

true in the nineteenth century. What may be distinctive today with respect to global systems is the relative ease with which those who benefit from them can withdraw from the world of those excluded. But even so, this is not an absolute shift. The nineteenth-century merchant prince in Istanbul or court official in Cairo lived in walled compounds and sought refuge in club life and ocean cruises, activities as far removed as possible from the squalor of everyday urban life experienced by the majority. The urban elite today also live a life apart—again in clubs and cabarets, but more importantly by being connected to their global counterparts electronically and via the media.

One implication of globalism might appear to be that the local is doomed to be overwhelmed by the global. But in fact that is not the case, or certainly not in the Middle East. In most countries, multiple centers of power and influence continue or have actually been enhanced. As Duben (1992) has noted, local government in Turkey, Iran, and much of the Arab world has grown in importance. Today mayors and city councils play important political roles in many countries and, quite unlike in the past, represent, one way or another, local constituencies or perspectives. Even Iran has been described as having a very multivalent system of power. What global processes may do is favor one urban node over another, but local identities may be strengthened, not weakened, in the process. Small-town boosterism, chambers of commerce, and the like are increasing, not decreasing.

This, then, suggests that a dual structure is emerging, or at least being strengthened, in major cities (see Keyder, 1999)—a segment that benefits from, or is not disenfranchised by consumerism, the international flow of capital, and larger market forces and a segment that does not. As Keyder writes in respect of Istanbul, you can photograph some street scenes which you could represent as being Kabul and others as from any city in Western Europe. But, as he also notes, this polarity does not mean a lack of mutual accommodation; in fact, it could be argued that civil strife in most Middle Eastern cities is notably less than in most European or American cities.

8

Kinship, Marriage, and the Family

This chapter discusses what we feel to be the major elements of social organization based on kinship and family structure in the Middle East. Given the diverse ways of life and cultural heritages, our discussion is both broad and subject to frequent caveats and qualifications. While it is useful to draw attention to general patterns and norms of behavior, one should never apply even strongly supported norms or preferences stereotypically. Many social scientists are skeptical of efforts that purport to describe social phenomena objectively. Nevertheless, there seem to have been sufficient studies by enough observers over the years to provide cumulative data on a wide range of behavioral patterns. Needless to say, one cannot extrapolate from the general to predict the specific, nor should one essentialize such abstractions as "family," "marriage," or "society." We are convinced, however, that to understand Middle Eastern society, even its higher levels of political organization, one has to understand the nature of the primary groupings into which the individual is born and how men and women subsequently fashion and use "primordial" ties and relationships throughout their lifetimes. The relationships are perceived and expressed in the idiom of kinship or closeness (in Arabic, *qaraba*). The binary distinction here is between one who is close or kin, *qareeb*, and one who is distant or a stranger, *ghareeb*. In fact, the same term, *ghareeb*, is applied to a nonrelative or stranger; for a relative, the term in Persian or Farsi is *khodi*, which is derived from the word *khod*, meaning "self."

There have been many attempts to characterize Middle Eastern social organization in terms of paradigms unique to Middle Eastern society, as if this region constituted a homogeneous and relatively unchanging world of its own. To that end, scholars have sought some simple and unique code that would reveal and explain social organization in the area. It is as if behavior in the Middle East cannot be understood in the same terms and concepts applicable to Europe or the rest of Asia. For example, an inordinate amount of scholarship

has been devoted to the expressed preference for patrilineal parallel cousin marriage (father's brother's daughter/son). For some scholars, this rule and its extension is a metaphor for what distinguishes Middle Eastern society in general. Other scholars stress the universality of the patrilineal segmentary system in which fundamental building blocks of society are formed according to rules of descent in the male line. For still others, the code lies in a unique system of values whose core lies in deeply rooted assumptions and attitudes about human sexuality and the need to control female sexual behavior. Some trace the origin of this value complex to the Islamic heritage of the area; others relate it to longer-standing practices that revolve around basic notions of honor and shame. Although simplification is inherently attractive, and indeed is the legitimate goal of scholarship, it has to be accomplished with full cognizance of the variability and complexity of the phenomena observed.

When viewing communal organization throughout the Middle East, and indeed throughout the world, there is no doubt that the single most crucial factor underlying social relationships is that of kinship. Even in the most developed industrial societies, most individuals grow up with, co-reside with, and, in general, spend most of their time in association with people to whom they are related in one fashion or another. How people interact with one another, their expectations of behavior, and their responsibilities to others are all heavily influenced by whether they are related to one another, and if so how. This specific aspect of social organization, kinship, and the formation of groups on the basis of selected forms of kinship is our initial concern here.

TERMS OF KINSHIP

Let us begin by asking the most elementary question: How do people themselves define and classify their relatives? We have to keep in mind that such systems of classification vary greatly around the world, and that anthropologists have reduced them to a number of major types according to how people define and distinguish key relationships—parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, for example. This is more than an exercise in comparative linguistics; how people create a specific universe of relations is closely related to patterns of actual behavior. For example, the fact that the English language does not distinguish verbally between maternal and paternal cousins is indicative of the social fact that all cousins tend to stand in the same formal relationship to the speaker. In Arabic, on the other hand, as in Persian and Turkish, the speaker not only has to distinguish linguistically between the maternal and paternal cousins but also has to specify the gender of the cousin in question and his or her exact relationship to the parent in question.

This descriptive and highly specific system of kin terminology, referred to by anthropologists as the *Sudanese* type, indicates the significance of distin-

guishing among cousins in most Middle Eastern societies. This same system distinguishes sets of aunts and uncles from each other in terms of their links to the parents; for example, different terms are used for mother's sister and father's sister. Thus, an Arabic, Persian, or Turkish speaker may utilize as many as 16 different terms or combinations to describe immediate blood relations. This precision in referring to people is associated with the importance that is attached to distinguishing among different sets of relatives. (See Table 8.1.)

It should be kept in mind that kinship classification systems give only a little insight into the structure of social relations; they do not necessarily reveal anything of the actual content. Thus, if a Turkish male refers to one man as his father's brother, *amca*, and another as his mother's brother, *dayı*, this tells us only that these two individuals stand in different social points to the speaker. Although in both urban and rural Turkish societies, a mother's brother is generally thought of as being warm and emotionally sympathetic to his nephew or niece and one's father's brother is frequently associated with exhibiting parental authority and discipline, it does not necessarily follow that actual behavior reflects these normative expectations.

