Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive

DSpace Repository

Theses and Dissertations | 1. Thesis and Dissertation Collection, all items

1994-06

Societal structures and the origins of authoritarianism : a general argument with reference to the Arab world

Johnson, Mark A.

Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School

http://hdl.handle.net/10945/28545

Downloaded from NPS Archive: Calhoun

http://www.nps.edu/library

Calhoun is the Naval Postgraduate School's public access digital repository for research materials and institutional publications created by the NPS community. Calhoun is named for Professor of Mathematics Guy K. Calhoun, NPS's first appointed -- and published -- scholarly author.

Dudley Knox Library / Naval Postgraduate School
411 Dyer Road / 1 University Circle
Monterey, California USA 93943

DUDLEY KNOX LIBRARY
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
MONTEREY CA 93943-5101

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

Societal Structures and the Origins of Authoritarianism:
A General Argument with Reference to the Arab World

by

Mark A. Johnson
Lieutenant, United States Navy
B.A., Miami University

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 1994

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved OMB No. 0704-

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washingon headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED
	June 1994	Master's Thesis

4. Societal Structures and the Origins of Authoritarianism: A General Argument with Reference to the Arab World (Unclassified)

5. FUNDING NUMBERS

6. AUTHOR Mark A. Johnson

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey CA 93943-5000

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to explain the origins of, and the reasons for the persistence of non-democratic forms of rule in the Arab world. It seeks to define the minimum social prerequisites for the development of democratic institutions, and then shows that in large measure these prerequisites are lacking in Arab societies. Moreover, this deficiency is not the result of Islam or the "Arab mind," but is primarily a consequence of the socioeconomic structures found in the Arab world.

The thesis flows from the general to the specific in first providing an overview of socioeconomic structures, by dividing them into three categories: hunter/gatherers, agrarian and modern industrial. It makes the argument that the socioeconomic structures of modern industrial society generate social circumstances that are far more favorable to the development of democratic political institutions than either the agrarian or the hunter/gatherer. Following this, the thesis looks specifically at the socioeconomic structures of the Arab world, making the argument that, largely as a result of the character of cultural and economic interaction with the West, the societies of the Arab world have maintained their primarily agrarian structure and they are therefore not predisposed toward democratic politics.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Democracy, Socioeconomic Structures, Arab World

15. NUMBER OF PAGES 103

16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	UL

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to explain the origins of, and the reasons for the persistence of non-democratic forms of rule in the Arab world. It seeks to define the minimum social prerequisites for the development of democratic institutions, and then shows that in large measure these prerequisites are lacking in Arab societies. Moreover, this deficiency is not the result of Islam or the "Arab mind," but is primarily a consequence of the socioeconomic structures found in the Arab world.

The thesis flows from the general to the specific in first providing an overview of socioeconomic structures, by dividing them into three categories: hunter/gatherers, agrarian and modern industrial. It makes the argument that the socioeconomic structures of modern industrial society generate social circumstances that are far more favorable to the development of democratic political institutions than either the agrarian or the hunter/gatherer. Following this, the thesis looks specifically at the socioeconomic structures of the Arab world, making the argument that, largely as a result of the character of cultural and economic interaction with the West, the societies of the Arab world have maintained their primarily agrarian structure and they are therefore not predisposed toward democratic politics.

Thesis
J62372
c.1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....1

A. WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?.....6

II. SOCIOECONOMIC STRUCTURES; A GENERAL OVERVIEW.....14

A. HUNTER/GATHERERS.....16

B. AGRARIAN SOCIETIES.....19

C. MODERN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES.....41

III. ARAB SOCIOECONOMIC STRUCTURES IN PERSPECTIVE.....57

A. SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS PRIOR TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.....59

B. SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE OTTOMAN AND COLONIAL PERIODS.....66

C. POST-INDEPENDENCE TO THE PRESENT.....79

IV. CONCLUSIONS.....89

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST.....93

DUDLEY KNOX LIBRARY
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
MONTEREY CA 93943-5101

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis is a theoretical argument based on general observation and deduction that attempts to explain both the origins of, and the reasons for the persistence of non-democratic forms of rule in the Arab world. The principal question that it seeks to answer is: Why has it proven so exceedingly difficult if not impossible for democracy to develop in the Arab world? The answer to this riddle does not lie specifically in Islam (as many Western authors have argued) nor does it lie in some congenital defect of the Arab mind. Rather, the answer can be found in the socioeconomic structures of the Arab world, structures that are primarily agrarian in nature which predispose Arab politics toward more hierarchical and authoritarian forms of rule and away from more democratic political institutions.

The thesis first attempts to define the minimum social prerequisites for the development of democratic political institutions at the nation-state level. These are defined as: consent, the rule of law, and citizenship based on nationality.

In keeping with the "general to specific" nature of the argument, the thesis then provides a broad overview of socioeconomic structures, dividing them into three groups: hunter/gatherer, agrarian and modern industrial. Although these groups are only ideal types, they do provide an intellectual framework within which the fundamental aspects of various socioeconomic structures may be grasped more easily. The thesis shows that because of the social

requirements of each of these three ideal types of structures, they tend to engender, or at least create the prerequisites for, certain political developments. Specifically, while socioeconomic structures that are primarily agrarian tend to produce political institutions that are hierarchical and authoritarian, socioeconomic structures that are primarily hunter/gatherer or modern industrial tend to foster more egalitarian political orders (although for very different reasons).

The thesis then looks specifically at the socioeconomic structures of the Arab world and attempts to demonstrate that despite Arab governmental pronouncements to the contrary, the admixture of elements from the hunter/gatherer and modern industrial "stages" (in other words, the societies of the Arab world are not, much like any place else, ideal representations of theoretical frameworks), and the superficial differences in the character of the various Arab regimes; the socioeconomic structures of the Arab world are primarily of the agrarian type. As a result, Arab societies tend to be governed in a authoritarian manner.

The third and final point of the thesis is that the primarily agrarian socioeconomic structures of the Arab world are both held in place and distorted by the character of the economic and cultural interaction with the West. Economically, the "world system," dominated by the productive capacity of the West, makes entry into the industrial and manufacturing spheres difficult to accomplish as the West holds an almost insurmountable

comparative advantage in quantity and quality of production (although as the example of Japan and the "four tigers" suggests, this advantage may not be absolute and forever). The economies of the Arab world simply have no choice but to integrate with the economies of the West, but they can compete and survive economically within the system only through the extraction of raw materials, or agrarian type economic functions.

At the same time, however, this economic interaction has the effect of producing new classes of people in Arab society (bank clerks, teachers, refinery technicians, etc.) that tend to militate against the authoritarian bent of the agrarian order. Ironically, such interaction also provides for the importation of the technology that makes it far easier for the authoritarian ruler to intrusively and violently impose his/their regime on society.

Culturally, the alien "other" is seen in both Arab and European societies as an obstacle to be overcome. The introduction of Western originated ideas and methods into Arab societies, therefore, arouses a great deal of suspicion and distaste. Since modernization and westernization are so closely associated with one another, it is difficult at best for Arab societies to internalize the mind-set of modern industrial societies without engendering feelings of defeat or self-betrayal.

I. INTRODUCTION

"Political liberalization, if not democracy, seems to be on Arab agendas."[1] This optimistic statement opened an issue of the Middle East Report devoted exclusively to the question of democracy in the Arab world. However, it was quickly qualified by the following: "At the same time, most of these openings have been controlled, if not calibrated, by the respective regimes [in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and Yemen];" and, "Even where elections have encompassed wide sectors of the population and included opposition forces, they have been for parliaments with little power vis-a-vis the president or king."[2]

Why has it proven so exceedingly difficult if not impossible for democracy to develop in the Arab world? Indeed, upon examination of the politics of the region, one is struck by the persistence of non-democratic forms of rule, and the near complete lack of democratic institutions in an era in which the pursuit of democracy seems to be becoming a universal phenomenon. Is this the result of some congenital defect? Are Arabs incapable of democracy? While this seems to be the view of some Western authors, the answer to the riddle of democracy (or lack thereof) in the Arab world is more complex and multi-faceted. This is the principal riddle to be addressed in the pages that follow, and the answer, as we shall discover, can be found in the socioeconomic structures of the Arab world, structures that are primarily agrarian in nature which **predispose** Arab politics toward more hierarchical and authoritarian forms of rule and away from more democratic political forms. Additionally, the principal factors that have

---

[1]Joe Stork et al., "The Democracy Agenda in the Arab World," Middle East Report No. 174, (January-February 1992), p. 3.
[2]Ibid.

contributed to the maintenance of those socioeconomic structures are the Arab world's cultural and economic interactions with the West.

It is my intention here to first outline how socioeconomic structures in general tend to predispose the political structures of their societies; second, to place Arab socioeconomic structures within that general outline, specifically, within the agrarian "stage" which is, as we shall see, antithetical to democratic political structures; and third, to define the primary factors that contribute to the maintenance of this particular kind of socioeconomic structure, namely: the Arab world's cultural and economic interaction with the West.

There is perhaps no other region of the world which has evolved culturally in such contrast and opposition to the West, and vice versa. Even the term "Middle East," within which the Arab world is described in the West, places the two cultural worlds in sharp contrast and is repugnant to most Arab sensibilities because it defines the Arab world in relation to the West.[3] This cultural antagonism has far reaching consequences for reasoned scholarship and debate, on both sides of the "great divide," regarding the political questions raised in this thesis. Even the very question of democracy in the Arab world, when discussed in the West, takes on an oxymoronic character that is symptomatic of this historical interaction.

The reason for this is quite clear. There are two contradictory and stereotypical images of Arab politics as seen through the lens of Western cultural bias: "oriental despotism" and weak, inept states attempting, unsuccessfully, to govern strong societies. The reason for these contradictory images is not based on fact, but a fundamental misunderstanding of Middle Eastern societies. For example, Marx's notions of the "hydraulic" central state and the communal/isolated villages as forming the basis of the "asiatic mode of

---

[3]Fouad Ajami, The Arab Predicament, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 134.

production" are divergent. If the central state takes on the exclusive role of providing hydraulic public works and, hence, life to perpetually arid regions as the basis of its power, then the "isolated" and autonomous village is an impossibility. Furthermore, the major "oriental despotisms" that Marx wrote of had very little to do with water works (e.g. Ottoman Turkey and Mogul India).

The conciliation between the two contradictory stereotypes is put succinctly by Ernest Gellner: "The ancient centralized state [of which it is fair to say that the Middle Eastern sultanates were a prototypical example and the basis for the "oriental despotism" image], notwithstanding its much-proclaimed absolutist pretensions, is seldom powerful enough to control effectively the daily life of the populations under its sway. Characteristically it governs, not a mass of atomized individuals, but a collection of at least partly autonomous local communities."[4] The distinction between the stereotypical image of despotism and totalitarian, absolutist despotism will be discussed in greater detail below as the subject has particular significance in the difference between "traditional" political structures and "neo-traditional" political structures or what Hisham Sharabi has termed "neopatriarchy."[5]

In neither stereotypical case (as is true with most stereotypes), however, is there any room for a realistic discussion of the problems and possibilities within Arab politics. In fact, Western authors, beginning with the ancient Greeks[6] and continuing more or less unabated through Bernard Lewis[7] and others, have

---

[4]Ernest Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 71.

[5]Hisham Sharabi, Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[6]"For Barbarians, being more servile in character than Hellenes, and Asiatics than Europeans, do not rebel against despotic government. Such royalties have the nature of tyrannies because the people are, by nature, slaves." Aristotle, Politics, Bk III, Chap. 14.

[7]See Bernard Lewis, "Roots of Muslim Rage," Atlantic Monthly,226:3 (September 1990). See also the writings of such influential Western minds as Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws and The Persian Letters, and Hegel, The Philosophy of History, among others.

tended to focus almost exclusively on the cultural differences between East and West, differences which have typically been presented in an extremely biased and chauvinistic manner. Arab culture and the political culture which springs from it cannot, they say, foster democratic institutions. But political culture changes much more rapidly than it is given credit for doing.

As it is sometimes defined, the concept of political culture is "understood as the predispositions, including beliefs, values, and affective attachments that influence political behavior," and it "assumes that the attitudes held by members of [a] society interact with memories of the past and expectations about the future, with the evolving interests of groups and individuals, and with the cultures of other nations."[8] It is this interaction with the past and with the cultures of other nations as well as the evolving expectations about the future that makes political culture so unstable and elusive at any given moment. What is clear, however, is that Arab political culture, as a rapidly changing and evolving phenomenon, cannot be held solely responsible for Arab political structures and institutions, particularly as those structures and institutions have remained relatively stagnant.

The prevailing stereotype, thanks to such visible personalities as Saddam Hussein and Hafez al-Asad, is that of "oriental despotism." This image, like the other, contradictory image, has deep roots in the Western cultural tradition beginning with the ancient Greek city-states. The "free" Greeks of the ancient world feared and hated the Eastern peoples of the then Persian empire "as instruments of despotic power bent on robbing them of liberty and reducing them to subject status. A war against Persia therefore partook of the character of

---

[8]Thomas F. Remington and Frederick C. Barghoorn, "Politics in the USSR," in Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell (eds.), Comparative Politics Today, Fifth Edition, (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), p. 359.

a 'crusade'..."[9] This "crusade" mentality and the idea of the alien *other* in both Western and Middle Eastern cultures has had a profound and determining influence on the self-image of both cultures through the centuries, an influence which will be discussed in detail below.

Economically, the development of mercantile capitalism and subsequent industrialization in the western European "core" has had an enormous impact on the "periphery" regions of which the Arab world is a part.[10] Specifically, the conditions which brought about the internal division of labor in the "core" area (e.g. the autonomous and indigenous explosion in cognitive growth spurred on by the unshackling of the economic sphere from the military/political and the religious) have produced, in their maturity, an international division of labor, or what Wallerstein referred to as the "modern world system."

This is a system in which the "periphery" areas can only be economically competitive with the "core" in the extraction of raw materials, hence creating a global division of labor. Whether the extractive process involves agriculture (from which the model of the Agrarian socioeconomic structure is derived) or mining of raw materials, it makes little difference. As will be discussed below, this situation has significant cultural and political consequences for the "periphery" countries as the extractive process is not conducive to producing an internal division of labor which is the bedrock of modern democracy at the nation-state level. This is not to say, however, that what I intend to put forth is strictly a variation on dependency theory, regarding the internal factors operating within Arab societies as mere reflections of external economic and political

---

[9]John Keegan, The Mask of Command, (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), p. 23.
[10]See Immanuel Wallerstein, The Modern World System, (San Francisco: Academic Press, 1980). See also Andre G. Frank, Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

relations.[11] To the contrary, as stated above, what will be outlined in the pages that follow are the principal factors which **predispose** rather than determine Arab political structures, and the internal elements of Arab societies are among them.

Before proceeding with the more general discussion of democracy in the Arab world, it will be first necessary to define the primary concept used in that discussion: democracy.

A. WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

"One cannot undertake the history of any historic entity...without establishing its definition, without fixing its limits."[12] This is especially true with regard to democracy, and attempting to define the term "democracy" is a bit like shooting at a rapidly moving target as the concept has been defined and redefined over the centuries depending on the various historical circumstances in which it appears. "'Democracy,'" to the ancient Greeks, "meant government by all the citizens, among whom slaves and women were not included."[13] Here lies the first key difference between the democracy of the ancients and that of the moderns: who is a citizen? Nowhere in the political philosophy of the Greeks do we find such notions as the all-inclusive citizenship of the "nation" and the consequent espousal of equality and freedom for all. These are strictly modern ideals. To the Greeks of antiquity, real freedom and equality could be found only in the "public" realm, as distinguished from the "private" realm of the individual household where the necessities of life were paramount. Quite the reverse is

---

[11]For an argument along these lines, see Samuel J. Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, "Modernization and Dependency: Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Latin American Underdevelopment" in Heraldo Munoz, ed., From Dependence to Development, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981).

[12]Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. I, (New York: Doubleday, 1968), p. 1.

[13]Bertrand Russell, A History of Western Philosophy, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), p. 9.

true now. Freedoms in the modern age are generally described in terms of the "private" realm as shelters against the onslaught of the "public" or political arena. The claim to citizenship and the rights and freedoms of the "public" realm of the citizens of antiquity was exclusively for the heads of households or such others who had the means or, to be more precise, the property to be free from the necessities of the "private" world of home and hearth. This, in most cases, excluded craftsmen and traders as well as women and slaves from "public," political life, from a *vita activa* .[14]

For the citizen, however, though they were a decidedly exclusive group, Athenian democracy "was in some respects more democratic than any modern system. Judges and most executive officers were chosen by lot, and served for short periods; they were thus average citizens, like our jurymen, with the prejudices and lack of professionalism characteristic of average citizens."[15] Political decisions and debate were made in common as were judicial decisions.[16] For those who were fortunate enough to be citizens, the concept of democracy represented true freedom, equality, and brotherhood.

The second key difference between the ancient and modern notions of democracy lies in the transferral of the term "democracy" onto a republican form of government. At the macro-societal, nation-state level, true democracy is a practical impossibility for obvious reasons. "The complex division of labor, the complementarity and interdependence and the constant mobility [economic and social]: all of these factors prevent citizens from doubling up as producers and participants in violence [i.e. the military/political structure]."[17] The solution to

---

[14]See, for example, Plato's statements on citizenship in Laws, Bk VIII, 842d and 846d as well as Aristotle's discussion of citizenship in Politics, Bk III, Chap. 5, among others. See also Hannah Arendt's discussion of the concept of labor in the *polis* and its implications for citizenship in The Human Condition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 79-84.

[15]Russell, p. 74.

[16]See Plato's description of the trial of Socrates in Apology.

[17]Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 88.

the problem is a representative form of government, or a republic. This also serves the purpose (echoing James Madison and, in this case, David Hume as well) of *refining* democracy in such a way as to dampen the effects of simple majority rule and the injustices which would (and have done so in ancient Athens if we are to judge by what we know of the turbulent history of that city-state) inevitably follow. To quote from Madison: "The effect of the first difference [i.e. between direct democracy and a representative republic] is, on the one hand to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom [as a group, not necessarily as individuals[18]] may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice, will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations."[19]

In view of the changing meaning of the term "democracy," what can be said regarding an operational definition of the term? As I see it, there are three primary elements involved in the modern notion of democracy. The first element, the cornerstone of any democratic system, is the ideal of the consent of the governed, either directly, as in the case of true democracy, or indirectly through electoral representation, as is the case today. It makes little or no difference for my purposes here whether the marxist critique of "bourgeois democracy," that the claim of consent of the many is "a sham that makes the de facto rule of the few more effective and secure behind a screen of formally democratic institutions,"[20] is valid or not. The perception of consent, real or

---

[18]As an aside, see Aristotle, Politics, Bk III, which Madison and others of his day were surely familiar with, for a discussion of the notion that because true wisdom and virtue are relatively rare in individuals, the more citizens involved in making decisions for the city, the more wise and virtuous those decisions were likely to be.

