AN EGYPTIAN VILLAGE GROWING UP: SILWA, THE GOVERNORATE OF ASWAN

By

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To the Intervening Forces in my Growth

Mama Leila and Baba Hamed
Map of Egypt
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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration in the text is in accordance with Silwian pronunciation. I have used the International Journal of Middle East Studies system to unify the vowels and the j, g, and q sounds in Arabic. The words with "ayn" sounds have an "a" and h, d, z, and s sounds have not been dotted for technical difficulties. I have retained the words transliterated by H. Ammar’s base line study to facilitate cross reference. The words have appropriate feminine and masculine endings. The plural, unless indicated, is formed by adding a terminal "s" for simplification. No attempt is made in the text to transliterate common names except according to sound.
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AN EGYPTIAN VILLAGE GROWING UP: SILWA, THE GOVERNORATE OF ASWAN

by

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Chairperson: Dr. Allan F. Burns
Major Department: Anthropology

This dissertation is a description and analysis of the responses of the Silwians in Upper Egypt to the increasing government intervention in local affairs after the national revolution in 1952.

Silwa is my paternal ancestral village. Its cultural processes were examined in 1951, six months before the revolution, by my father H. Ammar in a study done in 1954 entitled Growing Up in an Egyptian Village, Silwa, the Province of Aswan. H. Ammar's study serves as a baseline for this dissertation.

The village in 1951 was described as a relatively isolated homogeneous folk society of subsistence agriculturalists farming small plots of land. Kinship and tribal allegiances regulated the processes of exchange, politics, and dispute resolving. The social structure was differentiated on the ascriptive basis of age and sex. The capital monied market forces were weak and encounters of
them were rare. Children were socialized into norms of behavior to perpetuate the social organizational pattern of respect to elderly, a division of labor by sex, and the agricultural ethos of hard work.

In 1952, Egypt experienced a national revolution committed to improving the plight of the countryside by introducing modernizing policies and institutional reforms. The reforms and policies integrated Silwa into the capital market economy.

Following a restudy method, seven major cultural processes were interpreted in relation to change: the physical setting, the agricultural economy and ethos, the social structure, rites of passage, religious ceremonies, and socialization. It was found that the effects of the government reforms were not uniform or unilinear. On the whole, the Silwians have been able during the past thirty-five years to deal with the pressures and opportunities thrust upon them by actively maintaining the cultural meaning of their community. Silwa today has not been displaced into a town, nor is it the isolated, homogeneous folk society it was thirty-five years ago.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCING THE RESTUDY OF SILWA

This dissertation is a study of cultural change in praxis, guided by relevant and useful interpretive concepts of contemporary anthropology. The phenomena of change, adaptation, and adjustment have been a keynote in the various research endeavors of social science at the individual, group, national, and international levels. These endeavors have contributed to the enrichment of both theory and practice in the quest for understanding human cultures, in interpreting why people think and act the way they do, in ascertaining how societies change in the direction they take, and in identifying what makes certain social policies succeed or fail.

This study of "An Egyptian Village Growing Up" is anthropological research, of an empirical nature, based on field work by an Egyptian national. More concretely, it attempts to restudy the village of Silwa, Governorate of Aswan, which was studied by my father in 1951 as his doctoral thesis entitled "Growing Up in an Egyptian Village, Silwa, the Province of Aswan" and which was first published in 1954. The objective of this work is to examine the process of change in the life of this peasant community in Upper Egypt since the fifties. The time lapse between the
two studies amounts to more than 35 years, a period long enough to discern cultural change.

During this period, Egypt has emerged as an independent state in 1954 after 72 years of British colonialism. In the aftermath of political sovereignty, successive national governments have sought, in varying degrees of resolve and achievement, to modernize the country in order to keep in line and pace with western civilization. Rural communities, particularly in Upper Egypt which were hitherto peasant settlements hardly touched by any significant modernizing policies, started to appear on the agenda of reform. In fact, since 1952, the period in question has witnessed relatively more extensive programs aimed at changing and improving the lot of rural people through various agents of modernization.

Statement of the Research Problem

Silwa is one of the more than 4,000 large rural communities in Egypt where government intervention has been effected and felt. The aim of the intervention has been to render village life modern. In the words of the 1962 National Charter, "[Villages are expected to become] the cells that breathe life anew in the countryside and set up a civilization bringing the village near to the level of the town" (Nasser 1962:63). At any rate, we are not so much concerned here with the political aims of government policies, but only insofar as they have influenced the
general orientation and meaning of the community culture as described in the 1951 baseline study.

The problem of this restudy can be expressed in the following questions:

1. To what extent has the peasant culture of Silwa become urbanized departing from its cultural ethos as described in the baseline study of 1951 or, according to Redfield's hypothesis, lost its folk culture (Redfield 1950, 1956)?

2. If Silwa remains basically rural, what are the modifications, and adaptations that have taken place in the face of the new forces of modernization?

3. What are the specific areas of change in terms of direction, content, and processes, particularly in livelihood, social organization, and overriding cultural meanings as observed in the field?

4. Has the village culture developed assimilative and/or defensive mechanisms toward the government intervention which often assumes community culture to be "empty boxes" interacting with innovations in a mechanical fashion?

5. Where are the most weighty cultural meanings and symbols that perform regulatory or mediatory functions between the forces of cultural maintenance and cultural change located?

6. To what extent has the process of modernization brought the village culture into the mainstream of national
life and in contact with the international arena of the contemporary world at large?

Expressing the problem of this restudy in separate questions does not imply finding separate answers to each, as all issues involved are both logically and culturally interrelated. It is hoped that against the baseline study of 1951, the following chapters would contribute to shedding some light towards a deeper clarification of those issues.

The Choice of Silwa Community

As indicated earlier, the community study of Silwa takes the form of an additive restudy (Lewis 1951:428) of H. Ammar's work on the same village in 1951. At the outset, the description of the community used here includes not only the physical location and boundaries of the village, but also its position in a social, economic, and temporal context within the Egyptian society (Arensberg 1961, 1969; Arensberg and Kimball 1965). According to Arensberg's definition:

The community is the minimal unit table of organization of the personnel who can carry and transmit this culture. It is the minimal unit realizing the categories and offices of their social organization. It is the minimal group capable of re-enacting in the present and transmitting to the future the cultural and institutional inventory of their distinctive and historic tradition. And from it, and in it, the child learns from peers and the street as well as from parents and teachers, the love of his people and what must be learned to become one of them. (1961:253)
The advantage of this formulation of community lies in its recognition of the existing interactional system of a people over time and its transition to the future generations. This recognition is essential to this research since it focuses on interactional systems prior to and after the advent of the modernizing agents. Moreover, the reproduction of this system through the socialization of future generations reasserts the issue that community ethos is not a function of one "old order" which eventually dislocates. Rather, community interactions are perpetuated and reproduced with the necessary changes and adaptations over a multiplicity of future generations.

Silwa, thus, is chosen for research in culture change in view of the available 1951 baseline work of H. Ammar which provides us with a "portrait" of the community and its culture that existed before the introduction of government initiatives to modernize. This portrayal facilitates the task of validating the questions of "how and what were the essential dynamics and processes of the village culture prior to 1951"? With H. Ammar's information, this study proceeded to examine how the people of Silwa understood, acted/reacted, reinterpreted the meaning of their lives and the motivations that inform their day-to-day activities within the context of modernization since 1951.

The availability of the baseline study is not the only motivating force underlying the choice of Silwa. The community is also my ancestral village. It is the place
where my grandfather lived, my grandmother still lives, my father was reared, and my close kin call home. As a result, in search for variations in culture mixed with empathy, I followed my blood connections, thus fulfilling the common Arabic proverb "blood never transfers into water."

**Silwa Within the Egyptian Peasants' Ethnology**

This restudy of the Silwa community is informed by a gradually waxing ethnographic tradition. Ethnographic studies about the Egyptian Fallahin (peasants) and their village life have shed light on numerous facets including the adaptation pattern to the revolutionary movement of 1952 (Abu-Zeid, n.d.; Berque 1957); the change in peasants' folklore (Saleh 1971); the Fallahin's family life and organization (Barclay 1966); the effect of industrialization (Fakhouri 1972); the Fallahin's political mobilization (Harik 1972, 1974); the effect of modern health (Morsy 1978, 1980; Assaad and El-Katsha 1981); the consequences of agricultural development (Adams 1986; Hopkins 1980); the changing patterns of trade among the peasants (Saunders and Mehenna 1986); and the socio-economic impact of labor migration (Khafagy 1984).

However, in spite of the growing attention given to the peasant in research since 1952, a bias towards Lower Egyptian villages in the Delta prevails. All of the aforementioned concerns dealing with the Fallahin, except Hopkins (1980) and Adams (1986), were carried out in the Delta.
villages. This bias towards the Delta region is a point worth further investigation. Some researchers in Egypt have explained the reason for the bias as due most likely to easy access and to the short distance of the Delta villages from the capital Cairo, in addition to the difficult entry to the more conservative Upper Egyptian villages.

This conservatism is something I did not encounter, since as mentioned before, Silwa is my ancestral village and entry to it was an enjoyable and a rewarding experience.

The bias, however (whatever its source may be), must be rectified if a fuller picture of the rural sub-cultures of Egypt is to be obtained. The Upper Egyptian Fallahin live in a region economically, socially, historically, and ecologically different from that in the Delta. This difference will be briefly examined later in this chapter.

The Upper Egyptian village communities have been examined under the "volkerkunder" ethnology school in English by four monographs. The first examination was presented in 1932 by Hanns Alexander Winkler focusing on the description of a village near Luxor. The study represents a holistic approach to the community's economic, social, and symbolic processes, with special reference to the health conditions of the people.

Twenty-two years later, in 1954, H. Ammar's study of Silwa appeared to describe and analyze the process of how children grow up in a village in Upper Egypt. His
examination of socialization focused on cultural and socio-psychological aspects of growing up against a community's portrait of physical, social, and economic conditions.

In 1978 and from a journalistic perspective, Shahhat, the work of Critchfield appeared to illuminate the dilemmas of the individual Upper Egyptian peasant in the face of change. Following, the life history of Ibrahim, a peasant in the village of Berat in Luxor, Critchfield explicates the individual's encounters with perennial irrigation, sugar cane agriculture, compulsory education, and their effect on his psychological and social well-being.

Almost ten years later, Adams (1986) provides us with an ethnology of two Egyptian villages, one from Upper Egypt, in Menya and the other from the Delta region in Kafr El-Sheikh. The study presents an interesting village-level perspective that complements a larger economic picture of agricultural mal-development. His findings about peasant culture and change will be reviewed during the discussion of the relevant issues in this dissertation.

In the Arabic sociological literature, Upper Egyptian peasants, within the scope of my knowledge, are not treated in the ethnologies published. The majority of university dissertations and monographs deal with specific aspects of village communities in the Delta or of rural life in general.

Therefore, the contribution of this dissertation lies in providing a community restudy on a sparsely studied
region of peasants. As the only restudy of an Egyptian peasant community, it illustrates the forces of resilience, continuity, and change in the village community during a 35 year period of nation building through modernization and developmental policies.

A Contextual Framework of the Study

For introducing the Silwa community, it is deemed appropriate to provide at this juncture two main dimensions necessary for the understanding of the village. These converging dimensions are described as the personal and the geographical. The personal describes my kinship relations in the community and the geographical sets Silwa within the context of the sub-culture of Upper Egypt. These dimensions represent the subject and the object in terms of time and space, which are essential vistas for research in culture and culture change. The following discussion will attempt to provide a relevant statement on each of these dimensions in order to allow the reader a more comprehensive overview for a micro-study.

The I, the Subject

Anthropologists, more than other social scientists, have been for decades preoccupied with the dilemma of bias in their studies and monographs. The issues involved were pointed out by Bourdieu (1977), Golde (1980), Geertz (1973,
1983), Fahim (1977), Foucault (1972), Crapanzano (1977), and Dwyer (1982). The solutions posited by this group of anthropologists were not to ignore the process by which knowledge about others was gathered or obtained. They maintain that in view of the anthropologist’s engagement in search for meanings and not laws, the objective of ethnography should be devoted to the interpretation of the "natives’ point of view," i.e., give a "thick description" of the case in question. Consequently, the written work should not be disengaged from the activity in the field work including the position of the researcher himself/herself.

The activity of the work is inextricably tied with the person conducting the research study. His/her personal equation must be spelled out for a proper understanding of his/her interpretive venture. Anthropologists are individuals with histories, ideologies, nationalities, mother tongues, accents, and educational backgrounds. Edward Said summarizes the production of knowledge by saying, "Human science can never ignore its author’s involvement as a human subject in his (her) own circumstances" (1979:11). Bourdieu also argues this process of knowledge gaining by saying that the anthropologist "in his (her) preoccupation with interpreting practices is inclined to introduce into the object the principles of his (her) relation to the object" (1977:2).
It is this relation of the subject to the object that anthropologists, thus far, have been unable to confront. They write monograph after monograph without telling us about who they are, how they felt in the community, how people treated or perceived them, from where they come, what they look like, their background, and their institutional requirements. There are, however, few autobiographies of anthropologists in some written monographs such as Fahim (1983), Schepper-Hughes (1979), and Abu-Lughod (1986). Their approach has allowed "me" to understand the filtering processes through which the knowledge was gained. It is essential in my opinion that in an interpretive venture of others, the person engaged in the interpretation should be revealed. It is in the light of this introductory requirement to explicate who I am in relation to the community, the object of the field study, the following statement seems tenable.

To start with, I am the daughter of an indigenous anthropologist, with all the advantages and disadvantages of such a position. In Silwa, to which I have never been before, I was the long-lost daughter of the first man to receive modern education. My father, who had studied the village in 1951, was a Silwian. He was born and lived in Silwa until the age of 7. He then went to schools outside Silwa, returning to it on holidays. His education culminated in a doctoral degree from the University of London written on Silwa in 1952. His return from abroad
coincided with the 1952 Revolution, an era encouraging to
the educated elements from peasant backgrounds.

My father’s upward mobility to the ranks of "Egyptian
intellectuals" had become a legend in Silwa. Many stories
went around his education. Their content as they appear and
as I was told by many (including him) were almost mythical.
But the stories are central in providing the reader with my
setting and interchange in Silwa. A secondary school
teacher in Silwa related to me a story about how the
Silwian’s imagination viewed the first time my father went
to school in the nearby town of Edfu. All the able-bodied
men of the village from home to the railway station lined up
to carry him to his destination. Each man would carry him
and run handing him to the next one in the line--poor
father!!! The story telling was detailed; the person even
told me about the color of my father’s dress. Another woman
relative told me about a dream she had regarding "Hamed’s
success." She said:

"It, it came to me in my dreams. I saw in my
dream a huge white house. . . . At this time
there were no white houses in Silwa. . . .
All our houses were brown stone. I was
dragged into this house by a man wearing our
Saidi (Upper Egyptian) dress. This man told me
that this was Hamed’s house. . . . The man said,
‘Hamed is successful now. Hamed owns this house.’"

The relating of this dream became an essential start for
ever conversation with this woman. For this, according to
her, was a good omen for my work as I was doing the same
thing. She told me once:
"You’re doing your work on Silwa. . . . You will most surely pass. . . . Look what happened to your father . . . that is what happens to people who write about Silwa. . . . Silwa is Mabruke (a good omen—a blessed village)."

To the stories and dreams there was an added reality. Six weeks before my first trip to Silwa, H. Ammar was on National Radio on a program called "A Witness to an Era." In the program the show host (Omar Battisha) introduced him as the man from Silwa belonging to the G’afra Tribe (I have never related to him as a G’afari or being tribal myself). The two sessions exchange revolved around socio-cultural change in Egyptian villages and H. Ammar talked about Silwa and changes in it. The Silwians recorded the program on tapes and were to mention it to me over and over throughout my stay.

Upon my arrival in Silwa there were two generations who never saw Hamed Abou Mostafa (Hamed whose father is Mostafa—my father). For he had taken up a job with the United Nations that kept him away for more than 15 years. Through me, these people tried to reconstruct what happened 35 years ago when Doctor Hamed came to do his work. Those who remembered related the long nights he spent talking to people, the fancy cigarettes he brought with him when he came to Silwa, the camera, and the flash bulbs that would burn.

Just as I was introduced to the community of Silwa as the daughter of a Silwian, I also entered it with other parts of me which rendered the Silwians somewhat perplexed.
I was an anomaly in many ways to them. They did not know how to quite place me at the beginning. I was a single woman well above the traditional average marital age, the daughter of a Lebanese mother, a woman who wanted to walk in the village every day and enter into many men’s domain, a woman with very short hair and no earrings, and finally a woman who drinks tea with no sugar.

It was within this context that I entered Silwa—the daughter of a Silwian anthropologist with anomalies. I slowly created my own self and my own image. My acceptance by the Silwians was undoubtedly mixed with certain amazement. As a woman, they could not believe my interest in studying Silwa or behaving in the way I did. They kept on repeating you are Shekhat al-Arab (a term denoting a status of good manners and decency). "You are not arrogant and you like to laugh with us . . . you like our Hakkawi (stories)," one woman told me.

My first encounter with Silwa was in June 1986. The first few days were characterized by a mixed feeling of joy, nervousness, and bewilderment. From the second day of my arrival I began to receive visitors inside the Istishraf (the interior sitting room) of my uncle’s house. I discovered that male blood relatives could come into the house and sit at ease with me. All the people who visited me on that day (ten of them) had placed me in one framework or another.
I was either their far cousin, their near cousin, or the granddaughter of their beloved neighbor or their niece because one of my uncles/aunts or father was their brother/sister through breast feeding. One woman addressed me:

"You are Nawal mm. ... One of the twins that Hamed Abu Mostafa had. ... You are Nadidat (born in the same year or equal in age) to my younger sister ... so you are coming all the way from America (America) to study Silwa ha ... like your father ha."

I looked at her saying:

"Yes ... and what is your name?"
"Fatima ... my great-grandmother, Fatima, is the sister of your great-grandfather, Mostafa. ... We are Awlad Am (cousins)."

She then moved from her seat and sat next to me. Looking at my face and directly into my eyes she said:

"Nawal ... Ya Doctora (you who are a doctor) you speak Arabic."

I smiled and said:

"What did you think?"
"I thought you've been living in America, you've forgotten Arabic. ... I mean your father's language." (Note, it is not the mother's tongue.)

The above interchange with Fatima summarizes a number of elements in the community setting of my research. Many people knew a lot about the issues that one often uses to initiate a conversation. They knew my name, my civil status, where I was living, who my father and mother were, where my parents worked, the number of sisters and brothers I had. The many that did not know me would stop the person I was talking to or sitting with and ask: "Who is this with
you?" After staring at me, they came back to answer themselves, "This is Bit Abu Ammar (the daughter whose father is Ammar)." For phenotypically I resembled my aunts and the youngest daughter of my paternal uncle.

So here I was the anthropologist coming to her father’s native village where everybody knew something about me, but I could hardly keep up with the names, let alone the exact blood or kin relations. I was nervous and overwhelmed at the beginning. I spent hours at night writing every single detail that was happening and all the names of the people I met.

The initial nervousness and bewilderment slowly disappeared as I spent more time in Silwa. There were certain issues, however, that beguiled me throughout my stay and became even more inescapable as I wrote. These issues pertain to my scruples for providing an unbiased view of Silwa, being an indigenous anthropologist, the daughter of the first Ph.D. holder in Silwa, and part of the community kinship system as well as an outsider at the same time.

My interchange in Silwa, however, was not at all socially rosy and comfortable because I had a kinship web to which I belong. My family and kin had their rivals. This rivalry I was only told about after questioning someone’s actions or behavior. Two of the situations where I encountered shunning, I found out later, were reactions of individual(s) who had had a falling out with one of my cousins or close relatives. This shunning was their way of
getting back at them. In one of the situations I discovered that the person’s father (deceased) had a dispute with my grandfather (who has been dead for 33 years) that was never settled.

The Silwians required no elaborate explications to understand what I was going to do. They recognized that I was looking at how Silwa changed since H. Ammar’s research in 1951. This was a valid topic of research for them. But their comprehension limited the exercise to two things, namely translating all what I was writing in Arabic into English and only adding something to what H. Ammar wrote. According to them this made my task much easier than his. My explanations about great "paradigmatic" changes in anthropology, the non-experimental nature of human communities, as well as the demands of original work for a doctoral dissertation remained either incomprehensible or trivial to them.

The Silwians underrated another issue. They remained unaware of the fulfilling experience they gave me. In fact, they often kept repeating how precious I was to come to Silwa and restudy it. Their sincere acceptance and generous help combined with care and warmth I shall never forget. Being in Silwa was truly a loving and rewarding experience.

It is in the light of this setting of a daughter creating her own image within a mostly loving and congenial context that the findings of this work could be ultimately seen.
Silwa: The Object Within the Context of Modernization Between 1951 and Today

Having stated the subject in relation to the object, Silwa, it is appropriate here to highlight the main features of the latter and how it has "grown up" in terms of modernization and government intervention during the last 35 years. Further details of the village community will be explicated in the following chapters of the dissertation.

Silwa, a relatively isolated village community until 1951, had been little influenced by the process of modernization and government intervention as described in H. Ammar's study. Suffice to mention here that the main symbols of the central government or its institutional services were the police station; the tax collector; a pseudo health unit, and one elementary school which was a blind alley leading to no further stages of the educational system.

However, July 23, 1952, witnessed Nasser's revolution and the demise of the previous rule of King Farouk, marking a new era of political and social reforms.

All policies introduced into Silwa since that date are important elements for analysis. They all have induced change to varying degrees within the physical and socio-cultural context of Silwa. This research, however, signals out what appears, from the field work experience and
interchange, as having relevance in initiating/stimulating/causing and reinforcing change in the day-to-day life of the Silwians.

Silwa, a village in the southern-most Egyptian governorate, Aswan, falls approximately on latitude and longitude of 25 and 35 degrees, respectively. At about 30 kilometers to its north lies the town of Edfu and 15 kilometers to its south lies the Nubian village of Kalabsha (created in 1962 after the relocation of the Egyptian Nubians due to the inundation of their district by the lake created by the High Dam). Silwa, like many other villages in the southern region, is surrounded to the east by the barren Eastern Mountains and to the west by the Nile. It is located on the eastern plateau, a sandy and rocky terrain. Seventy kilometers south of Silwa lies the governorate’s capital, Aswan city, and 850 kilometers north of Silwa lies the nation’s capital, Cairo.

According to H. Ammar, the 1951 Silwa was a relatively isolated community with very few contacts with the nearest towns to its north and south. There was no easy transport communication, no infrastructure to facilitate mobility, and formal education was limited to a single 3R’s elementary school and two other traditional educational institutions, called Kuttab devoted to the memorization of the Koran.

Today and particularly since the building of the Aswan High Dam in 1962, Silwa’s physical isolation has ended. To its south live the Nubians who were relocated to new
villages. In 1964, the Relocation Law number 110 created for the Nubians the Center of Nasr which included 42 small villages and one new town. Kalabasha is the nearest of these villages to Silwa (CAPMAS 1978). As a result, the Silwians became in contact with new settlements inhabited by predominantly nonagriculturalist people from a different descent, characterized by their mobility and ambitions due to their long history of migration to cities (Fahim 1983).

The Aswan High Dam also brought with it in 1963 the completion of the Cairo-Aswan highway. This road connects Silwa directly to Aswan in the south and Cairo in the north.

H. Ammar tells us in his research that Silwa was a community of small landholders each owning less than 5 feddans. He notes that more than 60% of the total population were engaged in agriculture and depended entirely on perennial irrigation. Subsistence agriculture was the basis of their livelihood, while cash crops were grown only by two absentee landlords who owned 30 feddans of land each. The division of labor in the community was based on age and sex. Women were ultimately responsible for the housework, while men were mainly engaged in agriculture.

The introduction of the cooperative system into Silwa since the sixties was an innovation relevant to the change on the processes of agricultural activity. Article 18 of the 1952 Agrarian Reform Law required that all small farmers owning 5 feddans or less to establish an agricultural cooperative of their own. This cooperative was run by two
bodies. A government-supervised body, staffed with trained personnel appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, and an executive board of farmers from the village, elected by the villagers. The only two requirements for the nomination to the executive body were literacy and working in agriculture. The agricultural cooperative was established in Silwa to introduce and regulate the cash crop of sugar cane. The agricultural pattern became one cropping cycle instead of the previous practice of two and sometimes three cycles. Chemical fertilizers displaced the indigenous clay and dung fertilizer Marug. Price controls, credit, a new system of pest control, and marketing facilities were also introduced instead of the subsistence agriculture and its traditional farming routine. This system of controlled cash cropping together with other modernizing variables have initiated and stimulated certain changes in the Silwian everyday life fabric. The exact changes and processes will be discussed in later chapters.

The introduction of the village bank in 1974 to Silwa was also relevant to the study of change. The village bank took over the credit functions of the cooperative, and provided the farmers with cash to assist in the agricultural activity until repayment after harvest.

The introduction of universal compulsory education until the age of 15 and the abolition of fees from all the stages of education have also contributed to the process of modernization and change in Silwa. Today there are 3
primary schools, 3 intermediate schools, and a secondary school beginning last year. The Kuttabs have also increased in number by one institution, although their educational role has become of secondary importance.

Modern amenities and services in the 1951 Silwa included a post office, an electrical water plant for irrigation, and a quarantine unit for the malaria epidemic. Electricity, potable water, latrines, paved roads were nonexistent. Today, electricity and water have entered every home in Silwa. Potable water was introduced to Silwa in 1979 by way of communal taps and later in 1982 by way of a house tap. Electricity came recently to Silwian homes in 1982.

Also, Silwa’s quarantine unit was reorganized as a Wihda Sihiyya (health compound) in 1961. It is now staffed with three doctors, a dentist, a nurse, an accountant, a lab assistant, a school health inspector, and a health inspector. The unit is also furnished with a pharmacy and basic medical equipment.

In Silwa, marriage and family formation were basically sought for childbearing and rearing. People got married in order to have children. Women used to get married at an average age of 13 and some continue to do so, while for men the average marriage age was between 17-20. The 1952 law that fixed the minimum age for marriage at 16 for women and 18 for men is also relevant in the context of this study.
Socialization, H. Ammar tells us, was the major instrument of education, instilling social behavioral norms and skills. The methods of socialization were largely governed and conditioned by norms of obedience to parents, respect to elders, strict conformity to religious practices, and a high social value attached to hard work. Often the socialization process was enforced by severe punishment and shaming practices. Koranic education was limited to males and its educational content largely involved memorization and recitation of Koranic Surahs (chapters). However, attendance at the Kuttab was limited, sporadic, and secondary to everyday chores prescribed by kinship and familial obligations. Very little enthusiasm was shown to send girls or even boys to the modern elementary school.

Today, formal education represented by seven institutions, infrastructure facilitating movements from Silwa to other towns, differentiation in occupations, the watching of television after introducing electricity, and the migration of labor to rich oil countries of the Gulf (facilitated by government in 1974) have all been, to varying degrees, conducive to new adaptations and values in the traditional patterns and methods of socialization.

Other change policies and regulations enacted by governments since 1952 were not particularly of general relevance to the specific context of the Silwian community, e.g., land distribution, land reclamation, security of land tenure, minimum agricultural wages and land eviction. The
land distribution clause fixing holdings to 200 feddans in 1952 and then to 100 in 1961 was less relevant to the Silwian context than to many other Egyptian villages in the Delta and middle Egypt, where land was concentrated in the hands of few landholders. Compared to a national level where 47,923 acres were redistributed to benefit 188,217 families (from 1953-1961) (Tibah 1965), Silwa had 27 acres redistributed to benefit three families. Silwians, as indicated earlier, were primarily small landholders owning an average of less than 5 feddans per family in 1951.

In 1951, only four families did not own and work their land. These families did not even rent land as they were outsiders who depended on income from specialized occupations such as pottery, water fetching, carpentry, and grinding at their corn mill. Today, only 2% of Silwians rent land. Agricultural labor was often not on a regular basis and was usually during the period of harvest. Hired labor, when required, was often sought from relatives to whom such an assistance was expected to be paid back when they sought it. Resort to hired agricultural labor was minimal and workers were normally paid in kind after the harvest season. At present, it has become a rare service and quite expensive in terms of cash.

Whether in 1951 or at present, very little fruit and vegetable have been grown; currently land growing fruits and vegetables amounts to 2.2% of the total cultivated land.
The freedom in pricing the fruit and vegetable market was and is still not relevant to the Silwian context.

Land reclamation was not applicable in Silwa. Out of the 912,000 acres reclaimed by 1975, and up to my departure in July 1987, Silwa’s share was almost negligible as there was almost no arable land to be reclaimed within the village boundaries.

To sum up, the following policies, measures, and institutions represent the salient features of government intervention in the community life in Silwa:

1. The universalization of the educational system both for girls and boys, represented in the schools established in Silwa itself as well as in the relative accessibility of education outside the village;

2. The mandatory legal specification of minimum marital age for girls and boys at 16 and 18 years, respectively;

3. The upgrading of the health compound established in 1943 to include a core medical and paramedical staff;

4. The building of the Cairo-Aswan highway that crosses the heart of Silwa in 1958;

5. The introduction of electricity, which in turn allowed the spread of television and modern household appliances;

6. The installation of running water structures culminating in the use of household taps (1982);
7. The transformation of agricultural activity by introducing a cash crop, sugar cane, which requires a low laboring time, and by providing marketing and financing services through the cooperative (1963) and village bank (1977), in addition to the fixing of sugar cane price by the government which monopolizes its market; and

8. The creation of the village council and local government which will be described in Chapter Five.

9. The 1956 constitution granted women's suffrage for the right to vote and to stand as candidates to be elected to parliament. This was indeed a breakthrough in establishing legal equality between the two sexes. The 1959 Labor Law No. 91 abolished all discriminations between men and women in labor entitlements and job opportunities. In 1962 a woman became the first minister in the Egyptian Council of Ministers (Ammar 1988:312-314; Nirop 1979: 90-92).

Silwa Within the Context of Upper and Lower Egypt

Egyptian villages are not as homogeneous in their historic, social, economic, and ecological fabric as the hydraulic society proponents believe them to be. One of the many possible differentiating typologies is the geographic dimension of Lower (northern) and Upper (southern) Egypt. Upper Egypt constitutes the region south of Cairo starting administratively with the Giza Governorate and ending at the border with Sudan in the Governorate of Aswan. Lower Egypt,
on the other hand, excluding Cairo, the metropolis, starts north of Cairo to include all the governorates in the middle, east, and west of the Nile Delta up to the Mediterranean Sea.

Although the exact differences between the two regions have not been subject to any systematic study, certain aspects of the differences relevant to the restudy will be dealt with here on a limited scale.

Lower and Upper Egypt were united for the first time in the year 3300 B.C., under the Pharaoh Menes (Mina) (Linton 1959:105). But this signaled no fully fledged unity of the two regions. (The Pharaoh himself had two governments, one in Lower and one in Upper Egypt, and had to wear a composite crown representing the symbols of the two regions.) As late as the early sixteenth century, at the time of the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517, Upper Egypt remained outside their direct rule for 50 to 100 years (depending on the source one consults) (Holt 1973:183; Vatikiotis 1985:31). During this time Upper Egypt was ruled by tribal chiefs, Banu Ummar of the Hawwara, who settled there from the fourteenth century (Holt 1973:183).

When Upper Egypt came under Ottoman direct rule, it was handed in its entirety to one governor. The governor settled in Jirja, a major town of the Sohag Province. The rest of Egypt (Lower Egypt and Cairo) was then divided into 23 provinces and administered by 23 governors.¹
The encounter of Lower and Upper Egypt with the "West" was also different. As early as the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798 we are told by historians about French troops marching from Giza to Cairo and finally their encampments in Lower Egyptian villages such as Menoufia, Dakhalia, and Sharqia.

Upper Egyptians' encounter with the "West" came almost 90 years later with Cromer's idea to erect a dam in Aswan. To ensure that cotton would receive proper irrigation, Cromer ordered the building of a reservoir that stretched across the Nile first cataract at a distance of more than a mile from the city of Aswan (Fahim 1983:27). The dam was completed in 1902, and it lies in the same area of the High Dam completed in the early seventies.

The difference between Upper and Lower Egyptians' encounter with the West was not only in time, but also in magnitude and process. The French came into Lower Egypt as an army which could not settle, while the British came in as occupiers who managed to rule for 75 years. However, the British concern with Upper Egypt was limited to the irrigation system in order to secure water for the plantation of cotton, cultivated in Lower Egypt as a source of raw material for their textile industry. The French spread over various regions of Lower Egypt during their three-year campaign. The striking effect of the French soldiers' presence in Cairo and Lower Egypt was discussed by the contemporary Egyptian historian, al-Jabarti. He noted
with astonishment that the French allowed the mixing of the sexes in public and condemned the intermarriage between the soliders and the Egyptian women with its morally shameful effect on the societal fabric of Egypt (Vatikiotis 1985:45). He also recorded his bewilderment with regard to the technology of bombing and army training practiced by the French troops.

Lower Egypt’s exposure to the West continued with the signing of the agreement between Khedive Said (1854-1863) and Ferdinand de Lessepes to dig the Suez Canal in 1854. The digging of the canal required the mobilization of 60,000 Egyptian workers from agriculture (Al-Sayyid Marsot 1985:78). The locations from which the "hard working" men that dug the canal came from is unknown. One, however, can make a calculated guess based on the company’s policies. The company that was unwilling to provide food or shelter to the workers must have been also unwilling to invest time and resources in moving them from the further southern provinces of Upper Egypt. It probably drew on the pool of men nearby Suez, i.e., in the Lower Egyptian villages. This uprooting of men from agriculture to dig the Suez Canal for a period of 15 years (the canal was completed in 1869) could be viewed as the Lower Egyptian peasants’ first encounter with proletarization.

The experience of "proletarization of the peasant" came to Upper Egypt almost a century later during the Aswan High Dam project that was signed by the governments of Egypt and
the Soviet Union in 1958. The experience in Upper Egypt, however, was more of a proletarization than that of the canal enslavement. For the unskilled workers who abandoned their land for work on the dam project were salaried and provided with shelter and other fringe benefits. Few people from Silwa had the experience of unskilled labor and even fewer as skilled workers at the dam construction.

Lower Egypt was integrated into the world market much earlier than Upper Egypt. In 1882, upon the British occupation of Egypt, agriculture was largely transformed into the monoculture of cotton to feed the mills of Lancashire (Al-Sayyid Marsot 1985:78). The cotton crop requiring very fertile soil and moisture was more suitable for cultivation in Lower than Upper Egypt. Therefore, Lower Egypt was densely cultivated by cotton, while Upper Egypt was mainly devoted to subsistence crops with few areas for cash crop such as sugar cane (Warriner 1962). The cash cropping pattern of agriculture in Lower Egypt has been extensively studied, but never in relation to Upper Egypt. One comparative point often mentioned is that women work in the fields in Lower Egypt, while in Upper Egypt this is generally frowned upon. However, this difference is only the tip of the iceberg which deserves more intensive scrutiny.

Lower Egyptian villages also had to live their day-to-day lives with the British occupiers more than the Upper Egyptians. The Dinshiwai incident epitomizes this
asymmetrical daily encounter. At the same time, through easier access to modern education in Cairo and Alexandria, Lower Egyptians managed to join the ranks of government bureaucrats at a much greater proportion than Upper Egyptians.

Another difference between Upper and Lower Egypt is their encounters with the Nile. The Nile valley is wider in Lower than Upper Egypt. The average width in the former region reaches 30 kilometers, while in the latter region it reaches 16 diminishing as it goes further south where it does not extend more than 4 kilometers in the Silwa region (Hopwood 1982:1). In this connection, the cultivable land in Lower Egypt is larger in size and more fertile in quality. Depending largely on agriculture, people in the Delta on the average are relatively better off than those in the south. It is also noted that the rate of migration to cities within each region and to Cairo and Alexandria has been higher in the case of rural southerners.

The difference between Upper and Lower Egypt is not a view formulated by the intellectual and presumably insignificant to the people in the villages and the fields. To the people of the two regions the difference is real, not only in terms of dialects but covers wealth, educational opportunities, and cultural exposure. The variety of jokes depicting the Upper Egyptian as parochial, conservative, and naive are echoed constantly by Cairienne Egyptians. The anecdotes about the shrewdness of the Lower Egyptians are
also heard in counter response. The Upper Egyptian, picked immediately from the darker tone skin, is referred to as Saidi, i.e., from far away in the south, while the Lower Egyptian is referred to as Bahrawi, i.e., from up north. However, the unifying compromise is epitomized in the common saying that for Egypt the north generates wealth, while the south provides men. The latter connotation refers to the migrant workers from Upper Egypt who often form unskilled labor of the construction sector in the urban centers.

The aforementioned aspects of difference between Upper and Lower Egypt are not a full, exhaustive, or in-depth treatment of the subject. They are, however, a recognition of their existence. Such a recognition is not a way of espousing basic cultural separatism between Upper and Lower Egypt, but rather a realization that allows a contextual analysis for the study of Silwa in which the process of modernization has had a later start and perhaps a slower effect.

Silwa, the village community of focus here, is an Upper Egyptian village. Silwa in 1951 had several elements in common with the overall Egyptian society, and in particular the rural Upper Egyptian sub-culture. This sub-culture was characterized by the dominance of the authoritarian family, significance of kinship, low status of women and children, population pressure on land, high literacy rate, and popularized religion (Blackman 1968; Ayrout 1963; Critchfield 1978, 1981).
However, it varied from other rural/peasant areas in the Lower Egyptian region where land cultivation had been a commercialized venture since the 1820s and totally integrated into the market economy in 1882 (Radwan and Lee 1979). In the Delta villages, women have helped men in certain farm activities due to the intensive labor requirements of cotton cultivation (Ammar 1954; Bates and Rassam 1983; Hopkins 1980; Adams 1986). Feudal relations were also rampant (Warriner 1962) and were not isolated from urban influences and services of health and education. The case in the majority of Upper Egyptian villages, including Silwa, has been different on those accounts as well as other cultural features. It is deemed essential, therefore, to place the village community of Silwa within the Upper Egyptian context for better understanding of its cultural setting and dynamics.

Methodology and Field Work Activities

The argument in the course of this dissertation should be interpreted by the reader as an investigation carried out by an anthropologist with a real, and not fictitious kin group, who is examining specific policies carried out in a village locality in Upper Egypt. These policies, in spite of their underlying ideological implementations, i.e., socialistic during Nasser’s regime and capitalist during Sadat’s, were aimed at transforming Egypt into a modern capitalist/industrial society (Amin 1976).
Background information on Silwa, before the introduction of intensive government policies and measures, was available in H. Ammar’s book (1954). This source was consulted before my departure to Egypt for field work.

As an empirical study, field work represented the core of information and data. Field activities were carried out from June 1986 to July 1987 (with breaks in between). During my first three weeks in Cairo (May 5th to June 1st) I consulted bookstores and libraries for books in Arabic. In addition, I searched for H. Ammar’s field notes at home. Upon finding them, I read them slowly to weed out issues that were not included in the written manuscript.

The interest of this research was to reconstruct Silwian day-to-day activities and life experiences prior to 1952 and after. I, therefore, depended on observant participation (I participated to observe) (Al-Torki 1986:2). During the first six weeks in Silwa, the observations and participation were systematized by items drawn from H. Ammar’s work.

On the seventh week of field work (which I started after four weeks of being away from Silwa to fulfill a social obligation), I arrived with a box full of method "aids." These included an itemized list for community profile (Appendix 1); a questionnaire for the three women who are university students (Appendix 2); a question item for the first woman with a teacher’s certificate (Appendix 3); old pictures from Silwa taken by H. Ammar to reconstruct
Silwa in 1951 (Appendix 4); an itemized household survey which I used with 300 households (Appendix 5); items for follow-up on children studied by H. Ammar (Appendix 6); translations of H. Ammar's story completion and morality tests (1954) which were administered on 45 children of ages 6-16 (Appendices 7 and 8); a list of questions about social change, health, friendship which were answered by 20 school boys and girls in a written composition form (Appendix 9); a women's questionnaire (Appendix 16); a recorder; and a camera.

The methodology regarding government institutions and their activities in Silwa was primarily based on observation as well as consulting some of their records. I often arrived in the morning to one of the institutions for three or four consecutive days, then moved to another one. When the round of all institutions was over, I would start again with a different order. The visits to schools were intensified during January, March, and April in view of their summer holiday from May to September. Participant observations regarding institutions and general events were recorded on note pads every day during the afternoon rest time or just before I went to sleep at night. At the beginning, my note writing was bi-lingual (i.e., English and Arabic). But as time passed on, I found myself writing everything in Arabic.

Two extensive life history interviews with two women and one man were recorded. The women who were relatives and
neighbors, one aged 75 and the other 33, were visited every afternoon to have tea and talk. Whenever they decided to record, I asked if I could come back after finishing my usual afternoon tea round which often lasted for two hours. They always obliged me. These women were extensively interviewed about their childhood, their marriage, their births, the clothes they wore, the food they ate, the songs they sang, their social obligations, their relations with family members, the economy and exchange, their illnesses and cures, their house work, and social change. The man interviewed who is the head of my clan "the Hassablab" is blind. I visited him once or twice a week at night to record. This informant was asked about changes in Silwa including gender roles, socialization, economy, agriculture, climate, marriage, clan affiliation, ceremonies, health, and education.

I recorded songs sung by children, by adult men, and women. I also collected proverbs and documented children’s tales and games.

I used the help of three key informants, one woman and two men. I needed the help of men to gain entry to men’s domain more than women’s help to enter that of women. My woman informant is 23 years old. She goes to the university in Aswan and is studying science education. She provided me with my first entry to the community, which I primarily had through women. The first male informant is 33 years old. He teaches math in the secondary school of Silwa. He is a
relative and helped me tremendously to enter the men’s domain. My last informant who left in May to do his military service is also a relative. He is 19 years old and walked with me all over Silwa. He introduced me to the fields and the barren mountains. When he left I had to go to the fields with the children of my cousin (because women do not walk to the fields alone).

I drew extensively on my father’s informant Hajj Ali. At the age of 67 he is still as sharp as he was then. His knowledge of the baseline procedures helped tremendously in communication, and his commentary on Silwa growing up were quite penetrating.

Upon returning to Cairo in July, I visited the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) to collect various statistical information. I found out that the general population census for Egypt conducted in 1986-1987 will not be completed for another two years. Consequently, some of my statistical data had to contend with the 1976 information and few preliminary published results of the 1987 census.

To sum up, the data collected in this work comprises information obtained in various ways: (1) 1951 baseline study; (2) observation of institutions; (3) administering questionnaires, verbal and pictoral tests; (4) a community profile; (5) observant participation in the community; (6) collection of proverbs, games, and songs; (7) extensive
recordings of interviews; (8) key informants; (9) statistics; and (10) photographic recording.

It is worth mentioning that administering the two questionnaires, the psychological tests, and the written answers to questions were tools intended to reveal aspects which may not be grasped or identified through participant observation. Some of the results obtained could not be secured otherwise; other data were corroborative. This dissertation has made extensive use of the main findings of such tests and questionnaires. However, a full detailed account of the significance of their findings could not be fully accommodated in this work. The household survey, specifically conducted by six interviewers I trained in Silwa, contains a wealth of information which remains to be finalized and properly interpreted.

A note must also be made with regard to the conduct of field work studies in Egypt. Such an activity requires, by law, approval of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) in Cairo. In my case, the approval suffered delays en route from the Egyptian Embassy in Washington, D.C., the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education (Department of Missions Abroad), and CAPMAS. However, finally I received the authorization Number 1123 dated October 27, 1986, which was published as required legally in the Egyptian Gazette (al-Waqai' al-Misriah), Number 26, November 25, 1986, page 14.
Notes

1. In 1951, Egypt was divided into 14 administrative units called provinces (mudiriyat), and the naming has been changed to governorates (muhafazat) reaching 26 at this point.

2. A village in Lower Egypt (in the Delta region) had been used in 1905 by British soldiers who encamped there to shoot pigeons. The peasants of Dinshiwai made their living by selling these birds. Upon the return of the British soldiers to shoot pigeons the following year, the peasants attacked them, beat them, and disarmed them. One officer escaped and ran to the camp for help. He, however, died outside the camp from a concussion and an August sun heat stroke. Fifty-two of the villagers were arrested and tried by a court marshall (Al-Sayyid Marsot 1985:78-79).
CHAPTER TWO
PHYSICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND
ECOLOGICAL SETTING

The peasant community life in Egypt, due to the nature of the hydraulic society that necessitates administrative organization of irrigation, is arranged within village settlements. While it is impossible to generalize about the more than 4,000 villages in Egypt today, certain common features can be pointed out. Egyptian villages are in general densely populated settlements with densities ranging from 1500-2500 per square kilometer (CAPMAS 1987:14-15). Almost all villages are concentrated on the narrow 750 kilometer long Nile river valley. Various types of agricultural activities represent the main source of livelihood for the majority of rural population in Egypt. In this chapter, however, the specific variables of the Silwian village community life are discussed for contextual clarification. This sketch serves as an introduction to the transformation setting that the reader will later come to know in depth.

The Silwians, whose village life I came to share, were not what I had envisioned from reading H. Ammar’s (1954) study. Si1wa seemed to have a village life unfolding in relatively self-contained isolation. It was no longer a
community that utilized its physical setting and habitat in a culturally prescribed self-sufficient agricultural framework. In the past, the Silwians ate from their labor produce, dressed from the wool of animals they herded, fertilized the land with a soil nutrient they brought from the mountain bordering their village, drank and washed from water they fetched from the Nile river, built and furnished their houses with materials available in the environment, and used indigenous herbs to heal and decorate themselves.

In June 1986, when I first arrived in Silwa, the people had, largely due to government modernization policies, ceased to utilize their locale for self-sufficient agriculture. The thrusting of Silwa into the market cash economy at the beginning of the 1960s with the introduction of sugar cane as a cash crop and the agricultural cooperative credit services have altered the villagers' relationship with their habitat.

However, it must be noted at the outset of this chapter that while the experiences of the Silwians' changing relationship with their environment and physical setting reveal elements of structural differentiation, this is by no means a dislocation of their peasant agricultural adaptation. The elements noted by scholars of development—from Maine (1907) to Redfield (1956), from Durkheim (1964) to Stein (1960) including population growth, village-size expansion, specialization of labor, increased exposure to city life, and consumerism have not substantially moved the Silwian village to an urban way of life. In the course of
this dissertation, I argue that despite greater incorporation in the national economy, the Silwians have managed to make elbow room for themselves in preserving their culture due to their pre-existing cultural survival mechanisms (Wolf 1966; Chaynov 1925).

The Physical Setting

The name Silwa is given to a group of 11 villages of which Silwa El-Balad is the mother village. These 11 villages are geographically and administratively divided into Silwa Kibli (Southern Silwa) and Silwa Bahari (Northern Silwa). Kibli villages include (arranged from south to north) Kagug, Shabikih, Naja Sayyed-Siad, Muhieger, and Izbat Abed Al-Fatah. Bahari villages include (arranged in the same manner) Silwa El-Balad, Massaid, Al-Shatb, Al-Hajandia, Naja Al-Omda, and Jafar Al-Sadiq. Silwa El-Balad is located midway between the furthest northern and southern villages (Jafar Al-Sadiq, Kagug, respectively). In the past those villages used to be separated by "recognized boundaries--a high mound, a valley or a stretch of gravel" (Ammar 1954: ix). Today, due to expansion of housing construction, it is difficult to distinguish where the boundaries of one village begin or end except with the help of the blue road signs indicating the name of the particular village.
Figure 2.1 A Map of Silwa
Silwa’s name derives, according to informants, from the Arabic word Siwwa (the equal), denoting the village’s paralleling the Holy shrine of Kabaa in Mecca.

In this study Silwa El-Balad, which appears square on the map, is our main concern within the total context of the region and the country as a whole. To the east and northwest the village is surrounded by mountains; to the west it is boardered by the Nile River; and to the south and northeast by the Kibli and Bahari villages, respectively.

The total area of Silwa is approximately 17 square kilometers and its population concentration is mainly on the eastern plateau. This concentration is mainly attributed to two historical and ecological factors, namely the need to fully utilize the narrow strip of fertile land to the west by the Nile bank and to protect the houses from the annual floods of the Nile (which came once a year before the building of the Aswan High Dam, the last floods came in 1969).

Changing Connections With the Physical World

H. Ammar (1954:viii) notes that the "physical setting" of Silwa divides the villagers’ world into three distinct parts. Running from east to west these are "the hills," "the village," and "the fields."

Upon walking in Silwa El-Balad one still recognizes these three distinct physical divisions. However, their connection and social function within Silwian reality have
considerably changed as explained by the following observation.

The Barren Hills

The barren hills, which used to be a source of apprehension to children and a source of land fertilizer (traditionally called Marug) for farmers, are today a playground for children and an arena for the expansion of housing construction. The first time I went to the hills was during a summer day in the late afternoon, accompanied by four children and an adult married woman. There, I found houses built all around the hills, sandstone enclosures erected on the hills themselves, an indication that future houses will be built on the site. The children insisted that we climb all the various levels of the hills. They repeated to me that they played there all the time and that I should not be afraid. The adult woman took me to a sandy area on the extreme east of the hills remarking:

"Look, how soft and reddish the sand is here . . . unlike the bottom where the hills are rocky . . . we have many people come to these hills from far away places . . . last winter we had a woman come to cover herself with the sand here to treat her knee knots (arthritis)."

The adult men and boys today no longer go to the mountains to collect clay fertilizer. Manufactured chemical azotic, potassium soil nutrients are taken on credit basis from the village bank. Men go to the hills
only to erect enclosures which entitle them to claim the fenced area as theirs in the future.

The Village

The village which H. Ammar discussed in 1954 (viii) has also changed. It has physically been divided by the Aswan-Cairo highway completed in 1963. The road runs north-south into Silwa dividing it into east and west to the road.

To the east of the highway lies the "village" that H. Ammar wrote about in 1954. Today it has six Mosques, the two elementary schools, the girls' intermediate school, the market space, the first aid unit, the police station, the telephone and telegram office, the post office, the retail food cooperative, the saints' tombs, the new veterinarian center (still unoccupied), and the Al-Hammadi (the village square). This east to the road division of the village is now more densely populated. Its houses are smaller and closer to each other and its streets are narrower. Most of the houses in this section retain the color of the brownstone used hitherto for building. To the extreme north of this part of the village we find the only paved road in Silwa. The road takes you from the main highway to the girls' intermediate school. It was paved in 1982, when the Governor of Aswan came to officially open the school. Houses have also extended to the south and north of this section, with no definite design for any physical planning.
The west to the road village division was sparsely inhabited as early as 1936 (Ammar 1954:viii). However, it was not until the past ten years that there has been a substantial increase in the number of houses built. The houses are larger and are almost all painted with blue Jir (chalk-like material). This section includes the new secondary school, the burial grounds, the coffee shops, the railroad, the boys' intermediate school, the health compound, the sugar cane marketing office, the village center, one Mosque, the agricultural cooperative, the village bank, and the youth club. One notices that in this section of the village most of the post-1952 government buildings are located.

The village is further divided into quarters for physical reference. However, the quarters are more differentiated in the older section of the village than in the newer one. The latter section of the village is referred to as Al-Naja Al-Gharbi Ind Al-Siki (the Western Quarter Near the Railroad). In the older village, the northeastern part is referred to as Al-Naja Al-Shargi (the Eastern Quarter). The section lying 2/3 kilometers south of this quarter is referred to as Naja Al-Khoar (the Flood-Valley Quarter); 3/4 kilometers south we find Naja Al-Waznab, a quarter named after one of the clans in Silwa. Finally the southernmost quarter in this section of the village is referred to as Naja Al-Qotat (the cats' quarter), presumably due to a traditional notion when cats roaming in
the streets of this quarter were notorious. With no names for streets or numbers for houses, the naming of quarters in this manner seems to be an adequate substitute for locating people's residence.