Carol Delaney (1991) describes kinship as being a system of relationships that transcends simple kinship terminology alone. Kinship behavior in the Middle East, as elsewhere, is tempered by matters of personality, expediency, and the specific context under consideration. However, the normative patterns of behavior associated with specific terms do at least set the formal frame and some of the limits for social interaction. Knowing that the terms for close relatives can be extended to more distant relatives, even to strangers under certain

TABLE 8.1 Kinship Terminology

English	Arabic	Persian	Turkish
father	'ab	pedar	baba
mother	'umm	modar	anne (ana)
father's brother	'amm	amou	amca
mother's sister	khala	khaleh	teyze
father's sister	'amma	ammeh	hala
mother's brother	khal	doyi	dayı
brother	'akh	barodar	erkek kardeş
sister	'ukht	khohar	kız kardeş
father's brother's son	'ibn 'ammi	pesar amou	amca oğlu
mother's sister's son	'ibn khalti	pesar khaleh	teyze oğlu
father's brother's daughter	bint 'amm	dokhtar amou	amca kızı
mother's sister's daughter	bint khalti	dokhtar khaleh	teyze kızı
father's sister's son	ibn 'ammli	pesar ammeh	hala oğlu
mother's brother's son	ibn khali	pesar doyi	dayı oğlu
father's sister's daughter	bint 'ammi	dokhtar ammeh	hala kızı
mother's brother's daughter	bint khali	dokhtar doyi	dayı kızı

circumstances, gives an insight into the expectations that people have of that specific relationship. For example, in the Arabic-speaking world (and in Turkey, too), the use of the term for father's brother by younger men to address older men indicates respect and deference to their authority regardless of the actual biological relationship. (Parenthetically, we may add that if used in an inappropriate context, this usage may indicate derision or patronizing. For example, in Arabic a wealthy man might address a menial servant of his as *ya 'ammī*, or "my uncle"; in this case, the term expresses the effort of the rich and powerful master to "dilute" the social gap between him and his servant.) Arab children are also encouraged to use the term *khala*, or mother's sister, when addressing their mother's female friends of similar status and age. This is to indicate both respect and yet informal intimacy.

Extending the Arabic terms *'amm* to a large circle of older males and *khala* to a large circle of older females, while at the same time restricting the usages of *'amma*, or father's sister, and *khal*, or mother's brother, to a narrower group, reflects fairly pervasive social expectations about patterns of cross-generational deference, authority, and even intimacy.

In Turkish, brothers and sisters refer to each other by terms that indicate relative birth order and, by implication, express relative expectations of authority and deference. Naturally, within any household, actual relations between brothers and sisters may bear little resemblance to a hierarchy based on age. But still, there are times when this normative ranking can or should be expressed. For example, at ceremonial meals, or when strangers are present, or when married siblings pay social visits to each other's houses, it is expected that deference will be paid to older sisters and brothers. In a discussion of family structure in a Turkish village, Paul Magnarella (1974) notes that older sisters, *abla*, become like second mothers to younger siblings, and older brothers, *agabey*, are in many respects second fathers. Older brothers can become tyrannical in their behavior toward younger sisters as they assume the guardianship of family honor. Of course, even in a single community, people from different social classes, educational backgrounds, and so on, behave differently. However, in particular societies, it is possible to identify sets of expectations regarding proper behavior toward kinfolk. The way these expectations are met or not met in behavior can be revealing of the actual relationship among members of the family.

Thus, a basic set of Arabic terms for relatives is understood by the same 250 million speakers of that language, although this vast population encompasses a great range of social diversity and ways of life. All the same, terms take on different values and meanings in different areas and contexts. And the same word can convey different values when used in different situations. For example, the Arabic word *'amm* is used to refer to one's father's brother, as well as to address one's father-in-law, regardless of consanguinity. In certain situations, as previously described, it is also employed to signify respect for male elders or to

minimize social distance. Further, one may also tease one's age-mates by calling them *'ammī*.

Husbands and wives refer to one another in a variety of ways that reflect not only social class but also who is present, whether or not they are addressing each other in private, whether or not they have had children, and other factors that vary with local usage. The basic terms consist of personal names normally to be used only in private or in intimate conversation, except among the educated upper-class urbanites, where personal names are more widely used in address now. In public, a common practice among all segments of Arabic-speaking society is for spouses to refer to one another (and be referred to by others) by the name of their eldest son, for example, *'abu 'Ali* or *'umm 'Ali*, that is, "father of 'Ali" or "mother of 'Ali." If the couple has only daughters, the spouses are addressed by the name of the oldest girl until a son is born. Anthropologists call this practice of addressing parents in reference to their children *teknonymy*. Its presumed significance in the Middle East is to highlight the importance of male issue to both parents and to emphasize the responsibility of parenting in the marital bond.

Another widespread system of address is for spouses to refer to each other by the kinship term *bint 'amm* or *ibu 'amm* (father's brother's daughter/father's brother's son), particularly when wishing to stress the couple's immediate ties to one another rather than those arising from parenthood. In rural areas in much of the Arabic-speaking Middle East, husbands and wives very often simply refer to one another as *martī*, "my woman," and *rajli*, "my man," a usage disdained by educated and status-conscious individuals. Emrys Peters (1976) found that the terms used by spouses in Shi'a and Maronite villages of Lebanon differed in a slight but significant manner that reflected their different views of marriage. Husbands and wives in Shi'a villages consistently used the teknonymous system of address in private, that is, they referred to each other in terms of their children. The Maronites, on the other hand, used either personal names or kin terms such as *bint 'amm*, "father's brother's daughter," indicating that the spouses identified more closely with each other than with their shared children. It is because actual kinship usage is situational that it reveals much about what people expect from others and how they hope to manipulate or affect the behavior of others.

It is interesting to note here that whereas the Middle East is usually characterized as exemplifying a strong male bias with an emphasis on agnatic descent, this is not reflected in the system of kinship terminology. Whereas in many of the world's patrilineal societies, relatives on the father's side are referred to in ways that indicate a closer relationship than with the equivalent relatives on the mother's side, this is not true in the Middle East. The system of kinship terms used by most people of the area is evenhanded and can be considered as indicative of the importance that *all* close relatives may play in an individual's life. In other words, regardless of the political and social

alignments of the moment, the core of relatives on which an individual may rely and may even manipulate is bilateral and unbounded. As the Arab proverb expresses it, "Your kin are those who stand with you when battle lines are drawn."

PATRILINEAL DESCENT AND PATRONYMIC GROUPS

Ideas of kinship do more than provide a potential network for individual action. Some forms of kinship terminology sort members of a society into groups of people who interact on a regular basis or for some purpose. Just as kinship can describe a larger, almost open-ended circle of relatives, it can also be used to establish some set of relatives apart from the others. The idea of patrilineal descent is an important principle used to distinguish among relatives and to establish potentially discrete kin groupings or categories.

Individuals are considered biologically related in equal degrees to both their father and mother, a fact reflected in the bilateral nature of kinship terms used. However, among the Arabs, the general belief is that a child inherits his or her "blood," *damm*, from both father and mother, while the nerve or sinew, *'asab*, is believed to be passed only through the father, the male line of descent. Hence, the special significance of patrilineal descent as expressed in the idiom of *'asabiyya*, translated into clan and tribal solidarity and cohesion. As such, special recognition is paid to those relatives with whom one shares a common ancestry in the male line—that is, one's father's lineal relatives. At its simplest, this is directly analogous to the way in which family names are passed on through fathers in American and English society. In general, however, patrilineal descent is much more significant than just simply a means by which family names are passed on. In both tribal and nontribal Middle Eastern societies, a number of important rights, duties, and mutual expectations are associated with close patrilineal kin. In tribal societies, these rights include rights to water, land, mutual defense, and so on (as discussed in the earlier chapter on pastoralism). In nontribal communities, an individual may depend on his or her patrikin for protection, economic assistance, and general support.

