# CORPORATE GROUPS AMONG MIDDLE EASTERN PASTORAL NOMADS

by

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## ABSTRACT

In Middle Eastern pastoral societies, corporate groups perform various economic, political, and symbolic functions. The degree of corporateness depends on having multiple solidary bonds and interaction between group members, and increases both when more functions are carried out by the group, and when collective action, common property, and clearly defined rights and obligations are found. Symbolic expression of unity and representative leadership reflect the strength of corporateness.

Where there is territorial stability, corporations below the tribe are based on coresidence; otherwise, descent groups will be prominent. The ideology of common descent unites the whole tribe, unless pasture is allocated, in which case allegiance to a chief defines the tribe.

Whether a segmentary organization or cross-cutting alliances are prominent depends on the interaction of territorial stability and predictable resources. With both or neither, groups act in accordance with a segmentary model. With only one of these factors present, alliances become more significant.

## RÉSUMÉ

Dans les sociétés pastorales du Moyen-Orient, les groupes corporés remplissent diverses fonctions économiques, politiques, et symboliques. Leur degré d'intégration depend de la présence de liens de solidarité multiples et de l'interaction entre les membres du groupe; ce degré d'intégration augmente à la fois lorsque le groupe remplit plus de fonctions et lorsque l'on retrouve une action collective, un régime de propriété communautaire et des droits et des obligations clairement definis. La force de cette intégration est reflètée par une expression symbolique de l'unité du groupe et par un système de leadership représentatif.

Quand il existe une certaine stabilité territoriale, des groupes corporés plus petits que la tribu ont pour base la co-résidence; autrement ce sont les groupes de descendance qui sont les plus importants. L'idéologie selon laquelle le groupe descend d'un ancêtre commun unit l'ensemble de la tribu, sauf dans les cas où les pâturages sont alloués à chaque sous groupe, auquel l'allegeance à son chef definit la tribu.

L'interaction de la stabilité territoriale et des ressources previsibles détermine la pré-éminence d'une organisation segmentaire ou d'alliances entre les groupes. Lorsque l'un seul de ces facteurs est présent, les alliances deviennent plus importants; lorsque l'on trouve ces deux facteurs présent, ou lorsqu'ils sont tous deux absents, les groupes fonctionnent suivant un modèle segmentaire.

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# INTRODUCTION

Although there is a plethora of literature on corporate groups, comparatively little has been written on such groups among pastoralists. In fact, in the past, their existence among nomadic societies was often denied, based on the argument that the movement required by a pastoral adaptation demanded fluid group membership, and thus militated against the formation of corporations. Thus, Murphy and Kasdan claim that, among the Bedouin, "there are no lineages in the sense of bounded groups having a continuing and cohesive base in corporate rights and duties"; nor are there "corporate segments in Bedouin society, except for the pasture-owning tribe, which is only weakly so" (1959: 21, 24). Nina Swidler argues that "ecological pressures mitigate[sic] against the emergence of formal corporate groups on the residential level" (1972: 119). Recently, however, corporate groups have been identified and discussed by various authors in relation to specific pastoral societies, but few have attempted to make cross-cultural comparisons of their basis, nature, or functions.

Unfortunately, this gap is not unique to the study of corporate groups; it is evident in many areas of study concerning nomadic pastoral societies. Very little integrative work has been done on pastoralists, except at an introductory level. Part of the problem lies in the fact that such studies have been hampered, until fairly recently (in anthropological history), by the "lack of reliable or sociologically informative data" (Taoper 1976a: 2). It has only been

in the past twenty-five years that a "corpus of material capable of transforming the study of nomadic societies" has appeared (Dyson-Hudson 1972: 2). Although numerous ethnographies on individual pastoral societies have been published recently, this transformation has not yet occurred (Dyson-Hudson 1972: 7). There is still a paucity of literature offering comparisons or generalizations concerning the pastoral adaptation.

There is frequent reference in the literature to the fact that few comparative studies have been done, and to the need for such work. Witness, for example:

> Although much excellent ethnographic work has been done on nomadic peoples, there has not been a great deal of discussion of the subject on a higher level of abstraction. Conceptualizations of nomadism and the analytic tools used are somewhat wanting in sophistication. And general conclusions about nomadism as a system of action are quite difficult to find (Salzman 1967: 115).

Four years later, the situation does not seem to have improved, for Salzman again complains that "the study of nomadism has until present been weak in both conceptualization and substantive generalization. . . . It is not so much that generalization about nomadism has been led astray as that attempts at generalization have not been forthcoming" (Salzman 1971b: 104). As late as 1976, one author complains that there is still a deficiency in comparative studies of social organization among pastoralists in the analysis of face-to-face communities (Tapper 1976a: 5). The same is true of other types of groups.

This study will explore the nature of corporate groups among Middle Eastern pastoralists; it will look at both the basis of such groups (that is, how they are formed, who is recruited and how), and

the functions of such groups. In Chapter I, the literature on corporate groups among pastoralists is reviewed. The validity of the segmentary lineage model, which was considered the basis for social and political organization among nomads, but has recently been questioned, revised, or discarded, is also discussed.

Currently, networks, quasi-groups, alliances, and such are being emphasized, while corporate groups are being belittled or ignored. While it is "good that we do not assume a priori that corporate groups will be important," the converse is also true; the importance of corporate groups varies, and it is an empirical question as to whether they are important and what role they play (Salzman 1975: fn. 6). This is an issue that is by no means resolved. Part of the problem lies in the definition of corporateness, as there is no general agreement as to what constitutes a corporation. The characteristics attributed to or expected in a corporate group vary so widely from author to author that what one accepts as a corporation, another vigorously denies could be considered as such. Thus, before we can discuss the role of corporate groups, it will be necessary to establish a working definition of them; this is done in Chapter II. Questions concerning the characteristics, functions, and recruitment of corporate groups which should be asked when looking at specific corporations, or when comparing them, are raised. A framework for identifying corporations by function is proposed. Alternatives to corporate groups are also briefly discussed.

Chapter III examines the actual corporate groups found among Middle Eastern pastoralists. These are divided up according to the basis of recruitment. Examples of all these types are presented from

the literature. These are examined in relation to their functions and in light of the questions raised, in Chapter II, about their characteristics.

Whereas Chapter III is concerned with establishing the functions and characteristics of corporate groups, Chapter IV will explore the relative importance of the different types in the social and political organization of nomads. The circumstances under which descent versus residence groups will arise is explained. The debate in the literature concerning alliances versus corporate groups is also taken up here. A model explaining when one or the other will be prominent is proposed.

As is inevitable in a thesis, a number of issues are raised that remain unanswered; some are peripheral to this study, others are unanswerable without new field research. Therefore, in the conclusion, we will point out what further research would be fruitful, both in terms of the clarification and expansion of data presently available, and as a continuation and refinement of the hypotheses presented in this thesis.

# CHAPTER I

# CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE

## On Corporate Groups

Richard Tapper's article "The Organization of Nomadic Societies of the Middle East" (1976a[1]) attempts to show that there are corporate communities "at certain levels of social organization" which exhibit cross-cultural similarities among Middle Eastern pastoralists. He argues that these are not accounted for by the segmentary lineage ideology, nor can they be "explained by ecological factors alone, but rather invite presumptions of underlying social psychological and demographic principles" (Tapper 1976a: 1).

After discussing previous literature, Tapper presents data on such groups in fourteen societies. Through no fault of his own, this data is often incomplete; comparable data is simply not available.

Tapper then goes on to discuss the two types of communities he identified, calling them types A and B. A-type communities are found at the level of the tertiary section of the lineage, and tend to average between twenty and fifty households. They are usually based on a dominant lineage; blood responsibility limits usually coincide with at least the agnatic core of the group. Although the physical community and the descent group are ideologically and terminologically distinct, there is a tendency for the more corporate communities to confuse the two "in common parlance," assuming them to be coincident (Tapper 1976a: 16-17).

There seems to be a notion of an ideal community size, based not only on resource availability, but also, according to Tapper, on the "optimal size for a vengeance group." He states that, although ecological constraints and descent principles can affect the composition and size of A-type communities, they "do not account for the statistical fact that more or less corporate primary communities, with associated ideologies concerning the limits of blood responsibility, honour, and the control of women, should form at precisely this level of organization" (Tapper 1976a: 17-18). However, Tapper does not account for this phenomena either.

The B-type communities are much more vaguely defined. Their usual size is from 150-500 families, although examples range from 80-800. They are usually the "primary reference group." Because there is a high degree of endogamy at this level, these groups almost constitute a marriage isolate. Finally, since they form above the level of genealogical manipulation [fission, fusion, telescoping, foreshortening, etc. (see Peters 1960)], they exhibit "considerable historical continuity" (Tapper 1976a: 18). Tapper's conclusion about B-level communities is even less enlightening than those about A-type communities. He states: "I am unable to suggest why such communities should form at this particular level of organization" (Tapper 1976a: 18).

Tapper feels that "it will be among nomads rather than settled peoples that we can expect the emergence and evidence of any inherent social dynamic processes generating interactional communities of a certain size and character" (Tapper 1976a: 5), but he fails to show us what such processes are. He concludes that the existence of the two types

of communities suggests "the operation of some principles of demography or social psychology which I am incompetent to identify" (1976a: 19).

By its very nature, Tapper's paper invites further investigation into the processes and principles by which such groups should form. Ultimately, however, it seems to confuse as much as clarify the nature of corporate groups among Middle Eastern pastoralists. By trying to fit so many groups into one neat formula, he forces us to look for patterns that are not really there. For example, Tapper admits that there is a wide variation in the size of both types of communities, but he relies on the average size when comparing societies, which can be extremely misleading. One example will suffice.

Among the Basseri, Tapper states that the oulads range in size from thirteen to two hundred tents, but average about seventy; sections (tireh) average two hundred or so tents (Tapper 1976a: 12). However, when one looks at Barth's original figures (1961: 51), a very different picture emerges. There are thirty-three oulads listed; eight have more than eighty tents, four have less than forty, thirteen have between forty and fifty-nine tents, eight between sixty and seventy-nine. When we look at the sections, the average is even more misleading; there are fifteen sections, ten of which are composed of only one oulad. Seven of the sections have one hundred or more tents, containing 238, 416, 301, 384, 107, 200, and 100 tents respectively. The other eight range from twenty-six to seventy-seven tents. From these figures, Tapper states the average at two hundred and proposes to compare this with other societies.

Few of the factors that Tapper attributes to each type of commun-

ity are consistently found at that level. Estate allocation, endogamy preferences, reference groups: all are associated with corporate groups, but not always with the same level in each society.

One of the major problems with Tapper's article is that he fails to distinguish between corporate descent groups versus residential or other types of groups, a distinction that seems more fruitful than the two levels that Tapper describes. Another problem is that he often includes herding or camping groups as A-level communities, when in fact these are not even corporate groups but highly flexible units.

Tapper's paper would have been much more effective if, after establishing the existence of corporate groups among pastoralists, he had not tried to fit them all into one neat framework,but had instead tried to distinguish different types of corporate groups, and examined the processes by which they formed, the functions they performed, or their relative importance. As Salzman states, in criticizing another paper:

> There are great differences between tribes of pastoral nomads in overall political, vengeance group, and herding group organization, in areas and amounts of collective action, in territorial control, movement pattern, and adaptation, and so on. It is unlikely that a general descriptive model . . . could do justice to such a variety. It would probably be more fruitful to construct a model relating variations in some of these factors to variations in others (Salzman 1979: 123).

In fact, Tapper occasionally makes such comparative statements, or hints at differences, but he does not elaborate on them. He notes in his introduction that the Shahsavan and the Basseri communities differ in composition but are similar in character (?) and size, stating that

these differences are 'clearly related to different patterns of grazing rights . . . and imposed political structures" (Tapper 1976a: 2). In his analysis of A-type communities, he relates larger and smaller sized communities to joint estates and unrestricted grazing, respectively. He also connects community composition with rights to resources (water and grazing); when a group 'does not have its own estate (the manner of allocating grazing rights tends to be controlled at higher levels), then its composition is unstable, though usually confined mainly to kinship ties, with an agnatic emphasis" (1976a: 16).* Had Tapper pursued any of these, constructing a model that could account for variations in the size, stability, or composition of corporate groups, he would have produced a much more useable model.

In another paper, Tapper does discuss the allocation of grazing rights (1976b[1]). He briefly outlines the

> implications of the conflict between, on the one hand, the principles of allocating pasture estates to large tribal sections, and on the other, the necessity, for grazing purposes, for mechanisms for suballocating the estate to the component camps and herding units within the tribal section (Tapper 1976b: 4-5),

but he laments the lack of empirical data on such mechanisms.

Tapper shows how, in general, pastures as joint estates are allocated to large tribal groups. This is ecologically desirable in areas with "geographically and seasonally spasmodic and unreliable rainfall," as it gives the nomads freedom to move within a wide area (1976b: 2). Although large estates are theoretically unnecessary in areas of more predictable and reliable rainfall, the larger size tends to be preserved, as there is a higher population density, and "it will be both easier and more likely for them to be controlled effectively by autocratic chiefs"

(Tapper 1976b: 3), who often hold title to the land, and whose responsibilities include the allocation of estates to the sections of the tribe. Tapper found that when conditions were more predictable, there were more permanent allocations of the pasture, rather than smaller estates (1976b: 4).

After listing the estate holding units (eg., Basseri oulad, Qashqai tireh, Bakhtiari korboh), Tapper discusses some problems and solutions for managing and suballocating the pasture. In some arid areas, where estates are not subdivided, groups tend to localize around privately owned water sources; they thus become associated with certain areas of the territory. Elsewhere, a "first come, first served' rule often operates (1976b: 3). [These are not really mutually exclusive, as Tapper implies, for there can be private ownership of wells with an open pasture policy. In such a situation, there must be some way for families or groups to obtain water where there is good pasturage. Often, affinal and cognatic ties are used for this purpose.] When there is pressure on the available resources, other mechanisms seem to operate; these include mutual agreement, allotment by a leader with authority to enforce his decisions, or allotment for different time periods (Tapper 1976b: 4). He then goes on to discuss Barth's description of the Basseri, but does not find how pastures are allocated, or the mechanisms of internal distribution.

Unfortunately, instead of trying to locate and isolate such mechanisms, or further clarifying which groups estates are allocated to, Tapper turns to the Shahsavan, who have individuated grazing rights. Admitting that their system is peculiar, he looks to historical events,

denying ecological circumstances, to explain the origins of individuated estate allocations. Thus, he chose to enlighten us on the particular exception without further amplifying and clarifying the general mechanisms alluded to in the beginning of his article.

Aside from Tapper's article, there have been only a few articles that deal, directly or indirectly, with corporate groups among pastoralists. Although many ethnographies mention them in passing, or describe them without calling them such, very little has been written on the theoretical significance of corporate groups within nomadic communities.

Louise Sweet (1965a) postulates the existence of a "relatively stable social unit smaller than the tribe," that of the tribal section, among the Bedouin (Sweet 1965a: 158). This is in answer to traditional accounts that insist that "neither the structure of certain nomadic societies, nor the ecology of pastoralism, will permit the formation of corporate groups" (Tapper 1976a: 5). Sweet specifically wants to contradict Murphy and Kasdan's statement that, among the Bedouin, "there are no lineages in the sense of bounded groups having a continuing and cohesive base in corporate rights and duties" (1959: 24).

