

حَوْلِيَّات مَكَلِيَّةِ الْآدَابِ

تَصَدَّر عَنْ كَلِيَّةِ الْآدَابِ - جَامِعَةِ الْكُوَيْتِ

الرسالة الخامسة
في الاجتماع

دراسات أولية في
التدرج الطبقي الاجتماعي
في بعض الأقطار العربية

د. خلدون حسن النقيب
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المجلد الأول، ١٩٨٠ - ١٣٩٩ هـ



حَلَقَةُ الْإِلَهِيَّاتِ مَجْلَدُ الْإِلَهِيَّاتِ



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الكويت ٤٠٠ فلس - البحرين نصف دينار - قطر ٥ رials - الامارات ٥ دراهم - السعودية ٥ رials
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نعم الحولية السنوية

للفرد ديناران كويتي في الكويت - ديناران وخمسمائة فلس في الوطن العربي - عشرون دولارا
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للشركات والمؤسسات والدوائر الرسمية عشرة دنانير كويتية - في الخارج اربعون دولارا امريكا .

لأعضاء هيئة التدريس والطلاب خصم ٥٠٪

جميع المراسلات الخاصة بشروط النشر او اية استفسارات اخرى بشأن الحوليات توجه الى :
رئيس تحرير الحوليات ص.ب : ٢٦٥٨٥ الصفاة - الكويت

تَصَدَّر عَنْ كَلِيَّةِ الْآدَابِ - جَامِعَةِ الْكُوَيْتِ
الْحَوْلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى ، ١٩٨٠ - ١٣٩٩ هـ

الرسالة الخامسة
في الاجتماع

دراسات أولية في
التدرج الطبقي الاجتماعي
في بعض الأقطار العربية

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صدر من هذه الحوليات

الحولية الاولى

الرسالة الاولى (في الفلسفة)

الجدور الفلسفية للبنائية

د . فؤاد زكريا

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الرسالة الثانية (في التاريخ)

صفحات مجهولة من تاريخ ليبيا

د . محمد صالحية

الرسالة الثالثة (في الأدب)

ابن قلاؤس (حياته وشعره)

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الرسالة الرابعة (في التاريخ)

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دراسات أولية في التدرج الطبقي الاجتماعي في بعض الأقطار العربية

ملخص

تحاول هذه الدراسة أن تسد ثغرة هامة في فهم عوامل التطور والتغير في نظام التدرج الطبقي الاجتماعي في الأقطار العربية في المشرق العربي . ولهذا فهي تستعرض الملامح الرئيسية لما كتب حول هذا الموضوع ، ثم تدرس وتحلل نمطاً نظام التدرج الطبقي وتطوراتهِ في ضوء مفهومين أساسيين هما « تنسيق العمل » و« الحراك البنيوي » ، وعلى أساس منهجي يقوم على « مبدأ التقسيم إلى فترات تاريخية » .

ولذلك ، وعلى أساس الفكرة القائلة بالاستمرارية الحضارية والفكرة الأخرى القائلة بالتغيرات البنوية ، تقوم هذه الدراسة بتحديد دراسة ثلاث فترات تاريخية رئيسية في تطور نظام التدرج الطبقي في أقطار المشرق العربي :

أولاً : الفترة الكلاسيكية : وتغطي ظهور الامبراطورية الإسلامية ، وتكاملها ثم تجزؤاً وانهدارها .

ثانياً : الفترة الوسطى : وتبتدي بقيام الامبراطورية العثمانية وتنتهي في منتصف القرن التاسع عشر .

ثالثاً : الفترة الحديثة : وتبدأ بتسرب الاستعمار الأوروبي إلى البلدان العربية وتخلقه فيها ، وتستمر حتى ما بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية وتقرر هذه الدراسة أن نظام التدرج الطبقي الاجتماعي في كل من هذه الفترات يمكن اعتباره وحدة صالحة للمقارنة مع غيرها . وبهذا تبين خطأ أطروحة « الركود الأحدثي » التي تزعم أن المجتمعات الآسيوية ليس لها تاريخ .

