

The Bedoun Archive: A Public Archive Created for the Northern Tribes Bedouin of Kuwait

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Abstract

This article describes the creation of the Bedoun Archive at the Australian Data Archive, managed by the Australian National University. The Bedoun are a Bedouin minority comprising stateless members of the main tribes of Kuwait. They have been subjected to “Othering” in scholarly literature, indicative of both Orientalism and neo-Orientalism, approaches that have contributed to their oppression by the state and omission from the official histories of Kuwait and the academic literature. The theory and methodology behind the creation of the Bedoun Archive, based on the principles of humanistic sociology and collaborative research with Indigenous Peoples, are discussed. The archive provides safe storage for data analysed in the project, which can be used by others in future. This article contributes to improving understanding of the impact of Orientalism and neo-Orientalism on perceptions of the people and history of the Middle East in general, and the Arabian Gulf and Kuwait in particular. It also contributes new knowledge regarding the complex situation currently faced by the Bedoun, the role of intellectuals in the Arab Spring social movement and subsequently, their contribution to developing formal systems of knowledge about their own culture.

Keywords: Arab Spring; archive; Bedouin; citizenship; Muslim stereotypes; neo-Orientalism; Orientalism; social movements; sociology of knowledge

Introduction

The Bedoun are a minority Bedouin population who have never received citizenship from the state of Kuwait. This article discusses the development of knowledge about the Bedoun, and the circumstances around the creation of the Bedoun Archive at the Australian Data Archive. The archive is the first formal collection of cultural data relating to the Bedoun community

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held by a university or other public institution. It may be seen as one of the first, concrete steps in legitimising the Bedoun's history within a formal social institution (the Australian National University). The archive was created in response to the community's inability to store primary and secondary research data collected about them in a safe institutional space in Kuwait, due to two interconnected issues: the marginalisation of the Bedoun in scholarly and/or other official forms of history, and the precarious security situation and oppression of the Bedoun in the state of Kuwait at present.

In the first part of the article, I explain the context that has led to the Bedoun having no formal institutional resources on which to draw for the collection and storage of their cultural and historical data. This context is primarily, the development of knowledge about the Bedouin of Kuwait, and the Bedoun minority within it, framed from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge (Turner 2000; Znaniecki 1952b). This context has involved the omission and/or distortion of the Bedoun's identity in the history of Kuwait on ideological grounds, achieved using Orientalist methods of analysis across three phases of scholarship. Histories of Kuwait have chiefly represented the Hadar of Kuwait (town dwellers who self-identify as an elite, superior social class) as the dominant national group in Kuwait via the "Othering" of the Bedouin tribes of Kuwait, of whom the Bedoun are a minority. The suffering of minority groups is thus contextualised within the larger trajectory of a national history dominated by opposing groups (Znaniecki 1952b).

In the second part of the article, I explain the theoretical and methodological principles behind my approach to studying the Bedoun: humanistic sociology, and collaborative methodologies with indigenous, tribal people, which have contributed to the formation of the archive. I describe the development of intellectual ideals within the Bedoun social activist movement during the Arab Spring, and some of the issues surrounding their struggle to document their own history and develop their human rights and citizenship claims in partnership with humanitarian organisations. Finally, I discuss the contents of the archive.

The Current State of Knowledge

The Kuwaiti Bedoun are members of the main tribes of Kuwait. They are native to the region (Weissbrodt 2008), but were never granted nationality after their permanent settlement in Kuwait and are therefore regarded as a stateless population from the perspective of international law (al Anezi 1989). Kuwaitis (including the Bedoun themselves) use the term

“Bedoun” which means “without” in Arabic, or “Kuwaiti Bedoun,” similar to “Kuwaiti Bedouin” or *Badiat al Kuwayt* in Arabic (Group 29 2012, 6).¹ The Bedoun are family members of Kuwaiti Bedouin citizens, connected via nuclear, extended family and tribal relationships (Human Rights Watch 1995; Kennedy 2016). The Kuwaiti Bedouin were split into citizen and stateless (“Bedoun”) groups when citizenship was first distributed in Kuwait in the 1960s, so that only around half the Bedouin population but all of the Hadar population would receive citizenship (Human Rights Watch 1995).

National statistical records indicated tens of thousands of Bedouns had arrived in Kuwait prior to 1920 and until 1940 (Ismael 1982). The total number of Bedoun today is approximately 110,000 (*Kuwait Times* 2013), reduced from around 300,000 in the 1980s (Human Rights Watch 1995). Some sources claim that the population is likely far larger than the number stated by government authorities (Human Rights Watch 2014), and there is likely an increasing population group of unregistered Bedouns due to government refusal to document and count the group since the 1980s (such persons often hold other forms of legitimate identity documents, but they are not recognised by the government) other than as criminalised non-residents. However, these potential additional numbers are counterbalanced by significant population attrition due to ethnic cleansing (by both administrative erasure and physical means), which involves for many a failure to form families due to the range of restrictions placed on the group’s social participation by the Ministry of Interior.

Kuwaiti citizen women who marry Kuwaiti Bedoun men have stateless children (Human Rights Watch 2014). There were around 30,000 Bedoun spouses and children of Kuwaiti citizen women in 1995 (Human Rights Watch 1995). The proportion of Kuwaiti Bedouin of the northern and southern tribes has not been comprehensively established, and has been complicated by government practices which have removed individuals’ fathers’ names, tribal names, ethnic group and nationality from official records (al Anezi 1989, 263, n132; Group 29, 2012, 6) while attempting to relabel them with nationalities that do not belong to them (*Arab Times* 2014; WikiLeaks 2006).

¹ Anonymous research participants are numbered herein as they were in my doctoral thesis work (Kennedy 2016), enabling readers to discern information obtained from different individuals in fieldwork.

Out of all the main tribes of Kuwait recognised by the state (Alhajeri 2004; Alshayegi 1988), all but a few have Bedoun members (such as the Ajman [see al Haddad 1981] who have no Bedoun). Due to their physical isolation and social marginalisation caused by official expulsion in 1986 and subsequent social stigmatisation, ethnic proliferation of the stateless members of the tribes led to the consolidation of ethnic identity among the stateless group as “Bedoun.” Today, the population experiences plural identities, and feels different degrees of solidarity with the Bedouin citizen community and the Bedoun minority community depending upon their individual circumstances, and those of the tribe. The historical prevalence of consanguinity indicates continued intermarriage between citizens and stateless members of the main tribes functions as a form of tribal social protection (Gross 1998), reinforcing communal social solidarity and emphasising resource sharing.