Briefly, her argument goes as follows. The characteristics of camels - size, mobility, endurance - provide the subsistence base of Bedouin society. This dependence on camels, combined with the extremes of desert life, require mobility of all social units. The smallest social unit, the extended or joint family, is the most mobile, but it is also the most insecure, due to factors that deplete their herd and the slow reproductive capacity of camels. There is thus a need for a

social unit larger than the family that will be more stable, one that can provide security both in maintenance and protection of the herds, and protection against predation.

There are three units below the tribe that are functionally significant. The first is the section, which is composed of a core of ranked lineages with other persons attached. The second is this core itself, the "fixed lineage." The third is the "sliding lineage," an egocentric vengeance group, known as the khamsa. It is the tribal section, however, that can act as both the maximum unit for herd maintenance and the minimum unit for security. It is thus "the effective minimal camping unit" (Sweet 1965a: 173-174).

The tribal section is corporately organized in relation to certain tasks. It is an economic group, responsible for control and protection of resources, and for organization of nomadic movement for grazing (Sweet 1965a: 158). Although camels are owned individually, they are branded with the section sign; it is the section that controls and defends the herd (Sweet 1965a: 166).

The section also functions in organizing raids, which are institutionalized as a means of increasing the section's herd (Sweet 1965a: 169; 1965b). Animals thus captured are redistributed throughout the section by the chief, who is responsible for other redistributive functions, such as hospitality and collective support.

Finally, the section is, to a great extent, a residential group. Although it is "flexible in size and internal organization in response to ecological conditions", there is a core patrilineal kin group, the "fixed lineage," who move and camp together (Sweet 1965a: 158).

Thus, the tribal section is an adaptation to the needs of the camel and to the environment. The size of such sections varies among the various Bedouin tribes, depending on the ecological conditions in the tribal territory.

Although Sweet shows us that corporate structures do exist below the tribal level among the Bedouin, and forces us to look for equivalent structures elsewhere, her model is of limited value. Based as it is on the capacities and requirements of camels, it does not provide us with a general model applicable to other nomadic societies. She begins with the camel as the subsistence base of Bedouin society and the consequent need for mobility in the family unit, then jumps immediately to the functions of the tribal sections, with very little connection. We know what the sections do, but not how they do it; nor are we told anything about the formation of such sections. The fact that the family unit is too small and unstable to provide protection and security is simply not explanation enough for the existence of tribal sections.

Barth (1960) discusses the tribal political organization of pastoralists in South West Asia in relation to "certain basic corporate interests shared by the members of the nomad communities which combine in an organization" (Barth 1960: 347). These interests are defense, migration coordination, and pasture rights. Barth argues that these corporate interests, which may vary in importance among the groups, are "the sources from which tribal political organizations spring" (1960: 347).

Community defense is needed because, in the areas nomads frequent, there is little permanent settlement and thus poor local security, because the nature of nomadic property - animals - makes them particularly

vulnerable to robbery, and because their constant movement does not allow them to have "permanent fortification works and stores" as the villages have. Thus, it is necessary for camps to have some sort of organization that can act as a defensive unit; the nomads' strength depends on his being able to mobilize a force of men. It is on the tribal political organization that such tribes rely completely for defense (Barth 1960: 347).

In areas where there are patterns of successive use of pasture, or narrow passes and valleys through which many groups of nomads must pass in some order, some organization that can coordinate movement is needed. Such an organization is based on units united through recognition of a common supreme chief (Barth 1960: 348), and is found in areas where climate is more predictable and resources relatively lush (Salzman 1967: 128).

The final corporate interests of nomads in South West Asia involves the communal grazing estate rights. These generally include the right to use all public wells and irrigation channels, and to graze on uncultivated land (Barth 1960: 345). These may belong to the tribes as a gift or grant from the state; often, usufruct rights are "recognized by force of custom" (Barth 1960: 347). Although there is much variation in "rights in, and access to, pasture areas"(1960: 345), there is the need, for those who share the collective rights, to be able to prevent infringement by others, and to have "mechanisms for internal distribution and allocation of temporary pastures" (Barth 1960: 347). These functions are carried out by the tribal organization. Pasture rights are sometimes collectively held by sections of the tribe or by

the whole tribe. Where the ownership of the land is questioned, the tribal chief usually holds title to the land, but "with no clear definition of the respective rights of title-holder and tribe" (Barth 1960: 345).

Although Barth provides us with a nice overview of nomadism in South West Asia, and compares a number of tribes in terms of a few analytic aspects, his article is essentially descriptive. He describes three ways in which the tribal political organization is related to corporate interests, but does not properly describe the corporate groups that actually perform these functions; we do not know how these groups are formed, at what level they are found within the tribal organization, or how they actually perform the functions that Barth attributes to them.

Spooner's discussion of corporate groups among pastoral nomads is conspicuous by its absence. Only once in his eleven page section on social organization (out of a total forty-five page module) does he even mention the concept, and here in passing only, not directly related to such groups among nomads (Spooner 1973: 27).

However, in discussing the problems of social organization that a nomadic adaptation entails, he does raise a number of points that suggest some of the roles that such groups play in nomadic societies. Essentially, the nature of the resources exploited by pastoralists necessitate fluid local groups that can change their membership in order to maintain the optimum herd and herding group sizes in relation to the available pasture and water (Spooner 1973: 23). The principles governing such local group formation cannot be used as a model of social organization, since the instability of these groups would not allow members

of a society to predict daily relationships based on stable social groupings, identities, and roles (Spooner 1973: 25).

What is found, instead, is a model based on genealogy, which is "ideologically stable and fixed" (Spooner 1973: 26) and "which provides the ideological framework for the formation of [social] groups in lineage-based societies" (Spooner 1973: 28). Spooner states that the comparative "rigidity in the native model is a predictable cultural adaptation to ecological instability" (1973: 24). It provides conceptual stability in a situation that demands fluidity of local groups.

Another way that such conceptual order is achieved is through the attachment of territory to larger units, usually a group of subsistence units (Spooner 1973: 27). By allocating estates to groups of a higher structural level, which need not be fluid in membership, more permanent relations can be established. It also minimizes the effects of localized variability of resources.

Spooner claims that "the nomadic adaptation . . . generates a fluid society based on essentially unstable local groupings" (1973: 15) that are not defined by the native model of the society. The native model is concerned with units that are an amalgamation of local subsistence groupings (Spooner 1971: 203). Unfortunately, Spooner does not tell us anything about these larger units; we do not know how they are formed or who are members. Nor does he explain the relationship between the local and social groupings. The implication, however, is that they are formed through combining lower level local groups and are themselves fluid "unhomogenized amalgamation[s]" (Spooner 1971: 207). However, the local groups derive their membership from within stable

corporate groups that are recognized by the ideology. Spooner's argument is thus backwards, for he starts with the lowest level groupings and works up to more inclusive ones when, in fact, it is the individuals with membership in the higher level groups that split and recombine to form the camping units.

Without describing the overlying structure of nomadic societies from which the camps are drawn, Spooner (1973) proceeds to discuss some cultural mechanisms (contract, kindred, age sets, age grades) by which the lower level flexible local groupings are formed (presumably out of a fixed and rigid ideology). Although he does not consider that such elements could be the basis of stable social groups that are often corporate, it is useful to briefly examine one of these principles - contract - since it is a means of determining the composition of groups.

Local subsistence groups are not coterminous with descent groups in terms of membership; they either include individuals that are not accounted for by the genealogy, or else they are made up of only a selection of individuals from the total possible descent group. The principle whereby such arrangements are made is that of contract, which may be explicit or not. In lineage based societies, "contractual relationships tend to be conceptually inferior to genealogical relationships" (Spooner 1973: 26). Nevertheless, contracts are essential mechanisms of social organization among pastoralists, whether used for political support, client attachments, herding arrangements, or subsistence group composition.

On the Segmentary Lineage Model

Recently, a number of authors (Irons 1975, Vinogradov 1974, Peters 1967, Salzman 1978, Gellner 1973, Marx 1977, Marx 1978, Salzman 1979, Marx 1979) have discussed the tribal social and political organization of pastoralists, often questioning the validity of the segmentary lineage model, sometimes offering other models to explain the systems of organization. Since such systems are the basis for the formation of corporate descent groups, and are the vehicle through which they operate, it is worthwhile to examine these discussions, not only in relation to corporate groups per se, but also in terms of the larger system in which they are found.

Although Irons discusses corporate groups only in relation to the political structure of the Yomut Turkmen, he makes an important point that is not explicit in other articles, which is that there are two types of corporate groups - descent groups, with recruitment based on patridescent, and residence groups, with recruitment based on contract. Although there is an overlap in both function and composition, the two categories are distinct (Irons 1975: 39).

Genealogies among the Yomut are precisely known for recent generations (i.e., five to seven generations back, the limits of vengeance rights and responsibilities) (Irons 1975: 61). Beyond that, putative genealogies are generally known only to the extent of relating the apical ancestor of the precise genealogy to a member of a named descent group . Although there are more detailed genealogies, both written and memorized, the Turkmen do not consider them complete or precise; they admit that there are omissions, and are not disturbed by the

discrepancies. "The Yomut claim that genealogies dealing with more remote generations . . . are accurate only to the extent that they include those links which are necessary to explain relationships among existing descent groups" (Irons 1975: 44).

The Yomut claim that they do not readjust their genealogies to reflect their actual residential arrangements. In fact, the "notion that a descent group . . . could acquire new members through the type of contractual arrangements by which people join a new residence is foreign to the Yomut" (Irons 1975: 58). Nevertheless, qongshi groups [groups residing separately from their agnates, in a group dominated by another descent group (Irons 1975: 51)] do become absorbed politically after many generations of coresidence into the descent group with whom they reside. Although the previous position of the qongshi group in the descent system may be forgotten, the fact that they are "foreign" is not. Such groups are found "at every level of segmentation above the level of precisely remembered genealogy" (Irons 1975: 58).

What emerges from this discussion is the fact that there are two systems operating here simultaneously, one of descent groups, one of political groups, which are "distinct both in fact and in native conceptualization" (Irons 1975: 58, fn. 6). Irons calls the system a "segmentary political system" to distinguish it from a segmentary lineage system, although it functions in much the same way. "At each level of segmentation, groups can be mobilized in opposition to one another or united into a single coalition against a group on the next higher level of segmentation. The system differs from a segmentary lineage system, however, because it is only partly based on a genealogy" (Irons 1975: 58).

The Yomut Turkmen are not unique in this way. The Marri Baluch, for example, also have a segmentary political system rather than a segmentary lineage system. The fact that two systems can operate simultaneously is brought home even more forcefully in Vinogradov's discussion of the Ait Ndhir (1974).

The Ait Ndhir are a Berber tribe in Morocco who, according to legend, are descendants of one of the three sons of Jalout (Goliath) (Vinogradov 1974: 17). They are a taqbilt - tribe - divided into ten named corporate sections (ikhsan, sing. ighs) that are territorially localized, with their own laws, and of equal structural order (Vinogradov 1974: 56). The "normal relationship" between sections was based on mutual hostility and suspicion; the political legitimacy of the ighs was expressed by warfare. There was continual rivalry for resources land, caravan and travellers' protection rights (Vinogradov 1974: 68).

All the subdivisions of the ighs above the camping units are contingent groups, having "no jural, political, or ritual functions" and remaining "structurally and functionally latent" (Vinogradov 1974: 57). So far, the system sounds quite like a sementary lineage model.

However, although the Ait Ndhir assume common descent in these groups, since they possess a common name and "appear to be incapable of idiomatically perceiving their social structure in any terms other than those of agnatic descent" (Vinogradov 1974: 58), they do not really claim they are descended from a common ancestor, nor do they put much emphasis on patrilineality (Vinogradov 1974: 55). They do not keep track of genealogies, considering them irrelevant; they define membership

essentially according to whether a man fights with them (Vinogradov 1974: 58-59), or pays blood money. In fact, such payment is "the most expressive manifestation of lineage membership. It constituted the decisive criterion not only for acquiring lineage membership but also for losing it" (Vinogradov 1974: 75).

Agnatic descent functions "to define the status and legitimacy of individuals and groups" but it is not the only basis for group formation or recruitment. A stranger could join the group through various types of contractual arrangments This open recruitment, combined with a lack of marital preferences, meant that there was no common genealogical unity above the extended family (Vinogradov 1974: 61).

Although the descent-based segmentary system could be elevated to a model of the Ait Ndhir's social system, it "would not refer to anything real or evident to the Ndhir themselves, or to the function of their society" (Vinogradov 1974: 61). Operating in the socio-political system at the same time, and just as important, was a system of alliances and contracts.

Aside from the contractual arrangements whereby a man could join an ighs, there were several kinds of alliances in the intra-tribal structure First, there were the alliances that joined the ten clans into five paired groups. In each of the pairs, the two groups occupied areas of different altitudes, thus complementing each other in resources, The alliance implied mutual assistance and territorial sharing (Vinogradov 1974: 69).

Alliances were also formed between camping units of different tribes, and between clans. Alliances between camping units "implied

aid and trust and guaranteed entree and hospitality" Those made between clans were used to regulate theft and adultery; intermarriage was then forbidden between the clans until the death of all participants. Although there was no obligation of assistance in warfare, members of such allied groups would avoid, where possible, killing each other (Vinogradov 1974. 74-75).

Individuals could also enter into pacts of protection and brotherhood. Pacts of protection, amur, could be made to escort strangers or caravans safely through the clan territory, or to guarantee peace at a market in the area. An individual wishing to reside with a group could contract a patron-client relationship through an amur. A voluntary alliance of brotherhood between individuals, called a taymat, could be entered into to broaden economic assistance, for such a pact involved aid in sheep breeding and harvesting, exchanging hospitality; women were also exchanged in marriage (Vinogradov 1974: 72)

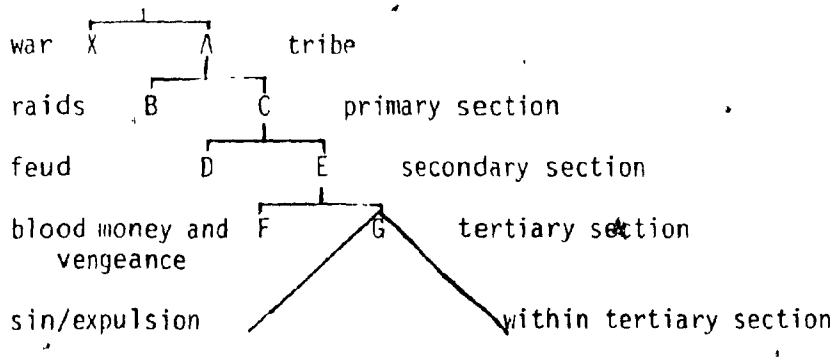
Vinogradov concludes that the social order of the Ait Ndhir involves a "dynamic interplay" of both a segmentary and an alliance system. "An alliance could reinforce the lineage, contradict it, or even replace it altogether." Although an agnatic segmentary ideology might define 'spheres of political cooperation" and mechanisms for dealing with conflict, it did not determine them. Alliances functioned 'to provide alternatives in the case of the failure of lineage cohesion" (Vinogradov 1974: 78). Thus,

> The Ait Ndhir seem to have operated simultaneously in terms of the two models, segmentary and alliance (considered as pure types). They did so without suffering the strain and stress of the ethnologist who tends to view these systems as contradictory and incompatible.