هذا وتتقوم الدراسة بمسح وتحليل الطبقات والشرائح الاجتماعية في كل من الفترات الثلاث : نشأتها ، ودورها ، ووظيفتها وبنيتها والعناصر التي تدخل في تكوينها ومصدر هذه العناصر . وبهذا تكشف عن التطورات التي تمت في نظام التدرج الطبقي الاجتماعي والعوامل التي أدت إلى هذه التغيرات ، وتلقي بهذا كله ضوءاً على نظام التدرج الطبقي الاجتماعي المعاصر في البلدان العربية في المشرق المعاصر .

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Cairo in the 18th century: "Cairo ... had a population of 300,000 - 100,000 being adult males. Of these 25,000 were artisans, 15,000 were workers and the remaining 60,00 were not productively occupied. These were soldiers, landlords, clergymen, traders and their servants. The servants alone numbered 30,000. Not all artisans were engaged in productive labor. The Cairo guilds included guilds for the bath-house attendants, hairdressers, jugglers, street singers, public speakers, mule and camel drivers, dancers and drummers." Lutsky does not say from where he obtained his figures, but his description of the urban population composition is lucid. For a description of these groups in the Classical period see Wiid's (1976)

brief exposition of what Professor Bosworth called "the mediaeval Islamic underworld," and also 'Ashour (1962 : Chap. 1, 9) for Mamluki Egypt.

105. This statement should not be interpreted to mean that the ruling class is unified or in possession of a blue print for the society. On the contrary, in-fighting and rivalry is a common feature of this class which is at the same time its source of vitality and durability. As Amin (1978 : 21) put it, "[t]his Arab world was thus simultaneously diverse and deeply unified by its ruling class."
106. These and other related questions are treated at length in the author's forthcoming study entitled "Toward a Political Sociology of Military Regimes: The case of Egypt, Iraq, and Syria."

- mobility been carried out in sufficient historical depth. Despite the recent avalanche of empirical research on social mobility, appallingly little is known about the process of social mobility in the past . . . in any society, certainly not in our own." Other rare historical studies of stratification and mobility are those of Robert J. Smith (in Rowney and Graham, 1971: 209-215) on Japan, and Lawrence Stone (in Rowney and Graham, 1971: 238-271) on England. See also: Kátz (1972) and more recently Sharlin's (1979) study of Frankfurt in mid 19th century.
101. For a recent restatement of this thesis which arose from Marx's writings on India, and the debate it generated, see Hindess and Hirst (1975: 201-220). Hindess and Hirst's clarification, based on Marx's theory of rent adds an important dimension often neglected by partisan writers but it does not bring anything new to the original statement.
 102. This method of presentation is borrowed from Rossides (1976: 101, Figure 3-3). Very little will be said about this figure in the present context. It will be discussed at greater length in the author's "Structural Mobility, Occupational Classification, and Social Change," a research project in progress.
 103. One of the most persistent critics of the 'ulama and bureaucratic officials and clerks is the poet Al-Buṣiri who lived in the second half of the 14th century in Egypt. He devoted over one third of his poems to this effect, describing clerks and lower officials and qadis as thieves, dishonourable, untrustworthy cut throats. In one of his longer poems he deplores "bartil" or bribery and other crooked ways of the mustakhdamun. See. M.S. Kailani (ed.), *Diwan Al-Buṣiri*. Cairo: Al-Babi Al-Halabi, 1955, especially, pp. 214-223 (in Arabic).
 104. To give an illustration of these substrata consider the following description offered by Lutsky (1969: 21) of the population of

