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*KINSHIP, TRIBE, CONFEDERATION, AND THE STATE IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE
MIDDLE EAST*

WEALTH IN PASTORAL NOMADIC SOCIETIES

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This paper basically focuses on the pastoral nomadic societies and specifically on their understanding of wealth to see and compare its distinctiveness in the modern world. The origins or the emergence of wealth as an issue and its conceptualization in social science will also be covered. This paper is also expected to reveal and emphasize the points of which the classical theories of political economy were unable to cover properly. This could be the result of the ignorance of the peculiar cultural, social, economic, and historical conditions of each society in their uniqueness. When the economic structure of a specific society is studied, it should not be forgotten that it emerges from the interaction of the general economic forces with the specific thoughts, habits, culture and patterns of social organization and institutions prevailing in that societies. For instance, at some places of the world, marriage ceremony involves economic transaction. As well, in many societies marriage is arranged along with some kind of exchange that may involve two patterns: payments from groom's family to the bride's, called bride-price, and payments from the bride's family to the groom's, called dowry. For many Westerners bride price confirms the interpretation that sees women as commodity in those societies. However the bride-price could also be seen as a way of compensating the girl's family for the loss of services resulted from the transference of her labor potential from her father's household to the one where from now on, she will live.¹ Like this one there are many other examples that attract reader's attention to the peculiarity of cultural, social, economic and historical conditions of each society. Here, pastoral nomadic societies may also be counted as the good one, because similar to the bride price example, one should notice that nomadic societies and more specifically pastoral nomadic societies may have distinctive economic, social and political organization which attribute profoundly different meaning to the term of wealth and modern economic methods could not work in the same way as in the developed Western societies.

The issue considering the improvement of the wealth of societies continues to increase its importance and become one of the most crucial problems of humanity for today's world. The danger of starvation threatening humanity could be comprehended better especially when one thinks of the rapid growth of world population within the last two hundred years and the fact that the great majority of world's inhabitants have less than required minimum food,

¹ Friedl, John, *Cultural Anthropology*, Harper's College Press, 1976, p. 244.

clothing, and sheltering for a healthy life. There are, of course, other factors that contribute to this threat such as the growing gap between the developed countries and the rest of the world in terms of wealth. However, one may ask if the social sciences could really be a trustworthy reference for the worldwide explanations regarding this crucial issue? Or more generally, could the social sciences' explanations on this matter be enough to illuminate the entire world composed of various distinctive types of societies? Those kinds of questions are seemed to be worthy enough for studying this issue of wealth. Within this framework, this paper begins with the emergence of the concept of wealth in the social sciences.

Notion of Wealth in the Social Sciences:

In the eighteenth century a new tendency emerged among the French school of philosophers which grounded economics on the physical reality. They were known as the Physiocrats which means “the original Economists”. Their main assumption was that the sources of all wealth were originated from the land. Thus, in the eighteenth century, wealth was regarded as consisting of other concrete things than material possessions such as gold and silver. At first the physiocrats tied productivity only to labor performed on land. Adam Smith extended the notion of “productive labour” to include ‘permanent improvements’, and “non-material products,” so that, the annual produce was regarded as to include services as well as commodities.² Hence unlike the French physiocrats who had argued that agricultural production alone creates wealth, Smith argued that wealth is created in both agriculture and industry. Adam Smith’s (1723-1790) *Wealth of Nations* published in 1776³, is a work of political and economic analysis that had an enormous impact on the European, American and later on global economic and social policies. Thus, in the nineteenth century Smith was regarded as the founder of a new science of political economy. This new science was contributed by the works of the subsequent well-known writers such as Malthus, Ricardo, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx who brought it to the point of orthodoxy. Smith proposed that the wealth of a nation consisted of the annual produce of its labour. According to Smith, wealth could be multiplied through the development of the division of labour; labour could be

² Soddy, Frederick, M.A., F.R.S., *Wealth, Virtual Wealth and Debt*, Omni Publications, California, 1961, pp.114.

³ Smith, Adam, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations*, The Modern Library, Random House Inc. : New York, 1937.

made more productive by subdividing tasks and rationalising the production process.⁴ For Smith, the development of the division of labor and markets constitutes the main driving force behind the mechanisms of creation and accumulation of wealth. For this reason, some privileges, including feudal or monopolistic ones constituting obstacles to development of free markets, trade, and commodity exchange, should be abolished. The expanding division of labor within specific industries as well as within whole society led to an increase in the level of wealth. In Smith's view, this would allow new forms of specialization to appear in the division of labor, thereby increasing productivity of labor, production of commodities, trades and wealth. All these arguments of Smith created an atmosphere in which he was blamed on forming the bourgeois ideology which also helped to legitimize the establishment of a capitalist, market society.

