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Thayer Scudder

Aswan High Dam Resettlement of Egyptian Nubians

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Thayer Scudder
Division of the Humanities and Social
Sciences
California Institute of Technology
Pasadena, CA
USA

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To the Memory of Hussein M. Fahim

Prologue

In spite of the assumed importance of large dams in national development throughout the world, there are few long-term studies into their actual economic and environmental impacts and their impacts on project-affected people within river basins. Indeed, the World Commission on Dams has stated that "few comprehensive post-project evaluations have taken place after the commissioning of large dams. This applies to virtually all regions and countries. With few exceptions, there has been little or no monitoring of the physical, social and environmental effects of dams, a necessary input for such evaluations" (World Commission on Dams 2000: 226–227). The Aswan High Dam is one of the few exceptions.

The High Dam is also one of the few cases where, over the long term, in this case 1964–2015, the livelihood of the majority of the 48,000 Egyptian Nubian resettlers has improved following removal (Scudder 2012: 37–67). Such a special case requires careful analysis of lessons learned as well as consideration of which lessons are transferable, provided one realizes that the impacts of large dams vary according to the unique features of each case.

Egyptian Nubians, for example, had a unique history prior to their High Dam resettlement, which presumably helped them cope with the resettlement process. During a period of over 1000 years during which they lived along approximately 500 kilometers of the Nile in southern Egypt and northern Sudan, they had to adjust to the belief systems and political dominance of the many invaders who used the Nile as the north–south corridor through the desert lands of northeast Africa or as a source of profit. At times, the Nubian population was devastated yet following conversion to Christianity in the 6th century, "the Nubian Valley was consolidated … under one church and one king" (Fernea 1966: 2). A later king was a Matokki-speaking Nubian and a Muslim who ruled during the Fourteenth century (Mahgoub 1900: 36).

Egyptian Nubian men were and are the best educated, traveled and experienced dam resettlers of whom I am aware. During periods of population growth when arable land along the Nile bank was inadequate to support the population, men went to the cities of Egypt and the Sudan as labor migrants where they formed a specialized labor force in a number of service industries. Women and children were left

behind in Nubia and wives played the dominant role in passing Nubian culture and language on to their children.

Over time, an increasing proportion of men became full-time urban residents while still maintaining families, or at least empty houses, in Nubia, with the result that by the early 1960s almost as many Nubians lived in Cairo as lived in Nubia (Geiser 1966: 6).

Nubian resettlers were also unique among those resettled in connection with other dams in having already experienced dam-induced involuntary community resettlement due to the construction of the original Aswan Dam in 1902 and its heightening in 1913 and 1933. Some of those living closest to the dam were required to resettle on more than three occasions with only those in villages closest to the Sudan border having to resettle for the first time in the 1960s.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes especially to acknowledge the assistance of Mather Habbob who implemented the 2007 Questionnaire in Kom Ombo and responded to my questions thereafter through 2015. I also wish to thank comments received from Asit Biswas, Michael M. Cernea, Robert A. Fernea, Nickolas Hopkins, Elizabeth A. Smith and Cecilia Tortajada on earlier drafts of this chapter. Additional thanks go to Elizabeth Smith for identifying Maher Habbob to undertake the updating 2007 survey, which initially had been approved in 2006 for completion by Hussein Fahim. Thanks also to Caltech's Victoria Mason for further adapting Figs. 1 and 2 in Chapter "Aswan High Dam Resettlement of Egyptian Nubians".

Contents

List of Figures

List of Table

Abstract

Analysis of resettlement of 48,000 Egyptian Nubians in connection with the High Dam is especially important for several reasons. First, High Dam resettlement is that rare case where research, begun before the dam was built, has continued for over 40 years. Second, Egyptian Nubian resettlement is one of the few cases where living standards of the large majority improved because of the initial political will of the government combined with Nubian initiative. Third, given the complexity of the resettlement process, weaknesses in government planning, in plan implementation, and in the weakening of government political will provide valuable lessons for future dam-induced resettlement.

Aswan High Dam Resettlement of Egyptian Nubians

1 Introduction

During the 1960s, construction of the High Dam approximately 10 km up the Nile from Aswan created a 500 km-long reservoir, with a surface area of over 5000 km^2. Named Lake Nubia in the Sudan and Lake Nasser in Egypt, the reservoir extends into the Sudan and required the relocation of at least 100,000 Nubians. This chapter deals only with High Dam impacts on the 48,000 Egyptian Nubians resettled between October 1963 and June 1964.

In addition to distinctive Nubian cultures, the flooded area contained prehistoric and early historic remains of global significance, including Paleolithic artifacts, the Pharaonic temple Abu Simbel, early Christian churches and Islamic shrines. A major international program was launched under Egyptian and UNESCO leadership that brought archaeologists, artists and photographers from around the world to document and preserve this heritage to the extent possible. Anthropologist Robert A. Fernea at the American University in Cairo (AUC) suggested that AUC's Social Research Center should complement the archaeological program with research on Nubian life and culture.

Under Fernea's leadership, The Nubian Ethnological Survey was carried out with Ford Foundation funding. Over 20 Egyptian and expatriate researchers were involved between 1961 and 1964. The documentation produced remains one of the world's most detailed pre-inundation social science surveys of dam-induced resettlement. Subsequently, UNESCO also became involved in documenting Egyptian Nubian history and culture through collaboration with the Egyptian government in building the Nubia Museum in Aswan, which was inaugurated on November 23rd, 1997.

One of the original AUC researchers was Hussein Fahim, to whom this book is dedicated. Following his pre-resettlement research in 1963–64, he spent two more years researching the resettlement process for his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley. Thereafter, Fahim carried out shorter periods of

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research on High Dam resettlement in 1968, 1969, 1971 and 1974. In 2006, Asit Biswas provided Fahim with the opportunity to re-survey the Egyptian Nubian experience and to collaborate with Scudder, another of the original AUC researchers, in presenting the results at the February 2006 Cairo conference on the High Dam. Unfortunately, his death from cancer intervened.

In July 2007 Biswas, concerned that the February conference proceedings would not include a resettlement chapter, asked Scudder if it might still be possible to fill that gap. Maher Habbob, himself an Egyptian Nubian, was recruited to complete a brief survey, largely restricted to those resettled in the Kom Ombo area, over a several month period. Four villages were selected including hamlets (*naja)* where Scudder and Abdel Hamid El-Zein had completed research in Old Nubia during 1961–62 (Fig. 1).

Two villages, Adindan and Ballana, were in the Fadicca-speaking area close to the Sudan border. The other two villages, Mariya and Kalabsha, were in the Matokki-speaking area close to Aswan. All four were resettled in Kom Ombo, with Adindan and Ballana approximately 45 km north of Aswan versus about 58 km for Mariya and Kalabsha (Fig. 2).

In each of the four villages, 20 interviews, divided equally between men and women, were completed. Half were among first generation elders who were adults at the time of resettlement and half were carried out among members of the second generation who, like Habbob, were born after the June 1964 completion of resettlement. While not intended to provide information for a statistical analysis, the fact that the large majority of each generation gave similar answers to the 33 questions asked, provides relatively consistent data on Egyptian Nubians' explanations of how the resettlement process has affected their lives and culture.

The majority of the 48,000 Egyptian Nubians were resettled 3–10 km from the Nile near the city of Kom Ombo. There, planners reclaimed from the desert older Nile alluvia to support the resettlers in a crescent 60 km long and on average 3 km wide. Housing and facilities were built for 37 villages whose relationship to each other in most cases approximated that in Old Nubia. Land reclamation began on 18,000 feddans (one feddan equals 1.038 acres) that would be irrigated by three main canals into which water would be pumped from the Nile. In total, 40 % of the land was to be used for the sugarcane crop, the harvest of which would double the intake of a nearby sugar refinery.

Throughout their known history, Egyptian Nubians have had to cope with a very narrow resource base along the edge of the Nile between the first cataract at Aswan and the Sudan border. They have done so in a number of ways including irrigated agriculture, circulatory labor migration to urban centers in Egypt, the Sudan and, more recently, other Arabic-speaking countries, as well as permanent immigration to urban areas and seeking education. The Nubians have also been influenced by invaders moving back and forth through the Nile corridor between the Middle East and Africa and by successive incorporation within Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Christian and Islamic civilizations. If experience of the outside world is a major asset for people pioneering new lands, then the Nubians should rank high as a people who are able to adapt to the stresses of dam-induced resettlement. Fernea makes an analogous point:

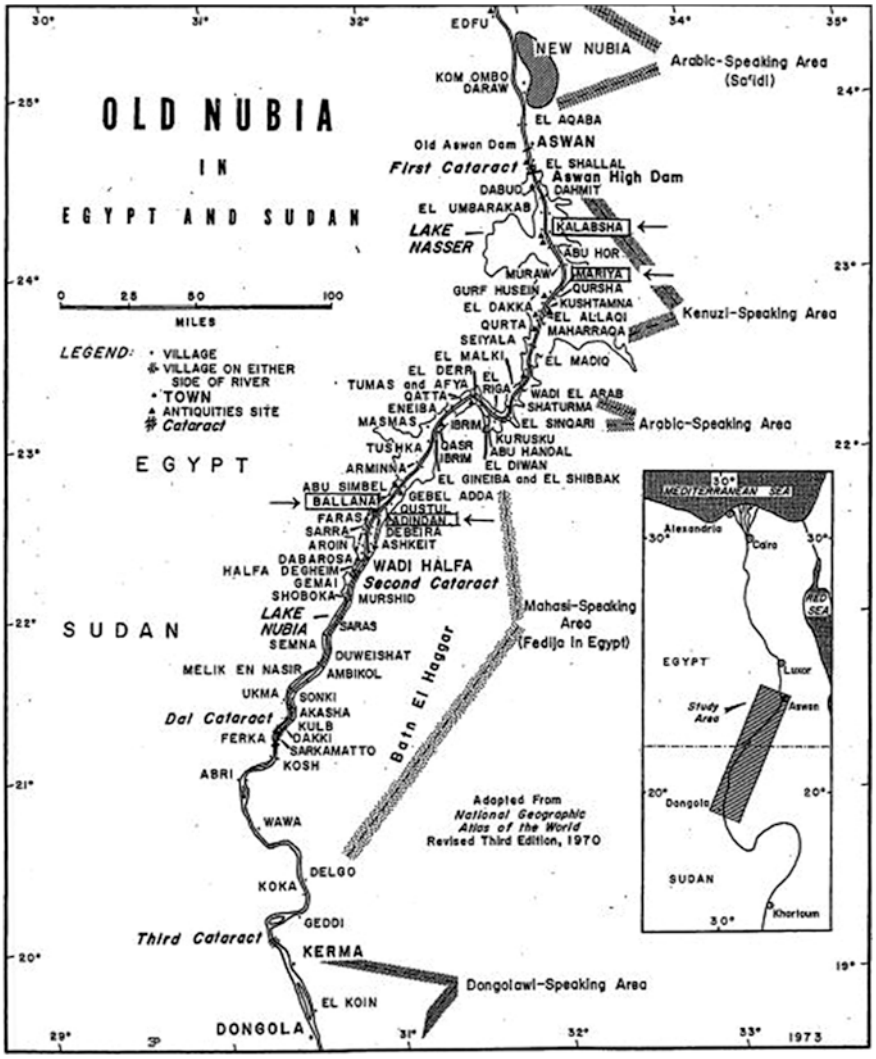

Fig. 1 Old Nubia before the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Adapted from Fernea and Gerster (1973)

The persistence of the Nubian enclave in the Nile Valley is in some respects even more remarkable than the survival of the famous Pharaoh temples of this region. For, unlike these great monuments, the people of Nubia have not endured through centuries of splendid isolation, but, on the contrary, have time and again met social and natural threats to their continued existence with remarkable vitality and flexibility. In fact, though it seems paradoxical, the survival of this ethnic group seems in large part due to its partial assimilation (Fernea 1966: 6).

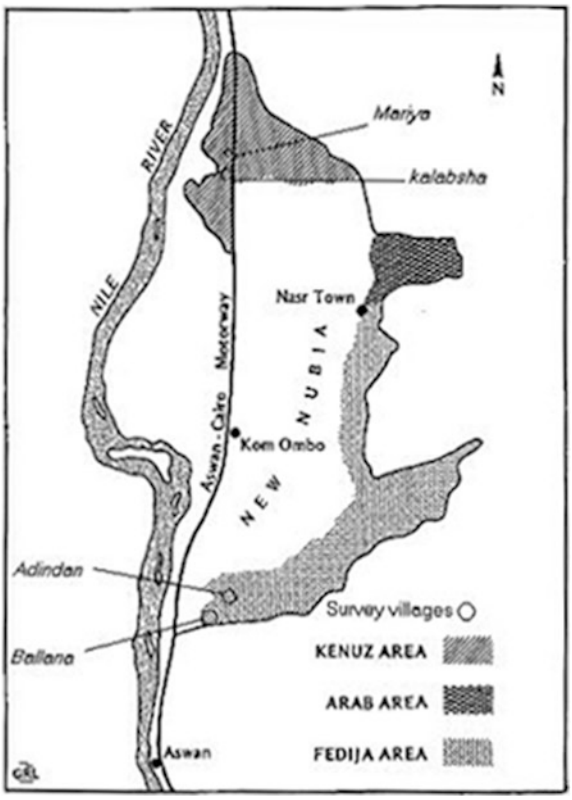

Fig. 2 Nubian Resettlement in Kom Ombo after the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Adapted from Fahim (1983: 56)

2 Egyptian Nubian Resettlement in the Context of Global Dam-Induced Resettlement

Tragically, there are still very few cases worldwide where resettlement caused by large dams has been able to improve, or even restore, the livelihoods of a majority of those who must relocate (Scudder 2012: 37–67). Aswan High Dam resettlement, though problem-prone, is one of the few exceptions.

Analysis of the High Dam case 55 years after removal is important for two reasons. The first is so that project authorities and governments everywhere can learn from the strengths and weaknesses of the High Dam resettlement experience. The second reason is that there continue to be some unacceptable deficiencies, which the current government has the ability and obligation to correct.

Planning and implementing the resettlement of people, the large majority of who consider their removal involuntary, is an incredibly complex process. Even with the best of intentions the outcome may result in failed expectations on the part of

planners and project agencies. Part of the problem is due to the multi-dimensional stress that invariably accompanies resettlement, and which has an adverse effect on resettlers' health and on their society and culture. That is especially the case with dam-induced resettlement because resettlers' homeland cannot be revisited due to its flooding. As we shall show, loss of homeland has been especially difficult for Egyptian Nubian communities because it was not possible for them to be moved inland to the edge of the reservoir, which across the world has been the preferred place for resettled villages so as to enable the majority to remain within a known socio-cultural and physical environment.