> Both verbally and behaviorally, the Ait Ndhir made no effort to be consistent and did not therefore place either individuals or groups in straitjackets or segmentary and/or alliance behavior restrictions (Vinogradov 1974: 54).

In his article on the feud among the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, Peters (1967) examines the validity of the segmentary lineage model in explaining actions and relations among the Bedouin. After analyzing "the disturbances in social relationships precipitated by a homicide" (Peters 1967: 261) with a lineage model, which accords with the Bedouin's own view, Peters presents further information that is not covered by the model, and shows that an accurate prediction of events cannot be made with it. Finally, Peters concludes that the segmentary lineage model must be abandoned, and examines the implications of such a position.

Peters begins by describing the various levels of segmentation of the tribe, the primary, secondary, and tertiary segments, and their means of dealing with a homicide, which are summarized in the following diagram (Peters 1967: 269).




Payment of blood money or a vengeance killing restore peaceful relations between tertiary sections. A state of feud perpetuates hostility; it is the nature of relationships between secondary sections, and, in a sense, defines them (Peters 1967: 267-268).

The description thus far, which the Bedouin themselves espouse, sounds like the classical segmentary lineage system. However, Peters goes on to raise five objections (four to the assumptions behind the lineage theory itself) to show the flaw in mistaking "such a folk model for sociological analysis" (Peters 1967: 270).

First, all secondary sections should be at feud with one another, which is not in fact true. The Bedouin apparently "evoke what are to them contingencies" to explain why they are not feuding with every other secondary section. But, "once contingencies are permitted to enter in, the lineage model ceases to be of use" (Peters 1967: 270-271).

Second, balanced opposition does not exist, and combinations not comprehended by the theory can occur. Third, groups cannot and do not come together in opposition to like groups, partly because there are no chiefs to command the action. Fourth, all the segments are not equal, either in people or resources (Peters 1967: 271).

Finally, lineage theory "cannot take account of women," but the ties and obligations created by matrilaterality and affinity are as "impelling" and "persisting" as those created by agnation (Peters 1967: 272-273). Because of these ties, "every person constitutes a bundle of roles by virtue of the fact that he is one of a very complex cognatic group" (Peters 1967: 272). These roles, Peters says, are present in every situation, such that one cannot give "general primacy" to one form, such as agnation, claiming the other to be a disturbing element. Although the Bedouin say they are endogamous, they do make external marriages, over a large geographical spread, but again these are explained as contingencies. "What they fail to appreciate is that these 'contin-

gencies' are ecologically, economically, demographically, and politically essential" (Peters 1967: 275).

What actually happens is that the Bedouin regularly make alliances through marriage with selected distant groups in different ecological areas for economic security (in case of drought, poor pasturage, and such). They do not marry with close collateral tertiary groups, who (contrary to the lineage model) are in fact their competitors for resources. It is from these groups that they "capture natural resources" when they need to expand. External marriage ties reinforce the separation between collateral tertiary sections by allowing each group "to express hostilities indirectly through their linked groups" (Peters 1967: 277). Essentially, there is a regularity of relationship with a "greater range of possible consequences to a homicide than those summarized in the diagram" (Peters 1967: 275), but these are based on the linkages and alliances created through affinal and matrilateral ties, not on the segmentary lineage system.

According to Peters, the Bedouin explain their behavior according to the lineage theory, with the two riders that one does not feud with cognates, and that secondary and primary sections are interlinked so one does not feud with all of them, because it explains most occurrences (1967: 275); "it is a kind of ideology which enables them, without making absurd demands on their credulity, to understand their field of social relationships, and to give particular relationships their raison d'etre" (Peters 1967: 270).

Peters concludes that the competition between corporate groups for resources, which forms the basis for the feud, necessitates a

'regularity of relationships." These relationships are not explained by using the segmentary lineage model, but rather by looking at the composition and shifting alliances of power groups and at the "growth and diminuition in the power of tertiary sections constituting the combinations which makes the facts of feud intelligible" (Peters 1967: 280).

The segmentary lineage model, which had in the past seemed a useful and accurate model for explaining the social organization of Middle Eastern pastoralists, now, on closer examination, appears to be more prevalent in the minds than the actions of many nomadic peoples. Nevertheless, much can be explained by this model, and it cannot be completely discarded. The question thus becomes: Is the segmentary lineage model useful in explaining the actions of pastoralists in a particular society? If so, why here and not elsewhere?

Salzman (1978) speaks to this question, and to many of the problems raised in and by Peters' article, and offers an alternative explanation as to why the Bedouin hold to a segmentary lineage ideology to explain their actions when, in fact, they act quite differently. However, the main argument in the article is concerned with whether the segmentary lineage model, and in particular the concept of complementary opposition, is found in practice among other groups who espouse this ideology. Two issues related to this are also raised;

> If complementary opposition is asserted but not acted, what are the actual patterns of loyalty and alliance and group formation, and what factors underlie the actual patterns? And, if complementary oppostion is present in some cases, under what circumstances is it present and under what circumstances is it not present? (Salzman 1978: 54).

In raising these problems, Salzman explains why a segmentary political system, as described by Irons (1975) for the Yomut (see page 19), would arise.

Many of Salzman's objections to Peters' article are raised in the form of questions that need answering before we can accept Peters' interpretations. These include queries such as: Are all neighbors collateral tertiary groups? How do groups expand if they do not fight their neighbors? How does expressing one's hostilities indirectly through distantly linked groups help to expand control over resources? Do genealogical ties have some sort of constraining effect, such that "if some groups did not do what they 'should' have done, did they also avoid what they 'should not' have done" (Salzman 1978: 56)?

Irons (1975) clearly shows that the segmentary system allows more choice in support than Peters (1967) indicates. Among the Yomut, a man may refuse to support his brother against his cousin if his cousin is in the right; however, he cannot ally with his cousin, but can privately advocate that his brother "desist from his dispute" (Irons 1975: 114). There are even acceptable reasons for not giving support: either "that the claim the disputant is pursuing is not justified, or that the matter is of too little importance to demand one's assistance." Finally, some individuals are defined as "neutrals" and are obliged to try to settle the dispute or at least "minimize the conflict" (Irons 1975: 115). Thus, although an individual's options concerning political support are not unlimited, there is a choice in the degree of support one actually need give.

Salzman feels that some of Peters' objections to the lineage

theory should really be viewed as empirical questions. For example, just because there are more than two segments at any given level does not mean that balanced opposition is impossible; when there are more than two collateral lineages, the actual patterns of conflict and alliance must be examined to see whether structurally equivalent groups join in uneven alliances or whether some remain outside the conflict (Salzman 1978: 60). Second, in relation to affinal and matrilateral ties and their impact on behavior, which Peters feels must be given equal weight, again it is an empirical question as to "which elements are present in what situations and to what degree" (Salzman 1978: 62).

To pursue these questions further, Salzman examines the systems of conflict and alliance among the Yomut Turkmen, the Somali, and the Shah Nawazi Baluch. Among the Yomut, an alliance pattern similar in some ways to the Cyrenaican Bedouin is found. Yomut groups ally with other groups spatially distant against their neighbors. But the pattern differs from the Bedouin's because the groups are at a higher level of segmentation, and because the larger groups are "non-territorial confederacies" with a genealogical framework (Salzman 1978: 57-58). Thus, in both groups there is a "spatial checkerboard pattern of alliances" (Salzman 1978: 59); however, whereas among the Bedouin groups ally with spatially and genealogically distant groups, among the Yomut groups ally with genealogically close groups that are spatially distant against neighbors who are genealogically distant (Salzman 1978: 58). Therefore, although the Yomut do not have a pure segmentary lineage system, they do function according to the rules of complementary onposition. The

system differs in that the groups are residential rather than pure kin groups, and include members of other lineages.

The Somali patterns of alliance are based on a patrilineal framework which is supplemented by contracts and uterine alliances. The contract "is used to crystalize political obligations of agnation" (Salzman 1978: 59), while uterine ties are invoked to counteract demographic imbalances in the segments. Because groups are not identified with particular territories, but are free to use the whole territory, there is no pattern of close versus distant neighbors. Thus, "there are no contradictions between propinquity and agnation" (Salzman 1978: 60); solidarity is based on closely related versus distantly related agnates.

The Shah Nawazi Baluch have a strong lineage ideology, but explicitly admit that ties other than patrilineal can be important in specific situations (Salzman 1978: 64). Like the Somali, the Baluch have an "open pasture" policy, so groups cannot relate to each other on the basis of propinquity. Salzman related two incidents which clearly show that complementary opposition and segmentary solidarity were in operation.

It becomes fairly obvious that Peters' findings on the Bedouin do not apply consistently elsewhere. Salzman agrees that "pure segmentary lineage systems" do not appear to exist (1978: 64), and suggests that what these other groups have is a "lineage-plus" model (1978: 61). Thus, for example, the Somali and the Yomut have institutionalized mechanisms (residential groups rather than descent groups, uterine ties) for maintaining balanced opposition in spite of demographic imbalances.

The question that now arises is why some groups have a lineage-

plus system (for it seems that all groups described as having a segmentary lineage system in fact have a lineage-plus one), which includes the elements of balanced opposition, complementary opposition, and segmentary solidarity, while the pattern is absent in others. Salzman says that the key here is territorial stability; for groups that do not have definite territories, such as the Somali or the Baluch, propinquity cannot be used as a basis for political support, but a genealogically based model can provide a stable framework (Salzman 1978: 62).

The Yomut Turkmen have territorial stability, but apparently manipulated their genealogies on the higher levels to obtain the checkerboard pattern that allows them to act according to the lineage ideology (Salzman 1978: 58, 67). For the Bedouin, the exigencies of material interests in a stable territory, where there was competition for resources, seem to have overridden the dictates of the lineage ideology.

One final problem remains, and that is: Why do the Bedouin so consistently proclaim that they follow a segmentary lineage model when this is obviously not so? Salzman argues that it is essentially a "social structure in reserve," a system that in the past has, and in the future could, provide a framework for political and social action "in circumstances which remove the territorial commitment from consideration" (Salzman 1978: 63). For nomadic populations in the Middle East and North Africa, political upheavals and periods of mobility were fairly frequent; these, combined with unpredictable resources, make "spatial dislocation" a common occurrence. The retention of a model for mobilization in such circumstances is an adaptive mechanism

(Salzman 1978: 63, 68-69). This has been historically documented for the Yomut Turkmen by Irons (1975).

Throughout the article, Salzman rightly warns against uncritically accepting folk models or, conversely, scrapping ideological models that do not correspond directly with the behavior of the people who espouse them. Contingencies, which are not random, "but patterned in relation to certain circumstances . . . can be incorporated into an analytical model" (Salzman 1978: 64). Rather than looking for pure patterns, or giving equal weight to all elements in a system, it would be more fruitful to examine the extent to which certain patterns are found, and what factors or circumstances modify it.

Gellner (1973) also argues for the retention of a segmentary model when looking at tribes in the Middle East. His conditions for classifying a society as segmentary are far less rigid than those Sahlins (1961) used in defining a segmentary lineage system; if a group maintains order through the opposition of groups at each level, and if the criterion for defining such groups is based on kinship and "territorial definitions which operate within the society itself," then the group could be classified as segmentary (Gellner 1973: 4).

Gellner agrees that a segmentary model is invalid if it is accepted as absolutely rigid in the way the people conceive of it, and that it cannot explain completely how order is maintained (1973: 5); however, he feels that it is a "good approximation of political behavior" (Gellner 1973: 3), especially in societies where there is a large degree of equality of power. To claim that the segmentary model is only an image, not a reality, deprives us of a useful tool of analysis (Gellner 1973:

4). Gellner's segmentary model corresponds closely with Irons' segmentary political system and Salzman's lineage-plus model.

When looking at Middle Eastern pastoralists, Marx (1977) argues that the concept of tribe is most applicable if conceived as a unit of subsistence (1977: 358), a "territorial ecological organization" (Marx 1977: 348), that is a "social aggregate of pastoral nomads who jointly exploit an area providing subsistence over numerous seasons" (Marx 1977: 358). This area includes both a "territory," which is controlled by the group, and an "area of subsistence," which is used by them but which may be used and/or controlled by others. Marx feels that the method whereby exploitation of such areas of subsistence is achieved is more through networks of relationships than by sets of corporate groups (1977: 344).

Marx first outlines the ecology of pastoralism in the Middle East, and the historical circumstances under which some tribes developed stronger political frameworks, most of which is not relevant to our discussion here. However, he does make a number of statements to support his argument about the tribe as a unit of subsistence that are worth examining.

Occupation of a territory large enough to provide the nomad with resources year round despite seasonal variations is the "main method" used by Middle Eastern pastoralists "to reduce the effects of irregular rainfall" (Marx 1977: 347). In relation to the Rwala Bedouin, Marx claims that this need to secure such a territory, containing both pasture and water, "determined the size of the territory and the social organization" of the Rwala (1977: 348). Further, he states that "climate

and pasture, neighboring tribes and governments were the factors that dictated to these men . . . the form and scope of their political organization and the size of the territory they were forced to control' (Marx 1977: 348).

Marx is contradictory in his definitions of territorial control, for although he recognizes that some pastures are used "only by sufferance or against payment" (1977: 350), and that is is not always feasible to control their whole area of subsistence, he claims that pastoralists depend on "gaining free access to pastures" (1977: 348). Marx argues that this access is often achieved through the "networks of personal relationships" of the nomads.

Further on, Marx elaborates on these networks, which are created mainly through marriages contracted with other sub-groups of the tribe. These marital links are used to "create sound economic contracts " for example, to secure access to pasture and water (Marx 1977: 357).

However, these networks are not included in the native view of their society, according to Marx. The native model is one of a segmentary organization based on agnatic corporate groups that control the land. "They conceptualize the territorial organization as a kind of political group whose membership is based on agnatic descent" (Marx 1977: 351). These corporate groups act as the military organization, and do make alliances with other such groups through intermarriage.

In his conclusion, Marx reiterates his view of the tribe as a unit of subsistence, and clarifies his view on the role of corporate groups versus networks. Corporate groups are only found at one level

(people related to a common ancestor five to six generations removed). These are agnatic descent groups, and they perform two functions; for an individual, the descent group "stands behind him in time of need and may employ force to support his rights, including access to pasture and water" (Marx 1977: 358); second, it defines his membership in the tribe. As a member, his rights to pasture and water controlled by the tribe are legitimized (Marx 1977: 359).

However, these descent groups do not fuse into larger corporate groups, as expected by the native model of segmentary organization. Groups in the upper reaches of the tribal genealogy are territorial divisions rather than descent divisions. To utilize his rights to tribal territorial resources, an individual relies on "personal networks of relationships' based on ties through marriage, close kinship, and institutionalized friendship. Thus, Marx concludes that there is no "segmentary political organization" among these pastoralists. Instead, "the tribe is then the cumulative end result of the efforts made by individuals [i.e., through personal networks] and small corporate groups to enlist the cooperation of others in order to cope with problems of pasture, water, and self-defense" (Marx 1977: 358).

