Bedouins into Bourgeois

How are state leaders adapting their citizen-building strategies for globalization? What outcomes are they achieving, and why? Bedouins into Bourgeois investigates an ambitious state-led social engineering campaign in the United Arab Emirates, where leaders aimed to encourage more entrepreneurial, market-friendly, patriotic, and civic-minded citizens. Extensive ethnography – including interviews with a ruling monarch – reveals the rulers’ reasoning and goals for social engineering. Through surveys and experiments, social engineering outcomes are examined, as well as the reasons for these outcomes, with surprising results. This fascinating study illustrates how social engineering strategies that use nationalism to motivate citizens can have paradoxical effects, increasing patriotism but unexpectedly discouraging or “crowding out” development-friendly mind-sets.

Calvert W. Jones is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland, College Park. She focuses on new approaches to citizen-building within a context of globalization and the nature of citizens’ economic, social, and political engagement, with emphasis on the Middle East. She earned her Ph.D. in political science from Yale University and holds masters’ degrees from the University of California, Berkeley in information management and the University of Cambridge in international relations.
Bedouins into Bourgeois

Remaking Citizens for Globalization

CALVERT W. JONES

University of Maryland, College Park
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This book had its origins in a trip to Dubai in the summer of 2009, where I was conducting preliminary research for my dissertation at Yale University on the making of citizens in the contemporary era, focusing on shifting goals, strategies, and outcomes. Over that summer, I also visited and made good friends in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman, but at that time it was chiefly the UAE that fascinated me, with its trailblazing efforts in education, citizen-building, and other areas. I knew we could learn a lot from this under-researched country’s efforts at pro-globalization social engineering, both pros and cons, and I couldn’t wait to get started on this book.

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Note on Transliteration

In transliterating Arabic into English, I generally followed the system used by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, which can be found on the journal’s website. Exceptions included Arabic place names and personal names that are well known to English-speaking audiences by a certain transliteration (e.g., Egypt’s Nasser and Faisal I of Iraq). In addition, where Arabic words have common English transliterations in the UAE, as written in public newspapers, building names, and street signs, I typically used those better-known transliterations (e.g., “sheikh” instead of “shaykh”). Finally, for personal names and titles, I used the transliteration that the individual appeared to favor (as written on a business card, for example).