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Pastoralism and the State in African Arid Lands

An Overview

M A Mohamed Salih

Introduction

Pastoralism is a system of production as well as a socio-cultural system consisting of an interaction between herders, animals and a given mode of resource management. The relationship between the factors of pastoral production is mediated by socio-political and cultural considerations which negate any reductionist approach which perceives of these as a mode of production governed by market relations. However, there is also no reason to believe that pastoralists obtain their livelihood entirely from animals. The evidence available suggests that pastoralists derive a considerable portion of their subsistence from activities other than raising animals (eg. crop production, arduous jobs, migration to towns and centres of employment etc). Moreover, in some climatic conditions ,which do not encourage the integration of grain and animal production, pastoralists tend to depend on imports of grain as well as other goods and services from other societies. Likewise, agro-pastoral societies are increasingly obtaining some of their non-agricultural requirements from external sources. What makes pastoralism a unique system of production is that, as a way of life, pastoralists are in continuous movement from one ecological niche to another. Kinship and political relations are expressed in relation to the herd whose reproduction is essential for social and economic reproduction.

The expansion of the market economy and the emergence of new consumption patterns among pastoralists reveals that pastoral societies are more and more interlocked into regional and national trade chains. Moreover, the emergence of the "new pastoralist" according to the literature (Swift, 1979; Konszaki, 1980; Hjort, 1982; 1989; Little, 1983; Dahl, 1982; Mohamed Salih, 1985; Baxter, 1985; 1986; 1990) indicates that pastoral communities are interlocked into regional economic structures responsive to exchange rates of non-pastoral goods and services as well as national policies. Hence, pastoralists are an inseparable part of the wider society and have more than ever been subjected to upheavals and disasters imposed upon them by misconceptions and ill-planned policies perpetuated by the central state apparatus. Consequently, it becomes more urgent to understand pastoral systems of production, not as remote and isolated uncaptured sectors of the post-colonial state, but as producers of primary products for regional markets as well as for export. The role of the state as a mediator between national and international capital is evident since pastoral development policies, with few exceptions, are operated with the prospect of surplus appropriation and revenue collection in mind. Many pastoral development projects are increasingly financed by aid agencies and international capital. The effect of economic intervention on the politico-social organization of pastoral communities is inevitable since states are interactive political entities. Hence, the relationship between states and pastoral production systems is determined by the role of the state as a provider and an "engine of development".

However, pastoralists have not featured prominently in the debate about the relationship between state and society in Africa. I argue elsewhere, (Mohamed Salih, 1990a) that "this could be attributed to the

fact that African states, colonial, neo-colonial or independent, have offered less attention to pastoralists and much attention to the political processes taking place among peasants and urban dweller who represent the majority of the population and are the main contributors to revenue and foreign exchange. The marginalization of pastoralists and their poor representation in the centres of power could as well be attributed to the very nature of pastoral production, which requires continuous movement from one ecological niche to another in response to seasonal variations in rainfall and pasture. Pastoralists are often not confined to rigid administrative local or national boundaries, and their mode of subsistence connects them loosely with national politics especially those who live in frontier regions.

The relationship between states and pastoral societies is a pervasive one and it entails more than a discussion of government policies and development programmes. Although the overlap between state and government obscures their responsibility to society, it seems obvious that the state is the most governmentally oriented form of political organization. At least it is obvious that there are no states without governments, a fact which suggests that states are governed by representation. However, the borderline between state and governmentally inspired policies is difficult to draw although state ideology is to be observed by state "servants" represented by the bureaucratic structure which runs the government. I am, however, doubtful whether this classic notion of the state is applicable to colonial or post colonial Africa. Centralized states usually excessively confuse governmental practice with state ideology. The situation is even much more grave in semi-absolutest states for which the demarcating line between the sphere of state practice and that of government does not exist.

