- Education scheme (dominant). Seclusion practiced under the dominant form implies the lack of an outlet for women's craft and food products. Women circumvent this restriction by depending upon children to sell their wares. Schildkrout's (1983) evidence illustrates the value of child labor; women who had children selling their prepared foods or crafts on the street full-time (talla) earned two to three times as much as women who had no children working for them. The recently promoted government policy of Universal Primary Education seriously threatens this source of economic livelihood because it removes children from the home during hours when they might otherwise be expected to help their mothers with sales.
- 3) Seasonal effects on productivity and long-term fertility (residual). Secluded women may experience the nutritional decline that often accompanies seasonal food shortages, and professional, "modern" women may be subject to seasonal inflation, but neither encounters the all-pervasive demands on labor experienced by Maguzawa and other nonsecluded rural women. Women practicing the residual form of gender relationship such as the Maguzawa are actively involved in all aspects of the agricultural cycle. Not only do they labor on family plots several days a week, but they also farm individual "private" plots, the proceeds of which are expected to support the entire household "well into the next rainy season" (Barkow, 1972, p. 325). These conditions imply vulnerability to seasonal diseases, as well as an increase in numbers of births and weaning activities at precisely the time when drought conditions might be expected to set in. The net effects include lower productivity on the part of the woman herself and an increased risk of infant mortality.
  - 4) Lack of control of family labor product (residual). Whereas

secluded women earn income that is considered "inalienable," the product of rural women's farm labor is frequently controlled by the male family head. The significance of this fact emerges in the dry season, when men temporarily migrate in search of opportunities to earn cash via wage labor. It is at this time that they may choose to exercise the "ancient precautionary right . . . to close the gandu granary" (Hill, 1972, p. 50), leaving women and other dependents to fend for themselves (cf. Roberts, 1979).

- 5) Quota on girls entering secondary schools (emergent). Martin (1983) reports that only 15% of all secondary school positions are reserved for girl students. The lack of secondary education diminishes the likelihood of women being hired in many segments of the Nigerian economy.
- 6) Lack of job opportunity in the urban economy (emergent). Young Hausa women seeking a professional career are constrained by an increasingly trenchant pattern of sex-typing in the northern Nigerian work force, as well as limited job training opportunities. While they may be able to teach or do clerical work, virtually all other opportunities in business, agriculture, or government agencies are effectively closed to them.
- 7) Expansion of commodity markets (dominant). The availability of manufactured cloth and mechanically processed foods poses serious threats to women who are kept in seclusion. Blocked from engaging in most forms of wage labor and salaried work because of their spatial confinement, these women have few alternatives for earning an independent income.

#### Medium Effect

8) <u>Inability to engage in secondary occupations</u> (residual). Because residual women's labor is so completely absorbed by farm work, they have little time to devote to secondary occupations. One effect of this pattern of labor allocation—the lack of control over the family labor product—has

already been noted. A second is the inability of women to turn to occupational alternatives in the event of a drought. Although there is no absolute restriction on such a switch, the lack of market outlet, expertise, start-up capital, etc., may mitigate against success in such ventures, especially under the adverse economic conditions set in motion by drought.

9) <u>Sexual harassment</u> (emergent). The activities of women in households practicing the dominant and residual forms are either consistent with prevailing norms, or pose no threat to the established social order. Women who strike out on their own, however, whether as <u>karuwai</u> or <u>bazawara</u>, or simply in the pursuit of a job opportunity outside the home, are subject to strong verbal and occasional physical assault that may be explicitly sexual in nature (the distinction blurs between physical and sexual harassment in this context). This abuse is commonplace in work environments (cf. Remy-Weeks, 1973), and can take on increasingly threatening proportions during periods of economic or political instability (such as during a drought), when single women are forced into unwanted marriages or are driven out of town, because of the perception that they are connected to the moral laxity that supposedly precipitated the crisis.

#### Low Effect

10) <u>Delayed childbearing</u> (emergent). Well-educated women do not necessarily have fewer children than their more traditional peers, but they may delay their first child for as much as five years while they attend school (compensating later by ignoring the post-partum taboo, cf. Trevor, 1975a). Should they choose to engage in trading or other economic activities that depend on child labor in later life, this delayed access to a proven asset could leave them at a comparative disadvantage.