Fundamental to all Middle Eastern social groupings is the idea that inheritance rights, which often establish an individual's basic access to productive wealth, are agnatically defined. The *'asab* relationship defines primary heirs as those related to the deceased person in the ascending and descending male line. When political authority is passed through inheritance, it also follows the male line. Throughout their lifetime, women continue to partake more in their father's social status than in that of their husband. In cases of divorce or death, minor children, after they are weaned, are kept with the father or his immediate patrilineal family.

What is important is where the principle of patrilineal descent is used to form relatively small-scale groupings for social action. These can be termed

extended families, patronymic groups, or shallow lineages. Although tribal organization is based on the widest extension of this principle, descent is more widely used to define small-scale groupings of the sort that characterize village, town, and city alike. This does not mean that all groups for joint action, co-residence, or other purposes are restricted to this patrilineal model. People may form groups in which the closest ties of kinship are through maternal relatives, or they may be joined by a mixture of patrilineal and matrilineal ties. Even when patrilineal groups are recognized, unrelated individuals may still join. For example, this often happens when a family settles in a village in which it has no previous patrilineal ties to the other residents. With time, facilitated by intermarriage, the family and its descendants may well become assimilated into one of the dominant patronymic groups. In short, although the actual makeup of any given social group is apt to be varied, a consistent pattern is the primacy of the patrilineal ties in forming named groups, be they families or lineages.

THE FAMILY AND THE HOUSEHOLD

Although it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the concept of the family from that of the household, the two are not always coterminous. Families are social constructs based on marriage and consanguinity—in particular, relations of descent. It is this latter relationship that gives families continuity across generations. Households, as we use the term, are the economic and residential units that may or may not correspond with the family. This analytical distinction between family and household is one made by members of Middle Eastern communities themselves, as expressed in the Arabic terms *'aila* or *usra* for a named core of closely related kinspeople and their affines (relatives by marriage) and *beit* or *dar*, which refers to the smaller, co-residing group. The family was and remains the basic unit of social organization in the Middle East. This is true for rural and urban segments alike. The root of the Arabic and Turkish term for family, *'aila*, means "to support," and in fact, children are referred to generally as *'iyal*, those to be supported or dependents. Until recently, the family in the Middle East conformed to the patriarchal model in which the father held authority and was charged with economically supporting his wife and children. The wife's main duties were confined to the household and to raising the children.

The often articulated ideal household structure among urban and rural Arabs, Turks, and Persians—an extended family made up of the father or patriarch, his wife, one or more married sons and their families, and all the unmarried daughters and sons—probably was never the statistical norm. Among the 15 households making up the small settled Bedouin community in the Western Desert of Egypt, Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) reports a wide variation. The smallest was a couple and their infant and the largest consisted of 25 people who shared two adjacent houses and who "ate from one bowl."

The great variability in actual patterns of residence and in household makeup, both in terms of numbers of people and in spatial composition, does not determine the actual patterns of intensive social interaction. Very often in rural as well as urban settings, brothers or agnatic cousins cooperate in particular political or economic enterprises but reside in separate households, each rearing his own children and maintaining separate household budgets. Seteney Shami's (1997) study of two low-income neighborhoods in central Amman (discussed in Chapter 7), revealed wide variations in household composition and in the use of shared space. Shami reports that a common type is the multiple family household consisting of a conjugal couple, plus one or more married sons and their respective families. Within the dwelling space, however, there were "divisions and boundaries structured intimately by household relations. These divisions are not, as may be expected from the literature on the Middle East, divisions into male and female space. Rather each conjugal unit within the multiple-family-household has its own space, and where possible their own room" (p. 84). When conjugal families that are part of the household go away on extended trips (for example to work abroad), their rooms are locked, even though the space is badly needed by the remaining members of the household.

What is important to keep in mind is that the more inclusive unit of the family, however formed in practice, continues to be important even when residential patterns change. As Shami concludes, it is the networks of kinship and cooperation that define the people's sense of identity, "give meaning to their social relations, and sustain them through difficult and insecure economic circumstances" (p. 81).

The size and significance of publicly identifiable family groupings in the Middle East correlate closely with their resources. Rich families take pains to maintain close relations among their members and to utilize ties of kinship and marriage to reinforce, perpetuate, and advance their positions. Whereas a poor man would likely find little to draw his in-laws close to him, a rich or powerful man will probably make use of (and be used by) not only his in-laws but those created by the marriages of his children. Even where productive property is individually held, it is advantageous for members of wealthy families to act in concert. Thus, when one hears reference to the decline of the family in the Middle East, it is usually in reference to the breakup of large residential entities and not necessarily to the diminution of the viability of the kinship grouping itself.¹

The great variability and flexibility in family and household organization are not simply a result of urban as opposed to rural society, nor is the contrast one between "modern" and "traditional" or even tribal and nontribal. These simple contrastive types tend to exist at the idealized and normative levels, whereas in reality the variation in family forms and functions occurs in response to specific socioeconomic forces that operate in a given context. This is clearly illustrated in the case of Iraq, where a severe economic embargo

¹ For a review article on the Arab family, see William Young and Seteney Shami (1997).

imposed by the United Nations in 1990 (following the Gulf War) has already had an impact on the family form and the division of labor among a certain sector of Iraqi society, according to Qais Al-Nouri, an Iraqi anthropologist (1997). Al-Nouri reports that the hardest-hit group are female-headed households, where a war widow is perhaps the sole provider and has no regular income. Rising food prices force these families to liquidate any property they may have, forgo family celebrations of any sort, and to withdraw their children from school so that they can be sent to work as day laborers to supplement the family's income. In extreme cases, children may be sent to beg at local religious shrines, where they hope to receive handouts from pilgrims.

Another sector that has suffered severely under the embargo is the families of civil servants, perhaps the largest wage-earning sector in Iraq. To cope with high inflation and soaring prices, this group has evolved a number of strategies of which an important one is the revival of the extended family and the multiple family household.

Two married brothers, for example, may reside with their wives and children in the same house along with their aged parents, pooling their resources to keep up with spiraling costs. One brother may be a poorly paid government employee while the other has an independent job . . . thus the urban extended family, which was on the wane prior to the embargo, is making a comeback among government employees. (Al-Nouri, 1997, p. 103)

Those who have not been adversely affected by the embargo include major contractors and financiers and large landowners. The steep rise in commodity prices and restrictions on foreign trade have greatly profited this group, who own and control the national food industries, including dairy and meat processing, chicken farming, and fisheries. According to Al-Nouri, members of this *nouveaux riches* group have become famous (or, rather, infamous) for their indulgence in "casual short-term marriages," a new feature in Iraqi society and an index, perhaps, of the normative breakdown that currently prevails in that country. These short-term marriages, which may last only a few weeks, are quickly registered and as quickly dissolved because "these newly wealthy men can easily afford whatever divorce fees and alimony payments are demanded, and they feel no social constraints in their dealings with their wives" (p. 105). While the long-term implications of such arrangements, born in the context of postwar trauma and economic hardships, are difficult to assess, that they occur illustrates the adaptability of conjugal and familial arrangements and underscores the fact that in Iraq, as elsewhere, people organize and maintain themselves in familial groupings and ascribe social significance to them in proportion to the benefits that accrue from such organization.