- landless. In southern Yemen, this group of noble descent managed to convert their status into political and economic advantage.
99. Antoun (1972: 26-27) shows that in the community he studied the stratification system is occupational although religious and descent rankings are present. Qubain (1955) reports that religious factionism in Bahrain resulted in Sunni dominance of the Shi'ite population, but he cautions that the development of the country has sufficiently undermined this system to the extent that religious division of labor is better understood in terms of the socio-economic division of labor. Khuri (1969: 35-6), on the other hand, maintains that in Lebanon family affiliations, religious sects, and regional allegiances cross-cut occupational groupings which, Khuri asserts, promote social mobility and prevent class struggle. This viewpoint is similar to Bill's (1972) "informal group associations" which, he claims, crosscut class relations in the urban centers of the Near East.
100. There is a number of important studies which have attempted such an approach and can be regarded as major contributions to the historical study of social stratification and mobility. But they remain the exception and not the rule. Thernstrom (in Rowney and Graham, 1971: 99-100) who published in 1964 an important study (Thernstrom, 1975) on social mobility in the city of Newport in the 19th century, offers this plea: "let me begin with a simple, obvious, uncontroversial point . . . that some of the most interesting questions we might ask about the nature of a class structure today cannot be answered without reliable information about the nature of that class structure yesterday — and the day before yesterday, and even the century before yesterday!". And that nowhere has the research necessary to supply such knowledge about class and

this position receives. In his diagram which is a modified version of Lenski's (1966) he pre-

sents two parallel stratification systems, one traditional and the other modern, thus :

RULER

Traditional	Upper Class	Modern
—Royal Families		—Military Elites
—Tribal nobility		—High 'ulama
—Native Landlords		—Foreign Capitalists
—Economic Elites		—Landless Rentier Elites
Middle Classes		
—Bureaucratic Middle Class		—Bourgeois Middle Class
—Professional Middle Class		—Clerical Middle Class
Lower Classes		
—Traditional Working Class		—Industrial Working Class
Peasants and Tribal Masses		

97. For the purpose of illustration see: Qubain's (1955) study of Bahrain, Salim's (1963) study of Chibayish in southern Iraq, Khuri's (1969) study of a village in Lebanon, Bujra's (1971) study of a community in southern Yemen (P.D.R.-S.Y.), and Antoun's (1972) study of a peasant community in the Trans-Jordan. These five communities are geographically separated and exposed to different historical and cultural influences.

98 Bujra (1971: 50, 62-71) maintains that there are two parallel stratification systems in the community he studies: (a) status of descent, and (b) status of occupation. He states that both of these mechanisms (of stratification) converge by considering that in fact those ranked highest in (a) also ranked highest in (b). Salim also notes the special position of the sayyeds in the countryside although they remained for the large part

- 1969). For a general treatment of education in underdeveloped countries with reference to the Near East see Burn (1963); Adams and Bjork (1969); and Sweet (1970). See also Abu-Lughod (1971).
93. The concept of the "new" middle classes as marginal groupings with no allegiance to traditional values and attitudes, cast in the image of nation-builders (Horowitz, 1972) has been widely debated in the context of the Near East and elsewhere. On one side Halpern (1962, 1963) and Khaduri (1953) who uphold such views, and on the other Perlmutter (1967) who contends that there is nothing new about the so-called middle classes in Arab societies. In details both sides seem to miss the point. The alliance of military-technocracy substrata, regardless of their newness, did bring about fundamental changes in Arab societies, representing a new phase in the transition to capitalism, but they are neither nation-builders, nor do they fit into the role the European entrepreneurs played in the development of capitalism.
 94. Rezaqaneh (1967: 198-208) admitting that there are two types of stratification in Arab society: vertical (occupational) and horizontal (cultural), and that there are three major classes: landowners, middle bureaucrats, workers and peasants; he nevertheless maintains that the disappearance of the first class will eventually lead to the tendency for middle class growth to encompass the whole population, and thus the class struggle will disappear. See also Grundy (1964) for comparable views in the African States' official ideology.
 95. Shah (1964) has developed a certain method for the manipulation of census figures, which has been copied by others. A great deal of the success of this method depends largely upon the conceptual clarity and precision in the definition of occupational groups.
 96. Bill (1972: 418) defines rank as occupational position and the relative share in the power distribution

yers, and 2 other persons were previously Ottoman bureaucrats. He continues, "similarly, an Egyptian newspaper found that among the 319 Egyptian Members of Parliament elected at the beginning of 1950, 115 owned land amounting to more than 100 feddans each, 45 owning at least 500 feddans of land. In Lebanese Parliament of the early 1950's there were 21 landowners out of 44 delegates." The situation in Iraq was even more eskewed. See: Bonné (1948); Haider (1942); and Hourani (1970). In another context see, Al-Saeed (1966).

