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Saharasia: Geographical Comparisons of World Cultures and Civilizations

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What is the source of the human impulse towards violence and war? Is it in our genetic structure, as some claim, or the product of Original Sin? Is it purely economically determined? Do all cultures share the same innate qualities of violent aggression, which lurks just beneath a surface facade of our civilizations, waiting for the right excuse or provocation to break loose and wreak havoc upon the world? A simple review of the daily news reports certainly might lead the casual observer to believe this is so. However, a geographical review of newer but mostly neglected findings on the issues of infant and child treatment, on the basic human needs for love and emotional bonds of affection, including sexual bonding, with comparisons between peaceful versus violent societies, leads us towards entirely different conclusions.

Various methods for comparing world cultures have been used over the years, some allowing for greater or lesser insights. One new method I developed in the early 1980s involved contrasting cultures and civilizations by their social institutions, behavior and belief systems, as recorded in the literature of anthropology and ethnography.¹ Rather than using the nation-state as a basic unit of comparison, my cross-cultural comparisons employed data from individual cultural units, such as tribes or distinctive ethnic groups, from around the world. And because these data were recorded from native, subsistence-level cultures as described at approximately 1900 CE, my method also allowed a limited but nevertheless valuable stripping-away of a good portion of the culturally-skewing influences of European colonialism.

My task began around 1980, as a graduate student of Geography at the University of Kansas, seeking to make simple world maps of human behavior traits. I worked from a theory that human behavior related to family life – on subjects such as human sexuality, marriage, childbirth customs, and the status of women – would show a pattern related to climate types. Notably from my interests in desert climates, and the attending severe problems of drought and famine, it was pretty clear to me that entire social groups and regions were being devastated whenever the Sahara Desert atmospheric conditions expanded a little bit, as to affect for example Ethiopia and the African Sahel, wiping out rains and turning the landscape into dry barren conditions.

Over generations, this would work through the mechanism of famine and starvation to destroy certain biologically-determined social behaviors, such as infant care and child nutrition, and also the relations between male and female. The effects of long-term drought and starvation would impose a deleterious influence on behavior that would be

absent from those regions characterized by wet and lush conditions of food-abundance. From this, a drought-starvation influence upon social violence and war was anticipated.

To address this question, I firstly investigated the Human Resource Area Files² compiled by Yale University. These were then in every major university library, but not in any machine-readable form, which was necessary if I wanted to complete a dissertation study on this matter in a few years, rather than a few decades. A sizable subset of the HRAF material had been summarized within the *Ethnographic Atlas*³ of George Peter Murdock, one of the “founding fathers” of American anthropology. It presented tabular codes for around 100 social variables on a global sample of 1170 different cultures. Murdock and his associates had reviewed original source materials from the most definitive ethnographies, made summary codes of their variables – such as Circumcision: present or absent; Bride Price: high or low, or non-existent; Descent: matrilineal, patrilineal, etc. – and then published those coded variables in the journal *Ethnology*,⁴ for peer-review and possible correction.

This process ran between 1962 and 1967. I was the first to plot Murdock’s data on world maps, as his *Atlas* was a slim book filled with data tables only, and no maps. His *Atlas* data had just been made available on IBM punch cards, easing my task of data review and writing a computer program to assimilate and plot the Murdock data on world maps as well as to make the necessary cross-cultural codings for evaluation of my larger desert-climate-behavior theory. Six years later, having also surveyed a significant amount of archaeological and historical materials, and undertaken additional fieldwork in the deserts of the American Southwest, Egypt and Israel, I could speak with some confidence on the subject of desert influences on behavior, as well as comparative regional variations in behavior. Here I shall briefly summarize these findings.

Theoretical Foundations: Patrist versus Matrist Culture

Looking around the world today, with its present difficult situations of violence and open warfare, one could easily succumb to the notion that the human species suffered under the burden of “violent, selfish genes”, a concept which I am convinced has no more scientific validity than the psychoanalytic “death instinct”, or the Catholic notion of “original sin”, or the “mark of Cain”. My study rested upon the foundational assumption that humans at their basic nature are spontaneously peaceful, cooperative and loving creatures – an assumption that was confirmed in the variable but highly structured nature of cultural data as reviewed geographically. Moreover, placing such cultural information on a time-line strongly suggests the existence of an early peaceful period in human prehistory where social violence and warfare was the rare exception, and not the rule.

A starting point in my work was the *sex-economic* theory⁵ of Wilhelm Reich, in whose writings one will find discussion of various forms of neurotic and violent *armored*

character structures, versus a more peacefully-cooperative but nevertheless vigorous and healthy-aggressive (in the sense of a healthy striving towards goals or meeting of needs) *un-armored* or *genital character* structure. The term *armoring* was coined by Reich to describe the way in which modern humans protectively hold back their deeper emotions, like a medieval knight in metal armor. When raised with punitive violence from adult caretakers, infants and children develop emotional armor as a survival mechanism, putting up a deadening emotional wall between themselves and the outer world.

This emotional armoring also reduces the capacities for joy and love in all their expressions, Reich argued, leading to sexual dysfunctions and distortions of both compulsively moralistic and pornographic natures (i.e., sexual frigidity and impotence, the “hatred of love”, sadomasochism, sexual insatiability, “group-sex,” rape, pedophilia, etc.) with a consequent buildup of undischarged emotional-sexual bioenergetic tension. In the growing adolescent and adult, this accumulated undischarged energy pushes for release through overt or covertly violent expressions. Such violence is usually directed towards anything that provokes anxiety within the armored character but is generally bound up within complex social institutions and expressed ritually. Out of this develop belief systems advocating the “goodness” of pain and compulsive joylessness, and the “badness” of pleasure and love, especially as related to sexual and reproductive functions.