Village Housing in Transition

Today there are many fine buildings in Silwa. If one enters the village from the south, the first house that meets you to the east side is a sandstone house painted with blue chalk. On one of the exterior walls of the house you will find written in English the words welcome as such "Well-come."¹ From that point on many of the houses you see on both sides of the road are painted blue and have some kind of decoration on the exterior. House painting in the past was primarily done for people who went on pilgrimage. Today it is a status symbol for those who can afford the expenses. There are also four houses in Silwa today that are built with red brick stone. The owners of these houses have all worked as teachers in the rich Gulf oil countries of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for several years. The government buildings are also built with red brick, in line with official construction requirements.

The houses in Silwa are not uniform; some are painted with blue chalk; others have been left to their natural brownstone color. Some houses have wooden doors, while others have metal ones. By and large, houses built in the west to the road section are newer houses than those to
the east side. Generally they are larger and are painted with blue and white chalk.

The difference between the old and new houses is not one of discontinuity, but rather represents a change in size, building material, room functions, implements, and decoration. Most houses in Silwa have a Mandara (a guest house) at their entrance. The Mandara of the old houses has a roof constructed by palm tree trunks, branches, and straw, whereas that of newer houses is made from stone or metal sheets. In older houses, the Mandara is furnished with wooden benches called Dikkak made by the village carpenter. In the newer houses, the Mandara is furnished with wooden seats which look more like narrow beds with cushions placed on the walls as back rests.

Figure 2.2 The Old Dikka and the New Seats
As one enters the main compound of the house, one encounters an open courtyard surrounded by roofed rooms with doors called Hassils. In older houses part of the courtyard is furnished with Dikkak or straw beds and is designated as the Istishraf (the inner welcoming room). In the newer houses the Istishraf is covered with a roof, but has no door and is furnished with the cushioned bed-like seats. The courtyard is used for washing clothes and dishes or putting bread dough to rise in the sun. The older houses have smaller courtyards, since dishes and clothes were not washed daily in the house, but were often washed near the canal or at the Nile bank. Today, with the water tap at one end of the courtyard, the space has become the place where most housework is done. The rest of the Hassils (rooms) are used for sleeping, cooking, baking, animal corners, human waste corners, and in the houses with newly wed daughters as the uxorilocal residence.

In the old houses the rooms are small with low straw roofed ceilings, sandy floors, with a step down from the threshold to enter them. In the new houses the rooms are large with high ceilings and cemented floors and with a step up to enter them. These steps were often placed in front of the sleeping Hassils in order to make it difficult for insects from crawling into the rooms from the courtyard.

The rooms for sleeping in the case of well-to-do families are furnished with beds, a table, a chair, a closet, a mirror, and an electric fan. The rooms have at
least one window which is fenced to stop birds or cats from entering. This window is covered with a piece of carton or cloth in winter. In the older houses the beds are made of Jarid (palm tree branches). The bed in many ways reminds one of Tutankhamon’s bed displayed at the Egyptian National Museum. The closets look basically like book shelves and are covered with a piece of cloth from the front.

In the new houses the beds are made of wood and have edges for head and foot rests. The number of the rooms and beds varies according to the size of the household. There are no designated beds or bedrooms, except for the newly married couples in the household. These couples are the only ones where the door is knocked at before entering the room, particularly when the man is in the house. On the whole, room privacy is seldom recognized and rarely observed.

The cooking Hassil in the house is designated as Matbakh, literally corresponding to the word kitchen. However, the translation may mislead the reader, since the contents of a Silwian kitchen have their cultural specificities. In most of the new houses the kitchen has a refrigerator for storing perishable food, a gas stove for cooking, and a Namliah (a metal closet) for storing nonperishable food, plates, and pans. The kitchen has no water source and no sink. In the older houses the gas stove is a Wabur (gas eye cylinder), the metal closet is a
Figure 3.3 The Old Silwian Bed

Saumma (clay cylindrical structure), and food is refrigerated by the Shalit (a hanger made of palm tree leaves that looks like the plant hangers and is suspended from the roof for the air to circulate around it as well as to protect the food from crawling insects).

The oven room is often located towards the end of the courtyard and contains only the Tabuneh (locally made clay furnace where the bread is baked). This room is also used for slaughtering animals and birds and for storing household utensils. The Tabuneh has two openings, one in front and one at the back. The front opening is where the bread is placed to bake, while the back one is where the fuel is
stacked and burnt. The fuel consists of any combustible mix including house garbage, paper, dried animal dung, tree branches, and straw.

Baking continues to be an essential activity of women in Silwa as there is no public bakery in the village. In a household averaging seven to nine people, bread is baked four times a week. The baked bread comes in seven varieties, five of which are baked from wheat flour and the other two from corn. The wheat flour bread includes Dukah, Fatir, Sharik, Maltot (Shamsy), and Manin crackers. While the corn flour bread includes Khamarid and Aside.

Prior to 1963, corn bread was for every day consumption and wheat bread was served on special occasions. Today wheat bread has become for daily consumption, specifically the Maltot. The reasons and significance of this change will be discussed in the later chapters on livelihood and socialization.

With fresh energy in the early mornings, women usually bake bread in order to get it ready for the daily meals. Today, and unlike 35 years ago when the corn or wheat were ground at home on the Rahai (round shaped grinder made out of clay with granite stones), the flour is bought from the shops. The yeast is often made at home from corn or borrowed from a neighbor who has made extra yeast. The mixing of the bread dough is done by hand. In the case of the Maltot bread the dough is put on Agras (round clay plates) for 20 minutes to rise in the sun and then to be
moved by the woman to the oven room. There the Tabuneh is fired and dust is cleaned from its front opening with water. The 20 to 30 loaves of bread are then baked by the woman, through a process that takes two to three hours and requires skill and patience.

The animal corner in both old and new houses faces you as you enter the courtyard. Inside it is divided into two areas: an open area where sheep, goats, cows, and donkeys are kept, and a closed area where the chicken and ducks are kept. This corner is closed by a wooden door so that the animals or birds do not roam freely in the house. The birds in both the new and old houses are in a space built out of
the wall like a small closet. They are let out in the mornings to roam around and at night they are counted and returned to their space by the women and/or children in the household.

The waste corners are not found in all the houses in Silwa. Any generalization assuming that pitlatrines are only introduced in new houses is not necessarily a valid one. The first pitlatrine, for example, was built in 1952 by my grandfather in honor of his son coming back from "civilization" in London with a Ph.D., while a house I saw being built in the new village section does not have a waste corner. The pitlatrines in Silwa today are basically holes dug in the ground that are emptied every seven months. Houses that do not have specific waste corners use the animal corner for urination and defecation which in due course of fermentation become compounds of animal manure used as fertilizer.

The bride section of the house is often at a distance from the other rooms. It contains a sleeping area, an eating space, and a separate Istishraf. However, the brides do the house chores in their mother's space.

The Mosques are still the most clean and elegant structures in Silwa. In 1951, Silwa had two Mosques; today these have been abandoned and seven new Mosques have replaced them. The significance of the increase in the number of Mosques will be discussed in a later chapter. However, it is worth noting here that five of the Mosques
were built from private money and two from public funds provided by the "Ministry of Endowments--Religious Affairs" Al-Awqaf. The new Mosques are all decorated with oil paint. They have inside mats, light bulbs, pitlatrines, and water taps.

The Fields

After crossing the village (still going from east to west) one is in the fields. Two kilometers into the fields we see one of the main two Teraas (canals) of Silwa. This is a 5 kilometer long Teraa which runs east-west and serves to irrigate 320 feddans of land. This very Teraa was also used prior to the introduction of running water to the village in 1979 for Murradih (water fetching). Further south the second major Teraa in Silwa is located, Al-Teraa Al-Omomia (the public canal) of Silwa. This canal runs south-north and irrigates approximately 814 feddans. Continuing west from there we find the last two canals, at 5 kilometers distance from each other. The first canal is called the Teraat Silwa Al-Gadimi (the old canal of Silwa). It runs 2 kilometers from north to south and irrigates 104 feddans. Across it there are three bridges, namely Al-Diri, Al-Shabka, and Massaid, lying at a distance of 1/2 kilometer from each other. The second canal is approximately 2 kilometers long, has no name, and irrigates approximately 186 feddans, and is crossed by two bridges: Al-Montagah and Zamala. These canals were dug some centuries ago and derive
their water from the river Nile source. Their use, however, changed in 1934 when perennial irrigation was introduced to Silwa.

The only feudal owner in Silwa at the time requested the government to build an electric water plant station to help pump water from the canals. This pump station lies at the end of the fields and continues to be the backbone of irrigation. It is a two story building with many black cylindrical antiquated structures. It was built, or at least equipped, by the Germans, since all the instructions are in German. The life span of this pump was supposed to end in 1980 and a new station was built on the northern end of the fields in 1978. It is ironical, however, that the 55-year-old station is still functioning, while the new one is left to depreciate. Surrounding the old water pump station there are four houses which were used in the past for the residence of the station’s operators. These houses today are abandoned, since the operators possessing the necessary technical training are from Silwa itself.

The vital importance of the network of irrigation infrastructure for agriculture in the village has always been the concern of both government and villagers. Its maintenance and improvement has been since time immemorial the cornerstone in the life of rural communities and that of the country as a whole.

There is an obvious sensate transition as one leaves the village to enter the fields. One leaves behind an arid,
brown, sandy setting to enter a green, fresh-smelling surrounding. Three major roads in Silwa will take you from the hills to the fields with no interruptions. Each one of these streets has a name which relates to some landmark in the village. The first street (the most northern one) is called Shari Al-Nuqta (Police Station street), where the police station is located. The second street is called Shari El-Murradih (water fetching street), as it leads you directly to the water fetching canal. The third and most southern road is called Shari El-Khur (flood valley), starting from the quarter to which people resorted when the Nile floods were too high.

The Silwians' relationship with the fields has considerably changed. Prior to 1962, when the Silwian men were engaged in subsistence agriculture they went every day from sunrise to sunset to the fields to tend their land plots. Today, sugar cane requires much less time for cultivation and peasants' visits to their fields are irregular. At best, they go every other day to check on their land and only once a fortnight to water their crop in a less arduous manner.

Administrative Setting

Prior to February 22, 1962, Silwa's administrative and political municipal affairs were handled in the Edfu municipality (30 kilometers north of Silwa), while the legal affairs were taken care of in the Komombo municipality.
(28 kilometers south of Silwa). Upon the community’s request, Komombo, a sugar cane industrial town, became the municipal center responsible for the village’s administrative, financial, and legal affairs. Edfu was a municipality resented by the Silwians as it frequently sided with their rival tribal group, the Ababda, during public elections.

Up until 1952 Silwa El-Balad was the administrative center mainly because of its police station. Today Silwa’s administrative functions include many other services, namely (1) agricultural services such as agricultural loans, pesticide provision, extension work, irrigation and crop rotation control provided by the agricultural cooperative and the village bank; (2) insurance benefits and retirement payments administered in Silwa’s village center; (3) subsidized food provisions, taken care of by the food subsidy office; (4) promotion of income generation projects through the village council; (5) first aid unit and health care by the health compound; and (6) sugar cane marketing administered by a special office.

Demographic and Ecological Setting

Population Composition and Change

The latest population census was carried out during 1986, yet the processing of the detailed data and its publication will not be expected before 1990. Recent
demographic data on Silwa, therefore, is not available, hence the resort to a relatively older data from the previous census. In spite of this deficiency, one is compelled to use older statistics for ascertaining trends and general indicators, particularly for comparisons with conditions stated in the study of H. Ammar.

The last official population census (1976) indicates that Silwa has a population of 15020, i.e., a little more than threefold increase from 1947 or during 30 years (the population census year used by H. Ammar indicated that Silwa had a population of 4457). This increase in Silwa’s population compares with an overall national increase from 19 to 40 million, i.e., approximately doubling the population for the same period (CAPMAS 1986:9).

This difference can be attributed during this period to the decrease in infant mortality rate in Silwa due to the improved health conditions and services in the village. This explanation, since specific data for infant mortality rate have never been worked out for Silwa, is based on a subjective assumption substantiated by the relatively improved conditions in the village. For 1988 the population of Silwa calculated on an estimated 2.8% annual rate of growth since the 1976 census could reach over 20000. It is evident that Silwa El-Balad represents a large size community which is not an uncommon size in the rural settlements in Egypt.
Silwa had a population density of 883.5 persons per square kilometer in 1976. Today, and similar to its situation in 1951, Silwa’s population density is less than the national average of 1033.5 (CAPMAS 1986:11) and much less than the population density in the Lower Egyptian villages of the Delta.

The sex distribution in Silwa according to the 1976 census reveals an almost equal ratio of males to females, 103.5 males per 100 females (a similar distribution to 1951 Silwa) and which is almost identical to the national average. Change in age composition in Silwa can be ascertained from the data in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 reveals interesting trends in the Silwian demographic situation, based on 1947 as the percentile index year. The population percentage of ages under 19 has increased in the past 20 years by 3.5 points, which is slightly higher little less than the overall Egyptian population growth of 3.2 points since 1947. It also indicates that the percentage of people living beyond the age of 50 has increased by almost 21 points in Silwa, compared with 0.4 point for the whole country. The percentage of age groups between 20-49 in Silwa has decreased by 6.7 points between 1947 and 1976. This could be partly attributed to increased migration of adults to urban centers particularly to Cairo and Alexandria and later to the oil rich Gulf countries, a pattern which is higher
Table 2.1 Comparison of Age Composition in Silwa and Egypt (1947-1976)

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\(^1\)Calculated from CAPMAS (1978: 53-54).
\(^2\)Taken from H. Ammar (1954: viii).
\(^3\)Calculated from CAPMAS (1986: 18).
\(^4\)Taken from H. Ammar (1954: viii).
than the overall Egyptian decrease of 3.5 points between 1947 and 1976.

The Nile Ecology and Climate

The village settlement lies at the eastern bank of the Nile at a distance of nearly 3 kilometers. Silwa as the rest of the Aswan Governorate suffers from the narrowing of the fertile Nile Valley where it reaches its least stretches of the cultivable land. The western plateau runs close to the west bank of the Nile River and leaves no valley for farming.

It is reported that ineffective drainage, use of chemical fertilizers instead of traditional animal and clay manure, and the prescribed cultivation of sugar cane have contributed to the deterioration of land fertility. Furthermore, with the introduction of perennial irrigation since 1936, fertilizing Tami (silt) provided by the Nile flooding during summer has deprived land from its main source of revitalization. The construction of the High Dam and its reservoir has brought an end to any silt that the Nile water was depositing on the cultivated land.

The climate of Silwa is typical of the desert topography that extends all through the Upper Egyptian Governorates from Assuit to Aswan. This essentially is a dry climate with very little rainfall. In the summer months extending from May to October, it is very hot and dry. In June, the morning temperatures average 42 degrees
centigrade in the sun and the evening temperatures about 28 degrees centigrade. During winter, which extends from December until February, the morning temperatures in January average 25 degrees centigrade in the sun, while the evening temperatures reach 10 degrees centigrade.

The Rhythm of Life

A Passed Life Rhythm

Ammar in 1954 writes:

The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers; youths and men mounted on their donkeys or camels call each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems almost deserted, except for women going on visits or on business and young children noisily engaged in their games. By sunset the roads leading to the village become busy and crowded with (men) villagers and cattle returning home, who in their hurried endeavour to their evening meal raise the dense cloud of dust that characterizes the agricultural roads and the streets during this hour. Some time later, the village witnesses the general exodus of women and girls from the village towards the Nile to fill their water jars, while men sprawl outside the houses or cluster around a wood fire in the guest house on cold nights to exchange news, smoke their tobacco and engage in gossip. (1954:ix-x)

Today, it is estimated that the men who go to the fields every day constitute less than 20% of the working force in Silwa. For the rest of the Silwians (men and women) the rhythm of life is more varied and is different. The variation is related to the different occupations they have taken up, the crops they are growing, the modern
amenities brought about by government initiative to modernize, as well as the in-school and out of school cycle.

With an increasing number of shopkeepers, government employees working in the village or nearby villages and towns, teachers, craftsmen, students, contractors, street vendors, coffee shop owners, and car mechanics the rhythm of life has become diversified as a result of their respective walks.

Women no longer go to the Nile to fetch water, since there are water taps inside the homes today. During the summer when sometimes the water is cut from the taps, women and girls go out to the Nile or canal to fill the jars.

With the introduction of electricity since 1982 nightfall does not represent an end to activities inside the home or an excuse for not fulfilling reciprocal visitations. The spread of radio and television sets provides a source of entertainment extending beyond midnight. In common conversation, laziness at work due to insufficient sleep is attributed to late night stay with programs of the mass media.

Villagers have become more mobile not only to nearby villages, but also to the different towns in the Governorate. With few taxi owners and drivers from the village, travel and commuting are no more tied down with the train schedule.
A Rhythm of Life for Education

The demand for education and the establishment of primary education, intermediate and secondary schools in the village have played a considerable role in influencing the traditional rhythm of life. It is worth elaborating on the pattern of daily activities as conditioned by in-school and out of school cycles.

The in-school cycle starts in September and ends in June. During this time, generally men, women, and children wake up at sunrise to prepare for going to school. At 8:00 a.m. Silwa witnesses uniformed children and teachers (both men and women) walking towards their schools. At the same time men and women (only three women are employed by non-educational government institutions) walk towards their respective place of employment. Soon the streets are empty and the only voices heard are those of students singing the National Anthem and saluting the Egyptian flag. Within an hour, when the children are settled in their classes the village looks deserted. Back in the homes the women are busy doing their household chores and cooking.

Around 2 o'clock in the afternoon the school goers and the government employees start heading home. At home, the noon meal is served as the main course meal (unlike during the time H. Ammar was writing when the main meal was served at night). The people who come back home before 1:00 p.m. (the intermediate school children and teachers) eat their meal as they watch the Tamthilia (soap opera) on television.
Married women living away from their mothers who are government employees arrange their schedules in a way that enable them to return home early to cook the dinner meal. Generally, this group of women attend to their house chores after the main meal is served.

The afternoons of the in-school cycle are spent studying (by students), preparing for classes (by teachers), preparing a light evening meal (by the women and the young girls), visiting (by men, women, and children), and checking the fields (by men and young boys). At 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. the family gathers around the television to eat supper and feel free.

During the in-school cycle, especially at the beginning of winter, men and boys are busy from morning till evening harvesting sugar cane. The government employees take time off lasting for about eight days from their jobs (often report sick) and many boys absent themselves from school. The out-of-school cycle corresponds entirely with the hot season in Silwa. At this time of the year the days are long and the nights are short. Women are up with the crack of dawn to finish their house chores before the forbidding morning heat. Men who are on a summer break from school go to check their plots or water them. Some children go in the early mornings to the Kuttab (Koranic school) to memorize parts of the Holy Koran. Afterwards boys go to play either by the Nile bank or on the hills, while girls go back home to help their mothers with the house work.
After the noon meal is served, everybody rests and most people enjoy their afternoon nap. The village wakes up again at 6 p.m. to start the summer Samar (leisure time entertainment). Women and young girls fulfill their visiting obligations. Men after fulfilling their social obligations of visiting, sit outside the houses or in the coffee shops playing Sija (a cardboard game), trick-track, exchanging news, and gossip. The boys play ball games on the streets or at the youth club.

Concluding Remarks

In concluding this chapter, it must be pointed out that the government's greater intervention in the local village affairs has changed the intra- and in-group village landscape. The Silwians do not question the obvious manifestations of physical alterations. Rather, there is an atmosphere of contentment about the "modernized" setting of Silwa. Yet, among the Silwians, there is a feeling of ambivalence about the socio-economic consequences that have accompanied the impressive outward physical changes. Their views of the past and present are apprehensive towards their future. While the Silwians realize that they have thus far managed to maintain a balance between the outside encroaching forces and the demands of their social and cultural village needs, they are aware of the increasing difficulties of continuing this endeavor. The following chapters attempt to present the emerging modifications
balancing the life reality of the Silwians as reflected in their pursuit of economic activities, social relations, symbolic expressions, and the process of socialization.

Notes

1. The word "well-come" is painted on the walls of a house that lies on the main street, which is an indication of new awareness to the importance of foreign tourism to the Aswan Governorate.

2. A feddan is slightly more than an acre.

3. The eight days of harvest are not the same for everybody in Silwa. Each landowner is called on at a specific time during the months of December-January to harvest his plot and deliver it to Komombo sugar cane factory.
Livelihood in the Forties

Agriculture continues to be the backbone of economy and society in the life of Silwa, in spite of the noticeable decrease in its share within the total context of economic activities. Although it does not dominate entirely the socioeconomic scene that prevailed in 1951 when H. Ammar undertook his study, agricultural folklife looms large within the overall cultural context. This is evidenced in the role of agricultural activities, the cultural valuation of land ownership, and the general fabric of social relationships and social status.

The size of the agricultural land in Silwa has not changed as the physical setting of the village allows no further expansion or reclamation. For generations the cultivated area has been estimated at 3,000 feddans. On the other hand the population has almost quadrupled since 1951, thus decreasing the per capita ownership from 0.6 to 0.15 feddan.

As the village has been a community of small land holders, it was not affected by the promulgation of the 1952 or 1961 Land Reform Laws limiting the maximum ownership per
person to 200 and 100 feddans, respectively. At present the distribution of land ownership is shown in the following table.

Table 3.1 The Distribution of Land Ownership in Silwa

| Amount Owned in Feddans | 5 kirat* -1 | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+
|-------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|------|----
| Number of Registered Owners | 407 | 305 | 58  | 24   | 2  |

*There are 24 kirats in a feddan.

Source: Village Cooperative in Silwa.

It must be noted, however, that ownership in the above table does not indicate in the majority of cases individual ownership. Rather, it refers to family or even to groups of families under one ownership title. According to Islamic Shariah (jurisprudence), land should be distributed among the heirs (sons, daughters, wife, etc.) after the death of the father. In practice, however, the heirs may decide to cultivate the land as a family; in other cases the land is parcelled and each inheritor tends his share. The continuous parceling of land among successive generations has rendered individual ownership smaller and smaller. As a result, it was deemed desirable to keep the title of
ownership as registered with the father's or even grandfather's name and avoid costly registration fees for individuals' titles.

Although the previous table shows that the majority of people own 1 feddan, in reality it is misleading, as the majority would be nearer to 1/2 a feddan.

From 1951 to 1987, the situation of agriculture has witnessed significant changes. In comparing between these two points in time, the analysis resorts to the material included in the study of H. Ammar, to interviews of the old generation in the village, as well as to field work findings. In a nutshell the change in the situation of agriculture has been influenced by various factors of modernization, namely the breaking up of the community isolation, the greater impact of education, the closer integration into the market economy, the government regulations, and the urban demonstration effects. These factors have influenced the crops to be grown, the nature and tasks of agricultural farming, diversification of occupations.

Farming as the Major Occupation

To map out the change in the agricultural situation and the economy in general, it is necessary to summarize the state of affairs at the beginning of the fifties.

Two-thirds of the adult male population in Silwa engaged in subsistence agriculture in 1951, and if young
boys and girls were included to H. Ammar's estimation, the proportion would have been greater. There were two cropping cycles, the Shitwi (winter) crops included, the cultivation of wheat and millet, while the Sifi (summer) crop included the cultivation of barley. Only two or three vegetables were grown each cycle, and fruit growing, with the exception of dates, was almost non-existent. The Coptic calendar, and its specific months, regulated the agricultural activity, climatic anticipation, and even food intake (see Appendix 10).

**Traditional Agricultural Technology**

Irrigation had been perennial in Silwa since 1934. The Sagiah (water wheel), the Shaduf (Tanbour or Oud), were used to raise water to the level of land plots at a higher standing from the water. These high-level plots, referred to as Jurah were few and mostly located at the extreme west of the fields bordering the Nile. The other plots were irrigated by a series of openings from the canal to the land plots.

The other agricultural tools included the Mihrat (the Egyptian plough dragged by cows), the Turiah or Fass (hoe), al-Mighraf (a straw basket), al-Minjal (sickle), al-Sillaa (a large curved metal), and al-Jaraffa (the trunk of a palm tree). The following table describes the function of each of the aforementioned agricultural implements.
Table 3.2 Agricultural Implements Used in 1951 Silwa and Their Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implement</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mihrat</td>
<td>Used for ploughing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turiah or Fass</td>
<td>Used to form basins, till the ground, scrape fertilizers from the hills and dig furrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migraf</td>
<td>Used to carry earth from one place to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sillaa</td>
<td>Used to pick palm tree leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minjal</td>
<td>Used for harvesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaraffa</td>
<td>Used to level the land after harvest or before sowing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Animals such as camels, donkeys, cows, and buffaloes were used in different agricultural activities, i.e., carrying implements, fertilizer, crop harvest, chaff, as well as means of human transport. Their dung was an important organic manure to supplement clay fertilizer. Wheat chaff, clover, corn leaves, and plant stems provided their stable fodder.

Agricultural Labor

The agricultural activity was labor extensive as farming tasks and animal husbandry extended over the whole year, with peak seasons of intensive work. Farming was primarily the domain of males from different age groups.
The local nomenclature of each of these age groups reflected a clear division of labor and the respective responsibilities of each group.

Young men above 15 and adults were called Nabbara or Fallahin. They were entrusted with sowing the seeds, ploughing, and the distribution of manure. Boys above 12, Marraga, were mainly responsible for bringing Marug fertilizer from the eastern hills. The younger boys above 7 were named Hawalas after their duties of watering the land under the supervision of their fathers or older brothers. The 5 to 7 year-olds, the Juhal (a name meaning the ignorant presumably of farming skills), were required to run errands, act as messengers, and deliver the mid-day meal to the farm (Ammar 1945:29-32).

Other Occupations

In 1951 Silwa, only four families did not engage in agriculture. As farming was the respected occupation for the Silwians in their community, the nonagricultural activities were undertaken by these four immigrant families. Their livelihood was derived from exchanging services. The first family, the Fakharaniah (Potters), lived on the northern edge of the old village. They came from Edfu and provided the village with its pots, pans, and water jars. The second family, the Najjarin (Carpenters), lived on the western edge of the village. They originally came from the Qena Governorate in Upper Egypt and provided the
village with its doors, wooden benches, beds, water wheels, chests, and farming implements. The third family, the Nissrania (the Coptic), lived on the southwestern edge of the old village. They provided the villagers with loans and later established a mechanical corn mill. The fourth family, the Jamass (named after a region in the Governorate of Qena), lived in the houses on the western border of the old village. They carried water for the villagers who had no one to fetch water for them or on festive occasions when the demand for water was greater.

Other occupations alongside agriculture included oil pressing, weaving, hair cutting, Koranic teaching by the Kuttab Sheikhs, and shop keeping. There were other occupations in which a very small number of the population was engaged. The 1947 census recorded 47 industrial workers, 47 masons, 36 working in transport, 60 traders, 10 personal servants, and 78 servants in government offices. However, H. Ammar in his field survey cast some doubt on the credibility of these figures which did not correspond to his actual findings in 1951.

Women’s Activities

In 1951 Silwa, the domain of women’s livelihood was in the home. The married women, al-Marra (singular and plural), were responsible for sewing, cleaning the house, fetching water for domestic use, attending poultry, sheep, and goats, churning milk for butter, cooking, baking bread,
building the Tabuneh (the baking oven), spinning wool, making household decorations from cloth or palm tree leaves, raising children, and sometimes assisting in providing fodder for farm animals.

The younger women, al-Fataia (plural of Fattaib, meaning the virgin), between the ages of 12 and 13 until their marriage, were restricted to the home in order to perfect the household chores by helping their mothers.

The girls from the age of 7 until 12, al-Banat (plural of Bitt, meaning the girl) were less restricted to the home and thus carried the corn to the mill and back. They also tended their younger siblings, and their help in farm work could be enlisted on certain occasions.

The youngest girls from age 3 to 7, al-Jahilat (plural of Jahila, meaning the ignorant), primarily tended their younger siblings and ran errands for their mothers, fathers, aunts, and neighbors. They were often asked to accompany their mothers on visits to other families. Here again, as in the case of males, job assignments and responsibilities among the female population were determined by age-group categories as clues to the social maturation of children at different stages.

The following words by my informant reconstruct some of what women did in Silwa prior to 1951. Upon asking Roda about what she did as a child, she said:

"I went to the Kuttab (next door to my house) when I was 6 or 5. . . . Actually, there were only four girls who went to the Kuttab. Upon finishing learning the alphabet or part of the Koran, we
used to make the Kuttab sheikh 'Fatir,' bread, and take him some of the grains we had at home. And then I went only for two years to the Ilzami school (the obligatory system of formal elementary schooling for five years). I was taken out of school when I was 9."

"What else did you do when you were young?" I further inquired. Roda said:

"Oh I used to fill Ourid water jars, three times a day riding on the donkey’s back, carrying my young brother with me on the donkey. . . . We also used to fill water from the Bir (well) near our clan’s guest house. The water from the Bir was salty. We washed everything in it except the men’s Shishan (turban) . . . since salty water made them yellowish. . . . So I fetched water from the Sea (Nile) for washing men’s Shishan and for drinking.

We also used to take the wheat and corn to the mill. We first took the wheat to be sifted and ground, brought it back home, and then took the millet. You see because wheat Bikarrif (takes odor and texture) from corn and so their flour should never be mixed. . . . Otherwise when bread was baked from wheat flour that had come near corn flour it becomes Mahlul (diluted). So in order for the children not to mix both flours together, they sent us first with the corn and then with the wheat. Wheat was precious as we only used it on festive days for baking, while corn was for everyday’s bread.

I also used to Astarsil (go as a messenger) to my aunt’s house . . . to tell her something or get from her eggs or milk. With a Tarifi (1/2 an Egyptian piaster) they used to send me to the shop to buy sugar and tea . . . for 5 millemes (there are 10 millemes in one Egyptian piaster) I bought sugar and tea for the entire house to drink for two days . . . there was not much money those days."

"What did your mother do ya Hajja?" Roda said:

"She prepared food for the night time meal which should have been ready when my father came back from the field. . . . She also used to send me to the fields with a loaf of bread and some eggs wrapped in a handkerchief for my father to eat at mid-day."
"I know you were married at the age of 13, and so what did you do after you got married?" Roda said:

"You know in Silwa the bride lives with her parents at the beginning. . . . So I stayed at home and helped my mother in the house work. . . . I never went out until two years after my marriage. . . . Just as I was pregnant one of my uncles died. . . . so I had to go to his Mahassar (funeral, literally meaning, the tallying space) which was my first occasion for going out of the house. . . . At 16 I had my first child."

**Household Technology**

The household utensils women used in 1951 were primarily made from material found in the environment such as clay and palm tree leaves. The following table presents a list of the utensils used by women in Silwa of 1951 for cooking, baking, washing, storing food, and water fetching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homekeeping Activity</th>
<th>Utensil</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>Malaz (a jar-like container made out of baked clay)</td>
<td>To cook grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dist (a large clay pot)</td>
<td>To cook meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small Tagen (a round clay pot with a handle)</td>
<td>To cook eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large Tagen</td>
<td>To cook fish and rabbit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homekeeping Activity</th>
<th>Utensil</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baking</td>
<td><strong>Burma</strong> (a jar-like pot made of clay with two handles on each side)</td>
<td>To cook <strong>Mulukhia</strong> (the spinach-like Egyptian green leaves)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mifraka</strong> (a wooden stick with 4 edges at one end)</td>
<td>To mash food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Rahai</strong> (two superimposed granite cylinders with a handle on top)</td>
<td>To grind wheat, salt, corn, and <strong>Henna</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Majur</strong> (a deep pot made of clay)</td>
<td>To mix the bread dough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Khashaba</strong> (a long wooden rod)</td>
<td>To mix the bread dough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Nashaba</strong> (a short wooden rounded stick with two thin handles at each end)</td>
<td>To spread and thin the dough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Agras</strong> (round thick clay plates)</td>
<td>To put the unbaked bread dough on while rising in the sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storing Food</td>
<td><strong>Walil</strong> (a large plate made of palm tree leaves)</td>
<td>To cover large trays or plates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sherba</strong> (a clay plate)</td>
<td>To cover smaller plates and pans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Shalit</strong></td>
<td>To preserve food from heat and insects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinning Wool</td>
<td><strong>Mugzal</strong> (spinning loop)</td>
<td>To spin wool with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>A rhomboutic structure</strong></td>
<td>To tie the wool being spinned on its sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homekeeping Activity</td>
<td>Utensil</td>
<td>Function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing</td>
<td><strong>Tisht</strong> (basin)</td>
<td>To wash clothes, dishes, and bathe in it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Hallih</strong> (a deep copper dish)</td>
<td>To boil the water in with local fuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Fetching</td>
<td><strong>Ballalis</strong> (plural for Ballas, a large clay jar with a narrow head at the top). The jars came in different sizes compatible with age and endurance.</td>
<td>To bring water from the Nile river or <strong>Teraa</strong> with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

House work and child rearing were generally (and still are) unrewarded and unrecognized activities by the market economy in Silwa and Egypt. Poultry rearing, however, was the only activity recognized by the 1947 census. At the time in Silwa, 1451 women were reported under the farmers category as tending poultry, since women in the village do not farm in the classic sense of tilling the fields. This activity was recognized in view of the fact that women directly exchanged poultry and eggs on the market for other goods and services.

Although women’s work in 1951 Silwa was generally confined to household activities, there were women who apparently worked outside the home. The 1947 census
reported 84 female industrial workers, 387 female personal servants, and 1 female servant in government. Hajj Ali, H. Ammar's informant, dismissed these figures then by saying "very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints" (1954:21). Upon asking Hajj Ali about the 1947 census figures 35 years later, he said: "These women could have been working outside the village, because their patrilineal family did not support them after the death of their patriarch."

Women's work outside the home in Silwa, however, was unthinkable.

**Exchange and the Market in Silwa**

Exchange in Silwa of 1951 was primarily a return for a service rendered. The return was mainly in kind, i.e., grain, baked bread, tea, and sugar. The harvest seasons (summer and winter) were the time of payment. Exceptions to this type and time of payments were the market day, the Kuttab Sheikh reward, land pawning, conditional sale of land, and animal buying and selling.

The market day, Saturday, was a day in which purchasing was done in exchange for money. The Kuttab Sheikh was also paid directly in kind upon the child's completion of a Koranic section. In land pawning the person passed all rights to the land in exchange for money. Only when the borrowed money was paid back in full would the person claim the rights to the plot again. In conditional sale of the
land, the person sold the plot for money with the option to repurchase it at a certain date. Selling land, however, was very shameful in Silwa of 1951, whereas owning land was a socially desirable asset. Land protected one from starvation and was a measure of belonging to the village (Ammar 1954:22). Only under considerable pressure did one attempt the pawning or conditional sale of land.

My informant told me that in many cases it was customary not to give a receipt to the lender in the case of money borrowing. A word of honor was a sufficient guarantee. Migrant men working in Cairo or Alexandria, normally as gate keepers or waiters, would send their savings to the Kuttab Sheikh for deposit with him till they returned home. Dealing with banks or post office savings was hardly known. Possession of liquid money and its circulation were also quite rare.

To conclude our summary of the situation of agriculture and economy in 1951 Silwa, it is evident that it reflected the conditions of a relatively isolated folk culture. Agricultural activities were predominantly the major occupation of the great majority of the men in the community. Occupational differentiation was unnoticed and uniformity in the life-style was prevalent. Land ownership was the source of material security and farming was the dignified job. Land and farming provided a strong sense of belonging and specified the division of labor between male and female as well as between age groups. Farm yield,
poultry raising, women’s house work provided the basic needs of food, shelter, and partly clothing. The village community was to a considerable degree almost self-sufficient and was marginally integrated into the market economy or into the mainstream of national life.

Today’s Livelihood

From Subsistence to Cash Cropping

Today, land ownership per capita, as indicated earlier, has decreased to less than 1/4 of its size in 1951 due to the continued rate of population growth. Population growth in Silwa, as in the country as a whole, has been caused by the decrease in the infant mortality rate due to the introduction of vaccination. Nevertheless, agriculture remains the most important single source of livelihood in the village.

Today’s agriculture has changed its previous substance of growing wheat, barley, corn, and millet for subsistence or of tending few vegetables for local consumption. Cultivation has been largely confined to sugar cane, a cash crop sold for manufacturing sugar nationally. The sugar cane thrust was part of an official policy enforcing cash crop rotation and designation to the most suitable regions for their production. This policy has since 1961 covered the cultivation of rice in certain Governorates of the Delta (Lower Egypt), cotton in other Governorates of the Delta and
the northern Governorates of Upper Egypt, and sugar cane in Upper Egypt, particularly the most southern Governorates including Aswan Governorate.

The suitability of the Aswan Governorate for specializing in sugar cane stems largely from its stable hot climate throughout the year. In fact, before 1961, when Silwa began its mandatory cultivation of sugar cane, the crop was already grown in the district town of Komombo (25 km south of Silwa) and a sugar cane factory was established. With the application of the law and the expansion of sugar cane cultivation a new factory for the extraction of sugar was established in Edfu (30 km north of Silwa). Additionally, two factories dependent on residual raw materials of sugar cane were established, namely the fiber wood factory in Komombo and the paper factory in Edfu (Hamdan 1984; Ayoub 1966).

Although sugar cane was grown on a very small scale before 1961, it now covers almost 93% of the total cropping in Silwa. The rest of the land is normally cultivated with vegetables, garden fruits, clover for animal fodder, and Karkadeh (red zinger). The agricultural year is almost one cycle and not two as it was in pre-1961. Farming activities are now governed by the Gregorian Calendar where villagers refer to its months in their numerical connotation, i.e., January, Shahr Wahid (month one); June, Shahr Sittih (month six) (see Appendix 10).
Sugar Cane Growing Activities

At present every farmer who owns or tills more than 5 kirats (a feddan equals 24 kirats) is required to grow sugar cane. The crop is cultivated on a four-year rotation basis. During this rotation the land is ploughed twice each year, once after the harvest and once before seeding/planting. The ploughing of the land is done by the Mihrat (the Egyptian plough dragged by two cows). The dwarf land holding system does not permit the entry of a mechanical plough. The first ploughing requires two weeks of exposing the ground to the sun. This is done in December/January. After the second ploughing, in January/February, sugar cane stems bought on credit from the village bank at 4 L.E. per bag are planted. The land is then leveled by the Jaraffa or Fass and divided into rows in preparation for irrigation. Every 15 days the land is irrigated once. During the time the ground is leveled, the first load of fertilizer is distributed. The load of fertilizer is also brought from the village bank on credit. Upon stemming out of the ground (it takes 30 days), the crop is sprayed by pesticides brought from the same bank. The second lot of fertilizers is distributed after the completion of spraying with pesticide. Subsequent use of fertilizers is put according to the need and condition of the crop. After 6 or 7 months of the plants’ growth, the field is sprayed again by pesticide.
Early December/January the fields are harvested. The canes are first burned to get rid of the straw surrounding the stem and to ensure that no one steals the cane for eating. Then the cane is harvested by breaking it from the ground level. The Silwians refer to the harvest as Kasr, a word that translates as breaking. The broken cane is piled up on one side of the plot and collected by camels to the railway station (east of the fields). Once the cane is broken the remnants of the cane are burned, the land is ploughed, and the process of cultivation starts anew. When the four-year cycle is over, the land is given a year’s rest during which the cultivator can plant any other crop.

The village bank provides the fertilizer in 50 kilo Jiwal (sacs) on a loan basis. This loan is part of the three credit system provided by the bank. This system includes the agricultural credit (cash loans for crop improvement and fertilizers), the investment credit (loans for animal purchase and agricultural machinery), and the household assistance (loans to buy bicycles, water pumps, sewing machines, and poultry). The fertilizer loan is determined by the bank on the basis of size of land owned, the quantity and quality of the previous year’s crop. Common fertilizer distributed during the past ten years in Silwa include azotic, phosphate, and potassium chemicals.

The bank’s conditions for granting the loans are membership in the village cooperative and being over 18 years of age.
The implements of agriculture in Silwa are still the same ones used in 1951. The exceptions are the Sagia and Tanbur (the water wheel) which have been replaced by the water pumping machine Makinat al-Miah for raising the water to the higher level land plots. As to irrigation in general, the exact system of openings from the canal to the land plots is still used. But the openings today are made out of metal provided by the bank instead of clay which used to be made by the potters.

Agricultural Labor

The cultivation of sugar cane is not an extensive activity involving much labor time. According to Hajj Ali the time required for a family of two boys and a father to work one feddan of sugar cane amounts to around 40 days. According to his estimation, labor time is distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sowing and soil preparation:</td>
<td>1 day (12 hours twice a year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting fertilizers:</td>
<td>8 hours (4 hours a year for actual collection and 4 hours to fill forms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation:</td>
<td>26 days (once every other week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of fertilizer and pesticide:</td>
<td>4 days (2 days twice a year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting:</td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of harvest:</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>39.3 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This agricultural activity according to the Silwians is not a full-time occupation. The ideal type of a full-time
farmer, in the conception of the old folks as derived from their past experience, is someone who goes to the fields at dawn and comes back home at sunset. The Muzare (the full-time farmer) owns a cow or a camel, and his only occupation is to tend the land. In constrast, the old folks sarcastically comment that a sugar cane grower is a part-time farmer who in the morning goes to another job or sleeps late.

However, some people, particularly those who are able to combine growing sugar cane with another occupation, consider the crop as a rewarding activity. The marketing and the cash returns from sugar cane are guaranteed by the government which is the sole buyer of the crop.

A family of two boys and a father tilling 1 feddan collects more than 1300 L.E. profit from selling their sugar cane annually. The following calculation reveals a detailed illustration of Hajj Ali's estimations:

Costs of Cultivating Sugar Cane

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land tilling:</td>
<td>tools cost between 6-26 L.E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar cane stems:</td>
<td>18 L.E. (3 bags needed, each costs 6 L.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizers:</td>
<td>50 L.E. (2 bags of 50 kilograms needed, each costs 25 L.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesticides:</td>
<td>50 L.E. (3 sprayings a year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water taxes:</td>
<td>60 L.E. (annually)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collecting cane:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 camels for 1 day:</td>
<td>24 L.E. (8 L.E. each camel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 riders for 1 day:</td>
<td>72 L.E. (4 L.E. an hour for each laborer, each works 8 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding riders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and tea:</td>
<td>3 L.E.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 303 L.E.
Returns from Sugar Cane

Each feddan on a regular year yields 49 tons of sugar cane. Up to 1986 each ton was sold for 29 L.E., in 1987 the price increased to 33 L.E. The price of the cane does not fluctuate according to the free market since it is fixed by the government. In 1987 the total returns of a feddan amounted to $49 \times 33 = 1617$ L.E.

Cash Profits

The cash profit of a feddan of sugar cane is estimated accordingly to be 1314 L.E.

Other Occupations

Due to the various factors mentioned earlier Silwians have been able to engage in different types of work and occupations in addition to farming. However, those who are in civil service posts in the village itself continue to work on the land or at least supervise its farming. Government jobs are the most coveted for their regular steady income.

The occupations that several Silwian men take up today alongside "sugar cane farming" include government jobs--such as teachers, cooperative administrators, village bank employees, first aid assistants, village council employees, Mosque attendants, cleaning or guarding staff in government buildings, policemen, electric water pump attendants, telephone operators, post office attendants, trade and services occupations (shop keepers, upholsterers, taxi drivers, newspaper salesmen, coffee shop attendants, and butchers).
In addition to these skilled and semi-skilled jobs, there are at present more than 30 university graduates working as engineers, geologists, medical doctors, accountants, secondary school teachers, and four with Ph.D.s teaching at universities. This is an entirely different picture from 1951, where my father was the only university graduate.

It is unfortunate again to rely on the 1976 census short of any more recent data. However, the occupational distribution of that year’s census would give an indication of the trend for the diversification of occupations at the time.

Table 3.4 Distribution of Occupation in Silwa According to the 1976 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers/Fishers/Animal Husbandry</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Workers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masons</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Sector</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled/Educational Sector</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners (stone quarries)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>2751</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2411</td>
<td>2774</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The census provides some perplexing data. It reveals that the majority of the economically active males in Silwa are not engaged in agriculture any longer. In fact, compared with the 1947 census, there is a decrease of 43% in those who farm. Moreover, the census figures illustrate that the majority of Silwians are unemployed, i.e., 64.6%.

Upon questioning Hajj Ali, the base line informant, about the numbers in the 1976 census he said:

"You have to look at what is involved in the agricultural activity today . . . and the rewards it brings. . . . This would explain to you why Silwians do not report themselves as Muzarin (farmers) to the census collector."

In relation to the unemployment figures of the 1976 census the offered explanations were numerous. Some were related to the nature of the specific definitions of having a job, others referred to the nature of data collection.

Hajj Ali noted that in Silwa some people who are not employed by the government consider themselves "unemployed."

He said:

"Employment means you have a secure job to which you go every day . . . those others, who sell items, do not consider themselves employed."

Another informant said:

"People who only grow sugar cane consider themselves unemployed. . . . The cash returns from the cane (al-Gasab) are not sufficient to make them live well. . . . They see themselves as unemployed because they do not make enough to live by."

One of the 1987 census takers from Silwa answered my queerying of the unemployment figure by saying:
"The unemployment figures for this year’s census will be more precise . . . the people who took the census this year are more educated than those who did in 1976."

Apart from the explanations of my informants, the data of the 1976 census show a significant change in the occupational pattern. Workers in agriculture, however, underestimated by the 1976 census came no near to the 65% for the 1947 census. The steady increase of adults in the labor force engaged in economic activities other than agriculture is reported by all villagers interviewed. The data of the 1986-1987 census will certainly be useful in explicating further the expanding trend of those employed in sectors other than agriculture.

With regard to the category of unemployed men, the informants’ explanation commands certain credibility. One could also venture by thinking that some of those who classified themselves as unemployed considered that such a statement could help them find a government job. The unexplainable figure of 2751 unemployed women remains perplexing. It can only be explained by the difference in concept and definition of employment as held by the census takers and the villagers. No married male villager would consider his wife as unemployed. After all she is Um El-Iyal (the mother of the children), and that is a necessary and sufficient employment. On the other hand, no married woman would regard herself as unemployed. The census misrepresentation of this category lies in limiting employment to wage or salary earners, a definition that does
not correspond to the cultural meaning and scope of rural work.

Women's Work

The 1947 census reported 1451 adult women engaged in agricultural activities, representing 32.5% of the total agricultural labor force. However, since the spread of sugar cane cultivation, women's engagement in this activity has diminished considerably. Raising sheep, goats, and poultry has not become a viable undertaking for women. Similar to men's lack of interest in keeping donkeys and camels, nowadays, women find it easier and not necessarily more expensive to buy poultry from the market. In the fifties, the period during which the Silwians were engaged in subsistence agriculture, grains and chaff from wheat, barley, and corn provided the stable feed for animal husbandry and poultry raising. Today bird and animal feed are not readily available to women at home. They need to buy it from the weekly market at a price that renders the purchase of a fully grown animal or bird cheaper than raising it at home. One of my informants and I worked out the following costs of raising 20 pairs of pigeons in Silwa today. These costs were accepted by many of the women who reviewed them later.

It usually takes 3 months for pigeons to become fat enough for eating.
Buying the small pigeons from the market = 100 L.E.
Buying feed (chaff) from the market for 3 months (1 10 kilo bag) each for 7-8 L.E. = 8 L.E.
Buying grain feed (Ghala) from the market for 3 months (1 10 kilo bat) at 20 L.E. = 60 L.E.

Total monetary cost 168 L.E.

In comparison, buying 20 pairs of pigeons from the market ready to be slaughtered costs 250 L.E. (2.5 for each pair). The difference of 82 L.E. between buying and raising the birds is not a worthy incentive for women to engage in this activity at home. Women’s preference to buy birds from the market is being justified on the basis of the labor time and effort entailed in caring for the pigeons at home as well as the lack of guarantees that the 20 pairs of pigeons will survive without loss until they are slaughtered or sold.

Poultry raising is not the only work that Silwian women do not perform as before. They do not anymore go to the mill to grind the grain from the harvest or grind it at home with the traditional Rahai. Today wheat flour is available from the Tamwin (subsidy shop) in 15 kilo sacks for 25 L.E. each. In Silwa women have also stopped spinning wool, since sheep are no longer raised in numbers at home. It has become less economic to spin and knit wool than to buy ready-made clothes from nearby towns. Spinning enough wool at home to make the traditional Tawadeh (a brown blanket-like cover that women wear in winter) costs the Silwian woman more time, energy, and money than going to Komombo, in
a taxi for 25 piasters, to buy a cover for a maximum of 45 L.E.

Water fetching is another household chore that women do not perform anymore. The introduction of the water tap to the home since 1982 has made water at their immediate disposal for drinking, cooking, and washing.

Nevertheless, household chores including baking, cooking, cleaning the home, child tending, breast feeding, washing clothes and dishes continue to be the domain of women. However, the appliances and utensils used to perform these chores have changed. Baked clay has disappeared from the Silwian kitchenware. Women today buy aluminum pots and pans for cooking. The spoon and the knife have become essential cooking items. The food is also served in plastic plates Millamin. The gas stove has been introduced for cooking. It is not uncommon for the Silwian kitchen today to contain an electric mixer, an osterizer, and an electric bean cooker Fawala in which the Egyptian fava beans are left cooking for the entire night. In many houses washing clothes is done today with a semi-automatic washing machine.

The participation of women in the labor force outside the home has been the most striking change in the domain of women’s work. In comparison to the few women who worked outside the home in 1951 Silwa, their counterparts today are educated and are backed up by their patriarchs.

In 1972, Silwa saw her first woman teacher. At the age of 20 Zeinab received her teacher’s certificate from Aswan
and took a job in the Al-Shahid primary school in Silwa. During Zeinab’s years of schooling people used to go to her father exclaiming "you spend money on this girl, then you give her to a man and you get nothing in return . . . how can you do this?" Zeinab’s father (my uncle) was himself an educated man. He was the first primary school principal to come from Silwa. He believed that education was a weapon against all insecurities in life. Zeinab and two other women from Silwa entered the Aswan teachers’ college in 1968. One of the women died in 1971 from a rheumatic heart and the other was employed the year after Zeinab. The three women, says Zeinab, were regarded with suspicious eyes by the community in general. When they used to return to the village during school breaks, people approached them with questions about where they sleep, what they eat, and who they talk to. She said, "I always had to be on my best behavior or else I would have been shamed at home."

While at school in Aswan, Zeinab and the other two women were always told in Silwa that they would never find a husband. Young men did not want a woman who knew how to read and write; they wanted someone who could cook and bake. Zeinab was married to her cousin, an engineer, a month after her graduation. Three months after the marriage they went to work in Libya for seven years. The other woman, Atiyat, never married. After working for a few years as a primary school teacher, she went back to Aswan to do a university degree in science education. Atiyat will graduate with two
other women from the university in 1988. This makes her among the first three women pioneers possessing university degrees in Silwa.

Today, in 1987/88, there are 808 girls going to schools in Silwa itself. Moreover, there are 75 women in Aswan at either the teachers college or pursuing technical education in commerce or home economics, in addition to 12 women at Komombo’s teacher’s training college. There are also 84 women between the ages of 20-35 who work outside the home as teachers or civil servants, and almost half of them (49%) are married.

Women have also moved into wage earners outside the home in jobs other than education. These include 1 woman working in the village local council with 233 male employees and a nurse at the health compound. In business, one finds 3 tailors and 1 woman who raises birds (about 1000 ducks and 1000 pigeons) for selling.

The most important factor contributing to the spread of female education in Silwa has been the availability of schools at different cycles in the village itself. On the demand side, the expansion of education itself together with other government services have provided employment opportunities for the educated female. Parents welcomed these opportunities as long as their daughters would be employed in the village or in a neighboring one. They also indicated, as expressed in my interviews, that their
daughters' employment provide extra cash for their family. Income from farming, they added, in an almost apologetic expression, was not sufficient in the face of the rising cost of living, and hence they were compelled to allow their daughters to work outside the home.