I, by no means, intend to deal wholly with pastoral development programmes and their failures, although this cannot be avoided. However, I intend to delineate the factors which influence pastoral development policies and the social forces behind them. I believe that although dealing with development programmes may explain technical and administrative failures, it often obscures the importance of the political society which gives impetus to the programmes in the first place. Such an understanding could be reached by answering the question of what is the nature of the African state and how it relates to society in general and to pastoralists in particular.

Since I argue that pastoral societies have some features in common with peasant societies such as being producers of marketable commodities (meat, milk, cheese, ghee, hide and wool), some elements of state/peasant relationship may offer a useful source of theoretical insight. Three postulates are relevant to this discussion: first, according to Alavi (1972), "the role of the colonial state was to create a state apparatus through which it can exercise dominance over the people of the colonies. The colonial state, was therefore equipped with a powerful bureaucratic-military apparatus and mechanisms of government which enabled them through routine operations to subordinate African societies. The post-colonial state has inherited an overdeveloped apparatus of state and has used it to institutionalize practices through which the role of government is regulated". It is, however, important to emphasize that the relationship between the colonial state and pastoralists was not less confrontational than that with the national states. Resistance to the advent of colonialism and the state intervention were fierce among pastoralists and several historical studies have already documented such incidents.

Second, Saul (1983) argues that "the African states directly appropriate a very large economic surplus from society and deploy it in bureaucratically directed economic activity in the name of promoting social and economic development". Hence, I argue that this has notably been the case among pastoralists from whom poll, sales and export taxes are directly or indirectly levied. The state is not only parasitic, as in the case of peasants, by tapping the agrarian sector for economic growth, it is also tapping the pastoral sector much more for agricultural transformation than for pastoral development per ce.

Third, in common with Poulantzas (1973), "the state is not a class construct, but rather the state of a society divided into

classes", a notion which questions the Marxist notion that "the state is an ideological expression of the ruling class". To my mind, this is not to preclude that in Africa, the hegemonic position of the state is created within territorial boundaries which quite often appear as artificial entities. Nevertheless I assert that a contradiction between the state and civil society is not necessarily an expression of contradictory class interests. In Africa, the class nature of the state is mediated by ethnic loyalties which cut across class interests.

Although these postulates are of some relevance to the debate about pastoralists and the state, it is erroneous to jump to the conclusion that a pastoral mode of production resembles a peasant mode of production and that as producers of primary products they both fall under the category of a pre-capitalist mode of production. This kind of analysis is naive, and is bound to forsake the fact that the African state has continuously been taking land from the poor pastoralists and giving it to the poor peasants. It does not suggest that the state is biased in favour of peasants, but that the neo-colonial state has a constant obligation towards international capital through the production of cash crops. It is, however, a bias in terms of hierarchy of interests and not as an overall policy priority. Hence, to lump pastoralists and peasants together under the same category of a pre-capitalist mode of production is not different from the official policies and development plans which subsume the pastoralists under the agricultural sector, only to neglect them.

Even when pastoralists rise to positions of prominence within the African state, they tend to identify with the dominant interest groups within the state and not with the pastoralists. It also provides that a bias to certain sectors of the economy and society is also an expression of the dominant interest groups within the state. The main objective of this chapter, therefore, is to discuss the fore issues with respect to pastoral societies and production in order to elucidate how they relate to the state in Africa today.

Pastoralism and the State of Nations

Some African pastoral societies comprise nations with a shared culture, language and what they perceive as equal rights of citizenship and access to a common territory. Such pastoralists, like the Beja, some of whose sections such as the Beni Amir and the Amar'ar extend their territory into Northern Ethiopia and Egypt, respectively. The Somali-speaking peoples are found in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya while the Fulani roam the West African Sahel from Senegal to the Sudan. There are the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania and the Baggara who originated in Chad and extended their presence as far as the western banks of the Blue Nile in the Sudan. There is, of course, an impressive array of pastoral societies living in frontier regions or in more than one country.