91. It should be made clear at this point that the composition of the land-owning strata was, for this reason, very highly variegated in all the countries under study. In the case of Iraq, Hasan (1970: 364) states: "The main characteristic of the structure of the Iraqi bourgeoisie—agricultural, real estate, commercial and industrial — is that it is mixed in the sense that its various strata are so intertwined that each strata-

tum shares in the economic interests of the other strata, to a smaller or greater degree. Often, a bourgeois at one and the same time owns irrigation pumps and agricultural land and some urban real estate, undertakes transactions in one or more branches of commerce, and owns industrial stocks and shares if he is not the main founder of an industrial establishment." See also Berger (1964 : 195-210); and Baer (1966 : 208-212). On the developments of Egyptians capitalism see Mitwalli (1974).

92. On the evolution of compulsory universal education in the Middle East see Rivlin and Szyliowicz (1965 : part II); Thompson and Reischauer (1966); Polk and Chambers 1968: part 5); and Qubain (in Landau, 1972 : 312-326 passim); Landen (1970 : part 5); and Berger (1964). Two features of the increased rates of literacy is the centralization of talent and activity in the main cultural centers (the metropolis), and the emancipation of women (Lapidus,

- (1969) collection of articles discuss recent development; also Fisher (1955, 1963); Laqueur (1958); and Cook's (1970, part III). It is unfortunate that none of these sources contain studies focussing on social stratification.
88. The evolution of this stratum and the various sub-strata composing it are important. Professor Lewis (1961 : 441 passim) states : The term (a'yan) had been in use since early times in the general sense of provincial or local notables, usually merchants. It now came to denote a definite social group or class of old and new landlords, exercising important political functions." See also Hourani (1968 : 48-54 passim).
 89. See : Haider (1942). Wariner (in Issawi, 1966: 77 : 1968) explains that the system of landownership through credit operations worked as follows : "usually the rent is fixed on share basis amounting to one-fifth of the produce if the landlord performed no service except that of paying taxes, two-fifths if the landlord provided seeds, four-fifths if the landlord paid all costs but labor." It is important to note the variations of this system between Iraq, Syria and Egypt. According to Baer (in Issawi, 1966: 88-90) landed property in Egypt was to subdivide whereas in the Fertile Crescent it was originally miri. "Land was mostly mulk (privately owned) in Egypt with extensive landownership rights and complete registration which made it possible for foreign capital to purchase land in Egypt." In the 1920's foreign-owned land amounted to about 10% of the total area. This resulted in the earlier development of cash crops as land reclamation further facilitated the transfer of state lands into private hands. See also Baer (1962).
 90. Baer (1966 : 208 passim) mentions that according to an investigation of the socio-economic background of Syrian members of Parliament in 1937, of the 60 members (out of 85) who responded, at least 20 were land-owners, 9 were law-

- jee (1956).
84. On the culture of the Ottoman gentry, see Zier (1966:26-30). On the question of foreign domination see Hershag (on Islamic Law, 1963:291); Lewis (1961:43-154); and Issawi (on Fisher, 1957); Hershag (1964: 16). Statistics for 1875: there were 80,000 foreign nationals residing in Egypt including 35,000 Greeks, 17,000 Frenchmen, 12,000 Italians. See Issawi (1970: 306-7).
 85. The Imperial decree known as the Hatt-i Sherif of Gülhane of Nov. 1831 stated, "Although, the Ottoman Empire has in the past been afflicted from the scourge of monopolies, lately considered in times of necessity a source of revenue, the customs still exist, although it can only have disastrous consequences, it is that of real emporiums, known under the name of 'mitzani.'"
Issawi (1956: 2-3).
 86. For excerpts from the text of the law, see Hershag (1964: 202-206). Note the absence of a clear definition of absolute "private property" in Islamic societies has been repeatedly emphasized by researchers. See: Robinson (1973:61-65): "The pure concept of private property as an absolute right to use and abuse, as it was defined in Roman Law, is rarely if ever encountered. . . ." Mulk or equivalent to private property in traditional Islamic Law included: house, its courtyard, and orchards within villages were private property (mulk) as well as most urban land (real estate). See: Gibb and Bown (1950, part I, 236-7); Lewis (1961:442-3). In 1528 roughly 87% of Ottoman land was miri land (Anderson, 1974:365), whereas in 1850 three fifths of miri land was transferred as quasi-waqf (see previous section above). The tapu provision finally acknowledged the legal right to own land.
 87. For further details see Rivlin and Szyliowicz (1965, part II, IV, VI, VII); Hourani (1970); Landen (1970) provide interesting documentary materials; Polk and Chambers (1968); and Gendzier's