However, it must be noted that none of the girls in Silwa has been employed outside the village or in the neighboring towns of Komombo and Aswan. The girls who go to Aswan for further education are mostly those who intend to receive teacher training. I have not been informed of any girl who went to Assiut or Cairo University for example to study engineering or medicine. However, one expects such a day to come soon. The same observation holds for employment, where until now female graduates have managed to find employment opportunities in the village or in the nearby satellite villages.

It is appropriate here to underline that both men and women have rights to land ownership in Silwa according to the injunctions of the Islamic Jurisprudence of inheritance. Following the Islamic laws of patrilineal inheritance women inherit, own, and pass on land rights to their children. A woman as a daughter inherits 1/2 of her brother’s share, as a wife 1/8th of her husband’s wealth after his death, and as a mother 1/6th of her son’s wealth if she survives him. In Silwa women often delegate the working of the land to their male relatives, and earn 50% of its yield in return.
Specialized Occupation

This treatment deals with two main categories of non-agricultural specialized occupations, namely, those which are practiced by some villagers as well as by immigrant families. The two categories of occupations were not and are still not socially esteemed in the community as they pertain to manual labor unrelated to land farming. The first category includes the barber, the midwife, the weaver, the fisherman, and the newspaper salesman who stands as a new addition to the traditional specialized occupations.

Some of the specialized occupations performed by families in 1951 Silwa still exist within the same familial status. Hair cutting is performed by the same family. The father (who is also a government employee) and the two sons (who are students) cut men’s hair. The shop opens in winter only in the afternoons, since both barber and customers are busy in their respective occupations. In summer the shop has someone in it at all times, since many of the clients, particularly children, are on school holidays. Unlike the 1951 situation, where hair cutting used to be performed in the client’s house or at any open space, a special shop has now been opened near the family’s residence. It is furnished with two barber chairs and mirrors facing them. On the walls of the shop hang pictures of Egyptian soccer players, Egyptian movie stars, Michael Jackson, and Farah Fawcett. The barber is paid in cash and the fee is not standardized as the customers are charged according to their
means, which are well known to the barber. In fact, the information about who has and who has not in the village is common knowledge to all the Silwian people. This barber also circumcises village boys and receives handsome fees on this festive occasion.

Midwifery is still a family pursuit. The present midwife circumcises all the girls and helps the government appointed doctor in delivery. The services of the midwife are also paid for in cash and not in kind as was the custom in 1951. She is paid a standardized fee for circumcising and delivering of 5 L.E. and 10 L.E., respectively. In addition to cash, the midwife receives valuable presents for delivery in the case of mothers giving birth to a baby boy.

Weaving has almost vanished as an occupation which was undertaken by a family in the forties, in Massaid, a satellite neighboring village. Only one 69-year-old man continues to weave the woolen Tawadeh (the external cover for women used when going out of the home). Previously he also used to weave the external woolen garment for men which has completely disappeared.

In 1951, H. Ammar noted that the younger generation was gradually abandoning the homespun and the locally woven wool for factory cloth. Today the old and young buy all their woolen cloth from the weekly market or from the nearby towns. For summer, cotton cloth is the least valued and polyester cloth is the most appreciated. As a result of this change the weavers' sons in Silwa have turned to
government occupations. The weaver noted that in a year he weaves on average between 7 to 8 **Tawadehs** and charges 40 L.E. per **Tawadeh**, compared to 1 L.E. in the fifties.

Silwian fishermen today do not exist any longer. The fishermen of 1951 have all died. Their sons have become government employees and shop keepers. When I asked one of them about the reasons for abandoning fishing he said:

"During our fathers' times fishing was a freer occupation. . . . Today we need permits to fish in certain areas, we need to pay taxes, we are restricted as to the area we can sell, and we have to abide by government price controls . . . fishing today is a headache."

The process of modernization has thus brought to an end or weaned out of the economic system some of the traditional occupations. Pressing oil locally has met the same fate. The oil presser was closed down in 1962. Crops such as lettuce and sesame were unavailable for pressing any longer. Some young adults were surprised that there was an oil presser at all in Silwa. Once when I inquired about the time the oil press closed down, a 17-year-old girl sitting next to me exclaimed, "Ahh, you know more about the Balad (the village) than we do . . . I had no idea we had an oil press."

The sale of newspapers and magazines has been a recent part-time occupation prompted by the spread of education in the village and the increase of government employees. The salesman receives the morning papers from Komombo, the nearby town. His distribution to his regular customers and odd buyers runs between 40-50 newspapers a day. He is
either paid at the end of the month or immediately on the spot. I have noticed that he often refuses to take money from one of his son's teachers at school in recognition of the special attention he accords to his child.

Teaching at the Koranic school, Kuttab (locally called Khalwah), was a full-time job for the Sheikh teacher during the forties and fifties, since many children attended to memorize the Koran. At the time, this kind of teaching was reasonably rewarding as well as its recognition of being a pious undertaking. Fees were paid in kind by a daily loaf of bread, and on the completion of certain Surahs (chapters) from the Holy Koran presents of grain, tea, sugar, and new cloth were given to the Sheikh.

Today two out of the three Koranic school teachers (Kuttab Sheikhs) are from the original Koranic educators in Silwa. Both of these Sheikhs are also school teachers. Their Khalwahs (Kuttabs) are annexed to their residence. The third Sheikh is a teacher of religious instruction at one of the intermediate schools. His Khalwah which he started five years ago is at the entrance of his house.

The Kuttabs today primarily function as "summer schools" starting in May and ending in August. The students learn the Koran in them and in return the Sheikh is paid a fee of 4 L.E. per student for his services.

A note must be made here with regard to the foreign families that came to Silwa and were performing specific services to the community. With the expansion of the
village settlement, they are no longer isolated at the extremities of the village habitat. They have been largely integrated into the socioeconomic life of the community. Some of these families, which H. Ammar noted as owning no land in 1951, are presently landowners either through marriage or direct purchase.

The carpenters Al-Najjarin have acquired land through marriage. They are no more considered strangers after their intermarriage from the Silwian community. Their sons, who have had formal vocational training at schools in Aswan, still provide the Silwians with doors, chest of drawers, wooden benches, beds, and other articles of furniture.

The potters Al-Fakharaniah have acquired land by purchasing it. They still live on the northern edge of the village. There is only one of the original potter’s sons who continues the traditional occupation of his family.

My conversation with him focused on how he had to support his family since the death of his two brothers. The six sons of Al-Fakharaniah have all gone to school and none of their male children knows the craft of molding clay. The Fakharaniah have not been fully integrated into the community. Their men and women never married from Silwa and they always went back to Edfu to marry. The only Fakharani today provides the Silwians primarily with the Zirs (water coolers) and Agras (the bread-baking plates) and is paid in cash in return for his service.
The Coptic family, Al-Nissrania, has also acquired land through buying. The family has been noted for its business-like spirit. During the fifties they established a mechanical flour mill and served to grind grains. Lately they established a bakery but was closed by the health authorities on the grounds of not being in conformity with the required specifications. Their enterprising motivation led them to be pioneers in growing fruits such as bananas and grapes.

The water carriers referred to as Jamass or Hallaila is the only family among the four families of strangers that has not acquired land in Silwa. Since the introduction of water taps in the Silwian homes, water carrying has stopped being the Halliala’s full-time occupation. They carry water to butchers during the weekly market and in turn they are given meat from the slaughtered animals. Today the Halliala carry water in tin containers instead of the skin ones they used in 1951. The Halliala men’s primary occupation today is trading in livestock. The Halliala women provide personal housework services to other women who are sick, old, childless, or are overburdened on festive occasions and are paid in cash for their service.

**The Saudi Migrant**

Today, Silwa has a number of people who have migrated to the rich oil countries to work. These people are referred to as Saudis regardless of the Gulf country they
have gone to. In 1987 there were about 300 Silwian Saudis, three of whom had been there for over a decade. In Silwa the people who migrate to the rich oil countries go mainly to four countries, namely, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, and Lybia. They go in three capacities: the first as school teachers on secondment Muarin from the Ministry of Education in Egypt; the second as learned religious men (Sheikhs) on secondment borrowed from the Ministry of Endowments—Religious Affairs to teach religion, or lead prayers in Mosques; and the third as skilled workers such as electricians, carpenters, or masons who go on the basis of private contracts. Most of the men loaned by the government (Muarin) (i.e., for four years renewable) take their wives and children with them during the second year of their stay.

The impact of this migration on the nation has been depicted as creating a "new social order" (Ibrahim 1982) within which the reversal of wage structure, consumption values, and the supremacy of pecuniary wealth have vitiated the existing social order. In Silwa one can discern a new group of wealthy people whose new social status is not derived from land ownership. The "Saudis" from Silwa go to rich oil countries to accumulate cash that would permit them to build a house and buy electric appliances. The three people who have been in Saudi Arabia for a decade have built the only three red brick houses in Silwa, in distinction from the traditional sandstone material. One of the houses I was told by the owner cost 25,000 L.E. and includes indoor
plumbing. Other "Saudis" from Silwa have bought gold bracelets for their wives, air conditioning units, and even vacuum carpet cleaners (where in Silwian homes the floor is predominantly cement).

In certain cases, some of these migrants have adopted the puritanical social and religious attitudes of some of the Gulf countries. I met one of these men who worked in Saudi Arabia for five years as an electrician at my aunt's house. Thinking that there were no strangers in the house, my two male cousins and I entered through the guest house entrance. Upon our entrance we noted this "Saudi" returned migrant sitting and waiting for the men of the house to receive him. My cousins, aware of the guest, immediately started to introduce me as "our cousin, doctora Nawal, the daughter of our uncle doctor Hamed." He was totally unresponsive to my cousins' remarks; instead, I was totally unacknowledged by him and he signalled to me with his hand the route to the interior side of the house. I then hurriedly ran in that direction, embarrassed by my intrusion into the male domain. This reaction, however, is not typically Silwian. During my stay and on many occasions the men who had not migrated to the Gulf countries shook hands with me, asked after my father, talked to me about my work in Silwa, and even offered me tea for hospitality.

However, some of the "Saudis" adjust very quickly when they come back to Silwa. The teachers and religious Sheikhs come back to their original jobs. The skilled workers,
however, take more time to find a regular occupation. They often wait until the oil money they have accumulated runs out.

The Local Market

In discussing the economy of Silwa a special mention must be made of the local weekly markets and their transactions that reflect some of the salient characteristics of the village community in its continuity and change.

Since the seventies, local markets are held on Saturdays and Thursdays, while before then only the Saturday market was known. The newly held Thursday market is relatively smaller where only vegetables, fruits, and some of the daily articles are sold. On Saturday, the major market takes place where in addition to vegetables, fruits, household utensils, sweets, herbs and spices, it is distinguished by the sale of meat, poultry, cattle, sheep, cloth, and agricultural tools. It is held on spacious grounds where the paved road leading to the girl’s intermediate school separates the meat section from the rest of the merchandise.

The market day starts at 8 a.m. in winter and at 7 a.m. in summer and continues till the early afternoon. The market is under the supervision of the local council which charges 10 piasters for renting space to vegetable, fruit, poultry, and all other sellers with the exception of
butchers who are charged 25 piasters. Transactions exchanged during the hustle and bustle of the Saturday market are estimated by one of the members of the village local council to reach an average of 10,000 L.E.\textsuperscript{1} It must be pointed out that all exchanges during this day are made in cash and on the spot.

In an attempt to depict a visual picture of the Saturday market, it is preferable to start from the west. As you enter the market from the west (i.e., from the Aswan-Cairo highway) you see the vegetable and fruit merchants. All the sellers here are men. Their vegetables are displayed on brown cheese cloth bags on the ground. On top white covers are set up to protect the sellers from the sun. The seller has a balance and weights. As one enters the market grounds further east it becomes divided by a paved road. This division clearly defines the meat section from the rest of the market. To the east in the non-meat market there are two coffee shops. One is a permanent shop and the other is a tent set up only every Saturday for the market day. Both coffee shops serve sandwiches, hot and cold drinks. Coffee shops are exclusively the domain of men and teenage boys. Women are not expected to come near them. It is an \textit{Awra} (impure) for a woman to eat or drink in front of men in Silwa. The men often go to the market to buy meat, to discuss local politics, village problems, and gossip over tea in the coffee shops.
At the core of the non-meat market one finds merchants selling cloth, agricultural tools, herbs, and spices. Most of these merchants are men who display their merchandise in the same way as the vegetable sellers. In this section of the market one also finds small trucks on which grain, chicken, pigeons, and ducks are displayed. The merchants here have microphones on which they announce their merchandise and the prices.

At the end of this section of the market women merchants display their goods. They sell henna (the hair dye), Kuhl (a black eyeliner that women decorate themselves with), birds, and household items ranging from matches to plastic containers. Finally, toward the end of the non-meat market the goldsmith sits with his wooden glass box. The women gather around him to sell or buy gold.

The meat market section is the exclusive domain of men. Almost every time I wandered around this section of the market I was the only adult woman in it. The meat traders slaughter the animals early in the morning and the meat is sold throughout the day.

The majority of the sellers in the Saturday market are from outside Silwa. They come from Silwa's satellite villages, and the nearby towns of Edfu and Komombo. Most of the women sellers are from Silwa Kibli, selling the produce of their land. The meat sellers are all from Edfu or Komombo.
The buyers are predominantly children and men. Women above the ages of 17 or 18 go only to look at the gold or cloth. The composition of buyers changes according to seasons. During the summer season the market is full of children and men. In winter, when school starts, the market is not very crowded and there are more women buyers.

The market in Silwa is still a festive occasion for the people. It has expanded in size and diversified in consumer items since H. Ammar's 1951 study. It is also not the sole place from which the Silwians can purchase food or other goods. Today they buy from the nearby towns or from the nearby market days, especially from the Nubian village of Kalabsha.

The Saturday market reflects the sex and age segregation in Silwa both in buyers and sellers. Regarding buyers, for instance, the meat section is for men, the gold for women, and the food for children and youth. Actually a teacher in the girls' intermediate school told me about a girl who for the past two years has been absent on Saturdays because her mother has no one else to buy food for her from the market.

The very clear pattern that appeared to me and was confirmed by a number of people I talked with was that the market is largely a meeting day for men and a buying day for women. For both, it is an occasion for recreation and sprawling.
Exchange and the Market Economy

Services rendered today in Silwa are expected to be paid for in cash and not in kind. The shopkeeper, the coffee house owner, the tailor, the newspaper man, the camel rider, the taxi driver, the Kuttab Sheikh, the house painter, the marriage contract drawer (Maazoun), the barber, and the midwife all expect only cash in return for their services. In some cases, however, the money payment is not immediate. In shops and coffee shops, for example, there is an account book where costs are entered under a person’s name until the end of the month when dues are paid. Boys below the age of 17 are expected to pay for all coffee house services immediately. A taxi driver may carry people to their destination and get paid later.

Today, the villagers are to a great extent familiar with pecuniary transactions. Some of them have accounts and savings with commercial banks in the nearby cities. Few have become aware of investing in small projects such as constructing a modern farm for raising poultry. Some women have started a small business for tailoring clothes.

Exchange of reciprocal obligations is not confined to goods or services in kind; it can also be rendered in terms of money. With the disappearance of subsistence crops, the daily needs of the village have to be bought by cash in a greater measure, starting from flour, meat, vegetables, canned food, fruit, clothes, mats, and other commodities which they hitherto used to produce.
Dealings with the cooperative society and the village bank have familiarized many villagers with various issues related to credit, repayment, installments, profit making, and other aspects of money dealings and utilization. On the whole, the village has lost many of its 1951 forms of transaction and is now largely integrated into the market economy. The ascriptive social status and power structure that prevailed during the fifties have now become associated to some extent with money possession and cash income.

**Concluding Remarks**

In summing up the village economy and its livelihood, the transformation of agriculture from subsistence crops to sugar cane must be underscored as influencing the life of the community. The changes that the Silwian fabric of life has witnessed is congruent in many ways to other historic and contemporary agricultural societies that have gone through the processes of modernization. Education, particularly, has contributed to the employment of men and women in new occupations.

The shift to sugar cane agriculture in Silwa based on modern agricultural inputs, institutions, and technology resembles the experience of Sidney Mintz’s plantation on the south coast of Puerto Rico (1985) towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. The transition in Silwa followed the same form of sugar cane engulfing subsistence plots and animal husbandry. Irrigation was expanded and the labor
force transformed. However, in Silwa the agricultural laborers since they owned their land plots were transformed into part-time agriculturalists and not to proletariat laborers.

The introduction of the mechanized water pump and available modern transportation system have decreased the need for the services of donkeys and camels. This decrease has in turn reduced the interest in raising the animals by every farmer. This decrease is common with Hopkins’ remark on Musha in Upper Egypt (1980). In fact, animal fodder cannot be provided from sugar cane residue as in the case of wheat and corn. Camels can be hired from the few people who own them for loading the sugar cane harvest to the railway wagons for delivery to the factory in Komombo.

Children’s work from both sexes in farming activities is no more socially mandatory. This transformation has contributed to the enrollment of children in schools with the diminishing returns of their work in the fields. Families in Silwa, with smaller plots to grow, combined with less labor time for the cultivation of sugar cane, have encouraged their youth to pursue their education and their adults to emigrate outside to the city or to the Gulf countries to earn additional incomes.

This encouragement is common in many Upper Egyptian villages. Adams’ (1986:142-143) study of a village in the Menya Governorate reconfirms this pattern. However, Adams’ dismissal of women in his introductory chapter (page 8), and
ironically by grounding the dismissal in H. Ammar's study, led him to point out only the increasing rate of education among sons. In Silwa both girls and boys have been increasingly encouraged to pursue their education to a differential degree in the educational ladder.

The public amenities of water and electricity, the access to modern household appliances have lightened women's home and family tasks. Among other things, these have provided incentive to send girls to school. New opportunities of employment in the community have encouraged many female graduates to work outside the home, particularly in the socially recognized field of teaching.

The increasing education, civil service employment, sugar cane cropping, and emigration are indicative of Silwa's greater integration in regional, national, and international arenas. In view of these forces, variations and discrepancies on the general pattern of livelihood are becoming more apparent.

Egalitarianism in Silwa today is not a striking feature any more. Ideologically the Silwians insist that there are no class differences among them, as they are all God's creation and alike as "children born after 9 months of pregnancy (Awlad Tisi)."

To an extent, a class system in a "Weberian" sense and not a "Marxian" one prevails. The Silwians are largely affected by the monetary economy and the market forces, and they no longer eat from their hand produce. Rather they
purchase the food they eat with cash. Those who have more cash incomes eat better, dress better, and build larger and more equipped houses.

The socio-economic differences today appear in both quantity and kind of the lifestyle and consumption pattern, unlike in 1951 when it was quantity and not kind (Ammar 1954:40). The wives of the "Saudi migrants" and government employees not only have more bracelets, larger houses, and houses built with brick stones, but their furniture, the color of the gold they wear, and the designs on the cloth they buy are quite different.

The villagers divide themselves into rich and poor today. The rich is someone who is more mobile, has enough cash to build a house or redecorate it, saves money, feeds his children well, sends them to schools, buys gold for his wife, and buys a diversity of clothes for the family. The poor is someone who does not have enough cash to satisfy his basic needs or someone who works in three different odd jobs to provide for his family. This perception of poor and rich was also expressed to me by some women in Silwa. The following informant’s statements reveal her frustrations from the changes that have occurred:

"Some women have become arrogant. They like to go out and be a center of attraction and attention. No woman raises her sister. . . . Kind, gentle women can not stand for their rights. . . . If you have a sharp tongue you will get what is rightfully yours. Rich women want to wear bracelets (gold), emulate the cities, and go out to tell their neighbors we did and did. . . . But
there is a proverb which says 'they cut each other’s fur' (gossip). . . . And if you do not engage (in gossip) you’ll be rejected.

A rich woman . . . the village women would follow her . . . and a woman who is poor and has nothing no one supports her.

In spite of al-Tamadun (used as development, modernization, and progress) ignorance prevails more than in the past. The appearances have changed . . . but the inside has not."

Not withstanding the various factors of modernization, and the greater integration of Silwa into the mainstream of market economy, the cultural ethos of peasantry continues in various degrees to be a dynamic force in the socio-economic fabric of the community. Agriculture still remains the bulwark of both security and stability in the village and its social organization as will be explained in the next chapter.

Ownership of land, however small it may be, is the source of social recognition for both the individual and the family. The price of land has increased 150% since 1951. However, regardless of its economic cost and returns, the land has to be tilled. It is shameful to leave your land fallow for any reason. It is even more shameful and degrading to sell your land. In the words of my informant Hajj Ali:

"It is very shameful to sell your land in Silwa. . . . Just as it was during the time your father was doing his work. . . . It remains the basis for your roots Asl and the criterion for social recognition. Preserving land inherited or adding to it does not promote your economic status, but it is an indication of god’s blessings."
In this connection a woman informant said:

"It is an Aar (unforgivable shame) to let your father’s inheritance slip by selling your land. The sale is done by persons who are not straight in their actions. . . . They are those who have to pay debts due to gambling or drinking."

**Note**

1. See Appendix 11 for market expenditure in Silwa today.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE ORGANIZING SOCIAL PROCESSES

By organizing social processes, here is meant the specific structures and patterns which develop to distinguish categories of persons within the community (Geertz 1973:363). These processes were referred to by H. Ammar (1954:42-86) as social organization. He not only considered the ideal patterns of relations, the chartered structures, but also real activities and behavior, social controls, religious and magical sanctions in Silwian institutions. Here the emphasis is on the continuity and change in the social organization of Silwa. Consequently, the word "organizing" in lieu of organization is used to depict the dynamic/temporal nature of the structures. Moreover, the word processes underlines the means and methods by which the community functions and influences its members.

Nieuwenhuijz (1962) profiles the social structure of the Near Eastern village as articulating in social units of a magnitude in between that of an entire village as such and that of its basic component, the simple extended household of hearth. (1962:301)

He continues to depict the extreme case of the near Eastern village as
A village may be said (with or without historic proof) to have been founded by one man, whose sons become the ancestors of this group. . . . In this case the kinship pattern, whether true or alleged, determines the articulation of village society and its components. (1962:301)

The Silwian organizing socio-cultural structure resembles to a large extent Nieuwenhuijz’s generic profile of the Near Eastern village. The kinship pattern in Silwa gradates from the entire village belonging to the G’afra tribe which extends over many villages in the Aswan Governorate as well as other Governorates. The tribe is divided into nine clans, the extended family, and finally the basic component unit, the Aila (the Core family) (Ammar 1954:45-49).

Silwa can also be classified into social groups based on age and sex. But, unlike 1951, the achieved basis of education and occupation have stimulated certain modifications and changes in these categories of differentiation.

Silwa’s Ancestors

The Silwians refer to themselves as descendants from the G’afra tribe that derives its origin from the Prophet’s daughter (Fatima Al-Zahra’), and its name from two G’afars. The first is G’afar al-Sadiq, Fatima’s great-grandson from her marriage to the Prophet’s cousin, Ali Ibn Abi-Taleb.¹ The second is G’afar Mohammad, the great-grandson of G’afar al-Sadiq, a holy Imam with direct descent from the Prophet’s
grandson al-Hussain. Mohammad al-Mahdi, the great-grandson of G'afar al-Sadiq settled in Fez. Mahdi's son, Prince (or Sayyid) Mohammad, on his return trip to Morocco from pilgrimage, settled in Egypt in 603 H.A. (beginning 12th century A.D.). Prince Mohammad settled first in the town of Damanhour in the Governorate of Behera in the Delta, then moved to Upper Egypt. Prince Mohammad had eight sons. Kameel al-Deen (his descendants are in Sudan), Kamal al-Deen (his descendants are in Komombo and Esna in Upper Egypt), Ahmad (his descendants are in al-Tounab in Upper Egypt), Hammad (his descendants are in Edfu in Upper Egypt and Damanhour in Lower Egypt), Jouhina (his descendants are in the Governorate of Sohaq in Upper Egypt), Ammar (his descendants are in Sudan at the Alba Valley), Issa (his descendants are in the Aswan Governorate in Upper Egypt), and Hamad (the grandfather of the G'afra of Silwa).

Hamad, the youngest son of Mohammad, settled in the Governorate of Qena in Upper Egypt (north of Aswan). Upon his return from Pilgrimage in Mecca, Hamad found his wife with a newborn son and named him Mohammad. Hearing rumors that this newborn baby was not his own son, Hamad went to his wife inquiring about the truth. She gave no definitive answer, but said, "if the boy is your son, he will live to reproduce." Mohammad, al-Daghfali lived to reproduce the Silwian's grandfather, named G'afar. G'afar had two sons, Bahar and Buhair, who represent the two major Hessa (sections) of the Silwian cluster of villages. Buhair's
descendants inhabit the villages of the western bank of the Nile, while Bahar’s sons, namely, On, Musa, and Ayyash are the founders of the Silwian settlements lying east of the Nile (see Appendix 12 for a genealogical tree of the G’afra and Silwians).

Today, the Silwians keep written documents of their descent. These documents are safely deposited with the older men in the extended family. Upon marriage, copies relating to the descent of the bridegroom back to Mahdi are made and signed by the Hessa Sheikh for legitimacy and honorable origin.

The Silwians are descendants of what has become historically known as the Shia’h line of descent from al-Hussain (the Prophet’s grandson). They, however, are Sunnis and are of the subdivision of Imam Malek (one of the four Sunni Imams who offered interpretations of the Koran and Islamic jurisprudence). The inconsistency between the descent line of Shia’h and the practice of Sunni Islam in Silwa was addressed by Gulick. He said,

Ammar does not mention, but one wonders, whether among the Sunni villagers it matters that Ja’far al-Sadiq was the sixth Shia Imam. (1976:70)

The Silwian answer to Gulick’s question as addressed by me was

"we are the descendants of Fatima Al-Zahara’... She was a Moslem and so are we. We are also descendants of G’afar al-Sadiq, but we are Sunni Ashraf (holy nobility)."

A more detailed answer, however, requires a historic investigation of the political, social, intellectual, and
regional conflicts between the Sunni and Shia'h sects in Egypt. It should trace the larger question of why is Egypt, the seat of an Islamic Shia'h Caliphate (the Fatimide), for more than 300 years, could be totally reconverted to Sunni Islam. What happened? Is the Silwian descent an indication that the Shia'h of the Fatimides was no more than a ruling class sect? Was Shi'ism persecuted after the fall of the Fatimides? Or was the Ayyoubide dynasty that overthrew the Fatimides so efficient in its methods of reconversion to the Sunni sect? But for now, it suffices to note that the G'afra in Silwa see their connection to G'afar al-Sadiq as an Islamic connection that has nothing to do with the various forms of Shi'ism.

The Tribal Identity

The discussion of Silwa's ancestors confirms the previous observations of Nieuwenhuijz as well as other Middle Eastern scholars (Gulick 1976; Fernea 1972; S'alim 1962; Aswad 1971; Stevenson 1985) insofar as the village's kinship system is derived from a unified genealogy. The G'afra descent continues to be a source of pride to the Silwians. In some measure, it still indicates a sense of affinity to other villages from the same geneological tree, particularly to those in the Aswan Governorate. The unified descent from the Prophet's daughter sets a dignified and serene pattern of social and personal behavior expected from adults.
Although the tribal unity is still expressed among the Silwians in various aspects at the inter-village relationships, its strength and implications at the intra-village level has been somewhat weakened, reflecting a significant loosening from the 1951 Silwa as described by H. Ammar. However, on both levels, the G’afra unity of allegiance is not as pervasive in personal day-to-day life or in communal events and undertakings. This, however, does not mean that the Silwians have lost completely their tribal orientation at certain levels of action, preference, and bias.

The general elections for parliamentary candidates provide a good illustrative example of the newly evolving dynamics of tribal allegiance among the Silwians. In the 1984 parliamentary elections for the People’s Council, and for the first time in the history of Silwian participation in central government politics, the votes have largely deviated from the descent. The G’afra candidate representing the New Wafd party (the right wing party) was defeated in favor of the National Democratic party candidate who was from the tribe opposing to the Silwians, the Ababda tribe. The reason for such an election outcome was explained as a consequence of the community’s dislike of the G’afra candidate party line. "We voted for the Government party . . . the government had been good to us," said one of my informants.
In the 1987 parliamentary elections, three out of the eleven G’afra tribe candidates in the Governorate of Aswan came from Silwa. One candidate was chosen by the Governor of Aswan to run on the National Democratic Party list as the G’afra representative. While the other two Silwian candidates ran as independent individuals. The election rules allowed the voter to vote for one party list (out of four party lists) and one individual candidate. Ninety percent of party list votes in Silwa went to the National Democratic Party, because the G’afra representative was himself from the village. Seventy-nine percent of the Silwians voted for one of the individual candidates. This candidate in his capacity as a member of the Aswan Local Council brought to Silwa electricity in 1982, the first aid unit in 1986, and the secondary school in 1987. People in Silwa voted for him in return for his services, as well as for his good upright conduct. The other individual candidate was disliked in Silwa. The Silwians argued that three years before the elections, this candidate had killed a man during a dispute over land although he was legally acquitted.

It is evident from the Silwians’ voting that they had been motivated by a mix of factors including criteria of political party interest, personal evaluation of candidates, and previous record of the candidates’ services to the village. These criteria are indicative of Silwian move towards a non-ascriptive decision making processes. It must
be noted, however, that voting for outsiders has created ill-feelings and bickering from those who did not succeed from the G'afra candidates.

This situation represents a different climate of opinion from that prevailing in 1951. H. Ammar states in his study:

One is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to this stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. . . . The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their paternal cousin. (1954:47)

At the local dealings of everyday life tribal or clan unity has to some extent lost much of its binding force. Factors indicated in the previous chapter, particularly those related to the differentiation of interests and the widening of the village contacts, have led to more individualized approaches to daily problems and decision-making situations. This is clearly borne, for instance, by the frequent resort to the courts for settling disputes.

In the 1951 Silwa Majlis al-Arab (the Arab Council) was the main traditional agent for mediating in sectional frictions that arise between individuals, families, and clans. Although it continues to serve such functions, through local leaders, it is frequently overlooked as disputants prefer to bring their cases to the tribunal courts, rather than accept its arbitration. However, my informant told me that this institution still serves to
settle some crucial inter-village problems within the G’afra region, as it will be elaborated later in this chapter.

In general, the easier access to government agencies has led the villagers to resort to the services and interventions of the government, thereby replacing in most cases the appeal to community action. The expected fatherly (or patrimonial as Spingborg (1979) refers to it) role of the government and the increasing dependency on its institutions have extensively grown to the extent of damping the local initiative. This prevailing attitude contrasts with that described by H. Ammar in saying:

To appeal to a remote and interpersonal power vested in local or national government is not a socially acceptable procedure. (1954:60)

Notwithstanding the loosening of tribal solidarity and allegiance, the G’afra identity continues to be embedded in certain affective situations and in adhering to specific standard behavior patterns. This is perhaps best illustrated by two personal examples reflecting the kinship aspect of tribal identity outside the village.

One day in Cairo, a friend and I stood for half an hour waiting for a taxi. Finally, a small three passenger cab stopped to pick us up. The driver of the car asked my friend where she was from (since she had green eyes). Then he directed his question to me:

"You are Egyptian . . . are you not?" (I said), "Yes . . . from El-S’aid (upper Egypt)." (He jokingly replied), "Oh . . . yes . . . you are going to tell me you are G’afaria . . . ha!" (I said), "Yes . . . I am G’afaria, how did you know?"
(The man, almost jumping out of his seat, adjusted his driver’s mirror toward me and said), "I am G’afari too!" We then talked about our respective clans, a conversation that convinced him that I was G’afaria. On this crowded day, the man drove for 30 minutes and refused to take money from us because I was G’afaria).

In terms of the expected behavior from a woman of the tribe an example during my visit to Aswan City, the capital of the Governorate, is also quite indicative. Two of my relatives and I went to buy cloth from the market. During the process of bargaining, I argued in a high tone of voice saying:

"I am not a tourist . . . I am one of you . . . So why are you giving me such a high price?" . . . (He said), "Where are you from?" "Silwa Bahari," (I said). (With a surprised tone he replied), "You couldn’t be a G’afaria . . . you speak too loud . . . they are soft spoken."

Embarrassed by the remark, I explained my true "urban" history and bought the cloth.

The Silwian Clans

The clans in Silwa are divided into Silwa Kibli and Silwa Bahari. The subdivision resulted from an antagonistic siblings’ fight between Ayyash (ancestor of the former village) on the one side and On and Musa (ancestors of the latter) on the other. The story whether legendary or real tells us that Ayyash started expanding his territory at the expense of the two other brothers. Musa and On, disturbed by such behavior, sent for their fourth brother, Mohammad, to come for arbitration in this dispute. Upon Mohammad’s
arrival, it was decided to divide the land by making him carry a stone, heading north-south. The point at which he stops or stumbles determines the border between the territory of Ayyash on one side and that of On and Musa. Mohammad, who was a large muscular man, carried the stone south with no pain. He only fell when, in fear that Mohammad would not stumble, one of Ayyash’s followers tripped him. Today, Hajar al-Hadd (the borderline stone) still stands to separate Silwa Kibli from Silwa Bahari.

From this time, Musa and On founded the nine clans of Silwa Bahari. On’s section of the clan referred to as Onab includes the five clans of Diabab, Gharamab, Hasaballab, Malliab, and Waznab, while Musa’s section referred to as Musiab includes the four clans of ’Amrab, ’Atamni, Brahimab, and Maraziq. It is still considered as during H. Ammar’s time in 1951 that each section consists of half of the village population. The Brahimab clan in the Musiab section is regarded as a clan large enough to be equivalent to two clans.

Presently the expansion of the village has scattered the traditional cluster of clan residential pattern. Today, there is no clear cut concentration of clan residence. However, the residence of the clan heads still reveals the pattern H. Ammar discussed in 1954. One finds that all the Musiab’s clan heads live on the southern side of the old village, while the Onab’s live on the eastern side.
It must be noted that traditionally as well as presently, this process of dichotomous brothers or clans that has permeated the social organization of the G’afra in Silwa and elsewhere represents a Simmelian (1950) dyadic approach toward achieving balance and stability within the community relationships and dynamics. The resort to arbitration in this duality/dichotomy was mainly a mechanism for establishing equality in land distribution, location of residence, size of clan membership, and means of power. The brothers’ dichotomy could be evaluated as an effective traditional process for articulating the social structure, as well as maintaining law and order.

Until now, each clan is characterized by certain attributes. The following are noted traits of clans as related to me by some of my informants and according to local usage.

The Onab (On’s descendants) comprising the following clans:

**Diabab:** Disgusting, they do not eat meat (i.e., they do not treat themselves well), they get along with everybody.

**Gharamab:** Confrontational, they stand for their own clan member whether oppressor or oppressed.

**Hassabalab:** Sly and never to the point.

**Malliab:** The best among the clans, the only ones who make fair judgments.

**Waznab:** They have low tolerance, if a hunger strikes in the village, they will be the first to die.
The Musiab (Musa’s descendants) comprising the following clans:

'Armar: They are as useless as underarm hair, they neither add or subtract to any situation.

'Atamni: Al-Sikata (the sinking of fish instead of meat in the food), a sign of accepting low standards.

Brahimab: They have low standards, they get along with everybody, and they are proud.

Marazig: They are stingy.

The origin of the above characterizations was difficult to retrieve systematically. The Hassaballab, for example, are known to by sly and indirect because its members are the most educated among the clans. Education, one informant said, "makes you sly." The Marazig are known to be stingy because they never lend or borrow from their neighbors. The 'Atamni are characterized as having low standards because their great-grandmother Fatima Al-Afni (the rotten Fatima) hid her gold at a time when her brother was in dire need for money.

Clan characteristics in Silwa which are most likely given by other clans can be viewed as exaggerated attributes related to notorious respective members and their behavioral interchange in the community. One can argue that such clan attributes are stereotypes by which individuals are distinguished and categorized. However, an argument emphasizing the individual and stereotypes covers a partial picture of clan characterizations. For in a community where status is derived from one’s origin, the clan attributes are
symbols of the competitiveness between their respective members over who belongs to the better clan and consequently commands leadership. The characterizations primarily seek to value or devalue the clan in terms of ideal norms of behavior including honesty, pride, hospitality, ability to deal with others, generosity, and treating oneself well.

The Silwians have other symbols of inter-clan competitiveness. The clan guest house, al-Khimih, is one such arena. The size, the cleanliness, the wall paint, and the furniture of a clan guest house are matters which allow the valuing of one clan over another. For a long time, the best Khimih was that of the Hasaballab clan. Their guest house was painted with blue chalk, when painting was not common in Silwa. A praying area inside the house was built ten years ago, and water taps were installed five years ago for Wodo' (ablutions before prayers). The furniture inside the guest house was and still is in good condition. No loose Dekkas (wooden benches) and no ripped cushions can be found. The grounds were and still are swept daily. At each corner of the grounds, trees were planted for decoration and are watered daily. Today, however, the Brahimab guest house competes with that of the Hasaballabs for first place. It was enlarged and painted two years ago. The furniture was refurbished, ceiling fans installed, and trees planted. In addition, a praying area and water taps for Wodo' were added inside the house. The other seven clan houses in the
village are small and do not yet stand in competition with the Hasaballab’s and Brahimab’s.

The state of a guest house is symbolic of a clan’s solidarity and therefore of fulfilling a valued ideal norm in the community. The clan head collects monthly dues from his clan members through their household heads. These dues, ranging between 25 to 50 Egyptian piasters, are spent in maintaining the clan guest house. The members of a united clan pay their Khimih dues regularly, whereas the members of a clan with friction among them do not display the same concern.

Festive celebrations are yet another symbolic arena where clans compete over which is the better one of all. The Silwians celebrate many occasions throughout the year (see Chapter Five on celebrations). During these celebrations, the clan male members gather in the guest house to feast over a slaughtered animal in the evening. Through gossip, the clan members compete over the number of people attending the celebration, the number of animals slaughtered, and the length of Koranic Surahs recited. The more valued clan is the one with most attendance, many slaughtered animals, and most recited Surahs from the Koran. This valuation is again a result of the upheld norm of clan solidarity. The more festive the clan celebration, the more unity and amity among its members.

Membership in the Silwian clan adheres to the patriarchal/patrilineal rules of descent. The children are
born to their father’s clan. Women, however, upon marriage move their allegiances and social obligations to their husbands’ clan.

The clan system in Silwa is not a closed one. The Silwians related to me over and over the story of how my great-grandfather, Ammar, aligned himself with one of the Silwian clans. The story relates that Ammar al-Kabir (the oldest Ammar) was a cousin of the Silwians through the line of prince Hamad who settled in Sudan. Ammar al-Kabir was a camel trader whose trade route covered Egypt, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia. Once, on his way to the Qena Governorate, his original abode, he set camp to rest in Silwa. The patriarch of the house near which the camp settled was obligated to serve food for the campers and feed the camels. Since there had been a bad harvest that year, the patriarch host had little grain at home and few resources to squeeze. Nevertheless, he collected all the food in his house, slaughtered all the animals he owned, and fed Ammar’s campers and animals. The next morning on his way out of Silwa, Ammar heard about the destitute state of his host and, in gratitude, married his daughter. The following year, when visiting his Silwian wife, Ammar brought his son to marry the younger daughter of his host (also the sister of his wife). Mostafa, Ammar’s son, stayed in Silwa and was adopted by his father-in-law’s clan. The story emphasizes that not only were the Ammars adopted by one clan, but that today, all the clans in Silwa have Ammar blood in them, for
Mostafa had eight daughters, and each married into one of the other eight clans in Silwa.

More recently, the open clan system in Silwa could be seen in the case of the Carpenters' family. Thirty-five years ago, the Carpenters, who are also cousins of the Silwian through prince Hamad, were considered outsiders. Today and after intermarriage with one Silwian clan, the Carpenters have become members of the community through cognatic lineage.

It is worth noting here that the clan system in Silwa, as revealed by the above examples, is a conditionally open system. The two families adopted by the Silwian clans have become far cousins and not total "strangers."

Through the process of change over time the reality of the clan system in Silwa has been rendered less thoroughly pervasive in everyday life. Its importance in the organizing process emerges in times of intra-village crisis, joys, or significant public events. Beyond the crisis or joy time, the extended and conjugal family stand as the weightier organizing units.

During my stay in Silwa, marriages and funerals were the most important activities where the clan could be seen as a definite organizing unit of social processes. However, the processes of this organizing unit is more heavily enforced on men. In a wedding, for example, the fathers of the bride and the bridegroom are socially obliged to invite all clan heads, regardless of their personal relationships
with these individuals. The guest list also includes personal friends. The mothers of the bridegroom and the bride, on the other hand, invite guests strictly on cognatic and direct reciprocity basis.\(^4\)

In funerals of natural death, the same organizing process prevails. Upon someone’s death, clans are represented in the Mahsar (funeral) either through a clan head or someone of equal status. Among women, immediate relatives and friends shoulder the obligation.

Crisis death is another arena where the clan is an organizing social unit. The following is an incident that took place during my stay in Silwa:

On a relatively cold November afternoon, I was at the village council observing the voting on a national government referendum. At 1:00 p.m. the screaming voice of women announcing a death and the boys and men running westward towards the Nile led me walking in that direction. Before reaching anywhere near the Nile bank, I saw a still body being carried toward the northeast side of the village. Inquiring about what happened, the answer came "a boy drowned in the Nile." At the voting center, the two local leaders representing the Musiab and the Onab clans relegated their responsibility of monitoring the elections and hurried to the boy’s home. By 3:00 p.m., all clan heads and the two local leaders were gathered at the deceased boy’s clan guest house, talking to police officers. At 5:00 p.m., the clan heads, local leaders, and the male and female relatives of the boy walked in a burial procession. I learned later that one of the local leaders has been for some time not on speaking terms with the boy’s father.

The clan also plays a role in organizing disputes and conflicts in Silwa. The Arab Council, a clan-based judging body referred to earlier, is still in existence in the village. The following two examples of Arab Council
deliberations reveal the clans' role in resolving disputes.

Example One

In 1951, Mohammad and Mahmmoud worked in neighboring land plots in Silwa Bahari. After having breakfast together in the fields, each went to irrigate his plot. Disagreeing on who would water the land first, they got into a physical fight. During the fight, Mahmmoud killed Mohammad with a Minjal (sickle). On realizing his action, Mahmmoud fled from Silwa to Sudan instantly. In Sudan, Mahmmoud was married and had children. Thirty-four years later, in May 1985, and due to the drought in Sudan, Mahmmoud returned to Silwa. Upon his arrival, he went to his Onab clan leader, asking to be taken to the clan head of the man he murdered for judgment. The Onab leader called on two clan heads from his section of clans who had amiable relationships with the murdered man's clan. The three men went to the murdered man’s clan to negotiate a date on which Mahmmoud could be delivered to them. Three days after the visit, word was sent to the Onab leader setting a date. On Thursday, May 16, 1985, Mahmmoud walked to the guest house of his victim’s clan with the Onab leader. Mahmmoud carried his Kaffan (the cloth with which a Moslem's dead body should be wrapped) anticipating a death judgment. At the murdered man’s guest house, the clan head announced that "the clan forgives Mahmmoud for the crime he committed. He (Mahmmoud) had suffered for his crime by being banished from Silwa for thirty-four years."

The Aswan newspaper wrote on June 7, 1985, about this judgment:

The Silwian clans have set an example of "civilized" behavior in their forgiveness and tolerance. This incident of Arab Council judgment will remain throughout history a white sheet in the Silwian records. (page 9)

Example Two

In the second example, the Arab council gathered to resolve a doublefold dispute.
Two families, "A" and "B", with contiguous land plots have had a dispute over a palm tree for two years. The tree was on the border between the two plots of family "A" and "B". Each family claimed that the tree was on its land plot and that the dates and leaves from the tree were rightfully theirs. Two years ago family "B" picked the dates from the tree before family "A." Last year, family "A" managed to get the dates before family "B." In defense of its rights to the tree, family "B" resorted to local leaders and clan heads from Silwa for judgment. As the leaders were deliberating, the head of family "A" caught the children of family "B" grazing their goats near the palm tree. He beat them and killed one goat with the excuse that they were trespassing. Family "B" immediately reported this violent act to the police station. The local leaders, however, pressured family "B" to withdraw its police grievance and make peace with family "A" by giving them the right over the palm tree.

Three months later, the two families were in conflict again over who had priority in irrigating from a water wheel Sagia. The children of the families engaged in a physical fight, where one of family "A’s" children suffered from a severe head injury.

The Silwian local leaders refused to interfere in the dispute any more. They considered family "A" as the aggressor and declared that peace should be made according to this verdict. Family "A," feeling victimized, sought an Arab Council judgment from outside the village. They called onto their far cousins from Bahar in the village of Daraw.

A week later, a group of six men from Daraw met in the guest house of a neutral clan. The guest house was filled with men and boys from Silwa. After the reading of a Koranic verse, the council retreated to start deliberations in an inside room in the guest house. The six men from Daraw were all between the ages of 40 and 60. They introduced themselves to me as two full-time farmers, one member of the village council in Aswan, one agricultural cooperative head, one school principal, and the Omda (local village head) of Daraw.

The hearing in the council proceeded as follows: Each family told its story through a clan
representative (chosen for his eloquence and wisdom), the boys from the two families that were involved during the killing of the goat and the physical fight over irrigation were questioned individually, and four volunteer witnesses were called upon to relate the story.

The questioning and dispute presentations took place in the inside room. The Daraw group, my cousin (who is also my informant), myself, and my tape recorder were present in the room. Two men from Silwa stood outside the room door to escort the witnesses in and out. After hearing the views of all the parties concerned, and reviewing land plot maps, the Council insisted on going to the fields to see for themselves, al-Hagiga "the reality." In the fields, two of the Arab Council members measured the land with a standard palm tree branch to determine the size of the plots.

It took the council eight hours to come to a decision. During this time, they drank water and tea only.

The following is a narrative exemplifying answers on which the Arab Council based their judgment:

Council member: "With what agrees with God (i.e., tell the truth), the palm tree in question, who was responsible for its grooming and care?"

Witness: "Caring . . . when the tree appeared, it appeared naturally, no one claimed rights over it. . . . Only three years ago, the dispute started. . . . You see, three years ago, the tree started producing dates."

Council member: "Tell us about grooming and caring . . . who was tending the tree?"

Witness: "No one grooms it in front of people. . . . Now when you want to groom a tree. . . . In order to make the tree yours, you make one of your land plot neighbors a witness. You talk with him near the tree so that he becomes a witness. . . . But those two families made no one their witness."

Council member: "You saw neither caring for the tree?"

Witness: "No . . . I saw no one."
Council member: "Thank you. . . . May God be with you."

In the late afternoon, the oldest member of the Daraw Arab Council walked outside to read the judgment, saying:

"In the name of God the beneficent, the merciful. . . . The Arab Council judgment is

First, concerning irrigation, the Sagia (water wheel) falls on the land plot of family 'B.' Consequently, they have priority over irrigation.

Second, concerning the palm tree, it became clear to the Council members from studying the location that it grows completely on family 'A's' land. As a result, family 'A' owns the tree, and no one has a right to compete with them over it.

This is what was decided, and God was our witness."

In agreement with the judgment, the disputing families signed the paper on which it was written and food was served. The next morning, the Daraw group sent the document to the civil court in Komombo for filing. This procedure is carried out to ensure that in future disputes over the tree or irrigation between the same two families, the eight-hour judgment would be referred to for enforcement.

The status of the Arab Council today is different from what it was 35 years ago. The head of the Hasaballab clan in reply to my question, "Is the Arab Council today like the Arab Council of yesterday?" said:

"Now the people no longer respect the judgment of the Arab Council. In the past, when an Arab Council decided that someone was in the wrong . . . this person was shamed. . . . He wished the ground would split and swallow him from embarrassment. . . . A person did not want to be wronged in front of people. Today the Arab Council is not respected as hitherto. . . . A person can disagree with their judgment and walk out uncaring to pursue his case at the law courts."

The relative loss of respect for the Arab Council judgment in Silwa has not affected its continuity. The Arab
Council is still an important arbitration body with its procedures remaining almost unchanged. The Council convenes with God’s blessings and a Koranic recital declares the beginning of its undertaking. The members of the Council are trusted to be fair and just in their judgment. Finally, they are expected not to accept hospitality food unless their judgment is honored by the disputing parties. Silwa has an average of one or two Arab Council hearings a year. In the past, Arab Councils were the only body where disputes were arbitrated.

Today the Silwians have the civil courts in Komombo and Aswan to settle agricultural conflicts. A paternal aunt and her nephew had a dispute over a 2 Kirat piece of inherited land. The woman’s husband and her nephew were in court to settle the dispute for four years. The price of the 2 Kirats at the time was 42 L.E., while filing the case, travelling to Komombo for court hearings on average twice a year, as well as the energy expended had cost them considerably more. Upon pointing this out to the baseline informant, Hajj Ali, he said:

"The land is dear. . . . But also, today agricultural disputes have to go to court. People today in Silwa have the skills, knowledge, and facilities to go to court. They know how to read and write; they can be in Komombo in 15 minutes by taxi. They also have the time for civil courts. What do they do? . . . They do not have to till the land from sunrise to sunset in order to eat as in times past."

The arbitration of land disputes in civil courts, according to Hajj Ali, have increased in the last ten years.
However, some people still resort to Arab Councils for resolving the conflict. Exact records as to how many arbitrations go to civil court or how many go to Arab Councils were difficult to obtain. Yet a trend toward an increase in the use of civil courts especially among the educated younger men was suggested by Hajj Ali.

No Arab Councils for women exist in Silwa today. Women, generally, resolve their conflicts through the intervention of a well-meaning third party that is friendly or related to the two parties in conflict. The procedure is often informal and is initiated by the third well-meaning party.

In the process of socialization among children, awareness of the clan’s framework within the social organization of the community appears at a much later stage in their growth than it used to be. Upon asking some children between the ages of 7 to 14 about their clan membership, their reply was "I don’t know ... but my father would know." However, the balance in identity between the clan and the conjugal family is reflected in both women and men referring to themselves by their fathers’ names. On the basis of the patrilineal principle, married women keep their maiden names.

The emergence of the clan in crisis/joy situations, delayed knowledge of clan membership by children, and adults referring to themselves through direct patrilineal descent are not indications of clan disintegration in Silwa.
Rather, these elements delineate the mandate of this jural unit within the various components of social structure in the community. The head of the Hasaballab clan in reply to a series of questions about clan allegiance said:

"The clan from way back and up until today is united on many levels. . . . If someone is not on talking terms with his cousin . . . he will support the clan or tribe in times of distress without any hesitation. Clan unity is very much alive. In their generality and specificity, the clans are interconnected through marriage. Here in Silwa, we are Onab and Musiab connected to Bahar."

**The Family: Extended and Conjugal**

The clans in Silwa further divide into *al-Aila al-Kabira* (the extended family) and *al-Bait* (the conjugal family). The extended family as a social unit consists of direct maternal and paternal blood relatives, and their spouses and children. The Silwian knows his/her relatives up to the third or fourth cousin and the relation can be explained in detail up to this distance. After the fourth cousin, the person is generally referred to as a Karib (a relative)—on the father’s side or the mother’s side.

Marriage relations in the village are almost always described in terms of blood relationships as its frame of reference. The following are examples given to me about how certain persons related by marriage were members of my extended family:
"How is Ahmad related to me? You know Bit Amek Amal (your cousin).... He is her husband" (Jouz Bit Amek).
How is Mona related to me? Sohair, Bit Amek (your cousin).... well, Mona is the daughter of the brother of your cousin’s mother (Bit Khalha).... So she is the cousin of your cousin (Bit Khal Bit Amek).