Another reason as to why dam resettlement outcomes continue to be unsatisfactory is because donor and national resettlement guidelines, even at this late date, continue to be inadequate. Inadequacy applies even to the World Bank Group and the Government of China, which are acknowledged to have the best international and national guidelines. In both cases, those guidelines correctly emphasize that resettlement should be minimized and, where necessary, occur within the context of a development project. However, having made those two points, both sets of guidelines allow governments and project authorities to implement the fallback goal of restoring livelihoods in spite of a growing body of international research which, time and again, has documented that a restoration policy causes impoverishment among the majority (Scudder 2005).

One of the strengths of Aswan High Dam resettlement policy, which should be the case everywhere, is that the government genuinely wanted to improve the livelihood of the 48,000 Egyptian Nubian resettlers. To analyze the extent to which that goal was achieved, it is important to question how "improvement" is defined. World Bank Group guidelines (and those of the regional banks, the OECD countries, and China, which have adopted and adapted them) emphasize the economic and social aspects of development but largely ignore equally important but less tangible cultural aspects. As our analysis will show, that has also been the case with High Dam resettlement, which helps to explain why Egyptian Nubians are requesting that government take seriously, and act upon, legitimate complaints such as those stated during the April 2007 Cairo conference on "Nubia between Resettlement and Development."

Egyptian Nubians see themselves first and foremost as Egyptian citizens, a view that the Nubian intellectual community reiterates whenever journalists, politicians or others suggest that an Egyptian population of less than half a percent of the national total poses a threat to the Egyptian State (Smith 2006: 8–9). This acquiescent position is reinforced by the current listing of Nubians in both Egypt and the Sudan as one of the world's 25 most peaceful societies (www.peacefulsocieties.com).

On the other hand, Nubian intellectuals also want the State to understand the magnitude of the willing sacrifice that Egyptian Nubians made on four occasions when their resettlement was required due to dam construction starting in 1902. They also frequently reiterate several rights: the right to weep over and replace loss of a beloved homeland (which includes the right to return) and the right,

as Egyptian citizens, to maintain and propagate Nubian languages and cultures (Smith Op. Cit.: 34).

It is important to emphasize from the start that High Dam resettlement has most likely been the greatest shock to the Egyptian Nubian people during the more than fifteen centuries that they have lived in the Nile Valley. Throughout that period their cultures have been characterized by both continuity and change. Continuity dates back at least to the seventh century when the first historical reference was made to distinctive and still existing Nubian languages in the Nile Valley (Rouchdy 1989).

There have been other major shocks in the past that have required significant change. A major example is the periodic invasion of Nubia by outsiders, a situation in which the marriage of Nubian women to non-Nubians enabled them to pass on their Nubian languages and Nubian culture to their children, acculturating the invading population in the process.

Throughout their history, Egyptian Nubians have continued to be "People of the Nile", which provided clean water for villagers living close to the river's edge, a distinctive system of irrigation that lives on today through the motif of the date palm (Baba 2003) and the memory of the creaking water-wheel (*sakia*), and stimulated distinctive rituals (Kennedy 1979). High Dam resettlement radically changed that characterization by moving the large majority of rural Nubians to a desert habitat (Kom Ombo) away from the Nile. That was and remains a major sacrifice to Egyptian national development that has yet to be adequately acknowledged and rewarded.

The analysis that follows utilizes Scudder's four-stage theoretical framework that, with modification, is supported by a statistical analysis of outcomes from over 50 cases of dam-induced involuntary resettlement around the world (Scudder Op. Cit.). The four-stage framework (Table 1) predicts how a majority of resettlers can be expected to behave during the four stages that need be completed over a two-generation period to achieve an outcome that at least restores livelihood. Of special relevance to Aswan High Dam resettlement, it explains why, during the first two stages, living standards of the majority can be expected to decline and why, during that period, the majority tend to behave in a risk-adverse fashion.

The most important aspects of the four-stage framework are the shift from Stage 2 risk avoidance to risk-taking at the commencement of Stage 3 and the various indicators that demonstrate a shift in emphasis from limited household concerns to

Table 1 The four-stage process for achieving relatively successful resettlement

Stage 1: Planning for resettlement prior to physical removal
Stage 2: Physical removal and coping with the initial drop in living standards frequently following removal
Stage 3: Initiation of socio-economic development and community formation activities that are necessary to improve living standards of first generation resettlers
Stage 4: Handing over a viable resettlement process to the second generation of resettlers and to non-project authority institutions

community formation and economic development followed by handing over leadership to the second generation.

Community indicators include formation of funeral and credit societies and various kinds of associations and cooperatives. Especially important is the re-establishment of community ritual that may include rebuilding of earth shrines, churches, temples, and mosques. The resettlement experience itself may play a role as when resettlers evolve their cultural identity through dance, drama, folktales, song and music, poetry and other literature, and a renaming of features of the new landscape. What is happening is that the communities involved are not only re-establishing their identity, but also notifying surrounding communities that they are a force to be reckoned with.

Economic indicators illustrate a shift from emphasis on household food self-sufficiency and security to improving living standards by improving houses and household furnishings and by diversifying the activities of family members in ways that are remarkably similar in case after case. Food crops and livestock become cash crops. Non-farm activities receive more emphasis, including crafts, use of sewing machines to produce items such as school uniforms for sale, small family shops in resettled communities, and new careers and higher incomes following migration to cities and towns. Other businesses include rental of farm equipment and acquisition of additional farm land. Especially significant is the growing emphasis on the education of children of both sexes.

The four-stage framework is derived from a well-tested hypothesis that regardless of political setting, most resettlers will take advantage of development opportunities if provided with appropriate opportunities and assistance. In other words, should development fail, case studies show that rather than socio-cultural shortcomings on the part of resettlers, the main reasons for a failed resettlement process are lack of political will and funding, and inadequate staff capacity and expertise on the part of project authority agencies, as well as inadequate opportunities for, and participation of, resettlers (Scudder Op. Cit.).

3 Egyptian Nubia Before the High Dam

In Egypt and the Sudan, Nubians lived between the first and fifth cataracts in portions of the Nile Valley where flood water and other types of irrigation were largely restricted to a narrow fringe of alluvial deposits continually at risk from desert encroachment. The densest rural population lived in the southernmost portion of Nubia in the Dongola region where there were more extensive flood plains. The largest community was Wadi Halfa, a Nubian-dominated border city just inside the Sudan and the southern terminus of the twice weekly Post Boat from Aswan.

In January 1962, Scudder sailed 320 km up the Nile from Aswan to the Sudanese border in a felucca (a traditional Egyptian sailing boat) with three colleagues from AUC's Social Research Center. Their job was to census geographically dispersed villages along the way from which sociologist Peter Geiser would

draw a sample of labor migrants for study in Cairo, and Scudder could draw a sample for a subsequent ecological and economic survey of Old Nubia prior to resettlement. Anthropologist Abdel Hamid El Zein and Scudder returned in June to complete that survey. Concentrating on eight villages that had been carefully selected to reflect labor migration rates for absentee adult males, again they traveled from Aswan to the Sudanese border and back.

The construction and heightening of the first Aswan Dam adversely affected Nubian society by increasing the necessity for Nubian males to support their families by seeking employment in Egyptian and Sudanese cities. However, Labor migration predated the Aswan Dam construction in 1902 by at least several centuries (see Scudder 1966: 103–104). The main reason was the inadequacy of the narrow strip of arable land edging the Nile to support the population.

One eighteenth century traveler estimated a Lower Nubia arable land area of only 2275 feddans for a population of over 50,000 (Burckhardt 1822: 127). Although such estimates are little more than guesses, even under triple cropping, which was sometimes possible in Nubia, 2275 feddans would provide on average less than one third of an acre per capita. As for the impact of the original Aswan Dam, by 1962 that had eliminated practically all land irrigated by water wheels throughout the Matokki-speaking region where sex ratios in three surveyed villages ranged from 37 to 47 males per 100 females as opposed to 55 males per 100 females in a Fadicca-speaking village close to the Sudan border where Aswan dam-related flooding was reduced, where 39 water wheels were still operational, and where palm trees per capita numbered 41 as opposed to two to six in the three Matokki-speaking villages (Scudder Ibid: 130).

Unlike the current barren surroundings of Kom Ombo, all of Egyptian Nubia in 1962 was a starkly beautiful environment. On both sides, desert sands, interspersed with rocky hills, came down to the water's edge. A total of 553 sparsely populated hamlets (*naja*) along the way belonged to three distinct ethnic groups, two of which spoke Nubian languages. The total resident population was 43,671 according to the 1960 census.

First came the Matokki-speaking Nubians whose 17 villages extended for approximately 150 km upriver from Aswan. Representing 36 % of the total population, they had been the most seriously affected by the original 1902 Aswan Dam. Closer to Aswan, a few villages had already relocated three times, moving to the reservoir's edge or downstream to and below Aswan with each enlargement. All of their date palms had been destroyed and most of the year all of their agricultural land was inundated. Cultivation was restricted to only a few months each year when the reservoir was drawn down. Then only quick-maturing fodder crops for the few cows, donkeys and small stock that village women kept, and vegetables, could be grown.

In some areas, huge sand dunes encroached into the reservoir. Owing to lack of income-earning opportunities, labor migration rates among men may well have been the highest in the world. In all four of Scudder and Zein's Matokki-speaking villages, not a single male over the age of 13 was resident. Another village close to

the Aswan Dam was completely deserted with sand gradually filling courtyards and houses. There, as with households in other villages, the villagers may have moved as a whole to build a new village, and pioneer new land, downstream from Aswan. One such village, containing Nubians from a number of upstream communities who had moved after the second heightening, was studied by Fahim and John Kennedy to see how Nubians had adjusted to dam-induced resettlement in the past (Kennedy 1977).

Immediately upriver from the last Matokki-speaking village was a small population (10 % of the total population in 1960) of Arabic-speakers whose seven villages edged the reservoir for the next 40 km. They will not be further examined in this analysis. The final 130 km were inhabited by the Fadicca-speaking Nubians. They constituted 54 % of the total population and occupied 18 villages. Closer to the Sudanese border, the reservoir narrowed so that the last Egyptian Nubian village of Adindan came closest to showing the type of Nubian economy and livelihood that must have existed before the construction of the original Aswan Dam.

Four livelihood zones were easily identified in Adindan (Figs. 3 and 4). Along the edge of the Nile was a thick belt of date palms that were the major cash crop. Interspersed were cattle-powered water-wheels (*sakia*) that lifted Nile water several meters into irrigation canals that traversed the second cultivation zone. Two annual crops were grown. Wheat grown in the winter months and sorghum and millet in the summer were the dominant food-grains. A large island in mid-stream was also cultivated. The third zone was a narrow strip of indigenous vegetation, including a distinctive species of acacia, used for building purposes. Behind that zone, on rocky, uncultivable land were the hamlets. As in other Nubian communities, houses of the more successful families were substantial with large courtyards.

In front of the donkey, photographed from the doorway of a Nubian house, the strip of indigenous trees, the annual crops and the date palms on the edge of the Nile stood out (Fig. 4).

Not only was the creaking of water-wheels throughout the daylight hours, and at night in the more distant past, a characteristic sound, but water-wheels were the key to the livelihood of each Adindan community. Zein presented a paper on the "Socio-economic implications of the water-wheel in Adindan, Nubia" at the American University in Cairo's January 1964 Symposium on Contemporary Egyptian Nubia. Of Adindan's inhabitants, he wrote:

> [They] are proud of the fact that throughout all Nubia they still have the largest number of water-wheels, thirty-three in the village proper and six on the island… Cultivation in Adindan depends on the water-wheels, the use of which is affected by the depth of the water in the river. This in turn, is affected by the opening and closing of the reservoir at Aswan in summer and winter, and by the water that comes from the south during the flood season.
>
> When the Aswan dam closes during the accumulation period (from November to July), the water in the Nile rises and the water-wheels work easily. At that time, the people of Adindan do their winter cultivation … This, their major cultivation effort, provides a major share of their food for an eight month period … The land of the water-wheel … is divided into 24 equal parts [which are divided among landowners]…

Fig. 3 Between a typical Adindan house and the Nile were indigenous trees, fields for annual crops, and date palms

> The ownership of the water-wheel is connected with the ownership of the land, because every share owner of the land must help build the water-wheel and also donate one of its parts … [T]he water-wheel system permeates all aspects of social and economic life … The water-wheel has helped create a method of partnership in the ownership of cows used to run the machine, and a useful system of land division, both of which strengthen the relationship of the various houses within families (1966: 298–322).

Fig. 4 In front of the donkey, the strip of indigenous trees, the annual crops and the date palms on the edge of the Nile stand out

Very different from Adindan was Ballana—the next village downstream and occupying the western rather than the eastern bank of the Nile. Its resident population of 5300 was over twice that of Adindan. The major reason for this difference

was the presence of one of four government-sponsored projects dating back to the early 1960s in which floating pumps lifted water for the perennial irrigation of about 2200 feddans of reclaimed land that was too high for water-wheel cultivation. Of approximately 15,000 feddans of cultivated land in Egyptian Nubia prior to resettlement, approximately 12,000 were on the four projects. About one-third of the remainder was in Adindan, which illustrates how little cultivated land was still available in the early 1960s for the vast majority of villages (Fig. 5).

Because of Ballana's pump project (Fig. 5), another significant difference between the two Fadicca-speaking villages was the lower incidence of male labor migration, the sex ratio in Adindan being 55 males to 100 females versus 84 males to 100 females in Ballana. Another important difference was Ballana's larger (299 vs. 7) population of Upper Egyptian Sa'idis. Zein attributed this difference to the pump project, noting that it "attracted a great number of Upper Egyptians to Ballana, who cultivate the land for Nubian owners, who in turn take a portion of the harvest as rent … Furthermore … about one third of the agricultural workers of Ballana are Upper Egyptians, while in Adindan there are no Upper Egyptians at all working in agriculture" (Ibid: 298–321). In their study of a Nubian community that resettled near Kom Ombo following the 1933 Aswan Dam heightening, Fahim and Kennedy noted a similar Nubian preference for Sa'idis, rather than themselves, to cultivate irrigation project lands—a preference and situation that Nubian resettlers repeated in Kom Ombo.

In addition to their exceptionally high labor migration rate, the Nubian population in both Egypt and The Sudan has also been involved in the permanent migration of whole families to Cairo, Alexandria and Khartoum as well as to other

Fig. 5 Pump-irrigated land between old Ballana village and the Nile

cities in both countries and elsewhere. By the 1960s, they were the first population in Africa in which it had been documented that approximately two thirds of the population had become urban residents (Geiser 1986). As in rural areas, they avoided unskilled manual labor.

