


FIGURE A A Turkana girl milks a camel. Camel milk is a mainstay in arid Turkanaland because camels lactate throughout the year when other animals are dry. The girl's heavy bead necklace is a typical form of body decoration. (J. T. McCabe, 1989)

PASTORALISTS

*Equality, Hierarchy,
and the State*

PHILIP CARL SALZMAN

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P R E F A C E

Nothing is more educational, in the end, than the mode of being of other people.

IRIS MURDOCH
The Sandcastle (1957)

As an ethnographer, living among and describing the lives of people, I was drawn to independent and intrepid pastoralists—"a fierce and turbulent race of Republicans," as Sir Richard Burton called the Somali pastoralists (Lewis 1961)—by my admiration for their human qualities (Salzman 1995). As an anthropologist, obliged to go beyond description to explication and explanation in search of the profound forces underlying human life, I was drawn to the apparent transparency of pastoral life. It seemed evident that, among pastoralists, ecology was about livestock, politics was about pasture, and social organization was about solidarity. At least among pastoralists, I felt, we knew what was going on.

The seeming transparency of pastoral life was a bit of a trap and has, from time to time, caught us in unwarranted overconfidence and led us, occasionally, into oversimplification. It was easy to fall, to some degree, into errors of analysis in the treatment of pastoral peoples: essentialism, characterizing people's complex lives and culture by one feature; overgeneralization, asserting without evidence that all groups or cases are like the one examined; reductionism, oversimplifying by identifying one factor that accounts for all others; and literalism, naively taking at face value superficial appearances and the verbal statements of informants.

Such problems have arisen in treatments of the subjects of this work—equality, hierarchy, and the state in the lives of pastoral peoples.

The discussions in this volume are attempts to struggle with these difficulties and to find ways of avoiding, as much as possible, these errors. And because the difficulties and potential errors facing students of pastoral people are shared by specialists in nonpastoral peoples, these discussions may be relevant and, I hope, informative to a wide range of anthropologists.

Chapter 1, "Introduction: Pastoralism and Pastoral Societies," is a general overview of pastoral peoples and is intended particularly for readers who are not specialists in pastoralism. It presents an antiessentialist view of pastoralists, stressing the many diverse combinations of characteristics exhibited by different pastoral societies. Chapter 2, "Agency and Adaptation: Pastoralists of Iran," examines variation in ecology and organization among pastoralists in Iran, drawing some general lessons from these examples. Here we see striking variations in pastoral life from region to region and also the multiple influencing factors, the understanding of which leads away from reductionist emphases on single factors such as ecology or economics or cultural values. Chapter 3, "Equality and Anarchy: Segmentary Tribes," explores the presence of equality and egalitarianism in pastoral societies, criticizing particularly accounts that overgeneralize the presence of equality or inequality. Chapter 4, "Hierarchical Image and Reality: Tribal Chiefdoms," examines the interplay between consent and rule and between impression management and reality and argues that what people say is very important but that if we take what people say literally, we will not understand what is really going on in their lives. Chapter 5, "Accommodation and Resistance to the State: Peasant Pastoralists," directs attention to pastoralists who have fallen fully under the sway of a state apparatus and the dominant influence that such a political circumstance has on their lives. Chapter 6, "What Can We Learn from Pastoral Peoples About Equality, Freedom, and Democracy?" addresses our understandings of pastoral peoples with questions about important values of our own, in the hope of gaining insight into the underpinnings of these values. Finally, Chapter 7, "The Dynamics of Pastoral Worlds," revisits some of the themes raised in the preceding chapters and attempts a synthetic overview of pastoral peoples and their lives.

In this work, I have drawn heavily from my own ethnographic field research among pastoralists in Baluchistan (1968–1969, 1972–1973, 1976), Gujarat and Rajasthan (1985), and Corsica (1988) and Sardinia (1987, 1988, 1990–1992, 1994, 1995). I cannot say enough about the kindness with which I was received among these people, whom I count among my beloved friends and valued acquaintances. But I have been equally if not more dependent upon ethnographic accounts by other students of pastoral peoples; I have learned a great deal from them, and I am very grateful to their authors.

We anthropologists like to think of ourselves, rather unanthropologically, as lone adventurers exploring strange cultures, whether near or far, and as solitary scholars, creating knowledge through our individual efforts. The less romantic reality is that we as anthropologists are created, both practically and intellectually, by professional collectivities and educational and granting institutions, without which we would not exist. I have taught at McGill University for over thirty years, and McGill has supported my research in many ways, for which I am grateful. During my work at McGill, I have learned much from colleagues, and I thank them for sharing their insights and for encouraging my research. In addition to assistance received from McGill, fieldwork in Baluchistan was supported by the National Science Foundation and Canada Council; fieldwork in India by the International Development Research Centre of Canada; and fieldwork in Sardinia by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and various agencies, such as Fondazione Agnelli and the Finnish Academy of Sciences, that provided support for members of my research team, the Mediterranean Anthropological Research Equipe.

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I

INTRODUCTION

Pastoralism and Pastoral Societies

The raising of domesticated animals is a major activity in societies around the world (Galaty and Johnson 1990). People depend upon domesticated animals, or livestock, for (1) foodstuffs such as milk, butter, blood, and meat; (2) raw materials such as wool and hair for making cloth, bone and horn for making tools and weapons, and skin for making leather; (3) traction for pulling loads and plowing; (4) burden for transportation of loads; (5) riding for travel, warfare, and recreation; and (6) ritual activities, such as sacrifice.

Pastoralism is the raising of livestock on "natural" pasture unimproved by human intervention. The movement of animals on the open range in pastoralism is thus contrasted with the provision of cultivated fodder for livestock, which is often associated with the stabilization of animals in pens or sheds. In practice around the world, the use of open range and the use of fodder are combined in many ways, with various degrees of emphasis.

Domesticated animals that graze, eating mainly grass, such as sheep, cattle, and horses, and those that browse, such as goats, eating bushes and branches, can be raised on uncultivated, "natural" pasture. Domesticated or semidomesticated animals that are allowed to roam, such as pigs in highland New Guinea and the Mediterranean islands of Sardinia and Corsica, but that live on roots and seeds in forest areas and cannot be herded effectively are not usually considered pastoral. The herding

of the lichen-eating reindeer of the Saami in Northern Europe (Ingold 1980) has evolved from reindeer hunting and represents a distinctive pastoral pattern.

The pasturelands utilized by livestock breeders are natural in that the grasses and bushes are not planted or tended by people. But the very existence of the pasturelands is, in some regions, the result of human action. Just as forests were cleared to provide farmland, so, too, were forests purposely cleared to provide pasture for herds and flocks. In fact, the line between farmland and pastureland may shift cyclically, as in the case of rotation systems in which part of a territory is cultivated for a period and left as pasture for a period, then returned to cultivation. Deforestation by fire, whether accidental or purposeful, or by lumbering and the exhaustion of land for agricultural purposes can provide new pasturelands for raising livestock. Many pastoral landscapes, then, are not truly natural in that they have often been shaped by human activity and also been maintained, disallowing the growth of secondary forest, through the regular grazing and browsing of flocks and herds and through burning by shepherds.

The exploitation of such natural pasture for the raising of livestock is one way that people actively adapt to their environment, adjusting to its circumstances and manipulating its potentialities. Just as all environments are local and specific, so, too, are pastoralism's many forms particular to local conditions. For example, one obvious difference among the pastoralisms practiced around the world is the type of animal raised: sheep, goats, cattle, horses, camels, buffalo, yaks, llama, and/or alpaca (Galaty and Johnson 1990; Barfield 1993). But within one of these animal species, there are always specific subspecies adapted to particular conditions, such as the slim dromedary camel of the hot deserts of Arabia and the heavy, woolly Bactrian camel of the cold deserts of Central Asia. The selection by breeders of animal traits desirable in particular contexts and in light of specific objectives leads to many varieties of livestock, such as the small, coarse-wool, good milking sheep of Sardinia, where cheese making is the main focus (Angioni 1989), and the large, fine-wool sheep of Australia, where wool production is the specialty.

In designing, refining, and maintaining a pastoral adaptation, pastoralists must consider many aspects of their environment: climate,

such as temperatures and rainfall; topography, such as the layout of deserts, rivers, mountains, and valleys; flora, such as the pasturage to support the livestock, as well as plants that are harmful to the animals; animal and human demography, such as the presence and density of people and livestock; and disease sources. The pastoralists try to identify for their particular environment the optimal combination of location and timing to maximize benefit for the animals—high quality and quantity of pasture, good water, and favorable temperatures—and minimize detrimental influences—extreme temperatures, lack of water or pasture, exposure to disease, and vulnerability to human or animal predators.

Pastoralism and Nomadism

Livestock, unlike agricultural land, water sources, orchards, and mineral sources, is mobile because the animals can, of course, move. Pastoralism—the use of an extensive resource, the natural pasture, spread over the terrain—requires that the animals move from where there is no pasturage or no more pasturage to where there is pasturage to be exploited. The movement of flocks and herds in response to pasture needs and also to other factors such as water, temperature, disease, and predators often involves considerable distances, as between valleys and mountains or through deserts.

Livestock needs supervision to provide guidance and protection and labor to extract products. Milking animals, for example, must be tended once or twice daily. There are two basic pastoral strategies for overseeing livestock. The first is permanent stability of the main residential group, with specified individuals going away with the livestock and living away from the main residence. For example, the Karimojong of East Africa (Dyson-Hudson 1966) live in semipermanent settlements along the rivers, where they practice horticulture, but young men are sent to herd the animals between far-flung cattle camps. In the Mediterranean islands of Sardinia (Angioni 1989) and Corsica (Ravis-Giordani 1983), shepherds would leave their families in permanent towns to live much of the year in sheep stations located in winter lowlands or summer highlands (although by the 1970s, most had cars and returned home frequently if not daily). In ranching, too, people have a



FIGURE 1.1 Turkana herding. The Turkana herd owner, Angorot, directs his flock of sheep and goats back to camp. He has separate herds of camels, cattle, and donkeys. (J. T. McCabe, 1996)

stable residence, with certain individuals going out on a regular basis to the flocks and herds.

The other strategy is the coordinated movement of both the residential group and the flock or herd; this is the nomadic strategy (Barfield 1993). Portable dwellings, such as tents or yurts, are loaded onto baggage animals, and the community migrates in order to be in the same general vicinity as the herds or flocks, allowing a return of the livestock to the residential area on a daily basis for milking or security. Desert nomads, such as the Bedouin of Cyrenaica in Libya (Evans-Pritchard 1949; Peters 1990), migrate seasonally from summer locations closer to water sources to winter locations in the desert, and they migrate around in the desert in search of pasture. Mountain nomads, such as the Lur, Bakhtiari (Garthwaite 1983a, 1983b), Qashqa'i (Beck 1991), and Basseri (Barth 1961) tribes of the Zagros Mountains in western Iran, need months to migrate hundreds of miles over mountains from winter lowland pastures to summer highland pastures.

Some pastoral groups fall between settled communities and nomadic camps. The yurt-dwelling Turkmen of northeast Iran (Irons 1974, 1975) rarely moved, since no pastoral motive in the rich Gorgon Plain required it. In times past, the Turkmen maintained their mobility as a defensive measure, to escape from military retaliation by the Persian (Iranian) government in response to Turkmen raids on Persian caravans and villages. Turkmen nomadism was thus politically, rather than economically, motivated. The Maasai of East Africa (Spear and Waller 1993), also residing in environmentally rich areas, have no pastoral reason for changing their residence seasonally or yearly, but they may relocate for ritual reasons.

Pastoralism can thus be found associated with permanent, stable communities; elsewhere, however, it is associated with fully nomadic communities. Each is an adaptation to a particular environment, approached through the culture of the specific community. Moreover, each pattern has its consequences (Salzman 1999). For example, where pastoralists are often away from a community residence, a sharp division of subcultures develops between men and women or between younger



FIGURE 1.2 Turkmen shepherds. Yomut Turkmen shepherds supervise their flocks. (Wm. Irons, 1967)

and older people. This can lead to the relative independence of each group, but it may also foster conflicts between them. Among nomads, where family and community members travel and live together, there is more commonality and closer integration but less independence.

Pastoralists and Pastoral Societies

Widespread in the world and throughout history, we find societies that have been characterized as pastoral because of a strong specialization in livestock breeding. Among such peoples are the native Andean herders of llama and alpaca in the high mountains of Bolivia and Peru in South America (Browman 1990; Orlove 1977, 1981), the Fulani cattle breeders of the West African savanna (Stenning 1959; Dupire 1970; Riesman 1977), the Tuareg camel pastoralists of the Sahara Desert (Bernus 1981, 1990; Nicolaisen 1963), the Maasai cattle herders of East Africa (Spencer 1965; Spear and Waller 1993), and the camel-raising Somalis of the Horn of Africa (Lewis 1961). European pastoralism includes the Saami reindeer herders of Northern Europe (Ingold 1980; Beach 1990; Paine 1994), the cattle breeders of mountainous Europe (Kavanagh 1994), and the sheep herders in the Mediterranean (Angioni 1989; Ravis-Giordani 1983; Salzman 1999; Schweizer 1988). In Asia are found the Bedouin of the Arabian and neighboring deserts (Lancaster and Lancaster 1990; Lancaster 1997; Shoup 1990; Abu-Rabia 1994; Chatty 1996), some Bedouin tribes specializing in camels and others in sheep, the sheep-herding mountain tribes of the Zagros range in Iran (Barth 1961; Beck 1986, 1991; Garthwaite 1983a), the horse-breeders of Central Asia, and the yak herders of highland Tibet (Ekvall 1968).

However, when we look closely at any particular society, it is obvious that a characterization such as "camel-herding pastoralists" is an oversimplification in various respects. First, in most societies in which pastoralism is important, more than one animal species is raised. In Africa, for example, the raising of large stock, such as camels or cattle, is usually combined with the raising of small stock, such as sheep and goats. This broader productive generalization of several species rather than the narrow specialization in one species provides a number of benefits, including a wider range of products (such as wool and hair as well as skins) and flexibility in off-taking, or "cashing in," for small stock can be



FIGURE 1.3 A Saami herder, accompanied by his herding dog, prepares to move to new pasture. (Robert Paine, 1962)

used to cover small expenses or minor hospitality (Dahl and Hjort 1976). More important, raising several species provides security because a major misfortune, such as disease, drought, or depredation, that badly hits one species would most likely spare the other species, leaving the people themselves with a basis for survival. The less prestigious small stock, through their rapid reproduction rates, reconstitute much more quickly than the slow-reproducing large stock, thus providing a successful stopgap during the slow rebuilding of large stock herds (Clark 1985). Multispecies pastoralism is thus a major strategy in adapting to the environment.

Second, labels such as "camel-herding pastoralists" are misleading because they imply that pastoralism is the sole or at least the most important economic activity. In fact, most people heavily engaged in pastoralism are equally involved in other kinds of production (Salzman



FIGURE 1.4 A Saami reindeer herd migrates. The Saami (and the photographer) travel by sleds powered by male reindeer. (Robert Paine, 1962)

1971, 2000a). The Tuareg of the Sahara (Bernus 1981, 1990) did not only raise livestock but, prior to the modern state, were also deeply involved with protecting caravans, trading, and raiding. They actively collected wild foodstuffs and had shares in agricultural crops, even if they did not cultivate themselves. The Karimojong of East Africa (Dyson-Hudson 1966) continuously engage in horticulture along with pastoralism. The Nuer of the southern Sudan (Evans-Pritchard 1940a) not only engage in cattle breeding but also stress pastoralism in their ritual and symbolic life. But they live as much from millet cultivation and fishing as they do from their cattle, so people's self-characterizations, too, should not always be taken literally. The Baluch on the Iran-Pakistan border (Salzman 1999, 2000a) like to identify themselves as herders and livestock owners, but they rely heavily upon a wide range of activities, in-

cluding date palm cultivation, grain horticulture, hunting and gathering, and predatory raiding (which was replaced by migrant labor in the middle of the twentieth century) (Salzman 1994). Therefore, a major commitment to pastoralism is commonly paralleled by engagement in other productive activities, as most "pastoral societies" in reality have multi-resource or mixed economies. Once again, this productive generalization provides adaptive security for the people by allowing a shortfall in any productive sector to be made up for by production in other sectors.

Third, although pastoralism may be very important in a community or society, that does not mean that everyone or every family is primarily engaged in pastoralism. Many East African tribes and peoples, such as the Pokot of Kenya (Edgerton 1971) and the Sebei of Uganda (Goldschmidt 1976), have sections specializing in pastoralism and other sections specializing in cultivation. In Mediterranean Europe (Braudel 1972; Manconi 1983), communities were often divided between families engaged in pastoralism and those engaged in grain agriculture, with many families in both groups also having gardens, orchards, and vines (Edelsward 1995; Assmuth 1997).

Pastoralism may be extremely important in a community or society, but it would be misleading to reduce the nature of that society to pastoralism. Similarly, there are many agricultural and even industrial societies in which pastoralism is very important. Cattle herding in the American West and the pampas of Argentina is integral to the economies and diets of those countries, and India, which has the largest population of cattle in the world, most of it nourished on so-called natural pasture, depends upon cattle for dairy products, fertilizer, and traction for plowing (Harris 1966; George 1990).

Pastoral Economics

The fitting together of pastoralism with other forms of production is a practical issue, for people must reconcile the many conflicting labor and cost requirements. For example, areas of cultivation are often separate or distant from pastures for the livestock. To satisfy the labor requirements of each, some kind of arrangement must be made. Among the Karimojong (Dyson-Hudson 1966), a sexual division of labor, in which the women specialize in cultivation and the men specialize in herding livestock, solves the problem.

But a multiresource economy also has benefits, for the resources of each productive sector can be used to support other forms of production. In Baluchistan (Salzman 1971, 2000a), for example, date pits and date fronds are used to support the pastoral sector: Processed date pits provide fodder for lambs and kids, and ropes made from woven palm frond leaves are used as tent ropes and pack ropes on animals. And the pack camels carry the dates to winter settlement areas.

The pastoral sector has characteristics (see Chapter 5) distinct from other primary production sectors, such as cultivation. Most important, perhaps, is the capacity of the "capital resource," livestock, to expand through sexual reproduction. In contrast, land and water resources, the main "capital" of cultivation, do not expand. The nature of "animal capital" is reflected in the husbandry choices of livestock owners and the common pattern of off-taking most male and nonproductive female animals for slaughter, leaving herds and flocks consisting primarily of fertile females. It is also reflected in the diets of pastoral peoples, commonly some kind of bread or porridge supplemented with renewable animal products such as milk, butter, or blood (taken without harm from live animals). Animals are slaughtered mainly on ritual occasions, so meat is eaten only occasionally.

Other forms of pastoral capital resources are pasture and water, and their availability is a central concern. In many preindustrial settings, pastureland and natural water sources are communally held, so community members have free access. This is true for most tribal territories, and until the eighteenth century, it was true for many peasant pastoralists. Even today, there are communities in Mediterranean Europe, such as Sardinia, with large commonlands. Open access to pasturelands is particularly an advantage where rainfall and thus pasture are spatially and temporally variable because a delimited area such as might be owned by a family could have rainfall and pasture one year and none the next, thus putting the animals and the family livelihood at risk.

Pastoral production has different economic goals in different societies. In some, it is oriented primarily toward satisfying the subsistence needs of the producers; in others, it is directed toward market exchange. East African pastoralism (Sperling and Galaty 1990) was traditionally oriented toward the subsistence of the producers, whereas livestock from West African pastoralism (Cohen 1969; Grayzel 1990) provided meat for

cities and leather for export. In Baluchistan (Salzman 2000a), pastoral products are mostly consumed by producers, but the Bedouin of Arabia (Lancaster and Lancaster 1990; Lancaster 1997) raised camels to provide merchants with the burden animals for Middle Eastern caravans.

In general, subsistence producers have multiresource economies with a wide range of productive sectors, so as to provide for the diverse products necessary to fill their total needs. In contrast, a strong market orientation, such as that among the Basseri (Barth 1961), allows productive specialization, with most work going into one specific product, sheep, because most other needs—for foodstuffs, raw materials, processed supplies, and manufactured products—can be satisfied through market exchange using the proceeds of product sales. Thus, highly specialized pastoral producers are not "pure" or isolated exotics, however colorful their desert or mountain setting may be, but are hard-headed economists keeping a close eye on the market and orienting production to market conditions (Bradburd 1994; Lancaster 1997).

Pastoralists who succeed in building their herds and accumulating many hundreds or thousands of animals may, because of its vulnerable nature, convert this capital to a more secure form, such as political support or land. Tribal subsistence producers, such as the Karimojong (Dyson-Hudson 1966), if successful in raiding or production, distribute livestock that they do not need to potential supporters, turning them into "cattle kin," that is, people who have kinshiplike obligations because of the cattle they have received. In contrast, successful Basseri pastoralists (Barth 1961) have sold their flocks and purchased land in villages, becoming settled landlords. Unsuccessful Basseri pastoralists must draw on their animal capital for subsistence, thus entering a downward spiral that ends with the loss of their flocks and settlement in a village as agricultural laborers. In many other pastoral societies, such as that of the Turkmen (Irons 1975), failing pastoralists will receive assistance, even animals, from kin, and efforts will be made to keep the family within the group.

Pastoral Social Organization

Tribal pastoralists live as members of a political unit that provides protection through collective responsibility, with each individual obliged to



FIGURE 1.5 Maasai youth of the *moran* warrior age-group guard cattle against predators in the Ngorongoro, Tanzania. Lions and cheetahs are their main worry, followed by raiders and rustlers. (J. T. McCabe, 1996)

support the others. For the individual pastoralist, the tribe is the maximal political entity to which he or she has loyalty and within which the rule of law—customary law—applies. Pastoral tribes are based upon lineages (as with the Somali [Lewis 1961]), age-grades (the Maasai [Spear and Waller 1993]), recognition of a common chief (the Basseri [Barth 1961]), or some combination of these. Whatever the basis, the tribe consists of sections and subsections that are bound together by the overarching tribal framework. The subsections generally try to provide welfare functions to members in need. Members of tribes often but not always (Barth 1961) have a common language and tradition. And tribes usually control a territory or claim rights over a territory.

Peasant pastoralists (see Chapter 5) live as part of a complex society governed by state institutions, such as a political hierarchy and a specialized military force. Peasants are obliged to give up some resources and products in the form of taxes and to submit to state-imposed laws

and regulations. The state attempts to monopolize the right to organize and to apply physical coercion, denying these initiatives to their subjects. Like all peasants, peasant pastoralists, among them the Corsicans under the French and the Sardinians under the Spanish and Italians, are pressed at the bottom of vertical class and power structures and are discouraged from establishing horizontal political alliances or economic exchange relationships with other peasants of their community or region, leaving them fragmented socially.

One major organizational problem of tribal pastoralists is the need to reconcile the rigid, overarching tribal structure, so important for political security, with the necessity of great flexibility at the local level, so critical for responding effectively to the rapid environmental variations characteristic of many pastoral landscapes. This is sometimes done by basing tribal organization on one principle and local organization on another. Among the Baluch (Salzman 1992, 1999, 2000a), the tribal organization is based upon lineages, the local organization upon annual co-herding contracts. By such means, local groups can split or combine without larger political implications.

One major organizational problem for peasant pastoralists is the absence of horizontal ties among herders within and between communities. Formal alliances and organizations are threatening to state authorities and therefore are outlawed or discouraged. So peasant pastoralists build informal, horizontal networks of “friends,” bridging the gap to some extent. The rural mafia of Sicily (Blok 1974) was based upon informal alliances of friends, prominent among them shepherds. Peasant pastoralists, mobile as they are in large territories, often try to elude the pressures of state authorities. Sometimes, peasant pastoralists reserve for themselves the right to apply coercive force, and some end up as outlaws or bandits in the eyes of the state authorities (Salzman 1999).

Among subsistence-oriented pastoralists, most notably among the pastoral tribes of East Africa, livestock exchange is used to establish relationships between individuals. When the Karimojong (Dyson-Hudson 1966) refer to “cattle kin,” they do not mean the bloodlines of cattle but the kinlike relationships, with mutual obligations implied, established among men by the loan of cattle. Here, cattle are invested not in economic wealth but in social wealth, including both social ties and social standing.

Pastoral Politics and Personality

Pastoralists have valuable capital, most notably livestock and territory, to protect against human and animal predators. Livestock is particularly vulnerable because it is mobile and can be led away into the possession of other people. The groups and alliances that pastoralists organize to protect against predation by other people can be best understood as political organization. The tribe is one form of political organization, institutionalizing solidarity and common defense among its members. Peasant pastoralists must rely upon codes of vengeance, information from informal networks of friends, and self-help or individual retribution (Salzman 1999).

Between tribes and between peasant villages, livestock raiding and the rustling of animals and entire herds are common occurrences (Dyson-Hudson 1966; Caltagirone 1989; Moss 1979). The first successful raid serves as the rite of passage for young pastoralists in many tribal and peasant pastoral societies. Moreover, raiding is often a reciprocal contest of attack and defense between neighboring tribes or villages.

Pastoral tribes also have relations with states (Khazanov 1994), but usually, they are distant and adversarial ones because the political independence of the tribe is seen as intolerable competition for the state. Located on the outer margins of state influence, tribes of Turkmen (Irons 1975), Baluch (Salzman 1994), and Bedouin (Lancaster 1997) often have the capacity to exploit caravan routes and settled peasant populations through protection rackets, extortion, and violent predation.

Internally, independent pastoral tribes tend to be politically egalitarian (see Chapters 3 and 4) because mobile tribal warriors are not prone to accept oppression. The position of peasant pastoralists is more variable (see Chapter 5; Wolf 1955), depending upon the larger agrarian regime.

The personality of pastoralists (Edgerton 1971) tends to be open, expressive, prone to direct action in attacking enemies, and quick to forget grudges; settled agriculturalists, by contrast, are more closed, inexpressive, prone to indirect action (such as vandalism and gossip) in attacking enemies, and slow to forget grudges. Pastoralists, who live in shifting and changing camp groups, can separate from enemies and avoid social tensions (Salzman 1999, 2000a) and can move around to benefit them-

selves and their herds. But settled agriculturalists are tied to their land and the other members of their community. In Africa, the tensions among agriculturalists often lead to witchcraft accusations, but this is not seen among pastoralists, who, even when they hold the same beliefs about witches, do not feel under attack by unseen, malevolent forces generated by their neighbors (Baxter 1972).

Challenges to Pastoralism

Mobile pastoralists in general and tribal pastoralists in particular are viewed by the state as likely outlaws or even rebels. Mobility in large, open ranges takes pastoralists at least somewhat beyond the control of state authorities. States always prefer to settle pastoralists so that they can be better controlled. Such settlement, of course, is often not compatible with continued pastoralism.

Commonlands, collectively held, have not been popular in those societies with capitalist leanings. Productivity and enterprise are believed to come from private property. Many government reforms have broken up commons, often leaving pastoralists without access to viable pastures. In recent decades, Maasai land in Kenya (Galaty 1980, 1992) has been divided into group ranches, resulting in unviable pasture units, the sale of membership rights, and the exclusion of upcoming generations from access to pasture; in addition, it has fostered the accumulation of land by a few and an increasing economic differentiation.

Population increase presses every scrap of land into agricultural use, so pastureland is appropriated and pastoralists are displaced. The Reika pastoral caste of Rajasthan (Salzman 1986), the northwest desert province of India, used to herd their sheep near their villages and did not move very far away or stay away. Now, the agriculture expansion into marginal lands has taken so much pastureland and water that the Reika have to engage in long-distance migrations, some into Uttar Pradesh, just to find enough pasture and water to keep their animals alive. In this process of "nomadization," the Reika are often away nine months of the year, and if the rainfall is not good in Rajasthan, they may remain away from their villages for another full year.

The "modern" culture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has valued urban rather than rural life, education rather than experience,

refinement rather than natural qualities, consumption rather than production, national rather than local identity, and leisure rather than labor. In the modernist vision, spread effectively and widely through schools and the mass media (Salzman 1996), rural producers, such as pastoralists out on the range with their animals, are deemed marginal and backward. With the cultural value of pastoralism so denigrated, young people are discouraged from taking it up (Murru Corrigan 1990; Edelsward 1996; MacDougall 1992), and without recruitment, pastoralism dies.

2

AGENCY AND ADAPTATION

Pastoralists of Iran

The word *nomad* in its various forms derives, via Latin, from a Greek term meaning "to pasture"; thus, etymologically, it has the same meaning as *pastoralism*, which derives from Latin and refers to raising livestock on pasture (according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* [OED]). Consequently, the first meaning attributed to *nomad* in the OED, documented by quotes beginning in 1587, is "a person belonging to a race or tribe which moves from place to place to find pasture; hence, one who lives a roaming or wandering life."

However, many anthropologists (for example, Salzman 1971; Barfield 1993: 4; cp. Khazanov 1994: 15–16) have, over the past decades, found it convenient to disaggregate analytically the two main elements of the term *nomad*: (1) raising livestock on natural pasture, and (2) moving from place to place. The current convention is to use *pastoralism* to refer to the raising of livestock on nature pasture and *nomadism* to refer to moving from place to place (Galaty and Johnson 1990; Fabietti and Salzman 1996).

By means of this convention, a population's type(s) of production, on the one hand, and spatial mobility, on the other hand, are logically distinguished, so that the various relationships of production and mobility can be studied and related empirically and ethnographically. In this way, an a priori, definitional conflation of production and mobility is avoided and observation of their relationships among various peoples in

the world is facilitated. This, in turn, makes possible empirical generalization, that is, the abstracting of common, observable patterns of production and mobility; it also makes possible theoretical generalization, that is, the relating of variables of production and mobility in a systematic fashion.

Now let us define *nomadism*, or *nomadic movement*, a little more precisely. What is implied in "a roaming or wandering life," as the *OED* put it, is more than wandering from the bar to the piazza and to the cantina; what is implied is the movement of the home and the household or, put another way, the spatial displacement of the home base and living establishment. Even more, the reference in the *OED* definition to "a race or tribe" (admittedly outmoded terminology) clearly points to nomadism as, in some sense, a collective activity, participated in by a community larger than the individual household. Finally, nomadism refers not to the rare or occasional displacement of people from one location to another, as in moving to a new house or migrating to a new community or country; rather, it refers to the regular, repeated, and frequent displacement of household and home base and community.

To recapitulate, I would define *nomadism* as the regular and frequent movement of the home base and household. An empirical index of this is the nature of physical structures for shelter, which among nomads are either portable, such as the tent, or temporary, such as the lean-to or the hut made with disposable, local materials.

The first empirical association that we find with nomadism is productive activity in general, for, almost always, nomadic populations are nomadic in the course of making a living. Nomadism is thus usually tied to a productive round of activities. There are many examples of different kinds of productive activities pursued nomadically, such as—to use the crude and conventional categories (about which, more later)—nomadic hunters and gatherers (Lee and DeVore 1968; Kelly 1995), nomadic traders and service providers (Clébert 1967; Fraser 1992; Gmelch 1977; Misra 1977; Rao 1987), and nomadic pastoralists (Galaty and Johnson 1990; Barfield 1993; Fabietti and Salzman 1996).

But not all populations engaging in these kinds of activities are nomadic; there are also nonnomadic populations that pursue these activities from stable, permanent bases: sedentary hunters and gatherers (Drucker 1965; Kelly 1995: 148–152), sedentary traders and retailers

(Thaiss 1973; Berland 1982), and sedentary pastoralists (Angioni 1989; Bennett 1969: chap. 6; Ingold 1980: chap. 4; Meloni 1984; Murru Corriga 1990; Ravis-Giordani 1983; Salzman 1980). Thus, a basic question, to which I will return later, is this: Under what circumstances are productive activities pursued nomadically?

I shall begin this exploration of nomadism by narrowing the field of study to pastoral nomads and by turning to ethnographic case studies that will serve to complicate a simple vision of nomadism through illustrating variations in many important dimensions.

Pastoral Nomads of Iran

Let us briefly review four ethnographically well-documented cases of nomadic pastoralists in Iran (Persia): first, the Baluch in southeastern Iran; second, the Komachi in southern Iran; third, the Basseri of southwestern Iran and other tribes of the Zagros Mountains; and fourth, the Turkmen of northeastern Iran. In the course of this review, I will draw out various general observations about nomadism.

The Baluch of the Sarhad

Baluchistan is split between southeastern Iran, western Pakistan, and southwestern Afghanistan. Iranian Baluchistan is both a distant frontier region and an ethnically distinct tribal area. It is about as far as one can be from Tehran, the national capital, without leaving Iran, and it is far from major Persian cities, such as Isfahan, Mashed, and Shiraz, and separated from them and even the nearest city, Kerman, by the great central desert. The inhabitants are ethnically Baluch, (most) speaking the Baluchi language (a western Iranian language closely related to Kurdish) and (most) following Sunni Islam rather than the Shi'a Islam of the Persians. There are no indigenous cities in Iranian Baluchistan, the population being divided into tent-dwelling nomads (*baluch*) and oasis-dwelling cultivators (*shahri*), sometimes ruled by a small elite (*hakum*). The following description is based on my fieldwork observations during the period 1968 to 1976.

The Baluchi tribes (such as the Yarahmadzai, Gamshadzai, and Ismailzai) of the high plains (altitude 5,500 feet), the Sarhad, surrounding the volcano Daptan (in Persian *Kuh-i Taftan*), lived in camping groups

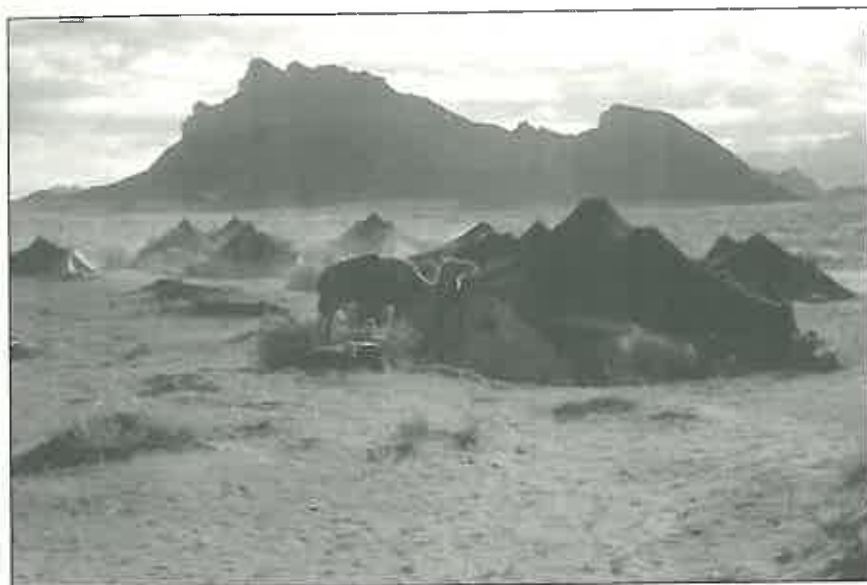


FIGURE 2.1 The Yarahmadzai Baluch camping group led by Jafar Dadolzai and shared mainly by other Dadolzai usually consists of about a dozen tents. In early evening, the smoke from fires used for preparing dinner curls around the goat-hair tents. A pregnant camel comes to the tent of her owner for supplementary feed. (P. C. Salzman, 1968)

of black goat-hair tents year-round and migrated from place to place throughout the year pursuing their productive activities (Salzman 2000a). These tribesmen and tribeswomen were not venturing to unknown places but were moving to known and named places within their large tribal territories. But they had no set migration cycle or route, for the availability of resources was unpredictable.

The Sarhadi Baluch were engaged in a variety of productive activities, including raising sheep, goats, and camels; cultivating grain and some vegetables and fruits; and husbanding date palms (Salzman 1971, 2000a). In the past, until 1935, they regularly raided villages and caravans outside Baluchistan; more recently, beginning in the 1940s, they temporarily left the tribal territory for trading or migrant labor (Salzman 1994). These Baluch needed to supply their sheep, goats, and

camels with the pasturage suitable for each species, as well as water for the animals and themselves. Though they were drawn to areas with these needed resources, they tried to avoid disease by staying away from areas with sick animals. Pursuing these goals, they nonetheless needed to remain within traveling distance of any cultivation requiring attention.

In general during the 1960s and 1970s, Baluchi herding camps remained stable during the late fall and winter; pasture was poor everywhere at that time of the year, and many men were working away from the tribal territory. Migrations began in the spring, when new grass and shrubs turned the desert green. Juggling the need for different kinds of pasturage, for water, for uncrowded areas, and for access to agricultural resources, as well as the different production and activity profiles of the households in each camp, camp members continually gathered information, deliberated, and debated when and where to migrate. Decisions



FIGURE 2.2 The Dadolzai herding camp migrates to a new residential location. Adults typically walk, sometimes carrying kids, lambs, and even baby camels, while young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and the ill are carried by camel. (P. C. Salzman, 1968)

were difficult, but throughout the spring, herding camps migrated, usually between a half dozen and a dozen times—first in one direction, then in another, one time a short distance (1 mile), another a longer distance (40 miles).