Beaugrand (2010, 2018) repeatedly emphasises the Bedoun’s heterogeneity, denying the group’s collective ethnicity and national identity. While the Bedoun’s identity is plural and complex, individuals I have studied typically reflect those of the Bedoun citizen of the Arabian Gulf, as discussed in Alshawi and Gardner (2014). There is good reason to regard the Bedoun as relatively, though not exclusively, homogenous. For example, the only sub-group of the Bedoun officially recognised by government are members of the northern tribes (Saleh 2014), in recognition of their homogenous ethnic structure. Conformity to the historical pattern of intermarriage between Bedouin citizens and the Bedoun, as well as the consanguineous nature of those marriage patterns, is also homogenous.

Ongoing social solidarities between citizen and stateless members are reinforced by solidarities in national politics. Support for the Bedoun by the citizen portion of the tribal population continues to be expressed after the Arab Spring (*Arab Times* 2014; Izzak 2018; *Kuwait Times* 2014b). Solidarity functioning between the tribes within the Bedoun community itself was demonstrated during and after the Arab Spring; for example, the Khatatib community school, established in 2015, serviced Bedoun members of any tribe, northern or southern (see al Hajji 2014). Historically, the Bedoun were discussed in the literature as the Kuwaiti Bedouins. Prior to the 1960s, both the Kuwaiti Bedouin and the Hadar were all stateless and called “Bedoun” (al Nafisi 1978 in Alshayegi 1988, 121). Citizenship distribution did not commence until the early 1960s, some years after the introduction of the Nationality Law 1959 (al Anezi 1989). The Kuwaiti Bedouin (including those who would later become known as the “Bedoun”) were variously referred to as “indigenous,” “tribal,” “the tribal consciousness,” the

“Arab nomad” (for example, Alessa 1981; al Naqeeb 1990) as well as more derogatory terms in discourse designed to reverse Bedouin settlement policy (e.g. “squatters” in al Khatib 1978).

In 1986, the Bedoun were administratively expelled (*al Talea* 2003) and then violently, physically expelled (Human Rights Watch 1991; 1992). The Bedoun began to be referred to separately from the citizen Bedouin of Kuwait in the academic literature, as either not Bedouin, or somewhat Bedouin, but mixed with a range of “others,” illegal residents and/or citizens of other states (Crystal 1992; Longva 1997), particularly “Iraqi enemies” of the state (Ghabra 1997a; Longva 1997). The approach coincided with the beginning of representations of Kuwaiti citizens as a homogenous, national community comprising Bedouin citizens and Hadar citizens, excluding the Bedoun (Ismael 1982, 132; Longva 2006), despite the two citizen groups’ ongoing cultural conflict (al Anezi 1989; Alhajeri 2004).

The omission of the Bedoun from discussions of the Bedouin ethnic group was a distinctly different approach from Kuwaiti researchers prior to the 1990s. The Bedoun can be traced historically in discussions of their population as an ethnic and/or an occupational sub-group of Kuwaiti Bedouins recorded on the National Census (al Moosa 1976), in discussion of their recruitment into the national security forces and as members of the northern tribes (e.g. al Anezi 1989; al Moosa 1976; Alhajeri 2004; AlShayaji 1988; and others) by most Kuwaiti scholars, both those supportive of, and those opposed to the group.

The Archive Context: Othering and Orientalism in the Studies of the Middle East

The term “Othering” was used by Edward Said (1978) to describe the objectification of people from other cultures identified as different, which he believed was characterised by emotive hostility, an adversarial position and a stagnancy of ideas and worldview (Turner 1994). The symbol of “the Other” was initially studied in the social sciences in relation to migration, race relations, criminalisation and impoverishment by the Chicago School of classical sociology (Calhoun 2007). Theories of cultural disorganisation referred to the “outsider,” “foreigner” and “stranger” to describe different, minority and marginalised individuals and groups (Znaniecki 1952a, 356). “Orientalism” functioned as an analytical approach used to illustrate comparisons between the East and West to produce what Edward Said (1978, 352) called an “unbridgeable chasm” between the two civilisations. The analytical framework used by Orientalists and others

attempted to demonstrate the superiority of Western culture, linked to the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras and the emergence of industrial capitalism in the West (Turner 1994, 22).

Western superiority was attributed not to the excellence of Western civilisation *per se*, but via the portrayal of the East as inferior to the West. Orientalist values were disseminated across a range of disciplinary fields in the social sciences and the humanities, often for their imperialist, political value (Turner 1994, 20). Cross-fertilisation of ideas (Znaniiecki 1952b) was facilitated by the fact that the organising principles used by Orientalists reflected similar methods of analysis used to theorise throughout the social sciences. An important feature of Orientalism was the reliance of scholars on unchanging systems of thought and worldviews, characteristic of conservative ideologies and dogma. Rigid or static ideologies no longer produce meaningful adaptations or innovations but are applied merely to support their own legitimacy using internal frames of reference (Znaniiecki 1952b, 286). Underpinned by a stagnant worldview, “Othering” featured negative or superficially nostalgic portrayals of the “East” and its peoples, reflecting the imperialist ideology of domination developed in textual discourses grounded in the positivist scientific paradigm, which sought to define and control the Orient itself, and/or our perception of it (Said 1978; Turner 1994, 21).

The Transmission of Orientalism to the Work of Kuwaiti and Arab Nationalist Scholars from the 1960s

Orientalist discourse has continued to transfix scholars until the present day, particularly in Middle East studies (Lockman 2004; Turner 1994). Research on the Bedouin in “Gulf Studies” (referring to the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula) remains one of the last strongholds of the theory (Alshawi and Gardner 2014; Little 2008). Therefore, we should not be surprised to find the approach used in scholarship about Kuwait. The problem has been attributed to the close relationship between the Western university system, “Gulf Studies” academics, and political and financial interest groups involved in the Arabian Gulf (Lockman 2004) who share interests in perpetuating the imperialist power relations traditionally promoted by Orientalists. The influences of autocratic ruling regimes, Arab nationalism and the military-industrial complex are also believed to play a role in these scholarly outputs (Stein 2012).

The Orientalist framework and its analytic discourse persisted across disciplinary boundaries, which is indicative that it was “not only an [expression of an] imperial relationship but actually constituted a field of political power” (Turner 1994, 21). In the following discussion, I focus

on the manner in which this field of power influenced the development of knowledge in studies of Kuwaiti society and the Bedouin in particular. In the twentieth century, this imperial relationship was transmitted to Arab, Hadar intellectuals of the Middle East via their indoctrination into colonialist ideals and Orientalist theory during their studies at Western universities (Bocco 2006; Fabietti 2006). This process began in earnest in the 1950s and 1960s as Britain was losing power over the Kuwait Protectorate. Britain and the United States took on major roles in educating young Arab intellectuals in their most prestigious universities, aiding development programmes modernising the Middle East (Ismael 1982; Lockman 2004). Hadar scholars imported these ideas into Arab nationalism (*quawmiya* and *wataniya*) via their absorption of Marxist theory (Stein 2012, 901).