While Marx was very critical of much of the analysis of Adam Smith, he was also inspired by some important ideas in Smith's writings. Smith argued that a surplus emerges from production, not from exchange. In *Capital*, Marx argues that wealth cannot emerge from trade or money, but is created by human labor in agriculture and industry⁵. However the issue becomes very complicated one when economic model of the value of labor power is tried to be applied to a commodity which is produced under non-capitalist conditions. Marx, for example, was criticized by some scholars not to provide an adequate analysis for family and household structures. Similarly, this criticism could also be valid for the conditions prevailing in non-capitalist societies. Within this framework, it becomes once again important to ask to what degree the classical economic models could be compatible with the economic conditions of the pastoral nomadic societies. By this way, this paper will also look for the degree of this compatibility between the theory of the classical political economy and the practices of the pastoral nomadic societies.

According to Barfield nomadic pastoralism is seem to be a societal rather than occupational phenomenon.⁶ While nomadic pastoralists display a variety of social organizations, they are generally tribal in nature, that is, they are dominated by kinship relations (however, this does not mean that tribalism could simply be equated with kinship) .

⁴ Copley, Stephen, Kathryn Sutherland (eds.), *Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations*, Manchester University Press 1995, pp. 24-25.

⁵ Marx, Karl, *Capital*, A Critique of Political Economy, Vol 1, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1976. (www.uregina.ca)

⁶ Barfield, Thomas J., *The Nomadic Alternative*, Parentice Hall, New Jersey, 1993, p.12.

On the other hand, in an economic sense, pastoralism for these societies is seem to be an efficient way to exploit natural grassland areas.⁷ In his book called “Nomadic Alternative”, Barfield states that “the economics of pastoralism is based on the type of animal raised and what is done with the products”⁸. For this reason, he said, wealth is tied to the ownership of animals raised rather than the ownership of land. Nomadic pastoralism in East Africa for example he tells, is most notable for its emphasis on cattle rising. Ownership of cattle is the key determinant of a man’s wealth and status. In east Africa the number of animals in herd has always been more important than their quality. Animals are also the only form of inherited wealth, since access to shifting agricultural land or pasture is obtained by lineage affiliation and is not personally owned. The Indo-European pastoralists of the second millennium B.C. were cattle herders, and according to Barfield, “the importance they put on cattle remains in the roots of many Indo-European words for wealth, which are ultimately related to cattle and in the veneration of the sacred cow in India”.⁹ Here Barfield truly grasps the limits of the Western Political economy’s assertion that ties wealth to the ownership of the land. However, Barfield’s own assumption of wealth, tied to the ownership of animals, could not also be a sufficient explanation for an elaborative understanding when pastoral nomadic societies are concerned.

John Friedl points in his book that “the anthropological approach to economics attempts to show that if economic theory is to be considered valid, it must apply not only to Western industrial society, but to all societies”.¹⁰ However, it becomes clear that classical economic theory may loose its validity when the non-Western peoples are considered. Western societies have not much difficulty differentiating between economic, political and legal behavior, but this is not the case among many non-Western peoples. Even if it is evaluated in the context of same society, for example, one form of social behavior may also represent many societal instances at the same time. Thus, as Friedl states, “what may seem like a religious ceremony can also be a setting for economic exchange from another perspective, or a reaffirmation of the distribution of power and authority from a third”.¹¹ Western economic theory is based on the premise that in a cash economy, people in a competitive situation will try to make as much money as they can. In Western societies,

⁷ Ibid, p. 12.

⁸ Ibid, p. 12.

⁹ Ibid., p.10.

¹⁰ Friedl, John, *Cultural Anthropology*, Harper’s College Press, 1976, p.314.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 314.

