

# Commission on Nomadic Peoples

**Newsletter of the Commission on Nomadic Peoples**

Newsletter Number 5, January 1980

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# COMMISSION ON NOMADIC PEOPLES

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January 1980

## COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

We are pleased to be able to report additions to the membership of the Commission:

Taking the position of Chairman of the Liaison Committee is Dr. Dan Aronson of McGill University, who will by virtue of his Chairmanship be on the Executive Committee.

We welcome as full members of the Commission

Dr. Bernt Glatzer, University of Heidelberg

Dr. Alfred Janata, Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna

Professor Jan Podolak, Comenius University, Bratislava

Mr. William Lancaster, Lyness, Stromness, Orkney, U.K.

Mr. John W. Sutter, Cornell University

Dr. Lothar Stein, Museum für Völkerkunde, Leipzig

Dr. Wolf-Deiter Seiwert, Museum für Völkerkunde, Leipzig

It is with great regret that we announce the death of Dr. Wolfgang König, Museum für Völkerkunde, Leipzig. Dr. König was Director of the Museum and an authority on the peoples of Middle Asia.

## COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

### Conference on "The Future of Pastoral Peoples: Research Priorities for the 1980s."

The Commission on Nomadic Peoples, with the cooperation of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi, will sponsor a conference on THE FUTURE OF PASTORAL PEOPLES: RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR THE 1980s in Nairobi, Kenya, August 4-8, 1980. Funds for the support of the conference are provided by the International Social Science Council and the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa.

The Commission encourages participation in the conference by members of research institutes of countries with populations of nomadic pastoral peoples, especially directors of research institutes and researchers active in the investigation of relevant issues. Also welcome are researchers and officials from the international agencies and researchers from the international community.

The aims of the Conference are to facilitate dialogue regarding current concerns, orientations and priorities of research, to enhance communication regarding present and planned programs of research being sponsored by relevant research institutes and researchers, and to make possible a sharing of perspectives on the key issues and problems facing pastoral nomadic societies at the outset of the decade of the 1980s, during which we all anticipate that dramatic processes of social change will take place.

Two levels of activities are anticipated for the Conference program:

1. The presentation of the principles and priorities guiding research being administered by or approved through agencies and institutes of the countries in Africa and the Middle East most concerned with pastoral populations, with the aim of facilitating communication between geographically distant countries with similar concerns, and

between a community of scholars involved in the study of change in pastoral societies and research institutes whose mandates and responsibilities are often much wider than these more specific interests.

2. Discussion and presentation of papers on some key areas of focus in the process and study of pastoral change, including:

- Ranching Schemes and Associations, including the issue of land tenure and resource control and use.

- Range Management and the Pastoral Process, including the relevance of ethno-ecology and ethno-economics for the study of pastoralism.

- Systems of Livestock Marketing and Commercial Production, including focus on formal and informal systems and subsistence needs.

- The State and Local Pastoral Systems, including focus on the legal context, the provision of government services and programs of planned change.

- Integrated Regional Development and Pastoral Sector Development, including a focus on the pastoral/agricultural interface.

- Theories and Strategies of Pastoral Development, as found in academic and applied studies, and motivating programs of planned change.

- The Research Process, with focus on research goals and methodologies, the role of institutes, and making accessible research findings.

It is intended that through the Conference, the Commission will serve the needs of (1) researchers committed to the understanding of nomadic pastoral peoples in a time of their social transformation (2) the research institutes charged with the responsibility of developing knowledge pertinent to the analysis and planned change of those societies, and (3) importantly, the societies themselves, whose futures depend to a significant degree on the information, analyses and projections of those involved in such planning, implementing, and communicating of the results of programs of research.

#### I.U.A.E.S. Intercongress

P.C. Salzman, on behalf of the Commission on Nomadic Peoples, is organizing a session at the I.U.A.E.S. Intercongress in Amsterdam, April 23-4, 1981, in cooperation with Dr. Roelof Munneke, National Museum of Ethnography, Leiden. The topic of this session is **PLANNED AND UNPLANNED CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY NOMADIC AND PASTORAL SOCIETIES**.

Each Intercongress session is restricted to twenty participants invited by the organizers. It is expected that participation will be broadly based, involving scholars from many different countries, and that there will be broad area coverage, with reports on nomadic peoples from many regions throughout the world.

#### PUBLICATIONS REPORT

##### WHEN NOMADS SETTLE

**WHEN NOMADS SETTLE: SEDENTARIZATION AS ADAPTATION AND RESPONSE**, edited by P.C. Salzman, J.F. Bergin Publishers, distributed by Praeger, a collection of original essays, will be published in Spring 1980.

- Ch. 1 "Introduction: Processes of Sedentarization as Adaptation and Response," P.C. Salzman
- Ch. 2 "Sedentarization and Modes of Economic Integration in the Middle East," N. Swidler
- Ch. 3 "Sedentarization of Nomads in the Seventh Century: The Arabs in Basra and Kufa," R.W. Bulliet
- Ch. 4 "Career Reorientation and Institutional Adaptation in the Process of Natural Sedentarization," W. Goldschmidt
- Ch. 5 "The Open Niche, Pastoralism, and Sedentarization in the Mambila Grasslands (Nigeria)," Ch. Frantz
- Ch. 6 "The Pastoral Family and the Truck," Dawn Chatty
- Ch. 7 "Processes of Sedentarization among the Nomads of Baluchistan," P.C. Salzman
- Ch. 8 "Wage Labor and Tribal Economy of the Bedouin in South Sinai," E. Marx
- Ch. 9 "Yoruk Settlement in Southeast Turkey," D. Bates
- Ch. 10 "Nubian Resettlement and Nomadic Sedentarization in Khashm el Girba Scheme, Eastern Sudan," H.M. Fahim
- Ch. 11 "The Maasi Group-Ranch: Politics and Development in an African Pastoral Society," J. Galaty
- Ch. 12 "Must Nomads Settle? Some Notes toward Policy on the Future of Pastoralism," D.R. Aronson

Members and friends of the Commission can order this volume and receive a pre-publication discount of 20% (full price, U.S. \$18.) from J.F. Bergin Publishers, Suite 1410, One Hanson Place, Brooklyn, New York 11243.

#### SUFFERING GRASS

SUFFERING GRASS: SUBSISTENCE AND SOCIETY OF WASO BORANA by Gudrun Dahl, Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology 8 (available from Department of Social Anthropology, University of Stockholm, S-10691, Stockholm, Sweden) 1979, 287 pages. In this study of a pastoral society in Kenya, the "aim has been to draw attention to the extent to which integration into a wider political and economic context has changed the opportunity structure of various sections of the society in a way that has led to a more marked internal social differentiation" (p. 15).

RESEARCH REPORTS

"Detribalization and Marginality:

A case study of the Marginal Man in  
Quetta/Baluchistan/Pakistan"

by Fred Scholz

The following brief report shows the result of a field study, which was done for several years since 1970. The whole report is published in: "Deutsch Pakistanisches Forum e.V.", Hamburg, 1979, Heft 4. German title of the report: "Detribalisierung und Marginalität. Eine empirische Fallstudie über Randseiter in Quetta/Pakistan".