In high summer, when the grass had withered, the tribesmen made their annual great migration (120 miles) through the Morpish Mountains and down off the Sarhad plateau to the Mashkel drainage basin (altitude 1,500 feet). They left their flocks in the hands of a few shepherds back on the cooler, less arid Sarhad, in order to devote themselves to harvesting their date groves. (The date palms drew water from underground streams tapped by their roots and so did not need irrigation or continuous attention during other parts of the year.) As date palms could not be grown in the cooler temperatures of the Sarhad and livestock could not be supported in the extremely arid environs of the date groves, the nomadic movement made it possible to incorporate both forms of production in individual household economies, just as mobility on the Sarhad during the spring made it possible to raise livestock on erratic and unpredictable natural pasture.

The environment of Baluchistan is extremely arid, and what rainfall there is is extremely variable across the land. In fact, annual rainfall rarely exceeds 5 or 6 inches and comes almost exclusively in the winter, as is the case in much of the Middle East and North Africa. The rain does not fall equally everywhere in the tribal territory, and consequently, pasture does not grow equally everywhere. All tribesmen, however, have rights of access to all natural pasture everywhere in the tribal territory and to all natural water sources. This "open pasture" policy is even extended on a conditional basis to members of other tribes, who may request permission of the chief (*sardar*) to gain access. This Baluchi adaptation to unpredictable microenvironmental variation depends upon both the legal right provided by collective land tenure and the practical means provided by nomadism.

Rainfall and thus pasturage are variable not only spatially but also temporally. Out of every five years, one year sees almost no rain at all and a second even less! Annual rainfall from 1963 through 1967 was (according to the Khash weather office) 5.6, 4.2, 1.5, 2.1, and 5.4 inches—a representative pattern. The Baluchi adaptation, with its mobility and its multiple resource production, allows the Baluch to survive the worse years and to expand their production rapidly during the good



FIGURE 2.3 A young family of the Yarahmadzai Baluch herding camp of the Dadolzai lineage migrates with campmates. The mother and children ride the camel, as the baby camel trots alongside. (P. C. Salzman, 1968)

years. The adaptation thus provides not only short-term production but also security in the long run. At the same time, this subsistence production system is labor intensive, supports only a modest level of material standard of living, and has depended upon an ongoing if limited inflow of resources, whether from the traditional predatory raiding or the recent migrant labor and trading of goods.

General Observation No. 1. Nomadism can be used, as it is by the Baluch, to gain access, through spatial movement, to resources (such as pasture and water) that are sparse in any particular location. In desert regions, such as Baluchistan, the amount of pasturage at any place is very limited almost all of the time.

General Observation No. 2. Nomadism can be used as an opportunistic "rapid response" to the sudden and temporary availability of irregular and unpredictable resources, such as pasture. The migration pattern

in these circumstances is consequently irregular in timing and direction and asymmetrical in pattern.

General Observation No. 3. Nomadism, the regular displacement of the household, is unlikely to be oriented to one and only one productive activity, such as pastoralism, because few populations limit themselves to one productive activity. Rather, nomadic mobility is likely to be put to work as well in aid of other productive activities, such as cultivation, as among the Baluch, or fishing, as among the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940a). Nomadic mobility is not infrequently from a location of one productive activity, such as pastoralism, to another, such as arboriculture. Thus, categories and labels (such as "nomadic pastoralists") tend to oversimplify and distort the multiresource economies that most nomads have and the versatile, multipurpose nomadism that they use to the fullest.

General Observation No. 4. Nomadism is not "wandering" in the sense of purposeless or directionless movement. Nomadic movement is highly purposeful, oriented toward achieving specific production (or other) goals. Nomads continually discuss where and when to move and why, and they are constantly searching for, assessing, and reassessing relevant information from direct experience and secondary sources in order to make good decisions about migration.

General Observation No. 5. Nomadism is not "wandering" in the sense of moving off in any direction and constantly entering new lands. Most nomads move within a known and customary habitat. Some, including the Baluchi tribesmen, migrate within their own, delimited territory, which they control politically.

The Komachi of Kerman

Several hundred miles to the west of these Baluch are found the Komachi, a small group (population 550) of Persian-speaking pastoral nomads (Bradburd 1990). They raise sheep and goats, migrating some 200 miles seasonally from lowland winter pastures on the coastal plains of southern Iran to highland summer pastures—which they deem their homeland—in mountain ranges south of Kerman city. This seasonal pattern of migration, sometimes labeled "transhumance," is an adaptation to macroenvironmental variation. The summer home of the Komachi, in

a valley at an altitude of over 8,000 feet in the mountains south of Kerman city, receives up to 16 inches of rain during the winter and provides good pastures and relatively cool temperatures during the summer. The winter home of the Komachi is the warm lowlands of the coast near Bandar Abbas, a region that receives an average of around 6 inches of rain in the fall and early winter and generally provides pastures of new grass in the early spring (Bradburd 1990: 13–18).

Daniel Bradburd characterizes the Komachi as "migratory peasants [rather] than marauders; they were . . . economic, rather than political, pastoralists" (1990: 5). They sold livestock products, such as goat's wool for cashmere, sheep's wool for carpets, and culled animals for meat, in urban markets and had dependent ties with merchants and moneylenders (Bradburd 1990: 34–49). They bought many of the products they consumed, including goat hair (from a type of goat they did not raise) for making tents.

Much of the Komachi's region was sparsely populated, infertile pasture areas to which they were able to gain access without great difficulty. But their access was dependent upon the goodwill of absentee landowners and, more recently, government officials and was usually forthcoming as a result of gifts, fees, or patron-client ties (Bradburd 1990: 21–24). As state order has strengthened and modern agriculture has spread in recent decades, the Komachi have been forced to shift to more distant marginal areas.

General Observation No. 6. Nomadic migration patterns, such as those among the Komachi, are more regular and are repeated, where macroenvironment features (seasons, altitude, and the like) determine the availability of needed resources.

General Observation No. 7. Nomadism is not tied in a determinative fashion with political structure. The Baluchi tribes of the Sarhad were fierce and independent (but now encapsulated), whereas the Komachi, highly integrated into Persian society and totally controlled by the Persian state, were pacific, peasant pastoralists (see Chapter 5).

General Observation No. 8. Nomadism is not tied in a determinative fashion with economic orientation. The Sarhadi Baluch had a generalized, multiresource productive regime—a richly mixed economy. They

produced almost entirely for subsistence; only a very small percentage of all they produced was traded locally, and none was exported from the Sarhad. In contrast, the Komachi were highly specialized and oriented toward sale, especially in the Kerman bazaar, which was, in many cases, directed toward export (Bradburd 1994).

General Observation No. 9. Nomadism is not tied in a determinative fashion with land tenure. Although the Komachi had a customary habitat in which they migrated, they had no legal title to it, nor did they control it politically as a territory of their own. Without political or military structure, they could not defend their customary habitat against intrusion. When Persian agricultural interests expanded and encroached into their migratory habitat, they were forced to shift to a less used and more remote habitat. This lack of rights to land contrasts with the tribal territories of the Sarhadi Baluch.

The Basseri of Fars

Hundreds of miles to the west of the Komachi, in Fars Province, are found the Basseri (Barth 1961), a Persian-speaking tribe of 16,000, one of five tribes of the Khamseh confederacy. The province of Fars and its legendary capital Shiraz are geographically at the southern end of the great Zagros mountain range, which reaches to the northwest of Iran, dividing the Iranian plateau to the east from the desert lowlands of Mesopotamia to the west. The Basseri (in the ethnographic present of the 1950s when Fredrik Barth did his research) practiced what might be called "grand transhumance," migrating along their *il rah* (tribal road) some 300 miles between lowland winter pastures at 2,000 feet and highland summer pastures at 13,000 feet. Rainfall of around 10 inches provided rich pastures. The migration each way passed by Shiraz, taking three months for the spring migration up to the highlands and a month or six weeks for the fall migration down to the lowlands. The migrating tribesmen and their flocks were coordinated with those of other tribes, with mediation provided between the tribesmen and village agriculturalists by the Basseri tribal chief.

Although the Basseri grand transhumance was an adaptation to the macroenvironmental variations of season and altitude, the selection of breeding stock, particularly of sheep, was very precise. As Barth describes it,

There are several common strains of sheep in Fars, of different productivity and resistance. Of these the nomad strain tends to be larger and more productive. But its resistance to extremes of temperature, particularly to frost, is less than that of the sheep found in the mountain villages, and its tolerance to heat and parched fodder and drought is less than that of the strains found in the [the lowlands]. . . . The migratory cycle is thus necessary to maintain the health of the nomads' herds, quite apart from their requirements for pastures (1961: 6).

Barth (1961: 99) estimates that the value of the annual product (including offspring, milk, and wool) of a Basseri ewe was equivalent to its on-the-hoof market value, which was a 100 percent annual return for the owner. This was remarkable productivity indeed, which gave even the moderately successful Basseri pastoralist a standard of living higher than that attained by peasant village agriculturalists in Fars or by pastoralists elsewhere, such as Baluchistan.

The Basseri, though drawing upon the products of their animals and even doing a bit of catch-as-catch-can grain cultivation, were oriented to exchange and the marketplace in their complex and developed region. They both sold animals and animal products and purchased many of the goods that they consumed, including the staple, wheat, as well as much of the supplies and equipment that they used (Barth 1961: 9–10). They had individual exchange relationships with villagers and collective relations with other tribes and the state (Barth 1961: 93–99). The Basseri were thus specialist producers in the complex regional economic and political system of Fars.

Neighbors and sometime adversaries of the Basseri were the Turkish-speaking tribes of the Qashqa'i confederacy (Beck 1986, 1991), encompassing at mid-twentieth century around 400,000 persons (Beck 1991: 10). The Basseri migrated on their north-south tribal road to the east of Shiraz, but the Qashqa'i tribes followed a grand transhumance of their own, migrating on their own north-south tribal road to the west of Shiraz. Their adaptation and economy were much like that of the Basseri, a specialized, market-oriented economy based upon a transhumant adaptation to macroenvironmental variations.

Several hundred miles to the north, the great Bakhtiari tribal federation (Garthwaite 1983a; Brooks 1983), with a population of a million, followed a grand transhumance route between lowland winter pastures

in the western plains and highland summer pastures to the east in the Isfahan region, the renowned city of Isfahan being a commercial and political referent. Between Fars and Isfahan and north of Isfahan into Kurdistan, people employing a nomadic strategy to adapt to their environments are found throughout the Zagros range. As David Brooks (1983) describes it,

By no means have all the tribes of the Zagros been exclusively pastoral in orientation, although it is probably accurate to say that their economic basis has been nomadism with their wealth and livelihood dependent on animals, predominantly herds of sheep and goats. . . . [Transhumance] migrations . . . involving thousands of tribesmen and their flocks, are found everywhere in the Zagros. Migration routes differ in length and difficulty, some being a matter of only few days' travel, . . . while others . . . require many weeks' travel over several hundred kilometres between summer and winter quarters. [Many people also follow] forms of semi-nomadic movement between settled villages where they farm.

Even shorter migrations can exploit macroenvironmental variations through seasonal timing and changes in altitude and by so doing remain regular and predictable. This does not, however, preclude using mobility to adjust to microenvironmental variations as well, through opportunistic changes of location to gain access to better pasture, water, fuel, or shelter or to avoid disease, predators, or conflict.

General Observation No. 10. Nomadism is found in both isolated, remote, and unpopulated regions and in more crowded and developed regions. Some nomadic populations occupy remote regions, environmentally marginal and distant from centers of civilization and power, such as Baluchistan, Nuerland in the southern Sudan (Evans-Pritchard 1940a), Somaliland (Lewis 1961), and the Empty Quarter of Arabia (Cole 1975). But other nomadic populations, such as the Basseri, Qashqa'i, and Bakhtiari, migrate through regions of agricultural settlements and pass and even stop at major cities, such as Shiraz and Isfahan—famous centers of civilization, known for their markets and homes of state agencies. The Komachi, as indicated earlier, are attached to the major urban center of Kerman.

General Observation No. 11. (This is a corollary of General Observation No. 7.) Independent or quasi-independent nomadic tribes vary considerably in political structure, from the acephalus, egalitarian, decentralized Nuer, Somali, and Maasai (Galaty 1980) to the weak chiefships of the Baluch (Salzman 1983, 2000a, 2000b) and the Bedouin (Cole 1975; Lancaster 1997) to the more strongly hierarchical and centralized tribal and confederacy chiefships of the Zagros.

General Observation No. 12. Chiefships arise in nomadic tribes in confrontation with powerful external populations (Irons 1979a). Thus, acephalus, egalitarian, decentralized, nonnomadic tribes are more likely to be found in remote regions far from centers of power, population, and trade, and nomadic tribal chiefdoms are more likely to be found in proximity to agricultural settlements, cities, state agencies, and major markets.

General Observation No. 13. (This is a corollary of General Observation No. 7.) Nomadic pastoralism is politically centrifugal, militating against central and hierarchical power. The mobility of nomadic individuals, households, and capital resources, especially flocks, makes avoidance, escape, and attack easier and more likely successful than among sedentary populations. Nomadic mobility, in consequence, has a dampening effect on hierarchy and centralization and on chiefly coercion and oppression. Tribal chiefs thus must be sensitive and responsible to the opinions of tribesmen (Salzman 1983, 2000b).

The Yomut Turkmen of the Gorgan

The tribes of the Yomut Turkmen (Irons 1975, 1994) make their home in the northeast of Iran, in the Gorgan region east of the Caspian Sea and north of the Elburz mountain range. The northern slopes of the mountains receive some 24 inches of rain and support a forest zone in which intensive agriculture is carried out by Persian- and Turkic-speaking sedentary villagers. The rainfall declines farther to the north in a humid steppe zone and still farther north in a steppe-desert zone.

The Yomut occupied the steppe and steppe-desert zones, those living in the steppe specializing in dry-grain cultivation and those in the steppe-desert specializing in sheep pastoralism. Each Yomut tribe

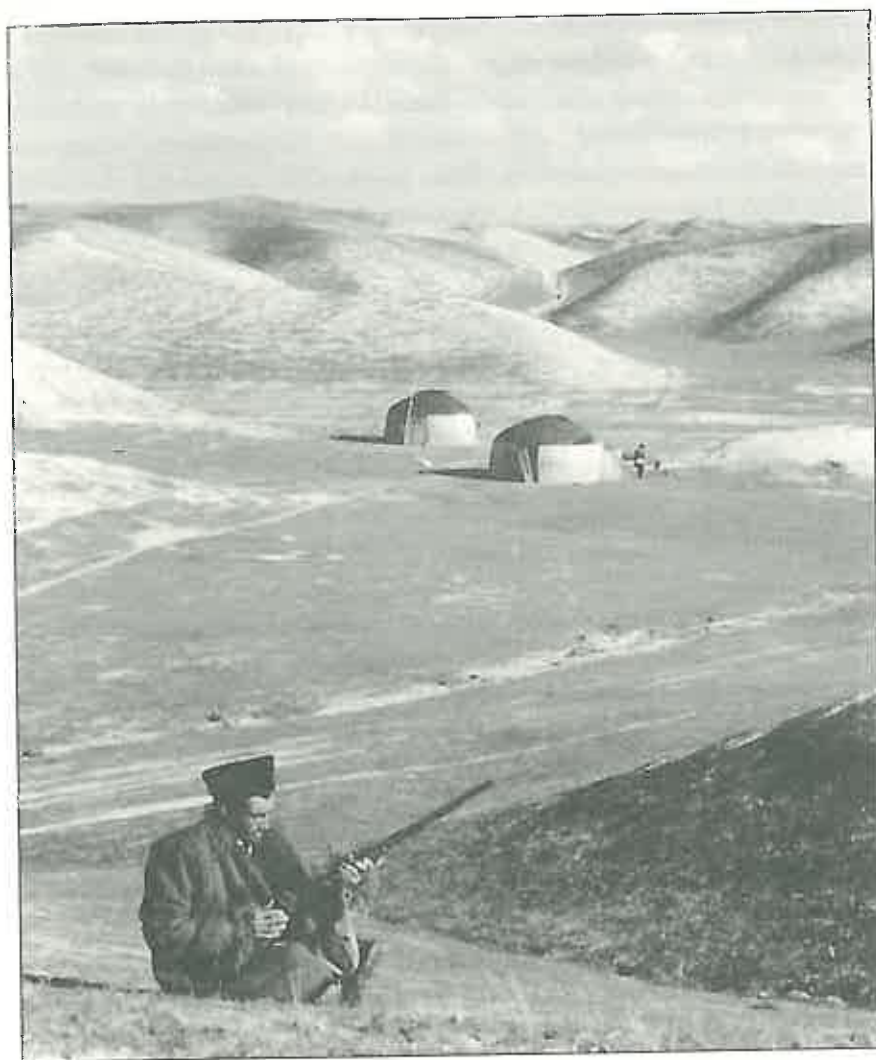


FIGURE 2.4 Yomut Turkmen yurts of one family are located in a typical Gokchadagh Plain setting during the spring. The Turkman in the foreground is in a hunting pose. (Wm. Irons, 1996)

included in its territory both zones and thus both pastoralists (*charva*) and cultivators (*chomur*). Both pastoralists and cultivators produced for their own subsistence, but they were also market oriented, selling livestock, carpets, and grain in markets where they bought staples, such as rice, and other goods.

All of the Yomut, cultivators and agriculturalists alike, were nomadic. They lived in yurts, the felt-covered, hemispheric, portable dwellings typical of Central Asia—quite distinct from the black, goat-hair tents of the Iranian plateau tribes. Though mobile, the Turkmen did not ordinarily move long distances. The *chomur* cultivators often migrated, in the spring, 6 miles north to the Gorgon River in order to avoid the flies and mosquitoes of the forest zone. During the wet season, the *charva* pastoralists made a number of one-day migrations, usually not more than 6 miles, within their local areas. During the winter and spring dry season, many would migrate around 25 miles south to the river.

Given the modest amount of movement usually undertaken by the Turkmen, there was really no pressing economic reason for them to maintain such a high level of nomadic capacity; they could have functioned quite well economically with a semisedentary residence pattern, with the agriculturalists staying on farmsteads or in villages and the pastoralists in individual or group ranches (Irons 1974: 21, 36, 69).

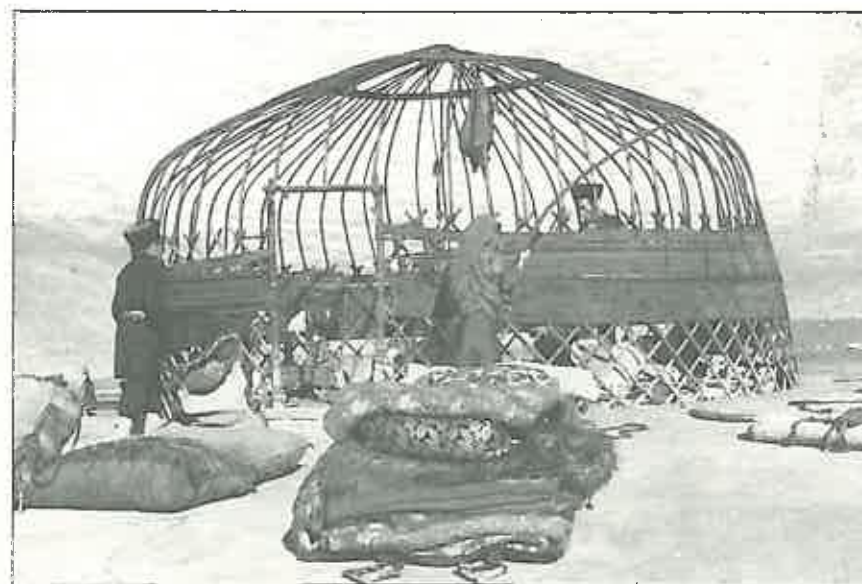


FIGURE 2.5 Yomut Turkmen prepare to migrate by removing the felt from the yurt and folding it into parcels that can be transported. With the removal of the felt, the skeletal structure of the yurt can be seen. (Wm. Irons, 1966)

The nomadic strategy of the Turkmen was fundamentally political rather than economic; nomadic mobility was an adaptation to inimical state societies, particularly the Iranian state of the Persians, who were old ethnic enemies of the Turkmen. The Turkmen advanced themselves by raiding Persian villages and caravans and even selling Persian captives as slaves.

No love was lost between the Turkmen and the Persians, and the Turkmen knew well that staying out of the clutches of the Persians was good for their health and their wealth (Irons 1974: 70). In general, of course, preindustrial states were predatory rather than nurturing, living by extracting resources from a reluctant peasantry and by looting foreign lands. The Yomut not only knew this but also had the means—nomadism—to avoid being suppressed and exploited. In the extreme case, under pressure from the full armed might of the Persian Crown, the Yomut could retreat en masse across the Kara Kum Desert and stay with their relatives the Khiva Turkmen until the idle Crown troops, uselessly eating up the Crown treasury, would be pulled back; then, the Yomut could return to the Gorgon (Irons 1974: 72–74).



FIGURE 2.6 Yomut Turkmen migrate with their household goods, including the yurt framework and felt. (Wm. Irons, 1966)

This case illustrates that the ecosystem of a particular human population includes other human populations, which act as competitors or predators, and that the adaptation of any group includes strategies to avoid or limit damage from those other populations. It would not be an exaggeration to say that, in this sense, all human adaptations are adaptations to a political environment. A corollary is that changes in a population's political environment will apply pressures for change in the population's adaptation.

General Observation No. 14. Nomadism is not determinatively tied to a particular kind of physiobiotic environment. Although many nomadic pastoralists exploit desert and mountainous environments that are marginal for other uses, a great number of other nomadic pastoralists, such as the Turkmen and the Zagros tribes, occupy rich habitats that could be exploited by other means.

General Observation No. 15. In some cases, as among the Turkmen, the political use of nomadism predominates over the direct productive use. Here, nomadism can "shade off," ranging from regular movement, as the term was defined initially, to the capacity for full mobility.

General Observation No. 16. Among the Turkmen, some nomadic chomur agriculturalists and some nomadic charwa pastoralists would shift areas and take up the other occupation—the agriculturalists becoming pastoralists and the pastoralists becoming agriculturalists—while all remained nomadic. This case thus highlights the fact that these activities and labels for them are not inviolable, permanent commitments that bind people. Rather, nomadism and pastoralism are capabilities and activities that can and are taken up and set aside, sometimes temporarily and sometimes indefinitely. The processes of taking up or leaving pastoralism or taking up nomadism or leaving it to settle are both very common and very widespread.

Patterns of Sedentarization and Nomadization in Iran

In thinking about nomadism, we are sometimes influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by an evolutionary conception of the world that assumes a

unilineal, directional change that cannot be reversed any more than time can be reversed. This orientation may fly in the face of historical accounts of many populations, societies, states, religions, and cultures, not to mention being contrary to much of personal experience, but we do habitually tend to think, in a manner oriented by evolutionary assumptions, of "rise and fall" rather than regular alternation or natural cycles (Salzman 1978a). Thus, it is easy to assume there is a "natural (evolutionary) development" from nomadic life to settled life. But this vision would not at all correspond to life as it has been lived in the Middle East and North Africa, where nomadization and sedentarization have been ongoing, complementary processes for millennia. Quite frequently, individuals, families, or lineages shifted from a nomadic and a sedentary life and back, depending upon circumstances. People settled when it seemed beneficial to do so and became nomadic for the same reason. An example from Palestine under the Ottomans is illustrative:

When security prevailed, masses of bedouin tended to settle permanently on the land, in the valleys and the plains, living in villages. When conditions in the villages were bad—when taxation was heavy and the [predatory] pressure of [the nomadic] bedouin was strong—the villagers tended to become nomadic. Nomadism had many advantages. Nomads paid no taxes, were not conscripted to the army, were armed (while the peasants were prohibited from keeping arms), could amass wealth in the form of livestock without being haunted by the unscrupulous tax collectors, and could even engage in occasional agriculture. They did not have to go far to the desert in order to be nomads, because large tracts of fertile lands in the valleys and on the plains were available (Cohen 1965: 7).

This shifting between strategies of adaptation in response to changes in conditions has been very common throughout the Middle East and North Africa (Salzman, ed. 1980; *Nomadic Peoples* 1984). We must also keep in mind that "settled" and "nomadic," rather than being two types, are better thought of as opposite ends of a continuum with many gradations of stability and mobility. Of course, many if not most rural producers in the Middle East fell between the two extremes, being somewhat stable but using some mobility—a strategy that, by the way, fosters a wide range of skills and knowledge that can be brought to bear

and thus makes it possible to shift to a strategy of greater stability or of greater mobility in response to changing circumstances.

In considering patterns of sedentarization and nomadization, let us once again make the round of Iranian regions, which will allow us to follow up the cases already discussed and provide an instructive range of ethnographic examples.

The Baluch of the Sarhad

The Baluch of the Sarhad reduced their nomadism somewhat during the 1960 and 1970s (Salzman 1980). Though most continued living in tents and remained in herding camps, the migratory patterns of many Yarahmadzai herding groups were more restricted than previously, and the locations of herding camps were increasingly influenced by access to town and to agricultural plots. Engagement with the extratribal job market, with the local goods market, and with local administrative services, such as mail, connected Baluch to the nearby town and administrative center, Khash, and made residing far from this town a burden. The development of some *qanat*- (tunnel-) and motor-irrigated agriculture in the tribal territory provided a new source of production and served as an anchor for those in herding camps who had to irrigate fields every four days.

Here and there in the Yarahmadzai tribal territory, tribesmen built small houses, *watag*, of unbaked brick, usually no larger than just one or two small rooms, or several families built small clusters of such houses. The Yarahmadzai chiefly family built a small village at Gorchan. Sometimes, if water was available, tribesmen would experiment with small gardens and orchards. But no tribesmen lived in their houses year-round. Owners of solitary houses did not want to live alone, and they spent most of the year in herding camps with their kin, using their houses for storage most of the year and occupying them only when their herding camp was nearby. The chiefly family did spend the winter in their houses at Gorchan, but they brought out their tents and spent the spring in the pastures and the summer at the date groves. At the distant date groves, people built ever larger mud-brick, one-room houses to keep themselves (relatively) cool during the broiling days of the summer date harvest, but the date groves were occupied only during July and August. Overall, the Baluch of the Sarhad were gradually denomadizing but were still far from settling.

General Observation No. 17. Decreasing nomadic mobility is often a voluntary choice of nomadic peoples in the face of changing conditions (Salzman, ed. 1980).

The Komachi of Kerman

For the Komachi, their summer quarters in a mountain valley south of Kerman city was their homeland. Ethnically Persian, they felt alien (surrounded as they were by Baluch and Arabs and other suspect types) in their winter quarters on the coastal plain of Bandar Abbas. If they had had any inclination to settle, it would have been in their summer quarters. But the agricultural potential was fully exploited by the villagers engaged in irrigation cultivation. Consequently, "given the *sarhad's* [that is, the highland's] limited resources, settling into the local agricultural sector was not and probably never had been a reasonable alternative for the region's pastoralists" (Bradburd 1990: 14). An additional factor inhibiting Komachi sedentarization was their lack of land rights; the Komachi gained access to pasture through the state or traditional landowners (Bradburd 1990: 21). Even their pastoralism was vulnerable in this respect, but unimproved pasture was more readily available than irrigation water and good agricultural land.

General Observation No. 18. Some nomads who might settle if they had access to good agricultural land continue their nomadism because they have no viable alternative.

The Basseri of Fars

The Basseri knew that they could not settle and keep their livestock. Their productive strain of sheep could not tolerate extremes of climate. As Barth (1961: 6) says, "It has thus been the experience of nomads who become sedentary, and of occasional sedentary buyers of nomad livestock, that 70–80% of the animals die if they are kept throughout the year in the northern or southern areas." So the Basseri who settled did not do so as pastoralists.

According to Barth (1961: 103–111), there were two processes of sedentarization. One was a spiral of failure, which saw a pastoral family drawing increasingly on their animal capital to meet ongoing consumption costs and ultimately losing so many animals that they could not

continue as pastoralists. They settled in agricultural villages to become agricultural laborers on the land of others. The other process was one of accumulation and conversion to other forms of wealth. If a pastoral family was successful and their flocks grew, they looked to convert animal wealth into a more stable form of wealth when they could no longer look after their animals themselves and when the maintenance of large numbers of animals became too risky. On a small scale, livestock was converted into portable valuables, such as carpets and gold jewelry, which also had prestige value. But the likelier destination of more substantial livestock wealth was land, in which there was an active market and secure legal rights. A well-to-do pastoralist could, by converting his animals into land, become a landowner and receive landlord's rents from the agriculturalists working the land. For the Basseri, then, these two processes brought the unfortunate and the fortunate to settled life—the former as a propertyless tenant, the latter as a landlord—leaving the moderately successful Basseri to continue following his nomadic strategy.

General Observation No. 19. Sedentarization is not always a collective event. In some cases, individuals, families, and small groups drop out of nomadic life and settle. The destinies of those who settle as landlords and those who settle as agricultural laborers are starkly different.

Other Zagros Tribes

In the 1920s and 1930s, Reza Shah, the king of Iran, set about gaining control of the country by mounting military campaigns in the unruly tribal areas (Arfa 1964). The Qashqa'i, as one of the most powerful tribes and thus one of the main threats to government control, received Reza Shah's close attention. Immobile peasants are always less threatening to the state than mobile tribesmen, and so, in 1933, Reza Shah ordered the Qashqa'i settled. Various tribal khans were executed to remove tribal leadership. When Reza Shah was forced to abdicate in 1941, most Qashqa'i immediately resumed their seasonal migrations (Beck 1991: 90–91).

General Observation No. 20. Governments often want to settle nomads as a way of gaining greater control over them. Here, we see the

reaction to the centrifugal political tendency of nomadism (see General Observation No. 13). Forcible settlement has not infrequently been attempted. Sometimes, it is successful, and at other times, it is not. But it is not irreversible, and nomads who have been forcibly settled have often returned to nomadism.

Nor were the Qashqa'i great favorites of Mohammed Reza Shah, the son of Reza Shah and the king of Iran in the post-World War II period (until the Islamic Revolution in 1977). During the 1970s, when Lois Beck (1991) was doing her initial research, the state was using many methods to pressure the Qashqa'i to settle. To migrate, one needed a permit from the army, and the army was in no rush to hand out permits. So Qashqa'i and their flocks would sit helplessly for weeks at a time, with no remaining pasturage and worsening climatic conditions. Pastures were nationalized, so access depended upon the reluctant will of government officials. Reducing the number of animals nomads could possess was the next step taken by the government, with a law requiring them to cut their flocks of sheep by half and to get rid of goats entirely. As Beck (1991: 322) points out, "This law, aimed more to force nomads to settle than [as the rationale stated] to lessen the impact of herd animals on the natural environment, did not restrict the number of animals that commercial investors in cities, towns, and villages could send onto national land."

In the face of these governmental pressures, many Qashqa'i settled. One of the cases Beck describes is that of Hajji Boa:

[Hajji Boa] had been one of the first Qermezi [section members] . . . to choose to settle permanently. Although his first year as a settler was difficult, he had now quite successfully combined agriculture with pastoralism and was steadily improving his economic condition. Viewing the option that Hajji Boa represented as viable, men in dire straits privately sought his advice (1991: 142). . . .

Hajji Boa . . . had understood sooner than most Qermezi men the need to place greater reliance on settled agriculture than on nomadic pastoralism because of the transformations brought about in Iran by land reform, the nationalization of pastures, the changing balance of power between the Qashqa'i and the state, and economic change (1991: 335).

Similar developments took place farther north in the Zagros, in Luristan, among the Bakhtiari, and in Kurdistan (Brooks 1983: 343), under both Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah. The cycle of forced settlement followed by nomadization continued to be repeated, according to postrevolution reports of settled tribes returning to nomadism (Beck 1991: 343).

The Yomut Turkmen of the Gorgon

The Yomut Turkmen, too, had been forcibly settled, and their land was taken as Crown land (Irons 1974: 28). When Reza Shah abdicated, the Turkmen not only returned to nomadism, they also tore down the houses in which they had been forced to live. By contrast, Yomut charwa who were having difficulty in the northern pastoral sector would move to the southern agricultural sector, stake out some land, and try to rebuild household income. Similarly, some chomur agriculturalists who did well and built up capital bought livestock and moved north to take up the pastoral life. So Yomut were not loath to take initiative and to pursue apparently beneficial courses. When the opportunity came during the postwar period, Yomut expanded grain agriculture by mechanizing, and in doing so, they reduced pastoralism in areas with agricultural potential.

Conclusion

The nomadic strategy is one means by which people adapt to thinly spread resources and to the variability of resources across space and over time. It is also a strategy for avoiding other deleterious environmental conditions, such as extreme heat or cold, disease, and predators. Furthermore, as human predators are always a risk, every adaptation is political, relating populations through power. Above all, the nomadic strategy is a means of maximizing, given local circumstances, culturally defined objectives, such as production (as in Zagros herds), survival (as in Baluchi multiresource production), and independence (as in Turkmen mobility).

The nomadic strategy is put to use in a variety of ways, but it often involves various production activities, even if the pastoral production of livestock is for some populations the predominant (or most dramatic)

one. In general, people using the nomadic strategy produce for their own consumption, even if they are heavily market oriented, and subsistence is supported by a variety of products. Productive diversification, often made possible or facilitated by nomadic mobility, is an insurance mechanism, guaranteeing survival in the face of failure in one productive sector—such as the loss of a flock from disease or predation or the loss of crops due to drought—as well as a base upon which to build. Diversification within pastoralism has the same benefit, with small stock (sheep and goats), for example, providing a fallback and a basis for rebuilding after the loss of large stock (cattle or camels).

People following a nomadic strategy usually do so within a customary habitat. Many, such as the Sarhadi Baluch and the Yomut Turkmen, have traditionally controlled territories—large expanses of land—that are their homes as they move around within them. Others, such as the Zagros tribes that make long nomadic treks annually, conceive of their territory as rights of time-space occupation, allowing them passage at a particular time on a particular route, as well as access to customary summer and winter quarters. Furthermore, even where people control territories, land tenure is almost always collective and relatively open. Natural pasture and water sources are thought of as given by God for everyone. Arrangements usually exist for the admission to the territory of outsiders, along with reciprocal arrangements for access to outside territories. However, access does not mean unbridled use, for collective social, political, and ritual mechanisms are in force to control the use of territorial resources and conserve the environment to guarantee continued availability of resources in the future.

What kind of people, we may ask, are nomads? But this is the wrong question, and it leads to false conceptions. In fact, nomads are not a kind of people but different kinds of people who use a particular strategy—that is, mobility of the household—in carrying out regular productive activities and in defending themselves. We may better understand the lives of these people if we ask what they are trying to accomplish through this strategy, how they implement this strategy, why they do not choose apparent alternative strategies, and in what ways this strategy is tied to the environmental conditions in which they live. Nomads do not live to migrate; they migrate to live. People who pursue a nomadic strategy do so for quite good reasons. Nomadism is one of a number of strategies that

a population uses in pursuing a living, and its consequences and implications are only one set among many of the conditions and circumstances in which and with which the population lives and copes. Perhaps, given a better opportunity or a change in circumstances, people who now pursue a nomadic strategy would choose a nonnomadic strategy. Thus, it is more precise and more useful to think not of nomadic peoples but of nomadic strategies.

By so doing, one can avoid the reductionism or essentialism of identifying one characteristic of a population—nomadism—as the key or basic one. The people I have called “nomads” in this chapter could, depending upon particular cases, be labeled under many names: “tribesmen” or “peasants,” “Muslims” or “pagans,” “Persian” or “Turkic” or “Baluch” or “Arab,” “fierce warriors” or “pacific civilians.” There are many aspects and dimensions to peoples’ lives and to a people’s culture. To select and emphasize one aspect as paramount would be a distortion of the always complex human reality. And such an essentialism and reductionism would be a distortion of nomadism, for truly to understand nomadism, we must grasp its dependence on human objectives and on multiple social, cultural, and environmental circumstances. Only then can we appreciate its variability, its malleability, and its impermanence.

EQUALITY AND ANARCHY

Segmentary Tribes

Inequality has become the focus of much recent anthropology. New analyses, for example that of Edwin Wilmsen (1989) on the Kalahari, have harshly criticized major ethnographic accounts of egalitarianism, such as that of the Kalahari Bushmen/San/Ju/'hoansi (Lee 1993). And the disagreements between the original ethnographers and the revisionists are often being bitterly debated (for example, Solway and Lee 1990; Wilmsen and Denbow 1990). The assumption that inequality is universal has gained widespread support. William Young (1996: 58) reports that "many anthropologists today accept the premise that . . . all societies are systems of inequality. . . . For current scholars, the question is not whether, or even why, inequality is found in every society, but why inequality takes the particular form that it does in each particular case." This emphasis on inequality has been at least in part influenced by various Marxist-inspired approaches, such as critical anthropology (Hymes 1969), cultural materialism (Harris 1979), and political economy (Wolf 1982); by the currently popular view of anthropology as cultural critique (Marcus and Fischer 1986); and by the enunciated political commitment of some postmodernists in favor of the subaltern and victims of all types (Marcus 1994).