Many of these scholars were deployed as researchers in the service of their sovereign states and a group of international organisations under the mandates of the Arab League and UNESCO to devise national settlement programmes for the Bedouin across the Middle East from the 1950s and 1960s (Bocco 2006). The programmes coincided with the development of international law for indigenous, tribal peoples set out in the International Convention on Indigenous Tribal Populations (ILO 1957). The programmes were intended to provide the Bedouin with citizenship and ownership of land distributed by the sovereign states, while transforming them into “good citizens” and an indigenous workforce (Bocco 2006, 306). Nevertheless, discriminatory, anti-Bedouin discourse typical of Orientalism was a large feature of political and intellectual discourse on the Bedouin during this era. Using this textual discourse, the Hadar intellectual class exercised political power over the Bedouin through their “expert” influence over the development of national settlement policies, imposing sedentarisation on the Bedouin (Bocco 2006).

At this stage of Kuwait’s history, the Bedouin were part of Kuwait’s Bedouin population, still known as “desert dwellers,” undergoing the transition from nomadism and semi-nomadism (al Anezi 1989; Alhajeri 2004; Alshayaji 1988). They were largely members of the northern tribes, actively recruited by the Kuwait government to join the military, National Guard and police services (al Anezi 1989). They were promised citizenship under the government’s settlement policy, which regarded them as reflecting the indigenous character of the nation, desired to counterbalance the growing dominance of other national expatriates, predominantly Arab nationals (Alshayaji 1988, 121).

Arab nationalists articulated a political position promoting the exclusion of all Bedouin from the Kuwaiti citizen base from at least 1965 (al Mdaires 2010). The Nationality Committee strategy of distributing citizenship to only half the Bedouin, implemented during the mid-to-late 1960s, delayed citizenship distribution to the Bedouin thereafter. The strategy set Kuwait apart from the other national settlement programmes in the Middle East (e.g. those described by Bocco 2006; Kark and Frantzman 2012). By the 1980s, Kuwaiti Hadar and Arab nationalist intellectuals had joined forces to even more strenuously lobby for the denial of the Kuwaiti Bedouin's citizenship (see the "national debate" in al Anezi 1989; Stanton Russell 1989, 34), leaving the Bedouin, who had been among the first Bedouin settlers in Kuwait (Ismael 1982), perpetually stateless.

In 1986, the Bedouin were administratively expelled and relabelled "illegal residents" based on a policy approved by a committee of ministers (*al Talea* 2003). In 1992, a resolution to exclude the Bedouin from citizenship on grounds of their ethnic identity was passed (Supreme Planning Council Resolution No.11/1992) while violent ethnic cleansing of the Bedouin was underway (Evans 1991; Gasperini 1991). A specially convened group of intellectuals had formalised the citizenship exclusion policy in 1992 and provided it to the prime minister and Supreme Planning Council directly, overriding the decision-making powers of the Ministry of Planning, which had called for caution in such a policy approach (Stanton Russell and al Ramadhan 1994). The policy reflected key elements of previous policy recommendations put forward by al Moosa (1976) and Alessa (1981) to deny the Bedouin citizenship on grounds of their cultural identity as northern tribes Bedouins. The policy cemented the administrative expulsion policy of 1986 and also limited citizenship grants to any incoming southern tribes' Bedouin who were not yet registered on the National Census. The Bedouin were then removed from "Kuwaiti" and "Bedouins" categories on the National Census and reallocated as "other Arabs" (Stanton Russell and al Ramadhan 1994).

The intellectual classes comprise scholars, ideologists and propagandists, who together produce nationalist ideology and supply it to the political class and elites for distribution among the masses (Znaniiecki 1952a; 1952b). Alhajeri (2004, 16) traced the development of the Hadar and Arab nationalist ideologies featuring anti-Bedouin discourse promoted by intellectuals (in publication) and politicians (via public announcements) over a number of decades. Themes focused on the "mistake" of the state having granted any Bedouins Kuwaiti citizenship at all, sentiments that the Bedouin were incapable of ever functioning in a democracy due to their

tribal culture (though Kuwait has never been a democracy), and self-contradictory claims over which political interests the Bedouin supported, in order to make the group appear to be politically weak and “disloyal” (al Nafisi 1978, 28 and others in Alhajeri 2004, 16).

This discourse reflected aspects of the Arab nationalist ideology that viewed the Bedouin as inferior and uncivilised, typically Orientalist ideas appearing in development theories also identified by Bocco (2006), used to enforce or coerce the Bedouin into settlement under the Arab League and UNESCO settlement mandate. In Kuwait, Hadar and Arab nationalists facilitated the integration of the ideology into government via the national policies described above (Bedouin expulsion policies) in their role as “experts” on government advisory committees. Discursive strategies were used progressively to create confusion about the Bedouin’s identity as Bedouins, and to portray them as a danger to Hadar society. They were described as “slum dwellers” of other nationalities and as illegal migrants “squatting” on Kuwaiti land (Alawadi 1979; al Khatib 1978; al Moosa 1976) and ultimately, as “foreign” threats importing a dangerous foreign culture into the state (see “desertisation” by Ghabra 1997a; 1997b, as below). The exclusion of the Bedouin from education was rationalised as necessary to prevent the development of political consciousness they required to alleviate their political powerlessness, lack of citizenship and human rights deprivations (e.g. Alessa 1981; al Naqeeb 1990).

The Transmission of Anti-Bedouin Sentiment to Western and Emerging Arab Scholars from the 1990s

Western social scientists made their first major studies of Kuwaiti society in the 1980s (Ismael 1982) and 1990s (Crystal 1992), with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq marking a new phase in “Othering” the Bedouin. A new generation of researchers absorbed the Arab nationalist position as the normative framework in Middle East studies (Stein 2012), carefully shifting blame to government for policies that had been designed by local scholars. They appear to have drawn on the expertise and guidance of Hadar intellectuals as their gatekeepers and cultural guides and to have emphasised values shared with them, which resulted in the dissemination of these ideas internationally. Knowledge of key policy developments would have greatly advanced understanding of the Bedouin’s ethnic origins and the reasons for their statelessness, but the new generations of researchers cited the works above while omitting specific and detailed discussion of the policy developments, such as calls for the Bedouin’s exclusion and expulsion from the state (al Moosa 1976), and for their oppression and deprivation of political and human

rights (Alessa 1981), which would be maintained by depriving the group of education (Alessa 1981; al Naqeeb 1990). The policy development outlining the expulsion of the Bedoun from the National Census introduced by al Moosa (1976), as well as more positive findings about the Bedoun in the same study, were omitted from the most recent discussion of that research by Beaugrand (2018). These are analysed in my research (Kennedy 2016).

