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Pastoral Women in Town: The Case of the Migrant Fulbe in Sinja, Sudan

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The world has witnessed rapid urbanization and an increased number of women migrating in a phenomenon known as the feminization of migration (Villarrel et al 2008; Oishi 2002). Urban areas are becoming extremely overcrowded and overburdened, putting pressure on insufficient infrastructures, schools, health facilities, sanitation and water systems (Touray 2006). More rural young men and women in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) migrate to cities to escape poverty. Being unprepared for the risks that await them in ill-equipped cities, many of these vulnerable youth turn to violent acts of theft, robbery, and trafficking when basic needs cannot be met (IRIN 2007). Women are at the heart of this maelstrom of movement, but there is concern that as the number of women migrating increases, incidences of abuse and exploitation also increase (Van Dijk et al 2001; Assal 2011). Life in the city has resulted in marginalization and social exclusion (Min-Harris 2009), especially because the urban centers are overtaxed and underprepared for the new migration patterns. Many rural migrants are no better off in the city and they have become human rights victims with no parental protection or legal rights (Min-Harris 2009). Women in particular face barriers to the labor market and significant vulnerabilities and health risks because of their gender, immigration status, employment context, and living conditions (Hennebry et al 2016). This paper examines this problem in the context of Sudan, examining pastoral women's migration to Sinja town.

Pastoral women are responsible for providing food for their households and thus play a vital role in livestock production (Oumer 2007). They also play a role in natural resource management and importantly in managing forests and forest products. However, this is often overlooked by development planners and officials, and pastoral women remain marginalized in processes of production, commercialization and sedentarization. This gender gap hinders women participation along the entire livestock value chain. As pastoralists, they are marginalized socially, economically and politically, and as women they suffer inequality in accessing resources, social services and participation in decision making (Kipuri and Ridgewell 2008). They have been negatively affected by drought conflict and sedentarization leading to limited access to services, land and livestock products, increased domestic work and income generating activities as result of increased subsistent responsibilities to end with increased vulnerability (CARE 2014).

War and tribal conflicts led to mass migration from rural to urban areas in Sudan as people searched for peace and security, this forced large areas out of production (Ahmed 2001). The number of female-headed households who migrate to urban cities looking for jobs to improve their income has increased (Assal 2011). In the Funj region, a homeland for many pastoral groups, the war disturbed

animals and human mobility and hindered any prospects for sustainable agricultural production. It has resulted in human and livestock losses, property destruction, famine and destitution. Moreover, it forced many of the pastoralists to settle and to diversify their economic activities and adapt livelihood strategies from animal husbandry, farming, petty trade and wage labor (Ahmed 2001, 2009). Wage labor is the most likely available option for the vast majority of the destitute nomads. However, the majority of the pastoral Fulbe are still rich in cattle when compared to other groups such as the Rufa'a al Hoi, a considerable number of them have involved in agricultural wage labor or work as hired herders. Among the Fulbe, the phenomenon of wage labor is widespread among women, and the forms of work they engage in is highly gendered (Osman 2013: 83). Men in Fulbe households tend to own a reasonable number of cattle and are not inclined to undertake wage labor, which explains the strong presence of women in the wage labor market. Women are concerned with providing food for households and they are most affected by poverty and the shortage of food during the dry season and are consequently forced to migrate to feed themselves and their children. Thus, for the pastoral Fulbe household, the decision to partake in wage labor is a choice between more sales of cattle or more freedom and autonomy for women. The first choice implies enormous sacrifice and greater insecurity, while the other implies deviance from the Fulbe's moral code for good behavior. The more conservative households tend to opt for the first choice. While the practice of female labor migration has, to some extent, become a familiar phenomenon, some Fulbe, such as the Mbororo proper, strongly oppose the practice and see it as a form of prostitution (Ibidem).

1.2 Research Problem

For more than a decade, many Woyla-Fulbe women of different ages and marital status, including adult, young and old women, have been seen working in Sinja town during the dry season which usually lasts from November to July. The majority of them work with tea and food sellers while others fetch water, powder okra and spices and other similar tasks. Few, if any, work as domestic helpers. The number of migrant women has increased daily and they have turned to prolong their stay in the town. While the majority of migrant women return home during the wet season, a few of them do not. In the evening, they return to their dwellings from the market place in small groups.

It is remarkable that this phenomenon is limited to Woyla Fulbe and not any other subsection of the Fulbe, and that Sinja is the final destination of these migrant women – not other towns such as Dinder, Hawwata or Abu Hujar. We can therefore ask what attracts these women to seek work in Sinja town in particular; and what is peculiar about Woyla that gave rise to this phenomenon? To answer these questions one needs to know something about the urban context of Sinja town and to dig into the socio-cultural set up of the Woyla-Fulbe community.

In April 2018, the elite of the Fulbe in the Blue Nile area,¹ including the Sultan of Mai Wurno, Ali Muhammad Taahir, launched a campaign to repatriate all migrant Fulbe women from the towns all over the Sudan. The rationale was that these women belong to well-off families and hence they have no good reason to migrate for work in towns. The Sultan regarded the migration as a sort of anarchy, a polite term for prostitution or at least a sort of deviance from the Fulbe moral code of behavior. Almost all migrant Fulbe women in Sinja town were repatriated and their repatriation led to shortage of labor in the tasks they previously performed. Meanwhile, however, people were looking for a replacement, they started to return and some of them changed their traditional dresses so as not to be recognized by the repatriates. As a further step, the Sultan, based on his native authority, formed a society to advice and/or preach migrant women and he is planning to subject these returning women to punishment.

The phenomenon of migrant women has invited my attention since 2006 when I was conducting a field work among the pastoral Fulbe in the Funj region. I collected data suggesting that the phenomenon could be attributed to the changing pastoral strategies adapted by the group, mainly the separation of herds from households which was a new strategy adopted in response to the declining security. This separation means that the young men take cattle to distant dry season grazing areas, leaving households behind in the camps with little or no milk losing a significant source of income and food. To bridge the resultant nutrition gap, women are forced to look for other sources of food and income.

However migrant labor by Fulbe women can be attributed to poverty and loss of cattle related to war and the decline of security in the Funj region. Because stratification among pastoral groups has become an established fact and the emergence of individualistic calculations have found their way to the daily life of the pastoral Fulbe, I assume that each migrant woman will have a different story to tell about the causes behind her migration for work and different experience to disclose about her life in town and the repatriation campaign.

However resorting to begging is not part of the livelihoods strategies of the migrant Fulbe women, I once came across one of them seeking help from a gathering of people performing prayers in the vegetables sector in the central market as she was ill and was in need of money to return to her nomadic group. Women facing such difficulties are vulnerable and might have been subjected to different sort of exploitation and abuses including sexual enslavement. Little is known about the conditions under which these vulnerable group of women in the town regarding accommodation, food, health and security. Here one needs to investigate on the factors pushing them to the town as

¹ Sinnar and the Blue Nile states

well as what attract them to Sinja town in particular and what kind of urban context Sinja provides to them.

1.3 Research questions

This study answers to the following questions:

- 1- Why do pastoral Fulbe women choose to migrate to Sinja?
- 2- What work are they involved in in the town? What is their income, and how do they spend it?
- 3- What are their living conditions?
- 4- What cultural changes do they experience as result of living in town?

1.4 Methods of data collection

I first contacted the migrant Fulbe women in Sinja town in 2006. Since then, I have grown to develop personal relationships with some of them and have even had contact with their families. Others, I know just by name and sight. The main study for this research started in December 2018 and continued intermittently until April 2019. The first trip lasted for one week and I was assisted by colleagues in the University of Sinnar, Fatima Ali and Fatima Sileemaan, for five and two days respectively. In the first trip, I interviewed the sheikh (mayor) of Sinja town about the history of the town and spoke to people who had direct contact with the migrant women such as their mistresses in work, their hosts, shopkeepers etc. Before entering into direct contact and conducting interviews with the migrant women, I wanted to understand the background context. The second trip took place in the first two weeks of January 2019, during which I focused on interviewing the migrant women. In this period, I also consulted the records of the Ministries of Health and Education in Sinnar state. The third trip, at the end of March 2019, was divided between Sinja, Damazin and the nomadic camps south of Damazin in which I interviewed native leaders and migrant women. The most difficult aspect of this fieldwork trip was the observation of the migrant women partaking in their everyday lives in and around Sinja.

I collected the primary data through participant observation, direct interviews and informal discussions. Observation was concentrated in the central market and the popular market in Sinja and Suuq Ambararo in Damazin and in the nomadic camps in 'Azaza, Juwwaani, Abu N'aama and Maganza in the area South of Damazin. I faced challenges related to accessing migrant women and their native leaders as it was difficult to interview a migrant woman in her workplace or dwelling, so interviews had to be conducted immediately before the end of the workday at 15:00. Many native leaders also regarded the topic as a taboo subject and refused to be interviewed, even threatening those who agreed to an interview. Another main obstacle related to the political situation in Sudan – during

the field work period, a state of emergency was declared in Sinnar State and a curfew was imposed from 18:00 up to 4:00.

1.5 Organization

This study includes six chapters. Chapter two reviews the existing literature on migration and urbanism, chapter three and four comprise the main body of the study, and investigate the root causes behind women migration and the entry points and the urban context Sijna town provide to migrant women. Chapter five is dedicated to the life history cases of some migrant women, and the study is closed with summary and conclusion in chapter six.



Interviewing a migrant woman; Sinja, December 2018.