These tides of thought have also rippled the placid backwater of research on pastoral peoples (see, for example, Asad 1970, 1978; Black-Michaud 1986; Bradburd 1990; Fratkin 1991; Little 1992). As Young

(1996: 58), in a not atypical statement, puts it, "For many years social scientists were fond of the notion that nomadic pastoralists were essentially egalitarian and that differences in authority and access to resources in a nomadic 'tribe' were either not substantial or were aberrations. During the 1970s . . . studies of nomadic pastoralists . . . demolished this romantic idea." Other authors (Borgerhoff Mulder and Sellen 1994: 220) point to "abundant new documentation showing that inequalities exist in the ownership and/or control of livestock both between and within families." According to Elliot Fratkin, Eric Roth, and Kathleen Galvin (1994: 9), these "new findings emphasize inequalities in livestock holdings . . . and production . . . in labor patterns . . . wealth levels." In fact, they continue, the documentation of "many sources of inequalities within a single pastoral group" have refuted past affirmations (by Schneider in 1979, Salzman in 1979, and Black in 1972 [as cited in Borgerhoff Mulder and Sellen 1994: 220]) of "the egalitarian nature of African pastoralists," a characterization that is now judged to be a "pastoral myth" (Fratkin, Roth, and Galvin 1994: 9).

Such a new understanding would be progress indeed. But its late arrival would also raise the question of why earlier researchers were so prone to characterize some pastoral peoples as egalitarian and so mistaken in their grasp of pastoral reality. Some archaeology of pastoral anthropology is thus justified in order to explore this puzzling lapse. To address this archaeology of pastoral anthropology, I shall examine two overlapping fields of discussion—politics and economics—in which there have been newfound discoveries of inequality.

Does Political Equality Exist Within Tribes?

The evidence is quite clear that within pastoral, segmentary tribes, power and authority are limited and widely diffused. This pattern is described in many well-known ethnographic accounts. Perhaps the most influential is E. E. Evans-Pritchard's reports on the Nuer of the southern Sudan (1940a, 1940b). Let us remind ourselves of Evans-Pritchard's views on power and authority among the Nuer.

According to Evans-Pritchard,

The Nuer constitution is highly individualistic and libertarian. It is an acephalous state, lacking legislative, judicial, and executive organs. Nev-

ertheless, it is far from chaotic. It has a persistent and coherent form which might be called "ordered anarchy." [There is an] absence of centralized government and of bureaucracy in the nation, in the tribe, and in tribal segments—for even in the village authority is not vested in any one (1940b: 296).

Acephalous, of course, means lacking a head, leader, or ruler. *Anarchy* means the absence of hierarchical government in a society. In other words, among the Nuer, power and authority were not concentrated in officeholders but were diffused among members of Nuer society. Nuer were not subject to central control; rather, they were, in Evans-Pritchard's words, "highly individualistic and libertarian."

The Nuer polity was characterized not by a hierarchy but by an equality among its members. Decisions were taken not by a few for many but individually, each for himself, and democratically, among the many for themselves. As Evans-Pritchard reports,

The ordered anarchy in which they live accords well with their character, for it is impossible to live among Nuer and conceive of rulers ruling over them.

The Nuer is a product of hard and egalitarian upbringing, is deeply democratic, and is easily roused to violence. His turbulent spirit finds any restraint irksome and no man recognizes a superior. . . .

That every Nuer considers himself as good as his neighbour is evident in their every movement. They strut about like lords of the earth, which, indeed, they consider themselves to be. There is no master and no servant in their society, but only equals who regard themselves as God's noblest creation. [A Nuer] does not consider himself bound to obey any one. . . .

Their only test of character is whether one can stand up for oneself (1940a: 181–183).

In addition to being struck by the lack of political offices and hierarchies, Evans-Pritchard (1940b: 296) thought that the lack of official human symbols for Nuer collectivities was wonderful: "The absence of centralized government . . . is less remarkable than the absence of any persons who represent the unity and exclusiveness of these [tribes and tribal] groups."

There were, nonetheless, several types of status differentiation among Nuer men, the most general being age status (Evans-Pritchard 1940b: 290): "In virtue of the position of his [age-]set in the structure, every male Nuer is in a status of seniority, equality, or juniority towards every other Nuer man. . . . The attitude of a man towards other men of his community is largely determined by their respective positions in the age-set system." There were differences of "duties and privileges" associated with these statuses. However, each Nuer man moved, during his lifetime, from junior to senior position. "Juniority" was a temporary, rather than a permanent, status.

There was also differentiation between men who lived in the tribes where their clans were dominant and those who lived in tribes where other clans were dominant. Evans-Pritchard (1940b: 287, 1940a: 211–213) uses the term *aristocrat* for people living in their clan's home territory but notes (1940b: 287) that "its predominance gives prestige rather than privilege."

Socially prominent men, usually heads of joint households who were men of "character and ability," were called "bulls" (Evans-Pritchard 1940a: 179). Bulls were considered people of importance and had a degree of unformalized influence. "Leadership in a local community consists of an influential man deciding to do something and the people of other hamlets following suit at their convenience" (Evans-Pritchard 1940a: 180). Nuer communities had no formal leadership invested with authority over others. In case of attack, "others rush forward, headed by the swiftest and bravest," but no one could order them to do so (Evans-Pritchard 1940a: 180).

A few specialized political and ritual roles existed among the Nuer, such as the misnamed "leopard-skin chief" (Evans-Pritchard 1940b: 291, 1940a: 163–164, 174–175), who usually originated from a nondominant lineage and who acted politically primarily as a mediator in disputes and conflicts, occasionally using the threat of a curse. More influential were a few prominent occupants of the role of "prophet," which seemed to have evolved initially at the turn of the twentieth century, perhaps in response to the Arab intrusion into Nuerland (Evans-Pritchard 1940a: 184–189). The prophets, who claimed possession by the gods, seemed to have been, from a political point of view (Evans-Pritchard 1940a: 189; cp. Johnson 1994), "pivots of federation between adjacent tribes and

personified the structural principle of opposition in its widest expression, the unity and homogeneity of Nuer against foreigners."

In light of these various forms of social differentiation, let us reconsider Evans-Pritchard's characterization of the Nuer as egalitarian, democratic, and libertarian. Does Evans-Pritchard suggest that being egalitarian, democratic, and libertarian, at both organizational and personal levels, required an exact similarity among all individual Nuer males? Must Nuer all have had exactly the same social position, abilities, and influence for political equality to obtain? Clearly, Evans-Pritchard does not think so. Some Nuer were senior, and some were junior; some were of the home clan, and some not; some were faster and braver; some had more character and ability. Notwithstanding these differences among Nuer, they were, in Evans-Pritchard's eyes, politically equal because every Nuer believed himself equal to every other and accepted no one as superior and because no positions of hierarchical authority existed among the Nuer and no one was able to monopolize "organized force" (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940: 14). Thus, for Evans-Pritchard, to say that the Nuer were equal is not to say that they were all or always exactly the same.

The significance of the Nuer and similar egalitarian, acephalous societies for political philosophy is not hard to determine. British philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes had for centuries argued that collective sovereignty could exist only when vested in hierarchical offices and that order could obtain only when authority was granted to officeholders. According to the arguments of these British philosophers, the only alternative to a hierarchical sovereign was the war of all against all, a circumstance in which human life would be nasty, brutish, and short. In this view, an egalitarian, acephalous society could not exist, and "ordered anarchy," as Evans-Pritchard characterized the Nuer political system, was an oxymoron, a self-refuting contradiction (which is probably why Evans-Pritchard liked the phrase so much). The fact that anthropological research had given the lie to such arguments was not lost on Meyer Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940: 4).

The intellectual problem that exercised Evans-Pritchard in his work on Nuer politics was not so much equality versus hierarchy, which could not, for a British subject at the height of empire, have had the same ideological and moral compulsion that it does for North Americans

presently, but rather, in the tradition of the British political philosophers, the problem of order. Life requires some degree of order, so that it is possible to know the consequences of one's acts, and some degree of security, so that it is possible to enjoy the fruits of one's acts. How can this order and security be guaranteed without specialized institutions—governments, police, courts—devoted to ensuring them? The Nuer provided Evans-Pritchard (1940a: chap. 4) with one answer: Order and security could be provided in a decentralized fashion, wherein the instruments and skills of coercion were distributed universally, through the contingent, oppositional balancing of cohesive political groups or segments at all levels of population and territorial size. This system worked internally among the Nuer in much the same way that it works, imperfectly, in international relations: Nuer knew that attacks on the interests, property, or persons of other Nuer would bring swift retaliation upon themselves and that large alliances formed against more distant Nuer would be balanced by equally fierce alliances seeking retribution. The system of segmentary, balanced opposition was thus a deterrent to predatory adventures among the Nuer, who found alternative opportunity for predation with less risk against outsiders, primarily the Dinka. Our interest, though, is equality, rather than segmentary political systems per se, and so I will not pursue here a discussion of the ingenious models of segmentary political systems (Evans-Pritchard 1940b, 1940a: chaps. 4 and 5; Fortes 1940, 1945; Middleton and Tait 1958; Lewis 1961; Sahlins 1961, 1968; Gellner 1969; Irons 1975) and corresponding critical arguments by other commentators (Peters 1967; Gutkind 1970; Marx 1977, 1996; Salzman 1978b; Rosen 1984; Munson 1993; Kraus 1998). More relevant for the present inquiry are the factors that might underlie or bear on Nuer political equality, a subject to which I will return later.

Was Evans-Pritchard's characterization of the Nuer as "egalitarian" less a fair assessment than a reflection of his insensitivity to hierarchy, to the repression of the disadvantaged, and to the hegemony of the privileged? Certainly, Evans-Pritchard was not unfamiliar with political hierarchy, having grown up in Great Britain during the height of the British Empire. Furthermore, his initial research was in hierarchical society, an African kingdom (Evans-Pritchard 1971). And in the introduction to *African Political Systems*, which he coauthored with Fortes, the "egalitarian and segmentary societies," such as the Nuer, labeled "Group B . . .

stateless societies," were contrasted with "Group A . . . societies which have centralized authority, administrative machinery, and judicial institutions . . . and in which cleavages of wealth, privilege, and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority" (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940: 9), which the majority of the accounts in the volume (six of Group A to three of Group B) described.

It was quite clear to Fortes and Evans-Pritchard that many African societies were strongly hierarchical. In fact, some of these hierarchical societies were pastoral, at least in their elite class. They included in their volume a chapter by Oberg on "The Kingdom of Ankole in Uganda," which discussed the many cases of conquest states imposed by pastoral peoples: "Whenever these pastoralists settled upon territory already occupied by the Bantu agriculturalists they made a uniform adjustment, they conquered the agriculturalists, and established themselves a ruling class. . . . Everywhere in this corridor [of Uganda were states with] the pastoralists as rulers and the agriculturalists as serfs" (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940: 121). Pastoral elites in conquest states (see also Maquet 1961) were clearly not egalitarian. Evans-Pritchard's characterization of the Nuer as egalitarian was situated, specifically in the case of the "Introduction" to *African Political Systems*, within a broad range of political variation that included bands, tribes using segmentary lineage systems, and kingdoms and conquest states (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940: 6–7 and passim).

Within this broad range of political variation, the Nuer are only one of many pastoral peoples who have been described by their ethnographers as egalitarian tribesmen. Here, we can do no more than briefly sample a few of these accounts for the purposes of illustration.

I. M. Lewis begins his 1961 account by quoting Sir Richard Burton's description of the Somali as "a fierce and turbulent race of Republicans," and his own vignette of the Somali also stresses the political:

The Somali have no indigenous centralized government. And this lack of formal government and of instituted authority is strongly reflected in their extreme independence and individualism. Few writers have failed to notice the formidable pride of the Somali nomad, his extraordinary sense of superiority as an individual, and his firm conviction that he is sole master of his actions and subject to no authority except that of God (1961: 1).

In this indigenous "egalitarian system" (Lewis 1961: 30), "every man has a direct say in traditional government."

The political organization of the Samburu (Spencer 1965) was, like that of the Nuer, based upon a combination of a segmentary lineage system and an age-set system. But among the Samburu, as among related peoples such as the Maasai (Spear and Waller 1993) and other East African pastoralists such as the Karimojong (Dyson-Hudson 1966), there was much greater weight on the age-set system (Schneider 1979: 183), in which males grouped by time of initiation move gradually through the age-grades of boyhood, moranhood (warriorhood), and elderhood. Within this system, "the basic relations which characterize the age-set system are equality between members of one age-set and inequality between members of different age-sets in which there is a moral obligation to show respect for seniority" (Spencer 1965: 81–82). Paul Spencer calls the Samburu system a "gerontocracy" because the elders held power over the junior grades and allocated to themselves the privileges of power. Yet the structural inequality was temporary for particular age-groups and their constituent individuals, as over time, these always moved up and gained status and power. Thus, Spencer, in his concluding chapter subtitled "The Gerontocratic Society," cannot but acknowledge "the egalitarian principle which pervades the whole society" (1965: 305).

Turning to the Middle East, Bedouin pastoral tribes have long been seen as egalitarian (Pouillon 1996). William Lancaster, in his description of the Rwala, is particularly eloquent:

The Bedu system is based on the premises of equality, autonomy and the acquisition of reputation. Thus no man has power over another nor can his authority outstrip his reputation. . . . In a system where every man is equally free to follow his own bent and where there is no mechanism for coercion, the only political power available is the ability to influence the decisions of others. This rests on four factors: good information, the ability to give good advice, a reputation for sound counsel and audience to influence.

With no centralised power of any sort, no form of coercion can be brought to bear. . . . All men are jurally equal and the only constraint is the desire to succeed within the system, which means being swayed by public opinion.

No individual has political power, no group has political power and no family has political power; power is restricted to the workings of public opinion. Even public opinion has no formal coercive power; co-operation can be withdrawn and that is all. . . . All men are autonomous and equal and there is no mechanism whereby these principles can be overridden—the best that can be done is to exert influence through reputation (1997: 73–77).

This picture is similar to that presented by Donald Cole (1975: 88) of the Al Murrah Bedouin of the Empty Quarter: "The relationships between households which unite in a lineage are strictly based on egalitarianism. There are no lineage leaders, except for the *agid* who served as a temporary leader during warfare. There are also no special lineage councils; all decisions are based on consensus."

But what of tribal leadership? Does not a sheikh have some power? Not among the Rwala, according to Lancaster (1997):

Political power and authority, in their normal usage, have little relevance to Rwala society. Political power implies socially legitimised right, while authority implies a moral right, to exercise coercion. Neither of these rights exist among the Rwala (95). Political power does not exist (96).

The sheikh's prime task is mediation and negotiation (87). [Within the tribe], where the "leader" has no coercive powers at all, his best means of justifying and maintaining his position is by being better informed than anyone else (93). [In external relations], the sheikh has no authority to treat on the tribe's behalf, for there is no legal framework nor coercive force available to him. All the sheikh can do is represent the tribe and bank on knowing what the tribe want in any particular circumstance. He then has to persuade the tribe to accept the results of his negotiation (87).

Cole's description of the amir of the Al Murrah (1975: 96, see also 98–99) is similar:

In practice among the Al Murrah, the tribal leaders are only slightly differentiated from the rest of the tribe. The Al Murrah are strongly egalitarian. Their leaders function as first among equals and are members of lineages and clans just like all members of the Al Murrah. . . . They rule by persuasion and not by threat of physical force, and their continuation

as leaders results from their ability to reconcile conflicts within the tribe and to successfully represent the tribe in dealing with the outside world.

Evans-Pritchard (1949: 59), in his account of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, finds a pattern similar to those among the Arabian Bedouin: "[The sheikh's] social position is unformalized and . . . he must in no sense be regarded as a ruler or administrator. Bedouin respect their Shaikhs, but they do not regard them as superiors. Rather their influence and wealth are considered as capital to be drawn on for the benefit of whoever is in need of them." Lancaster's (1997: 162) final words in his account of the Rwala are that "this is really what the whole Bedu system is about, freedom and equality."

Lancaster's characterization of the Rwala applies well to other pastoral peoples with segmentary lineage systems, which institutionalize decentralization and wide distribution of the instruments and organization of coercion, of the rights of movement and association, equality of status, and individualistic and democratic decisionmaking.

William Irons (1975: 2, see also 1994: 175–176) contrasts the stateless, segmentary political system of the Yomut and other neighboring Turkmen peoples with "the political organization of other tribal groups in Persia which tend to be sharply stratified in their political structure and have traditionally been more closely integrated into the state organization." In contrast, the Turkmen were organized into segmentary tribes (Irons 1975: chap. 3, 1994: 181–182) and "had no political hierarchy, no tribal chiefs." There were no permanent or hereditary tribal offices among the Turkmen (Irons 1975: chap. 3, 1994: 187), only strong men who served as *saqlau* (protector), in charge of the extortionate protection racket that was worked on Persian peasant villages by the Turkmen.

I, too, have seen firsthand the workings of a segmentary lineage system among pastoral tribes of the Sarhad of Iranian Baluchistan, in this case (Salzman 1983, 2000a) combined uncomfortably with a weak chiefship, and I can attest to its egalitarian, democratic, and decentralizing qualities.

What have we learned from this recitation of ethnographic characterizations? According to these accounts as I read them, indigenous political systems varied considerably on a continuum ranging from hierar-

chical at one end to egalitarian at the other. *Egalitarian* here means a lack of hierarchical authority, diffusion of the means of coercion, and individual and democratic decisionmaking. *Hierarchical* means centralized authority, unequally distributed means of coercion, and elite decisionmaking. According to these criteria, pastoralists who formed the elites in indigenous conquest kingdoms fall toward the hierarchical end of the continuum; indigenous pastoral polities based on age-grades, or "replicate" structures (Dyson-Hudson 1966: 255), fall toward the egalitarian end of the continuum; and indigenous pastoral polities based on segmentary lineage systems fall at the egalitarian end of the continuum.

If this review of pastoral polities is correct, what are we to make of the assertion that "the egalitarian nature of African pastoralists" is a "pastoral myth" (Fratkin, Roth, and Galvin 1994: 9)? It does not appear from our cursory review of the literature that anyone suggested that all indigenous African pastoral polities were egalitarian or even equally egalitarian. However, some indigenous African and other pastoral polities, as illustrated above, were indeed, according to the ethnographic accounts, truly egalitarian in any reasonable use of that term. This observation makes it difficult, I believe, to accept the assessment that the egalitarian nature of (certain) pastoral polities was a "myth." In fact, such a blanket denial of the existence of egalitarian polities seems implicitly to assert the universal presence of hierarchical political structures and deny that there was a wide range of variation among indigenous polities. Apparently, as Leslie Sponsel (1997: 621) has argued, "revisionists tend to ignore the tremendous diversity in regions, environments, cultures, and economies, politics, and histories."

Thus, I am obliged to assert what I had thought was an incontrovertible understanding of anthropology—that human societies and cultures vary in important ways—together with its corollary, that pastoral societies vary in important ways, including in their degree of egalitarianism.

Does Political Equality Exist in Tribe-State Relations?

There is, however, a further argument against the existence of egalitarian segmentary and replicate pastoral tribes, and we cannot leave the question of politics until it has been addressed. The argument is that

there are no egalitarian tribes because tribes can only be understood as epiphenomena of state polities and that therefore tribes themselves occupy a low position in a hierarchical society. The "soft" position is put forward by Morton Fried (1975: 100): "Tribalism can be seen as a reaction to the presence of one or more complex political structures, which is to say states, in its direct or indirect environment." In this view, there is no possible reason for rural communities to unite into tribes, rather than to remain "open" and "loosely knit" (Fried 1975: 76), except as a response to state pressure. "Tribalism cannot be analyzed in terms of vague conventional notions about 'tribes' and 'tribalism,' but must be approached through our knowledge of stratification and the state, colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism" (Fried 1975: 104).

The "hard" position of this stance is argued by Emanuel Marx (1996: 109): "While it is true that the 'tribesmen' often put the tribe at the centre of their image of society, they do so not because they view it as an autonomous agglomerate. The tribe refers to their incorporation in the state and to the necessity to align every aspect of their lives to this reality. They do not consider the tribe to be a closed social system, but rather as an indirectly ruled administrative division or dependency of the state." In this view, there are no such things as independent tribal polities because tribes are all and always administrative units of the state. Therefore, it is mistaken to consider tribes as polities in their own right and, I would infer, futile to debate to what extent they are or are not egalitarian.

Now, undoubtedly, there is something to this position. Some tribes, such as the Shahsevan of Iran (Tapper 1979: 18), have been directly constructed by governments. In other cases, tribes are closely allied with the government; for example, members of the Al Murrah of Saudi Arabia (Cole 1975: 107–109) serve as members of the Saudi National Guard and receive their main income from this service. And the primary task of the Al Murrah leaders of the tribe is to act as "intermediaries between the tribe and the government" (Cole 1975: 96). Nor is it rare for tribes to be totally dominated by the state, as Emanuel Marx (1967) shows for the Bedouin of the Negev and Talal Asad (1970; cp. Salzman 1979) demonstrates for the Kababish of the northern Sudan.

Yet here again, we have an argument that asserts that all tribes have been exactly the same: all and always administrative units of the state.

This position also implies that all states have always been exactly the same: omnipotent, hegemonic powers with total, effective control of their claimed range of suzerainty. And further, it holds that the relations between states and tribes have been constant. But it is obvious that these assumptions are unwarranted and profoundly antihistorical.

Preindustrial, agrarian states were highly variable from one to another and through time in their power and effective control over the populations and territory that they claimed (Tapper 1983). In fact, the modern state, with effective control throughout its territory right up to the borders of neighboring states, is very unusual. From a historical point of view, it makes more sense to see premodern, agrarian states as centers of power with varying degrees of reach and effectiveness over claimed territory and populations. It was not unusual for the effective reach of one state to fall far short of neighboring states, sometimes for long periods and over large areas. Thus, there were often large stateless areas in which other kinds of social groupings and polities, such as segmentary tribes, could and did flourish and hold sway. Often, these stateless polities engaged in predation against populations and resources claimed by neighboring states, and they sometimes entered into direct conflict with the forces of these states, occasionally even conquering them (Gellner 1981; Tapper 1983).

Without entering into a detailed and lengthy historical survey, let us just touch on some examples of the relations between tribes and states that illustrate the existence of tribes as independent polities. In the Maghreb and in Morocco especially, there was a well-established appreciation that some tribes were tied to, dependent on, and loyal to the central government, whereas others fell outside the control of the government and operated independently from it. As Clifford Geertz, Hidred Geertz, and Larry Rosen put it,

The great Berber dynasties of the eleventh to fifteenth centuries—the Almoravids, the Almohads, and the Merinids—arose from the mountain and desert fringes of the country and, fueled by religious zeal, successively established themselves as the primary forces. Moreover, they helped to establish the pattern of a central government, or *makzen*, that was focused on a few major families and that sought—through alliance and military foray, intrigue and negotiation—to maintain solidity at the

center and control over the tribes at the periphery. Regions of governmental control and local independence—*bled l-makzen* and *bled s-siba*—were not, however, geographically defined because constellations of power were numerous, shifting, and not organized along simply territorial lines. Even when makhzen dominance was amenable to actual enforcement—especially in the major cities—it was constantly subject to internal and external pressures. Rather than hierarchical, the pattern of political organization, from this formative period, became horizontal, and the bases of recruitment, alliance, and power were fractionated and multiple (1979: 13).

This description is reminiscent of Ibn Khaldun's model (Gellner 1981) of the dynastic cycle, in which degenerate state elites are replaced by solidary and hardy tribal intruders, who take over the government and in their turn degenerate, to be replaced by the next wave of tribal invaders.

Farther to the east in Libya, within the sphere of influence of the Ottoman Empire, the hold of the imperial authorities over the tribes of the desert was hardly more than notional. Evans-Pritchard (1949) describes the situation in Cyrenaica:

Outside the towns all is Bedouin and the Turkish, and later the Italian Administration, found that they could not get a grip on the Bedouin of Cyrenaica as they could on the peasantry of Tripolitania (46).

Nor could the Bedouin be coerced by force or law. The tribes were largely inaccessible and they were stronger than the towns, even with the administration behind them. The Bedouin were not afraid of the Turkish Administration, which sat very lightly on their shoulders (44).

In the Levant as well, the grip of the Ottoman Empire varied over time, leaving room for local and regional formations to operate independently. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Palestine was under the Ottomans:

There was little centrally maintained law and order in it; the country was poor, far from the central seat of the empire, and topographically difficult to control. . . . During this period, . . . the gravest danger to the villages came from the bedouin. When local rule was weak, strong bedouin

tribes raided peasant settlements, looted their crops and animals, killed their men and destroyed their property. Also, the powerful [bedouin] shaikhs exacted a special protection tax [*khuwwa*] from the terrorized peasants. The Ottoman authorities could not, and probably did not need to, act against these shaikhs. Instead, they often recognized the shaikhs as local rulers and entrusted to them various administrative tasks, including the collection of taxes. Except in the few urban centres, the bedouin practically dominated the country (Cohen 1965: 4–5).

In these conditions, land was cheap and abundant, and the main form of wealth was livestock. Village agropastoralists, often already seminomadic on their desert fringe, would sometimes join bedouin tribes:

When conditions in the villages were bad—when taxation was heavy and the pressure of bedouin was strong—the villagers tended to become nomadic. Nomadism had many advantages. Nomads paid no taxes, were not conscripted to the army, were armed (while the peasants were prohibited from keeping arms), could amass wealth in the form of livestock without being haunted by the unscrupulous tax collectors, and could even engage in occasional agriculture (Cohen 1965: 6–7).

In the Hadramaut of Yemen (Bujra 1971: 5), the desert was broken by oasis towns based upon irrigation cultivation: "The Hadramis have traditionally seen their society as being composed of the 'civilized' people (*hadr*) of the towns and the 'primitive' tribesmen (*bedu*)." How were the *hadr* and *bedu* organized? "Traditionally, . . . towns . . . have always had centralized political systems and elaborate administrations" (Bujra 1971: 6).

All areas outside the towns, however, were tribal areas, in which each tribe had its own demarcated territory. Within the tribe, political organization followed the familiar lines of the segmentary system. Within and between tribes there were endemic feuds at the root of which was competition for scarce resources and for the politically significant quality of "honour." Tribesmen, unlike townsmen, were armed with rifles and besides conducting feuds often engaged in highway robbery on caravans owned by townsmen (Bujra 1971: 6).

What was the relationship between the hierarchical *hadr* and the segmentary *bedu*?

The unarmed townsmen could not look after their farms which were always outside the perimeter of towns, and thus had to get protection from tribesmen. The Sultans were militarily weak and their territories limited to the large towns. They had treaties with tribes demarcating the boundaries of their towns from tribal areas. They even paid tribute in the form of gifts to some of the larger tribes, and when a Sultan wanted to move from one town to another in his territory he had to pass through tribal territory with a heavily armed guard (Bujra 1971: 7).

The towns were, in effect, "isolated pockets," and most of the territory was occupied by the independent, segmentary tribes (Bujra 1971: 7).

For our final example, let us turn to Iran (Persia), the case that I know best from my own research. Here, too, as in many Middle Eastern states, royal dynasties were overthrown by tribes that established new dynasties (Sykes 1969; Avery 1965: 23; Tapper 1983). Beck (1986: 14) underlines the importance of tribes in Iranian dynastic formation: "In Iran, all major ruling dynasties from A.D. 1000 to 1926 were tribal in origin, except the Safavids, and all, including the Safavids, based their military strength on tribal forces. Ruling dynasties developed when tribal leaders on the peripheries of state grew in military and political power, conquered existing states, and became state rulers." But the interests of each new royal dynasty lay with the cities and villages rather than the tribes (Avery 1965: 23), and the tribes continued to "refuse wholly to conform to the wishes of the central government, [preferring] to be in control of their own affairs and in charge of their own destinies" (Sunderland 1968: 611). Sometimes, the state was strong and succeeded in integrating, suppressing, or neutralizing the tribes. But "whenever the centre weakened, the state disintegrated into autonomous units ruled over by chiefs who ceased to own any authority higher than themselves" (Avery 1965: 27). Such was the situation directly observed during service with the South Persian Rifles by Percy Sykes (1969: vol. 2, 481) in 1917, when "the nomad tribes began to lose all fear of the Government."

There were certain robber tribes who lived mainly by brigandage, and . . . other tribes occasionally sent out raiding parties. . . . Moreover,

robbing was the custom of the country and the nomads were crusted old Tories, resenting the idea of a new order. Persia had been brought to misery and poverty by the insecurity of life and property, and the nomads were the perpetrators of outrage after outrage which had materially reduced the population in numbers and in wealth. . . . The Government, during the many years I had known Persia, had not attempted to deal with this difficult but fundamental problem (Sykes 1969: vol. 2, 481).

Even in post-World War II Iran (Sunderland 1968: 635), the tribes were said to be "of much greater significance within Iran than their numbers alone might suggest since they constitute well-organized and disciplined, economic, social, and even political units within the state, and for certain vital purposes hold themselves aloof from the activity of the central political authority to which they are all in theory subject."

To be fair, any government of Iran faces a formidable task in imposing order. The ethnically Persian cities and villages that provide the economic and political base for any central government are surrounded and at various critical points penetrated by ethnically distinct tribal populations, some numbering in the hundreds of thousands and even millions in population: the Turkic Qashqa'i in southwest Iran, the Lurs in the west, the Kurds in the northwest, the Turkmen in the northeast, and the Baluch in the southeast. Although all of these populations and their territories have always been claimed by the Persian Crown, they have never defined themselves in terms of or felt loyalty to the Persian state. Whenever they have been able to, which has been frequently over the centuries, these tribes have acted independently of the Crown, pursuing their own visions and goals, treating with foreign powers, and attacking Persian populations and even the forces of the Crown itself.

The Yomut Turkmen of the Gorgan Plain, a population of some 138,000 in 1966 (Irons 1975: 30), provide an excellent example of independent and quasi-independent tribesmen within the Iranian state's putative borders. "The Turkmen . . . were, for the most part, free of effective political control by any neighboring sedentary state" (Irons 1975: 7). Irons continues:

The Turkmen have also been a force with which sedentary states have had to cope. States based on sedentary society have often adopted a largely defensive policy against the Turkmen. . . . At other times, sedentary political



FIGURE 3.1 Among the Yomut Turkmen, social control, defense, and predation depended on the military capacity of each man and each lineage. Turkmen coercive power, together with nomadic mobility, assured the Yomut freedom and autonomy by keeping them beyond the control of the state. (Wm. Irons, 1966)

leaders have sought military support from various Turkmen groups. For example, the Turkmen of Iran were instrumental in the establishment of the Kajar dynasty of Iran in the late eighteenth century, and opponents of the Iranian constitution sought Turkmen support in the revolution of 1909 (1975: 8).

But support in establishing a dynasty did not mean subservience to that dynasty.

During the later Kajar Period (late 1800s through 1925), the Iranian government enjoyed only a very limited ability to control the Yomut [Turkmen]. . . . Usually the government was able to collect taxes and conscripts from the [cultivating] chomir near the seat of provincial administration,

Asterabad (modern Gorgan), but was seldom able to punish offenses [extortion and slave raiding] by these chomir against [Persian] Welayet villages or to intervene in the internal wars and feuds of the chomir of this region. As a rule the government had no effective control over the chomir farthest from the seat of administration in the eastern portion of Yomut country, or over the [totally pastoral] charwa (Irons 1975: 66–67).

Nor was military power effective in enforcing control. “Occasionally the Kajar government sent military expeditions into Yomut territory in an attempt to exercise a degree of control. Battles occasionally occurred between Persian military expeditions and the Turkmen, but they were seldom a serious threat to the Turkmen, and the Persian military was not greatly feared” (Irons 1975: 67). Gorgan Yomut Turkmen nomadism (Irons 1974, 1975: 72–73), especially in the rich, humid regions of the southern Gorgan Plain, was more an adaptation to the political environment than to the physical and biological environment, for the Yomut could always escape any major Iranian military threat by simply packing up and moving north to or across the Kara Kum Desert to their kinsmen, the Khiva Yomut. For the Turkmen, mobility was a necessity for maintaining autonomy and equality.

The ordinary Turkmen saw his own situation as vastly more desirable than that of the Welayet [Persian peasants]. He also perceived that his mobility was the factor responsible for his ability to escape the plight of the Welayet. His attitude is summarized in a stereotyped threat . . . : “I do not have a mill with willow trees. I have a horse and a whip. I will kill you and go.” The reference to the mill reflects the notion that immobile wealth could undermine a person’s willingness to fight in his own defense, and could lead one to the subservient status of the Welayet peasant (Irons 1975: 70).

This Turkmen conception of the opposition between Turkmen tribesmen and Persian peasants is a highly suggestive one, to which I will return shortly.

In southeastern Iran is Baluchistan, where I carried out ethnographic research for twenty-six months between 1968 and 1976 among the relatively small and scattered pastoral nomadic tribes of the highland Sarhad

region. The Yarahmadzai with whom I lived numbered something over 5,000 when I was there; the Gamshadzai and Ismailzai tribes were somewhat smaller. Throughout the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth century, there was no Persian government presence in the Sarhad and no effective government control. The tribes were autonomous polities operating according to their own lights. In this, we are assured by Brig. Gen. R. E. H. Dyer (1921: 15), who led a British Indian Army punitive mission against these tribes in 1916: "The Sarhad . . . is occupied by a number of nomad tribes who claim absolute independence. At this time these tribes were causing considerable embarrassment and difficulty to the Indian Government."

Dyer's report is consistent with earlier accounts. When Henry Pottinger (2003 [1810]) crossed the Makran in the south of Baluchistan, the Sarhad was so unsafe he could not go there. George Curzon (1892: 262–263), drawing on the reports of Capt. R. H. Jennings, who visited the Sarhad in 1885, says of the Sarhadi tribes that "all were Sunnis, all detested the Persians, all subsisted upon rapine; and the Persian authority amounted to little more than a prudent recognition of local chieftains and an occasional armed expedition for the collection of revenue." In the Sarhad, tribal leaders operated with little outside interference (Dyer 1921: 40): "The central portion [of the Sarhad] is held by the Yarahommedzais [Yarahmadzai] under Jiand Khan, an elderly man, who has been undisputed chief, and a sort of over-lord of the whole of the Sarhad, for very many years. He has been looked upon by his own and neighbouring tribes as well-nigh a demi-god." Percy Sykes (1902: 131), a major at the time, traveled through the Sarhad in 1893 and because of the Yarahmadzai "raiding propensities," refers to the chief of the Yarahmadzai as "the notorious Jiand Khan."

The independence of the Baluchi tribes vis-à-vis the Persian Crown was demonstrated by their frequent, energetic, and ruthless predatory raiding of Persian villages and caravans, which featured, among other pleasantries, the carrying off of Persians for sale or local use as slaves, thus paralleling, in a modest way, one of the major industries of the Turkmen in the north. According to Dyer, who in the title of his book referred to the tribesmen as "the raiders of the Sarhad,"

the [Sarhadi] tribes literally live by raiding. They know no fear, and seldom show mercy. They not only raid travellers but villages, and, on oc-

casions, large towns. . . . The raiders not only loot jewels, carpets, food, cattle and herds, but women and children, whom they subject to a life of utter misery.

Persian ladies are frequently carried off in this way, to become eventually abject slaves subject to inter-tribal barter (1921: 42–43).

Nor did the Sarhadis seem particularly gentle in intertribal relations (Dyer 1921: 43): "But, although they are utterly lawless in regard to other people, their few inter-tribal laws are fairly strictly observed. These laws, however, chiefly consist of the doctrine that Might is Right and Success pardons all Sins. In the Sarhad a man is expected to tell the truth—unless a lie better suits his purpose."

The Sarhadi tribes were finally "pacified," that is, brought under the effective control of the Persian Crown, after a lengthy military expedition sent by Reza Shah (Arfa 1964: 253–257). "They had been practically independent until 1923, when Reza Shah had sent the newly organised Sistan Brigade to occupy the town and old fort of Khash, in the district of Sarhad" (Arfa 1964: 254). But it was not until 1935 that the Sarhadi tribes finally submitted to the government (Arfa 1964: 257). Even then, effectively encapsulated by the Iranian state, the tribesmen retained their tribal identity and loyalty, and they continued to rely on their segmentary organization for internal security (Salzman 1983, 2000a).

The Turkmen and Baluch were among the more remote tribes in Iran, located geographically along distant borders and politically beyond the sphere of effective state control (until several decades into the twentieth century). But other tribes, such as the large confederacies of the Bakhtiari (Garthwaite 1983a, 1983b) and Qashqa'i (Beck 1986), penetrated into the heartland of Persian Iran—the Bakhtiari to the city of Isfahan, the Qashqa'i to the city of Shiraz—and were much more integrally involved with the Iranian state than the Turkmen or Baluch. Gene Garthwaite (1983a: 10) describes the Bakhtiari under the Qajars during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: "The Qajar government's demands *vis-à-vis* tribal confederations and other *autonomous groups* were comparatively simple—recognition and submission characterized by payment of taxes, conscription of recruits, and observance of royal suzerainty" [emphasis added]. The Bakhtiari were treated as an administrative unit of the state, but their cooperation and compliance were far from guaranteed. "They often defied the rulers of the Afshar and Zand

eras" (Garthwaite 1983a: 8). In 1909, the Bakhtiari, in support of the constitutionalists, marched on Tehran and occupied it and brought down the Qajar king, Muhammad 'Ali Shah (Avery 1965: chaps. 9–12; Garthwaite 1983a: 112–125). Many parallels are found with the Qashqa'i. They successfully launched a military rebellion and occupation of southern cities in 1946 against the Soviet occupation of northwestern Iran, against leftist members of the government, and against political and economic conditions in Fars Province and thus contributed to the change of government and withdrawal of the Soviets (Beck 1986: 148–150; Avery 1965: 396–397). Less successfully, from 1980 to 1982, the Qashqa'i khans and some supporters rebelled against the Islamic Republic, but the insurgents did not gain wide support and failed, the leaders being executed or jailed (Beck 1986: 324–342).