[19]James Madison, The Federalist: No. 10.

[20]Dietrich Rueschemeyer et al., Capitalist Development and Democracy, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 10.

otherwise, whether by direct participation or elected representation, serves as the validating principle of democracy.

The second element involved is that of law or, more specifically, the rule of abstract law versus the rule of personality. The term "abstract law," hereafter referred to as simply "law," is used here to differentiate between laws which are associated with a personality such as the edicts of a monarch or prophetic verse, and the abstract rules, discussed and deliberated among men, that apply equally to all members of a society. The rule of law, part of what Max Weber termed the "rationalization" of society, is key to the success of democratic institutions and is intricately woven into the fabric of that peculiar form of civilization known as "Western."

Of the forms of domination, or rule, which Weber studied in considerable detail, "only legal domination is shown to be the result of gradual development. The rule of law is neither bound up with the hero in history [as is the case within Weber's concept of charismatic domination] nor with sacred tradition [as in traditional domination]; it cannot 'erupt' like the first nor endure like the second. It is the specific product of human deliberation..."[21] developed in the unique history of Western civilization.

It is unique because of the peculiar confluence of the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian currents within it which provided the spark to ignite the Renaissance--a period that Perry Anderson has rightly called, "the crux of European history as a whole...The revival of Roman law [which provided a coherent and systematic framework for the purchase, sale, lease, hire, loan, and testation of goods and property, unlike, for example, the Islamic Shari'a which is uncertain in matters of real estate] was accompanied or succeeded by the reappropriation of virtually

---

[21]Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 397.

the whole cultural inheritance of the classical world [or, to put it in marxist terms, the cultural superstructure of antiquity was placed nearly intact onto the infrastructure of the feudal mode of production]---an event with literally earth-shattering consequences of which the progress and evolution of the rule of law was a major contributor."[22]

The importance of the rule of law as a necessary element of modern democracy is twofold. First, it serves as a protection for society against the capriciousness of the state and, therefore, provides an environment in which "civil society" can flourish. Secondly, it levels the playing field of economic competition where all economic actors operate under the same set of rules, engendering a situation where the market mechanism can function and where, as a consequence, a "rational," complex division of labor can proceed.

The third necessary element of modern democracy is the issue of citizenship. Who is a citizen and what does citizenship entail? As has been discussed above, the idea of citizenship has changed dramatically over the centuries. In the *polis*, citizenship was based on gender, property and, by extension, kinship groups. Now, it is based on one qualification, and one qualification only: nationality.

The simple answer to the question of who belongs in a given national group is those who were born into that group or have been admitted to it by "naturalization." But this still leaves us with the more complex issues of what constitutes a national group (or nation), and what is implied by the process of "naturalization?" Attempts to codify what exactly meant by the term "nation" have often led to a shared culture, a sense that a particular group has a shared history, language, race and/or religion. But this argument is at once too broad and too narrow. It is too broad because it includes such entities as clubs, political parties, and even street gangs as well as nations. It is too narrow because it fails

---

[22]Perry Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State, (New York: Verso, 1979), pp. 422, 426.

to account for the cohesive force that binds these collections of individuals together. That force has been described as "will," and the concept of "will" is the other principal claimant to the idea of what makes a nation. But this is also too broad as there are numerous other groups that "will" themselves into being through self-identification, coercion or self-interest.

Gellner's thought-provoking work on nations and nationalism sheds a great deal of light on these questions. "When general social conditions make for standardized, homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities, a situation arises in which well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identify. The cultures now seem to be the natural repositories of political legitimacy...Under these conditions...nations can be defined in terms both of will and of culture, and indeed in terms of the convergence of them both with political units."[23]

In other words, it is not merely the juxtaposition of culture and will, but a **consciousness** of culture and the will to perpetuate it that constitutes a nation. When culture becomes an identifier, a passport, if you will, to participate in the social and political life of the group, it becomes "visible," no longer reserved for the ruling elite or shrouded in the mystery of the high priesthood. It becomes the idiom through which all members of the society relate to one another and the lens though which those outside the group are viewed. As an aside, "the price [the formerly] high cultures pay for becoming the idiom of entire territorial nations, instead of appertaining to a clerkly stratum only, is that they become secularized. They shed absolutist and cognitive pretensions, and are no longer linked to doctrine."[24]

---

[23]Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, p. 55.
[24]Ibid., p. 78.

The result is that the nature of citizenship has changed from one of more substantial qualifications such as property, gender, and lineage to one of more cerebral qualifications: basic education, or the internalization of social norms, and the consequent ability to function in the highly complex cultural idiom of a given society. Hence, the importance of standardized and homogeneous education in the age of nationalism as well as the peculiar (or what would have been called peculiar in every age before our own) process known as "naturalization," through which, theoretically speaking, any individual from any place on earth can become a citizen of a given political unit simply by internalizing, by means of education, the culture of that unit over a more or less random time period to insure that the internalization is complete.

When these three elements (consent, rule of law, and citizenship within the confines of nationality) are brought together, they form the sufficient prerequisites for modern democracy. They provide the soil in which democracy may take root. Such attributes of democratic government as freedom of expression and association, regular free and fair elections, all-inclusive suffrage, and the like all must eventually follow from these three basic elements if democracy is going to succeed in the long-term, but it is not pre-ordained that they will necessarily do so.[25] "The most far-reaching ideals of democratic thought---of a government thoroughly and equally responsive to the preferences of all its citizens or of a polity in which human beings fulfill themselves through equal and active participation in collective self-rule"[26]---are precisely that, ideals. Ideals which, like Plato's allegory of the bright sunlight of ideas,[27] have no place

---

[25]Take for example the situation in Paraguay where General Stroessuer was elected in 1954 and ruled until deposed by a coup in 1990.
[26]Rueschemeyer et al., p. 10.
[27]Plato, The Republic, Bk VII, 514-520.

in the "cave" of human relations or human reality, but serve as the ultimate measuring sticks by which we gage the success or failure of our strivings.

II. SOCIOECONOMIC STRUCTURES; A GENERAL OVERVIEW

Before getting to the specifics of Arab socioeconomic structures, it will first be necessary to explore socioeconomic structures in general. Socioeconomic development has sometimes been divided into three broad stages or categories: hunter/gatherer, agrarian, and modern industrial.[28] While this division is indeed useful as a theoretical tool for organizing and clarifying the complexity that is the history of mankind, it is precisely this usefulness that often lends itself to the reification of these concepts and a consequent distortion of reality. "The mental construct of a cultural [or socioeconomic] stage merely means, analytically speaking, that the individual phenomena of which it is composed are 'adequate' to one another, that they have...a certain measure of inner 'affinity,' but not that they are related in any determinate way..."[29]

What is proposed in the following, moreover, is not intended as a purely materialist "stage" theory or a regurgitation of Marx. Although these "stages" are primarily differentiated on the basis of their economic regimes, it should be noted beforehand that the economic infrastructure cannot be fully separated from the social superstructure. The two are interactive with one another; elements of the infrastructure (i.e. technological advance in the means of

---

[28]There has certainly been no shortage of "stage" theories of development related principally to economics and the social consequences of various economic systems. Consider, for example, W.W. Rostow's The Stages of Economic Growth; Marx's Feudalism, Capitalism, and Socialism; and Adam Smith's Hunting, Pastoral, Agricultural, Commercial, and Manufacturing stages. The three "stages" that I have proposed here, based largely on the thought-provoking work of Ernest Gellner in Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History, cited above, are meant neither to add to nor detract from whatever merits these various other "stage" theories may have, but merely to provide a convenient intellectual framework within which Arab socioeconomic structures may be placed in relation to other socioeconomic structures, both past and present.

[29]Max Weber, "Gesammelte Aufsatze Zur Sozial-und Wirtschaftsgeschichte," quoted in Introduction to Economy and Society, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, eds., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. XLIV.

production) are the result of the superstructure (i.e. scientific ideas, ideology, and philosophy), and vice-versa. As a further disclaimer, these stages are not mutually exclusive nor are they necessarily a linear progression.[30] "The continuum of cultural development in the Mediterranean-European realm has up to now shown neither completed 'cycles' nor an unambiguous unilinear development."[31] One further, seemingly obvious, and perhaps most important point regarding "stage" theories in general and the one I will propose here in particular: there is no uniformity of "stages" across the spectrum of human existence at any one point in time. While one society may be primarily defined by one "stage," other societies, very often in close physical proximity, may be principally defined by the aspects of other "stages." This allows for the reality of the so-called demonstration effect in bringing about changes in the socioeconomic structure of a society through external influences.

This being the case, however, there is a great deal of merit in the division of socioeconomic structures in this manner. Related primarily to modes of production, each of the stages is readily discernable from the others, and each marks a relatively distinctive age and equally distinctive structural adaptations to that age.

---

[30]This is the error in conception or, perhaps more importantly, interpretation of most "stage" theories of development. The various "stages," as ideal types, are rarely, if ever, seen in reality. More often, what is seen is the overlap of some aspects of two or more different "stages." Further, "stage theory is most closely associated with a uni-directional rather than cyclic view of history...Even in the process of devolution and decline, the return to a level experienced previously is not viewed as a recurrence of the earlier age." Simon Kuznets, "Notes on Stage of Economic Growth as a System Determinant," quoted in Gerald M. Meier, Leading Issues in Economic Development, Fifth Edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 69. Incidentally, in Western cultures, the linear view has held sway over the cyclical view of history in general since the Aristotlian refutation (Politics, Bk V, Chap. 12) of the Platonic political cycles (The Republic, Bk VIII) as evidenced by, among others, Darwin's The Origin of the Species, Hegel's thesis + antithesis = synthesis in The Philosophy of History, and, in general, the pervasiveness of the idea of "progress" in Western culture.

[31]Weber, p. XCIX.

A. HUNTER/GATHERERS

The hunter/gatherer stage, within which I shall include pastoral groups, is defined primarily by a means of subsistence (or production) that relies on the movement of both people and property. Movement is necessitated by the changing of the seasons and the consequent shifting of suitable pasture, changes in vegetation, and/or seasonal movement of game; the threat of attack by more powerful groups; and the opportunity to attack and plunder other groups using "hit-and run" tactics which not only give the attackers the advantage of surprise, but also markedly decrease the probability of a successful counter-attack.

The fundamental consequences of this mode of production for the social structures of the hunter/gatherer groups are fourfold. First, because of the necessity for unencumbered movement, there can be only a limited accumulation of wealth; if it cannot be easily carried or herded off, property is a hindrance rather than a benefit. Second, as a result of the necessity for movement, the lack of accumulation of wealth, and the general harshness of existence at the mercy of nature and the seasons, these groups tend to be relatively few in number in comparison to agrarian or modern industrial societies.

Third, primarily as a result of the hunter/gatherers' dependence on and submission to the forces of nature as well as the overwhelming prevalence of the spoken over the written word (literacy is seldom, if ever, found among hunter/gatherers), these groups tend to have conceptual systems which are referentially fragmented yet socially united. By this, I mean that the objective or factual world is not seen as a whole. Instead, the factual world is divided into "multi-purpose sub-systems" in which facts and data are interwoven with strands of social meaning and ritual. While "the social elements in each sub-system form a reasonably coherent whole with the social elements in the other

sub-systems...it is the empirical constituents of the diverse sub-systems (when they are present at all) which fail to cross-relate to each other. Unpurified, meshed-in with the social, they cannot cross-relate to other pure 'factual' elements, and there is no common idiom in terms of which they could do so. Instead, they generally butress up the same pervasive social vision."[32]

What these multi-purpose sub-systems engender, by not allowing the intrusion of untainted facts (i.e. facts that are not bound by countless threads of social meaning), is "a coherent vision of the social and natural world. They produce a *cosmos* in which the natural and the social are not sharply or systematically distinguished "[33] It is also no coincidence that these groups, as a result of the referentially fragmented way in which the natural world is viewed and the binding of logically inconsistent facts within webs of social meaning, tend to be exclusively polytheistic. Each deity has its own referential fragment over which it has domain within the coherent social pantheon of the deities of the *cosmos*.

Fourth, hunter/gatherers tend to be organized along patrimonial and patriarchical lines held together by a strong honor and shame moral system. "Honor and shame are the constant preoccupation of individuals in small-scale, exclusive societies where face to face, as opposed to anonymous, relations are of paramount importance..."[34] The moral systems of honor and shame most likely developed as a means of social control to ameliorate the intense conflict that the competition for scarce resources (e.g. suitable pasture, access to water supplies,

---

[32]Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History, p. 60. See also David Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, Bk I, for perhaps the definitive, empiricist analysis of fact/fact and fact/value separation.
[33]Ibid.
[34]John Peristiany, Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society, (Chicago: Midway Reprints, 1974), p. 11.

limited wealth, and a limited number of suitable marriage partners) created within these groups.

These general characteristics of hunter/gatherer groups tend to produce micro-societies[35] with limited resources that are polytheistic and, despite being patriarchical, are surprisingly egalitarian among the various leaders or patriarchs within the group.[36] Decisions regarding such issues as movement, war and peace, and the division of spoils are made in conference with due respect given to the opinions of the "chief" or the head of the society. The reason for this is quite clear: Because of the lack of wealth accumulation, the ability of any one segment of the group to pack up and move on with few material consequences, and the relative equality of martial abilities,[37] no one member of the society is capable of completely dominating the others.

---

[35]Although the prevalent tendency for Hunter/Gatherers is toward the micro-society, this does not necessarily mean that they are few in number or that they are martially impotent. The nomadic tribes of the Asian steppes (most notably, the Mongols and the Huns) as well as the tribes which emerged from the Arabian Peninsula to subjugate a majority of the then known world in the seventh and eighth centuries C.E. were Hunter/Gatherers by the above classification scheme. These examples, however, are the exception rather than the rule and, moreover, they still exhibit the same micro-societal characteristics of being highly personalized entities of tightly knit, more or less independent patriarchical groups that happen to be interwoven into a much larger whole.

[36]Despite the overall tendency towards egalitarianism, there have been documented cases of pastoral groups oscillating between fairly egalitarian tribal political structure and tyrannical forms of rule based on the overwhelming strength of one individual or, more likely, a group or clan. See, for instance, the work of Robert Montagne on the Berber tribes of the Atlas in The Berbers: Their Social and Political Organization, (London: Cass Publishing, 1973).

[37]Because this mode of production involves all of the male members of the society as warriors, either in war-making itself or in hunting game, and because the non-martial activities of these groups (e.g. herding livestock or moving the group from place to place) are not particularly labor-intensive, all the male members of the group may, in effect, take on the roles of both producers and protectors without having to sacrifice one for the other. "Pastoralism is not labor-intensive, but it is defense intensive." Ernest Gellner, Muslim Society, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 21.

B. AGRARIAN SOCIETIES

Agrarian societies look much different from those of the hunter/gatherers. Unlike the mobile hunter/gatherer groups, agrarian societies are based upon a settled community which is tied to the land for its survival. The land is worked in a highly labor-intensive fashion to produce not only subsistence but, if nature cooperates, a surplus as well, and the accumulation of wealth is thereby made possible on a scale unknown to the hunter/gatherers. The agricultural mode of production leads to several tendencies in the social structures of these groups which vary significantly from the tendencies of hunter/gatherer socioeconomic formations.

First, the presence of a storable, settled surplus makes possible a fuller development of arts and crafts as well as trade with other settled communities. Second, as a result of the highly labor-intensive nature of this mode of production, producers must devote all of their time and effort to the land. They must sacrifice their role as protectors[38] in order to be successful producers. Furthermore, the labor-intensiveness of the agrarian mode of production makes agrarian societies Malthusian in nature; the more offspring, the more production. Third, the existence of a stored surplus, not only as a source of wealth but as a "insurance policy" for the survival of the community in years of unusual and unfavorable climatic conditions,[39] necessitates the protection and guarding of that surplus against theft or destruction from within or, more likely, outside the community; it is a matter of survival.

Fourth, the presence of immobile wealth within an environment of marauding hunter/gatherer groups and neighboring, predatory agrarian

---

[38]See previous note.

[39]The necessity of this "insurance policy" is poignantly illustrated by the Biblical tale of Joseph's experience in Egypt. See Genesis, 41.

communities creates a situation in which a siege mentality is likely to develop. As a result, we see the construction of citadels, fortresses and walled communities or cities, and the "preemptive strike" against a neighboring community becomes a rational mode of behavior. "Generically, this much can be said of agrarian society: its dependence on a storable and seizable surplus and on land, the principle of escalation of conflict and of the rationality of preemptive action, jointly ensure that they tend to be governed in a authoritarian way by a group or stratum which monopolizes the means of coercion."[40] This brings us to the fifth, and perhaps most important, tendency of agrarian societies: the formation of a simple division of labor.

As stated above, producers must be exclusively that. Due to the labor-intensive nature of the agrarian mode of production, they may not double as protectors or warriors as in the hunter/gatherer socioeconomic formations. Therefore, a warrior class or stratum develops whose sole function is the protection of the producers or, more often than not, the protection of the produce itself. It naturally follows that this class of warrior elites becomes a ruling class which subsists on the products of the producers and tends to gain wealth by exploiting the producers with the aforementioned monopoly on the means of coercion. Any surplus, therefore, is usually under the control of and at the disposal of the warrior elites rather than the producers themselves.

All of this seems to be terribly unjust from the producers' point of view. On the surface, it would appear that the relatively small warrior stratum of society would be incapable of maintaining such an unjust situation over an extended period, even taking into account the siege mentality of this type of society,

---

[40]Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History, p. 99. For an extrapolation from this argument, see Charles Tilly, Coercion, Capital and European States, (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), as he makes a intriguing case that this monopoly on violence and coercion by a relatively small group within society played a large part in the creation and formation of the European states.

without being overthrown by an organized revolt of the producers who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, and this is indeed what often occurs throughout the long, cyclical history of agrarian societies; there tends to be a violent, periodical recycling of the warrior elites from the productive masses. Stability is never fully achieved, but the authority of a particular group of warrior elites and relatively long-term order is maintained in agrarian societies where the concept of "legitimacy," the perception that the existing order is just and beneficial, comes into play. "A legitimate government is one which has succeeded in persuading the governed that it is consistent with their interests, their duty, or their honor to obey the few."[41] In other words, it is when the "foxes" (to use Machiavelli's analogy[42]), who rule by guile as opposed to the "lions" who rule by force or brutality, come to power.