In cities, Nubian populations preferred positions for the more educated in clerical jobs and for others as door men, waiters and cooks for upper-class families, and for restaurants and other businesses and embassies. In the 1970s, Scudder found a Nubian working in Pasadena, California's up-grade Huntington Hotel, while Fahim and Helmer studied Nubians working at a number of Arab embassies in London. Nubians also had a high regard for education, with the Nubian population in the Sudan reputed to be the most educated ethnic group.

In cities, club formation played a major role in facilitating "the partial assimilation" to which Fernea referred earlier. Dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century, Nubian urban clubs have played a major role in easing Nubian migrants into Egyptian society while maintaining close contact with Nubia (see especially Fernea and Rouchdy 1987 and 1991). Initially, they acted primarily as welfare societies for dealing with illness and death, and as means for finding employment for new migrants. They were also educational centers where teachers were hired to help migrants and their children with their Arabic and the keeping of accounts.

By the 1940s, some clubs had formed food cooperatives for provisioning home villages in Nubia and building elementary schools there. By the time of resettlement, there were more than 40 such clubs in Aswan, Cairo and Alexandria. Drawing their members from specific Nubian villages, some owned coffee shops and other commercial businesses. Others provided support for Nubian painting, poetry, music and dance, with a group of young men performing at clubs and at weddings. Broader membership clubs also had political functions that included organizing workshops and conferences to discuss Nubian problems.

Since resettlement, a widening range of clubs and other Nubian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have expanded into villages as well. By 1969, for example, all villages in Kom Ombo had formed community development associations. In 2007, respondents among the 80 Nubians interviewed by Habbob belonged to a variety of associations in Kom Ombo, including sporting, Nubian Heritage Revival and women's associations. By then, trained and experienced members of Nubian NGOs were dealing with broader issues such as micro credit, gender, environment and sustainable development. Other NGOs, including Nubian associations formed throughout the Middle East, and in Australia, Europe and North America, were providing financial support for building clinics, schools, rest houses and mosques in Kom Ombo and elsewhere.

Egyptian Nubians had converted from Christianity to Islam by the fourteenth century while maintaining a very strong sense of their cultural and historical identity. Mosques and tombs of important religious leaders were a dominant architectural feature between the first and fifth cataracts. Bearing in mind Fernea's comments about partial assimilation, why were Nubians not totally assimilated? Along with their vitality and flexibility, a number of customs were of great symbolic importance.

Referred to as "symbolic property" (Fernea and Rouchdy 1987: 371), Fadicca-speakers valued elaborate, lengthy and highly ritualized weddings and mourning rites, while Matokki-speakers held elaborate Saint's day ceremonies at a large number of shrines. Ethnic endogamy continued whereby Nubians took spouses from within their own larger community to the extent that even today there continue to be relatively few marriages between Matokki- and Fadicca-speaking Nubians.

Another important characteristic for maintaining continuity, until recently, was the preference of Nubian men that women not accompany them to the cities. Rather they remained in female-dominated Nubian villages in which children were born and socialized within an exclusively Nubian context. This included learning a Nubian language as a first language since few women spoke Arabic. Though Muslims, women also practiced a form of folk Islam. Rituals associated with the Nile, for example, had Pharaonic components as did the decorations that women painted on the interior and exterior walls of their houses.

Finally, Nubians felt just as superior to other Egyptians as those Egyptians felt to them. Their "high self-esteem derived from well-deserved reputations among the foreigners and high-status Egyptians for whom they worked and … a strong sense of identity with their own communities, a sense of importance in their own land … It would be difficult to over-estimate the symbolic importance of Old Nubia" (Ibid: 370).

4 Stage 1: Planning Resettlement (This Section Draws Heavily on Fahim 1968 and El-Abd 1979)

4.1 Government Planning

Although subsequent implementation suffered because of inadequate government staffing, planning was carried out well according to today's standards, with several major exceptions. One major exception to this was how resettler houses were sited, sized and constructed in each village. Aside from choice of resettlement location, Nubians were not directly involved in policy making and planning, which was exclusively a national and provincial government responsibility. According to Fahim, Nubian voices were "always heard, but seldom taken account of except in cases where it was possible to accommodate Nubian desires easily within the general framework of the plan … [I]t is a fair statement to say that although there was no consistent or actual participation of Nubians in plan formulation, there was consultation and communication between them and the policy makers" (1968: 49–50).

As emphasized throughout the final report of the World Commission on Dams, participation is important for many reasons. In addition to equity considerations, it gives resettlers a greater sense of ownership as well as responsibility for the resettlement process. Also, as Fahim has emphasized, participation also reduces the risk of resettlers becoming overly dependent on those who require their involuntary removal.

The government intended for the Nubians to be better off following removal, as well as more integrated within Egyptian society. Plans included both compensation and development. Development would include both arable land and non-farm employment opportunities. Hence the 5-year development plan for Aswan Governorate included five factories to be built in Kom Ombo. The resettlement budget was 33 million Egyptian pounds (in the late 1960s one Egyptian pound equaled $2.32) or approximately 8 % of total project costs. £15 million were for permanent housing, social services and infrastructure.

Housing would be provided in two phases, starting with resettlers still living in houses in Old Nubia at the time of removal. Subsequently, houses were supposed to be built for urban migrants (the *mughtarabin*) who had houses in Nubia but who were not resident there during the resettlement process. Housing would also include 920 units for government staff and service workers. Infrastructure included paved roads for linking villages within the Kom Ombo crescent and to the main neighboring towns that were linked to Cairo and Aswan by air, rail and regular bus service.

A total of £9 million was for land reclamation for irrigated agriculture. According to the plan, families that had a house in Nubia at the time of the 1960 census would receive, based on family size, the 2–5 feddans of irrigated land allowable under the 1952 Agrarian Reform Act. There was one major exception, however, that left approximately 40 % of the displaced families with no land (Fahim 1983: 74). That included all households with access to less than one feddan of arable land in Old Nubia. They received only cash compensation, which those involved saw as especially discriminatory since landless families received up to 2 feddans of irrigable land. The government explained this serious inequity as due to the lack of available land in the Kom Ombo area. Also required under the 1952 Act, every landowner was expected to join a government-controlled producers and marketing cooperative and every landowner was expected to farm the land received.

The remaining £9 million included equal amounts for compensation, before- and after-move subsidies, and expenses for those planning and implementing resettlement. Compensation was based on a survey of land resources including date palms and housing. Half was to be paid in cash with the remainder to cover the costs of resettlement housing and land reclamation. Should housing and reclamation costs exceed the estimated amount, the remainder was to be paid over a 40-year period with a moratorium in repayment until the first crop was harvested. Until that time each family would receive a subsidy to cover living expenses. As for the timing of the resettlement plan, it had two phases. The first was to resettle approximately 48,000 people currently living within the future inundation zone. The second, yet to be completed, was to house the *mughtarabin*.

A year after work began on preparatory infrastructure for the dam's construction phase, the Government launched belated (in terms of the state of the art for pre-resettlement bench mark studies) surveys in 1956 and '57 of the future reservoir's perimeter and of the number and location of Nubian communities. A major

conclusion was that it would no longer be possible for resettlers to move their villages inland to the edge of the new reservoir as they had done in the past.

In 1958, the High Dam Service Committee led a government effort to identify possible resettlement sites and to commence developing a resettlement policy. Owing to lack of relevant data on the existing Nubian population, the Ministry of Social Affairs was requested to complete a detailed social survey. In addition to necessary demographic and socio-economic information, the survey included questions on Nubian preferences among possible resettlement sites.

While the large majority preferred to move to the government's preferred area near Kom Ombo, two-thirds of the families in Tomas wa Afia preferred to move further downstream to Esna where they had purchased some land at the time of the second heightening of the Aswan dam in 1933. The government facilitated those wishing to move to Esna by contracting Ital Consult to reclaim 8000 feddans. In total, 4150 feddans were handed over to Tomas wa Afia resettler families in 1970 with the remainder sold in auction to Sa'idi families. As for housing, resettler families received 488 houses in 1964. *Mughtarabin* received 50 houses in 1987, 50 in 1995, 100 in 2003 and 10 in 2007 for a total of 210 houses.

During January—February 1960, 60 social workers working with 165 Nubian teachers from local schools completed the social survey. It covered 6066 families in 553 hamlets that were clustered into 37 villages. Also in January, both President Nasser and Vice President Shafi came to Nubia to address the resettling population. In his speech, President Nasser emphasized two fundamental policies of his revolutionary government. One included the provision of free education and medical care; the other emphasized "social solidarity in terms of lessening the segmentation of the society" (Fahim 1968: 48).

Noting that the Nubians were giving up their homeland "for the prosperity of the Republic," the Vice-President emphasized that the Republic would "welcome them in one of its new districts in Kom Ombo. There they will find stability, prosperity, and a decent life." During a later visit, the Minister of Social Affairs stated that "we appreciate Nubian traditions and respect their spiritual and moral values. We want you to preserve and maintain them in your future life" (quoted by Fahim no date: 62). At the same time they stressed a common heritage for Egyptians and Muslims, reminding Nubians of the "Islamic appeal that favors migration for a better life" (Ibid: 65). Such personal attention from high government officials continues to be an uncommon feature of dam-induced resettlement.

Also in 1960, an Investigation of Nubian Demands Committee was formed that was chaired by the Governor of Aswan Governorate. As the title suggests, its task was to "help settle Nubian problems and to forward Nubian ideas to policy makers. The committee held monthly meetings with Nubian delegates until the time of departure for the new lands" (El-Abd 1979: 100). That same year the Ministry of Culture provided a boat to allow 20 artists and writers to travel through the area to record whatever appealed to them, with their impressions widely circulated. A photographic survey was carried out of Nubian artistry and architecture. Later, in

1963, a new social survey of Old Nubia was completed. Based on more up-to-date information, each resettler was then provided with an identification card that Fahim refers to as their "passport from the old to the new site" (Fahim 1968: 62).

Another 1960 initiative was the government's agreement to meet on occasion with participants in AUC's Ethnological Survey of Nubia. In addition to ongoing meetings with relevant government officials, including the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, preliminary results were presented in a series of papers at a several-day workshop held in Aswan in January 1964. That was already halfway through the physical removal of the people to Kom Ombo. While the survey was initiated with the understanding that the policy relevance of information gathered would be available for planning purposes, there existed the type of tension between administrators and researchers that continues to be all too common throughout the world. The main problem stemmed from a tendency of the administrators to interpret the comments and suggestions of researchers as a criticism of their work.

Fahim refers to such reactions during the workshop; reactions which he believes affected administrator/researcher relationships for "since then, administrators have looked at field ethnographers as troublemakers and disliked seeing them in the resettlement area" (1968: 47). On the other hand, it may have been the case that the response of administrators was partially because the research was initiated too late in the planning process so that research-derived suggestions, no matter how useful, were made at a time when plans were already being implemented; hence the likelihood of tension if suggestions differed from those plans. The obvious solution is to integrate policy-relevant research into the planning process at an earlier date.

Overall responsibility for resettlement planning and implementation fell to the Aswan Governorate. That "made the Nubian project an integral part of the decentralized program of economic development of Aswan Province" (Fahim 1968: 44). Planning and implementation, however, were the task of central government departments through the Joint Committee for Nubian Migration that was set up in 1961 with the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs as chair.

In planning the layout of villages, the government tried to follow Nubian desires that villages be aligned to each other as they had been in Old Nubia. The main exception was where three small villages were aggregated within others. The final 37 villages (*nahia*) retained their names, with Adindan, for example, becoming New Adindan. In most villages, a mosque and a guesthouse were provided. Also provided were 19 elementary schools, one boarding secondary school, three technical boarding schools, and a vocational training school for teachers.

In total, 11 health units and clinics were also provided as well as a 140-bed hospital that eventually had 19 doctors. The hospital was located in the administrative center named Nasr Town, which also had a central police station, a central fire station, and a central postal facility. In addition to four outlying fire stations, police stations and postal facilities with telegraph and telephone service, 18 sports grounds, 17 bakeries and 17 cooperative-associated stores were provided. There were 21 markets of varying size, with 3–13 shops in each.

4.2 Nubian Reactions to Resettlement

Unique, I believe, among those required to move involuntarily because of dams, is the fact that the majority of the Nubian population could see benefits as well as costs associated with resettlement. Ironically, the reason for this was in large part due to previous Nubian removals in connection with the construction and heightening of the original Aswan Dam. Unlike many other resettling populations, the Nubians not only knew what resettlement would involve, but were aware of how the majority's movement to the edge of a growing reservoir had increased their isolation and reduced their further integration into the political economy of Egypt.

When informed about what would be a fourth removal for those living closest to Aswan, reactions of Matokki-speakers were ambivalent. On the one hand, they continued to have a deep attraction to Nubia, like other Nubians. As characterized by Fernea and Kennedy:

> Nubians "had always stated that their native land was 'blessed.' They considered the climate, land and water superior to that found anywhere else in the Nile valley, and they believed their villages, which were relatively free of outside influence, to have the highest standards of peacefulness, cleanliness, honesty, and personal security in Egypt. On the other hand, they were well aware of the material and social disadvantages which resulted from their isolation, and they resented their inability to participate fully in the revolutionary changes taking place elsewhere in Egypt" (Fernea and Kennedy 1966: 349–350). "Yet they were also concerned about security issues, especially relating to women, which they associated with the unfamiliar host population of Sa'idis that would surround them" (Ibid).

Matokki-speakers also knew that their terribly inadequate natural resource base and lack of employment opportunities in Old Nubia split families, as the large majority of men sought outside employment while wives and children remained in Nubia. Seldom seeing their husbands, the majority of women, though filled with anxiety about moving to Kom Ombo, favored resettlement there in hopes that their husbands could rejoin them by finding local employment. Even if such employment was not available, distances between family members would be decreased and ease of travel increased.

Young men also tended to favor removal, while the Nubian elite saw it as an opportunity to have a greater impact on (and be impacted by) Egyptian society as well as being better integrated within the community of Islam. Least willing to move were those whose livelihood would be most affected by relocation. That included those who made and owned the sailing boats that traveled up and down the Nile between Aswan and the Sudan border, and the merchants who used them to provision the villages along the way. It also included those involved in lucrative international smuggling activities. And it included elderly widows and divorcees who had seldom left Nubia.

Attitudes toward removal varied according to distance from Aswan. Being the most disadvantaged by previous removals, Matokki-speakers were more in favor of removal than the upriver Fedicci-speaking Nubians, especially those in the least affected villages closest to the Sudan border. In the mid-1950s, they rejected as not

true the first rumors that the construction of a High Dam would inundate all of Egyptian Nubia. When substantiated in 1958, Fahim noted that "the saying, 'Sad Yami Kharaba Yami,' i.e., the construction of the dam means the destruction of Nubia, was often heard" (Fahim 1968: 68). At that time "uncertainty, grief and depression" began (Fahim no date: 60).