Where there is individual access to wealth, power, and prestige, those who attain it usually attract and maintain clusters of kin around them. The poor in both rural and urban communities tend to resemble one another in that they are organized around small and unstable family groupings. The powerful in both

rural and urban sectors are alike in that they frequently use part of their wealth or influence to develop and maintain large, long-lasting kin groups.

Alan Duben and Cem Behar (1991) have examined how Istanbul households were transformed between the years 1880 and 1940 in a study remarkable for its detail and scope. One important finding was that household size and fertility roughly paralleled what was happening in Western Europe, and that by the 1930s, urban populations were just reproducing themselves, while rural population growth continued unabated. In Istanbul, however, Muslim fertility declined, and "the quality of life of the children brought into the world, their health, proper socialization and education, became a major focus of the attention of parents" (p. 242). Istanbul became, in their view, the first Middle Eastern city whose population began what is known as the "demographic transition" toward low fertility, and as such was a warning to anyone who would axiomatically associate Islamic culture with high birth rates. As Andrew Mango (1993) points out, one has to see the forces that worked to shape Istanbul's dynamics in order to understand similar trends happening elsewhere in the region today. Istanbul households developed in a culture different than the Anatolian hinterland, but one that has now spread widely—a culture that favors small conjugal units, frowns on polygyny, and emphasizes marriages based on affection and compatibility (Duben & Behar, 1991, p. 246).

MIGRATION AND THE HOUSEHOLD

The transformation of Middle Eastern rural and urban life that we have described throughout this book has had a profound and differently felt impact on men and women, on rural and urban households, and even on different classes and ethnic groups. In some areas agricultural development and mechanization have generated new rural wealth and a class of landowners whose family members of both sexes benefit from access to public education and professional training. At the same time, the consolidation of small farms is driving many peasants off the land and forcing them to lead impoverished lives in urban slums. Here the real social costs may be far greater for women than for their husbands, who at least control what meager resources they live upon.

For women, one paradox is that under certain circumstances a move from a village to a town or city may increase rather than decrease some aspects of their seclusion and spatial segregation. Whereas men almost immediately adopt city dress and have more places to go for entertainment and diversion, women usually retain village dress and may even adopt the veil worn traditionally by lower-class urban women. Women in rural areas generally move relatively freely and unveiled because their neighbors are also relatives. Once in an urban setting, this is often not the case, and the women may then veil as they find themselves in public spaces and in proximity to strangers. Veiling and the seclusion of women may also indicate an upward social move, as it symbolizes

the fact that the family has acquired the means to free women from work outside the home. It is only over the long term that urban residence is reflected in changed attitudes about seclusion and increased emphasis on female education

In cases where migration involves only the males of the household, the consequences for women vary, depending on such factors as age, social class, educational level, and duration of migration. Certainly communities with heavy male out-migration see a rise in de facto women-headed households, where, in the absence of adult males, the wives take charge in areas formerly the domain of their husbands. The implications of this phenomenon for family relationships are not self-evident, however. In Egypt, for example, the high rate of male migration to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states has led to what some refer to as the "feminization of the Egyptian family." Homa Hoodfar (1996a), who studied the impact of male migration in a Cairo neighborhood, notes that whereas lower-class and uneducated women managed to improve their status within the household, better-educated, white-collar, employed wives, in contrast, lost ground to their husbands. In the latter case, where previously both husband and wife earned the same income, allowing the wife an equal voice in family decisions, the migrant husband now earned considerably more cash, undermining the wife's claim to equality. Hoodfar's conclusion is worth quoting here:

Ironically, male migration, which has put women in the unconventional position of heading their own households, regardless of whether it resulted in more or less power for the wives, has also strengthened the more traditional marriage ideology in which the husband remains the unequivocal breadwinner and the wife financially dependent mother and homemaker. . . . Migration may have resulted in the "feminization of the Egyptian family" but it has also reaffirmed the essence of traditional gender ideology, which perpetuates the situation in which women are financially dependent on their male folk, despite some superficial changes in the realm of activities they may perform. (p. 73)

International labor migration, which is particularly important in Turkey, Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, and Lebanon, and affects both rural and urban households, has a similar impact. Women living in households with no adult males come to play wider social roles than they had formerly. Another consequence of labor migration is that women themselves may leave the countryside to join their husbands in the cities or abroad. Once there, it is not uncommon for them to take wage jobs. There are about 3 million Turkish workers and dependents in northwest European countries. Of these, well over one-third are women, many of whom arrived in Europe as spouses but soon found work outside the home. Others were recruited directly from Turkey, coming even from rural areas. In the initial phase of labor migration, many parents who would be reluctant to have a single daughter live alone in a Turkish city actively supported their daughters' seeking work abroad. Having a family member employed abroad conferred social status as well as being an important source of income. The risk of bringing shame to the family was minimized by the fact that Europe was acknowledged to have a different sexual code, one in which more independent behavior

by females was accepted. This supports our contention that the codes of sexual modesty have to be understood within particular social and political contexts.

MARRIAGE

Rich or poor, large or small, almost all families in the Middle East seek to control marriage, which is viewed as essentially a union between families rather than between two individuals. Marriage is very often employed to reaffirm or strengthen existing familial ties, as well as to build new ones where none existed before. There is, in fact, a frequently expressed preference in the Arab world for marriages between first cousins and in particular between a man and his father's brother's daughter (henceforth FBD). This latter preference, which is by no means universal, is often described in the literature as a peculiarity of Middle Eastern marriage systems. The early Islamic precedent cannot be discounted in affirming the preference for FBD marriage, and even as Islam spreads today in Africa, this preference for close-cousin marriage often follows. 'Ali, cousin of the Prophet, married Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, quite likely following a well-established pre-Islamic practice. Thus, for some Muslims, such a marriage as a celebration of religious tradition is reason enough to stipulate it as an ideal.

We must, however, be wary in ascribing undue structural significance to the expressed preference for marrying a FBD, as the available studies indicate a wide range of variability in marriage practice, even within communities in which this preference is strongly voiced. Moreover, too few studies utilizing representative samples have been published to allow easy generalization about its prevalence. What we can safely say, however, is that there is a strong tendency for people in general to marry cousins, and that this practice tends to be shared by Muslims and (many) Christians alike. The Shari'a establishes the rules of exogamy, whom a person may not marry, as these prohibitions are clearly stated in the Quran as follows:

Forbidden unto you are your mothers, and your daughters, and your sisters, and your father's sisters, and your mother's sisters, and your brother's daughters and your sister's daughters, and your foster mothers, and your foster sisters, and your mother-in-law, and your step-daughters who are under your protection (born) of your women unto whom you have gone in—but if ye have not gone in unto them, then it is no sin for you (to marry their daughters)—and the wives of your sons who (spring) from your loins. And (it is forbidden unto you) that ye should have two sisters together except what hath already happened (of that nature) in the past. Lo! Allah is ever forgiving, Merciful. (Quran 4:23)