Marx's other article (1978) repeats the same arguments under a different title, but he does elaborate on a few points, and discusses some causes of change in pastoral societies.

Marx claims that the factors determining the size of the territorial organization (the number of members) are "the outside political forces brought to play on the tribe by settled populations and by neighboring tribes" (1978: 68), as well as the size of the territory required

to provide pasture and water in a normal year.

The type and amount of rainfall determine, to a great extent, the amount of territory needed, for it dictates the range of the nomad's movement. Where larger territories were needed to overcome rainfall fluctuations, larger tribal territorial organizations were necessary to protect the rights to resources (Marx 1978: 51).

Pressure from settled areas, where a military organization can be maintained, often compelled the Bedouin to form more powerful political organizations with strong leadership that was "necessary both for negotiation with the powers that be and for defense against attack" (Marx 1978: 52). This was the basis for the Rwala confederation, among others, found among the Bedouin.

In his response to Marx (1977), Salzman (1979) raises a number of questions concerning Marx's conclusions. Salzman takes exception to Marx's claim that the tribe is "generated by the necessity of controlling the required territory" (1979: 121). As Marx himself points out, but later contradicts, tribes do no always control the area of subsistence they need; often they must rent or lease land. Furthermore, his argument is

> an ecological version of the functionalist fallacy, arguing as it does that because people have a need to control a certain territory, they will somehow successfully organize to control it. The sad reality as we all know, is that needs do not invariably generate their fulfillment (Salzman 1979: 122).

Perhaps Marx's argument could successfully be reversed, for it seems more likely that the amount of territory controlled could in large part dictate the limits of the size of groups, and the form and scope

of their political and social organization Certainly, the socio-political environment has such an effect, as Marx himself discussed in relation to the rise of the Rwala confederation.

Another point about which Salzman has reservations concerns Marx's elevation of networks to primary importance in generating tribal unity, while dismissing the segmentary organization of corporate groups. 'The difficulty . . . is that in fact the networks do not make unity possible, but rather presume unity in order to function' (Salzman 1979: 123). Without the corporate organization of the tribe,, which defines membership, regulates access to pastures, etc., the networks, which are 'bounded by tribal membership" could not function (Salzman 1979: 123).

Many of the problems in Marx's article seem to arise out of definitional confusions. Marx claims that "no segmentary political organization" could be found; however, as Irons (1975) shows, a segmentary political system can exist without a segmentary lineage system. Where Marx comments on a segmentary organization, he really means a segmentary lineage system (Salzman 1979: 123). Marx's own data shows that the Bedouin do have a segmentary political organization of "replicate groups tied together by a unifying conceptual framework" (Salzman 1979· 123). They do not, however, have a proper segmentary lineage system in operation.

The other conceptual distinction that Marx fails to make is between corporate groups and "corporate action" or "collective action" (Salzman 1979: 123). Marx claims [as did Peters (1967: 271)] that because the tribe does not have a leader, does not have a territorial

center where it could gather, and has 'no formal arrangements for co-ordination" (Marx 1978: 50), it is not corporate. But, as Salzman points out, 'corporateness" can exist at a cognitive level, such that members "act in terms of the rights and obligations defined by group membership (Salzman 1979: 122). Defined this way, corporate groups do exist and function in Bedouin society to a much greater degree than Marx allows

Another problem is that Marx seems to feel that corporate groups must be descent groups, and that territorial organizations are therefore not corporately organized. If he were to accept that there are corporate residence groups (as among the Yomut Turkmen), he would then be able to explain the difference in control of the "territory" versus the 'area of subsistence." For it appears that the Bedouin have such corporate residence groups who control their territory; it is only for the use of the "area of subsistence" outside the controlled territory that an individual must turn to his affines and cognates.

In his response to Salzman (1979), Marx "clarifies' some of the issues raised by Salzman. For one, he turns around his own argument (as was suggested above, pages 35-36) when he states that the "tribal organization is largely determined by the types of territorial resources available to, controlled by, the tribesmen" (Marx 1979: 124).

Marx also elaborates on his view of corporateness, claiming that a tribe is not necessarily corporately organized, even though it possesses some of the characteristics of a corporation. For Marx, the "critical attribute" which the tribe lacks is the capability for 'co-ordinated collective action"; such action is difficult without formal

leadership, which the tribes do not have, but which Marx considers essential for a large corporate organization (1979: 124).

"Although a tribe is a bounded political organization, whose members are aware of their rights and duties, and act individually or in groups (though in some cases never collectively) to implement them, it is not necessarily a full-fledged corporation" (Marx 1979: 124). Marx thus seems to contradict himself again, saying that a corporately organized group is not a corporation. His confusion could be greatly alleviated if he were to accept that there are different types of corporations, with different degrees of strength and importance.

# CHAPTER II

# THE NATURE OF CORPORATE GROUPS

## Definitions of Corporate Groups

Before we can establish whether corporate groups are, in fact, found among pastoralists, and if so, what forms and functions they have, it is necessary to define what a corporation is. Although there are a number of points in common in most definitions, there is no general agreement in the literature as to what constitutes corporateness.

The earliest definition of a corporation comes from Henry Maine (1861). He claimed that the primary characteristic of a corporation was that it never died. Maine discusses the family as a corporation, with the Patriarch at its head being its representative. He assumed rights and obligations that were viewed, by both fellow citizens and the law, as belonging to the corporation, not the individual. As such, these rights and duties were passed on, at his death, with no breach in continuity, to his successor. One of the main duties was as trustee of the family's possessions for his kin (Maine 1861: 11). "The context of Maine's remarks . . . leaves no doubt as to the linkage between corporation and property . . . ." (Fried 1957: 18).

Maine's view of a corporation has served as the basis for many other definitions over the years. For example, Buchler and Selby claim that a corporation exists independent of the individuals within it, and "displays perpetuity through time"; it also has a continuity of possession

of an estate (1968: 70). In his article on kinship in the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Goody lists the first and preferred use of corporate to refer to a property-holding unit that never dies (1968: 403). Fortes elaborates on this in relation to the lineage when he says that perpetuity means more than physical replacement of individuals; "it means perpetual structural existence, in a stable and homogeneous society, that is, the perpetual existence of defined rights, duties, office and social tasks vested in the lineage as a corporate unit" (1953: 165).

The attachment of privileges and obligations to members of a corporation is often considered an important defining characteristic. Buchler and Selby state that there are rights and duties ascribed to individuals by virtue of their membership in the group (according to whatever principles are used to define membership) (1968: 70). For Salzman, individuals can be seen as members of a corporate group "as long as they act in terms of the rights and obligations defined by group membership" (1979: 122). Boissevain, on the "corporationist" end of his continuum from the individual to the group, sees a corporate group as having consciousness of kind, common rights, duties and interests (1968: 545).

The emphasis on common property has also been used as a defining characteristic of corporations. To Radcliffe-Brown, a corporation was defined as a group that had a continuity of possession (1935: 34). Hunter and Witten define a corporate group as one whose "members share rights and responsibilities in an estate" (1976: 122). Keesing states that corporate groups often "act corporately with regard to an estate

in land" (1975. 17). Lucy Mair defines common property interests much more broadly, including material goods, rights in persons, land, titles, rituals, etc , a group of people "recruited on recognized principles with common interests and rules (norms) fixing rights and duties of the members in relation to one another and to these interests [in property]" is, for her, a corporate group (1972: 15).

Another set of definitions emphasizes the political rather than economic aspects of the corporation. Max Weber defines a corporate group as a social relationship that is either closed to outsiders or has restricted admissions based on specific regulations. The main characteristics, however, are that its authority is enforced by an individual (or individuals) "charged with this function" (1962: 110), and that the group is "capable of coordinated collective action" (Marx 1979: 134, from Weber 1947: 124). One of the uses of the word corporate, according to Goody, refers to a group with a hierarchy of legitimate authority (1968: 403).

The criterion of collective action is often mentioned in relation to corporateness (see Weber 1947, above). Schneider says that a unit must be able to act as a corporate unit in order to be classified as such, and that the kinds of functions that members of a group undertake together determine the strength of the bonds in that unit, that is, its corporateness (1965: 48-49). Fortes states that "a lineage cannot easily act as a corporate group if its members can never get together for the conduct of their affairs" (1953: 170). However, Boissevain maintains that interaction between members of a corporate group may be common, but it is not a necessary criterion (1968: 545). "Cor-

porate groups" and "corporate or collective action" are different conceptual entities (Salzman 1979: 123), and the latter is not necessarily essential to the existence of the former.

Although not all authors feel that there must be a leader vested with authority, many still emphasize the juro-political aspect of corporateness. Thus, Fortes says that, when the lineage is a corporate group, all its members "are to outsiders jurally equal or represent the lineage when they exercise legal and political rights and duties in relation to the society at large" (1953: 164). Keesing also states that all members "act as a single legal individual" (1975: 17). Lewis does not define a corporation as such, but discusses corporate units only in relation to politico-jural solidarity, that is, "political unity as manifest in war" (1965: 91-92).

Instead of, or in addition to, the economic and political definitions of corporations, emphasis is sometimes placed on the view of the group from the outside, in relation to other groups. Schneider feels that the minimal definition of a corporation is that a group is "treated as internally undifferentiated by the other unit or units with which it has a specific relationship" (1965: 47). For Gluckman, a corporate lineage is one that is genealogically segmented internally with "each segment having unity or identity against corresponding groups" (1950: 166). Fortes sees a lineage as "a corporate group from the outside," that is, in relation to other groups (1953: 164). Keesing views a corporation as undifferentiated vis-á-vis outsiders; no matter how different individuals within the group may be, "seen from outside, in an important sense they are One" (1975: 17).

Symbolic expression of a corporation's unity is common, but not crucial. A group may have a common name (Keesing 1975: 17), or be corporate in relation to totemic or religious activities (Buchler and Selby 1968: 71).

Thus it becomes obvious that a corporation can be many different things to different people. Rather than sorting out these definitions and making a composite one using elements from various definitions, or eliminating some characteristics while retaining others, it seems much more fruitful to take a minimal working definition, then look at the other characteristics to see whether they appear and under what conditions. We can then ask empirical questions concerning the forms and functions of corporate groups.

A corporation, then, is a group that either operates as or is conceived of as a single unit and has perpetuity. As such, it must have rules of recruitment or eligibility that define who is or is not a member.

Once it has been established that a particular group is corporate by our minimal definition, we may proceed to ask questions about its nature, such as: Does it have symbolic expression? Is it capable of collective action? Do the members possess some form of common property? What form of leadership or authority is present? Are there specific rights and duties entailed in membership? What are the criteria for membership? What function(s) does it perform in that society? When these have been answered, we can then look at how important each particular type of corporation is in relation to other social and political organizational forms, including other corporations, alliances,

networks, quasi-groups, age-sets, and so on. And finally, when the characteristics, functions, and importance of corporate groups have been established, another set of queries can be posed. First and foremost, must these characteristics (symbolic expression, collective action, leadership, rights and obligations, common property) be present to define a group as corporate? Under what conditions do we find these characteristics? Are those corporations with more of the above characteristics or with multiple functions stronger than those with only a few?

## A Framework of Functions

Although the above definition of a corporation allows us to classify a group as corporate, it tells us nothing about it. What is needed, in addition to a definition, is an analytic framework for describing and comparing corporate groups. We propose to examine them in reference to the types of functions that they perform.

Befu and Plotnicov (1962) discuss three types of functions of corporate unilineal descent groups. They state that the structural aspects of the various definitions of corporate groups could refer to other types of groups as well; only when the functional aspects are added can a group be defined as corporate. These functions are in the economic, political, and religious spheres (Befu and Plotnicov 1962: 314).

An economic corporation is one whose subsistence depends on the use of property to which the group has rights, either usufruct or direct ownership.

> The degree to which a unilineal descent group may be said to be economically corporate depends on the ex-

> tent to which it possesses certain rights over property on which the daily livelihood of its members, or a great majority of them depends (Befu and Plotnicov 1962: 314).

Political functions deal with the "ordering of human relations" (Befu and Plotnicov 1962: 314). Members of a political corporation are theoretically bound by "decisions and sanctions made by its authoritative heads." There are both internal and external political aspects; internally, there is an unequal command distribution, with adult males usually possessing authority, while externally, the group presents itself to outsiders as jurally equal (Befu and Plotnicov 1962: 315).

"When a group either maintains its order through supernatural sanctions or recognizes its solidarity through acts and performances which manifestly symbolize its unity," then it can be considered a religious corporation (Befu and Plotnicov 1962: 316). It must, however, have sanctions that are purely supernatural, that is, enforcement is left to the supernatural powers; if such power is delegated to living individuals, then the sanctions are political, not religious (Befu and Plotnicov 1962: 317).

A corporate group may stress only one, two, or all three of these functions. In fact, there are seven possible types of corporate groups, based on the logical combinations of the three functions (Befu and Plotnicov 1962: 318).

Salzman (1979) discusses another type of corporateness, that of symbolic corporateness. This is at a "cognitive level, a part of an institutionalized symbol system, and functions to define groups and

their boundaries." An individual member of a corporate group may act alone, with a few others, or with the whole group; so long as he behaves in terms of the rights and obligations defined by membership, he is acting as a group member (Salzman 1979: 122). A religious corporation as defined by Befu and Plotnicov shall hereafter be considered as a type of symbolic corporation.

Thus, it can be seen that a corporate group can fulfill a number of different functions in a society. Some of the specific functions performed by corporate groups include: coordination of movement, allocation of estates, arrangement of marriages ["exercise of authority over members of group" (Befu and Plotnicov 1962: 316)], distribution of bridewealth or booty, mutual defense of property, social control, military mobilization. A corporate group can act as a vengeance unit, having both collective responsibility for revenge and equal sharing of blood money (and conversely, being equally responsible for payment of compensation for injury or death), or as a reference group, providing conceptual stability to its members and presenting a united front to outsiders.

From the above discussion, a number of corollaries become obvious ["The obvious is that which is never seen until someone expresses it simply"(Gibran 1926: 54)]. First, a corporation can perform one or multiple functions in a society. Second, there may be more than one type of corporate group within a given society. These may have either discrete or overlapping functions. Third, the above-mentioned functions may be performed by groups, institutions, etc. other than corporate groups. In other words, these functions are not related exclusively to corporations.

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Fourth, a corporation need not be evident or immediately recognizable; it may be either latent or contingent. A group may "have latent corporative functions which emerge only in trouble cases" (Fried 1957 19). There may also be an "underlying corporative function" in a population that has expanded or been dispersed or dislocated, this can be indicated by the incorporation of newcomers/strangers who can demonstrate consanguinal ties, and who may then "move in and enjoy the benefits of" group membership, and the exclusion of those who cannot (Fried 1957: 19, 25). There is a "danger" that these functions may be missed or underestimated by the anthropologist during his brief period of fieldwork (Fried 1957: 19). Also, if a unit is conceived, by another group, as undifferentiated, then "for that purpose, or for that particular relationship, it is corporate" (Schneider 1965: 48)

One final point that has been implicit in various discussions of corporate groups, but must be made explicit, is that corporateness is not simply a characteristic that is present or absent, there are degrees of corporateness. The ability to act as a unit depends in part on having solidary bonds between members of that group; the more repetitive bonds, each reinforcing the others, the more solidary the unit can be, and therefore the more corporate. As well, the fewer the number of outside ties, the more strongly corporate a unit will be (Schneider 1965: 418-419). This can also be judged by whether the group acts autonomously or is incorporated in a more inclusive structure (Befu and Plotnicov 1962: 321). A group is less strongly corporate if "there are fewer contexts in which people act as a corporate unit, relative to fewer and less important things" (Keesing 1975: 32).