The dissolution of traditional forms of community such as tribes, clans, families, etc., is a side-effect of all socio-economic developmental processes. In present-day so-called industrialized countries, this process had already been more or less concluded before industrialization began. Differentiation of the population of these countries has taken place in modern times according to social class and income group and has been intimately bound up with a comprehensive, steadily rising economic development. The process of dissolution of traditional forms of community in the countries of the so-called Third World, on the other hand, has, to put it somewhat generally, taken place to the degree that external (European) influence has been able to assert itself, has been able to permeate all areas of the social and economic life of these countries without offering an appropriate alternative social superstructure. For large groups of the population in these countries this development, commonly called "detribalization", has meant the loss of social orientation, economic security, cultural independence; familiar forms of communication, and settlement and economic forms particular to a specific area, etc.

Particularly profound changes have taken place above all among the nomadic tribes in the countries of the old world arid zone. While as a rule the leading members of a tribe have been integrated into the supratribal society and economy, the process nevertheless has meant marginalization for part of the ordinary tribal members, the group varying in size from country to country. Marginality means here the uprooting of people from their former, familiar society without their being at home within the framework of the new society. These are groups that participate only partially or not at all in modern developments, are for the most part undernourished, are forced to set up their shelters in peripheral areas, live in structurally and hygienically inadequate housing, have no education, and for these reasons cannot get steady, qualified jobs and are thus excluded from any kind of vertical social mobility.

The present study deals with such groups, designated as "marginal men", using the example of Quetta. Marginal men are to be found in all the larger cities of Pakistan but represent a peculiarity in Quetta insofar as they here represent without exception former members of nomadic tribes who have come to Quetta in the wake of detribalization and denomadization. Here they live in tent-like shelters and try, always with very limited success, to maintain subsistence level by performing unfamiliar tasks and are forced into seasonal migration because of the climatic conditions in mountainous Baluchistan (ca. 1600 m high; average summer temperature = 26°C, average winter temperature = 6°C). These factors determine their settlement forms and above all their economic activities. The observations made here are based on empirical studies made in 1970, 1974, 1976 and 1978 which had as their goal a survey of all camps inhabited by marginal men on the basis of a uniform set of questions. The following results deserve emphasis:

1. The marginal men are made up of former members of the tribal groups of the Pathan, Baluch and Brahui.
2. The number of marginal men nearly doubled between 1970 and 1978.
3. The quality of the housing of the marginal men has deteriorated steadily since 1970.
4. With few exceptions, employment opportunities for marginal men in 1978 were just as insufficient as they had been in 1970.
5. Educational opportunities and chances to improve social position are limited and could not be determined to have had any influence at all on the groups selected for investigation.

But "marginal men" are by no means a problem only in Quetta or Pakistan. Marginalized population groups can be found in all the countries of the Third World. Marginality is understood today as one of the very characteristics of underdevelopment, as that of inequality on a global scale.

The marginal man in Quetta is one of the last links in the chain of global inequality. His situation, however, which is described in detail in the present essay, is not just a scholarly problem but rather or above all a problem of humanity. The goal of this study is to call attention to this fact and to awaken understanding for these groups.

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# "UNCOD, Combatting Desertification, and the Pastoral Nomad"

by Douglas L. Johnson

Meeting in Nairobi from 29 August to 9 September, 1977, 95 United Nations member states and the representatives of assorted UN agencies,<sup>1</sup> non-governmental organizations, and intergovernmental organizations deliberated upon the nature of desertification, digested a host of scientific reviews, case studies, feasibility investigations, and national experiences, and, if production of an (at least superficially) agreed upon Action Plan is any indication, reached consensus on how to resist the degradation of dry land resources. This distillation of global wit and wisdom is summarized in twenty-eight recommendations, often with detailed elaboration, that constitute the conference's Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The final plan is contained in the Report of the United Nations Conference on Desertification (A/CONF. 74/36; pp. 2-63) and is available from either the UNEP Desertification Unit, P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya or the UNEP offices in Geneva (UNEP Liaison Office, Palais des Nations, Pavillon du Petit Saconnex, 16, Avenue Jean Trombley, 1209-Geneva, Switzerland) and New York (UNEP, Box 20, Alcoa Building, 866 U.N. Plaza, N.Y., N.Y., 10017, USA). Updated information on the anti-desertification battlelines is published in the Desertification Control Bulletin (available from UNEP, Nairobi), the first number of which (June, 1978) contains a summary of the Action Plan recommendations, UNCOD proceedings, and current anti-desertification efforts.

The conference originated in a United Nations General Assembly resolution (3337; xxix) of 17 December 1974. This resolution stressed the need for international cooperation to resist desertification. It called attention to ecological deterioration of the world's dry lands and mandated an urgent compilation of the current knowledge of desertification's causes and impacts as well as articulation of the steps that should be taken to halt and, wherever possible, reverse the process. The disastrous but well-publicized images of drought and human suffering in the Sahelian zones of West Africa and the semi-arid lands of Ethiopia and Somalia galvanized support for a conference that would produce an Action Plan and mobilize resources to combat the source of dry land environmental decline.

No brief summary can do justice to the complexities and implications, let alone the presumed practicability, of such a global strategy to cope with adverse environmental change in the world's arid regions. The Action Plan attempts to comprehensively survey all livelihood systems operating in the world's dry lands and to make practical suggestions for appropriate management strategies. These recommendations encompass comprehensive land-use planning, better management of water resources, soil conservation, salinization abatement, vegetation regeneration, drought risk reduction, reduced regional economic inequalities, strengthened national science and technology capacity, alternative energy resources, improved climate monitoring, and development of national anti-desertification plans, among other issues.



Only one section of the Action Plan (Recommendation 6) deals specifically with the problems of rangeland management and (by implication) with indigenous pastoral systems, although occasional tangential references crop up in other sections of the document. Recommendation 6 suggests "That measures should be taken to prevent desertification and to ameliorate the condition of degraded rangelands, to introduce suitable systems of rangeland and livestock and wildlife management, to develop diversified and integrated systems of production and to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of those areas." (A/CONF. 74/36, p. 21). The recommendation then proceeds to spell out in specifics just what these innocuous generalities mean. In most cases, these concrete proposals emphasize the appropriateness of centralized land management, restricted mobility, and top-down development approaches that offer little scope for constructive involvement of indigenous pastoral systems. These proposals can best be examined under four headings. Although the critique presented here relates specifically to the pastoral sector, the same shortcomings permeate the Action Plan's approach to other livelihood systems and economic sectors. The four critical areas upon which the Action Plan founders are:

(1) A focus on land rather than people: Consistently desertification is approached as a physical phenomenon that can be combated by appropriate land use planning, legislation, and the application of improved and centralized land management techniques. Little attention is paid to the needs of the human systems enmeshed in the desertification process, to efforts that reduce the vulnerability of peoples exposed to desertification, or to practices that strengthen, rather than destroy, indigenous coping mechanisms. As such, the Action Plan tends to treat symptoms of the problem (i.e., physical environmental deterioration) rather than its root causes which lie in patterns of behavior and social change. For this reason its effects run the risk of being counter-productive in the social-economic sphere even when they might succeed in dealing successfully with the degradation of the physical environment.