The following generation of scholars (of all backgrounds) not only featured omissions and gaps in their work regarding the historical development of Bedoun policy, but also more vigorously promoted negative stereotypes (Turner 1994, 101). There were the Bedoun who “lost” their passports (Crystal 1992, referencing al Haddad 1981, who did not actually write about the Bedoun), the “Iraqi” Bedoun (Longva 1997, a nationality claim used by government as grounds for judicial and extrajudicial killings), and the “squatter” Bedoun of Ahmadi (Alissa 2013, 56, referring to Bedoun living in houses subletted from their citizen relatives, which Kuwait’s government allows). The Bedoun were thus rhetorically transformed from the “dangerous” tribal society of lazy Arab nomads “squatting” on Hadar land (after the Hadar purchased traditional Bedouin water sources) by the first generation of scholars (e.g. Alawadi 1979; Alessa 1981; al Moosa 1976), into the “mercenary,” other nationals, citizens of other states, expatriate workers, Iraqis, Iraqi soldiers and military deserters, tantamount to a fifth column, “slipping through the cracks” (Crystal 1992; Ghabra 1997a; Longva 1997) by the second.

Today, a third wave of scholars and/or writings still describe the Kuwaiti Bedouin in terms such as “empty vessels” (Longva 2006, 182) or threats to the state (al Khandari and al Hadben 2010) (both typically Orientalist stereotypes of the Bedouin), while the stateless Bedoun are described as an “invisible” population (Beaugrand 2010, 16, 17, 20, 140, 161), an “acutely insecure” people (Shultziner and Tétreault 2012, 284) encroaching on urban society, a Hadar and Arab nationalist domain (Alissa 2013, in an interpretation of the Bedoun somewhat similar to “desertisation”). Some believe the Bedouin should stop calling themselves “Bedu” and “assimilate” into Hadar society (al Nakib 2014, 7).

Ghabra’s concept of “desertisation” (al Ansari 1994, in Ghabra 1997a, 61, 612, n20; 1997b, 366–67) stands out as a demonising concept applied to both the stateless Bedoun and citizen Kuwaiti Bedouin. It positioned the Bedouin citizens in a clash of civilisations with the Hadar, while criminalising the Bedoun. “Desertisation” was a manifestation of Goffman’s (1963, 4) “tribal stigma” applied literally to a tribal people. The concept was recycled for more than a

decade by Mary Ann Tétreault (2001, 205, 208, 210, 214, 216; 2003, 228; Shultziner and Tétreault 2012, 285).

Joining the Threads: Orientalism, Marxism and Arab Nationalism and Neo-Orientalism

The theories of modernisation and Marxism and “liberal” ethnography acted as a new means for the theoretical and methodological transmission of Orientalism as contemporary cultural commentary (Turner 2000). While the previous generation had omitted information that would portray the Bedouin favourably, the second and third generation of scholars’ omissions avoided exposing the inherently biased and destructive nature of nationalist ideologies that informed their own development of knowledge about Kuwaiti society, including the historical development of Bedouin policy.

These omissions may be regarded as reflective of second-generation Orientalism (pertaining to scholars of the West and/or Europeans), self-Orientalising (Pavan Kumar 2012) or neo-Orientalism (Keskin 2018). They may also be associated with the indigenisation of the social sciences (al Azm 1980; Keskin 2018), in this case, referring to Hadar intellectuals as the indigenous group, as opposed to the late-developing, tribal Bedouin who are still forming an intellectual class of their own. Bayat (2015) explained that the production of knowledge is more systematically developed in second-generation neo-Orientalism, in order to portray the “Other” not as exotic or benign, but as dangerous and a threat to the cultural values and civilisational integrity of the West. Neo-Orientalism (Bayat 2015) is applicable here because in the first generation, the stereotypes used to develop concepts of Bedouin expulsion included notions that the Bedouin were generally “uncivilised” (exotic), inferior and deficient (benign). Then, in the second generation, these stereotypes were recycled while omitting or suppressing relevant information about the Bedouin’s identity and history. This approach helped to promote the perception that the administrative expulsion (1986) and ethnic cleansing (1990) were justifiable, because the Bedouin were essentially defined as foreign imposters (e.g. Ghabra 1997a; 1997b; Longva 1997). The latter strategy was comparatively more negative and destructive because texts more overtly criminalised the Bedouin’s identity, positioning them as threats to the cultural values of the Hadar and the state itself (e.g. Ghabra 1997a; 1997b).

The creative evolution of both harmonious and destructive ideals is not typical of bureaucratic invention but rather intellectual creativity (Halas 2016; Znaniecki 1952a). While Kuwaiti

politicians and elites ultimately endorsed Bedoun policy to enable their segregation from their citizen Bedouins family members and tribal affiliates, the role of scholars in the design and the implementation of the policy was crucial and significant. Without the intellectuals, the policies of exclusion would not have been articulated, legitimised and actioned systematically. The foundation stone of the policy was denying or distorting the Bedoun's identity as Kuwaiti Bedouins, and confusing their identity with nationals of other states or as tribespeople without effective nationality from any modern state. The basic ideology "Othering" the Bedoun was transferred from the writings of Kuwaiti scholars (where it appeared initially) into government policy (as discussed above). The Kuwaiti context was exceptional in that a large portion, if not the vast majority, of the Bedouin population who were promised citizenship under the criteria for the national settlement programme were permanently settled in the programme on the basis of their tribal membership (Ismael 1982; Stanton Russell 1989). The Bedoun were absorbed into the nation prior to being criminalised *en masse* and forced into statelessness (up to 300,000 or half of Kuwait's Bedouin population prior to ethnic cleansing, according to Human Rights Watch 1995).