Therefore, when looking for and at corporations, it is not enough to say that they are present or absent. We must also identify the functions they fulfill, and their degree or strength of corporateness. Once that has been done, it is possible to examine how these groups are formed, that is, their methods of recruitment and definitions of membership, and at what levels of the society they are found. Finally, with the above information, we can see how these various corporate groups perform the different functions.

## Alternatives to Corporations

Before describing the various types of corporate groups found among pastoralists, a word must be said concerning the alternatives to the model of a corporate segmentary organization.

> Since contingency and variability are the essences of nomadic pastoralism . . . it also suggests that the kinds of units we should be paying attention to are more likely to be pragmatic than formal - networks rather than corporate groups (Dyson-Hudson 1972: 9).

One such prononent is Emanuel Marx (1977, 1978, 1979), who feels that the segmentary model should be discarded (1979: 125); instead, he feels we should look to the networks of relations created, primarily, through intermarriage. At the same time, however, he admits that "the corporate organization based on quasi-agnation" is a part of the social structure (1977: 356). Unfortunately, Marx does not discuss the circumstances when ties from personal networks versus corporate groups will be emphasized, or why. He states that "a new model may lead to new insights and benefit our art, provided it is replaced by another" (1979: 125), but Marx himself does not offer such a model.

Instead, he simply repeatedly belabors a fairly obvious point, that we must look at the personal networks and alliances as well as at the corporate groups in order to understand how nomads control their territory and gain access to resources that are necessary for survival.

Marx states that the networks are spread throughout a defined territory, and are "almost coextensive with it"; the personal links "form the framework within which a dense network of relationships and interaction exists" (1978: 69). However, it is difficult to see how such networks could form the boundaries of interaction. It seems more feasible that

> the networks do not make unity possible, but rather presume unity in order to function. . . . In short, the cumulative pattern of personal networks, so useful in soothing relations between local groupings and facilitating access to resources, presupposes and is predicated upon the corporate nature of the tribe (Salzman 1979: 123).

It is not despite, but within, the tribal corporate structure that social networks function.

Peters (1967) also favors abandoning the segmentary lineage model, because it is only a "frame of reference used by a particular people to give them a common-sense understanding of their social relationships"; however, it is not a sociological model, as it neither covers many important areas of relationship nor allows accurate predictions to be made (Peters 1967: 261). What are essential, for Peters, are the alliances made through selective intermarriage, and the interactions between affinal and cognatic relatives. Peters' specific objections to the lineage theory are outlined in Chapter I (see pages 24-25); it is sufficient here to note his objection to the elevation of "a component of social

life to such a position of universal dominance" (Peters 1967: 279).

Thus, both Peters and Marx feel that the segmentary model cannot account for enough of the actions of individuals to be a useful model of society, even though groups that form according to the segmentary principle are discernable on the ground. Both admit to the importance of corporate groups and their interactions, but feel it is the alliances and networks created through affinal and cognatic ties that must be examined in order to explain the workings of these societies.

Unfortunately, Marx and Peters seem to want to "throw out the baby with the bath water," so to speak. As Gellner points out, since groups do form, cooperate, and oppose one another in more or less the same way that the segmentary model predicts, we can conclude that "the segmentary system is a reality as well as an image" (1973: 6). At the same time, we need not believe that "the segmentary principle ever completely explains the maintenance of order in any society," or that "it should ever be taken entirely at face value in the way in which it is conceived from the inside by participants" (Gellner 1973: 5). Marx and Peters do not offer alternative theories, but complementary ones; taken together, a segmentary lineage model combined with alliances does explain more about how these societies function.

Although Spooner does not speak to the issue of the segmentary lineage model directly, he also feels that it is more important for the nomad to maintain a network of relations that "would secure options to switch from one set of resources to another" than to secure access to "a particular set of resources" (1971: 265). In order to maintain this flexibility, there is a high degree of competition, primarily with close

neighbors [who are agnates]. Cooperation is usually found between distant groups "who are more likely to be of help in bad years" [and who are generally affines](Snooner 1971: 205).

Part of the confusion as to the importance of corporate lineages versus alliances could be alleviated if the distinction, made by Irons, between political and social alliances were recognized. This distinction is based on the obligations and assistance that agnatic and non-agnatic kin entails among the Yomut Turkmen (1975: 114).

Social alliances involve obligations of assistance that "express friendly relations with another individual without expressing hostile relations toward any third party" (Irons 1975: 113). This may involve exchanging women or giving economic aid, for example.

Political alliances involve "assisting someome in a dispute against a third party" (Irons 1975: 113) This is an obligation between agnates, and there "is little room for choice" as to whom one will support politically. Even if there are personal disagreements between individuals, the oblinations are not diminished (Irons 1975: 114).

In contrast, social alliances allow a large degree of choice and can be weakened by disagreements. It is with uterine and affinal kin that such alliances are found; it is thought improper for them to involve themselves in political disputes [although "conflicts between norms and sentiments" do occur (Irons 1975: 113)].

Thus, "close agnatic ties require both types of ailiance, whereas distant agnatic ties call only for political alliance. Close uterine and affinal ties entail only social alliance, while more distant ties of these varieties incur no obligatons at all" (Irons 1975: 114).

Obviously, there are two systems working simultaneously here, for political alliances and obligations are based on a segmentary lineage organization, which is, after all, primarily an alliance network above the minimal lineage, that comes into being only in situations of conflict with other groups of minimal lineages (Sahlins 1968: 50), while social alliances are based on personal networks, which are nevertheless bounded by the most inclusive corporate structure, the tribe. This seems to be the case elsewhere as well. The issue, then, seems to be when social or political alliances will be emphasized. In other words, we must look at the importance of descent versus alliances as organizing principles in nomadic societies to see how the two interact, and why one or the other comes into prominence.

# CHAPTER III

## THE TYPES OF CORPORATE GROUPS

### Descent Groups

Now that we have established a minimal definition of corporate groups, we can examine the different types of specific groups found among pastoralists. Perhaps the most common corporation is the patrilineal descent group.

A unilineal descent group is one that is perpetuated by tracing kinship ties through one line of descent and has "some form of group property or obligation" (Fox 1967: 52) As mentioned previously, property is used, as by Mair (1972: 15), in its widest sense, to include not only land or material goods, but also rights in persons, titles, rituals, and such. It should be noted, however, that the principle of descent can be used to define various types of social relations, which can be called "person-to-person relationships" as distinct from "rights to group membership" (Fox 1967: 51-52). Thus, the patrilineal principle can be present in a society that does not have patrilineal descent groups. Only when the principle of descent is used for group formation do we get a unilineal descent group.

Despite the fact that some authors claim there can be non-corporate descent groups (Fried 1957, Befu and Plotnicov 1962, et. al), it is our contention that all unilineal descent groups, by definition, must be corporate, since they have perpetuity, and operate or are con-

ceived of as a unit, either by themselves or by outsiders. The criterion for membership - descent from a common ancestor - clearly delineates eligibility. The problem to examine, then, is not whether they are corporate, but what functions they perform as a corporation, how strongly corporate they are; we can then look at how important the descent group is in individual societies, in contrast to other forms of organization, including other corporations and alliances.

Befu and Plotnicov (1962) argue that the type of function performed by corporate unilineal descent groups, and the strength of corporateness, are "determined by structural factors, namely, by the spatial arrangment (settlement pattern) and size of the group" (1962: 313). They discuss three different units of descent groups - minimal, local, and dispersed - which they feel are correlated respectively (but not exclusively) with economic, political, and religious functions. Although they are discussing these in relation to descent groups in general, rather than specifically in reference to nomads, it is worth examining their findings. We can then see how they must be modified when dealing with pastoralists.

The minimal group, which is the basic domestic unit of unilineally related kin (thus excluding affines and non-kin who are members of the household), tends to be economically corporate, if it is corporate. It may either own property outright, or have usufruct rights to the land (Befu and Plotnicov 1962: 320).

The local group, which includes all the unilineally related kin in the same village or settlement, tends to emphasize political actions, since it is large enough to provide protection, and can easily be mobil-

ized and coordinated, because all the members are localized. Even if the local group is economically corporate, by owning resources, it must include some means to allocate access to smaller units; this requires management, and therefore "entails political activities" (Befu and Plotnicov 1962. 322).

It is difficult for a dispersed group to be economically or politically corporate, since it is not localized; because of its size and geographical spread, it is hard for members to be controlled politically or share in property on which their livelihood depends. Thus, if it is corporate, it will probably be so religiously, having symbolic solidarity or sharing in rituals (Befu and Plotnicov 1962· 323).

Although Befu and Plotnicov's findings correspond well with data on settled communities, they must be modified when dealing with nomads. The various functions do not correspond as neatly to the different levels of descent groups among pastoralists.

The minimal group, the domestic unit, can, in theory, be economically independent among settled peoples, for a family can produce all its subsistence needs from the land it owns. Among pastoralists, however, even though the herd may be privately owned, pasture is not allocated to or ownership vested in individual tent-households. Access to grazing depends on membership in a more inclusive group (which may be the whole tribe), making the tent economically dependent.

Whereas among settled populations there is only one local descent group, among nomads there are a number of them, each more inclusive. The least inclusive, the group of agnates in a camp[2], is not corporate: These herding camps are not stable groups, but highly fluid, unstable

units that change composition in response to ecological conditions.

The distinction between local and dispersed groups is more difficult to draw among pastoralists; their nomadic lifestyle militates against the formation of such discrete units. In a sense, all but the herding camps are dispersed groups. As such, they perform more economic and political functions, and play a much more important role, than would otherwise be expected.

Thus, local and dispersed groups must be considered as types of descent groups that include a number of distinct units. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the actual units found within various societies We will begin with the most basic unit, the tent-household, then skip to the most inclusive unit, the tribe or society as a whole. Afterwards, the subdivisions between these two will be discussed.

The domestic unit among pastoralists, the tent-household, which Patai has characterized as "patrilineal, patrilocal, patriarchal, extended, occasionally polygynous, and emphatically endogamous" (1969: 135), is the "basic social and economic unit" (Patai 1979: 8). The animals on which subsistence is based are owned by this unit; often, water sources, date palms, and agricultural land are owned as well. The head of the household controls the rights of disposal of all goods, even if the actual title is vested in another member of the household.

Although a woman's father's brother's son has rights of first refusal, so to speak, concerning her marriage, the father has the right to reject his nephew as a bridegroom, even though this means that she cannot marry another without the father's brother's son's permission. Thus, ultimately, the father, as head of the household, exercises auth-

ority over members of his family as well as over their property.

The only group that is recognized by the Basseri chief below the oulad is the household (Barth 1961: 50). The tent is the basic unit of society; it is the unit of production and consumption, and "rights over moveable property," including the herd, products of the animals, household effects, etc. are held by it through the representation of the male head (Barth 1961: 11). He is also responsible for all outside dealings, whether with tribal leaders, other households, or villagers (Barth 1961: 14).

The head of the Yomut Turkman household is also considered the administrator for his dependents (Irons 1975: 84). The household is thought of as the "smallest unit in their hierarchy of agnatic descent groups" (Irons 1975: 83), and performs more [economic] functions than any other segment of the society. It is the unit of consumption and production, the property-holding unit (animals and agricultural land), and is, of course, responsible for the "important business of reproduction and child-rearing" (Irons 1975: 84).

The household, then, as the basic property-owning unit of production and consumption, is economically corporate. However, as W. Swidler points out, it is not independent, but requires the cooperation of other such groups to maximize the balances of animals, resources, and personnel (1973: 30) required for a successful adaptation. Also, although an individual's eligibility for group membership is determined by his parentage, it is through lineage or tribal, not family, affiliation that he is vested with the rights and obligations that membership accords.

A segmentary lineage ideology of a hierarchy of progressively more inclusive descent groups that finally embrace either the tribe or the whole society is frequently present among pastoralists. For example, the nine noble tribes of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica consider themselves as the descendants of the great-grandsons of their founding ancestress Sa'ada (Peters 1960: 363-364), just as the Somali genealogies are all traced back to Samaale (Lewis 1965: 89). The Yomut Turkmen "can be described as a descent group which includes a million and a half people" that subdivides into numerous levels of groups down to the domestic unit. They are said to be the descendants of three of the grandchildren of the mythological character Oghuz Khan (Irons 1975: 40).

Where the descent ideology thus includes the whole society, such that all individuals consider themselves members through genealogical connections (even though this is obviously not true), we can say that the group is corporate symbolically. If nothing else, this group provides an individual with a common identity (us versus them) within a defined boundary. All members share a common name.

But does this unit have other corporate functions? While this group rarely mobilizes as a unit, it does "possess a common code and means for settlement of disputes on a society-wide basis" (Lewis 1965: 90), and could thus be considered as politically corporate. However, it is only weakly so, for the more significant politico-jural functions are performed by the lower level sections of the tribe or society. These subsections are the actual units in and through which disputes are settled, pasture is allocated, vengenace is taken. Leadership at the tribal level, if present, is not strong. Authority and sanctions

of the leader are very limited; he depends more on personal prestige and influence, and serves more as a representative than an administrator.

The only office among the Yomut Turkmen was the thâqlau (protector). In return for a promise not to raid (and compensation if his promise is broken), he collected tribute from settled villages, which was then distributed to the tribes. He was thus the representative of the tribe to the villages. He was also the intermediary through which the representative of the Persian government dealt for collecting taxes and guaranteeing the tribe's good behavior (Irons 1975: 68). The Baluchi Sardar was "the leader and representative of the tribe, militarily in battle, diplomatically in relations with outside groups, symbolically in standing for the tribe as a whole" (Salzman 1971a: 437). But he, like all leaders at this level, depends on the tribe members for support and acceptance, for he has few actual sanctions to enforce any decisions against the will of the tribemen.

There is also a common territory shared, in theory, by the whole tribe. Frequently, however, this is subdivided and allocated to smaller units. Even when this is not so, certain resources are owned by individuals or small corporate groups, which tends to localize groups in specific areas of the territory. Economically, then, the tribe could be considered only weakly corporate, if at all.

Obviously, societies do not all subdivide into units that are similar in size and function, for, as in all segmentary lineage systems, the divisions tend to be relative. Comparison is made all the more difficult because there are almost as many names for the units as there are anthropologists writing about them; terms are not always precisely

defined, and the same names are often used to refer to widely differing groups. For example, many authors follow Evans-Pritchard, who speaks of the clan as being divided into maximal, major, minor, and minimal lineages (1940: 192); Lewis identifies six clan families subdivided into clans, primary lineages, and dia-paying groups. What Tapper calls the maximal lineage (1976b: 9), Cole refers to as the lineage (1975: 82), and Salzman calls the minimal lineage (1975: 2). Other authors speak of segments, sections, and subsections, while some simply use the native words, such as oulad, tira, rend. Nevertheless, despite the terminological confusion, there are enough similarities to make some of these groups comparable.