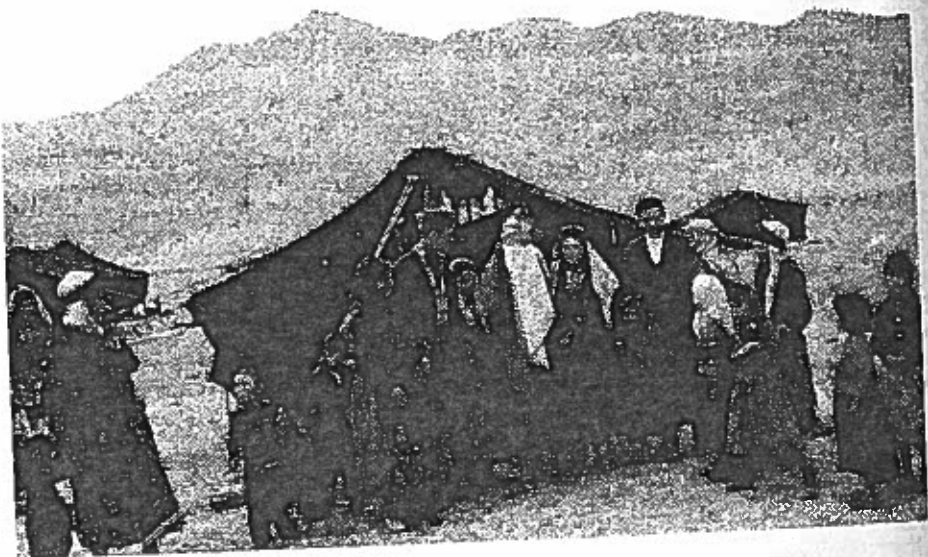
As we have said, rates of cousin marriage vary greatly from group to group and, indeed, even among different strata of the same community. For example, in her study of marriage and property in an Arabic-speaking village in southeastern Turkey, Barbara Aswad (1971) found that a significantly higher percent-

age of first marriages contracted by the landowners were with the father's brother's daughter. This was in marked contrast to marriages among the poor and landless. In a sample of 473 marriages among the Yörük of southeastern Turkey, Daniel Bates (1973) found that nearly 22 percent involved women married to their father's brother's son. About 40 percent of the marriages in the same sample were between first cousins and second cousins of all sorts.

In the small settled Bedouin community of Awlad 'Ali, Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) reports a high incidence of patrilineal parallel cousin marriage; four out of the five heads of the core households (out of a total of 15) had married their father's brother's daughter. Of those who had taken a second wife, three had married a more distant paternal relative. According to Abu-Lughod, women find a number of advantages in this type of marriage. Having a paternal kinsman for a husband gives a woman more rights and sense of security since it is the duty of the paternal male kin to protect and take care of their agnatically related womenfolk. Women are also less dependent economically on their husbands, since in these cases both husband and wife often share a common patrimony. Moreover, it also means that a bride does not have to leave her close kin and familiar community to live with "strangers."

Close endogamy is common throughout the region, even among Christians, since there is a tendency for families of high status and groups controlling important resources to marry close relatives. From this wider perspective, marriage with father's brother's daughter or another close relative is simply an extreme expression of generalized endogamy, the principle that states that people should marry within their lineage, community, village, and social class. In fact, this preference for equality of status of the bride and groom is expressed in a Shari'a-based marriage rule termed *kafa'a*. Among most Muslims this rule demands that the couple be of the same or equivalent social background, but it does not spell out exactly how this equivalency is to be determined. Even though the rule of *kafa'a* is rarely invoked as a legal impediment to a marriage that has been agreed upon by the families, it does establish the basis for negotiations over the amount of bride wealth, which is often viewed as symbolic of the relative status of the families involved.

Also important to understanding marriage endogamy are patterns of inheritance, especially among people with considerable property. As we have seen, the Shari'a entitles a woman to a share of her father's property. Among poorer families in most communities, daughters are customarily excluded from claiming their share, but among the wealthy, women generally claim what is theirs. Under these circumstances, even though the formation of large patrimonial estates is precluded by partible inheritance, a cluster of close relatives can maintain continuity of control over contiguous plots of land by marrying among themselves. This helps to explain why control over marriage of women is usually a more important issue among the propertied classes than among the landless. Thus, close endogamy is one more mechanism used by local families



A traditional Yörük bride and family and contemporary Yörük newlyweds.



of note to perpetuate their position. The same strategy is also practiced by families that have claims to saintly descent and holy lineages; in other words, close endogamy functions to perpetuate material wealth and symbolic capital. Educated middle-class families are abandoning this practice as their increasingly independent-minded sons and daughters take an active role in choosing their own spouses.

In close endogamy, the created affinal or in-law ties go beyond immediate economic expediency. The renewal or reinforcement of existing relationships through intermarriage announces to the community the importance of the particular family as an enduring group. In marrying a close cousin, a man not only expresses his close association with his uncle or other relative but also affirms the fact that his own father and his father-in-law are on close terms.

There are, however, enclaves of Muslim populations who, in custom and practice, scrupulously avoid marriage with kin of any degree. They are primarily of Caucasian or Balkan origin, for example, the widely dispersed Circassians, for whom kin exogamy is a marriage requirement. In addition, in some countries, especially Turkey, the government seeks to discourage kin marriage on the grounds that it carries a genetic risk. Carol Delaney (1991) writes that the villagers she knows discount this warning, saying that they always marry close kin, and should a child be born deformed for genetic reasons, it is because the parents were inadvertently made *siit kardeş*, or blood siblings, having been nursed by the same woman.

Given the importance of affinity in expressing and maintaining social and political ties, it is not surprising that polygyny, or marriage with more than one wife, is permitted in Islam. A verse in the Quran allows the man to marry up to four wives at any time, provided he treats them equally. A later passage (4:3) seems to add another restriction on the practice: "Ye are never able to be fair and just as between women even if it is your ardent desire."² Among traditional propertied classes, particularly in the rural areas, a man might marry a close cousin for his first wife and take a second wife from another family, thus extending his social and political network. Again, as in the case of marriage with the father's brother's daughter, rates of polygynous marriages vary greatly from one community to another and in terms of social background and class. Apart from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, it is rarely encountered among urban-dwelling upper- and middle-class families. In fact, as we will see in Chapter 9, modern legislation in some countries has either forbidden it completely or has put impediments to its practice.

Comparative data are still lacking on the incidence of polygyny. It seems, however, to be most frequent among traditional landowning families in communities in which secular education is not very significant, among the sheikhs of the Gulf region and their wealthy counterparts among the tribal populations

² For an excellent discussion of the different interpretations of the Quran and the Hadith as it relates to women's status, see Barbara Stowasser (1994).

everywhere.³ Wealthy Türkmén of northern Iran almost always keep polygynous households. Increasingly, however, these same families are sending their daughters to school, and polygyny will quite likely decline. Even where it is still practiced, the ability to maintain a polygynous household contributes less and less status to the male.