(2) A top-down approach to planning: Essentially desertification is seen as being responsive to plans developed in the centers of political and economic power and brought to the people affected by desertification. Despite lip service being paid to the need to "involve pastoralists from the outset in the planning and implementation of all measures that affect them" (p. 24), the entire thrust of the document is to call for extensive educational campaigns that will promote "rational" use of resources and "overcome social and cultural obstacles to socio-economic management." Regarded by implication as perverse and irrational, practitioners of indigenous management strategies are to be "educated" into right thinking about, and proper recognition of, the nature of their problems. This ambivalent oscillation between admonitions to involve the people and advocacy of centralized land use planning is best exemplified by the Conference's repeated reaffirmation of the United Nation's commitment to the support of indigenous science and technology. Beautifully vague, this masterful expression permits both the ethnoscience enthusiast and the proponent of planning to combine forces in support of the same principle while differing on its meaning. The tenor of

the document leaves the distinct impression that the people most immediately concerned are to be consulted when right-thinking people have evolved the plan and their compliance with plan objectives is desired.

(3) A confusion of desertification with other phenomena: Throughout the Action Plan there is a tendency to confuse desertification with drought, general issues of poverty and political marginalization, and economic development (health, sanitation, education, water development and so on). This leads the Action Plan to the conclusion (35j, p. 23), for example, that attempts to ameliorate degraded rangeland should include establishment of fisheries development projects in small reservoirs in an attempt to diversify dry land livelihood systems. While there are some superficial similarities between fishing and pastoral exploitation systems (both, for example, exploit spatially and seasonally variable resources; in one case the often elusive fish, in the other ephemeral grasses), and while fish resources do have major potential for economic development in some arid environments (along exotic rivers, for instance), the linkage of fisheries development to pastoralism and desertification, tangential at best, seems contrived. Inclusion of such admittedly worthwhile projects for economic development in the interests of planning comprehensiveness results in a lack of focus, diverts attention from crucial and attainable objectives, and dissipates energy and resources.

(4) An absence of priorities: At no point are clear priorities established based on the severity of the desertification problem, the intensity of impact on particular peoples and resources, or the urgency of coping with the problem before irremediable damage is done. Everything is equally serious and must be done yesterday if not sooner. Perhaps in a global political arena support for anti-desertification can be generated in no other way, but one cannot help but feel that a more careful balancing of needs, resources, and attainable objectives would have made a more compelling case. For example, in the pastoral sector it is probably far more important to gain firm control over, and ameliorate the deterioration of, rangeland adjacent to major bore wells, than it is to worry about presumed degradational trends in rangeland in general. Evidence for the former is incontrovertible, while data for the latter is lacking or controversial at best. Similarly, strengthening of the subsistence base security of pastoral systems is likely to have more significant results than attempts to "rationalize" the traditional pastoral sector in order to increase offtake. Drought security and increased milk production from existing herds would seem more likely to encourage stabilized stocking rates than either draconian measures or an abrupt shift to commercial beef production.

For one can certainly argue that pastoral people have been more heavily threatened by desertification and the forces that unleash it than many other livelihood systems. Except in unusual circumstances, now the most marginal and powerless of the dry lands' livelihoods, traditional pastoralists can expect from the desertification Action Plan (if implemented) more of the same kind of pressures that have rendered their existence precarious during the last several decades. The consensus of the assembled nations (p. 86) was that population

growth was leading both to agriculture expansion into marginal lands and to an increase in livestock numbers with consequent overgrazing and rangeland deterioration. Only by developing improved grazing strategies (paragraph 35(b)), improved range management (i.e., fencing, paragraph 35c), improved livestock management (better quality animals with better health -- 35d), improved systems of land tenure and water rights (35k), alternative livelihood sources (crafts, tourism, industrially useful raw materials etc., 35n), better social services (35o), and resettlement and sedentarization "where appropriate" (34, 35p) can this disastrous trend be reversed. Little attention is paid in the Action Plan to improved marketing structures for pastoral products, or for mechanisms whereby pastoralists can be assured that value added to their animals through participation in stratified production schemes will actually be returned to them.

For scientists there are obligatory phases about the need to survey existing resources, to study the primary and secondary productivity of grassland ecosystems, and to develop more productive and drought-resistant fodder species, all of which provides the appropriate rationale for generating funded research. Existing MAB<sup>2</sup> and EMASAR<sup>3</sup> programs also are annointed with this litany of modern range management. There is not one word about the relevance of traditional strategies, their objectives, values and productive potential, or the possibility that indigenous wisdom and behavior can form the basis both for development and anti-desertification programs. In effect the Action Plans' response to rangeland problems repeats the conventional wisdom of the last several decades, which has been attended by modest success at best, and ignores the evidence (often modest because unsearched for) that traditional pastoral systems can impose effective social controls on common property resources<sup>4</sup> and that traditional concepts of environmental management, such as the hima system, can form the basis for meaningful rangeland development.<sup>5</sup> The Action Plan's approach to pastoralism reflects a major gap in communication between social science based students of pastoral nomadic systems on the one hand and range managers deriving their fundamental inspiration from agristological/ecological sciences on the other.

In only two areas can pastoral peoples find encouragement in the Action Plan. Paragraph 35l calls for protection of the rights of pastoralists, an important objective, although this is seen as best attainable through planned land use, improved tenure systems, and the regulation of other land uses in pastoral areas. Why tourism is cited as an example of land use requiring such regulation, when the expansion of marginally productive dry farming poses a infinitely more serious threat, remains a mystery. The Action Plan's call (35f) for better strategies to cope with drought through the establishment of fodder reserves, development of livestock markets, etc., also strikes a responsive chord. Insofar as the short-term crisis phases associated with drought reinforce longer-term productivity declines, such activities promise to assist the pastoralist, although they are unlikely to deal effectively with fundamental problems.

A final point that needs to be stressed, in what is perhaps an

overly critical review, is that the Plan of Action is by its very nature a generalized document; it explicitly and repeatedly acknowledges that global prescriptions are not likely to apply to the context of individual nation states or different regions within them. In this recognition there is hope that national anti-desertification action plans will be more subtly attuned to local opportunities and conditions. One way to assess the application of Recommendation 6 would be to analyze the major transnational pastoral project (Management of Livestock and Rangelands to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian Regions (SOLAR); A/CONF. 74/26) developed as one of the UNCOD action feasibility studies. Another might be to review the programs of individual countries in terms of their relationship to ongoing UNESCO (MAB III and IV) and FAO (EMASAR) activities in grassland ecosystems. Because the Action Plan represents as much a political statement designed to marshal international moral and financial support behind anti-desertification programs as it does a practical planning program, it is on this national and programatic level that the future of dry land pastoral peoples will be decided.

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>While UNEP had organizational responsibility for UNCOD, UNESCO and FAO played major supporting roles. WHO, WMO, UNITAR (which sponsored a conference on desert development strategies preceeding UNCOD), ILO, UNDP, UNU, and WFP also were in evidence in the anti-desertification struggle.