The concept of "legitimacy" would have little meaning to the hunter/gatherers. Their societies are ruled by the most able and fit among them, generally with provisions for consultation as already mentioned. Moreover, if factionalism becomes too much of a problem, there is always the option for one or more of the factions to opt out, to simply pack up and leave with relatively few material consequences. For the agrarians, however, there are significant centripetal forces (primarily, being tied to the land for their survival) which tend to hold these societies together (in the physical sense) when, under similar circumstances of factionalism, the hunter/gatherers would have long since settled their disputes or gone their separate ways. A sense of legitimacy is, therefore, an important factor in holding agrarian societies together in the spiritual sense as much as they are held together in the physical sense. This still

---

[41]Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. 2, (New York: Doubleday, 1970), p. 180.
[42]See The Prince.

leaves us with the question of how a sense of legitimacy or, to be more specific, political legitimacy is achieved in agrarian societies.

The other element of the simple division of labor in agrarian societies, aside from the producers (i.e. the economic realm which includes craftsmen and traders as well as farmers) and the warrior elites, is the clerisy, or that stratum of agrarian society which has a monopoly on the sacred and on the rituals which surround it. Members of this stratum are the agrarian society's "specialists in cognition;"[43] they are the repositories of the society's high culture, traditions, language, law,[44] and, as such, they are the bestowers of legitimacy upon the social order.

The question of why such a stratum or class develops within agrarian societies is a complex and perhaps unanswerable one. It would seem, however, that this development is associated with the combination of two somewhat contradictory themes: the expansion of the ritualistic sage practices and beliefs of the hunter/gatherers that are ascriptive to the person and lineage of the sages themselves to include not just the single tribe or groups of tribes, but a settled community with increasing numbers, a simple division of labor, and the resulting increase in vertical social stratification; and the growing use of the written word with which ritual is "formalized" and goes beyond the person of the sage to form a canon or dogma that is transcendent of time, place, and the group or individual. The sages then become "priests" who are touched by, and are the keepers and guardians of the divine or sacred, but are not necessarily divine in and of themselves, and whose power rests not in their person per se,

---

[43]Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History, p. 121.

[44]The fundamental importance which is placed by all religions on the strict formalities of ritual performance leads to a codification of those rituals. "This religious formalism--very probably the first form of legal formalism--comes from the fact that the formula to be pronounced and the movements to be made contain within themselves the sources of their efficacy, they would lose it if they did not conform absolutely to the type consecrated by success." Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, (New York: The Free Press, 1915), p. 50.

but in their knowledge of the Word. "Mankind entered the age of Plato when the authority of concepts became a *theory* , when the Transcendent became manifest as such, and when the paradigmatic incarnation of the concept was no longer, or not exclusively, found in ritual, but rather in writing. Ritual had once underwritten the Word, but the Word itself now became a ritual."[45]

The rise of the Transcendent produces a socially **and** referentially united *cosmos*. The "similarity of the rational regularity of the stars in their heavenly courses, as regulated by divine order, to the inviolable sacred social order in terrestrial affairs...makes the *universal* gods the responsible guardians of both these phenomena."[46] The "multi-purpose sub-systems" of the hunter/gatherers give way to a unity of the social and natural worlds. A single "world view" comes into being within which "history" develops as a social, evolutionary process of Man's compliance with or rejection of the natural order of the all-encompasing Transcendent. One deity, one world, and one law, although not necessarily in this order,[47] is the universalizing, overarching theme of cognitive development in agrarian societies.

The idea of a "world history," at the conceptual level, brings every aspect of the natural and social realms into focus as a whole as opposed to just pieces of a puzzle acting or being acted upon by separate and disparate forces as in the hunter/gatherers' conceptual system. "The idea of one sole God...was received [by Muhammad's mostly pastoral contemporaries in Mecca] as simply bizarre.[48] It was not that the notables of the Quraysh disagreed with him; it was that at the beginning they simply did not understand what he was talking about..."[49] They

---

[45]Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History, p. 87.
[46]Weber, p. 417. Emphasis is mine.
[47]In the Roman Empire, for instance, this sequence was more or less reversed: One law, one world, and one deity.
[48]"Maketh he the gods one God? Lo! That is an astounding thing," Qur'an, 38:6.
[49]Fatima Mernissi, Islam and Democracy, (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1992), p. 97.

did not understand the homogenization of thought that he wanted to bring about.

However, while the natural and social, or the referential and non-referential, are thereby joined at the hip and homogenized, it is the social that gains conceptual dominance over the natural. Unlike the conceptual systems of the hunter/gatherers which are fragmented with no clear-cut dominance of the referential or the non-referential causes and effects of events,[50] the conceptual systems of the agrarian societies include very specific lines of causation between the natural and the social; the natural is **caused** by the social, and empirical facts are thereby slaved to social values. In this situation, strict adherence to the Word is the key to the survival of the community lest natural disasters or invasion destroy them; and this can only be accomplished by the literate stratum of society, or the clerisy, as the sole keepers of the history, the language, the rituals, and the laws of the Transcendent.

Still, the fear of communal disaster in this world is fairly remote and (to use Gellner's phrase) "pretty anemic stuff" on which to hold such power over the laity and to fend off the warrior elites. Something more potent, aimed directly at the individual is needed to bolster the legitimacy and the political legitimizing force of the clerisy. This is the essence of the transformation from "communalistic" to "salvationist" religious practice and belief which occurs in agrarian societies, the root of which lies (at least in the monotheistic traditions if not in the traditions of the Indian subcontinent and beyond to the East) in the Greek metaphysical construct of the immortal soul.[51]

---

[50]For instance, if rainfall occurs, then it can be either the result of the capricious whim of a deity or as a result of a particular ritual performance, or both.

[51]See Plato, Phaedo, 80a-b, and Meno, 81c, the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and Aristotle, On the Soul, 408b.

Within this metaphysical construct, the philosopher alone is the possessor of real knowledge of the soul and of the Ideal or Transcendent, and the concept of the philosopher-king in The Republic is a reasoned argument for the rule of the clerisy. It is an attempt at coercion by reason rather than by violence to ensure authority and social order. However, "the trouble with coercion through reason is that only the few are subject to it, so that the problem arises of how to assure that the many, the people who in their very multitude compose the body politic, can be submitted to the same truth. In The Republic, the problem is solved through the myth of rewards and punishments in the hereafter, a myth which Plato himself obviously neither believed nor wanted the philosophers to believe. What the allegory of the cave story in the middle of The Republic is for the few or for the philosopher, the myth of hell at the end is for the many who are not capable of philosophical truth."[52]

The concept of the hereafter and of a vengeful god are the most powerful symbols the clerisy has at its disposal to maintain its authority and thereby stabilize what would otherwise be, as pointed out above, an extremely unstable socioeconomic structure. Plato's arguments, although they constitute much of the basis for the development of the god concept[53] and the theory of the hereafter, never had the explosive impact of later theological arguments. They lack both the cohesion (claiming one thing in this work, and another in that) and the passion displayed by religious prophets. In the words of Emerson: "The defect of Plato in power is only that which results inevitably from his quality. He is intellectual in his aim; and therefore, in his expression, literary...It is almost

---

[52]Hannah Arendt, Between Past and Future, (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 108.

[53]The common origin for much of Christian and Jewish philosophy and theology is Platonic. See, in particular, St. Augustine, City of God, BK I, Chap. 35; II, 14; and VIII, 5; and those, such as St. Anselm, who followed his work. See also the impact of Greek philosophy (not only Platonic, but Stoic and Pythagorean as well) on the work of Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, at the turn of the era.

the sole deduction from the merit of Plato that his writings have not---what is no doubt incident to this regency of intellect in his work---the vital authority which the screams of prophets and the sermons of unlettered Arabs and Jews possess."[54]

The evolution and systemization of the god concept would take several more centuries and much rational thought delving deeply into the causes and effects operative in the cosmos, as well as "the vital authority" of prophets. For instance, while Aristotle rejected Plato's doctrine of the Ideas (as he rejected so many of Plato's theoretical doctrines) in Metaphysics, there is a critical passage in that work that deserves attention: "Even when the Forms exist, still the [material and sensible] things that share in them do not come into being unless there is something to originate the movement."[55] In other words, although this is part of Aristotle's refutation of the Ideas as first causes, it is, ironically, a key to understanding the rational progression from the inanimate Ideas to a "living" first cause, the ultimate Ideal: God. "The God of the theologians, from Aristotle to Calvin, is one whose appeal is intellectual: His existence solves certain puzzles which otherwise would create argumentative difficulties in the understanding of the universe. This Deity...appears at the end of a piece of reasoning, like the proof of a proposition in geometry..."[56]

The apparent rationality of this "cause and effect" system of thought, despite its promising beginnings and contrary to expectations, does not produce lasting cognitive advance, and even tends to stifle such advances over time. First, it is

---

[54]Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Plato; or, the Philosopher," in The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 490-491. The difference between the philosophical teaching of antiquity and prophetism can be summed under the heading of passion. "Prophets...have elements in common with teachers of ethical philosophy, like Pythagoras [and Plato], who gather disciples and found schools; but such teachers lack the emotional sermon through which the prophet proclaims religious truths." Bendix, p. 90. The virtue that the philosophers of antiquity held to be the good in Man is precisely a controlling and a harnessing of the passions by reason, whereas prophetism speaks directly to the passions, bypassing reason altogether.

[55]Aristotle, Metaphysics, BK I, Chap. 9.

[56]Russell, p. 585.

"upside-down" with regard to causes and effects. By the rational, calculating, and ever doubtful scientific mode of thought which has been the engine behind the explosion of cognitive growth in modern industrial societies, the natural causes the social, or certain empirical facts lead to social consequences, not vice-versa. Furthermore, the enslavement of facts to values smothers scientific, rational, and purely "objective" thought, except in the relatively rare cases of "pure" geometry, mathematics, and even astronomy as long as their proofs and results supported the position of the clerisy and posed no danger to the socioeconomic order. "Scientific" thought can survive and even flourish within the agrarian order[57] when it pertains to mathematics or astronomy or any other science which is devoted to the treatment of "simple" objects, but the scientific method of investigation and the cognitive advances it promotes can only come to dominate when it is applied to Man himself in his economic and social organization.

Agrarian societies violently oppose any advance in cognition , of which the fact/fact and fact/value separation of the scientific method is a key, which threatens that socioeconomic order. "A society grounded in substantive [as opposed to formal or bureaucratic[58]] notions of rationality may thus be relatively secure in its values, which are regarded as matters of fact, but inevitably demonstrates a resistance to the possibility of its reinvention in history, for its ideals are regarded as untransformable reflections of nature itself."[59]

Take, for example, the late European Middle Ages debate on whether the Earth was at the center of the known universe or occupied some other, less

---

[57]See, for example, the synopsis of the careers of al-Razi (865-925 C.E.), al-Biruni (973-1050 C.E.), and al-Khwarizmi (780-850 C.E.) in medicine, astronomy, and mathematics in Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, Tenth Edition, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970), pp. 365-367, 376-377, 379-380, respectively.

[58]See Weber, Chaps. VIII and XI.

[59]Anthony J. Cascardi, The Subject of Modernity, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 41.

glamorous and less appealing place within it. The notion, or the "fact," that the Earth was at the center of the *cosmos* was very much tied to the belief system which bestowed order and legitimacy on society. It was intolerable that man, God's greatest creation whom He created in the image of Himself, could be relegated to some inconsequential corner of a vast, cold universe. This fact calls into question the validity of the whole belief system. Therefore, if that belief system was to maintain its validity, and hence preserve the social order, the "fact" of the Earth's central place within the *cosmos* must be maintained. Dissent is therefore crushed and cognitive growth is stunted. In this regard, Copernicus and Socrates[60] suffered much the same fate for much the same reason: they challenged the social order, not by denouncing the warrior elites (or the political rulers), but by endangering the validity of the belief system of the clerisy which held the social order together and provided its legitimacy.

Second, "every aspect of religious phenomena that points beyond evils and advantages in this world is the work of a special evolutionary process, one characterized by distinctively dual aspects. On the one hand, there is an ever-broadening rational systemization of the god concept [or, for that matter, the teachings of Buddha or the Hindu karma concept] and of the thinking concerning the possible relationships of Man to the divine. On the other hand, there ensues a characteristic recession of the original, practical and calculating rationalism. As such primitive rationalism recedes, the significance of distinctively religious behavior is sought less and less in the purely external advantages of everyday economic [or military/political] success. Thus, the goal of religious behavior is successively 'irrationalized' until finally other-worldly, non-economic goals come to represent what is distinctive in religious

---

[60]See Plato, Apology.

behavior."[61] "At some point in its development, every genuinely devout religious faith brings about, directly or indirectly, that 'sacrifice of the intellect' in the interests of a trans-intellectual, distinctive religious quality of absolute surrender[62] and utter trust...The salvation religions teaching belief in a transcendental god stress...the inadequacy of the individual's intellectual powers when he confronts the exalted state of the divinity."[63]

The paradox is that the seemingly rational, systematic formalization of the Word represents the suppression of cognitive potential and the progressive irrationalization of behavior when this type of social organization meets with success. "What in the past has worked for the welfare of the individual and the community will work in the present. Experience has proven the merit of this particular way of life; wisdom dictates that it be followed. Adherence to the teaching [of the Word] assures the individual of acceptance in the group. It also supports established practices and strengthens the status quo, consequences that work to the benefit of those in power."[64]

All of this is not to say that religion, any religion, in and of itself, is the root cause of social, political, and economic stagnation; or, to take the reverse argument, that it is primarily responsible for social, political, and economic success and achievement as has been argued by Weber[65] and those that followed his work. "The difficulty with attempts to connect a particular religious confession with a particular form of moral [or political and economic] behavior lies in the fact that life is never as clear as doctrine. Religion as it is creedally

---

[61]Weber, p. 424.
[62]Interestingly, this is a close translation of the Arabic "Islam," or "absolute submission."
[63]Weber, p. 567.
[64]Dianne Bergant, "The Perspective of Wisdom," in M. Jack Suggs et al., eds., The Oxford Study Bible, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 175.
[65]See Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, (New York: Charles Scribner, 1958).

defined and religion as it is actually lived exist at different ends of a very long spectrum..."[66]

It is, therefore, the **role** or function that religion and those who are most closely associated with it perform within the structure of a given society, not the religion itself per se, which largely determines its interpretation and influence, and whether or not that society will become stagnated. As James Madison observed, even "when the Almighty himself condescends to address mankind in their own language, His meaning, luminous as it must be, is rendered dim and doubtful by the cloudy medium through which it is communicated."[67] In other words, while religion defines the basic metaphysical essence of a culture, it is itself defined, interpreted, and reinterpreted based on the circumstances of its use and its place within the socioeconomic structure. If the metaphysical "building blocks" of culture, as defined by religion, were the sole basis for institutional structure,[68] then the Christian societies of Europe and North America would be just as socially, economically, and politically stagnant as the Islamic societies of the Arab world, perhaps even more so. In fact, in the writings of the "founding fathers" of the American republic there are numerous references to and descriptions of God and the nature of the universe which are strikingly similar to those found in the Qur'an.[69] Indeed, there is much evidence to support the notion that the Judeo-Christian tradition, with its rabbinical and priestly hierarchy and its strict dogmatism (at least to the time of Martin Luther),[70] is

---

[66]Steven Ozment, Protestants: The Birth of a Revolution, (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 213.
[67]James Madison, The Federalist No. 37.
[68]A position that Daniel Pipes and Bernard Lewis seem to support.
[69]Compare, for example, Thomas Jefferson's letters to John Adams of 1820 and 1823 in The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Adrienne Koch and William Peden, eds., (New York: Random House, 1993), pp. 639-640, 644-645, and the Qur'an, 25: 45-54, 50: 6-10.
[70]It should be noted that Jewish scriptural interpretation and norms for religious and social conduct have remained somewhat more elastic, since the period of the Babylonian exile, than the Christian dogmatism found throughout the greater part of the church's history. It was not until the Reformation that there appears, outside the hierarchy of the church and its various monastic

more antithetical to democratic political structures than the Orthodox (or Sunni) Islamic tradition in which there is, theoretically, no priesthood with its inevitable hierarchy of faith.[71]

It is when religion performs the societal function of a political "ideology" (in the Marxist sense of the word) that it becomes intolerant, stifling, and dictatorial in nature. Some brief examples from the history of the Christian church may shed more light on the subject. In its origin, the Christian religion was simply the "good news" of salvation, forgiveness, and the love of one's fellows through the beneficence of God. It became, however, after the collapse of Roman secular authority, a politicized religion; an ideology to maintain the social order and to suppress rebellious thoughts and the deeds that follow from them.[72] "As long as Christianity was without secular interests and responsibilities, it left the beliefs and speculations about the hereafter as free as they had been in antiquity. Yet when the purely religious development of the new creed had come to an end and the Church had become aware of, and willing to take over, political responsibilities, she found herself confronted with a perplexity similar to the one

---

orders, a strong move toward interpretation and reinterpretation of scripture as it applies to social and political life.

[71]"Islam too [as in the monastic communities of dissidents from the hierarchy of the clerisy] preaches the direct relation of individuals to the deity. But generally attempts at reformation are quickly followed by a reversal, a backsliding to the earlier condition. Social pressures making for a clerisy distinct from civil society are too strong." Gellner, Plough, Sword, and Book: The Structure of Human History, p. 165.

[72]Despite the eternal philosophical debate over the priority of the *vita contemplativa* or the *vita activa* , and despite Goethe's upside-down attempt to marry the two with his Faustian theory of action (that the deed is creativity, for how could the cosmos have been created out of thoughtless chaos if this were not the case?), a theory, incidentally, that became an integral part of Marx's revolutionary thesis ("Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, but the real task is to alter it." Marx, Eleven Theses on Feuerbach), it is my contention here that the idea most often precedes the action rather than the reverse. The most efficient way to control deeds is to control thoughts, and from Plato, the Church hierarchy, the Ulema and the Imams, to Joseph Goebbels and George Orwell, it would appear that I am not alone in this view. Incidentally, the above is one of the many contradictions found in Marx. If the new order or the "end of history" will ultimately come about independent of action, then why the need for action to bring it about?

that had given rise to Plato's political philosophy,"[73] namely, how to ensure authority and social order without resorting to violence?