people often speak of the profit motive as a basic economic incentive. According to Richley Crapo, “the profit motive concept is often used to imply that material benefit is the sole motivator in economic transactions”.¹² However, the view that sees this kind of profit motive concept as a main force behind any economic activity around the world is criticized by the anthropological approach. Because, material things may not carry the same meaning for many non-Western people as it is in Western world. The value of commodities may be measured from a considerably different point of view which is specific to the culture of the society concerned. Thus, obtaining culturally valuable commodities can not be limited to the acquisition of material things. Things or goods that have moral or spiritual value such as prestige, respect, admiration, personal honor, mana, luck, or a reward after death may carry much more significance for people, and thus, people may willingly accept material loss for spiritual benefit or for increased social honor as such. So, especially when non-Western societies concerned, as Crapo points, “any view of the profit motive as nothing more than the principle that people will always try to maximize their immediate material gain in any exchange of goods is much too narrow”.¹³ Friedl also asserts, “prestige, or the obligations of kinship, or any of a number of outside factors might lead a person to disregard monetary gain and to make an economic decision that to us would seem ‘irrational’, ... and the blending of economics with other aspects of social life, such as religion, marriage, or kinship is typical of tribal societies including pastoral nomads, in contrast to industrial ones”.¹⁴ When all these points are taken into consideration, to start first from their economic structures in terms of analyzing the exchange patterns of these tribal societies could provide an understanding of the meaning of wealth in tribal societies generally, and pastoral nomadic ones specifically, in a more elaborative and efficient way. When the exchange pattern of any society is considered, anthropologists generally analyze the three fundamental forms of economic exchange; reciprocity, redistribution, and market exchange.

Forms of Exchange:

Generally, the ‘gift’ constitutes the basic theme of reciprocity. Crapo defines reciprocity as “the system of exchange in which goods or services are passed from one

¹² Crapo, H. Richley, *Cultural Anthropology: Understanding Ourselves and Others*, McGraw-Hill, 1995, p.197.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 197.

¹⁴ Friedl, *op. Cit.*, p. 315.

individual or group to another as gifts without the need for explicit contracting for specific payment”.¹⁵ Reciprocity differentiates from the activity of buying and selling in the sense that it does not involve bargaining over what is to be given in return and it constitutes the sole form of economic distribution in bands and tribes where the small number of people in each local community makes gift giving a sufficient procedure to meet everyone’s economic needs. As noted by Sahlins, reciprocity takes three basic forms: *Generalized reciprocity*, *balanced reciprocity*, and *negative reciprocity*.¹⁶ *Generalized reciprocity* is the one in which gifts are given with no expectation of immediate exchange. The main reason for the minimum expectation of an immediate return lies behind the feeling of ‘obligation’ that resulted from one’s strong loyalty to his or her own community as well as to the kinship group. Obligation also carries implicit meaning which represents the consideration for the welfare of the others. Thus, where generalized reciprocity is practiced, ‘generosity’ is likely to be an expected characteristic of the normal behavior. Crapo argues that “*balanced reciprocity* in which a return gift is expected within a relatively short time would likely to occur between two persons who lack sense of kinship or obligation to help one another with no expectation of return, but who each have something that the other would like to have, and it is commonly practiced between neighboring communities that each specialize in the production of different goods or that control different resources”.¹⁷ It may include the exchange of services as well as goods. On the other hand, we could speak of *negative reciprocity* when at least one group or individual in a reciprocal exchange system attempts to get more than it gives. It is most common among the strangers within the same communities or members of different communities, especially those differing in their cultures.

In redistribution, commodities are contributed by all members of the social group to a common pool from which they are then distributed to where they will be used. Here, unlike reciprocity where there are only givers and receivers, third party is required for coordinating redistribution process. This also implies that that third party exercises control over the flow of the goods and services. Friedl states that redistribution “entails the collection of goods by central authority, and then the reallocation of those goods according to some principle to members of the society”.¹⁸ Unlike reciprocity, there is an outside authority intervening and exercising some kind of control in the redistribution process. By this way, redistribution

¹⁵ Crapo, op. Cit., p. 203.

¹⁶ See in *ibid.*, p. 204.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹⁸ Friedl. Op. Cit., p. 319.

necessarily implies stratification. Another comparison that could be made in the sense that reciprocity can occur in both highly stratified and basically egalitarian societies whereas redistribution generally refers to some sort of enforced organization that increases output by requiring a surplus product to support a group of non-agriculturalists.¹⁹ According to Friedl, redistribution is frequently performed in a complex set of kinship relationships in which there is person who represents some kind of authority collecting and redistributing the goods. The relationship between this person and the producers may be real or fictive. Similarly, symbolic role of a tribal chieftain as representative of the spirit of all the ancestors of the tribe may imply his role in collecting and reallocating the tribe's resources. It should be noticed that, instead of participating the productive work, the chief generally performs a task of a full time political official whose duties include coordination of the redistribution process. Meanwhile, this position of the chief as controller or coordinator of the redistribution practice provides prestige to the chief and his family only if it is used for the benefit of others. Interesting for many Westerners, in these societies, one may perceive that chiefs may live in poverty but receive great respect in turn.