Not only are some pastoral societies shared by more than one state, but some constitute whole nations within their states. The Dinka represent 10% of the total population of the Sudan and think of themselves as a nation and so do the Beja who represent a strong regional political force in the Sudan. The Shilluk, the Ankole, the Bunyoro and the Buganda states thrived well before the colonial legacy, and their exhibition of nationhood tendencies cannot be ignored. The same applies to the Affar, the Oromo and the Beni Amir who exhibit strong nationalist sentiments.

The imposition of modern administrative structures both during and after the colonial legacy has created contradictions between the state apparatus and elders and chiefs in pastoral societies. Societies, which according to Walter (1969), "lacking officers and specialized political roles, integrated by segmentary lineages, clans, age grades, religious associations or other corporate solidarities" were to accept the rule of centralized authorities. The focus of authority elders and chiefs was mobilized by the colonial regime as well as by the national states to organize labour for public tasks, tax collecting and conflict-resolution. Although these may resemble features of the state's responsibility, states are distinguished from chieftainship by centralization, role specialization of certain services

and the nature and means of coercion authorized and exercised by the political community. The merging of new and old political systems and their social values was not accepted without resistance. Coercion more than persuasion, education, Christianity or Islam was in used to integrate pastoralists and other rebellious groups into the realm of the African state. Many features of traditional chiefdoms withered away and new administrative systems partially or totally replaced them which agitated traditional authorities attempting to find new roles or reinforcing the old ones. Resilience is sometimes difficult to persist and at times the winds of change are so swift that few traditional patterns and values continued. The new structures of government within the independent African states, created their own problems emanating from the high expectations placed on them.

Contradictions between state, society and nation emerged as the state began to intervene in every aspect of social and political life. The process of political modernization, the creation of parties, trade unions and cooperatives have hardly transcended the values inherent in local politics. In some cases it produced a blend of modern and traditional political values existing side by side. Hence, it created a serious confrontation between the values inherent in the state structure and the values of political expression available to society. The state's role as an ultimate arbiter of political and social institutions is at times challenged for at least two reasons: first, the state is perceived by society as a provider of social services and goods which it in reality cannot satisfy for reasons emanating from underdevelopment and second, a contradiction between nation and state developed since the present national boundaries of most African states were artificial creations of colonialism. The fact that all wars in the African arid lands involve pastoralists (Dinka, Shilluk, Nuer, Beni Amir, Baggara, Somali, Affar, Berber) highlights the calamity of the situation and the intensity of the contradiction between the values of statehood and those of 'nationhood'. This always creates a crisis of identity especially in cases where pastoralists oscillate between adherence to local politics mediated by ethnicist ideology, on the one hand, and national politics of a narrowly perceived notion of a nation-state, on the other.

One explanation for the wars going on in the Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Chad and the Spanish Sahara could be attributed to the state's intolerance towards the periphery and its insistence on integrating it into the mainstream political society at any expense. The centre versus region syndrome as I argue elsewhere (1985:48-9), is due to the fact that "since regions are open systems, a fact which is normally denied by central level politicians, much greater attention must be given to the economic factors influencing regional political activity for there are much closer links between economic inequality, public policy and anticentral attitudes".

Issues of economic, social and cultural inequality are high on the agenda of all pastoralists fighting for liberation or political autonomy from the threshold of the African states. The centrality of the state therefore creates animosity and jeopardizes the process of national integration. Since this paper is not intended to offer detailed cases of contradictions between states and all resistant pastoralists, I use the case of the Sudan to illustrate some of the points which have been raised. The Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) and its political wing the Sudan Peoples Movement (SPLM) launched a war in 1983 against the central government of the Sudan. The reasons behind the war have their historical roots in the slave trade, colonial policies of 'divide and rule' and an unequal development maintained by successive national governments. Unlike the first war between the South and the North (1955-1972) which was for separation, this war is for the creation of a new Sudan. According to the SPLA/SPLM the concept of a New Sudan "strives to establish a new cultural order in the country. It takes as its point of departure the notion that human beings, in any given society, have equal rights and obligations regardless of colour,... etc. The establishment of the new cultural order demands of necessity a radical restructuring of state power to establish genuine democracy and follow a path of development that will lead to far-reaching social changes". Furthermore, the majority of the SPLA/SPLM army consists of Dinka pasto-