2 Review of literature

2.1 Urbanization and migration

Urban areas are becoming extremely overcrowded and overburdened, putting pressure on insufficient infrastructure including schools, health facilities, sanitation and water systems. Youth are an integral component of the migrant population, both in terms of volume and the effects they have on both their points of origin and destination. It is estimated that 15 percent, approximately 26 million people, of the migrant population are youth (Touray 2006). This migration pattern expands the pool of young urban job seekers and reduces the pressure on employers to offer competitive incomes and work standards to their workers. Escalating urbanization has created a new context of poverty in which urban centers are overtaxed and are unprepared to absorb increasing youth unemployment. In absolute numbers, youth unemployment becomes more prevalent in urban areas than rural areas (Min-Harris 2009).

To escape poverty, rural young men and women across sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) migrate to cities. However, these vulnerable youth are unprepared for the risks of city life and many turn to theft, robbery and trafficking to fulfil their basic needs (World Bank 2009). SSA's migrating youth increasingly face the potential threats exacerbated by ill-prepared and rapid urbanization, such as urban poverty, crime, prostitution and exploitation. Consequently, many are no better off in the city than in their rural homes and they have become human rights victims with no parental protection or legal rights (Min-Harris 2009).

Urban life has resulted in marginalization and social exclusion. Young women face particular barriers to the labor market, many of which are attributable to cultural attitudes of men. While they may successfully find work in domestic settings and in small businesses, commonly, many girls are exploited because they are young, easily manipulated, unaware of their rights, and afraid to expose their negligent employers. In the worst situations, they work fifteen hours a day, are beaten, badly fed, poorly paid, and become sex slaves to pay for their basic needs (Min-Harris 2009).

2.2 The feminization of migration

Women migrating rural-urban on their own is increasing in a phenomenon that can be termed the feminization of migration. In 2006, 95 million migrants were women which amounts to approximately half of all international migrants worldwide. In fact, women migrate as much as men and they account for 48.2% of all international migrants (Oishi 2002; Van Dijk et al 2001; WHO 2017, 12). Women are increasingly migrating alone and are no longer restricting themselves to following their husbands or other family members as dependents. However, there is a concern that,

as the number of migrant women increase, incidents of abuse and exploitation also increase (Assal 2011).

In Eritrea and Ethiopia, for instance, women and girls are motivated to migrate for a number of reasons. Often, girls find themselves in precarious situations at home because of a combination of economic pressures. These situations are made worse by the death of one or both parents, separation, abuse from relatives, lacks of educational and employment opportunities, and in some cases religious and political pressure (Grabska 2016). In Ethiopia, which has the highest rate of child marriage, female migration is often connected to escaping early marriage (Erulkar et al 2006).

Women migration was commonly correlated with employment opportunities. However, these opportunities may pay a lower wage, be less valued positions, and be in vulnerable health and predatory situations (Van Dijk et al 2001). Women face significant vulnerabilities to health risks that stem from their gender, their immigration status, their employment and living conditions, and workplace contexts (Hennebry et al 2016). Migrant girls are especially vulnerable without the protection of parents and legal rights (Van Dijk et al 2001). In Mali, for example, young girls face worse conditions as they escape poverty in search of dowry money. Once arriving in the city, most of them are sexually exploited, beaten, and manipulated (IRIN 2007). Likewise, in Khartoum it is difficult for Ethiopian and Eritrean girls and young women, to find a good job and hence they accept harsh working conditions. As domestic workers with Sudanese families, they are subject to very low pay and often face sexual advances and abuse from the male members of the family and harassment and maltreatment from the women. Girls and young women often complained about long working hours, heavy work load, and lack of adequate food and living conditions (Grabska 2016).

Currently, migrant women are experiencing unprecedented levels of xenophobia, racism and sexism against migrants. They can face discrimination, exclusion and abuse, which contribute to widespread suffering and poor health (WHO, 2017, 15).

Researchers have given different perspectives on the effects of women's migration on the family members left behind. Some analysts argue that the widespread migration of women will result in a deleterious "care drain" or "tilt" of caring resources. Other negative effects include a decline in the mental health of family members left behind, especially when the older daughters have to assume heavier burdens of household tasks and parent their siblings in the absence of their mothers, which often leads to them dropping out of school (Parreñas R, 2005, cited in WHO 2017). Other researchers, however, maintain that the impact of women's migration is not so dire and can even result in the families benefiting from remittances, which can be observed through indicators for education, health care, housing and economic stability. Female labor migration has become one of the most dependable sources of income for poor women and their families and migrant women have become

economic mainstay of their dependents. Moreover, migration results in shifting gender roles and earning strategies and affords critical resources for well-being. It thus becomes part of the African livelihood and might provide young women with employment opportunities (Erulkar et al; 2006 Van Dijk et al 2001; Aymar 1997,2005).

Migrant women often exhibit agency, autonomy and resilience either through individual empowerment or by participating in formal organizations or informal networks developed through their work. They report a sense of increased autonomy in decision-making and freedom of movement related to when and where they migrate or re-migrate, or through economic autonomy and the ability to provide assistance at home through remittances and savings. Migrant women's organizations not only generate political power, but also contribute to their ability to find social and moral support, friendships, education, employment advice/assistance, housing and leadership development by creating informal networks of support and care, such as cultural and ethnic-based groups (Chun 2016; Chun and Cranford 2016; Cranford 2013; Commission on Filipinos Overseas 2017, all cited in WHO 2017). These findings are supported by Acharya et al. 2010 and Aymer 1997.

2.3 Pastoral women, gender and Migration

Pastoral women play a vital role in livestock production (Oumer 2007). In Sub-Saharan Africa, women undertake 60% of all marketing, and at least half of all tasks related to food storage and raising livestock. In the East and Horn of Africa, women shoulder increasingly heavy burdens to provide for their families. They both fulfil 'female' roles in the household, and make money from tasks traditionally deemed to be 'women's work' including collecting firewood, and making and selling handicrafts (CARE 2014). Through their use of firewood, wild fruit, fodder and water, pastoral women play a significant role in daily natural resource management. They also play an important role in managing the forest and its products, including non-timber forest products (NTFPs) (Oumer 2007; CARE 2014). However, this role is overlooked by development planners and government officials in many cases and women have been called the 'hidden hands' of pastoral production (CARE 2014). Policy makers' failure to recognize the roles that pastoral women play is a factor behind the shortcomings of many livestock development projects (Oumer 2007).

Women in pastoral societies have been marginalized in the process of production, commercialization and sedentarization and a significant gender gap in livestock ownership, production and commercialization exists. This gap is maintained by constraints such as culture and women's weak property and contractual rights to land, water and livestock (CARE 2014). Women face multiple constraints in accessing, managing and controlling livestock assets and production. Gender inequality continuously hinders women's participation along the entire livestock value chain. Women generally work at the lower levels of the livestock value chains and undertake work such as looking after smaller, young, and sick stock; milking and milk processing; and milk marketing at the household level. They

often manage sheep and goats and are also responsible for the home herd of cattle and camels when the men migrate with the other herd (Mupawaenda et al. 2009; Njuki and Sanginga 2013; Jeckoniah et al. 2013). This division of labor largely reflects social and cultural norms which do not encourage women to interact with men, travel by themselves, or own land or key productive assets (CARE 2014). The limited participation of rural women in livestock value chain activities also results from a fundamental misunderstanding of gender relationships and from the socio-economic and cultural roles of livestock at the household and community levels as the main source of income and prestige (Laven et al. 2009; Coles and Mitchell 2011).

The lack of asset ownership is a huge challenge faced by pastoral women. Social and cultural norms dictate that women do not own livestock and all ownership rights are held by the man (CARE 2014). For most pastoral women, access to livestock is by virtue of their relationships to men, their husbands, fathers and sons (Brockington 2001). These factors severely curtail women's access to resources and services, including credit, training, extension, inputs, and trading and marketing networks (CARE 2014).

Pastoral women are also marginalized by institutions and policies both within their own communities and in wider governance. They remain caught in what Kipuri and Ridgewell term a 'double bind': "as pastoralists, they are victims of social, economic and political marginalization, and as women they suffer inequality in accessing resources, social services and participation in decision-making" (Kipuri and Ridgewell 2008). During the commercialization process, income generating activities are often taken over by the husband when they develop from focusing on family sustenance to a larger scale business. This may even apply to the marketing of livestock products over which women have customary control, such as milk (Watson 2010). Increasing market opportunities for livestock products therefore has the potential to increase pastoral women's economic status, but does not necessarily mean that they will be able to take advantage of these opportunities (Sadler et al. 2009).

Over the last century, pastoralists have been marginalized and forced to relinquish any formal decision-making control. Women pastoralists are marginalized further because of their limited decision-making role and the scarce attention they receive within the development framework (CARE 2014). Pastoralist women today are more vulnerable than they were in the past and are unable to directly voice their concerns to those who make decisions over their lives. Their health and social status and their ability to participate in community life is adversely affected. Limited access to health care and education, high mortality rates, low life expectancies, and lack of knowledge about family planning and reproductive health all indicate that pastoralist women continue to be disproportionately excluded from public services, which are already extremely limited (Ibid).

Key shocks and trends, such as drought, sedentarization, and conflict, impact pastoral men and women differently and can change gender roles and relations. In response to drought, male migration and/or separation of herds from household increases, in turn this reduces women's access to livestock products and may force them to depend on firewood collection and other income generating activities. Moreover, wage labor migration by men increases women's labor and adds the extra burden of managing the stock, increasing their workloads as water, grazing and fuelwood become more difficult to find. Migration and separation can also mean that women are more vulnerable to attack, especially in situations of conflict (Watson 2010).