The least inclusive corporate descent group above the family is one made up of kin related patrilineally through a common ancestor four to eight generations back, in which the exact genealogical relations are known, making it a lineage. We will refer to this as the minimal lineage, unless there is another term used by a specific author. This is in many cases the vengeance group, with blood money and responsibility being shared equally within it.

Although corporate groups with recruitment based on principles other than agnation are important among the Marri Baluch and the Yomut Turkmen (see below, pages 66,70), nevertheless, both have a group whose primary obligation involves blood responsibility. The Turkman tire consists of kin related up to a seven generation depth; "the concept of seven generation blood responsibility came into play only if a homicide occurred" (Irons 1975: 61-62). The members of the waris among the Marri share "jural responsibility for blood revenge and for punish-

ing adultery" (Pehrson 1966: 40). When vengeance and sharing of blood money are its only functions, this corporate lineage is a contingent polity, for although it is always recognized as an important part of the social structure, it only takes on responsibilities in the wake of a killing.

Among the Somali, this agnatic kin group with blood responsibility is called a dia-paying group. It is a contractual unit of agnates, with members pledged to mutual support and payment of blood wealth. However, it is also the "basic political and jural unit," since it is the most stable unit; a man most frequently acts as a member of the dia-paying group (Lewis 1961: 6). An individual has political and jural status only through membership in a dia-paying group (Lewis 1961: 170). Affiliation is obtained by birth, but formalized by contract.

Traditionally, there is no official leader of the group; it is the responsibility of the elders to see that contracts are honored (Lewis 1961: 6). All adult men are considered elders, and have the "right to speak at the councils which deliberated matters of common concern" (Lewis 1961: 196). This council has no regular meeting place or time, and no official positions; it is summoned as the need arises, and decisions are based on majority agreement (Lewis 1961: 198).

The members of a bras-rend (minimal lineage) among the Yarahmadzai Baluch share the same types of rights and duties as do members of the dia-paying group; it is within this group that an individual has "most day to day business, most on-going ties, and most demanding responsibilities" (Salzman 1975: 3). Water sources that require labor are owned by the lineages that dig and maintain them. The "lineage-

community" has a headman, but support is based on consent; his authority and sanctions are, in fact, minimal (Salzman 1971a: 438).

As well as having political functions, the minimal lineage often has economic functions. Ownership of wells and agricultural land is often vested in this unit (eg., Baluch); grazing estates are frequently allocated to the minimal lineage.

For the Al-Murrah Bedouin, the lineage (fakhd = thigh) is the basic unit of society. Ownership of wells rests with the lineage (Cole 1975: 86); ownership of the herd is conceived as being vested in the lineage, although individuals have the rights to use and disposal of the animals, and there is a single brand for the camels of the lineage (Cole 1975: 87). This unit was also the fighting and defense group, and each had its own war cry and leader (Cole 1975: 85). Moreover, it is the only group that comes together regularly as a social group (Cole 1975: 87).

The "structurally more important group" among the Basseri is the oulad, which has a headman, recognized by the chief, and shares joint grazing areas and migratory routes and schedules, allocated as usufruct rights (Barth 1961. 54). The oulad is an administrative tool for the Basseri chief (Barth 1961: 62). Through the headman, who is a link of communication rather than "a separate echelon of command" (Barth 1961: 75), the chief allocates pasture and regulates migration (Barth 1961: 62). Individuals gain access to this estate by membership in the oulad; "a man's rights in an oulad . . . depend on his patrilineal descent". (Barth 1961: 55).

The Shahsevan section, whose composition corresponds with the

maximal [sic] lineage (agnates related through a common ancestor three to six generations back), is the main community. Each migrates as a unit, and used to exploit a joint estate in pasture (Tapper 1976a: 13; 1976b. 9). The males control the marriages of women in the section. On major religious occasions, this section was a "ritual congregation" (Tapper 1976a: 13).

What then are the corporate functions of the minimal lineage? Which of the characteristics does it display? How strongly corporate is it? As a vengeance group, the minimal lineage is certainly capable of collective action; rights and obligations concerning, among other things, blood responsibility, are clearly defined. Symbolic expression, whether in a common name, war cry, camel brand, or ancestor, is always present. Leadership, when present, depends more on consent than formal sanctions. Some form of common property - grazing rights, wells, animals - is usually owned or vested as usufruct rights to this group. With the exception of those units where vengenace is the only function, the minimal lineage can be said to be strongly corporate, for not only does it act autonomously as a unit, but there is more interaction between members who have numerous repetitively reinforcing ties in relation to multiple functions.

Descent groups on a higher level of segmentation are unfortunately not as thoroughly discussed. There is often a fixed number of some of the units in each society, since they are formed above the level of genealogical manipulations and fission and fusion. They also tend to be the primary reference group for the individual.

There are twelve structurally equivalent tire among the Basseri,

made up of oulads with "adjoining grazing areas, same or close migratory route [and] similar migratory schedule" (Barth 1961: 54). Each has a traditional history, and have remained stable through time because they are "insulated from most of the processes of petty politics, factionalism, and fission" (Barth 1961: 60, 68). Identification with the section overrides all other identifications. There is no formally recognized leader of a tire.

The primary lineage of the Somali is "the most distinct descent group"; an individual "normally describes himself as a member" of this group (Lewis 1961: 5). There are two more levels above the primary lineage - the clan and the clan-family. The clans represent the "upper limit of corporate political action" [they do occasionally unite in collective action (Lewis 1961: 205)], and tend to have "some territorial exclusiveness" (Lewis 1961: 4-5). Of all the subdivisions, the clan was the "more clearly defined territorial unit" (Lewis 1961: 203), although this is not based on any ownership or usufruct rights to the land. Many, but not all, clans are led by "sultans"; this office was the "only truly traditional titular political office" (Lewis 1961: 203). The sultan was a symbol for and focus of clan unity, which is based on agnatic solidarity. He acts as mediator in intra-clan disputes, and as a representative of the clan in external relations (Lewis 1961: 204-205). However, the office "has little intrinsic power attached to it"; it is mainly a position of privilege and respect. Relations between members of the six clan-families are colored by allegiance to and identification with the clan-family.

The Al-Murrah Bedouin have seven clans, made up of four to six

lineages. They are mainly political units, as all political actions involve the support of the whole clan (Cole 1975: 91). The clan has no active economic role.

Thus, major descent units above the minimal lineage are primarily symbolically corporate. However, since there is a segmentary lineage organization, many groups are contingent; they are politically corporate, but only in opposition to like groups. At such times, they do actually gather together and act as a unit, but this lasts only as long as the conflict that brought them together. A temporary leader often arises, identification with this unit becomes primary, but again this is only for the duration of the confrontation. Thus, except symbolically, the strength of corporate groups at the higher levels is not constant but contingent.

Residence Groups

However, a segmentary organization need not be based solely on kinship; as Irons (1975) shows, a segmentary political organization, based on coresidence, can exist (see above, page 19). Here, one finds a hierarchy of increasingly inclusive (and often named) territorial groups, sometimes in addition to, others instead of, descent groups.

These territorial/residence groups are a second important type of corporate group found among Middle Eastern pastoralists. Although the smallest units often have an agnatic core, they differ from descent groups in that solidarity is based on coresidence, not kinship. Recruitment, although based on patriliny, is supplemented by other principles. Affinal and cognatic kin may be included, often on a contractual basis.

Common allegiance to a chief is also a frequent criterion for membership. When authors speak of sections or segments, they usually refer to territorial rather than descent groups.

Residence groups are more or less localized. The least inclusive groups will live together in a single community or on common property, while the more inclusive groups will have contiguous territories.

The main residential community among the Yomut Turkmen is the oba, a group of families that "share joint rights to pasture and water in reference to a defined territory" (Irons 1975: 92). Camps form on a contractual basis from the obas. Although such residence groups have a numerically dominant descent group at their core, membership is based on mutual consent, they are also formed on a contractual basis (Irons 1975: 49). A headman, who acted as a spokesman to outsiders, was chosen by the men of each oba; he could act only on the basis of consensual agreement of the oba's members, and he had no authority (Irons 1975: 48).

While the basis for recruitment to the residence and descent groups is not the same, the composition tends to correspond fairly closely (Irons 1975: 49). This is a result of the preference of the Yomut to reside with patrikin, since kin were most readily relied on for support (agnation entailing more obligations than other ties). The main obligation of coresidence is to maintain peaceful relations and to avoid conflict. Non-agnatic members of an oba will receive political support in the residence group, although the degree would be less than what agnates could provide. However, in the case of conflict between patrikin and fellow oba members, a man would always support his

agnates, for ultimately, "agnation was considered more important than coresidence" (Irons 1975: 63).

Above the oba in the residential hierarchy is the il, a tribe, in the sense of a contiguous group of obas on peaceful terms and united against outsiders for mutual defense. The il is always defined politically, even though its name is taken from the descent group that dominates it numerically (Irons 1975: 49).

Thus both residence groups among the Yomut are political corporations. The more important group is the oba, for it is through membership in it that individuals gain access to pasture and water, making the oba an economic corporation as well.

The Cyrenaican Bedouin conceive of their tribes as being divided into three genealogical levels - primary, secondary, and tertiary sections - which "correspond to an ordered division of the territory" (Peters 1967: 262). Each of the sections has a shaikh, but "his leadership is limited to situations in which a tribe or segment of it acts corporately," that is, in warfare or external relations (Evans-Pritchard 1949: 59). Because of the segmentary character of the society, absolute authority cannot be vested in a shaikh. His role is essentially representative (Evans-Pritchard 1949: 60). Although the sections are conceived as lineages, in fact, the composition is not purely agnatic. Genealogical manipulation occurs at the tertiary level in order to maintain the ordered distribution of groups in relation to fixed ecological divisions of the territory (Peters 1960).

The tertiary sections, which are conceived as the "corporate group par excellence" each have their own homeland - watan - which

includes water supplies, pasture, and plowland. It is also the smallest political unit, with blood responsibility and payment being shared equally within the group (Peters 1960: 367). The section also shares a common name.

The composition of the tertiary section is over 80% agnatically related males (Peters 1967: 263), going back to a common ancestor four to five generations back (Peters 1960: 367). There is "never any doubt about the affiliation of any tribeman"; however, ultimately, membership in a tertiary section is not based on the calculation of degree of kinship, but on acceptance of the obligations and responsibilities of blood vengeance (Peters 1967: 263).

Tertiary sections are thus politically and economically discrete corporations, and since the resources are essentially the same for each close group, there is little need to seek either trade or other relations with other tertiary sections: all major necessities are available within the group's controlled territory.

The secondary sections, made up of an unstated number of tertiary sections, are self-contained discrete units. "More of the requirements of everyday living can be met within the territory and span of a secondary section than within those of a tertiary section" (Peters 1967: 267), since each secondary section has its own micro-climate and a larger population aggregate. Social relations within the sections are intense, with frequent visits. Often, there is a common grain store, although it is divided along tertiary section lines (Peters 1967: 265). The primary sections and tribes correspond with ecological divisions of the territory, but function mainly as contingent political

corporations, in opposition to like groups.

The tribal section - fakhd - is the basic structure in Bedouin society in Arabia; it manages and brands the herds collectively, redistributes camels and other wealth, and "has the means of acting upon or bringing pressure to bear upon vengenace operations" (Sweet 1965a: 166). The section is also responsible for mutual defense and protection of the herds and resources, and for raiding (Sweet 1965a: 169). It owns or controls part of the products from oasis cultivation, either by owning the date palm gardens outright, or by collecting tribute for protection. This is redistributed by the section chief. The allocation of grazing rights and camping places is done by the chief or leading men of the section each winter and spring (Sweet 1965a: 167).

There is a chiefly lineage, from among whose ranks the tribal chief is chosen. In each sub-unit, there is also a leader chosen by consensus from a family of ranked position. "The role of the chief, at any level within the chiefdom, is fundamentally a coordinating position, . . . and a role of intermediary and negotiator with all persons, societies, and other units external to the members of the particular chief" (Sweet 1965b: 270). Although the tribal section has an agnatic core, it does contain tribesmen from other lineages, as well as subordinate members (slaves, clients, blacksmiths) (Sweet 1965a: 172). The fakhd is therefore a residence group.

Both politically and economically, the sections seem to be the most important corporate group. Presumably, the fakhd is the main reference group, but Sweet does not discuss this. Nor does she tell us how the tribal sections related to the tribe itself.

Although the Shahsavan sections are descent groups, the tribes are residential groups. The tribes are composed of "a territorially compact collection of sections with common allegiance to a chief" (Tapper 1976a: 13). They are the main political group, and the primary reference group (Tapper 1976a: 14).

Common allegiance to a political leader is also an important criterion in defining section membership among the Marri Baluch. Two other criteria are also important: recruitment by agnatic descent, and sharing of rights to agricultural land estates (Pehrson 1966: 18).

Tribal agricultural lands are allocated to sections, then subdivided, following "the schema of segmentation into subgroups; below that point, the subgroups are treated as unsegmented corporations and full members are given equal shares" (Pehrson 1966: 19). These are granted primarily on the basis of patrilineal descent, which is the main rule of recruitment to sections. However, political contracts can override this criterion. The joint estate is periodically reallotted, at which time sectional membership is reviewed through the division of shares (Pehrson 1966: 19).

Residence groups can thus be seen to consist of progressively more inclusive units that function in much the same way as a segmentary lineage system. Possession of common property is the most important, because it is the defining, characteristic found in these groups. Although they do not have an ideology of common descent, they usually share a common name or other symbolic expression of unity.

As with descent groups, it is the less inclusive units that are the most important and most strongly corporate, as they perform more

functions than the other units. The smallest unit is the one to which estates are allocated; collective action is more frequent; rights and duties are more clearly defined. This is essentially because of the propinquity of the members; since they live together in a defined territory, there is more interaction between members.

Tribal Political Corporations

In some instances, tribes are not considered as simply the most inclusive descent or residence group, but are corporate political entities. The criterion used to define the tribe is common allegiance to a supreme chief.

Although the Marri Baluchi tribal structure can be "thought of as an enormous agnatic lineage" there is no unifying genealogy (Pehrson 1966: 18). In fact, political unity, not common origin, defines them as a social unit (Pehrson 1966: 3). The sardar - chief - "is the central and unifying leader who by his existence creates the Marri tribe and who for formal purposes is regarded as the fount of all legitimate power in the tribe" (Pehrson 1966: 20). He convened and sat at the head of the tribal council, and was responsible for confirming section leaders (Pehrson 1966: 23, 20).

The Basseri, who are fairly typical of the tribes of the Zagros Mountains area of Iran, are also united and defined politically rather than genealogically. There are twelve sections of the tribe with different origins, some native to the area, others from outside (Barth 1961: 52). What unites them both in their own eyes and to outsiders, is their "political unity under the Basseri chief" (Barth 1961: 71), whose res-

ponsibilities include the allocation of pastures, coordination of migration routes, and settlement of disputes.

Thus, in such groups, strong leadership provides the tribe with unity, both symbolically and politically. Although political functions may be carried out in the segments of the tribe, authority and sanctions are seen as flowing from the chief; the power of section leaders is also dependent on him. The tribe is therefore both symbolically and politically strongly corporate.