In Silwa children refer to their parents’ uncles and aunts as Jidi (grandfather) and Jidati (grandmother), respectively. Children also refer to their extended family relatives on the mother’s side and father’s side as Khal (male) or Khala (female) and Am (male) or Amma (female), respectively. Separate words are used to distinguish between the paternal and the maternal sides of kinship. The kinship terms are also extended to a larger social circle of males and females, reflecting patterns of intimacy, status, social distance, and age governed by communal ascriptive criteria. This practice is common among a number of Middle Eastern cultures including Peters’ (1976) Maronite village in Lebanon, Magnarella’s (1974) Turkish town, and Stevenson’s (1985) highland Yemeni market town.

In cases where blood relatives are also related by marriage, the former takes precedence in tracing the relationship. The following is an example from my experience:

My uncle’s (Am) daughter is married to a man who is also a third paternal cousin. Her children refer to me as Khala (a maternal relationship) because the closer and more compassionate blood relationship is with the mother.
In cases of cross-cousin marriages, the hierarchical order of relations follows the patrilineal line. For example:

My uncle’s daughter who is married to my aunt’s son have children who refer to me as Amma (paternal aunt) and not Khala (maternal aunt).

The extended family in Silwa is the unit of discipline and social control resorted to when the basic conjugal family unit fails in this domain, particularly when the son is grown up and shows traits of social deviancy. However, the degree and level of interference from the extended family is prescribed by patrilineal rules of descent. The portion of extended family related through the father’s line is directly responsible for disciplining its members. It is referred to as Asaba (the throbbing nerve, the core).

The matrilineal extended family is referred to as Lahma (the flesh connection). It is the family side which plays an emotional, supportive, and rewarding role. In marriage, for example, while the common saying dictates that a man should take the Asila (the woman of good descent) and ask the Am (the paternal uncle) before the Khal (the maternal uncle); the Khal mediates in paying a smaller or receiving a larger bride price.

The social obligations of the extended family are also differentiated according to the patrilineal Asaba and matrilineal Lahma categories. The Asaba obligations are material, while the Lahma’s are affective and emotional. On festive occasions, the paternal extended family helps in the
cost of food, bread, cigarettes, sweets, and other items to be offered to guests. The maternal extended family, on the other hand, helps in cooking and organizing the celebration. In death, the paternal extended family must help in the burial rituals and the funeral costs. The maternal extended family, during this crisis, helps in comforting the sufferers from their loss.

The smallest organizing social unit in Silwa is the conjugal family al-Bait. H. Ammar notes that the family is the unit responsible for the economic and social support of its members (1954:42). Today there are approximately 3,000 families in Silwa Bahari. The preliminary results of the household survey I carried out reveal that the majority of families (70% of 300 households surveyed) consider the basic bread winner in the house to be the head of the family. The person, i.e., the family head, is not necessarily residing in the home. He could be a migrant father/brother or a father separated from the mother by divorce. Moreover, the family head is not necessarily the oldest member of the household. Yet the head of the family is predominantly a man.

The term family, Aila, in Silwa is not an ambiguously used term (Fakhouri 1972:55). The word produces momentary images of a residential place, a bread winner, a unit of procreation, and feelings of affection. The family, Aila, wrote a sixth grader in Silwa,
consists of a father, a mother, and children living in a house. In the family, the parents love their children if they behave themselves and do not cause trouble. The children love their parents all the time. The parents love the youngest child most because he is weaker and cannot defend himself. The older child, though jealous of his younger brother/sister, should care, tend, and defend him.

The parents hit children when they play with fire, dirty themselves in the sand, or do badly at school.

Few female-headed households/families exist in Silwa today. These families, however, are only female dominated on day-to-day financial and emotional support. They provide expenditure for school equipment, food, electricity, and water bills. In cases of large expenditures, crisis or major decisions including school fees, medical bills, funerals, marriages, yearly supplies of clothing, or educational choices, the patrilineal males in the extended family have to come into the picture. The proportion of female-headed families in Silwa amounts to approximately 10%.

These families have emerged as a result of four events: widowhood, divorce, desertion, or migration. Women heading these families earn their basic incomes from a combination of two or three sources including their husband’s/father’s pension (if he was a government employee), taking up a job, renting or selling of the land they own, and/or selling their gold jewelry. The following passage reveals the dynamics of such families through two case studies.
Case One: Widowhood

This family has been female headed since the father’s death one year ago. The father worked in the railways as a traffic controller. The household now consists of three unmarried daughters and the mother. Two of the daughters are school teachers, while the third attends a teacher’s college. The day-to-day expenditures of this family are covered through the father’s pension and the income of the two daughters from teaching. The daughters inherited a very small piece of land. The younger sister’s college expenditures are paid for by the paternal uncle, who also had to pay for the father’s funeral. The paternal uncle is their representative and spokesman in public and community affairs.

Case Two: Orphaned/Divorced

This family has been female headed for six years. Both parents died within a year and the older brother moved to his uxorilocal residence upon his marriage. Today the family consists of four sisters. The oldest sister was divorced many years ago and moved back to her father’s house. The second sister (in order of age) was deserted by her husband who is now working in Cairo. The two younger sisters are not yet married and go to the teacher’s college in Komombo.

The family earns its day-to-day income from the oldest sister’s work as a "tailor," and the annual profits from their land share of sugar cane sales. Note that in "normal" families this occupation is looked down upon and only excused on the basis of dire need for a source of money. Major decisions in this family are made by the brother and the brother-in-law. On the last day of my stay in Silwa, the men gathered to decide a strategy for obtaining a divorce for the second sister who had been deserted by her husband for a year. I heard when I was in Cairo that the brother had met with the deserting husband and obtained the required divorce.

Other types of families exist in Silwa, the nuclear/conjugal family type. Ideally, this family represents the older life cycle families. Parents whose children have all been married for ten or more years live in
the nuclear structure. Today, however, there are newlywed couples who live in separate households from their in-laws. Still, this young nuclear family is not a prevalent dominant structure. The newlyweds start their family in the bride’s patrilocal residence. The bride’s patrilocal family is responsible for housing the couple and preparing food for the bridegroom. Six or seven years or after having one or two children, the newlyweds move to the virilocal residence. This move reshapes the family into a one boundary patrilineal family. The patrilocal family and the son’s family constitute one family that shares all the economic expenses as well as caring for the children.

There are also families where the daughters move back to the uxorilocal residence after the virilocal resident family has been established. These are cases of divorced women or wives of migrants. The divorced women go back to their father’s house with their younger children. In the case of divorce Islamic law allows the mother to keep the children up to the age of 7 for boys and 9 for girls. The social practice, however, permits the mother to keep the children until their marriage, since often the father remarries, whereas the mother in the majority of cases does not.

Women whose husbands migrate to the oil-rich countries move to their father’s house until the legalities of accompanying the husband are completed or until the husband’s return.
In 1951, Ammar noted the Habib, as the cognatic category cutting across the bilateral kinship of Karib. The Habib relationship was not a cooperation based on binding mutual obligation (1954:65-66). Today, in addition to the Habib cooperative cognatic relationships, there is the Jar (neighbor) relationship.

The Jar relationship is based on a binding mutual obligation of direct reciprocity. If your neighbors lend you yeast to bake bread, utensils to cook, and stand by you during your celebrations and funerals, then you are bound to reciprocate. But if the neighbors do not help and support you or act indifferent, then your relationship is ideally based only on Husn-al-Jira (descent/polite treatment) sanctioned by the Prophetic tradition. The neighbor’s mutual obligation in the village today supercedes the binding Karib relationship only in minor crises. However, the Jar relationship ends in cases of misunderstandings or friction. Today in Silwa, the most reported reason for friction between neighbors is the throwing of water on the streets or alleys common between neighboring houses. Due to absence of any drainage facilities in Silwa, the household rids itself of excess dirty water by throwing it on the public streets. Neighbors trying to reach their houses slip in the mud caused by this practice causing some bodily injury or at best dirtying clothes.
Inter-Family Relations

In 1951, H. Ammar depicted inter-family relations as patriarchal in nature. The husband enjoyed the highest position in the family. He made the major decisions and was informed only about major events affecting everyday family life. The wife, on the other hand, was largely submissive and attended to her husband's needs. Levity of behavior between husband and wife was not permitted, especially in public. Women never called their husbands by name, while men referred to their wives generally as "people of the house." Demonstration of affection or intimacy between husband and wife in public or in front of children was not permissible. During the first year of marriage and until she bore a boy, the wife was not allowed to eat with her husband. Sexual fidelity from the wife was an expected norm and breaking it entailed more than divorce.

The father's relationship with his children was characterized by social distance. He was the disciplinarian and his obedience was unquestionable and sanctioned by religious values. He planned his son's work and future, whereas the mother was responsible for the daughter's upbringing. Boys avoided their father in public as a sign of respect and obedience.

The relationship of the mother with her children was more affectionate. Obeying her orders could be questioned and sometimes not followed.
Older sons were favored by parents. Brother relationships were ideally supposed to show solidarity, assistance, and affection. However, in actuality this did preclude stimulating jealousy during childhood training and bickering in later life.

The binding force of kinship ties characterized the in-laws’ relationship. The wife’s mother was affectionate to her son-in-law while the husband’s mother was harsh and fault finding.

In spite of the patriarchal nature of the family process, matrilineal affinities were valued in certain situations. In warding off the evil eye rituals, charm writing situations, appealing to God in prayer, and the displaying of affection through visitations, connection to the mother was always invoked.

Today, the inter-family relations described by H. Ammar (1954:50-55) continue in the majority of households. The family is still patriarchal in structure, where the husband is the master of the house. The traits he appreciates in a wife include religiosity, beauty, obedience, and good family origin. The preliminary results of the household survey I administered to 300 families reveal little correlation between such criteria in a wife and the educational level or occupation of the husband. The wife, on the other hand, primarily appreciates a providing husband with a productive source of income and a solid man who "fills his garments."

The traditional common saying, "ye who chooses the monkey
for his money, the money goes, and the monkey stays as he is," alludes to the discouraging of such a selection criterion for a husband. Although being rich in terms of money has not loomed large in choosing a wife or a husband, yet the value is being tacitly recognized.

The husband’s decisions have expanded to include planning his daughter’s work and marriage. He is the one who generally communicates with his children’s school teachers and looks at their homework. Concerning their marriage, one of my informants recited the common proverbial advice to the father, "arrange your daughter’s marriage and don’t worry about your son’s."

The maternal sentiments in Silwa are still a strong element in the kinship regulating process. The seeking of Baraka from older women and the pride with which the Silwians refer to their descent from the Prophet’s daughter translate the sentiment precisely.

The preliminary results of the household survey reveal that only 20 of the 300 men seek education in women as a trait in a wife. There is a strong correlation between the age of the respondent and the selection of this trait. Men below the age of 35 emphasize the criterion of an educated wife. It is within this generation of families that change has occurred.

In the 1951 Silwa, the mate selection was a family process. Upon professing the readiness to marry or around the age of 20, the boy’s mother or female kin listed
properly eligible young women (many of whom the boy had seen once or twice when they were fetching water). After his selection, the groom’s female relatives asked the mother or a female relative of the prospective bride about the possibility of allowing the marriage. Once the women came to an agreement, the official men’s request proceeded. The bride to be provided no reply when she was informed by her father and kept silent whether she willed or nilled the marriage. At the time, camels, cows, sheep, goats, pigeons, and grains were exchanged for the bride’s price. The negotiations took the form of bidding. The bride’s maternal uncle Khal was the one to agree to take the price from the in-laws.

Mate selection today is relatively more personal and individualistic. The young man, upon seeing the girl on the job or as a student or in the market, approaches her best woman friend with the idea. The woman friend then talks to the prospective bride and later informs the suitor of her decision. Then the man goes to his family announcing his desire to marry Bint Filan (the daughter whose father is so). At this point the groom’s male kin visit the family of the prospective wife. The intentions of the visit are clarified through neighbors or by a visit from the mother of the groom to the mother of the bride. The bride price is not negotiated any more. It is actually a standardized monetary sum that changes with inflation. The last bride price I witnessed was 400 Egyptian pounds in comparison to the 15
pounds in the sixties. The maternal uncle still cashes the bride price.

Although the husband with an educated wife still enjoys the highest position in the family, the decision making process is made in a dialogue with the wife, or can be suggested by her, or at least she may have her own comments on the matter.

The educated wife in the young family is obedient but not submissive. She tends her husband’s needs, but not over and above her children’s welfare. The wife eats, converses, and jokes with her husband at home. The levity of behavior in public, however, is still expected. The wife never refers to her husband by name in public, but calls him al-Rajil (the man). Display of affection between husband and wife continues to be a taboo in public or in front of the children. The change in the power relationship between husband and wife in these young families is best symbolized in walking. Today when the husband and wife walk together in the village, they walk next to each other and not like in 1951 when the wife was expected to walk behind her husband or come separately when both were visiting a relative.

The educated wife’s control over household resources among the young families has expanded to include money. The wife earns approximately half of the monthly liquid income since she works outside the home. Moreover, the wife still holds the keys of various closets that contain money and goods. Today, the goods include consumer items such as
crystal glasses, plates, forks, knives, tapes, records, pictures, and sometimes cameras.

The relationship between the father and the children in young families with educated wives is characterized in addition to respect by proximity and tending. The father often calls his children by nicknames and supervises their school homework. However, this relationship cannot be generalized across the life cycle, since the children in these families are still between toddlerhood and the age of ten. It will be interesting to observe the father-children relationship in these families in five to six years’ time.

Sibling relationships in these young families with educated wives are also still limited to the specific life cycle of dependent youngsters. Yet, within this cycle, the relationships are imbued with over-protection and constant call for sibling solidarity. Both sisters and brothers are affectionate to each other. Competitiveness between siblings in these young families is normally created by the parents over school work comparisons.

The relationship of the mother with the children in these young families is still very affectionate. Her presence, however, is not a constant since she goes to work for three to six hours daily, during a period of nine months.

Sons are still favored by both mothers and fathers in these families, but the chronological order of birth is no longer a criterion for favoritism. The son who obeys and
performs well at school is the preferred one. Success and good grades at school have become the greatest incentive to parental favoritism and a source of family pride.

The in-law relationship is still a binding force among young families with educated wives. The wife’s mother nowadays, however, is not unconditionally affectionate to her son-in-law by the imperatives of the kinship system. She is affectionate to him if he reciprocates mutual obligations and helps her family in its affairs. In this cognate pattern of relationships as in other areas of family dynamics, standardized modes of behavior prescribed by the kinship system do not reign supreme as in the past. In reality reciprocating at the personal level has emerged to be an acceptable criterion for concern, feelings, and action in everyday life as well as in social relations.

The Village Government, Kinship, and the State

H. Ammar tells us that the government system in Silwa in 1951 included a local village system and a central government agency. The village government was represented by the Omda (head-man), and two Sheikhs. Both offices were filled by election, but were ultimately determined by kinship and tribal principles. The Omda office had been vested in the same family since 1911 and the Sheikhs’ positions represented the two major sections of descent in the village, namely Onab and Musiab. The central government
was embodied in the police station, government appointed officers, and policemen. The local administration law of 1960 cancelled all head-men positions for villages with Nugtas (police stations).

Silwa, today, in view of its much larger population size and territory has three Sheikhs (local leaders) instead of two. The kinship system provides its balance in the determinants of these three offices. The first Sheikh represents the four clans of the Onab Hessa (section). The second Sheikh represents three of the four clans of the Musiab section including the 'Atamni, 'Amrab, and Marazig. The third Sheikh, the grandson of the last Omda, represents the largest single clan in the village, the Brahimab. The Sheikh post is still an honorary unpaid post. Elections for the Sheikh post take place when there is more than one nominee. This, however, barely happens and the Sheikhs assume their positions based on clan agreement and fictive elections every four years (eligibility to the Sheikh post requires a minimum ownership of 5 feddans and knowledge of reading and writing).

The Sheikhs of Silwa today are responsible directly to the police station headed by a police officer. Their role is to resolve disputes, to mediate between central government agencies and village clans in cases of crime, and to provide government officials with the required data and information. However, in carrying out this role, the
Sheikhs are not part of the state hierarchy and their power lies in mediation not execution.\(^5\)

Today the state/central government is strongly and more extensively represented in Silwa. This presence is felt not only through the police station, the village cooperative, the health compound, the village council, the youth club, the village bank, the schools, but through local and general elections, specifications of marital age, land sales and purchases, and the monthly pay checks earned by civil servants as well.

The administrative and executive power of the central government in the village falls directly with the village council. The rest of the agencies are concerned with agriculture, health, and civil courts.

Article 124 of the 1960 Local Government Law dictated the formulation of village councils for sizable villages. According to this law the village council was constituted of twenty elected members from Silwa and its satellite villages in 1960. The condition for election was membership in the government party system (Arab Socialist Union). The elected members then voted from among them, the head of the village council. This was only one body in a chain of various administrative units at higher levels. Each village council was to be represented in the Governorate (the provincial administrative unit) by way of district representations (the local administrative unit between village and Governorate). Aswan is divided into five Marakiz (districts). Each
district provided the Governorate with five to six members representing it (by election) to form the Aswan Popular Local Council, which in turn elected its secretary general. Again this body would choose its representative to the general conference of the Arab Socialist Union in Cairo.

In 1978, the previous law was cancelled and the new local government, Law No. 43, was promulgated introducing a new system of local government. On the village level, the village council includes two bodies, the Village Local Popular Council and the Local Unit. According to the new law the former body represents the villagers and is elected by the community—a sort of local parliament—while the latter is an executive body, appointed by the Governorate council. The Local Popular Body in the village is responsible for ascertaining the needs of the people. It raises these needs to the executive body, which in turn transmits them to the Governorate.

On the Governorate level, the Governor, the highest official on the provincial level, is given the authority over all the ministries operating in his locales. Just as in 1960, the Governorate's Local Body was elected from the districts. The difference in 1978, however, was that elections on all levels were based on multi-party systems of right, center, and left, instead of a one party system.

The Village Local Popular unit today in Silwa comprises of 17 elected members, one of whom is a woman. The members are engaged part time in the council and are paid monthly
salaries. The unit organizes itself into committees which meet once every other month. These committees focus their concern on local issues and problems related to education, health, housing, food subsidy, and public amenities for transmittal by the unit with its recommendations to the Governorate.

It is worth mentioning here that the election of a woman to Silwa's village local popular unit reflects a breakthrough in the traditional world of women. Attitudes allowing women to join the labor force in Silwa today still limit them to the realm of education. However, the local government law of 1978 provided a clause mandating at least one woman representative in every elected local or national administrative executive unit.

The woman presently occupying this seat in Silwa is 27 years old and single. She is a member of the 'Atamni clan and holds an accounting diploma from Komombo. Her conjugal family is female headed, and the income she earns is their only regular source of money. The village attitude, generally, focuses on the destitute state of the woman's family to rationalize the reason for her election. It would be interesting to follow up on this woman's position in the unit after the next local elections in Silwa, since the clause concerning the representation of women in government-elected councils was repealed in April 1987.
Social Groupings and Their Implications

In 1951, Ammar classified social groupings in Silwa into three different groups on the basis of age. These were Juhal (the youngsters between 3 and 12), the Fattayat and Fityan (unmarried girls and boys), and the married, referred to as men and women. The age criterion showed itself in the segregation among the three groups, the variation in dress, and the outward behavior of respect (Ammar 1954:48). Today, the age criterion is still a basis for social differentiation. However, the classifications, boundaries, and norms of behaviors of the respective age groups have witnessed a slight change especially due to the spread of compulsory education.

The youngsters in the village compromise two distinct groups. These are the Juhal (boys and girls below the age of five) and the new category of Talamiz (school children). The difference between the two groups reveals itself in dress and behavioral expectations. The Juhal wear the Gallabiyya (the loose long dress) at all times and are allowed to mix with adults. The Talamiz are expected to wear western trousers and dresses during school times and are seldom permitted to mix with adults during social gatherings.

Education and occupation have also reshaped the unmarried and married age boundaries. Today these groups are differentiated into Kabir Mitalim (educated adult) and Kabir Jahil or Ummi (uneducated adult). The two groups of
the same sex mix freely regardless of their educational background or marital status. The differentiation between the married and unmarried adult reflects itself in the titles given to the individual and in dress variation. The educated married or unmarried adult is referred to as Oztaz (for male) and Abla (for female teacher). The uneducated single adult is referred to as bit Ibrahim/wad Ibrahim (the son or daughter whose father is Ibrahim), while the uneducated married adult is referred to by ascribed titles including Hajj/Hajja (those who have been on pilgrimage,) or the mother/father of so and so.

The dress varies between the married and unmarried. The married men wrap the Shash (turban) as a head dress, the unmarried do not. The wearing of the Shash among the married men in the village today varies according to occupation. The civil servant wears the "western" trouser and shirt during his official work and does not cover his head. Upon his return from the job, he slips into the Gallabiyya (the loose traditional dress) and puts on his head dress.

Women's dress also varies according to their marital status and occupation. The married women in Silwa wear the black Tuub (dress) and cover their hair with a scarf and Mognah (a long net-like black scarf) all the time if they do not hold a job outside the home. The married women who work outside the home, however, wear a long dress or skirt and cover their head with a scarf that matches the color of their
dress. Upon returning home, the working women change into the black Tuub and Mognah. The unmarried women in the village, unless in mourning, should not wear black and put the Mognah on their shoulder.

Outward behaviors of respect for the older person have witnessed some change in Silwa. This change is clearly revealed in the reply of the head of the Hassabalab clan (an elderly) to my question, "What happened to the respect for old people?" He said:

"It has been shaken a little. . . . The respect is not like it used to be. . . . In the past, the older person was totally respected. . . . you don’t lie down in front of him. . . . you wait until he greets you first and then quickly exchange the greeting. The older people were few in the village.

There has been a change in respect. You tell the younger people come I’ll tell you what to do. . . . they say we know, we do not need advice."

The reduction in outward behaviors of respect for the elderly does not mean a decrease in valuation of the old in the village. The criterion for old in Silwa is related to biological deterioration in men and the end of procreational years in women. Women at the menopausal years gain status. They can mix more freely with men and can walk on their own at night. Many of the old women referred to as Gadimat are healthy and energetic. It is believed that they bestow Baraka (blessings) and that their prayers are heard.

The old men, referred to as Gadimn, are often physically handicapped. Although some old men feel they do not receive their deserving esteem, they are respected for their knowledge, memory, and traditional wisdom. Their
ability to relate stories from the past, the geneology of the G'afra, and their fair/tolerent judgment are respected by the younger villagers.

Today the villagers refer to the older people by the religious title of Hajji (male) or Hajja (female) and not by the kinship terms used in 1951. The real title is gained by performing the pilgrimage to Mecca and it is one of the highly cherished aspirations of all the older people in Silwa.

Gender was another basis for social grouping in Silwa referred to by H. Ammar (1954). The two definitely distinct groups (the world of men and the world of women in the community) still exist. Today, the free mixing between the two worlds is still not permissible. But that one thing done by one sex can be done by a member of the other sex has become thinkable in certain activities such as feeding the baby or making tea. In 1951, women's activities were mainly confined to the home, except when they fetched water or went to the mill to grind grain. Today and since 1965, women have left the home to receive general and professional education. They have joined the men as teachers in schools. Consequently, educated women have been engaged in an occupation which was monopolized by men for at least 15 years. Men, however, have not joined the core of women's domain inside the home. A man who does not mix with his fellows outside the home still stands to be branded "man of the oven," the place where women bake the bread.
Women's education and their joining of the labor force outside the home has not, however, challenged completely the segregation of the sexes in the village. At the school levels (primary and secondary tiers) where girls and boys are in classes together, the girls sit on one side and boys on the other. During recess, the same pattern prevails; girls play and sit together and boys play away from the girls. Among the teachers, the segregation between men and women is also the accepted practice. The women teachers drink their tea separately from the men teachers during the morning recess. The interaction between the teachers takes place strictly in "groups of females" with "groups of males."

The following is an incident of gender segregation in schools:

A sixth grade female student from Silwa won the school contest held annually on the Governorate level for best drawing. I received an invitation to attend the celebration where representatives from the center (Komombo) and the Governorate (Aswan) were coming to hand prizes to the student and the art teacher. I arrived at the school to find the grounds decorated, the students lined up, and two separate seating spaces arranged in the school court. At first, I thought the chairs were separated to delineate the teachers' space versus the guests' space. I recognized, once the celebration started, that one set of chairs was for the guests, while the other was for the female teachers. The male teachers stood near the students to keep them quiet. Although the prize winners were a female teacher and a female student, the cultural norm of excluding women from strangers required containing women teachers in one space instead of allowing them.

Male and female worlds are still differentiated by decoration requirements, dress, speech, expressions of joy
or sadness, worship rituals, and various aspects of behavioral patterns.

Women are still expected to adorn themselves with ornaments for almost every sense (Ammar 1954:49). These ornaments have changed to include in most cases plastic earrings instead of gold earrings, modern chemical makeup instead of the Kuhul (indigenous black powder used for the eye), and bottled moisturizing creams instead of Henna herb. The gold nose rings and silver anklets have been completely outmoded. Men have also added to their ornamentation wrist watches and aftershaves or colognes.

Men still keep their hair short, while women never cut their hair short with the exception of the two women students who attend the university in Aswan. The third female university student has assumed the Hijab (the urban Islamic dress), which dictates that she covers her hair, forehead, and ears in a tight fashion, an imitation of the emerging urban design of the Islamic dress.

Although women do not wear trousers as an everyday attire in the village, the school uniform is a trouser suit. The jacket of the suit is long so as to cover the backside of the legs. At the intermediate and secondary levels, female students are required to cover their heads with a white scarf, an educational tradition adopted by rural and provincial schools. It is worth noting that this female age group, according to the community dress code, are not required to cover their heads.
Today, speech patterns are not as differentiated by gender as by age and education. The older uneducated women were the hardest to understand from my Cairenne Arabic stance. They maintain the speech pattern characterized by H. Ammar as sprinkled with diminutive, attaching the feminine "n" at the end of the third person verb, and drawing out their verbs. The older, uneducated men spoke fast and dropped the endings of many of the verbs.

The younger and educated Silwians sympathized with me at the beginning of my stay. They, because of television, were aware of my Cairene accent and spoke either slower or mimicked the Cairene accent.

The greetings used by men are different from those used by women. Men, in general, greet you by saying al-Salamu Alikwm (peace be upon you). They stop to talk to the man/men they have greeted only if they have not seen him/them for a while. Women, on the other hand, greet other women by asking about their situation and well-being. They stop to greet other women and hold hands for the time they are saying, "Ki Halik, Tibi, Minhi, Mziri" (how are you, well, doing well, tired).

Men and women who know each other, upon meeting on the street or alleyways, avoid eye contact and exchange greetings with mumbling words as they pass by. In certain specific kinship relationships, the two groups stop and talk to each other.
Women still are the gender group that is expected to express without restriction their feelings of joy or sadness. The situation, however, is changing. In the past, the Wri Wri or Abou Abou cries of joy and sadness were essential to announce happy or sad occasions. Today, microphones that are placed on Mosques or the roofs of houses have been introduced. As a result, men in the family are using religion to discourage women from uttering the mourning cries. Women are told it is unIslamic to cry in mourning and that it is unIslamic for women’s voices to be heard. However, women are not deprived of uttering their joyful shrills on happy occasions. In ceremonies attended by both sexes, men sit on benches in the middle of the courtyard while women sit on the ground toward the periphery.

With regard to religious duties, as dictated by the Holy Koran, both sexes are encouraged to adhere to their rituals, observances, and taboos. However, with the exception of fasting in Ramadan, women are more lax than men in connection with observing the five daily prayers. Women in Silwa, as in many other rural and urban areas in Egypt, do not participate in communal worship in the Mosque or attend it for individual prayers. This phenomenon is certainly related to the customary tradition of sex segregation and has no basis in the injunctions of Islamic jurisprudence.
It was reported to me that communal worship in one village Mosque was opened to women eight years ago on Friday. Two weeks later, the Sheikh of the Mosque banned women from coming any more. According to the Sheikh, "The women sat during the Khutba (sermon) talking about their cooking and gold instead of listening. . . . They disturbed the concentration of men sitting in front of them."

For those men who earn enough cash money, there is a conspicuous tendency to perform the sacred duty of pilgrimage to Mecca with their wives. Indeed, the trip, compared with two or three decades past, has become less tiresome and more accessible by steamboat or chartered flights. If in 1951 Silwa a handful of Hajis was recorded, the current number has considerably increased to reach more than 600. It is worth noting that performing pilgrimage does not only mean fulfilling a sacred duty and attaining a pious title, it is equally a symbol of prestige and social status as it will be elaborated later.

Magico-religious rites in Silwa have been subjected to certain criticism and their hold has become weaker. However, the world of women remains more vulnerable than the world of men to such practices. The women persist in performing certain rites at home and visiting healers to cast away the evil eye, to request pregnancy, or to fulfill a specific desire. Informants note that the only time men go to a healer or seek an amulet is in the case of Rabta (impotence).
Enlightenment through the spread of education and the availability of modern medicine have in great measure contributed to the weakening of magico-religious healing and support. Nevertheless these rites continue to represent the final resort when reason and modern medicine have proven their failure and something has to be done about the problem at stake. In other cases, poverty and ignorance have led to such practices on the basis of their cheapness and easier accessibility.

The Ordering Process of Religion

Today in Silwa, religion is still a vital social organizing force. Islam in its five pillars of worship is followed very closely. The first pillar of witnessing that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammad is his messenger, Al-Shahada, is not required by children of a Moselm father. The children in Silwa, however, are brought up in Islam through the Prophet’s sayings and the learning of the Koranic Surahs.

The second pillar of Islam, that of praying five times a day, varies in its practice among the Silwians. One of my informants said regarding praying in Mosques:

"In the past, people did not pray in Mosques as much as they do today. . . . People (meaning here, men) used to pray at home, if they prayed at all. Today, most men pray the five prayers in the Mosque . . . unlike in the past, when people were ignorant and did not know how to pray."
The conspicuous praying in Mosques can also be attributed to the increase in the number of village Mosques from two to seven. The building of Mosques has become another expression of clan competition. It is a holy deed motivated by the Prophetic Tradition which states "he who builds a Mosque for God, how small it may be, God will build a house in Paradise for him." However, the men who pray in Mosques are often the older and the married.

As indicated earlier, women pray at home. Those who perform the five prayers are the older, the married, or the widowed, as well as those who have been on pilgrimage. Socially the younger, unmarried women are not expected to pray, although religiously they are.

The third pillar of Islam, fasting during the lunar month of Ramadan is strictly observed in Silwa. Fasting in the Islamic religion is the act of abstaining from eating, drinking, smoking, and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset. Those exempted from fasting are men and women too old or feeble to bear the hardships of fasting. The sick, pregnant women, women who are suckling children, menstruating women, and those traveling can break their fast on condition they make up for it at a later period. In any case, it is inconceivable in Silwa to see any adult eating or drinking in public during Ramadan.

In the past 5 years, Ramadan has coincided with the Silwian summers. During the Gregorian year I spent in Egypt, Ramadan came twice. At the time, the Silwians waited
for the announcement of the month from the television. Once it was announced, the general daily routine changed. People stayed awake a long portion of the night in order to eat the Suhur meal (a meal eaten before dawn). The Silwians slept at 2 or 3 o’clock in the morning. They woke up at 7 or 8 a.m., rather late for the summer season, to attend to their respective chores. Ramadan during 1987 came when the school was out of season for most students. Only the high school certificate students, Al-Thanawiyya Al-‘Ama, were preparing to take their public exams. The 165 students were all fasting, except some of the women who had the valid excuse of menstruation. In the classroom I asked the general question, "Do you think that God will punish you if you don’t fast, since you’re preparing for a hard exam?"

One woman student immediately answered my question by repeating the Prophet’s saying, "Work on this earth as if you are living forever, and work for the world hereafter as if you were to die tomorrow." She continued her answer by explaining that "they," the students, were studying for the exams, thus working on this earth and fasting for the world after. "We are fulfilling the prophet’s saying precisely," she said.

Women, during the 1987 Ramadan, prepared for the break-fast meal early in the morning and rested during the afternoon. Women who worked outside the home were on vacation since work at school came to an end.
Men who worked as civil servants went on short work days, while the men teachers on vacation slept late in the morning.

Children usually followed the gender role models. Girls helped their mothers prepare the break-fast meal in the morning, while boys joined their fathers in the late mornings.

At sunset, the family gathered to break its fast. Often, the radio and the television were turned on in order to hear the cannon announcing sunset.

Children in Silwa generally start fasting at the age of seven or eight. They are trained or as one person said, "broken into fasting," gradually. First, they abstain from food and drink for a day or a portion of the day and slowly build up through the years to fasting the whole month.

In Ramadan of 1987, men spend extended evenings with their men friends in coffee shops or at guest houses. Women, on the other hand, stay at home watching television and preparing the Suhur meal.

The Suhur meal usually consisted of dates, green salad, cheese, fava beans, and bread. The food eaten at this meal should be light and unsalty, in order to make fasting the next day an easier process.

The break-fast meal normally contained meat, rice, fava beans, Mulukhia, green salad, apricot juice, and Kinafih (a sweat made of shredded wheat). In fact, families during
Ramadan gave greater attention to food, its variety, and cooking than any other time in the year.

In the past, the break-fast meal used to be eaten separately by men in their clan guest house. The men took their meal from home to the clan house. Today, the break-fast meal is eaten at home with the family. This is indicative of the clan’s lesser weight in favor of the family within the social structure. The month also witnessed the exchange of food items between relatives, care for the poor, and visitations to the elderly and the sick.

The fourth pillar of Islam, Zakat (alms-giving), is obligatory on all Moslems. It is payable at the rate of 2.5% of all savings over which a year has passed, in addition to Zakat on capital, land, and animals (Bagdadee 1969:20). Alms giving today in Silwa is paid in the uniform currency of money. The Zakat amount (not necessarily the real value) given by individuals is larger than in the past, since the assets owned have gained value through inflation. In 1951 Silwa, the Zakat was mainly given in kind in terms of grains, whereas today it is paid to the needy in cash money. This is partly because people grow very little grains which were taken over by sugar cane, and partly because of the common use of money in everyday dealings.

The fifth pillar of Islam, Hajj to the Kaba, the sacred house in Mecca, is made incumbent upon every Moslem at least once in a lifetime if he or she is in a position physically and materially to undertake the journey. The Hajj is
performed during the ninth day of the twelfth month of the Moslem calendar.

Today in Silwa, there are approximately seven hundred people who have gone on pilgrimage. Hajj Ali, the baseline study informant said:

"During your father's time, the people who went on pilgrimage could be counted on one hand. Now, they have increased, especially with the accessibility through transportation and increase in cash. In the past, people used to ride camels across the mountains to the Red Sea... It used to take 15 to 20 days to reach Mecca on camels. A Mutauif (a person announcing Hajj time) used to come from Mecca to Silwa inviting people to go on pilgrimage. Today, this is done through travel agents. Silwians who work in Mecca and Medina take care of their village folk. The trip, nowadays, costs around 700 to 800 Egyptian pounds and takes by plane approximately six to seven hours from Cairo."

In the past, the people going on pilgrimage used to be escorted by the villagers until the boundaries of Silwa. Now they are seen off at Aswan airport or at the Suez maritime port. The event is also celebrated by festivities of food and drink before and after pilgrimage.

The return from the Hajj celebrations today include painting the respective houses of the pilgrimages with blue and white chalk. Drawings from Mecca and Koranic verses decorate the exterior of the house in a more elaborate fashion. Close kin are socially obligated to receive their relatives on their return at the airport or the train station. At home sweet tea and cold drinks (since the Hajj has been in summer for the past six or seven years) are served. The pilgrim brings with him or her presents,
particularly rosaries for distribution to relatives and close friends.

In view of the importance of the pilgrimage occasion in revealing and expressing some of the norms, obligations, and dynamics of social organization in concrete terms, a full description of the festivities connected with this event is attempted in Appendix 13.

The Silwian religious ordering includes saints. This inclusion is not a fact present in rural cultures only. In both Cairo and Alexandria, urban people have their saints in Sayyida Zeinab, Sidna al-Hussain, and al-Sayyid al-Badawi. The Silwians, however, have three orders of holy Sheikhs (saints). These are the living saints, the buried, and the markers.

Today the living saints are descendants from one man, Ahmad Alithi, the grandson of al-Naqshabandi, the founder of a mystic order named after him. Ahmad Alithi was a pious man who, according to Silwians, performed miraculous feats by healing the sick and making infertile men and women fertile. His tomb is visited by Silwians soliciting help in chronic and incurable diseases. The sons and grandsons of Sheikh Ahmad Alithi are regarded with respect and thought to have ancestor Baraka (blessing). The original Sheikh, i.e., Ahmad Alithi, is celebrated in Silwa in a horse race festival. He is also commemorated by naming the first primary school after him. The grandson of Ahmad Alithi, who
resides in a nearby town, is sought by Silwians for Baraka, problem solving, and mediation in the Arab councils.

Sheikh Ibrahim is another buried saint in Silwa. The grandfather of the Brahimab clan, his descendants, have not been considered as possessing Barkat. His tomb is in the "old village" and is covered with green cloth, a color usually associated with related kinship to the Prophet, and the wooden structure that contains the tomb is painted with white chalk.

Sheikh Ibrahim’s tomb has a self-appointed woman guard. The woman appears to be in her seventies. Five years ago, this woman, who is originally from the Brahimab clan, dreamt of Sheikh Ibrahim asking her to clean and guard his tomb. She is a widow, living in a house on her own, and all her male children work in Cairo. In the morning, she goes to the tomb, sweeps the floor, sprays it with water, and sits there until sunset. The tomb of Sheikh Ibrahim is frequented by women who have financial problems or ill children. Women visitors, often on their way out, give the guard a few piasters for her work.

Sheikh Abou Gharama is the third saint buried in Silwa. Abou Gharama is the tomb of the great-grandfather of the Gharamab clan. The burial ground is at the center of the old village. Both men and women visit this tomb to draw Baraka and fend off the evil eye. The tomb has no guard and is a little smaller than that of Sheikh Ibrahim.
Two other holy sheikh shrines are in Silwa. These, however, are Alamat (markings) left by holy men traveling through Silwa and not tombs.

El-fawi is a stone marking left on the eastern hills of Silwa. This shrine is often referred to as the "children’s Sheikh." The shrine is visited on the morning of the Moslem feast, after the month of Ramadan, by children to draw Baraka from it and to enjoy an energetic outing in climbing to the hill. The marking of El-fawi came in a dream to a person in Silwa a long time ago, and ever since it has been recognized as a holy saint.

El-sheikh Hadid is the second marking shrine in Silwa. It is a piece of granite stone on the eastern part of the old village. Women visit Sheikh Hadid to induce pregnancy. Today, the stone shrine is being partly destroyed by a 70-year-old man who is expanding his house to accommodate his daughter’s uxorilocal residence. Upon asking him if what he is doing is right or wrong, he said:

"We have here two stones, women come and put on them bread and walk across them. They call it Hadid (the word also means iron in Arabic) . . . There is no iron and no wood . . . no nothing. . . . Women have weak beliefs . . . Why do this? There is no sheikh Hadid, no nothing and he left no mark. Why leave a mark if he was a holy man and God accepted him? What does he need from people? What does he want with this world if he is going to heaven? . . . Why leave a mark?

We had in the Kuttab here a person called Sayyid Zouni. . . . His father guarded the Mosque in the next door village. Zouni said, 'I will make you a holy man’s shrine tomorrow.' At night, he brought palm tree leaves and sat on them. The next morning he told everybody Sheikh Zouni passed and left this mark. . . . Women from all over the
Silwian villages started coming to visit this sheikh. This is all from the women and their weak minds. . . . They believe everything."  

From the previous discussion of the ordering process of religion it becomes clear that it acts as an articulating force in the life of the village. It is evident that religion, magico-religious practices, and saint observances are largely interwoven with the social fabric and the community structure. The sanctity of commendable moral behavior versus unacceptable sinful behavior stems from the corresponding religious norms of Halal and Haram which are often invoked in evaluating any social action or dealing. Marriage, birth, circumcision of boys and girls, success, and even personal or communal crisis are all justified and rationalized on religious foundations.

Familial piety and obedience to parents is dictated by the Koran, thus sanctioning the maintenance of the patriarchal authority. Taking oath on the Koran makes the agreement between the two parties binding and a substitute for recording, as in the case of initiating marriage or in a financial transaction. With few exceptions and more liberal interpretations, the life of the village remains as in the study of H. Ammar governed by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions (1954:75).

Recall must be made to the pride of the community in its descent from the Prophet’s tree. The village clans compete in establishing each its own Mosque as they compete in their guest houses. Even the two large sections of On
and Musa sustain their social equilibrium by each having its own saints, enshrined in the holy tombs of Ibrahim and Abu Gharama. The saintly world itself is structured where Sheikh Allithi at the top sought and celebrated by the whole village, followed by the other two saints, ancestors of the two major sections, with the rest of the saints at the base of the hierarchy. However, the profane act of erecting a residence on a saint’s territory is a strikingly new phenomenon. In fact, some of the magico-religious beliefs and practices are now being questioned or abandoned with the modernization process, particularly among the educated youth. It is in the world of women that these magico-religious activities die hard due partly to the much higher rate of illiteracy among females.

At the family level, laws of inheritance, marriage contract, divorce, and custody of children are all governed by the enacted law of Personal Affairs derived from Islamic jurisprudence and which is largely adhered to in Silwa. Segregation of women has its sanctions from certain Puritanic interpretations of Islamic traditions. The family prestige and social status is enhanced by the pilgrimage of its patriarch which would compensate for his lack of wealth or education.

In short, whether as declared ideology or in practice, religion is inextricably connected with the processes of social organization, control, and structuring in the village community. One can describe the village religious
practices in terms of popular religion which varies in its magico-religious beliefs from the interpretations of the learned scholars and jurists of Al-Azhar, the reputed religious university in Cairo.

It is also popular in contrast to the interpretations of some of the Fundamentalist groups with their politico-historical version of Islam. The villagers in Silwa have not been influenced by any of the claims of this group. The appearance of both men and women remains folkish in dress. Men have not grown beards and women continue to dress in the Gallabiyya, the traditional garment, except in the case of those employed as government civil servants. On the whole, neither in beliefs nor in practice and observances, the extremism of militant Fundamentalists have exerted any influence.

It is worth mentioning here that the Fundamentalist movement with all its paraphenalia finds its fertile soil among the urban proletariat and lower middle class in large cities. In Silwa, as in the large majority of rural areas, Fundamentalism has not been able so far to strike any capturing note.

**Concluding Remarks**

To sum up the main issues of this chapter, it is evident from the field data observed that the challenging forces of modernization have so far produced minor changes
in the basic structure of the kinship web and in the dynamics of local community processes.

It is observed from the previous description that certain loosening in the closely knit social system of 1951 has occurred. This is particularly noticeable when the in-group solidarity is faced with events at the national level, as exemplified in the case of general elections. In some measure, private and personal rights and interests have begun to prevail over corporate and communal rights and interests, particularly with the younger generation. The increasing rate of resort to court and legal procedures in case of inter- and intra-village disputes is also a symptom of a weakening in the binding force generated hitherto by the web of kinship.

However, the distribution of local power between the two kinship sections (On and Musa) and their respective clans persist in regulating and maintaining balance between the different groups. Combined with religious and magico-religious sanctions, the kinship system still provides the forceful sanctions that validate community processes and social control.

Modernization and education have had little effect on the segregation of the two sexes and in the division of labor. Women’s education, with only four or five exceptions, has not been encouraged to proceed to higher or university level. According to the social norms of decency, general education provided within the village suffices for
girls and if need be women travel to primary teacher training institutions nearby. Women’s employment with the government has been so far confined to jobs in Silwa and its satellite villages where the women can return home. Segregation on the basis of age is still observed with greater laxity especially among the younger generation.

Although the patrilineal principle and the father’s supreme authority maintains its hold in the social structure, younger families are moving towards more egalitarian decision making. Marriage from the agnate or cognate relatives or at least from the same village is still common with few exceptions in the case of officials whose duty station is in town or of those who have decided to reside in cities.

On the whole the organizing processes of the folk culture have continued with minor modifications to reproduce the basic interrelationships between the various components of the social structure. The cultural ethos with its reciprocal obligations, standardized behavior, and social values has not been so far challenged by the intervening forces of modernization.

Notes

1. Ali Ibn Abi-Taleb is normally referred to as Imam Ali, being the cousin of the Prophet, the fourth Caliph in the Rashideen Caliphate that succeeded the Prophet Mohammad, and the first holy Imam for the Shia sect of Islam.

2. The Ano Hegirae (A.H.) is 354 or 355 days, and it is calculated in relation to the moon’s orbiting around the
The A.H. or the lunar year is shorter than the A.D. or the solar year by 11 days. Each 97 A.D. years = 100 A.H. years.

The months in the A.H. year are 12. Some are 30 days and some are 29. See Koran 39:9. Mathematically, the A.H. year is calculated as follows:

\[
\text{The A.H. year of 1988 A.D.} = \frac{33}{32} (1988 - 622) = 1408
\]

3. The Khimih, which literally means "tent," is a communal spacious building for the reception of government officials and guests coming from outside the village, for the celebration of festivities during marriage and religious occasions, for mourning the deceased and condoling his/her family, and for holding "Arab Council" meetings to settle disputes.

4. See Chapter Five for details on how Silwians invite guests to their ceremonies and festivities.

5. Sterling (1966) and Harik (1974) both argue that the local leaders of the villages they studied in Turkey and lower Egypt, respectively, were either a weak part of the state hierarchy and/or derived their legitimacy from government intervention. In Silwa the sheikhs do not belong to the government hierarchy, and their legitimacy is totally based on the kinship dichotomies of On and Musa sections.

6. In the majority of intermediate and secondary cycles of education throughout the country, boys and girls are segregated in separate schools. They are only allowed to enroll in the same school when it is found that the arrangement is more economical in view of the size of school population of both sexes.

7. Ahmad Alithi horse race festival takes place during October or November, depending on the relative coolness of the months. It is an intra-village race, in which the villages from all over the Aswan Governorate meet in Silwa. The winner today is presented with a small silver cup as a reward.
CHAPTER FIVE
RITES OF PASSAGE AND RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES IN TRANSITION

Changing rites of passage and ceremonies have been problematic to anthropological theorizing and data collection (Durkheim 1915; Radcliffe Brown 1922; Malinowski 1935). The concept rites of passage was introduced by Arnold Van Gennep (1906). Gennep was interested in the activities associated with the ceremonies organized around the individual’s regeneration (Kimball 1960:vii). However, his book *Les Rites de Passage*, congruent to early twentieth-century thought, did not address issues of change.

As anthropologists became aware that socio-cultural change is more of a "characteristic than an abnormal occurrence," new explanations were offered, and old ones revived which directly or indirectly addressed rituals and ceremonies (Geertz 1957, 1968, 1973; Mannaheim 1955; Ortner 1978). Wolf, for example, argues that religious/ritual innovations in peasant societies often are built up and carried outward by the elite. This process of innovation requires time to reach the peasantry and therefore they retain their traditional practices. Once the innovation reaches the peasantry, they synchronize their traditional order with the new elitist pattern. This process Wolf calls
syncretism and defines it as "a merging of forms from two cultural spheres, in this case an older cultural tradition and a more recent one" (Wolf 1966:103).

The following pages describe change in the Silwian rituals, namely pregnancy, delivery, the post-partum period, inducing fertility, circumcision, marriage, divorce, death, celebrated ceremonies, and religious feasts. The change reveals a pattern of syncretism. This pattern came about by formulations introduced by the central government policies (elites) especially since 1952.

The exact processes leading to social change in Silwian rituals and ceremonies were difficult to depict precisely from my stance of data collection (Geertz 1957, 1968). The readily available information (both from the original baseline study of 1954 and from my own fieldwork) provides an ethnographic present of either before the change took place or well after the change has taken place. Recording or retrieving the stages and mechanism of the process of change was lost in the period in between.

**Rites of Passage**

**Naming Ceremony**

Marriage and family formation are only crowned by bearing and giving birth to children. The move from uxorilocal residence of the newlyweds after having a child, preferably a boy, to the patrilocal or independent house
represents the maturation of the conjugal family unit. For generations past, this new state of the family used to be announced in the naming ceremony of the son.

Presently, the naming ceremony is one of the rites of passage that has totally disappeared in Silwa. Prior to 1952, the Silwians held an elaborate naming ceremony for a boy offspring seven days after his birth. The guests, all men, gathered in the clan guest house for the declaration of the name. A yearling ram was sacrificed. The baby was then passed over the blood of the ram seven times to ward the evil eye off the child (Ammar 1954:91).

Today the parents pick two names, a boy’s and a girl’s, before the child is born. At birth the child is registered immediately by his/her name on the birth certificate as specified by the government’s law of civil registration of births.

The interesting change has been also in the kind of names used in Silwa. Traditionally the Silwians named their children after one of the Prophet’s daughters or sons, the Prophet himself, the ninety-nine names of God present in Islam preceded by the word Abd (servant of God), or after someone from the G’africa descendants. Moreover, the oldest child was often named after his paternal grandfather or her paternal grandmother. Today the naming process has generally become more secular, diversified, and innovative. Secular names of political leaders such as Saad, Jamal, are used. Meaningful names such as Ashraf (noblest), Khaled
(eternal), Adel (fair) are also used. For girls the names have also become more imaginative. Instead of the religious names of Fatima, Zeinab, and Khadeja, the girls' names have become modernized to include Mona, Rusha, Hana, and Sohair. One cannot fail to discern the urban demonstrative effect on the naming of both boys and girls in Silwa today.

On inquiring about why the naming ceremony has ceased in Silwa the reason given by all the informants rests on the high cost entailed in celebrating the ceremony. Money spent, they further stated, would better be saved for the child's schooling, a heavy responsibility which was not included in the scheme of parental values during the 1951 study.

**Pregnancy and Delivery**

In a woman's life pregnancy and birth-giving were the most important events in 1951 Silwa. The event of pregnancy, particularly in the case of the first child, was characterized by secrecy, carving, and declaration stages.

The woman, upon realizing that she was pregnant, told only her husband. She wrapped her stomach and declared her pregnancy into the second trimester. The pregnant woman during the second trimester started her craving. She used to crave for fruits, vegetables, and other delicacies which the husband was socially obliged to provide.

The delivery was carried out by a *Daia* (a traditional midwife) at home. "No woman in the village had been to a
doctor or hospital for delivery" in 1951 Silwa (Ammar 1954:96). Delivery was not regarded as a painful process by the woman who gave birth among her matrilineal women relatives. The actual delivery took place on a Majur (clay plate), while the woman was squatting on three stones. Three of the women kin present aided the delivering woman.

The Daia was paid by the women kinfolk. The Nugut (payment) consisted primarily of grain and bread. Upon delivering a boy, the Daia was sometimes given money in appreciation. The Daia’s duties included reporting the birth to the governmental authorities by way of filling a birth certificate form. In 1951, the literate men in the village helped the Daia in filling the government forms.

According to H. Ammar (1954) the professing of dissatisfaction upon having a girl was almost a sin in 1951 Silwa (due to the pre-Islamic custom of burying girls alive Wa’ad Al-Banat). Still, the behavioral practices, especially the announcing of birth, the rewarding of the midwife, and the curtailing of nursing time for girls to hasten pregnancies reflected the desirability for boys.

Pregnancy and birth giving remain the most important events in a woman’s life today. But the institutionalization of secrecy and craving stages do not characterize it anymore. Upon missing a period the newly married woman consults the doctor, either in Silwa, Komombo, or Aswan. The news of the newlywed’s visit to the doctor declares the
woman’s first pregnancy, while hitherto she was confined to the house until she gave birth.