monopolies of agricultural produce, or of any other articles whatsoever, as well as all Permits from the local Governors . . . etc. Article IV states that British-merchants or their agents shall purchase Turkish produce, growth, or manufacture for exportation, "free of any kind of charte or duty whatsoever . . ." On the question of Ottoman debt see Sulva (in Issawi, 1966: 94-106); and Berque (in Polk and Chambers, 1968: 223) on the foreign debt in Egypt. Berque's article is appropriately entitled ; "The Establishment of the Colonial Economy."

82. By then three fourths of the exports of Iraq and Egypt went to Britain, and three fourths of their imports came from that country. The same situation existed between France and Syria. See : Lutsky (1969, Chapters IX, X, XII); Issawi (in Cook, 1970: 395-411); David (in Cook, 1970: 193-206); and Chevallier (in Polk and Chambers, 1968: 205-222).
83. On the typical colonial economy in the age of im-

perialism in which finance capital is the moving force, see : Lenin (1970, Vol. I; 671-778); Hobsbaum (1919); and Sweezy (1956 : 307-328). To illustrate how typical the situation was consider the following figures : in 1914, 59.4% of Turkey's import were industrial products, only 13% of its exports were such products. The percentage of raw materials exported was 38.4%. The startling feature of Turkey's foreign trade structure was that although its exports of grains were 45%, it still stood in need of 25% of agricultural imports. As for Egypt in 1902, 100% of all mortgage companies were foreign owned. Foreign capital controlled 94.8% of all banks and financial institutions, 65.8% of immovables(rural and municipal), 91.8% of transportation and communication, 90.7% of trade and industry, (Hershtag, 1964: 77, 99). The role of the **Levant and East India Companies** owned by Britain in this process is well documented. See: footnote (82) above, and Mukher-

- and Hershlag (1964). Serious sociological studies have so far been a rarity. See for example Baer (1966); Berger (1964), Abdel Malek (1968), and the recently translated work by Hussein (1973); and Van Nieuwenhuize's (1971) survey. Other works dealing with various aspects of the social transformation of the Near East should include Finnie (1958); Meyer (1959); Shawdran (1955 revised in 1966); Halpern (1963); Hurewitz (1969). On the demographic aspect of social transformation see Abu Lughod (1965, 1971); Lapidus (1969); Hamond and Alexander (1972); and Fisher (1972). Finally, theoretical and empirical studies in specialized fields of inquiry have been rather conspicuously lacking and unexplainable. On political trends and ideologies see: Hourani (1970); Karpas (1967); and Khadduri (1970).
79. Anderson (1974: 515-66) writes, "On the other hand, the commercial vitality of the Arab epoch, which had coursed through the 'intermediate' civilization of classical Islam, now progressively ebbed away. This shift was, of course, correlated with the rise of European trade. On the contrary, already in the 12th century, Christian shipping had won a dominant position in Egyptian waters Moreover, just at the moment when Mamluk Egypt was absorbed into the Ottoman Empire, giving direct access to the Red Sea for the first time, the Portuguese voyages of Discovery outflanked the entire Islamic world" See also Cahen (1970); Lapidus (1969: 51 *passim*); and Lewis (1961: 40-51 *passim*).
 80. For the text of the treaties see Hershlag (1964: 279-386). It is obvious that considerations other than commercial ones motivated the European Powers to request such capitulations.
 81. Article I of the 1838 treaty reaffirms all previous privileges granted by all previous treaties to all foreigners. Article II calls on the Sublime Porte to "formally engage to abolish all