5 Stage 2: Physical Removal, Multi-Dimensional Stress and Initial Adaptation

5.1 Introduction

Even where eventual outcomes of dam resettlement are positive, World Bank and other guidelines are correct in emphasizing the need to avoid resettlement wherever possible. Looking back on their earlier experiences with resettlement, all but one of the first generation respondents in Habbob's survey stated that the first years of resettlement were the worst. The one exception was a university-educated engineer. Of the eight who gave more specific answers, six emphasized the first 10 years and two the first 15 as the most difficult. Difficulties listed included leaving Old Nubia, confusion concerning the future, and, most frequently mentioned, difficulties adjusting to a new area and new neighbors.

The second generation was well aware of such difficulties, having been informed about them by their elders. As a result, of 80 first and second generation resettlers, only two gave a positive answer to question 33, which asked if respondents would have been willing to leave Old Nubia for Kom Ombo (or elsewhere) if a wider range of choices and opportunities had been available. Both were older men in their seventies. One was the engineer mentioned above who had graduated at the time of resettlement from Cairo University. He stated, "Yes, I would leave because education, health services, new kinds of jobs away from farming became available." The other, though uneducated, was a Cairo worker at the time of resettlement who replied, "I do like living in cities, especially Cairo."

Everyone else, in emphasizing an unwillingness to leave Old Nubia regardless of the alternatives offered, saw resettlement in the 1960s as involuntary. Invariably, the short reason given for refusing to move was "because it is our homeland." Comments of the few who gave more elaborate answers included: "Who would leave his homeland voluntarily to a place and people he never use to know;" "because my wonderful childhood was there in Old Nubia—the unforgotten homeland;" "all my good memories are there;" and "because it is our homeland and I do not like our Nubian community to mix and melt into neighbors' communities with their cultural differences."

Nubians summed up their aversion to involuntary resettlement by refusing to refer to the Kom Ombo resettlement area as "New Nubia," which was the title used by "government agencies and official bureaus" (Mahgoub Op. Cit.: 40). Rather they used the Arabic term *El-Tahjir*, which means "the displacement."

5.2 Physical Removal

Preparing themselves for the move, Nubians took advantage of the scarcity of wood throughout Egypt to sell what trees there were as well as their wooden doors, window frames and roofing. As the date of removal grew closer, they also stopped cultivation, selling the wooden parts of the water-wheel. Some also sold their domestic stock, while merchants ceased provisioning communities. Those activities led to inadequate food supplies in villages where resettlement dates were postponed. As a result, people were more malnourished than they would have otherwise been and more susceptible to disease when finally shifted to a far more densely settled Kom Ombo.

Urban Nubians also contributed to food inadequacies when they returned to help with the evacuation, visit shrines, or to "have a last look at their homeland and to visit the cemetery to express respect and loyalty to their dead relatives and friends" (Fahim 1968: 64). In response, the government tried to prohibit their departure from Aswan to Old Nubia, which further increased Nubian suspicion toward Egyptian government policies and officials.

While the timing of physical removal in connection with dam construction should always be synchronized with the construction timetable, the priority given to completion of physical infrastructure often provides insufficient time for resettlement purposes. In the Aswan High Dam case, everyone had to be moved before June 1964 when ongoing construction was expected to raise water levels several meters above the previous high levels. Though the government had assured Nubians of a smooth resettlement process, the implementation of physical removal was sufficiently defective to cause unnecessary stress and suffering.

The movement of the first few communities was carried out with precision and considerable fanfare; thereafter, confusion and stress increased significantly. Several reasons were involved. At the time of removal, less than 10 % of the land being reclaimed at Kom Ombo was ready for cultivation. In rushing to complete housing on a tight schedule, contractors ran short of materials. Others did shoddy work, with subsidence of poorly laid foundations on unstable soil causing large wall and roof cracks. Some resettlers even arrived to find no houses ready for them.

The influx of 48,000 people over an eight-month period from 18 October, 1963 to 22 June, 1964, plus urban relatives who returned to help or to advance their own case for housing, led to a serious food shortage, which, in turn, contributed to malnutrition and a higher death rate. Movement of Nubian livestock, which had been an important cash crop before High Dam resettlement, was also poorly planned and implemented with the result that many died during the first year because of inadequate fodder.

First to be moved on October 18 were 1223 members of 501 families from a village 25 km upriver from Aswan. Upon arrival by boat at Aswan, they were met

by the Minister of Social Affairs, other officials and the public. They were greeted with flags and music "to symbolize the gratitude of the whole nation to the Nubians for their sacrifice" (Fahim 1968: 71). They then were then transported to Kom Ombo by bus, preceded by a cavalcade of official vehicles, with their introduction to their new community and new houses supervised by the Minister. Several days later, they were visited by the Prime Minister who was en route to Aswan to receive another group of resettlers.

As more and more Nubians arrived during the days and months that followed, the logistics required for effective physical removal through Aswan and into Kom Ombo broke down. On April 10, 1964 John Kennedy observed at Aswan that:

> The unloading of the Nubians was a scene of great confusion. The young relatives from Aswan, Cairo and Alexandria were trying to help the old men, disabled people and small children. The weather was very hot and there was not much help of any kind … Goats were breaking lose and running all around with people chasing them.
>
> At Kom Ombo, "there were two or three social workers moving in and out among the people trying to give assistance and help them find their houses. All the furniture had been piled in a huge heap. In front of the village everyone was trying to find his belongings. Many of the beds were broken and cracked. Truck drivers just dumped them and left … Everyone was expressing his dismay at the state of things."

Under such circumstances, it was understandable that resettlers organized, with the help of well-placed urban relatives, to send complaints to high officials in the central government, some of which noted the contrast between the initial removals and subsequent ones. Cause for complaints increased as resettlers found arable land still to be reclaimed.

Customary foods such as vegetables, cheese and other dairy products, and meat were in short supply and what foods were available sold at inflated prices due to the sudden increase of 48,000 people with cash from compensation, as well as exploitation by host population traders from surrounding communities. While groceries sold from the government cooperative stores were more reasonably priced, they consisted primarily of canned goods and other foodstuffs with which Nubians were unfamiliar. In addition, as opposed to the use of credit, which had prevailed for purchases in Old Nubia, payment was required in cash.

The situation for livestock was especially serious. Fearing the introduction of disease from Old Nubia and the Sudan and aware that initially there would be inadequate fodder in Kom Ombo, project authorities requested that Nubians sell their livestock, with the promise that they would subsequently be replaced with new stock. That request was rejected because it did not take into consideration Nubians' experience with unfulfilled government promises during past resettlements. The compromise that followed was to quarantine livestock in Aswan. Although some Nubians bypassed that requirement by smuggling their animals into Kom Ombo, the result was the same—livestock, including 3000 cattle from quarantine, eventually arrived with little available to feed them. The result was that "they died in great numbers day after day" (Fahim 1968: 76).

5.3 The Multidimensional Stress of Resettlement

Although thousands of Nubians may have looked forward to resettlement, the resettlement process was still stressful with physiological, psychological and socio-cultural components. In spite of improved medical facilities, there is strong evidence that death rates among children and the old increased significantly during the first year following removal. Nubians who had formerly lived in isolated communities of several hundred people now found themselves in one large resettlement zone of over 50,000 people. "Communicable diseases such as dysentery, measles and a form of encephalitis quickly spread in the suddenly condensed population. These conditions were aggravated by the high summer temperatures typical of the region. They caused a rapid rise in mortality, especially among the very young and the very old" (Fernea and Kennedy 1966: 350).

As is common with dam resettlement worldwide, "some areas had initial difficulties with water supplies" (Ibid). Maintenance of the 200 communal taps, for example, proved to be a problem.

A contributing factor, according to the doctors with whom Fahim talked, was the resettlement-induced under-nutrition that occurred prior to removal and the malnutrition that followed as a result of the inadequate food supply available in Kom Ombo. "Resistance to infectious diseases was described as very low, especially among infants and elderly people. The official vital statistics show a high rise in the crude death rate among the relocates during the year following relocation; from 13.6 in 1963 … to 23.6 in 1965 (the year following the completion of relocation)" (Fahim 1979: 82). Though death rates had dropped to nearly 17 by the mid-1970s, they were still significantly higher than elsewhere in Egypt.

In regard to the psychological stress, Fahim states "the insufficiency and inadequacy of food over a long period created a state of anxiety among the relocates due to the uncertainty of life prospects in the relocation area" (Ibid). That was further aggravated, he believes, by the grieving of Nubians over the loss of Old Nubia (Fried 1963). Referring to the initial 18 October, 1963 move, Fahim wrote in an earlier source:

> Just before boarding the boats, women went sadly and silently to visit their dead. They sprayed the graves with water, which to them symbolized mercy and blessing. Visits were also paid to the [community] shrine to express devotion and ask its blessing. Observers of the move were touched by the sad expressions and tear-filled eyes of the Nubians at the time of departure. Some were kissing the land, others were crying at the walls of their deserted homes, and some were filling their pockets or small bags with soil. In the boats Nubians sat in deep silence staring at the disappearing village which they had left forever (Fahim 1968: 70).

> Following arrival, "A feeling of insecurity and mistrust prevailed … doors were closed and people approached the strange neighbors cautiously … Many Nubians lived in great fear of the non-Nubian groups living near their new villages. They were also suspicious of the Nubians next to them" (Fahim 1968: 78). "So fearful were Nubians of others that youth patrols were mounted during the first few months to keep outsiders away from Nubian communities" (Fahim no date: 112).

5.4 Kom Ombo Housing and Villages

The Ph.D. dissertations of two Egyptian architects were especially critical of the housing provided by the government. Both were based on research from the late 1980s, with Yasser Mahgoub's submitted in 1990 and Wael Fahmi's in 1993. While Fahmi concentrated on three villages in the Matokki-speaking area, Mahgoub selected one village in the Feddica-speaking area as well as two Nubian pioneering resettler communities that were built in the 1970s, close to the frontier with the Sudan.

Rather than "following the traditional method of researching architecture from the architects' point of view, [Mahgoub] choose to look for social and cultural meanings of architecture in the daily life experiences of community and people in order to understand their experience with architecture and environments" (Mahgoub 1990: 20). As for Fahmi, he "adopted an exploratory interdisciplinary approach" (Fahmi 1993: 24) during which he used Scudder's four stage framework as a point "of departure whereby each stage will be examined" (Ibid: 66) and critiqued in relation to the Egyptian Nubian case.

Both were influenced by Hussein Fahim's research and by the Egyptian architect, Hassan Fathy, "who advocated the need for an *Egyptian accent* in architecture and architecture for the poor using self-help and mud-construction techniques" (Mahgoub 1990: 13). In Fathy's words:

> In modern Egypt there is no indigenous style. The signature is missing, the houses of the rich and poor alike are without character, without an Egyptian accent (Fathy 1973: 19–20).

The major exception was Nubian housing that Fathy found in the Mattoki-speaking area:

> As we visited the first few villages … we immediately realized that we were face to face with a most dramatic and significant human experiment. It was a new world for all of us, whole villages of houses, spacious, lovely, clean and harmonious. There was nothing like them in Egypt. Each village seemed to come from some dream country. (Fathy 1966: 73).

The same was the case in the yet-to-be-inundated areas near the Sudan border. There, Nubian housing not only reflected Nubian society and culture but reinforced both from generation to generation. Figure 6 outlines such a pre-resettlement house in Old Nubia.

The house's large size was intended to accommodate an extended family life style. Such a house "was not perceived as rooms, rather it was a collection of spaces where events and activities took place: eating, sleeping, cooking, entertaining guests, weddings, birth, and living in general. Each part of the house was a story of interwoven meanings and actions" (Mahgoub Ibid: 141).

Old Adindan houses were usually located in larger groups based on kinship while house building was seen as an opportunity for the whole community "to participate and show their support. The event was usually associated with the formation of a new family." In one case described to the author, "all the village shared in the construction of the new house, men and women alike; some were

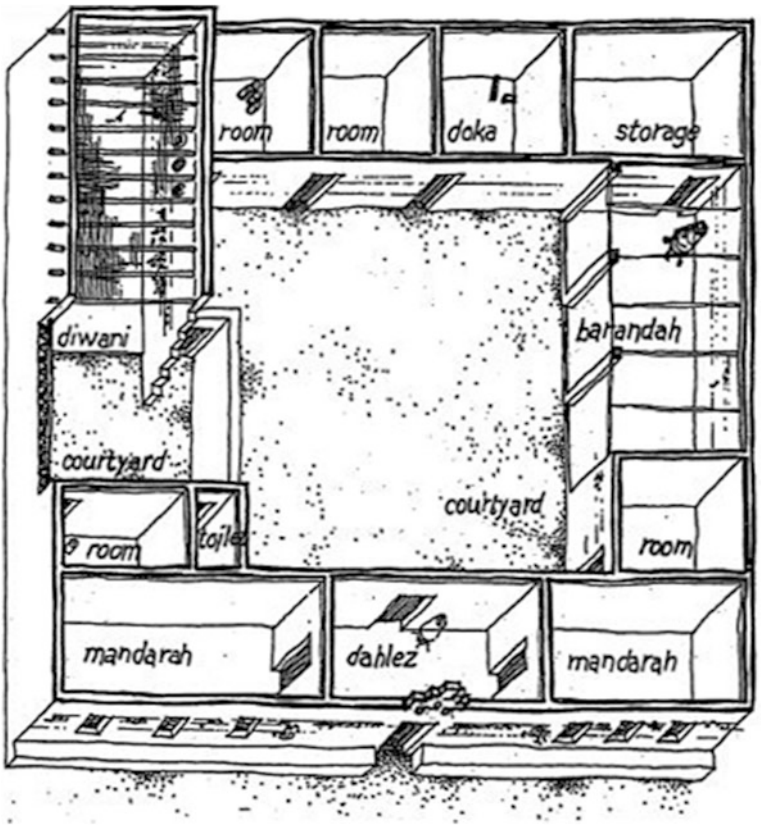

Fig. 6 A typical house in Old Nubia diagrammed by Yasser Mahgoub in his (1990) Ph.D. dissertation

digging, some brought mud and stone, while others prepared palm leaves for the roof. Everyone participated either to fulfill an obligation to the owners who had helped them build their houses or to assure their help when needed."

Walls were built of a special mixture of "gravel, sand, Nile mud, animal dung and straw" in up to 20 layers, each of which required drying for two to four days. "Because it took several months to build a house using this method, events and celebrations [that] took place during the house construction tied the house to the history of the *naja* [hamlet] and the individual" (Mahgoub Ibid: 151–2).