The Qashqa'i and the Bakhtiari tribes were, as political entities, partly indigenous and partly (particularly as centralized confederacies) creations of their interactions with the Iranian state, which tried to govern them by means of indirect rule. As Beck (1986: 9), referring to the centralized Qashqa'i confederacy, puts it, "The polity emerged simultaneously with the attempted extension of state structures into areas heretofore relatively free of them." These confederacies were to a degree autonomous and to a degree under the control of the state, the degree of each depending upon the time and circumstances. Unlike the Turkmen and Sarhadi Baluch of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which I would call independent tribes, the Bakhtiari and Qashqa'i were what I would call "encapsulated" tribes, partially and varyingly under the control of state authorities. These encapsulated tribes were relatively much more hierarchical and centralized (Garthwaite 1983a: chap. 3; Beck 1986: chap. 8; Irons 1979a; Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940: 16) than the more egalitarian, decentralized, segmentary Turkmen and Baluch and most of the other tribes referred to so far—the Nuer; the northern Somali; and the Cyrenaican, Levantine, Rwala, Al Murrah, and Hadramaut Bedouin. The encapsulated tribes, although subject to pressures and coercion of the government, were nonetheless, because of their own organizational and coercive resources, in a much stronger position to defend their interests than the peasantry. Completely subservient at the bottom of the state hierarchy, the peasants were totally at the mercy of state powers, which is why the

Turkmen looked upon the Persian peasants with such contempt, although, in modern eyes, the peasants deserved a larger portion of pity. The peasants had no political autonomy; they had no coercive resources to apply in defending their interests.

Thus far in our selective survey of pastoralists, we have emphasized segmentary tribes because it is these that manifest the disputed quality of political egalitarianism. But we have already seen that there are pastoralists encapsulated in state systems and that these are markedly less egalitarian, substantially more hierarchical, more centralized, and less segmentary. This leads us to ask whether there are pastoralists who do not have the autonomy of independent or encapsulated tribes, who are more fully integrated into the lowest levels of state systems, who have no coercive resources with which to defend their interests, and who thus are totally dependent upon the tender mercies of state agents, like the Persian peasant villagers despised by the Turkmen. Are there, in short, peasant pastoralists?

In fact, we can draw on quite a few ethnographic accounts of pastoral peoples who are fully integrated into state political systems, much the same as peasant cultivators (Salzman 1996 and Chapter 5 in this volume). Among the many cases of state-integrated, nonnomadic pastoralists in which males lived and worked in the pastures would be the shepherds of Corsica (Holway 1978; Ravis-Giordani 1983) and Sardinia (Meloni 1984; Angioni 1989; Schweizer 1988; Salzman 1999) and the Reika breeders of Rajasthan (Salzman 1986). Nomadic pastoralists who were fully integrated into states would include such peoples as the Sarakatsani of northern Greece (Campbell 1964), the Yörük of southern Turkey (Bates 1973), the Komachi of southern Iran (Bradburd 1990), the Bharawad of Gujarat (Salzman 1988b), and the Gujars of the Himalayas in northern India (Gooch 1992).

These state-integrated pastoral peoples are not usually called "tribal" or said to make up "tribes" by their ethnographers. This is because the word *tribe* has the connotation of political independence, which none of these pastoralists possess. They do not have an internal political structure, political leaders, or a sense of political unity; they do not have an organization or tools of coercion; and rarely if ever do they engage in coercion against outsiders. They are not polities or political entities; their *raison d'être* is economic, not political. The contrast between

these pastoral peasants, integrated into hierarchical state systems, and segmentary tribesmen is striking.

The critical factor underlying egalitarianism is thus not pastoralism. We have seen that the political standing of pastoralists ranges from egalitarian to hierarchical, and the main influence is the degree of political independence. Those pastoralists who were relatively free of state control were organized in a segmentary fashion and were decentralized and egalitarian. Those pastoralists who were effectively encapsulated within state systems, maintaining limited autonomy, were more hierarchical and centralized and correspondingly less segmentary. Those pastoralists who were fully integrated into the lower strata of states had lost their political structure and virtually all of their ability to mobilize politically. The privileging of "pastoralism" as a category and the assumption that all pastoralists should be alike is based upon the mistaken idea that "infrastructural" production is *the* determining factor of social and political life. It is time that this economic reductionism, which regards political relations as secondary or epiphenomenal, be put to rest. From our wide-ranging (but necessarily incomplete) review of pastoral peoples, we have seen that a major factor underlying the degree of egalitarianism is political—that factor being whether the population is an independent, segmentary tribe; an encapsulated tribal chiefdom; or an integrated peasant population.

Fried's (1975: 100) argument that tribal organization is always and only a reaction to more complex political structures in the "direct or indirect environment" is probably mistaken. There are quite good local reasons for tribal organization, especially among pastoral peoples. One is that, among pastoralists in marginal environments, climatic and biotic variability requires access to large regions and depends upon wide-ranging mobility, which can only be made possible by regional social organization, such as segmentary tribal organization. In other words, tribal organization provides secure access to highly variable but critical pastures. A second reason is that pastoralists hold extremely valuable capital wealth in their herds, which, because it is concentrated and self-mobile, is highly vulnerable to theft or extortion. In order to provide security to protect their wealth, pastoralists had established alliances, which we call tribes, to guarantee political and military support in the face of human predators. A third reason is that tribal organization, if it

could be constructed so as to be larger and more powerful than that of neighboring groups, provided a political and military advantage for expanding at the expense of neighboring groups (Sahlins 1961).

Furthermore, Fried's formulation of "direct or indirect environment" is so vague that almost anything could count as indirect environment. In fact, it is doubtful that a good case in favor of influence from more complex political structures could be made for many East African tribes. What complex polities caused the Nuer, the Karimojong, or the Samburu to form tribes? But even if Fried is correct and tribal organization is not indigenous—because pastoralists are not capable of organizing for their own purposes?—this would not be a very worrisome result, for people did organize politically independent tribes and live with egalitarian tribal ties, whether they creatively invented them themselves or creatively responded to external stimuli. Presumably, most social and political formations are "secondary" in this sense. All that this tells us is that people live under the influence of wider social, cultural, and political environments. I think we can all agree on this point.

Emanuel Marx's (1996: 109) argument that tribes are always administrative units of states and manifestations of indirect state rule seems to me difficult to sustain in light of the historical and ethnographic evidence. He is surely correct that many states would like tribes to be administrative units under their control and that some tribes, at some periods, have been under the indirect control of states. But there are many other cases, as I have illustrated above, in which tribes were totally or largely independent of state control. Agrarian states were by no means the omnipotent, hegemonic powers that modern states sometimes seem to be. Often, they were more dependent on tribal power than controlling, and they often were exploited and conquered by tribal power. And some tribes, such as the Nuer and other East African tribes, did not seem to have any contact with states prior to the twentieth century. We must, therefore, conclude that independent, segmentary tribes, internally egalitarian, were also not unequal in external relations, for they were not integrated, directly or indirectly, into the lower strata of state systems. Once again, an assertion of variability over space and time in relations between tribal peoples and states seems the only position supported by the evidence.

This clarification about pastoral peoples allows us to return to and address, if only in a cursory fashion, the most interesting question: Why were independent, segmentary tribes egalitarian? In what is perhaps the most ambitious attempt to answer this question, Harold Schneider (1979: 10), focusing on what he calls in his subtitle "The Economic Basis of Social Structure," argues that "where pastoralism (as a 1:1 ratio or better [of large livestock to persons]) occurs, egalitarianism results from the fluidity of this form of wealth and inability of any persons to monopolize its production." According to this approach, when no one can control the wealth in a society, no one can control other people, and so the society is egalitarian.

I would add a further ecological factor, the holding of basic resources—such as land, pasture, natural water sources, and uncultivated plants and trees—as common property, open and available to all members of the tribe or tribal section. Pastoralism is an extensive adaptation, requiring an extensive area of land per animal for production. "Natural" pasture, depending upon precipitation, is limited in nourishment and, in arid areas, is erratic and unpredictable. Consequently, the larger the area of land and thus pasture and water to which pastoralists have access, the better. For this reason, most land, pasture, and water were held collectively, as commons, open to all tribesmen. The Baluch referred to these natural resources as belonging to God rather than to man. And usually, even outsiders were regarded as having a legitimate or moral claim on use. When most of the productive resources are open and available to all, differences in accumulation of one element of production—livestock held as family property—are likely to be ephemeral.

In addition to these important economic factors, I would join Irons's Turkinen in pointing to the importance of mobility for equality. Mobility is a political factor, for it provides the possibility of escape from an oppressor, whether an autocratic leader, an extortionate tax collector, or an exploitive property owner. As Irons puts it,

The Yomut lack a political hierarchy because of their ability to use mobility as a political and military tactic. . . . All rural producers in the traditional Middle East preferred to resist government control over their affairs, but only some were able to do so. They also preferred to resist control by local chiefs for similar reasons: no one likes being controlled,

and political authority and exploitation have tended to go hand-in-hand in the Middle East. Living in rugged mountains or desert—areas that are difficult to control militarily—enhanced the ability to resist. When this was combined with high potential mobility, as in the Yomut Turkmen . . . , the ability to resist was especially high. . . . They did resist (1974: 186).

The nomadism so useful in adjusting to a variant environment also served to undercut hierarchical power.

It was the conjunction of these three factors—the fluidity of livestock, the holding of "natural" resources in common, and the mobility of herders—that led pastoralists, left on their own, to form egalitarian polities or, if encapsulated, to constrain their chiefs to respect public opinion and seek to work within the bounds of consent (see Chapter 4).

Does Economic Equality Exist Among Pastoralists?

Some revisionists (for example, Borgerhoff Mulder and Sellen 1994: 220) who reject the possibility of egalitarian pastoralists seem greatly exercised by "new documentation showing that inequalities exist in the ownership and/or control of livestock both between and within families." Is this truly the new and remarkable discovery that the authors seem breathlessly to be offering us?

It is true that Evans-Pritchard says that economic equality exists among the Nuer:

Cattle are everywhere evenly distributed. Hardly any one is entirely without them, and no one is very rich. Although cattle are a form of wealth that can be accumulated, a man never possesses many more beasts than his byre will hold, because as soon as his herd is large enough he, or one of his family, marries. . . . Every household goes through these alternating periods of poverty and comparative wealth. Marriages and epidemics prevent accumulation of cattle and [thus] no disparity in wealth offends the democratic sentiment of the people (1940a: 20).

He continues in this vein (1940a: 91): "There is little inequality of wealth and no class privilege. . . . It is true that cattle can be amassed, but . . . in

fact they are not. . . . When a herd has reached a certain size the owner—if one may speak of an owner of a herd in which many people have rights of one kind and another—is morally bound to dispose of a portion of it by either himself marrying or by assisting a relative to do so." But Evans-Pritchard does not substantiate these assertions with evidence of herd sizes and variations over time. And the variations he does notice might strike some other observers as significant.

Other ethnographers have, however, provided us with systematic information about livestock ownership and distribution. Neville Dyson-Hudson (1966: 49) presents a stock census indicating number of grazing units: from 124 grazing units with under 25 head through 118 grazing units with 100 to 200 head to 27 units with 200 to 400 head. What is the significance of these variations? Dyson-Hudson (1966: 49) explains: "Although cattleless families (or families extremely poor in cattle) and very large herds exist among the Karimojong, they are infrequent and impermanent. . . . The common range of herd size [is] between the approximate limits of 50–150 head." I. M. Lewis (1961: 57) also presents quantitative information on the distribution of livestock among 36 Somali families, documenting the range of variation in camel ownership from 4 to 500 and the small stock ownership from 0 to 1,400. These noted differences in livestock wealth do not lead Lewis to qualify his picture of Somali pastoralist independence and autonomy or of the complete absence of authority hierarchies. Schneider (1979: 204), too, has taken note of variation in cattle ownership: "Egalitarianism does not mean that there are no differences in wealth in stateless societies. Huge variations in the number of cattle or camels owned by different men may exist. In the subtribe of Wahi in Unyaturu the range seems to have extended from 0 to 1,500." Yet this does not lead to a hierarchical society. Schneider continues (1979: 204), "Any attempt by the rich to translate wealth into power is resisted." This view is echoed by Lancaster (1997: 73) in regard to the Rwala Bedouin: "Economic wealth and inherited family reputation are admittedly variable but neither confers more than a starting point for a personal reputation. Indeed, in some circumstances great wealth and high inherited reputation are a disadvantage, for more is expected of such a man and he has farther to fall." As well, Irons (1975) quantitatively documents differential livestock ownership for the Turkmen, as I did (Salzman 1972) for the Sarhadi Baluch.

The idea (Borgerhoff Mulder and Sellen 1994: 220) that differences in livestock distribution among pastoralists were previously unknown or unreported and that "new documentation" has exposed this remarkable, hitherto unknown fact does not stand up to scrutiny. Earlier researchers had indeed documented this fact, reported with so much excitement in recent works (see also Little 1992) as if it were an amazing new discovery.

What underlies the revisionist misrepresentation of earlier researchers is a more fundamental difference, specifically in regard to what *equality* means. For the ethnographers of independent segmentary tribes, *egalitarian* means a political system without an authority hierarchy, in which men and their families are on politically equal terms and can act with autonomy and in which stratification is absent. As Robert Kelly (1995: 296), writing about hunters and gatherers, says, "The term *egalitarian* does not mean that all members have the same amount of goods, food, prestige, or authority. Egalitarian societies are not those in which everyone is equal, or in which everyone has equal amounts of material goods, but those in which everyone has equal access to food, to the technology needed to acquire resources, and to the paths leading to prestige. . . . The critical element of egalitarianism, then, is *individual autonomy*." For the revisionists of pastoral studies, the existence of differences in livestock ownership is sufficient in itself to deny that pastoralists are "egalitarian" and proclaim that pastoralists are characterized by "inequality." By this reckoning—or by the citing of other perhaps "newly" discovered "inequalities" of strength, energy, astuteness, luck, fierceness, fertility, and many more—pastoralists and indeed everyone everywhere could be deemed "unequal."

The difficulty, as John Dewey saw, with designating everything in some particular way—everyone is unequal, every account is interpretation, every person is both good and bad—is that the power to discriminate among cases and among individuals and societies and ideas is lost. Once we say that everything is X, this criterion becomes useless for distinguishing differences in the world: the differences between people who are more good and more bad, ideas that are more sound and less sound, and societies that are more equal and less equal, where individuals are more autonomous or less autonomous. The blunted conceptual tool of "universal inequality" would make it difficult to discriminate

among segmentary tribes with no authority hierarchies, replicate tribes with escalator hierarchies, encapsulated tribes with chiefly hierarchies, and integrated peasants in the bottom strata of state systems. And indeed, this inability to distinguish is exactly what the revisionists have shown by dismissing the reality of egalitarianism among indigenous segmentary pastoralists.

We see the deadening effects of the revisionist approach in such assertions as "[livestock ownership] differentiation increases under the influence of external market forces, commercialization, and sedentarization" (Borgerhoff Mulder and Sellen 1994: 220), with no account taken of the significance of the previous state of less differentiation and its consequences for social and political life or of the important reality that pastoral peoples are even today involved to very different degrees in external market forces, commercialization, and sedentarization. For example, J. Terrence McCabe points out that the revisionist emphasis on change and disaster

masks the fact that many pastoral people are surviving the vicissitudes of drought and development and living rather "traditional" lifestyles. . . .

For the Turkana, this means that the diet consists primarily of pastoral products, although grain is certainly consumed; that people and livestock remain highly mobile; that members of the family did not migrate to the famine-relief camps; that few children are educated; that social networks based on the exchange of livestock remain strong; and that some, but not many, animals are bought and sold in the larger market economy (1994: 70 and n. 2).

Even the revisionist Peter Little, having asserted, without substantiation, that dairy marketing by women was regarded by earlier researchers as "uninteresting, unimportant, and thus unlikely to be portrayed" because men were not involved, admits that

pastoral dairy trade, which is often a periurban [no more than 40 to 50 kilometers from a market town] phenomenon, is usually tied to urban markets where consumption is concentrated. . . . Outside of this radius, dairy commerce is unlikely to be as important as trade in livestock and other commodities. Most pastoral studies have focused on the more

remote rangeland areas, so analyses of milk marketing have been few (1994: 165–166).

And, we might add, most pastoral studies have focused on the more remote rangeland areas because this is where most pastoralists live. But the main substantive point here is that pastoralists differ in their engagement with milk marketing as in many other things. And the revisionist tendency is to want to ignore this.

Another critical distinction that revisionists in pastoral studies seem to ignore is between economic differences and economic differentiation. As we have already shown, economic differences, such as in livestock holdings, did not affect the egalitarian nature of independent, segmentary tribes. The reason is that in segmentary tribes, differences in wealth did not lead to economic differentiation such as (1) stratification, a social differentiation of status between rich and poor, or (2) class systems, in which the poor work for the rich and the rich reap part of the benefits of the work of the poor. This is because livestock is a highly volatile form of property, subject to great fluctuation in response to drought, disease, and predation, and because in independent tribal societies, livestock, easily mobile and divisible, was, for social and political reasons including marriage and political alliance, distributed and allocated to other tribesmen rather than accumulated. As Lewis says,

In tribal conditions, where security is always . . . at risk, . . . it is often precisely the need for ample and widely distributed security that makes the production of surplus worth while. The more one produces the more one is expected to give away; the positive side of this equation is that the greater one's generosity the stronger and more comprehensive one's corresponding entitlement to support and succour in time of need.

[Thus] surplus production is invested in human relations, material wealth is transformed into social assets, creating chains of indebtedness which build up and maintain a circle of grateful clients or followers. Wealth and resources tend to be shared on this very rational . . . basis of enlightened self-interest (1976: 176).

This is the reason that, for example, among the Yomut Turkmen (Irons 1994: 175–179), though there were great differences of wealth

between families, social symbolism, social interaction, and conscious ideological thought expressed no differences in economic status. Differences of status were recognized and expressed among the Turkmen, but these had to do with differences of age, gender, and religious accomplishment rather than differences of wealth. In some other, more hierarchical Iranian tribes, such as among the Lurs, only chiefs or wealthy men provided hospitality for strangers. But among the Turkmen, every household head had the prerogative of providing hospitality. Bridewealth was the same for all Turkmen unions, irrespective of family wealth. There was no difference in dress among Turkmen that might reflect differences in wealth and economic status. Nor was interaction determined by wealth; the Turkmen, regardless of wealth differences, mingled on friendly terms, attended weddings, and visited on holidays. There were many possible occasions—in greeting, in entering a dwelling, in spatial placement, and so on—for expressing status differences. But differences in age and religious status (hajjis, sufis, teachers), not economic status, were expressed on these occasions.

One reason for this lack of social or economic differentiation among the Turkmen is that differences of wealth were not stable over time. Thus, Irons finds that

while there is a very unequal distribution of wealth, the place of each family in this distribution is not permanent. . . . Over a period of years, many households move from one of these economic categories to another. . . . This was the view that they [the Yomut] always expressed about their own society. There were vast differences in wealth, but the wealth of individual families could be expected to change. For the wealthy to become poor or the poor to become wealthy was not unusual (1994: 192, tab. 9.2).

Irons demonstrates quantitatively and statistically this volatility of wealth among the Turkmen. To see whether Turkmen who were wealthier at one time remained wealthier at a later time, Irons (1994: 192) compared the patrimony received (on average) 17.7 years before and the distribution of wealth at the time of the study; he found that "the actual amount of change is about 74 percent of what would be expected if patrimony rank and current wealth rank were randomly re-

lated. This, it would seem, is enough to justify the view the Yomut themselves have of their society: the wealthy will not remain wealthy, nor will the poor remain poor."

The result (Irons 1994: 193) is much the same when the relative ranking of patrimonies received by men and those they gave their sons was compared. The change in wealth is about 81 percent of what one would expect from a random relationship between the patrimonies of fathers and their sons. So, how many livestock or how much land a man got from his father does not indicate very well how many or how much he was able to give his son. In other words, rich patrimonies in one generation often become mediocre ones in the next, and poor patrimonies often become average or rich ones in the next. There is no great continuity of wealth within families. This is even truer for the more volatile livestock than for more stable land; livestock patrimonies reflected an 88 percent correspondence to a random shuffle, whereas land patrimonies were 69 percent of a random shuffle (Irons 1994: 194).

Differences in livestock ownership—in wealth—among independent pastoral tribesmen, even though commonly of great magnitude, did not lead to social stratification or economic class. The reason is that livestock wealth in these societies was highly volatile and fluctuated greatly, so that there was little continuity of wealth over time. Even Young (1996: 59, 66), committed to characterizing the Rashaayda Bedouin as unequal, admits that differences in livestock wealth were highly unstable over time and did not result in economic stratification or political inequalities.

Among independent, segmentary tribes, in a context of economic and political insecurity, wealth was invested in other people rather than accumulated, for it could not be secured as wealth. This fact was reflected in the good pay given to poor men working as shepherds; men working as shepherds could reasonably quickly build up their own herds and become economically independent (Irons 1994: 189; Salzman 2000a: chap. 8; cp. Bradburd 1989: 84 for an example of poor pay for shepherds among peasant pastoralists). Among independent tribesmen, political solidarity among segmentary allies outweighed—for practical reasons and thus enlightened self-interest—economic wealth. This is why differences in wealth did not become inequality and why (temporarily) rich and poor Turkmen were, in the long run, economically egalitarian.

Recent colonial, postcolonial, and modernizing states have encapsulated and increasingly incorporated pastoral tribes into state structures, thus initiating peasantization, involving processes of differentiation internally and externally, already long accomplished among pastoralists in some areas of the Mediterranean and Middle East (Salzman 1996 and Chapter 5 of this volume). What were previously independent segmentary tribes have been changing into posttribal, ethnic populations increasingly engaged with national and international goods and labor markets and governed by state authorities and agendas. The political absorption of these pastoral populations has undermined the tribal political structures and solidarities that previously ruled social and economic life. This has led to new processes of economic differentiation and property accumulation and new inequalities.

The recording of these transformations is one of the main contributions of recent research into pastoral peoples (Asad 1970; Beck 1991; Fratkin 1991; Fratkin and Roth 1990; Galaty 1980; Galaty et al. 1994; Irons 1975; Little 1985, 1992; Marx 1967; Salzman 1973, 1994, 2000a). But even in considering these transformations, to appreciate the true significance of differentiation, we must acknowledge the baseline equality of independent segmentary tribes. For here, we are dealing with changes over time, historical change, in degrees of equality and inequality.

Furthermore, peasantization processes resulting from the effective integration of tribal peoples into states occur at different rates and to different degrees in different places and times, for which the crude assertion of inequality is hardly adequate. Even now, the Nuer have refused to accept integration into the Arab-dominated state of Sudan (Hutchinson 1996), and the Somali have recently extracted themselves from state control and have returned to operating as clans. And, as we have noted, the Turkana (McCabe 1996) have remained somewhat aloof. The remarkable variation of past and contemporary pastoral peoples cannot be adequately appreciated by a universal postulation of "inequality."

4

HIERARCHICAL IMAGE AND REALITY

Tribal Chiefdoms

Image and reality interplay in the chiefship of the Basseri tribal chiefdom of southern Iran. We know the Basseri through the influential and rightly esteemed ethnography *Nomads of South Persia*, by Fredrik Barth. Barth's account of the Basseri chief is vivid and striking, and in placing the chiefship within the complex society of Iran, it was an original contribution to the ethnographic literature. And yet, there appear to be certain subtleties of the Basseri chiefship that, though implied in the historical and ethnographic information provided by Barth, are not included in his explicit description. As a result, Barth overstates, I believe, the degree of the Basseri chief's power and underestimates the extent to which the chief depended upon the consent of his tribesmen.

Image and reality interplay in social life because people present themselves and describe others pragmatically, in ways designed to achieve their objectives and goals. The images that people thus present of themselves and others—the "clever student," the "influential professor," the "honest used-car salesman," the "public-spirited politician," well known to us all—may be partial, incomplete, or totally false but usually involve some degree of misrepresentation. To the extent that the claims people make in constructing their own and others' images do not correspond to their actions and activities, to their practice and practices,

the images diverge from reality. This is the criterion we apply in our everyday lives, and I believe it is appropriate for understanding other people's lives as well.

But the story does not end with the simple distinction between words and actions, between image and reality. For though the referent of an image may be all or partly illusory, the presentation of that image to other people is itself social action—intentional, goal-oriented action; it can and does lead others to act, and so, the construction and management of images is itself part of reality. To this extent, image presentation shapes the worlds we wish to understand and thus is a legitimate and necessary focus of our attention. Among the Basseri, "the chiefship" exists, on the one hand, in images and, on the other hand, in the realities of image management and other actions. What I explore in this chapter is the extent to which characteristics of the chiefship are best understood as Basseri image management and to what extent as political action, and I explore the circumstances that might explain the discrepancy between image and reality.

The Position of the Chief of the Basseri Tribe

In his classic ethnography of an Iranian nomadic tribe, Barth describes the chief, or khan, of the Basseri as "the central, autocratic leader of the tribe" who had "great power and privilege" (1961: 71, 74). This "power is conceived as emanating from him, rather than delegated to him by his subjects" (Barth 1961: 71–72, emphasis in original). Barth (1961: 74)—writing in the "ethnographic present" about a period prior to 1956—continues: "The outstanding feature of the chief's position . . . is his power of decision and autocratic command over this subjects. . . . The right to command, to make decisions on behalf of persons in other tents than one's own, is a strictly chiefly prerogative. The monopolization by the chief of the right to command is a fundamental abstract principle of Basseri social structure." There was no command structure intervening between the autocratic Basseri chief and his subordinate subject: "All Basseri are equal in their direct relation of subordination to the chief, who at any time may give any person an order which the latter must obey" (Barth 1961: 75). The Basseri was thus led, as are each of the other nomadic tribes of south Persia, by "the omnipotent Khan or chief" (Barth 1961: 90, emphasis added).

This characterization of the Basseri chief as autocratic and all-powerful is, I believe, misleading, for—to anticipate my argument below—it is based rather too much upon style and image and too little upon substance and reality. In criticizing Barth's characterization of the Basseri chief, I shall examine the supporting evidence and argument as presented in *Nomads of South Persia* (hereafter *Nomads*) and point out what appear to me to be problems in the author's account. And I shall refer to some evidence about chiefs in other tribes. Then, I will present a reinterpretation of the Basseri chiefship that I consider to be Barthian in spirit, for it is consistent with the theoretical approach of *Nomads*.

The Role of the Basseri Chief

Until the mid-1950s, the chief was the keystone in Basseri tribal architecture. The dozen Basseri *tira* (tribal sections) were known to have diverse ethnic and historical origins, variously Arab, Persian, and Turkish (Barth 1961: 50–53). Basseri tribal unity was defined by a common allegiance to the chief. "It is the fact of political unity under the Basseri chief which in the eyes of the tribesmen and outsiders alike constitutes them into a single 'tribe' in the Persian sense" (Barth 1961: 71).

The Basseri chief and his close relatives formed a small, wealthy elite stratum above the mass of ordinary nomadic pastoralists who made up, along with some settled sections, the great bulk of the Basseri population.

The chief and his immediate relatives belong in a category entirely apart from the rest of the Basseri, both in the minds of the tribesmen, and to an outsider. They are *Khavatin*, of the Khan's dynasty; they are shown respect and granted authority. . . . Most of them . . . take little part in nomadic life. Particularly the chief and his brothers, one of them the former chief, are sophisticated members of the *élite* on a Persian national level; they maintain houses in [the provincial capital] Shiraz and travel extensively within and outside of Persia. In wealth they are also in a class entirely apart from other Basseri, each owning several villages as well as flocks of many thousand head of sheep and goats (Barth 1961: 73–74).

The chief's position and status were manifested materially in his urban villa and the size of his nomadic tent but above all in offering boundless hospitality, his generosity exhibiting his greatness of wealth and spirit.

To support his needs, the chief was able to call on his tribesmen to contribute one, two, or even three sheep in a hundred (Barth 1961: 74).

The authority of the Basseri chief was exercised regularly in three fields: "allotting pastures and co-ordinating the migrations of the tribe; settling the disputes that are brought to him; and representing the tribe or any of its members in politically important dealings with sedentary authorities" (Barth 1961: 76). Of these services, it is the third that was most critical: "Perhaps the chief's most important function is to represent the tribe in its relations with the Iranian administration, and in conflicts with sedentary communities or persons" (Barth 1961: 77). By so doing, the chief, enabled by ruling power within his own group and elite status among other regional and national elites, bridged the gap between the partly autonomous Basseri, on the one hand, and, on the other, the Persian government, village agricultural communities, urban dwellers and bazaar merchants, and other segments of the "plural" society of Fars Province and Persia at large (Barth 1961: 77). "The chief's role in mediating relations with sedentary society, in protecting the nomadic herders' interests *vis-à-vis* the often formidable and always confusing organizations that structure parts of their environment and encroach on their life, is correlated with a strong feeling of respect and dependence among the tribesmen" (Barth 1961: 80).

The Basis of the Basseri Chiefship

The service that the chief provided for his tribesmen did not, according to Barth, adequately account for the Basseri chiefship, for "the persistence of an institution is not exhaustively explained by its usefulness" (1961: 80). Rather, "the position of autocratic authority occupied by the Basseri chief can only be successfully maintained and defended if it is supported by enough coercive power to enforce discipline and suppress opposition from below. . . . Positions of authority can only be stable if the incumbent of such a position is able to mobilize enough force to counter any group that can form within the system to question his authority" (Barth 1961: 80-81). Thus, "an analysis of the political organization calls for an analysis of the processes whereby the powers of the chief are exercised and defended" (Barth 1961: 75).

What, then, were the sources of the Basseri chief's coercive powers? There were not, in fact, any special institutions of coercion available to

the chief—no tribal police or military unit under the control of the chief. The main physical coercion directed by the chief was carried out by ordinary tribesmen: "Corporal punishment takes place in the presence of the chief and is specified by him. . . . The beating is not performed by any special category of functionary—any bystander who is a member of the tribe may be ordered to do it" (Barth 1961: 82). There were some situations, such as in the competition between rivals for a vacant chiefship, in which assassination was used or at least threatened (Barth 1961: 84). The chief was able to levy fines against tribal segments (Barth 1961: 82), and he could punish groups through the allocation of poor pasture. Of course, the chief could withhold services desired by tribesmen. On the whole, however, it seems clear that the Basseri chief did not have at his disposal substantial coercive means to support his position.

In the absence of coercive powers, how did the chief maintain his position? Barth's answer is that Basseri commoners were, for organizational reasons, unable to challenge the chief: "The political subjects of the chief are . . . organized in small, mutually hostile, and weakly led groups, each striving to maintain internal harmony and unanimity without coercive means" (1961: 81). This social fragmentation made it impossible for the tribesmen to unite for the purpose of opposing the chief. Because ordinary tribesmen "lack strong leaders on the level of their own communities, they lack mechanisms for delimiting and containing the powers of leaders on higher levels of tribal organization; and they thus become subjects of the chief on terms of autocratic dominance/submission" (Barth 1961: 90). Thus, "the poor development of centrally controlled coercive means reflects this impotence of any potential opposition" (Barth 1961: 81).

In sum, according to Barth, ordinary Basseri tribesmen, the commoners who made up the great bulk of the pastoral nomads, were socially, economically, and politically fragmented, effectively leaderless at the local level, and were thus unable to unite in common political purpose to oppose their chief, to whom they consequently remained subordinate and obedient. The omnipotent chief, drawing upon his wealth, status, and contacts with outsiders, commanded his tribesmen in an authoritative and autocratic fashion. To his tribesmen, the chief was "he who must be obeyed." And in the view of the Basseri tribesmen, this was proper and desirable; "the tribe without its chief was compared to

a flock without its shepherd and a car without its driver" (Barth 1961: 75). Tribesmen wanted a strong chief (Barth 1961: 84-85).

How Submissive Were Basseri Tribesmen?

In his account of the relationship between the Basseri chief and ordinary tribesmen, Barth emphasizes dominance by the chief and the submission of the tribesmen. Let us now examine some of the description in *Nomads* that suggests that ordinary Basseri tribesmen might have been less than totally submissive in relation to their chief.

First, a possible response to a chief—or in this case, to a pretender for succession to the chiefship—was passive resistance. The tribesmen could have ignored instructions and orders from a leader whom they did not accept. "Though the authority of other pretenders may not be directly challenged by the common tribesmen, people start dragging their feet and fail to act on the orders of other pretenders than one, until one day the whole edifice of administrative decisions and imperious manner built up by the unsuccessful pretender collapses, and nobody listens to him any more" (Barth 1961: 84). Conceivably, this process could have taken place with an established chief, if he were to have fallen out of favor with his followers.

Second, we should consider that one of the resources of the chief, as he negotiated with outsiders, was the military capacity of his tribe. The Basseri tribe, after all, was made up from "collectivities of free tribesmen, who for one thing constitute a mobile, ready-made cavalry force" (Barth 1961: 90). Many Basseri owned horses for riding, and hunting was a popular sport (Barth 1961: 6, 9). In addition, firearms were esteemed (Barth 1961: 74, 88). Thus, the tools of military force, firearms and riding horses, were in the hands of ordinary tribesmen, and the tribesmen were skilled in their uses. This suggests that Basseri tribesmen, notwithstanding their alleged organizational weakness, were capable, at least as individuals or small groups, of applying armed coercion. And if arms could be turned against foreign enemies, could they not also have been turned against internal enemies? If a chief could have been brought down by an assassin's bullet, he could have also been brought down by a rebel's bullet. So it is difficult to reconcile the image of an omnipotent, autocratic chief and his subservient, submissive sub-

jects with the reality of a universal distribution of the means of armed coercion among skilled and hardy tribesmen. As Bahman Behman-Begi (1945: 134), himself a member of the powerful Qashqa'i tribal confederacy, puts it, "Le fait . . . que les nomades soient armés et de caractère vif rend la tyrannie (*estebdâd*) impossible" (The fact . . . that the nomads are armed and quick-tempered rends tyranny impossible).

Third and perhaps most important was the universal capacity of Basseri tribesmen to remove themselves from the authority of their chief. The Basseri enjoyed an almost absolute capability for spatial mobility. Their established nomadism rested on a technology of portable housing and production equipment, and their capital resources, livestock, were both spatially mobile and, thanks to the urban marketplace, financially liquid. This mobility rendered them fully capable of making a rapid and complete retreat from threats of any kind. Tribesmen could have, if they wished, literally walked or ridden away from their chief.

Some large herd owners, fearing rivalry with the chief and expropriation of their herds, sold their livestock, bought agricultural land, and settled in villages as landowners (Barth 1961: 127). Furthermore, notwithstanding Barth's argument that Basseri tribesmen were not well situated to organize collectively independently of the chief, large groups of tribesmen had settled as units in compact villages in their traditional summer pastures (1961: 117). Even more striking, large groups of tribesmen acting as units had left the Basseri entirely:

Repeatedly in the past, groups have defected from the tribe and the area, to move either northward to the Isfahan area and beyond, or eastward into Kerman. During the rule of Agha Jan Beg . . . a number of such defections took place. For example, according to the traditions of the Il-e-Khas, a total of 300 tents left as a group to join in the new tribe then being formed by Zel-e-Sultan, a son of Nasr-ud-Din Shah, in Isfahan, while about 30 tents of Il-e-Khas went east to Kerman, and a remnant of 8-10 houses only of that section remained behind as settlers (Barth 1961: 116).

The abandonment of the Basseri by these large groups of tribesmen resulted from the rejection by tribesmen of the tribal chief. "Defections from the tribe by larger groups of commoners are caused . . . by the ruthlessness of strong chiefs" (Barth 1961: 84).

A tribal chief in Fars Province did not have a monopoly of leadership over his tribesmen. The presence of chiefs of neighboring tribes presented alternative leadership options to common tribesmen. Consequently, weak and ineffective chiefs could lose their tribesmen to competing chiefs of other tribes. "Any imbalance between tribes in the effectiveness of centralized authority stimulates an extension of the stronger centre's claims to authority, and a voluntary flow of commoners from the weaker to the stronger centre" (Barth 1961: 85). If tribesmen believed that their interests were better served by the chief of a neighboring tribe, they could have switched allegiance. "Camps, oulads and sections seek out the strong chief and submit to him; from him they obtain better protection and by him their interests are best safeguarded" (Barth 1961: 85). A tribal chief was thus in constant if implicit competition with neighboring chiefs for the loyalty of his tribesmen.