One should keep in mind that, reciprocity and redistribution stated here are ideal types. In practice we can find many examples of a mixture of redistribution and reciprocity performing together. One of the best examples that could be given for this case is known as 'potlatch' operating among the Kwakiutl Indians. In potlatch, redistribution process operates in the form of festivals and ritual gift giving. They are ceremonies in which chiefs publicly announce certain hereditary rights, privileges, and high social status within their communities. In a system of potlatch, much wealth is continually being consumed and transferred. According to Marcel Mauss, "such transfers may, if desired, be called exchange or even commerce or sale; but it is an aristocratic type of commerce characterized by etiquette and generosity; moreover, when it is carried out in a different spirit, for immediate gain; it is viewed with the greatest disdain".²⁰ All material possessions would be given away during the potlatch. The greatness of the personal property given away was a measure of the prestige of the person giving potlatch. The more the person could give away, the stronger would be his claim, to a high social status. By this way, in the course of the potlatch he would seek to prove his worthiness of the position he claimed to hold, and to increase his prestige. The principle of potlatch was for a man to be able to give away more than his quests could reciprocate.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 324.

²⁰ Mauss, Marcel, *The Gift*, W. W. Norton & Company Inc.: New York, 1967, p. 36.

Potlatch could also be evaluated as a form of saving institution. During bad times, a prestige acquired as a result of distributing surplus in the form of potlatch becomes an instrument to receive support from others who are in debt to him after the potlatch. In this sense, as Friedl points, “distributing a surplus, by whatever means, serves the same purpose as putting money in the bank”.²¹

This potlatch example given above shows us that relationship between economics and other aspects of the social organization within the society deserves careful evaluation. Western notion of maximizing individual profit, for example, could not be treated for societies where profit is generally perceived around such values like honor, prestige, and solidarity that could be obtained in social as well as monetary terms. Many values can not be calculated, and many objects can not have a fixed value assigned to them. With Friedl’s words, “prestige and social approval of one’s actions can be much more important than a higher material standard of living, and these factors will enter into any calculations made by a resident of the community.... Westerners tend to look at such economic activities as irrational because they violate their views on what is “rational” according to their system of values”.²²

The major economic force in industrialized societies of the world is the market which is based on the idea of direct exchange that is, buying and selling as opposed to mutual gift giving of valued items or services. Thus, self-interest rather than generosity often becomes the guiding principle. Crapo states that “market exchanges are predominantly economic in nature. Because people are more interested in maximizing their profits than in maintaining a long-term relationship or demonstrating their political allegiance to a chief or leader”.²³ Again, Crapo tells that the major prerequisite of a market is the relative or price of any good or services which are determined by the market principles of supply and demand.²⁴

As one can see in the lights of the information above, the concepts of ‘gift’ and the ‘generosity’ gain crucial importance when tribal societies’ and specifically pastoral nomads’ social, economic, political and cultural aspects considered as a whole. Gift and generosity are also important because they both reflect different indications of wealth. In the past historical

²¹ Friedl, op. Cit., p. 327.

²² Ibid., p. 330.

²³ Crapo, op. Cit., p. 167.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 168.

systems we do not find simple exchange of goods, wealth and produce through markets established among individuals. Marcell Mauss argues that

“for it is groups, and not individuals, which carry on exchange, make contracts, and are bound by obligations; the persons presented in the contracts are moral persons—clans, tribes, and families; the groups, or the chiefs as intermediaries for the groups, confront and oppose each other... Further, exchange is not performed by goods and wealth, real and personal property, and things of economic value, but courtesies, entertainments, ritual, military assistance, women, children, dances, and feasts; and fairs in which the market is but one element and the circulation of wealth but one part of a wide and enduring contract”.²⁵

Finally, although it seems to be as voluntary exchange, in essence it is strictly obligatory act within these societies. The concept of ownership has also different meaning from its Western sense. Mauss points that “it is at the same time property and possession, a pledge and a loan, an object sold and object bought, a deposit, a mandate, a trust; for it is given only on condition that it will be used on behalf of, or transmitted to, a third person, the remote partner”.²⁶ According to Mauss, the concept of honor is best expressed through the modern concepts of ‘wealth’ and ‘authority’.