The interior of each house is not seen as an aggregate of rooms for different functions like sleeping but as a place for essential social and cultural activities. According to Mahgoub:

> "whenever a discussion starts about the Nubian house … the first thing that a Nubian talks about is the *diwani.*" As one Nubian explained to Mahgoub, "the *diwani* is a house within the house … where the wedding ceremonies are held … The *diwani* is made for the bride and her groom so that they could be in private there" not just for the marriage but for the

first days, months or years of their marriage, during which time it became "the best maintained and decorated part of the house" (Mahgoub Ibid: 147).

Perhaps the most stressful aspect of resettlement for many Nubians, women especially, at Kom Ombo was the type and layout of their new housing. Government planners completely ignored the role of housing in Nubian culture and social organization. Several reasons for this situation were inexcusable. They included failure to involve Nubians in the design of housing, which was a major cause for nuclear families eventually replacing extended families as the dominant form of social organization among the Nubian elite. Because construction was not synchronized with dam construction, construction was rushed, with planning carried out in Cairo with virtually no examination of the unoccupied and roadless landscape for villages in regard to soil structure and risk of flooding for housing and agriculture.

In order to reduce costs and to ease construction, the government clustered identical houses in back to back rows based solely on family size. As a result, a family requiring four rooms would find itself separated from a widowed mother who had lived nearby in Old Nubia but now would be allocated a single or two bed room house in a more distant row. All houses were not only identical in construction, aside from the number of family members, but they were also significantly smaller than in Old Nubia. The *diwani*, which was so important for a daughter's marriage and for integrating the second generation within a single household until they could build their own house, was actually omitted from the government house (Fig. 7).

Shared walls between adjacent houses were lower than in Old Nubia, further reducing the sense of privacy that was so important to Nubians. Moreover, the final form of house design made living conditions inside intolerable during the hottest months since the proposed "heat insulating construction system … was replaced by non-insulating flat, concrete roofs, which were cheaper than the hollow block roofs recommended by the guidelines." Not being insulated, such roofs "allowed the heat to penetrate into the rooms, where poor ventilation trapped the heat inside" (Mahgoub Ibid: 17). "This disregard of climatic considerations in the new houses caused death among elderly people" (Fahmi Op. Cit.: 117). One result was that for months at a time, family members slept outside at night on narrow benches that some families added to their front walls or in the narrow side streets.

Women were particularly critical of *El-Tahjar* housing because it kept people from resettling with relatives and former neighbors. Now people occupying co-joining row houses were strangers, hence increasing insecurity—an insecurity that was heightened by the smaller size of houses and the low walls between adjoining houses. Strangeness was increased by features with which Nubians were unaccustomed, such as in-house quarters for livestock as opposed to their being outside as in Old Nubia. Crowding inside houses also increased rising from 0.7 per room in Old Nubia to 1.6 in *El-Tahjar* (Fahim 1974: 9).

As for the 553 formerly separate communities in Old Nubia, now they were jammed together in 37 villages that also had adverse privacy implications.

Fig. 7 Line of attached Nubian resettler houses with concrete roofs in Kom Ombo

According to Fahmi, "the lack of sewage and waste disposal systems contributed to the environmental problems in the new villages. In addition, these problems were aggravated by the lack of proper latrines (trenches) or drainage facilities in the State-built houses … The lack of coordination between housing and the agriculture planning schemes resulted in serious water-drainage problems that caused the fast filling of latrines … inside the houses and the necessity for constant latrine sewage removal. Delays in cleaning latrines often caused problems between neighbors and contributed to the degradation of the environmental conditions in the new villages" (Fahmi Ibid: 228).

In addition, and surely obvious to their occupants, the new housing and communities had not been designed to accommodate population increase, a problem that presumably accelerated the Nubian propensity to migrate to Cairo, Alexandria and other urban cities.

Nubian culture, as well as social organization, was also adversely affected with one informant telling Fahim "if we want to maintain our customs, we must maintain our architecture" (Fahim no date: 78). Some, Fahim noted, were so disturbed that they accused their own leaders of cooperating with government officials in ways that were contrary to Nubian interests. Others were inclined to blame their misfortune on the anger of deceased religious leaders about whom they dreamed, or claimed to have seen, and whose shrines they had left behind: "As a way out of that stress and frustration, rumors of possible return to Old Nubia rapidly became widespread" (Fahim 1968: 79).

Considerable cultural loss also occurred. Because most of the Kom Ombo resettlement area was located several kilometers inland, Nile rituals that were of previous importance to women were dropped. The same was the case with psychodramas that were of importance to women for dealing with mental illness and insecurity. The rebuilding of shrines for revered religious leaders was either delayed or omitted entirely. Saint's Day celebrations were reduced in number. Among Fadicca-speaking Nubians, wedding ceremonies were simplified and reduced from 3–4 days to 1 day. Mourning ceremonies were also simplified and reduced from 15 to 3 days. Among Matokki-speakers, the length of ceremonies for saints was reduced sharply. Lasting at least 7 days in Old Nubia, in *El-Tahjir* the trend was for them to last only a day (Fernea and Kennedy 1966: 325).

5.5 *Initial Coping with Adversity During Stage 2*

As with dam resettlers elsewhere, Nubians attempted to cling to the familiar during the first year following removal. Women took the initiative to remodel their housing; in the words of one, "to change the government house to a Nubian home" (quoted by Fahim no date: 79). By 1970, Fahim noted that "the facade of houses in most of the villages (88 %) had been plastered, painted and decorated" (April 1971: 13).

Customary low benches were also made outside, being important in Old Nubia as a place for people to congregate and visit. Inside houses walls were decorated, while tiles were laid over sand floors. Livestock quarters in most households were moved outside, often, because of space constrictions, to the middle of what were supposed to be streets. To help provide leafy vegetables, women placed alluvium on courtyard sands that they irrigated—much to the annoyance of the government authorities—using communal taps. Rather than use bread from the government's 17 bakeries, they used wheat flour provided through food aid for making bread in customary ovens that they rebuilt in former livestock quarters that had been remodeled into kitchens.

Nubians who had hoped to remain with, or rejoin from Cairo or other urban areas, families in Kom Ombo followed previous patterns by seeking work in cities as migrant laborers due to the inadequacies in the government's land reclamation program and the scarcity of off-farm employment in the surrounding areas. That necessity has continued to the present.

While the responsibility of the Ministry of Land Reform, less than one third of the promised land had been reclaimed prior to the formation in 1966 of the Egyptian Authority for the Utilization and Development of Reclaimed Land (EAUDRL). EAUDRL was established in order to reclaim land whose irrigation would be enhanced following completion of the High Dam. Among plans for the reclamation of 76,000 feddans in Upper Egypt, 29,000 were designated for Nubian resettlers in Kom Ombo and Esna.

By 1969, EAUDRL had only added several hundred feddans to the 5863 feddans reclaimed by the Ministry of Land Reform. The total increased to 15,477 feddans

by the mid-1970s and was only distributed to approximately 60 % of resettling families. Averaging 1.7 feddans, not only were holdings small in comparison to the 2–5 feddans promised each household, but they were also divided into at least two parts. One, on better soils, was relatively close to the owner's village; the other was at a distance of several kilometers. In total, 40 % of such holdings were required by the government to be cropped in sugar cane while families could utilize the remainder as they wished.

Nubians who received such land used it in varying ways. Fadicca-speaking Nubians, who had been able to continue farming in Old Nubia after the heightening of the original Aswan Dam, were more apt to farm it themselves, or allow its cultivation on a sharecropping basis with other Nubians. Matokki-speakers, like those who had resettled below Aswan in 1933, tended to enter into share-cropping relationships with Sa'idis. In all cases, Nubians prevailed against attempts by the authorities to require them to cultivate the land themselves like peasants elsewhere in Egypt. Nubians saw the decisions regarding how their land was cultivated as their prerogative. The government requirement was seen as "an imposition and an inappropriate intervention into their personal business" (Fahim January, 1972: 7).

5.6 Government Reactions to Inadequate Implementation

Having not anticipated the serious food shortages that arose, the government finally negotiated with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for food relief that began in January, 1965 and continued for 18 months. In addition to wheat flour and other foodstuffs, the FAO provided corn and fodder sufficient to feed 6000 livestock and 8000 chickens. After a gap of 3 years, the government then arranged for the World Food Programme to provide food relief in 1970 for another 5 years. That relief, however, was only available for those managing reclaimed land, presumably as an inducement not just to cultivate it, but also to increase its productivity.

Although critical of the government's failure to arrange for food relief to be available before removal, Fahim argued that its subsequent provision increased Nubian dependence on project authorities; a dependence that initially arose because of the government's inability to make good on its initial resettlement promises and plans.

In addition to improving the government's plan implementation capacities, Fahim also theorized that increased Nubian participation in policy formation, planning and plan implementation would have reduced what he referred to as a "dependency syndrome." Although project authorities with resettlement responsibilities have time and again criticized what they call a 'resettler complaints and dependency culture,' that is a 'blaming the victim' stance—the ultimate cause was the failure of the authorities to plan and implement, with resettlers' participation, a credible resettlement with a development plan.

6 Stage 3: Economic and Community Development

6.1 Introduction

It is not easy to pinpoint a specific time for the commencement of Stage 3. Fernea and Kennedy report that after only one year observers noticed "a dramatic change in Kom Ombo. There is a new air of optimism" (Fernea and Kennedy 1966: 351). This 'dramatic change' would have been no later than 1965. Those observers noted, for example, the extent to which Nubian women had remodeled their government-provided houses.

In Fahmi's opinion, however, the Second Stage lasted 4 years (Op. Cit.: 66), while Fahim notes that Nubians were no longer remodeling and decorating their houses in the mid 1970s. Indeed, deterioration had set in, in part he believes because the government had yet to turn over home ownership to the resettlers. He also reports a continuation of what he has labeled "resettlement sickness," whereby Nubians continued to associate Kom Ombo with "illness" and Old Nubia with "health" (Fahim 1979: 87); an attitude commonly expressed in our 2007 interviews. In the author's opinion based on this article, Stage 2 continued for 7–10 years; that is until at least the mid-1970s.

Most 2007 first generation participants in our survey simply stated that the best years followed right after the worst years. Of those who mentioned specific years, nine stated since 1980 (with one specifying 1980–2000), since 1985, and since the late 1980s (with one specifying 1985–2000). The engineer who reported no worst years stated that the best years started with resettlement in 1964 after which there was "new land and community with unlimited expectations" along with government services (especially education), improved transport, more jobs (especially for women), and increasing family income. Those benefits were also listed time again by the majority as characterizing the best years.

Second generation women were especially appreciative of improved education and employment. An employed female social worker from Mariya stated that, "I would never have had such a chance in Old Nubia." On the other hand, she like others also noted resettlement costs. Health, for example, was better in Old Nubia due to its "pure calm atmosphere and organic food" or, as stated by another second generation woman, "unpolluted atmosphere and fresh organic food." The reference to organic food related to the need in Kom Ombo to use fertilizers, pesticides and other inputs, while health was initially worse due to "resettlement diseases" and, more recently, to crowding and pollution.

6.2 1970s

By 1970, Fahim reported a major change, stating that, "from our frequent visits to Kom Ombo one feels and sees, indeed, a great transformation not only in the physical scene but also in Nubian achievements and aspirations" (Fahim 1974: 17).

By then, he reports that those seeking wage labor preferred white-collar jobs in Aswan Governorate as opposed to Cairo and Alexandria so as to be nearer their families. While labor migrants continue to circulate between Lower Egypt and Kom Ombo, others have left Cairo and Alexandria for jobs in Aswan and neighboring towns.

On balance, a greater proportion of men were living in Kom Ombo than was the case in Old Nubia, sex ratios having increased from 62 in 1960 to an estimated 78 in 1971 (Fahim 1971: 12). Nonetheless, sex ratios still varied greatly between the Fadicca-speaking area where they ranged from 80 to 100 and the Matokki-speaking areas where the proportion of males to 100 females ranged between 30 and 50 in 1976 (Fernea and Rouchdy 1987: 381).

Stage 3 economic indicators included Nubians expanding their horizons by seeking employment in oil-rich Arab states by the mid-1970s following easing of government policies, and increasingly moving out of service occupations into middle class positions. Political indicators included merging village clubs into pan-Nubian clubs that took on such additional functions as planning and raising capital for Nubian involvement in the development of Lake Nasser, as well as the increasing influence of Nubian women as a voting block.

Socio-cultural indicators included Nubian clubs initiating broader activities. In the Fadicca-speaking area, Nubians worked together in 1970 to build their first youth club, while Matokki-speakers built a high school that same year to serve their entire population. Other indicators involved further assimilation into Egyptian society (as illustrated by women praying in Arabic), while emphasizing a common history and ethnicity and re-interpreting and demonstrating Nubian culture.

The Ferneas reported that "[g]radually, the music of tradition and nostalgia, sung with enthusiasm by a new generation, helped to re-establish the sense of pride in and the consciousness of being Nubian" (Fernea 1991: 172). The associated cultural revival emphasized Nubian ethnicity and played a role in the establishment of two new clubs that united, for the first time, both Matokki- and Fadicca-speakers. Performing to a widening audience, the artists contributed their fees to a resettlement fund for assisting the elderly and the disadvantaged.

More indicative still, Matokki and Fadicca-speaking communities had come to realize the importance of working together to meet common goals. By the mid 1970s, they had initiated a project to fund higher education for students on the understanding that recipients would return to work in *El-Tahjir*. They were also having more influence on the political economy of Aswan Governorate, controlling 26,000 of 57,000 votes in their electoral district. Voting as a block, they were electing Nubian representatives and looking forward to the day when the Governor would be a Nubian.

Pioneering their importance as voters in the area and setting an example for Sa'idi neighbors, Nubian women cast twice as many votes in the 1976 election as their menfolk (Fahim no date: 111; Fernea and Rouchdy 1987: 384). In terms of the economy of Aswan Governorate, Fernea and Rouchdy believed that Nubians were "well on the way toward dominating white collar employment in the area" (Ibid: 380).

Girls attended schools in almost equal proportions to boys, while women were taking jobs in offices and shops for the first time. For that reason, and perhaps also because 52 % of land holdings were in women's names (since husbands were absent as labor migrants during the 1960 and 1963 censuses), the economic status of women had risen appreciably. In 1978, female university graduates formed their own club in Cairo that began playing a similar role to male clubs in fostering community development in Kom Ombo as well as in return migration to the shores of Lake Nasser, which had been sanctioned in 1977 by President Sadat.

Though Fahim used talk of returning to Old Nubia in the 1970s as a possible indicator of continued stress, Fernea and Rouchdy noticed less discussion on that issue in the early and mid-1980s. By then, a major drawdown of the reservoir during a succession of drought years had made irrigation-based pioneering more difficult with the result that several attempts to start new communities had failed.