<sup>2</sup>Man and the Biosphere (MAB) is an international ecological research program carried out under UNESCO auspices.

<sup>3</sup>EMASAR (the Ecological Management of Arid and Semi-arid Rangelands in Africa and the Near and Middle East) is FAO's major rangeland research, training and development scheme. It hopes to extend its activities to the Far East and Latin America eventually.

<sup>4</sup>S.P. Malhotra, Socio Economic Survey of the Livestock Breeders in Anupgarh-Pugal Region of Western Rajasthan, Human Factors Studies Division, Divisional Report No. 65/2, Jodhpur: Central Arid Zone Research Institute, 1965.

<sup>5</sup>O. Draz, Report to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on Range Management and Fodder Development, UNDP No. TA 3292, Rome: FAO, 1974.

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# "Some Thoughts on the Anthropological Study of Pastoralism"

By Gudrun Dahl and Anders Hjort  
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The study field of pastoral societies has been important within social anthropology. The attention has increased in anthropology as well as other sciences during the recent drought periods. One result has been a substantial production of literature, much of it of high quality. We wish here to briefly indicate and evaluate a few issues which from our subjective horizon seem to be interesting. Our reflections stem from the work with the research project "Pastoralism, society and ecology" which is financed by SAREC (Swedish Authority for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries).

Given the disastrous effects on pastoral economies caused by the droughts it is natural for the concern of anthropologists to be primarily with production aspects. The more principal discussion which pays attention to pastoral production represents a gradual shift away from a structural functional approach which dominated the pastoral studies in the 1950s and early 1960s. One contribution which substantiates such a statement is Perspectives on Nomadism (eds: Irons and Dyson-Hudson, 1972) where Dyson-Hudson identified a number of problem areas in the introduction. In Pastoralism in Tropical Africa (ed: Monod, 1975) some articles dealt with the difficulty to analyse the role of pastoralists in the framework of today's development process. The Desert and the Sown (ed: Nelson, 1973) focussed on pastoralists' relations to the larger community. The quality of involvement with external factors was further discussed in Pastoral Production and Society (1979). One tendency in the debate was been a wide-spread consensus to avoid the term "nomadism", which concerns degree of mobility, since this does not provide analytically significant units (cf. Salzman (1971), Barth (1973:11f) and Asad (1979)). A greater emphasis is instead attached to the economic aspects of animal husbandry, i.e. "pastoralism".

A fundamental issue evoking debate concerns the relation between ecology and social organization. The question is to what extent the use of ecology as an explanatory variable leads to a deterministic analysis which could not account for form variations (cf. Dahl (1979a:262ff)), or whether, as Salzman suggests, one can "assert that one adaptation, such as nomadism, limits and conditions to a greater extent than does another adaptation, such as agriculture" (1967:121). Salzman's essay deals with the relation between ecological conditioned patterns of pastoral land use, and political organization. When pastoral migrations take place along regular routes and occur in a more predictable environment there is centralization and when uncertain conditions foster irregular ad.hoc movements, this necessitates a more flexible political system with a high degree of independence for production units.

The discussion about models founded on a correlation between ecology and social organization has also been associated with an article by Rubel (1969) based on camel pastoralism, where she suggests

a relation between herd composition (in terms of species) and pastoral social organization. Whereas Rubel sees widespread and diffuse social relationships as typical for small stock pastoralists as opposed to camel pastoralists, Pastner has in a critical article (1971) contended that such relationships are significant to all pastoralists (*ibid*:287). This position has been generally approved among anthropologists the more so since Rubel's hypothesis has been falsified by recently gathered empirical data (cf. Lewis (1975:430f) and Tapper (1979:48)). After Rubel there have been few systematical attempts to build models of pastoral social systems on ecological variations.

Today a consensus seems to be that there can be no effective single model of pastoral economic and political systems based on ecological conditions alone, but that both cultural and ecological circumstances need to be considered in an analysis. Burnham (1979:350), for example, stresses the importance of political factors rather than the natural environment as an explanation of spatial mobility: "...the overly deterministic but commonly held view that settlement mobility is best analysed as resulting from environmental necessity has been shown to be unhelpful as a point of departure for the study of mobile societies." The question is, however, whether the "ecological" approach represented by Rubel has yet been based on a sufficiently sophisticated knowledge of the pastoral production system to warrant model-building or whether the right questions have yet been asked in that context. No doubt we have to take into consideration both ecological and political factors: the exact relation between these two fields has yet to be ascertained. Perhaps a significant improvement can be reached by focussing on "production" rather than on "ecology", for the patterns of pastoral production by necessity have to account of both political and natural factors: relations of production in a wider sense as well as the environmental constraints under which pastoralism operates.

Outside the field of social anthropology there are two fundamental approaches to pastoralism which seem to be of growing significance, and which reflect the two major development theories, that of dependency and that of modernization (cf. Long (1976:9ff)). One is based on an insight of the increasingly vulnerable situation of the local population in the dry areas as caused by the expansion of capitalism which draws them into marginal but dependent positions in the dominating national economy. Perceived from this perspective the problems of pastoralists require for their solution new forms for regional and local distribution of wealth and new power structures. The other school, positive to "development" efforts and the involvement into nation-building, instead focuses on the technical constraints and opportunities built into the pastoral production system for a national perspective: its potential productivity of meat for urban markets, its vulnerability, and its possible capacity to support rural people and keep them away from the cities. However, this leads adherents of the modernization theory to overstress technical problems: to our minds, anthropologists have a great responsibility in emphasizing the limits of such "technological reductionism".

Anthropology has to some extent presented an approach of a different quality to those just mentioned, with a greater emphasis on small scale studies. There has been a gap between social

anthropologists on the one hand and development planners on the other, which has been clearly visible at some large scale conferences in the last five years where anthropologists have been urged to provide their detailed knowledge about various pastoral societies for an improvement of development projects under way. Results from such conferences have been edited by Nelson (1973), Monod ed. (1975), Weissleder ed. (1978) and L'Equipe écologie et anthropologie des sociétés pastorales eds. (1979).

The anthropological efforts have not been altogether successful. Ruthenberg (1976), in his review of the papers from one such conference, provides a good illustration: "Almost all past efforts to develop the production potential of pastoral areas failed. Several contributors to this book argue that this was so because their expertise had been ignored. The book, however, gives little hope for improvement. ... Planners and decision-makers in pastoral Africa would like to learn from the anthropologists and ethnologists what could be done to improve the lot of the pastoral people. Perhaps nothing reasonable can be done without a land tenure reform, which imposes livestock quotas or which introduces private cattle on private land or common cattle on common land. If this is so, then it should be said by those who are so knowledgeable about pastoral people." Here, Ruthenberg treads on an obviously sore toe of many anthropologists who prefer the study of traditional social systems, nicely organized and balanced, to studies of economic change.