The increasing sedentarization can have a positive or negative impact on pastoral women. On one hand, it provides women in urban and peri-urban settings more opportunities for income generation, theoretically enhancing human capital through increased access to healthcare and education. It is hoped that women may be able to make more use of these economic and service opportunities whilst retaining social status as a married woman. However, because of the cultural and social limitations placed on women, few women actually succeed in establishing businesses and the private sector remains male dominated. Moreover, female-headed households in these settings may also suffer from a loss of social status through a reduction in the influence they would wield as pastoral wives (Ibid).

Civil war and tribal conflict and communal raiding have resulted in human and livestock losses, property destruction, famine, destitution and have disturbed human and animal mobility and hindered any prospects for sustainable agricultural production (Muhereza and Otim 2002; Ahmed 2001). In Sudan, war has forced large areas out of production, which has led to mass migration from rural to urban areas and to pastoralists sedentarizing. Post war communities encompass considerable portions of female headed households (widows, divorced, deserted etc.) who are forced to find wage labor in the mechanized farming or to migrate to urban centers looking for work opportunities (Osman forth coming).

Limited access to services (education, training, extension, and credit), and increased domestic and income generating burdens on women and girls have been crucial effects of drought and climate change, increasing sedentarization and conflict. Other effects include, a restricted access to land and pasture which limited the entire communities' participation in the value chain and has a particularly negative impact on women, in turn this breaks the bonds among women and significantly affects their collective action groups such as self-help/savings groups (CARE 2014)

3 The root causes behind pastoral Fulbe migration to Sinja Town

3.1 Background

Migration is not systematically mainstreamed into development plans in Sudan. However the integration of these components is widely considered an important step to ensure that the development dimension of migration is fully included in the national planning process (IOM 2011, 18).

The pastoral Fulbe, also known as Mbororo, are among the recent Fulbe who entered Sudan during 1920s- 1930s. They continued moving eastward with their cattle and eventually came under the authority of Sultan Mai Wurno, but were not welcomed by the local authority or host community (Feyissa and Schlee 2009; Gadrimaari 1975). They adopted a highly mobile form of pastoralism and previously lived within their own communities. More recently, in response to socio-economic and environmental changes, they have integrated into wider society and the market economy. Many of these former pastoralists have now taken up a sedentary life and integrated into towns. They have also adopted cultural practices from their new communities, which is evident through their diet, dress, song, education, religion, hospitality practices and use of modern utensils and new foods (Osman 2013, 94 and 95). One significant change is the emergence of new patterns of division of labor and a new family budget, signifying shifting gender roles (ibid 78,79).

The presence of women vendors in the market place is an old phenomenon in Sudan. After the wars of the Mahdia in the late 1800s, in which many women lost their husbands, an area was specified for women vendors in the Omdurman market. By the 1980s, the number of women vendors had increased dramatically due to years of drought and war which pushed pastoralists to selling in the markets and the implementation of sharia laws that banned the sale of alcohol and prostitution. Over time, women's market activities have diversified. In the early 1970s, few older pastoral Fulbe women worked with crop sellers and young women sold dairy products from door to door. In the 1990s to 2000s, more women began to move to Sinja central market in the dry season and have prolonged their stays in the town.

3.2 The root causes behind female migration

The root causes of migration can be split into two sets of factors: internal and external. Internal factors are related to Fulbe's culture and particularly represented by customs and arrangements related to marriage and family life. While external factors refer to the interrelated mechanisms the pastoral Fulbe have adopted to cope with the transformations they have undergone in the Funj region. These

mechanisms include sedentarization, the separation between herds and households, and the changing gender roles.

3.2.1 Customs of marriage

The Fulbe claim to have a unique culture built around a central moral code of behavior known as *pulaaku*. The Woyla Fulbe have unique customs of marriage that involve long and complicated procedures. In general, marriage among Woyla is prearranged, polygamous and endogamous with marriage to a man's paternal female cousin favored. It is common for a man to marry two, three and more women and there are very few single women. Consequently, it is easy for a widow or a divorced to remarry and the existence of co-wives and half-brothers and half-sisters is very common. This implies larger households and a high rate of dependency. These larger households are more inclined to face poverty and food shortages, especially during the dry season when the young men take the herds of animals to the distant grazing areas.

Marriage traditionally arranged by the elders without consulting the couples, and sometimes against their will, is common among the pastoral Fulbe. Parents can also select a future wife for their son while the couple are still babies. An accepted proposal is a moral obligation that no one else can make another proposal, unless the groom's parents change their mind and "raise their hands from her."

According to the Fulbe, a virgin woman (Fulfulde: *karwodo*) has no say in her marriage and therefore many women are married to men they dislike and vice versa. For these women, travelling to the town to work can be a means to escape a miserable family life. Some women have also started to demand divorce.

A respected traditional custom of the Woyla Fulbe is that of *Wofaake* where a newly married woman returns to her mother for three years once she becomes pregnant to give birth and care for her new baby. In so doing, she is called *boofiidu*. The *boofiidu* refrains from all contact with men, including her husband, wears black and refrains from any beautification. Failure to observe these conditions is highly stigmatized. *Wofaake* avails a *boofiidu* with autonomy and independence from her husband and her in laws' group and allows her a freedom of movement that she can make use to migrate for wage labor in the town to buy things for her future life as an adult.

In Fulbe customs, there are two baby naming ceremonies. Firstly, an ordinary naming occasion seven days after child birth and secondly, an expensive feast paid for by the husband one year to eighteenth months after birth, called *humturu*. The *humturu* feast contains huge quantities of consumer goods, such as tea, okra, sugar and spices, and one or two bulls and a sheep are slaughtered. After this feast, the mother returns to her husband's group carrying some household items that qualify her for a small tent. She stays in this small tent until her second pregnancy when she again goes back to her mother

to give birth. She will receive another humturu before returning to her husband and gaining a larger tent.

After the third humturu, a woman may stay with her husband for some years before going to her mother and making and buying household items (‘idda) in a practice called *gaari*. The items include a decorated bed, pots, dishes, clothes and so on and is very expensive. A woman generally needs three to ten years to make ‘idda. Her husband is able to visit during this period, but he is not allowed to financially assist her as that would be insulting to her family. Failure to provide ‘idda is stigmatizing and the woman would not be allowed to return to her family. Once a woman is successful, she returns to her husband who throws a large feast, preferably bigger than the wedding ceremony.

Some religious men and tribal leaders have begun to fight these traditional customs, regarding them as contradictory to Islamic teachings. They have called for reasonable marriage expenses and for women to join their husbands shortly after birth. They also blamed well off fathers for not supporting their daughters to buy household items and the poor ones for not sending them back to their husbands, if they are not able to support them to buy households’ items.

3.2.2 Response to transformations and adoptive mechanisms

The pastoral Fulbe, like other pastoral groups in the Funj region, have adopted many mechanisms to cope with the socio-economic and environmental transformations of recent decades. These mechanisms will be discussed below and include sedentarization, the separation between herds and households, changing roles of gender and new budget arrangement.

3.2.2.1 Sedentarization

Settlement is not new to the pastoral Fulbe in the Funj region, but there has been a recent increase in its rate and change in its nature. Security decline, continuous cattle raids and looting have forced the pastoral Fulbe to settle down.

Hamlets of ‘hunger’ have emerged as temporary settlements during the dry season for impoverished households from different groups, mainly women, children, the elderly and the disabled people. A few weak and milking cows will be kept in the hamlet while the young men and the herds of cattle remain on the move with the main group. The inhabitants of the hamlet suffer from milk shortage and depend on meagre income from wage labor and the sale of medical herbs. However, living in the hamlet also offers children a chance to go to school, elders can be involved in wage labor, encourages change in diet habits and the introduces of new items of food, among other cultural changes (Osman 2013, 87, 79, 94 and 95).

Another form of settlement known as *Nizaam Kooz* has emerged as sections of the household resorted to living permanently on the margins of urban centers to produce milk for the market. This practice involves some household members staying to look after some selected milking cows while the single-men and newly married couples with one to three children move with the rest of the cattle. One or two young men remain in the hamlet to look after the cows and the elderly parents. In the hamlet, in contrary to 'traditional' pastoralism, the traditional role of women of milking the cows and the selling of milk has become the responsibility of men. Apart from this change in gender roles, living in these hamlets has also offered additional sources of income and open avenues for the acquisition of new values, attitudes, and skills (ibid, 95)

The transformations the Funj region has undergone have forced many pastoral Fulbe groups to settle down and to establish new villages. Upon their settlement they entered into dispute over land but at the same time have integrated into the neighboring town communities and have been subjected to cultural changes, such as changes in diets and the introduction of new items of food. Like the inhabitants of the hamlets, they have diversified their economic activities by practicing farming, petty trade and the like. This sedentarization process reached its momentum after the separation of south Sudan as many groups have settled in the area north of Damazin and have started to struggle for the social services and to invest in the future of the new generation (Osman and Abu Manga, forthcoming).

The different forms of settlement the Fulbe have experienced has increased women's subsistent burden as breadwinners in the absence of men and herds. Living in urban and peri-urban settings, they have faced shortages of food, struggled with hunger and malnutrition but simultaneously they have enjoyed more autonomy and decision-making power within the households. They have also acquired values, attitudes and habits that have put them in an atmosphere conducive to wage labor migration.

3.2.2.2 The separation of herds from households

The essence of separation is that household members stay in a fixed place during the dry season while the young men take the herds to the distant dry season grazing areas. Some milking cows will be left in the nomadic camp to provide milk for household consumption, but milk production during the dry season may decline to zero, leading to a nutritive gap. This increases the subsistent responsibility of the women heading the households forcing them to look for sources of income that may include wage labor and migration.