6.3 1980s

6.3.1 Ethnicity and Socio-Cultural Change

Emphasis on a broadening of Nubian ethnicity and identity continued throughout the 1980s with linguist Aleya Rouchdy referring to what was "indeed a revival of Nubian ethnicity compared to what had existed in Egypt prior to 1960" (Rouchdy 1989: 97). In urban areas, marriages were increasing between previously endogamous Matokki and Fadicca-speaking villages. At the same time, Nubian men, women and children were becoming increasingly integrated within Egyptian society with marriages more often occurring between urban Nubian men and non-Nubian women (Ibid: 95).

While Nubian women were still reported as being stressed in the mid-1970s, at the time of Fernea and Rouchdy's brief visit in January, 1986, they no longer appeared fearful. By then, they reported that women, for the first time in the authors' experience, were taking part in conversations in a less reserved fashion. Traveling to *El-Tahjir* markets to make purchases, visiting relatives and friends, and interacting with Sa'idis (several hundred of whom were now living in Kom Ombo) appeared to be a familiar practice (Fernea and Rouchdy 1986: 374).

Linguist Aleya Rouchdy, however, was of the opinion that the two Nubian languages were at risk:

> 'Tip' to the dominant language, Arabic, is occurring. It is taking place unevenly in the two different settings, urban and non-urban, but even the temporary 'persistence' of Nubian in villages is now increasingly threatened by recent linguistic, social and economic developments (Rouchdy 1989: 97). The government does not recognize Nubian languages with only Arabic being taught in primary schools throughout the country.
>
> By 1986, Rouchdy found "a major decrease in the use of Nubian for primary socialization" (Ibid: 98). Urban Nubian mothers are increasingly fluent in Arabic. Even where still speaking Nubian in family affairs, they usually spoke Arabic to their children, with

> Rouchdy's informants no longer believing Nubian to be an important language. Even in the villages children no longer spoke Nubian at home; indeed, they "insisted on responding in Arabic when addressed in Nubian by their parents or adult family friends" (Ibid: 99).

Education in Arabic and use of Arabic at work were only two of a number of factors that Rouchdy saw undermining use of Nubian. Arabic newspapers published in Cairo were now readily available in Kom Ombo due to improved communications. Now, with electricity in their houses, Nubians had access to television which, "as the main source of entertainment, propagates Arabic culture and promotes the learning of Arabic" (Ibid: 98).

Also propagating Arabic was the Islamic revival that was occurring throughout Egypt. Mahgoub noted in the late 1980s in *El-Tahjir* Adindan that "a group of Muslim conservatives, including both Nubians and non-Nubians, consider singing and dancing *irreligious* activities that should be banned from the village. For those conservatives, women should be veiled and secluded from any contact from men." Most such conservatives were teachers in the government's school system who, according to one of Mahgoub's informants "punish those girls who participate in a public party by giving them poor grades; that's why they do not participate in our parties anymore" (Ibid: 54).

More men, accompanied by their sons, were also attending Friday prayers at the local mosque. Women were "actively practicing Islam. They learn Arabic in order to cite the Qur'an and practice Islam properly" (Rouchdy Op. Cit.: 99), while children were studying the Qur'an after school.

Like Rouchdy. Mahgoub emphasized, "'Deterioration of Language' …. In the case of Nubia, language was affected and modified by the Nubian's dislocation." But most serious in Mahgoub's opinion was "Loss of *el Aman .... El aman* is an Arabic word that means peace, security, and safety… For the Nubians, *el aman* was a concept of social peacefulness, which they lost after moving to Kom Ombo … The loss of *el aman* was also felt in aspects related to the whole community. Nubians attribute the loss of *el aman* to their contact with other ethnic groups, especially the *Saidis* of Upper Egypt (Mahgoub Ibid: 186–187).

Mahgoub was also concerned about loss of community spirit among the Nubians he met. On explaining to an old woman that he was in *El Tahjir* Abu Simbel to see houses,

> She looked at me and said 'the houses changed the people very much.' Her remark was shocking and surprising. How did the houses change the people I asked her? She said, 'The houses changed people very much. In the past, people were good to each other. Now, they are locking themselves inside their houses and do not care about each other' (Ibid: 185).

Mahgoub's conclusion was that "The change of meaning of neighbors was due to the distribution of houses after the displacement, which forced non-relatives and strangers to be neighbors. The meaning of neighbor changed from one of mutual support to one of mistrust" (Ibid: 189).

Both Fahmi and Mahgoub were also impressed by increasing divisions in Nubian society between what Fahmi called enculturated or localite Nubians (who were mainly female house owners with and without children) living in the one- and

two-room resettlement houses and a new, wealthy urban-oriented elite who increasingly were building large new houses on *El-Tahjir* village fringes.[1] Fahmi uses the word enculturated because "the smaller the house the higher the external activity" especially "amongst low income female-headed households in small houses who were closely involved in kinship interactions, and neighborliness is evidence from their more frequent use of the neighbors' *mastabas* [benches]" (Op. Cit.: 358–9) for a wide range of activities, besides socializing with kin and neighbors, that include generating income, household chores and the supervision of children (Ibid: 342) playing around house benches and in the smaller streets (Fig. 8).

By way of contrast, the urbanite households' "acculturation levels were clearly indicated from the limited use of [house] entrances and external spaces as venues for social interaction and neighborliness … As a result of the establishment of strong defensive barriers (mainly private gardens and fences), urbanite households exhibited a more introverted private life, with a low intensity of external activities", which also applied to their children who were "more inclined towards playing in private areas such as external gardens … and internal courtyards" (Ibid: 359).

While Fahmi describes in detail the urbanites' self-financed new larger houses as well as major modifications including a second story, Mahgoub concentrates on the contrast between the enculturated and urbanite lifestyles. Since the mid-1970s, an increasing number of families have become "much wealthier" than others in *El-Tahjir* Abu Simbel by having kin working in the Arab Gulf countries. "An unbalanced income and attempts to show off the new economic status resulted in jealousy and envy between residents of the same village" (Mahgoub Op. Cit. 208–209).

6.3.2 Land Use

Visiting Nubia over a 2-month period in 1989, Lassailly-Jacob reported (1990) that Nubians in one village had successfully integrated farming the reclaimed land into a diversified household production system that was closer to practices in Old Nubia. Though only 18 farmers were interviewed, the emphasis was on livestock management with animals reared for sale and fed with homegrown fodder crops. Because of land scarcity, her informants had been given three plots of land—two in the Kom Ombo area and one 30 km away. All had leased out the distant plot to Sa'idis.

As land values had risen, they had shortened the leasing period from up to 7 years to a single year and had increased the leasing price. Leasing was also used wherever the government-required sugar cane was cultivated as well as for the cash cropping of vegetables.

Where share-cropping occurred, it did so usually with another Nubian, both of whom might then hire laborers. As Nubians had insisted to Fahim in the 1970s, they

[1]Fahmi also separates out farming households (they concentrate more on livestock than crops) with their resettler houses having an "external activity density" similar to locality households.

Fig. 8 Nubian women must socialize and work in the roads that run between the houses

continued to believe that they could make more money combining such a system with urban employment than working full time in agriculture (Fahim 1983: 82).

Among her informants, Lassailly-Jacob reported a relatively high living standard. In total, 16 of the 18 had running potable water in their houses, a radio-cassette player, butagaz, a refrigerator and a washing machine. A total of 14

had a television and nine a telephone (1990: 20). Elsewhere in the community most Nubians also had running water inside their houses. Besides the gardens cultivated for family use "there are often large sun-dried mud brick enclosures that house the livestock" (Ibid: 13).

7 Nubia Today—Stage 4: Handing Over and Incorporation

7.1 Introduction

Handing Over involves project agencies handing over responsibilities to various ministries, local government and Nubian organizations as well as the first generation of resettlers passing on responsibilities to the second generation. Incorporation involves not just the incorporation of the resettlement area, and resettlement households elsewhere, into Egyptian society but also the ability of the Nubian community to compete successfully for respect and their fair share of national resources—goals that are yet to be realized.

Because the Government used a committee structure to plan and implement resettlement that involved existing government ministries and the provincial government, handing over has occurred and was easier than where a specialized resettlement agency or project authority has been involved elsewhere. Handing over from the first generation of resettlers to the second is proceeding satisfactorily. Incorporation, on the other hand, has yet to be completed satisfactorily due primarily to failure of the government to adequately address legitimate Nubian complaints concerning housing inadequacies in Kom Ombo, lack of promised housing for the *mughtarabin*, and failure of the government to acknowledge the extent of the Nubian sacrifice for the common good of Egypt and, based on that sacrifice, to participate more fully in the political economy of Aswan Governorate and, more specifically, in planning and participating in the future of their homeland surrounding Lake Nasser. For those reasons, the resettlement process is not yet over.

7.2 Nubian Livelihood, Society and Culture in the Twenty-First Century

7.2.1 Introduction

A case can be made that the highpoint for Nubians since their resettlement was during the 1980s and 1990s, with the downturn since then occurring due to two major reasons. The first reason has little to do with the resettlement process. It concerns the perception among Nubians, as among other Egyptians, that life in

contemporary Egypt has become harder due to lack of employment opportunities, especially for young men and women,[2] low salaries and inflation—a situation requiring even the educated to work two jobs (Smith 2006: 307) if they are fortunate enough to find them, or, since the mid-1990s, to seek work outside of Egypt.

In our 2007 survey, a greater proportion of the second generation than the first generation noted that the 1980–2000 period was the best. In her Ph.D. dissertation, Nahed Baba refers to the hardship of life in Kom Ombo during the initial years of the twenty-first century, with remittances from Cairo workers no longer sufficient to support families in Kom Ombo (Baba 2003: Sect. 2.3.2.1). She also refers to the complaints of elders "about the dramatic change in the characters of people," especially those who display wealth acquired in Europe or elsewhere in the Middle East.

As outlined above, the first reason probably contributes to the second reason, which involves increasing concern over the failure of the government to deal with legitimate Nubian grievances associated with resettlement and with recognition of Nubian identity within the overall context of Egyptian society. Two major complaints were emphasized in the April 2007 Cairo conference on "Nubia between Resettlement and Development." The first concerned the situation in Kom Ombo while the second emphasized Nubians' 'right to return' to their homeland in Old Nubia. To counter the criticism that such complaints indicated that Nubians were a threat to Egypt's nationalism, throughout the conference Nubians present stressed their loyalty as Egyptian citizens and, to end the conference, sang the national anthem.

7.2.2 Egyptian Nubian Interrelationships with the Nation State

In her Ph.D. dissertation on Nubians belonging in Egypt, Elizabeth Smith showed how Nubian intellectuals used "multiple strategies to both assert their belonging and maintain their distinctiveness" (Op. Cit.: 5). To assert their belonging, they saw themselves as a "tributary in the stream of Egyptian civilization" (Ibid: 5). To emphasize their distinctiveness, they insisted on their right to emphasize their willing sacrifice with inadequate compensation to the development of Egypt since the building of the first Aswan Dam, their right to nostalgia and compensation, and their right to preserve their culture and language as Egyptian nationals (Ibid: 34).

To be both Egyptian and Nubian has been a difficult balancing act since periodically influential individuals and the media have suggested that Nubian distinctiveness in art, music, and especially Nubian literature and Nubian demands, are a threat to the Egyptian Nation State. Aside from neglecting legitimate Nubian complaints (including inadequate opportunities to participate in the development and politics of Aswan Governorate and in Egyptian television and other media), the

[2]According to the Egypt Human Development Report (2010), jobless youth reached about 60 % that year.

problem has not involved discrimination by the State, nor has the State implied that Nubians were a threat (Ibid: 3). On the contrary, the Ministry of Culture collaborated with UNESCO in the building of the Nubia Museum. The President and Mrs. Mubarak and UNESCO's Secretary General were present, while the "event was covered live by Egypt's State-owned national and satellite TV channels" (Raafat 1997: 2).

The museum, which provides "an unprecedented representation of Nubian culture in Egyptian civilization" (Smith Op. Cit.: 154), has also re-invigorated attempts by an increasing number of Nubian academics and intellectuals to familiarize Nubian youth with Nubian culture and to preserve the two Nubian languages. Nubians provide large numbers of visitors to the museum, which is an important stop and rallying point when urban Nubian families in Cairo, Alexandria and other Northern Egyptian cities charter trains to visit Kom Ombo and Aswan at the time of the two major Islamic holidays (Ibid: 152).

Museum artifacts emphasize to Nubians "unity, citizenship, peace and trade under the umbrella of centralized Egyptian dominance." Feeling secure as Egyptians makes it easier "to preserve and teach the Nubian language and write fiction addressing the history of Nubians in Egypt" (Ibid: 145–146). Still, although Smith states that the State views Nubian culture "as a vital ingredient of national culture," Nubian distinctiveness is potentially threatening to the idea of national unity (Ibid: 5), which may help to explain the failure of the government to address legitimate Nubian complaints about Kom Ombo and the 'Right to Return' to their homeland.

7.3 The Situation in Kom Ombo

7.3.1 Housing and Cash Compensation

The location of Kom Ombo in a treeless desert area away from the Nile has been a legitimate grievance of Nubians since resettlement in the mid 1960s. The same is true of the inadequacy of the housing received and the failure of the government to complete the 9103 houses promised for the *mughtarabin.* Much of the original housing in the mid-1960s had construction defects and had been built on unstable soil. Those problems had been specified as early as a 1967 technical report prepared by the engineering faculty of Cairo University for a People's Assembly Committee report on problems in Kom Ombo villages.

Those problems were not addressed by the government, with Rouchdy emphasizing initial resettler and *mughtarabin* problems in the 1980s and a People's Assembly Committee report repeating them in 1998. Not only had housing deterioration worsened, but the way houses had been joined together left no room for married sons to build houses near their parents. On the other hand, none of those receiving houses in Habbob's survey had sold or rented their homes.

A further complaint was that the cash compensation promised had not been received by the households involved. Even if it had been received, it would have been inadequate for the 40 % of households who received no land because their holdings in Old Nubia were less than one feddan (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9 Nubian farmer in his Kom Ombo field

7.3.2 Land Use

All of those in the survey who received arable land following resettlement still had that land in 2007. Some raised livestock and grew a variety of crops using family labor as in Old Nubia, while others used Nubian or Sa'idi sharecroppers, rented to other Nubians, or had the agricultural cooperative manage the land in return for 10–15 % of the annual income.

7.3.3 Identity

Our 2007 survey Question 31 asked respondents to comment on how resettlement had changed the way in which they saw their identity as Egyptian and as Nubian. Most emphasized that "my identity as Egyptian and Nubian will never change." Four stated that their identity had been positively and strongly influenced because previously isolated Nubian communities have been merged with other Egyptian communities, while two others noted that merging had an undisclosed effect on their identity. Only one person felt that merging had a negative impact on identity while another feared that "the next generation will forget their Nubian identity." (Fig. 10).