The terms *omnipotent* and *autocratic*, as applied to the chief, suggest that the Basseri tribesmen, whom the chief "commanded," were totally dependent upon and at the mercy of their chief, "subjects of the chief on terms of autocratic dominance/submission" (Barth 1961: 90). Yet Basseri commoners, as we have seen, had many resources of resistance at their disposal: passive refusal, threat of or actual violent attack, threat of or actual physical defection from the tribe through sedentarization or migration, and threat of or actual shift of allegiance to another chief. The presence of these weapons of resistance in the hands of Basseri common tribesmen suggests that they were less than totally at the mercy of their chief and that they did have effective access to alternatives to obeying the chief.

Tribal Rule and Obedience

The King is King by grace of the people.

TWSANA PROVERB (GULBRANDSEN 1995: 433)

If, as Barth's material suggests, Basseri commoners did not have to obey their chief because of an inability to resist, why *did* they obey their chief, accepting his orders and judgments? And why did they support the chief in his elite status and imperial manner (Barth 1961: 74)? The answer is that the Basseri chief was able to rule because he had the consent of his tribesmen.

Barth argues that a tribal chief maintained his "authority . . . by its effective and continuous exercise . . ." (1961: 84). *Authority* is an apt term here, for it implies *legitimate* power, that is, power based upon consent. But what exactly counted as effectiveness in the exercise of authority? From the tribesmen's point of view, chiefly effectiveness would include as primary component the serving of *their* interests. This is one of the reasons given by Barth for tribesmen switching allegiance to another chief, to "obtain better protection and [have] their interests . . . best safeguarded" (1961: 85). This was an explicit expectation in assessing the chief's settlement of disputes; the chief must "make the decision which he feels is 'best for the tribe'" (Barth 1961: 77). Undoubtedly, tribesmen were watching, then and later, to see if the decision was indeed best for the tribe.

The ineffective tribal chief or the oppressive tribal chief, if he survived assassination, would have seen his tribe melt away, his "subjects" having disappeared over the horizon—to villages, to other chiefs, to other parts of the country. He would have become an ex-chief, for one could not be a chief without followers. Nomadic tribesmen, mobile warriors, free herd owners could not be held against their will. If they felt that, on balance, their interests were not being served or that they were being abused, they would have resisted, rebelled, and departed.

No one knew this better than the successful chief. He knew that he was chief by virtue of his tribesmen. He knew that their consent was the foundation of his political power. He knew that he had always to be aware of public opinion and act within its parameters. For example, speaking of the appointment of subchiefs, Behman-Begi (1945: 134) stresses the sensitivity of chiefs to the preferences of their tribesmen. "*L'Il-Khân* ne peut nommer chef de tribu ou de clan que celui des candidats . . . que soutient l'opinion publique. . . . En général, les nomades peuvent choisir leurs chefs" (The *Il-Khan* [confederacy chief] can only appoint as tribal chiefs those . . . who are supported by [tribal] public opinion. . . . In general, the nomads [of the different tribes] can choose their chiefs). The successful chief knew that to act outside of public opinion risked undermining the consent upon which his rule was based. Finally, he knew that the truly effective chief was successful in shaping and leading public opinion.

Let us stop for a moment to recall Barth's statement that "an analysis of the political organization calls for an analysis of the processes whereby

the powers of the chief are exercised and defended" (1961: 75). This is one of many statements in *Nomads* emphasizing processual analysis as an addition if not replacement for structural and normative analysis. *Nomads* is more than an ethnographic description; it is a brilliant theoretical demonstration, illustrating throughout the relevance and appropriateness of processual analysis, its fruitful emphasis on decisionmaking and transactions, and its power in showing the way social forms are generated. In his processual analyses in *Nomads*, Barth shows, among many other things, that the Basseri camp was constituted demographically by an aggregate of economic decisions made by individuals (1961: chap. 8), that the tribe maintained demographic balance with its environment through sedentarization (chap. 9), that the herding camp as an operating social group was based upon negotiation and purposeful alliances (chap. 3), that herding groups were formed by means of utilitarian contract (22–23), that the Basseri tribe was a congeries of segments diverse in origin, ethnicity, and history brought together by conscious political allegiance to the chief (49–54), and that the "Arab" Khamseh confederacy, of which the Basseri were part, was invented for instrumental purposes by powerful urban merchants and sealed by the provision of arms and other resources (86–89; see also Oberling 1974: 65). In short, Barth demonstrates that "structural" features were generated by decisionmaking and transactional processes and that these were based at least partly upon rational and strategic considerations.

Barth's (1961: 80–81, 90) account of the Basseri chief's ability to maintain command and his characterization of chief/commoner relations as one of "dominance/submission" is, as indicated above, based primarily upon a structural feature—the political fragmentation of the bulk of tribal commoners. In criticizing Barth's formulation by identifying processes of resistance and opposition among commoners, I am following his own theoretical lead, demonstrated by him in the analyses of other aspects of Basseri life mentioned above, in emphasizing the processual generation of structures. And if we can now accept the argument that the Basseri polity was based upon consent and that the chief's actions had to be in tune with tribal public opinion, I think we can go a little further by looking for the processes by which the Basseri khan tapped into, tested, and tried to shape public opinion.

Just as the Basseri chief was constantly collecting and exchanging information with other members of the regional and national elite in

order to carry out his role as representative of his tribe and to act as intermediary and advocate on its behalf, so, too, was the chief constantly collecting information from tribal commoners about conditions and opinions within the tribe. One process by which this happened was the standard Middle Eastern exchange of host and guest, in which the host provides food, shelter, and gracious reception and the guest provides respect, appreciation, and information. No one was better placed to benefit from this exchange than a chief, who was expected as part of his chiefly role to be a great host. The Basseri chief had a large tent and "his hospitality should be boundless" (Barth 1961: 74). The chief's invitation to come and receive hospitality was unlikely to be refused by tribal commoners. In the course of offering hospitality, the chief was able to draw opinions, collect information, and plant the seeds of rumor in order to test public opinion. Another process, that of conflict resolution conducted by the chief, also provided an occasion for the chief to collect information about current tribal circumstance and opinion. So, too, was the chief's reception of commoners who were seeking assistance with problems internal or external to the tribe. Finally, the chief's distribution of valuables to commoners not only exhibited his wealth and generosity—"he should provide spectacular gifts of weapons, and stallions from his large herd of horses, to his more prominent subjects" (Barth 1961: 74)—but also provided an optimal occasion for soliciting information as well as support and loyalty. In providing hospitality and distributing valuable gifts, the chief used his patronage to offer material benefits and esteem in exchange for both information and political support. Here, the chief was not only collecting and testing public opinion but also trying to shape it by catering to the personal desires of tribesmen.

Even in his own decisionmaking process, the chief may have relied upon a jelling of opinion among interested parties, his advisers, and local leaders. Barth (1961: 74), in his characterization of chiefly decisionmaking, stresses the difference between the indirect, democratic opinion-formation processes of the camps and the "autocratic command" of the chief. He writes:

Decisions governing collectivities among the Basseri are reached either by discussion or by command. . . . Decisions governing camp groups are made by their members through a lengthy process of discussion and

mutual persuasion. . . . The right to command, to make decisions on behalf of persons in other tents than one's own, is strictly chiefly prerogative. The monopolization by the chief of the right to command is a fundamental abstract principle of Basseri social structure (Barth 1961: 74).

Even if we accept this account of chiefly command as "a fundamental abstract principle of Basseri social structure," we can still ask, in a Barthian spirit, whether the process of decisionmaking did not involve collection of information and tapping public opinion. In this regard, I offer a description of decisionmaking by the *ilkhani* (chief) of the Qashqa'i tribal confederation, the Basseri's neighbor and sometime opponent, a much larger and more powerful polity than the Basseri. According to Beck,

A primary feature of the *ilkhani's* style of leadership, which reflected political processes among the Qashqa'i in general, was the large open gathering in the reception tent, where he presided but did not explicitly dominate the discussion. The process Barth (1961: 43–46) describes for the Basseri [camps], in which men talk most of the evening about the possibility of migrating the next morning, and in which a consensus slowly emerges without any single individual's having made the decision unilaterally, is similar to a process found among the Qashqa'i. The *ilkhani* possessed information, especially about the state and foreign powers, that others present did not, but he tended to introduce it in general conversation to allow others to consider and discuss it. . . . Meetings and discussions were usually public, and those attending prepared their statements carefully because of the scrutiny of others. All present had the right and opportunity to add opinions and details. . . . Overall, the nature of the gathering was relatively egalitarian, and the decision-making process was often informal. People presented their problems in this open forum, presided over by the *ilkhani* and his advisors, and decisions could be reached in the course of group discussion without the *ilkhani's* having made any kind of a definitive statement (1986: 218).

So, even among the most powerful chiefs, open discussion was encouraged, a wide range of views were sought, the building of a consensus was favored, and informal and collective decisionmaking was common.



FIGURE 4.1 Perhaps the primary function of a tribal chief is to mediate between tribesmen, with the goal of resolving disputes peacefully. Here, the Baluchi Yarahmadzai chief, Sardar Han Mahmud (standing, wearing a turban), mediates. (P. C. Salzman, 1973)

This suggests that command, when rarely invoked, was not sociologically opposed to these processes but rather dependent upon them.

The Image of the Omnipotent Chief

If, as I propose, the Basseri political system prior to the mid-1950s was fundamentally based upon consent and the chief was severely constrained by public opinion among his tribesmen, several questions arise. Why did the chief present an imperial manner? Why did the tribesmen see power emanating from him rather than being delegated from them? And why was the chief accepted as an omnipotent ruler? I do not believe that Barth got this image wrong. In fact, I think that the Basseri chief and Basseri commoners took great pains to validate and reinforce this image of the chief. They themselves wanted to believe it, and above all, they wanted others—Persian government officials, sedentary villagers,

urban merchants, and other tribal chiefs and commoners—to believe it. Nothing served the Basseri better in their complex and plural social environment, where they were surrounded by agents of the Persian government, by urban populations, by sedentary villagers, and by other tribes, than the picture of a solidary and unified tribe unquestionably following the commands of their strong and unchallenged ruler. The Basseri projected this image, they broadcast it, they asserted it, and they may have even believed it. So, too, did the chief himself. This image of the omnipotent chief and his obedient subjects, considered in relation to the consent on which the tribe was in reality based, can be appreciated as a conspiratorial misrepresentation jointly engineered, to whatever degree consciously or unconsciously, by both the chief and the commoners. This “presentation of (collective) self” was the facade exhibited by the Basseri to the wider world, to encourage respect and fear and discourage opposition and aggression.

In electoral democracies, leaders may undercommunicate their real power, presenting themselves rather as “ordinary folks”; by contrast, it is not uncommon in tribal societies for leaders to overcommunicate their real power, especially for the consumption of external audiences. Lancaster discusses image making among the sheikhs of the Rwala Bedouin:

In the dealings between sheikhs and outsiders impression-management comes into play. . . . The impression they intend to convey is one of power and magnificence. My earliest contacts with the Rwala sheikhs were at feasts given for visiting officials and the scene was of almost nineteenth-century splendour—slaves and servants abounded and there was a continual stream of fruit, sweetmeats, kebabs and drinks. The main course was two, three or more whole sheep on mounds of rice sprinkled with pine-nuts and, sometimes, vegetables. The slightest whim of the guests was fulfilled, fruit was peeled for them, glasses were topped up, cigarettes lit, new brands of tobacco produced; the guests needed to do nothing for themselves. All these services were performed by slaves and servants at a sign from the sheikh and every action was carried out promptly. One would have said that they went in fear of their lives if they disobeyed or were even careless. As soon as the visitors had left, it became apparent that the whole scene was a charade designed solely to impress. The slaves lolled in the recently vacated seats, the

sheikhs poured their own tea, the servants ate up the titbits or simply left. Later on, when it became obvious that I wasn't worth impressing, I heard the same slaves, those paragons of domestic service, telling the sheikh that it was too hot to do what he had asked, he'd have to do it himself. How far anyone is taken in by these phoney displays of omnipotence is hard to say; presumably other Bedu aren't, but maybe government officials and other non-Bedu guests are, to some degree. . . . Many public statements (and formal feasts are statements) are only too apparently impression-management (1997: 82–83).

In relation to free Rwala tribesmen, the Rwala sheikh cannot be said to have ruled and commanded:

The sheikh's prime task is mediation and negotiation. . . . The sheikh has no authority to treat on the tribe's behalf, for there is no legal framework nor coercive force available to him. All the sheikh can do is represent the tribe and bank on knowing what the tribe want in any particular circumstance. He then has to persuade the tribe to accept the results of his negotiation. . . . The sheikh is never a free agent, he can only act as the mouthpiece of tribal or group consensus (Lancaster 1997: 87).

What a Rwala sheikh needed to pursue his leadership role was information. As Lancaster writes:

In a political system of this sort, where the “leader” has no coercive powers at all, his best means of justifying and maintaining his position is by being better informed than anyone else. Thus the sheikh has to ensure that information pours in from all quarters. This isn't as difficult as it sounds; it is just very expensive, which is not to say that information is bought but that the sheikh must keep open house (or rather tent) for all comers (1997: 93).

Rwala sheikhs are highly aware that their influence is based upon public opinion (Lancaster 1997: 96): “Emir Sattam ibn Hamad Sha'alan . . . is quoted as saying [in 1878]: ‘I can only do what my people wish’ . . . He spoke no less than the truth. . . . Had he tried to coerce he would have been deserted. The fundamental principle remains the same today,

leadership by consensus. Political power does not exist." Here, we are shown that among the Rwala Bedouin, great displays of omnipotence for outsiders veiled a political reality based upon consent and consensus. Although we cannot assume that the Rwala and Basseri political systems are the same, the existence among the Rwala of both displays of chiefly omnipotence and the practice by chiefs of close following of public opinion provides some validation for my similar interpretation of Basseri political life.

Outsiders not infrequently believe that tribal chiefs are more powerful than they really are. Lady Anne Blunt and her husband (1879, cited in Lancaster 1997), to whom Emir Sha'alan spoke the words quoted above, "took him to be weak," unwilling to use the power at his disposal. Similarly, Gen. R. E. H. Dyer refused to believe the protestations of Jiand Han, the sardar, or chief, of the Yarahmazai tribe of Iranian Baluchistan, about the limitations of his control over "his" tribesmen. Dyer, later known for his part in the "Amritsar massacre" (Colvin 1929), during a punitive campaign against Jiand Han and the Yarahmadzai saw Jiand Han as "a very notable man, with enormous power and prestige, not only with his own tribe, the Yarmohammedzais, but with all the nomad tribes of the district, and was regarded as a personage by the Governments of both India and Persia" (Dyer 1921: 62). When "Jiand . . . pleaded that he himself had done his best to restrain his men from interfering with the British lines of communication, warning them that it was neither safe nor wise" (Dyer 1921: 71), Dyer did not believe him. "He could not seriously have expected that I would swallow this excuse, as he was known to be held in such awe by his followers that not one of them would have dared to dispute his authority" (1921: 71). But though Dyer was correct in saying that Jiand Han was "a very notable man, with enormous . . . prestige," he was mistaken in believing that Jiand had "enormous power" and that Yarahmadzai tribesmen would not "have dared to dispute his authority."

The Reality of Tribal Chiefs: The Yarahmadzai Baluch Case

Jiand Han was a notable and had enormous prestige because he was the recognized and successful leader of the Yarahmadzai tribe, an independent tribe of fierce raiders and warriors. Regular and repeated predatory

raiding of Persian villages and merchant caravans was (until the Persian conquest of Baluchistan, 1928–1935) an integral part of the Yarahmadzai economy, culture, identity, and personality (Salzman 1994, 2000a). Raids were carried out by small groups and large, led by individuals, lineage leaders, or tribal leaders. But raiding was not centrally controlled; it was a prerogative of each tribesman. In this respect, raiding was like most other important activities of tribal life, such as livestock ownership, herding, migration, camp location, well digging, agriculture, and arboriculture; control over raiding and these other activities was decentralized, in the hands of and at the discretion of individuals, families, contractual residential groups, and small corporate lineages. Although the sardar represented the tribe externally and was its war leader, his responsibilities internally were limited to mediating disputes. Social control and physical coercion rested in the hands of corporate lineages, and economic resources were common property, for example, pasture and natural water sources or lineage property (such as wells), or family property (such as livestock). The leadership of the sardar rested not on his control of necessary resources or on his ability to coerce tribesmen but on the *kaful* (permission or consent) of the tribesmen.

I base my understanding of Jiand Han and his "Yarmohammedzais" of the first third of the twentieth century partly on my research among his and their descendants over an eight-year period in the 1960s and 1970s. The Yarahmadzai (called, under the shah, the "Shah Nawazi") had at the time of my arrival been effectively encapsulated by Iranian state authorities for thirty-five years. Perhaps the main change from Jiand Han's time was the absence of raiding, suppressed since encapsulation and replaced in post-World War II decades by migrant labor and small-scale trading and smuggling (Salzman 1994, 2000a). The sardar of the 1960s and 1970s was heavily involved in acting as middleman between the tribe and state authorities, serving as intermediary, mediator, and broker, and he was able to draw on some state political and economic resources to bolster his position inside the tribe (Salzman 1973, 1974, 2000a). But with most other tribal arrangements remaining in the decentralized status quo ante, the sardar's influence continued to rest on public opinion and the consent of his followers, and he was not in a very strong position to move them where they did not want to go (Salzman 1983, 2000a).



FIGURE 4.2 One of a tribal chief's main tasks is to represent the tribe to outside authorities. Here, the Yarahmadzai Baluch chief, Sardar Han Mahmud (wearing a turban), meets the governor-general of the Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchistan (wearing a trilby). The main subject of business is the donation of an expensive diesel motor to drive an irrigation pump. (P. C. Salzman, 1973)

One example of the sardar's intervention among Yarahmadzai tribesmen may serve to illustrate the relations between the sardar and other tribesmen. It all began on 23 August 1972, when a stray camel of a tribesman from one tribal section ate the dates off of a palm belonging to a tribesman of a different tribal section. The latter tied up the camel and refused to return it to its owner without compensation for the lost dates. An exchange of unpleasantries led to an exchange of blows, with the owner of the palm receiving the worst of it. This incident quickly escalated to hostility between members of the two maximal tribal sections. Four days later, a group of section mates of the palm owner ran across a smaller group from the other section, including two respected elders, and roughed them up. This incident intensified the hostility and led to large-scale mobilization for conflict, one instance of which I observed.

Upon hearing of this conflict, Sardar Han Mahmud rushed to the date palm area to meet with elders of the contending sections. The following is an exchange between the sardar and elders of one of the sections, which took place on 1 September and was reported to me by several persons present.

Sardar: The Rahmatzai and Kamil Hanzai are all brothers, should not be fighting, and should settle the matter peacefully. You, the Rahmatzai, did not call upon me to settle the matter, which was wrong of you. But if you would give the Kamil Hanzai 5,000 tuman and two girls for marriage without bridewealth payments, the matter would be settled. After all, you manhandled Abdul Karim, an old and important man of the Sohorabzai, and this puts the balance of blame on you.

Mahmud Selim, speaking for the Rahmatzai: No, we absolutely will not pay. We are one *kom* and the Sohorabzai are one *kom* and the two are equal. The Rahmatzai is prepared to fight but not to pay.

Sardar: The Rahmatzai should then give 3,000 tuman, and I will see that it is settled.

Mahmud Selim: No, the Rahmatzai will not pay. And furthermore, you, Han Mahmud, no longer have our *kaful*, consent, as our leader. We repudiate you as our Sardar.

Sardar: I have come to make peace, even though you did not send for me. If you do not wish to make a peaceful settlement, you cannot expect me to help you when you find yourselves in difficulty. I have the support of the *dolat*, the Government of Iran, and they will use their force as I say. If anything happens to any of the Rahmatzai, I will not do anything about it.

Mahmud Selim: We Rahmatzai are Pakistani not Irani, and are thus safe from Iranian Government interference. As far as the Sardar and the Soherabzai are concerned, the Rahmatzai are a separate tribe.

This conflict, which came to be called *jang* (war), continued for three years, with attacks by one side and then another and injuries on one side and then another. Attempts at settlement, in Baluchi tents and in Persian courts, repeatedly ended in brawls. Finally, in the latter part of 1975, with the courts and the sardar collaborating in threatening heavy fines on anyone who did anything, a great *diwan* (deliberative meeting)

called by the sardar was successful in calling off the feud and reuniting the sections of the tribe in peaceful amity. (For a full account, see Salzman 2000a.)

Sardars and Khans

The Yarahmadzai sardar, whether of distant or more recent times—however enormous his prestige and however great a “personage”—was far from having the power to command his fellow tribesmen. He could not be dominant, and his fellow tribesmen were not prepared to be submissive. Of course, the Yarahmadzai tribe was different in important respects from the Basseri. The Yarahmadzai was conceived as a descent-based lineage group and enjoyed strong, corporate lineages; its territory was far from urban centers and large agricultural populations; and its desert pastoral ecology did not lend itself to central organization. In contrast, the conception of the Basseri was centered on the chiefship; lineage segments were not united through common descent and were invested with more limited powers; and the relatively predictable physiobiotic environment and crowded social environment made useful some central coordination. These differences would have strengthened the hand of the Basseri khan in comparison to the Yarahmadzai sardar.

But commonalities in the circumstances of the Yarahmadzai and Basseri tribesmen circumscribed the power of the chiefs in both tribes. All tribesmen were warriors and owned weapons and riding animals, and they had the skills and inclination to use them. All tribesmen were also members of economically self-sufficient families or microlineages; livestock, the main form of capital, rested in the hands of families. All tribesmen were highly mobile; their families, dwellings, furnishings, tools, and capital resources could be packed in a matter of hours onto family-owned baggage animals and transported over rough country to near or distant destinations. All tribesmen, as new recruits, would be assets to the chiefs of neighboring tribes and would be welcomed into those tribes. As a consequence of these circumstances, Yarahmadzai and Basseri tribal chiefs did not have a monopoly of the means of coercion, control over the main economic resources, or a captive body of subjects. In consequence, their leadership and “rule” depended upon

the consent of their followers, who, as we have seen, would follow only so far as it suited them. To be sure, the Basseri chief did “command,” as he was called upon to do by the exigencies of impression management, but to maintain his position through the “effective and continuous exercise” of his authority (Barth 1961: 84) required that he command only what he knew his tribesmen were willing to obey, to lead only where his tribesmen were willing to follow.

If my interpretation of the Basseri authority structure is correct, thanks must go to Barth himself, who provided much of the relevant information. As I have already indicated, I believe he was correct in depicting the public image of the tribal authority structure, an image encouraged and advanced by tribal commoners and elite alike. But why did Barth not sense, as I do, a discrepancy between image and reality, between facade and foundation? One reason might be that he carried out his research, as he makes very clear (Barth 1961: 71–72, n. 1, and 96), two years after the Basseri chief had been deposed, when the Persian government’s legal authority over the tribe had been vested in a colonel of the Persian army. Barth (1961: 72, n. 1) comments, “The change to Army rule had not been accepted by the Basseri tribesmen, who continued to act towards the legally deposed chief as if he were formally in office, while liaison between the Colonel and the tribe was poor. This *de facto* situation was even recognized by the authorities. . . . The activities and processes I shall describe have thus been observed in the field.” But it is not made explicit in *Nomads* which aspects of the chiefly authority structure Barth was able to observe directly and to what extent he had to depend upon reports from tribesmen about these matters. It is difficult to imagine that the chief was not constrained in his actions by the new arrangements. Furthermore, given the unwelcome violation of the tribal political structure by the Persian government not long before Barth’s research, would not the Basseri tribesmen have been likely to think and speak positively of their now threatened if not extinct, independent chiefly authority? However this may be, even in observing an intact chiefly authority structure, a researcher would most likely become aware of the discrepancy between rhetoric and reality only when a chief mistakenly or imprudently overstepped his mandate, perhaps repeatedly, and tribesmen began to respond by passive or violent opposition and by withdrawal or secession. This might happen

relatively rarely, for savvy and prudent chiefs would have strived purposely to avoid it. That an anthropologist should be present to observe such occasional events would be unlikely. All the more useful, then, are historical accounts, such as those provided for us by Barth (1961: 84–85, 116–117) of previous secessions and defections.

Could Chiefs Have Had Real Power?

We need not assume, of course, that all chiefs and all chiefdoms are the same. The “default setting” for an anthropologist should, in fact, be the assumption of great variation. Eric Wolf is quite explicit on this point:

The term *chief* has come into common parlance to denote the recognised leader or head (from the Latin *caput*) of a socially organized population. In practice, the term was usually bestowed by Europeans upon any native person of influence who was in a position to forward or to hinder their interests. As such, references to chiefs cover different kinds of recruitment and degrees of authority, and are of little analytic utility (1982: 96).

Drawing on “the concept of mode of production,” Wolf distinguishes “two rather different kinds” of chiefdoms:

those based on the kin-ordered mode, in which the chief and his followers are still embedded in kinship arrangements and bound by them, and those in which the form and idiom of kinship may be maintained even as a dominant group transforms divisions of rank into divisions of class. . . . In this second kind of chiefdom, the chiefly lineage is in fact an incipient class of surplus takers in the tributary mode (1982: 97).

Wolf elaborates on kinship-based chiefdoms:

The kin-ordered mode inhibits the institutionalization of political power, resting essentially upon the management of consensus among clusters of participants. . . . The extension and retraction of kin ties create open and shifting boundaries of such societies.

A chief can become a pivot of the power of his kinship group: but if he is sometimes able to incarnate the kin order, he is also its prisoner (1982: 99).

He then elaborates on tributary chiefdoms:

[Tributary chiefdoms] require mechanisms of domination to ensure that surpluses are transferred on a predictable basis from one class to the other. Such domination may involve, at one time or another, a wide panoply of sanctions based on fear, hope, and charity; but it cannot be secured without the development of an apparatus of coercion to maintain the basic division into classes and to defend the resulting structure against external attack. [The tributary chiefdom is thus] marked by the development and installation of such an apparatus, namely the state (Wolf 1982: 99).

Using Wolf’s framework, we would, without hesitation, identify the Yarahmadzai as a kin-dominated chiefdom, in which the sardar was distinguished by rank rather than by class. Although the Yarahmadzai sardar could request contributions from tribesmen to advance one or another project, he could not levy or enforce taxation.

The Basseri prior to the mid-1950s clearly exhibited some features of a tributary chiefdom. The chief and his kinsmen formed an elite class distinct and above the ordinary tribesmen. And the Basseri khan could levy from 1 to 3 percent of livestock (Barth 1961: 74) (although no information is presented on how frequently and for what purposes this could be done or how the tribesmen responded to requests). But to what degree could one say that the members of the Basseri chiefly class were “surplus takers,” in Wolf’s phrase? In fact, they were able to draw for their incomes on their own large herds, as well as sources independent of the tribal economy, notably on landlord fees and shares from the agricultural land and villages that they owned (Barth 1961: 74). It seems that it was not necessary for the Basseri tribal elite to be extracting surplus from tribesmen on a regular basis. And this is fortunate, for they would probably not have succeeded, as they did not have the necessary “apparatus of coercion” at their disposal. Without the apparatus of coercion, without a state apparatus, a true tributary chiefdom was

not possible. For Wolf, then, the Basseri, notwithstanding its class division and limited surplus transfer, could not be considered a true tributary chiefdom.

One of the limitations of Wolf's formulation—ironically, considering the general thrust of his approach—is his conception of chiefdoms as isolates, as if they had to evolve on their own. But Middle Eastern (and Indian and Chinese and other) social formations have, for thousands of years, evolved under the direct or indirect influence of states and quasi states, tribes and kin groupings, markets and quasi markets. The relations of local and regional political groupings to centers of power and trade were variously and varyingly close or distant, in alliance or in opposition, but tribes were rarely in isolation. The Basseri tribe evolved within the ecologically, culturally, socially, economically, and politically rich and complex environment of Fars Province, a center of Persian civilization, and the dynamics of Basseri structures and politics were shaped by that environment rather than by strictly internal exigencies.

The pastoral nomads of the Basseri tribe were themselves an economically successful, privileged "middle class" of the Fars region (Barth 1961: 17, 108–110; cp. Beck 1986: 158, n. 18). The most successful pastoralists converted their livestock wealth into land to become elite landowners (Barth 1961: 105–106). The main task of the Basseri chief was to maintain good relations—good for the tribe, that is—with other tribes, sedentary populations, agents of the Persian government, and bazaar merchants. The Basseri chief was working for the tribe; the Basseri tribesmen were not working for the chief, as one might expect in a tribute chiefdom. The Basseri chief did not have a special call on supernatural powers, nor did he redistribute the productive wealth of the society, two chiefly functions seen in more isolated chiefdoms (Service 1975: 75, 78; cp. Salzman 1975). How did the Basseri chiefship, without a coercive apparatus at its disposal, arrive at elite standing and obtain the symbols if not the substance of command? It did so exactly as Barth has told us, through providing the "interface" between the tribe and the other, relatively balanced segments in the "plural" society of Fars and Persia. This is why Irons, taking into account the particular characteristics of pastoral nomads, has argued that "among pastoral nomadic societies, hierarchical political institutions are generated only by external political relations with state societies, and never develop as a

result of the internal dynamics of such societies" (1979a: 362). If it were useful to proliferate types, one might add to Wolf's kinship chiefdom and tribute chiefdom an intermediate type, labeled the "plural society chiefdom," of which the Basseri would be an example.

The general lesson to be drawn from this exercise is that what people say, the way they represent themselves, is an important part of their lives and reality, but their lives and their reality also reflect other motivations, calculations, pressures, constraints, and opportunities. The present emphasis in some social analysis on "voice" and identity privileges words—the comfortable medium of the academic—and sometimes underrates or ignores the other ways that people "speak" with their choices, with their strong arms, and with their feet.

ACCOMMODATION AND
RESISTANCE TO THE STATE
Peasant Pastoralists

Pastoralism is the raising of domesticated animals on natural pasture. Pastoralists are people who engage in pastoralism. This much is fairly well agreed upon. The sociological correlates of pastoralism and of the many varieties of pastoralism, perhaps less well established, are the subject of this chapter.

We would do well to remember, as we embark on this excursion, that these terms, *pastoralism* and *pastoralist*, are our labels that we use to identify categories defined by the specified criteria of "raising domesticated animals on natural pasture." In other words, these are constructed, analytic tools rather than chunks of reality that we are viewing directly.

The terms used in defining the categories are themselves vague and need further definition and clarification. This is something that we need to do on a case-by-case basis and as we construct the argument. But here, I shall give some examples to illustrate the point:

- What exactly counts as pasture? Do we intend only open areas, such as meadows? Is it grass and shrubs anywhere they are found, such as in forests? But goats and camels eat leaves, so do we include trees also? And do we also include the roots and nuts that free-ranging pigs eat?

- What exactly is “natural” pasture? We know that, historically, many pasture areas were developed by human action, such as the cutting of forests and the burning of secondary growth. And many areas remain pasture and do not develop secondary forest growth only because vegetation is cropped closely by flocks and herds guided by people. So, exactly what is “natural” about “natural pasture”?
- How much “raising domesticated animals on natural pasture” does someone have to do to be considered a “pastoralist”? In other words, what portion of a person’s time and energy must be devoted to pastoralism, in comparison with other work on agriculture, commerce, industry, labor sale, or coercive predation, in order for that person to be a “pastoralist” in any significant sense? The sociological point here is that the nature of pastoralism shapes a person’s life only if it is a major part of his or her life. How, then, do we take into account the fact that people who, by our definition, are “pastoralists” are also many other things as well?

Alerted to these conceptual uncertainties and substantive puzzles, we are intellectually armed to attack a basic question about the common features of pastoralism.

Commonalities of Pastoralism

The conceptualizing of pastoralism only makes sense and is only useful if there are certain elements shared by all pastoralists and if these common elements shape pastoralists’ lives in a particular fashion. I would identify the following as the primary common features of pastoralism:

- Domesticated animals, or livestock, are a major capital resource. This means that they are a *repository of value*.
- Livestock is *self-reproducing* and has at least the potential of expanding in number. (This is in contrast to some other kinds of capital resources, such as land, water, and mineral deposits.)
- Livestock holdings are made up of individual animals, so flocks and herds are naturally *partible*. This means there is a great flexibility in “off-taking” or “cashing-in” value.

- In regard to those domestic animals usually considered as pastoral, livestock is *mobile*, providing spatial flexibility.
- Livestock, in comparison with other kinds of capital resources, is particularly *vulnerable* to theft and disease.
- The other major resources required are *pasture* and *water*.

These elements of pastoralism provide a fixed set of imperatives and opportunities that are shared by all pastoralists and that shape their lives and influence their cultures:

- **Security:** Livestock must be constantly protected so that its value is securely held.
- **Nurturance:** Livestock must have consistent and timely access to pasture and water.
- **Mobility:** Animals may be moved from place to place in advancing security and nurturance, in seeking beneficial situations and circumstances, and in avoiding those that are threatening. However, as they must be supervised, their keepers must also be mobile, living on the move rather than in stable, sedentary settlements.
- **Distribution and exchange:** Livestock may be divided up, distributed in different places and under the supervision and control of different individuals, and they may be exchanged. These strategies may, like mobility, serve security and nurturance. They may also advance social goals: welfare, in providing animals to individuals in need; alliance, in a loan or gift reinforcing a relationship; status, in honoring the name of the giver; and income, in “cashing in” animals for other capital resources, consumables, or political or legal debts.
- **Production:** A herd or flock—obviously varying according to the species of animal and the intentions of the owners—may generate a wide variety of usable products: work for riding, burden, and traction; milk, meat, and blood for human consumption; wool, hair, skins, horn, and bone for weaving, tanning, and shaping into clothes, shelter, and tools; and manure for fertilizer.

These imperatives and opportunities faced by all pastoralists must be addressed by the people involved according to their own cultural

resources, the ecological and environmental setting, and the economic and political context in which they must operate. This brings us immediately to the differences among pastoralists.

Varieties of Pastoralism

Significant variations can be found in many aspects of pastoralism, and thus, there are many different analytic dimensions along which we might range particular individual pastoralists or groups of pastoralists or "pastoral societies," should we dare to risk reification by designating entities at such a high level as "pastoral." Here, I wish to mention a few important areas of variation before focusing on one.

Ecological and economic differences among various pastoral peoples and populations (already discussed in Chapter 1) include pastoral *specialization* versus productive *generalization* or *diversification*, which is the extent to which people limit themselves to livestock production or engage in a broader range of productive activities, such as agriculture, hunting, fishing, trading, caravanning, extortion, labor-sale, and/or predatory extraction; *subsistence* versus *market* production, whether people mainly consume their own products or sell them to others; and *nomadic* versus *sedentary* settlement patterns, the extent to which the community moves or remains stable during the annual round of productive activities. These different orientations and practices shape pastoral life in major ways (discussed in Chapter 1).

Tribal and Peasant Pastoralists

The factor that is perhaps of greatest importance for the lives of pastoralists is political power, ranging from political power over other groups, the capability to *rule*, through control over their own lives, *independence*, to being subject to the will of others, *subordination*. The lives of pastoralists, as well as those of people engaged in other activities, are substantially defined by their political positions.

I would contend that the concepts of "tribe" and "peasant" primarily designate differences of political status among rural populations in preindustrial societies. A tribe is an independent political entity consisting of a number of structurally similar local groups of primary pro-

ducers. A peasantry is a number of local groups of primary producers that have been incorporated into an agrarian regime controlled by a ruling class with political, military, and ritual power.

Pastoralists in preindustrial settings might thus be considered tribal or peasant, depending upon their political independence or dependence. However, political power is a variable, with many gradations and patterns. It would therefore be more precise to think of "tribe" and "peasant" as labels for points or ranges on the continuum of political power. On this continuum—which could be broken down into ranges with labels such as rule, suzerainty, independence, encapsulation, incorporation, assimilation, suppression, and annihilation—the tribe would correspond with the suzerain or independent range, whereas the peasantry would correspond with the assimilation range. (Other ranges on the continuum would stand for other political relationships: For example, suppression would stand for the destruction of the peasantry, as in the Scottish Highland clearances.) The ranges between independence and assimilation, that is encapsulation and incorporation, indicate intermediate relationships of partial loss of independence and of limited control by others, statuses that many pastoral peoples have experienced both through history and in modern times, either permanently or temporarily. Thus, although we may speak of "tribal pastoralists" and "peasant pastoralists," we must keep in mind that these are really labels for ranges on a continuum and that there is a large area of gradation between them that may be occupied by pastoralists with varying degrees of independence and subordination.

Tribal Pastoralists

A brief discussion of tribal pastoralists will place into context the account of peasant pastoralists to follow. I begin with a case I know well, the Yarahmadzai Baluch of southeastern Iran (Salzman 2000a).