Women in Silwa today experience carving during pregnancy as a personal state of physical demands. However, the foodstuffs they crave for are available to most of them either at the weekly market or in one of the shops. Consequently, the effort made in the past to obtain fruits or chocolates from a nearby town is uncalled for now, and thus unmentioned. One of my informants said pregnancy today is characterized by visiting the doctor and enjoying a light load of work.

Inducing pregnancy today in Silwa is a composite of traditional practices and of resorting to modern medicine. The major change has been in the concern of men in checking their infertility more by way of modern medicine, while women combine both methods.

Pregnancy and delivery in Silwa are surrounded by beliefs about infertility. Mishahra (infertility in women of childbearing age) is perceived as temporary, caused by metaphysical forces, and the case is always curable. It is believed that the wearing of gold is a prime cause of infertility among women. Often the woman who wears gold conspicuously is envied by her companions and relatives. This envy is perceived as a cause of Mishahra and the working of the evil eye.

Entering the room of a woman who is in her Nafasia (post-partum) period after a trip from the market or a long
journey from a far-away place renders her infertile later. It is believed that unless the woman visits the market or the place from where her visitor(s) has come, she will never conceive again.

Surprisingly, a newlywed couple, when alone in a room together, can be another source for the wife’s Mishahra if suddenly visited by a stranger. Another situation which should be avoided is going out of the house after sunset and seeing the stars and the moon. Consulting healers by a woman’s enemies to write them Amal (evil charms) against her conceiving could also cause infertility. This can only be prevented by counteracting charms done by a healer to disengage the effect of the previous inimical charm.

Women treat infertility or potential infertility by preventive and curative magico-religious measures. In the case of those who have been married for more than a year without conceiving, their cure can be sought in attending horse races, visiting Hajar al-Haad (the border stone) where the ancestor brothers delineated their boundaries between Silwa Bahari and Kibli, and/or seeking special healers to become fertile. These three measures are perceived as generic cures of infertility. Causality, linking specific cause of infertility to any of the particular three measures for cure is irrelevant in this situation. Only in the case of a newlywed bride with lots of gold that a healer to release the gold envy is necessary for providing the specific curing measure.
Women who are in their Nafasia (post-partum) period seek preventive steps to avert the future danger of becoming infertile. They hang Kalfa (bergine) in their rooms as barriers from the bad or evil feelings of people that may cause infertility. Also, the new mother meets all her guests (coming from the market or far away places) at the entrance of her room. If the guest(s) is carrying suitcases or food bags she steps seven times over them as a measure of securing her future fertility.

It must be noted that infertile women have started seeking modern medicine for curing their infertility only in the past five or six years. As indicated earlier, modern medicine, however, is not sought exclusively as infertile women believe that it cannot be relied upon totally. Without exception they visit the doctor and seek other traditional measures concomitantly. This combination of the double check is a testimony of the high level of anxiety resulting from fear of bearing no children.

Infertility among men is not as traditionally institutionalized in Silwa as that of women. Today men of child-bearing age who have been unable to have children with their wives seek modern medicine for checkups. If and when they are diagnosed as the "problematic" partner, they seek all possible medications and cures that are within their reach and the reach of modern technic medicine. However, when and if the diagnosis reveals the wife as the problematic partner, informants agreed that the man is
entitled to another wife, as a socially accepted procedure.

One informant related her story as follows:

"I was married to my first husband for two years. I was 14 when he married me. . . . I had not menstruated yet. So after the first year he went to the doctor to check whose fault it was that we've had no children. He was fertile of course . . . so he divorced me 6 months later. . . . I was married to my second husband, a year after my divorce . . . well you see we have two nice children. Thank God . . . but my first husband went around saying I am Ager (infertile) . . . may God forgive him."

In Silwa, impotence among men is culturally institutionalized and recognized only in one specific situation, i.e., al-Rabt. Only newlywed men are vulnerable to al-Rabt (impotence) and it is confined to this stage. It is also believed that people holding grudges against the groom or his family seek a healer to write them evil charms to render the groom impotent. The impotent newlyweds seek a healer in the nearby village of Massaid. He prescribes herbal medicine and tells them to read specific Koranic Surahs 40 to 60 times. Most of the cases, I was told by my informants, who seek the healer to cure their impotence are cured within a few weeks or a couple of months, at most.

Precautions from potential impotence are taken by many grooms on their wedding day. They wear their underwear inside out or wear a net around their waist.

In the case of delivery the traditional midwife Daia continues to perform this service in several instances. In many other instances delivery is carried out by the health compound doctor in the presence of the Daia at home. The
matrilineal women kinfolk are still present for moral support, since their role in the process of actual delivery has been replaced by the male doctor’s presence.

Both the Daia and the doctor are rewarded in cash today. The Daia is paid 5 L.E., while the doctor’s fees are 10 L.E.

There are also numerous cases today in Silwa of hospital deliveries outside the village for supposedly a better service. Ten percent of women go to the hospital in Aswan to deliver. These women are, however, the educated or those who anticipate complications such as cesarean sections or problems from rheumatic hearts.

Hospital deliveries in Aswan today start with the woman visiting the doctor for monthly checkups. She pays 20 L.E. for the doctor’s examination during the nine months of pregnancy. For the delivery, the doctor’s fee is 200 L.E. and the hospital room costs 10 L.E. daily. After delivery, a pediatrician checks the baby and prescribes a diet for the mother. The mother usually spends between one to three days in the hospital, depending on her condition.

Professing dissatisfaction with the birth of a girl is still a sin in Silwa. Statements such as "this is God’s will," "praise God she is healthy" are repeated consolations by mothers and fathers of newly born girls. However, the low profile in announcing the girl’s birth, in spreading the name chosen for the newly born, and the strained expression
of the delivering mother are behavioral indications which reflect the desirability for boys.

**Post-Partum Period, Nursing, and Birth Control**

In the 1951 Silwa the practice of enjoying 40 days of confinement followed the delivery. This was a period during which the woman was considered *Nafasia* (unclean) and susceptible to the evil eye. During this period the woman was secluded with her child and abided by a rigid protein diet and minimum movement (including no bathing). Dying from *Homa Elnifas* (puerperal fever) was not uncommon.

For a period of two years, if the mother bore no other children the child was breastfed. Within the fourth month women supplemented the milk with other food. Bottle feeding was entirely unknown. At the time the Silwian women recognized a relationship between nursing and pregnancy. They only curtailed the nursing period after the first year if they wished to become pregnant, but never extended breast feeding beyond two years as a birth control method.

Weaning in 1951 Silwa was a gradual process. Women put *Henna* on their breasts so that the milk would have a bitter taste and the child, in turn, would shy away from the breast and wean itself.

Birth control technology in 1951 Silwa as well as in the whole country was virtually unknown. In fact, attempting to prevent the conception of children was believed to be a sin sanctioned by religious tradition.
At present, the Nafasia period still follows delivery for women in Silwa. It is still charged with fear from the evil eye. Undesired guests are not allowed in the room where the woman is sleeping with her child. Protein diet is strictly followed. However, movement and bathing have become more frequent. Women who deliver in Aswan hospital, for example, travel back to Silwa the next few days after delivery, a 70 kilometer move by train or taxi. Moreover, women delivering in hospitals wash immediately after delivery upon the doctor’s request with water and antiseptics. Those who deliver at home wash within the third day of delivery and move around the house making tea or preparing food.

Death during the Nafasia period has considerably diminished in Silwa. During my stay I heard of only one case of death from Homa-Elnifas (puerperal fever), as well as few infant mortality cases.

Women breast feed their children for Hawliyyn Kamiliyyn (two years) as sanctioned by the Koran. Women, however (due to the purported increase in the usage of birth control pills), complain about the scarcity of breast milk to feed the child for two years. They, as a result, are forced to substitute breast feeding for artificial milk.1

Women who have to go out of the house for work either come back during break-time to breast feed their child or leave a bottle of their breast milk with the woman who is guarding the child, often the maternal or paternal
grandmother. Consequently, breast feeding in Silwa has become less indulging, and it has become replaced (in the second year) by powdered milk.

Repeated incidents where married couples were found out to have been nursed by the same mother led to wet nursing decline. For according to Koranic injunctions, two individuals nursed by the same woman are Okhwan Bilrida (breast-feeding siblings), and their marriage is forbidden.

Today, weaning in Silwa is less gradual and less bitter. The mother whose milk dries out (due to birth control pills) simply denies the child her breast. She substitutes the bottle for her breast and, sometimes when the screams become too loud, she holds the child very tight in a breast feeding position.

Two modern methods of birth control are used by Silwian women today. These are the birth control pill and the intrauterine device (IUD). The Birsham (the pills) available in pharmacies come in three brand names. These are Primovlar, Anovlar, and Nordet. All three brands have high estrogen content. The first pill box is bought from the pharmacy in Aswan or Komombo, after a visit to the doctor. From then on, women buy their contraceptive pills without prescription and by exchanging the empty box for a filled one at the pharmacy. The Sharit (IUD) requires fitting by the doctor. Women who use the Sharit are the older women who do not want children any more.
Age limitations for birth control pills are often not warned against by the doctors. Instead, doctors at first include vitamins in their prescription to protect women from the side effects. Women who use the pill have complained to me from pains in the rear part of their lower legs (thrombosis). Other women who use IUDs have suffered from sporadic and heavy menstrual flow, attributing it to the children they are killing by using this device.

Generally, however, Silwian women told me that they use birth control methods not for Tahdid al-Nasl (controlling or limiting pregnancy) but to organize offspring, Tanzim al-Nasl. The former practice is considered by the majority in Silwa a sinful act, interfering with God’s will.

It deserves mentioning here that birth control has been adopted as an official policy by the government since the seventies. It is promoted and encouraged by all authorities concerned. A Supreme Council for Population has been formed presided by the Prime Minister to coordinate all activities with a view to diffuse the Egyptian population explosion. Television and radio programs include special strips to instill attitudes towards smaller families and fewer children. Enlightened religious scholars do not object to the campaign.

However, in Silwa, as in many other rural communities in Egypt, folks are not largely sold on the idea. The deeply entrenched desire of parents for children as a source of security, sanctioned by their version of popular
religion, still questions the legitimacy of the public policy. As I heard from several people, they do not regard it as a pious act, and even those who practice it harbor a perplexing sense of guilt.

Circumcision

Circumcision in Silwa today is still performed on both girls and boys.

Male circumcision, al-Khitän. Male circumcision, according to the Silwians, is a religious rite. A Moselm man must be circumcised.

Male circumcision in 1951 Silwa was celebrated in a Mulid (festivity). The village barber came before sunset to perform the operation. After the circumcision was over, and the boy’s visit to the Nile River, dinner was served to the male guests gathered in the Mandara (guest house). Male (and female) circumcision took place in summer because healing was faster in the hot season and during a Higrae month with no sequel.⁸

Today, the son of the deceased barber is the village barber, inheriting his father’s occupation. However, he refused completely to tell me that he performs circumcision operations. After my third visit to his home he said, "All male children are circumcised by the health compound doctor," while the medical doctor at the compound denied that he circumcises males. During this third visit, and upon the insistence of my cousin (informant) that Maala
(the barber's name) still circumcises males, the barber showed me his instrument kit. It had scissors, a mirror, and a razor blade. All the instruments were clean and looked very septic to my naked eye. The village barber said, "These are my father's instruments. . . . I keep them for his memory."

The barber's denial of undertaking circumcision operations, at first, was due to the fact that he is not officially authorized by health authorities. His case is not unique; many other barbers and Dajas continue unauthorized to render their respective services in Egyptian rural communities.

Upon leaving the barber's house, my cousin (informant) said:

"I tell you he still circumcises males in the same way his father did . . . . But today they use chloroform to reduce the pain and give the boy pills to reduce bleeding. Also, no one takes the circumcised boy to the Nile any longer . . . people now understand that fertility is from God and not from the Nile." (See Appendix 14 for male circumcision procedures in 1951.)

Today the Silwians no longer celebrate male circumcision in a Mulid. The explanations given to me for the cessation of circumcision Mulids included religious and economic reasons. The following is the answer of one of my male relatives to my question "Why don't you celebrate 'male circumcision' Khitan in a Mulid anymore?"

"We understand our religion better today. You see the Prophet told us to conceal circumcision and declare marriage. But, also, you see our daily life has become busy. That is why we have no time to celebrate
circumcision. Today it costs money to have a child. It costs a bundle to have it delivered, to feed it, to dress it, to send it to school . . . so why add the cost of circumcision to all these expenses?"

In addition to my informant's rationale for ending this formal celebration, one is justified in submitting a further explanation. The cessation could be taken as one of the indicators for the loosening of the kinship web. In the 1951 Silwa and throughout past generations, the circumcision ceremony of boys was a public demonstration of the solidarity of the clan and the extended family whose seniors were invited by the head of the conjugal family to partake in this occasion. It was an event where all invited pay Nugut (little drops of gifts—grain, dates, lentils, sugar) to the father of the circumcised child. In other words, it represented a moment where mutual reciprocity was exchanged as an imperative regulating norm within the social structure. Even disputes between relatives did not prevent them from offering their dues to the celebrating kinsman on the occasion.

Today, however, with an increased awareness of family responsibilities that cannot be met, except through affecting the use of money, communal gatherings involving food and meat have become burdensome. One might also venture to interpret the cessation of the ceremony to its diminishing returns in its traditional functions as a festive occasion for rejoicing. It does not seem farfetched to maintain that the spread of television, radio,
coffee shops, and easy access to city life have displaced some customary ceremonies as recreational media breaks the monotony of the traditional rhythm of everyday life.

By the age of 7 all male children are circumcised in Silwa. Unlike old times, they are circumcised individually and not in a group by the village barber. Each boy is circumcised at his home and the occasion is witnessed by the conjugal family and close relatives and friends.

Female circumcision, Tuhur. Most of the women I talked to from all age groups in Silwa agreed that the village girls are circumcised because it is a tradition, and not because it is a condition necessarily for marriage. Notwithstanding, an old man told me: "Ya Binti (you who are my daughter), it is our Tagalid (tradition), . . . if a girl is not circumcised no man will marry her."

Only two, from the various women I discussed circumcision with, challenged its practice, and both were married. The first has nine years of formal schooling and two children. Her reply to my question about female circumcision came in a very faint background voice: "They circumcise us so that we do not have any sexual pleasure." Upon asking her to repeat what she said, she turned her face away from me, and then walked out of the room where her mother and grandmother were also sitting.

The second woman has a social worker’s certificate, i.e., 13 years of schooling, and was recently divorced. She said:
"Circumcision is not Halal (religiously sanctioned). Doctora Nawal El. Sadawi (a famous Egyptian medical doctor who wrote extensively on the subject) says that al-Tuhur (female circumcision) is barbaric."

The circumcision of girls in 1951 was also done in groups. The neighborhood gathered its uncircumcised girls of various ages in one house. The midwife then arrived to circumcise the four or five girls. One 17-year-old woman said: "They dressed us up nicely and promised us a Mulid (a celebration)--only to find out later that it was a painful celebration."

Female circumcision was not an announced celebration in Silwa of 1951. However, women kin gathered in the house where the group circumcision was to take place and ate a meal together. (See Appendix 14 for procedures of Tuhur in 1951.)

The mothers of the girls to be circumcised often told me about their hiding during the circumcision of their own daughters. One woman said: "I hid away in the Hassil (a room) when my daughters were being circumcised . . . I could not see them bleeding."

Today, the Daia (midwife) still circumcises the young girls. The present midwife (the daughter of the midwife H. Ammar talked to) refused to discuss the circumcision of females with me. Moreover, she obstructed my access to observing any circumcisions. These actions (or rather non-actions) should be understood within the legal context of midwifery in Egypt since the early 1940s.
Egyptian midwives have received official recognition since 1880s (Population Council 1980:461). In 1969 the practice of midwifery was made illegal by the central government. Midwives were no longer granted certificates for practice or trained into their traditional activities. It is, however, estimated that 10,000 Daias (midwives) continue to practice in both urban and rural settings in Egypt (Assaad and El-Katsha 1981:39).

Moreover, in 1953 a legislation banning all varieties of female circumcision rendered its practice (in form at least) illegal.

It is within the general illegal status of midwives and the specific illegal practice of female circumcision that the Silwian midwife’s reaction to me should be understood.

Women with whom I discussed female circumcision in Silwa revealed the following information about its contemporary practice. Girls between the ages of 4 to 11 are operated on by the Daia. Some girls, and these are a very small majority (five girls were mentioned to me by one woman, and all under the age of 7), are taken to the health compound doctor. The doctor applies localized anesthesia before the operation.

Today in Silwa the variety of circumcision is "clitrodectomy," Misri (Egyptian) (i.e., the excision of the entire clitoris), instead of the 1951 variety of "infibulation," Sudani (Sudanese).
Women told me that the Misri circumcision is healthier for the girl at the time of operation. Today the girl does not bleed as much as when the Sudani variety was the common practice, and she does not have to stay in bed wrapped at the thighs for a week any longer.

The majority of women I discussed circumcision with could not remember the incident itself. They remembered the girls they were circumcised with, the women kin who held them during the actual cutting by the midwife, and the food they ate before the operation. But no woman remembered the details of the operation. This detail affacement of the circumcision operation is not specific to the Silwian women only. Narrations presented by Atiya (1982) and Al-Sadawi (1980) reveal the same pattern. The difference, however, between the Silwian women, Sadawi’s narration, and Atiya’s informant’s narrations is that women over 40 in Silwa seem to have forgotten the incident completely. Some even did not remember the pain and recovery from their own circumcision.

All women in Silwa are still circumcised as girls in neighborhood groups.

During my stay in Silwa, the dialogues I had with women about circumcision almost always brought about a mental image of a passage I had read in a book just a month before leaving to Silwa. The following is a reproduction of the passage:
In Egypt until the 1950s the practice was very popular in the rural areas and still had a strong hold among the urban population. In the following two decades of Nasser’s regime, the practice showed a marked recession toward the periphery and its remnants were found in areas least affected by the social revolution and among groups who benefitted least from the revolution’s economic reforms. This could be paralleled to the overall changed conditions of women in real terms: equal opportunities in education, skill training, employment and full political rights backed by a constitution that stressed the importance of the equality of women for the success of the revolution. As Egyptian women gained ground at all levels, an obsolete practice such as female circumcision could not persist against a new tide of feminist consciousness. (Toubia 1985:156)

Toubia’s passage does not paint an accurate image for many rural communities. It is perhaps more valid in urban centers and large cities. Silwa has been affected by some of the economic reforms and measures of the revolution, but the recession or obsoleteness of female circumcision has not become a reality. Female circumcision in Silwa continues to be practiced and has undergone a change in variety, i.e., from infibulation to cliterodectomy, which in a way indicates a slight improvement, but the practice has not disappeared.

Sexual frigidity is often reported as a consequence of female circumcision (Hosken 1979; Al-Sadawi 1980; Daly 1978; Toubia 1985). In Silwa, the women that agreed to discuss their sexuality with me (i.e., the younger, more educated) noted that frigidity is not experienced by all circumcised women. One recently married woman said:
"The girl who has had a Sudanese circumcision, 'infibulation,' experiences no sexual pleasure whatever. . . . But if the girl has had a Misri circumcision, 'cliterodectomy,' she feels a lot of sexual pleasure. You see this sexual pleasure in Silwa is not seen as important. . . . In this village, a woman does not initiate any sexual advances. She only goes to the man when he wants her. Women here, unlike the Ajanéb 'foreigners' (specifically referring to Europeans) who need a man all the time, are self-controlled."

Marriage

In 1951 children were the function of marriage (Ammar 1954). The man married at an average age of 17 and the woman at fourteen and the mate selection was a family process.

Today, children are still the most important function of marriage and the woman is expected to get pregnant within the first 12 months of her marriage. However, the marital age has increased to an average of 18/19 for women and 27 for men. There are very few unmarried women and men in Silwa today who are over the age of 30. However, these are the exception and not the norm. Actually there are only two women above 30 who never married, one is blind and the other is a university student. Regarding men, there is one man above 40 who has never been married, but he is a depressive maniac.
The Marriage Ceremony in Silwa Before Modernization Tolled

Up until 1970 the marriage ceremony in Silwa (excluding mate selection) typically consisted of eight stages. Four stages took place before the actual betrothal and three after the betrothal (and of course the betrothal itself).

Al-Tibi (the bride price agreement) was the first stage in the marriage ceremony in Silwa. The word means to feel pleasant over a Mahar (bride’s price). This was a stage where only men participated. The men from the families of the bride and the groom gathered in the bride’s patrilocal guest house. The El-Shaib (oldest person) from the groom’s group announced a price that his family was willing to pay. El-Shaib from the bride’s family raised the price up, regardless of whether it was agreeable or not. Price suggestions went back and forth between the two Shiab (plural of Shaib), until an agreement was deemed pleasant. Then Al-Fateha (the Koranic Opening) was read to make the promises of exchange sacred and binding between the two families, and tea was served. The bride price at the time was a composite of monetary and symbolic exchange. One of my informants who was married in 1940 told me that her Mahar (bride price) was 10 Egyptian piasters (there are 100 piasters in an Egyptian pound, L.E.), many birds, 2 pairs of gold earrings, and a Libbeh (a precious stone set on gold necklace). Another informant who was married in 1969 told
me that they paid her a bride price of 3 L.E., a camel, 20 pairs of pigeons, and 2 pairs of Akhras (gold earrings).

The Bidi was the second stage in the marriage ceremony in Silwa. The word is derived from alBbidaia (the beginning). Only women participated in this stage of the celebration. They gathered in the bridegroom’s house to eat dinner. The bridegroom’s mother invited the people she wished to come. The guests brought with them tea and sugar wrapped in a scarf, expecting that the scarf will later be filled with grain and bread in return. The dinner consisted mainly of Shamsy (wheat sun bread), meat from an animal sacrificed earlier in the day, and beans. All expenses here were paid for by the groom.

The Sawmara was the third stage of the marriage celebration in Silwa. The word derives its meaning from the word Samar which means entertainment. Sawmara took place three days before the actual betrothal. The women kin and friends of the bride gathered in her patrilocal residence to decorate her. They removed her body and facial hair and soaked her from top to bottom in Henna (herbal red dye) for two days (henna here worked as a moisturizer for the skin from the very dry Silwian climate). In the morning of the third day the bride was washed thoroughly from the Henna and dressed in a bright color dress.

The Dora was the fourth and final stage of ceremonies before the actual betrothal. The word means the rounding. In the morning before the betrothal, the Mazzoun (the person
who draws marriage contracts) gathered in the bride’s patrilocal residence with the groom, the Wakkil (bride’s representative), and two male witnesses to draw the official Katb al-Kitab (marriage contract). During the evening, the groom’s kinfolk and friends invited earlier gathered in his patrilocal residence, while the friends and kinfolk of the bride, also invited earlier, gathered in her patrilocal residence. A table and chairs were placed at the entrance of the groom’s house. At the table, the groom’s representative sat with a notebook recording the payments each guest made so that later on the groom could reciprocate the payments. As every payment was paid, whether in cash or kind, the representative announced the name of the contributor by singing in a loud voice:

"The inheritor of God, the inheritor of goodness, oh prince, here Sheikh (common title) so or the son of so and so paid a certain amount of money. May God reward him with silver and holy blessings."

The groom sat on a chair with the barber proceeding to cut portions of his hair equivalent to the money that was paid. The payments at the time never exceeded 25 Egyptian piasters. Once the bridegroom’s hair cut had been completed, he and his guests proceeded to the bride’s house. With the men in front and the women behind, carrying Henna and Kuhul (black eye liner), the procession rounded the village announcing the marriage (an Islamic tradition that the marriage should be publicly declared, ISHAR). The men sang: "Our prophet is good, we love him. . . . God’s Praise
be on Mohammad, God's Praise be on Mohammad," while the women sang to the groom: "Long life be to you if God permits." The procession then stopped at the central Mosque for blessings and from there to the bride's house to eat dinner. All expenses here were paid for by the groom.

The exchange of tea and sugar among women during the Dokhla stage and the payments of money to shave the groom's hair during the Dora stage are referred to as Nugut (little drops of gifts) in Silwa. Prior to the early seventies the payment was made in kind among women and cash among men. The reciprocal mutual obligations fell on the families of the groom and the bride, more specifically on the father of the groom (or his paternal uncle if the former is deceased), and the mother, older sister, or maternal aunt of the bride.

Presently, the payment of Nugut still involves the same pattern of in kind exchange for the bride and cash for the groom. However, the payment has become more standardized, its receipt more direct, and its reciprocal payment weight falls on the individuals newly wed. The groom and bride, today, are paid Nugut during special visitations by friends, relatives, and neighbors after the Shabka (engagement) stage. The groom receives a payment of 10 to 25 pounds put in an evenlope and slipped in his hand at the beginning of the visit. The bride is handed cloth and/or gold earrings, and/or perfume wrapped in newspaper as the visitors come into the house. Both bride and groom are expected to
reciprocate directly to the individuals that have made Nugut payments during later festive or sad occasions.

Al-Dokhla (the consummation) was the fifth stage. The word translates literal as the entry. In the evening the guests gathered in the bride's patrilocal residence. Two different celebrations took place with the women inside the house and men outside enjoying singing and eating. Towards the end of the evening the midwife took the bride into her newly built house in the corner of her patrilocal residence. Minutes later the groom followed them inside. The midwife left the bride only upon receiving an agreeable sum of money from the groom. The amount paid at the time never exceeded 10-15 piasters. All expenses here were paid for by the groom.

Al-Sabahieh (the morning after) was the sixth stage in the marriage celebrations. The friends of the groom slept in the courtyard and the guest house of the bride's patrilocal residence, a symbol of peer solidarity and support. In the morning the bride's family cooked a breakfast consisting of bread, pies, stuffed pigeon, and lamb chops for the groom and his guest friends.³

Al-Soubou (the week) was the seventh stage in the marriage celebrations in Silwa.

On the third day after al-Dokhla the groom invited all his male kinfolk and friends to eat dinner at the bride's patrilocal residence at the expense of his bride's family. A generous meal consisting of lamb, pigeon, duck, and wheat
bread was offered to please the groom and assert his status with his in-laws.

Al-Solh (reconciliation) was the eighth stage in the marriage celebration in Silwa.

For a month after al-Dokhla the bride’s father did not talk to his son-in-law. He avoided him in public places and never greeted him back. Not until the son-in-law invited the bride’s father to a meal would a reconciliation take place.

Marriage in Silwa Today

The marriage ceremony in Silwa has been reduced from eight to two stages and curtailed in its time span. These stages today are al-Shabka (the hook) and al-Dokhla (the entry). Upon asking one of my informants about the reasons behind this reduction, the answer came:

"Today, since it has become more expensive to get married, we have ‘summarized’ Ikhtasarna the stages. . . . The groom needs to pay cash for the bride price, for the gold bracelets, for the food, and even for the flour with which the bread is baked. . . . Also, he has to buy a refrigerator, a television, and so on. . . . Life has become more expensive. All this requires cash money."

Today al-Shabka stage combines part or all of the four pre-consummatory celebrations prevailing in Silwa before 1970. The word al-Shabka "the trap" or "the net" is borrowed from the Cairienne Arabic usage. In the morning, the men gather in the guest house of the bride’s patrilocal
residence. There, the bride’s price is agreed on and the marital contract is drawn up.

The bride’s price, today, has become a standardized sum of money. During the first seven months of 1987 the bride price was 400 Egyptian pounds, while in 1986 the bride price was 375, a raise reflecting the role of the market economy and price inflation. No time is lost in the process of bidding for the price to be paid between the two Shiabs in the families, as was the case in the traditional procedures. Instead of bargaining over the bride price, the tea is immediately served and preparations are made for drawing the marital contract. The contract drawing remains the same; it still requires the Mazzoun, the Wakkil, and two male witnesses. This is a mandatory form required by both the Islamic jurisprudence and civil registration.

Indigenous decoration by Henna for girls has disappeared completely in Silwian marriages. The Sawmara stage has been replaced by the modern hairdresser. In the morning the bride, two or three of her female relatives, and a male chaperone take a taxi to the hairdresser in the nearby town of Komombo. The hairdresser styles the bride’s hair and applies cosmetics on her face.

In the evening the women and men related to the groom walk with him to the bride’s patrilocal residence. The women carry with them perfume, soap, chocolate bars, nylon stockings, cookies, and potato chips in boxes, replacing the traditional gifts of grains, pigeons, sugar, and eggs. Upon
arriving to the bride’s house they leave the boxes, expecting to collect them at the end of the evening refilled with bread, meat, and cake baked the night before by the bride and her friends.

Here we also note two changes. The first is the disappearance of the public announcing of the marriage, Ishar, by rounding the village and singing. Today a microphone on the roof of the bride’s patrilocal residence serves the Ishar purpose. The second is the diversification of items exchanged to include a number of consumer items bought from the city or from local shops.

The guests, upon arrival, gather in sexually segregated groups. The women sit in the courtyard inside the house, while the men sit in the guest house outside.

After the guests have arrived, the bride in her brightly colored lace dress that she has bought in Aswan comes to the courtyard to sit on a platform set up for her and the groom. Food is then served, first to the men in the guest house and afterwards to the women in the courtyard inside the house. The bride’s father and her female relative supervise the process of food distribution. The meal consists of a green salad, lamb, two kinds of vegetables, and bread. A sweet drink referred to as Sharbat and tea are also served. The bride’s family bears the expenses of this urbanized menu. Again increased consumerism and city habits are represented here in the bride’s lace dress, the appearance together of both bride
and groom in public, and the blast of songs from the radio or a cassette recorder.

The groom, escorted by some of his unmarried friends, and relatives move from the guest house to the courtyard after dinner has been served to everybody. At this point the groom sits next to the bride on the platform to place two gold bracelets and a ring on her wrist and finger, respectively. During the rest of the night, the gathering in the courtyard of the bride’s patrilocal residence continues to include unmarried men. During this time of the Dokhla, the unmarried girls stand in an exclusively female circle to sing.

The songs heard today in the Dokhla ceremony represent the changes that have occurred in the community outlook. The songs include allusions to contemporary vocational aspirations, certain cherished luxuries and desires, but retain some of the specificities of the Silwian cultural fabric. The following are translations of two contemporary songs often heard during this event.

Song One
You, the attractive man: yes, take her and go to the canal
The girl loved the medical doctor, and he loved her
He left his clinic and went to see her
You, the attractive man: yes,
The girl loved the teacher, and he loved her
He left his school and went to see her, and took her to the canal
You, the attractive man: yes,
The girl loved the engineer, and he loved her
He left his office and went to see her.
Song Two
For him furnish the room in the ostrich feathers
We were walking on the bridges, we asked for tea with mint and heard the voice of Om Kalthoum (a famous Egyptian singer)
When he brought the loose Hijjil (the foot bracelet made of silver) he said the goldsmith was drunk and when he brought the loose necklace (made of gold) they furnished the room with ostrich feathers.

Al-Dokhla is the second and final stage of marriage celebrations in Silwa today. In the morning, the bride goes again to the hairdresser in Komombo. She comes back from there to wear her white bridal dress which she has bought in Aswan. Then in her patrilocal residence a celebration with food takes place during the early evening. After dinner is finished, the midwife walks the bride to the step of her new house where the groom is waiting so they can walk in together. The groom then gives the midwife some money in her hand and the couple proceed into their house. Here we note that there have been changes in the way the midwife ushers the couple into their house. Instead of the bride going in first and waiting for the groom to follow, both now enter the house together. Also, we note that the midwife’s role in the giving away of the bride conditional upon approving the amount of money to her by the groom has eclipsed. These modifications can be taken as a symbolic representation of the changes in the role of the bride and the bridegroom and the nature of marriage. They are into this marriage willingly and not by the sheer approval of an outside party. This is also based on the changes that have taken place in the mate selection process, but does not
necessarily indicate a significant or qualitative change in the position or status of women in the community.

The legal marital age in Egypt (including Silwa) is 16 and 18 for girls and boys, respectively. In Silwa age for the purpose of marriage is calculated in lunar years (H.A.). As a result, the girls and boys at the legal marital age are chronologically slightly younger than what would be 16 or 18 by western definition, since the lunar year is shorter by about 10 days than the Gregorian.

In cases where the girl has no official birth certificate indicating her legal age (this sometimes happens when parents intentionally lose the document because the girl is under 16), the Mazzoun (the person who draws the marriage contract) requires a certificate from the doctor estimating her age, Tasneen. In 1986, out of the 150 marriage contracts drawn up in Silwa about 18% presented Tasneen certificates for the bride. This percentage, according to the Mazzoun, is very small compared to similar cases in the past. Twenty years ago, the Mazzoun said:

"At least 50% of marriage contracts I drew up were based on Tasneen certificates. The issue of grooms marrying below the legal age in Silwa has not presented itself to me during the past 15 years."

Marriage in Silwa is strictly endogamous for women and unrestricted by boundaries for men. Today in Silwa there is only one woman married to a man from outside the G’afra tribe. This woman was allowed to do so because she had been married twice before and had a 4-year-old child.
Men on the other hand marry from a diversity of places from other Governorates and descents in Egypt as well as from other countries provided their spouses are born in the same faith. Religious endogamy is an imperative marriage rule among the Silwian men.

Contrary to many Middle Eastern cultures (Baybee 1978; Magnarella 1974; Aswad 1971; Khuri 1970; Hilal 1970) patrilateral or cross marriages are currently not favored or practiced systematically in Silwa by either men or women. Today the reason most cited for such disfavoring of cousin marriages is the developing awareness of possible genetic abnormalities. One informant said:

"Cousin marriages cause children to come out with all sorts of diseases. You find the children have bad teeth, bald, or even bad eyesight."

However, the primary reason for avoiding patrilateral or cross cousin marriages, informants agreed, is the inability to figure out whether the children suckled from the same woman or not. However, more distant relatives within the extended family or the clan continue to be preferred (see Appendix 15).

Polygamy in Silwa is not widespread and has been steadily diminishing. Informants agreed that among the generation of men below 45 the practice of polygamy is almost nonexistent, while the older generation has practiced it. One informant said:

"The men who marry more than one woman do not put them in the same house . . . and very often the man has a wife in Silwa and another in some other town."
Nevertheless, the younger generation of men practice serial monogamy. The phenomenon is not yet as widespread as in some industrialized countries, and its practice is practically limited to men. The number of divorce cases show a slight, though undisturbing, rise during the last ten years in Silwa. Almost 95% of the men remarry while between 2% to 4% of the women enjoy the same opportunity. Table 5.1 indicates the number of divorce cases in the years between 1976-1986.

Divorce in Islam is the worst permissible practice according to the Prophetic tradition. In Silwa men initiate the procedure and women accept it. The reasons leading to divorce are many, including infertility of the wife, disagreement with the in-laws, and the husband’s mother’s dislike of the wife. Disagreement between husband and wife provides the least causality for a divorce while adultery is nonexistent.

Table 5.1 Divorce Cases in Silwa Between 1976-1986.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Silwa Mazzoun records.
The family cohesiveness within the expected social norms of the husband’s authority and wife’s docility plays a greater role in the social structure and the socialization of the individuals. Yet, quarrels between husbands and wives are not uncommon leading the former, and to a lesser degree the latter, to express *Harad* (anger and avoidance) by moving to stay in his or her patrilocal residence. On the occasion intermediaries from relatives would go in between for reconciliation. If the issue in the dispute between the husband and wife touches an inter-familial affair, it may lead to the convening of an Arab Council for mediation and settling the dispute. If no agreement is reached, a divorce becomes the ultimate solution.

**Death and Funeral**

Death in Silwa is a sad occasion surrounded by social and ritual obligations. Informants agreed that in 1951 the death passage included seven stages. These were the announcing of death by the screams of women, the preparation for burial, the burial, the three-day remembrance, the forty-day remembrance, the feast visitations to the Jibaneh (burial ground), and eliciting *Rahmat* (God’s mercy for the deceased).

Today, the stages of the death passage have proliferated in content and increased in number. To the seven passages three more have been added: the *al-Soubou* (seven-day remembrance), the nineteen- or fifteen-day
remembrance, and Sannawiah (the annual remembrance). The specialized undertaker has disappeared, and community volunteers prepare the dead for burial today.

The following pages describe the sequence of activities, their content, and changes that have taken place.

The announcing of death by Awil (the screams of women). Upon hearing that someone died, the women kin, friends, and neighbors dressed in black rush towards the dead person’s house in groups. Inside the house, they commence their Awil with systematic rhythmic sounds of Booh-Booh or ya ya. Women also engage in saying T’addid (mourning rhymes) and making mourning gestures.

The mourning gestures are uniform throughout the village. Women closely related to the deceased dig earth from the ground to put on their head and wrap their waist tightly with a cloth as gestures of mourning. One cannot help but view both gestures as very symbolic. The putting of earth symbolizes the Islamic belief mentioned directly in the Koran about humans born from earth and returning upon death to earth. Psychoanalysts may consider that wrapping of the waist tightly projects death as being the antithesis of birth; women’s wrapped waists emphasize the emptying of the womb through death.

The T’addid (mourning rhymes) pronounced by women vary according to age, sex, and relationship of the deceased and
are very reflecting of the values and norms looming in the culture.

If the deceased is an older woman the following is one of the many mourning rhymes said:

The beloved ones remain--the beloved remain and this is but a passing stress.

If the deceased is a father, the following is one of the many mourning rhymes said:

You girl, cry for the loss of your father, neither your husband nor your brother will be good to you anymore.

If the deceased is a youngster, the following are two of the many mourning rhymes said:

You short neck (meaning not fully grown) were lost with the washing and disappeared. [Prior to 1979 women did their washing at the Nile bank, and often they lost pieces of washing to the Nile.]

They told me tomorrow is the feast, in the feast I have no companions, and what can a feast do when separated from the beloved ones.

The above rhymes run congruent to the values and norms appreciated in Silwa. The death of an older woman is a crisis, but only a passing one, since her basic role as a mother has been fulfilled. The death of a father is an everlasting crisis for the daughter, since he was the patriarch who protected her. Finally, the death of a youngster is a loss unanticipated and grieved in spite of happy days such as feasts.

Preparation for burial. Prior to 1951, the undertaker provided the instructions and joined with the kinfolk in the washing of the dead man's body. In the case of a woman's
death, the undertaker gave instruction on how to wash the body to the Mahram (the man married to the woman or the man who is not allowed by religious sanctions to have sexual intercourse with the deceased woman including her father, brother, son, sister’s husband, paternal uncle, and maternal uncle).

Today, the undertaker has disappeared from the Silwian occupations. The community, i.e., neighbors, relatives, and friends of the deceased, prepare the body for burial. In women’s death, the Mahram of the deceased often supervises the process as her close women relatives and neighbors prepare the body for burial.

Henna (a red dye herb) is spread over the deceased body first. This is not an Islamic tenant, and its origin can be traced back to the Pharonic times when life after death was a major concern. The herb Henna acts as a moisturizer and softener for the skin, and according to this old tradition if human beings were to be revived after death, their bodies should be soft and smooth for the occasion.

After the applying of Henna, the corpse is washed thoroughly from all its traces. While the washing is taking place, Koranic Surahs are read to purify the body both from material and spiritual dirt. God’s blessings are invoked by all present, reiterating relevant Koranic citations.

The body is dried carefully, covered with the Kafan or Dablan (a white cloth) and sprayed with perfume. Perfume spraying is an innovation adopted in the past fifteen years.
Prior to this, indigenous incense was used to provide the sweet smell of perfume.

Under the Kafan, men are dressed with bottomless shirts, underpants, and a Tagiah (head dress). Women, on the other hand, are dressed with undershirts, underpants, a dress, and a Tarha (head dress). All the items of clothing the deceased is dressed with should be new and clean. Moreover, the towels with which he/she is dried should also be new.

Prior to 1951, the wrapping cloth Kafan, towels, and clothing material were bought upon the death of a person. Today, and since the beginning of the seventies, the old persons buy their death attire Hajat al-Takfin during their lifetime.

Immediate relatives (except in the case of deceased women whose Mahram is needed for supervising the washing process) are separated from the process of body washing. Close kin and neighbors force immediate relatives into corners of the house away from where the washing is taking place. Not until the washing is over are immediate relatives allowed to see the deceased.

During the washing, a group of men from the community, often younger able-bodied men, are sent to dig a burial space in the Jibaneh (burial grounds). Another group, often younger boys, are sent to the hills to fetch two large stones with which the tomb is marked.
After the body has been washed, dressed, and covered by the Kafan it is carried to the Mosque by four men for the funeral prayers. Men only can attend the special prayers prescribed in the case of death.

The burial. After prayers, the body is returned to the home of the deceased in order for the funeral procession to start from there. Men and women walk in the funeral procession with men in front and women behind. Women never reach the burial ground during this ritual. Towards the outskirts of the village, i.e., 1/2 a mile away from the burial grounds, men ask the women to return to the home of the deceased. Exactly why this happens, informants could not explain. They agreed that this was tradition, and so they follow it. The close male relatives of the deceased are also not allowed to come close to the burial grounds. After the women leave the procession, sand and pebbles are thrown at the close male kin of the deceased in order to ensure keeping them away from the burial grounds.

At the burial grounds the Kafan is removed and the body is put to rest inside the hole dug earlier by the young able-bodied men. The hole is then filled in with sand and two stones are put on top to mark the tomb. Tombs in general are not allotted by family order in the Silwian burial grounds.

The process of burial in Silwa, including preparing the body for the burial, the funeral prayers, and the actual burial, is a speedy one. If the person dies before sunset
he/she should be laid to rest before sunset. While if the person dies after sunset he/she is buried at sunrise the next day.

The three-day remembrance starts three days after the burial. It is believed that during this period the soul departs from the body towards heaven.

During this stage of the ritual, men gather in the clan house of the deceased man for three days. Koranic Surahs are read for his spirit to rest in peace and the conversation revolves around the good deeds of the deceased. In cases where the deceased is a woman, the men gather in her father’s clan guest house and not her husband’s.

The three-day remembrance among the women takes place inside the house of the deceased person. For three days, the women cry and scream, say T’addid, and engage in mourning gestures.

The good deeds of the deceased are also a part of the conversation that women engage in during this event. The content of the conversation regarding the deceased person’s good deeds differs strikingly between female and male gatherings. Men mention the deceased’s upright conduct, his/her role as father or mother, and the person’s neighborly qualities. In the female gathering, women refer to the deceased’s attributes as they relate to specific situations when the deceased was good to them individually or collectively. Stories about how the deceased helped during a time when money was short, or supported them in a
crisis or festivity, or defended their rights in their land plots are heard among the women’s group.

On the first day of the three-day remembrance an animal is sacrificed and its raw meat is distributed to the poor. It is believed that feeding the poor is a pious act that helps in making the spirit of the deceased rest more peacefully. Today, the social status of the deceased is symbolized by the number of animals sacrificed on his/her remembrance days. The more endeared and valued the person, the more animals are sacrificed.

The food served during the three-day remembrance is prepared and provided by close relatives and neighbors of the deceased. Trays of food are sent to the women inside the home of the deceased, and from there they are carried to the clan guest house according to the size of the gathering. Each tray bearer announces where the food is coming from, so as the household of the deceased reciprocates on future occasions of crisis or festivities. It is here and more than any other event, the imperatives of mutual social obligations and reciprocity are being strictly observed and noted by all parties concerned.

The forty-day remembrance. Forty days after the death of a person, women relatives visit the burial grounds at sunrise, while men relatives later on the day (usually after noon prayers). The forty-day visitation used to be the first occasion on which women and close men relatives of the deceased were allowed near the burial grounds. Today, as
stated in the section on the new death rituals, the relatives of the deceased visit his tomb earlier at their convenience.

Food during the forty-day remembrance is also provided and prepared by the neighbors and close relatives of the deceased person.

The feast visitations. The remembrance of the dead is a very important process in Silwian feasts. The night before the feast, women bake Kaek (small loaves of bread) to take to the tomb the next morning. Early in the morning, often at sunrise, women in groups go to the burial grounds to place bread on all their deceased relatives’ tombs and read the Koranic opening for their souls, appealing to God to have mercy on them. The placing of the bread on tombs is a ritual criticized by the men as un-Islamic. One male informant said: "you cannot convince women not to waste bread like this, since it gives them great pleasure to think of feeding their deceased relatives." However, one feels that the practice is an ancient pre-Islamic custom.

The men visit the burial ground after they finish their communal feast prayers at the Mosque, i.e., after sunrise.

In the evening, all the household members gather together for the feast meal to remember the deceased and read the Koranic opening for their soul to rest in peace.

The new death ritual stages in Silwa. To the above stages of the death ritual in Silwa three more have been added since 1951.
The exact practice of these stages is not uniform among Silwians and varies in their observance according to the cohesion of the family, the level of education of its members, and their economic and social prestige.

The Soubou (seven-day remembrance) is almost always seven days after the death had occurred. The ritual resembles the three-day and forty-day remembrance. As customary, men gather in the clan guest house and the women in the deceased person’s house. Food is prepared and provided by the neighbors and close relatives. The burial grounds are not visited by the close relative of either gender.

The variation among Silwians in this stage of the death ritual is reflected in the distinction between the Soubou and the three-day remembrance. Some people keep the remembrance at the clan guest house and in the home of the deceased going for the entire seven days, while others stop on the third day, making the seventh-day remembrance a distinctive stage. One informant noted that the more religiously Orthodox Silwians practice the latter option, since excessive mourning in Islam is not desirable. The duration of this occasion, as in most of the decisions regarding all death rituals, is relegated to the oldest male kin in the extended family of the deceased.

The fifteen- and nineteen-day remembrance is another innovation that is also diversely practiced in Silwa. The stage involves mainly the visiting of the tomb of the
deceased. The immediate men relatives of the deceased visit the tomb for the first time fifteen days after the death, while the immediate women relatives perform the visit nineteen days after the death.

The exact practice of fifteen- and nineteen-day visitations vary from one group to another. Some women go to visit their deceased fifteen days after the death, while some men delay their visit to twenty-one days. Both, however, go to visit the deceased relative at least once after two weeks and before forty days have passed on the death. It is worth noting here that the number of days separating the death and visitations largely depend on the age of the deceased and the socioeconomic circumstances of the living family members. Young children who die young are visited sooner than the elderly who die natural deaths. Middle age husbands or wives leaving a number of dependents are also visited sooner than older husbands or wives.

The annual remembrance is a stage that all Silwians practice today. In the two separate remembrance gatherings of men and women Koranic Surahs are read and animals are sacrificed to distribute their meat to the poor. Food, during this stage of the ritual, is prepared and provided by the deceased household.

On this occasion, women do not scream or cry, but dress in black. Their remembrance involves conversation about how much the deceased had been missed during the period of a year. Men’s conversations, on the other hand, revolve
around direct condolences to the immediate relatives of the deceased and light exchanges about community issues.

**Religious Celebrations**

**Al-Isra’ Wal Miraj**

The *Isra’ Wal Miraj* (the journey to Jerusalem) is a religious ceremony celebrated to commemorate the day Prophet Mohammad flew by God’s will from Arabia to Jerusalem, and from the Dome of the Rock there to the seventh sky, on a white-winged horse to meet with God. During the meeting between God and the Prophet, the five pillars of Islam were established.

The *Isra’ Wal Miraj* is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the eighth Higrae month, Shaban. In Silwa, the day is celebrated within the family inside the household. A story is told or read about the Prophet’s life, the deceased are remembered by reciting Koranic Surahs, eliciting Rahamat, and an animal is sacrificed or chicken slaughtered, depending on means available.

In the past, until approximately the early sixties, the *Isra’ Wal Miraj* was a clan festivity, celebrated by men who used to gather in their respective clan guest house. They sacrificed the animal (usually a ram), cooked it, and a communal meal was served. After the meat the men drank tea and read stories about the Prophet’s life. However, today the celebration has changed from a clan and communal
occasion to a conjugal family affair with other relatives residing in the household.

Lilat Al-Qadr

Lilat Al-Qadr (the Evening of Destiny) is the evening in which the Koran was first revealed to the Prophet Mohammad. There is a Koranic Surah (97) that states explicitly the holiness of that night which is much more than a thousand months. The evening is celebrated in Silwa on the 27th of Ramadan (the ninth month of the lunar calendar).

After the breakfast meal on that night, men gather in their respective clan guest houses. In this collective gathering, Koranic Surahs are read, incense burnt, and the late evening prayer performed in the Mosque attached to the guest house or in the corner of its courtyard. In view of its being one of the holiest events, the celebration of Lilat Al-Qadr has not changed since 1951 in either content or procedures.

Al-Fitr Feast

Al-Fitr is officially a three-day feast celebrated immediately the day Ramadan, the month of fasting, ends. Al-Fitr means the breaking of fast.

Today and since 1982 when television started to enter the village, the Silwians await the announcement of the
feast by the broadcaster. Prior to the television, the announcement of the feast was heard on the radio. In 1951 the three villagers who owned radios went around the village announcing the feast.

Once the television confirmed the beginning of the new lunar month of Shawal, feast preparations proceed. Women prepare the small bread to take the next morning to the burial grounds, as well as Kaek El-Eid (the feast cookies) for the enjoyment of the family. The younger girls decorate themselves with Henna, and the young boys round the streets with their friends singing and playing games. Men visit their close kin and friends to congratulate them on the coming of the feast.

In the morning, women go to visit the burial grounds, while men in their most presentable clothes go to the Mosque for the collective prayers of the feast.

After the morning prayer, men go to visit the burial grounds. Upon returning to their homes, they find a breakfast tray consisting of Kaek El-Eid, stuffed pigeons, rice, and milk pudding ready. They then collect it and go to have breakfast at the clan guest house, a meal that extends till noon, frequently interrupted by mutual congratulations among seniors of the clan families.

The women, young girls, and boys of the house take breakfast at home. After breakfast the unmarried girls, who decorated themselves with Henna the night before, wear new
dresses and round the homes of the newlywed brides collecting cookies.

At lunch the family gathers at home to have lunch together. The rest of the day is spent visiting and/or receiving guest relatives and friends.

The second day of the feast, unmarried girls and boys, each in their segregated group, head early in the morning toward the location of the saint El-Fawi's marking in the mount hills. The girls leave their homes with a straw tray filled with food and a jar of water. The journey is a two-hour leisurely walk from the heart of the village. The girls walk in a physically distinct distance from the boys. But during the walk one sees the occasional boy intersecting the girls group to ask for water or a cookie from a specific girl. In the past, this boy's request was an indication of some interest in the girl as a future wife. Consequently, if the girl returned the boy's request for water or feast cookie, she was indirectly agreeing to the interest. But, if she ignored the boy's request, it meant she was not interested. On the other hand, the girls never walk out of their circles or attempt intersecting the boys' group.

Before reaching Saint El-Fawi, the two groups rest at the Sahhaba site. The site is also a holy location to Silwians because it is said that some of the "companions" of prophet Mohammad (Sahhaba) rested there on their trip from Arabia to Egypt. The two groups of girls and boys sit in segregated circles. They drink water, eat cookies, and
engage in conversation across the groups. After an hour’s rest they then head to El-Fawi, repeat the rest, and head back to their homes. This holy recreation takes the young girls and boys around six hours to complete their visit to the Sahhaba and El-Fawi and return home.

Today, the trip is more a fun outing than a mate selection technique as the latter was hitherto one of its main functions. Presently, most of the girls and boys know each other from school or having been at school together at one point. The age groups of youngsters going on this trip ranges from 8 to 15. However, there are few older boys who join the trip.

The rest of the feast days are spent visiting and receiving guests and exchanging congratulations. Village streets seem busy with hustling groups of men and youth as well as groups of chattering women seeking to carry out their social obligations for the occasion.

Today, the major change in Al-Fitr feast is the dresses children and youngsters wear. It has become customary to dress them in new clothes and shoes, while in 1951 a clean dress sufficed for the occasion and shoes were hardly worn.

Eid-Al-Adha

Eid-Al-Adha is the four-day sacrificial feast that Moslems celebrate on the tenth day of the twelfth lunar month (or approximately seventy days after the end of Ramadan) by slaughtering a sheep by those who can afford it.
It is also the feast before which Moslems start their pilgrimage to Mecca.