This is the emotional background for such incredible social “rituals” as are designed to destroy the maternal-infant bond during the early periods of infancy, childhood and adolescence. Examples include: ⁶

- Demands for infants to be swaddled or denied the mother's breast;
- Cutting of the genitals of infants, children and adolescents with knives (“circumcision”);
- Beating of children into compulsive obedience to irrational adult demands;
- Taboos to crush down the child's budding curiosity in sexuality, or to literally murder children if they fall in love, or to cruelly push them towards suicide (i.e., the miserable fate of Romeo and Juliet, or countless young girls murdered for “honor” in Islamic regions);
- Compulsive or arranged marriage systems, to insure that even adults should not experience romantic love or sexual bonding, thereby insuring the persistence of such cruel institutions as concubinage, sexual slavery and coercive prostitution.

The reader will note how all these various expressions of family life are likewise bound up with authoritarian social structures, where Kings, Priests, Warlords, Tsars, Commissars, or Mullahs occupy positions of totalitarian rule, and males in general live within strict social hierarchies, with women and children occupying the lowest

positions. The argument laid by Reich was that *State Structure Mirrors Family Structure*,⁷ be they either cooperative and peaceful or authoritarian and violent, a point that found exacting support in my work.

Table 1 gives a summary of the two different cultural expressions,⁸ which I have termed *Matrist* and *Patrist* to denote their emphasis upon either satisfying the needs of infants, children, adolescents and adults, or the denying of those needs. In the destructively sadistic family-social “rituals” summarized on the “armored Patrist” side of Table 1 and incorporated into religious ideologies as well as into law, *women play a role just as large as men in spite of the fact that they may suffer disproportionately as the victims of violent Patristism.*

Female genital mutilations, for example, are uniformly carried out by older women, mercilessly using razor blades on the genitals of young girls, and often they are the most emphatic supporters of the practices. Also, “honor killings” of young girls who violate sexual taboos, as in the Islamic world, are often initiated by the female gossip system or demanded by the girls’ own mothers; these mothers put the men of the community and family under extreme pressure to “do something to restore the family honor,” which also affects their own social standing among women’s communities.

The murder of such a “sinful girl” restores “family pride and honor” for both males and females. Certainly, the role of the man is central – he typically carries out the murders, and disproportionately is the one who abuses and terrorizes women and children in the family home and often is murdered himself by other males in spasms of warfare which periodically erupt. But women also can be big supporters of wars, enslavement and murder of the “hated enemy” even when their own children are offered up as sacrificial victims to the gods of war. Emotionally softer males in armored Patrist cultures also are subject to abusive treatment by both males and females.

Table 1: Dichotomous Behaviors, Attitudes, and Social Institutions⁸

<u>Trait</u>	<u>Patrist (armored)</u>	<u>Matrist (unarmored)</u>
Infants,	Less indulgence	More indulgence
Children and	Less physical affection	More physical affection
Adolescents:	Infants traumatized	Infants not traumatized
	Painful initiations	No painful initiations
	Dominated by family	Children’s democracies
	Sex-segregated houses or military groups	Mixed sex children’s houses or age villages
Sexuality:	Restrictive attitude	Permissive attitude
	Genital mutilations	No genital mutilations
	Female virginity taboo	No female virginity taboo

<u>Trait</u>	<u>Patrism (armored)</u>	<u>Matrism (unarmored)</u>
Sexuality (cont.)	Adolescent lovemaking severely censured Homosexual tendency plus severe taboo Incest/pedophile tendency plus severe taboo Coercive concubinage, prostitution	Adolescent lovemaking freely permitted No homosexual tendency or strong taboo No incest/pedophile tend. or strong taboo No concubinage or prostitution
Women:	Limits on freedom Inferior status Vaginal blood taboo (hymenal, menstrual & childbirth) Cannot choose own mate Cannot divorce at will Males control fertility Reproductive functions denigrated	More freedom Equal status No vaginal blood taboo Can choose own mate Can divorce at will Females control fertility Reproductive functions celebrated
Cultural and Family Structure:	Authoritarian Hierarchical Patrilineal Patrilocal Compulsive lifelong monogamy or polygamy Military structure Violent, sadistic	Democratic Egalitarian Matrilineal Matrilocal Noncompulsive monogamy or occasional polygamy No full time military Nonviolent, no sadism
Religion and Beliefs:	Male/father oriented Asceticism, pleasure-avoidance pain sought & emphasized Inhibition Fear/hatred of nature Full time religious specialists Male shamans/healers Strict behavior codes	Female/mother oriented Pleasure welcomed and institutionalized Spontaneity Nature worshiped No full time religious specialists Male or female shamans/healers Absence of strict codes

However, I wish to break away from the usual finger-pointing and look at the unconscious and robot-like manner in which both *men and women* carry out a wide variety of pain-inflicting and destructive actions against infants, children and

adolescents, as well as against themselves and their neighbors, to twist and warp the softer parts of the human character into the hideous armored expressions we now see in varied expressions globally.

Natural biology reproduces the peaceful and cooperative nature of *Homo sapiens* in every newborn child, but the various religious and cultural “rituals” found within the anger-laden and emotionally-damaged, authoritarian type of family structure work to destroy the softer human qualities and distort them into their exact opposite. Reich’s theory allows us to find commonalities, from the pain-inflicting, obedience-demanding and sex-negating patriarchal authoritarian family structure to understand the creation of millions of armored adults who, for example, supported the medieval burning of “witches” and who later collectively marched to the political slogans of Hitler, Stalin and Mao or who considered Pharaoh or Hirohito as a god.