Until the successful military campaign of Reza Shah in 1936, the Yarahmadzai Baluch were a fully independent tribe. They had militarily asserted their independence from the small Kurdish hakomate, a stratified protostate with a ruler called "hakom," in the Kuhu Daptan Mountains on their northern boundary. They governed themselves through councils of household heads and lineage collective responsibility, controlled their

own large territory, and engaged in predatory raiding of Persian villages and caravans in the regions to the north and west of Baluchistan. They had a chief, or sardar, but his role was limited to internal mediation and representing the tribe to outsiders (Salzman 1983). The tribesmen lived in herding camps, migrating with their tents and animals in the course of their productive activities. They cooperated in production, shared their resources, and supported their fellows in the face of conflict (Salzman 1988a).

Following encapsulation of the Yarahmadzai by the regime of Reza Shah and the stationing of Persian troops in the area, the tribe was obliged to accept the new name of Shah Nawazi (meaning "Shah stroker"), raiding was suppressed, and arms were confiscated. The sardar's position increased in importance as he took on the role of middleman between the tribes and the government, providing him with unprecedented access to resources as well as new responsibilities and risks (Salzman 1973). Some decades later, the government initiated a program to divide the tribal territory and give local groups legal rights to the land they customarily used. Stationary facilities such as schools and clinics were established, and irrigation agriculture was encouraged.

We can discern in this brief account the basic pattern of tribal pastoralists. As politically independent entities, they govern themselves, control their territories, rely on the flexibility of mobility, maintain a high level of internal equality, and exhibit a high degree of social solidarity. At the same time, they must rely on their own resources, cannot expect help from the outside, and must face on their own or with horizontal alliances with similar groups threats from other tribes or from protostate or state entities.

Once a tribe is encapsulated by an aspiring regional elite or by a powerful state, these abilities erode. Use of coercive force is suppressed, external regulation is imposed, and control of the territory and its resources is appropriated. This is clearly seen in many diverse cases, such as the Bedouin of the Negev (Marx 1967), the Turkmen of northern Iran (Irons 1975), and the Yörük of southern Turkey (Bates 1973). Furthermore, authorities often discourage mobility, which is viewed as inimical to effective political control and as a potential threat, and encourage settlement in permanent residences, as in the case of the Qashqa'i of south-western Iran (Beck 1991), settled by Reza Shah in the 1930s and pres-

ured to resettle by Mohammad Reza Shah in the 1960s. Tribal elites are incorporated into the state apparatus, raising their status and wealth and dividing them from the tribesmen (Aswad 1971: chap. 2; Bates 1973: 225). Tribesmen lose their common political interests with their fellow tribesmen, each family striving to survive on its own, often through vertical, patron-client ties of dependence; as a consequence, solidarity—the cooperation, sharing, and mutual support among tribesmen—declines, leaving communities socially fragmented.

Peasant Pastoralists

Pastoralists whose social organization and culture have been assimilated to a state-dominated society are appropriately called "peasant pastoralists." Although the lives of peasant pastoralists are shaped by the same political forces that have encapsulated and then incorporated formerly tribal pastoralists, the processes have gone further, with the assimilation to the culture, organization, and psychology of subordination being complete. The cultural, organizational, and characterological structures of power and independence are totally absent. Anger and resistance are episodic, expressive rather than instrumental (Edgerton 1971), and ultimately futile.

Let us now consider the situations of several particular groups of peasant pastoralists in the Mediterranean, Middle East, and India. In briefly reviewing these cases, we can examine the ways in which the above-mentioned political problems are manifested in specific ethnographic contexts, the ways in which people cope with these problems, and the consequences for their social and cultural lives.

Pastoral Shepherds of Corsica

Corsica, a wooded, alpine island of 250,000 people located in the western Mediterranean, west of the Italian mainland and south of France, is legally part of France while remaining culturally distinct. In the southern region were found a substantial number of shepherds who migrated between the winter pasture on the coasts and summer pasture in the mountains, providing milk, cheese, meat, and wool, and who formed an underclass in the highland villages to which they belonged (Holway 1978). Local landowning elites and independent cultivators alike excluded shepherds

socially, refusing to marry them or even to allow them to sit in church. The shepherds' appreciation of their situation became evident when opportunities arose for them to join the French army and to move to French cities such as Marseille, whereupon they deserted shepherding and their villages en masse and forever. Even those few shepherds who remained abandoned their highland villages and relocated their permanent residences to the coastal areas (Salzman, personal observation, 1987–1988).

In northern Corsica, a different pattern was dominant (Holway 1978; Ravis-Giordani 1983). Communities of equal smallholders carried on mixed, agropastoral production. Pastoralism was part of most families' activities, and the seasonal transhumance of migration with the flocks between coastal winter pastures and highland summer pastures was carried out by young men, usually elder sons, while senior males remained with the females, children, and old people in the village and pursued other productive activities. (This mobility pattern, with young men going off with the livestock for long periods and other family members remaining in permanent settlements and engaging in cultivation and other productive activities, is widespread. An African example is the division of labor among the Karimojong [Dyson-Hudson 1966].) These largely egalitarian communities of agropastoral producers were not united by strong political bonds, and vendettas often divided families and led to ongoing, reciprocal violence. Pastoralism declined when coastal winter pasture was lost to agricultural and tourist development and new opportunities arose in nontraditional sectors. Sheep and shepherds were replaced by free-ranging pigs, which required little supervision.

Pastoral Shepherds of Sardinia

In Sardinia—a drier and more denuded island of 1.5 million people, located just to the south of Corsica and legally part of Italy although culturally distinct—pastoralism has been a major activity; in the mountainous areas, it is a dominant one (Angioni 1989; Meloni 1984; Schweizer 1988; Salzman 1999). Until the end of the nineteenth century, mountain communities—each a *comune*, including at least a main village of several thousands of people and its territory—were divided between sheep- and goat-raising pastoralists and grain-growing cultivators, with most families also maintaining gardens, vines, and orchards. Many communities had large commonlands, sometimes tens of thousands of hectares,

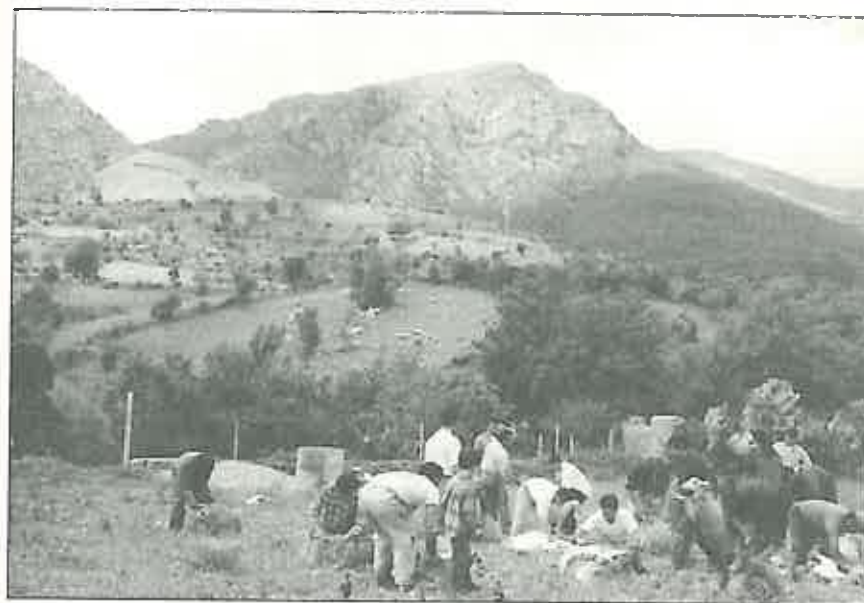


FIGURE 5.1 The *tosatura* is the annual sheep-shearing *fiesta* (festival). Shepherds with the help of friends and family spend the morning shearing sheep and the afternoon eating and drinking. (P. C. Salzman, 1992)

which served as fields and pastures. Many villages were located in the mountains and on highland plateaus. While women and children remained in the villages, shepherds and their sons would live away from the village much of the time, often for months on end, at sheep stations, *ovile*, on lowland plains in the winter and in the highlands in the summer. In the countryside, the shepherds pastured their livestock, milked them, and made the sheep's milk cheese, *formaggio pecorino*, which was an important part of their diet; from the end of the nineteenth century, it became a major export product, demanded by Italians around the world to eat on their pasta. As wheat cultivation in the valleys declined, pastoralism expanded onto the abandoned land, and the number of livestock expanded impressively during the twentieth century.

Since the Romans invaded Sardinia 2,000 years ago, the island has been almost continually occupied by a series of external state forces.



FIGURE 5.2 Everyone at the highland Sardinian *tosatura* pitches in with the shearing, including the anthropologist, seen here in the foreground. (Lisa Edelsward, 1992)

Early tribal organization was suppressed, and governance was controlled by imperial rulers. The power of taxation and other rights over territory were often held by foreign elites. Lucrative plantation agriculture in the valleys was closely controlled by the occupiers, but agropastoral communities in mountainous areas often escaped close control. With political and legal control appropriated by the occupiers, Sardinian communities were stripped of any regional political organization, leaving them socially encysted and cut off from one another. Often geographically

separated from one another by vast territories, villagers were endogamous, marrying only covillagers, and they maintained differences in costume, diet, ritual, and even dialect.

In the nineteenth century, the imperial government decided to divide the commonlands and distribute them as private property. This approach succeeded to varying degrees in the mountain comune; there were many rebellions, but in the end, some communities lost land to outsiders, and others saw much of their land fall into the hands of a small segment of wealthy families. In the twentieth century, the Italian state increasingly intervened in Sardinian life, passing laws for the regulation of pastoral production and many other aspects of life. Even in the last decades, the region of Sardinia and the Italian state have imposed new controls over the lands of mountain communities by instituting, in spite of strong local resistance, a vast national park. Financial benefits to Sardinians and to Sardinian pastoralists from Italian state



FIGURE 5.3 After the work of shearing at the Sardinian *tosatura*, everyone gathers at the alfresco table for food, talk, and jokes. (P. C. Salzman, 1992)



FIGURE 5.4 In response to the Italian state's imposition of the Gennargentu National Park on much of the communal land of highland Sardinian *communi* (municipalities), many highland Sardinians—and above all, the pastoral shepherds—resisted as best they could. Graffiti denouncing the park were widespread and bitter. The building pictured is virtually covered with antipark graffiti. The graffito on the left, “No al parco truffa,” means “No to the fraudulent park.” (P. C. Salzman, 1992)

coffers have frequently flowed differentially, through patron-client ties within the framework of political parties. Some Sardinians in mountain communities continue to support traditional customs and local independence through armed resistance, manifested in repeated shootings and bombings of state agents, especially soldiers, police, and municipal authorities, as well as their installations and property (Salzman 1993).

In the mountain villages, the basic social unit has for centuries been the nuclear family. Ties between families were frail, and each was

obliged to act in its own economic, social, and political interests. Local custom was based on individual “self-help” in defense of family interests. In the pastures, each shepherd had to look out for himself and his flock. The rustling of livestock from other communities was an accepted and even encouraged part of pastoral life (Moss 1979; Caltagirone 1989). The threat and application of violent “self-help” by individuals was and is the ultimate stage of social control within communities and between shepherds, sometimes resulting in vendettas between families.

The Sarakatsani of Northern Greece

The Sarakatsani (Campbell 1964) are a population of some 4,000 shepherds living in the mountainous Zagori region of northern Greece. Although Greek-speaking, they are ethnically distinct from the Greek villagers of the region and form an endogamous community. The Sarakatsani migrate seasonally with their sheep and goats from highland summer pastures to lowland winter pastures. Until a national government proclamation in 1938, they were without local rights and had no claims on land and pasture. Summer pasture in the mountains, the area they deemed to be their homeland, had to be rented from villagers. For the winter, they migrate—as long as they have received their migration permit from the police—with their flocks down from the mountains to the coastal plain, where the families are dispersed and separated from one another. On the plain, although some own plots of land, many must rent sites for their temporary residences and pasture for their animals.

The Sarakatsani community is socially fragmented (Campbell 1964: 39). There are no community-wide political institutions: no chief, council, lineage, or military formation. There is, however, a common culture, as well as a set of ideals and standards, and an arena for competition between families for subsistence and for prestige (Campbell 1964: 237). Thus, local politics among the Sarakatsani is manifested primarily in the struggle for honor among individuals and families (and their somewhat wider bilateral kindreds). Physical coercion is organized on a familial basis and is limited to disputes among Sarakatsani. There is thus, among Sarakatsani, a low level of collective solidarity and a low-grade war of all against all (or at least all families against all families).

In the absence of collective solidarity and the “insuperable obstacles” to cooperation among Sarakatsani families, Sarakatsani household

heads seek relationships with powerful outsiders in order to protect their families' interests (Campbell 1964: 217–218). Relations with outsiders take the form of hierarchical, client-patron relationship (Campbell 1964, chap. 9). Bonds with powerful and prestigious village leaders and regional politicians are established through sacred ties of marriage sponsorship and godparenthood, "friendships" based upon the exchange of favors, and "gifts" intended to influence decisions. Legal and political favors by patrons are balanced by clients' electoral support, labor, and pastoral products.

The Yörük of Southern Turkey

The Yörük of Turkey (Bates 1973) shifted east from the crowded western and southwestern coast during the first half of the twentieth century. The pastoral niche in the region currently occupied by the Yörük was available because the government had forced the pastoral Kurdish and Turkmen tribes to settle, giving ownership of the land to the former tribal leaders (Bates 1973: 225). The Yörük were allowed to remain pastoral nomads because the state deemed them not to be a political threat. The state is thus a dominant force in the lives of the Yörük. As Bates puts it, "All [Yörük] transactions, social or economic, take place against a backdrop formed by the political paramountcy of the Turkish state and its governing institutions. . . . The tribal structure of the Yörük is an expression of this reality" (1973: 34). The spatial distribution of the Yörük over the landscape was determined more by political processes than by economic processes: "The Yörük . . . have changed many of their fundamental patterns of migration and land use in response to pressure by the government" (Bates 1973: 37).

The Yörük migrate with their flocks of sheep between lowland winter pastures to the south and highland summer pastures in central Anatolia. Their migration schedule is determined not by the needs of their animals alone; instead, the Yörük herders adjust their schedules to the agricultural cycle of the settled villagers because it is politically expedient to do so. They do not have rights to land but must rent pasture from villagers and pay grazing fees, negotiating access annually. They have no choice because the agencies of the state enforce the rights of villagers. Thus, "nomadic pastoral patterns of land use are often best intelligible as adaptive responses to other communities and the state" (Bates 1973: 226).

Bates uses the term *tribe* to refer to the largest named sections of the Yörük, and by this he means "the maximum unit of presumed common agnatic descent" (Bates 1973: 44). This "tribe" has, however, no political existence: "The Sacikara tribe, like other Yörük tribes, is territorially dispersed, . . . lacks corporateness with respect to common access to resources, or any set of binding rights and obligation inherent in tribal membership. . . . There is no formal political hierarchy or pan-tribal office" (Bates 1973: 44).

Political leadership roles, or "bey," were suppressed "by government fiat and force" by the early nineteenth century (Bates 1973: 36). All that is left to the tribe as a social entity is "the sharing of a common name and cultural heritage" (Bates 1973: 41). Bates suggests that if Yörük tribal organization had not been emptied of all political content, the Yörük would have been "economically destroyed by forced settlement and dispersion as an intolerable rival to the national system" (1973: 57).

Yörük pastoralist families camp together for security against rustlers and for greater weight in negotiating grazing contracts with villagers, as well as for sociability (Bates 1973: 121–122). But there is little cooperation in labor among families, nor are there prospects of long-term coresidence (124). What informal leadership there is comes from wealth and generosity (134–135). The substantial wealth differentiation among Yörük pastoralists, as indicated by livestock holdings, fluctuates with household labor power and numbers of consumers and does not harden into economic strata or develop into economic classes of wealthy and laborers (chap. 7, 222), as it does in settled Yörük villages (211).

The Komachi of Southern Iran

The Komachi are a small group (population 550) of Persian-speaking pastoral nomads (Bradburd 1990). They raise sheep and goats, migrating some 200 miles seasonally from lowland winter pastures on the coastal plains of southern Iran to highland summer pastures—which they deem their homeland—in mountain ranges south of Kerman city. Bradburd (188) characterizes them as "pastoral peasants."

While their pastoralism and their nomadism were terribly important to the Komachi—it was a defining feature of their self-image—and while they saw themselves as a community defined by common kinship, the Komachi did not claim to be, and they did not act as though they were,

descendants of an ancestor such as Ghengiz Khan. The Komachi were more migratory peasants than marauders; they were . . . economic, rather than political, pastoralists (Bradburd 1990: 5).

They sold livestock products, such as goat's wool for cashmere, sheep's wool for carpets, and culled animals for meat, in urban markets, and had dependent ties with merchants and moneylenders (Bradburd 1990: 34–49). They bought many of the products they consumed, including goat hair (from a type of goat they did not raise) for making tents.

Much of the Komachi's region was sparsely populated, infertile pasture areas to which Komachi were able to gain access without great difficulty. But their access was dependent upon the goodwill of absentee landowners and, more latterly, government officials, and usually forthcoming as a result of gifts, fees, or patron-client ties (Bradburd 1990: 21–24). As state order has strengthened and modern agriculture spread in recent decades, the Komachi have been forced to shift to more distant marginal areas.

Although the Komachi was formed by people of various origins, members see themselves as tied by kinship and by obligations that follow from that. But there was no unifying political structure and no common property. Wealth in livestock was significantly unequal among households, and the wealthy families employed poorer ones as shepherds, leading to class conflict and reinforcing economic differentiation (Bradburd 1990: chaps. 5 and 6). Bradburd says that there was a great deal of cooperation and assistance, but that it was asymmetrical—in effect, economic exploitation. But this, according to Bradburd (73), is an extension at the lowest level of the exploitation and oppression that the Komachi as a whole and rural producers generally suffered at the hands of the power hierarchy of the larger Iranian society.

The Bharawad of Gujarat

Originating in Saurashtra, in north Gujarat, groups of Bharawad pastoralists have spread through southern Gujarat and beyond, into northern Maharashtra. Some Bharawad, now settled in Surat city in south Gujarat (Salzman 1988b), had previously engaged in pastoral nomadism with cattle, buffalo, sheep, and goats, selling ghee (clarified butter)

for income. Following a seasonal north-south loop, they would migrate to the more humid south for two months during the dry season, sometimes grazing their animals on agricultural stubble in farming communities. This carried them over the most difficult season and provided some income from fertilizing fields. They could not remain longer because the small stock tended to fall sick in the southern wet season. Having settled on some municipal land along the Ring Road and now keeping only buffalo, the Bharawad—no longer nomadic and, supplying fodder for their animals, no longer pastoral—have become dairy-men to the urban residents of Surat. Residing together, their homes and stables adjacent, they have so far maintained social boundaries and aspects of their distinctive culture.

Another Bharawad group, now mostly settled in Umarpada Village (Mangrol Taluka, Surat District), had made their home in the forests of south Gujarat (Salzman 1988b). Herding cattle in the forest, they lived in temporary camps, moving residence from time to time. But they were able to sell milk only by taking it on the train to Surat city, a process so arduous and costly as to vitiate the enterprise. The settled families now belong to a milk co-op and provide milk for Sunul Dairy in Surat city. They have also taken up other occupations and appear to be assimilating to village customs and culture.

While nomadic and pastoral, the Bharawad appear to have been somewhat disenfranchised. They did not vote and were not connected to the political structure. Moreover, it was difficult for them to receive services or assistance. Now that they are settled, they face other difficulties. The Surat city Bharawad do not have secure residential tenure and in fact face eviction as unwanted "urban cattle keepers." They must also purchase some fodder, a financial drain on their marginal enterprises. The Umarpada Village Bharawad have amalgamated with the settled peasantry and integrated with regional economic structures, gaining the benefits of integration and stability while losing the benefits of mobility and distinctiveness.

The Reika of Rajasthan

In the Great Thar Desert, which occupies the western half of Rajasthan, livestock breeding and pastoralism is an ancient and well-established occupation (Salzman 1986). Sheep and goats predominate.

with camels in the driest areas and cattle in the less arid areas also being important. All of the livestock provides milk for consumption or sale (raw or processed into ghee) and fertilizer for the fields. In addition, 50 percent of India's wool comes from the sheep, goats provide hair, and the camels and cattle supply traction and serve as burden animals. Though most rural families in the Thar Desert raise some livestock as subsidiary production, around half of all livestock is owned by traditional pastoral specialists, such as the Reika (Rubari) and Sindhi-Muslims, who make up around 5 percent of the rural population.

Members of herding castes are a minority (usually less than 10 percent of the population) in villages dominated by agriculturalists, such as Jats, Rajputs, and Bishnoi who own most of the land and are politically most powerful. Pastoralists have, in the past, grazed their animals on uncultivated pasture areas, wasteland, and harvested fields around their villages, for which they rely on the permission of the agriculturalists. However, local resources can no longer support the livestock. Pasture and water availability have markedly declined with the sharp growth in livestock numbers (for example, in Jodhpur District from 1.5 million in 1956 to 3.5 million in 1983), and the great increase in human population (in Jodhpur District, from 400,000 in 1901 to 1.7 million in 1981, including a 45 percent jump between 1971 and 1981) and the attendant expansion of agriculture (Salzman 1986). In the remaining uncultivated areas, forests have been closed to herds by the government.

As a result of these conditions, sheep breeders (and camel breeders [Köhler-Rollefson 1992]) in western Rajasthan cannot provide the basic necessities for their livestock in the vicinity of their villages. In an average year, they are able to stay in their villages for several months after the rains, but must migrate away with their herds for the remaining eight or so months. Increasingly, in order to find adequate pasture and fresh water, they go farther—depending upon home location, to Gujarat and Maharashtra, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh—and stay away longer. In spite of this nomadization, the herders' situation is exacerbated by an increasingly cultivated landscape and resulting conflicts with agriculturalists. Breeders now migrate in ever larger groups—hundreds of men with thousands of sheep, their numbers providing some degree of security and useful for intimidating people they encounter.

Conclusion

Some pastoralists are independent tribes; others are assimilated peasants. However, on the continuum from political domination to annihilation, there are many gradations. At one extreme are pastoralists who have historically been conquerors and rulers; at the other extreme are pastoralists who have been suppressed through forced settlement or physically annihilated. Between the independent tribes and assimilated peasants are gradations of encapsulation and of incorporation. Among the cases mentioned above, the Komachi appear to be the most assimilated, fully sharing culture with the larger society. The Reika and Bharawad may also be considered assimilated within a social system based upon cultural diversity. The Yörük are almost assimilated, with most offending elements of their culture long removed. The Sarakatsani might be considered more incorporated than assimilated to the larger society, but their political initiative is limited to internal matters. Corsican and Sardinian shepherds, because of their violent resistance to state control, should perhaps be considered encapsulated rather than incorporated or assimilated. But throughout this range on the continuum (encompassing encapsulation, incorporation, and assimilation), the effects of state power are felt.

One further factor should be identified as an important influence that affects the conditions within which pastoralists pursue their lives: demography. When there is a lot of land available because there are few people, exactly who owns the land does not make so much difference. The Sardinians and the Komachi benefited from very low population densities and gained access to land relatively easily in spite of their relative political weakness. In contrast, the Reika, even with traditional rights of usage, suffer from an extreme lack of pasture and water because of the tremendous pressure of increased population and agriculture. The Yörük and the Sarakatsani, too, must step carefully amid the settlements and lands of the agriculturalists. In practice, political power and demography interact in a close fashion.

To the degree that legal and coercive power rests in the hands of nonpastoralists, they are in a position to make and enforce laws not designed with the needs and interests of pastoralists in mind (particularly in circumstances of demographic pressure)—laws that constrain and

direct the activities of the pastoralists. Peasant pastoralists must face this political situation as a series of practical circumstances and problems with which they must cope.

Land and its resources, pasture and water, are part of state territory and controlled or owned by others. Access to pasture and water is thus highly problematical. In Corsica and elsewhere in Europe, traditional lowland winter pastures have been lost to agricultural or tourist development, thereby undercutting the seasonal migration cycle. The Sarakatsani, Yörük, and Komachi must negotiate and rent pastures from settled landowners. The Reika sheep and camel breeders can hardly find pasture even to rent, and traditional grazing grounds in forests have been closed to them and others, such as the Gujar buffalo herders (Gooch 1992), forcing the Reikas to migrate farther and stay away from their villages longer. Even settled Bharawad dairymen have no tenure and are threatened with eviction.

Responses vary. The loss of winter pastures in Corsica, together with problems of labor relations, has led to a decline of pastoralism and its replacement by nonmigratory, free-ranging pigs. The Sarakatsani, Yörük, and Komachi avoid offending settled populations and seek powerful settled patrons to assist them in gaining access to land. The Reika have opted for nomadization, migrating farther and staying away longer from home districts, in search of pasture and water.

Mobility and thus the ability to move across space in order to reach necessary resources, to maintain social relations, and to gain access to markets is not guaranteed and is often subject to restriction by state authorities. Some forms of movement, such as nomadism, may be banned outright. Forced settlement is a preferred remedy of governments seeking to control nomadic populations deemed threatening. Sarakatsani must have police passes in order to make their seasonal migration. The niche occupied by the Yörük was made available by the forced settlement by the government of other pastoral nomadic groups. Reika herders find themselves increasingly hemmed in by expanding agriculture, so much so that it is often difficult to establish migratory routes.

Sarakatsani and Yörük do their best to appear nonthreatening to the settled population. The Yörük migration schedule is timed to the agricultural cycle, in order to minimize conflicts with farmers. The Sarakatsani and Komachi seek help from powerful patrons in the settled community to assist them in gaining permission to migrate.

Political subordination is the unalterable circumstance, and some form of relation with the elite, often of a vertical, patron-client form, is required for protection from depredation and for access to resources. As we have seen, the Sarakatsani, Yörük, and Komachi cannot establish their own policies and follow their own will but must satisfy the priorities of external powers, usually state authorities. This is also clear in the case of the Reikas and Gujars in regard to access to forests.

Powerful authorities who are not concerned with the interests of weaker segments or who see no reason to apply rules in a universalistic fashion do respond to other powerful figures in the society. Thus, the Corsicans, Sardinians, Sarakatsani, and Komachi and others as well establish ties with powerful patrons, whether local or regional politicians, wealthy businessmen, or religious figures, who will act on their behalf in return for economic goods or labor, electoral votes, or honor and prestige.

Lacking the unity of group political action and of collective ownership of major resources such as land, social relations are fragmented, with people having similar interests but few common ones. Competition for the limited good is not balanced by the solidarity of cooperation, sharing, and support, leaving each to weigh his or her separate interests. Among southern Corsicans and Sarakatsani, families stand in competitive opposition to one another, with violence as a quick option. Sardinian agropastoral towns, some enjoying large commonlands, do exhibit some solidarity, but as with Corsicans and Sarakatsani, families are the main referent of solidarity, opposed to one another in practice if not in principle. Although the Komachi express group solidarity, economic advancement of one family at the expense of the other is the practice. In most of these cases, no property or right is held in common.

Without common interests and in order to advance or at least avoid falling back in competition with other families, strategies for advancing individual interests are adopted. Economic cooperation and sharing are often restricted to members within the family, except in emergencies. Where "self-help" in violent action is the only recourse to a serious challenge, it is the individual or close members of the nuclear family who act. Individual arrangements are made with patrons. Resources are hidden. Attacks, often of an indirect nature involving anonymous gossip and vandalism, are launched against others to undermine competitors.

In sum, the consequences for pastoralists of the loss of *political independence*, the defining criteria for "peasants," is a loss of or precarious hold on the *capital resources* of land and water, the *mobility* they need to move their livestock, their *equality* with one another, and the *solidarity* of the larger social group. As a result, peasant pastoralists are characterized, in contrast to tribal pastoralists, as *dependent* upon outsiders, involved as *subordinate clients* with external patrons, economically differentiated into *classes* or *protoclasses*, and *socially fragmented* into small entities, often nuclear families.

6

WHAT CAN WE LEARN
FROM PASTORAL PEOPLES
ABOUT EQUALITY, FREEDOM,
AND DEMOCRACY?

I would like to draw on our review of pastoral peoples in order to address two issues. The first is a major question in political philosophy: the compatibility of equality and freedom, that is, the extent to which equality and freedom can exist together. The second issue is the contribution of pastoral culture to the widespread deficit of democracy in contemporary Middle Eastern and African states.

Freedom and Equality

Among the characteristics that stand out in any review of pastoral peoples is the extent of agency of the individual pastoralist, as seen in the great degree of autonomy and independence that we find as central features in the personalities and social arrangements of pastoralists. The reason for this is that most pastoral peoples are organized in a decentralized, segmentary fashion, with governance and security in the hands of each and all; it is this that both requires and guarantees a wide range of individual agency. Thus, a central or recurrent theme in ethnographic accounts of segmentary, tribal pastoralists is the autonomy or freedom of the individual.

Tribal peoples such as the Bedouin are famous for these very characteristics. For example, Lancaster (1997: 73, 136) characterizes Rwala society as “one where every man is equally free to follow his own bent” and “every man is an island and is responsible for his own affairs.” In all areas of life—including whom one associates with, where one lives or travels, how one makes a living, how one allocates one’s resources, and whom one fights—decisions are up to the individual. The reason for this is that “no man has power over another” (Lancaster 1997: 73).

Among the Rwala, there were no rulers and no subjects. “No individual has political power, no group has political power and no family has political power; power is restricted to the workings of public opinion. Even public opinion has no formal coercive power; co-operation can be withdrawn and that is all. . . . All men are autonomous and equal and there is no mechanism whereby these principles can be overridden” (Lancaster 1997: 77). Summing up, Lancaster (1997: 73) says that “the Bedu system is based on the premises of equality, autonomy and the acquisition of reputation.”

Similarly, among the great tribal confederacies of the Zagros Mountains in western Iran, the sheep-herding tribesmen are highly autonomous in spite of appearances to the contrary. Barth (1961) has made a point of describing their economic autonomy, and I have made the case (see Chapter 4) that the Basseri were equally autonomous in their political arrangements. This view is also taken by Charles Lindholm in his overview of Middle Eastern tribal peoples:

Middle Eastern peripheral peoples—camel nomads, shepherds, and mountain farmers—unanimously maintain ideologies of egalitarianism and personal independence. Note that it is not nomadism *per se* that is valued, but the freedom, integrity and personal independence that is associated with the nomad’s life—the same freedom found in remote mountain villages and tribal oases, where men also claim a right to the respect and honor due to a warrior. The characteristic tribal values continue to be held in spite of attempts by the state to dominate, and in spite of the hierarchies that arise within the tribes—hierarchies which themselves are largely a way to mobilize against the state and maintain autonomy in the face of its demands (2002: 27).

This understanding is confirmed by accounts of other Middle Eastern tribal peoples, such as the Cyrenaican Bedouin (Evans-Pritchard 1949), the Al Murrah Bedouin (Cole 1975), the Yomut Turkmen (Irons 1975, 1994), the Harasiis Bedouin (Chatty 1996), and the Sarhadi Baluch (Salzman 2000a).

African tribal pastoralists exhibit similar characteristics. Among the Somali, that “fierce and turbulent race of Republicans,” as Richard Burton (quoted in Lewis 1961) described them, both individual liberty and equality are presumptions and operating principles. Lewis (1961: 1) refers to the Somalis’ “extreme independence and individualism” and each Somali’s “firm conviction that he is sole master of his actions and subject to no authority except that of God.” The Somali political system is based on “an egalitarian social contract,” thus showing Somali society to be part of “that class of egalitarian societies, with little social stratification and no centralized government” (Lewis 1961: 3).

Similarly, among the Nuer, as Evans-Pritchard (1940a: 296) famously tells us, equality is no inhibition to autonomy and freedom, “the Nuer constitution” being “highly individualistic and libertarian.”

The ordered anarchy in which they live accords well with their character, for it is impossible to live among Nuer and conceive of rulers ruling over them.

The Nuer is a product of hard and egalitarian upbringing, is deeply democratic, and is easily roused to violence. His turbulent spirit finds any restraint irksome and no man recognizes a superior. . . .

That every Nuer considers himself as good as his neighbour is evident in their every movement. They strut about like lords of the earth, which, indeed, they consider themselves to be. There is no master and no servant in their society, but only equals who regard themselves as God’s noblest creation. . . . [A Nuer] does not consider himself bound to obey any one.

Nor are the Nuer exceptional among pastoralists in these regards, as we have learned from Robert Edgerton’s (1971) groundbreaking psychological study of pastoralists and farmers in four East African tribes—the Hehe, Kamba, Pokot, and Sebei. Based on elaborate testing, Edgerton concluded that

independence of action is a pastoral trait, par excellence, and so it should be in an environment where individuals must make many decisions regarding themselves and their herds, usually without recourse to tradition, or group consultation, and, what is more, without delay. In a world where man and his animals are vulnerable to so many threats, life without independent decisions, rapidly made and carried out, would be fragile indeed (1971: 195, see also 275, fig. 4).

The extent of equality among pastoralists has been reviewed in some detail (see Chapter 3). The general thrust of that review was that among segmentary, tribal pastoralists, equality as an ideal, equality of status, and economic equality were all quite strong. Differences in status were those of prestige and contingent on achievement, whereas differences in economic success resulted largely from circumstances and individual characteristics. Surpluses were commonly invested in other people through the distribution of livestock and in any case disappeared from generation to generation. Thus, both the philosophy and the practice of equality were marked. In tribal chiefdoms (see Chapter 4), the striking differences in status, power, and riches between the elite and the ordinary tribesmen were, to a degree, illusory and purposely so in order to mislead external parties, resting as they were on continued and critical assessment of performance by the tribesmen. In this case, if the ordinary tribesmen were not equal in status or riches, they were equal or superordinate in giving or withholding consent.

It seems apparent that both equality and freedom are present in great degree among these tribal pastoralists. No conflict between equality and freedom is apparent; no incompatibility is discernible. The reason for this is the impact of segmentary security on freedom and equality.

Segmentary Security and Self-Help

Segmentary societies base order on a balance of coercive potential and effective force, each segment ready and able to mobilize and apply coercion in defense of its own interests. Such disparate pastoral peoples as the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940a), the Bedouin of Cyrenaica (Evans-Pritchard 1949; Peters 1990), the Somali (Lewis 1961; Helander 1998),

the Berbers (Gellner 1969), the Turkmen (Irons 1975), the Rwala Bedouin (Lancaster 1997), and the Baluch (Salzman 2000a), among many others, rely on self-help and a balance of force to maintain order. In these societies, with the exception of a small religious contingent, all men are warriors, and all men must concern themselves with effectively applying coercion in defense of their interests. Facing a serious dispute or injury, threatened or actual, the men of a segment mobilize to act militarily.

In segmentary societies, raiding and warfare is endemic, and violence is a way of life. The need for security and the quest for power, wealth, and reputation generate a constant bellicose struggle. We see this clearly among the Bedouin, raiding for camels; among the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940a), raiding Dinka villages, stealing cattle, burning huts, killing the "useless" elderly, and expanding into the "cleansed" territory; among the Yomut Turkmen (Irons 1975); and among the Sarhadi Baluch (Salzman 2000a), raiding Persian villages for slaves, livestock, and carpets and raiding caravans for merchandise. Meanwhile, the Nuer, Turkmen, and Baluch fight among themselves, both within and between tribes, over threats or injuries or to profit from opportunities. Lindholm (2002: 86 and *passim*) describes the "continuous and fruitless struggles for power" characteristic of segmentary tribal societies, although he acknowledges that, from time to time, tribes, as described in Ibn Khaldun's model, do succeed in conquering and ruling settled societies.

In segmentary societies, every man, barring a few ritual specialists, is a warrior. In addition to knowing how to herd or farm, every man has to know how to fight. And every man expects to engage in combat from time to time, at the very least, but has to be vigilant at all times and ready to fight at any moment. In the early Arab empire, with a population made up largely of Bedouin, "the citizen list was the army register, the tribes and families forming the regiments and companies" (Wellhausen, quoted in Lindholm 2002: 85–86). The population and the army coincided! And off to raid and fight they went, with great effect, bringing the Arab empire conquest upon conquest, occupying and ruling region after region. When that phase ended, they once again took up fighting among themselves.

What is absent in segmentary, tribal societies is civil peace, in which disputes and conflicts are resolved according to specified rules, without recourse to violence. In civil society—society in which security is based

on institutions of civil peace—small official groups specialize in legal procedures and the enforcement of legal decisions. This frees most men from military activities, allowing them to devote their energies to crafts, industries, services, commerce, and professions, thus facilitating economic and artistic productivity and innovation. Thus, there is a major opportunity cost in segmentary, tribal societies, where men must devote themselves to military skills and combat at the expense of productive creativity.

However, it is the necessity of military solidarity in segmentary societies that explains the ease with which freedom and equality can be reconciled in those societies. The security of each man and family depends upon the collective solidarity of the segment, which serves as a defense and attack group. For this reason, wealth for a tribesman is the political support of his fellows, and available economic resources, such as livestock, are important as means to gain that social wealth. Tribesmen are quite prepared to redistribute their surplus livestock and to share their foodstuffs with their fellows, for it is their ties with their fellows that are most valuable to them. That the tribesman redistributes his economic resources willingly—nay, enthusiastically—brings a voluntary and painless economic equality. In this way, economic resources are used to advance political solidarity, the most important resource a tribesman can have. And individual freedom and economic equality are mutually congenial. In effect, segmentary security buffers the potential contradictions between freedom and equality, leading free tribesmen to choose equality.