Monogamy, always the practice of the majority, is increasingly becoming the preferred form of marriage. This reflects social as well as economic changes in the society, among which are the decrease in infant mortality, which encourages families to have fewer children, and the increasing costs of rearing and educating children. Moreover, in every country, new values stressing romantic love and companionate marriage are disseminated by television and other media. In Egypt, for example, soap operas frequently present polygyny in a negative light and raise debates about its legitimacy. The increasing value placed on monogamy also reflects the rapidly changing status of women. No longer confined to exclusively domestic roles, women increasingly pursue jobs and attain status in their own right, a development that is incompatible with the personal restrictions inherent in traditional polygynous marriage. In the cities, the increased opportunities for women to be educated and employed outside the home further discourage polygyny, which is increasingly viewed by educated men and women alike as exploitative of women and incompatible with modern life.

Among the Shi'a, especially in Iran, there is an alternative form of "marriage" termed *mut'a* or more popularly *sigheh*, the validity of which was reaffirmed by the late Ayatollah Khomeini and even more recently by other senior clerics, sparking controversy among women's groups. Strictly forbidden by Sunni law, *mut'a*, also known as "temporary marriage," is believed to be pre-Islamic in origin. It refers to a contract between a man and an unmarried woman (who may be divorced or widowed) in which the amount of money to be paid by the man and the duration of the marriage are clearly specified. Children of such a marriage are, in principle, recognized as legitimate and may inherit from their father. Shahla Haeri (1989) states that although they are legal, women who enter into these "marriages" are, in fact, stigmatized and marginalized, especially since such arrangements are not registered as marriages. Iranian women's groups have been vocal in their opposition to the *mut'a* marriage, which they see as devaluing women, the marriage bond, and the family.

MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS AND WEDDING CEREMONIES

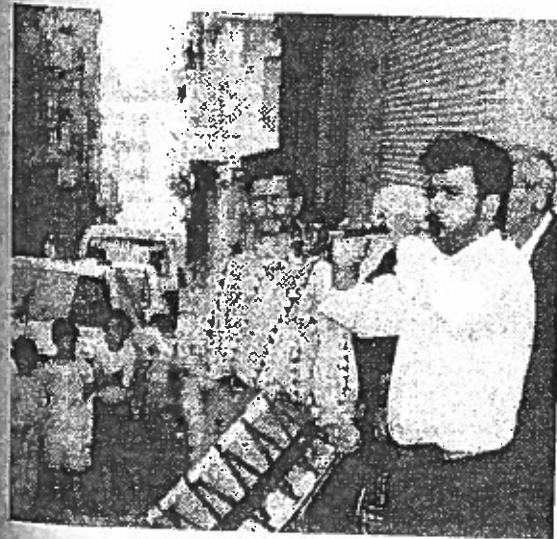
Throughout the region marriage is still customarily initiated by negotiations between families rather than the outcome of individually pursued courtship. Of

³ For an interesting examination of how marriages are used to consolidate households, forge alliances, and settle disputes among a tribal population in Afghanistan, see Nancy Tapper (1991). See also Martha Mundy (1995) for the Yemen.

course, rapid changes are occurring, particularly in cities, where open forms of courtship are increasingly evident. In Cairo, male and female students at the universities attend classes together, and there is considerable socializing outside the classroom. As a consequence, marriages among the educated are very much the result of individual choice, though it is rare that any marriage will go against expressed family wishes. This pattern for the educated classes is generally true throughout the Middle East, except perhaps for Saudi Arabia. In Turkey, the freedom of courtship is widely established even among the less educated working class, but still parental approval for marriage seems the norm.

Despite the increase in individually initiated courtship in some sectors of contemporary society, the prevailing normative pattern remains that of familial negotiation and arrangements. Even when courtship results in a choice of a spouse or even in cases of elopement, the families ultimately go through the process of a formal meeting and agreement. One important part of the negotiations is the nature and amount of the *mahr*, an Arabic term that is widely used by non-Arabic speakers as well, and is usually translated as "bride wealth" or "bride price." In the Arab countries of North Africa, the *mahr* is commonly referred to as *sdaq*. The *mahr* remains significant not simply because of its possible economic value, but because it is required by Islamic law to validate any marriage contract. Thus, bride wealth is more than a folk custom carried over by force of tradition.

The *mahr* is an agreed upon sum of money or durable property that the husband agrees to pay his wife at any time prior to or during marriage or upon divorce. Technically speaking, the preponderance of legal opinion is that the *mahr* should become the property of the bride herself. In practice, where significant amounts are involved, the *mahr*, or a good part of it, often remains with her



Kurdish street musicians in Aleppo, Syria playing at a wedding party.

father or guardian. Again, there is much local variation as well as differences within communities according to social class, education, and even family reputation. In some communities or among some ethnic groups, the *mahr* may be regarded as fixed, and in any particular period, all will pay approximately the same sum. The Türkmén of Iran illustrate this approach with a tradition that bride wealth must amount to the cash equivalent of ten horses. In some rural communities in Turkey, agreement has been reached to fix bride price at a consistent and low amount, and thus to avoid the rampant inflation in the *mahr*, or *başlık* in Turkey, which afflicted many communities. In some countries such as Iran and Egypt, inflation in *mahr* payments has become a national issue debated at all levels of the society. Islamist groups often call for placing limits on the *mahr* as they decry its commercialization.

Even in communities in which a high *mahr* is the norm, some families, usually the wealthy, may make ostentatious efforts to demonstrate that the *mahr* does in fact go to their daughters in the form of jewelry, furniture, property, and so on. Among the urban elite, there is great variation in how the *mahr* is handled. In the large cities of Turkey, there is strong sentiment that the *mahr* be considered strictly symbolic, with only a token exchange or even none at all. In provincial towns or villages, however, the *mahr* may indeed involve a very substantial payment. In other countries, for example Iran, the publicly announced amounts of the *mahr* may be greatly inflated because families strive to display their status in this manner. The actual payment, on the other hand, may be only a small portion of the announced amount. Even the percentage of the *mahr* actually given the bride can vary for many reasons. Some families might give less of the *mahr* to a daughter they have put through school or formal vocational training, the implication being that the father is to be compensated for this and for the increased earning power she will bring to her husband.

A common rule regarding *mahr*, if a formal written contract is drawn up, is that about one-third of the negotiated sum is paid upon marriage, and the balance is held as security against the possibility of a future repudiation of the wife by her husband. If this is spelled out in the marriage contract, it can be considered as a form of anticipated alimony. This is common among the elite of the region, except in Turkey. Even when people frankly acknowledge that the sum may be unrealistically high or that its collection will be highly improbable, it serves in some circles as an index of social status, or at least pretension. In rural society, this practice is rarely encountered except among wealthy landowners.

Marriage arrangements among the poorer segments of the rural populations as described in ethnographic accounts often resemble a straightforward exchange of a woman for money or goods, with little pretext of providing the bride with a comparable trousseau or insurance against possible repudiation. The *mahr* here becomes a bride price, and the family is compensated for the loss of the woman's labor and childbearing potential. The money received is used to acquire a bride for a son or for any other purpose a family decides upon.