3.2.2.3 Changing roles of gender and household budget

The socio-economic and environmental transformations in the Funj region have prompted the pastoral Fulbe to make some changes to the traditional division of labor between sexes and ages and to introduce a new budget instead of the simple traditional one (Osman 2013, 78, 97). For instance, women are now involved in herding and participate in farm labor when there is a shortage of man power. Meanwhile, boys contribute to women-specific domestic tasks, such as fetching water and firewood and, under certain circumstances, men assist women with milking the cows. This flexibility in division of labor is indicative that each of the sexes has become prepared to do without the other in case of necessity (*ibidem*).

The pastoral Fulbe previously followed a simple traditional budget that women were responsible for providing food with the proceeds from the sale of dairy products while men met other financial needs through the sale of cattle. However, the pastoral Fulbe have recently turned to a new arrangement because they are not able to move as freely as before and this has subjected them to experience drought and other seasonal variation. Women are now responsible for covering the costs of cooking ingredients and grain during the wet season and men are responsible for covering these costs and other consumer goods during the dry season. The logic behind this is that milk is abundant during the wet season and therefore there is more income, while during the dry season there is little income from the sale of milk. To meet the increasing subsistent needs due to the increased level of hospitality, household members are to choose between selling more cattle or to look for additional sources of income. One of the possible sources of income is wage labor in town, to which many women resort during the dry season to feed themselves and their families in the absence of men with the herds of cattle (Osman 2013, 83, 84).

The prevalent polygamous and pre-arranged marriage among the Fulbe often result in discontent and disputant couples and ends in unstable marital life. Moreover, the complicated and costly customs of marriage press men as well as women to gain money and avail women with freedom and autonomy from the patriarchal authority. Likewise, sedentarization, separation between herds and households and the changing gender roles have increased the women's subsistent burden, while also strengthened their decision power and avail community members with new values.

In conclusion, the traditional system of marriage and the related customs, together with the mechanism adopted by the Woyla Fulbe to cope with the transformations, have provided an atmosphere conducive to female wage labor migration and function as root causes behind the phenomenon. Moreover, women's migration to Sinja has become one of the pastoral Fulbe survival strategies and an important experience crucial for character building and developing women personality as women are able to engage with modernity.

4 Entry points and sponsorship

In this chapter, we focus on factors that have attracted these migrant Fulbe women to Sinja town and their entry points to the town. More specifically, we want to see what sort of incubation/sponsorship the urban context of Sinja has provided to these women. Such a discussion may help in answering the question why these women bypass other urban centers such as Damazin, Abu Hujaar, Dinder and Hawwaata.

4.1 Entry points

To enter and to live in the town and to find a work opportunity, a woman needs a social capital and network of support (Grabska 2016). There are many entry points open for the Fulbe women in Sinja town and they can make use of a rich social capital and networks. These are represented by patron-client relations, the deeply rooted sufism and philanthropist attitude of the town's men, the West African factor that links the Fulbe, the Hausa and the Borno, and bonds of relations with the Southern Funj region people. The remarkable presence of women vendors and the emergence of a gender segregated cluster in the market place (Suuq al-A^zabat) is an encouragement to migrate.

4.1.1 Patron-client relations

The pastoral Fulbe in the Funj region, like other pastoral groups, are no longer detached or isolated group of people. As mobile people, they have adapted themselves to the different and changing socio economic and political environments. Through increased market relations and more contact with urban centers, they have created social spaces for themselves and established cross-ethnic ties of friendship, intermarriage and patronage (Osman 2010; 2013, 133-137). Fulbe patrons in Sinja include livestock guarantors, livestock traders and mediators, butchers, crop sellers and mechanized farmers. These patrons bridge the gap between the nomads and the settled, provide necessary information about livestock prices, provide the nomads a place to rest and sleep etc. More importantly, they act as mediators to solve the problems the nomads face in the town.

Livestock guarantors

When a nomad comes to sell an animal in the livestock market in the town, he needs a familiar person to mediate between him and the towns men and to guarantee that the animals he is going to sell are not stolen. This person is known as *dhaamin* (guarantor). The livestock dealers would usually congregate adjacent to the pastoral Fulbe camps and involve in the purchase of cattle from time to time. They hire herders and make fences to contain the cattle. Later, with the advance of the rainy season, they move northwards, together with the pastoral Fulbe, to reach Sinja in September. Before 1950, there were three guarantors in Sinja livestock market representing Kinana, Rufa^a al Hoi and Rufa^a Ash-Sharig and the Funj region tribes. In 1950, Sultan Mai Wurno, as the native and spiritual

leader of the Fulbe, appointed Mirghani al-Khaliifa, a butcher and a livestock trader, as guarantor for the pastoral Fulbe groups in Sinja livestock market. Together with other livestock dealers, he went to places like Bagiis and Kilgo in the last days of the dry season each year to barter the breed of Kinana cattle. Mirghani was cheerful, 'liberal' and humane and developed strong connections with the pastoral Fulbe, hosting them and welcoming them to his home where he assigned huts for them. Fulbe women woke up early to ignite several fires in the yard to make ghee and sell it fresh in the market place while men went to market place to sell their cattle. In the evening, all return to the house to rest, have their meals, entrusting their money to Mirghani and his wife. In the house, all family members devotes much of their time to serve the quests.

Remarkable bonds of friendship developed between Mirghani's family and some of the Fulbe leaders and notables such as sheikh Hassan Kuura of the Woyla and Ahmad Simpeegi of the Uuda. Mirghani had continued to function as guarantor for the pastoral Fulbe up to his death in 1971 and on his deathbed advised his family members to continue opening his house for guests and to incubate the pastoral Fulbe (Mbororo). The relationship between Mirghani's family and the pastoral Fulbe, which has transcended the economic to the social and the personal, has continued after his death. For decades, all members of the family have hosted the pastoral Fulbe and involved in mediation to solve the problems they face in the town and provide help to the needy and sick. Mirghani's daughter, Najwa, expressed in an interview conducted for this research in December 2018 that she admires the pastoral Fulbe and their peculiar culture and sees them as kind and simple people. She is acquainted with their language and wears their style of beads ornaments. She has assigned a place in her house to host the migrant Fulbe women. She narrated that when she was a child she used to accompany her father to receive the pastoral Fulbe herders coming from the south in Om Bineen and how it was pleasant for her to ride a loading bull from there to Sinja.

4.1.2 The sufi culture and philanthropism

The philanthropist attitude and the sufi culture of offering food and help to the needy is deeply rooted in Sinja community. There is an established habit among many merchants, traders and shop keepers to bring food in the market place so that porters, the needy and passers-by share meals. There was a man called Gismalla who, for decades, collected little shares from the people in the market place to make a big sacrifice of boiled cereals to be distributed to the poor, passers-by and street kids. Another aspect of philanthropy is that many of the people living in the neighborhoods of the market place have opened their houses to passers- by, market venders and others in which they can have meals and use toilet. Some of the owners of these houses have specified toilets for market venders and commuters.

Upon their arrival in Sinja, the migrant Fulbe have made use of this philanthropist attitude. A remarkable example of these is a mechanized farmer called 'Abd-Allah Osman An-Nijuumi who has

had long contact with the pastoral Fulbe. During the wet season, they came to his agricultural camp to barter dairy products with flour and he provided them with food and medicine. In Sinja, around 20 of the migrant Fulbe women working in the central market fetched water from ‘Abdalla’s house. He recognized that they had no place to live and assigned part of his house to them, he also provided flour for their meals and leftovers to eat. Two years ago he apologized he could no longer host them in his home, but his house has remained open for them to come for meals, entrust their money to his wife and to seek her help.



Three migrant women having a free meal in the central market; Sinja March 2019.

4.1.3 The West African factor

As West African immigrants and Muslims, the Fulbe, the Hausa, and the Borno (FHB) are historically linked. In 1989, they welcomed the Bashir regime and enjoyed his support to institute voluntary associations, such as Islah and Muwaasa (Reform and relief) and Aj-Jizuur (roots), to solve social problems and to fight non-Islamic practices. They also applied for an administrative system (Amara) separate from the Funj region Nazirate, but later Fulbe-Hausa relations deteriorated and each group tended to seek its own separate administration (Osman 2013, 111-118). Despite the deterioration of relations, the sense of unity and shared background between these three groups, emanating from a common origin as West African, has remained intact.

During 1970s, the Sheikh of the Hausa in Sinja, ‘Umar, acted as a paramount chief for the FHB. He was socially obliged to provide hospitality and support to the members of these groups who resort to his house. A small group of old migrant Fulbe women used to come to live in his house but they stopped coming in the 1980s, with the exception of few medicinal herbs sellers coming for a shorter periods. In recent years, sheikh ‘Umar’s house has become the entry point for a new generation of

young migrant Fulbe women aged between 17 and 25, often newly married and with two to three children. These young women come during the dry season to work with tea sellers. Upon their arrival from their nomadic camps and villages, they stay for three days or so and look for work opportunities. After finding work, they move to live collectively in houses closer to where they work or live with their mistress. In the 2018/2019 dry season, Sheikh ‘Umar’s family received 20 women, 19 of them found work in the central market and only one is working in the popular market and is still living in the house. By the start of the rainy season, all these women will return to ‘Umar’s house with their savings and stay for some days to do shopping and prepare themselves to return home as a group.