Every culture suffering under the patriarchal authoritarian family and state structure, Reich argued, created its own quanta of un-discharged rage, which people misdirected internally in masochistic impulses of violent self-abuse, or outwardly against socially-approved targets who almost always were emotionally softer and more sexually alive than themselves: the “immoral” sexually-active female, the “pornographic” Jews and Americans, the “naked savage” Indians, the “over-sexed” blacks, the capitalist “pigs” or “evil” counter-revolutionaries, the “infidel” non-believers. Those who live a life of greater freedom and pleasure stir up the anxiety of those who do not, and thereby incur their provoked wrath.

Superficially, historians have detailed these types of mass-murdering social movements according to economic or religious factors, or to ideology only, but their commonalities in family structure and emotional-sexual behavior have been almost systematically overlooked. And yet, a focus upon those neglected factors gives us a new perspective not previously possible.

Geographical Review of the Cross-Cultural Data

Early in my work I was impressed with the magnificent libraries of the universities where I studied, and viewed their collections, in total, as “time-machines” – vast repositories of knowledge about archaeology, history and anthropology, as well as of our biological nature. They surely must contain the answers, I felt, if only we could review and assimilate that information all at once, in a comprehensive manner. With thousands of cultures having been observed and described, it became apparent, this might be possible though presentation on world maps of the myriad facts of human behavior as observed by large groups of scholars, using geographical and cross-cultural methods of analysis combined.

We all regularly use maps to orient ourselves and our place on the Earth in relationship to other locations and nations, whether this is to drive from one state to another or to understand where the next weather-front is and how its motion will affect us. We gain a deeper understanding by knowing where things exist and their spatial and temporal relationships to each other as placed on a map. Maps are used in nearly all disciplines, from geology to meteorology to economics, allowing different kinds and forms of phenomena to be displayed in a location-specific manner, after which some of their deeper aspects are quite spontaneously revealed as a simple expression of their spatial relationships. But they have never been widely used in anthropology, perhaps due to specialization or a bias against the inevitable diffusion theories which arise when cultural data are mapped.⁹

My first cross-cultural evaluations used the data set of Textor,¹⁰ which employed a 400-culture regionally balanced subset of the original Murdock data, with 63 different variables that mirrored those summarized in my Table 1, above. This effort proved at a high level of statistical significance the following: Cultures with the highest levels of social violence are characterized by harsh and abusive treatment of babies and children, by sex-repression of adolescents and the unmarried, by compulsive marriages and deeply hierarchal social structures which push women down, and by a predominant religious authoritarianism. Cultures with the lowest levels of social violence are opposite to this description in nearly every respect.¹¹ These ideas were firstly argued by Reich in his seminal works,¹² later validated in the cross-cultural work of Prescott,¹³ and finally confirmed and expanded within my own cross-cultural evaluations.¹⁴ From that starting point, the first global maps of human behavior were composed.

From both the Murdock and Textor data sets, and also from several new data sets I assembled myself using both hand-drafting and computer methods, I made numerous individual world maps of various cultural characteristics: i.e., male and female genital mutilations, swaddling and infant cranial deformation, female virginity and post-partum sexual taboos, segregation of boys, the bride-price, male-favoring inheritance rules, patrilocal marriage customs and patrilineal descent, class stratification, castes and slavery, and belief in a "high god" whose Earthly representatives invoked divine authority. A separate *World Behavior Map* was also developed, from a composite of many different factors, as described below. All of these maps showed a very similar and profoundly striking geographical pattern. The mapped core-source regions for the various armored Patrist behaviors in my Table 1 were not randomly or uniformly distributed over the world map. In fact, a clear-cut global geographical pattern in human behavior was apparent from the very start of my work in this direction.

Before describing these maps, the time-line of the Murdock cultural data must be brought into discussion.

The data themselves were developed from the peer-reviewed published descriptions of aboriginal native cultures, as recorded from c. 1850 to 1950 (centered on c. 1900 CE) by hundreds of different anthropologists and ethnographers. Given the focus of these scholars on studying aboriginal native subsistence-level cultures, this approach tended to minimize the influences of European-derived and contemporary North and South American nation-state cultures. Those modern cultures appear in the database as only one of many hundreds of aboriginal native cultures, even though numerically by population they may be the largest groups. This approach thereby minimized their cultural expressions on my maps.¹⁴

In Oceania and Island Asia, the influence of European-derived culture was also diminished in the maps for similar reasons, though Mongol-Turk and Islamic influences from earlier centuries of invasion and conquest clearly do show up, such as across North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and within the Indonesian archipelago.

Murdock's database also excluded evaluation of contemporary homogenized European nation-states, relying for Europe instead upon published ethnographies of culturally isolated village societies that did not reflect the turbulent and bloody conditions that afflicted Europe during more recent centuries. The Americas therefore appear on the maps as relatively unarmored, Matristic and peaceful in character, though with a smaller percentage of extremely violent individual cultures.^{14, 15} This was the general condition in the pre-Columbian past, but certainly is not the condition today.

The maps therefore must be viewed in their historical context.

Figure 1 shows my composite **World Behavior Map**.¹⁴ The map reveals the most extremely armored Patristic and violent cultures, with the harshest treatments of infants and children and the most sex-repressive rules directed against women and the unmarried, dominant across the vast Old World desert regions encompassing North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. To more easily identify this large region of relatively similar armored-Patrist human behavior, which also is not accidentally the harshest and largest region of uninterrupted world desert, in the early 1980s I coined the term *Saharasia*. Notably, *the farther one travels away from Saharasia, as a generality, the more one finds softer and lesser armored, more Matrict cultures.*