Bride wealth, however paid, is never divided among members of the extended family in the Middle East, as it is in many other parts of the world to emphasize the collective responsibility of the larger kin groups toward their members. In the Middle East the emphasis is on the primacy of the rights and obligations of the father or his surrogate and to a lesser extent of the paternal uncle toward the woman. In this sense, marriage is primarily the concern of a very restricted familial grouping, rather than the collective responsibility of such larger social entities as the lineage, clan, or village.

Traditionally, and often today, the boy's family initiates the search for a bride among "honorable and reputable" families. Steps here are informal and involve only indirect contacts. The initial steps of the negotiations fall on the women of the households. Only after agreement has been reached on all the important particulars is a formal meeting arranged, again involving female relatives of both households. At this juncture, if all goes well, the boy's side will send male intermediaries to formally request the girl's hand in marriage and to reach an understanding on the value of the *mahr*.

The next major step is an engagement ceremony, again involving women coming together and exchanging gifts. The bride-to-be symbolically indicates her respect and formal subordination to her future mother-in-law by kissing her hand publicly. This ceremony stresses the importance of the mother/daughter-in-law relationship, and the presence of the women of the two households symbolizes the union of the two kin groups. Following this, perhaps as long as a year later, a formal marriage is presided over by a religious functionary. Participants in this ceremony also include the groom, two witnesses, and a representative of the bride's family. In certain Turkish communities, as is often the case elsewhere, the bride's physical presence is not required. Both the groom and the representative of the bride are asked three times if they concur to the marriage; upon affirmative answers to each inquiry, the ceremony is complete.

Following the ceremony, the bride is transported with much to-do from her natal home to that of her father-in-law. Even if she is to reside in a separate dwelling with her new husband, she must nevertheless be taken first to her father-in-law's house, a further symbolic emphasis of the new ties between the two families. Susan Dorsky (1986) describes the arrangements and ceremonies involved in Arab weddings at a town in central Yemen, 'Amran. What follows is a brief account based on Dorsky's ethnography.

In 'Amran, parents and guardians arrange all marriages; men dominate the arrangements, although women play an important advisory role. In selecting a bride for their son, parents rank health, good temperment, and competence in household tasks as very important. While beauty is also valued, it is not considered as important as the other attributes. In theory, neither sons nor daughters can be coerced into marriage, as they have the right to refuse a match; in practice, this can be difficult. Once the match is decided, the next step involves the negotiation of the *mahr*. A portion of the *mahr* goes directly to the

ride, with the larger portion going to her father and/or brothers. Dorsky writes that women strongly supported the institution of the *mahr* and saw a high amount as an affirmation of their worth and of the value of their labor.

Weddings, in general, involve two parts. The first is a private legal ritual in which a marriage contract, *'aqd* or *kitab*, is drawn up and witnessed by a judge, *qadi*, or some religious functionary; the contract represents the agreement worked out between the fathers or guardians of the groom and the bride regarding the terms of the marriage. The judge or cleric must, in principle, formally obtain the bride's consent to the marriage before the contract is signed to ensure that she is not being coerced. The second part involves the public celebration, *farah*, which follows the signing of the legal agreement.

Several weeks before the wedding, female relatives of both the groom and the bride begin to prepare for the round of celebrations that mark a Yemeni wedding. Food and clothes are bought and a *muzzayyina* (female dresser-cum-entertainer) is hired; the *muzzayyina* has an important role to play at weddings. She (and often her all-female band) perform and entertain the women at the many prewedding parties that are held by the families of the bride and the groom; she also dresses and makes up the bride on the wedding day and leads her to the groom.

A few days before the wedding, the bride's father and the groom, along with several male witnesses, meet to draw up the marriage contract, after which the *fatiha*, or the first verse of the Quran, is recited. At this stage, the bride is expected to stay inside her house and do no work for the week preceding the wedding. Three days before the wedding, accompanied by her friends and relatives, she is taken to the public bath, *hamam*, where she bathes, puts on new clothes, and has her peaked bonnet removed (this bonnet is worn by all unmarried girls in rural Yemen). Upon her return home, the bride's hands and forearms are decorated with *henna*.

The remaining days before the wedding are punctuated with parties at the houses of both the bride and the groom. The high point of one party is the public presentation of the gifts, which are announced by the *muzzayyina*. On the wedding day, the women prepare a feast for the male guests who begin to arrive at the groom's house in the afternoon. Later that evening, the groom and his male guests depart to pray at a nearby mosque. They then return home in a slow procession through the town accompanied by youths who carry lanterns and trays with lighted candles. A professional singer leads the procession and the men sing religious chants. Ululating women and children watch from the rooftops.

Later that night, the bride is brought to the groom, who waits for her at his house. The married couple spend the next week at home in relative isolation during which they are not expected to do any work.⁴

⁴ For a more detailed description of weddings in Yemen, albeit among a wealthier group in a small coastal town, see Anne Meneley (1996).

RESIDENCE

Residence after marriage tend to follow a regular pattern, which can be instrumental in shaping the organization of the local community, particularly where people continue to reside in close association with their relatives. The primary rule of postmarital residence in the Middle East is patrilocal, where the bride leaves her natal home to reside with her husband. He, in turn, by custom and practice, usually continues, at least for a time, to reside with his father or in close proximity to him.

As we mentioned earlier, although there is much variation in terms of the actual composition of households and of the neighborhoods they form, the incorporation of the wife into her husband's family or household is virtually universal. It is rare to find a man physically joining the household of his wife's father, although the practice of establishing a separate residence near her kin frequently occurs. It is explicitly felt in almost all sectors of Middle Eastern society that it is somewhat humiliating for a man to reside with his father-in-law because it would indicate that his family lacks social status or sufficient resources. It puts the groom in position of subservience to the authority of his father-in-law. While it is considered natural for a son to be under his father's direct or day-to-day authority, this does not extend to the father-in-law, even when the father-in-law is a close relative. Even a man's father's brother, who enjoys a generalized position of authority, is not normally considered of the same status as his own father. Furthermore, should the bride's father be forced by circumstances to move into his son-in-law's home, he would suffer a similar loss of status, as this would bring him under the authority of his son-in-law. However, if a widower were to join his son's household, he would continue to occupy at least a nominal position as head of the household and senior male.

As mentioned earlier, there is a widespread feeling that a man should avoid informal contact with his wife's parents in the first years of marriage. Such meetings as occur are likely to be ceremonial meals and visits. This avoidance clearly serves to minimize the potential friction attending the process of the transfer of responsibility for a woman from one male-defined group to another. As we might expect, the period of formality and avoidance is considerably less when close relatives intermarry.

The transfer of authority over women deserves some elaboration, as it points to some aspects of interfamily dynamics. Immediately after marriage, the husband assumes sexual rights, while his father or male surrogate assumes direct responsibility for the general well-being of the bride.⁵ In this sense the bride becomes part of another household under the authority of other males of her father's generation. In fact, one often hears, in Arabic or Turkish, the new

⁵ An interesting exception to the general rule is found among the Yomut Türkmén, where a man is expected to cohabit with his wife only some years after their marriage. Until then, she continues to live with her father, and her husband has no visiting rights.

bride referred to as "our bride" (*aroustna* in Arabic; *gelinimiz* in Turkish) by members of the groom's family. However, the responsibility for the bride's good conduct and reputation ultimately remains with her father or brothers; only with the passage of time and with the bearing of sons is that responsibility completely relinquished. In this sense, the movement of the woman into a new family or household is seen as a gradual process of incorporation and not as a single event. As we have said, the woman never loses her identity as a member of her natal agnatic group, and she continues to partake in the social status of her father as much as or more than in that of her husband.