Thus, one can see that economy of gift exchange does not conform to the expectation of the classical political-economy’s utilitarian principles. As Mauss stated, although “the notion of value exists in these societies, economy is still imbued with religious elements and carries a ceremonial character; money still has its magical power and is linked to clan and individual”.²⁷ Similarly, Helmuth Berking asserts that “since the exchange involves the offering not of equivalence but of ‘reciprocity’, all attention can be directed, seemingly without any calculation, at the symbolic aspects of the action, at the interaction rituals which only exist to stage generosity and voluntaries of exchange as relationship formulas”.²⁸ He defines the significance of symbolic capital by applying to Bourdieu’s terminology, as constituting ‘the only possible form of accumulation’ and gift exchange its only ‘rational

²⁵ Mauss, op. Cit., p. 3.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

²⁸ Berking, Helmuth, *Sociology of Giving*, Sage Publications: London, 1999, p. 40.

medium'.²⁹ Here, Berking describes the economic base of political authority that built only upon a combination of hereditary ranks and the redistributive organization of reciprocity as calculated generosity for the societies concerned. Sahlins described generosity "as a triggering mechanism of political interaction, because 'it creates followership', and compels a loyalty".³⁰

We can trace the reflections of the existence of such kind of political loyalty in Saddam's Iraq persisted until the recent times. To create for himself a strong power-base Saddam Husayn recruited to the regime's internal security apparatus many members of his own Tikrit-based tribe, al bu-Nasir.³¹ Amatzia Baram argues that "the majority of the presidential bodyguards, organized in Special Security (al-Amn al-Khass), were trained under extremely harsh discipline, and at the end of their training period they were desensitized and conditioned to total obedience to the man whom they called "amma al-chebir" (Our Big Paternal Uncle), Saddam Husayn".³² They state that those young people who graduate from this harsh school grew to admire Saddam Husayn, and proved loyal to him. In the early 1980s Saddam Husayn started to recruit young tribal people to other elite units. Baram asserts that this recruitment policy reflects the belief in honor and valour that constitute the social norms of the desert. So, as one could see in tribal societies which also include the pastoral nomads wealth creates obligations. One possesses in order to give, for only by giving can one possess. Only generosity summons great names, and these draw riches after them as well as themselves signifying wealth. As Berking pointed that "rank sign, status duty and supreme virtue all in one, generosity implies and endorses practical proof of that social status which justifies the accumulation of 'economic capital' merely to distribute it ostentatiously; and thus to keep in motion a seemingly pointless, because circular, circulation which actually ensures that symbolic credit constantly grows in the form of obligations, loyalty and deference, services and dependences".³³ The accumulation of material objects that appear to be of no 'economic' benefit chiefly serves as a power to achieve the recognition of power. Thus, as Berking said that "the only wealthy person is the one who is a 'generous man'".³⁴

²⁹ Bourdieu, 1990, see in *ibid.*, p. 40.

³⁰ Sahlins, 1972, pp. 206-209 in *ibid.*, p. 41.

³¹ Ginat, Joseph and Anatoly M. Khazanov (eds.), *Changing Nomads in a Changing World*, Sussex Academic Press, 1998, p. 157.

³² See in *Ibid.*, p. 157.

³³ Berking, *op. Cit.*, p. 41.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

In the Rwala tribe and other tribes in the north as well as tribes in southeast Oman, for example, each individual is living on his own skills, his own management of his own capital whether that be perceived as money, goods, or information or his own markets through his reputation as “a good man” and his social identity as a tribe or group member.³⁵ Lancaster point that all activities of nomads in the Arab region had, and have, both subsistence and surplus aspects. Thus there are various channels including gifts, exchange, hospitality and taxation whereby surplus is distributed.³⁶ It should also be remembered that within the wider domestic group surplus and subsistence are not necessarily distinct categories – one member’s surplus may represent part of another’s subsistence.

As it is described previously, within nomadic morality, the social relationships supported mainly by generosity imply much more significance than mere material wealth. Lancaster tells that Arab nomads see social relationships as the practical base of their flexibility which is the key to their survival. According to Lancaster, Arab nomads see their socio-economic system as more sustainable than that of state systems, because former is based on a strict morality lacking in state systems.³⁷ Nomadism suits to the unpredictable environment that demands vast networks of information which can only be provided by the wider domestic group. Therefore, as Lancaster argues, “social relationships, which need to be based on a strict moral code, must take primacy over other considerations”.³⁸ Bedouins, for example, praise individuals who display courage and initiative, because these are the most crucial features for keeping livestock and moving them regularly that is vital for the survival of nomadic society. They also assign highly value to hospitality. Traditionally, men gained honor by acts such as raiding for camels and then distributing the spoils to others. On the other hand, “political reputations could be enhanced by the ability to resist the demands of others, bringing others under one’s control as clients and allies, or most importantly, by being sought out by others as mediators in disputes”.³⁹ A person or whole tribes could lose honor by abandoning their autonomy to seek protection because of economic need or political weakness. On an individual level, the concept of honor was closely tied to personal behavior, particularly the ability to display self-control. The greater a man’s age, power, or wealth, the higher the standard to which he was held. On the other hand, one should note that possessing