The Saharasian Desert Belt and its Behavioral Consequences

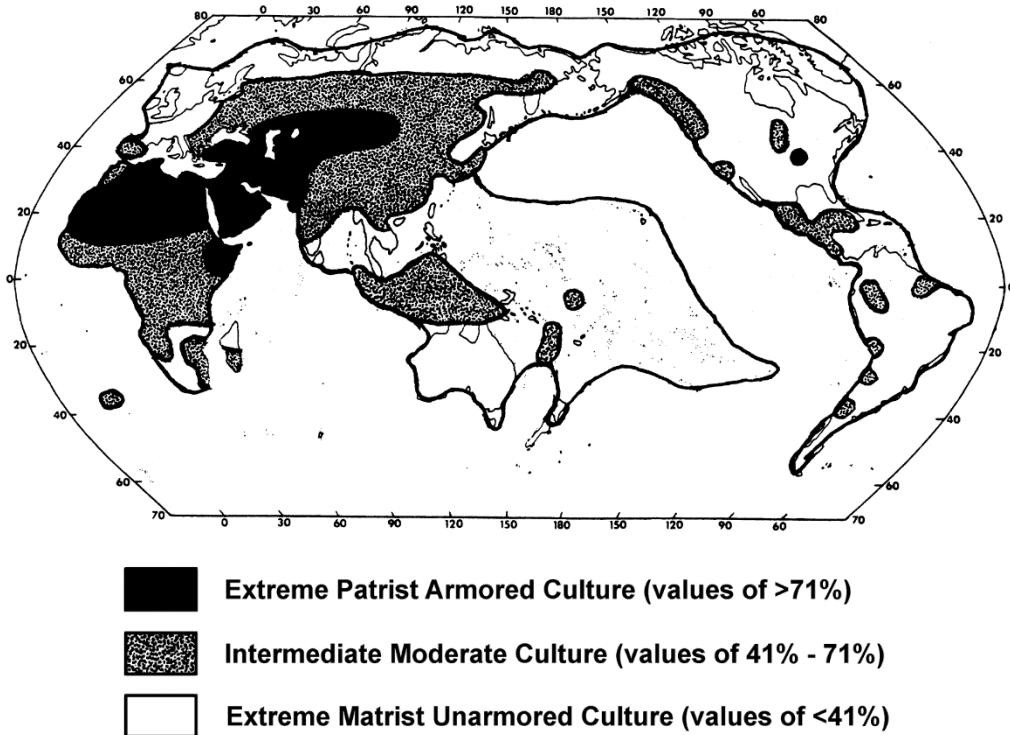


Figure 1. The World Behavior Map: For the period roughly between 1850 and 1950, as reconstructed from aboriginal cultural data given in Murdock's *Ethnographic Atlas*, with minimal historical interpretation.¹⁴

Why should this profound cultural pattern exist, and why should the behavior of people in harsh deserts be characterized by such violent Patristic social conditions? What is it so special about this Saharasian region? As mentioned, Saharasia is also the location of the world's largest and harshest desert region, what I have termed as the *Saharasian Desert Belt*,¹⁶ which extends nearly halfway around the planet. As previously determined in other global-environmental maps I prepared, Saharasia is the most extreme environment on the planet from climatological and biological viewpoints, with the world's largest regions of vegetation-barren and uninhabited space, the highest mean monthly maximum temperatures, the lowest precipitation quantities and the highest precipitation variability.¹⁶ Life in this large region is exceedingly difficult and often "hangs on by its fingernails."

Figure 2, the Budyko-Lettau climate map,^{16, 17} reveals the Saharasian Desert Belt most clearly, identifying the most severely harsh desert regions on the planet – and the Saharasian Desert Belt is defined as such. The overlapping spatial correlations between the harshest desert-climate landscapes in Figure 2, and the most extreme armored-patrist

human cultures in Figure 1, are immediately apparent. The geographical aspects of human behavior, as extracted from the cross-cultural data and revealed for the first time in my behavior maps, suggest something profound happening within the Saharasia region over the course of human history. Something happened to allow emotional armoring, Patristism and social violence to develop and take root within Saharasia, after which, we may postulate, it slowly spread outwards over the centuries.

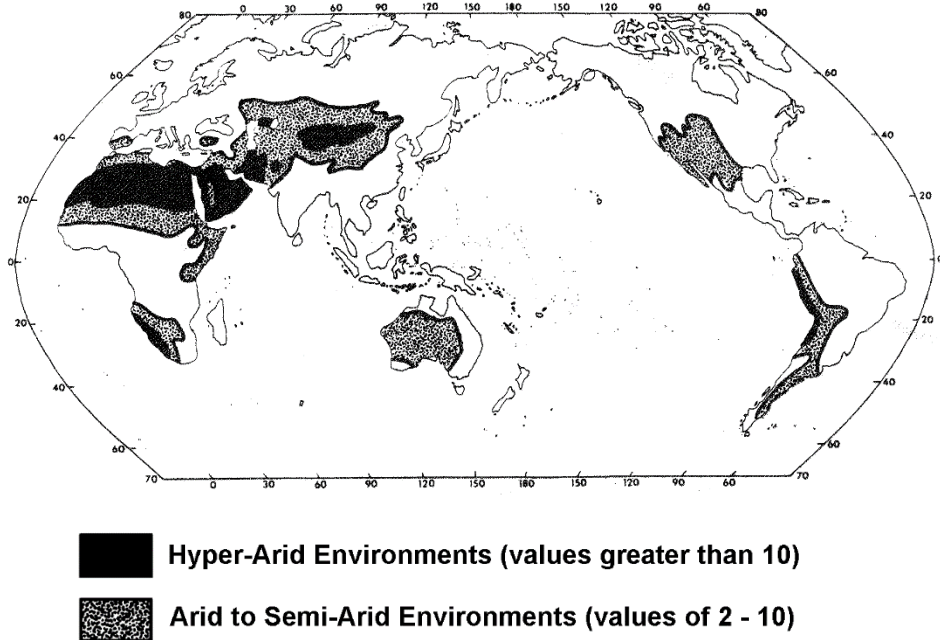


Figure 2. Budyko-Lettau Dryness Ratio: Contrasting the relative dryness of different arid lands around the world. Values reflect the ratio between precipitation and evaporative energy; values of 2 receive twice as much evaporative solar heat as moisture from precipitation, while values of 10 receive ten times as much.^{16, 17}