In Silwa prior to 1951 the Al-Adha celebrations were simple and communal. Every clan shared in the cost of buying a sheep to sacrifice on the morning of the feast. The sheep cost 80 Egyptian piasters and was slaughtered in the clan guest house. After the feast prayers in the Mosque, men went to their respective clan guest houses to witness the sacrifice. The meat was then divided among the clan men. Each man took his share to be cooked at home, and at noon the family heads returned to the clan house with a meal to eat with their fellow clan members.

The women went in the morning to the burial grounds to visit their dead and place the small bread on their tombs. They then returned to cook for their men and ate their noon meal with their children and adult female household members.

Today the Adha feast has become more of a family celebration. At dawn the women visit the burial grounds, while the men go to the Mosque to perform the feast communal prayer.

Having completed these rituals, the household gathers together to slaughter the sheep they had bought. The sheep today costs approximately 90 to 95 L.E. After the slaughtering of the animal is over, men go to their clan house to meet with their clan members, while women cook the meat and the rest of the noon meal which is served within the household.
The rest of the feast is spent visiting and receiving guests wishing a happy feast.

Ras El-Sana El-Hegriya

Ras El-Sana El-Hegriya is the beginning of the Islamic New Year. The day celebrates Prophet Mohammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina due to the continued persecution of the new converts to Islam by the Quraish tribe in Mecca, at the time when Islam was declared openly to the people.

In Silwa, the celebration of the Islamic New Year has been greatly reduced in form and activity. Today, most people sit in front of the television at home to watch the programs celebrating the event. But 35 years ago the celebration extended from the first of Muharram (the first month in the Islamic lunar calendar) until the 10th.

On the first of Muharram and for ten days the young boys took the Bisbahah (ropes made from palm tree leaves), went up to the mountains to light them, and turned them around in circular movements until they burned. Women sat in groups near their homes with a drum daf singing the praise of the Prophet every evening from the first of Muharram until the tenth. Finally, men gathered for the first ten days of Muharram in their clan guest houses telling stories about the Prophet’s life and adventures. This is a totally different picture from the way the Islamic New Year is currently celebrated in contemporary Silwa.
Ashura

Ashura is the tenth day of Muharram. This day is a very sacred day for the Shiite Moslems. It is the day when the Prophet’s grandson was killed in Karbala’, a town in Iraq, upon going to assume his rightful position as the Moslem Caliph (leader) from the Omayya Userper Yazid Ibn Mu’awiya.

The Silwians, as well as Egyptians in rural and urban areas, have always celebrated this day by eating a wheat base meal called Balilah, made of wheat and sugar. No change has affected this tradition which seems to be one of the residual ceremonies that Sunni Egyptians have continued to enjoy since the reign of the Shiite Fatimides dynasty. However, the strict Shiite sect in other parts of the world celebrate the occasion in an entirely different manner, expressing lamentations and sadness combined with a sense of guilt by inflicting certain bodily injuries on themselves.

El-Mawlid Al-Nabawi (Mulid)

El-Mawlid Al-Nabawi (the birth of the Prophet) is celebrated on the twelfth day of Rabi El-Awal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. Here again the Silwians have limited their celebration of this occasion to a family affair within the household where a special meal including lots of meat is served.
Thirty-five years ago the Silwians celebrated the Prophet’s birthday for twelve days and nights.

Women and men in segregated groups gathered at nodal points in their neighborhoods with Dafs (drums) to sing in praise of God and his prophet. On the night of the eleventh of Rabi El-Awal, the clan’s customary gathering over a communal meal and listening to stories read about the Prophet’s life and Koranic recital was a significant event.

The evening of the Prophet’s birthday witnessed the gathering of the Silwian men in the village central square Al-Hamadeh to enjoy a racing competition of camels, horses, and donkeys. Women in their black dresses and drums rounded the village singing in praise of God and the Prophet. The only feature that is preserved and elaborated presently is the horse racing on this occasion as well as on other festive occasions.

Concluding Remarks

The attempt made in this chapter to describe the rites of passage and religious ceremonies in Silwa, as briefly as possible, is not intended for the sheer collection of ethnographic data. Rather the focus was primarily placed on the change that has occurred therein, its underlying processes, and its significance in the community culture within the prevailing framework of societal dynamics.

At the outset, it is worth stating that the gamut of the modernization forces referred to in the previous chapter
have gone into modifying and adapting many aspects of the ceremonies in question. The disappearance of the naming and circumcision ceremonies as communal events, opting for celebrating many religious events on a family rather than clan basis, and the preference of distant relatives to paternal or maternal cousins are correlates of the modernization process. As seen from the previous description of many ceremonies a much greater weight is placed on the family and the resources of its members in dealing with ceremonial obligations as a corollary to the diminishing involvement of both extended family and clan.

With greater mobility through travel and migration, more exposure to education and modern medicine and technology, the impact of urban habits and customs, have influenced the form and content of some aspects of ceremonial arrangements. This has been reinforced by the mass media acting as informative, entertaining, and recreational agents for the cherished urban culture, and buttressing the role of the conjugal family in discharging those functions at the expense of the larger units of the social structure.

The change pattern reveals certain transformation in kind and quality in some rituals and ceremonies, in others the impact of technology is greater, while in the formation of a new family unit or the passing away of a deceased person mutual reciprocity and kinship obligations continue to loom as large as hitherto. Family mundane celebrations
on the success of their children in general examination certificates or the return of a migrant from the Gulf countries have been fairly common.

However, all these rituals and ceremonies continue to involve the partaking of food, including the offering of meat as the major delicacy of the occasion, whether the occasion is held at the clan or the family level. In 1951, meals for feasting were largely made from locally produced components. Today most of the items, including flour for bread, are bought from the market or from nearby cities. The elitist urban demonstration effect has stimulated the appetite for increased consumerism. In fact, the pressure for conspicuous consumption in ceremonies for family and clan prestige has been conducive in certain instances to inter-family wranglings and intra-family frictions. The prolonged indebtedness of some people to the village bank has been attributed to the showy urban imitations in marriage, pilgrimage, or other family celebrations. Instead of spending the loans from the bank in productive investment, as indicated by one of the informants, the money is spent in hiring microphones, taxis, buying meat and chocolates, and other luxuries for a celebration. These are few of the indicators of the stress and strain correlated with syncretism as a functional mechanism in the total modernization process.

Furthermore, the diversity in the dimensions of change in the rites of passage and ceremonies among Silwians leads
one to pose the following questions: Why is it that within one cultural system/context the rites of passage and ceremonies have been affected differently in the process of syncretism? Why is it that marriages have been reduced in stages and have become more urbanized, while funerals have prolonged and maintained the traditional pattern? Why is it that female circumcision has undergone change in quality and male circumcision is still carried out by the traditional barber? Why has the Fitr feast ceremony become more family oriented and the Al-Kadr night is still a clan celebration? Why is it that inducing fertility remains within the magico-religious rite and realm, whereas delivery and birth control are giving way to modern medicine?

It is well established that culture change cannot be viewed in terms of a geometrical symmetry but should be regarded as a chemical reaction. In reality, the synchronization of the traditional cultural elements with the modernizing impact has not been uniform in several aspects of the Silwa community. A plausible answer to the discrepancies in change as posed by the previous questions can be provided through examining the traditional belief system which syncretism combines.

In the Silwian case, as with other folk communities in Egypt, the cosmological belief system is based on a binary opposition of Al-Thahir (the visible) and Al-Baten (the invisible) (El-Aswad 1987). Within this system of cosmological belief, the invisible commands superiority vis-a-vis the visible. Its realm is unfathomable as it relates
to God’s will and wisdom, Al-Hikma Al-Ilahia.

Fitting this argument to the rites of passage and ceremonies, we note that rituals and celebrations dealing with the less valued beliefs, the visible, including the feasts of Al-Fitr and Al-Adha, pregnancy, birth, female and male circumcision have taken more of the exact elitist innovations during the process of syncretism. While the rituals and celebrations dealing with the more valued, superior beliefs including death, the uncomprehended celebration of Lilat Al-Qadr, female infertility, and male impotence have in syncretism taken less from the inexact urban elitist innovations. Within this view, the emphasis on the traditional element in some rituals and celebrations can be adequately understood.

Notes

1. This substitution, during my stay in Silwa, created a major problem throughout the whole country. In January of 1987, news of a shipment of radiated powdered milk arriving to Egypt from Germany reached the television, radio, and newspaper. My personal conversations with doctors and chemistry professors revealed that every individual in Egypt, due to this shipment, was exposed to radiation. In Silwa, the news hit very hard. Women stopped using powdered milk. Instead, the few cows together with sheep and goats available in Silwa were used for milk and providing the substitute for mother’s milk.

2. The following are the names of the months in the Hijrah months:

Muharram
Safar
Rabi El-Awal
Rabi El-Thani
sequel led months
3. This stage, I was told, was the time for the groom’s mother to avenge the loss of her son to the bride by overeating and overcomplaining.

4. In 1951 Silwa, all women and young girls were haerdressed by a local woman Mashata who plaits the hair into small tresses tightly worked out to dangle to the sides and the back of the head in an African style. Today, women’s hair is ironed at the hairdresser and sprayed with brand name products to maintain the straight shape.
CHAPTER SIX
SOCIALIZING THE YOUNG

This chapter attempts to describe child rearing practices in Silwa with particular reference to the context of modernization and social change. Here the aim is to assess the extent to which childrearing conditions reflect continuity and/or change of adult behavior and practices in the process of socializing their children.

Growing Up in Silwa of 1951

H. Ammar (1954) described the methods of socializing the infant in Silwa as generally indulgent. Prolonged and on demand breast feeding, lax toilet training, close proximity to the mother and other adult females, and ample time-enjoyment of play characterized this stage of socialization. The permissiveness of infancy was abandoned in childhood by the age of 5. The strict discipline during this stage aimed at perpetuating the utilitarian values associated with the agriculturalist ethos of hard work in return for a good harvest and content stomach. The discipline moreover, was imposed on children to inculcate cultural attitudes of Adab (politeness) and docility towards elders, the sense of rivalry and competitiveness among brothers and sisters was deliberately fostered to stimulate
fear of shame from breaching adult norms to produce assertive, and aggressive attitudes toward other children and to reinforce the norm of the separation of the sexes.

The socialization norms of children in Silwa argued Ammar was a result of adjusting to the harsh economic and historic realities of the adult villages where:

Hearty laughter is rare, and it usually occurs amongst adults in their sarcastic allusions to others, and in belittling their esteem, while apparently seeming to praise them. Suspicion of the evil intentions of others is institutionalized in the evil eye, seeing potential danger in practically everybody. The small family guards its private affairs with great caution, especially its misfortunes, for fear that others may exult or gloat at their expense. (Ammar 1954:230)

Generally the period of childhood experienced the reduction of care and attention given to the child by its mother. It was also the period of integrating the child within the play and age groups and the appreciation of food. By this age children of both sex were normally circumcised, a practice which as described earlier, continues to be one of the highlights of children’s socialization (Ammar 1954:107-116).

The effect of formal schooling on children was relatively insignificant in the 1951 Silwa. The compulsory education law of 1923 was applied to Silwa in 1925 by the establishment of the Ilzamia (elementary) school. However, the impact of schooling as a contributor to the village life had been vitiated by limiting its scope to abolishing illiteracy, and by the irrelevance of its aims
and methods to the actual life of the villagers (Ammar 1954:216).

The Silwians at the time evaded sending their children to school by manipulating the governmental registry system. Instead the Silwian children attended the Koranic school Kuttab. The strength of the religious motives and values in the village argued Ammar (1954) motivated some parents to send one of their sons to this educational institution, while other children were reared and trained by the age of 6 to engage in the farming activity. All the Kuttabs in Silwa, but one enrolling a handful of girls, were restricted to boys. This system of Islamic education emphasized "rote learning, memory and enumerative procedures" (Ammar 1954:204). This tradition emphasized realism as children’s fantasies, make-belief or imagination were not encouraged. The norms and values of growing up in 1951 Silwa Ammar noted were also indexed in the structure, organization and content of children’s play and folk tales.

**Training In Early Childhood:**
**Old Knowledge, New Items, and Situations**

The changes that have taken place in the early training of infants in Silwa do not represent a complete break from the past. They, however, reflect the general societal and cultural transformations in the agricultural activity, easier access to market goods and services and the
availability of certain amenities such as pit latrines, water, and electricity.

At least the first born babies today in Silwa are born in an extended family household structure, since the bride continues to live in her uxorilocal residence.\(^1\) Within this family structure the child receives emotional gratification from establishing a variety of relationships with other women (Hatem 1987:292). The ease with which Silwian children are moved from one lap to another without any cries of discomfort on their part is really striking to any observer.

During the first 7 to 9 months the newborn child is only handled and seen by immediate relatives such as grandparents, aunts and uncles. Other kin relatives, neighbors, and friends who visit the mother see the child’s image through a cloth covering. The reasons for this practice, according to informants, is to protect the child from flies and to ward off the evil eye.

Warding off the evil eye remains to be a very important institution in the Silwian culture. Pinning a gold charm with the word Allah (God) on children has become a common practice among the relatively well to do Silwians, while the less affluent use a blue bead or a metal hand of Fatima to ward off Alhassad (evil eye). Upon asking an informant about the effectiveness of protecting a child from the evil eye by these charms, her reply was

"The evil eye affects every person, and when it does, there is no way any charm or healer can ward
it off . . . but we do it because the Prophet asked his daughter Fatima to protect her son from a woman’s evil eye. He asked her to put a stone in her son’s bed before a person possessed with the evil eye came to see her child. After that person’s departure the Prophet asked Fatima to uncover the stone, it was split in half."

Infancy in Silwa, i.e., between birth and the age of 5, is still a relatively permissive stage of the life cycle. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Five, children are breast fed for a period of at least one year, and preferably for two years as prescribed by the Koran. Preliminary analysis of the survey I conducted on women revealed that mothers between the ages of 25 and 34 (i.e., the generation born after the 1951 study) 79% breast-fed their children for a period of more than a year, 18% for less than a year, and 13% for less than a month. No distinct correlation could be ascertained here between education and length of the suckling period. The pattern among this age group’s breast feeding was relatively comparable to the group of women between ages 35 and 45 where 76% of this group breast fed for more than a year, 7% for less than a year, and 17% for less than a month. The slight difference between the two groups may be attributed to the statistical logic of the Central Limit Theorem, where the larger the sample the more the diverse reality is reflected, since the younger group of women examined was smaller in number than the latter.

The on demand suckling pattern in Silwa has been affected, as mentioned earlier, among women who work outside the home as teachers. Women informants generally say that
the indulgent practice of the on demand suckling of children in Silwa is now being more controlled. Reasons given for the emerging pattern of the relatively more disciplined nursing of Silwian children included training the child to regulate his/her eating habits in the future. This practice has been promoted through the television spots by the famous actress Karima Mokhtar advising mothers on how to better care for their children. However, one cannot dismiss the fact that in Silwa today the introduction of children to boiled soft food during their second month could have contributed to regulating breast feeding. Since the food curtails the child’s demand for his/her mother’s breast, mothers feel more secure that the baby has had something to eat thus affecting their nursing response to his/her crying. Today Silwian women leave their infants crying if they are assured they’re not hungry. "Crying," told me one informant, "teaches the child that it cannot get everything it wants in life."

Children who are not nursed by their mother’s milk in Silwa are described as weak and Jasirin (aggressive). One informant said about her 3-year-old daughter who physically looked younger than her age:

"She refused to suckle my milk ... can’t you tell ... that is why she is weak and bad tempered."

Women in Silwa nurse their children with no discrimination as to their gender/sex. It is considered Haram (not religiously sanctioned) to suckle boys
intentionally more than girls. My survey of 180 women showed that women nursing practices was similar to their attitudes in not discriminating between boys and girls across the age generations between 25 to 70. However, the actual care in other needs may be different in favor of sons.

The Silwian infant is nursed by a very attentive mother. During the first seven to nine months of his/her breast feeding, the mother holds the child tightly, talking and teasing him/her. When you’re sitting next to the nursing mother one notices how her face hardly ever moves to the side to look at you during the process.

Though weaning today comes earlier than in the past, the process is less bitter and shocking than hitherto. Presently, children are weaned by gradually reducing the times the child is breast fed and substituting his/her diet by other food and the bottle an unknown product in 1951 Silwa. The introduction of pacifiers are also a common sight in Silwa today. In the past and before certain foods, the pacifier or the bottle were available to the Silwian mother, the child was weaned by attempting to create a negative association response to the suckling experience by putting bitter herbs such as pepper on the mother’s breast. The process of weaning today takes an average of two to three months.

Infancy in Silwa today still imposes little restrictions on the child’s freedom of movement, toilet
training and pressures to walk or talk. Children crawl around the courtyard of the house, playing with sand, water taps, kitchen utensils, flour, bread baking plates and any other objects lying around the house. Mother's and other female relatives in the household watch out for the child not to hurt him/herself, without constraining it. Summer nights where scorpions begin to roam freely in Silwa, are the only exception to this freedom of movement. During this time children are restricted to beds, wooden benches, or well-lit places.

Children start their toilet training between the ages of 2 and 3. The preliminary results of the survey I conducted revealed that women trained their children in terms of the place to defecate. It must be noted that toilet training in Silwa still means directing the child to the place of defecation for both girls and boys. The animal corner or the pit latrine is pointed to the child after the fact and the child is not taken to these places at regular intervals in anticipation.

The age at which a child talks or walks presents no anxiety of evil eye warding to parents in Silwa. Parents and especially mothers, make no conscious effort in helping the child at the first stages of his/her attempts to walk. Often the older sister, or cousin is the one seen supporting the child at this stage. Some mothers noted to me that their children will walk when God wishes them to do so.
The surroundings of the Silwian infant within the extended family atmosphere is very conducive to their learning to talk. The relatively large number of the household members and their age diversity as well as the reinforcement of adult talk whereby children are always responded to by "the correct" adult word, allows infants to develop communicative speech skills early on. According to my informants, children in Silwa today not only learn to talk Silwawi, but also learn the Cairenne dialect from television and songs played on tape recorders. At the early stage of the Silwian infancy between the ages of 2 to 5 there is a lot of mimicking and emulation of adult members in the household. My two nieces (my female cousins' daughters) who are 3 years of age, eventually started imitating me by sitting behind the table and pretending that they were writing. These two children often took the broom from their grandmother's kitchen and pretended they were sweeping the floor like their mothers. Also my 7-year-old nephew (the son of my female and male cousins), who lived in a separate house and with whom I developed a very close bond, insisted that his parents by him a camera, so that he can take pictures like I do; the parents did.

Children mimicking and imitating of adults is encouraged, particularly when this is acted within the same gender boundaries. It is one of the socialization methods developed by the culture to introduce the child at an early age to the patterns of action held by the Silwian culture.
The family in Silwa remains a very important institution for training the infant throughout childhood. The recognition of this unit's role can be seen through the villager's proverbs which emphasize the influence of parents on children.  

Characteristics of the Average Childhood in Silwa Today: An Altered State

H. Ammar (1954:107) argues in his study that the process of socialization is beyond any doubt not an identical process for all children. He notes that the chronological order of the child, the life crisis experienced by the child and his/her family, the age of the parents, are forces that lead to "distinctive personality constellations." As a result his focus was on the "common prevailing forces" and the "basic personality structure" in the socialization process. At the time, H. Ammar's focus could be neatly accomplished, since he was dealing with a homogenous society as well as the culturally restricting investigation of boys. Presently, however, the "common prevailing forces" of socialization among boys and girls have many exceptions in terms of income, and education of parents as well as the parental experience of migratory workers. Therefore, the sections that follow represent the "experience of the average Silwian child," i.e., the child whose parents are alive and are in the context of a stable marriage. The child's mother has between four to nine years
of formal schooling and does not work outside the home. The child’s father owns a piece of land that is being cultivated with sugar cane. In other words our picture represents the normal type as observed within the Silwian situation.

One of the main characteristics in the Silwian child’s socialization today, is the prolonging of the permissive stage into childhood. The need to perpetuate the agricultural ethos of working hard for a good harvest has become of secondary importance to present day Silwian reality. The cultivation of sugar cane requires no work by male youngsters. Female youngsters are no longer required to fetch water from the Nile or take the grain to the mill, since the water tap is in the house and flour is bought from the shop. The decreased demand for the labor of youngsters due to cash crop cultivation and the introduction of other amenities has extended the period of relatively permissive childhood and introduced the new disciplinary ethos of schooling as will be described later.

The extension of childhood indulgence is expressed in Silwa by the cultural value of permissible play. Generally boys and girls are permitted to play outside the house in mixed or segregated groups until the age of 8 or 9. Children play organized ball games, earth/board games and hide and seek. However, after the age of 9, girls generally are home bound. During this period, a girl’s life becomes more disciplined by demands put on her to help her mother in
house chores, caring for her younger siblings and doing her homework for school.

The boys on the other hand face less restrictive disciplining demands during this period, and their mobility outside the home often permits their evasion. One cannot fail noticing the number of young boys and young men playing ball in the youth club during the summer vacation as well as during the school season. Moreover the village streets, especially during the summer, are always filled with boys who appear to be 9 and 10 years of age playing organized games. 3

Male children today are introduced gradually into the economic values that are enhanced by schooling. They are expected to go to school to receive an education which will enable them later to obtain a government job and a regular income. Childhood contacts with farming remain marginal and minimal throughout the period of boys’ schooling. Girls, on the other hand, are introduced to both their mothers’ economic pursuits and to education. They are expected to do well in both, and if one need be sacrificed it is the latter not the former. The dual demand on Silwian girls which affect their relative share of free time runs parallel to those of many other rural women whose experience with modernization did not necessarily entail free time or shorter work days (Boseurp 1970; Friedl 1967; Palmer 1980; Hammam 1986). At any rate, today, the childhood of Silwian
girls extends over a period longer than in 1951, but shorter than the boys in their age group.

The second characteristic of childhood in Silwa of 1987 is the diversification of socializing institutions and agencies. Although the family remains to be the basic unit of socialization combined to a lesser degree than hitherto with other kinship units, the Silwian child is exposed and introduced to two other major institutions, namely, the school and the television.

The child enters the compulsory primary school at the age of 6 with a new uniform, clean hair and nails, and polished shoes. Unlike in 1951, there is no evasion of children from being enrolled according to the law. In fact both parents and children are enthusiastic and the occasion is one of family jubilation. Mother’s at this stage pay greater attention to their children’s appearance than in 1951, since mothers of unclean children are sent written messages of rebuke from the school health inspector.

At school the written word, the urban values of the government prescribed curriculum, books, sitting on chairs, and dealing with money at the school cooperative shop are new values and situations in the child’s transmission from family to school. Through the flag salute and the singing of the National Anthem every morning the children are also introduced to new norms and emotions related to the "greater society."
The importance of the school as a socializing agent will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. However, it suffices for now to note that the school as a socializing institution highly appeals to the Silwians today. Reference to how Al Ailm Nour (education is light) and to the Prophet's saying that the learned are the inheritors of the Prophets, are often heard by Silwian adults. For them, the school to Silwians represents the panacea to the growing life expenses, since its certificate can lead to a decent job and income.

The introduction of electricity to Silwa in 1982 brought with it the media resource of television. Access to television is not restricted to owners of the device, but also to their friends, relatives and neighbors. The preliminary results of the household survey conducted on a sample size of 300 revealed that approximately 45% of Silwians own a television. Furthermore, television sets are available in the village coffee shops, thus increasing exposure to them.

Generally, television coverage in Egypt "takes a didactic approach in discussing social middle and upper class problems and makes a deliberate effort to educate the "uncultured viewers to a more acceptable awareness of what is right in the modern world" (Rugh 1984:250).

The extent to which Silwian children have been affected by television coverage must not be underestimated. It has created unrealistic stereotypes of the Cairo upper/middle class subculture and served to increase the schism between the "pious" Silwian and the urban "deviant."
One 14 year old boy commented on a scene from a classic Arabic (Egyptian) movie where the hero and heroin were slow dancing: "By God they will go to hell for doing this." The modernizing effect of television as mentioned by Lerner (1958) cannot be confirmed by observable social and individual behavior in the field. Silwians are affected by television by staying up late watching it, and thus arriving to school or work late the next morning.

Furthermore, the occasional confusing effect of television on children's knowledge in Silwa and Egypt as a whole is best illustrated by an example:

The word Jafaf in classical Arabic means both dehydration and drought. During the past two years Egyptian television has been airing messages of public health awareness about Jafaf "dehydration" of children caused by dysentery and other intestinal diseases. The content of the messages are superb and variation of class content renders catchy and identifiable. In June of 1986, the public examinations for the second intermediate class (i.e., 13 and 14 year old children) included a question about the effects of Jafaf "drought" in Africa. The examiners upon correcting the exams realized that a large number of students have discussed dehydration of children in Africa and not the drought, a problem they are more familiar with through television.

As no statistical data was sought, or is available to ascertain how much time children in Silwa spend watching television programs or what specific programs they prefer, one cannot evaluate its possible impact in a satisfactory manner. However, it is my impression that children spend a good time watching their preferred shows, plays, songs, and soccer games. For many children this has curtailed
occasions for age group chatting and play. It has also
minimized their creative play with clay, wood, strings and
other local materials which were often used for modelling
and making things for enjoyment or play.

The third characteristic of childhood in Silwa today is
the earlier integration of the boy or the girl with a
"stranger" play group and the situational multiplicity of
the group. Presently, the integration of preschool children
into the play group remains within the confines of the elder
siblings, relatives and neighbors. The older children still
act as guardians of the younger ones and the nurturing role
of the girl guardian versus the less burdened one of the boy
still prevails. On the other hand, children of mothers who
teach are often integrated with older children who are not
relatives or neighbors prior to the age of 6. These mothers
accompany their children with them to school and either
leave them to move freely within the school compound talking
to students, or put them in the classroom where they are
teaching.

Moreover, Silwian children today join more than
one play group, since they have longer periods to enjoy
play. The primary school boys form play groups at school
and in their quarters. The intermediate school boys add to
their play group the youth club frequenters, the Nile
swimmers and the board game players in the coffee shops.
Although the primary school girls today have relatively less
situations from which to choose play groups than the boys, they nevertheless have added to their play situation.

The fourth characteristic of childhood in Silwa today is connected with the change in the orientation of sibling rivalry. Children in 1951 Silwa experienced sibling rivalry at the time their "mother’s abdomen became enlarged on pregnancy" (Ammar 1954:109). The source of sibling rivalry at the time was believed to be the older child’s jealousy of the younger because of the process of "pushing him/her" away from the mother’s lap. Furthermore, the stimulus for the rivalry was to accelerate development, maturity and self worth.

Today sibling rivalry is stimulated at a later stage and its absolute direction is not one way, i.e., older from younger. The older child today is given attention by the mother and other adults by different means than suckling. He/she sits in front of the television, is allowed to listen to music on the tape recorder, and is bought chewing gum or "sweets" Ders Halawa. In the Silwian case, where the mother is not the sole care taker and where the child develops multiple bonds with other adults, it is not surprising that the increase in certain material and consumer goods could waiver the attention of the old sibling from the younger one. A 16-year-old informant told me that, presently in Silwa, brothers and sisters recognize that parents love all children equally, but that the young needs more attention.4
However, sibling rivalry, and for both sexes is stimulated during the early years of school and continues throughout this stage. The source of jealousy or rivalry here lies mainly in the achievement criterion of grades and scoring well on examinations. Children are often shamed for not doing their homework like their siblings by using the word *Ager* (infertile). An informant told me in the presence of two of his children, a 17-year-old boy and a 12-year-old girl: "the girl is far better at school, but him . . . well I hope he passes his *Thanawiyya Ama* (secondary school public examination).  

Teachers also resort to stimulating the rivalry between siblings. An intermediate math teacher, pointed out a second cousin of mine and said out loud in front of all the classroom: "he is not as good as his older sister, she was *Kwissi* (good) when I taught her math at the elementary school."

Competitiveness between siblings today has assumed a new dimension, namely the culturally valued achievement in school in order to get a secure job. Presently, as mentioned earlier, the most favored child is the one who does well in school, since he/she can lessen the burden on the parents later in life. Although it is boys who are expected to care for the parents in their old age, girls who get an education can help out in the home-expenses while unmarried and will bear some of their wedding expenses.
The fifth characteristic of socialization in Silwa today is the appreciation of money and consumer items. It is quite frequent that you see boys and girls lined up in front of the village shops to buy chewing gum, candy bars, and Coca Cola. Older boys are preoccupied with bicycles, book bags, wrist-watches and tapes. One informant complained to me of how her son enjoys eating a dried out Tameyih (falafel) sandwich in the coffee shop, only because he could spend money there. Girls, on the other hand, prefer items such as dolls, doll houses, hair bands, plastic rings, and bracelets, and knitting wool. These items have displaced girls' play and hobbies of making dolls from old clothes, tray covers from palm tree leaves and other hand made decorations for their future homes in preparation for marriage. On the whole children's interest today tends towards acquiring consumer items for food and play. The conversation with their parents and friends, their dreams and their songs manifest such interests. Relatives who come from outside Silwa with urban presents for children are frequently mentioned and remembered. The competitiveness between children for acquiring consumer items contains an element of tantalizing subtlety. Though children are not permitted to conspicuously reveal their possessions for fear of the evil eye, they always find a way to show each other their new acquisition. One 5-year-old girl, who acquired a new baby sewing machine as a gift, was refused permission to play with it outside the house on the grounds that it is new
and her playmates will break it. An hour later the girl went for the machine telling her mother that her aunt wants to see it. The girl, of course, took it to show to her playmates.

Aims of Socialization: An Added Dimension

Today, children in Silwa are handed down from adults a twofold system of learned behavior, dispositions, values, habits, and languages. Far from the depictions of Morgan (1877), Tonnies (1971), Redfield (1941, 1950) and Smelser (1971) the Silwian responses to the market oriented economy have not stimulated the rearing of specialized autonomous individuals who could be integrated into society on the basis of non-familial social group basis. To the contrary the Silwians, perpetuate in their children one set of behavior, norms and values appropriate for the context of family, kin, and community, and another set for the school, the work place and the outside world. Presently in Silwa the two systems of socialization referred to as compartmentalization (Fakhouri 1972) and hierarchial (Paydarfar 1967, 1974) confront the Silwian child as mutually reinforcing.

This reinforcement is perpetuated by the spill over of the home/village values and behavior into the school/institutions. This is illustrated in Chapter Four by the case of the duality of role playing by women teachers, and the sexually segregated seating pattern of students.
The process of growing up today in Silwa is envisaged as a way of disciplining the child to conform to village values and to guide him/her towards education in order to acquire the qualifications necessary for surviving in the future.

The giving of Adab (politeness) still embodies the set up by which adults socialize their children to conform to village standards. Adab encompasses a set of values including respect for the elderly, following the segregated norms between the sexes and assisting adults in their daily chores. Avoiding to play in front of adults has ceased to be an expressive criterion of Adab in Silwa today. The boy or the girl who plays all the time is merely expressing childish Shagawa (naughtiness) which is sometimes tolerated by adults.

The keenness of parents to instill Adab in their children is still, as H. Ammar noted, motivated by reciprocal relationships fused with moral and religious sanctions (1954:127). One informant illustrated this reciprocity by quoting a Koranic Surah stating that respect for parents at old age is related to the parents caring for the young child. Another informant emphasized the fact that villagers who don’t take care of their children are those who are not observing their religious duty.

On the whole, however, the process of giving Adab in Silwa today has assumed a relatively stronger dimension of assuring the survival and perpetuation of the social
structure. This is best evidenced by the emerging criterion of dubbing children inclined to urban or television emulation as without Adab. A child who imitates urban dress, speech or habits is reprehended by statements such as "walk out of the room you without Adab," or proverbs such as "the modernized Upper Egyptians bring catastrophe to our people". Girls, specifically who emulate urban dress or hairstyles even if they were students studying in town hear disapproval expressions such as "these are not our traditions, you can do this in towns."

In addition to instilling Adab, the Silwian adults today promote the value of Shatara (excellent capability, achieving) in their children. Shatara is a process by which the child is disciplined to comply with school and scoring standards, thus acquiring the qualifications of a good student. The Shatir is a child who organizes his/her study time so as not to interfere with other family demands or other leisure activities such as play or television. A boy of 13 or 14 who comes back from school, changes into the Gallabiyya (traditional dress), eats, and then studies is Shatir. A girl of 12 who helps her mother in doing home chores and then studies is Shatra. The Shatara, however, includes instilling the child with a sense of competitiveness, and liveliness so that he/she is not subservient in the school surroundings. These attributes are to be enacted in school, among peer groups or in front of guests but never with parents or older relatives. A
child who allows his/her teacher to beat him/her without complaining is Khaib, i.e., not Shatir. A boy or a girl of 13 who shys away from replying promptly to guests is also Khaib.

Instilling Adab or Shatara by parents is not as readily accepted by children in present day Silwa as 35 years ago. Some children challenge their parents as to the validity of their system of life vis-a-vis other ways of life they were exposed to on television, while traveling or in books. The challenging of the mother is often more open and statements such as "this is Daga Gadimi (old fashioned)" are heard. Fathers on the other hand are challenged behind their backs and are accused of not having enough education being a Garrawi (a villager). This challenge by no means leads to defiance. Children agree that their parents know more through their experiences in life and seeking their satisfaction is religiously sanctioned. One 14-year-old girl told me that "mother’s prayers" are very important for a child’s success in her exams and asked me if I have ever seen a goat teaching its mother how to graze?

Today, the Silwian children on the whole are in greater contact with adult groups. At home male adults are ever more present, since they no longer go all day to the fields. In the evening, the family members often gather around television young and old. Furthermore, the growing tolerance of play by adults leads one to see boy groups playing next to an adult gathering in alleys and streets,
while girl groups play inside one of the houses. The school situation, the youth club and coffee shops have also brought together the adults and children closer in work and play. One can argue that in Silwa the traditional norm of age separation has been to a great extent temporally and spacially reduced. The generation gap between educated and uneducated remains latent, inhibited and seldom manifest or rebellious.

Children's play groups in Silwa today have varied prescribed behavioral patterns which coincide with the twofold patterns of Adab and Shatara. The play groups in which the members consist of neighbors or kin, respect for the elder member in the group is expected and the rivalry often takes the form of sarcastic reciprocity. On the other hand, the play groups at school are more aggressive, and tainted with rough behavior, especially among boys. One often sees 6 or 7-year-old children coming home from playing with their kin crying because the older relative refused to give them the ball or made a sarcastic comment. While at school one observes boys fighting with each other, grabbing each other's shirts, while girls snatch books or sandwiches from each other. At the youth club and coffee shops, boys relate to each other also in a rough manner both physically and verbally.
Methods of Socialization
Continuity and Change

H. Ammar (1954) discusses a variety of methods by which the social norms of behavior are instilled in the child. These include the decrease in intimacy between the adult and child, a larger tolerance in conforming to respect of parents in the private sphere than in the formal setting, frightening the child with imaginary creatures, dangerous mythical animals, bad names, and somewhat severe corporal punishment. The base line study descriptions and analysis of these methods still hold true in impressing the socialization norms of adab in Silwa today. The only exception, however, is corporal punishment.

Presently the administering of corporal punishment by parents to children in Silwa has diminished. Although, the child is still slapped on occasions, he/she is punished today by withholding from him/her the daily pocket money, the right to watch television, the promised trip to the Governorate capital and the opportunity to go to the youth club.

The child is often punished by such methods when he/she reveals excessive aggression at school; if he is discovered swimming in the Nile, or if he/she is impolite to their parents or an adult.

The Shatara norm in Silwa presently is developed by parents through stimulating rivalry among siblings and close kin of the same age. The child is often reminded of how the
brother or sister do more homework, better studying, and obtains excellent scores on tests and school reports. The fostering of this rivalry is reflected in family or group gathering where one often hears adults asking siblings (of both sexes) "who is more Shatir at school?"

The rivalry also takes the form of impressing the insecurity of the future of the child in case he/she does not reach at least the secondary vocational education level. One hears boys between the ages of 14 and 15 commenting on some of their age cohort’s in an apprehensive tone by saying: "These colleagues have dropped out of school and are bound to become Muzarin "agriculturalist."10

Sibling and age group rivalry are expressed, as I mentioned earlier in the aggressive behavior at school play groups. However, it also manifest itself at home. One art primary school teacher mentioned the incident of one of her talented student’s art book being torn by the jealous younger sister, an act that has made her collect the books from the students and keep them at school.

Presently the norm of Shatara is also instilled by bringing a private tutor to clarify and review curriculum requirements for the child. This often starts during the intermediate level schooling. I, however, observed few students in the 6th primary year who take private tutors.

The private tutor phenomena is not only a Silwian method of instilling Shatara and ensuring success at school. Rather as Egyptian planners and educators call it "it is an
Egyptian epidemic." In Cairo public schools for example, the low paid teacher often explains the minimum possible in the classroom, and sets up a Magmua (group session) of ten or eleven students later in the day to explain the curriculum more thoroughly. Each student in the Magmua pays between five to ten Egyptian pounds per session. Each Magmua session provides the teacher with an income return at least double his/her monthly government salary.

The Silwian private tutor method, has not yet become as prolific as the practice in Cairo. Since the Silwian school teachers are predominately from the village, with close kinship relations and reputations of honesty at work that function to ensure the he/she does the required standards of teaching. In Silwa presently, the tutoring takes the form of one-to-one teacher student instruction, and the need for the tutor is initiated on the student’s side. However, the phenomena adds strain on the parents expenditures, since they pay the tutor between three to 5 L.E. per session. Calculated over a period of two months (usually the last two months before the exam), and for at least a session a week, the parents pay minimum 12 L.E. a month for tutoring in a system where schooling is supposed to be free.11

To sum up, the periods of infancy and childhood today in Silwa do not represent a discontinuity in terms of severity in disciplining to ensure conformity in community norms and parents image of the child’s future occupation. Childhood has become an extension of infancy’s play,
specifically for the boys in Silwa. It has also been pointed out that childhood socialization has come to include more institutional services of socialization such as the television, the school, foreign and ready-made toys.

Moreover, the process of growing up in Silwa today has increased the contact between the adults and children. Though the observance of age and sex remain important norms for the child, the situational forming and multiplicity of relevant groups tend to reduce the intensity of the segregation and increase the child’s exposure to a variety of behavioral patterns.

Reflecting on the process of socialization in 1951 characterized by sudden transition from permissive infancy to rigid childhood discipline which Eric Fromm would have considered "thwarting the child’s fulfillment" (1948:153-8), one is inclined to adjudge it at present as having a much lesser effect. The Silwian child’s gradual deprivation from the mother, for instance, is balanced off by candy bars, toys, watching television and forming other family primary bonds. On the whole the adjustment between infancy and childhood is relatively less severe than in 1951 in view of the longer period of child permissive development.

In this connection a question of utilitarian nature must be asked. Do children’s lives today fare better than those of the children in Silwa of 1951? In answering this question many elements need to be taken into consideration. The child receives the pressure of socialization at a much
later age than in 1951. However, this pressure includes two spheres that are considered within his/her system of life, not necessarily compatible. The child is required to grow into a mature adult embued with the village cultural norms, and one who is expected to be a school achiever in order to secure a government job in the future. In other words, the process of growing up in Silwa today entails a new balancing for internalizing the mores of the family, and community as well as for facing the increasing encroachment of modernization and the demands of the larger society.

Children's Play: Transformations in Meaningful Structures of Socialization

Childhood in Silwa today is associated with more organized play activities than in the spontaneous rough and tumble forms of play in 1951. However, one notes that girls engage in more creative leisure activities than the boys in spite of their restricted opportunities and short span of play time in their life-cycle.

Children from about the age of 6 until 15 spend an average of three to four hours playing during the winter school season, and considerably more time during the off school season. In the description of games in Appendix 19, examples 1, 2 and 10 are played during winter because of their energetic nature, while examples 3, 12 and 13 are summer games because of their sedentary or cooling nature. Moreover, examples 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 13 are play situations
suitable for older boys, while 5, 8, 9, and 11 are for younger boys. Examples 14 and 15 are played by all ages within their respective gender groups.

Presently in Silwa, during the school season there are fixed times for play, namely the school noon recess and after homework is completed. A valid excuse for a child not to join a neighbor’s play group is having to study.

Children’s games that prescribe choice of leaders or a starting order often use rotation rhymes. The rhymes are sung by one person who rotates his/her index finger along a spaced order, and upon its completion the child that the index finger is pointed at either starts the game or becomes the leader.13

The meaningful structure of games, and other symbolic gestures including twitches and winks, talk, poetry has been increasingly pointed out by contemporary social scientists (Geertz 1973; Goffman 1973; Dwyer 1982; Abu-Lughod 1986; Berne 1964). The production, the presentation, the perception, the temporal and social space of games and symbols correspond to aspects of culture, "and without which they would not ... in fact exist" (Geertz 1973:7). By deduction one can argue that the changes in games people or children play are related to and are embedded in the transformations of the culture which gives them their transactional meaning. In the following highlights of games children play presently in Silwa, an attempt is made to
interpret some of the changes in the cultural meaningful structures of the young.

It must be pointed at the outset that many of the traditional games and play activity of 1951 are still practiced. Sex dichotomy continue to be the norm in differentiating the play of boys and girls and strict separation is observed at around the age of 10. Boys' play and games are still characterized by their roughness, assertiveness and physical buffeting as compared to the sedentary docile nature of girls' play. They are also more varied and requiring greater physical energy.

Play situations have become more spread in their sites with new opportunities for organized games and gymnastics for boys and girls at school in addition to the youth club for the former. Play time at night is no more limited to moonlit nights as electricity at home and the electricity poles lighting certain streets provide freedom in selecting time and place that are convenient to the group of players. However, girls' play outside school is largely home bound and its breach is reprehensible and may inflict punishment.

Soccer has recently become one of the most favorite games for boys both at school and outside. The flare for this game has been partly promoted by watching the television broadcast of national and provincial clubs. Heated conversation among boys regarding who won and why for games played by them or by the national clubs has become a common theme in their daily life. Adults are not
particularly interested in encouraging their sons to be skillful in the game as it dissipates their energy and wastes their time which in their view should be devoted to school studies and other social duties.

As in other spheres of activities, objects of play, and games today are ready made articles bought from the market. For instance, balls that were traditionally played by hand (and not foot) were made by boys themselves from old cloth, sticks required were made from palmtree branches, stones and pebbles used are available everywhere. Many articles are now purchased from either the local market or from nearby towns.

Among the new games played by the boys at the youth club are volley ball, hand ball and table tennis, yet they have not yet captured the enthusiasm as soccer. In this respect one observes that group play and games are more interesting to both boys and girls. Individual play is deemed to be appropriate for younger children only. Culturally, growing up socially and psychologically is marked by being one in the group.

It is significant that in the conduct of games, boys traditionally used to divide themselves into subgroups named after village clans or neighboring villages, while today names of national heroes, cities, village schools are preferred, an attitude which is most likely affected by schooling. Other urban names and actions have infiltrated in play activity such as the bicycle game (without a real
bicycle), the dice, the floating ring, the cement brick, the transaction of buying and selling, features which indicate new trends in the structure and content of children's play in Silwa. (For a full description of children's games see Appendix 19.)

Children's play can only be properly understood within the context of adults' conception of its socializing role. Reference was earlier made to parents' disinterest in children's play as they consider it a matter for peers of the respective sexes. They are hardly seen participating in any manner in their children's games or play. As in 1951,

it is not incorrect to state that growing up in the village is a continuous process of weaning the child from play to embark on the serious activities of a "dignified man" (Ammar 1954:155).

Although adults have become relatively more tolerant of children's play, they are still largely ambivalent about its validity as a valuable activity in the life of children, not to mention adults. Even those few adults who waste their time playing domino or trick track at home or in the coffee shops are frowned upon and do not win the social respect of others. However, the ambivalent attitude towards play becomes more accentuated once the children join school; the pressure on them to abandon wasting time in play becomes greater. A child who has grown up in terms of both Adab and Shatara is he/she who terminates his/her playful stage or at least curtails the time it consumes as early as possible. It is no wonder that within the last 35 years, Silwa has not produced any
national or provincial player or team in any of the modern sports.

Children’s Institutional Learning: The Modern Schooling

Though the universal compulsory education laws were supposed to be enforced in Silwa by the establishment of the elementary school in 1925, serious efforts to provide adequate modern educational facilities in rural Egypt were not undertaken until four years after the Free Officers Revolution in 1956.

In Silwa today the government education efforts are represented by six institutions.

Schools in Silwa and Egypt as a whole teach a curriculum and follow a structure provided by the central government. In the primary schools, the curriculum for the first four years consists of training in the rudiments of religion, Arabic language, mathematics, physical education, art, music and environmental general knowledge. In the last two years of primary education, science, social and civic studies are added. Education is free in all its cycles in Egypt. However, during primary school parents contribute an annual fee for extra curricular activities and note pads which amounts to six Egyptian pounds in Silwa. Attendance at this level is obligatory by law. Students are admitted at the age of 6, and for the first four years they spend
Table 6.1 Schools in Silwa 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>School name and date established</th>
<th>Student enrollment Total</th>
<th>Teacher enrollment Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Al-Lithi 1924</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Al-Shahid 1962</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Al-Azharee 1977</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Primary 3 Mixed</td>
<td>1179</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-</td>
<td>Boy’s Intermediate 1950</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-</td>
<td>Girl’s Intermediate 1982</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-</td>
<td>Al Azharee Intermediate 1982</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Intermediate 2 Boys’ &amp; 1 Girls’</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Silwa Secondary 1987</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Registries
from 8:00 am until 12:20 pm at school and during the last two years they leave an hour later.

The three primary schools including the 62-year-old Al-Lithi represent no threat to students health. The classrooms have cement floors, and are all ventilated by windows. The furniture used by the students and teachers are all stable. Aesthetically, the school surroundings are by far better than numerous public schools in Cairo. The school grounds are clean, and it is the responsibility of the students to keep them tidy. Moreover, the glass on the windows is intact, the classroom walls are decorated with posters and pictures made by the students themselves.

Overcrowding facilities in primary schools are a major problem only to Al-Lithi school since it is the oldest institution in Silwa, and was not originally built for such an enrollment size. The other two primary schools have large play grounds and sufficient size classrooms.

In 1981 the government extended compulsory education to nine years of basic education (Massialas and Jarrar 1983). The intermediate school was to include vocational training to facilitate entry into the vocational institutes or in life occupations after this stage. However this aspect of practical training receives in fact very minor share due to the lack of necessary provisions and equipment.

The transfer from the primary to the intermediate level is almost automatic. In the three years of intermediate schools, the curriculum consists of further training in
Arabic language, religion, English, social science, mathematics, science, vocational classes, home economics for girls, and physical education. The curriculum of Azharee school, an institution related to the Azharite religious system of education, includes more emphasis on religious studies and memorizing the Koran at both primary and intermediate levels.

The secondary level of education was introduced to Silwa in 1982. Students before attended classes in the Boy’s intermediate school or in secondary schools in nearby towns. On March 1st, 1987, the Aswan Governor opened the academic secondary school of Silwa, and the students resumed classes in the new buildings. The students and teachers are proud of their new buildings and have decorated the halls and classrooms with posters and maps.

Attendance at this level is not obligatory and fees paid for extra curricular activities and note pads cost 16 L.E. annually. The school day at the secondary level extends from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Transfer to the academic secondary school depends largely on the average the student attains in the Idadiyah (intermediate level public examination). The lower percentiles are transferred to vocational institutes training. The students promoted to the secondary school, depending on their public examination scores, are then placed into one of three branches of studies: scientific, mathematic, or literary. The first two years of the former
branch curriculum consists of focuses on mathematics, geometry, physics, chemistry, biology, Arabic language, English, and French. The third year of the scientific branch divides further on the basis of science or math concentration. The literary branch curriculum focuses on Arabic language and literature, history, geography, philosophy, logic, English, and French.

Silwians are very proud of the educational institutions in their village. In comparison to its satellite villages, Silwa El-Balad is the only village where the three tiers of education are established. In relation to its administrative district, Silwa comes first in the number of students and in educational tiers represented in any single village.

Silwian Schools in Thirty-Five Years

Silwa in 1986 had six schools enrolling a little more than 2,000 children of all ages and sexes compared to the 180 students enrolled in 1951. Furthermore, compared to the two teachers from the village in the elementary school of 1951, there were in 1986 82, 28, and 14 teachers from the village teaching at the primary, intermediate and secondary schools respectively.15

It is clear from these figures that the enrollment in Silwa schools in 1986 was more than ten times that of 1951. To assess the increase of educational opportunities, students enrolled in institutions outside the village in
technical, vocational, and teacher training have to be added.\textsuperscript{16} Enrollment in the universities is still very limited, particularly for girls, as it entails very high expenses for living away from home. However, the recent establishment of a secondary school in Silwa and College of Education in Aswan City have encouraged students to proceed for higher education. Currently, as mentioned earlier, three girls from Silwa are enrolled and one of them will graduate in the summer 1988.

On the whole modern education at institutions introduced into the village, and in other rural areas, have been accepted by the rural people, and have been a success at least quantitatively. All the people I met in Silwa were enthusiastic about schooling, and often remembered my grandparents adventure and sacrifice in sending their sons to schools at the time by saying:

"They were far sighted (and your grandmother especially was tough), they taught all their boys in schools outside Silwa, and look at what they have accomplished."

Yet, the enthusiasm about education in Silwa today must be understood within the cultural context in terms of its desirability, usefulness, and the provision of better future opportunities for children. People do not consider modern education as an instrument for "altering the peasants apathy and resistance to social change" as advocated by the Egyptian elite.

The expansion of educational facilities in Egypt has been addressed by many scholars (Waterbury 1976, 1983;
Massialas and Jarrar 1983; Moore 1980). The problem, however, has been predominantly addressed in terms of the desired effect. Moore (1980), for example, in relation to the education of engineers in Egypt says:

Egypt remained a highly deviant case in 1970, supporting over twice as many (university students) among third world countries, as its industrial infrastructure would have predicted. (page 19, emphasis mine)

The fact that Silwians, and other Egyptians have chosen to go to school for credentials is not in any way deviant, given its value as a promoter of social mobility and providing almost the only licence for employment. The villagers of Silwa today send their children to educational institutions as a maneuver to create elbow room for themselves within the ever increasing market economy pressures on their livelihood. In such a situation predictions on the basis of modern capitalist change tend to view the economic dimensions as overriding, and overlook the cultural processes of learning. A review of the learning process prevailing in the educational system further illuminates this point.

School Curriculum: Echoes of Indigenous Education

Silwian indigenous institutional learning of the Kuttab emphasized memorization. The traditional Islamic practice of learning the Koran by repeating it loud until memorized by heart, and not interpreting the content of the experience prevailed in Silwa of 1951 (Ammar 1954:204-208). The
concrete realism of the Silwian child’s life was largely compatible with this learning process.

Presently, the schools in Silwa have transferred the indigenous learning practice to the modern institution. Children memorize and rote learn their lessons. In an English language class I was invited to teach at the intermediate girls’ school, and was asked to read a sentence out loud for the students to repeat it out loud after me. In an Arabic language class for the sixth grade at the primary school, the students were given two composition topics, and before they started writing, the teacher provided the classroom with two potential ways of addressing the topic. All the students that day wrote their compositions within the teacher’s framing of the topic.

The extent to which the Silwian children internalize the school curriculum in a non-interpretative, rote memorizing manner is best illustrated in the following example. I stopped a 7-year-old boy who was singing the Egyptian national anthem that contains lyrics at the beginning calling Egypt Misr, the mother of all countries, to ask him what Misr meant. His reply was Misr is the capital of Egypt, Cairo. This is not surprising, since rural Egyptians refer to Cairo as Misr.

Scholars have attributed the reasons for this memorization to the diglossia of Arabic, since the child is learning a different language, to the unskilled teachers in school, to the over crowded debilitated condition of modern
education, and the irrelevance of the content to the students (Massialas and Jarrar 1983). In spite of the contributing importance of the above mentioned variables they, however, are not sufficient explanatory ones.