- they were recruited. Furthermore, the high status of the 'ulama and the wealth they reportedly amassed could be related to their bureaucratic rank. Even here we should observe the distinction between qaḍis and qadi-askeri or chief judge of the askeris. The former had no jurisdiction in administrative, fiscal, and disciplinary matters (Lewis, *ibid*, p. 53). Unfortunately a detailed study of the complex history of social strata is not yet available.
76. The relationship between hierarchical stratification, the mode of bureaucratization, and the level of the development of the productive forces cannot be pursued in the present text. See: Anderson (1974: 370-388, 496-517), for preliminary considerations.
 77. An *éntrepôt* or a port of trade is a politically and administratively autonomous trading community usually surrounded by large political entities. The major economic activity is largely, but not exclusively, the re-export of commodities (Belshaw, 1965: 89). On the history of *éntrepôts* see: Polanyi, et. al. (1957: 38-63, 177-187 and Endacott (1964).
 78. This preoccupation with the discovery of generic parallelisms to European development runs throughout the recent literature on the Near East. Given this deficiency, so much valuable information has been revealed but in some indirect way. General introductory studies can be found in Rivlin and Szyliowicz (1965); Thompson and Reischauer (1966); Laquer (1959); Fisher (1955, 1963); Gendezier (1969); Landen (1970); and Landau (1972). The historical narratives on this period are Lewis (1961); Vatikiotis (1969); and Lutsky (1969). Some important anthropological studies are collected by Antoun (1972); Sweet (1970); and also Shiloh (1969) texts. Other anthropological studies will be referred to later. Recent studies dealing with the economic and social history of this period have been published by Issawi (1966); Polk and Chambers (1968); Cook (1970);

was infused with the Sufi and sectarian orders. By the time the mawali system was formalized as a separate institution of the Ottoman period, the Ottoman Empire had already incorporated vast territories whose inhabitants formed ethnic, religious as well as national minorities. The Arab provinces clearly formed a distinct national "minority" differentiated not by religion (since the majority of the population were Muslims) but rather by the exclusion from power and authority. The ethnic dimension of the ethnic division of labor is an expressly modern phenomenon associated with the European influence and the influx of capital and personnel. In this sense, the millet system was fused with the national issue. The caputatory system gave the Powers of France and Britain the chance to strengthen the local tendencies of Christian Millets in the European parts of the Empire to the extent that the authority of the central government

was severely limited. "Chacun des cultes reconnus forme des lois, un Etat dans L'Etat," wrote Leon Verhaeghe in 1872 (quoted in Hershlag, 1964).

75. It is of vital importance in the context of the Ottoman period to understand the structure of the ruling stratum -- the askeri or the asker aristocracy. The heterogeneity of this group is reflected by the various classifications of its substrata. Lewis (1963: 53-63), Gibb and Bown (1950, part I, 56, *passim*), and Levy (1971: 391-404) give a glimpse of the complexity of this stratum and the conflicting interests of its substrata. The second millet, the a'yan, is equally heterogeneous. Most statements on this subject in the Ottoman history which regard it as part of the ruling bureaucracy, e.g., by Marshall and Marshall (1970: 102), are based on Levy and Leveau (1961) that they formed a separate subordinate institution, but they belonged to the a'yan stratum from which

