



## TABULA RASA Issue 37 (DECEMBER 2020)

### **Special issue: *Anthropology of nomadism: nomadic logics, transhumance, mobility***

#### **Associate Editor:**

Leticia Katzer

*Universidad Nacional de Cuyo-Conicet, Argentina*

Nomadism is a way of life being actualized and recreated in a myriad of contexts and under manifold ways. Even though this is common knowledge in some philosophies, it does not find the same echo in hegemonic American anthropological production, where nomadism seems to be devoid of interest.

In the scholar's imaginary there is a prevailing notion that nomadic logic belongs to another time; as such it is the subject of archaeological, historical, and literary studies. Except for the Amazonia and some isolated cases, among which Rom people stand out, nomadism as a practice is not recognized either in academic studies or in legal frameworks. In a number of records from contemporary shepherd societies we can see the terms "transhumance" and "mobility", rather than nomadism. Also, the environmental/economic aspect is overstated when characterizing a means of production linked to shepherd activity. There seems to be a naturalized assumption that sedentism is a natural evolutionary process, even though sedentariness is neither natural nor inescapable, but in certain cases it is the outcome of a colonial power relation, of some forced and violent imposition.

Asian and African studies in British anthropology move away from this, since, by adopting a critical ethnographic approach of the colonial dynamics, they challenge the State-nomadic people relation as both a political and economic issue. In this line of thought, several authors have warned the definition of nomadism, as mobility from place to place to find pasture, must be challenged, since "nomadic" cannot be reduced to pasturage and transhumance. Also it is worth noting that the difference between "nomadism," "transhumance," and "migration" was already explained in post-structuralist French philosophy.

Still, nomadism is a broader category that can encompass, or not, a transhumant practice (a paradigmatic case is Rom people, who are not transhumant), which can include, or not, ranching/pasture activity. However, nomadism is not only legally unrecognized, but it is the

object of discrimination and racism. In most societies, nomadic populations endure a nagging estrangement, as well as racist discredit, distrust, and violence.

Within the framework of these debates, this issue intends to gather together several papers addressing “mobility” from different levels and disciplinary approaches —as a way of life, as a means of production, as a means of social and political organization, and as a form of cultural identity, that is, encompassing economic, environmental, cultural, and political aspects, establishing a dialogue with varied theoretical studies and approaches on nomadism, transhumance, and mobility.

For further information or to submit your manuscript complete with an abstract (in English or Spanish languages), please contact Myriam Acero ([maceroa@unal.edu.co](mailto:maceroa@unal.edu.co)) or Leonardo Montenegro ([l.montenegro@revistatabularasa.org](mailto:l.montenegro@revistatabularasa.org)).

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Myriam Acero ([maceroa@unal.edu.co](mailto:maceroa@unal.edu.co)) or Leonardo Montenegro ([l.montenegro@revistatabularasa.org](mailto:l.montenegro@revistatabularasa.org)).