7.3.4 Living Standards

All women who answered the question stated that their living standards had gone up as a result of resettlement with improved educational and job opportunities

Fig. 10 Sugar cane harvesting in Nubian Kom Ombo fields

frequently mentioned. While men overwhelmingly also stated that their living standards had improved, three were contrarians with two adding that "our living standards in Old Nubia were the best; life was so simple and our needs were few."

Nubian initiative in taking advantage of new opportunities for higher education has not only played a major role in their achieving higher living standards, but also has led to the rise of influential Nubian intellectuals and managers. Since the end of the 1980s, for example, Nubians have occupied an increasing proportion of high administrative positions in educational institutions in Aswan governorate and have also occupied such positions elsewhere in Egypt. One retired Nubian told Habbob, "you know, son, I prayed to thank God once in celebration in the Cairo diplomatic club because many years ago we used to work as servants in that location." He was referring to himself before he became a university graduate and manager of an Egyptian Bank.

7.4 Culture Change and Continuity

As with the question on identity, the large majority gave similar answers to questions dealing with culture change and continuity. Because the question on culture change singled out resettlement impacts on "decorative arts, handicrafts, literature, music, ritual and language use," answers tended to emphasize those cultural aspects. Loss of Old Nubia's unique house decorations and facades, ritual and language use were especially regretted. According to one 70 year old man, "Nubian rhythm, music and daily use of Nubian language were badly influenced because of inappropriate area atmosphere, neighbors, and cultural differences after leaving Old Nubia." Use of the Nubian language was also endangered because, as another respondent observed, "Nubians didn't use it in their daily life details as they did in Old Nubia."

While only three respondents believed that resettlement "impacted negatively on all aspects of Nubian life," seven took the exact opposite position in noting that "nothing can change or influence Nubian culture" with one adding "because it is genetically in our blood." As for cultural continuity, that is enhanced by a continuation of preferred friendship and marriage with other Nubians. In our survey, for example, no marriages were mentioned with non-Nubians and all respondents stated that most of their friends were Nubians. In Ballana, for example, choice of spouse was either a relative or someone from the same village.

7.5 The Right to Return

The right to return was emphasized during the April 2007 conference not just because it was the Nubian homeland but because of promises made by two Egyptian presidents. President Sadat had agreed in 1977 to Nubian settlement

within the reservoir basin and following a visit to Nubian lake shore pioneers at New Adindan in 1979 had "even promised the Nubians that forty-two Kom Ombo villages would be reconstructed on the lake's shores when Egypt began to enjoy 'the prosperity of a peace era'" (Fahim 1983: 127). As for President Mubarak, he agreed in October 2006 to give Nubians priority as settlers in the government's current scheme to build model villages around Lake Nasser to serve as nuclei for an ambitious program of irrigated land settlement.

Following Mubarak's removal after the 2011 Revolution, the Military Council appointed Prime Minister Essam Sharaf who met that November with a Nubian delegation to discuss their 'right to return' to the Lake Nasser basin. Also discussed was the Nubian request for "a special authority to develop Nubia, like the newly formed one for Sinai, which Sharaf has agreed to" (AL MASRYALOUM 11/09/2011).

In June the following year, a Cairo Nubian association drafted a series of demands that would be submitted to newly elected President Mohamed Morsi following its submission to other Nubian coalitions. Topics covered "issuing a decision of repatriation of Nubians in their original lands, building new villages on the east and west banks of Lake Nasser, demolishing collapsed houses [in *El-Tahjir*] to contain Nubian population growth and establishing an extreme authority to develop old Nubia" (AL MASRYALOUM 20/06/12). The following July, hundreds of Nubians fought with staff members of the Ministry of Agriculture in Cairo after the Minister had begun selling land in Old Nubia to private investors. Their demand was that all such sales not only be canceled but that the title deeds be handed over to the protesters (AL MASRYALOUM 19/07/12).

Four months later, President Morsi's and Prime Minister Qandil's advisers met with prominent Nubian leaders to discuss such issues, including the allocation of six areas for Nubians along the shore of Lake Nasser at a series of workshops (AL MASRYALOUM 02/10/2012). Later that same month, at a conference attended by leaders of assorted Nubian associations from Cairo, Suez, Alexandria, Ismailia and Aswan, Nubians demanded that the new constitution "recognize the Nubian right to return to land surrounding Lake Nasser" (AL MASRYALOUM 31/10/2012).

Finally, in 2014, Article 236 in the new Constitution confirmed the Nubians' "right to return and the State's needs to develop and implement a plan to achieve comprehensive economic and urban development on the disadvantaged border areas, including Nubia, and to implement projects allowing the Nubians to return to their area of origin and develop them" (Khalid Hassan in *Al Monitor* October 12, 2015).

Though a major step in the right direction, as of November 2015, no progress has been made in planning, let alone implementing, that constitutional requirement. Though Egypt's current President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has met with a Nubian delegation since the constitution was approved, "he did not promise to grant their demands to resettle on the banks of Lake Nasser" (Aman June 9, 2014 *Al Monitor*).

7.6 Nubian Efforts to Return to the Shores of Lake Nasser

In answer to the question of whether or not a respondent in our 2007 survey would return to the foreshore of Lake Nasser if houses, irrigated agriculture and financial assistance were provided, all except one from the first generation stated that they would return permanently, with the return of the one exception being temporary. All second generation respondents in three villages also emphasized a permanent return. The one exception was in *El Tahjir* Adindan where only three second generation respondents were willing to return permanently, with five unwilling to return and two willing to return only temporarily. While it is not possible to forecast how many Nubians would actually return if they had the opportunity, the strong Nubian support for the right to return warrants more government consideration than has been the case to date.

According to Fahim, "in 1977, the Egyptian and Sudanese Parliaments met to discuss the economic and cultural integration of the two countries. Among the proposals presented was a joint project for the development of the lake shores." (1983: 127).

In 1979, President Sadat provided some financial assistance for Nubians who wished to return to Old Nubia, while Nubian clubs helped finance the formation of the government-approved Sadat Agricultural Cooperative Society which Nubian activists had proposed (Ibid: 121–124). Three small communities were established using the drawdown area and pumping water from the reservoir on to the western foreshore. The first had 25 families and an elementary school by 1985, while the second had only three families and the third had been deserted (Rouchdy Op. Cit.: 97).

Across the reservoir and near the Sudan border two other small communities, New Qustul and New Adindan had also been pioneered by Nubians in 1978. Conditions deteriorated during a serious drought in the 1980s when Lake Nasser waters receded at least 4 km, leaving waterless the land that a government project had planned to irrigate for the Nubians. That was the situation when Mahgoub visited both communities in 1989. In New Qustul, there were 23 houses occupied by husbands and wives unlike New Adindan where the only residents were men and most of the 20 houses were unoccupied.

According to one of the settlers, on arrival he had to raise his living quarters

> "above the ground on empty barrels because snakes and scorpions were attacking us. I planted palm trees and colocynth trees in this place. Now the water is very far from where it used to be and the pump has stopped. It is very difficult to irrigate the land and keep the plants alive (Mahgoub 95)."

Together Mahgoub and the Nubians went to the government fields, which were dry. There were a couple of new tractors never before used rusting in the desert. "We walked by the dry 600 feddans of the government farm project. Am Hassan looked at them and said:

> They put the pumps in the wrong place. We told them it was not the right spot because the Nile could get lower than the pumps. They did not take us seriously. Now the pumps are standing two kilometers away from the water. We told them that they should use floating pumps. They never listened. Today they are implementing new floating pumps after losing all that money and time (Mahgoub Op. Cit.: 95–96).

According to Rouchdy:

> "Non-urban Nubians were enthusiastic from the first about the establishment of these villages. They thought it was an ideal situation where Nubians could gather alone, avoiding outside interference, thus maintaining their language and customs… There is the notion that there is a future in the new villages in the form of a fishing industry and in the development of tourism. They would also like to establish themselves in the area to reaffirm their claim to the land." Though young urban Nubians did not share that interest in pioneering, "the idea of returning to the old land revived both urban and non-urban Nubian pride in their ethnic background" (Op. Cit.: 97).

During the 1980s, however, the drawdown of the reservoir under extreme drought conditions greatly increased the difficulties of the pioneers. A small community failed when government-supplied wells were unable to provide potable water. As the numbers of pioneers dropped at other settlements, discussions in Kom Ombo, Cairo and elsewhere about a return to Old Nubia declined (Fernea and Rouchdy Op. Cit.: 196).

Nubian interest in the potential of the Lake Nasser fishery continued, however; perhaps in part because the pioneer fishers were primarily several hundred Sa'idi fishers, some of whom had already established lakeside residence while others slept in their boats. To reduce conflicts among them, the government divided Lake Nasser into five sections based on fishers' areas of origin (Sørbø 1977). By 1977, numbers of largely Sa'idi fishers had increased to about 6000 living in over 100 fish camps and using about 1500 boats. The large majority of boats were small with crews of three to five men.

Fish landings, estimated at 16,000 tons in 1976, peaked at about 34,000 tons in 1981, dropped to about 20,000 tons for some years and then to a low of somewhat over 8000 tons in 2000 (or from 650 kg/boat/day to 35 kg), which was far below the estimated potential of the lake (Bene et al. 2008: 222). According to the authors' recent unpublished survey, about 95 % of the fishers came from elsewhere in Egypt and 39 % commuted back and forth annually (Ibid: 223; Fig. 1).

Marketing was a government monopoly, fishers being required to sell their catch to a government company at a fixed price. In total, 50 carrier boats transported catches to Aswan. The majority were owned by another company. None had freezers and transport services were uncoordinated and unreliable with considerable wastage, due to irregular supplies of salt, even when fish were dried in the hot desert sun.

By 1989, Lassailly-Jacob reports that three carrier boats with freezers were operational. Fishers were organized into four government-required cooperatives including at the upper end a "powerful Nubian fishing cooperative" (Op. Cit.: 22). Based on past history, and a similar pattern reported for previous Nubian boat owners (FAO 1973), I would suspect that the boats owned by Nubians may have

been used by non-Nubian contract labor. However, that may be an outdated view—all seven of the fishing guides currently employed by the African Angler, which claims to be the first safari company to introduce recreational and sport fishing to Lake Nasser, were Nubians (http://www.african-angler.co.uk/about.html).

Although experts varied in their explanations for the extreme variation in annual catches, Bene et al. expect that the main reason was smuggling due to the government-controlled low price for fish landed at Aswan between 1961–2000 (even though the price for fish was unfixed elsewhere in Egypt) as well as the "bad management and inefficiency of the State-owned companies" that marketed the fish, government regulations, and irregular payment (Ibid: 225–226).

After the turn of the century, the government attempted "a complete reform of the Lake Nasser fishery" (Ibid: 220) including an unsuccessful attempt to 'liberalize' the price at the various landing points after which price controls were re-established in spite of the fact noted by the authors that "fresh fish landings jumped from 3908 tons in 2000 to 18,513 tons in 2002, a 300 % increase" (Ibid: 2008).

Over the years, the government has been slowly increasing its Lake Nasser planning capacity. In 1963, the Government of Egypt established the Aswan Regional Planning Authority to plan and implement the development of Aswan Governorate, Lake Nasser included. A research function was added in the mid-1960s based on recommendations from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In collaboration with FAO, UNDP was assisting several African governments to establish research organizations on new man-made lakes. In 1966, UNDP's Governing Council approved a similar request from Egypt to establish a "Lake Nasser Development Centre", which became operational in July 1968 for a 6-year period.

Development-relevant research activities included agriculture, fisheries, public health, settlement planning, tourism and transportation. Under the UNDP/FAO project, a 60-feddan research station was built near the new town of Abu Simbel, several kilometers inland from the reservoir to experiment with different crops in the reservoir drawdown and inland areas. Results suggested that it might even be possible to restore the lucrative cultivation of date palms that provided the principal cash crop before the construction of the original Aswan Dam.

Between 1968 and 1974, extensive soil surveys were carried out by government staff using project-supplied aerial photography. Although fertilizers were required, large areas—especially around reservoir inlets—were identified with agricultural potential. Including areas requiring lift irrigation up to 30 m above full storage level, it was estimated that 10 % could be added to Egypt's total arable land.

The project's 1975 final report stated that approximately 200,000 feddans could be cultivated in the reservoir's drawdown area during the winter months in short maturing crops "using mainly subsoil moisture" although supplementary irrigation would increase reliability of yields (UNDP/FAO 1975: 14). The most economic crops to grow without irrigation would be fodder crops and vegetables along with a wide variety of fruit trees along the reservoir margin.

Further inland in the Toshka depression west of Lake Nasser, 500,000 feddans were identified for pump irrigation. Given the escalating costs of pump irrigation at higher elevations, the author suspects these figures are a significant over-estimate. Nonetheless, the report influenced the Mubarak government to initiate a mega Toshka program 20 years later while a majority of Sa'idi fishers immediately stated a desire to farm such lands with their families if the government facilitated their settlement in viable communities in terms of housing, social services and transport.

In the reservoir basin a follow-up High Dam Development Authority was established in 1974 to continue development planning with ongoing UNDP assistance. After 1988, reservoir levels again began to rise, with full storage levels reached during the 1990s. In 1989, the World Food Programme (WFP) agreed to launch a joint program with the High Dan Development Authority whereby WFP would provide food for work to reclaim thousands of feddans for farming along the lake shore and for the eventual construction of 33,000 houses (Poeschke 1996: 149).

In 1997, the government initiated an expanded two-component program of agricultural land settlement that would draw water from Lake Nasser. The largest component was Mubarak's Toshka Project, the foundation stone of which was set on 9 January 1997. Though the offtake and pumping station are located in Old Nubia, the land irrigated is served by a 51 km canal that diverts water to an ancient northwest channel of the Nile. The government's intention was to encourage large agribusinesses to develop smallholder outgrower schemes and agro-industry in four major areas. The long-range plan was to settle several million immigrants from the Nile Valley with smallholders cultivating, in addition to crops for consumption in Egypt, organic produce for export to Europe and elsewhere. By 2010, Allen refers to Andre Fecteau's estimate in his "On Toshka New Valley's Mega-Failure" with the statement that only "16,500 feddans had actually been irrigated" (Allen 2014: 95).

The other component, of direct relevance to the Nubian homeland and the right to return, was UNDP assistance to the Ministry of Plan to "develop a master plan for the development of Lake Nasser, aiming to build an integrated economy of agriculture, livestock, industry and tourism, all based on available natural resources. The plan recommended lake development schemes designed to absorb up to one million people, of which 700,000 would be expected to be immigrants mostly employed in agriculture, aquaculture and livestock raising. The timeframe for this was estimated to be from 2002 to 2022." (Adaption Fund 2011: 9).