ralists fighting, "to transform the Southern movement from a reactionary movement led by reactionaries to a progressive movement led by revolutionaries and dedicated to the socialist transformation of the whole country". Apart from this ideological rhetoric, which is not within grasp of the majority of non-educated Dinka and other Southern groups which support the SPLA/SPLM, there must be some concrete objectives as to what the struggle is all about. I argue elsewhere (Mohamed Salih, 1985:48) that the reasons which militated the taking up of arms by the SPLA/SPLM are part of "a regional demand for an equal distribution of the limited resources of the country, autonomy to develop their own human and natural resources, recognition of cultural diversity, fair representation in the central government, and a clear solution to the problems of citizenship". These political concerns are certainly not much different from those held by the Eritreans, the Tigreans, or Oromos in their wars against the central state in Ethiopia. In the general situation of the pastoralists of the Horn of Africa, Markakis (1987; 1989) has clearly demonstrated that the African states are launching a crusade to integrate the parts of Africa which the colonialists were not able to incorporate into the mainstream national politics. Hence it could be inferred that—given the class structure of the state mediated by its ethnicist tendencies—pastoralists are more than Marx's notion of the peasants being "potatoes in a potato sack". However, social differentiation among pastoral societies is a function of opposing interests between state and the civil society (Doornbos, 1989) and the ethnic cleavages which society deploys in the struggle over values and material resources are important to local level political culture and its accompanying values of politico-social expression.

The state of nations in Africa is by and large a state of defiance and resistance against the authority of the central state. Hence, the contradiction between state and nation is compounded by another contradiction between societal interests and state policies. The lack of a system of two-way communication between the two levels of political participation has hindered the state's attempt to reach out to the populace in any meaningful sense. Attempts at political modernization have not resulted in the break-down of old suspicions, either, between ethnic groups or the hegemony of the states and the pastoralists quest for political autonomy.

Pastoralists and Democracy

Two messages in Baxter's (1985) "From Telling People to Listening to Them" deserve more attention in exploring the democratic venues available to pastoralists in the African context. Baxter *(ibid.* 2-3) has pointed out that, "first, African pastoralists represent a poorly organized minority of about 3% of the half billion, or so, Africans. Second, pastoralists are generally unpopular and are interfered with by governments and officials for a number of mixed and sometimes contradictory reasons". One of such reasons is how the traditional political institution of pastoralists have either been exploited by the state apparatus to justify political intrusions or brutally manipulated to rebuke political opponents. As the planners were not listening to pastoralists by pretentiously holding themselves responsible for telling them how to conduct their lives, politicians were in the habit of mobilizing pastoralists for political goals inspired by party politics or an authoritarian one-party state. None of these two forms of political abuse can be accepted by pastoralists if democracy ruled over the use of state power to ensue undesirable policies. Moreover, the relationship between those who placed themselves in the position of telling people without listening to them is a relationship between unequals in which those who are compelled to listen are in a disadvantageous position.

Again in the particular case of the Sudan, I argue (1990a) in a chapter on "Pastoralists, Socialism and Democracy", that, "neither during the colonial period nor during independence have governmental policies been introduced among pastoralists in any democratic manner". For example, the introduction of a native administration system was more for security and economic considerations than for extending a new vision of democratic rule among pastoralists.

