Nomadism, a migration mechanism for environment and economic sustainability: the Pokot of Kenya.

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Abstract

This paper discovers that mobility of the nomads is at the same time an expression of a flexibility permeating all spheres of life. It also investigates and seeks answers to the following questions: Why should an economic system (that is, nomadic pastoralism) that has survived for centuries in these dry regions be considered inappropriate and irrational today? Is it not rather a matter of changed general conditions rendering the traditional strategies ineffective? This paper, using the example of the Pokot of Kenya, shows how this ethnic group is environmentally aware and lives and works adapting to the living circumstances, and that their behaviour is not irrational; also that they have a vital interest in preserving their environment and that, if the supporting capacity of their living environment has already been exceeded the cause should not be blamed on the people themselves, but on changes brought about by external factors. The paper concludes by suggesting measures that would enable the nomadic Pokot continue living in their environment, with assurance of the sustainability of their economic activities as dictated by the demands of the existing ecology. The paper acknowledges and appreciates the importance of studying and understanding the socio-anthropology of a people in any operational research, for the sake of success of region-specific development planning and implementation.