Today, the system of oppression of the Bedoun maintained by the Central Apparatus of the Ministry of Interior pivots on a definition of the Bedoun identity as the "Other," which is remarkably close to academic definitions. While this approach may be interpreted as a purely nationalist stance that excludes all nationals of other states (the focus of Longva 1997; 2006), the Bedoun suffer as a result of a distinctive regime targeting their *ethnic* identity as Kuwaiti Bedouin. Other, non-Kuwaiti national groups have not been targeted in the same way. They were not settled permanently after being invited by the state to become citizens *en masse*, are not stateless, and have not been administratively erased in the programme of "status adjustment," which removes their ethnic and national identity (Kennedy 2016). Nor have other minorities in Kuwait been misrepresented, criminalised or omitted in the academic literature to the same extent as the Bedoun.

The Arab nationalist interpretive framework has shifted from the left to the centre, becoming the dominant, normative paradigm for interpreting the Middle East (Stein 2012). In this respect, Orientalist stereotypes have been interpreted as social facts, reflecting the early work of Marx (Turner 1994) and Engels (Turner 1998, 75) adopted by Kuwaiti Hadar and other Arab nationalist scholars in the 1960s to 1980s during their university education in the East and West. Without a full understanding of Marx's lifelong intellectual trajectory, fixation on his

early writings would have reinforced Orientalist bias (Turner 1994, 42) toward the Bedouin. These ideas were recycled by Lerner (1958) and Patai (1976), and in the Kuwaiti context such stereotypes served as confirmation and justification for destructive Arab nationalist ideology seeking to exclude the Kuwaiti Bedouin from the nation from 1965 (al Mdaires 2010).

Finally, the rejection of the Bedouin as anti-modern and incapable of development may also be seen as a partial rejection of the shadow of the “Other” within the Self, to the extent that many Hadar scholars have Bedouin ancestry but seek to identify with what they perceive as the urbane, even “enlightened” (Ghabra 2014) aspect of their heritage, rather than the tribal aspect. The ideology, asserted in texts about Bedouin citizens as well as the stateless Bedouin, indicates that the Bedouin have been targeted not because they are “foreign” to Kuwait but foreign only to the Hadar (al Anezi 1989; Alhajeri 2004), precisely because they are Kuwaiti Bedouins with a Kuwaiti national identity (Kennedy 2016).

In this discussion I have attempted to explain the nature of the discursive misrepresentation of the Bedouin, and the problem whereby scholars publishing internationally have avoided recognising or legitimising the Bedouin’s history using methods of analysis typically seen in Orientalism (Turner 1994, 22). My purpose was to illustrate the role and significance of the Bedouin Archive as a counter-narrative in acknowledging and protecting important primary and secondary data resources that interpret the Bedouin’s identity, culture and history since the formation of the modern state. This is particularly important because at present the community cannot publish their own counter-narratives due to widespread lack of education and written orders suppressing the Bedouin issued by the Central Apparatus, which have caused the attrition of established community leaders and intellectuals.

An Alternative Theoretical and Methodological Approach

The humanistic (Halas 2010; Znaniecki 1952a) and collaborative (Lassiter 2005a; 2005b) approaches are characterised by morally grounded idealism and a commitment to authentic representation of the researched group. The humanistic approach (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918; Znaniecki 1952a) is a qualitative research approach developed in response to positivist theories and methods in the social sciences. It was developed well before the postcolonial responses to Orientalism provoked by Edward Said (1978) in literature and media studies and Bryan Turner (1978) in sociology, with Znaniecki (1952b) (and others) writing extensively on the sociology of knowledge. Rejecting the positivistic paradigm, Znaniecki (1952b) was one of the first

Polish cultural theorists to actively promote the social justice perspective (Denzin and de Giardina 2010; Halas 2010) in qualitative research.

The approach regards the data collected from research participants, including their memories and life histories, ideas, experiences, values and attitudes, as vital cultural data (Bierstedt 1980; Gross 1978; 1998; Halas 2010; Smolicz and Secombe 2003). The cultural value placed on this data affirms the contributions of native communities to the development of formal knowledge systems. Such data forms evidence of an idea or system of ideas, as well as a physical, documentary archive that stands as a unique cultural product on its own terms. Since the Bedoun no longer have any formal social institutions in Kuwait through which they can record and give voice to their history, the Bedoun Archive aims to initiate the legitimisation of such resources for the community. Its creation simultaneously bears witness to “the intellectual work of activism” (Choudry 2016, 47) by the Bedoun intellectuals and ordinary members of the community.

The collaborative research approach in anthropology is positioned similarly to the humanistic approach in sociology, in the sense that researchers seek authentic representation of the research participants, giving members of the researched population key roles in the production of knowledge about their own culture (Lassiter 2005a; 2005b). It also draws cultural data from biographical records, family lineages and collective histories of the participants. Lassiter (2005b) describes the return of data as an essential concept in collaborative ethnography (17), “an act of return ... a giving back for something received” (Glenn Hinson in Lassiter 2005b, 17) or the “repatriation” of materials gathered from the researched community (Dell Hymes 2000, in Lassiter 2005b, 163). Harsh realities are often met by researchers and cultural guides as they identify with shared ideals and attempt to produce joint research (Marcus 2001, 521 in Lassiter 2005a, 93). Collaborative work with the Bedoun inspired me to leave behind a cultural product for the group that would satisfy Lassiter’s (2005b) principle of a return of data to the community. This goal became increasingly important as my research participants experienced the post-Arab Spring security crackdown (al Saadi 2014).

The Bedoun’s Struggle to Document Their Own History

Group self-awareness of the Bedoun’s political consciousness was first expressed during the Arab Spring. The group’s ethnic and national identity forms the main basis of their political identity, but their personal experience of roles in the state security services, and their resistance

to war, ethnic cleansing, and other forms of oppression are also intimately tied to the emergence of this identity. The context of the Bedoun's collective intellectual development and the development of social activism is characterised by their strong tradition of oral transmission of cultural histories, and late access to formal education and literacy (reading and writing). The oral tradition is emphasised in the interview data, which is expressed in English and/or translated into English.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to account for the full history of the Bedoun's access to education, but generally speaking, it is only recently that even Kuwaiti Bedouin citizens have been able to take up university education in large numbers (al Nakib 2014). Additionally, the first generations of Bedoun intellectuals benefiting from education were substantially assimilated into Kuwaiti society through their professionalisation, alongside the Hadar (see Beaugrand 2010), which limited their capacity to take up roles as public advocates or reformers. Nevertheless, some of them contributed to the seminal human rights report on the Bedoun (Human Right Watch 1995). The development of the next generation of intellectuals was interrupted in the 1980s and 1990s by their expulsion from schools and universities, leaving most of that generation (who are now aged around 35–45), uneducated or undereducated, unemployed or underemployed, and often deprived of the ability to establish their own families. Members of this group rose into intellectual and social leadership roles during the Arab Spring. Despite being bombarded with multiple security restrictions (Saleh 2014), due to their historical, legal eligibility for citizenship under the domestic law, their national identity and ethnic identity is particularly strong, defensive and resilient (Kennedy 2016).