Cunnison (1966), argues that among the Baggara of the Sudan the creation of power positions was a challenge to traditional concepts of an egalitarian ideology in which leadership was exercised independently of territorial considerations. In Cunnison's *(ibid.* 147) words, "these power positions are more than leadership because the leadership in the past was independent of local considerations, the leader controlled not a stretch of land with people in it, but a lineage or an alliance of people wherever they might be". This policy also resulted in the creation of a class of tribal chiefs favoured by the colonial state and which supported its endeavour to maintain peace and order, to collect taxes and to mediate in conflict-resolution. Among the Kakabish of Northern Kordofan, Asad, (1970:238) asserts that, "the maintenance of the monopoly of power has rested largely on the *de facto* control of the basic means of political administration over the tribe as a whole in which physical coercion or direct persuasion have played little role". After independence in 1956, the leaders of the pastoral societies were incorporated into the emerging political parties, and the two largest political parties were supported by different pastoral communities. The Umma (National) Party gained support among the Baggara pastoralists of Western Sudan. The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) was supported by the Beja and the Shukriya pastoralists. The national elections since independence revealed an intimate relationship between voters, behaviour, tribal origin and party affiliation. The pastoralists often voted for candidates from their own tribe, mainly for tribal sentiments or religious faith as in the case of The Umma party, the political arm of the *Ansar* sect or the DUP, the political expression of the *Khatmiya* religious sect. Liberal democracy created a form of civil dictatorship which ignored the aspirations of the local communities. Some tribal leaders were reported to have created enclaves of power outside the state, with corruption, nepotism and vulgar abuse of political power. The pastoralists almost received *diktats* from their leadership and voted for the chiefly families. The question arises in Asad's (1970) questioning of whether the leaders of the pastoralists ruled by consent or coercion. Although Asad has not completely excluded the use of coercion, his analysis is useful in explaining the failure of the Sudanese political parties to ensure political modernization and transcend ethnic politics.

However, the main political changes which affected pastoral communities in the Sudan came with Numeri's socialist reforms during the period between 1969 and 1976. The socialist programme aimed at modernizing the political practice and creating a new leadership capable of mobilizing the masses. A colonial heritage represented by the native administration system of 1922 was nominally abolished and a new system of peoples, local government was enacted in 1971. The Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU) was established in the same year and was to replace the multiparty system and the corrupt practices of the sectarian political parties. However, when the traditional leadership recognized the threat posed to it by the new system they joined the opposition and rallied behind the sectarian parties. The tribal leaders who held the positions of *nazir* and *omda* which constituted the backbone of the native administration system were banned from political activities. Elections for the new political and administrative positions were held but without success in eliminating the ethnic character of the voting behaviour. According to Zaki (1987:214), "no two or more candidates from the same tribe competed for seats of their constituency in order to avoid the disintegration of the tribe and the division of the votes for that would increase the chances of success for candidates from other tribes". In other words, the pastoralists had succeeded in transforming the objectives of the socialist programme which advocates "popular participatior" into a function of tribal politics. Pastoralists have since then rendered themselves captives of a new breed of educated elites who cared less about their immediate problems and needs. The new leaders were not accepted by the pastoralists as serious contradictions between their value systems began to emerge. The new elites stood behind policies handed over to them by the state, and were expected to tackle local issues of which they contrived to know little or nothing and propagated a political ideology alien to the pastoralists. It is a

clear case of competing systems of political expression; one close to the heart of pastoralists and the other representing the dominant ideology which supports the conveyance of power to modern educated elites. It is only natural that the state was still dependent on the traditional leadership in conflict resolution and the repair of the social damage caused by its policies. It is important to recognize that the strength of the traditional leadership is derived from its appeal to local needs, shared sentiments, sectarian politico-religious ideology and the dominance of tribal political values which perceive the traditional leaders as legitimate and have the right to rule.

However, when the populace began to show some signs of political awareness, the peasants and pastoralists opted for more independence from the state. Members of the newly emerging political elite were infuriated when they felt rejected by the pastoralists and began to use the state machinery to curtail popular aspirations. The political elites effectively blocked the quest for any meaningful popular participation. Appeals for internal reforms were neglected and those who pleaded for democratic venues for democratic expression of political views were detained. The pattern emerging here is not different from the attitudes of the state development policies in which pastoralists were compelled to listen to those who promised development but furthered "underdevelopment" and promised participation but offered political repression instead. Both in political penetration and development implementation the quest, as Baxter (1986) put it, is for listening to people and responding to the means of political expression available to them.