72. Hourani (1968) and Karpap (1968) define the a'yan stratum to be inclusive of the askeri stratum as well as the local urban notables. This in my opinion would be an inaccurate classification. The former stratum differentiated nationally and distinguished itself both culturally and by its monopoly of bureaucratic authority. The a'yan stratum derived its support from the peasantry and the urban population and distinguished itself either through the recognition of the askeri stratum of its status, or by its wealth. The a'yans did not, generally speaking, begin to assert their position until after the first act of Tanzimat of 1838.
73. On the topic of the Ottoman guilds in this period see Gibb and Bown (1953, part I: 227, 28-92); Boer (1970: 17-30); Ashraf (1970: 215-218); Hershlag (1964: 18-22); Hishmahlik (in Cook, 1970: 218-219). The craft and artistic guilds in Arab countries combined political, social and religious functions beside the professional one. There is some evidence which suggests that promotion and mobility between professional levels was not restricted neither was the guild structure very rigid. Some writers seem to like saying that Ottoman guilds were "democratic".
74. There should be no confusion between the so-called ethnic division of labor and Millet system. If the former is conceived as "the identification of minority groups with specific occupations" (Hershlag, 1964: 25), then this is not a characteristic peculiar to the Ottoman period. Ethnic specialization into certain occupations (trades, crafts, etc.) due to geographic, religious and historical factors has always been a feature of Mediterranean societies (Issawi, 1966: 114). Ibn Khaldun (1969: 300, 314 *passim*), for example, spoke of urban and geographical concentration of crafts. In the Classical period we encountered the mawali system but this system had mainly religious connotations. It acquired a political dimension when it

five tax categories: tithes, livestock taxes, poll taxes collected from non-Muslims, tariff duties, and traditional taxes; he analyzed only the tithes and livestock taxes. It should be noted that all foreigners, religious groups, inhabitants of the capital city, the traders, industrialist businessmen and *şarraf*s (bankers) among others were either exempted from taxes or were taxed very lightly. He found that between 1863 and 1873, tithes and livestock taxes collected from

rural population averages 40% of the total State revenue. They constituted 45% of the revenues of the fiscal year 1872-73 (excluding tax-farmers' revenues). In comparison, the peasantry's benefits from public expenditures did not exceed 0.3% of the same year. The comparison between the peasantry's contribution to public treasury and their benefits from it is highlighted in the following table (*Ibid*, p. 112, Table 6, partially reproduced):

Revenues and Expenditure Groups	Amounts (1,000 Kese)	percent of Total
Revenue contributed mostly by the farmers	2,198	52.0
Expenditure which benefits mostly the farmers	13	0.3
Revenues derived mostly from non-farmers	711	16.0
Expenditures which benefit non-farm population	2,316	54.1

- change, i.e., the use of firearms which reduced the military importance of the Sipahi cavalry. Thirdly, the shrinkage of revenue to the treasury due to timar holders evasion of paying taxes and inefficient tax collection systems. See: Gibb and Bown (1950, part II); and Karpas (1968: 70-76) Professor Lewis (1958), among others, believes that the disruption of the timar system signalled the gradual collapse of the socio-economic foundation of the Ottoman State and of the main financial revenue which maintained the ruling institutions. See also Braudel (1973 : Vol. 2, p. 702).
69. The origin of the 'musha', or communal land system, is not very clear. Some writers assume that it originated in the collective assessment of taxes on the community as a whole. Others believe that it had had genuine tribal-communal ownership origin which evolved from a certain historical bond common to members of a tribe or ancient village communities. See: Granott (1952); and Pliak (1939) on the history of musha'. For a brief description on the how musha' functioned, see: Warriner (in Issawi, 1966: 72-78; and 1948). It should be remembered that musha' land was miri land (State land) by legal status.
 70. The spread of small land holdings of this kind reached enormous proportions by 1850. Hershlag (1964: 39) quotes some primary sources to the effect that three fourths of all land in the Ottoman Empire in 1850's was waqf. See: also Gibb and Bown (1950 Vol. I, part I: 235-275). At least part of the decline in land productivity and hence revenue could be attributable to this development.
 71. Resat Aktan (in Issawi, 1966: 108-113) illustrates the tax burden on the peasantry. Although his data pertains to the period following the great reforms of Tanzimat, they still show the magnitude of the exploitation of the peasants immediately prior to the implementation of Tanzimat. Of the

contrast to (Europe), in the Arab world, because the peasants did not play this role (fragmentation of feudalism) unity was preserved. For the same reason, however, Arab civilization was a fragile affair. It was enough for trade to fall off for states to perish, along with the cities in which they were based. Wallerstein (1974: 325-25), who among very few writers, downplays the impact of Portuguese domination of Indian Ocean trade on the decline of Arab mercantileism. See also Anderson (1974: 312-317).