Overview

To summarize thus far, there are numerous types of corporate groups, with three different criteria for membership (descent, coresidence, allegiance to a leader) found among Middle Eastern pastoralists. These are arranged in hierarchies of progressively more inclusive units that finally embrace the tribe or society as a whole.

Economic functions are almost entirely carried out by the domestic unit and the least inclusive, localized groups. Moveable property is controlled or owned by the domestic unit; fixed property - grazing land, natural water sources - is rarely owned. When the grazing estate is allocated to groups, it is to the minimal lineage; when units are permanently associated with a fixed territory, "ownership" rests with the tertiary section (here used to indicate the smallest residence group). However, when there is an "open-pasture" policy, territory is traditionally, but not exclusively, associated with higher level groupings. Fixed property that requires an input of labor - dug wells, agricultural land, date palms - is owned by the unit that main-

tains it; sometimes this is a joint effort by members of a group, at others, it is by the household.

Political functions are found at all levels. Because of the segmentary character of these societies, many of the units are contingent polities; only the minimal lineage or tertiary section can be considered as a constant unit that is capable of collective action. Nevertheless, many of the larger segments do act collectively when necessary.

Although there is a means for settling disputes and a common jural code for the whole society, the necessity for maintaining peaceful relations and settling conflicts decreases among the more inclusive groups, primarily because there is less need for interaction between them: the minimal lineage or tertiary section is more or less independent economically; because of preferential endogamy, wives are most often from the minimal lineage or next inclusive group; blood responsibility is shared within these minimal groups; individuals are genealogically and geographically closer to members of less inclusive units, and probably know all the group members personally.

Interaction between minimal lineages or tertiary sections is also frequent and politically significant, if not as intense. A vengeance killing or blood money payment is required between such groups so that peaceful relations can be immediately restored and continued. At higher levels, relationships are often characterized by a state (actual or potential) of war or feud. When conflict did break out, primarily over resources or boundaries, it was therefore between maximal lineages or secondary sections (because of the operation of complementary opposition). Thus defense and territorial claims were carried

out by these larger segments rather than the less inclusive groups.

When there is a chief who allocates pasture and coordinates the movement of the groups, political functions are enacted at the tribal level. Even if the tribe as a whole is not involved in a particular conflict, it is not limited to the specific units involved, but is the responsibility of the chief, since all legitimate power and authority originates in and flows from him.

Symbolic functions are also found in all types of groups. However, they seem to be associated mainly with the higher level units. The primary reference group for an individual is the group between the tribe and the minimal lineage or tertiary sections. Nevertheless, such identification is also contingent, depending on the particular circumstances an individual finds himself in (or on the person to whom he is talking); for example, it is always possible to include or exclude whomever one wishes by reference to the proper level of common or divergent ancestors in the genealogy. The basis of symbolic expression is common ancestry for descent groups, common property for residence groups, and a common leader for tribal political groups.

## Characteristics and Degree of Corporateness

Now that the types and functions of corporate groups have been described, we must return to the various characteristics of such units, to discover under what conditions they are found, whether they are necessary components of a corporation, and whether their presence or absence affects the strength of corporateness.

Collective Action: As has been shown, not all corporate groups

actually gather together and act as a unit. Collective action is most frequently found at the level of the minimal lineage or tertiary section, although higher level groups do act collectively on occasion. Blood vengeance groups, the membership of which is usually defined by descent, but is sometimes reinforced or formed on a contractual basis, are always capable of collective action. The ability to act collectively both depends on and reinforces the multiple solidary bonds between members of a group, thus making it more strongly corporate, when present. But it is not essential for members of a group to act collectively in order to define that group as corporate.

Leadership and Authority: Leaders are not always found in each corporate group; when present, they usually act more as mediators and representatives than as ruler/administrators. Temporary leaders often arise to lead a group on a raid or in warfare, but the do not retain any authority once the conflict is over. The sanctions of a leader, whether temporary or permanent, are extremely limited; they depend primarily on prestige and influence. Generally, they are not regarded as superiors (Evans-Pritchard 1949: 59), but are seen as "primus inter pares" (Lewis 1961: 205), "scarcely more than a peer among peers" (Sweet 1965b: 271). Thus, although leaders are seen as representing the unity of the group, their presence is not essential, nor does it affect the strength of the corporation; leaders are symbols of that unity and strength.

Sometimes, however, strong authoritarian leaders are present. This occurs in areas of relatively lush and predictable resources, where groups can easily be controlled and coordinated (see Salzman 1967). In

such cases, the chief is seen not simply as a symbol of unity, but as the source of all legitimate power and authority. The tribe is defined by its allegiance to the chief. As such, the leader creates the corporate group that is the tribe. Because all power emanates from the leader, his presence increases the degree of corporateness of this unit.

Symbolic Expression: The sharing of a common identity, name, rituals, leaders, ancestors, or whatever, is common in all types of corporate groups, and is always present, by definition, in a corporate unilineal descent group. Such expression is most frequently related to units at a higher level, where the other characteristics are not as strongly or frequently found. The primary reference group is usually the unit above the tertiary section or minimal lineage. Part of the reason for this lies in the segmentary nature of nomadic societies, where all groups at the higher level are contingent. Despite this relativity, such units must be able to unite to settle disputes, make land claims, exchange women, when necessary. Symbolic expression of the group's unity at this higher level provides a sort of rallying point for individuals who otherwise, in part because of their nomadic lifestyle, have little contact with each other.

Taken alone, the presence or absence of symbolic expression does not greatly influence the strength of a corporation, for as we have seen, the primary reference group is not the one in which the individuals have the most interaction. Rather, it seems to be a result of the strength; the more strongly corporate, the more likely that a group will express its unity symbolically, frequently with multiple symbols of their common identity. Thus symbolic expression is not a necessary

component of a corporate group, but a logical consequence of its incorporation.

Common Property: When a group shares some form of common property, there is more frequent interaction between member of that group. Because their livelihood depends on owning or having access to property - herds, grazing, water, plowland - it is perhaps the most important overall concern. For these reasons, the sharing of common property makes a corporation much stronger. When grazing rights are not subdivided and allocated to segments, pasture is (theoretically) open to all and belongs to the tribe as a whole, but in practice, groups are associated with specific sections of the territory. It is the primary lineages or sections that are traditionally linked with parts of the territory. On the lower levels, corporate residence groups always share common property, for they are defined territorially. On the other hand, descent groups below the tribe do not consistently share in an estate. But not all corporate groups share common property, so it cannot be considered an essential attribute of such a group, even though its presence does strengthen it.

Rights and Obligations: For an individual, there are certain expectations as to how he will or will not act, what he can or cannot do, as a member of a group. In the less inclusive units, there are more such rights and obligations, and they are more specifically defined. Nevertheless, membership in a corporate group always entails certain responsibilities and grants some privileges. Because rights and duties are thus ascribed to individuals by virtue of their membership, they can be considered as an essential component of a corporate group. A

group will be less strongly corporate if these are only broadly defined, or if there are only a few such expectations.

The degree of corporateness can thus be seen to increase when some of the above characteristics are present. The more such attributes are found, the stronger will be the corporation, for each will strengthen and reinforce the others. When members of a group have more in common, the number and intensity of interrelated ties increases, and the bonds between them become more solidary.

It also follows that when a group performs a variety of functions, it will be more strongly corporate. Although all units but the tribe itself are incorporated into a more inclusive structure, and can never be completely independent, if the most frequent, intense, and important interactions are carried out within one specific group, then it can, to a great extent, act autonomously, and thus the degree of its corporateness increases.

Therefore, the more characteristics and functions that a group shares, the greater the degree of corporateness. Consequently, the strongest corporate groups are the lower level, less inclusive units, in which individuals have the most repetitive ties, and through which they most often act.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CORPORATE GROUPS

### Descent as an Organizing Principle

According to Patai, in Middle Eastern tribes, "patrilineal descent, whether actual or assumed, . . . [is] the basis of social organization" (1979: 8). While this is obviously not entirely true, the ideology of patrilineal descent is so prevalent among pastoralists that all societies have corporate descent groups in one form or another. It is therefore appropriate to begin our analysis of the importance of corporations by examining the role of descent as a principle of organization in nomadic societies.

Although Lewis (1965) rightly concludes that the "functional significance of descent" varies widely, that we cannot say that it has greater primacy in any one society or that some societies are more patrilineal than others, his discussion of criteria for comparing unilineal descent groups raises some important points. He is basically concerned with discovering "how exclusive . . . is the patrilineal principle, and to what extent is it aided or reinforced by other principles of association and ascription" among the Tiv, Nuer, Somali, and Cyrenaican Bedouin (Lewis 1965: 89).

Of the four groups, only the Somali do not define their "basic politico-jural aggregates" territorially. Agnation is the main principle of association, supplemented by formal contracts used to maintain

a balance of power. In the other three societies, descent "serves to substantiate territorially founded relationships and provides the dominant idiom in which these are stated" (Lewis 1965: 96); genealogies are adjusted to "maintain a consistent relationship between lineage and political solidarity" (Lewis 1965: 97). Thus, for all but the Somali, descent ideologically represents the basis for political relations, while in practice, cohesion is territorially defined, whereas for the Somali, agnatic descent is the actual fundamental organizing principle, even though it is not consistently followed.

Another factor to consider is the "range of socially significant genealogical articulation" (Lewis 1965: 89). In all but the Nuer, the genealogy includes all members of the society. However, the whole society is never mobilized as such; rather, unity is expressed as a "national cultural identity" (Lewis 1965: 90). Lewis claims that they do not constitute corporate political groups, but his criterion for corporateness is "that of political unity as manifest in war" (1965: 92). He does concede that they have a common jural identity.

Other considerations include: are there religious cults organized on a genealogical basis, and does lineage affiliation define religious status? (Lewis 1965: 93); are there other organizations, such as age-sets, that have political functions that reduce the "uniqueness of descent as a political principle"? (Lewis 1965: 98); and on the place of women in these societies: are any links traced through women? Do women retain their status in their natal agnatic group, or are they incorporated into their husband's group?

From the above discussion, and the data in Chapter III, it

becomes obvious that the role of unilineal descent varies widely. Perhaps its function as a mechanism of social and political integration can best be viewed as on a continuum, with descent at one extreme, and alliances at the other. Contractual relations and political allegiances come between the two.

At the descent end of this continuum there are such groups as the Yarahmadzai Baluch, for whom patrilineal descent is the "primary symbolic idiom" of social organization. Here, agnation defines all the corporate groups, from the most inclusive to the smallest, stable social groups; "no other idiom - kinship, religion, ethnicity, territory - is used as a basis for corporate groups" (Salzman 1975: 1).

Where descent is the only criterion for corporate group formation, residence groups are not corporate. Instead, they are camping units, whose composition is unstable, but usually based on contracts. This is not to say that affinal or cognatic ties are not recognized or considered important; it is simply that such ties are not the basis of any corporate structure. In such cases, corporate descent groups at various levels perform economic, political, and symbolic functions.

There are no pastoral tribes at the alliance extreme of the continuum in the Middle East. All other groups fall somewhere in between, with coresidence and common allegiance to a chief mitigating, but not eliminating, the importance of descent.

## Descent Versus Residence Groups

The question that must now be answered is: when is descent versus coresidence emphasized as the basis for corporate group formation?

The key point here seems to be territorial stability (as discussed by Salzman (1978), see above, page 30).

Where there is no allocation of pasture estates, and the territory is theoretically open to all equally, propinquity cannot be used as a basis of solidarity. In such cases, the segmentary lineage ideology is, to a great extent, actually acted out on the ground. However, since demographic and ecological factors do not "recognize" this ideology, other principles, such as contracts, are utilized to maintain the balance between population and resources, producing a "lineage-plus" system (Salzman 1978).

Where there is territorial stability, coresidence becomes a more important defining characteristic for corporate groupings. Equivalent sections are identified with specific territories, and more or less limited to them. Although "territorially based sentiments of loyalty are reinforced and given structural definition in lineage terms" (Lewis 1965: 96), the basic principle of association is territorial contiguity. While these corporate groups usually have an agnatic core, and are viewed as a patrilineage, the territorial group is not a true descent group.

But, as Sahlins shows, in such residential groups "there is no particular relation between the descent ideology and group composition" (1965: 104). Most groups will have cognatic irregularities, despite a patrilineal ideology. He demonstrates that residence groups with a variety of ideological descent arrangements can have identical composition; the difference lies in which ties are enfranchised, which ignored (Sahlins 1965: 104). Essentially, the composition of territorial groups is

not expressed by the overlying descent structure, but just the opposite: "The major descent system orders genealogical facts in allegiance to its own principles" (Sahlins 1965: 106). Thus, in societies with territorially based corporate groups, one finds that the fit between groups and the territory is maintained or achieved through genealogical manipulations, a process which allows the balance of power to be upheld.

Thus, political as well as economic functions rest with corporate residential groups, while the fiction of common descent provides symbolic unity at the higher level of integration.

Nevertheless, even among tribes where residential corporate groups are prominent, the responsibility of political support for vengeance and blood money payment is still vested in a proper lineage, unless there is a specific contractual arrangement that overrides other allegiances. This type of contract is found within societies that have only descent groups (Somali) as well as those with territorial groups.[3]

In the case where estates are allocated to groups, rather than their being associated with a defined territory, we find another combination of corporate groupings. Since the nomad's livelihood depends on having grazing for his animals, he must have access to pasture. When this estate is divided among groups of the tribe, he must be a member of one of these groups to whom the estate is allocated. Membership in such groups is based on patrilineality; here again, we find the basic economic functions performed by a descent group. These groups are "arranged in a genealogical structure"; however, the "political superstructure . . . is not an extension of this segmentary lineage organiation" (Lewis 1965: 100). Instead, what is found are a number of cor-

porate descent groups united under a common supreme chief, who is responsible for allocating estates to these lower level units.

Although groups tend to be associated with specific territories, there is not really territorial stability, in that allocations are periodically reviewed and adjusted to keep the balance between resources and people. These allocations may be for specific periods of time as well as specific areas. Thus there is no need for genealogical manipulations, nor is the ideology of common descent maintained in relation to the most inclusive groups.

Thus, it is necessary to examine the way in which individuals gain access to grazing pastures in order to understand how corporate groups are formed. Because of the nature of the pastoral adaptation, "individual ownership of pasture land would be intolerable" (W. Swidler 1973: 25). Instead, rights to resources are obtained through membership in corporate groups. Whether these groups are based on descent or coresidence depends on how rights to the territory are defined. If the tribal territory is open to all, descent groups will be prominent. When rights are exclusively held by a group, such that the territory is stable, solidarity will be based on propinouity, and membership in the corporate groups is based on coresidence (but with an overriding ideology of common descent). When access to grazing is regularized in both space and time, estates are allocated to descent groups who are tied together by allegiance to a chief, who allocates these pastures.

## Corporations Versus Alliances

Despite the fact that corporate groups are ubiquitous in nomadic

societies, it does not necessarily follow that they will always be of primary importance. As Marx(1977, 1978) and Peters (1967), among others, have shown, alliances are not only common but are sometimes even more significant than corporate group relations "in facilitating cooperation and limiting conflict" (Salzman 1979: 123). Allegiance to a chief where a structure of political authority exists is here considered a form of alliance.