³⁵ Lancaster, 1981; Lancaster and Lancaster, 1992b, see in Ginat and Khazanov, op. Cit., p.25.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 31.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 181.

wealth may also bring disaster to the person, because as Barfield states : “distributed generously for fasting and hospitality to create a network of allies it brought fame and good will; but if hoarded or spent on personal luxury it yielded any social contempt”.⁴⁰

Mongolia

In communist Mongolia a specific institution known as *idesh* emerged as a result of intensive urbanization and migration from the pastoral to the urban milieu. During this period, kinship networks lost their territorial basis while kinsfolk became disassembled and accommodated in various places. Since the Socialist economy was unbalanced and generated inadequacies; there existed separate economies for both urban and country environments with specific demands constantly not provided for. Within this system, relatives placed in various environments worked mutually to supply insufficient goods and services. *Idesh* has been incorporated into traditional gift exchange whereby manufactured consumer goods and urban-based services were contributed from town to countryside; and this was reciprocated by food supplies to the opposite direction. The latter gave the name to the institution which (*idesh-meat* for the winter) persisted for years until adversities of recent times undermined the exchange.⁴¹ Slawoj Szykiewicz points that general impoverishment and price rises made townspeople unable to contribute, and for some time they offered money, which in Mongol culture also substitutes for the status of a gift. On the other side, according to Szykiewicz, “herdsmen feel compelled to continue their traditional obligations of providing their town kin with meat and other produce, either as a requirement of kinship solidarity or in expectation that the institutional exchange would, in the future, be reinstated”.⁴² In any case, it could be perceived that *idesh* still works in parallel with the concept of rights and duties within kinship networks.⁴³

In addition to kinship, another network operating in the Mongol society is that of hierarchical dependency based on the structures of formal or informal authority and subjection. The pastoral society of Mongolia preserves three status-defining factors: formal authority of rank or public roles which generates an ascribed status; prestige, which is a

⁴⁰ Barfield, op. Cit., p. 80.

⁴¹ Potanski and Szykiewicz, 1993; 74-75, see in Ginat and Khazanov, op. Cit., p. 211.

⁴² Ibid., p. 211.

⁴³ Redcliffe, A. R. – Brown, see in ibid., p. 211.

condition of informal or achieved reputation and influence; and wealth standing.⁴⁴ All three have worked incessantly, though; relevance of wealth had been obstructed during the years of the collective system. Status is an important agent, structuring the network of social relations. And everybody conforms to its requirements or is supposed to conform. Formal status is the most hierarchical and rigid, though Mongol culture lays down some limitation to its exercise. It has been reported through the consecutive historical stages since early feudal, militarized society up until the collective period. Szykiewicz stated that “the relationship was usually described in kin terms, *akh küü*, literally older-younger brothers, recognized as having senior-junior affiliation... In practice, however, the senior position within a formal hierarchy has been described by the term *darga* who is a person holding any office of influence, or ability to affect such a person’s acts, and it includes both descriptive and honorific connotations”.⁴⁵ Elderly people and those of acquired prestige have been kept in high esteem equal to rank holders. Except age, other criteria for prestige are negotiable. There are two methods of status achievement according to Szykiewicz: “One is excellent performance in a respected activity, such as former *dargas* with good record, outstanding wrestlers, renewed trainers of racing horses, prominent herders, eminent healers, etc... Another is a generous distribution of goods and merriment by giving a ritualized party which may last two or three days, is open to everybody, and involves gift exchange”.⁴⁶ Such a party is called “*nair*” and is devoted to status building.⁴⁷ For many years under the socialist ideology, *nairs* were forbidden; they were considered to belong to the feudal past. For this reason administrative officials were eliminated from proposing and executing *nairs*, but now they have incorporated it into their strategy of shaping their own social images. As Szykiewicz points, even prominent herders before receiving the title of ‘labor hero’, had begun to include a *nair* in their campaign. Szykiewicz asserts that “a *nair* is an obligation in the life of an honest man, but continuous *nairs* are vehicles to transfer already respected men to the class of distinguished members of a community, or to the class of *dargas*”.⁴⁸ There also appeared new prestige seekers, aspiring for recognition or a distinguished standing in a community, as exemplified by local leaders who desired to advertise their traffic, or former emigres returning from urban centers to take up large pastoral business and striving for acceptance into a community. These people applied to the traditional way of assuring their social position by means of the *nairs*.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 213.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 213.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 215.