Several aspects of the mapped data support such an astonishing line of argument. Surrounding the core-source region of extreme Patristism, seen on the World Behavior Map in Figure 1, there exist regions of *intermediate* Patristism, which fully surrounds the central core of Saharasia proper. This intermediate zone of Patristism eventually gives way, with increasing distance from Saharasia, into world regions of a predominant unarmored Matrism, as found, generally speaking, across Oceania and the Americas. Southern Africa, Southern India, much of Island Asia (outside of Islamic regions) and the high Arctic regions – at even greater distances – generally escaped significant Patristic influences. Move farther away, into the Americas and, with notable exceptions, the regional evaluations are even more Matristically and peacefully inclined.

This profound geographical pattern suggests a major role for human migration and the diffusion of culture, and is supported by much, but not all, of accepted history and

archaeological findings on the subject. The mass-migrations of ancient Semitic and Indo-European languages out of Arabia and Central Asia into surrounding borderland regions is one such example of accepted theory which is mirrored in the World Behavior Map. The Kurgan/Battle-Axe peoples, Scythians, Huns, Mongol-Turks and Islamic Armies are other examples discussed in the historical sections of my publications.¹⁸ Patristic warrior nomad groups dominated Saharasia at different historical periods, irrupting outwards into the Saharasian borderlands to periodically invade and wreak havoc and destruction upon pre-existing peaceful Matristic cultures in the moister non-desert regions.

Those conquered lands were then converted into extreme Patristic or intermediate Matrist-Patrist cultures, by virtue of transplanted social institutions, generally through violent destruction of male populations and becoming dominant overlords of surviving women and children. Their culture and behavior was thereby passed on to the next generations, and so on from then on down to relatively recent times. We can get a very good view of this process, and its relationship to the overall Saharasian patterns, by looking at Figures 3 and 4, which presents the mapped expression of maximum occupied territory of two of the most recent expressions of such warrior-nomad groups bursting out from core Saharasian desert regions into surrounding territory. These are, respectively, those of the Arab/Islamic conquests after 640 CE,¹⁹ and the Turko-Mongol conquests after 540 CE.²⁰ Together, they dominate 100% of the Saharasian Desert Belt, plus a significant percent of the moister borderlands regions.

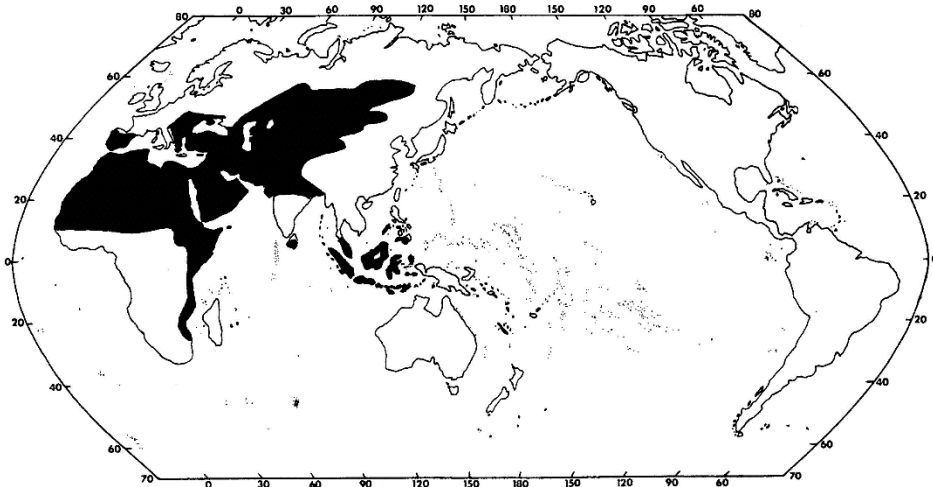


Figure 3. Areas Conquered by Arab/Islamic Armies Since 640 CE.¹⁹

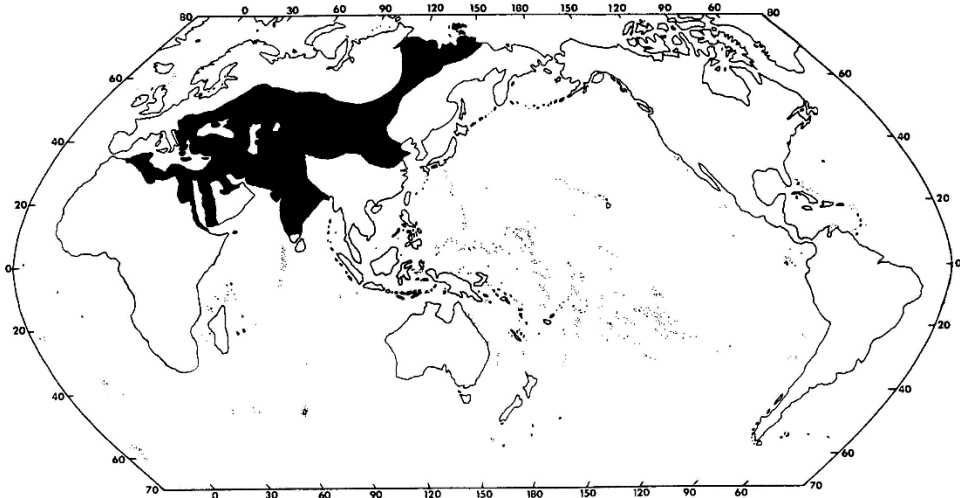


Figure 4. Areas Conquered by Turko-Mongol Armies Since 540 CE.²⁰

Figures 5 and 6 present a generalized first-approximation reconstruction of the migratory pathways out of which the earliest armored Patristic and socially violent cultures emerged, to diffuse and migrate around the world.²¹