After the withdrawal of the defeated Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the early 1990s, foreign correspondents and international humanitarian agencies discovered that the Bedoun were undergoing ethnic cleansing (Gasperini 1991). This was referred to by government authorities as a state-sanctioned population purification programme (Evans 1991). These strategies were also used to ethnically cleanse Palestinian residents (some methods of violence used against the two groups were the same, while some were different). The cleansing involved detentions and killings (including death by starvation, beatings, torture and executions) coinciding with (never officially investigated) disappearances, the appearance of unmarked graves in Kuwait City, forced deportations, encampment in Kuwaiti ("refugee camps" close to the Iraqi border with insufficient water, food or basic shelter), and other strategies to drive the Bedoun out of

the country, such as threatening them with hanging if they returned to their homes in Kuwait City (Amnesty International 1992; 1994; 1996; Human Rights Watch 1991; 1992; 1995).

International humanitarian organisations monitored the Bedoun issue thereafter until the Arab Spring, when the Bedoun's contacts with journalists and international humanitarian agencies rapidly proliferated (2011–2014). For those who could not travel outside the country (the vast majority of Bedouns) these organisations were the Bedoun's main source of social contact with civil society outside Kuwait's borders. A large pool of primary data was collected from the community by Human Rights Watch (1995), for the largest humanitarian report on the Bedoun published to date. Around 500 interviews were conducted, capturing data on systematic human rights deprivations and state-sponsored violence, but the organisation did not disclose what proportion of the study actually comprised Bedoun interviewees in Kuwait. Aside from the quotations in the reports, the primary data collected by fieldworkers was not further disclosed in publication or returned to the community.

The generation of Bedoun leaders who arose in the Arab Spring did not have the same life experiences and the same level of education as intellectuals and social leaders of the previous generation. They were far more isolated, even secluded during their upbringings, largely in al Jahra, Sulabiya and Ahmadi. For example, Bedoun participants recalled the post-Iraq invasion environment in which ethnic cleansing took place through their own eyes as children, when their families became impoverished, homeless and hungry. Bedoun interviewees reported that by the 2000s, their people were still unable to develop normal social relationships with members of the southern tribes Bedouin due to stigmatisation (Goffman 1963) in the wake of the ethnic cleansing. Some explained that they rarely travelled beyond their local areas because they feared that the Hadar hated them, leading them to remain insulated by their local tribal culture (research participants 05 and 09 in Kennedy, 2016).

For these reasons, the Bedoun's contact with international humanitarian organisations in the Arab Spring was particularly significant to this new generation, as the organisations not only investigated their group's situation, but also provided other means of support to emerging leaders. For example, they received assistance in forming local, civil rights organisations (some registered with UNESCO for representation at the United Nations), introductions to citizen advocate groups from the Kuwaiti Hadar community, and training in human rights advocacy, freedom of speech and community organisation (e.g. Amnesty International 2015). As

fieldwork contacts, human rights defenders and gatekeepers working for humanitarian agencies, they were also subject to some degree of social control by these organisations through their “management” of contacts. From around 2014 onwards, the Bedoun network participants began to be systematically replaced by Hadar advocates who reported on the Bedoun instead, while human rights organisations simultaneously reduced their presence in the field.

Throughout the Arab Spring, primary data of human rights violations and state-sponsored violence collected by international humanitarian organisations was gathered with the assistance of these new community leaders. But the data was never returned to the community, while only a very small proportion of the primary data was published in humanitarian reports. Thus, two relatively sustained periods of data extraction from the community had been performed by Western humanitarian organisations. While Bedoun claims to human rights were formally presented by Kuwaiti and international humanitarian organisations under the periodic reporting mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (and other organs of the UN), none of these efforts have produced meaningful, concrete reform (“human rights” reforms associated with Decree 409/2011 failed, see Human Rights Watch 2014). While some Bedoun leaders have submitted individually to United Nations committees as founding members of small civil society organisations (Hakeem al Fadhli in Kuwait and Mohammed al Anezi in London are two examples), those living in Kuwait were prohibited from travelling to committee hearings due to their entrapment by the state, and were subsequently issued security restrictions by the Central Apparatus for their efforts.

Bedoun leaders were patently aware of humanitarian organisations withdrawing their support for the community after the Arab Spring, and the loss of the valuable interview data given to such organisations. This interview data forms an important cultural record and likely includes evidence of crimes against humanity, warranting its repatriation (Dell Hymes 2000, in Lassiter 2005b, 163). However, the question arises, to whom could or should the visiting agencies return the data, and where would the data be stored, preserved and displayed? Due to their experiences during the Arab Spring, the leadership group began to develop an awareness of the fact that very little of their interview transcript data was ever published by human rights agencies or visiting researchers. They also became aware that their inability to develop their own cultural organisations had left them with little power to negotiate the return of data from humanitarian investigations and academic research to their community as a whole.

The Bedoun leadership group that emerged during the Arab Spring had assumed that their own interview data, and other interview data collected with their facilitation, would form the basis of evidence for cases developed by international humanitarian organisations to challenge the government of Kuwait in ways that would lead to concrete outcomes for the Bedoun (personal communication with M. al Anezi, London, December 26, 2014, and A. H. al Fadhli, Ahmadi, Kuwait, November 17, 2014, and Participant 09, Taima, Kuwait, July 21, 2014). Issues of importance to the emerging intellectuals, chiefly the provision of education to all stateless children in Kuwait (al Hajji 2014), were not followed through by the humanitarian organisations. This led to frustration for Bedoun leaders and supporters after the Arab Spring, leading to increased self-advocacy among the leadership group. They conducted multiple, small-scale actions calling for educational reform in the country during and after the Arab Spring, sometimes reported by journalists (see al Hajji 2014), but not by humanitarian agencies. They also increasingly reached out independently to international journalists to discuss their situation, so that by the time they confronted the Comoros Plan,² they were confident enough to speak openly about the human trafficking element of the programme (Hakeem al Fadhli in Abrahamian 2014).