⁴⁷ Potkanski and Szykiewicz, 1993, pp. 71-73; Szykiewicz, 1993, pp. 169-170, see in *ibid.*, p. 215.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 215.

Importance of non-economic goals in pastoral societies reveals many interesting aspects. Their economics requires distinguishable strategies for short-term productivity and longer-term insurance. According to Philip Salzman “they also clearly see their herds as banking and investment devices, so that they will try, for example, to keep some small stock as relatively liquid assets or “small change” for consumption purposes, or will convert downward to small stock from their remaining large stock after a drought to take advantage of higher growth rates and lower per-unit risk factors”.⁴⁹ However, one should note that pastoralists also use their animals to acquire prestige, and influence in their societies. Salzman tells that “judicious loaning of milk animals to the needy, entrustment relationships, the assembling of an impressive dowry, gift giving, and “estate planning” for one’s children can all work to demonstrate an individual’s or a kinship grouping’s importance, and may all involve the selection and/ or retention of animals, or the commitment of resources, that are not strictly justifiable on an economic grounds alone”.⁵⁰

All these information stated above implies that wealth in its Western sense may be a burden for nomad, because it soon poses a contradiction to his mobility. An accumulation of material goods beyond a certain point restricts the pastoralist’s freedom of movement, thus reducing his ability to care for his stock and threatening his livelihood. As Lattimore’s stated, “the pure nomad is the poor nomad”.⁵¹ In pastoral nomads, the economy is not organized for sustained production even in normal times. Incentive to produce surplus is lacking. Work is organized by ‘non-economic’ relations in the conventional sense, belonging rather to the general organization of society. It is an expression of pre-existing kin and community relations, the exercise of these relations. Similarly, Sahlins states that “in tribal society inequality is more the organization of economic equality, and high position often only secured or maintained by over crowing generosity, and the economic basis of tribal politics is chiefly generosity”.⁵²

⁴⁹ Salzman, C. Philip, *When Nomads Settle*, Praeger: New York, 1980, p.177.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.177.

⁵¹ See in *ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵² Sahlins, Marshall, *The Tribesmen*, Parentice- Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1968, p. 87.

Prospects for a Future Pastoral Nomadism

All these specific characteristics of pastoral nomadic societies, and especially the ones relating with economic organization including the mobility of populations and the pastoral nomads' production are seemed to be obstacles for surviving of nomadic pastoralism in the modern world. Mobile pastoralism is all too often viewed as an archaic mode of production that, while colorful, has no future in the modern world.⁵³ Sedentary people have generally viewed the nomadic life as inimical to civilization. If pastoral nomads are to be brought into the modern world, they must first be settled. Indeed, since pastoralism is often a more dependable and more profitable way of making a living than subsistence agriculture on semi-arid steppes of Central Eurasia, the mountains of Iran, or the African savanna, settlement might well mean a loss of wealth.⁵⁴ According to Barfield, nomads are wanted to be settled primarily by the state's desire to control them better. Such peoples are difficult to command because they can move across borders to avoid taxes, smuggle goods, or escape conscription. Their loyalties are often tied to social group, not to the state. Nomadic pastoralists have historically occupied marginal regions of mountains, steppe, and deserts; they tend to straddle the frontiers between nation states. Until modern times, those frontiers were vaguely defined and there was little purpose in trying to assume control of regions that cost more to hold and administer than they contributed in revenue. Barfield notes that "with the expansion of nation states and a new concept of state sovereignty emerged which demanded fixed boundaries between nation states and asserted that governments within such boundaries had a monopoly on the legitimate use of force".⁵⁵ Such lines were, of course, arbitrary and initially meaningless for nomadic peoples. The issue turned to be political one only when governments attempted to make such lines on a map a practical barrier for the movements of nomads. Barfield tells that the Bedouin, for example, found themselves migrating between a host of new nations carved out of the Arabian Peninsula, many of which now looked upon their deserts as potential oil fields while Afghan nomads found that their traditional migration routes which crossed the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan left them vulnerable to disputes between those two countries. Barfield asserts that "what was ordinary everyday behavior like trading with neighbors or visiting kinfolk was now redefined as 'smuggling' or

⁵³ Barfield, op. Cit., p. 210.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 211.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 212.

