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(Small towns in pastoral areas)

Abstract:

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**Changing Circumstances, Flexibility and Adjustments: The case of the Hawawir in Northern Sudan**

This paper explores the emergence of small towns or settlements in pastoral areas and how both new forms of social, economic and spatial organization as well as changing cultural perceptions influence production systems and significant social relationships in pastoral ‘communities’. It also focuses relations between mobile- and more recently settled pastoralists and their varying perceptions of mobile and settled ways of life. In order to address the overall theme questions asked concern social, cultural and economic interdependence between settled communities and pastoral production systems. What are the initial sources of economic activity in settlement areas? What kinds of livelihood options are evolving due to settlement and in the interface between settled and mobile adaptations? How are gender relations shaped by changing livelihood systems? Does emerging links between ‘towns’ and pastoral production systems affect household structures and if so, in what ways? To what extent is reorganization of space interlinked with changing perceptions of significant relationships and social practices? The discussion is based on material collected during social anthropological fieldwork conducted among the Hawawir in Wadi al Mugaddam, Northern Sudan (1997-2008) where a settlement programme was initiated in the early 1990s in an area called UmJawasir. In the wake of the programme the construction of a new tarmac road from Omdurman towards Dongola took place and a town called al Sherian was established not far from the Hawawir area. While the settlement or ‘village’ within the Hawawir homearea is inhabited by Hawawir belonging to different clans as well as both those returning to the homearea from towns along the Nile and those who move ‘out’ of the desert, the inhabitants of the town al Sherian is more diverse.