There are not only contrasting views between anthropologists and planners, but such differences occur also within the discipline according to well-known segmentary principles within anthropology. Schneider (1976:52) concluded in his review of the same volume that the anthropologists were to be sorted into two categories: "...this conference represented a confrontation between two paradigms, the ecological, which explains the behavior of pastoralists in terms of the constraints placed upon them by the habitat, and the sociocultural, which explains behavior by reference to internal social structure and values." This links back to the debate mentioned above. These paradigms have become a self-fulfilling classification system so that researchers tend to be ascriptively affiliated either to one or the other. This is part of a more general trend within anthropology today to seek explanations either in terms of materialistic or symbolic frameworks.

Some general criticisms can be raised against the results of these conferences: (1) Only a clear minority of papers presented deal at any extent with the wider context within which pastoral societies operate today; (2) even fewer make this a major issue; and (3) practically no contribution deals with pastoralists in the tradition of peasant studies. Generally, we think that a number of important issues would benefit from more systematic studies, for example the fields listed below: (a) labour inputs (seasonal or permanent shortage, for example, is an evident problem in many pastoral societies), (b) land rights (pastoralists are generally losing their best pastures, those kept for difficult years), (c) pastoralists are ethnic or religious minorities (their political organization is often weak and they are proportionally few in practically all countries), (d) new forms of dependency (the current development process means a rapid expansion of a capitalist economy with great structural significance). We believe that more



systematization is vital particularly for the understanding of the present development process. The anthropologists who have a thorough fieldwork experience have a first-hand knowledge about the complexity of pastoral societies, a knowledge that is evidently lacking among authors of other disciplines, authors who may well observe that pastoralists are now being exploited but who cannot then account properly for how this occurs.

One step towards this end would be to concentrate on wider power relations in order to be able to identify also the causes for growing economic inequality and intra-pastoral societal imbalance (cf. Dahl (1979b)). The striking discontinuity between on the one hand the study of peasant societies, concerned primarily with farming communities, and on the other hand the study of pastoral societies, needs not to be there (cf. Asad (1979)). Through the emergence of a great number of small urban centres within the pastoral regions (cf. Dahl ibid and Hjort (1979)), through the creation of political ties between the interests of a national bourgeoisie and those of peripheral "elites", important economic and social links are created between the pastoral producers and national centres. This is a situation where pastoralists become "peasants" in a wider sense, i.e. they become dependent on a capitalist mode of production for supplementary, yet necessary cash incomes rather than independent subsistence producers.

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 (Paper read to the IXth Scandinavian  
 Ethnographic meeting, Uppsala,  
 October 19-21, 1979).

BOOK REVIEWS

The Last Caravan by Thurston Clarke,  
G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York 1978  
286 pp.

Thurston Clarke is an investigative journalist whose earlier works include a study of shady international financiers. In The Last Caravan he combines his muckraker's nose with a novelist's evocative skills and the anthropologist's eye for systemic relationships between society and environment to present a lucid and informative analysis of the Sahelian drought of the late 1960's and early 70's, particularly as it effected the Tuareg of Niger.

The book's structure is especially effective. We are drawn into the stark events through the eyes of Atakor, a nomad of the Kel Dennik confederacy. He serves as a Tuareg "everyman", a representative of the famine victims Clarke interviewed in refugee camps and on journeys into the hinterland. Interspersed with vivid accounts of Atakor's strategies in coping with the drought--his decision to abandon his wife to her kin's largesse, his long journey in search of work in Niamey and his sorrowing memories of the Tuareg's glory-days--are the grim facts and figures on the drought and its antecedents. Clarke has a bone to pick and he does it persuasively.

Rejecting the "act of God" theories of climatologists who blame the drought on changes in the earth's weather patterns, Clarke assigns most of the culpability to human tampering with a fragile ecosystem. To Clarke, the prime villains were the French colonial policies which encouraged expansion of export-crop agriculture into the more marginal regions of the Sahel and promoted construction of numerous wells, with concomitant rises in livestock populations in their vicinity. As monetized cotton replaced livestock as the valued commodity in local exchange systems, nomads had to increase their holdings still more to keep pace.

Prior to such developments the Tuareg and their Peul neighbors had experienced and survived droughts of equal duration. But when the rains failed in the late 1960's the exploding livestock population of the Sahel placed the nomads in an untenable position. With pastures around well-heads denuded by overgrazing, the choice was no choice at all: migrate in search of grazing and see animals die of thirst: remain near the wells and watch them starve! Nor are the natives of the Sahel exempt from the blame. Cutting of firewood on a large scale promoted erosion by wind and rain, reduced transpiration and allowed true desert to encroach south into the semi-desert of the Sahel.

In one respect I have a quarrel with Clarke and probably with many of my colleagues. Clarke, like numerous anthropologists, seems

to equate "culture" with "species" or "organism", such that he views the Tuareg culture, like the Blue Whale, as supposedly verging on extinction. Such a perspective is, of course, very much in accord with various anthropological schools which also rely heavily on organismic analogy (e.g. Stewardian cultural ecology, Classic Functionalism and, the more "applied" vein, such organizations as "Cultural Survival"). Reification, however, is not necessarily reality. Unlike Blue Whales, Great Auks, and Dodos, "extinct" (to paraphrase the ecologist's bumper sticker) "need not be forever" in the realm of human culture as long as people themselves remain alive. This most Tuareg did, large and tragic losses of life in the drought notwithstanding.

Clarke claims that 50-75% of Tuareg pastoralists were uprooted by the drought and that despite post-1974 attempts by international agencies and the government of Niger to aid the Tuareg in rebuilding their herds, little had been accomplished by 1976, when the basic research for the book was completed. Surely, given the nature of the third and fourth-world bureaucracy, two or three years is hardly "forever". This is especially true when one considers the time required for livestock reproductive rates to build depleted herds to a level adequate to sustain a pastoral economy. Voluminous cross-cultural data indicate that "boom" and "bust" (and back to "boom") cycles are common in a genre de vie as precarious as pastoral nomadism. One is reminded of a similarly titled book--The Last Migration (Cronin 1957)--in which the fate ascribed to an Iranian tribe (presumably the Qashqai) turned out not to be terminal after all!

Even if we accept, as I do not, the idea of an irrevocable loss of a viable pastoral nomadic lifeway for the Tuareg, does this in fact mean that Tuareg culture is "dead", its survivors fated to be but "a weak and distorted echo of an earlier generation" (Clarke p. 279)? Clarke's own data suggest that the Tuareg are more tenacious than he gives them credit for. Like pastoralists elsewhere, they are nonpareil strategists and opportunists, taking status validation and verification for self-esteem where they can find them. Thus, if Atakor is able to fulfill, in some degree, his self-image as a warrior by becoming a sword-carrying nightwatchman in Niamey, it ill behooves Clarke, or romantically inclined anthropologists (among whom I would count myself) to cast brickbats just because Tuareg aren't as glamorous once off their camels. Where, in any case, does one decide the point at which a culture has disappeared? The Tuareg, for example, had ceased raiding for slaves--once an important part of their economy--long before the drought!

In this regard the fieldwork my wife and I carried out among the Baluch of Pakistan is instructive. In 1968-69, when we worked with nomads and oasis farmers in the interior of Western Baluchistan, we found that each group regarded itself as superior to the other. Villagers disparaged nomads as rustics and "hillbilly" types (pahwal), while nomads viewed themselves as the most "pure" (asli) Baluch, nature's nobleman in contrast to the corrupt shahri or "townsmen". Both agreed, however, that the fishermen on the Arabian Sea coast far to the south were of low status.