‘illegal immigration’”.⁵⁶ Nomads have viewed such restrictions upon their movements as illegitimate, since they had been moving across these territories long before any of these states were created and their boundaries were drawn. However, governments responded to such opposition by insisting on their settlement. According to Barfield, the movement of nomads has remained a source of continual struggle between nomadic peoples and nation states.

Despite any political problems, pastoralism continues to play an important productive role and contributes measurably to local and national economies. Far from being unchanging and out of touch with the world, pastoral nomadism has proven itself to be highly adaptive to the modern world. Perhaps the biggest change is the movement away from raising animals for subsistence to raising animals for exchange. Barfield states that “although they still may use yurts, tents, or cattle kraals, pastoralists in most parts of the world now depend less on consuming the direct products of their herds and more on their sale to the market for money”.⁵⁷ He points that many nomadic pastoralists are now ranchers; pastoral specialists in a cash economy. He gives the Mongols and Tibetians as an example, and says that they have increased their production of cashmere goats significantly to meet increased world demand. Similarly, the Kazaks in China have replaced most of their old varieties of sheep with better wool-bearing animals.⁵⁸ Pastoral nomads are criticized mostly for that they destruct grasslands because of their desire to graze their herds. However, as Barfield notes pastoralists have always been aware of this danger. They have had a variety of ways to restrict access to ‘common’ pasture. Tribal boundaries usually coincided with pasture boundaries and these were defended against outsiders so that the use of a common pasture often to everyone was actually restricted to a limited number of people.

In practice, changes in technology and the cash value of livestock in particular can combine to produce destructive pressure on limited resources. Moreover, most governments assume that any land not permanently occupied is the property of the state. Another obstacle to the survival of pastoral nomadism is that the vast rate of population growth throughout the developing world creating so much pressure to expand agricultural production that new farming schemes are almost always preferred over continued pastoral use, even in areas that are not well suited for agriculture. Barfield suggest that “extensive nomadic pastoralism may

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 212.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 213.

⁵⁸ See in *ibid.*, p. 213.

well represent a better long-term strategy for production because it protects the environment and makes productive use of land”.⁵⁹ So, it has the potential for development and can adopt successfully to the modern world. But, like expanding populations of subsistence farmers, nomads eventually produce more people than can be supported by an extensive pastoral economy.

There are many who assume that pastoralists simply do not have any future at all. Khazanov states that “the increasing dependence of the pastoralists on national governments which favored agriculture and industries, and often pursued deliberately anti-pastoralist policies, had several detrimental effects: one is the further marginalization of pastoralists”⁶⁰. Thus, the size of their territory decreased, and the stability of their society eroded. Secondly, artificial boundaries that the new nation-states created often split the grazing areas of nomads who had been used these areas in the past. By this way migrating routes and patterns of nomads were negatively affected. Finally, Khazanov argues that pastoral nomads are increasingly being drawn into national, regional and international systems based on market economy and surplus production⁶¹. However, it should be noticed that nomadic pastoral economies’ dependence on subsistence are easily overstressed when they become dependent on a market economy and market demands. On the other hand, Khazanov states that in many countries, efforts for applying modern technologies on pastoralism resulted in desertification and degradation of vegetation, oil, and water. Although all these commodification and modernization attempts could possibly destruct pastoral nomadism, Khazanov asserts that if there is any possibility for the survival of pastoral nomadism it must modernize itself along with the lines of the commercial production. He argues that “episodic revivals of more or less traditional pastoralism, in one country or another, are more connected with temporary factors, such as the weakening of central power, than with long standing trends in modern development”⁶².

Besides, there is one crucial point that should always be taken into consideration when the pastoral nomadism is concerned. One should realize that production is not only an economic activity, but also a socially and culturally constructed activity. Khazanov states in his example that, “...many pastoralist groups, especially in Africa, are reluctant to produce

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 216.

⁶⁰ Khazanov and Ginat, op. Cit., p. 9.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 12.

⁶² Ibid., p. 12.

meat for the market because stock for them is not only a means of subsistence, but also a form of wealth, a social capital, and a source of prestige and esteem connected with some specific cultural values... It is very difficult, in many cases almost impossible, to turn traditional pastoralists into capitalist ranch-owners without drastic changes in their social organizations, and thus, without destroying their communal forms of land tenure and depriving a large number of people free access to pastures".⁶³ According to Khazanov, utilization from the pastoralist's expertise and their participation in the decision-making process are inevitable in order to provide a real success in their modernization. However, there is very little hope for this project to be realized in the near future.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 14 Ibid., p. 12..

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