CONJUGAL VERSUS DESCENT TIES

Conjugal ties, however important for the formation and maintenance of households, do not supersede the jural rights stemming from descent. For example, in the event of the death or divorce of the wife, the ongoing household unit is based on the relationship of a man to his children, or even his grandchildren. Under no circumstances is it expected that children would come under the control of the woman's natal family. Further, when a woman is divorced, upon reaching a certain age (generally six years), her children revert to the custody of their father or his male kin. Unmarried children of the same father but of different mothers usually reside together and maintain close ties, being of one family. Children of different fathers but sharing the same mother rarely reside together and may not, in practice, recognize a close relationship unless their fathers are also close relatives.

The jural primacy of patrilineal ties is further evidenced in cases in which a man dies and leaves small children. They are usually taken under the custody of their father's closest male agnate, usually his father or older brother. Thus, if his widow remarries, she will most likely have to leave her children behind. Faced with this, a common but not universal practice is for the widow to marry one of her husband's brothers, if this is convenient. This practice, found among some Jewish and other non-Muslim groups as well, is known as the *levirate*.

It is obvious that there is an inherent potential for tension and even conflict between the demands arising from conjugality and the expectations and jural rights based on lineal ties. Marriage, while serving to reinforce ongoing relationships, can easily lead to contradictory demands on the loyalties and commitments of family members. The expectation everywhere is that sons should cooperate closely with their father, brothers, and close agnates. However, once married and separated from the domicile and direct authority of his father, a man may well find that he is increasingly drawn into the sphere of activities of his wife's family. This is quite understandable if we consider that the wife's sense of identification and desire to be with her natal family is as strong as that of her spouse. Women tend to prize the intimacy and relative informality of their brothers' company, and as a woman bears children she will

seek to visit with her family members regularly. When disagreements or disputes arise among close agnates, it is very likely that some will increasingly turn to other relatives for support, including their wife's kin. Affines thus potentially exert a centrifugal pull on a man's loyalty; this is expressed in any number of proverbs and folk sayings to the effect that to allow one's son to "marry out" is to lose him.

The fact that close-cousin marriage is common does not necessarily resolve the potentially conflicting demands on the loyalties of the individual. Indeed, as has been suggested, it may exacerbate conflict under certain circumstances. If a man is married to a close matrilineal or even a distant agnatic relative, already existing social relationships to his wife's kinspeople may be strengthened at the expense of ties to even closer agnates. Even when a marriage is arranged among close agnates, it is not uncommon for hard feelings to be aroused in the process. There may be other closely related families who also feel that they should have been consulted, or even that their own son or daughter was slighted. In many communities, some of the most enduring intrafamilial disputes involve disagreements over marriage arrangements.

Despite the presence of a strong descent ideology and the importance of patronymic groupings and jural rights stemming from patrilineality, the individual's kin circle of interaction is quite open and flexible. Given the men's ability to shift their alliances to different sets of relatives, families that depend on shared resources such as property or political power have a great concern in regulating marriage. Families whose households rely on wages or individual sources of income are far less concerned with containing marriages within a narrow group. As the economic trend is toward increasingly individuated sources of income, we see a corollary to this in the decreasing importance of close intrafamily marriage and a corresponding increase in the significance of the conjugal bond.

We also see this expressed in the larger patterns of village and neighborhood organization and in settlement patterns. Increasingly, new households are establishing themselves whenever they can gain access to sufficient resources, even when this means moving to distant cities or settling on government-sponsored land-reclamation projects far from their natal families. Settlement patterns for many agricultural regions traditionally reflected the distribution of related patronymic groups. Today this is changing in many areas, as local governments sponsor agricultural projects and village housing and encourage movement to facilitate rural development.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

In most big cities today, the severe housing shortage and new economic realities have altered preexisting patterns of residence. In Cairo, middle- and working-class households locate wherever they are lucky enough to find accommodations.

Entire communities are built up around factories. In Baghdad, as in other Iraqi cities, the government sponsored the development of neighborhoods based on occupational groups. For example, officers, engineers, high school teachers, and so on, are entitled to house sites or apartments at special rates. In every country we see the emergence of new neighborhoods that are fairly homogeneous in terms of income and class. The increasing mobility of middle-class households and the resulting instability of newer neighborhoods have resulted in a decline in the importance of the social role of the neighbor among this sector of the population. Being a neighbor, *jar* in Arabic and *komsu* in Turkish, traditionally implied a specific set of mutual expectations and behavior. This is also true for Iran, where the term for neighbor is *hamsoyeh*. The word *soyeh* means both shade and shadow; *hamsoyeh* thus refers to people who share the same shade or shadow. One shares the cool shade with a good neighbor and falls under a dark shadow with a bad neighbor. Having a bad neighbor is considered one of the worst misfortunes in Iran (Gita Rangbaran, personal communication). The mutual support and informal visiting that characterize relations between neighbors parallel, in many regards, the responsibilities and obligations one has to close kin.

Although we have just emphasized increasing mobility, most Middle Eastern communities still reflect residential patterns based on kinship, common descent, and ethnicity. A household that depends on access to land or other local resources will in turn depend on recognition of specific rights and the support of others in the community. When conflict or disagreement arises over property rights, the matter is often settled within the community on the basis of the support each contender can muster for his claim. One tends to reside when possible near those with whom one is identified politically and socially. Most villages—indeed, traditional urban neighborhoods—are politically factionalized, and faction membership is congruent with actual residence in a particular area or neighborhood of the town or village. Even when rural people migrate to the city, they try to establish themselves near already settled kinspeople; similarly, modern housing developments also tend to reflect clear regional, ethnic, or tribal patterns. This is not that different from what we see in large American cities, where immigrants tend to cluster together with their compatriots.

In Baghdad, newly arrived migrants usually begin by living with relatives and in time, as they find jobs, move to places of their own, not far from their relatives and fellow tribesmen who act as an informal organization to assist them in their new environment. Loyalties to tribal sheikhs are maintained in the city and, paradoxically, may even be strengthened. Whereas in the countryside the tribe tended to be dispersed over a wide area, in the city its members are brought into closer daily contact and mutual dependency. The close proximity of different groups of migrants and city people reinforces the sense of ethnicity and makes the immigrants rally around their traditional leaders, who now assume new roles as spokesmen and brokers for their group vis-à-vis the government bureaucracy. Neighborhood mosques and coffee- and teahouses serve as meeting places and public forums for the migrant community.

The emphasis in this chapter has been on the uses of kinship and kinship network groups formed by patrilineal descent, marriage, and patterns of residence. We have tried to introduce the most basic elements of social organization that might be considered the building blocks of Middle Eastern society. Throughout we have stressed the principles that influence group formation and group life; in the next chapter we shift our focus to a consideration of the role and status of women in the Middle East today, a subject of considerable interest, debate, and controversy.