When we returned to Pakistan in 1976-77 to study maritime Baluch

on the Sind coast, the tables were turned, with the fishermen seeing themselves as far superior to interior groups who were disdained as miserable "jungle" men and "drylanders", despite the fact that the fishermen's own fathers and grandfathers had been desert-dwellers, driven to the coast by drought and sectarian rivalry (cf. S. Pastner 1978). The self-esteem of the fishermen was in large measure justified even though they were no longer participants in the historically "purest" Baluch adaptations--i.e., desert-based ones; for the erstwhile refugees now enjoyed a higher living standard, on the whole, than interior groups, deriving a lucrative living not just from fishing but also as key participants in smuggling networks operating between the Gulf emirates and Pakistan. Now, even more than desert nomads, were they able to indulge such "pure" Baluch ideals as close-kin endogamy and purdah for their womenfolk, ideals the exigencies of desert life made it somewhat harder to achieve due to greater needs for mobility and social plasticity (cf. C. Pastner 1978). Clearly, cultural identity and pride, unlike beauty, are not entirely in the eyes of the beholder!

My criticisms of Clarke aside, I regard The Last Caravan as an excellent book, although not a "scholarly" one, if by the term one means a wealth of footnotes and a certain turgidness of style. Certainly the lack of citation of documentary sources is a shortcoming of the book, although the introduction makes it clear that Clarke did touch base with such approved authorities on the Tuareg as Nicolaisen and Swift. On the plus side, Clarke's wealth of anecdotal material accords beautifully with theoretical models of pastoral decision making, which emphasize the nomad as strategist.

If one believes, as I do, that anthropology can as well aspire to a good muckraking journalistic ideal (à la Upton Sinclair or, latterly, Bernstein and Woodward) as to a natural-science one, then The Last Caravan is a praiseworthy effort. While it is not a substitute for more academic accounts of the Sahelian tragedy (cf. Swift 1977) it is a valuable adjunct to them. It is especially relevant for the Commission on Nomadic Peoples, since its lucid style and readability make it at least as likely to be consulted and acted upon by those in policy-making positions as the reports of scholars which, as we all know, are frequently relegated to dusty file cabinets.

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Saudi Arabian Bedouin: An Assessment Of Their Needs,  
by Saad Eddin Ibrahim and Donald P. Cole. Cairo  
Papers in Social Science, Monograph Five, 1978.

This monograph is, I find, deeply disturbing. Two well-accredited academics from a respectable institution carry out a fairly standard piece of research and come up with conclusions which are almost diametrically opposed to my own. My conclusions were arrived at after 38 months of living with a north Saudi bedouin tribe accompanied by my family of wife and three (later four) children, 4 months on my own mostly with various sheikhs in the desert and the towns and 42 months of travelling and library research, (and trying to earn a living.)

Before embarking on the major worry to which this monograph gives rise, it is as well to get some nit-picking criticism out of the way. The survey was carried out, mostly by questionnaire, at four summer camps, yet we are given very little detail about these camps except that there was a Summer Campaign (for literacy, health, religious instruction, etc.) at each and that they were predominantly inhabited by certain tribes. The sample is very small, 208 or approximately 0.01% of the total Bedu population, but we are never told what proportion of the chosen camps population this represents: nor are we given the refusal to participate rate. The questionnaire, although broken down into categories for us, is not printed so that the actual questions cannot be evaluated. The authors state that the sample was drawn from regions spanning all parts of the Kingdom (p. 99), but this is simply not true. No Bedu from the northern provinces was contacted although these provinces comprise well over a third of the land surface of Saudi Arabia and are inhabited largely by nomads according to the Ministry of Planning Second Development Plan. Another irritating feature is the use of statistics. By training I am sceptical about the value of statistics but I can see that they do, on occasion, have their uses. However, what is the point of producing significant correlations of the obvious? Clearly long-range nomads in this area are going to have more camels than settled Bedu; clearly rich camel-herders are going to have more trucks than poor agriculturalists. In any case can minor statistical correlations on a sample size like this really be regarded as significant when the total Bedu population of 1.9 million is considered? I don't think so. Apart from this the sample is skewed, as the authors point out. It consists of groups who partake in Summer Campaigns, even if not all those who were interviewed do, although we don't know the proportion of participants to non-participants nor are the statistics broken down so that a comparison between the two groups might be made. What I find difficult to understand is why all the sample population was drawn from groups at Summer Campaign wells. The authors claim that it was to ensure that all participants had been exposed to welfare programmes, but why this should be important is obscure; not only is such a sample unlikely to be representative of the Bedu as a whole, but it also gives rise to an unpleasant suspicion (one hopes unjustified) that the survey was commissioned by the Ministry of Education (we are not told) and that

it was important that the answers should confirm the Ministry in its opinions. Perhaps I'm being unduly cynical. That Ministry, i.e. non-Bedu, opinion is at work is shown by the authors pointing out that the skew in the sample is towards 'a select group of more enlightened Bedouin' - a patronizing description, the phrasing of which gives rise to doubts about the authors impartiality. This air of superiority, one hopes unconscious, is further displayed on pp. 4, 20, 46, 47 and outrageously on p. 49 where the authors find it 'Interesting and amusing' that the Bedu use mispronounced european words to describe an alien type of house. This sort of attitude, unconscious or not, is unforgiveable.

There are three further points which indicate that the authors have failed to understand the Bedu and have remained firmly locked in their own culture. On p. 14 it is suggested that the size of bride-wealth may account for the relatively late marriage age for men. We are told that few parents (sic) are wealthy enough to provide the bride-price outright for their son. In the north the marriage age is somewhat earlier, but (and this is the important point) the collection of the bride-wealth is a group endeavour although it is invariably spoken of as emanating from the groom alone. The same variation is shown in the question of divorce. In this sample only three men are divorced. This is reasonable provided that it is realised that it means divorced i.e. wife-less at that moment; it does not mean that divorce is rare. On the contrary it is common, among the Rwala (the tribe I worked with), where most men of forty or over had been married to two or three different wives at some point. Cole makes exactly the same observation in Nomads of the Nomads, p. 75. But perhaps divorce is rarer among 'more enlightened Bedouin'. These anomalous observations admit to only two possible explanations: either the northern Aneze group of tribes are very different (which they aren't and I detected no difference among the few Harb tribesmen I met - the only point of overlap) or one of us is wrong. In my view it is the latter, although when I first read Nomads of the Nomads I felt so at home that it is most likely that the questionnaire method is the real culprit. Finally, why do the authors take as gospel the opinions of government doctors concerning the health of the Bedu? It is a widespread myth that the Bedu are undernourished, have TB, worms, lice and eye-diseases. My own observations give this the lie. After meeting, at a rough estimate, some 3,500 Bedu (men and women) I can only recall 4 with eye-disease (one cataract, one trachoma and two unspecified in women over 75). My own children, aged between 2 months and 14 years, never had worms although they always ate communally with the other children and they caught lice once in 38 months of close physical contact. As for TB, I was present during an eradication campaign and the doctor, an Egyptian, told me categorically that he had found the disease exclusively among town-dwellers. He found the Bedu, in general, extremely healthy as did I and my children certainly had no more illness than would be normal in Europe.