The Silwian child today enters school for a very culturally practical reason, to attain a credential that secures him/her a job. The grounding of this practical thinking among Silwian children can be seen in their dreams, and story completion test.¹⁷ It is this practical reason, molded in a pre-existing culture of learning that leads the child to memorize unquestionably as long as he/she is achieving the goal of being Shatir.

Consequently, not only is the quantitative expansion of education a subject of cultural usefulness and not of an overriding economic gain, but the content as well. The Silwian child is learning to become Shatir and attain credentials. Unlike the European nobleman, existentialistic issues do not concern him/her.

It is thus in the manner of realism and concrete cultural relevance that schooling and other government policies should be understood in Silwa. Our thesis maintains that the Silwian children’s experiences with school do not indicate a failure in the implementation of the government policy. Rather, they are a further indication that the ingredients of successful westernism, however implemented in the third world are normally deployed into a system of active peasants whose production and
consumption rules are subject to calculations other than mere cost-benefit analysis.

**Concluding Remarks**

The relative change that occurred in children's content and procedures of socialization is a manifestation of a new balance within the community necessitated by pressures from without.

The vanishing of the subsistence economy within the introduction of the cash crop of sugar cane, and the need to engage children in agricultural and domestic activities have largely contributed to the extension of lax attitudes of socialization from infancy to childhood. A relatively heightened awareness of money as the main source of livelihood has transformed the process of growing up in the village by adding the new method of Shatara, reinforcing Adab to perpetuate the social structure, and orienting children to the labor market.

In a linear trend of severe and weak socialization, the Silwian child fares better today than in 1951. However, presently the Silwian child is faced with the dilemma of maintaining a balance between a community, family culture and the demands of an outside world where pressures to secure an income are becoming increasingly more competitive.
Notes

1. Recent studies conducted in lower Egypt Al-Sa’tai (1980) and Upper Egypt Al-Shinawi (1981) as well as earlier studies on the Middle East Magnarella (1974) and Bates (1973), Berque (1957) reveal a decline in the extended family ideal household structure. In Silwa the extended household remains to be an influential structure within the total social organization.

2. Examples of these proverbs include

   Al-Hidai Matirmish Katkit
   The killing bird does not reproduce chicks
   Like father/mother like children

   Ibn Al-Wiz Awam
   The off spring of the goose also swims
   The person whose (father) or (mother) are good at something will grow up to be good at it too

   Igfi Al-Gedra Ala Fammha Tetla Al-Bit Lomha
   Turn the jar on its mouth, the daughter grows up like her mother.
   Just as easily as one can turn the jar upside down, the daughter turns out to resemble her mother.

3. Emphasis must be made here on the fact that from the appearance of Silwian children, in terms of height and fat distribution I often placed them 2 to 3 years below their chronological age. My discussions with the doctor at the health compound revealed that this physical maldevelopment is the result of ameobic and bone development diseases including schistomasis, dysentery amebia, congestivitis ameabiasis and rickets.

4. For statements about sibling rivalry, and its orientation see Appendix 7.

5. The highest two scores in Silwa in the 1986 intermediate school public examination, and the second highest score in the secondary school public examination were obtained by female students. Consequently, some female students provide a real substance for rivalry.

6. See Appendix 17 for dreams.

7. This view is traced back to Morgan’s (1877) work distinguishing between savage, primitive, and modern, Tonnies’ (1971) distinction between Gesellschaft and
Gemeinschaft, Redfield’s (1941, 1950) dichotomy of folk and urban societies, and Semelser’s (1971) convention of increased structural differentiation for "take off".

8. See story completion Appendix 17 for statements about play.

9. The Koranic Surah states:

"Thy Lord has commanded that ye worship none but Him and that ye show kindness to parents. If one or both of them attain old age with thee, never say to them as much as augh nor reproach them but always address them with kindly speech.

Enlower to them the wing of humility out of tenderness and say my Lord have mercy on them, as they nurtured me as a young child."

10. Basic schooling in Egypt today is nine years.

11. The resort to private individual tutoring for the assimilation of school curriculum has become a widespread practice due partly to the high density of classrooms, and partly to the highly competitive exams leading to academic secondary schools and university entrance.

12. Aggressive winter games examples no. 1, 2 are not played at school, while example no. 4 is a very common school game situation. (See Appendix 19.)

13. Some of the rotation rhymes include

a. Bof Bof Di Shekalata Baloza

   Bof Bof there is chocolate and Baloza (a white sticky sweet).


   Among us a dancer that dances and the scissors cut.

14. Notice from Table 6.1 that girls after intermediate schooling either marry or go to teacher training colleges in Komombo or Aswan. Moreover, boys also either go to vocational training schools or secondary schools in nearby towns.

15. Silwa’s experience of educational expansion is no different from the country’s rate during the past thirty-five years. Since 1972 the number of primary and secondary
students have tripled (World Bank 1978). The literacy rate for the country increased from the period 1937-1987 by 31.40% (The Kingdom of Egypt 1948; CAPMAS 1987).

16. Exact numbers of students studying outside the village were not available. However, estimates of 150 to 250 were given to me by informants.

17. See Appendix 7 and Appendix 17.
CHAPTER SEVEN
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapters are a study of socio-cultural change among the Silwians in Upper Egypt after the 1952 revolution, a period presumably signaling major socio-cultural and economic transformations in the country as a whole. While the processes of change can be examined in a variety of ways, this study is carried out through the medium of the restudy. The Silwian community was formerly studied by H. Ammar a year prior to the revolution and three years before Egypt’s full-fledged political independence. This first study, published in 1954 with the title Growing Up in an Egyptian Village, Silwa the Province of Aswan, it is to be remembered, serves as a baseline in terms of the particular moment in history.

After the revolution of 1952, the Egyptian government assumed its responsibility to development by increasing its involvement into national and local affairs. Economic, social, and political policies were formulated promising a better life and equal opportunities for all. Modernizing reforms were to help the peasants into the passage from folk-rural conditions to urban industrial development. Policies were aimed to change traditional orientations with a view to mobilize peasants for action-oriented citizenship.
and to draw them into the mainstream of national life. The stated aims of rural development were to transform village life to an urbanized pattern.

The problem of this restudy as stated in Chapter One was to examine the extent to which the proclaimed intent of the governmental rural policies as reflected in the Silwa community has materialized. In question form, the problem was phrased: Has Silwa, due to the process of modernization and government national and local interventions, become urbanized, departed from its integrating and regulating cultural ethos? How and where has it been influenced by the new forces and institutions? What adjustments have been made in the community way of life to accommodate its exposure to the process of modernization in general?

This restudy maintains, as a nutshell answer to these queries, that the cultural focus of Silwa community has not been dislocated or suffered from any significant symbolic disorganization. The community logic, its basic rationale, and its fundamental cultural tenets remain largely intact. This conclusion is formulated in the Weberian concept of ideal-type construct to describe the general effect and the generally upheld position towards modernization in praxis. However, during the last 35 years in Silwa, certain change there has been, and change there will be as indicated in the previous chapters. The data observed and analyzed indicate that so far, outside intervention has produced specific forms of adjustments and accommodation within the community.
culture, yet its traditional forms of behavior, action, social relationships, norms, social organization, world view, and rituals continue to predominate.

There can be no denial of the improvement in the physical quality of life in terms of food, health, and higher rates of literacy. Nevertheless, in spite of the villagers’ accessibility to modernized means of material culture, habits of cooking and eating, realization of balanced meals, appropriate nutrition for different ages, or health education have not been basically altered. Notions about disease, traditionally associated with an ascetic attitude and attributed to Godly trial seldom relate effect to medically known causes. One questions the preference in terms of health improvement for canned vegetable, chocolate, and Coca Cola in comparison with the traditional local fresh vegetables, chewing sugar cane, and lemon or Helba (herb beverage). At any rate, considering a relative decrease in infant mortality, and the survival of a greater number of elderly people, it can be generally assumed by these two indicators that government services have contributed to a noticeable improvement in the physical quality of life as stated by my elderly informants.

Notwithstanding, it is when we look into the fundamental tenets of the community culture ranging from its most external aspects of greetings, dress, conversing, rules of appropriate conduct to the multi-dimensionality of the cultural norms, the picture appears different. Here, one
finds that the social organization and village institutions have not lost their binding meanings of social cohesion, behavioral regulation, and security yielding. As discussed in the previous chapters, the assumed common descent, the various units of the social organization, the kinship ties, clan structure, ascriptive social roles, religious practices, rituals, and ceremonies are still oriented towards the traditional pattern of cultural ethos.

It is often stated by scholars (Mintz 1985; Pelto 1973; Huxley and Capa 1964) that change from subsistence economy to cash crop has been or even stood in a causal relationship to culture change. In their transition from cash cropping to sugar cane cultivation as prescribed by government policies of crop distribution, the Silwians have entered into a different substance of production and consumption. However, they still use their traditional tools, family labor, and traditional pattern of land ownership and inheritance. In this respect government intervention has not gone beyond credit and marketing facilities through the agricultural cooperative and the village bank and has not significantly replaced human and animal labor by modern technology. Land continues to be the source of psychological security, social status, and feeling of belonging. Strangers are those who do not own land and in fact there are no landless Silwians however dwarf their holdings may be.
The change into a cash crop has not displaced the normative connectedness to land and its significance in ordering the reality of honor for preserving ancestral ownership and the ensuing shame in selling even parts of it. It has not discarded the reality of expected generosity and hospitality from those who own more land than others or the reality of rootedness and rootlessness. Agrarian land reforms were not relevant to the system of land tenure in Silwa, and means of production have not changed significantly.

The cultivation of sugar cane and the institutional arrangements of the cooperative, the village bank, have created new problems with government authorities. These problems include delays in providing chemical fertilizers, the availability of credit, and the assessment of the degree of concentration in sugar cane.

On the other hand, the vanishing of the subsistence economy with the introduction of sugar cane cash crop has brought the village into the market economy and the value of the monetized system. This is certainly an aspect of decisive change which replaced the in-kind transactions, enabled the villagers to purchase foodstuffs, non-agricultural products, and other commodities from markets outside the village, and international markets. Cash has put at the disposal of Silwians a medium for greater physical mobility. Money earned from other occupations has
added to the security of government employees and migrant workers on their return home.

Within the community itself, the market economy has not shaken the kinship web in its solidarity, mutual reciprocity, or brought about any conspicuous differentiations in the social structure, or in breaking up the norm of corporateness to that of individualization. Certain loosening in the diffusiveness of the kinship ties have occurred as described in Chapter Four, but the main theme with its concomitant mutual social obligations continues to maintain its cultural imperative. Formal equality expressed in dress, customs, values, social behavior have witnessed little change. The village proverb "We are all an offspring of nine months" Ahna Awlad Tisi is often readily quoted in the face of anyone who tries consciously to distinguish himself by way of wealth or herself by way of jewelry.

The value of money and the involvement of the market economy have not bitten deep into the various elements of the culture or its basic symbols of orientation to the extent of transforming it into the capitalistic ethos. Money is used for fulfilling family needs so that one could live adequately or in the villager's term Mastur (covered), a word which is usually invoked in prayers. Money has displaced the in-kind payment in the process of cultural give and take, in everyday life, and in ceremonial occasions. Silwians do not save and only handful have bank
accounts. They invest money in traditional activities such as farming, animal raising, purchase of jewelry, supply of dowry, building or expanding residence, contributing to their clan guest house or Mosque, and performing pilgrimage. Savings and capital accumulation for business or profit-making enterprises is unknown except in one case of a poultry project established for marketing.

On the whole, money and market economy have rendered the Silwians relatively more calculating, particularly in the case of salaried villagers and the increasing number of shopkeepers. Nevertheless, the capitalistic forms of modernization have not moved the community any long way towards the supposedly rational economic values. Although money and market economy command the movement of goods and services to an increasing extent, yet they have not undermined the Silwians' pre-existing cultural ethos which continues to govern the familial, kinship, social, religious, and political sanctions.

Kinship ties in their solidarity and rivalry balancing functions persist to be the core of the social structure. The holy tribal descent of G'afra, the clan system, the conjugal and the extended family maintain their integrative impetus. Change since 1951 has been observed and noted by the villagers to the loosening ends in the kinship fabric of the larger units of the social organization, with a shift towards the smaller units, namely the extended and conjugal families. However, the norm of an independent individual
beyond the social structure units is culturally condemned and religiously damned in the Silwians' viewpoint. The child is born, bred, socialized, and matured to become a member of the various circles of the social structure with their respective obligations of reciprocity, support, and norms of behavior.

If certain kinship ties have become loosened in the process of change, yet they remain even stronger or at least more elaborate for certain events such as death, sickness, financial contingencies, and some religious ceremonies. In 1951 Silwa, condolences in the event of death of a family head used to be confined to sympathizers from Silwa itself and from nearby villages arriving to fulfill their kinship duty on donkey back. Today the ease of modern transport facilities brings sympathizers from much further villages and towns of the G'afra stock or their in-laws in the Governorate of Aswan. Migrant workers and officials from Silwa who are working in Saudi Arabia are socially obligated to provide assistance in terms of money, food, or presents to their kinfolk during their pilgrimage in Mecca and Medina. Government officials are supposed to pay part of their salaries to their fathers and to assist in the education of their younger brothers and sisters.

In spite of the looseness in the kinship structure, it still regulates in varying degrees of flexibility, mutual obligations, attributes of group membership, social and affective relationships. The particular shift to the family
as a more dominant unit in the social structure can be viewed partly as a response to the modernization process that demands a strictly defined group from which monied resources can be drawn. It can also, in part, be attributed to the increasing size of the village and its expanding boundaries leading to less frequent contacts at the level of larger social units. Moreover, the responsibility of socializing children has extended beyond the requirements of the total social structure to include formal schooling.

Kinship ties could be considered in the final analysis to be the most potent component continuing to exert its regulating force in the community cultural dynamics. As indicated by H. Ammar (1954), kinship ties also continue to be a source of problems between grown up family members, clans, and inter-village relations. Bickering, altercations, scoldings, and stormy rages occasionally vitiate the solidifying and integrative role of the kinship fabric. Such wranglings may occur as a result of failure in fulfilling social obligations by way of acting in a traditional manner and not through reciprocating in modernized acts or presents. Disputes referred to legal courts, instead of the Arab Council, have become as described in Chapter Four, more frequent. On the whole, assessing the quality of kinship relations in terms of the adequacy of their reciprocity, balance sheet, intensity, and support in time of need remain among the main topics of
conversation within the family as well as between families and clans.

The kinship ties also play their dominant role in the introduction of party-system of national politics. Voting for a G’afra candidate or candidates is still the ideal, all other conditions being equal. Dissidents, mainly on private grudges, would pride themselves on the breach of the norm in a vindictive manner. It was reported that in Silwa, as in most rural areas of Upper Egypt, the returns of voters during the 1987 elections were much higher than in urban centers including Cairo and Alexandria. In the former case, both men and women were mobilized to vote for their kin candidate and their larger participation cannot be interpreted as indicative of being a more politically active segment of the Egyptian population. The handful of villagers, mostly from the educated government officials who are members of the government’s political party, have joined for personal interest. In fact, my knowledge of one villager reveals that he has changed party membership twice within one year.

The establishment of primary and intermediate schools, and very recently of a secondary school, has been so far the most powerful vehicle of social change and of greater potential for future cultural change. Education has been the major contributor to job differentiation for both men and women as explained in the previous chapters. It has provided graduates from both sexes with government posts as
teachers in the village as well as in neighboring villages which lag behind Silwa El-Balad in their educational facilities, particularly for girls. It must be noted that the Silwians who completed their university first degree, as well as those with graduate degrees, had no opportunity or interest in working in the village itself. Most of them are employed in cities and married from outside the village. Although the contacts of these handful professionals with their village have been sporadic, and mainly in the event of a close relative pilgrimage, death, or marriage, they are often quoted as ideals for school goers.

It is evident that the impact of the highly educated Silwians in the process of social change is minimal except in offering sometimes a justification for cultural deviancy in terms of adopting urban norms of dress, independence from certain community norms, e.g., choice of a mate, laxity in fulfilling a social obligation, participation in a particular ceremony, or observing a certain ritual. However, villagers with less educational qualifications prefer to get a government job in the village or in the nearest village or town in the governorate. For women this choice has been even more imperative, not only on economic grounds but as a security and control mechanism ensuring her sex role and propriety of conduct.

The less educated group of government officials conform by and large to the prescribed norms of the traditional culture starting from its obvious symbols of wearing the
peasants dress *Gallabiyya*, once they leave their office (in which they wear the western dress), to their engagement in agricultural activities, adherence to sex segregation, and compliance with social obligations and modes of behavior. At the same time, they are the symbols of the value of job differentiation to supplement work in agriculture. Their relatively urbanized orientation from schooling with a regular monthly monetary income has contributed towards improving their standard of living through the purchase of electrical home appliances. They were the forerunners in the use of modern consumer products in Silwa as they were also the initiators of migration to the rich oil Arab countries. Their migration on government secondment opened the door for other skilled and unskilled villagers to follow suit.

These educated villagers have been the main transmitters of the modernization effect, particularly in its consumerism. The desire for achievement acquired through the schooling process has developed among this group an impetus to improve their standard of living while residing in their own community. This increasing group of educated villagers has also become more conscious of issues involved in social cost and social prestige in a certain balance without impinging on the basic tenets of community culture. They marry by the same rituals as other illiterate villagers, perhaps with a pronounced flare of urban symbols. Their ultimate aim of marriage is to raise as many children
as God wishes. Their children are socialized in the same norms, especially those pertaining to sex, perhaps with a cleaner appearance and tidier clothes.

The relative change that has occurred in the content and procedures of socialization purport an encouraging of achievement in school and a decrease in labor required by children. However, as the discussion in Chapter Six indicates, education is not ultimately pursued for high mobility aspirations for the individual, nor for the accumulation of knowledge. Rather, the Silwian child goes to school for the practical reality of securing an income to survive the increasing demand of a monied economy, that is to be Mastur. The Silwian children’s socialization manifests the new equilibrium within the community culture, namely, maintaining the extensive family loyalties and obligations, the religious attachments as well as securing future means of survival through exhibiting capability of Shatara at school.

Migrant workers to cities in Egypt or to other countries, described earlier, try to maintain many ties of kinship and community under external conditions. On their return, the fruits of their expatriotism Ghurba is often expressed in bringing with them urban articles and commodities. These migratory workers may stay for short or long durations, yet they never sever their relation with their families or relatives. They continue to visit the village, send money remittances to wife, children and/or
other close relatives. Ideally, they never declare the intention to settle away from their home village; in reality, very few indeed are compelled to do so. In this respect one finds the validity of the statement that they "come to the city for their differentiation, but return to the village for their integration" (Hoselitz 1963:42).

Within this context, migratory workers, especially in their menial new jobs, have never been a marginal group on their return. Similarly, the educated Silwians working as government employees have not been alienated from the community culture to the extent of playing the role of the innovator elites.

Rites of passage and religious ceremonies have been subject to certain changes since 1951. Few have vanished, others have been curtailed, modified, or elaborated in somewhat urbanized forms. They, however, have withstood the impact of the modernizing forces and government intervention. The circumcision of girls still prevails in spite of its legal prohibition. The discussion in Chapter Five reveals that many of the rites of passage and religious ceremonies continue to be recognized and largely observed to represent, in varying degrees, occasions for community, clan, and family solidarity. These events confirm mutual obligations, normative expressions regarding social reciprocity, standardized patterns of behavior on the basis of sex and age in addition to the affective meanings in kinship ties in times of joy, sorrow, and sacredness.
Islam and Islamic interpretations have always been the main sanctions of behavioral norms at the community and personal levels. Practically every action, transaction, expectation, ceremony, or wish would elicit, invoke a religious form of assistance or sanction. The Silwian community, unlike large cities, has not experienced a state of anomie in its integrated social fabric, a state which has led to the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism (or extremism) among certain groups in the latter loci. The popular interpretation of religion as held and practiced continues to be a necessary and sufficient view of this world and the world after. It requires from villagers no revival or defense against infidelity, secularism, or onslaught of foreign values presumably viewed as threatening in the urban context.

In this summary of the impact of modernizing forces of the national government on the peasant community of Silwa, one cannot but allude to the role of the mass media, which was almost unknown in 1951. Some villagers read newspapers, many listen to the radio, and an expanding number own and/or watch television. There are no cinemas in the village, but many Silwians go to see films during their visits to neighboring towns. The spread of the mass media in terms of quantity is an obvious element in the process of changing from the personal, oral, and instructional character of the traditional system of information.
Even without relying on empirical data, mass media are bound to be one of the vehicles of relating the villagers to national and international news, events, and people. However, lacking such data, it is difficult to assess the impact of the media on the villagers' ideas, attitudes, and social norms. This requires a specialized field study as to the influence of the media consumption on the specific aspects of the community perceptions and attitudes.

As a cursory observation one feels that the consumption of mass media, particularly the television, has become a symbol of social prestige, and a medium of extending hospitality to kin and friends who do not own one. It is also felt that radio and television programs are largely sought for their entertainment function. Some of the programs watched are enjoyed, while others resented (family planning), scorned (dancing) as introducing unacceptable values and norms incompatible with the villagers' cherished way of life.

In concluding this chapter, the economistic viewpoint of analysis has not proved valid in its interpretative value of socio-cultural change in Silwa. Change from subsistence to market economy and the separation of production from consumption have not transformed the village lifestyle from a pre-capitalist to a capitalist culture in which the propensity for saving, capital accumulation, risk taking, and maximization of profit are its main characteristic features. Nonetheless, the village life has become more
vulnerable to price fluctuations in commodities at the national and international levels.

The folk-urban continuum hypothesis cannot be accepted as a universal direction of change in all contemporary cultures. Few symptoms of individualization and disorganization can be discerned within the cultural context of the village community. In terms of ideas and practice, to describe the Silwians' culture as moving towards the secular approach to life situations is definitely out of question. This does not deny the fact that a certain degree of modern rationality is exhibited, particularly by those who have received some formal education. However, this has been limited mainly to the conduct of personal affairs and does not prevail in corporate obligations.

In spite of the break up of Silwa's relative isolation, the emergence of differentiation in occupations, the increase in the number of the literates and the educated, the community culture expresses a noticeable degree of resilience towards the absorption of the incompatible norms of the great society.

Other conceptual dichotomies or continuums such as the traditional and the rational, the integrated and the differentiated, the simple and the complex, do not apply in their neat abstractions to the process of change in Silwa. This restudy has interpreted socio-cultural change in the Silwian community as uneven, where modernization forces have left varied forms of modification on the different
components of the cultural matrix, since it was not originally an empty plain.

The change that has occurred in Silwa seems to be slow, sluggish, and different in comparison with modernization in the Cairo or Alexandria lifestyle, which exhibit structural differentiation and western modes of integration. However, the thesis of the peasants' resistance to change and having a culture inimical to development and technological advancement cannot be maintained on the basis of my interpretation. The Silwa community has developed its own adjustments and accommodation to the modernizing forces without losing its cultural core.

The echoes of Father Henry Ayrout in 1938 about how "they (the Upper Egyptian peasants throughout history) have changed their masters and their religion, their language and their crops, but they had never changed their way of life" (p. 203) cannot be totally validated in the late twentieth century. In addition, Critchfield's changeless Shahhat, where "time goes by, and in the course of this time, Shahhat does little but go to his fields and return. . . . Here is his past and his present, and he can no longer imagine any other future" (1984:22), does not depict the reality in Silwa. The Silwian life has so far undergone changes through processes of accommodation and adaptation.

The interpretation submitted here is not exceptional to Silwa or Egypt. Work conducted by Dazier (1970) among the Pueblo Indians of North America, the Wiser's (1971) in the
Karimpur village of India, Elmendorf (1976) with nine Mayan women in Mexico, and Stevenson (1985) in the highlands of Yemen corroborate the multilinear accommodating affects of modernization on traditional cultures.

The discussion in this dissertation, however, points out the meager effect of the current mode of government intervention on the Silwian peasants. The government modernization forces have not, as Lerner (1958) and Inkeles (1966) noted, changed the Silwian traditional culture to a modern lifestyle of urbanism, literacy, mobility, and empathy within the wider context of national life.

Government policies and institutions introduced to the Egyptian village may have been necessary but not sufficient to modernize. Context and culture-free government intervention in Egypt in certain cases (especially in transforming the agricultural crop and introducing monied economies) have encouraged in Silwa "passive expectations of ready made prosperity" (Hoselitz 1963:38). The promise of plenty by the modernizing government diminished creative local initiative to innovate according to its needs. In fact, today in Silwa the creative local initiative is geared, in many ways, toward accommodating the money necessary to secure goods from the village into the market economy within the established traditional cultural structure. Here lies the paradox in the impact of government modernization and the functions of its institutions in Silwa and other Egyptian villages. To the
Silwians, the accommodation of modernization into their peasant economic and social structures has meant an emergence from the Aalam (darkness) into Tamadun (civilization), and their ambivalence to the future is secured by an increasing dependency on government employment.

The government, on the other hand, organizes and reintroduces policies in order to finance its plans from the surplus of these agriculturalists, but finds itself overburdened with ever decreasing agricultural surplus and ever increasing demands on its services (Adams 1986).

Scholars studying Egypt today examine the question of the overburdened government and unproductive peasant from the viewpoint of how modernity has not generated the structurally differentiated system it aimed to develop. They provide different views to explain the phenomena including the ineffective political style (Springborg 1979; Waterbury 1977, 1983; El-Menoufi 1982), the economic structures (Allan 1983; Adams 1986; Radwan and Lee 1979), and the personality traits (Gulick 1976; Mayfield 1971). Among these scholars, the formula of modernization is generally one sided, and the cures lie in making the system more "efficient."

These scholars attribute the interaction between the modern and traditional cultures that have overburdened the Egyptian state to the government's deviation from playing
the economic game correctly. Adams (1986), for example, states in his study that

"over the long run, squeezing agriculture reduces the net transferable surplus generated by peasant producers by limiting their ability to take advantage of new technological inputs" (and advised development planners not to) "rob agriculture in order to finance the development of other sectors of the economy." (pp. 192-193)

This study has demonstrated that the government’s policies have not transformed the Silwian society and culture into the modern polarity because the village encountered these policies with a pre-existing culture. This culture has its own cherished rules, functions, and meanings which so far has not been amenable to the introduction of capitalistic economic rationality. In the encounter, the two systems, modern and traditional, underwent a chemical interaction. Here the carrier of a pure economic element chart for interpreting the reaction can misunderstand the placement of the product. It is thus essential to carry more than one chart. As early as Malinowski’s Kula ring exchange in the Argonauts of the Western Pacific (1932), anthropologists have emphasized the noneconomic rules of certain traditional cultures (Sahlins 1976; Firth 1951; Cancian 1968). The question that remains to be answered is why scholars on Egypt have not drawn sufficiently on this cumulative wisdom. The answer has many facets for explanation. The first is that Egyptian social scientists as well as non-Egyptian scholars have been mostly concerned with macro-societal studies or technical sectoral
levels of analysis (Ibrahim 1982; Abdel-Fadil 1975, 1980; Abdel-Khalek and Tingor 1982; Ayoubi 1977; Baker 1978; Springborg 1979; Radwan and Lee 1979; Barkat 1985; Bates 1980; Bestor 1978; Ikram 1980). This macro approach blurs the dynamic human interaction and resort to ascertain general patterns away from their cultural context which is not necessarily imbued with capitalistic rationality or its value of efficiency.

The second explanation is that studies conducted on the socio-cultural microcosm in Egypt today are dominated by political scientists (Harik 1974; Ansari 1986; Adams 1986) or journalists (Critchfield 1978; Atiya 1982) who in their particular disciplines have not been handed down Malinowski’s (1932) Kula and Cancian’s (1968) non-maximization norm or have overweighted the role of power structure and the ruling elite.

The third and most relevant explanation here is that anthropologists seem to have shied away from examining the dynamic of change in contemporary Egyptian rural cultures as affected by government intervention. The few studies carried out by anthropologists (Morsy 1978, 1980; Fakhouri 1972; Saunders and Mehenna 1986; Glavanis 1981, 1984; Assaad and El-Katsha 1981) reveal the sensitivity to noneconomic elements in the changing rural Egyptian cultural matrix.

It is imperative at this stage of Egypt’s paradoxical development that anthropologists (with their cumulative wisdom about the non-profit elements governing cultural
interaction) provide the planners, the decision makers, and the future students of Egypt with an added sensitivity to the various non-economic elements in rural communities and their interaction with national policies of development and change. This dissertation about "an Egyptian village growing up," has been an attempt in this direction.
APPENDIX 1
COMMUNITY PROFILE

I. HABITAT, MAINTENANCE

LOCATION-TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION:

CLIMATE-TOPOGRAPHY

SETTLEMENTS: STREET ARRANGEMENT, BUSINESS AND HOUSING
CONCENTRATION, SANITARY FACILITIES, PUBLIC UTILITIES,
STRUCTURE'S ARCHITECTURE (HOUSE PLAN).

QUASI-ORGANIC FORMS: E.G. MINES, ETC.

ACCESSIBILITY: WHO MAY GO WHERE? WHICH AREAS ARE OPEN AT
ALL? WHICH TO OFFICIALS ALONE? YOUNG? OLD? MEN? WOMEN?

HISTORICAL DISPLACEMENT: MARKETS, MINORITIES HOUSING.

COMMUNITY SELF-DESCRIPTION: WHAT SECTIONS ARE
DISTINGUISHED, WHAT NAMES ARE APPLIED?

LAND USE: FORM OF FIELDS, DWELLINGS, GARDENS, COMMONS,
PRIVATE PLOTS, PROPERTIES AND PROPERTY SYSTEM, DIVISIONS AND
RESTRICTIONS OF LIVING SPACE, ACQUISITION AND RELINQUISH-
MENT, INHERITENCE, RENTING, LEASING, COMMUNAL SHARING.

COMMUNICATION AND TRAFFIC: SPATIAL MOVEMENT WITHIN AND
BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS (TRANSPORT MEANS: ANIMALS-VEHICLES,
ETC.), FREQUENCY OF TRAVEL, FACILITIES OF TRAVEL, PURPOSE
OF TRAVEL, TRAFFIC FLOW (DAILY, WEEKLY, MONTHLY, AND
ANNUALLY).
II. ECONOMY
LABOR: BASIS OF LABOR DIVISION, OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIZATION, LABOR SUPPLY AND EMPLOYMENT, WAGES, LABOR RELS.
WORK ROUND: PRODUCTION (AGRIC.-INDUST.-SERVICE), TOOLS, EMPLOYMENT (INCLUDING WOMEN'S WORK AREAS), WORK CYCLES.
CONSUMPTION: FOOD, CLOTHING, APPLIANCES, GOODS AND SERVICES.
FOOD: DIET, EATING HABITS, COOKING AND SERVING, FOOD SUPPLY.
MARKETS: ROUTES, PHYSICAL SETTING, PARTICIPANTS, TRANSACTIONS, SOCIAL INTERACTIONS.
EXCHANGE: GIFT GIVING, BUYING AND SELLING, DEBT RELATS, MONEY AND RECIPROCITY, BORROWING AND LENDING, WEALTH TRANSFER.
INCOME:

III. DEMOGRAPHY
POPULATION STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION, BIRTH STATISTICS, MORBILITY, MORTALITY, INTERNAL MIGRATION, IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION, POPULATION POLICY.

IV. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION
KINSHIP: RULE OF DESCENT, LINEAGES, CLANS, TRIBES, TERMINOLOGY, HISTORY, EXOGAMY AND ENDOGAMY IN RELS TO KIN GROUPS, OTHER KIN RELS, BEHAVIOR TOWARDS NONRELATIVES.
FAMILY: RESIDENCE, HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, ROLE OF FAMILY, WOMEN'S ROLE, MOTHER-IN-LAW AVOIDANCE.
FAMILY CYCLES: MEALS, WORK, SLEEP, FESTIVITIES.

RECURRENT CRISES: SICKNESS.

SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION

AGE: AGE GROUP AND AGE GRADE PATTERNS, YOUTH ACTIVITIES,
ADULT, OLD AGE AND CHILDHOOD ACTIVITIES, MECHANISMS OF
TRANSITION, CONTROL, EXCLUSION AND SANCTIONS.

SEX: SEXUAL PATTERNS WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE FAMILY,
CONTROLS, SANCTIONS.

OTHERS: EDUCATION, ECONOMIC POWER, POLITICAL POWER, TRIBAL
AFFILIATION, COLOR.

SOCIAL CONTROL

COURT AND POLICE RECORDS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, TRIBAL
ELDERS, SCHOOL TEACHERS, GOSSIP.

V. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

SPEECH, VOCABULARY, LINGUISTIC IDENTIFICATION, GESTURES AND
SIGNS, TRANSMISSION OF MESSAGES, DISSEMINATION OF NEWS AND
INFORMATION, PRESS POSTAL SYSTEM, TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH,
RADIO AND TELEVISION, WRITING, PHOTOGRAPHS, SOUND RECORDS
AND TAPES, NAMING AND PERSONAL NAMES.

VI. CLOTHING AND ADORNMENT

NORMAL GARB, SPECIAL GARMENTS, GARMENT CARE, ORNAMENT,
TOILET, ACCESSORIES.
VII. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS
FRIENDSHIPS, VISITING AND HOSPITALITY, ETIQUETTE, ETHICS, IN-GROUP ANTAGONISMS.

VIII. SOCIAL PROBLEMS
DISASTERS, DEFECTS, ALCOHOLISM, OLD AGE, SEXISM.
ECONOMIC AND BUDGETARY FOUND: PERIODIC INCOME, EMPLOYMENT.
MARRIAGE: BASIS OF MARRIAGE, MODES OF MARRIAGE, MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS, NUPTIALS, POST-MARRIAGE RESTRICTIONS, MODE OF MARRIAGE TERMINATION (LEGALLY AND SYMBOLICALLY), DIFFICULTY OF DIVORCE FOR WOMEN, REASONS FOR DIVORCE.
EDUCATION: TRAINING METHODS AND CONTEXTS WITHIN THE FAMILY, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE FORMAL SCHOOLING, LEVELS OF FORMAL EDUCATION AVAILABLE, SYSTEM AND CONTENT OF SCHOOLS, SCHOOL AND FAMILY CONTENT, VOCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ASPIRATIONS.
SOCIALIZATION (EDUCATION): INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD TRAINING, SOCIAL PLACEMENT, CEREMONIES DURING CHILDHOOD, AGGRESSION TRAINING, INDEPENDENCE TRAINING, OBEDIENCE, MAIN DISCIPLINARIAN, PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT, INFANT FEEDING, WEANING AND FOOD TRAINING, CLEANLINESS TRAINING, CHILDHOOD ACTIVITIES, DISPLAY OF AFFECTION (HELD, FONDELED, CARESSED, OR PLAYED WITH), PROTECTION OF CHILD FROM ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOMFORTS (EXCESSIVE HEAT OR COLD, BRIGHT LIGHT, INSECTS), EXTENT TO WHICH THE DISCOMFORTS ARE EXPERIENCED AND PREVENTED (QUICKLY OR SLOWLY).
DEGREE OF DRIVE REDUCTION: HUNGER, THIRST, UNIDENTIFIED DISCOMFORTS, HOW FULLY ARE THESE REDUCED.
SOCIALIZATION ADULTHOOD: PUBERTY AND INITIATION, ACTIVITIES, STATUS.

SOCIALIZATION: REPRODUCTION, CONCEPTION AND BIRTH CONTROL, PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH/DIFFICULTIES AND UNUSUAL BIRTHS, POSTNATAL CARE, ABORTION, ILLITERACY, POVERTY.

IX. COMMUNITY SOCIAL STRUCTURE
INFORMAL GROUP BASIS, INFORMAL GROUP INTERACTION, ADMINISTRATION.

X. STANDARD OF LIVING AND DAILY ROUTINES
MEASURE OF LIVING.
LEASURE TIME: CONVERSATION, HUMOR, HOBBIES, GAMES, VACATIONS, SPORTS, REST DAYS, HOLIDAYS.

XI. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION
TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CODIFIED LAWS
AUTHORITY OF LOCAL GROUPS
PRACTICE OF BLOOD REVENGE
ELECTIONS
JUSTICE PROCEDURES
COURT PROCEDURES

XII. RELIGION
SACRED PRACTICES
FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

INTERACTIONAL ANALYSIS IN COMMUNITY THROUGH RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES

PROFANE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES
APPENDIX 2
THE THREE UNIVERSITY EDUCATED WOMEN

The clan background, family background:
No. of sisters and brothers, level of education and occupation of father. The mother's background.

The values that education has for these girls. What will they do with it?

Age of the girls now.

Their scores in official exams.

Their marital status.

Their outlooks for a career.

Their outlooks in marriage.
   i. How to meet or have met their to be spouse?
   ii. What are their responsibilities in that marriage?
   iii. How will they teach their daughters?
   iv. Would they like to stay in Silwa to bring up their children?
   v. The age of their to be spouse compared to their age.
   vi. The educational status and other traits.
The village's attitude towards their education.

What do they do differently in Aswan than in Silwa?

dress
daily activity
integration with groups
for entertainment

If they were to change Silwa what would be the three essential things they would change?
APPENDIX 3
LIFE HISTORY OF THE FIRST EDUCATED WOMAN

Her family background:
Clan, no. of brothers and sisters, father’s educational background, and mother’s background. Land owned.

Educational progress from the kuttab to schools, scores in official exams.

Values instilled in her about education and how that fitted with the values of marriage and children.

Her trip into education.

Her career advancements.

Her marriage:
Age at which, age at which she had first child, husband’s age and relationship, occupation and level of education of husband.

The village’s reaction to her education:
In relation to her reputation
In relation to her contemporaries
In relation to the younger generation
In relation to her marriage
In relation to her fitting in the village
Her family’s support--who was the prime supporter and why?

What has she to say to her Silwian female students?

Her interaction at work and how do men take her education?

Today’s reactions to her in the village.

How would her life been different?
APPENDIX 5
HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

SECTION I

Demographic and Ownership Characteristics

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Sex of the household
   Female       Male

2. Age of the head of household

3. Marital status of household head
   Married (monogamous) (polygamous--no. of wives)
   Divorced      Widowed

4. Age of the husband’s first marriage

5. Age at wife’s first marriage

6. Major occupation of the head of household

7. Other jobs of the head of household

8. How many people live in the household (who share expenses)?
   Relation       Age       Main Occupation
                  to husband
                  to wife

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9. Number of children born by the wife/wives of the head of household

Wife no. No. Ages

How many alive? How many died?
Ages at death Reasons of death

10. How many children are married?
What were their ages at marriage?
What was their relationship to their spouse?
Son’s name Age at marriage Relation to spouse

Daughter’s name Age at marriage Relation to spouse

OWNERSHIP

LAND

11. How many Feddans do you own?
How do you use these Feddans?
Plant them in sugar cane Corn (shami, sorghum)
Barseem Foul Fruits Others

SPECIFY SUMMER AND WINTER CROPS

12. In what form do you own the land?
Individual Shared ownership (specify with whom)
Sharecropping Others
13. If you own land do you have any debt on it? What kind of debt? Specify

14. If you rent the land how much do you pay in rent and to whom?

15. What kind of fertilizers do you use and where do you get them from?

16. What kind of instruments do you use in farming? Specify water fetching ones

HOME

17. How many rooms do you own and use for living in your house? Specify them and their functions

18. In what form of ownership do you hold your house? Private Shared Rental Others

19. If it is rented, how much do you pay and in what installments?

20. What kind of lighting do you use? Candles Kerosene lamps Electricity Others

If electricity is used specify
When was it installed?
How much did it cost to install?
How is the bill paid?
How often and how much does it cost?
How often does it get cut off?
21. How do you get water into the house?
   Water pump     Tank system     Tap     From a near-by water source     Others

   SPECIFY WATER INSTALLMENT:
   Cost of installment and bill payment
   Frequency of its getting cut
   Procedures of payment and how bill is paid

22. What kind of cooking fire do you use?

23. Which of the following items do you own?
   Furniture (specify)
   Cooking equipment
   Animals (specify)
   Radio
   Television
   Refrigerator
   Clock
   Video Machine
   Sewing Machine
   Car
   Mirrors
   Cutlery
   Bicycle
   Telephone
   Mixer (oesterizer)
   Fan
   Iron
Washing Machine
Camera
Gas Furnace

SECTION II

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

24. Do you normally grow enough food to feed yourself and family?

If not please specify yearly

Items bought    Quantity    Approx. yearly cost

25. Where do you usually buy these items?

List places of transaction

26. Do you usually pay cash or credit these purchases?

Specify if both by item
27. If the household grows anything in excess to their consumption specify.

Items
Approx. quantities
The leveling off mechanism
If sold specify
Where By credit or cash and annual income from
To whom such sales

28. Does the household usually
Provide all the farm labor required
(how many people work) (who works)

Needs outside help (whom and how are they paid)
If help is needed
How many At what time of the year
To do what At what kind of reciprocation
Cash-Food-Others

29. In a total what is the approx. cash income of the household residence?

30. Of this income, how much is obtained from
Sale of farm produce
Wages from household members in the village
Wages from household members outside the village
Wages from household members outside Egypt (where?)
Rent collection
Others (specify)
31. Please specify which of the following items are part of your expenditure: regularly (each day)
   occasionally (each month)
   rarely (each 8-12 months)
   never

   Rice
   Oil
   Meat
   Spices
   Sugar
   Salt
   Matches
   Soap
   Grains
   Cigarettes
   Sweets
   Liquor
   Sweets
   Medicine
   Hospitals
   Doctors
   Dentists
   Shoes
   Cloth and clothing
   Tailors
   Drugs
   Vegetables
School fees
Books and stationery
Private lessons for children
Transportations
Ceremonies (specify)

Must specify here the amount of work done by women

SECTION III

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

32. Some people prefer their children to marry relatives rather than strangers, what do you think?

Why?

33. Are you related to your wife? If yes what is the rel.?

34. In your opinion when a boy marries with whom should he live?
With his parents? Why?
With his wife’s parents? Why?
Apart from his parents and in-laws? Why?

WHAT REALLY HAPPENS IN THE VILLAGE WHEN THE BOY MARRIES?
34. When a girl marries with whom should she stay in your opinion?
   With her parents?    Why?
   With her husband’s parents?    Why?
   Apart from her parents and in-laws?    Why?

   WHAT REALLY HAPPENS IN THE VILLAGE?

35. At what age do you think a boy should marry?
   Why?

36. How many children should a man have?
   Why?

37. How old were your sons when they married?

38. How many children does each have?

39. At what age should a girl marry?
   Why?

40. How many children should she have?
   Why?

41. How old were your daughters when they married?

42. How many children does each have?

43. Do you prefer that your children select friends from
   Only strangers
   Only relatives
   Only from your friends’ children
   Any friends that they like
   Others
44. What are the three most important things that a wife likes her husband to be?
   Religious  Monogamous  Rich  Cares for his children  Influential in the village  Educated
   Others  Why?

   Likes his wife to be
   Religious  A good child-care taker
   A beauty  Obedient  A good cook  Educated
   From a good family  Others  Why?

45. In a family what are some of the responsibilities of the Wife and the husband
   Wife
   Husband

46. What are some of the responsibilities of parents to their married children?

FAMILY AND KINSHIP

47. Do you prefer to do monetary and business transactions with members of your family rather than strangers? Why?

48. How many of the village members are related to you patrilineally?
   Draw a diagram if possible
49. In your opinion who is the most respectable relative you have in the village? (Specify relationship)

50. Why do you respect this person?

51. How often do you see this relative?
   Almost every day   Every week   Two or three times a month
   A few times a year   Less than once a year
   Other

52. Some people think that relatives have more sympathy than strangers when someone is in crisis. What do you think? Do they help? How? To what extent?

SECTION IV

RELIGION

53. What is your religion?

54. If you are a Moslem which of the following acts do you perform?

   Always    Sometimes    Never
   Praying
   Fasting
   Almsgiving
   Hagg
   Once    Twice    More than twice    Never
55. How often do you go to the mosque?
   Almost every day  Two or three times a week
   Only on Friday  Two times a month  Only for
   mourning ceremonies  Only during Ramadan or Feasts

56. In your opinion do people today observe the commands of
   religion:
   More than the time my father was researching
   Less than the time my father was doing his research
   The same  Why?

57. In your opinion people must observe the commands of
   their religion:
   More than they do
   Less than they do
   As much as they do now
   Why?

58. Do you think that people are punished for neglecting
   their religion?  Why?

59. Should parents force a child to practice their
   religion?  Why?

60. What is your opinion of other religions?
   Judaism  Christianity

61. Have you been hit by the evil eye?
   When and how?
   How did you treat it?
SECTION V

COMMUNICATIONS

62. Please state how many members of your household have done any of the following:
   Ridden a car
   Ridden a train
   Visited Aswan Dam and Aswan
   Visited Komombo
   Visited Edfu
   Visited Asyut
   Visited El Minya
   Visited Cairo
   Visited Alexandria
   Visited Suez
   Lived outside Egypt Where?

63. Do you have a radio in your house? If yes how many and what type?

64. How often do you listen to the radio?
   Everyday  2-3 times a week  Once a week
   2-3 times a month  Other

65. What radio programs do you like to listen to?
   Arabic music and songs  Foreign music and songs
   Religious programs  News  Stories and plays
   Science programs  Others
66. Can you read the newspaper? If yes how often do you buy it? Where do you get it from?

67. Do you have a television? If yes is it color or B/W? How often do you watch it?

68. What programs do you watch on T.V.?
   Religious programs   News   Stories and plays
   Science programs   Others

69. Do you have a video tape machine? If yes what do you watch on video? How often do you watch it? and where do you get the tapes from?

70. What are the means of entertainment available at the village? For men/For women Which do you prefer and why?

SECTION VI

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

THese are not questions but should be observed:

***** Breakfast, lunch, and dinner times and food nutrients consumed.

ILLNESS AND HEALTH

71. People who get sick are
   Unlucky   Do not observe health principles
   Cursed by the evil eye   Cursed by God
   Subject of others' envy
72. Do you believe that the date of a human’s death is determined before birth (Maktoub)?

73. If a neighbor’s child became sick and died would the reason be
   Lack of medical care   Lack of parents’ care
   Its time has come   Others

These are not questions but should be a) observed, b) statistics from the health compound unit.

Illnesses, treatment, epidemics, and cost of doctors as well as medicine and its availability.

Schistomiasis (Bilharzia), age of person, occupation, gender, treatment, at home and at the hospital

Folk understanding of Bilharzia

Cholera same as above and all other epidemics

74. Did you ever swim in the Nile or Tira (a stream)?

75. Will you allow your children to swim in the Nile or Tira?

76. What is the function of the health compound unit?

77. What do you pay per visit?
   Are these expensive rates?

78. How often do you and or a member of your family go to the health compound?
79. Do you go to hospitals or health services outside Silwa? List when, where, and are they more expensive than those in Silwa?

80. How would you treat a person for
   Snake bites
   Scorpion bite
   Cold
   Headache
   Stomach ache
   Diarrhea
   Constipation
   Toothache
   Fever
   Nausea
   Skin rash
   Others

CHILD CARE AND SOCIALIZATION

81. When did you have your children?
   Immediately after you were married        Waited for ____
   Specify what birth control method was used and how it was prescribed.

82. How much education would you like your children to have?
   Girls                                       Boys
83. How much money do you spend on your children’s education? Specify

84. If you could choose your son’s occupation which of the following would you choose?
   Follow your occupation
   Be a gov. official
   Be a teacher
   Be a doctor
   Be a politician
   Be an engineer
   Be a merchant
   Others

   Why?

85. If you could choose your daughter’s occupation which of the following would you choose?
   Follow your/wife’s occupation
   Be a gov. official
   Be a teacher
   Be a doctor
   Be a politician
   Be an engineer
   Be a merchant
   Others

   Why?
86. Is it desirable to put girls and boys in the same classroom? Why yes and why no?

87. When does a child turn out to be worthless?

88. If the child does turn out to be worthless, the reason is
   His/her parents' bad luck
   The parents' negligence
   The blame is to be put on the father only
   The blame is to be put on the mother only
   The blame is to be put on the clan

89. What is bad upbringing in your opinion?

90. If parents put their children in school:
   The children will grow up to have a better life
   The children's life will depend on God's wish anyway
   The child's future depends on his hard work
   Others

91. Do your children fight?
   Over what?
   And what do you do about it?

92. Who is dearest to you among your children?

93. When you get old, who of your children would you like to take care of you?
94. Who strikes the children at home?
   Mother    Father    Grandmother    Grandfather
   Older brother    Older sister    Other (specify)

95. Who named each of your children?
   Name    Namer

96. Why was which of the above names chosen?
   How long did it take you to name each child?

97. Describe the naming ceremony, if you had any.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

98. As compared with today, how would you say the economic conditions of this village were when
   Your father was young
   Before the revolution in 1952
   Before the electricity and water

99. And how do you think living conditions will be
   In five years
   When the children of today are grown up
   A hundred years from now

100. How would you say this village compares with other regions as far as living conditions are concerned?
    Kalabsha
    The other Naga’s in Silwa’s administration
Komombo
Aswan
Cairo
The oil-rich countries
Other countries

101. In your opinion what is the most important problem in this village?

102. Is there much extreme poverty in this village?

103. Is it possible to improve the living conditions in this village? How?

104. What is better in your opinion?
To improve living conditions in the village
Or improve the living conditions of one’s family

105. How would you say the economic conditions of your family compare with the situation of your family when
You were born
Five years age
Ten years from now

106. If you had a choice, where would you live?
Here in your house or elsewhere? Where?
Here is the village or elsewhere?
107. Have you ever tried to move outside this village?
   No, because you do not want to
   No, because it is not possible
   Yes, I have tried but in vain
   Yes, I am trying now
APPENDIX 6
ITEMS FROM BASE LINE STUDY CHILDREN’S LIFE HISTORY
AND FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Items from Base Line Study Children’s Life History

Ammar used these life history items to reveal aspects of growing up in Silwa. I use the follow-up items to reveal some aspects of cross-generational change between child/parent.
Number of siblings
Is the child the oldest
Parents’ background (married, polygamy, divorce)
Grandparents living (background)
Fights with parents
School performance (the child’s performance and teacher’s perception)
Ask child to draw the scene from pilgrimage celebrations
Ask child about illnesses he/she experiences
What is the child’s appearance like
The child’s favorite games
Memories about circumcision
Ask the child about people he/she likes and dislikes
(These same questions were asked to the oldest child of the person)

Follow-Up Questions

Job, educational attainment
Marital status/relationship with spouse
Number of children and short life history about them
Relationship with the person’s siblings
Relationship with children
Memories from childhood
The story completion test is composed of nine stories. It is borrowed from H. Ammar’s adaptation (1954:274) of Pintner for the assessment of various aspects. H. Ammar used it to reveal some psychological and sociological aspects. I used it to reveal sociocultural change in such aspects. H. Ammar administered the test to boys. I administered it to boys and girls.

The following are the stories:

1. Once there was a boy sitting outside the house. He was not playing with other boys, but was staying all alone by himself. Why?

2. One day the parents of this boy (girl) got angry with him (her). What happened afterwards? Who punished him?

3. The boy (girl) went to fetch water from the Nile on donkey back. But on the way the water jars were broken. What happened then?

4. In the street the boy (girl) was fighting with another boy (girl). A man passed. What happened?

5. The boy (girl) saw his (her) younger brother playing with a ball. What did he (she) do?

6. This boy (girl) had a friend he (she) liked very much. One day he (she) said "come with me and I’ll show you something, but you mustn’t tell anyone because it’s a secret." What did he (she) show him (her)? What did they do?

7. It was night. The boy (girl) was sleeping and suddenly he (she) woke up screaming. What made him (her) wake up? What was the matter?