The answer to this riddle, as pointed out above, is to make extensive use of the most powerful symbols that the clerisy possesses: its monopoly on the sacred, and the perception of its direct influence on the eternal salvation or, more importantly, the eternal damnation of the individual. Through these powerful symbols, the clerisy maintains the order of agrarian society, not by suppressing the rebellious action or by pushing the social order towards a more productive and/or fulfilling life in this world, but by suppressing any thought process that would lead to a disturbance in the ideological basis of power.

In writing of the reasons for the formation of various sects within Christianity after the sixteenth century explosion brought on by the Reformation, Thomas Hobbes has this to say: "I confess I know very few controversies amongst Christians of points necessary to salvation. They are the questions of authority and power over the Church, or of profit, or of honour to churchmen, that for the most part raise all the controversies."[74] The reasons for the Reformation are varied and complex, but one point stands out clearly: it was a rebellion of the producers against the authority of the clerisy which, as long as it held sway, was a primary (if not **the** primary) bar on the exit to the closed cycle of European, agrarian societies. The economic Gulliver was beginning to awaken.

It is here that we see the development of the famed "Protestant work ethic" as but a side effect of taking religion out of the exclusive hands of the clerisy thereby destroying their monopoly on the sacred, and putting it into the hands of the productive masses. The producers had good reason to be bitter about the idleness and sloth of the clerisy which lived by the "bloody sweat" of the peasant and

---

[73]Arendt, Between Past and Future, p. 132.
[74]Thomas Hobbes, Behemoth, or the Long Parliament, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 63.

working men and women. That the clerisy had, over several centuries, hoarded the wealth of the productive masses obviously engenders an opposing reaction that religious men should also be productive men. However, "the utopian literature of the time indicates a clear preference for centralized, authoritarian regimes in which no independent political entities or dissent are tolerated and obedience is the most valued and praised trait of the good citizen. To Luther and his contemporaries, something more basic than political freedom and equality was at stake in the hierarchical ordering of home and society: the viability of life itself."[75]

In this, we see the authoritarian nature of agrarian society, the logic of the system if you will, persisting even though that order is in the process of change. Hobbes and Luther, although they were not immediate contemporaries, were of one mind regarding the sanctity of obedience and order in society. They were both extremely fearful of the kinds of social and political disorder brought about by the unhinging of the agrarian socioeconomic order in the time of the Reformation.[76] However, they each took decidedly different approaches to the problem.

To Hobbes, the best way to ensure the viability of the social existence of Man was to merge the "Ecclesiasticall" and the "Civil," or the religious and the political, into a single, monolithic and hierarchical institution.[77] "To the Luther of the 1520's, [however,] the great enemies of the age were the advocates of absolute cultural uniformity, whose aim was to identify church and state, and collapse religion and society together. On the one hand, they were the magistrates and princes [i.e. the warrior elites of Agrarian society] who treated the

---

[75]Ozment, p. 143.

[76]For a particularly vivid account of the consequences of the social and political disorder brought about by the Reformation, see Jon Swan, "Apocalypse at Munster," in Robert Cowley, ed., Experience of War, (New York: Dell Publishing, 1992), pp. 93-109.

[77]See Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan.

Church and the soul as also their wards; on the other, they were the evangelical fanatics who wanted to rule the world by the Sermon on the Mount, as the Pope had earlier aspired to do by canon law. As long as those in power viewed the sacred and the civic as coextensive realms, society would only oscillate between attempts by each side to dominate the other."[78] This, in effect, is the very essence of the agrarian socioeconomic order; a perpetual oscillation between the warrior elites and the clerisy, sometimes at odds with one another, and at other times closely cooperating, but always needing each other, and always dominating and exploiting the productive masses.

The clerisy maintains its monopoly on the sacred even as, in some cases, agrarian communities grow to become prosperous agrarian empires and/or literacy becomes more widespread, by means of language and the complexity of canonical text and the laws derived from it. In these cases, the clerical and "official" language of the society is the language of the conquerors or, more specifically, the language of the elites among the conquerors, and while the vanquished may become part and parcel of the larger whole of the empire, the language of the sacred is incomprehensible to them. Furthermore, as time goes by, even the "everyday" language of the conquering peoples may become distinct from the sacred language of the canon and the language of the elite, again rendering the rites of the sacred incomprehensible to the laity,[79] which has the

---

[78]Ozment, pp. 126-127.

[79]Take, for example, the continued use of Latin as the language of the Catholic Church when, from the early Middle Ages to the present, the vast majority of those under its sway had little or no comprehension of that language. As an example more relevant to this thesis, consider the differences, sometimes minute and sometimes vast, between the various languages and dialects of the Muslim world and the language of the Qur'an which is utterly incomprehensible to some and, to others, is "stuffy" and formalistic. "Among the higher strata of agro-literate society it is clearly advantageous to stress, sharpen, and accentuate the diacritical, differential, and monopolizable traits of the privileged groups. The tendency of liturgical languages to become distinct from the vernacular is very strong; it is as if literacy alone did not create enough of a barrier between cleric and layman, as if the chasm between them had to be deepened, by making the language not merely recorded in an inaccessible script, but also incomprehensible when articulated." Gellner, Nations

happy side effect of instilling the awe of the unknown within the hearts of the lay community.

The building of a complex canon provides not only a status marker for the clerisy, but also provides a bulwark against prophetism. "In conservative and ritualist societies [i.e. agrarian societies] there is no differentiation of orders; the same socioreligious values pervade economics, politics, and private life. The breakdown of conservatism by prophetism opens the way for increased autonomy in each order of activity"[80] and, consequently, breaks down the authority of the clerisy. "Even in the absence of a prophetic challenge, [prophecy being a direct challenge to priestly traditions and the magical elements surviving in religious ritual by its strong appeal to the laity,] priests endeavor to systematize established beliefs [in the form of an increasingly complex canon] in order to protect their position against attack and to combat skepticism or indifference."[81] Both the language barrier and the sheer complexity of the canon insure that the clerisy remains a select group within the agrarian society even if admittance to it is no longer based on lineage alone (which is usually the case).

This is of great importance, both to the warrior elites and to the clerisy, for the maintenance of status boundary markers in this type of socioeconomic order. An individual's language and culture are the status symbols in agrarian societies that mark the elites as distinct from the rest of society. It is, therefore, beneficial for the maintenance of the socioeconomic order to preserve the heterogeneity of culture and language within it rather than to attempt to define political units in terms of a homogeneous cultural grouping, as is the case (as will be discussed below) in modern industrial societies.[82]

---

and Nationalism, p. 11. See also, on the subject of the significance of canon formation, James A. Sanders, From Sacred Story to Sacred Text, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

[80]Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. 2, p. 273.

[81]Bendix, p. 90.

[82]Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, p. 11.

One final point regarding the clerisy within the agrarian socioeconomic structure. Since they produce no wealth themselves, and because it is inconsistent with their doctrines and their place within society to forcibly take subsistence and/or genuine wealth from the producers, one is left with the question of how the clerisy maintains its material basis. The solution to this problem is "voluntary" donations from the producers. "The best way [for the producers] to escape violent confiscation [by the warrior elites] was to link one's wealth to religion, seeking the protection of the sacred. Pious foundations of one kind and another could benefit the original owner and donor, or could at least help him retain the residue. So wealth flowed to the temple, the monastery, the upkeep of a mosque school. It is almost meaningless to ask whether the faithful benefactors were buying the favors of heaven, or merely escaping the rapacity of the political/military thugs. They were doing both, fleeing robbery, and securing merit both in this world and the next."[83]

As we have seen, the clerisy is violently opposed to cognitive innovation. On the surface of things, however, it would seem that the other power group within agrarian societies, the warrior elites, would seem to favor cognitive advance as a means obtain the rudiments of a technological advantage on the battlefield. This is an erroneous assumption. Cognitive advance and the accompanying technological innovation is just as dangerous to the position of the warrior elites as it is to the clerisy; for real and lasting cognitive advances can only take place in the economic realm of the producers. It occurs, as we shall see in the following discussion of modern industrial societies, when the economic Gulliver becomes free from, and comes to dominate, the Lilliputian military/religious power bloc that binds it within the structure of agrarian societies.

---

[83]Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History, p. 103.

Take, for example, the invention of the crossbow. By most accounts, the crossbow was developed around 500 B.C.E.,[84] but it did not make any significant impact in Europe until the Medieval period. Why? The answer lies in the fact that "when commoners on foot [i.e. producers] could so easily kill their social betters, the fabric not only of warfare but of European society began to fray...Military prepotency was no longer reserved for one class, a fact dramatized when Richard the Lion-hearted himself was shot down by a crossbow as he cavorted before a besieged castle. Rather quickly the Church [i.e.clerisy] stepped into the breach. In 1139 [C.E.] the Second Lateran Council outlawed the use of the crossbow among Christians (though not against Muslims). The Church was not alone. The English aristocracy also banned the offending instrument in the Magna Carta of 1215."[85]

In Gellner's words: "In a society of this kind [e.g. agrarian society], the surplus accumulated by the producers, if not forcefully seized by the monopolists of violence, is naturally channelled either into purchasing entry to the ranks of the swordsmen or into enhancing the ritual equipment of the society. So, one way or the other, the clerical-military elite benefits...Neither way, however, is the surplus used to augment the productive equipment of society, or to enhance its cognitive potential. The entire organization of society, in both its coercive and ideological institutions, works against this being so. Almost everything in the ethos, and in the balance of power of the society, generally militates against the possibility of an explosive growth in either production or cognition."[86]

It is also this ethos and balance of power within the agrarian society that tends to make agrarian cities what Weber classified as "consumer cities" rather than

---

[84]See Hero's 399 B.C.E description of the *gastrophetes* (belly-bow) in Belopoeica.
[85]Robert L. O'Connell, "The Life and Hard Times of the Crossbow," in Robert Cowley, ed., Experience of War, (New York: Dell Publishing, 1992), pp. 82-83.
[86]Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History, p. 103.

"producer cities." In this type of city, "the purchasing power of...large consumers---and that means: of *rentiers*---determines the economic opportunities of the resident artisans and traders. These large consumers can be of very different types, depending upon the kind and sources of their incomes. They may be officials spending their legal or illegal revenues, or manorial lords and political power holders consuming their non-urban ground rents or other more politically determined incomes in the city."[87] This type of city is the direct result of the warrior elites' consumption of the wealth exploited from the producers. The ethos of the agrarian society, an ethos which disdains labor as slavery to necessity and an unflattering status marker (i.e. it marks one as not belonging to the warrior elite or clerical classes), in turn, encourages the producers not to produce more, as is the case in Modern Industrial "producer cities," but to **escape** from production altogether if and when they can afford to do so. "This," observes Hannah Arendt, is "the solution of the well-known puzzle in the study of the economic history of the ancient world that industry developed up to a certain point, but stopped short of making progress which might have been expected in view of the fact that thoroughness and capacity for organization on a large scale is shown by the Romans in other departments, in the public services and the army."[88] The producers and, therefore, productive growth and the development of the "producer city" are held in check and are the captives of the logic of the agrarian socioeconomic order.

The sixth tendency of agrarian societies is that there is little upward social mobility. One may either purchase entry into the ranks of the warrior elite (that is, a producer may convert all or most of his economic resources, if he is fortunate enough to have more than meager material resources, to means of

---

[87]Weber, Economy and Society, p. 1215.
[88]Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 65.

defense or coercion in order to avoid being plundered himself), attempt to join the ranks of the clerisy, or one may become a valuable "client" of a member of the elite on whose proverbial coattails one could ride.

In agrarian societies, the bonds between landlord and tenant serve as prototypes of what first comes to mind when we think of patron/client relationships. According to Carl Lande, "a patron/client relationship is a vertical dyadic alliance, i.e. a [direct and personal] alliance between two persons of unequal status, power or resources each of whom finds it useful to have as an ally someone superior or inferior to himself."[89] Given this definition, he goes on to state that patron/client systems tend to be pyramidal in structure with a patron having several clients and being, in turn, the client of another, more powerful patron.[90] Using this line of reasoning, Thomas Carney has described a principal difference between the socioeconomic structures of agrarian societies and modern industrial societies. The former is "a society based on patronage, not class stratification; so that little pyramids of power abound...Thus, [this type of] society resembles a mass of little pyramids of influence, each headed by a major family---or one giant pyramid headed by an autocrat---not the three-decker sandwich of upper, middle, and lower classes familiar to us from [modern] Industrial society."[91]

This accounts for the more prevalent vertical aspects of patron/client relations, but this alone does not provide us with a full picture of the intricate web of social ties involved in agrarian societies. Horizontal ties must be considered as well. Of these, there are two basic types: the indirect and the direct. The indirect, horizontal patron/client relationship can best be described as a

---

[89]Carl Lande in Schmidt et al., Friends, Followers, and Factions, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. XX.
[90]Ibid, p. XXI.
[91]Thomas Carney, The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity, (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1975), p. 63.

"brokerage." "Brokers" are individuals who hold high honor in the eyes of two equal competing parties that resolve conflicts between them on a personal, double-dyadic level. The direct, horizontal patron/client relationship can best be described by the Roman term *amicitia* (loosely translated as "friendship"). This is a relationship of constant "give and take" in which two individuals of equal social status do each other favors and repay those favors on a continuing basis so that the "tab" is never paid in full, and the two individuals are held together by honor and mutual interest. It is a system of alternating patronage and clientage between two equals. In this way, two equal individuals or groups of equals may collectively move up the socioeconomic "ladder" of agrarian societies.

In summary, agrarian societies are an uneasy balance of power between the warrior/ruling elites and the clerisy. The warrior/ruling elites have not the means to impose order by coercion alone and, moreover, they generally remain cowed by the theological doctrine of the clerisy. They therefore permit the existence of the clerisy as a legitimizing force. The warriors support the clerisy in its suppression of cognitive growth in return for a social order that is amenable to themselves. However, what happens when the warrior elites acquire the means of coercion that is capable of maintaining the order of things without the necessity of the legitimizing force of the clerisy, and without permitting the producers to escape domination? They do so and, as we shall see below, this is precisely the situation that can be found in a number of Arab states today.

Furthermore, within the simple division of labor necessitated by the labor-intensive nature of the agrarian mode of production, the elite elements or classes are relatively closed to the productive masses, generating a system of patronage as one of the few viable avenues to upward social mobility. Lastly, whether the warrior elites or the clerisy or both (as is most often the case) hold the reins of

power, agrarian societies are, with few exceptions,[92] ruled in a authoritarian manner with sharp, vertical social stratification. These societies are more or less a "closed cycle" within which the individual actors or families and groups of actors may, and quite often do, violently change roles, but the socioeconomic structure tends to remain in tact.

C. MODERN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES

If it is, in fact, the case that agrarian societies are a "closed cycle" of violent, periodical upheaval in which the names may change but the roles remain the same, then how is it possible for a new socioeconomic order (namely, modern industrial) to emerge? Everything within the agrarian socioeconomic structure militates against the emancipation of the producers from the tyranny of the military/religious edifice. However, this emancipation did occur, spontaneously and indigenously, in one area, but one area only: western Europe or, to be more specific, England and Holland.[93] All other modern industrial societies are the result of direct colonization or the demonstration effect of the great, and heretofore undreamed of, wealth and power of this type of socioeconomic order.

This is not intended as a "racist" or "Euro-centric" statement nor is it meant to imply that non-European civilizations have no intrinsic value of their own, for the Western Europeans themselves had no inkling of the future that they were

---

[92]The ancient Hellenic experience with democracy in Athens, Syracuse, and a few of the other city-states is perhaps the only exception. It is important to note, however, that those societies were primarily mercantile, relying on trade rather than strictly agriculture to provide wealth. The example of Sparta is more typical.

[93]The answer to the riddle of why the demonstration effect of the English and Dutch industrialization was so much more immediately potent in the rest of Western Europe than elsewhere in the world could conceivably take several volumes to fully explore. However, I believe that the answer lies principally in the commonality of Western European peoples (English protestations aside); their common religious roots in the Church of Rome, their common linguistic roots and alphabet, their close physical proximity to one another, and their nearly uniform development of absolutist states out of the feudal system that laid much of the groundwork for the emergence of the nation-state.

creating; they acted out of ignorance, not design. Indeed, "the transformation was too profound, and too contrary and too **offensive** to the established pattern of thought and values, to be understood in advance."[94] Had it been understood and appreciated for what it was, it would surely have been, wherever possible, crushed at the outset. "By the time understanding came, it was too late to try and throttle it."[95] The previous statement, therefore, is intended merely to highlight the unique nature of modern industrial society and the tremendous odds against which it originally came into being.

To postulate that had the breakthrough from the agrarian to the modern industrial order not taken place in Western Europe, then it would have happened elsewhere in due course is to become a prisoner of the linear view of history and it is, at best, wishful thinking. This line of thought (if you will pardon the expression) fails to take into account the one piece of key evidence: that for thousands of years, men had lived in agrarian societies throughout the world, societies whose general structures I have outlined above that had experienced virtually no structural and change whatsoever in all of that time. Why such a transformation happened at all is still somewhat of a mystery despite numerous, intriguing explorations of the subject.[96] However, it is not my primary intention to discuss the reasons for the transformation from Agrarian to Modern Industrial socioeconomic structures, but to discuss the consequences of such a transformation.

The most important feature in the structure of modern industrial societies is that the productive masses have not simply escaped the tyranny of the military/religious edifice, but have turned the tables and come to, if not

---

[94]Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History, p. 171. Emphasis is mine.
[95]Ibid.
[96]See, for example, Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation, Barrington Moore, Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, among others.

dominate, then to largely envelop the military and religious groups within themselves. Through the examination of the dominant values and mores of a society, it is possible to gain a reasonably clear understanding of which groups and which activities are held in the highest esteem within the socioeconomic structure. In the agrarian order, where the warrior elites and the clerisy were dominant, it was martial ability, honor, loyalty, obedience, and knowledge of the sacred which were held in the highest esteem. In modern industrial societies, it is labor and innovative production that is honored and even glorified.

"The sudden, spectacular rise of labor from the lowest, most despised position [the position that it occupied in the Agrarian order] to the highest rank, as the most esteemed of all human activities," did not begin, as Arendt argues, "when Locke discovered that labor is the source of all property."[97] It began when the economic classes gained supremacy over the entire social order, naturally raising labor and/or the act of production (which are not necessarily the same given the distinction between "work" and "labor") over martial ability and theological or philosophical knowledge as the most praised attribute, the very expression of the humanity of Man. Most of Marx's (perhaps the foremost spokesman of the producers) work flows from his definition of Man as *animal laborans* which, in turn, follows from the rise of the producers and that activity which defines them. It is ironic that Marx's ideas, even prior to their distortion through the work of Lenin, represent, in effect, the "ideology" (a term of contempt for Marx),[98] or the system of ideas which are presumed to define reality to justify the dominance of a particular group, of the producers.