Figure 5. Core Spreading Centers (1. Arabia, 2 Central Asia) for Origins of Armored Patristism Within Saharasia.²¹

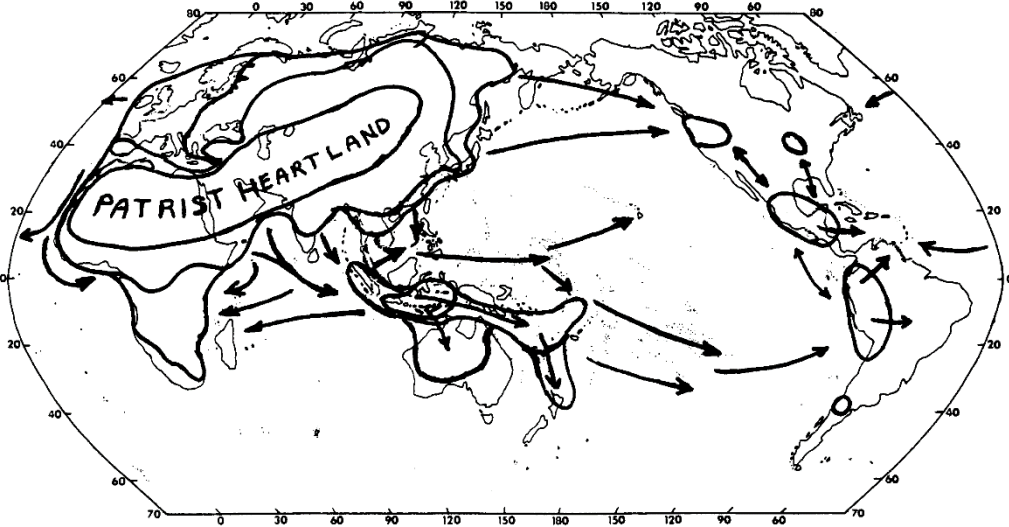


Figure 6. Diffusion of Armored Patristism from Saharasia to Other World Regions (a first approximation).²¹

As noted particularly in Figure 6, my behavior maps also imply a wide-ranging diffusion of Patristic culture suggestive of pre-Columbian contact theory, where armored Patristism was eventually carried into the Americas through trans-oceanic voyages originating from different parts of the Old World; there, seaworthy ships and navigation knowledge had been available since c.2000 BCE. The mapped patterns and archaeological data as discussed in my other publications suggest large regions lacking in significant prehistorical social violence, and this allows us to develop a new postulate, as follows: The original migrations into the Americas via Beringia starting some 15,000 years ago was fully Matristic and non-violent in character, composed of peaceful, cooperative groups.

Only later, after c.2000 BCE, did Patristism appear in the Americas, primarily along coastal regions (Pacific NW), in isolated clusters along navigable rivers (central Mississippi Valley), or in highland regions formerly associated with a coastal entry of extreme Patristic peoples (Inca and Mesoamerica regions). When Europeans later migrated to the Americas, for this reason they found a mix of both peaceful-Matristic and violent-Patristic Native American cultures. The idea of pre-Columbian contacts injects yet another controversy into the overall Saharasian theory, but this cannot be avoided. I have more fully addressed the issue elsewhere.^{15, 22}

Ancient Gardens Into Hyper-Arid Wastelands

The Saharasian discovery contains new insights, as well as controversy, from other viewpoints as well, notably as regarding the existence of an early peaceful period in human prehistory. We should not shy away from this question, as it helps us to understand why human violence is not equally distributed around the globe, and also

how the distorted modern expressions of violent and repressive human behavior could have gotten started in the first instance.

The Saharasia behavior maps suggest a core region of armored Patristic behavior, no differently than the temperature and precipitation data which defines the Saharasian desert proper. This fact has quite astonishing implications when we consider that *prior to c.4000 - 3000 BCE, Saharasia was not a desert*. Prior to c.4000 BCE, most of North Africa, Arabia and the Middle East, as well as the large deserts of Central Asia, were semi-forested grassland savannas, cut through with broad rivers and gigantic fresh-water lakes. They were thick with large browsing animals like elephant, rhino, horse and giraffe, with hippos and crocodiles and fish, as well as early human habitations engaged in hunting, fishing, animal herding and early agriculture. Bones of such large browsing animals are scattered across the open desert regions, and old long dried-up river valleys, remnant lakeshores and abandoned human settlements are found, sometimes covered over with layers of desert sand.

The early inhabitants of all these regions left behind rock paintings and carvings, as well as the remnants of their settlements. This gave us evidence of an early wet and lush environment where peaceful social conditions were the dominant rule, and warfare or social violence was the rare exception. After the drying up of Saharasia, human settlements are abandoned as the nomadic way of life predominates, rock art degenerates into scenes of warfare and chaotic graffiti, and only the long-dead bones of the large browsing and aquatic species can be found. I have elsewhere provided exceptional detail on these astonishing and immense climate and environmental changes, from wet and lush into bone-dry conditions, detailing a dramatic shift in climate starting around 4000-3500 BCE.¹⁸

I've also reviewed those isolated exceptions of very early social violence within slightly moister or even wet environments,²² such as found in Jericho, or in isolated European digs. Contrary to the many popularized claims that these exceptions are a "proof for very ancient violence", these archaeological sites frequently show only the most ambiguous kinds of evidence, or the pop-writers are not being careful in reporting where in the archaeological strata one sees the first appearance of violent behavior. An ancient settlement may show thousands of years of habitation without any signs of war weapons, crushed skulls or destruction layers, but then violence suddenly appears late in the habitation sequence, whereupon popular writers seize upon it to ignore evidence for a prehistorically peaceful period in favor of claims for "ancient violence".²²

While I cannot go into detail in this short article, my research has made it clear that such “exceptions” are associated with one of two basic factors:

- 1) The early violence developed during an early sub-phase of harsh drought or desert conditions, or
- 2) The violence existed among peoples who migrated out of such a harsh droughty-desert region.