This pattern—the conjunction of equality and freedom among segmentary, tribal pastoralists—does not obtain among nontribal pastoralists, just as it does not obtain among nontribal peoples generally (Salzman n.d.). Pastoralists in corporate, collectivist societies, such as the former Communist countries, were incorporated in collectives and communes of one type or other and subject to central planning (Humphrey 1983; *Nomadic Peoples* 1993). These pastoralists were equalized by government diktat, often involving the “nationalization” of livestock, pasture, and water, the enjoyment of which then required strict conformity to communal regulation for work, reward, and consumption. Thus, among pastoralists in corporate, collectivist societies, economic equality was enforced to a substantial degree, even as indi-

vidual freedom in both economics and politics was very restricted. The fall of communism has seen a great upsurge in freedom among post-communal pastoralists, whereas economic differentiation has begun and economic equality has declined. Economic freedom among post-communal pastoralists has been manifested in such places as Mongolia (*Nomadic Peoples* 1993; Janzen 1998); family pastoral enterprises have been reconstituted, pastoral nomadism has been reactivated, with mobility patterns chosen on a familial basis, and the overall result has been highly complex and variable.

In contrast to the high level of equality and low level of freedom among pastoralists in corporate societies, there is a greater degree of freedom among pastoralists, with a lower level of equality, in mercantile and capitalist, market-oriented societies (Bradburd 1990; Galaty and Johnson 1990). Even among market-engaged tribal chiefdoms, there is an emerging pattern of high freedom and low equality. For example, the Basseri of south Persia, who are heavily engaged with the livestock and goods markets of urban Shiraz, fall into three economic categories: (1) middle-level livestock owners with sixty to several hundred sheep, who continue to migrate as pastoralists, (2) poor livestock owners whose flocks have fallen below the minimum of sixty sheep, who eventually drop out and become landless agricultural laborers in villages, and (3) rich livestock owners with many hundreds of sheep, who convert the unstable livestock into land and settle down to become sedentary landlords (Barth 1961: chap. 7). Thus, among pastoralists in mercantile and capitalist societies, the pattern of greater freedom and lesser equality obtains.

So it is only in segmentary, tribal societies that pastoralists can enjoy both freedom and equality. However, they do so at the price of security secured through self-help.

Pastoral Democracy

In the contemporary world, many countries with significant tribal pastoral populations are notoriously undemocratic, autocratic, despotic, corrupt, and devolving. There is hardly a country in the Arab world, from Morocco to Arabia and south to the Sudan, that could be considered democratic, and many are brutal dictatorships. Iran is governed by

a theocracy that has lost the support of its population, and Central Asian countries have maintained the Soviet spirit in governance. The picture is hardly better in Africa south of the Sahara, with elections being fixed (where they are held at all) and government business directed by corruption and particularistic interests. This sad picture is well known.

The reasons for the democratic deficit, the widespread corruption, the despotism, and the brutality are not well understood and are open to debate. For example, in current anthropology, the Leninist, "post-colonial" explanation is that the imperialist and neoimperialist powers are to blame for everything that has happened so far and for anything bad that will ever happen in those countries. In my view, a study of pre-colonial history is the best antidote to postcolonial slogans, but correcting postcolonialist theory is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Rather, I want to address a different explanation for the failed states of the Middle East and Africa. This explanation is more generally held than the postcolonial theory, now that the idea of "culture" is in the streets, as Geertz has put it. The argument, stated most baldly, is that these Middle Eastern and African folks have no experience of democracy, no way of knowing what it is or what they should do, no democratic orientation, and even a personality structure that militates against democracy. That is, the indigenous psychology and culture is not democratic, and therefore, state politics cannot be democratic. This view about these failed Middle Eastern and African states is widely expressed, by citizens of Western countries and by journalists and commentators in Western newspapers and magazines. For example, one version of this explanation specifically cites Islam as being incompatible with democracy (Kay 2003). Indeed, hardly a week goes by without this explanation being reinforced by repetition.

And of course this cultural explanation has scholarly roots as well, in theories of "the authoritarian personality" and its political manifestations (Adorno et al. 1950) and of "political culture" as a foundation of government (Pye and Verba 1965). For example, Sidney Verba (1965: 542) argues that "in some societies . . . people know little and care little about how decisions are made; they care merely whether the output of the government is beneficial or not. This would be so in a society in which most people considered themselves subjects of the government rather

than participants with a legitimate voice in deciding what the government does." For anthropologists, as students of Asia and Africa, the ethnographic question is, Do Middle Eastern and African populations lack an idea of, experience in, or a personality consistent with democracy? Further, what is the nature of local and regional politics in the Middle East and Africa? And how do segmentary tribes, widespread throughout the Middle East and Africa, comport themselves politically?

In segmentary, tribal societies, decisionmaking is democratic (see Chapter 4). The reason for this is straightforward: Coercive capacities, including skills and weapons, are widespread throughout the population, and no leader, elite, or small clique is capable of enforcing a policy against the will of the majority. Public opinion always counts for a great deal and is eventually decisive. The process of decisionmaking is commonly one of lengthy discussion and consensus building. Tribal polities are participatory democracies. All men and female elders are welcome to voice their opinions. Not all members have the same degree of influence on their fellows, but they do have the opportunity to try to influence them. There are often recognized leaders with honorific titles: sheikh, kalantar, khan, il-khan, sardar, and so forth. However, these leaders are not rulers and not despots. Rather, leadership at the lowest and highest levels in tribal societies consists largely of tapping public opinion and eliciting consensus.

Now, even in African and Middle Eastern countries where segmentary tribes are prominent, they are not always the majority and are not always dominant politically. But tribal life is formative in the regional culture. For one thing, there have historically been flows of population between the tribal sector and the peasant and urban sectors. And for various historical reasons, tribal cultures are, to a degree, seen as the "authentic" expression of Arab, Middle Eastern, or African culture. It is not uncommon for tribal culture, with its emphasis on freedom and equality but above all else democracy, to be symbolically important in national culture. Middle Eastern and African tribal societies thus contribute a model for democracy to the national culture.

The thesis that African and Middle Eastern states lack democratic institutions because democracy is foreign to the cultures from which these states arise cannot be sustained in light of the well-established indigenous democracy at the local and regional levels. If Arabia, Syria, Jordan,

Iraq, Egypt, Libya, and the rest do not enjoy democratic governments, it is not due to a lack of democracy in Bedouin culture. If Iran is dominated by an autocratic theocracy, it is not the fault of the democratic Turkmen, Kurds, and Baluch. If Somalia and the Sudan have despotic governments, it is not because their tribal pastoralists are insufficiently democratic. If the Maghreb suffers from oppressive governance, it is because the rulers do not emulate the democracy of the Berbers, not because that democracy is absent. Whatever the reason for Middle Eastern and African despotism, it is not due to a lack of democracy in Middle Eastern and African culture. The ethnographic facts do not support the cultural argument in accounting for state despotism.

But the problem goes beyond the lack of ethnographic evidence for the cultural explanation. The concept of culture used in this analysis is faulty. I leave aside views contrary to the cultural argument, such as Geertz's famous formulation that culture is a context of meaning rather than a cause: "As interworked systems of construable signs (. . . symbols), culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly—that is, thickly—described" (1973: 14). Geertz rejects the entire enterprise of explanation, reducing anthropology to ethnography (Salzman 2001; Wolf 1994), which, to many of us, is a sad diminution. Nor can I entirely agree with Marshall Sahlins's (2003: 3) position that specific behaviors cannot be attributed to "such totalized, abstract and indeterminate (non)entities" as culture, for between such abstractions and lived experience "there can be no simple commensurability or causality." After all, the abstraction and generalization are ours as analysts; to the actor, his or her beliefs and values can be definite and specific. Sahlins is, however, correct in saying that our explanations cannot invoke high-level abstractions to explain particular actions without identifying the specific connections and influences.

However, my criticism of the cultural explanation of despotism takes a different tack. I would argue that the cultural explanation for despotism is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of culture and neglects critical aspects of culture.

First, culture is not all of human life but the specific established ideas and values of a particular place and time. The degree of integration and correspondence of culture with psychology, social relations,

politics, and the sequence of quasi accidents that we call history is partial and variable. In other words, there are many factors at work, and the influence of ideas and values—and I would not shrink from attributing to them some causal influence—is always far from complete. At the very least, explanations of human behavior, institutions, and history have to be multicausal.

Second, contrary to the assumptions of many culture theorists, from Ruth Benedict (1935) on, a particular culture carried by a specific population is not unitary, organized around a central theme, or based on a single underlying structure of oppositions. Rather, each culture is characterized by plurality and multiplicity, incorporating not only variations of certain ideas and values but also distinct and even opposing ideas and values (Salzman 1978a, 1981, 2000a). In other words, each culture contains and maintains alternative ideas and values that are associated with alternative forms of organization and action.

Third, the ideas and values of a culture are not only a milieu of meaning but also a set of tools with which to tackle the challenges of the environment, of historical process, and of existence. In the course of responding to the world and its changing circumstances, people draw on the specific elements of their culture that they believe address the problems facing them. For example, they may shift within their own complex cultural tradition, by activating certain elements and deactivating others, from specialized to generalized production, from combative confrontation to peaceful exchange, from decentralized to centralized leadership, or from political inspiration to religious inspiration. All of these are cultural responses because each population depends on its culture to provide effective alternatives to deal with the changes in circumstances that repeatedly challenge it.

This pluralist or multiplex view of culture requires a reformulation of the question, altering it from "Does the culture of the region support democracy?" to "What are the circumstances that elicit the democratic elements in regional cultures?" We know that herding camels in the desert elicits all of the democratic elements in Middle Eastern culture and that herding cattle in the savanna elicits democratic elements in African culture. We also know that peaceful contact with weak states leads tribes to establish a formal tribal leadership with hierarchical optics but with a base of control by ordinary tribesmen (see Chapter 4).

The question, then, in regard to state despotism is "What is the conjunction of circumstances that suppresses democratic cultural elements and elicits those elements that lead to dependence on despots, and what are the noncultural elements—the organizational, psychological, and historical factors—that feed into this selection and overdetermine the result?" The answer cannot be a claim that regional cultures are insufficiently democratic.

Conclusion

Our examination of pastoral peoples in relation to the issues of the compatibility of equality and freedom and the cultural basis of failed states allows us to draw two conclusions.

The first conclusion is that although most societies emphasize equality at the expense of freedom or freedom at the expense of equality (Salzman n.d.), pastoralists are among the few to build into their societies both freedom and equality. But there are major opportunity costs associated with this pattern, namely, the absence of civil peace and the associated economic development.

The second conclusion is that the political process in pastoral societies tends to be strongly democratic, with decisions based on consent. Thus, the absence of democracy in states that encompass pastoral peoples cannot be attributed to an absence of democratic impulse in regional culture.

THE DYNAMICS OF PASTORAL WORLDS

The label *pastoral society* stands not for a particular kind of society but rather for the many kinds of society in which pastoralism is prominent. Nor does *society* as used here refer to a complete social entity or an isolated one or even one with longevity over time; rather, it refers to the social life of a particular population at the moment specified.

Pastoralism, the raising of livestock on so-called natural pasture, is found in a great variety of societies. In this chapter, I shall discuss the varieties of pastoral society and examine the influences that account for variation among pastoral societies.

Before turning to this discussion, I will pose one question: If pastoralism per se is not determining and if the label *pastoral society* does not refer to a single type of society, why is it useful to focus on pastoralism at all? In my view, two reasons make such an exercise worthwhile.

First, although pastoralism is not the only or even the main determining influence, it has a substantial impact because raising livestock on natural pasture sets some common problems for all pastoralists, just as it presents certain opportunities (see Chapter 5). In other words, being a pastoralist does influence, to a significant degree, one's way of life. To know that people are pastoralists is to know something important about their world. So, one can expect to find some commonalities among all pastoral societies.

Second, by limiting our survey to an examination of pastoral societies, we "control" (at least to an extent) an important variable, that is, the production system. It is easier to see the impact of variations in market orientation or state control in a number of societies that are all pastoral than to try to identify equivalents in pastoral and agricultural societies, where differences may be due to the two types of production system rather than to the variations in market engagement or state influence.

These rationales can only be judged, in the end, by the results of our inquiry, by whether we can gain insights by comparing pastoral peoples. Let us begin with an overview.

I

We must recognize from the outset that people, groups of people, and populations do not remain the same over time. They may take up new activities, new forms of organization, and new values and leave behind the old. Pastoralism is a particular activity or set of activities that may be increased or decreased, may be adopted or dropped. Particular organizational forms, such as tribal segmentation, may decline and fade away and also may be activated or adopted. Particular values, such as those of religion, may be taken up and eclipse habitual norms. What you see now is not necessarily what you get . . . a little down the temporal road.

As we consider this sometimes startling variability over time in both activity and identity, two complementary aspects to these changes should be kept in mind. One aspect is the context within which these changes of activity and identity often take place, that is, the constantly changing conditions in which people live: years of good rainfall alternating with years of drought; periods of state presence and strength alternating with periods of state weakness or absence; times of market demand for certain goods alternating with times of little or no market demand; and so on with diseases, invasions, crowding, ethnic mixing, the labor market, and more.

The other aspect is the social capability to manage these changes, which is manifested in the multiplicity of culture. This multiplicity is seen in each particular culture, which does not consist of only one

vision, one structure, and one pattern of behavior but rather incorporates a certain number of alternative patterns of activity, forms of organization, values, and identities.¹ Although some activities, forms, values, and identities may be manifested at a particular moment, they do not exhaust the potential of that culture. Other activities and forms, inactive and countercurrent, are maintained through verbal assertion, ritual, deviant minorities, written record, or a minor active role in current affairs (Salzman 1978a, 1978b, 1980, 1981). These "institutionalized alternatives" are available to be activated and acted out, at the opportune time, when conditions are changing.

The mutability over time of pastoral society can be seen in cyclical as well as cumulative transformations of economies, organizational forms, politics, and identities.

II

Pastoral society is almost never exclusively pastoral. Almost every population heavily involved in raising livestock on natural pasture is also seriously engaged in other productive activities, whether cultivation, hunting and fishing, caravanning, smuggling, predatory raiding and extortion, or sale of labor (Evans-Pritchard 1940; Salzman 1971, 2000a; Nicolaisen 1963; Dyson-Hudson 1966; Casciarri 1996; Lancaster and Lancaster 1996; Marx 1996).

To the degree that they are producing for their own consumption, pastoralists will have multiresource or mixed economies. Subsistence production generally aims at a wide range of foodstuffs and other products to satisfy the broad scope of needs and desires of consumption. Among subsistence-oriented pastoral nomads, craft production in each family supplies clothes, carpets, bedding, luggage, ropes, saddles, pots, pans, and tools, although the latter are often provided by local blacksmith groups. Subsistence production in pastoral societies is well illustrated in the Middle East by the Baluch (Salzman 1971, 1999, 2000a) and the Turkmen (Irons 1975).

In most Middle Eastern cases, productive specialization in livestock arises from the engagement with markets, often urban (Marx 1996) but also rural markets (Salzman 1988b; Köhler-Rollefson 1992). The more a population is specialized in pastoralism to the exclusion of other kinds

of production, the more likely its members will be tied to markets (Marx 1996). In some multiresource, pastoral populations, it is the agricultural component that is selected for and expanded through market engagement (Lancaster and Lancaster 1996); in others, it is manpower for policing (Kressel 1996). Specialized pastoral production for the market is oriented, in some cases, toward meat (for example, among the Bedouin [Marx 1996] and Saami [Paine 1994]), in others, toward wool (the Reika sheep breeders of Rajasthan [Salzman 1986]), draft animals (the Reika dromedary breeders of Rajasthan [Köhler-Rollefson 1992]), baggage animals (the Rwala Bedouin of Arabia [Lancaster 1997]), ghee (the Bharwad cattle pastoralists of Gujarat [Salzman 1988b]), and milk for cheese (Sardinian pastoralism [Salzman 1999]). As a consequence of this specialization, some pastoral groups become highly dependent upon the goods market for provision of the necessities and luxuries of life (Barth 1961; Marx 1996).

Productive specialization in pastoralism can be found in Africa in subsistence-oriented societies where engagement with the market is weak. In some African groups, such as the Turkana (McCabe 1996), livestock is raised primarily for consumption by the producers and not for sale to urban populations. However, some exchange takes place with agricultural producers, whether across tribal boundaries or between pastoral and agricultural sections of the same tribe (Edgerton 1971), bringing in grain products that are important in the diet (McCabe 1996). So, even in Africa, pastoral specialization is dependent upon exchange.

The extent to which a pastoral population is engaged in generalized, multiresources production or in specialized pastoral production and the extent to which it is oriented to subsistence consumption or the market can and often does vary significantly over time. When the urban meat market is strong and political conditions are stable, pastoral production is emphasized at the expense of other kinds of production; when the market declines and instability reigns, pastoralists diversify, downsizing livestock production or dropping it altogether (Marx 1990, 1996). Similarly, when urban demands for agricultural products are high, multiresource pastoral nomads may settle and devote themselves to cultivation (Lancaster and Lancaster 1996; Meir 1996). When the labor market is strong, pastoralists may shift to selling their labor, but they often main-



FIGURE 7.1 Ngorongoro Maasai on their way to market to purchase maize (corn) meal. The male is armed with a lengthy spear. (J. T. McCabe, 1999)

tain a "rump" herd as well as their tribal network and claims to territorial access so that they have an economic alternative to fall back on when the labor market declines (Marx 1990). But when the urban meat market revives, the now diversified pastoralists reintensify their pastoral production, and when the labor market revives, those who had returned to subsistence production in their home territories turn again to selling their labor, putting their subsistence production on a "reserve" basis once more.

Although some African pastoral peoples may not be primarily market oriented, shifts in trade and in production strategies are common. The need for nonpastoral products, such as grain, increases during times of stress in the pastoral system (McCabe 1996), so we would expect to see more trade during bad times and less during good times. Among African groups with a more diversified subsistence production system (for instance, the Karimojong [Dyson-Hudson 1966]), more investment

in horticulture would be likely during times of stress on the pastoral system. Similarly, after droughts, production is oriented toward the rapidly reproducing small stock, and only later, with a sound economic basis established, is the focus shifted toward the more valuable but slowly reproducing large stock.

Similarly, nomadic movement of the household is increased or decreased according to the prevailing circumstances. A shift toward agriculture can lead to settlement, although people continue to live in tents or keep their tents pitched alongside their houses (Kressel 1996). But when sedentary cultivation loses its luster because of a bad drought, a fall in the market for agricultural goods, or a decline in security, people can fold their tents and start moving again.

Being a pastoral nomad means having pastoralism and nomadism as part of one's psychic, social, and technological repertoire. The acting out of pastoral production and nomadic movement is itself contingent on environmental conditions, as are the more specific orientations of generalization/specialization and consumption/market. Other capabilities in the economic repertoire, whether agriculture, smuggling, predatory extraction, or paid labor, are equally circumstantial and can be culturally maintained as options until the moment is opportune. Consequently, we should not be surprised to see—both through history and in the contemporary world—pastoral nomads producing mainly for markets and then mainly for consumption, engaging in one economic activity and then another, and even disappearing and reappearing once again.

III

Pastoral nomads, like everyone else, are actors in a political field. How they organize themselves, as well as who and what else are in their political fields, varies from place to place and time to time.

Pastoral nomads are often organized into tribes.² Tribes are segmentary political organizations tying together a number of rural communities. The organizational idioms of tribes vary but commonly include either descent, age, or territory and often a combination thereof. For example, the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940a, 1951) emphasize descent and residence, the Maasai (Spear and Waller 1993) age and descent, and the Rwala Bedouin (Lancaster 1997) descent. The tribal political process

often involves symbolic manipulation of the organizational idiom and reference to sacred powers to bolster the organization. Tribes may have—in local definition and/or as observed by an outsider—a variety of mandates, including (1) providing security against external attack and against internal, armed conflict; (2) representing constituent members and groups to external groups and agencies; (3) controlling access to and use of a territory; (4) organizing collective efforts, such as migrations, public works, and religious celebrations; (5) providing certain kinds of assistance or welfare aid, such as sanctuary, sponsorship, guarantees, loans, subsidies, and gifts; (6) marshaling resources, as in the assignment of labor tasks, collection of taxes, and specification of duties; and (7) resolving conflict and making law, as seen in mediation, arbitration, and adjudication by tribal leaders or agents.

The “others” in a political field can include other tribes, other states, and other rural populations controlled by the states—populations that I will call “peasants.”³ The relationship between a tribe and these others defines the degree of its political independence or dependence, as well as important economic constraints and opportunities. The circumstances in which different tribes are found at any given moment are highly diverse, just as their situations over time are subject to radical change. Historical accounts and reports of contemporary events describe how dynasties, states, and empires rise to great strength and expanse and fall into decadence, weakness, and fragmentation.⁴ From a local or miniregional perspective, this means that local peoples are sometimes, independent of their will, encompassed in powerful political fields and at other times freed from those fields to carry on as they best see fit. The also common intermediate position of being on the periphery of a power field requires people to deal with the demands of outside agencies, while having a considerable amount of leeway to pursue their own courses.

In some regions of the world, such as Asia and the Mediterranean, state organizations and their agents have been present and variably effective for several thousands of years; in others, such as Northern Europe, Africa south of the Sahara, and South America, states came later but have been major factors for at least hundreds of years. In many places and in many periods and particularly in recent times, tribes have been incorporated by states and functioned as, among other things,

administrative units of the state.⁵ Often, of course, tribal populations are assimilated more fully into state structures, and tribal structures lose their political power; what remains of tribal organization is used in the economic sphere (Kressel 1996; Lancaster and Lancaster 1996; Meir 1996).⁶ I do not consider those pastoralists who have no effective political organization of their own to be members of tribes; I refer to them as "peasant pastoralists" (see Chapter 5).

Among the Negev Bedouin, who were incorporated into the power field of the state of Israel, control of resources devolved from the tribal to the domestic level, and their society, in which territory had been defined through tribal affiliation, became one in which social relations were defined by private property, causing the collapse of the tribal polity (Meir 1996). It is common to find peasant pastoralists, such as Sardinian shepherds (Angioni 1996), with neither political support groups nor control over territory (especially in those communities without pasture commonlands); instead, they rely upon far-reaching knowledge of social land use and widespread social networks, depending upon a mix of friendship, payment, and patronage to gain access to pasture, materials, assistance, and information. Postpeasant pastoralists, such as shepherds in Tuscany (Solinas, Becucci, and Grilli 1996)—detached from their original peasant communities and individually adapted to farm-based production, capitalist market exchange, and structures of government and private finance—are fully integrated into the modern state system. Postpeasant pastoralists, integrated into modern state structures, were also found in the USSR, China, and Mongolia but were, in these cases, part of centralized, command economies (*Nomadic Peoples* 1993).

However, many other pastoral peoples have been and still are less perfectly integrated into state structures; indeed, even the imposition of encapsulation is often less than fully effective. Among the Guajiro, who are geographically marginal to state centers of power in Colombia, the state's legal system and its codes are not applied or applicable (Picon 1996). The Ahamda of the northern Sudan, now closer to the center of state power in Khartoum than their southern kin in the traditional home territory (and in consequence having undergone processes of increasing state control), were previously operating more independently (Casciari 1996). Farther to the south in the Sudan, pastoral peoples famous in the

anthropological literature, such as the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940a, 1940b), appeared, in earlier ethnographic reports, to be largely free of government control; in recent decades, they have been fighting a civil war against the government in Khartoum (Hutchinson 1996). On the northern and western margins of Kenya, where state control is sporadic and uncertain, pastoral populations such as the Turkana have been using automatic weapons in raiding expeditions against neighboring peoples.

When and where states have been totally absent or completely ineffectual, as in the Horn of Africa prior to colonial times and the Sahara until recently, pastoral peoples such as the Somali (Lewis 1961) and Tuareg (Nicolaisen 1963) have formed their own polities, independent of outside control. Such situations have been found not only in the further reaches beyond state control—in the desert and mountain marches of Arabia and Kurdistan—or in regions typified by weak states, such as Afghanistan and Central Asia, but also in the Arab and Persian heartlands during the decline and decay of state institutions.

Among those pastoral peoples who have for considerable periods maintained full political autonomy, some have become predatory or expansionary, with their power turned against states and their peasant populations. The predatory raiding by tribal peoples of peasant populations, trading caravans, and travelers is well documented, as with the Baluch (Salzman 1994, 2000a) and the Turkmen (Irons 1975). Extortion for "protection" is a common corollary (Irons 1975; Lancaster 1997). Powerful nomadic tribes operating without state interference have often imposed rule upon local agricultural peoples, as seen in the subjugation of non-Shammar oasis dwellers by the Rashidi amirs of the Shammar (Al-Rasheed 1996). More ambitious tribal peoples have directly challenged the state, as in the Bakhtiari occupation of Tehran and control of the government (Avery 1965), or they have conquered the state, setting themselves up as a new dynasty—a process seen repeatedly in Middle Eastern history and taken by Ibn Khaldun as typical (Gellner 1981). That state authorities have often thought of tribes with fear and loathing reflects a political reality that is too often manifest for the state functionary to ignore safely or for the comparative sociologist to neglect.

Radical shifts in the political status of pastoral groups can be seen in even brief temporal spans. The Yarahmadzai Baluch, noted raiders of Persian peasant villages and commercial caravans (Salzman 1994),

effectively resisted punitive expeditions by the Persians and, during World War I, by the British (Dyer 1921). Finally conquered during Reza Shah's southeast expedition between 1928 and 1935 (Arfa 1964), the tribe accepted the name Shah Navazi (meaning "Shah stroker"), and it was increasingly pacified and disarmed and effectively encapsulated by the occupying Persian military through the late 1970s (Salzman 1999, 2000a). After the anti-Shah, Islamic Revolution in 1978, the Baluch, like the Kurds in the northwest and the Turkmen in the northeast border areas, took up arms and reasserted their autonomy, meeting and beating Persians Sistanis in a battle for control of the capital, Zahedan, and the region. The military apparatus of the Islamic Republic was forced to repeat Reza Shah's circumconquest of the tribal marches, resulting in, for the Yarahmadzai, the flight of the chiefly family to exile in Pakistan. Such alternation of tribal political status from aggressive to pacified and back has been common across continents and over millennia.

IV

There is no single organizational structure for pastoral nomads. One could not expect such commonality considering the many types and gradations of economic context and orientation among pastoral peoples or the great differences in the political fields in which they operate. Even if cultural and ecological variations are left aside, the differences in economic and political environments alone would generate great contrasts in social organization and process. Two ways in which the organization of pastoral nomads differ, which I will discuss in this section, are crystallization of functions and political solidarity.

By crystallization of functions,⁷ I mean the degree to which basic social functions—production, reproduction, social control—are fulfilled by one organizational structure or the degree to which different functions are distributed among a variety of structures. Crystallization of functions is one index of structural integration, whereas dispersion of functions is indicative of structural fragmentation.

I would suggest that crystallization of functions is greater among those pastoral nomads with more political autonomy and those with effective tribal polities, where there is a relatively self-sufficient organization. By contrast, among those semitribal or peasant pastoral nomads

who are encapsulated, integrated, or assimilated into larger, complex polities, there is less crystallization and more dispersion of functions among a variety of different organizations.

A well-established convention in anthropology, which I follow here, is to use the term *tribe* to refer to polities based primarily upon segmentary organization.⁸ Tribes, then, are made up of segments that are structurally like one another. Segments—larger or smaller, more or less inclusive of other segments—usually share the organization idiom of the more inclusive tribes and so may be based upon territorial, descent, age, or other criteria, depending upon the group. Among the Yarahmadzai Baluch, for example, segments from the smallest microlineage up through the tribe and beyond, relating the tribe to others, are called by the same term, *rend*, meaning "descent group." When we talk about "tribal structure" we refer to all constituent segments, not only the maximal level of political unity and identity.

Although larger or smaller segments are structurally similar, they are not functionally similar. Different criteria are used at various levels to define relations. For example, again among the Yarahmadzai, there is an executive office of the chief,⁹ or *sardar*, for the segment (approximately 5,000 souls) defined by descent from Yarahmad, but there is no such office for more inclusive segments defined by ancestors of Yarahmad and no offices for smaller segments. Obligations of political solidarity, *toepak*, apply at this level that do not apply beyond.¹⁰ At a considerably lower level of segmentation, the *brasrend* (approximately 50 to 150 souls), there are, in addition, mutual obligations for economic aid, especially in response to crisis, that are not present at higher levels of segmentation.

However, tribesmen also use forms of organization distinct from that of the political structure for activities critical to their lives (Marx 1996). Among the Yarahmadzai, the most "concrete" grouping—the medium for daily life and economic production—is the *halk*, the herding camp and residence group, based not on descent but on formal contract, *karar* (Salzman 1992, 2000a). The annual renewing of herding group contracts allows the tribesmen to adapt to highly variable ecological, demographic, and political circumstances. Other important organization forms are the informal working "teams" (Salzman 1988a) and the widespread networks of matrikin, friends, and occupational associates.

In pursuing their individual purposes, tribesmen use a variety of social strategies, including sponsorship, alliance, protection, and neighborliness—processes that are also seen among peasants (Lancaster and Lancaster 1996).¹¹

In a politically functioning tribe, there is an interdependence among the various organizational forms. The Yarahmadzai's contractual herding camp, work teams, and networks do not function irrespective of or in spite of the tribal organization but in a complementary fashion.¹² They exist and work *because* of the existence and presence of tribal organization. Yarahmadzai tribesmen can mix and mingle in contractual herding groups because nonlocalized lineage groups are charged with social control functions, so that wherever and with whomever a tribesman resides, he is protected by his lineage mates.¹³ Herding groups have unrestricted access to pasture throughout the tribal territory because the tribe guarantees an open pasture policy for all Yarahmadzai and also guarantees the boundaries against unpermitted incursions by others. Informal (but ongoing) work teams can function because (but only to the extent that) formal herding contracts provide ongoing coresidence. There is also a correspondence at the level of the maximal segment of a formal executive role, the broadest referent of obligatory political solidarity, and the control of territory, including its uses and boundaries. Thus, in tribal organization, the crystallization of functions parallels the structural nesting of segments.

In posttribal societies integrated into larger polities, such as that of the Bedouin of the Negev (Marx 1967, 1996; Meir 1996), there is a lack of crystallization among organizations in which the Bedouin must participate. Agencies of the state of Israel, especially the Israeli Defense Force, control the territory of the Negev, and the Bedouin, already moved around and given access to only a small part of their traditional range, must deal with agents of the state in all territorial matters. Access to jobs through the labor market has been controlled by Israeli agencies, and these agencies have regulations about entry into urban zones. As well, Israeli labor unions control some of the terms of employment. Political influence must be channeled through Israeli national political institutions, such as political parties and Parliament. Even among the Bedouin themselves, to take the case of the south Sinai Bedouin, one named association controls local territorial rights for

building and cultivation, whereas another provides access to pasture (Marx 1996). Among peasant pastoralists (see Chapter 5), crystallization is quite low, with social control provided by state agencies or individual self-help, with land owned by individuals or rented from outsiders, and with state regulations and assistance negotiated via patrons, often themselves outsiders.

Thus, although many of the social processes seen among posttribal or peasant pastoralists are also common among tribesmen, there is a considerable difference in their significance: Whereas posttribal and peasant pastoralists are using sponsorship, networks, alliance, and so on to gain access to resources, tribesmen are using these processes to gain maximum benefit from resources that are already guaranteed to them by their participation in the tribal structure. Tribal autonomy puts control of resources in the hands of tribesmen, and their decisions, alliances, and negotiations are aimed at maximizing the use of the resources they control. Posttribal and peasant pastoralists without control over resources or even their own actions use their representations, associations, and choices to gain access to the freedoms and resources controlled by others. Consequently, the social relations and political lives of state-integrated and assimilated posttribal and peasant pastoralists are very different from those of independent tribesmen and substantially different from those of encapsulated tribesmen. It is only to the extent that tribesmen are autonomous that the segmentary tribal system works. Submersion in a larger, encompassing polity changes the possibilities for pastoral nomads, making it neither possible nor desirable for them to pursue the segmentary politics suitable for moments of tribal autonomy.

A segmentary political system is based on the contingent structural relevance of any segment for a particular dispute or conflict and the solidarity of segment members at the moment of contingent relevance. According to the folk model, a segment is activated as a political entity when there is a conflict between (some of) its members and the members of another segment of like order, defined by the genealogical (or territorial or other) distance of the conflicting parties, that is, microlineage versus microlineage, tribal section versus tribal section, tribe versus tribe, and so on. The object of this system is social control, based upon the principles of balance of power and retaliation. The system works to the extent that tribesmen honor their obligations of solidarity.

But segmentary ideology, even when vigorously asserted by tribesmen or posttribesmen, is not always put into practice, and segmentary solidarity is not always honored (Peters 1967; Salzman 1978b; Marx 1996; Al-Rasheed 1996; Lancaster and Lancaster 1996). Segmentary solidarity and tribal cohesion are, like the crystallization of functions, subject to the conditions of the political field as well as other factors. In favorable circumstances, solidarity and cohesion are the rule; in unfavorable circumstances, segmentary principles are violated (Al-Rasheed 1996). But what exactly are the determining circumstances?

One factor is the amount of spatial mobility engaged in by the population, people's movement across the landscape, and their mixing with each other as their trajectories cross and they share temporary locales. Maintaining order among people on the move requires a nonterritorial framework, such as a genealogical or age-based definition of segments, which can situate people politically wherever and whenever they meet. It is for this reason that oasis dwellers, such as the dwellers of Gafsa in Tunisia (Kilani 1996), even when they form into corporate groups, do not have well-defined and deep genealogies, whereas the pastoralists in the surrounding countryside, as well as those who settle in the oasis, do have well-defined and deep genealogies, which serve to specify and order social relations across the vast terrain used by the pastoral nomads. When mobility declines and home territories are staked out, as in the case of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica (Peters 1967) at one moment in their history, the genealogically based segmentary system is distorted by the claims of territory and contiguity.

The second factor influencing solidarity and cohesion is the extent to which a population depends upon the segmentary system for security (social control) and for access to resources—in short, the degree of crystallization of functions in the tribe. When there are no better options for security and resources, people will hold by their segmentary responsibilities. Of course, each individual is pulled and tugged by multiple interests and is sensitive to some claims rather than others. And each tribal segment has its own history, identity, and particular circumstances. Among the Yarahmadzai, lineages differ in their reputations; some are said to be solidary, *patoepak*, and others are not. Even so, segmentary solidarity is taken very seriously. I observed one family that, after having lived for decades in the Sind, returned to its kin because lineage mates bought out its debt, paid

for transportation, and provided a tent and a flock (Salzman 1994). I saw another family returning to a residence group with many of its lineage mates, after having lived with others for decades, because of a minor physical conflict and subsequent threats. Perhaps most relevant, I was present to see two lineages, or *brasrend*, form up in angry confrontation over contested resources (palm logs) and then drop that unresolved dispute to line up together, literally, with weapons in hand, along with other members of their tribal section, in opposition to members of another tribal section that had offended violently in another locale (Salzman 2000a). Nor did any of the "Yarmahornmedzais" find it in their interests to side with General Dyer (1921) in his campaign against the tribe. Undoubtedly, some people, on some occasions, evade their segmentary obligations, and some people may even side actively against their genealogically designated allies. But among the Yarahmadzai, segmentary solidarity, as defined by genealogy, was deemed by most tribesmen to be in their self-interests: For social standing, it was their genealogical position that defined their place. To gain access to the resources needed to make a living, only the tribal system could provide pastoral resources. And to protect themselves against threat, they had only their lineage mates to turn to.

For pastoral nomads, moments of (relative) autonomy can be quickly succeeded by moments of constraint, pressure, and encompassment by external forces entering the tribal political field.¹⁴ Such intrusions can be dramatic military campaigns by invading peoples or assertive states, the latter exemplified by Reza Shah's conquest of the border tribes of Iran. Less dramatic but equally devastating changes include the closing of borders (Irons 1975; Lancaster 1997; Al-Rasheed 1996) and the decline or collapse of markets for pastoral goods (Lancaster 1997; Al-Rasheed 1996). Beyond encapsulation, with the fuller incorporation of a tribe by the state, the tribe becomes an administrative unit of the state (Marx 1996) responsible for carrying out state policies and can no longer represent fully the interests of the tribesmen. The tribesmen, no longer being able to rely on the tribal structure, must look to other expedients to pursue their interests. The imposition of total state control destroys the tribal political structure, as with the state of Israel's domination over the Bedouin of the Negev (Meir 1996). The destruction of the tribal structure leaves the posttribesmen with little more than a common ethnic identity to assist them in negotiating the state polity.