Land settlement got off to a slow start because of the government's lack of capacity to provide housing, the necessary water supplies and other infrastructure including schools and clinics. With the approval of The High Dam Development Authority and the governor, and with Canadian and UN funding, in 1997 the Near East Foundation (NEF) was the first outside agency to commence working with previous spontaneous settlers.

The first phase of the NEF agro-ecology project was started that year in Garf Hussein—one of three villages (the other two being New Kalabsha and Bashayer El-Kheir) that pioneer families had founded in 1994. By 2004, 3100 families have been given use rights to 15,000 feddans or roughly 5 feddans per family. Less than 20 % were Nubians (Egypt Today 2004: 8) in spite of the fact that World Food

Programme assistance involves special efforts "to target Nubian Families" (World Food Programme 2001: 11).

By 2007, the Government had also built in the Garf Hussein area, which is now served by a paved road from Aswan (although yet to be attached to the national grid), its first model village, with two others under construction and two more on the drawing boards. In cooperation with the World Food Programme, each model village was planned to have settler-built housing, educational and health facilities, and irrigation provided throughout the year from Lake Nasser. Each was also expected to serve as a nucleus for further settlement.

The Nubian complaint at the 2007 "Nubia between Resettlement and Development" conference was that, in spite of President Mubarak's agreement, to date, Nubians had yet to be given preference. That complaint is entirely justified. Where Nubians are in the majority, as in Al Salam village where 150 Nubian families farm 250 feddans and seek employment in Abu Simbel 10 km away, it is due to their own pioneering settlement without significant government assistance.

Meanwhile increasing Lake Nasser pollution associated with existing settlement, fishing, grazing and drawdown farming has become another constraint to the Nubians' right to return. In addition, epidemiologists were concerned about the results of a health survey in the three NEF villages that "showed symptoms of tropical and renal diseases as well as malnutrition. Weak immunity is likely to result in a negative response to regionally recurrent epidemics like cholera and malaria," with the risk increased by pollution, the extreme heat, and the fluctuating drawdown area (Al-Ahram Weekly 2007: 3).

The situation is sufficiently serious that some Egyptian scientists have urged that agricultural settlement be prohibited around the reservoir. Concerns have also been expressed that a large resident population beside a polluted lake in a hot desert environment could not only be a magnet for diseases, but also a conduit for their spread down the Nile to Middle and Lower Egypt.

7.7 Kakkar

In 2009, the Ministry of Housing announced that the Central Agency for Reconstruction had begun a study for an agricultural society for Nubians in the Karkar Valley in the vicinity of the town of Abu Simbel 5 km inland from Lake Nasser. Under development as a tourism center, the population of the town and surrounding area already was approximately 60 % Nubians working for government agencies as well as for hotels, shops and other tourism attractions (Habbob February, 2013 email to Scudder).

Not based on careful agricultural feasibility studies or Nubian architecture, the initial plan was to provide housing for Nubian families in eight estates. Both the agricultural and housing concepts were rejected by the Nubians as one more government effort to deny their right to return to their nine preferred "come back" sites around the edge of Lake Nasser. However, the Mubarak government already

"was working on providing 10,000 feddans of reclaimed land around Lake Nasser as well as providing 2000 housing units for resettlement … however, the exclusiveness of these lands and units to the Nubian people were questionable as the main national policy was [sic] accused to be looking at the rural development of these lands explicitly to all Egyptians" (Serag 2024: 16 quoting Marefa.org. 2013).

By 2013, of the 1573 Kakkar houses built to date, only 100 families were in occupation "due to lack of services and non-availability of the basic components of life" including transportation, postal services and security (the police station was closed). "So people were forced to leave their homes they had received a few month ago and this despite the fact that the total cost of the project exceeds two billion pounds" (Habbob Op. Cit.).

8 Old Nubia and Lake Nasser Today

8.1 Introduction

Since 2010, it has become increasingly clear that the Egyptian Government since the Mubarak regime never intended to implement the Nubians' right to return to Old Nubia and the Lake Nasser basin. Indeed, "since 1988, the Government of Egypt started planning for the Lake Nasser region to serve as a receptor for voluntary migration from other regions" (Adaption Fund 2011: 8 and Presidential Decree no. 476 for 1988).

Subsequent implementation of this conclusion is clarified by two documents submitted to international institutions at the request of the Mubarak regime. The first document was the March 2010 "New Land, New Life" Project's Final Technical Report submitted by The Near East Foundation to Canada's International Development Research Center. The second was the August 2011 Proposal for Egypt submitted by the Government to the Adaption Fund. Both clarify how the Lake Nasser basin should be utilized by 1–1.5 million rural and urban Climate Change immigrants, especially from the Nile Delta and other regions of Northern Egypt.

8.2 "New Land, New Life" Project March 2010

The "New Land, New Life" Project: Adaptation to Climate Change was a pilot project, initiated in 1994. It was based on the Garf Hussein, New Kalabsha and Bashayer El-Kheir pioneer villages some 100–130 km south of Aswan for implementing the government's national policy "that entails moving populations from the overcrowded Nile Valley and resettling them in new communities in newly

reclaimed desert lands" in the Lake Nasser basin (NEF 2010: 6). To date, a majority of settlers come from Lower Egypt and the Delta including a third from lower Egyptian urban areas.

The purpose of the Final Technical Report was to present a large series of studies pertinent to dealing with climate change that have been carried out over a number of years by researchers affiliated with Aswan Province's South Valley University, the government's Agriculture Research Centre and the High Dam Lake Development Authority with assistance from the Near East Foundation, the World Food Programme and other international agencies. The studies in question relate to the climate; Lake Nasser waters; soils; early maturing crops, such as tomatoes with a higher market value in northern Egypt; alfalfa (*berseem*) for livestock; new crops like jojoba; and organic gardening using, for example, dry active yeast as fertilizer to increase yields.

The current residents are approximately 3000 relatively young, low income pioneers (Adaptation Fund 2011: 33) in one of the hottest and most extreme desert areas in the world. Each family has been given five feddans. There is no mention of Nubians as project beneficiaries or of current Nubian residents in the Lake Nasser Basin.

As for the current pioneers, the various researchers make it clear that their current crop agriculture, livestock and aquaculture lifestyle was inadequate and expected to worsen because of climate change. On the other hand, the researchers had the same confidence, as other Egyptian planners had in the past, that they would be able to, for example, change the current system of low productivity, costly and water-polluting diesel-fueled pump irrigation to a system based on drip and other high technology methods.

Meanwhile, although project personnel have held numerous workshops and meetings with the settlers, they have no resident extension service to deal with day-to-day production and marketing needs and questions, while the available labor in the Lake Nasser basin do not have the skills to deal with sophisticated irrigation systems. Proper health and medical care services are also non-existent. It is hard to imagine a more challenging situation.

8.3 Adaption Fund: Proposal for Egypt, August 31, 2011

A major outgrowth of the Middle East Foundation-Government-World Food Programme activities has been an August 2011 $8,575,892 Government proposal submitted to the World Food Programme for "Preparing the Lake Nasser Region in Southern Egypt as a Climate Adaptation Hub" for up to a million voluntary settlers required to leave areas such as the Nile Delta due to climate change-induced flooding and increasing soil salinization. The Proposal was to be funded through the Adaption Fund established under the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The project's objective "is to develop the Lake Nasser region to serve as a receptor for climate-induced voluntary migration from other regions, as well as a hub for applied adaptation technology that is transferrable to other parts of Upper Egypt which are climate stressed". Its three components are "Strategic adaption planning for the Lake Nasser region, technology transfer to enable adaptation in Lake Nasser Communities … by providing Upper Egypt with affordable food products," and to, "Transfer knowledge and technology to three of the poorest villages in Upper Egypt under the Government's 1000 village initiative."

The project' output will build on the three villages included in the "New Land, New Life" project with further expansion on both the West and East sides of Lake Nasser. As with the "New Land, New Life" project, no mention is made of the Nubians' right to return aspirations, while the only mention to an estimated 20,000 Nubians living on the west side of Lake Nasser was their demand to receive "similar services to those offered to migrants. This has been arranged" (Adaptation Fund Ibid: 38–39).

The Adaption Fund proposal was turned down in September 2011 at the 15th meeting of the Adaption Fund Board, which emphasized the Fund not supporting climate-induced voluntary migration from other regions as an adaption response. Rather, the Board encouraged the "the proponent to emphasize the adaption pilot activities as well as those that strengthen institutional capacity to address adaption on the national scale."

Presumably because of the January 2011 revolution and its uncertain aftermath, a revised Adaptation proposal has yet to be made.[3] However, President al-Sisi has emphasized his support for Mubarak's Toshka Project, so presumably it will be only a matter or time before an updated Lake Nubia proposal will be forthcoming.

9 Summary

9.1 The Egyptian Nubian Resettlement Process

A 2005 statistical analysis of 50 large dam-induced resettlements identified five factors as significant, but insufficient, in achieving improved resettler outcomes (Scudder 2005, 2012). They are political will, financing, and capacity of the implementing governments and project agencies, and participation of, and opportunities for, the resettlers. Other factors, including unexpected events and problems with immigrants and host populations (as in the Egyptian Nubian case) may be important in explaining outcomes in specific cases.

[3]A much broader proposal was submitted to the Adaptation Fund in 2012 that deals with all five provinces in Southern Egypt as opposed to just the Lake Nasser Basin in Aswan Province.

9.2 *Political Will and the Need for the Government to Address Current Nubian Complaints*

There was no question that political will was initially present in the High Dam case. Presumably, that political will was influenced by awareness on the part of the government of the sacrifice that the Nubian population would be making for national development. On the other hand, there was insufficient awareness of the magnitude of that sacrifice in regard to two issues unique to the Nubian case.

The first issue was that the entire homeland of the Egyptian Nubian population was going to be inundated. If the majority of Nubians were to be resettled together, which the people preferred, then the host population would be largely composed of non-Nubian strangers. Such resettlement would be especially stressful for previously isolated Nubian women. It would also pose a major threat to Nubian language and culture, an outcome that the author doubts the government considered and the significance of which this author had also underestimated in previous analysis of Egyptian Nubian resettlement.

The second unique factor was that a majority of Nubian communities had already been required to resettle—indeed, three times for some communities—due to the construction and heightening of the original Aswan Dam. On those occasions, "the government had no organized programs of resettlement" (Rouchdy Op. Cit.: 92 after Fahim 1983).

Some Matokki-speaking Nubians moved south to resettle among Mahasi-speaking Nubians in the Sudan or Felicca-speaking Nubians whose villages were not inundated. Other Matokki-speaking Nubians moved north to Aswan and other Egyptian cities. In each case, "an unorganized forced migration" (Rouchdy Ibid) was involved.

The magnitude of the Nubian sacrifice, and the extremely unethical way in which successive governments, following President Sadat's, dealt with the Nubians' "right to return" to Old Nubia, is why the Egyptian government should implement a more participatory future post-resettlement development program for the Nubians. While its content should include existing village restoration work in Kom Ombo and finalizing housing for the *mughtarabin*, most important would be much more Nubian incorporation within the planning and implementation of the future development of the Lake Nasser region. Also important are issues relating to how Nubians are represented in educational materials for schools, in the media and in television.

Throughout, it is essential that Nubians be actively involved as participants during the planning, implementation and monitoring of whatever program results so that the mistakes of the past are reduced.

9.3 Financing

According to the World Bank, inadequate funds "may be the single most powerful explanatory variable behind the failure to implement resettlement operations well" (World Bank 1994: 6/11). In the High Dam case, inadequate funding was involved in the construction of defective and inappropriate housing in Kom Ombo, the failure to provide promised housing for the *mughtarabin*, and to reclaim adequate irrigable land in the Kom Ombo area.

9.4 Capacity

The Government did not have the necessary time, experience, capacity or private sector backup to effectively implement their plans for physical resettlement. In particular, there was especially insufficient time to plan and implement the resettlement program. While it is necessary to synchronize the resettlement schedule with the dam construction schedule, that alone is not sufficient. Far more careful attention needs be paid to the amount of time it takes to find, evaluate and prepare resettlement areas. Otherwise, the emphasis switches, as in the High Dam case, to the rushed physical removal of people so as to meet construction deadlines.

Lack of experience is shown by the failure of the Ministry of Social Affairs and other government agencies to plan for food aid during Stage 1 as well as by the failure more actively to involve the resettler population throughout the resettlement process. Lack of capacity was most obvious in the total inability of the Ministry of Land Reform to reclaim more than 10 % of the promised land at the time of physical removal. It also explains the deteriorating efficiency of physical removal and the delayed and shoddy workmanship on housing and other infrastructure in the Kom Ombo crescent. As was the case with the government, the private sector also had insufficient capacity to carry out responsibilities such as the timely provision of materials for building houses and the construction of suitable housing.

9.5 The Importance of Participation for Avoiding Mistakes, for Reducing Dependency, and for Decreasing the Length and Stress Associated with Stage 2

Aside from important human rights and social equity issues, there are important practical reasons for more actively involving resettlers in all stages of the resettlement process. If the Ministry of Social Affairs had stressed participation in planning as opposed to consultation, presumably a more relevant and less stressful form of housing could have been provided. While costing more in the short run, it

would have created a more viable community in the long run—an important and cost-effective outcome as opposed to Kom Ombo's currently deteriorating condition.

Among features that Nubians would have emphasized would have been to allow kin and former neighbors to resettle in closer proximity and to leave room for housing the second generation and the *mughtarabin*. Regarding the design of houses, these would have better accommodated previous features, including higher walls for privacy, further room for family expansion, and the *diwani* to accommodate the second generation.

As emphasized by Fahim, it is reasonable to expect that greater participation would have given resettlers a greater sense of responsibility for the construction and development of Kom Ombo. In addition, that could well have reduced the sense of dependency and the complaints culture that Fahim has analyzed in detail. Finally, greater participation could be expected to reduce the stress involved throughout Stage 2, though not necessarily its length since Nubian participation might not have influenced the slow land reclamation process.

9.6 Development Opportunities

The government's initial political will to implement an adequate resettlement process, including the provision of significantly improved educational facilities, and the eventual provision of irrigated land for resettlers in Kom Ombo and Esna are a major reason why Aswan High Dam resettlement is one of the few cases in the world where the resettlement process did not impoverish the majority. Another reason is the initiative and enterprising attitute of the Nubian resettlers regarding their decisions of how to use those educational facilities and the irrigated land to improve their livelihood. Nonetheless, livelihood improvement came at a major cultural cost, which underlines the importance of the government discussing with the Nubian community their complaints and planning and implementing with the Nubians an appropriate development plan in the years ahead for dealing with those complaints.

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