These observations demonstrate that it is possible to distinguish groups of women and their respective abilities to respond to drought on the basis of gender form. They also expose the difficulty in making any sort of quantitative comparison of the relative levels of gender vulnerability each group experiences. For example, while I may be able to demonstrate that secluded women's childbearing is threatened by early childbirth, and that the childbearing of farm women is affected by the greater risk of child mortality inherent in early weaning practices, I find it nonetheless difficult to derive any objective basis for concluding that one group is more vulnerable than the other as a consequence.

These difficulties notwithstanding, I would tentatively argue that the seclusion of women (i.e., the practice of the dominant form) in talakawa households carries with it the most negative set of implications for drought response. The spatial restrictions of purdah imply the inability to make any of several immediate responses to drought--engaging in wage labor, collecting food from uncultivated bush lands, collecting and selling firewood or fodder, etc. Beyond this, the long-term prospects for lower class households in which seclusion is practiced are not favorable, given the double onslaught of the Universal Primary Education scheme and competition from the industrial sector against secluded women's craft and food-processing occupations.

As for women in rural households practicing the residual form, they appear to be more completely exploited in the sense that they both provide subsistence and carry out the full complement of domestic duties. In terms of surviving drought conditions, however, the full utilization of family labor resources tends to confer benefits that outweigh individual costs. Although farm women do not control as much of the product of their labor as

secluded women might, their direct contributions to food production tend to stabilize the whole household unit, potentially improving their own lot in the process.

The vulnerability of women experiencing the emergent form does not appear to be as acute as either of the other groups. Their employment options are restricted somewhat by sexual bias, but their education levels make them attractive marriage matches, and it can be assumed that the jobs that do exist for them--as school teachers and secretaries--provide a fairly stable source of income.

#### TABLE 4

# FACTORS AFFECTING THE VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN EXPERIENCING DIFFERENT GENDER FORMS

# High Effect

- Spatial restrictions on the expenditure of labor power (dominant)
- Restriction of access to child labor due to Universal Primary Education scheme (dominant)
- Seasonal effects on productivity and long-term fertility (residual)
- Lack of control of family labor product (residual)
- Quota on girls entering secondary school (emergent)
- Lack of job opportunity in the urban economy (emergent)

# Medium Effect

- Inability to engage in secondary occupations (residual)
- Sexual harassment (emergent)
- Expansion of commodity markets (dominant)

## Low Effect

• Delayed childbearing (emergent)

#### CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have defined the concept of gender vulnerability to drought to mean the inability to prepare, adjust, or adapt to drought due to constraints inherent in a particular form of gender relationship. I have also shown that the concept applies to men as well as women, and can be used to refer to different levels of social organization.

I have demonstrated gender vulnerability at the individual and household levels in comparisons of men and women, of women in different classes, and of women who experience different forms of gender relationship.

I conclude that women bear the brunt of the gender vulnerability in Hausaland. Major contributing factors to women's gender vulnerability include: 1) the unremunerative nature of women's work; 2) their lack of ownership and control of the means of production; 3) restrictions on women's education; 4) competitive disadvantage vis-a-vis new industrial commodities; 5) enhanced vulnerability to seasonal effects; and 6) spatial restrictions on their ability to sell their labor.

A second comparison above shows a marked increase in vulnerability among <u>talakawa</u> and working class women. Of greater interest than this simple outcome, perhaps, is the complex relationship that emerges between class and gender analytical categories. Generally speaking, the data show that <u>talakawa</u> women experience all of the negative aspects of any particular form of gender relationship, while enjoying few, if any, of the benefits.

Finally, I compared groups of <u>talakawa</u> women on the basis of the form of gender relationship they experience. The results of this investigation show that, while it was clearly possible to differentiate groups of women

on the basis of gender form, it is much more difficult to make any sort of quantitative comparison of the relative levels of drought vulnerability they experience. However, I tentatively conclude that seclusion poses the greatest risks to lower class women due to the effects of spatial restriction.

There can be little question proceeding from the foregoing that environmental relations are in all respects social relations, and more specifically, that gender constructions have clear environmental implications. This realization leads to the conclusion that a careful reconstruction of the process of gender transition and a thorough analysis of the resultant matrix of gender forms is essential to a complete understanding of the relationship of a particular society to its environment. The impetus derived from this contention points toward the redirection of hazards research and policy-making. This is especially critical insofar as the vulnerability of women to drought and other extreme geophysical conditions is directly tied to the well-being of all members of the societies to which they belong.

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