Although many individuals benefited from the cross-fertilisation of ideas experienced during their interactions with Kuwaiti Hadar advocacy networks and Bedouin political networks, humanitarian organisations, journalists and scholars, no substantial gains were made by the community as a whole, for their investment in the humanitarian organisations' processes during the Arab Spring. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of young Bedoun men were issued with security restrictions regarded by authorities as equivalent to a criminal offence, as a punitive response to the Bedoun demonstrations in the Arab Spring (Saleh 2014). While hopes for genuine government reform has since receded, the Arab Spring remains a much-cherished high point in the Bedoun's recent history, having been absorbed into the collective memory and nurtured their sense of national identity. This soon becomes evident in virtually any discussion with community members young or old.

² In a new policy development the Ministry of Interior's Central Apparatus introduced "the Comoros Plan" after the Arab Spring. The plan was an extension of "status adjustment" but rather than dispersing the population across a variety of ineffective nationality labels in official records (as per the previous policy), the population would be allocated to up to three nationalities, including the Comoros Islands and likely, Egypt (*Kuwait Times* 2016; Toumi 2014). Sheikh Mazen al Jarrah explained that the plan would only target Bedouns classified as criminals, who would be deported to the Islands (*Kuwait Times* 2014a). Expulsion and deportation threats on grounds of criminalised identity ("illegality") have been in place since around 1983 (al Anezi 1989, 266–67, n152). Since then, the Bedoun population has been classified as "illegal" on a range of different grounds, with new layers of criminalisation emerging in response to the Arab Spring protests.

As the Bedoun ethnic and national identity continues to evolve, it is hoped that the community can develop appropriate protocols to ensure raw data collected in significant studies is not lost, but preserved, protected and made available to the community for future use. At the most basic level, the Bedoun remain prohibited from expressing their intelligence, culture and national identity in society not only due to the oppression of government authorities, but also due to ethnic conflict with the Hadar and other nationals in Kuwait. As long as the Hadar submit to Orientalist stereotypes of the Bedouin desert dweller and the post-Iraq invasion interpretation of the Bedoun as the enemy of the state, conflated with normative Arab nationalist positioning as the centre of gravity among scholars (Stein 2012), the Bedoun will continue to require the protection of their knowledge and cultural products to be provided by supportive institutions in other countries.

Fieldwork with the Bedoun

A large part of my ongoing discussions with my cultural guides concerned the capacity of the community to contribute to academic research processes and to acquire some degree of ownership over the development of knowledge about their own community. While the contributions of the small, intellectual leadership group in the Bedoun community have been essential to my methodology, they will likely continue to be vital to the development of formal systems of knowledge about their people as long as they are able to access sufficient freedoms to do so. But unfortunately, even the emerging intellectual class among the Bedoun still have some difficulty perceiving themselves as co-creators of formal knowledge about their culture, and interpreters of their own history.

This is due to systematic oppression such as the distribution of multiple security restrictions to intellectuals and social leaders (others tend to receive single restrictions), placing enormous pressure on their ability to function in their public roles. On the other hand, the group's development of intellectual ideals and positive ideologies related to their concepts of national identity, ethnic belonging and participatory citizenship has led to the creative re-organisation of their culture (Znaniński 1952a). Their creative work in the Arab Spring led to thousands conducting spontaneous, popular protests, the development of their own media presence, self-advocacy in education, the production of their own humanitarian reports, and work with journalists, human rights organisations and scholars. This period of cultural expansion forms an important part of the Bedoun's contemporary history.

Mohammed al Anezi of London, Mona Kareem, Hakeem al Fadhli and Abdullah Atallah are examples of breakthrough leaders who developed significant public profiles, but all have paid the price for their leadership in various ways. Mohammed al Anezi was the first social activist publicly supporting the Bedoun in the diaspora. Mona Kareem developed a profile as a journalist during the Arab Spring, and in association with her blog BedoonRights.org. Both have assisted me with gathering newspaper archives and personal documents, respectively. They have both left the country and suffered from family separation and difficulties with freedom of expression in the West, due to their family ties in Kuwait.

Mohammed al Anezi (Tran, 2011) and research Participant 12 developed Bedoun Internet activism with their own sites prior to the better-known BedoonRights.org. (the latter site was managed by Mona Kareem from the United States). They also contributed to some of the earliest Bedoun-authored reports submitted to the United Nations. Another research assistant and cultural guide to whom I dedicated my thesis work, along with Participant 09 (a poet and writer who founded the Khatatib, a Bedoun community school in October 2015), also played significant roles helping me to obtain the data used for my historical analyses preserved in the Bedoun Archive.

Mohammed Atallah was arguably the most eloquent Bedoun to have gained public attention to date. He disappeared after incarceration by authorities in 2015. Hakeem al Fadhli produced a documentary called *Jasseem, a Beggar among the Oppressed Bedoun* (al Fadhli 2012), and was nominated for a human rights prize in honour of his ongoing human rights activism (Gulf Centre for Human Rights 2017). He contributed to more than 10 research papers published across a variety of social science disciplines, performing multiple research roles (cultural guide, fixer, translator and interpreter, interviewee, and others). He performed this work amidst a series of arrests and incarcerations in relation to charges of public expression (we discussed these experiences in personal communications on December 1, 2015, May 20, 2016, September 14, 2016, and August 26, 2017).

Participant 09, Participant 12 and Hakeem al Fadhli played key roles in public advocacy and behind-the-scenes negotiations with authorities for education reform from 2011 to 2015. Although they felt that they had made little impact on the new prohibitions on children's education (September 2015) at the time, their efforts stimulated public debate in the National

Assembly, leading to MP Hassan Jawhar's discussion of the connection between the oppression of the Bedoun's education and the issue of birth certificates by government with false nationality labels, and the "status adjustment" programme which erases the Bedoun's identity through administrative procedures (*Arab Times* 2014). This discussion contributed to a growing basis of evidence demonstrating the purpose of "status adjustment" in ethnic cleansing of the Bedoun. These are just a few examples of the intellectual contributions of Bedouns to the development of social activism and formal knowledge development about Kuwaiti society, including the creation of the Bedoun Archive.

These examples of the social actions from the Arab Spring and post-Arab Spring years (2011–2016) were forms of "learning activism" together (Choudry 2015). Bedoun contributions to journalism, humanitarian reporting and academic work as well as public demonstrations, warrant the attention of scholars interested in the human rights of minorities, social movements and the sociology of knowledge in Kuwait, the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East. The recognition of interviewees and cultural guides as providers of essential cultural data (Znaniacki 1952a) repositions the perception of the Bedoun population beyond Orientalist, criminalising stereotypes and one-dimensional portrayals of a whole population in the Arab Spring context as "activists" and "protesters" (Mohamedou 2015, 122). It expands perspectives on the intellectual work of activism (Choudry 2016) linked to the development of new social roles within national culture, and the essential function of nation-building (Znaniacki 1952b).