Those examples are thereby exceptions which prove the rule that the original trigger for human violence connects back, by historical migrations, to some period of long-term exposure to a harsh, arid desert environment, with its attending famine and starvation conditions.

Let's consider the mechanisms at work, revealing how large desert wastelands could generate human violence. My review of archaeological evidence suggests human violence developed earliest within the larger Saharasian Desert Belt, at the same time its individual desert regions began to form. Later historical and anthropological/ethnographic evidence shows more widely distributed spatial cross-cultural correlations between persisting social violence and the harshest desert regions.

The most obvious and in fact correct mechanism is the link of famine and starvation attending increasingly severe droughts and desertification, as surely would have occurred during the formation of the Saharasian deserts. As I have shown elsewhere hard drought and desertification is the primary cause of famine, starvation and mass-migrations throughout history, and many specific examples have been recorded by careful observers and clinicians.

It is also known, that the death-dealing conditions of famine and mass-starvation trigger a severe damage to human social existence, where family bonds of love between men and women, and between mothers and babies, are destroyed utterly. Food-seeking and self-preservation take over all other concerns, and mass-migrations also ensue, from drier to wetter regions, triggering additional social tensions as groups firstly cluster around remnant water sources, and later conflict with neighboring regions where water and food still exists.²³

Starvation and long-term malnutrition also does severe damage to the human neural system, including to the brain, and particularly to the growing infant.²³ And from that we see an increase in the numbers of emotionally suffering and damaged people, with the ascent of strong-man leaders and a turn of hunting tools into war weapons. Violence and cruelty then increases, along with sexual sadism, disturbances in male-female and adult-child relationships, and all the rest which has too often become an integral, yet self-defeating part of most civilizations.

Such dramatic and deadly drought-famine conditions most surely afflicted prehistorical human tribes in Saharasia after c.4000 BCE, when the deserts began to dry up. And archaeology across Saharasia records dramatic destructions of the early peaceful, cooperative and pleasure-supporting societies which once lived and thrived there.

I would argue this transformation of climate and landscape most certainly would also have been directly observed and remembered by those early humans, of their garden-like environments converting over into harsh desert conditions.

This message appears in both myth and the holy books of many world religions, especially for the “great desert religions.” The dramatic climate changes from lush and well-watered grasslands, of “milk and honey” occupied by early hunter-gatherers and pastoral herders, were remembered in ancient myth, alongside the degeneration of that same landscape into harsh hyper-arid deserts of barrenness, famine and starvation. The early humans were literally “cast out of the garden”, and cut off from their own deeper loving and emotional roots. I have already given natural scientific and ancient historical discussion on these matters, including what modern biology has to say about the behavioral effects of famine and starvation.²³

Another more disturbing aspect is apparent in the behavior maps, however. While some degree of violence is today found in nearly every corner of the globe, it is not accidental that the current fountainhead of international terrorism and slave-like conditions for women is found predominantly within the modern desert regions of Saharasia, where patriarchal authoritarianism is also at its most extreme. The cultural expressions of the old Taliban regime in desert Afghanistan or of Wahhabist Saudi Arabia are perhaps the most “extreme Patrist” one could find on the entire planet. And wherever such people have dominated or migrated, carrying their desert-warrior social institutions and behaviors with them, similar high levels of social violence can be found, irrespective of climate.

Overall, my work on this question provides a clear and solid support for writers such as Samuel Huntington, who notably observed, with respect to the modern ideology of the Saharasian warrior nomads, that “Islam has bloody borders.”²⁴ This is more than merely a metaphor. It was anticipated and sadly proven out in my Saharasia maps from the early 1980s.

Portions of the patterns revealed on my Saharasia maps have been discussed in a more limited regional manner in the writings of scholars such as Maria Gimbutas²⁵ and Riane Eisler,²⁶ as I later discovered. Gimbutas in particular documented the migrations of early Kurgan and battle-axe peoples, who subsequently invaded and destroyed the more peaceful cultures in Europe. Griffiths²⁷ has more recently detailed the spreading of deserts, and widespread *garden myths* prevalent among cultures with roots in various desert regions, a topic I also discussed in my *Saharasia* book.¹ Modern paleoclimatology has also recently verified an abrupt decrease in North African rains

and vegetation at c.3500 BCE, triggering the onset of Sahara Desert conditions so fast as to prevent easy migration, and hence being very destructive to the fabric of early human societies.²⁸

My own findings on culture and climate were globally comprehensive, however, and made completely independently and earlier than all but Gimbutas. I also provided detail on the historical destruction of early peaceful cultures in sub-Saharan Africa, India, SE Asia, Europe and China, through invasions of conquest by warrior-nomad groups out of Saharasia.¹⁸ Appropriate discussion and maps have also been given in my other publications regarding violent Patristic regions of Oceania and the pre-Columbian Americas.¹⁵

It is a pattern that has repeated itself over the course of history, and unfortunately continues into modern times -- continued patriarchal authoritarianism and violence as seen at the foundations of too many modern nation-states. Civilization as we know it, while working to uplift humanity in both technology and spirit, has also acquired a self-destructive aspect during the ascent of humankind, a dark side which has worked to drag societies down after long periods of amazing growth and technological progress. We can now identify the roots of that self-destructive process, which is neither in our genes nor in our souls.