It is, therefore, apparent that the economic realm has become paramount and with it we see a growing dominance of the scientific mode of thought. This

---

[97]Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 101.

[98]See, among others, Preface to the second edition of Kapital and Marx/Engels, The German Ideology, Part I.

mode of thought, having its basis in the rational investigation of the nature of things in antiquity, was never allowed by the clerisy of the agrarian order to be free of the social constraints which prevented it from being applied to the social and economic structure, to Man himself and his values. As we have already seen, this would have been catastrophic for the agrarian order as one of the fundamental principles of rational investigation is that "nothing is **necessarily** connected with anything else. [One] must separate all separables in thought, and then consult the fact to see whether the separated elements are, contingently, joined together."[99] This includes, especially when the subject of investigation is Man himself, the imperative that facts not only be separated from other facts, but that facts be separated from values as well.[100] If the Earth is not at the center of the universe, then so be it. Not only will the modern industrial order refrain from suppressing that fact, but its discovery is celebrated as a "breakthrough," a triumph of Man's reason, and another step toward understanding and conquering the ultimate foe of the economic realm: nature.

Unlike the military/religious hierarchy of the agrarian order, the producers are primarily concerned not with the subjugation of the masses at home and enemies on the battlefield to bring wealth, status and prosperity to themselves, but with the subjugation of nature to provide these things. "Indeed, from the moment men think scientifically, the chief activity of collectivities ceases to be the war of man against man [although this continues to occur] and becomes the struggle of Man against nature, the systematic exploitation of natural resources."[101] This systematic exploitation of natural resources, as opposed to

---

[99]Gellner, Plough, Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History, p. 64.

[100]It is in Machiavelli's discourses that we can see the scientific mode of thought, in all of its clinical rationality, begin to emerge from its long imprisonment within the agrarian order. Well before Hume's analysis of the philosophical consequences of the phenomenon, the separation of facts from facts and facts from values is clearly evident in Machiavelli's sometimes shocking political counsels on the "practical" exercise of power.

[101] Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. 1, p. 75.

other factors such as the "moral" and "material" density of a given community as proposed by Durkheim,[102] is the principal motivation behind the complex division of labor that occurs in modern industrial societies. In fact, one could even say that it is the raison d'etre of this type of socioeconomic order.

It is here also that we see the subtle shift from the Platonic to the Cartesian mode of thought. In the Platonic world, knowledge of reality was derived from the Transcendent whereas in the Cartesian world, the Transcendent can only be comprehended through knowledge of reality or nature. We can see this subtle shift taking place through the life and work of Johannes Kepler who, in 1571, labored tirelessly on his hypothesis that the planets travel in elliptical orbits in order to discover and understand "how God worked." The consequences of this shift in emphasis are drastic and profound for the ordering of society.

The scientific mode of thought moves cognition from being primarily non-referential to being primarily referential. Empirical facts become free and independent of social values. Indeed, facts come to dominate values rather than the reverse.[103] We can observe the subtle changes taking place which move a universal conception of society and the cosmos from the primarily non-referential to the primarily referential in the thought of Auguste Comte. He borrowed Bossuet's "elevated perspective [of] the whole of the history of society," formed from Bossuet's theological perspective (i.e. non-referential), and put forward the concept of a "single design" of history with a twist. It was no longer a transcendent being, Forms or Ideas which provided that "single design," but

---

[102]See Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, (New York: The Free Press, 1984), pp. 200-223.

[103]It should be noted here that primarily through the influence of a superficial and vulgarized version of the thought of Nietzsche on Western Modern Industrial societies (particularly in the United States), the concept of "values" as being prior to facts has gained increasing adherence and has become an increasing threat to the foundations of Democracy. But this is another vast subject for study and reflection which, while it is particularly relevant to the future of Modern Industrial societies, it is not entirely relevant to the current discussion of the bases of these types of socioeconomic orders.

the progress of the human mind. Comte "concluded that the positivist [or scientific] method---based on observation, experimentation, and the establishment of general laws [governing the natural world]---must be extended to areas which were still entrusted to theology, i.e., to a method which claims to discover the underlying causes of phenomena and to locate the final causes in transcendent beings."[104]

This is not to say that religion disappears from the scene entirely. To the contrary, religion becomes "compartmentalized" into one particular aspect of life and is transformed into a "civics lesson" or social norms for behavior, much as it had been in antiquity. It ceases to be an all-encompasing political ideology because it no longer has the unquestioning confidence of the masses. "The incompatibility of modern science with traditional beliefs does not lie in any specific scientific findings, all of which can be absorbed by religious beliefs for the reason that they will never be able to answer the questions which religion raises [i.e. ends, in every sense]...this incompatibility [lies], rather, in the conflict between a spirit of doubt and distrust which can ultimately trust only what it has made itself, and the traditional unquestioning confidence in what has been given..."[105]

The social order is, therefore, taken off the "gold standard" of the Transcendent. If Man's knowledge of the natural world is no longer derived from the Transcendent but from his own exploration and investigation, then he is impelled by the logic of this mode of thought to examine and re-examine every fact, every value and, in short, every facet of the social and natural worlds to establish its validity; the kind of hard and fast validity that can no longer be established by the Transcendent of the clerisy, but must be established by rational

---

[104] Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. 1, p. 95.
[105] Arendt, Between Past and Future, p. 31.

calculation and by **general agreement**. "The modern social order is founded on a rejection of the naturalistic thesis insofar as values, beliefs, and indeed society itself came to be seen as open to change, hence as requiring new forms of legitimation."[106]

This new form of legitimation is the ideal of consent. The clerisy, no longer holding its monopoly on the sacred as, over the course of time, the world becomes "disenchanted" and increasingly devoid of the sacred,[107] is incapable of providing the legitimation necessary to ensure authority and social order in any settled community without resorting to violence, whether that community be agrarian or modern industrial in nature. In this situation, no one individual or group of individuals has a monopoly on Truth. In order for a truth to be accepted as valid, it must pass muster in (to use Oliver Wendell Holmes' phrase) "the free marketplace of ideas." What else, therefore, can legitimacy be based upon other than consent?

Incidentally, while this is one of the major factors that militate for democratic government in modern industrial societies, it is also one of this type of society's major problems. The scientific mode of thought, once it has come to dominate and pervade society through cognitive advance in the economic/technological realm, leads to conclusions that are sometimes absurd, and at other times, extremely disturbing. First, if there is no such thing as absolute truth, then truth becomes relative and a matter of opinion. There is a subtle but tangible feeling in Modern Industrial societies that the whole world is becoming unhinged, that the wheels are coming off. This is a direct result of the fact/value separation and

---

[106] Cascardi, p. 42.

[107] "A belief in magic...makes sense if it is assumed that the whole world is brimful of powers that act in a manner beyond human comprehension." Bendix, p. 203. However, when human comprehension begins to succeed in unraveling the great mysteries of the natural world, belief in the power of the sacred and the magical, mystical qualities that surround it is gradually eroded. The world becomes entirely "profane."

the natural world being taken off the "gold standard" of the Transcendent, and it raises fears that the world is not governed by any authoritative point of view.[108] If truth is only a matter of opinion, then let the stronger opinion prevail! Relativism and deconstructionism are the common result.

Plato clearly anticipated the mental perplexities resulting from relativism in Statesman. "There is a...postulate on which we must insist, and it is this: 'Excess and deficiency are measurable not only in relative terms but also in respect of attainment of a norm or due measure.' For if we cannot first gain assent to this postulate, we are bound to fail if we advance the claim that a man possesses statecraft, or indeed that a man possesses any other of the special forms of knowledge that function in human society."[109] In other words, if the greatness or deficiency of an object, an idea, of morality or of men is measurable only as relative to others of these, then we cannot possibly **know** anything. We become lost in the shifting sands of our futile attempts at definition and redefinition until the whole of the world external to the individual becomes utterly meaningless. The individual's **perspective**, and his opinions based on that perspective, becomes the most meaningful currency of the modern intellectual exchange, and knowledge as such goes by the wayside.

The scientific mode of thought, when it is applied to society, can and does produce a "rationalization" of labor and bureaucracies organized around a means-ends rationality for optimum efficiency, however, this mode of thought is rather limited to the economic/technological field even if we insist (as we so often do) on rationalizing everything else in society, actions which are based purely on sentiment, not reason or logic. "Reason...may be able to tell us what is

---

[108]Cascardi, p. 126.
[109]Plato, Statesman, 284b-c.

the case, but it is powerless to tell us what to want; it stands mute with regard to ends."[110]

Modern industrial societies are defined primarily by a mode of production that results in a complex, rather than a simple, division of labor. As mentioned above, this complex division of labor comes about as a result of the dominance of the economic over the military and religious spheres, and the consequent, systematic battle waged by the producers against nature for the exploitation of its resources. The scientific mode of thought also engenders the most efficient means of achieving that end. Just as each fact/fact and fact/value cluster is broken down and dissected into its constituent, fundamental components, each labor process is broken down and divided in minute detail. Each of these details is separated from the others and becomes an area of "specialty." Each area of specialty, however, is based not on lineage, kinship ties or social position, but on education and training (areas which are much more within the control of the individual). "In the modern world, society no longer prescribes in advance what the role of individuals, and what the truth of their lives shall be. This meaning is no longer recognized as a pre-established norm or accepted as prior to the individual. Rather, it must be created and affirmed by acts of individual choice."[111]

Furthermore, "if cognitive growth presupposes that no element is indissolubly linked a priori to any other, and that everything is open to rethinking, then economic and productive growth requires exactly the same of human activities and hence of human roles. Roles become optional and

---

[110]Cascardi, p. 37. Man is guided and propelled by feelings when it comes to the ends which he pursues and he is, therefore, inevitably and unalterably irrational regardless of the logic and rationality of the means he uses to achieve those ends. On this subject, see, in particular, Thomas Hobbes, Behemoth, or the Long Parliament, and Vilfredo Pareto, The Mind and Society, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1935).

[111]Cascardi, p. 97.

instrumental. The old stability of the social role structure is simply incompatible with growth and innovation. Innovation means doing new things, the boundaries of which cannot be the same as those of the activities they replace [in the agrarian order]."[112] In fact, individuals in modern industrial societies tend to become *role-players* not only in their public lives but in their private lives as well; being a husband or wife, father or mother, and even being male or female becomes optional. It is of no minor significance that the consummate role-players, those who can most easily and gracefully move from one role to the next, donning and doffing personalities and even sexualities as if they were clothing, are the most popular and well-known figures in modern industrial societies; these are, of course, actors.

As a result of this shifting of roles and the economic and social mobility, social boundaries tend to become ephemeral, and where they exist at all, they are on the basis of the level of education and training in the cultural idiom of the society that an individual attains. A prime example is the Ford assembly line where each worker becomes a cog in the labor machine that has a specific task to perform, and the efficiency of the operation is thereby enhanced.

Another, perhaps better, example is the formation of rational, legalistic bureaucracies. This is opposed to the kind of "traditional bureaucracies" defined by Weber which have as their basis "the sanctity of age-old rules and powers" and loyalty to the person of the ruler rather than to abstract laws. Within these rational, legalistic bureaucracies, each individual has "a clearly defined sphere of competence subject to impersonal [or abstract] rules; a rationally established hierarchy; a regular system of appointment on the basis of free contract, and orderly promotion; [and] technical training as a regular requirement."[113] Weber

---

[112]Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, p. 24.
[113]Weber, Economy and Society, pp. 226, 228-229.

theorized that "everywhere bureaucratization foreshadows mass democracy..."[114] Why? Because when put into use, if it is to be effective, it must have a "leveling" effect on society "in the interest of the broadest possible basis for recruitment in terms of technical competence...The dominant norms are concepts of straightforward duty without regard to personal considerations. Everyone is subject to formal equality of treatment; that is, everyone in the same empirical situation."[115]

It is in the interest of this broadest possible basis for recruitment that education in the cultural idiom of the society must become homogeneous. The high culture must become universalized, and every member of the society becomes part of the clerisy *sans* absolutist pretensions linked to doctrine. They all must speak the same language and understand the same set of social rules in order to function as more or less interchangeable parts of the economic machine. "Universal literacy and a high level of numerical, technical and general sophistication are among [the complex division of labor's] functional prerequisites. Its members are and must be mobile, and ready to shift from one activity to another, and must possess that generic training which enables them to follow the manuals and instructions of a new activity or occupation."[116]

Cultural heterogeneity no longer serves the stability of the social order as it did in the agrarian societies by providing status markers. Indeed, in the modern industrial socioeconomic order, cultural heterogeneity is intolerable because it necessarily limits the mobility and interchangability of individuals in the various roles and "specialties" of the economic machine thereby throwing the proverbial monkey wrench into its smooth-flowing gears.[117] Status markers are

---

[114]Ibid, p. 226.
[115]Ibid, p. 225.
[116]Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, p. 35.
[117]As an aside, Tocqueville speculated that one of the results of this economic and social mobility, and the hope or expectation of each individual of rising in the social hierarchy, was a belief in the

provided by wealth and/or increased levels of education. "Nowadays people can only live in units defined by a shared culture, [which are] internally mobile and fluid. Genuine cultural pluralism ceases to be viable under [modern industrial] conditions."[118]

Another result of the complex division of labor is that both kinship groups and patron/client relationships are broken down and become less and less of a factor in labor-oriented relationships (although they do not disappear entirely). First, the complex division of labor takes away the raison d'etre of both these types of relationships. Extended families are no longer a requirement for economic success as they were in the agrarian order; one can achieve sustenance and can gain wealth without the necessity of the extended kinship group working the family plot of land or the family trade. And, because the hierarchy within the complex division of labor tends to become a meritocracy, based on individual skills and performance abilities,[119] the need for patron/client relationships dwindles.

Second, the social and economic mobility produced and necessitated by the complex division of labor causes an increasing atomization of society which, therefore, erodes these types of relationships. Individuals, without their kinship ties and possessing earned educational skills, enter the "work force" as individuals. In their work related roles they must be able to function by an

---

unlimited perfectibility of Man. See Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, J. P. Mayer, ed., (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 452-454.

[118]Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, p. 55.

[119] Although the complex division of labor does melt away the necessity of patron/client relationships for upward social and economic mobility, it does not remove the need for this type of relationship entirely. The patron/client relationship is still operative to some degree and, even where it does not exist, the perception that it does exist plays an important role in easing the unbearable social tensions that would arise from a pure meritocracy. "The irony [of a meritocracy in Modern Industrial societies] arises from the fact that if everyone has a position commensurate with his merits, those who occupy the lowest positions can no longer blame fate or injustice. If all men were convinced that the social order was fair, then the latter would, in a certain sense and for certain persons, be intolerable." Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, Vol. 1, p. 92.

abstract set of rules governing their actions which make no place for personal or familial considerations if the system is to function well. All members of the kinship group do not remain in one geographical location. As individuals, their changing roles and positions requires their mobility, and families may be spread over a very wide area indeed. In Gellner's words: "When everyone has become a Mamluk [i.e. has specialized training and has been separated from kinship groups in conjunction with that training], no special Mamluk class predominates in the bureaucracy. At long last the bureaucracy can recruit from the population at large, without needing to fear the arrival of dozens of cousins as unwanted attachments of each single new entrant."[120]

When this situation occurs, the old structures which had once provided each individual with his identity, dignity and material security, in short, with his sense of belonging, are eroded. He must now depend on his education and his part in the shared literate culture to provide these things.[121] He becomes not only conscious of culture, but absolutely dependent on it for his own sense of identity and well being. Nationalism is then born, and strives continuously and often violently "to make culture and polity congruent, to endow a culture with its own political roof, and not more than one roof at that."[122]

In summary, the modern industrial socioeconomic order, once it has come into being, produces social realities that are conducive to democratic government. First, when the primarily economic and technical "scientific mode of thought" comes to dominate cognition, as it does when the economic realm of the producers pervades all of society, then there can be no absolutes in the spiritual and social worlds. The world becomes "disenchanted" or "profane" and devoid of the sacred. Legitimacy, the necessary element to any stable

---

[120] Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, p. 37.
[121] Ibid, p. 85.
[122] Ibid, p. 43.

sociopolitical order, can no longer be provided by the clerisy under these circumstances. It can only be derived from the consent of the governed.

Second, the systematic exploitation af nature, once it has become the paramount activity of society, produces a "rationalization" of not only the economic realm, but also the social realm as well, since the two are now completely interdependent and coextensive with one another. This, in turn, leads to the generation of abstract rules or laws to govern the functioning of the economic machine which provide "civil society" shelter from any capriciousness on the part of the government that might endanger the enterprise of the productive masses.

Third, because individuals in this type of order are socially and economically mobile, there develops an egalitarian ethos in society. Anyone, with the right education and training, may perform any and every role or function within the socioeconomic machine and, furthermore, those roles are (in fact, must be) governed by abstract rules which are devoid of personal considerations and prejudices; rules or laws which are, in short, completely egalitarian.

Lastly, the complex division of labor in modern industrial societies erodes the traditional social fabric of the agrarian order[123] which provided individuals with their sense of identity and belonging. The vacuum is filled by the consciousness of the shared culture which has become synonymous with the sociopolitical order; or, to be more succinct, the vacuum has been filled by nationality as the passport to participate in social and political life of the community. Nationalism and all-inclusive citizenship for those who hold this passport become unavoidable by-products of this type of order. All of these factors **predispose**

[123]There has never been a case, that I am aware of, in which a society made the leap from the hunter/gatherer to the modern industrial socioeconomic order without first being a predominantly agrarian society. In this sense, and in this sense only, the "stages" that have been proposed here are indeed a linear progression. However, evolution is not guaranteed, and "stages" may become the closed-cycle discussed above.

(rather than force) modern industrial societies toward democratic government, and provide the necessary prerequisites for the formation of that type of political regime.

When Barrington Moore reached the conclusion, "No bourgeois, no democracy,"[124] he was correct, but only superficially so. It is not only the Middle Class or the Capitalists, however one defines the term "bourgeoisie," but the entire productive mass of modern industrial society within a complex division of labor that militates for democracy. The consent required for political legitimacy after the scientific mode of thought has permeated the society through the dominance of the economic over the military and religious realms; the mobility of the individual and the consequent abstract laws and egalitarian ethos; and the nature of the all-inclusive citizenship of nationality with inherent political interests; all of these factors make democracy a possibility in the modern industrial socioeconomic order.