But enough nit-picking. The most worrying feature of this survey is its essential dishonesty. The authors claims that they are enquiring into the needs of the Bedu in an unbiased fashion, yet they run down nomads and Bedu alike and project western needs into a totally different society. For the analysis Maslow's system

of hierarchy of needs is used, a system presumably designed to be universal (I am not familiar with it) yet a category of social need called 'recreation' is included which is surely only relevant to an industrialized society. Simple societies or even simple sections of complex societies (French peasants spring to mind) don't have recreation in our sense of the word, or only to a very limited extent. Poetry, stories, myths, mock-battles, dancing, etc. among the Bedu all perform a definite function, either moral injunctions, history, explications of social relationships, straight information, training or expressions of the significance of certain social occasions. Whatever else they might be (and this is an ad hoc list) they are not recreation as we understand it. And can listening to religious programmes on the wireless really be classed as recreation? The authors must have an unorthodox view of religion and its function in society if they can classify it as such. Two conclusions can be drawn from this: either Maslow's system is unsuitable or the authors have misunderstood it.

It is delightful and sensible that researchers should go to the subjects themselves to find out their needs but unfortunately the survey does not do this despite its avowed intention. The authors say that "the quantity and quality of satisfying basic needs are affected by the structure of the kinship group. Therefore it becomes imperative to explore this social medium of need satisfaction" (p.6). But they don't go on to do it. Nowhere is it mentioned how the kinship group lives, works or co-operates - this 'imperative' is left a total blank. As for the needs that are considered they are looked at, like recreation, from a completely western viewpoint. We hear that tents and 'shacks' are overcrowded and without sanitation, ignoring the fact that for most of the year a lot of the time can be spent outdoors and that the Bedu like being what we would regard as overcrowded. It was a feature of life among the Rwala that almost drove us mad; whenever we were alone the Bedu worried that we were either cross or sulking and immediately tried to draw us into a group. What is overcrowding to us is a demonstration of solidarity and goodfellowship to them; this even applies to the sleeping arrangements. As for sanitation it is unnecessary under nomadic conditions, a nearby dune or bush being quite adequate and, given the climate, extremely hygienic. Even those living in what the authors so charmingly called shacks prefer to use the open air as their lavatory, regarding inside sanitation as an unfortunate and downright disgusting necessity brought about by settlement. Another need that the authors identify is education. By this they quite clearly mean western type schools and learning the three Rs. They totally ignore the indigenous education system which has enabled the Bedu to elaborate a complicated society and survive and expand under difficult climatic conditions. Literacy and numeracy are only essential to the government, not to the Bedu. The Bedu only need them if they are going to be welded into the mainstream of an industrializing and westernizing society and there is little evidence to show that this is what they want. Both the authors are highly educated men so, according to their thesis they should be able to make a good job of camel-herding. I should like to see them try it without the traditional education that they ignore. The running down of the Bedu is far more obvious than this for on pp. 35, 104, 108 and 111 are specific instructions on how best to



induce the Bedu to settle. Throughout the monograph there is the assumption that Bedu must change to fit 'modern' life, with no hint that modern life might be modified to fit the real needs of the Bedu. There is no consideration that pastoralism might be a starting point for development so that the Bedu could contribute in a natural way to the national economy. In a rather frightening passage (p. 4), the authors say that 'the Bedu are marginal to modern Saudi economy. Their nonutilization as man-power constitutes a most serious problem in a country which is experiencing an immense labour shortage'. The implication of this view, and the whole tenor of the survey, is that the Bedu must be made to settle to fulfil townsmen's needs and that the survey was a method of discovering how best to do it. Yet the authors admit, and substantiate from their findings, that the most settled Bedu are the most poverty-stricken and the least satisfied. In other words, the economy must go forward even if it involves the degradation of a large section of the population. Nowhere is the point made that the Bedu like living in the desert, they enjoy their own society and that many despise ours. Yet in one of the most impressive parts of Nomads of the Nomads, Cole makes just this observation. On p. 67 of this monograph it remarked that Cole noted little change in Al-Murrah in a decade; presumably his own opinion has changed.

It is hardly surprising that the Bedu are not presented as a people, as a living, working society; the monograph might just as easily have been about pearl-fishers in Okinawa or dust-bowl farmers in Oklahoma. They come across as a faceless substrate for 'improvement'. If the southern Bedu are anything like their northern cousins (and what evidence there is points in that direction), then they are a dynamic, suspicious, self-confident, rather bloody-minded lot with a deep, but tolerant, contempt for bureaucrats and government control. It is only to be expected that such people should give the answers that researchers seem to want, it is the quickest way to get rid of them. This is one of the disadvantages that Ibrahim and Cole worked under; they were connected, correctly or not, with a government agency and treated accordingly. It took me, accompanied by my family, 18 months to allay suspicion of government complicity and the difference in the quality and ceracity of the fieldwork results was marked. Be that as it may, the Bedu are not fools. If it appears likely that a government is going to pay subsidies, provide a house, clinic, mosque, post office or whatever simply because enough of you say you do want one, then obviously you comply. The same process happens among the Rwala, but out of earshot they laugh at such gullibility and say that they only want the mosque so that old men can find a bit of peace and quiet away from the women and children, the post-office is only so that a couple of young men can earn a wage near home and the house is only to store food in and retreat from sand-storms. Nobody takes these things seriously, nor does it mean that they will make the smallest effort to get them. If the government is fool enough to want you to have them, well why not? They might come in useful and it costs nothing. It is simply a way of keeping officials happy and at bay. If the goose says that you need golden eggs it is hardly polite or sensible to refuse them. The same applies to settlement. If the government makes it worth your while to settle then obviously you may; it doesn't mean, for a moment, that you'll remain settled. As soon as it becomes more convenient to move, you go. The Rwala

would, I have no doubt, respond in exactly the same way as the respondents in this survey; many of them are settled, apparently permanently, but it is just one option among many and it happens to be one which pays handsomely at the moment. As soon as the subsidies stop coming in they'll abandon their farms and houses and take up some other option. They admit this freely to someone not from officialdom.