The case of the Sudan has some wider implications for other pastoral societies. In his widely read "A Pastoral Democracy" Lewis (1961:3) argues that, "Somali pastoral democracy lies in kinship. The second basic principle is complementary to kinship as a form of social contract". Furthermore, he argues that, "I do not claim that Somali political contract *(heer)* corresponds in all respects to any one of the many doctrines of the social contract and the political philosophers. But I do hold that it includes essentially contractual elements having closest affinities with these political theories which saw the origins of political union in an egalitarian society". However, in the case of the Somali as well as among the Baggara (Cunnison, *op. cit.)* and the Kababish (Asad, *op. cit.)*, such traditional contractual relations gave way to political abuses by tribal leaders. The continuity of certain tribal political institutions such as *dia* (blood compensation) paying groups, the elders role in the maintenance of peace and order during the liberal as well as the socialist one-party system indicates that matters of peace and order are important to any human society regardless of its level of political and economic development. In common with the Sudanese Socialist Union, the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party failed to implement its programme for the mobilization of the pastoralists who represent about 45-70% of the total population of Somalia. The state in Somalia began to use more coercive measures to favour one Somali clan over the other. Social democracy which was inspired by assumed social and political unjustices committed against pastoralists by the traditional leadership under the multi-party systems proved to be less acceptable and completely failed to realize either full participation or wider acceptance by pastoralists. The Somali promise to return to civilian rule is a clear indication of the state's appeal to the pastoralist nature of the Somali society.

It is, by now, obvious that neither liberal democracy nor social democracy appealed to pastoralists, and both have their misgivings by rendering them captives to the political desires of the educated political elites and their strive for power and resources. A situation of lack of representation is certainly a case for telling people rather than listening to them. This has thus far been the conventional wisdom which has led to pastoralists, lack of participation in the political arena as well as their absence from decision-making institutions in pastoral development ventures.

Pastoral Development and the State

Pastoral development like other areas of development is loosely defined and refers

to different things and practices in different sociopolitical contexts. There is also the confusion of livestock development policies for pastoral development policies. Although the two have different connotations, they overlap, albeit with varying perceptions and target group or groups. Pastoral development is largely a social development activity aiming at the improvement of the standards of living of pastoralists through the provision of health, education, veterinary, water and other services together with institutional-building for better systems of range management. Livestock development, on the other hand, is an economic activity based on cost recovery with the aim of achieving some or all of the following objectives: a) technical change and the introduction of new inputs such as medicine, vaccines, fodder farming and the use of engine power for watering, b) specialization and diversification through the adoption of modern production and management techniques and the specialization in livestock products such as dairy, milk wool, hide etc., c) increasing ability to evade seasonality by transforming milk and meat into storable forms usually through technical advancement and specialization, d) developing, integrated market outlets responsive to national and international demands. By examining the state structure we can depict the forces behind such policies which are more interested in livestock than livestock raisers. The prime objective is to produce cheap livestock products for the urban dwellers whose alienation may trigger off protest and political unrests. The policy itself is appealing to international finance institutions because it fits into their perception of development. A second economic force behind livestock development policies is the newly emerging private owners of dairy farms and slaughter houses. In a sense, livestock development policies are designed to cater for the needs of the already wealthy and privileged.