8. One night the boy (girl) dreamt he (she) saw the angels during his (her) sleep. They asked him (her) to pray for something he (she) wanted. What did he pray for?

9. This boy (girl) is growing up. He likes to be a man (woman). What would he (she) like to do?
The story completion was given to 30 students from ages six to sixteen. The following are samples corresponding to H. Ammar’s age and sex categories.

A. Age 9
1. He is not playing with other boys because he is thinking of something that is worrying him.
2. His parents were angry because he failed in school or broke something in the house.
3. When he breaks the water jar he goes back home to get another one.
4. The man asks them about the cause of their quarrel and helps to settle their problem.
5. He would play with his younger brother and does not take the ball from him.
6. He showed him money.
7. Bad dream or nightmare.
8. He prayed that he succeeds at school and to go to heaven.

B. Age 14
1. The boy is not playing because he is thinking about something he regreted doing.
2. His parents are angry with him because he did something wrong.
3. He was angry that he broke the water jar and was scared of his father.
4. The man asked them why they were quarrelling and then tried to keep them apart from each other.
5. The boy took the ball from his younger brother.
6. He showed him something he stole.
7. A bad dream made him wake up.
8. He prayed that he can always obey his parents.
9. The wish is to become a medical doctor and succeed in his work.
C.  Age 15
1. He is not playing with other boys because he has no friends.
2. His parents were angry with him because the school sent them a letter of warning about his bad conduct.
3. When he breaks the water jar, they (his parents) will say evil is broken.
4. The man will ask the boys about the problem they are quarrelling about and will try to resolve it.
5. He will take the ball from him and tell him to go to study.
6. If the boy is old enough, he will show his friend a letter from the women he loves.
7. A nightmare woke him up.
8. He will pray God to keep his parents in good health and make all my wishes come true.

D.  Age 16
1. The boy is not playing with other boys because he is worried.
2. His parents were angry with him because he cursed them and walked out of the house.
3. When the boy breaks the water jar he worries about his parents' reaction, but if the father is a good man he will forgive him.
4. It depends on the man, if he has time he will stop them from quarrelling, but if he is in a hurry to catch a train or a bus then he will not interfere.
5. It depends on how he likes his younger brother. If he likes him he will play with him, but if he does not he will take the ball from him.
6. The boy showed his friend something he stole from their house.
7. He woke up from a nightmare.
8. If angels came to the boy in his dreams, then he is a good boy who would pray for his parents and relatives and not for himself.

9. Give him a good wife and be tolerant.
This test is designed to ascertain the public official moral ideas of the group.

The child is asked for three things that would be considered good for him/her or for a boy or a girl of his/her age to do and for the same number of things that would be considered bad to do. The individual responses are taken to indicate not just how the child acts in a given situation, but how he/she thinks people in general want him/her to act.

The first part of the test was elicited:

"What could you or a boy (a girl) of your age do that would be a good thing for which father, the family or the people would praise you? Mention three things.

What could you or a boy (girl) of your age do that would be a bad thing, that makes father, family or the people think badly of you? Mention three things." (H. Ammar 1952:272)
Moral Ideology Test
Bavelas Moral Ideology Test
(quoted in Ammar 1954:272-273)

Part 1.

Boys
A. Age 9:
   1. Pray
   2. Obey parents
   3. Do a good deed

B. Age 10:
   1. Obey parents
   2. Do good deeds and don’t hurt other people
   3. Honesty

C. Age 13:
   1. Help other people
   2. Be good to other people and friends
   3. Respect the elderly and be kind to the younger children

D. Age 16:
   1. Succeed at school
   2. Achieve in society
   3. Be good with parents

Girls
E. Age 13:
   1. Pray with studying
   2. Take a straight and righteous road
   3. Protect our honor

F. Age 16:
   1. Study and be a good student
   2. Not to watch too much television
   3. Obey parents

Part 2.

Boys
A. Age 9:
   1. If I believe in more than one God
   2. If I do evil things to people
   3. If you don’t obey parents

B. Age 10:
   1. If I am conceited
   2. If I wish evil onto people and my friends
   3. When I don’t extend a helping hand to people
C. Age 13:
   1. When you do not have parents’ blessings
   2. If you do not respect people
   3. If you are dishonest

D. Age 16:
   1. Disobey parents
   2. If you fail your exams
   3. Befriend the boys they dislike

Girls
E. Age 13:
   1. Fail in school exams
   2. If you don’t study
   3. Go out of the house without permission

F. Age 16:
   1. Do not go to homes with bad reputations
   2. Do not go out or talk to a man
   3. Protect your honor
APPENDIX 9
COMPOSITION QUESTIONS

1. What are the basic changes that have taken place in Silwa during the past years?

2. What is clean in your opinion?

3. Education is the weapon of progress. What is your opinion?

4. Cleanliness is close to holiness. What is clean in your opinion?

5. What is a healthy meal?

6. What is leisure?

7. A friend. . . . Describe one.
APPENDIX 10
THE COPTIC CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coptic Months</th>
<th>Corresponding Gregorian Calendar Months*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toot</td>
<td>10th or 11th of September-10/11th of October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babah</td>
<td>10th or 11th of October-9/10th of November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatoor</td>
<td>9th or 10th of November-9/10th of December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiyahk</td>
<td>9th or 10th of December-8/9th of January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toobah</td>
<td>8th or 9th of January-7/8th of February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsheer</td>
<td>7th or 8th of February-9th of March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barahamt</td>
<td>9th or March-8th of April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baramoudah</td>
<td>8th of April-8th of May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bashans</td>
<td>8th of May-7th of June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baoonah</td>
<td>7th of June-7th of July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abeeb</td>
<td>7th of July-6th of August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misri</td>
<td>6th of August-10th or 11th of September</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Year 284 A.D. is the year of martyrdom to the Copts. After the Roman Emperor persecuted them they started their calendar with it.
I calculated with one of my informants the buyer’s average expenditure in the Saturday market. For a family of 8 people, 4 adults and 4 children, the winter and summer time expenditure is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th></th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 kilos of meat</td>
<td>30 L.E.</td>
<td>3 kilos of meat</td>
<td>30 L.E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 kilos of oranges</td>
<td>1.20 L.E.</td>
<td>2 kilos of  grapes</td>
<td>1.60 L.E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 kilos of tomato</td>
<td>.80 L.E.</td>
<td>2 kilos of tomato</td>
<td>1.60 L.E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 kilo of cucumber</td>
<td>.45 L.E.</td>
<td>1 kilo of onions</td>
<td>.45 L.E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 kilo of onions</td>
<td>.50 L.E.</td>
<td>3 kilos of moulokiah</td>
<td>1.20 L.E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-3 kilos of salad greens</td>
<td>.30 L.E.</td>
<td>(Egyptian spinach)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 kilos of okra</td>
<td>1.50 L.E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Parsley, Gortom, and Gargeer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32.45 L.E.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36.35 L.E.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 12
THE G’AFRA DESCENT TREE
AS MEMORIZED BY THE RELIGIOUS SHEIKHS
The Prophet Mohammad

Fatima Al-Zahra = Ali-Ibn Abi Taleb

Zeinab  Om Khalthum  Ragaia  Al-Hussain  Al-Hassan

Zein Al-Abedeen
Mohammad Al-Bagir
Ga’far Al-Sadiq
Musa Al-Kazim
Hassan Al-Askari
Mohammad Al-Mahdi (Morocco)
Prince Mohammad (Settled in Egypt)
Hamad (Great-grandfather of Silwians)
Mohammad Al-Daghfali (Grandfather of Silwians)
Ga’far (Founder of Silwian Clans)

Bahar (Eastern cluster of villages)  Buhair (Western cluster of villages)

Ayyash (Southern Silwa)  On Musa (Northern Silwa)  Mohammad (Qoos village in the Governorate of Qena)
Food Preparation

We woke up in the morning and the entire house was preparing for the Mulid. The woman of the house who herself was going to Mecca, her three married daughters, her unmarried daughter, and her two younger sons were busy cooking, bringing flour to bake, and cleaning the house. The food basically consisted of Shamsy (sun) bread, Mulukhia (an Egyptian spinach-like plant that is chopped finely and then cooked into soup), Weaka (okra cooked to a soup-like dish), and lamb. The Mulukhia was cleaned in the morning by the women of the house. They all sat in the kitchen (gracefully kneeling down) and removed the leaves of the plant from the stem and then chopped the leaves. This process is a tough one, but they do it so quickly as they chat. Then it was time to invite the women orally. The decision to have the ceremony was made five days in advance. The men received written invitations two days in advance. The women were invited the morning of the ceremony orally.
The Inviting of Women

The unmarried daughter (my informant) dressed up and said let’s go. As we were leaving her mother repeated names of certain women in an insisting tone. At the same time the sisters kept on reminding her not to take long because there is much to do.

The inviting took three hours and going to over 75 houses. We started off by the farthest point from our house, i.e., the eastern-most point since we live in a new house, closer to the fields and the railway. It was 10 o’clock on a mid-July day and was it hot!!!! The procedure of inviting goes as follows: We knocked at the wooden door whether it was opened or closed, then waited for the woman of the house to either open the door or come to the door. Often there was handshaking. Mostly during the handshake we were puoled into the house to have a cold drink since it was so hot. We then waited in a shady spot where we would say we are having a Mulid (literally translated as a birth celebration, but has assumed the meaning of festivity) tonight for my mother and we’d like you to come. After our three hour round we came back home where the food preparation was still going on.

Food Preparation Still Going On

The bread at the time was all done. I later noticed a difference in the bread and inquired. . . . The answer came,
"Well we have baked some at home and bought some from our next door neighbor who sells bread on such occasions." The bread was cut into halves and put in big cooking pans. It was put in one of the bedrooms and covered with blankets from the birds, cats, and dogs.

At 2 p.m., the maternal cousin of the woman of the house (Ibn Khalha) who is also the husband of one of her daughters, together with her younger son, started the slaughtering of the lamb. They had two knives, a long stick that looked like a broom handle, a wooden ladder, and some boiling water. The slaughtering started with reading the Islamic opening (Al-Fateha), a necessity to make the slaughtering Hallah (permissible to eat). The blood from the neck of the lamb came running on the floor like a flood, another condition to making the slaughtering Hallah. Then the limbs of the lamb were removed and a straw was inserted into his body. Through this straw the two men interchangeably blew air into the body of the lamb to inflate it. Once the body was inflated the lamb was hung on a pole and skinned. Lastly, the intestines of the lamb were removed, chopped, and given to the women to cook.

The meat was put in big pans with onions and fat on various fires. Some were those of gas stoves, others were of wooden fire, and yet others were of a kerosene one-eyed stove. Meanwhile as the meat was being cooked, plates, drinking glasses, and large round silver-plated trays were
being washed and prepared for serving. Also, the Zeirs (the clay-like cylindrical containers used for cooling the water) were being cleaned and filled with water.

It was 7:30 p.m. and all was ready. The daughters of the woman of the house washed and dressed their children and themselves. And the children were the first to start the celebration.

One fascinating observation here was the way the women of the house were dressed. They wore what I often called their house dresses. The Silwian married women wear black dresses over their house dresses if they were to go out or see a man who is not a Mahram (a husband or a man with whom sexual intercourse is tabooed by religious prescriptions).

Later I discovered why. The ceremony is a segregated affair whereby the men have their celebration outside the house and the women inside it. Only the sons of the house are allowed inside the home boundaries.

However, the women guests came in their formal black dresses and never took them off during the course of the evening.

The Men’s Ceremony and Food

The men’s ceremony takes place outside the house. Dikkak (wooden benches) are put outside the house and men sit there exchanging news and politics, both local and
national. The food and water of men are put separately from that of the women. The men’s food is also served separately from the women in the outermost room.

The serving of food for men is done by a hired male servant. He pours the food from the pans into plates and arranges the trays.

The eating in Silwa in general is a group endeavor. Aluminum bowls of food are put on a tray (the tray used to be wooden, now it has become aluminum) with pieces of bread next to each guest. Every person dips the Kisras (pieces of bread) in the bowl of food and eats the dipped bread. During the Hajj celebration eating is no different, except that there are more men than there is space for all of them to eat with each other. The arrangement of who eats with whom is actually done by the time of arrival. The men of the house more or less keep track of who came with whom, and thus people who came at the same time eat together.

The men/boys of the house come in and out of the house proper fetching tea, more water, more bowls, and more food.

The men guests are dressed in their ordinary garments Gallabiyyas. They bring nothing with them to the Mulid, except the very close kin who bring cigarettes for distribution among the guests.
The Women’s Ceremony and Food

For the women’s ceremony straw mats are put on the floor inside the house courtyard. Women come in with bags of sugar, tea, bottled concentrate mango, and strawberry juices. Upon arriving inside the house the women look for the woman of the house. Once they see her they hug each other and start making a shrill from their mouth that sounds like ri-ri-ri. This is a sound common enough in Egypt; often it is referred to as Zaghruta. It indicates happiness and congratulations. In Cairo the sound is obtained by moving the tongue horizontally left to right or vice versa on the upper lip very fast. In Silwa the sound is obtained by putting one’s tongue on the inside upper lip and moving it up and down. After the hugging and Zagharit, the women guests give the woman of the house the presents they brought with them. A few minutes after the guests arrive, food is put on a tray and is served to them by one of the daughters of the house. The same serving pattern of arrive-together eat-together applies in the case of the women.

In my case, since I did not arrive with anybody but was there, I was served with my closest kin, my father’s sister (Amati), and the daughters of my father’s other sister who is deceased (Banat Amati). As we were sitting down my aunt divided the meat equally between us from the communal bowl. She put each of our pieces on our bread and said, "Each should eat and if it is not enough there is plenty more."
This I was told later was a common habit in the recent past when slaughtering lamb was the only source of eating this kind of meat. Meat then used to be given by hand while serving the food separately from the communal bowls of vegetables. But now one can buy lamb meat once a week from the Saturday market and eat it at least twice a week or more after refrigeration.

After the food was served, the entertainment started.

**Entertainment**

Entertainment constitutes an important part of the gathering.

An hour before the guests started coming, a loudspeaker was installed on the ceiling of the house next door to where the celebration was to take place. On the microphone the occasion of the celebration was announced. It said:

"Armalat (the widow) of Mr. So and So (God rest his soul), and her children are celebrating her going on pilgrimage and visiting the Prophet's shrine and you are invited to attend the gathering."

The loudspeaker was later used by a family of professional Koranic readers and singers hired to entertain the men. The songs that were sung in this group contained religious themes.

Men also entertain themselves with political conversation and the affairs of the Governorate and the village. The major topic I heard that night was about the
difference between the people who go on pilgrimage privately and those who go with government grants.

Towards the end of the evening a tray covered with barley, sweets, and incense sticks was passed around the men’s group.

Entertainment Among the Women

Among the women the entertainment I saw was clearer since I stayed with them most of the evening. Singing, dancing, and gossip were the major arenas of entertainment.

At this gathering there was a professional singer that was invited and two other women who sang. The professional singer had a Daff (a round-like drum made out of wood and sheep skin). The woman singer was middle aged and sat on the floor mats surrounded by other women singing and dancing. The songs were like a dialogue, mostly in praise of the Prophet. The major singer would say: "Zorna Alnabi Sawa Sawa (We visited the Prophet, together, together)," and the reply would come: "Sawa Sawa (together, together)." The dancing was performed in a circular pattern. Most women dancing stand in a circle and move around and around the circle. From a distance in the dark all you really see are black dresses moving around and around. An interesting happening was that every time I would want to take a picture, the women dancing would immediately cover their faces with their black head dress indicating to me that they are not in a trance like in the Zar (exorcism) dances.
The professional singer is often given Nugut (drops of money). Every now and then someone would move towards her and give her a quarter of a pound or so and her voice would go higher, indicating that she has received the money. Once this singing group was established, a younger group of women in their teens and early twenties gathered together in a different corner and started a different circle of singing and dancing. They had a Tabla (a cylindrical-like drum made of clay and sheep skin) and sang more urban popular songs. The dancing that went on was also more of the popularized bellydancing type.

Gossip

The women's exchange was an essential part of the entertainment. Often the exchange was gossip. One of the major themes in this gathering was me. Everybody in the village knows my age, since when I was born my father informed his family of my birth. So everybody knows more or less to which generation I belong. This is quite a story for the Silwian women. Everybody was asking why I was not married and that I do have a ring around my finger (my middle finger). I was asked a number of times in that evening whether my ring was gold or not. Later that evening many of my relatives told me that the women were convinced that I was engaged, but did not want to tell me about it.
Another interesting topic of gossip that I was let into was about a young boy who was being particularly withdrawn. I asked a woman sitting next to me why he was so withdrawn. So everybody in the circle told me about how he was the son of the deceased brother of the woman of the house, but from a second wife. So I said: "but what is the problem"? (since polygamy is not so alien to the Silwians). The story came as such:

The brother of the woman of the house had introduced this woman who is a Silwian originally, but lived in Cairo, to his younger brother to marry. His younger brother prolonged in taking the initiative to finalize the marriage. So he (the older brother) swore he would marry her and he did. They lived in Cairo while his original family (two sons and a daughter in their mid-teens and his first wife lived in Aswan). He would come from Cairo periodically to visit them. Two years ago the man died in a car accident. His second wife got remarried and her son was brought back to Silwa by his paternal uncles. The young boy (he is seven years old) is at this point living with his compounded family, who came back to live in Silwa after their father’s death. The boy’s grandmother is with him in Silwa awaiting the deceased man’s brothers to furnish them with a home of their own. This change from a boy living with his mother and father in Cairo to having to face the loss of his father by death, his mother by remarriage, and live in Silwa has had quite an impact on the boy.

Another interesting gossip story I happened to hear by accident and then sat down to follow up on was about the quality of men from the Hassabalab tribe. This is the tribe of the family that is entertaining (and by the way my tribe, too). The woman said: "the Hassabalabs have weak men, men who can take no initiative, and are led by their wives."

Overhearing this I could not but sit down on the floor mat
to hear what is to transcribe, especially that there was a
woman from the Hassabalab sitting in the circle.

The conversation went on jokingly:

"Why are they weak"? . . . 
"They cannot carry anything." . . .
"In Silwa women are supposed to carry not men."
"You see I told you, you lead your men." . . .
"Our men are the most educated we have the medical
doctors, the university professors, and
even the first educated woman." . . .
"You see I told you, you lead your men . . . even
the first woman to break the rules and go to Aswan
to school was a Hassabalab."

The conversation then faded into looking at the singers
and dancers. In about five minutes time the niece of the
Hassabalabs said in a rather high-pitched serious tone:
"The men in my tribe are not weak" and was about to
challenge further when her maternal aunt (who is a
Hassabalab also) looked at her and said: "Things become
serious when you talk serious . . . so we were only joking,"
thus silencing any further debate.

Towards the end of the evening a plate with a red
liquid on it was passed among the women. The liquid has a
scented flowery smell and is used by women as perfume. They
dipped their fingers in the plate and then spread the liquid
on their wrists, between their breasts, behind their ears,
and under their arms.

The End of the Evening and Cleaning Up

At 12:00 p.m. the men stopped their singing, the
loudspeaker was pulled down from the roof of the next door
building, and the wooden benches were returned to the inside of the house. The last women guests bid the woman of the house farewell and left. (A remark here: The men sit outside and the women inside, thus the men guard the women and keep track of them as they come in and walk out of the Mulid.) Since the men are sitting outside and the women are shy of them, a constant question as the women were preparing to leave was "Is it crowded outside?" meaning are there lots of men sitting outside which makes our walking out of the house uneasy. Since women walk without talking at all to the men as if neither exist, men have the prerogative of watching, while the women walk straight ahead without looking at all.

The next morning the women of the house reorganized the entire house, washed all the dishes, and swept all the floors. It took them from 6:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. to do so, while the men slept until 10:00 in the morning.
APPENDIX 14
MALE AND FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

The following is a narration from the village barber in 1951 which I retrieved from H. Ammar’s field notes, explaining the operation of male circumcision.

Doctor Hamed Maala, the village barber (euphemistically called Doctor), and a source of fear for the village children says:

Male circumcision is done in two stages:
(1) the blocked tissue
(2) the split tissue

(a) Air is introduced into the blocked tissue in order to make it split. If this does not work, I split the tissue with scissors and then by hand.

(b) Once the tissue is split, I insert Al-Mirrwad (a thin needle-like instrument) inside the split tissue and cut the foreskin with the Kalbih (sharp scissors), minding carefully the veins.

(c) The boy to be circumcised sits on the Majur (the clay plate).

(d) After cutting the foreskin, the boy’s organ is washed with cold water, since hot water helps the rushing of blood. After washing, I apply white alcohol.

(e) Once circumcision is over, the boy is taken by his kin to see the Nile River; it is a symbol of fertility.

(f) A couple of hours later I visit the boy to check on him, just in case he’s bleeding. I keep visiting him for three days.
(g) The circumcised boy should be decorated with a 
Hafizeh (protecting charm) or something in silver 
with holy inscriptions on it.

(h) After circumcision, the boy eats boiled eggs, 
chick peas, luppini beans, and light lunches.

(i) The circumcised boy does not see the 
operation. His "dress" Galaabiyya is pulled 
towards him in a way that prevents him from seeing.

The following is a narration from the village midwife 
of 1951, which I retrieved from H. Ammar's field notes, 
about the operation of female circumcision:

The village midwife says:
(1) If the girls are from Bahari (north), i.e., 
from Edfu or Mitgar, only the Nawaia (the 
clitoris) is removed.

(2) But if the girls are from Silwa the Nawaia, 
the Fassia (labia minora and labia major) are 
removed. This way there is security for the girl, 
since Bahari Taharaat (northern circumcision) 
appears to the groom during the first night as 
though the girl (is not a virgin) Thaiib.

The way by which we circumcise is 
(a) We bring Al-Bifdf (a thin, long pair of 
scissors) provided by the ministry of health.

(b) We bring Al-Mijdab (long tweezers) with which 
we hold the cottonballs.

(c) The girl then sits on three stones. Three 
women stand by her, two hold her thighs and the 
third holds her from the back.

(d) I hold the clitoris with the Jifd. First I 
amputate the labias with a clean razor blade and 
then with the jifd I cut the clitoris.

(e) I put on the wound, after I wash it with Yazol 
an antiseptic brand name used generically), 
gazel blood (a red herb that has the same texture 
as flour). The gazel blood is then used to clean 
the wound until it heals for seven days.
(f) The circumcised girl eats luppini beans, boiled eggs, and very simple lunches for seven days.

(g) The girl’s thighs and ankles are wrapped together to facilitate healing.
APPENDIX 15
KINSHIP CHART

The following is a detailed four-generational kinship chart revealing the nonsystematic practice of cross or patrilateral cousin marriages.
APPENDIX 16
WOMEN'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographics of individuals
Age  Occupation  Education level
Marital status  Years of marriage  No. of children

Household composition

1. At what age did you start menstruating?
2. What did you do then? Explain in terms of who did she go to, how prepared was she to the menstrual cycle?
3. Do you bathe when you're menstruating?
   If no, why not?
4. Every how many days do you menstruate?
   Do you have pains preceding, during, or after your period? What are they and where? And what do you do about them?
5. If you have menopausal, when did you? Dis you have any back aches where you could not stand up? Did you have a burning feeling in your shoulders, spinal cord, or thighs?
6. How many children did you have? And what was your age at each delivery?
7. Where did you have your children?
   1st child
   2nd child
3rd child
4th child

8. If at home, was there a doctor present or did you have the Dayya (mid-wife)?

9. Do you still want to have children?
   If yes, how many?

10. What if you do not want to have children, what would you do?

11. What will your husband say?

12. What ages are your children?

13. What did you tell your girls about
   Menstruation
   Marriage
   Birth control
   Birth

14. What did your mother tell you about
   Menstruation
   Marriage
   Birth control
   Birth

15. What happens to a woman when she stops having menstrual flow?

16. Why do old women shrink and have humps?

17. How many of your children were breast fed?
   Who breast fed them and for how long?
   Did you substitute other food for your children while breast feeding?
*I HAVE OBTAINED INFORMATION OF CIRCUMCISION BOTH MALE AND FEMALE, HOWEVER I NEED SOME CONFIRMATION, SO:

18. Are you circumcised?  
   Where were you circumcised? How old were you and do you recall it?

19. Have you (or will you) circumcise(ed) your daughter?  
   If yes, then why? Where? And when?

20. I need you to list for me your daily chores since you wake up in the morning.

*****I shall also categorize the list into
Daughter Newly married Mother
Middle age with unmarried daughters
Middle age with married daughters
Old with daughters Old with no daughters

21. How did you meet your husband or how did your husband come to ask for your hand?

22. How would you like your daughters to meet their husbands?
Silwian Interpretations of Dreams

1. Death: The death of the evil soul.

2. To survive drowning:
   (a) During a.m. period implies success
   (b) At other times implies getting well after an illness

3. A girl in a wedding dress: She will soon get married

4. A girl in a black shawl: She will soon get married

5. Fish: Good omen

6. Well-done meat: Death

7. Rare meat: The death of a loved one

8. Eggs: Envy and bad omen

9. A girl: Good omen

10. When a pregnant woman dreams of a scarf: She will have a girl

11. When a pregnant woman dreams of a Ballas (water jar): She will have a boy

12. Gold: Good omen

13. Milk: Good omen

14. Green things: Good omen

15. Garlic: An argument or a fight

16. Fire: A fight

17. Water: Prosperity
Girls' Dreams

Age 10:
I dreamt that I was in a boat in Aswan. It kept going until we made it to the shore and the I woke up.

Age 14:
I dreamt that I was walking on top of a mountain and then I fell to the sea. I was worried about my brothers. At first I lost them but then I found them. I asked my grandmother about my dream and she told me that the sea is a good omen.

Age 11:
I dreamt that Silwa had tall buildings.

Age 13:
I dreamt that my aunt came to visit with her young kid. She had a bag full of cookies and coloring pencils. I ate some cookies and gave some to my brothers and sisters, but she asked me to keep some for her son.

Age 15:
I dreamt that there were apartments being sold for 100 L.E. My mother gave me money and we rode a car. When we got there they told us that they were sold out but that there are others for 300 L.E. We went back to my mother's family and they said they didn't need any for this price.

Age 9:
I dreamt that my aunt came from Saudi Arabia and got me a bike. I played with it in the street and so did my sister.

Age 8:
I dreamt that there was this old man next to the mountain who wanted to slaughter my little brother and sister. They climbed the mountain and I went after them. I found them on my way back home. And then I found the old man and he told me he wasn't going to kill anyone. He had his dog with him.

Age 12:
I dreamt that Atiyat, my cousin, was pulling us, Zanouba, my other cousin, and myself along the railroad track.
Boys’ Dreams

Age 11:
I dreamt that we used to visit Cairo every year. One year my father asked me to stay behind. I was kidnapped and two years later I returned to Silwa. I found that my parents went on pilgrimage and nobody recognized me. Then I was arrested.

Age 8:
I dreamt that I was walking along a long road and there was a man calling me. I found a forest and the man was still calling me. He had in his hand a shiny object. Every time I touched it, it went away from me. Everywhere I went the man was still calling me. Then he gave me a ring and I wore it. When I wore it a naked man appeared and asked me to wish. I told him, I want to go back to my village. Suddenly, I found myself at home.

Age 14:
I dreamt that I was going home from school and my cousin gave me some dates. But the date was on fire. I threw it against a wall and the wall caught fire.

Age 12:
I dreamt that every time I walked a step I found a pencil. Once I even found a red pencil, but I didn’t stop, I kept going.

Women’s Dreams

Age Approximately 75:
I dreamt that the holy man told her to ask the Omda to build a Khimih (a guest house) and organize it for his people (meaning clan). The next day the woman reported to the Omda the dream, but he did not follow the instructions and died in a period of two months.

Age 40:
I dreamt that my father was asking me why I was not praying regularly. He told me that since I know how to pray I should pray five times a day.

Age 30:
I dreamt that while climbing the mountain I kept on being pushed by cows and then finally when I looked down the people were all transformed into cows, too.
Men’s Dreams

Age 35:
I dreamt I drove a car all over the buildings of the girls’ intermediate school and nothing happened to me.

Age 22:
I dreamt that I was playing soccer and my team won, and so I carried all the team members on my back at once.

Age 40:
I dreamt that I received a green paper calling me for military service.

Age 28:
I dreamt that I was walking in the desert for three whole days without food and water, until I met with tourists in a helicopter who fed me and brought me back to Silwa.
APPENDIX 18
DISAPPEARING BOYS' GAMES

1. The game of the mouse (Lilabat al-Far).

A group of boys build a heap of sand or dust around which they sit. The oldest boy is the leader and remains in control throughout the game. He calls out "the mouse has entered," at the same time inserting his index finger into the heap, and the others immediately do likewise. When he calls out "the mouse has come out" everyone must withdraw his finger. Any delay in responding to the leader's instructions exposes the child to hits on the body from his playmates till the leader orders them to stop. (Ammar 1954: 145)

2. Shalal-Balal (the words only rhyme and have no apparent meaning).

This is played with two equal teams of three to five members each, each team having a perfect, "arif," who is usually the eldest boy. The prefects stand beside each other at what may be called a base, whilst the two teams stand intermingled at a distance from them. The prefects take turns in throwing up or away in any direction a small object, usually a bone. This "bone of contention" must be retrieved by one of the players and returned to his team-prefect at the base. The game involves brute strength as well as cunning, for if any boy can obtain the bone surreptitiously amid the general scramble, he must cunningly shake off suspicion and rapidly reach his prefect. Otherwise the scramble continues, and the bone is fought out with struggle and chase. The winner's side calls out "Fikum Humar," which scoffingly means "That's a donkey for you." (Ammar 1954:146)

3. The buffalo little horn (Kurain al-Gamoosee).

A younger boy is slung over the shoulders of an older boy so that his trunk hangs down freely behind the latter, while his knees flex over each
shoulder and his legs are crossed over the chest of the older boy. The feet are held rigidly by the older boy to perform a butting and buffeting movement representing the little horns of the buffalo. Three or four couples are so made up. The struggle begins amidst challenging shouting of "the buffalo's little horn" usually between two parties, the object being to dislodge the crossed legs and so cause "the buffalo" to slip down. The "horns" are thus destroyed and the two players so dealt with drop out of the game. The remaining couple resumes its attack on other survivors and so on until one couple is left as victor. (Ammar 1954:146)

4. Donkey ride (Rokoub Hamir).

In this case a younger boy straddles the shoulders of an older boy, who holds the rider's dangling legs securely with his hands. The object of this game is to unseat the opponent by dragging or pulling him off his mount. This, however, rarely occurs, as the struggle between the riders usually takes the form of buffeting, pulling and pushing. Actual striking or slapping is not allowed. Although the younger boys seem to be the more active participants in the game yet the older boys can naturally assist in the struggle by maneuvering their positions to help their riders. (Ammar 1954:146)

5. The water carrier fight (Harb al-Sakka).

[It] is so called because the older boys carry the smaller boys slung across the small of their backs, grasping them firmly to themselves, similar to the way in which the waterskin is slung behind the water-vendor. The protruding legs are free to kick and to hit the opponents' free legs. The aim here, as before, is to dislodge "the water-skin" from the back of "the water-carrier." (Ammar 1954:146)

6. Racing.

The combination of old and young boys also takes the form of a race. The older boy stands putting his arms behind his back, clasping his hands together, while the smaller boy stands with his feet on the former's hands. A line of these couples race towards the goal shouting out: "This is the tall palm tree that extends from here to the island" (Al-Nakhla Attawili, Min Hina Lil Jaziri). (Ammar 1954:146-147)
One of their favourite games is for two boys to stand side by side linking the near hands, and for a third boy to crook a leg over the joined arms and place his hand on the near shoulder of each of the other two boys. As they advance at walking pace, he hops on his one leg, then sings "The lame cock jumps over the hen" (Arag Arroug, Nat al-Faroug), as they quicken their pace. Races can be run in this way, having teams of three.

From the age of nine and ten till thirteen and fourteen years boys play more complicated games which are, on the whole, tougher and require more muscular skill, lasting longer. (Ammar 1954:147)

7. The queue (Tabbom).

For instance, a boy stands facing a wall, leaning forward with his palms falt to support him, his legs apart. Another stands behind him grasping him round the waist, another stands behind this latter grasping him similarly, and so forth for as many as are playing. The last one, however, is the active player in the game. His task is to detach each member, one by one, from the chain. This he must do by grasping the last member by both legs and pulling him how he will until he has detached the person in question, dragging him away to a base. Then he returns to tackle the next victim and so on. When he has finished this, another member is dragged till the chain, thus disconnected, is reformed to start again. (Ammar 1954:147)


The boys are divided into two teams of equal number, and face each other on either side of a line drawn on the ground. Each boy grasps his opposite number by the right hand, across the line. The aim is to pull the opponent over the line of demarcation towards one's own side. Directly one member has done this, two boys, one from each side, are chosen to spit on the sand, and the loser, bending over with his hands on the ground, is slapped on the buttocks by all members of the other side. This continues until the two boys declare that the spit has gone dry. If, however, the victim wishes to curtail his punishment he must say "I am a woman," whereupon the beating ceases, and the teams line up again and resume the struggle. A confession of "womanhood" by a boy of one side is a point scored for the other. (Ammar 1954:147)

There are also various versions of hide-and-seek. The well-known type is where one hides and the rest search him out while singing in chorus:

\[
\text{At-Talab Fat}
\]
\[
\text{Fat}
\]
\[
\text{Wif-Dailo Saba Laffat}
\]

The fox passed, passed

and in his tail there are seven knots.

A variation of this is called "Policemen and thieves" with two teams, where each member of one team (the constables) must search out his opposite number in the other team (the thieves). Having found him, the searcher must bring him to the base, often a task which entails struggle and strategy. After all the thieves have been rounded up, the teams change places, and the game goes on. (Ammar 1954:147-148)

10. The little rope (Hibail).

[It] is played with two boys seated on the ground facing each other, holding a rope tautly between them. One is called the "Bridegroom," the other the "Bride." The other boys take turns to approach the "bridegroom" and strike him with a small rope or a turban end. Then, and not before, the "bridegroom" drops his rope and makes every attempt to catch the boy before the latter reaches a base. If he cannot catch the boy, but secures the striking rope, he returns and places this in front of the "bride." The striker cannot be "home" without his rope and therefore must retrieve this. The "bridegroom" may not attempt to catch the striker until the latter has touched his striking rope. It is a matter of quickness of eye, and running ability. If the "bridegroom" catches the striker this time, the latter must take his place. If he does not and the striker reaches "home" with his striking rope, the "bridegroom" must reseat himself and the next boy then must advance to strike.

Another game using a short-length rope is played by a group of boys. All of them stand some distance from a base, and one of their number throws the rope up into the air. Then all the boys scramble to catch hold of it as it falls and the lucky one then turns on the rest to strike whom he can while they are running back to base. (Ammar 1954:148-149)
11. Who jumped over the little pot (Meennattak Kwidees).

On moonlit nights the game is played with great zest. Two boys are chosen by turns, one to bend over on to all fours placing his head between the knees of the other facing him. The former’s eyes are covered by the latter’s hands, so that he cannot see. The other boys jump in turn over the crouching boy, who at each jump is asked by his partner by saying "Who jumped over thee, 0 little pot"? If he guesses correctly, he can immediately change places with the jumper. If, however, he does not guess any of the names, the boys disperse after secretly informing the partner where they will hide, and the crouching boy must then guess where each one has hidden. A correct guess will merely bring back the boy whose place was correctly guessed from his hiding place, but inability to guess will mean that the hiding boy must be carried back to base. (Ammar 1954:148)

12. The dice game (Seega).

A game which involves no physical exertion is called "Seega with Tab." The tab is the instrument of scoring, and is made of a palm-tree branch (frond). It is cut a "span" in length and a "thumb" wide, one side being green, the other white. Four of these sticks are used in scoring. For playing, two of these sticks are held in each hand, the hands unite to shuffle them, and one hand strikes the sticks on to the other hand to fall on the ground. The scoring depends either on the number of the white sides turned up, one, two, three or four (called an egg), or on all the green sides up, which counts as six. A one must be thrown before scoring can begin, i.e. in the boys’ phrase "One must bring a boy" (a Walad). On throwing an opening one the player usually shouts "This is the boy that thrilled the village" (Walad Kharab al-Balad). In subsequent throws a one allows an extra throw, as also does a four and a six.

These things are necessary for the game: a palm-tree branch (used as a cane), a ring of rope and a very small stick. The player cannot participate in the benefits of the game until he scores a one and the person is thus "sweetened." Further scores are six for a "Sultan" who holds the ring of rope, four for a "Minister" (vizir) who holds the cane, and three ones for the small stick. Directly a Sultan and a Minister are
scored, the former can command the latter to beat any "unsweetened" boy with the cane (usually from one to ten strikes on the soles of the feet). The small stick, when it is scored, is the "stick of mercy" and the holder can lessen any of the Sultan’s penalties. As the game continues, the different symbols of command, execution and mercy change hands according to the tab scorings and thus give ample change for retaliation, conspiracy and altercation.

The third game in which scoring is by "tab" is called "Burial" (Dafn). It is a simple game for which the participants sit in a circle. Whoever first scores three ones—sometimes the rule is consecutively, at other times cumulatively—buries the tab sticks in the ground. The player who preceded the winner must then attempt to get the sticks out by using his chin to remove the soil and his teeth to extract the sticks. This takes place amidst the jeers and words of humiliation from the whole of the group.

Another type of Seega is played without "tab" scoring, where a square of five rows of five holes (Khimasiyah), or seven rows of seven holes (Sibaiyah) is made on the ground. Each player, in the case of Khimasiyah has twelve "dogs," each dozen of different material—crockery bits, stone or dried pellets of camel-dung. The players agree on who shall "throw" first. The first player puts two of his pieces in any two of the holes except the centre hole into which no piece may be put at this stage. The other player follows by putting two of his pieces where he will. In this way both players place their pieces in all the twenty-four holes, and the centre hole is left for the first move, which is played by the last person who placed his pieces. He moves any one of his pieces adjacent to the centre hold, into the centre hole, and his opponent follows by moving any of his pieces adjacent to the vacated hole, into it. The aim is to get pieces in holes immediately adjacent either side of the opponent’s piece, whereupon the surrounded piece is "eaten" and thrown out of play. The winner is the one who is left with three pieces to the opponent’s one. (Ammar 1954:149-150)

13. First change (Awal Hawal).

There are teams playing with a ball, called "Jal-loud," usually improvised with pieces of old cloth, though sometimes of rubber, and a striking post, which is a piece of stone set up on the
ground. One team "fields" whilst the other team have their "innings," one at a time. The boy who is "in" stands with his back to the fielders and faces the striking post. He throws up the ball and on its descent hits it back behind him. This first hit is called "Awal" (one). If any of the fielders catch it, the player is out. Otherwise, whoever retrieves it is allowed to aim at the striking post, from where he found the ball. If he strikes the post, the player is out, and another member of his team takes over. If the fielder fails to hit the post, then the player strikes the ball again, saying "Tani" (second), and so on, if he can, to the third striking called "Abu" (father). If he succeeds in not being caught out, or the retriever has not hit the post, then he turns his face to the fielders and strikes the ball towards them with his hand. If he succeeds three times in this way in remaining "in," he kicks the ball towards the fielders—he is allowed three kicks in all, provided he remains "in." There are nine possible strikings of the ball by the players who are in to score "a donkey," or another three added if they want to have "a donkey ride" on their opponents. In the case of the latter, the two captains do not take part in "the donkey riding" and play by themselves. The "ride" of the winning team lasts for as long as their captain is not "out." Directly the captain is "out" the two teams change places. One of the most important rules in this game is the strict observance of the order of striking the ball, and to make a mistake in calling out the sequence is to be declared "out" by the other team saying "You are jumped over" (Hub alaik). (Ammar 1954:151)

14. Shattat Battat (no meaning just rhyming words).

It is played with two sticks, one a yard, the other six inches, in length. The teams pair up, one having innings, the other fielding. A hole is dug in the ground and the smaller stick is laid across the hole. The first player strikes this smaller stick into the air by lifting it smartly with the longer stick. If the stick is not caught, whereupon the player is out, the fielder aims it at the hole where it must either hit the stick or fall into the hole, and the player is then out. Assuming that there is no catch or successful aim, the player then proceeds to build a small heap of earth on which he places the little stick sloping with the upper end free. He
then strikes this upper end down, the stick flies up and he strikes it again as hard as possible. It is now a question of catching, otherwise wherever the stick falls, another heap is made and the little stick is struck again for as many as twelve times in all. If no catch has been made, the losing team must carry the winners, with the exception of the leaders who walk back to the base. (Ammar 1954:151-152)

15. Hopping game.

[It] is played by three boys at least. Two boys sit facing each other, their legs extended so that their feet touch each other, their legs forming a diamond shape. The third boy holds his right leg behind with his hand as in the "Shad" game. Then follows a series of hopping feats of ever-increasing difficulty, where the two boys make him hop over them higher and wider at every turn. In hopping he must not touch any part of them with his foot or leg. The penalty is that he lies prone between their legs and is squeezed. From this the game has derived its name "To be squeezed" (Kammatat). To release himself the victim must confess "he is a woman" or say that "he is in God's shelter" (a woman's phrase). (Ammar 1954:152)
i. Continuing Boys Games

1. Tighten yourself *(Shad)*

This is a hopping game which used to be played primarily by the adolescent Silwians. Today the game is played by both young and older children, and H. Ammar’s description of it in 1954 remains to be as dynamic.

It requires a large open space, and consists of two teams made up by pairing with the usual procedure. The boys usually strip to the waist, keeping only their pants with turban strips tied around the waist. The two teams face each other in a row, each boy holding his right foot up behind him with his left hand. In their initial struggle the team that is "in," "hides" a member, who plays the "bride," and he does not begin to play until later. The teams advance on each other, hopping along, the aim being to jostle, push, shove, pull, using only the flexed knee and the free hand, although charging is included. In this free fight the object is to knock over the opponent, who is "out" if he lets his foot slip from his hand or falls on the ground. If the "bride’s" team is left with one or more against an empty field, then the "bride is safe," and the game is won. If a few of the opposing team, or even one, survive, having vanquished all the "bride’s" team, the "bride" then has to face those opponents, her job being to hop off to a goal without actually being engaged in any fight with the opposing hoppers. is dodging, speed, and nimbleness are required from the "bride," it is usually the fastest player who is selected as "bride." If the "bride" reaches "home" safely—that side has won; if she is unsuccessful, the other side changes place, and chooses its own "bride" to resume the game. (p. 152)
2. The hidden heaps (*Kwaimat Ad-Das*).

Was a crowd hide and seek like game that Silwian children played on a moon-lit day in 1951. Presently the Silwian children play this game during summer just before sunset.

Again Ammar’s description of the game depicts it vividly as

Two senior boys are chosen as leaders and the other boys pair up. The pairs decide on names beyond the leaders’ hearing: one is wheat, the other barley, one is horse, the other donkey, and so on. They return to the leaders who alternately are given two such agreed names to choose from, and thus the two teams are formed. The leaders and their teams then set off in opposite directions, each team agreeing on the limits of an area to be covered. The aim is to make little heaps of said or earth in out-of-the-way places, so unobtrusive that some effort must be made to discover them. The first team to return begins to make a noise, shouting, howling or calling, so that the other team shall return. Then both teams set off into the other’s territory, to destroy as many of the heaps as they can find. On their way they sing:

*Sharrag, Gharrab, Ya Liamun,*
*In the east in the west, there are lemons*
*Bahhar, Qhabbal, Ya Liamun.*
*In the north, in the south, there are lemons.*

Then at last both teams meet again and there is a check by each leader of the other team’s work. This necessitates visits afterwards to both areas by both teams, and the heaps still left undestroyed on both sides are totaled up, the winning team having a balance of undestroyed heaps in their favor. (1954:148)

3. Dice games (*Seega*)

Of the four seega variations mentioned by Ammar (1954) only one the ludo kind is played by children in Silwa presently, using a piece of paper and a pencil instead of the palm-tree branch tab and small pebbles with different shapes for each player’s pieces. The *Seega* today
is played by making little holes in the ground in four rows of between usually six to ten holes in a row. These holes are called "eyes" (Oyun). In each eye of the two outermost rows is placed a piece of stone (called dog), say sandstone for one row, and bits of pottery in the other, to distinguish the dogs of each player. One person or more can play on each side. The scoring is with the tab as already outlined. The main object is to "eat" the opponent's dog according to the moves of the tab. The dogs can be moved only after scoring a one, they then become "Moslems" after being "Christians", and therupon are called "brothers" instead of dogs. They move along the inner row on the side nearest their home (dar) and then along the inner row on the opposite side, till it secures a place in the opponent's home. The whole crux of the game depends on a piece or pieces in a hole being moved along to a hole occupied by the opponent's piece or pieces; all these later are thus "eater" and are removed from the game. Thus the one who manages to 'eat up' all his opponent's pieces first is the winner. (Ammar 1956:149)

4. Wrestling (Sira)

Is yet another game that Silwian children continue to play. Ammar (1954) describes it as

The boys embrace each other, one arm passing round the shoulder; thus, both have an equal hold. The aim is to throw the opponent on his back. Aims in the holding position are only to be used to exert pressure, and legs can be used to trip the opponent to fall on his back. The winner declares his victory by announcing that "he has brought so-and-so's back to the ground. (p. 153)

ii. Present variations of old boy's games:

5. Hide and seek (Ghimamieh)

In 1951 Silwa there were two variations of hide and seek. One where the group searched for the hiding individual, while the other called "policemen and thieves." The members of the police team searched for the thieves
team. Today the hide and seek variations are more individualistic in terms of searchers.

i. **Ddsasia** where the group of children **Yndasu** (hide) and one child looks for them.

ii. **Hijarria** where the hiding children can avoid being caught by standing on a stone. (See Appendix 18, game no. 9)

6. Bring the bucket (**Jardal Hatou**)

This game used to be called drag him bring him along in 1951. Two groups consisting of equal numbers of boys are separated by a heap of sand. In their respective groups each boy holds onto the next boy’s shirt or **Gallabiyya** (dress) to make a train like line. The groups then exchange a dialogue that essentially rhymes and has offensive allusions.

One group initiates the dialogue: **salmat** (greetings).

The other group replies: **Adouak Mat**, (your enemy died).

The first group affirms: **La Gahwa wa la sherbat** (no coffee, no sweet drinks).

Then the groups join hands through the boys in front of each line and start pulling and pushing each other until one of the group crosses over the sand heap that separates them. Once a group has crossed the heap, the other group members run after them to beat them. Directly after each member in the losing team has received a beating, the teams line up to resume the game. The punishment for the losing team in this
game used to be more focused on one member and severe punishment. (See Appendix 18, game 8).

7. The pieces (Al-Shagifeh)

This is mainly a "fields" "innings" game. A variation of this game was played in 1951, where the ultimate aim was to obtain from the opponents (the fielders) a "donkey ride" on their backs.

Today the striking post is made out of cement pieces retrieved from broken water pipes in the fields. Seven pieces make the striking post. The innings team consist of three children. The fielders, on the other hand, consist of one boy standing behind the post facing the other team. The inner's aim is to strike the post and reorganize it as many times as they can. The aim of the fielder is to prevent the inners from doing so by hitting each boy once with the ball. Upon an "in" strike, the innings team attempts to catch the ball being thrown at them and in turn throw it as far away as possible from the site of the post. This way it takes the fielder who needs to retrieve the ball to "kill" his opponents time enough to allow the inners to rebuild the post. If the inners succeed in rebuilding the post the game continues, while if they don't the striker takes the place of the fielder in protecting the post.

iii. New Boy's Games

8. Tripping (Farkush)

Children sit in a circle surrounding a leader. The leader "king" orders the respective children in the group by
name to stand up and freeze in a certain position such as on one leg or knees. The child that stays in his position, after all others have fallen out, becomes the next leader in the ring.

9. Date Seed (Nawaiha)

Children (both girls and boys) make geometric designs out of palm tree leaves. They then round the village to sell them only in exchange for a date seed. After the children have sold all their "goods," they gather in the Saturday marketing lot to count and compare the seeds they have collected.

10. The Fisherman (Siyad Al-Samak)

A large group of children assign two leaders. The two leaders play with two balls, called Jallud made today of old stockings. The aim here is for the leaders to strike each boy in the group once to get them out of the game. The boys in the group who remain after ten stikes by each of the leaders, obtain a Bidda (a white) privilege to choose one of the boys already out of the game to re-enter.

11. Bicycle (Baskalita)

This is a game played predominately with younger children, but also during summer by the early adolescent group. Two boys laying down on the ground superimpose their feet together to move their legs in a cyclical rhythm.

12. Crow Gakgk (Ghoriab Gakgk)

This guessing game requires at least three players. Two of the boys agree between each other to represent an
object or an animal such as ship and plane or dog and goat. The third boy then is approached by the others saying: "Crow or gakqk," he in turn responds: "No, gakgk." The boy is then given the choice between one of the representations: Do you take the ship or the plane?" Upon choosing, the boy whose representation was picked exchanges places to become the guesser.

13. The Floating Ring (Twagiah)

This is primarily a water game, played by boys swimming in the Nile. The boy swimming with the ring is followed by the other boys until someone catches him by his head and takes the ring. The game then resumes.

14. Ball Games (Kurah)

Presently in Silwa ball games are played by boys very frequently. Soccer is the most commonly played ball game by all age groups in Silwa. However, in the youth club one observes boys playing volley ball, hand ball and table tennis. Ball games are a recent innovation to Silwa. Before the early 60's children only played with the Jalud ball and their soccer teams improvised on the game.

i. Continuing Girl's Games

15. Weights (Tugul)

This is a skill and coordination game that girls continue to play in Silwa today. H. Ammar describes the games as
A typical game for girls is called "Tugul" (weights), which is similar to "five stones" played in Europe, except that in this case "marbles" are used instead of cubes. The preparation of these little balls entails a good deal of work in shaping and smoothing pieces of sandstone, and sometimes pottery, to about half an inch in diameter. The game is usually an individual game played normally by two girls. The first play is to grasp the first "marbles" (ten in the case of older girls) in the hand and throw them up in such a way as to intercept their fall on the ground with the back of the hand—the purpose being to scatter the marbles haphazardly. The second play is to throw up one marble, and grasp a second, catching the first as it falls. The caught "marble" is then put aside and the remaining marbles are to be grasped in the same way during the throwing up of the first marble. The third stage is exactly the same except that two marbles must be picked up at each throw; the fourth stage entails grasping three and then one, at each throw. The final stage is to place the marbles on the back of the hand, to throw them up and grasp them all, while they fall. If at any stage the marble is not grasped, or the thrown one is not caught, or, if in the final stage all the marbles are not caught, the girl loses her turn to the other. When picking a marble, no other marble must be touched. (1954:153)

16. The mimicking of adult situations, as mentioned earlier are still a favorable game played by the Silwian girl today. Marriage, cooking and social visits are all imitated. One also often sees younger girls imitating their grandmothers way of outdoor dress by wrapping a piece of cloth all around them and mimicking their words Ani Rayhe (I am leaving).

ii. New variations on old girls's play situations

17. Girls today play with plastic dolls and ready made clothing instead of making them out of straw and palm tree leaves. Older girls knit wool, do needle work or make Walils (the covering plate) from cotton thread and cardboard.
iii. New play situations for girls

Silwian girls today play ball games, especially at school. They namely play ball catching games and an improvised form of racket ball. They, however, do not play soccer since it is considered a "man’s game" Libat Ragil.

18. The Box (Al-Sandog)

This is the common known game of hopscotch. A group of girls play the game by drawing six boxes vertically. The game starts by throwing the stone on the first box and pushing it while hopping on one leg to the sixth box. If the girl does not trip or the stone hits one of the 19 demarcation box lines, she continues to play. At the end of the game (when she has thrown the stone in all six boxes) she chooses one of the boxes as her "home" and orders the other girls in the group to skip it while playing. This home designation makes the game harder to play.
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