One final note on modern industrial societies: As noted at the beginning of this section, the autonomous and indigenous transformation from the agrarian to the modern industrial socioeconomic order occurred only in parts of Western Europe, and all other modern industrial societies (including the rest of Western Europe) are the result of either direct colonization (as is the case in North America and Australia) or the demonstration effect (as is the case in Japan and Russia). However, the demonstration effect is not a static condition, and the scientific mode of thought, with all that follows from it, is constantly making inroads in areas of the world where it has not been dominant in the past. Indeed, the crux of Western European civilization, the period which laid the groundwork for the formation of the original modern industrial order: the

---

[124]Barrington Moore, Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), p. 418.

Italian Renaissance, was largely the result of "a deliberate revival and **imitation** of one civilization by another, across its entire range of civic and cultural life..."[125]

It is, on the other hand, a dicey situation at best when this way of thinking is injected into an agrarian socioeconomic structure that at once embraces the tools produced by innovation and fights tooth and nail against that very same innovation, as all agrarian orders are want to do. It tends to produce a large set of variations and distortions of the original "model", some of which are beneficial, most of which are destructive. And it would also seem, based on the historical evidence, that the greater the time delay between the development of the original modern industrial society and all later developments along those lines, the greater the variations and distortions in the developing society. The Arab world is a prime example of precisely this sort of distorted change.

[125] Anderson, p. 149. Emphasis is mine.

III. ARAB SOCIOECONOMIC STRUCTURES IN PERSPECTIVE

In discussing 12th century Arab regimes, Albert Hourani has this to say: "In moments of fear or hardship, the whole population of the city might be disturbed. Moved perhaps by popular preachers denouncing oppression and holding out the vision of a just Islamic order, mobs would break into the suq, merchants shut their shops, and some spokesman of the people would bring to the ruler complaints against his officials, or against merchants suspected of causing an artificial scarcity of bread. Faced with such a movement, the ruler might adjust his policy to satisfy some of the demands; officials would be dismissed or executed, the storehouses of the grain merchants opened. The market would open again, the coalition of forces dissolve, but the urban mass would still be there, appeased or controlled for the moment, but as far as ever from a just Islamic order."[126]

The chain of events described here bears a striking resemblance to much of the recent political crises in the Arab world.[127] As we shall see, this point is illustrative of the fact that, despite the modernist pretensions of many of the ruling elites in the Arab world with their "revolutionary" and/or "socialist" agendas, and despite a great deal of social and economic change over the last 150 years, the basically agrarian structure (i.e. the domination of the

---

[126] Albert Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, (New York: Warner Books, 1991), p. 137.

[127] The Egyptian bread riots of the late 1970's bear the closest resemblance, but the rising of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, the Shi'a uprisings in southern Iraq, and the recent political struggle in Algeria, while the outcomes were quite different, also bear a resemblance to the above chain of events and correspond to the yearning for a more just order yet to be achieved.

military/religious edifice over the economic mass) of Arab societies has remained relatively constant.

In fact, the Arab world seems to be allergic to all things modern, including the notions of "pure" socialism and/or democracy at the nation-state level. "It is true that, in the last few decades, there has been a tremendous move toward modernization in the Arab world, greater in certain regions than others. But to say that the Arab world has become modern in its sociopolitical and economic structures; its thought; its sciences and arts; its values, attitudes and behavior; and the lives of its individuals is a gross overstatement."[128]

In order to gain perspective in understanding the current state of Arab socioeconomic structures, it is necessary to briefly outline some salient points on the internal development of those structures as well as their external, symbiotic relationship with the Western world. Before doing so, however, the discussion in the previous chapter regarding the existence of socioeconomic stages only as ideal types must be reemphasized. The socioeconomic structures of the Arab world contain elements of all three of the stages that I have proposed. It is in the blending together of these elements that we see the unique nature of Arab socioeconomic structures as compared to these structures elsewhere. This, however, is not to say that Arab socioeconomic structures do not fit the general pattern of any of the ideal types described above. They do, in fact, conform most closely to the agrarian stage in their political, social, and economic patterns and, moreover, it is precisely this blending in of elements of the other two stages that serves to amplify and to distort certain characteristics of the agrarian order.

---

[128]Issa J. Boullata, "Challenges to Arab Cultural Authenticity," in Hisham Sharabi, ed., The Next Arab Decade, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), p. 147.

A. SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS PRIOR TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

In the historical circumstances of Islam's appearance in the world in the 7th century, the majority of those peoples that we would sum under the heading of "Arabs" were pastoral, tribal groups exhibiting the primary characteristics of the hunter/gatherer socioeconomic structure outlined above. They were polytheistic, patriarchical, warlike, more or less egalitarian among the male patriarchs, and held in order by a strong honor and shame moral system. With this in mind, it is clear that part of the genius of Islam is that it sought to create a universal tribe: the umma (as compared to the much more exclusive character of Judaism, for instance). The strong emphasis on the interests of the group and the just battles to be fought for it, on the principle of consultation, on the equality of believers; these are some of the dictums of tribal organization. The much heralded concepts of political consultation and egalitarianism, which are central to democratic government, are very much present in Islam as a result of the universal tribe paradigm. However, these concepts wither on the vine when Arab socioeconomic structures become primarily agrarian rather than hunter/gatherer in nature.

As to whether the prophetic verse of Muhammad was divinely inspired or was the result of the "demonstration effect" of the other great monotheistic religions is highly controversial and, as with most things that are highly controversial, we can never know the truth of the matter. However, one thing is clear: from its very inception, Islam was defined in terms of its relationship to not only polytheism but to the other monotheistic religions.[129] This provides us

[129] See, in particular, the Qur'an, 3: 1-63, 4: 171, 5: 59-66, 6: 20, 11: 110, among numerous other examples.

with one of our first keys to understanding the dynamic interplay between the Arab and Western worlds.

If we "fast-forward" to the age of the great Arab empires in the 8th-14th centuries, we can clearly see the development of the agrarian type of structure. The relatively close-knit tribal, hunter/gatherer socioeconomic formations of the conquerors, once they become settled communities in the pre-existing cities or build their own cities (as was the case with Baghdad, Cairo, Kufah, and a host of others), gives way, as it must, to the simple division of labor of agrarian societies. We see the development of a specialized clerisy (the Ulema) whose liturgical language, already distinct from the heterogeneous languages and dialects of the vanquished (who, by the way, we would now also sum under the heading of "Arabs"), is distinct to the elites of the society.

When the leadership of the umma passed into settled, agrarian communities at the time of the founding of the Umayyad dynasty in 661 C.E., this is when the written word of Islam becomes important,[130] and the ulema, those who teach, interpret and administer the Shari'a and are the guardians of the elaborated norms of social behavior, develop as a distinct clerisy. The religion then begins to take on a whole new function in society. It has become a means of legitimation of coercion rather than personal salvation; hierarchy and power rather than community and brotherhood. One of the reasons for the durability of the ulema as a distinct clerisy is the explicitly stated position that Muhammad was the final prophet or "seal of the prophets." "By firmly closing the door, in principle, to further additions to the revealed doctrine, [Islam] enormously strengthens the hand of those who have access to the delimited truth through

[130] By most accounts, the Qur'an achieved its final written form around the time of Uthman in 650 C.E.

literacy and who use it as a charter of legitimacy. They cannot be outflanked by new revelations."[131]

It is at this time that we also see the consolidation of a warrior elite which governs by the power of the sword as well as the legitimizing force of the ulema. As with agrarian societies in general, there is no room in this type of sociopolitical arrangement for egalitarianism or consultation. These concepts are, by their very nature, destructive to the agrarian order. This, however, has a twist to it which is rather unique to the Arab world. The warrior elites maintain what Durkheim would term the "mechanical solidarity" of their tribal, hunter/gatherer roots over and above the "organic solidarity" of the cities that they rule.[132]

From the beginning of the Arab age of empire with the Umayyad dynasty in the 7th and particularly the early 8th centuries, when the princes were banished to the desert in order to maintain the martial skills and self-reliance characteristic of nomadic tribes, to the foundation and formation of new empires out of the old, we see the recurring pattern of ruling, warrior elites either attempting to retain their nomadic roots or being overthrown and replaced by nomadic warriors from outside the society. It is in this way that the warrior elites remained a special stratum of Arab, agrarian societies.

Their solidarity, cohesiveness, and martial superiority gave them a virtual monopoly on the means of effective coercion, and with the legitimizing support of the Ulema who, while "not very powerful in deciding between one ruler or dynasty and another, were most influential in determining the general nature of society,"[133] the nomadically oriented warrior elites were able to dominate the agrarian structure of Arab societies. It became "generally accepted that power was

---

[131] Gellner, Muslim Society, p. 23.
[132] See Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, pp. 31-87.
[133] Gellner, Muslim Society, p. 115.

acquired by the sword...It could, however, become legitimate authority only if it was used to maintain the Shari'a and therefore the fabric of virtuous and civilized life."[134]

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the agrarian societies cannot survive without the double-edged sword of protection and subjugation offered by the warrior elites. "At the same time, however, the military and administrative equipment available to the civilization [which, as pointed out in the previous chapter, cannot be improved upon without upsetting the proverbial apple cart of the agrarian order] does not allow the state to dominate the countryside effectively, particularly given the arid and/or mountainous nature of the terrain [in the Middle East] and the pastoral ecology encouraged by it."[135] This state of affairs leaves the door open to the development of tribal opposition and, if that opposition is strong enough, to the overthrow of the current stratum of warrior elites by a new group whose cohesiveness and martial abilities have not been "corrupted" by the soft ways of the city.

This is part of the explanation for the mixture of elements of both the hunter/gatherer and the agrarian socioeconomic structures which is evident throughout the history of the Arab world. Even as these structures become more and more agrarian in nature, and there was a corresponding growth in the predominance of unsymmetrical, patronage relationships, there was, and continues to be, a continuing influence of the hunter/gatherer, patriarchical kinship ties. The social constants that are prevalent throughout the Arab world include: "a strong urban orientation; a corresponding disdain for the peasant [and pastoral] way of life and for manual labor; sharp social, geographic, and economic stratification; political instability and a history of weak states;...rigid

---

[134]Hourani, p. 144.
[135]Gellner, Muslim Society, p. 80.

sexual segregation;...strong emphasis on shifting, ego-centered, non-corporate coalitions; [and] an honor-and-shame syndrome which defines both sexuality and personal reputation."[136]

If we study the above listing closely, it becomes apparent that the social constants of the Arab world (and, indeed, most of the Mediterranean basin) are an uneven synthesis between the social norms of settled, agrarian communities and their pastoral counterparts. It is as if the primordial kinship ties, the sexual segregation, and the overall social framework of honor and shame associated with the tribal and pastoral groups have been transposed onto the larger, sharply stratified agrarian communities which place primary emphasis on, among other things, the "shifting, ego-centered, non-corporate coalitions," or networks of patron/client relationships.

During the "golden age" of the Abbasid dynasty (750-861), the Arab world came under the heavy influence of both Persian and Greek thought which softened some of the rough edges of Arab society. It was an age of intellectual and cultural pursuits and Arab empire was at the zenith of its power and glory, heights all the more impressive when seen in comparison to the state of European civilization during the same time period. It is during this period that we begin to see a certain openness to the thoughts and ideas of other peoples as opposed to the extreme sensitivity that is evident in the Arab world today toward any importation of "foreign" ideas.

One of the first, and perhaps the best, expression of this can be found in the writings of al-Kindi (c. 801-866). "We should not be ashamed to acknowledge truth from whatever source it comes to us, even if it is brought to us by former generations and foreign peoples. For him who seeks the truth, there is nothing

---

[136] David Gilmore, "Anthropology of the Mediterranean Area," in Annual Review of Anthropology, 11, (1982), p. 178.

of higher value than truth itself."[137] In later works by al-Farabi (d. 950), the influence of Greek philosophy, particularly that of Plato, is clearly present. For example: "The philosopher...could attain to truth by his reason and could live by it, but not all human beings were philosophers, and able to grasp the truth directly. Most could attain to it only through symbols...Philosophy," according to al-Farabi, "and the religion of Islam do not therefore contradict each other. They express the same truth in different forms, which correspond to the different levels at which human beings can apprehend it. The enlightened can live by philosophy: he who has grasped the truth through symbols and has reached a certain level of understanding can be guided by theology; the ordinary people should live by obedience to the Shari'a."[138]

I point this out in order to show that Arab societies have not always been uncompromisingly hostile to alien ideas and, in fact, it was the incorporation of new ideas with the pre-existing grandeur of Arab society that led to the "golden age." They could do this because they were in a position of strength and superiority vis-a-vis those from whom they borrowed. The openness that we find here continues, although increasingly from a position of weakness beginning in the 17th and 18th centuries, right up to the immediate post-independence years.

---

[137] al-Kindi quoted in Hourani, p. 76.

[138] al-Farabi quoted in Hourani, p. 78. Compare this to the meaning of Socrates' discussion of the rewards and punishments of the hereafter in The Republic, Bk X, 614-621, after considerable arguments have been made for the happiness of the just and good, and the miserable state of the unjust and bad in this world no matter what their possessions or position in society. The many who are unable to escape the cave can be just and good by focusing on the proper symbols, or shadows, on the walls. As an aside, the argument of al-Farabi here would seem to suggest the compatibility of reason and revelation. While this was his public teaching, his private teaching pointed to the ultimate tension between the two and that they are in fact incompatible with one another; a choice had to be made as neither reason nor revelation can adequately refute the claims of the other. On this subject, see Leo Strauss, Persecution and the Art of Writing, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973).

In the Abbasid period, "merchants, bankers, manufacturers, speculators and tax farmers accumulated huge sums in the great cities; urban crafts diversified and multiplied; a commercial sector emerged in agriculture; long-distance shipping girded the oceans; astronomy, physics and mathematics were transposed from Greek into Arabic culture. Yet the limits to Abbasid development were reached relatively soon. Despite the soaring commercial prosperity of the 8th and 9th centuries, few productive innovations in the manufactures were registered, and little technological progress was yielded by the introduction of scientific studies."[139] Why?

First, while there was significant borrowing and adaptation, this is not to say that there were no difficulties in the incorporation of "foreign" ideas. For instance, despite the works of al-Kindi and al-Farabi, "there persisted a current of thought both hostile to the philosophers and theosophists, and alien from the attempts of dialectical reasoning to give a rational defense of the deposit of faith...Within the community, controversies and speculations which might lead to dissention and conflict [were usually] avoided,"[140] or, more likely, condemned. In the words of Fatima Mernissi: "From the first centuries of Islam, the Mu'tazila [who raised the question of qadar or predestination and responsibility, and were condemned as falasifa (philosophers) that were 'polluting' Islam with the humanistic patrimony of ancient Greece] were castigated as being in the service of foreigners and the propagators of enemy ideas. As such, they were repudiated as atheists who were perverting the faith."[141]

Second, the Abbasid state was in a economic position very similar to that which curtailed the development of medieval Spain. "The balance of payments surpluses...on its external account, partly because of its superior stock of precious

---

[139] Anderson, pp. 508-509.
[140] Hourani, p. 179.
[141] Mernissi, p. 26.

metals, were themselves a disincentive to increase the output of manufactures, since there was rarely a trade deficit of the type which stimulated [some] West European economies...to produce more exports."[142]

There are three relevant points here. First, the ulema or the clerisy condemns and suppresses any ideas which threaten the socioeconomic order, as is consistent with the logic of the agrarian society. Second, there is a flowering of the notion of the alien "other," already implicit in the Qur'an itself, as being hostile and fraught with danger. This notion is just as applicable to European societies as it is to the Arabs,[143] and it makes exceedingly difficult the acceptance of thoughts and ideas which are, in the last analysis, part of the heritage of mankind rather than that of a particular "culture." And third, despite advances in numerous areas, the economic, political and military dominance of the Abbasid state confirmed the superiority of the socioeconomic structure. Not only was there no incentive for change, the very idea of change, notwithstanding the relatively closed-cycle nature of agrarian societies, would have appeared to be ludicrous.

B. SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE OTTOMAN AND COLONIAL PERIODS[144]

With the advent of the Ottoman Empire we see a continuation and a perfection of the agrarian structure in the Arab world. It is not, however, without its differences from the previous regimes. While in keeping with the pattern of dominant warrior elites emerging from outside society and coming to

---

[142] Anderson, p. 516.

[143] See notes 7 and 8, and also consider the notion of the "House if War" as being all that is outside the fold Muslim civilization, a civilization dominated by Arab societies.

[144] I have grouped the Ottoman and colonial periods together because they are similar in that during both periods Arab societies were governed by remote and foreign institutions, although more remote in the first instance and more foreign in the second.

rule as a distinct group, for the first time since the 7th century, those warrior elites were not considered "Arabs." Additionally, "the [Ottoman] Empire was...the first Muslim political system to create a specially organized religious hierarchy with a clergy comparable to that of a full-scale church."[145] We also see the full expression of *sultanism* develop under the Ottomans. This particular form of government was the basis for the notion of "oriental despotism" but, as was the case with the empires that preceded it, the Ottoman regime did not have the means to completely dominate all of the atomistic communities which formed the larger whole of the empire.

Be that as it may, the addition of these three elements to the existing socioeconomic structure served to make the Ottoman Empire perhaps the ultimate example of the agrarian order. There is a clearly defined, simple division of labor dominated by a stratum of warrior elites and supported by a clerisy which, while it was already distinct in society, is now organized in the form of a hierarchical priesthood. Furthermore, the distinction between these groups and the rest of society is made even more evident by the cultural heterogeneity of the empire, "held together by the sword of 'Uthman."[146] In accordance with the logic of the agrarian order, this cultural heterogeneity is purposely enhanced by the ruling stratum[147] in order to maintain the divisions between the productive masses and their consequent weakness. Finally, "the main objective sought [by the elite stratum] was not so much the welfare of its subjects as the welfare of the state personified by the sultan-caliph."[148]

---

[145] Anderson, p. 369.
[146] Hitti, p. 716.
[147] Note the development of the Janissaries as well as the use of Circassians, Greeks, Albanians, Slavs, Italians, and even Armenians, mostly pariah groups within the mostly Arab society, to not only fill positions of importance without fear that they would develop a broad power base within the Empire and destabilize the order, but also to have the advantages of imported ideas and technology without concern that these things would disturb the belief system of society as a whole.
[148] Hitti, p. 716.