Interests are not, however, limited to resources and security. They also include less tangible considerations of social standing, status, and prestige, as well as honor, virtue, and purity. For example, when a tribal organizational idiom is maintained and aggressively asserted, it may be as much a "model for" as a "model of," not so much reflecting all of the quotidian realities and compromises as representing the identity, image, and objectives of the group. One sees this among the Ahamda of the northern Sudan, who have come increasingly under the influence of the state and whose shared, multiresource pastoralism has succumbed to economic differentiation among tribesmen (Casciarri 1996). For the Ahamda, some of the political and economic shared and common interests that were bases of tribal unity in the past have been undermined by a growing heterogeneity among the tribesmen. But the ideological assertion of the segmentary, tribal model both reinforces unity at the ideological level and, notwithstanding the changes that have so far taken place, serves to order some important social relations: It affirms the Ahamda Arab and Muslim identity; it legitimates relations between segments generated partly by nontraditional processes; and it distinguishes Ahamda from other tribes and local populations. In short, the tribal ideology affirms Ahamda unity in the face of forces that threaten that unity, thus achieving its goal through a self-fulfilling assertion.

The call of such interests as social standing and honor can also lead to processes of segmentation, to a formal assertion of the lack of solidarity, and even to a shift of reference from segmentary politics to revitalization politics. For example, among the Maasai, fission—the splitting of elements of one tribal segment into two distinct segments—often results from disagreements or disputes over statuses or symbolic prerogatives (Galaty 1996). Generally among the Maasai, these segmentations do follow preexisting cleavages, thus reflecting organizational principles. Often, it is lower-status subgroups that leave or are expelled, usually on a ritual occasion—a common setting in all pastoral societies for symbolic statements of division. Fission does not destroy relations between the previously united groups but rather unites them at a specified but more distant and less demanding level of cohesion—which is true in all segmentary systems.

Sometimes, tribesmen leave the segmentary system altogether, uniting under a banner defined by totally other principles. In the first

decades of the twentieth century, the tribal unity of the Shammar was undermined by the Wahhabi Islamic purification movement when a quarter of the Shammar accepted antitribal Wahhabism and allied with Ibn Saud, who was conducting a holy war against the Shammar and other tribes accused of being un-Islamic (Al-Rasheed 1996). Although various other political and economic difficulties contributed to the vulnerability of some Shammar tribesmen, the call of "higher (and more inclusive) loyalties" is not without its attraction, as has been demonstrated in other places and times—such as the Mahdist movement in the Sudan, the prophets among the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940a; Johnson 1994), the Sanusiya holy war against the Italians (Evans-Pritchard 1949), and, more recently, the Islamic warriors in Afghanistan—by tribesmen moving beyond their tribal loyalties to participate in religious and other movements. Even when politically autonomous, tribesmen, especially those who participate in a broader literary civilization such as Islam, will always have referents other than the tribal segmentary system. And they will, from time to time when the circumstances are right, act on these other referents.

The Wahhabi movement arose in the middle of the eighteenth century (1744) and was vigorously suppressed by Ottoman troops in 1818 (Al-Rasheed 1996). But Wahhabism did not die; rather, it was maintained in a state of dormancy, presumably by some loyal but prudent adherents (or what I would call a "deviant minority"). Having remained dormant but available for almost a century, Wahhabism was activated by Ibn Saud at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it provided the basis for political expansion throughout Arabia. Wahhabism thus offers another example of cultural multiplicity within a society and of organizational alternatives maintained but inactive and then activated to great effect.

V

The discussion in this volume refers primarily to pastoralists, to the people with whom a number of us have been conducting research, rather than to ourselves, as is favored in certain postmodern tendencies. I have not taken center stage or felt obliged to comment reflexively on myself as the author. The discerning reader will find little in the

way of confession, qualification, and justification. Perhaps this reflects my benighted, retrograde, or merely aged state. But the underlying epistemological question justifies a brief reflection on different ways of approaching anthropological research.

The so-called postmodern view, still current at this moment, is that anthropological research has been inhibited by unrealistic empiricist epistemologies and misleading positivist claims. The contrary view, reflected in the discussions of this volume, is that anthropology in general and the study of pastoral peoples in particular have been distorted by abstract theories, ideal types, and stereotypes and have not been nearly empirical enough.

Is the debate between empirically minded researchers and postmodernist relativists primarily a matter of intellectual fashion, to be decided by the passing of time? Or is there some intellectually serious way to address this question? An examination—which may be called “empirical” or “interpretive,” as one likes—of the practical consequences for research of holding different paradigmatic and epistemological views can perhaps make a contribution to the discussion. I have in mind François Pouillon’s (1996) comparison of the naturalistic Enlightenment inquiries on the Bedouin with the more interpretive Romantic researches that followed. Pouillon finds a stark contrast in the quality of the findings of Enlightenment and Romantic researchers. Reports from the Enlightenment tended to be based upon detailed observation and to be factual, complex, and insightful. In contrast, reports from the Romantic period tended to be based upon slight contact and to be impressionistic, stereotypic, and thin. Pouillon (1996: 76) concludes that “there is little to show from Romanticism in its efforts to portray the Bedouin. . . . The emphasis on intuition justifies every laziness and avoidance of the work of documentation and research. . . . Here the ambience alone seems sufficient to generate the necessary sensations and the Bedouin are often reduced to little more than figures in the background” (my translation).¹⁵

Considering the parallels between the intuitionism of the Romantics and the interpretationalism of the postmoderns, the poor results of the Romantics should give us serious pause. It is doubtful that excursions into authorial confession, subjectivism, and moralism advance our understanding of pastoralists and their destinies, any more than do essential-

ism, overgeneralism, reductionism, and literalism. What students of pastoral peoples owe our pastoral subjects and our academic and applied audiences is an understanding that is comprehensive as well as subtle, rigorous as well as insightful, and reliable as well as sensitive. Anything less and anthropology sinks into confession, propaganda, and rumor.

Notes

1. Just as among philosophical precursors debating the nature of the universe (for example, William James in *A Pluralist Universe* [1977] attacking the monist views of Hegel, Bradley, and Royce), there is repeated intellectual conflict among analysts whose views of culture lean toward the monist and those who lean toward the pluralist. The monist view of cultures as single coherent patterns, seen in the work of Ruth Benedict (1935), Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966), and Clifford Geertz (1973), can be contrasted with the pluralist view of culture as “shreds and patches” or as a variety of diverse influences and counterinfluences, as seen in the work of the diffusionists as well as the work of Robert Redfield (1962), Fredrik Barth (1966), and Eric Wolf (1982).

Recent pluralist statements, under the banners of “antiessentialism” and “multilevel linkage” analysis, include those of Andrew Vayda (1994), Barth (1994), Wolf (1994), and C. Kottak and E. Colson (1994).

2. The debate over the concept of “tribe” and its empirical referents is, of course, of long standing in anthropology, running in modern times from accounts of tribal organization (Middleton and Tate 1958; Sahlins 1968) to critiques and dismissals (Gutkind 1970; Fried 1975) and, currently, to reconsiderations and assertions of validity (Helander 1998; Kraus 1998).

I cannot undertake a review of this debate here, but I would say that the criticism of the concept of tribe appears to be hampered by a tendency for essentialistic thinking, for the preference of ideal types—whether of independent polities or state-subordinated entities—over concepts that can be used to identify variation among cases and over time.

3. I use the term *peasant* in a political sense, as a population of preindustrial rural producers under the political control of a state and subject to its dictates and agents (see Chapter 5). I contrast the peasant with the tribesman, defining *tribes* as independent polities (see Chapter 2).

Some other authors (for instance, Giulio Angioni [1996], Gideon Kressel [1996], and William and Fidelity Lancaster [1996]) use the term to designate a particular type of rural producer, that is, an agriculturalist as opposed to a pastoralist. They draw upon indigenous terms and distinctions, the Arabic

felaheen versus *bedu* and the Italian *contadino* versus *pastore*. In their use of the term as an economic one, no political status is implied.

4. The relationship between states and tribes is seen by some as inherently unstable. Ibn Khaldun identifies the instability as residing in the interplay between the military vigor of hardy, puritanical tribes and the inevitable, progressive decadence of state dynasties, leading to the repeated overthrow of decayed dynasties by tribes from the periphery (Gellner 1981).

Kressel (1996: 137) argues for a trialectic between pastoral tribes, farmers, and the state, with the greed of the powerful undermining their power: "An impaired balance of power in favor of pastoralists meant a decrease in the collective power of the farmers and the farmers' state. Overly strong states that enjoyed a greater ability to manipulate and tax both the pastoralist and the farmers, and thereby, saw off the bough it was sitting on, of necessity could not last long. With their decline, weak states reinforced the return of tribal groups, to a point that they immobilized a great deal of the production capacity of the farmers. This phase also could not last long; the peasants had to do one of two things, get united in support of the state's military power to ban the Bedouin, or abandon the field, i.e. hand over production. This choice would create a collapse in the economic system, destroying the Bedouins' main source of livelihood and ultimately forcing them to retreat. History repeated itself over the centuries."

5. Marx (1996: 109) generalizes—and from my point of view greatly overgeneralizes—this point to all tribes: "The tribe refers to [the tribesmen's] incorporation in the state and to the necessity to align every aspect of their lives to this reality . . . the tribe . . . as an indirectly ruled administrative division or dependency of the state."

6. The point at which, in referring to the wide range of sociopolitical variations, one stops using the term *tribe* in favor of another term is obviously tied to one's initial definition of *tribe*. As I have defined the tribe as a political entity, the loss of political function must serve as a diacritica between tribal and nontribal or, as I have defined it, "peasant" population.

A parallel problem is drawing the line between tribes and other forms of independent polities. If we hold to a definition of *tribe* as a segmentary organization, then we might wish to distinguish it from polities with permanent executive roles, such as chiefs, and enforcement agencies, such as police and courts. At some point in the gradation between segmentary and executive organization, between decentralization and centralization, and between egalitarian and hierarchical organization (Salzman 1983), tribes become nonsegmentary chiefdoms (see Chapter 4).

7. This concept is adapted from that of "status crystallization," used in sociology to consider the extent of correspondence between different status systems, such as race, ethnicity, occupation, wealth, and education (Lenski 1954).

8. Segmentary opposition and processes of segmentation are found in all types of societies and organizations (Smith 1974). Tribal organization is distinguished by the fact that the political structure is segmentary and that organization in general is based predominantly on segmentation.

9. The hierarchical chief does not sit easily on the egalitarian segmentary lineage system. There is a basic conflict between the contingent, decentralizing, egalitarian tendencies of segmentary systems and the continuous, centralizing, hierarchical tendencies of chiefships (Salzman 1983). Madawi Al-Rasheed (1996: 439) describes this for the Shammar amirs of Hail: "The [Rashidi] amirs ruled . . . as a result of tribal consensus. . . . Their rule over the Shammar was a matter of negotiation and diplomacy. The existence of two types of leadership contributed to the emergence of underlying political tensions. These resulted from the uneasy coexistence of a centralising agent (the amirs) and a decentralised tribal political ideology and nomadism both unfavourable to the concentration of power in one lineage."

That this contradiction has long been recognized is evidenced by the account of Volney (first edition 1787), quoted in Pouillon, from his travels in Syria and Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century. This quote (in full in Pouillon [1996: 67]) begins with the sentence, "Le gouvernement de cette société est tout à la fois républicain, aristocratique et même despotique, sans être décidément aucun de ces états" (The government of this society is at one and the same time republican, aristocratic and despotic, without being decidedly any one of these).

Given this contradiction, obedience/disobedience to tribal leaders would, from an analytic point of view, have to be considered distinct from segmentary solidarity. Tribesmen, from the insider participants' perspective, do not always consider the demands and actions of chiefs as legitimately representing tribal norms and obligations.

10. In designating certain Nuer segments as "tribes," Evans-Pritchard (1940a) uses several criteria, among which is the obligation to settle feuds, an obligation that is not recognized at higher levels of segmentation.

11. The understanding of social patterns as arising from individuals pursuing strategies and making decisions was pioneered in anthropology by Barth (1966). In a work focusing on politics, F. Bailey (1969) identified common processes of conflict, leadership, and control in the most diverse types of societies.

12. The Yarahmadzai tribe was, during the time of my field research stints (from 1968 to 1976), effectively encapsulated by the Iranian state. It was functioning as a polity but as an encapsulated one, not an independent one.

13. Herding camps, in fact, generally have a lineage core of lineage mates (Salzman 1992).

14. A frequent correlate to pressure from external polities—which may arise from resistance to the pressure, from encapsulation by the external polity, or from incorporation into the administrative structure of a larger polity—is the strengthening of executive roles, such as those of chiefs, and the enhancement of hierarchy and centralization (Salzman 1974, 1979). The consequence is the eroding of segmentary politics, as seen in the shift of functions from segments to the leadership hierarchy; the loss of vigor in segment leadership; and the weakening of corporate solidarity. (See also Fabietti 1996.)

The effects of a ruling hierarchy are seen in the Basseri (Barth 1961), where segmentary structures and politics are virtually absent (and, to the extent that the Basseri tribe was initiated as a chiefship, may never have existed). The contrast between the internal politics of the Basseri and those of the Turkmen (Irons 1972 presents an explicit comparison) and the Baluch are striking (Salzman 1992 includes a comparison of Baluch, Basseri, and Turkmen).

15. “Maigre bilan que celui du ‘romantisme suprême’ au regard du monde bédouin . . . La valorisation de l’intuition immédiate autorise à l’occasion toutes les paresse, dispense de la documentation et de l’enquête; . . . Ici, le paysage semble suffire au tableau des sensations, et les Bédouins y sont souvent réduits au rôle de figurants.”

APPENDIX

Masters and Masterworks of Pastoral Studies

The following tributes to masters of pastoral studies were written on the occasion of the presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Commission on Nomadic Peoples, International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES). I had the honor of serving as chair of the Awards Committee and thus the pleasure of composing the announcements.

These award announcements introduce or reintroduce major authors in pastoral studies, summarizing their contributions and specifying their most prominent works. The works referred to in the announcements are a rich source for the understanding of pastoral societies and could serve as a core bibliography for pastoral studies.

Fredrik Barth

Announcement of the Presentation of the IUAES Commission on Nomadic Peoples “Lifetime Achievement Award” to Professor Fredrik Barth

It is my happy office as Chair of the Awards Committee to announce that the IUAES Commission on Nomadic Peoples presents its first ever “Lifetime Achievement Award” to Professor Fredrik Barth for his contributions to the study of nomadic peoples. Through this honorific presentation, the Commission, on behalf of all students of nomadic peoples, wishes to express its appreciation to Professor Barth for his astute, imaginative, and powerful portrayals and analyses of nomadic peoples, and for his groundbreaking theoretical conceptions and formulations about their lives and circumstances.

Each student of nomadic peoples will have his or her own reasons for being grateful to Professor Barth; each will in her or his own way have a debt to his work. I am confident that my colleagues will share in my enthusiasm

for honouring Professor Barth. However, in these remarks about Professor Barth's work, I speak for myself out of my own experience, and each colleague will have to add his or her own perspective of appreciation.

It is quite true that Professor Barth's work on nomads strongly influenced and inspired subsequent ethnographers of nomadic peoples (although clearly not in the way suggested by Street 1990; cp. Salzman 1995b). In the mid-1960s, when I was a graduate student, I read *Nomads of South Persia* and various of Professor Barth's articles, and drew on them—explicitly and implicitly, consciously and unconsciously—in my own research, as did my coevals and those who followed.

"Ecologic Relationships of Ethnic Groups in Swat, North Pakistan" (1956), *Nomads of South Persia* (1961), "The Land Use Patterns of Migratory Tribes of South Persia" (1960a), and "Nomadism in the Mountain and Plateau Areas of South West Asia" (1960b) offered the reader enlightening accounts of several groundbreaking themes: first, understanding nomadic peoples in terms of their ecological adaptation; second, appreciating the role of ethnicity in ecological specialization; third, placing nomadic peoples within a wider social and political context, and especially in their participation in a complex society involving markets and state institutions. These works went further, demonstrating the interplay between ecology, ethnicity, and complex society, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, social, political, and economic organization among nomadic peoples.

At the time of this research and writing by Professor Barth, a particular image and a model of nomadic peoples dominated anthropology. This representation (e.g., Beattie 1964: 185; cp. Kroeber 1948: 276–277), drawn heavily from East African cases, especially the work of Herskovits (1952) and Evans-Pritchard (1940a), characterized nomadic peoples as livestock-loving, subsistence-producing, independent, autonomous, egalitarian, decentralized warriors, organized acephalously by means of segmentary lineage and age-set systems. In contrast, the Basseri of South Persia were shown by Professor Barth to be virtually polar opposites of the dominant pastoral paradigm:

- Rather than being subsistence-producing, livestock lovers, the sheep-herding Basseri were market-oriented and instrumentally minded in their pastoral production.
- Unlike the independent and autonomous tribes of East Africa, the Basseri were part of the Khamseh Tribal Confederation, which itself was tied to elite, urban merchants; furthermore, the Basseri and the Khamseh were subject to the claims and capacities of the Persian state apparatus, which deemed these tribal peoples within its realm of suzerainty.

- Far from being egalitarian and decentralized, the Basseri had a hierarchical political structure topped by a powerful chief, who made important decisions for all members of the tribe, and was socially stratified into an upper class consisting of the wealthy chiefly family and a low class of ordinary tribesmen.
- Unlike pastoral tribes in East Africa, in which most men barring a few ritual specialists were warriors, or else there was a special age-grade of warriors, and mobilization for raiding or defense were common, among the Basseri the norm was peaceful relations with other nomads through avoidance, peaceful relations with settled people through exchange, and peaceful relations with urban elites and state agencies through collaboration and coordination with tribal chiefs and recognition of tradition rights.
- Rather than being defined and united by common descent and organized by a segmentary lineage system of balanced opposition, the Basseri openly acknowledged the distinct origins of various sections and were unified as a tribe through their common recognition of the Basseri *khan* as their leader, as they were organized by the hierarchical structure of chiefly authority.

Professor Barth's illuminating account of the Basseri challenged the dominant anthropological paradigm of pastoralism and demonstrated convincingly, by implication and also in comparative discussions (1960b, 1961: chap. 10), the great diversity of culture and organization among nomadic peoples, and some of the factors which underlie this diversity. A footnote to Professor Barth's contribution, if I may be excused a further personal reference at this point, is the inspiration that I drew from this vision of variation among nomadic peoples in preparing my master's thesis and first professional publication (Salzman 1967). If we can judge by citation and reference in comparative analyses, Professor Barth's work on the Basseri has provided a reference point and font of information for ethnographers who followed (e.g., Bates 1971; Beck 1986; Bradburd 1989; Irons 1972; Salzman 1992; Tapper 1979, 1997) and for historians drawing on Basseri ethnography to construct models and build interpretations (Tapper 1997: 18–24).

The influence of Professor Barth's contributions to nomadic studies does not rest solely upon the elegance of his ethnography and the interest of his topical syntheses. As well, these studies were guided by, and exhibited the results of an original and powerful theoretical vision, manifested earlier in such works as "Father's Brother's Daughter Marriage in Kurdistan" (1954) and *Political Leadership Among the Swat Pathan* (1959), and explicated later in more abstract form in *Models of Social Organization* (1966). This processual and transactional

theory—rejecting an overemphasis on custom and rule-based behavior, and searching for dynamics that could explain change—emphasized the decisions of individuals and the exchanges between individuals, and explained patterns of social organization by generative models, as resulting from aggregates of individual decisions. By using this approach in *Nomads of South Persia*, Professor Barth was able to show, among many other things, that the Basseri camp was constituted demographically by an aggregate of economic decisions by individuals (chap. 8), that the tribe maintained demographic balance with its environment through sedentarization (chap. 9), that the herding camp as an operating social group was based upon negotiation and purposeful alliances (chap. 3), that herding groups were formed by means of utilitarian contract (22–23), that the Basseri tribe was a congeries of segments diverse in origin, ethnicity, and history brought together by conscious political allegiance to the chief (49–54), and that the “Arab” Khamseh Confederacy, of which the Basseri were part, was invented for instrumental purposes by powerful urban merchants and sealed by the provision of arms and other resources (86–89). In short, Professor Barth was able to demonstrate that “structural” features were generated by decision-making and transactional processes, and that these were based at least partly upon rational and strategic considerations. Professor Barth’s processual, transactional approach would inform the research of subsequent researchers on nomadic peoples and many other subjects as well.

In my remarks, I have concentrated on Professor Barth’s publications in the 1950s and 1960s, for the obvious reason that they dealt directly with nomadic peoples. The later work of Professor Barth has of course been of great interest to us as general anthropologists and students of ethnicity (Barth 1969), experience of culture (Barth 1983), cultural variation (Barth 1987, 1994), local knowledge (Barth 1975, 1993), and many other topics. But as a clear refutation of “presentism”—the assumption that only work done today is valid, and that publications older than five years can be safely ignored—as a refutation of “presentism,” we could not find a better example than the long-term, continued and continuing importance of Professor Barth’s work on nomadic peoples.

Therefore, the IUAES Commission on Nomadic Peoples, on behalf of all students of nomadic peoples, thanks Professor Barth, and in recognition of his accomplishments, bestows on him its “Lifetime Achievement Award.”

William Irons

William Irons, Ethnographer of Yomut Turkmen and Anthropologist of Nomadic Peoples: Winner of the IUAES Commission on Nomadic Peoples Lifetime Achievement Award

“Everything I thought I knew at the end of my first year of fieldwork was wrong,” William Irons said to me when first I met him in Tehran, at the British

Institute of Persian Studies, in 1967. Irons was in course of his second stint of research among the Yomut Turkmen of the Gorgon Plain, to the east of the Caspian Sea, having after his first stint of fieldwork taken a study break of several months at the University of London. I had just arrived in Iran to begin my fieldwork in Baluchistan, and I was impressed by Irons’ observation. As in so many other things, Irons proved to be correct, at least as measured by my experience in Baluchistan.

Irons’ reports of his findings among the Turkmen are striking, both because of the interest of his discoveries, and the clarity and persuasiveness of his accounts. Here are several of his arguments:

Yomut Nomadism as Politics

The Turkmen were resolutely nomadic, living in yurts the year round, but their nomadism was not primarily an adaptation to the physiobiotic environment. For the small number of Turkmen *charwa* pastoralists in the arid north of the Gorgon Plain, seasonal migration was useful; for the great majority of Turkmen, who were grain cultivators, *chomur*, living in the rainy south of the Gorgon Plain, there was no productive need to be mobile, and they moved very little. Thus Irons argues that nomadism, for the Yomut Turkmen, was not ecological or productive, but was a political adaptation (Irons 1974, 1975). The Turkmen lived on the edge of the Persian Empire and had to contend with the Persian Crown. Turkmen took it as their right to extort payments from their Persian neighbors, to slave raid among more distant Persians and then sell the Persian captives in Central Asian markets, and to raid Persian caravans. However, these activities were a challenge and threat to the Persian Crown, which believed it had an exclusive right to extort from its subjects. From time to time the Persian Crown sent off an army on a punitive campaign against the Turkmen. The Turkmen, for their part, simply parted, packing up their yurts and heading across the Kara Kum desert to visit their Khiva Turkmen relatives while the Royal Army sat on the Gorgon Plain and ate up the Crown treasury. When the Royal Army was recalled, the Yomut returned. Thus for the Turkmen nomadism was not primarily regular movement of the household or community in the course of production, but mobility that could be called on to guarantee political independence and liberty, and the opportunities and benefits that followed from these. Nomadism as mobility allowed the Yomut to remain independent tribes by using rapid retreat as a tactic to avoid control by the Persian state.

Why Yomut Turkmen and Basseri Social Policies Differ

Nomadic tribes can be strikingly different from one another, as Irons (1972) shows in his comparison between the Yomut Turkmen and the Basseri (Barth

1961). One remarkable contrast is the social and economic independence of Basseri households in comparison to the social and economic interdependence of Turkmen households. The nomadic Basseri tribe consisted of families with substantial but not very large herds, giving the tribe a rather homogeneous economic profile. This famously resulted from a sloughing off of both rich and poor families, the former becoming landowners, the latter agricultural labourers or sharecroppers (Barth 1961: chap. 8). The Yomut tribes instead maintained membership of rich, medium, and poor families alike. Poor families had the options of working as shepherds for wealthy families or taking up agriculture in the *chomur* section of the tribe. Wealthy families had the option of farming out their herds to poor families.

What accounts for the differences between the exclusive Basseri and the inclusive Yomut? We might say that the Basseri were economic nomads, while the Yomut were political nomads. Irons (1972) points out that both the internal and external security systems of the Yomut were based on military confrontation. Internally, the Yomut depended upon the balanced opposition of a segmentary lineage system; externally, the Yomut presented a military force for offensive raiding and defensive battles. Both internally and externally the measure of power was the number of fighting men. Segmentary solidarity for the Yomut was not only a norm, it was a direct interest. The more fighting men, whether from rich or poor families, retained by a lineage and tribe, the stronger it was. In contrast, the Basseri lived amidst Persian cities and peasant villages, watched by Persian Crown officials as well as by other tribes. For the Basseri, internally organized hierarchically under an administrating chief, *khan*, who also represented the tribe to the government officials, landowners, tribal chiefs of the regional elite, raiding and extortion—sources of major income for the Yomut—were not viable. Basseri success depended upon a good economic balance between population and resources, efficient livestock production, and good relations with the urban market. Households that were not succeeding were a drag on everyone else and not a resource to be supported. Thus, as Irons shows, political interests drove Yomut internal social policy, while economic interests drove Basseri internal social policy.

Why Do Tribes Have Chiefs?

The Yomut Turkmen tribes (Irons 1975, 1979a) were relentlessly egalitarian in their politics. They had no chiefs; they had no political hierarchies; there were no permanent offices (other than *saqlau*, “protector,” the tribal collectors of tribute from Persian villages). Political relations were organized by patrilineal descent, and order was maintained by the balanced opposition of corporate lineages (Irons 1975: chap. 3).

Irons (1979a) attributes Yomut political egalitarianism to two ecological characteristics common in nomadic societies: low population density, and ease of geographic mobility. Under these circumstances, in which small groups can manage their own affairs and disputes can be solved through mobility, “the development of an institutionalized political hierarchy [is] improbable” (Irons 1979a: 362).

How then can we account for the presence of political hierarchies, chiefs, and great power differentiation in some nomadic tribes? Irons (1979a: 362) offers a hypothesis: “Among pastoral nomadic societies, hierarchical political institutions are generated only by external political relations with state societies, and never develop purely as a result of the internal dynamics of such societies.” Irons (1979a: 366) suggests that “chiefly office among pastoralists is concerned primarily with armed conflict and its alternative, peaceful negotiation and adjudication backed up by the possibility of armed conflict.” In other words, hierarchical political institutions develop among nomadic pastoralists when there is close contact and a loose balance of power between the tribe and state authorities, and the tribal chief can effectively negotiate for the tribe with the state. Irons’ general argument is supported by his material on variation in political stratification among the Yomut and other Turkmen (Irons 1971). Various Turkmen groups had different degrees of contact with Persian sedentary peasant populations and with Persian government officials: *Charwa* pastoralists had little contact with either peasants or government; *chomur* cultivators were active “protecting” peasants for a fee; and those *chomur* closest to centers of Persian administration, such as the city of Asterabad, had some dealings with Persian officials.

Those Yomut with greater contact with outsiders were involved in more developed political hierarchies. The *charwa* operated mainly with an egalitarian lineage system; the *chomur* regulated their protection racket through the formal, hierarchical role of *saqlau*, generally taken by the most potent raider; and those *chomur* close to Persian cities found themselves embroiled with Persian officials, *sarkardeh*, responsible for recruiting conscripts and collecting taxes. Furthermore, the Goklan Turkmen, to the east of the Yomut, and within the influence of the city of Bojnurd, found themselves incorporated into administration by the government hierarchy. The more contact the Turkmen had with Persian officials, the more taxes they paid and the more men were conscripted.

Effective control by the Persian government over the Yomut, both immediately before and not long after WWII, increased the incorporation of the tribes into Persian administration. Amongst the Yomut themselves, the office of *saqlau* was lost, but rich Yomut, urban dwelling and educated, who were effective in associating with the Persian elite, became patrons for Yomut in the

countryside, thus establishing an informal but real political stratification among the Yomut.

Irons (1971: 155) sums up this account with the generalization, "an increase in interaction with sedentary society is associated with an increase in political stratification."

Life Chances Among the Yomut

Does cultural success result in biological success? Do individuals who achieve culturally specified goals have greater success in passing their genes to the next generation? This is the question that Irons (1979b: 258) explores using quantitative data from the second phase of his Yomut research.

For Turkmen individuals, economic success is maximizing wealth (Irons 1979b: 260). If some Turkmen succeed in building wealth relative to other Turkmen, does this have any effect on their fertility and mortality, which taken together is a measure of Darwinian inclusive fitness? Irons pursues this question by ranking 566 Yomut households by amount of capital wealth, including livestock and land, and comparing the wealthier and poorer halves of the sample.

What Irons has found is that both survivorship and fertility is higher, especially for men, among the wealthier half of the population. On average, wealthy men can expect to have 4.4 sons and 3.7 daughters, while poor men can expect to have 2.4 sons and 2.3 daughters. This is how Irons (1979b: 267) explains these remarkable results: "Wealthier individuals of both sexes enjoy better diets and medical care and devote less time to forms of labor which are strenuous or involve high risks. This in turn affects survivorship rates. Wealthier males have higher fertility because their families can afford to acquire brides for them at an earlier-than-average age, because they remarry more quickly after a wife dies, and because they are more frequently polygynous."

From these results Irons (1979b: 272) is able to conclude that "emic success among the Turkmen makes a high inclusive fitness more probable."

Do the Rich Always Get Richer Among the Yomut?

Some Yomut families were very well to do, with hundreds and even thousands of livestock, or many acres under cultivation, while other Yomut families were poor, with only a few head of livestock or small patches of cultivation. Yet there was no economic stratification; there were no symbolic markers of economic status among the Yomut. Irons (1994: 189) argues that

while there is a very unequal distribution of wealth, the place of each family in this distribution is not permanent. . . . Over a period of years, many households move from one of the economic categories to another.

This was the view that they [the Yomut] always expressed about their own society. There were vast differences in wealth, but the wealth of individual families could be expected to change. For the wealthy to become poor or the poor to become wealthy was not unusual.

Irons (1994) demonstrates statistically this volatility of wealth by comparing rank according to current wealth with rank according to inheritance. His (1994: 192) findings are that "the actual amount of change is about 75 percent of what would be expected if patrimony rank and current wealth rank were randomly related." A similar result is found in relation between patrimonies received by men and those given to sons; the change in wealth is about 81 percent of what one would expect from a random relationship. In short, who is well-to-do among the Turkmen has little to do with how wealthy his parents were, and will have little effect on how well off his son is. This is why differences in wealth among the Yomut do not lead to social inequalities.

These and other contributions to the understanding of nomadic peoples by Irons have influenced and clarified the thoughts of many students of nomadic life. For more than a few of us, Irons' work has been enlightening and inspiring. It is for this reason that the Awards Panel of the IUAES Commission on Nomadic Peoples determined to present William Irons with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Walter Goldschmidt

Walter Goldschmidt, Exemplary Anthropologist of East African Pastoralists, Recipient of the IUAES Commission on Nomadic Peoples Lifetime Achievement Award

Walter Goldschmidt has enriched nomadic studies by bringing his particularly American sensibility to the study of pastoral and other East African peoples. Goldschmidt has succeeded in combining in his approach three complementary analytical themes, with which he has been able to illuminate lives and cultures: One theme is values, those institutionalized standards by which people measure themselves and others. The second theme is the individual, both as carrier of biological and psychological characteristics, and as actor pursuing his or her own interests. The third theme is ecology, and the ways in which ecological adaptation shapes institutions and values. These three themes were well established in American anthropology, but Goldschmidt developed and integrated them, and then applied them in a systematic, precise, and creative fashion to the study of East Africa.

Goldschmidt's three books on the Sebei of Uganda, along with his many articles, are a major contribution to the study of pastoral peoples and of East African pastoral peoples in particular: *Sebei Law* (1967), *Kambuya's Cattle*:

The Legacy of an African Herdsman (1969), and his general ethnography, *The Culture and Behavior of the Sebei* (1976). In oversimplified summary, *Sebei Law* illuminates values and their institutionalization into law, and their transformation in response to ecological shifts; *Kambuya's Cattle* features the individual actor manoeuvring and manipulating the conventional resources at his disposal to advance his goals; and *The Culture and the Behavior of the Sebei* illustrates the ways in which culture and behavior are responses to ecological pressures, and that differences or shifts in ecological adaptation have their corresponding adjustments of culture and behavior.

Goldschmidt's contribution to East African pastoralist studies extends beyond his own work to the major research project, "Culture and Ecology in East Africa" (1960–1967), that he directed. Four distinct East African societies were studied. In addition to the individual studies of each society, there was a general, psychological and value study carried out in all four by Robert B. Edgerton, which resulted in the groundbreaking volume *The Individual in Cultural Adaptation: A Study of Four East African Peoples*, a work that Goldschmidt was particularly pleased to have sponsored.

The power of Goldschmidt's work results not only from his meticulous, detailed information, analytical sharpness, and theoretical insight, but also from his methodological rigor. For Goldschmidt, it was imperative for anthropologists to improve the quality of the information gained from research, so that we could more decisively draw sound conclusions. Methodological improvement required adoption and adaptation of scientific logic to anthropological research. To achieve this, Goldschmidt refined "controlled comparison" and applied it in the "Culture and Ecology in East Africa" research. Each of the four societies studied had both pastoral and farming sections, which meant that those differences between pastoral and farming sections found in common in all four societies could be attributed to the difference between pastoral and agricultural adaptations, rather than to the cultural or environmental differences between the societies, which were effectively "controlled" through this comparison. The concomitant variations elicited between pastoral or agricultural adaptations and behavioral and cultural patterns were the fruits that justified the methodology. Similar logic is applied in Goldschmidt's analysis of geographical variation and change over time, which are integral to his books on the Sebei.

The Commission on Nomadic Peoples of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, in recognition of Professor Walter Goldschmidt's distinguished contribution to the study of nomadic peoples, presents Professor Goldschmidt with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

I. M. Lewis

I. M. Lewis, Master Ethnographer of the Somali, Recipient of the IUAES Commission on Nomadic Peoples Lifetime Achievement Award

It is through the work of Professor I. M. Lewis that we have learned most fully and most deeply about the Somali nomads, that "fierce and turbulent race of Republicans," as Burton, quoted by Lewis, calls them. From Lewis' accounts of the Somali, always graceful, sympathetic, and analytically sharp, we have been taught about Somali nomads' way of life, their engagements with the wider world, their history, and their contemporary circumstances and dilemmas. Thanks to Lewis' efforts, publications on Somali nomads serve as one of the richest repositories in the ethnographic literature on nomadic peoples.

Lewis' general ethnography of the northern Somali nomads, *A Pastoral Democracy*, subtitled *A Study of Pastoralism and Politics Among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa*, was published in 1961, and followed shortly by the brief complementary monograph, *Marriage and the Family in Northern Somaliland* (1962). Then Lewis collaborated with Andrzejewski in a volume on *Somali Poetry: An Introduction* (1964). The first edition of Lewis' history of the Somali, entitled *The Modern History of Somaliland: From Nation to State*, appeared in 1965. Three subsequent editions have been published, the latest, with the title, *A Modern History of the Somali*, in 2003. In addition to several brief, introductory works on the region, Lewis' more recent works on the Somali include *Nationalism and Self Determination in the Horn of Africa* (1984), *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (1994), and *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somalia, Afar and Saho* (1998).

Those of us who are familiar with *A Pastoral Democracy* and Lewis' supplementary ethnographic monographs and articles can testify how full and rich his accounts of Somali nomads are, and with what a masterful eye he examines events to discern patterns. If I may be allowed a personal reminiscence, the Somali were the first nomads I met, and I met them in Lewis' *A Pastoral Democracy*. I was intrigued by the Somali nomads, not knowing at the time how much I owed to Lewis for the fascination that I felt. Reading *A Pastoral Democracy* was a major step for me along a path I have trod for many years (although Lewis of course cannot be held responsible for any of my ethnographic or theoretical sins).

Lewis as we know did not stop at his ethnography of a tribal people. He pursued the Somali back through history, and forward through the passing of time, and outward geographically in order to contextualize Somali people, practices, and activities. He particularly has focused on the interplay between Somali culture and social construction in patterns of change and transformation such

as state-building and state-breaking and other engagement with the wider and contemporary world. Lewis has thus not left his Somali nomads as impressive examples of their ethnographic kind, but has followed them in their real lives as they struggle to make a place for themselves in the 20th and 21st centuries. Lewis' work is demonstration, if any such be needed, that the postmodern rejection of repeated field research and of continuity of ethnographic focus is an arid conceit.

We can see in Lewis' more general anthropological work an additional contribution of his ethnographic studies. Lewis' profound knowledge of tribal society arising from his Somali research is reflected in the wisdom of his more general treatises, such as *Social Anthropology in Perspective* (2nd edition 1985) and *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (1971). There we find examples drawn from the Somali, but, more importantly, an appreciation of the organization and dynamics of social life and culture that rests firmly on knowing firsthand how tribal society works.

The Commission on Nomadic Peoples of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, in recognition of Professor I. M. Lewis' outstanding contribution to the study of nomadic peoples, presents Professor Lewis with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

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