For these women, Sheikh ‘Umar’s house is a transitional area; a first leg or an entry point to town in which they wash their clothes. As my informant, ‘Umar’s grandson said, they use the opportunity “to breath in the air of the town and to polish themselves” i.e to recover from the hardship and the harsh environment in which they live before entering the town. Sheikh ‘Umar’s house is also a safe and secure place in which they can find space to store what they buy in preparation for returning home. They share rooms with household members. They are not served proper meals, but their hosts provide whatever available to them and they also bring some food with them. But the senior man, the grandson of the sheikh has become less enthusiastic to host women and only does so for sake of his mother. In his opinion, sheikhdom has gone and he is not in a position to bear the risk of hosting people he knows nothing about. He added, “one needs much patience to tolerate these disturbing women who stay awake chatting up to late in the night and wake up early at dawn to wash themselves”.

The role played by Sheikh Umar’s family in hosting and supporting the pastoral Fulbe women, outweighs the role that played by the settled Fulbe. There are many settled Fulbe households living in Sinja since the beginning of the 20th century, which grew in the 1980s and 1990s due to security threats in the Funj region. However, very few of these settled households hosted and provided help to the migrant women and contact between these women and the settled Fulbe is not strong.

4.1.4 Fulbe relations with the southern Funj region people

The pastoral Fulbe in the Funj region, have become more integrated into the wider society and the market economy. They have developed good relations with many of the southern Funj region people (Ar: *Awlaad As Sa’iid*), such as the Berta, the Jabalawiyyiin, the Ingessana, and others. Remarkable relations developed between the Woyla groups in the area of Sinja-Nabag and the inhabitants of Diruub and Banat (Fanzigar and Ja^caliyyiin). The majority of the migrant Fulbe women come from the area of Sinja-Nabag and therefore, the existence of *Awlaad As Sa’iid* in Sinja town is a social capital for the pastoral Fulbe women and constitutes one of their entry points for looking for work. Some of these *Awlaad As-Sa’iid* have hosted Fulbe women and women entrust what they earn to them. For instance, Al- Mardi Abdel Gadir, who belongs to the Ja^caliyyiin of Banat runs a small business in the central market in Sinja, hosted 10 to 15 Fulbe women in his house between 2011 and 2014 but

stopped after his neighbors complained that they had produced too much waste water and were noisy at night. However, he still maintains good relations with them and they come to buy consumer goods for their mistress, and most importantly they also resort to him for advice and to solve problems.

There are many entry points for Fulbe women into Sinja town which have made Sinja more attractive than other towns. These include: the patron-client relations that exist between the pastoral Fulbe and livestock guarantors and crop sellers; the sufi culture and philanthropism deeply rooted in Sinja community; relation to Awlaad As-Saciid; and the west African factor. Moreover, the openness of the community in Sinja and the welcoming attitude migrants find in Sinja where different ethnic groups co-exist peacefully open a wide entry point to migrant Fulbe women.



A considerable portion of the migrant women are specialized in fetching water, a difficult job

5 Pastoral women in town

5.1 The Socio-economic background

This chapter describes the life of the migrant women in the town including the type of work they are involved in, their income and expenditures. It also covers the cultural and attitudinal changes women have experienced in the town and community reaction towards these changes. Due to the obstacles we faced during field work and the low response rate from the pastoral Fulbe leaders in the nomadic camps and hamlets, I was not able to select a sample of migrant women. The socio-economic characteristics of the migrant women, described below, are based on participant observation and direct interviews with key informants including tribal leaders, shopkeepers in Suug Ambararo in Damazin and direct interviews with migrant women in Sinja, Damazin and camp sites.

Age and marital status: The migrant Fulbe women in Sinja town represent different ages and marital statuses but they are mostly aged 12 to 35 years old, the majority aged between 15 to 25. However, recently, the number of younger girls has increased, and I observed many girls aged between 12 and 15 working in the market place in May 2019. These women and girls compose of single, married, divorced and widows, some carry one or two babies with them.

Sending area: Most of the migrant women and girls come from the area of Sinja-Nabag on the western side of the River Blue Nile (RBN) south of Damazin from places such as Juwwaani, Abu Na^aaama, Diruub and Maganza. Few women come from the eastern side of the RBN, south of Roseiris from places such as ^aAzaza, Madiina Talata and Om Darfa. A considerable number of these migrant women come from the Rankalde group of Sheikh Muhammad Riiri and women from this group are considered as the spearheads of migration to towns. Some years ago, many women came from Bazuura in Gedarif State, but this has dramatically decreased.

Family background: Most, if not all, migrant women are descended from large sized families commonly consisting of 14 to 17 members, mostly consisting of co-wives, half-sisters and half-brothers.

Economic status: The majority of the migrant women seem to belong to rich in cattle households. Most have some cows to milk during the dry season and enjoy surplus of dairy products to sell in the local market during the wet season. However, there are some women coming from impoverished households.

5.2 Work, income and expenditure

Most migrant Fulbe women work with tea and food sellers, performing tasks such as washing dishes, arranging chairs and tables, serving clients, powdering spices etc. A good number of women are

specialized in fetching water and powdering coffee and they do not link themselves to a specific client but provide work on demand. A few women work with laundry shop keepers washing clothes; however, this is seen as exploitation due to the low wages and is a last resort usually only done by old women.

Working with tea sellers seems to be the most sustainable and hence preferable work. Recently and with the increased number of migrant women, the scope of the tasks and the jobs they perform has become wider to include the collection of waste from butchery and restaurants, domestic work and attending funerals and wedding occasions to wash dishes etc.

The migrant women use to come to Sinja during the dry season and stay intermittently from November up to August. A woman may stay for one or two months in the town and return to join her household while another woman from her own group, and preferably a member of the same household, comes to replace her. In August, when herders return from the south, most of the women return to stay with their husbands and resume their traditional household tasks. In December 2018, there were about 400 migrant women working in the central market in Sinja. In March 2019, this number has increased as new women and girls had come. During this period, groups of women going to or coming from Sinja had become a familiar scene in Damazin.

The discussion above pertains to the majority of the migrant women, the 'ideal' or 'proper' category which still stuck to group norms and traditions, but other categories do exist. There is a small category of acculturated 'modernized' migrant women who started their life in the town in the same way as the others but after managing to establish a starting capital, they rented shops and established their own food and tea business and turned to adapt town way of life. They earn handsome money that enables them to rent houses, buy furniture and to send their children to schools. They abandoned their traditional dresses and wear western dresses, use make up and cosmetics. Hence, they have been a subject of criticism from their conservative community and are regarded as crossing ethnic boundaries.

A third category of migrant women is represented by a small portion of impoverished women who have migrated to town accompanying their husbands to settle permanently in the town. They are involved in different kinds of work including domestic work, farm labor and tea selling. Through time, these individual households have managed to develop social relations within the urban context that has helped them to diversify their sources of income and to think of better future for their children.

Those who work with tea sellers receive a daily wage in the range of SDG70 to 120 (1.5-2.6 US dollar). A woman fetching water can earn SDG 300 (6.6 US dollar) per day. Those working freely in fetching water, arranging cabinet and powdering coffee and those who run their own small business earn handsome money, but as the supply of labor has turned to exceed the demand, wages are expected

to decline. The women entrust their money to shopkeepers, mistresses, mistresses' household members and to their hosts. A woman saves SDG 7000-9000 (155-200 US dollar) each round she comes to work. This relatively handsome savings indicates how keen and anxious are these women to make money, and also reflects how thrifty they are and they do not spend much on themselves. While some of them enjoy free of charge meals from their mistresses, others depend on eating leftovers and cheap food.

Some of these women especially those coming from villages, have good contact with their families and send regular remittances to them. Upon their return, migrant women carry food items (flour, oil, onion, sugar and tea) pots and clothes with them. They may also buy items of furniture, mobile phones, bed sheets, cushions and kitchen utensils. Some of them bring dried bread and wheat flour they collect from bakeries.

5.3 Accommodation and living conditions

The migrant women in Sinja town fall into three categories: collective lodgers, those who live with their mistresses, and those who live with their own families. In general, they live in crowded places under unhealthy environment with poor sanitation services.

5.3.1 Collective lodgers

The majority of the migrant Fulbe women in Sinja live in groups of lodgers. They are distributed among seven lodgings: four in the neighborhoods of the central market and three in the vicinity of the popular market. The biggest and most well-known group of migrants consists of about 50 women who have been lodging in a house in the neighborhood of the central market for more than ten years. The house, which is located in the eastern quarter, is close to where women work. The local residents have welcomed the presence of these women as they constitute a source of cheap labor which is badly needed especially in the social occasions that require intensive labor that the town women could not afford.

Each woman pays SDG 5 per night. They sleep on mats in the yard of the house and use only one toilet. They go to the market place immediately after dawn prayers around 4:00 AM and return before or immediately after sunset, around 6:00PM. In the absence of their male guardian, and for their security and protection, they sleep in groups. They live in peace, with only minor disputes occurring between them. They spent most of their time in the market place and have their meals there.

Another group of 25 share a house in the vicinity of the popular market with a poor woman. The woman rented the house for herself and when she failed to pay the monthly rent, she offered the open space for these women to sleep in against a payment of SDG 5 per night per head. She uses the proceeds to pay the monthly rent with a little on top that can meet part of her costs of living.

5.3.2 Living with mistress

There are some migrant women who live with their mistress in the different parts of the town. I did not manage to collect detailed information about the conditions under which these women live in their mistress's houses. But this category of migrant women is subjected to hard criticism by the local people in the market place and from their own kinsmen. Splitting from their flock, these women are regarded as detached and going astray. In the opinion of the critics, the women and girls living with mistresses are vulnerable to manipulation and sexual exploitation. However, some of the mistresses asserted that they treat women and girls the same as they treat their daughters and assume full responsibility to act as moral guardians to them.