The Bedoun Archive Contents

The Bedoun Archive includes the following contents:

1. All interview recordings and transcripts collected in my thesis research.
2. All interview transcript excerpts thematically analysed into 235 themes around the Bedoun identity, marginalisation of identity and culture and Bedoun education and the intellectual ideal.
3. Bedouin family data (additional to the dissertation) (177 themes).
4. Photographs of Bedoun housing areas including the segregated compounds of Taima and Sulabiya, taken over the last 40 years. The photographs illustrate the historical development of the compounds, where much of the population still remains isolated from mainstream society.

5. Personal documents provided by members of the Bedoun community—identity cards, census registration certificates, hospital registration used as substitutes for Bedoun birth registration, and others (documents modified to ensure anonymity).
6. Secondary data used to analyse discursive omissions, objectification and dehumanisation in academic and public discourses on the Bedoun, thematically analysed and presented with mapping documents; references to all published works with page numbers (not provided in the dissertation).
7. Data used to analyse the system of administrative erasure called “status adjustment” or “reverting” or “recovering” their original nationalities in the Ministry of Interior’s Central Apparatus, which intensified from 2010 to 2014 (this section was subject to two rounds of analysis). This programme was first discussed by al Anezi (1989) and later US Embassy officials (WikiLeaks 2006) as equivalent to an administrative erasure; related newspaper data is included in the news archives.
8. Data used to analyse administrative population reduction strategies including those concurrent with violent ethnic cleansing; related newspaper data is included in the news archives.
9. Data used to analyse violent ethnic cleansing from 1990 to 1995, including methods of violence, killing, expulsion and other forms of population eradication; related newspaper data is included in the news archives.
10. Data used for the analysis of the current state of knowledge regarding Bedoun education in the Ministry of Education; omissions on education monitoring in UNESCO and other international agency reports.
11. Newspaper archives, mainly from the early 1990s (ethnic cleansing/population “purification”) and from 2010 to 2016 (the Arab Spring and administrative erasure) with indexes; a bibliography of relevant international humanitarian agency reports.
12. Additional documents associated with the methods of analysis used in my thesis.

The archive files will be allocated different levels of access. The file structure of the archive will be able to be viewed online, along with descriptions of each of the files in the collection. This information will enable viewers to select files they wish to access. Some files will be available online immediately; other files will be available on request. Users can reproduce the data with author attribution and according to the principles of beneficence to the community. The interview recordings and full transcripts have restricted access and will only be accessed in case of public interest, as evidence for international law claims (such as

applications for United Nations Special Rapporteur investigations or International Criminal Court advisory opinions regarding crimes against humanity). Other data will be opened to the community and/or the general public, after an embargo period while the data is being processed.

The most significant barrier to opening the archive to the public remains the community's inability to make effective use of it as a result of their inability to exercise public custodianship, develop their own publications, and participate openly in cultural production. Open public access online may indeed be the best method for the group to access the archives (and this includes the return of data to research participants), as the Bedoun are more likely to use the Internet anonymously than to visit a "Bedoun" collection of public archives, literature or art for security reasons and also to avoid social stigma. Thus, the choice of location of the archive is not physically central to the community at stake, but it is not essential that it should be. The online environment also appears to be the optimal environment for self-education, so that the community can access the material for free and at their own pace.

The Bedoun Archive's Purpose, Aims and Content

As I have mentioned, the Bedoun Archive provides a historical counter-narrative to the characterisation of the Bedoun as the foreign "Other" in Kuwait, though they are an indigenous tribal people. It is my hope that the Bedoun Archive helps to bring attention to the problem of the Bedoun's lost primary data collected by international humanitarian agencies and academic researchers over the past 25 to 30 years. The Bedoun Archive presents a return of data extracted from the community, as well as a return of information to the community of information written by others about them, which has contributed to their disadvantage and in some cases, the eradication of their population. It is an important historical and symbolic step in the humanistic and collaborative research processes which recognises the group as having their own culture, and their having performed an integral role in nation-building towards the development of Kuwait's national culture.

According to Lassiter (2005b), collaborative methodologies seek to affirm the personally ascribed identity of indigenous, tribal people and promise a return of data extracted by researchers to these communities. This is believed to be especially important for communities that are unable to exercise substantive cultural ownership over the products they create, or whose histories have been marginalised and/or diminished in nationalist narratives created by

opposing settlers. The Bedoun are no longer able to create, display or celebrate their own cultural products openly in Kuwait. Therefore, the archive may also be seen as an important development arising from Bedoun community leaders' vital intellectual work during the Arab Spring and in the ensuing years up to 2016. It attempts to provide records of the group's culture and related information resources in a format that is not available elsewhere, to facilitate expansion of knowledge about the group and to promote their legitimacy, protection and survival.

The humanistic sociology and collaborative research frameworks recognise such data as a cultural product created by researchers and participants together, in an environment of intellectual and nationalist oppression. The data is regarded as having a high cultural value due to the various risks faced by the Bedoun discussed. The Bedoun Archive may serve as an example for researchers studying hard-to-reach and/or vulnerable groups, whose cultural production has been severely oppressed or otherwise destroyed. The data may be used to provide assistance to future generations, as they seek legal remedies and compensation for their oppression.

The archive represents a concrete cultural product that is co-owned by the Bedoun community, which will outlast my personal efforts publishing the Bedoun data. My principal supervisor, Dr Margaret Secombe of the University of Adelaide, and my co-supervisor, Associate Professor Hossein Esmaili of Flinders University Law School, are listed as co-founders of the archive. The community custodians of the Bedoun Archive include my principal research assistants and cultural guides, Hakeem al Fadhli and two other individuals who have supported me since the beginning of my fieldwork in Kuwait (their names cannot be released at the moment for security reasons and will be added to the archive at a later date). Senior Archivist Janet McDougall has provided invaluable assistance, helping with curation, administration and the organisation of the archive files over the past two years. The Australian Data Archive at the Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods generously hosts the archive.

According to a collaborative approach, it is important for the community to receive the advantage of first access, prior to the general public, for the archive to serve its collaborative function. However, this opportunity must be balanced with the restrictions on intellectual freedom and freedom of expression faced by the Bedoun, and the prospect that for the time

being, public, open online access to selected files may provide the Bedoun with the best method of access, and allows them to share access with individuals and organisations who act on their behalf. I remain in contact with the custodians, though this latter issue is unresolved at the time of writing. Once the archive curation is complete, the Australian Data Archive will open files to the public and continue to make the data available to the Bedoun population for their future use and benefit, on a permanent basis.

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