The authors might have arrived at the same conclusion if they had carried through their investigation of kinship structure. Bedu society is a balancing act, a careful assessment of assets and options and the family carefully deployed to take maximum advantage of the greatest number of options. A Summer Campaign is obviously an option which can be exploited, so part of the wider family go there. By failing to follow up the kinship structure we don't know what proportion of the sample is doing this (and lying about their wants) and what proportion are there because it is their only option and really do want to settle. There are indications that some of the second category really were present. Apart from balancing options Bedu society works on co-operation; and only those who co-operate enjoy a good reputation. It follows then that those who don't co-operate do not have a good reputation. Those tanker-owners (p. 31) cannot have good reputations as they don't co-operate with their neighbours. (Neighbours are honorary kin until they or you move). If, as this indicates, they don't have good reputations it explains why they were at the Summer Campaign at all; they were social failures within the Bedu system who desperately needed to find new opportunities. A further indication that they had poor reputations is the ownership of such trucks at all. Tankers are unusual enough, Ibrahim and Cole tell us, to be classed as luxury items. Now a luxury item denotes surplus income (if bought through a loan) or surplus capital (if bought outright); but any surplus denotes meanness, for, after your family are adequately cared for, all surplus should be disposed of in casual generosity. Lack of generosity is meanness and meanness lowers reputation. Again those tanker-owners are likely to be of low reputation, and therefore in need of new, non-co-operative options. It is, of course, possible that they represent families that have simply diminished demographically, but the lack of enquiry into kinship structure makes this impossible to determine.

The authors confusion about Bedu society is further exposed on p. 16 where they state that 'high status Bedu were those who had the greatest wealth....'. This certainly wasn't true in the past and it is doubtful now. Reputation gave status and as indicated above it is difficult to be wealthy and have a good reputation. Even among townsmen wealth and high status do not necessarily go together. I know extremely rich individuals (some of them from the Royal family) who have filthy reputations and who are generally regarded as being of low status by the Bedu. That some of them have the trappings of high status, they are treated deferentially for instance, is a reflection of their power of patronage. To say that tribal affiliation is a determinant of social status is only a half-truth. While it will have some relevance in the tribes own area, outside it they will probably be unknown to townsmen and only faintly familiar to other Bedu; this obviously applies mostly to the smaller tribes.

One of the more extraordinary statements is that 'Among the Bedu, an individual has little or no identity in his own right'.

p. 11. In a segmentary and intensely egalitarian society, segmentation has no cut-off point, it continues down to individuals. The Bedu, if not the authors, are very aware of this. It is shown most clearly by the way in which the Bedu explain how groups segment into two or more complementary groups. The usual explanation is that the differentiating group was sired by two half-brothers, the descendents of each now forming groups on their own. Nor is the explanation purely retrospective. Half-brothers are aware that their offspring will ultimately form opposing groups and the possibility of preventing it happening too soon is a constant topic of conversation among the women who endlessly arrange and rearrange possible marriages between their infant children to delay such divisions. Such conversations and the awareness of the implications of segmentation demand an acute sense of individuality and personal identity. But equally in a segmentary society, such an awareness is masked as it is more usual for an individual to be seen as part of a group and to act as such toward an opposing group. Any outsider inevitably sees more of the faceless group member than he does of the individual and if he does not belong to the segmentary system himself may well never be aware of the intense individuality that such a system conceals.

If my views on Bedu society are correct there are only two conclusions to be drawn from the information in the monograph: either the questionnaire method is inadequate or the sample was very badly skewed indeed. Personally I think that both factors are at work. There is little doubt about the skew and, in the previous paragraph I have shown that the segmentary system itself, by always posing groups in opposition, might not ever be suitable for the questionnaire method. Group solidarity will inevitably lead to lies, for backing up one's own group will always be more important than such an abstract concept as truth. Indeed the authors give grounds for such a view for they express some surprise that formal answers and informal conversations show sharp divergence and that answers are contrary to observed behavior.

There is, however, one occasion when group solidarity is not so evident. On p. 105-6 it is revealed that the younger age-groups are less committed to settling than the older. The authors explain this by suggesting that Bedouin youth is oversocialized (whatever that means) or else less aware of alternate life-styles. Even Ibrahim and Cole seem unconvinced by these hypotheses but they do not seek further for an explanation. So wedded are they to the doctrine that Bedu must be settled that they ignore another, rather obvious interpretation. The young, being perhaps less aware of the strength of the powers-that-be, are expressing a conscious rejection of 'modernity' (for want of a better word). This possibility, or rather probability, came out quite clearly in my own fieldwork. About three years ago the Rwala seemed fairly convinced that the end was in sight for nomadism and the young men, particularly, were organizing their lives to enable them to partake in the new options of bureaucracy, education, service industries, etc. More recently (1979) there have been strong and increasing signs that their views are changing. While even more are turning to agriculture and trade skills they are quite open that this is temporary, a means of getting through a bad patch and that it is very much a second choice. They build little houses and settle, but where possible still live in their tents, they follow the movements of the sheep and camel market keenly and although they keep up with the Jones's in matters of television or air-conditioning, they are becoming

more and more vocal in their fundamental dislike of and opposition to settled town life. Even more vehement in their condemnation of house-dwelling are the women, particularly the younger ones. They claim, with justification, that towns are far less healthy, far more restrictive and far more boring: houses are, on the whole, less satisfactory than tents, more time-consuming and difficult to keep clean. They also dislike town food and bewail the lack of fresh milk. Perhaps surprisingly for a tribe which is far laxer in formal religion than Al-Murrah seem to be, the fundamental motivation seems to be religious. There is something unclean, in a moral sense, about living in a town; towns are seen as corrupt whereas the desert is clean. It seems to be a part of the general religious revival in the Muslim world, of which events in Iran were the first major public demonstration. It would be unfair to accuse Ibrahim and Cole for failing to pick this up, but it is not a wholly new phenomenon and the lack of consistency between questionnaire and observation should have alerted them to the fact that something, somewhere was wrong.

Certain members of the Saudi royal family are undoubtedly aware of this growing dissatisfaction, as is the Emir of the Rwala who is trying to encourage the tribe to build up its herds again, although his motivation may be more connected with the certainty that one day oil and easy money will run out. Unfortunately the bureaucrats, who appear to control policy, are totally committed to further industrialization, westernization and 'progress'. This monograph will, regrettably, add academic respectability to their preconceptions. Unless events move very fast in the Middle East, which fortunately they have a way of doing, the Bedu may be all but crushed and destroyed for once the art of camel-herding has been lost it will not easily be re-discovered. Busy officials, who are unlikely to be aware of the shortcomings of this monograph will cite it as justification for their actions; and the academic world will have to share the blame.

Let me end with a plea. If anyone in a position to help should read this essay, would they note the following fact? The present policy of settling nomads in the Middle East is morally wrong, economically stupid, ecologically disastrous and politically unwise. Just because western man prefers to live in a house in a town and earn a daily wage or engage in settled agricultural pursuits, it does not mean that such a way of life is better, superior or more desirable. To hold this view is to indulge in value judgements which we are not competent to make. If anthropology and sociology have any justification at all it is to make those in power aware of this. This monograph is based on just such value judgements and its conclusions are, in my view, erroneous, except for one. On p. 110, the authors say that 'The most striking result of the research is the lack of change they (the Bedu) have experienced in the last decade....'. Considering the time effort and money that has gone into attempts to change the Bedu this can only be interpreted as a refusal, or at the very least, a reluctance to change on their part. Changes toward making nomadism easier, more productive and profitable is a line which has been almost totally ignored. Perhaps it should be tried? The Bedu are as adaptable, intelligent and willing as anyone to try out innovations. If we showed the same

qualities in bringing our own thinking into line with reality we might be more successful in enabling nomads to play a greater role in the development of their environment.

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