5.3.3 Settled households

The ex-pastoral households constitute a small portion of the migrant women in the town. They are represented by single, married and divorced women who came and have settled permanently in the town. Some of them came single and remained single, while others married and established a family. Some women came with their husbands. These settled households have integrated into town life. They are keen followers of town way of life and "modernization" and have changed their traditional dresses. Despite their impoverishment, they still host their relatives who come to town seeking work or better medical treatment.

5.4 Health conditions

Most of the migrant Fulbe women used to come from their original places malnourished. Here I cite two of my key informants in Sinja, the first commented that "they used to come weak and hungry but because they have no 'sour grass'² [so by taking] a piece of mango from here and a piece of sweet potato from there, they usually turn to look good in a short period..." the other informant noted that one of the migrant women told him that their husbands send them to the town to become fat and that a pregnant woman comes to the town to support her pregnancy.

In the town, women and their babies live under unhealthy and unhygienic conditions. Lying on the ground during the hot season in dense and crowded places, they are vulnerable to infection. Further, because they were unable to bring many clothes with them, they are forced to wash their clothes often, producing a lot of waste water. This waste water creates an unhygienic environment conducive to the proliferation of mosquito and malaria infection. Some of the migrant women carry difficult activities such fetching water from distant places and it is normal to see a woman holding her baby on her back and simultaneously carrying two plastic containers full of water. Anxious to make money, a woman

² This colloquial expression means that they are not selective and eat whatever they find.

can kill herself working from dawn to sun set carrying more than 100 containers per day. Of course, in the long run, such a hard work will have negative implications upon women's physical and psychological health. Some of these women suffer from psychiatric problems resulting from both the physical fatigue and the social pressure of working in a male-dominated environment or with their mistresses. However, these women have good access to the available health services in the town and that they find support and sympathy from towns' people, although the majority of them return home once they feel ill to visit traditional inhalers or seek spiritual treatment and few of them resort to the available health centers in Sinja.

5.5 Crossing ethnic boundaries

Sinja has roughly received three generations of migrant women since the 1970s. The first generation was represented by old conservative women working with food sellers and in crop processing. The second generation emerged in the 1980s, and was younger than the first, but was still conservative and performed similar activities. The third, the current generation, is composed of women representing different ages and marital statuses. Like the old generations, a larger portion of the current generation is still conservative and adhering to *pulaaku*. They move in flocks and keep a distance from others and distinguish themselves from the town dwellers through their traditional dress and other social peculiarities.

However, within the current generation, many have crossed ethnic boundaries and became no longer 'Mbororo'. They have acculturated and deviated from the socially accepted norms and morality. Some have abandoned their traditional dresses and turned to wear western ones, use cosmetics and make up. Not only that, many of them also refuse to return home with their husbands and some of them resorted to the court of law to demand divorce. It is reported that some of these women have gone prostitutes and some of them were trailed under public order laws and Sudanese Criminal laws, under articles 146, 152 and 153. Some cases of illegitimate pregnancy have also reached the court of law. A shopkeeper in the central market commented that "these women were blind, polite and straightforward, but now they have 'improved', 'modernized' and have become open. "They were good but now they have become nonsense. They deteriorated and turned to steal each other", he added.

Still, the majority of the migrant women are conservative but they are vulnerable. They are subjected to harassment by the public and are liable to exploitation from their mistresses, some of whom have a background as prostitutes or liquor sellers. There is also no form of organization or association to represent their interest, give advice and protect them. An informant commented that these migrant women are beautiful and when they come to town, they become clean and more attractive and some of them are just innocent girls that can be easily manipulated to be exploited sexually. Some laxity has been observed in the behavior of some of these women and girls, while rebellious behavior and

crossing of boundaries has been observed among those who settled permanently and managed to establish their own small businesses.

5.6 Anti-migration and repatriation campaign

The phenomenon of migrant Fulbe women has attracted the attention of the Fulbe elite since 1990s when many young women migrated from the Blue Nile State (BNS) to work as domestic helpers in Khartoum. This was regarded by the tribal elites as disregard of the moral code of behavior and as unacceptable anarchy. In 1990, the Amir of the Fulani (Fulbe) in the Khartoum State, Fadl As siid 'Isa, instructed that migrant females should not be conspicuous, move in large groups or cause disturbance in the streets. In 1993, the Relief and Reform Society in the BNS exerted efforts to fight the non-Islamic practices including women vending and begging (Osman 2013, 105-106). Similar efforts were exerted by Aj-jizuur (Roots) Society in Sinja in Sinnar State.

Some years later, the anti- female migration campaign entered a new phase and witnessed the application of new approaches. In 1999, the Omda of the Fulbe in Khartoum, Muusa Mahale, formed committees in coordination with the police to repatriate women from Khartoum. The committees managed to convince 35% of the migrant women to return voluntarily, sent 20% of them to evening classes in Khartoum and repatriated 45% of them. A good portion of those who attended evening classes later ceased working to continue their education.

From 2006 onwards, Omda Mahale and others, stopped to work under the Umbrella of the Amara of the Fulbe in Khartoum and tried a new strategy trying to address the root causes of the phenomenon. They registered migrant women and issued membership cards for 2600 of them, resorted to advice and religious preaching and to supporting women financially to marry. They achieved some success managing to convince some of the women³ to return home but due to financial shortcomings they could not continue for long on these efforts.

The increasing number of migrant Fulbe women, the obvious crossing of ethnic boundaries and the laxity observed on the behavior of some of them, have excited some of the Fulbe elite to initiate some efforts of social reform. Some of the elites have become jealous to hear that some of their kinswomen live with 'bad women' and have intimate contact with foreign and 'inferior' people. These behaviors were seen as stigmatizing and insulting to the group and therefore the question of migrant women has become a central issue of concern to the elite of the group including tribal leaders and government officials. In 2011, Omda Muusa Mahale formed grass root committees in the settlements of the Fulbe

³ Some villages are more responsive than others and percentage of the returnees ranges from 1% to 10%.

in Damzin and Roieiris localities to compact female migration, but he was opposed by some tribal leaders and the influential extended families to which migrant women belong.

Later in 2018, Omda Mahale and others made use of the social media channels to make an initiative called “Woyla Sudan” to discuss the question of migrant women. With support from Sultan Mai Wurno, and in coordination with the Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) of the police and the Higher Council for Childhood (HCC), they started a campaign to control women migration. They assigned some persons in the bus stations to prevent girls under 18 years old from travelling and to speak to those above 18 years old to convince them to return home. This proved to be very successful and encouraged some of the Fulbe Sheikhs in the BNS to hold a meeting in Gaddaala north of Roseiris to discuss the question of migrant women. The meeting concluded that the majority of the migrant women belong to well off and rich in cattle households and thus they have no good reason for migration. A committee emanated from the meeting to repatriate women from towns all over the country. In coordination with Sultan Mai Wurno, letters and envoys were sent to village sheikhs emphasizing that every responsible man who has faith in God should not let his wife or his daughter go to town for work. In April 2018, the campaign was launched. Vehicles were sent to towns and women were chased in the market place and were repatriated. No physical violence was used against the repatriated women, however one of the repatriates was very cruel and used excessive and humiliating violence. Some of the women managed to escape, hid themselves or disguise their looks to avoid repatriation while few women showed resistance and rebellious behavior refusing to go with the repatriates.

Here we stop at two impressive cases of rebellious behavior by two women. The first said to the repatriates “where shall I go, I am an orphan and divorced woman and I have no house to live in. The one who wants to take me back should find a husband and a house for me, or let Sultan Mai Wurno, who wants to send women back to marry me”. The other woman explained that she had her husband permission to go to work in the town and rhetorically emphasized that women are in the town to earn for themselves and for their children and not for anarchy. She exclaimed “who is going to feed women and their children, those who repatriates women are irrational”. She continued “Our men are good and true men in bed only. They know well how to make women pregnant but they provide nothing to them and leave them to struggle with hunger and poverty.”

The repatriation resulted in shortage of labor in the local market. Food and tea sellers resorted to hiring local women but these women did not constitute a good substitute to Fulbe women who are energetic, disciplined and industrious. After 15 days the repatriated women started to return and some of them, with a help of a shopkeeper, collected money and were intending to file a case in the court against six of their native leaders who organized and launched the campaign but they did not follow the case to the end. The campaign was regarded as failed by the repatriates themselves and its failure

was attributed partly to the fathers and the husbands of the migrant women who had sided with their daughters and wives to migrate for work. But failure can also be partly attributed to the women's keenness to migrate and their ability to impose their wills upon men.

The failure of the campaign has not ended Fulbe efforts of social reform. Sultan Mai Wurno formed *al-Amri Bi-l-Máruuf* Society to provide advice and religious teachings to migrant women. The migrant women, who gained more self-confidence after the failed campaign, not only pay no attention to preachers but some of them also dare to tell them not interfere into 'their personal affairs'. As a last resort, the elite of the Fulbe are considering raising funds to facilitate women marriage and to enroll girls into schools. Regarding these as the most effective tools to compact female migration, they are looking for NGOs and voluntary associations to initiate this work.



A migrant woman waiting her chance to fill containers with water, Sinja, March 2019.

6 Life history cases

6.1 Introduction

Women generally migrate for work opportunities in towns, but each woman has her own motivations and a different story about her own experience and the circumstances under which she has lived. This section presents some interesting life history cases of some migrant Fulbe women that might contribute towards deepening our understanding of the phenomenon. I will not refer to them by name, but will use abbreviations.