The preoccupation of the African state with development means that its intervention in the economic sphere is imperative regardless of ideological orientation. An underdeveloped national private sector and a state operating under severe international financial constraints refute any desire for commitment to a coherent ideology. Policy performance has, at best, favoured those who can help themselves without the state's help, and at worst has neglected both the deprived and the potential investor. The contradiction between the state policies and the rural population—peasants and pastoralists alike—can also be explained with respect to the centrality of the state. For example, in his "Pastoral Man in the Garden of Eden", Arhem (1985:27) argues that in socialist Tanzania, "the development of state controlled beef ranches and dairy farms has steadily and increasingly channelled resources away from the pastoral producers... The history of the pastoral Maasai is a history of land loss and marginalization. The grazing land has been taken over by individual farmers, private companies and the state, usually in that order... The gap between rich and poor herders has widened". Although Arhem was concerned with an inclusive notion of conservation based on multiple land use, and sustainable eco-development, his chapter "the Tanzanian State and the Maasai" offers a useful insight into the three contradictions between state ideology, policy and local perception of resource management and maintenance. It, therefore, becomes evident that the state's control over the economy is also an explicit indication of the state's control over society. Moreover, the function of the state as a manger places it as a link between politics and economics. The state is not only a source of power, it also uses this power to enlarge the bureaucracy's economic base. This very nature determines a top-down approach which negates the pastoralists ability to organize themselves or perceive common goals with the state apparatus and its set of priorities.

A more revealing and complex case is that of the Shukriya agropastoralists whose predicament is analysed by Sørbø (1985) in his illuminating study of "Tenants and Nomads in Eastern Sudan". The tenants in this case are the Nubian immigrants from Northern Sudan following the establishment of the Aswan Dam in 1965. The nomads are the Shukriya of the Butana who inhabit the territory between the Atbara River, the Blue Nile and the Nile proper. According to Sørbø (*ibid.* 101), "the

evolution of the political structure seems to have been the outcome of a) internal processes of differentiation related to important features of the production system and b) the political support given to the Shukriya elite families by the state. Whereas powerful external state agencies have controlled the means of coercion, they have also to a large extent handed over control over non-pastoral means of production to the Shukriya elite". However, the immigrant Nubians were provided with modern housing, educational, health services and tenancies dependent on an input delivery system financed on credit by the state. The Nubians have better access to education since the colonial times and being on the borders with Egypt, they have a long history of migration to urban centres and cities. They occupy not less than 20% of the top hierarchy of the state apparatus and, as such, they are within easy reach of policy and decision-making institutions within the state. Following the same line of argument, Hale (1988:280-81) asserts that, "Nubians, then, played a major role in creating, through at least one apparatus—the education system—the dominant ideology of the state". The powerful Shukriya elites, on the other hand, were originally the creation of the colonial regime and the native administration system. This, I argue, has created a leadership which perceives protest against the state policy as a challenge to the rule of law. This is natural since during the colonial period, it was difficult to distinguish between a protest to improve the lot of the local population and a challenge to overthrow foreign rule, not to mention the colonialist suspicion of any signs of rebellion. During independence, the pastoralists were still not able to co-ordinate resistance to the state or play one political opponent off against the other. Sørbø *(op. cit.)* and Asad *(op. cit.)* have rightly described the relationship between the pastoralists and their leadership as a patron/client relationship in which there is little if any room for political manoeuvre. The Shukriya elites, therefore, are managers of local politics and they have invaluable knowledge in responding to problems emerging within this arena. They are, however, not in a strong political position to manipulate the state apparatus to realize the demands of their subjects. Unlike the tenants on whose behalf the state borrowed millions of dollars to develop the New Halfa scheme and has an obligation to international capital, the pastoralists operate with little intervention in the form of veterinary services and water points. The case of the New Halfa Scheme demonstrates that the financial intervention of the state in agropastoral development is not a mere attempt to provide technical solution to the constraints of production, but a political activity expressing the nature of the state and of the social groups whose interest it serves. In the final analysis, development involves sectoral biases which imply social and political biases as well.