NOTES

¹ DeMeo, J.: *On the Origins and Diffusion of Patrism: The Saharasian Connection*. Dissertation. University of Kansas Geography Department, 1986.

DeMeo, J.: *Saharasia: The 4000 BCE Origins of Child Abuse, Sex-Repression Warfare and Social Violence, In the Deserts of the Old World*. Revised 2nd Edition, Natural Energy Works 2006. <http://www.saharasia.org>

² Human Resource Area Files, Yale University. <http://www.yale.edu/hraf/>

³ Murdock, George P.: *Ethnographic Atlas*, U. Pittsburgh Press, 1967.

⁴ *Ethnology*, issue #1 January 1962 through issue #6 April 1967, U. Pittsburgh. <http://www.pitt.edu/~ethnolog/>

⁵ Reich, Wilhelm: *Character Analysis*, Farrar Straus & Giroux, NY 1961, p.504-539. Also see DeMeo 2006, op.cit. p.44-45.

⁶ My *Saharasia* study provided world maps of such social institutions as:

Infant cranial deformation and swaddling - Male and female genital mutilations - Female premarital sex taboos - Segregation of adolescent boys - High bride price marriage - Marital residence near male kin - Unrestricted polygamy - Lengthy post-partum sex taboos - Patrilineal descent - Land inheritance favoring male kin - Movable property inheritance favoring male kin - Presence of a high god - Class stratification - Castes and Slavery - Contraceptive plants and herbs Status of women index - Contraceptive use - Political-Social freedoms - Press freedoms.

- ⁷ Reich, Wilhelm: *Die Sexualität im Kulturkampf (Sexuality in the Cultural Struggle)*, SexPol Verlag, Copenhagen 1936 (Republished in English as Part 1 of *The Sexual Revolution*, Farrar Straus & Giroux, NY 1962.)
- ⁸ Table 1, reprinted from DeMeo, *Sahasasia*, 2006, op.cit. p.5.
- ⁹ See the discussion on the controversy over the “Diffusion Maps of G. Smith (1915-1933) and E. Loeb (1923)”, in DeMeo *Sahasasia*, 2006, op.cit. p.370.
- ¹⁰ Textor, Robert: *A Cross Cultural Summary*, Human Relations Area Files Press, Yale University, New Haven, 1967.
- ¹¹ DeMeo, *Sahasasia*, 2006, op.cit. “Correlation Table of 63 Sex-Economic Factors”, p.418-421 & 68-69.
Out of a total of 3906 possible correlations, 520 correlations were observed (500 positive and 20 negative) -- 95% of all recorded correlations were therefore positive in character, only 5% being negative, fully supporting the sex-economic theory. A 50%/50% split between positive and negative correlations, with a greatly reduced absolute number of correlations, was forecast by chance alone. The correlations ranged from between $p < 0.10$ to $p < 0.001$ levels.
- ¹² Reich, Wilhelm: *The Sexual Revolution (1962)*, *Mass Psychology of Fascism (1970)*, *Function of the Orgasm (1973)*, *People in Trouble (1976)*, all republished by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, NY.
- ¹³ Prescott, James: “Body Pleasure and the Origins of Violence”, *Pulse of the Planet* 3:17-25 1991.
- ¹⁴ See DeMeo *Sahasasia*, 2006, op.cit. p.70-75, 106-108.
- ¹⁵ DeMeo, James: “Peaceful Versus Warlike Societies in Pre-Columbian America: What Does Archaeology and Anthropology Tell Us?”, in *Unlearning the Language of Conquest, Scholars Expose Anti-Indianism in America*, Four Arrows (Don Jacobs), Editor, Univ. Texas Press, 2006.
Also see: DeMeo *Sahasasia* 2006, op.cit. Part III Section 9: *Patrimism in Oceania and the New World*, p.369-386.
- ¹⁶ DeMeo *Sahasasia*, 2006, op.cit. see Chapter 4, *The Saharasian Desert Belt*, p.91-110.
- ¹⁷ Budyko, M.I.: *The Heat Balance of the Earth's Surface*, US Dept. of Commerce, Washington DC, 1958.
- ¹⁸ DeMeo *Sahasasia* 2006, op.cit. see Part III: *The Ancient Origins and Geographical Diffusion of Patrimism: Mapping the Archaeological and Historical Evidence*, p.205-486.
- ¹⁹ Arab/Islamic conquest map composed after Jordan, T. & L Rowntree, *The Human Mosaic*, Harper & Row, NY 1979, p.187.
- ²⁰ Turko-Mongol conquest map composed after Pitcher, D.E.: *An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1972, Map V.
- ²¹ DeMeo *Sahasasia* 2006, op.cit. p.10, 105, 382.
- ²² DeMeo, James: “Update on Saharasia: Ambiguities and Uncertainties in ‘War Before Civilization’,” *Pulse of the Planet*, 5:15-40, 2002.
- ²³ DeMeo *Sahasasia* 2006, op.cit. see section on “Physiological, Behavioral and Social effects of Prolonged Drought and Famine”, p.77-87.

- ²⁴ Huntington, Samuel P.: "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, p.35.
- ²⁵ Gimbutas, Marija: *The Kurgan Culture and the Indo-Europeanization of Europe: Selected Articles From 1952 to 1993 (Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph Series No. 18)*, M.R. Dexter & K. Jones-Bley, Editors, Institute for the Study of Man, 1997.
- ²⁶ Eisler, Riane: *The Chalice and the Blade*, Harper Collins, San Francisco, 1988.
- ²⁷ Griffiths, Brian: *The Gardens of their Dreams: Desertification and Culture in World History*, Zed Books, 2001.
- ²⁸ Demenocal, Peter, et al.: "Abrupt onset and termination of the African Humid Period: rapid climate responses to gradual insolation forcing," *Quaternary Science Reviews* 19:347-361, 2000.