6.1.1 Life history cases

Case No.1

T. S is a 30 year-old divorced woman with a 13 year-old son and a 10 year-old daughter. She was born in a small village in the Kadaalu area south of Roseiris and lived with three sisters and a brother. In 1992, her father and her cousin were killed by the Gumuz in Jabal An-Noom while attending to the herds. After the death of T.S's father, her mother took her and her siblings to live in Kadaalu. In Kadaalu, the widow was assisted by her brothers and her nomadic kinsmen to raise her children. There, she was married to another man and gave birth to a boy and a girl. Beside attending cattle, the eldest son cultivated a small plot while T.S and her sisters assisted him in farming.

Two of T.S's maternal cousins, the main supporters of her family, were killed by the Gumuz in 1997, during the invasion of the NSO, and 2000. In 1999, T.S 's eldest sister moved with her husband to live in Sinja and five years later, at the age of 15, T.S joined them. In 2005, T.S was pressed by her elders to marry her maternal cousin. At first she refused because she was in love with his half-brother who later married her younger sister. She unwillingly lived with him and when her mother died, in 2011, she went to live with her married sister in Sinja. Later she resorted to court and filed for divorce.

After her divorce, she worked as a tea seller in the central market for a while and went to Medani and then to Khartoum and worked as a domestic helper for one year before returning to Sinja. In Sinja, she lived with her sister but she left after a short period as she was not in agreement with her sister's husband. She rented an unhygienic house lacking a bathroom and without tap water, however it is supplied with electricity. She sent her children to a private school and claimed that she is planning to devote her life for them. However, she noted that if she finds a good man (*wad balaal*), she will marry him. She prefers to remain single than to return to her nomadic group. She is planning to convince her brother to sell his cattle and bring his family to live with her in the town.

Case No.2

M. A was born in 1992 as the first born child in a poor farming household in Muluwa (South of Roseirris). When she was three years old, her father became ill. He struggled with his illness for three years and died in 1998 leaving her, her mother, her sister and brother destitute. Her mother married another man and gave birth to three boys and two girls. In 2005, at the age of 13, M.A. was married; against her will and without her knowledge, to her maternal cousin whom she has disliked since she was a child. She joined her husband's nomadic group in Garri but escaped after three months to join her father's group in the South Sudan.

In 2012, Muluwa was flooded after the heightening of Roseiris dam, and M.A.'s mother's group were resettled in Madiina Talata (town No3) and she sent her children to school there. In 2013, she started to migrate to work in Sinja. After working and living with many women, she managed to establish a starting capital as a tea seller in the popular market and is living with T.S. She sends money to her mother and her sisters. Her husband does not send money to her but in 2018 he came and took the boy to live with him.

In 2014, M.A's husband went to bring her back and she refused to return with him but he captured her while she was going to fetch water from the stream. With the help of one of her fathers' relatives, he tied her with a rope, and took her to the bus station and from there to al- Garri. In al- Garri, she spent 7 months and after her husband went south with his cattle she escaped and joined her mother. Some months later, her husband joined her in Madina Talat but she refused to return with him and demanded divorce. In response, out of his frustration, he beat her and her mother and left. He deserted her for 18 months and refused to divorce her. Now she is intending to resort to the court of law to demand divorce, but her grandfather prevented her.

Case No. 3

AMO is 29 and belongs to Jabtu'En subsection of Woyla Fulbe. Her father has two wives and she has one brother and five sisters. AMO was married at age 15 to a rich cattle owner and had a baby with him, she has a co-wife who gave birth to three daughters. She began to go to Sinja for work some years ago, but still lived in the camp. In January 2019, she was working with a tea seller in the popular market. She said she was going to work for just a few weeks to gain some money to buy clothes before returning home, but I met her at the market again in March and April 2019.

AMO and all her sisters were married 7 to 10 years ago but they are all living with their mother now. They joined her to stay to buy household items for their new life as adults. She does not send money to anybody as her husband use to leave a good number of milking cows for her in the camp site and sends her money to buy food and other necessary things. AMO likes Sinja because, in her word, work and everything is good in Sinja and she faces no problems.

Case No. 4

H.S belongs to sheikh Sileeman group of Woyla Fulbe. She was born in Kadaalu in 1979 in a small village South of Roseiris. She was betrothed to one of her kinsmen, A.K, at 8 years old and was married to him at 15. He was more than 15 years older than her and married her after he divorced his maternal cousin with whom he spent three years without having children. With a good number of cattle and abundant milk, the couple lived comfortably. But their life dramatically changed during war time when H.S lost her father and two of her male maternal cousins and A.K. lost all his cattle. In 1999, the couple took their three daughters and went to live in Sinja where they found support from local people with whom they have earlier contact. In Sinja the couple was involved in different forms of wage labor including agricultural labor, construction and domestic work. They managed to save enough money for H.S to become a tea seller. For a number of years, they lived in a house under construction. In 2012, A.K was appointed as a guard in a governmental department and was able to squat in a corner inside the headquarters. In addition to his salary, he earns extra income from free wage labor.

Two of H.S's daughters were married to their kinsmen and have children with them. One of them is still living with her mother while her husband migrates to work in Khartoum. The third daughter has been sponsored by one of her fathers' friends to continue her education, she has now passed her third semester in the Faculty of Education of University of Sinnar.

When living in the town, H.S abandoned her traditional dresses and put on the traditional Sudanese *toob* and began to look like an ordinary town woman. So she was not subjected to any pressure during the campaign launched by the Fulbe elite to repatriate Fulbe women but in March 2019, some disputes occurred between her and her husband who became jealous of her clients phone calls.

Case No. 5

R.J is 45 years old and belongs to Woyla Jabtu En group, she was born in Juwaani Just west of Sinja Nabag. Her father had three wives and more than ten daughters and one son. When she was 15 years old, her relatives married her to her paternal cousin and she now has three sons and three daughters who are aged between 2 and 10 years old. Her husband has two other wives and relations between the co-wives have been good. Her husband owns no cattle, but her father is rich in cattle and provides her with milk.

From 2007 onwards, R.J went regularly to work in Sinja, unless she has a strong reason not to go. She even travelled during her pregnancy. Her husband gives her permission to go to Sinja and she also informs the rest of her family, including her husband's relatives and her own sick father. When she travels, she leaves her children with her sister, who also takes care of her father. Initially, she

worked with food and tea sellers, but she now does activities such as fetching water, grinding coffee and spices and is ready to provide work on demand, such as cleansing and catering for social occasions. She changed jobs once she became pregnant because it is not seen as appropriate for a woman looking after a baby, performing unhygienic tasks, to serve food and drinks.

R.J sleeps with dozens of women in a house near the central market in Sinja. She frequently sends small remittances such as SDG 100–200 (2.22–4.44 US dollars) and saves up to SDG 3000 (66.66 US dollar), but her savings are spent on her family livelihood. She has not purchased household items yet. In our discussions, she criticized the Fulbe men who do not send money to their wives and children and leave them to struggle with hunger and poverty. She resisted the repatriation campaign and regarded the repatriates as irrational.

Case No. 6

Z.A is 20 years old. She belongs to Woyla Jabtu En sub-group, her group moved from Sinja Nabag to Maganza Aj-Jabal in 2013. Her father has two wives: Z.A's mother has five sons and two daughters, and her co-wife has three sons and five daughters. Her father owns a herd of cattle and Z.A's brothers take the herds to the dry season grazing area crossing the borders into Ethiopia. Depending on the availability of grass close to the camp, they sometimes leave the milking cows there. When there are no milking cows left in the camp site, there is a shortage of milk.

Z.A is single and has not been engaged. Two of her sisters are married – one has a child and the other has two, but the families are living with their mothers because they have not yet bought household items. Z.A started to work in Sinja in 2010, aged 11, and has continued to regularly travel. She previously worked grinding coffee and fetching water but two days before we met, she joined a tea seller in the market. However, she prefers her old job rather than working with the tea seller because of the higher income. She does not send money to her family regularly and uses her income to buy things for herself and for the household. She does not need to have permission from anybody so has to come to Sinja for work and is free to decide when to come to work and when to return. Together with other nine women, she spends the night in a house in the eastern quarter. They pay SDG 5 to lie on plastic sheets in the yard of the house and to use one toilet. She does not entrust her money but keeps it herself.

Case No. 7

C.A.A is 13 years old and belongs to Woyla Jabtu En sub-group in the area of Gedarif. She is single and has not been engaged. She has neither attended school nor *tuggaaba*, the Qura'nic school where teaching takes place by firelight. Her father has two wives and she has 8 sisters and brothers. She lives with her mother's mother in Abu-N'aama, but her mother's brother (the senior man in the household)

is in prison accused of crop damage estimated at SDG 100 000 (220 USD). She started going to Sinja last year, this year she went five times and she spent one month at a time in the city. She works with a tea seller in the central market and spends the night with a group of women in a house near the market place. Her daily wage is SDG 100 (2.22 USD) and she is given one free meal a day. She provides support to her grandmother and used to bring her cooking ingredients and clothes, and is now building her a hut. She faces no problems in Sinja but she complains that the place in which they sleep is not good.

Case No.8

H.W is from a small nomadic hamlet on the margins of a small village south of Roseiris called cAradeeba. She is 25 years old and was born in 1994. When she was 15 years old, she was married to a 20-year-old kinsman. H.W has two sons, the eldest is two years old and is left at home when she goes to Sinja, the other is six months old and she carries him on her back. She has no co-wife. She comes to Sinja irregularly and works fetching water and grinding coffee in the popular market. She does not send money to her household members and came to Sinja secretly, without informing her husband. She just came after her husband took his herds of cattle to Ethiopia however, he left some milking cows for her. She plans to return home before her husband returns. She sleeps with around 25 other women in a woman's house in ad-Daraja quarter close to the popular market. The women sleep in the yard to escape mosquito bites and use one toilet. H.W rubs her baby with a chemical substance to protect him from mosquito bites but if she or her baby feels ill, she will go to the medical center.