Although there are many more cases to illustrate the relationship between the nature of the state and pastoral development policies, no analysis would be complete without looking into the so-called most successful state intervention in livestock development in Africa. The case of Botswana is still one which creates nothing less than mixed feelings between commercialization and conservation. In their "commercialization of Livestock and Differentiation of People in Ngamiland", Hinderink and Sterkenburg (1987) made a distinction between four social groups: a) marginalized households with no access to or have inadequate resources. These form a reserve for local wage labour and migrants to towns and the mining industry. b) poor peasants who diversify their sources of income by owning very small number of cattle, c) middle peasants who combine or supplement ranching with arable cultivation and sell substantial proportion of their production, d) large cattle ranchers, i.e. those with more than one hundred head of cattle and who usually combine well paid urban positions in government, politics and private business with their pastoral activities. According to the authors (p.202), "the big cattle and ranch owners are the least numerous and at the same time the most influential group in Ngamiland. Representing about 5% of the population, they control roughly one third of the district's livestock resources... those who combine stock-ranching with some political office (at the district and national level)" have much easier access to credit and the

decision-making apparatus. No wonder that, the establishment of commercial ranches in Ngamiland encountered serious problems and caused painstaking process of political haggling whereby large herd owners used their considerable political influence both on the Tawana Land Board and the national level to pursue their private interests. When evaluated against the interest of the small producers, it is found that "power relations are of utmost importance for the concentration of cattle in the hands of the privileged minority". Although the commercialization policy has succeeded in increasing production, exports and foreign exchange earnings, its impacts on soil, the environment and social differentiation are staggering.

The case of Botswana evidently has much relevance for Kenya (1968; Raikes, 1981; Hjort, 1982; 1989; Dahl, 1982; Baxter, 1990) and Nigeria (Frantz, 1975; Aowgbade, 1983; Waters-Bayer, 1988; Mohamed Salih, 1990b) where land administration, control and use policies have served the interest of the already wealthy and powerful interest groups within the state apparatus. Baxter (1990) and Hjort (1989) have particularly emphasized that state policies have undermined individual household security and relegated pastoral communities to a situation of mass regional instability militated by ecological stress and food shortages and a looming famine. Again state policies were considered out of touch with the pastoralists' needs, aspirations and perception of production objectives. This also occurred under malformed political structures which are incapable of fulfilling the promise of pastoralists participation in policy formulation.

It appears that a pattern can be established in which the lack of access to the state apparatus is a hindrance to pastoralists' ability to influence decision-making or to mobilize themselves as a pressure group. This may also lead to the questioning of the avenues of political expression available to pastoralists in their resistance to state policies. The contradictions between state, society and the field of interest are compounded by divergent perceptions of subsistence security and local political responsibility vis-á-vis profitability and centrality of decisionmaking. In such circumstances, society and state may not perceive common goals and objectives.

Conclusion

The relationship of the African state to pastoralists has much in common with its relationship to the wider society. Societal interests have often been sacrificed either for alien technical arrangements to introduce planned change or political interests not in congruency with those of the pastoralists. Doornbos (1989:17) summarizes the relationship of the African state to society by asserting that, "with respect to the uncertain search for state identity that drew so much attention in the early days after independence, one wonders in retrospect whether the stress on nation-building and national unity at the time reflected a genuine desire to create a new 'national' society, or whether it constituted the beginning of an ideological defence of the colonial heritage which had become the state system". I add that such colonial heritage includes a centralized state apparatus intolerant to local initiative and self-realizing political structures. The pervasiveness of the state hinges in an oscillation between coercive measures to curb discontent and resistance, on the one hand, and the state's adherence to faulty distributive mechanisms which perpetuate protest. As Doornbos (*ibid.* p.12), has correctly argued, " 'state' and 'civil society', which in other contexts can be strongly interwoven and complementary, in deeply polarized situations can become each other's opposites and opponents, with shifting boundaries between them". In that sense, African pastoralists more than other sections of the civil society have been in continuous opposition to the state since societal interests are more often misconceived, if not totally disregarded, by the state. Popular resistance in the extreme form of liberation movements or the milder form of popular movements and the creation of corporate groups outside the state's domain of activity are only a few expressions of pastoralist's dissatisfaction with state policies and the interest groups behind them.

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