This last point provides some insight into the consequences of this type of socioeconomic structure. *Sultanism*, as defined by Weber, is "traditional domination" (traditional in that legitimacy is claimed for it by virtue of age-old rules and powers) which operates primarily on the basis of the discretion of the ruler. "Sometimes it appears that sultanism is completely unrestrained by tradition, but this is never in fact the case. The non-traditional element is not, however, rationalized in impersonal terms [as would be the case if a "rationalized" bureaucracy was developed], but consists only in an extreme development of the rulers discretion."[149] In fact, in the Ottoman system, the traditional element of sultanism gives rise to the discretionary elements. "For Ottoman political theory, the cardinal attribute of sovereignty was the Sultan's unlimited right to exploit all sources of wealth within his realm as his own imperial possessions."[150]

The capriciousness of this system leaves no room for the productive capacity of the masses to grow, and it is largely pre-empted in favor of the ruler's needs and wishes. There is no rule of law (as defined in the Introduction) and, therefore, "two bases of the rationalization of economic activity are entirely lacking; namely, a basis for the calculability of obligations and of the extent freedom which will be allowed to private enterprise...Economic relationships tend to be strictly tradition-bound...the development of [capitalistic] markets is obstructed, [and] the use of money is primarily consumptive."[151] Furthermore, "the sultanate nearly always intervened against the interests of the indigenous merchant communities in the cities, which were regarded with constant

---

[149] Weber, Economy and Society, p. 232.

[150] Anderson, p. 365. This notion is opposed to the European tradition of sovereignty as, primarily, the right to make laws. It is not difficult to deduce the reason for this as in the Ottoman system, laws, as opposed to decrees, were already given from God, and the authority to interpret those laws rested entirely with the Ulema. From the Western vantage point, therefore, sovereignty lay with the clerisy.

[151] Weber, Economy and Society, p. 238.

suspicion by the ulemate,"[152] as is consistent with the logic of the agrarian socioeconomic structure. For these reasons, the Ottoman cities, particularly Constantinople, were the classic "consumer cities" of agrarian societies.[153] Wealth was appropriated by the warrior elites and the clerisy by such means as extensive tax farming, influence buying (both in the political **and** religious spheres) and other such devices and, as discussed in the previous chapter, the ethos of this type of society is one of consumption and disdain for production as socially demeaning.

Beginning in the 17th century, with the repulse of the Ottomans' second and last attempt to capture Vienna in 1683, we see the Empire dealing with the Europeans from an increasing position of weakness. "By the end of the [18th] century, there was a growing awareness of the dangers [of the increasing economic and military power of the Europeans]. Among the ordinary people it found expression in messianic prophesies, among the Ottoman elite in the idea that something must be done...Some attempts were made to introduce corps with modern training and equipment [i.e. European style] into the army and navy, and in the 1790's, on the initiative of the new Sultan, Selim III, a more sustained effort was made to create a new model army; but in the end it came to nothing because the creation of a new army, and the fiscal reforms which it involved, threatened too many powerful interests."[154] Within this situation, the two principal, contradictory elements that have caused the distorted change (alluded to in the Introduction) in the socioeconomic structures of the Arab world to this day can be found.

First, there is the realization that the "other" is more powerful, and there is the natural reaction of any order, when it comes in contact with the superior

---

[152] Anderson, p. 376.
[153] See note 87.
[154] Hourani, p. 262.

strength of another order, to emulate what it views as the "other's" most impressive traits; in this case, primarily military strength. And second, that emulation is squelched by the natural opposition to innovation found in all agrarian socioeconomic structures. This natural opposition is made even more severe in the case of the Arab/Islamic world by the millennium-old, mutual antagonism with European civilization in which the antagonists view themselves largely in relation to each other.

In the present-day Arab world, this contradiction has resulted in the importation of certain goods and technology from the West, but the ideas, processes, and methods which produced these items, notwithstanding a relatively brief and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to import and internalize these as well in the 19th and 20th centuries up to 1967, have been shunned by the majority of the Arab world. For example, in the 1820's Rifa'a al-Tahtawi was sent by Muhammad 'Ali, the founder of present-day Egypt who was himself an outsider born in Macedonia, to Paris with an educational mission. Al-Tahtawi's description of the French included these remarks: "They deny miracles, and believe it is not possible to infringe natural laws, and that religions came to point men to good works...but among their ugly beliefs is this, that the intellect and virtue of their wise men are greater than the intelligence of the prophets."[155] From this it is clear that the Arabs had very little conception of the essence and the source of European power, and this lack of understanding is all the more ironic given that al-Tahtawi was sent to gather the knowledge and textbooks of Europe in order to gain that very understanding and the economic and military power that went with it.

---

[155]Rifa'a Rafi'i al-Tahtawi quoted in Hourani, p. 305.

During this same time period, there were similar attempts to incorporate Western ideas into the crumbling Ottoman state.[156] "Attempts at 'liberal' renovation to conform with Western capitalist norms...were inaugurated by Mahmud II in the 1820's, in an attempt to modernize the administrative and economic apparatus of the Sultanate...But the artificial character of the new political course soon became evident. When Turkish nationalists attempted to impose a representative constitution, Sultan Abdul Hamid II had little difficulty in reimposing a brutal if rickety personal despotism in 1878."[157]

When the agrarian socioeconomic order is challenged by the superior wealth and power of a modern industrial order, the result is what Huntington termed the "king's dilemma."[158] Simply put, if the elites of the agrarian order are to be successful in meeting the challenge, they must use their centralized authority in ways that are alien and contradictory to the agrarian order; they must attempt to reform the social and economic institutions of the society rather than using that authority for their own aggrandizement. It is, however, precisely this reforming process that unleashes the political power of the productive masses and threatens to overturn the agrarian socioeconomic structure, to do away with the ruling elites and to compartmentalize the role of the clerisy.

Since the early 19th century, finding a solution to this dilemma in the Arab world has been problematic at best. The solution attempted by the old Ottoman elite discussed above was simply to clamp down on reform efforts and reassert the whole of the agrarian structure. However, the most common pattern to be found in the political changes of the Arab world with regard to this dilemma was

---

[156] Egypt, in all but name, was detached from the Empire in 1805 and came to occupy Syria for 10 years (1831-40) before being forced to withdraw by the European powers who were determined to keep the eastern part of the Empire intact for their own strategic benefit. It was joined by Algeria, colonized by the French beginning in 1830, and Tunisia, occupied by the French in 1881.

[157] Anderson, pp. 388-389.

[158] See Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 177.

originally played out not by Arabs, but by the "Young Turks" who overthrew Abdul Hamid's rule in 1908.

"In 1908, a revolution supported by part of the army [which had been raised and trained by modern, European methods] restored the constitution...In the next few years, however, power over the government was seized by a group of Turkish officers and officials (The Committee of Union and Progress, or 'Young Turks') who tried to strengthen the empire by increasing central control."[159] The old order was nominally overthrown in the name of progress by a cabal of military officers recruited and trained in the Western manner, and a few "enlightened," modernizing individuals seeking to ride the Western wave of the future in reforming their own institutions.

However, the dreams of those modern-minded individuals ultimately came to nothing as the agrarian order was overturned in its old form only to reemerge in a new guise. "Even the most indulgent study of the 'Young Turk' regime concludes that it was unable to create any new institutions, but merely exploited traditional mechanisms of rule for its own purposes."[160] It is the newly formed *petite bourgeoisie*, composed of the more educated members of the traditional bureaucracy (as opposed to a rationalized bureaucracy) and middle to low ranking military officers, that takes power ostensibly to make society over but, in effect, it simply takes the place of the old warrior elite within essentially the same socioeconomic structure. The maintenance of power becomes not a means but **the** end.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the occupation of the majority of the Arab world by the European powers, the changes in Arab social, economic, and political institutions already begun by the Ottomans were, in many ways

---

[159] Hourani, p. 281.
[160] Feroz Ahmed quoted in Anderson, p. 390.

greatly enhanced, but in other ways the colonial administration contributed to socioeconomic stagnation. However, these changes were but a side-effect of colonization and, moreover, the Europeans had the same basic goal as that of the Ottomans with regard to the Arab societies over which they ruled (with the possible exception of Algeria): they sought to maintain their dominance over these societies for their own aggrandizement in the form of both the exploitation of resources and the pursuit of strategic advantage vis-a-vis each other. The Europeans had no more interest in seeing the productive masses freed from their yoke than did the Ottomans.[161]

> "The policies followed by England and France [when they occupied the majority of the Arab world] could be regarded as continuations, in a more effective form, of those of the indigenous reformers...A limited number of schools was established or retained from the previous period, enough to train officials and technicians at the level at which it was judged feasible to employ them, but not enough to produce a large class of discontented intellectuals."[162]

The social and economic changes wrought by European colonialism on Arab societies was impressive. First, largely as a result of their superior organization and technical skills, the colonial powers were much more capable of maintaining

---

[161] There are many who would object to this notion, and certainly if one looks to the opening of universities and other schools by the Europeans, an argument can be made that part of the self-perceived role of the European invaders was to make life better for the local populations, to "civilize" life in the Arab world and provide it with an opportunity to break free of the traditional bonds. However, if we look to the "divide-and-rule" tactics of the colonial administrations, playing off one group against another, we see the true nature of the occupation. Furthermore, if we examine these schools a bit more closely, we find that the majority of them were either developed to educate and train a small number of the local populations in technical fields required for the smooth running of the occupation and the extraction of resources or they were Christian missionary schools. "The degraded state of the Muslim world made it an obvious target for Christian missionaries. The proselytizing crusade was launched with renewed vigor and quickly spread..." Maxime Rodinson quoted in John L. Esposito, The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 49. The explosive effect that the exposure to Western thought, with its nationalistic, scientific and secular themes, was to have on later events was an unforeseen side-effect of the educational process begun by Muhammad 'Ali as well as the Ottomans, and furthered by the European colonial apparatus.

[162] Hourani, pp. 285, 286.

control over the countryside than the Ottoman regime could ever hope to be. This greatly increased centralization of power in the capitals of the colonial administrations is key to the later development of distinct national identities in what would become newly independent, separate states within the larger whole of the Arab world. However, the colonial administrations were, in effect, continuations of the old order. They governed principally by force and they were a culturally distinct group from the societies over which they ruled; they were, in other words, the ultimate Mamluks. But the power that this particular group of "warrior elites" possessed enabled them to rule without the legitimizing force of the clerisy.

Here, again, we find a pattern that is still being played out in the Arab world today, particularly in Syria and Iraq. A warrior elite that is capable of maintaining order without need of the legitimizing power of the clerisy does so and pushes the clerics aside. The result is a totalitarian despotism that is far more pervasive and intrusive in society than the classical "oriental despotism" of the sultans. "The sovereign, who before found his power (despotic in name) circumscribed, because with all the will, he had not the real art of oppressing, by the aid of science finds himself a giant."[163]

However deeply this affects society, the change in the basic structure is only superficial. The society remains essentially agrarian in its economic functioning and in its cognitive development and view of the world. The spiritual power of the clerisy, no longer used as a political legitimizing force, retains its hold over the "hearts and minds" of society; a hold that tends to grow in strength rather than weaken as the political order has lost the webs of social meaning which had made it bearable, and religious expression becomes the language of revolt. What we see, therefore, is not the elimination of the clerisy but a continuation of the

---

[163]Captain Adolphus Slade quoted in Gellner, Muslim Society, p. 56.

oscillating nature of the warrior elite/clerisy relationship within the agrarian socioeconomic structure. More will be said below on this phenomenon as the discussion turns to the present-day political situation in the Arab world.

The second effect of the colonial period was to form the core of a new stratum of indigenous elites: landowning "notables" and a *petite bourgeoisie* primarily made up of European-educated intelligentsia and European-trained (or at least European-styled) military officers. The land reform begun by the Ottomans and the Egyptian Khedive in the mid-19th century in an effort to encourage production had the unintended result of creating a class of absentee landowners and local "big men." By the time of the First World War, nearly half of the cultivated land was in the hands of those owning more than 50 acres.[164] With the coming of the colonial period, these "notables" became even more powerful in Arab societies as the colonial administrations tended to lean heavily on this group to help maintain order and to insure the continued flow of agricultural products (especially cotton and silk) and other materials to European markets; a service for which the "notables" were amply rewarded both economically and in terms of influence with the regime. "By the 1920's, there was in most Arab countries a class of landowners whose interests were bound up with the production of raw materials for export, or with the maintenance of imperial rule."[165]

In addition to the land owning "notables," "another kind of elite [became] no less important: those who had an education of European type. Schooling in this period was still mostly confined to those who could afford it, or possessed some other advantage [a powerful patron, for instance]; even within that group, it might still be limited by the reluctance of society to send its boys (and even more

---

[164] Hourani, p. 289.
[165] Ibid, p. 325.

its girls) to schools which would alienate them from their families and traditions..."[166]

The third major effect of the colonial period was to mix together some of the tendencies of the modern industrial order with the agrarian or extractive mode of production in the Arab world. First, the expansion of mining areas (inclusive of oil production facilities) and the cultivated land holdings of the "notables" to include areas that had long been considered tribal, pastoral ranges in order to increase export volume; the extension of centralized control by the colonial administrations over the countryside; and the building of an extensive transportation infrastructure to facilitate both of these pursuits; had the effect of practically eliminating the hunter/gatherer, nomadic pastoralist existence of the tribes which had always played such a key role in the Arab socioeconomic structure. "The 1920's and 1930's were the period when nomadic pastoralists virtually disappeared as an important factor in Arab society. The coming of the railway and motor car struck at the activity on which the long-distance pastoral economy depended: the rearing of camels for transport...[Also,] the extension of control by central governments and changes in urban demand were causing mainly nomadic and pastoral groups to move nearer to becoming sedentary cultivators."[167]

This development not only eliminated one of the principal elements that made up the unique Arab socioeconomic structure (if you will recall that prior to this, that structure depended on the periodic rejuvenation of social and political cohesion brought about by tribal conquest of the agrarian order), but also added to the growing number of landless, impoverished peasants and sharecroppers whose ultimate future destination was to be the swelling urban centers of the

---

[166] Ibid, p. 326.
[167] Ibid, p. 334.

post-independence Arab states. Be that as it may, there was no longer any cohesive tribal force that was capable of fending off the central government and, therefore, there was little if any opportunity to escape the predations of the elites of the agrarian structure.

The agrarian mode of production was further entrenched by the integration, begun in the 18th and 19th centuries, of the economies of the Arab world with the "world economic system," a system dominated by the European "core." "Thus as early as 1788 the French ambassador to Constantinople characterized the Ottoman Empire as 'one of the richest colonies of France.'"[168] This integration was moved toward completion in the colonial period.

Within this system, the "periphery" areas, of which the Arab world is a part, double as both vast resource bases for the modern industrial economic engines of the "core," and equally vast markets for the finished goods of industrial production. In other words, "the capitalist system in the West expanded partially at the expense of pre-capitalist systems. Through colonialism and neo-colonialism, the West subjected pre-capitalist formations to its own growth requirements."[169]

This, it turns out, is a double-edged sword for the Arab world. On the one hand, the extractive process, which is not conducive to the development of a complex division of labor and does not require that the scientific mode of thought pervade the social order, does indeed produce wealth, but this wealth is used to purchase the wares of the "core" rather than to accumulate capital for indigenous manufacturing enterprises. Attempts to do so meet with little success as the "periphery" areas have no chance of attaining a (to use the

---

[168] Abbas Alnasrawi, "The Arab Economies: Twenty Years of Change and Dependency." in Arab Studies Quarterly, Vol.9:4, (Fall, 1987), p. 357.

[169] Nadia Ramsis Farah, "The Social Formations Approach and Arab Social Systems," in Arab Studies Quarterly, Vol. 10:3, (Summer, 1988), p. 262.

economists' terminology) "comparative advantage" in quality or quantity of production over the "core" area. The extractive process, therefore, remains one of the few alternatives for economic survival within the system, and it serves to stagnate structural change.

On the other hand, the process of integrating Arab societies into the world system necessarily brings social change and accelerates the development of a *petite bourgeoisie* which, in turn, creates a conflict. There is a clash between the elements of the basic agrarian structure that are now being held in place by the nature of the world system as well as their own preferences, and the new socioeconomic groups created by the interaction with the world system that are antithetical to the status quo of the agrarian order. In other words, integration into the world system tends to have a "push-me-pull-you" effect on the socioeconomic orders of the "periphery" areas.

We can clearly see the Arab world being drawn more firmly into this system by the colonial experience in both the solidification of new dominant classes (the "notables" and the Western educated "intelligentsia") as well as the spending patterns of the colonial powers. During this period, "compared with the investment of European capital in agriculture and mining [both of which are extractive processes], that in industry was small, and for the most part confined to building materials, food-processing and textiles."[170]

The primary effect of this dependence on extractive processes is to severely limit the opportunity of the productive masses to escape the domination of the elite classes of the agrarian order. They simply have no basis for economic and political power. The structure is not dependent for its survival on their innovative and creative abilities and there is, therefore, no incentive for the politically dangerous move of freeing the minds and bodies of the productive

---

[170] Hourani, p. 321.

masses, and allowing the dissemination throughout society of the scientific mode of thought and the complex division of labor which results from it.

Unlike the original, European transition from the agrarian to the modern industrial socioeconomic order which took place in conjunction with and actually furthered the consolidation of state power, a situation that provided the route of escape for the productive masses, the consolidation of state power in the Arab world now became a pre-existing condition in which the central authorities recognize the dangers to themselves of allowing the productive masses to become free of their yoke, and without an existential threat to provide the incentive, it is unlikely that those authorities will deviate from the maxims of power within the agrarian order. As we shall see in the following section, that threat is a growing reality in the present-day Arab world, partially as a result of the very same processes that entrench the agrarian-type order within the world system.

C. POST-INDEPENDENCE TO THE PRESENT

The post-independence era seems to mark a divergence in the political paths of those areas of the Arab world that had been directly colonized and those that had not been so. While monarchies were placed in power by the Europeans in the former colonial possessions and there were already monarchies in existence in the areas not directly colonized, the social changes (e.g. the direct exposure to Western ideas of nationalism, secularism, socialism, etc; and the solidification of the new elite classes of Westernized intellectuals) brought about by the colonial experience seems to have made the old, traditional Agrarian structure intolerable to the peoples who had direct colonial experience.