Case No.9

A.Y is 15 years old and is single but has been engaged since she was a baby. Her father is rich in cattle and used to leave enough milking cows in the camp site to provide milk for his household members. He has two wives. A.Y is the eldest of seven brothers and four sisters and has two half- sisters and one half-brother. She started her school in Kadaalu and dropped out after completing class II during war time in 2011. Her paternal uncle was killed, and they fled their village to spend the wet season in al-Garri and from then they have resumed nomadism. She still hopes to complete her education, if she has a chance to.

In March 2019, A.Y came from her nomadic hamlet near Abu Humura south of Roseiris to visit her aunt in Sinja. After staying for two weeks, she started to work in a restaurant washing dishes for SDG 100 per day (2.22 USD). She is satisfied with her work which ends early meaning she can say her midday prayers at home. She told her father that she will work for one month and return but she has

not had contact with the man she is betrothed to and thinks that he might have changed his mind. Her mother is not in need of money, but A.Y will buy her a gift. If she manages to collect money, she will buy a golden ring for her marriage ceremony. She is the first woman from her group to come to work in Sinja. To fit in with the urban environment, she changed from her traditional dress, but will change back when she returns to her nomadic group.

Case No 10

‘A.A is 17 years old, she was born and grew up in ‘Azaza where she learned Qura’an in the *khalwa* (the traditional Qur’anic school). She belongs to Woyla Fulbe. Her nomadic group came from Gedarif to Settle in ‘Azaza (south of Roseiris) during the 2000s. She is single and has not been engaged. Her father has two wives, eight sons and four daughters. The eldest daughter is married to one of her close relatives and gave birth to a male baby. ‘A.A’s brothers are all single and some of them look after cattle, taking them to the distant dry season grazing areas and returning to graze in the vicinity of the village during the wet season. During that period, ‘A.A milks the cows and sells dairy products in the local market.

‘A.A started to go to work in Sinja last year and is now living and working with T.S. She sends money to her mother and buys cooking ingredients and clothes. In the town, she replaced her traditional dresses. She sees women’s work as a necessity because men do not provide them with what they need and expressed that she does not need permission to come to Sinja for work and regard this as a personal matter.

Case No 11

AmM is 33 years old and belongs to Woyla Dungaran Ko’En living in Juwaani in the area of Sinja Nabag. AmM’s father had two wives but AmM’s step mother died. AmM was married at the age of 22 to her maternal cousin and has four children. Unlike other women in her community, she spent only one year with her mother after giving birth. She did that in compliance to her native and religious leaders’ instruction to abandon the ‘irrational’ and non-Islamic customs related to marriage such as *woofaake* and *humenturu*

AmM used to come to work in Sinja, but didn’t in 2018 because she was heavily pregnant. In 2019, she travelled to the city once her husband had taken the cattle to Ethiopia. She explained that she would not come to the city without his permission, nor if he was still in the village. Two of her children accompany her and the others were at home with her grandmother. She works in the popular market in powdering coffee and fetching water and is hosted by the grandson of the ex- Sheikh of the Hausa in Sinja in al-Hay al-Gharbi C. She will use her money to buy furniture and other household items.

6.2 Extracts

The migrant women have different reasons to migrate to work. They represent different ages, marital statuses, and socio-economic and family backgrounds. They work to meet their basic needs or to meet customary obligations, while a portion of them seem to have no obvious reason to migrate. Some of these women are relaxed and enjoy stable and peaceful family life, while others have faced difficult experiences, such as early and forced marriage, physical violence and inhumane treatment.

Pastoral women had different experiences and exhibited different personalities when living in Sinja. Some are conservative, while others are rebellious and cross ethnic boundaries; some see their future within pastoralism, while others see it outside of pastoralism; some are stable and 'rational' in their choices, while others are unstable and challenging; some are submissive, others are free and autonomous, while some fall in the middle. In many cases, they try to find a compromise between their personal freedoms and their traditional community norms.



A migrant woman waiting her chance to fill containers with water

7 Summary and conclusion

7.1 Summary

Urban areas are becoming overcrowded and overburdened as escalating urbanization has created a new context of poverty. Youth are an integral component of the migrant population, but face challenges exacerbated by rapid urbanization and ill-prepared cities. Urban life has resulted in marginalization and social exclusion. The situation is particularly difficult for young women and girls who face barriers to the labor market and often experience exploitation or are forced to accept harsh working conditions. Contrary to previous beliefs, women migrate as much as men and their migration correlates with work opportunities. However, women are often in less valued positions and are in vulnerable health situations and are exposed to exploitation. Women spoke of being subjected to abuse and exploitation and experience unprecedented levels of xenophobia, racism and sexism.

However, researchers have different views regarding the effect of female migration on both those they left behind and on their personal health and well-being. Some researchers have focused on the negative effects of female migration, such as the loss of social and emotional care for their families. While others have paid attention to potential positive effects including social, cultural and economic benefits of remittances and the empowerment of women.

Pastoral women play a vital role in livestock production but this is not recognized by policy makers, leading to a failure of pastoral development projects. Pastoral women are caught in a 'double bind': they are victims of social, economic and political marginalization, and they suffer inequality in accessing resources, social services and participation in decision-making. Women's participation in the livestock chain is hindered by a significant gender gap in livestock ownership and women are susceptible to gender discrimination. Moreover drought, conflict and sedentarization affect women and result in an increase in demands on women in terms of domestic work and income generating burdens

Sinja has attracted pastoral Fulbe women since the 1970s, but more recently, the number of women migrating has increased and they have been prolonging their stays. The root cause behind this change is in the traditional customs and arrangements related to marriage and family life and in the strategies the Fulbe have adapted to cope with transformations. These changes have encouraged an atmosphere more conducive to female migration, and migration has become a coping strategy in this pastoral community. Further, migration has become an important experience for a considerable number of women and girls.

There are many potential entry points into Sinja town for the pastoral Fulbe women. They can use the rich social capital and social network of support represented by their patron-client relations; exploit the sufi culture and philanthropist attitude of Sinja's citizens; engage with the West African factor linking the Fulbe, the Hausa and Borno and the extended relations with the southern Funj region people. Sinja was particularly attractive for the migrant women because of the open nature and welcoming attitude of the ethnically balanced community. Other towns, such as Damazin, are less appealing because they expose themselves to the patriarchal authority of the native leaders. In addition, Sinja provides good opportunities for women vendors and accommodation is available for them.

The majority of the migrant women work with food and tea sellers but with the increasing supply of labor, the scope of the activities they perform has become wider. They receive low or hardly fair wages and often live in crowded and unhealthy environments. The majority of women live collectively, but some live with their mistresses or other philanthropists, very few live in their own households. Collective lodgers are more conservative and see their future within pastoralism; while those who live with their mistresses and the settled households are more adaptive to town way of life and see their future out of pastoralism. The women are often malnourished and continue to live in unhealthy conditions, suffering from infection, malaria and psychiatric problems. However, they are not screened from the available health services, they prefer to go to their traditional inhalers and spiritual treatment providers.

Most migrant women are conservative, but some from this generation have crossed ethnic boundaries and displayed rebellious behavior. This led the tribal elite to start an anti-migration fight and in April 2018, they launched a campaign to repatriate women from towns. The campaign failed, but endeavors of social reform have continued pursuing new approaches addressing the root causes of the phenomenon.

7.2 Concluding remarks

Below, I highlight some of the main findings and implications from this report.

1. Fulbe women are marginalized and powerless and are subjected to social and cultural pressures, such as prearranged and forced marriage. They live in large polygamous and traditional families. Moreover, they have reduced access to livestock, especially when herders take cattle away leaving them behind struggling to gain for household subsistence. Empowerment programs should prioritize targeting pastoral women.
2. Migrant women are heterogeneous and represent different ages, marital status and family backgrounds, and they have different experiences and different future

orientations. The women are divided between those who see their future within pastoralism, out of pastoralism or in a combination of pastoral and urban life. Policy and decision makers should address this reality.

3. Migrant women have been welcomed and generously supported by their hosts and by the friendly and peaceful social fabric of the town, but this cannot be guaranteed. Economic hardship, changing lifestyles, the increasing decline of traditional authority and so on will lead to the decline of the philanthropist attitude and will reduce people's readiness to tolerate hosting these 'disturbing' women and to devote their valuable time to them. In fact, many of those who host migrant women have grown tired of giving support. Organized and systematic intervention by formal and informal bodies has become necessary for solving these women's problems, including accommodation.
4. The concerned governmental department(s), such as the Ministry of Social Welfare, along with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS) and voluntary associations, have not paid any attention to migrant Fulbe women and their infants who live in an unhealthy environment. This also applied to the CPU which coordinated with the Fulbe elites to repatriate young girls. This total disregard has to do with politics of colour and the misconception about the pastoral Fulbe (Mbororo) who are wrongly categorized as 'non-Sudanese pagans' who worship fire and such derogatory images. These entities need to intervene for the betterment of the pastoral Fulbe migrant.
5. Ethiopian and Eritrean migrant women are members of the Catholic Church and because of this enjoy great solidarity and strategic support including accommodation. The pastoral Fulbe migrants have no any form of informal organization and do not benefit from strategic support from the Islamic institutions such as mosques, chamber of Zakat and the like during the ex-Islamist regime.

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