There is no acceptable explanation as to why corporations or alliances will be more prominent in a particular society. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to analyze this in depth, it is necessary to touch upon it in order to understand the importance of corporate groups in pastoral societies. Therefore, we will offer an hypothesis that shows when alliances will be emphasized in lieu of corporate groups. We will use the Baluch (Yarahmadzai), Bedouin (Cyrenaican), Basseri, and Yomut Turkmen as examples of the different types of arrangements of corporations and alliances found among pastoralists in the Middle East.

The presence or absence of territorial stability again becomes important in explaining the emphasis on alliances. Yet, taken alone, this groups the Basseri, who are unified by alliances to a corporate tribal political structure outside the descent system, with the Baluch, who depend on a segmentary lineage organization of corporate descent groups for unification; it also places the Bedouin together with the Yomut, when the former rely on alliances and the latter on corporate residence groups.

However, if we also consider a second factor, that of predictable

resources (that is, predictable seasonal variation and relatively lush resources), all four variations can be explained. The following chart shows the four possible combinations of the two ecological factors, and the groups that exhibit each form.[4]

| | Territorial Stability | Predictable Resources |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Baluch | -[a] | - |
| 2. Basseri | - | +[b] |
| 3. Bedouin | + | - |
| 4. Yomut | + | + |

[a] - = indicates absence

[b] + = indicates presence

We will look at each case individually, to explain how these factors affect the type of solidarity found in these societies.

In the example of the Baluch, there is an open pasture policy, which is necessary because of the poor and unpredictable resources in the territory; without this, the nomads would not be able to maintain their animals. Because individuals and groups move around so frequently, in response to micro-ecological variations, solidarity cannot be based on propinquity. The concept of alliances with distant kin for economic security is meaningless. Thus a corporate descent structure, based on a segmentary lineage ideology, that allows for fluid local groups, provides the primary basis for ordering social relations.

"The corporate patrilineages are thought of as the dominant agents for filling two main needs: social control, and social/economic assistance" (Salzman 1975: 2). Military, political, economic, and emotional

support are the obligations of one's lineage mates.

This is not to say that other kinship ties are not recognized; for example, makom (kin through the mother) are also considered important, and such ties are frequently used to justify arrangements (hospitality, coresidence, economic assistance, marriage) that are not inherent rights of the relationship (Salzman 1975: 7). However, unlike with patrilineal ties, such assistance is optional, not obligatory, and is based on agreements between individuals. It is the corporate descent groups that are "vested with primary political, social, and economic responsibilities, upon which the welfare of most individual baluch depends" (Salzman 1975: 8).

On the other hand, because they have territorial stability, the Bedouin rely on members of their corporate residence group for most daily economic and political activities and support. Each tertiary section has its own homeland, and members share a common name, which "carries with it full political responsibility incumbent equally on all members" (Peters 1967: 262); these responsibilities are for defense, vengeance, and blood money payment. However, since the resources are unpredictable, and competition for them is frequent, it is necessary to make alliances with distant groups to provide economic security. Close (both genealogically and geographically) neighbors, in a bad season, will experience the same lack of resources, and will not be able to come to one's aid. If a group is to expand, it will be at the expense of such close neighbors. Thus, it is with close groups that one competes for scarce resources, and with distant groups that one makes alliances, through selective intermarriages.

The rights and obligations subsumed by affinity and matrilaterality are fairly extensive; for example, a mother's brother is expected to contribute blood money, and is the first person approached by a man if his group is short of water; this uncle can put pressure on a man's father to get that man a wife, or represent him against his father's brother. Affines are also expected to help pay blood money and bridewealth, or allow access to water supplies (Peters 1967: 273).

Because of competition for resources, it is necessary for corporate groups to "combine to prevent encroachments of others in similar combinations and also to expand their resources whenever the opportunity arises" (Peters 1967: 279). But this regularity of relationships is not the result of groups combining according to a segmentary lineage model, but is based on cross-cutting alliances created with affinal and matrilateral kin.

A combination of corporate descent groups on the local level, and an overlying political tribal structure, characterize the Basseri. Groups are not exclusively associated with specific territories, for while pasture estates are allocated to descent groups, these allocations are not permanent; groups have the right to use a particular area for a specific period of time, and such allocations are periodically reviewed and revised to take account of changes in the size of groups and herds, and the availability of resources. Movement is coordinated, and pastures allocated, by a chief, to whom all the tribesmen claim allegiance. This coordination is possible because resources are predictable, and, to a certain extent, is necessary, because of the competition with other tribes for the same resources. Economically, corporate descent groups

are more important, but political alliance is the raison d'être of the tribe itself.

Our final example, the Yomut Turkmen, present many interesting anomalies; they have plentiful and predictable resources, but are not incorporated into a political superstructure controlled from above, as are the Basseri; although they have stable territories, like the Bedouin, groups are related through a segmentary (political) system, like the Baluch, not through alliances. The Yomut have two hierarchies of corporate groups, one based on descent, one on coresidence, with different, but sometimes overlapping, functions.

Through genealogical manipulation at the higher level, the Yomut have arranged themselves on the ground in checkerboard fashion such that close kin (outside the residence group) are physically distant, while close neighbors are genealogically distant. In this way, they are able to follow the dictates of complementary opposition and segmentary solidarity. Alliances with non-agnatic kin are not as necessary, since close kin are physically distant and can provide the economic security that the Bedouin must seek through such alliances. At the same time, because the resources are relatively lush and predictable, competition for resources is not as strong; although conflicts do occur, they are not as frequent as among the Bedouin.

Because there is territorial stability, solidarity is based, to a great extent, on coresidence. These territoral groups are formed on a contractual basis. Since these groups are associated with, and have rights to, a specific territory, there is no need or way for a leader to allocate rights to the estate. All major economic and political

functions are carried out by the corporate groups.

Thus, when both factors are present, there is no need for a wide network of alliances to provide economic and political support; likewise, where neither is present, there is no basis for such alliances (except on an individual basis). Only when either territorial instability or resource unpredictability are found do alliances become more prominent in a particular society.

What place, then, do corporate groups have in the social and political organization of Middle Eastern nomadic tribes? In all these societies, both corporations and alliances are present in some form.

In those societies where there is territorial instability combined with unpredictable resources, descent is the sole idiom of corporate group formation; the tribe as a whole is unified through the ideology of common descent. Social alliances are made, but on an individual basis, and for personal, rather than collective, interests. Contracts, a type of alliance, may be used to form herding units, but these are not corporate, and are extremely unstable; contracts are also used to solidify the bonds of agnation for political support. Such alliances notwithstanding, corporate descent groups perform all the major economic, political, and symbolic functions in these societies.

Where territorial instability is found with predictable resources, tribal affiliation is mediated through membership in a corporate descent group. These groups are then united, not by the fiction of common descent, but by an alliance based on allegiance to a supreme chief. The tribal estate is allocated by the chief to the descent groups; individuals gain access to these resources as members of these corporate

groups. The tribe as a whole is a corporation by virtue of the political unity that allegiance to the chief engenders.

When relations are based on propinquity, because of territorial stability, corporate residence groups, based on contracts, emerge. Tribal unity is still expressed in terms of common patrilineal descent, and "tribesmen conceptualize their rights to exploit their territorial resources" in terms of the tribal genealogy (Marx 1977: 359). However, genealogies are manipulated to maintain the "fit" between local groups and the territory. When resources are predictable, a segmentary political ideology, based on the complementary opposition and segmentary sociability of residential rather than descent groups, is found, thus producing a "lineage-plus" system. Alliances for access to pasture and water in times of drought, and for territorial expansion, become necessary when resources in a stable territory are unpredictable. Nevertheless, these alliances are made between the minimal corporate groups, and within the tribal corporate structure. Individuals still derive access to resources on a regular basis, and political support for a vengeance killing or blood money payment, through membership in a corporate residence group.

Ultimately, then it is the articulation of small, localized corporate groups within a tribal corporate structure that must be analyzed. Whether these will related to each other according to the segmentary model (either lineage or political), or by alliances that cross-cut or override the genealogical ideology, will depend on the interaction of the two ecological factors of resource availability and territorial stability.

# CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSIONS

Using a minimal definition of a corporate group - one that has perpetuity, acts as, or is seen as a unit, and has some rules concerning eligibility - it has been possible to enumerate the various functions and characteristics of the different types of corporate groups found among pastoralists in the Middle East. In the process, a number of important conceptual issues have arisen that should be reemphasized here.

First, although it was possible to use our minimal definition to decide whether a group was corporate, when examining such groups on the ground it was necessary to look at the functions they performed and the rights and obligations that membership entailed, as group membership always defines some types of responsibilities and privileges.

Second, there are different types of corporations, based on the method of recruitment. Among Middle Eastern nomads, these are descent, coresidence, and allegiance to a chief. Contracts are frequently used to either form or crystalize such relations. These types of groups need not be mutually exclusive; a particular group, for example, may have both descent and residence groups, each with different functions. It was found that only when there is territorial stability do corporate groups based on coresidence appear. Otherwise, descent groups are prominent. However, when the pasture estate is subdivided among the

units, instead of being open to all equally, or belonging to a specific group, the most inclusive groups are united not by an ideology of common descent but by allegiance to a chief, who allocates such grazing rights.

It was also found that there are different degrees of corporateness, depending on the number of functions and characteristics shared by a group. When there were multiple functions and overlapping characteristics, there were more contexts in which members of the group had reinforcing, repetitive bonds and interaction; the group was thus more autonomous and more strongly corporate. The sharing of common property and the ability to act collectively both increased the strength of a group's corporateness, while the presence of representative leaders and symbolic expression of unity were a reflection of that strength.

Sometimes, however, ties from personal networks, marriage alliances, or allegiance to a chief were more prominent than relations between the minimal corporate groups (as expected by the segmentary lineage model espoused). This occurred either when there was territorial stability combined with unpredictable resources, in which case cross-cutting ties outside the basic corporate residence group were needed to secure access to resources, or when there was territorial instability with predictable resources, in which case corporate descent groups were tied together by allegiance to a chief, who regulates access to the territory. In both instances, the networks of personal or group relationships are ultimately bounded by the overall corporate structure of the tribe. Even though alliances did not follow the dictates of the lineage ideology, they were still made between corporate groups. Thus, in order to

understand the mechanisms of social and political control and integration, it is necessary to examine the corporate groups and the ways in which such units relate to one another.

## Further Considerations

One of the major problems encountered was the lack of comparable data on the membership, characteristics, and functions of corporate groups in each society. This was particularly evident in terms of the units between the tribe and the minimal lineage or tertiary section. Few authors made the distinction between descent and residence groups; many referred to lineages when, in fact, the units were territorially based. Therefore, in any future research, the basis of group formation as well as the specific functions and attributes of the various corporate groups need to be expounded.

Another distinction that was rarely recognized, but should be borne in mind for future studies, is that of social versus political alliances. Too often, authors speak of alliances without detailing the specific obligations that they entail. By examining these obligations in light of the type of assistance required or expected, the role of alliances would become much clearer.

A number of interesting issues that were only touched upon in this thesis warrant further study; some of these are not fully discussed in the literature available at present, and would provide useful information on the pastoral adaptation.

Throughout this study, the nomadic tribes were necessarily discussed in a vacuum, without consideration of their outside ties. How-

ever, all Middle Eastern pastoralists are encapsulated within states, and have essential relations with neighboring tribes, villages, or oases. It would thus be instructive to examine how the nomads relate to these other groups, that is, whether the corporate structure was used as the basis of interaction.

The role that contracts play in the formation and functioning of both corporate groups and herding camps has not been thoroughly documented for all societies. They appear to have both political and economic functions in pastoral societies, and can either solidify corporate groups or create ties and obligations that cross-cut the corporate structure. An examination of the contents and dynamics of contracts would shed light on the workings of many social and political relations.

One area where contracts are often important is in the formation of herding camps. Although the principles governing the composition of such camping units are entirely different from those of the corporate groups, membership is still derived from within the descent or residence groups. The articulation of these units needs to be explored further.

Throughout this thesis, we have dealt exclusively with nomads in the Middle East. It would be worthwhile to test the hypotheses presented on pastoralists elsewhere, to see how the differences in the adaptation (for example, in the African cattle belt, where agriculture plays a more important role, or where groups are not encapsulated into a state society) and in the systems of social organization (as among the Lapps, who reckon kinship cognatically) affect the mechanisms of social and political integration.

## NOTES

1

Both of Richard Tapper's articles (1976a, 1976b) have recently been published, in revised form, in Pastoral Production and Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979. However, they were not available at the time of writing. Therefore, all references in this text are to the papers as presented at the "Colloque internationale."

2

A word must be said here about camps, even though they are not corporate. The camps are the actual communities that the nomads live in and move with.

Ecological constraints play an important role in determining the composition of camps. It is necessary to maintain a balance between animals, people, and available resources; since the optimal size of the herd and the availability of resources change seasonally, so must the herding groups change.

Although corporate descent or residence groups do break down into camps, these herding units do not constitute recognized segments of the descent or residence groups (although individual tent-households are recognized) Principles of recruitment are completely different from those of descent groups, and are usually based on the "multiple interpersonal ties" of bilateral kinship and affinity (Barth 1961: 60). Camps are often contractual in nature.

However, the choice of campmates is not unlimited; personnel is drawn from within the descent or residence groups, and is bounded by them. The ability to choose local group affiliation, and change it when necessary, is possible becasue individuals already possess rights to resources by virtue of membership in these corporate groups. No matter how much the local groups vary and change, "lineage membership is stable," and an individual's rights and obligations to other members of the lineage are set (Salzman 1975: 9).

3

A striking example is found in the contracts of the 'Aishaibat tribe of the Egyptian desert. For the 'Aishaibat, patrilineality is the most pervasive structural principle, and is, in theory, "the effective base for dividing Bedouin society into social and political groupings" (Obermeyer 1973: 161).

But relations within both the lineage segment ('āila) and the sub-lineage segment (bait), each of which have their own territory (making them territorial rather than descent groups), are based on explicit contracts. For the bait, the contract is the "verifying principle of corporation," while on the higher level, it provides the "logic and prerequisite for corporateness" (Obermeyer 1973: 161).

Members of the bait share equally in blood responsibily and vengeance, and are, "bound to swear the oath (yamin) in support of a lineage-mate accused of a crime or falsehood in matters of litigation." Contractual relations between segments are ratified by the leaders; "all members adhering to the wider bond swear to uphold their contractual partners" in the same way as members of a bait. In addition, they will support a man in his claims to his rights over his father's brother's daughter, if not to marry her, then to have the right to approve her marriage partner (Obermeyer 1973: 162).

Thus, although the lineage principle is ideologically dominant, and groups are primarily formed of agnatic kin, contractual relations "may at times override all other structural principles" (Obermeyer 1973: 161).

4

This combination has the characteristics of the "Exclusive-Or" logic function. The plus here indicates a true statement, the minus a false one. Here, true indicates that alliances are emphasized. In this function, to provide a "true" result, one or the other, but not both, statements can be true. If both are true, or false, the result is therefore false. Thus, in our chart, types 2 and 3 are both true; alliances are emphasized in each case. Types 1 and 4 are both false; the primary emphasis is on corporate groups.

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