Of the monarchies established at independence, the Jordanian monarchy is the only one that still remains, however tenuously, in power. The rest of the

monarchies (those in Libya, Egypt, Syria and Iraq) were overthrown in a peculiar mixture of the application of the essentially Western notions of nationalism and socialism and the rebellion against the Western dominated, world economic and political system. It was both a grand emulation of the West and a rebellion against it. The areas that had not experienced the full effects of direct colonization (e.g. Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states) or had pre-existing, more or less continuous monarchies considered more "legitimate" by the populations over which they ruled as a result of their more indigenous nature (e.g. Morocco), are slightly less problematic for this discussion as they retained the old style, agrarian socioeconomic structure of a stratum of warrior elites governing the productive masses with the aid of the legitimizing power of the clerisy. The regimes of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states were also considerably aided by the material success of the extraction process and the consequent ability to buy off internal and external opposition to the existing order.

This apparent divergence in the political character of the regimes of the Arab world, while real enough in some respects, particularly prior to 1967, has turned out to be largely superficial. The "young turks" of the Arab world, Nasser, the Ba'th, and later, Qhadaffi, rose to power in confrontation with the "lackeys of Western imperialism:" the newly established monarchies. "They condemned the radical individualism of capitalism, called for Arab unity and solidarity, and promised the creation of a new social order to alleviate the plight of the masses in Arab societies."[171] The new order that they sought to create was a grand Arab socialist republic, a new Arab unity and greatness that would rival that of the "golden age."

The well-spring of this general movement was Arab nationalism born in opposition to Western imperialism. There was, however, significant problems

---

[171] Esposito, p. 71.

with the notions of nationalism and socialism in the context of the Arab world. First, as a result of the centralization of power in the capitals of the colonial administrations and the passing on of that centralized framework to the newly independent states, those states (artificial and abstract creations of the West) became reified. The institutional framework and the borders of those artificial creations, over a period of decades, had acquired the support of entrenched interests in each of them. Army personnel, members of the state bureaucracy, and property owners all had an interest in maintaining the separate state entities. Therefore, how was unity and identification with the whole to be achieved without the disunity and bloodshed which would inevitably follow from force and coercion?

Secondly, there is a deep and unsolvable paradox in the notion of Arab socialism which seeks to create a synthetic and more indigenous alternative to the "pure" socialism of the West. There are three very good reasons why this alternative was attractive to the "young turk" regimes. In the first place, with the expansion of the extractive processes in oil, gas, and agriculture, and the first bloomings of capitalist enterprises, vast inequalities of wealth began to emerge in the colonial and post-colonial periods not only within the new states, but between them as well. The situation was analogous to the cruelties and injustices observed by Marx in the early period of English industrialization as well as to the situation in Russia in the early 1900's that moved the Bolsheviks to action.

In the second place, "the new oil, gas, and the large abandoned enterprises and estates [left by the colonial powers] could hardly be handed over to individuals [without increasing the already growing material inequalities]. [Therefore,] in a variety of forms, some of them experimental, they were socialized."[172] In other words, they were nationalized by the state.

---

[172]Gellner, Muslim Society, p. 168.

Lastly, "the urge to impose a severe moralistic rule on the distribution of advantages in industrial society is known as socialism. It may be for this reason that the moralistic tradition inherent in Islam, its vocation to uncompromising and implemented righteousness, has its curious elective affinity for modern social radicalism..."[173]

In this way, the new, radical regimes could have their cake and eat it. They could create modern industrial societies capable of holding their own against the West, while at the same time they could both alleviate the socially harsh aspects of such a major change in the socioeconomic structure and disavow the original model of the modern industrial society. The paradox is this: while scripturalist Islam is in some ways compatible with radical socialism, this type of sociopolitical structure requires a rational bureaucratization of government that is the product of the scientific mode of thought. Again, we arrive at the insoluble contradiction between reason and revelation. Socialism is the product of Man's reason and intellect; it is Man-centered while Islam is God-centered.

This is not to say that, at the outset, these regimes leaned in any way on the clerisy for support and legitimation. Rather, they sought to discredit or do away with the clerisy as an impediment to the new order while at the same time some of the new regimes retained Islam as the "window-dressing" necessary to differentiate "Arab socialism," as an indigenous and authentic social, economic and political structure, from European socialism.

Given these two primary contradictions in the aims of the radical new regimes, it is small wonder that their grand visions of the future came to naught. However, there are two additional reasons for the failure of these regimes to accomplish any real and lasting change in the socioeconomic structures of their states. One of these is that even with the turn to the Soviet Union as an

---

[173] Ibid, p. 48.

alternative to the West, the dynamics of the global division of labor remained applicable as these states produced little else other than the raw materials of extraction for export while the importation of finished, manufactured goods and technologies continued, albeit from a different source. The result was that the economic functioning of these societies remained more or less agrarian in nature, providing no impetus for the permeation of the scientific mode of thought throughout society, the development of a complex division of labor, or a rationalization of bureaucracy.

Another reason for the failure of the new regimes' plans for the future was that the leaders of these regimes, while they "mimicked the noise of revolutionary change and adopted the outside trappings of socialism," they lacked "the will and determination to wage socialist politics."[174] The opportunity for a redistribution of wealth along more equitable lines throughout society that the nationalization of resources and land reform provided was wasted. While most of the "notables" were thereby disenfranchised, the wealth of the new states merely passed into the hands of members of the ruling clique. Government corruption became much more widespread, exacerbating the reliance on personal ties or patron/client relationships which are, if they are the norm rather than the exception, fatal to the development of a rationalized bureaucracy.[175]

The contradictions and failures of these "young turk" regimes became readily apparent to their subject populations with the 1967 defeat at the hands of Israel. These regimes could no longer brush aside the popular discontent with the capriciousness of the state (largely the result of the failure to create a rationalized

---

[174] Ajami, pp. 41-42.

[175] For a particularly good account of this phenomenon in Syria, see Yahya Sadowski, "Patronage and the Ba'th: Corruption and Control in Contemporary Syria," in Arab Studies Quarterly, Vol. 9:4, (Fall, 1987), pp. 442-458. For other examples of the pervasiveness of patronage relations within the bureaucracies of the Arab world, particularly with regard to the *shillal* circles of friends in Egypt and Tunisia, see Shlomo Eisenstadt and Louis Roninger, Patrons, Clients, and Friends, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 83.

bureaucracy, and the consequent patronage and corruption within a state that holds the keys to all the wealth) and the secular attitudes and plans of the ruling elites. The benefits of any economic growth went largely to members of the ruling group with the other segments of the population benefitting little if any.[176]

As long as these rulers could hold out the possibility that these things were necessary for the development of future power and prosperity, popular opinion could be marshaled in support for plans and policies which went against popular sensibilities, foremost among which was the discrediting of religion and the religious hierarchy as backward and reactionary. However, with the utter rout on the battlefield as irrefutable proof of the failure of these regimes to deliver on their end of the bargain, popular sensibilities could no longer be so easily put off.

> "As the Six-Day War demonstrated, diplomatically and militarily the Arab governments had proved impotent in the international arena...Despite several decades of independence, imported ideologies and development schemes seemed to have failed. Old issues of identity, national ideology, political legitimacy, socioeconomic reform, and Western domination persisted. The failures of governments and national ideologies, epitomized by the humiliation of 1967, precipitated a deepening sense of disillusionment and crisis...and contributed to the political and social resurgence of Islam."[177]

It is at this point that we see the great adventure of "Arab socialism" come full circle, back to the typical agrarian order or derivative forms of it. It is here also that we see the full resemblance to the experience of the "young turks" in that power now became the end rather than the means for the failed revolutionary regimes. The groups within the army and the Western influenced *petite*

---

[176] See Hourani, p. 438.
[177] Esposito, p. 76.

bourgeoisie that had usurped the power of the traditional warrior elites of the agrarian order, intoxicated with revolutionary spirit and nationalism, mostly believed that they were going to bring down the old traditional order, not preserve it. However, the means to achieve that transformation was power. "[They] thought that power would enable [them] to fulfil [their] historical role, so [they] tenaciously clung to it and depended on it and forgot its stating point and good intentions until power became [the] goal rather than [the] means."[178]

As power became the end rather than the means to achieve a transformation of society, the ruling elites of the previously radical regimes were left with a choice between the only two options available to them to preserve their power. On the one hand, they could attempt to do what ruling regimes had done throughout not only Arab history, but throughout the history of all agrarian orders: "coopt the religious sensibility, identify it with the interests and stability of the nation, and channel it into less destabilizing endeavors. And as had been the established norm, the official religious hierarchy that had long made its peace with the men of the sword would be ready to pitch in, bless the men in power and urge the believers to trust the men who had it within their power to order and presumably change things."[179] This attempt to coopt religious sensibilities, already begun by Nasser in the early and middle 1960's to thwart what was primarily Saudi charges that his government was "un-Islamic,"[180] became more of necessity of maintaining power for not only the Egyptian rulers but also for those of most of the other states in the Maghreb after 1967.

On the other hand, the ruling elites could ruthlessly turn the power of the state against their own populations. This option was the one taken by the Ba'thi

---

[178]Sami al-Jundi quoted in Ajami, p. 59.

[179]Ajami, p.73.

[180]"Nasser countered [these charges] by employing religious symbols, leaders, and institutions to **legitimate** and win support for his Arab socialist ideology and policies. His government controlled or coopted the religious establishment." Esposito, p. 75. Emphasis is mine.

regimes in both Syria and Iraq. These regimes chose to eliminate the religious establishment as, with the importation of military technology and hardware, they were both willing and able to establish and maintain order, their order, without the legitimizing force of the clerisy. In both of these cases, it is important to note the fact that the technology and hardware used by the ruling elites to maintain their power without the clerisy was, and is, imported and not the products of the indigenous masses.

This is part of the distorting effect that the older, more established modern industrial societies have on the development of agrarian societies. The scientific mode of thought which is a necessary precondition to the development of technologies that are capable of this thoroughness of domination and coercion, when it permeates the indigenous productive masses as it must if they are to succeed in producing such goods, also creates internal pressures and forces that are a mortal threat to the agrarian order. When these technologies become available to the ruling elites without a coincident rise in the productive abilities of the masses, the result is a stagnation of the social, political, and economic order of society as the ruling elites are interested only in their self-aggrandizement (typical of all agrarian elites) rather than the good of the masses and, furthermore, they have no incentive to think in terms of that good. What was once the "traditional" rule of a monarchy becomes a totalitarian despotism.

What both of the above options preclude is an avenue of escape for the minds and bodies of the productive masses from the bonds of the agrarian order. Secularism has been discredited by its inability to produce results. The religious hierarchy has either been crushed or transparently coopted by the ruling elites and it is, therefore, discredited as a viable force for change as well. The only possibility for escape is therefore in popular religion, or Islamic "fundamentalism."

"The appeal to Islam has...served as a double-edged sword [for the regimes that have either retained the typical agrarian structure (e.g. Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and Morocco) or have degenerated to that same structure (e.g. Egypt and Tunisia)]. Those who wield it run the risk of being judged by that very Islamic yardstick, challenged or toppled."[181] The regimes that have sought to crush the organized religious elements within their societies have tended to come under even stronger attacks from the "fundamentalists."

The situation that the peoples of the Arab world find themselves in bears a striking resemblance to the situation in Germany in the early 1500's, a situation that gave rise to popularized Christianity, or Protestantism. At a time when literacy was beginning to rise and Europe was threatened by the alien "other" in the form of an aggressive Ottoman Empire, the primary enemies of the masses in Germany were considered to be the corrupt Church hierarchy, the merchants and profiteers who sold them vain and useless foreign goods, and the corrupting influence of the influx of foreign styles and ways of life. These enemies were sure to "bring divine wrath and punishment upon the land if Germans continue[d] their spiritual and material folly."[182] With this in mind, perhaps what we are witnessing is an Islamic reformation in which the economic Gulliver is beginning to stir.

Within the Arab world, we can plainly see the elements of the agrarian socioeconomic structure in two basic forms. One in which the traditional pillars of power, the ruling elites and the clerisy, dominate the productive masses. In the other, the ruling elites have suppressed the religious hierarchy and rules the masses by the sword. In both forms, however, the productive masses are held in check as a danger to the stability of the order, an extensive system of patronage

---

[181] Esposito, p. 117.
[182] Ozment, p. 52.

relations becomes one of the only avenues for upward social and economic mobility, and the societies are governed in an authoritarian manner. These societies are, however, transitional, "which means, amongst other things, that most of the people involved know that fundamental changes in society are coming, and that most of the present...political, economic, and social [environment] is extremely precarious and temporary. Hence, the political struggle is played for enormous stakes: not for marginal advantages, or for top positions in a stable structure, but, on the contrary, for control of the direction of the fundamental changes; and the winner takes all."[183]

[183]Gellner, Muslim Society, p. 205. For an example of the kind of "winner takes all," "rule or die" stakes involved, and the results of these stakes, see Thomas Friedman's account of the Asad regime's crushing of the Muslim Brotherhood in From Beirut to Jerusalem, (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1989), pp. 76-105.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The main points that I have attempted to demonstrate in this thesis are: first, that certain types of socioeconomic structures tend to predispose political institutions toward certain forms and methods. Specifically, that hunter/gatherer socioeconomic structures tend to lend themselves to a generally egalitarian political system; that agrarian socioeconomic structures tend to lend themselves to an authoritarian form of rule; and that the socioeconomic structures of modern industrial societies lay the seeds of democratic government.

Secondly, I have attempted to demonstrate that despite Arab governmental pronouncements to the contrary, the admixture of elements from the hunter/gatherer and modern industrial "models," and the superficial differences in the character of the various Arab regimes, the socioeconomic structures found in the Arab world are primarily of the agrarian type. As a result of this, Arab societies have a much greater tendency to be governed in a authoritarian manner.

The point is not that liberalization and democracy are an impossibility in Arab politics, any more than totalitarian despotism is an impossibility in a modern industrial society. Such liberalization is indeed possible, but the way is filled with serious obstacles to this possibility that are put in place by the nature of the agrarian order. Unlike the modern industrial socioeconomic order which, by its very nature, creates the necessary preconditions to democratic government (e.g. consent, rule of law, and citizenship based on nationality), the agrarian structure provides thin soil indeed for the democratic plant to grow.

The agrarian structure generally will not permit the consent of the majority to become a factor in politics because it either physically suppresses opposition or it denies the very idea of consent as a rebellion against God (as if men could possibly decide for themselves the good of society when the structure as it stands has been ordained by God), or both. The rule of law, applying equally to all members of the society, is generally precluded by the capricious nature of the agrarian state and the consequent pervasiveness of patron/client relationships, and also by the denial of the concept of consent.

Citizenship based upon nationality is especially problematic for the societies of the Arab world. While some of the heterogeneous status markers which were necessary for the proper functioning of the "model" agrarian order have disappeared, there continues to be somewhat of a differentiation between the members of the elite and the productive masses based primarily on Western language skills and education which are simply not available to everyone nor, I should add, are they desired by everyone. Homogeneous basic education and training in a single cultural idiom are lacking.

All of this aside, there is still a far greater problem that is specific to the Arab world. Since independence, there has been a continuing question as to what the limits and boundaries of the Arab polities should be. If the basic necessity of nationalism and, therefore, national identity and citizenship is that culture be endowed with its own political roof (and not more than one roof), then what should be the boundaries of the Arab political roof? Should it be based on the geographical territories of the Arab states as they now stand, or on linguistic, historical, or religious demarcations? Should loyalty be given to local, tribal, pan-Arab, Ottoman, Phoenician, Maghrebian, ancient Egyptian, or Islamic ties? These are the questions that Nasser, the Ba'th and the pan-Arab forces in general tried to answer. Needless to say, they were unsuccessful in resolving the

dilemma. The current pan-Islamic movement is but another attempt to answer these very same questions, and until the issue is resolved, there is little chance for the achievement of a true national identity and a basis for citizenship that will inspire the loyalty of those who hold it.

The third and last point is that both the global division of labor within the world economic system and the Arab world's interaction with the European "other" (in other words, the Arab world's economic and cultural interaction with the West) has made the Arab escape from the closed cycle of the agrarian order all the more difficult to achieve. Economically, the world system, dominated by the productive capacity of the West, makes entry into the industrial and manufacturing spheres difficult to accomplish as the West holds an almost insurmountable comparative advantage in quantity and quality of production (although as the example of Japan and the "four tigers" suggests, this advantage is not absolute and forever). The economies of the Arab world simply have no choice but to integrate with the economies of the West,[184] but they can compete and survive economically within the system only through the extraction of raw materials, or agrarian type economic functions.

Culturally, the alien "other" is seen in both Arab and European societies as an obstacle to be overcome. The introduction of Western originated ideas and methods into Arab societies, therefore, arouses a great deal of suspicion and distaste. Since modernization and westernization are so closely associated with one another, it is difficult at best for Arab societies to internalize the mind-set of modernity or the scientific mode of thought (even without the already

---

[184]This point is made especially clear by the experience of the Eastern European and former Soviet economies upon the collapse of the Soviet Union. "When Eastern Europe opened its markets to Western competitors, its outdated...industry faced a clear choice: integrate with the West or perish." Matthew Brzezinski, "Eastern Europe's Car Makers Feel the Sting of Capitalism," in New York Times, (April 28, 1994), p. C1.

considerable constraints of the agrarian structure) without engendering feelings of defeat or self-betrayal.

Initial Distribution List

1. Defense Technical Information Center — 2
   Cameron Station
   Alexandria, Virginia 22304-6145

2. Library, Code 52 — 2
   Naval Postgraduate School
   Monterey, California 93943-5002

3. Dr. Thomas C. Bruneau — 1
   Chairman, National Security Affairs
   Naval Postgraduate School
   Monterey, California 93943-5002

4. Dr. Glenn Robinson — 1
   Asst. Professor of National Security Affairs
   Naval Postgraduate School
   Monterey, California 93943-5002

5. Dr. John Arquilla — 1
   Asst. Professor of National Security Affairs
   Naval Postgraduate School
   Monterey, California 93943-5002

6. LT Mark A. Johnson — 1
   6 Old Club Court
   Rockville, Maryland 20852

7. Dr. Maria Moyano — 1
   Asst. Professor of National Security Affairs
   Naval Postgraduate School
   Monterey, California 93943-5002

8. N511 H — 1
   Chief of Naval Operations
   Room 4D562
   The Pentagon
   Washington, D.C. 20350-2000

9. Dr. Ernest Gellner 1
Kings College
Cambridge University
Cambridge, England

DUDLEY KNOX LIBRARY
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
MONTEREY CA 93943-5101

DUDLEY KNOX LIBRARY
3 2768 00307298 4