65. For an extensive investigation of the formation of economic world order in the sixteenth century, see Wallerstein (1974) and Braudel (1966-1974, Vol. II). Wallerstein's definition of peripheral areas vs. external arena is not entirely convincing.
66. The European penetration of the Middle East began as early as 1454 with the conclusion of the treaty between Venice and the Ottoman Empire. This was followed by the Ottoman Capitulation

in 1675. The texts of these treaties are published by Hershlag (1964: 279-292). The question of the revival of commerce in Europe is a major factor of the disintegration of feudalism remains a controversial issue. See Pirrene (1937, 1970); Braudel (1966-1974, Vol. I); Dobb (1970, especially pp. 37-50); and Ashtor (1976, 'the Pirrene thesis,' pp. 101-107). But the impact of European revival of commerce upon the later development of Ottoman Empire is well demonstrated by the Copernic system.

67. For a general treatment of the land regime in Arab countries in this period, see Polak (1939), Granot (1952); Daer (in Issawi, 1966: 79-90); Volney (in Issawi, 1966: 213-219); and Gibb and Bowen (1953, part II).
68. The disintegration of timar system was due to many factors. First it was accompanied by economic and political crises at about mid sixteenth century, associated with the inflation in prices. Secondly, the technological

religion" were passed down to future generations. In another context, Hourani (1970 : 25) writes: "For Ibn Khaldun, the Islamic State, like all stable and virtuous States, is a blend of kingship (mulk) and Shari'a State. True as this was of the sultanates of its time, it was true also of political development of Islam." See also Anderson (1974 : 505, *passim*).

63. Under the Millet system, religious, ethnic and national minorities of the subject Near Eastern people formed corporate autonomous bodies within the Ottoman Empire. This system spawned continuous national struggle in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and provided the basis for the organization of urban guilds. See : Hershlag (*op. cit.*, pp. 22-26); and the historical narrative of Lutsky (1969). Also the various studies published by Polk and Chambers (1968). For an enumeration of these minorities see Saunders (1966 : 15). As for the transformation of the socio-economic categories, professor Karpát (1968)

emphasizes that the four main categories : the men of the sword, the men of the pen, the merchants, and the mass of food producers, acquire fundamental importance if the Ottoman Empire is viewed as a political system rather than as a religious model. In this period, he maintains, fundamental to their organization is the control of land.

64. The struggle between the Egyptian Mamluks and the Portuguese and later the Ottomans over maritime trade routes to India extended from 1498 to 1551 which finally ended the commercial importance of Eastern Mediterranean and final collapse of Arab mercantalism. See : Al-Duri (1969 : 111-115); Hitti (1950); Gibb and Bown (1953, Part I), and Osbaran (1972). El-Kodsy (1970 : 16-17) advances the thesis that the Arab world was basically a commercial grouping, with Egypt as the only great "peasant" exception. In the Classical period, the ruling class was the cement that (bound) the whole grouping together. He continues, "In

associations. Expressions laden with class distinctions such as : 'a'yans, ku-bara, and Khāṣṣa (notables, select few) for the upper strata; and 'ammah, 'awam, and saweqa (lowly people, rabble) for the lower strata, became quite common during the Seljuqid rule and thereafter. See also Lewis (1937); and Ashraf (1970 : 318-9).

60. Grunebaum (*op. cit.*, p. 198) writes 'the social crisis brought about by the rise of industry and trade in the 'Abbasid Empire had filled wide strata of the population with enmity against organized religion. Around 1000, Muhammad al-Ifriqi, known as al-Mutayyam, sang :

No, certainly, I shall not pray to God, as long as as I shall be poor.

Let us leave prayers to the **Shaikh al-Jalil, to Fa'iq**. To the chief of armies, whose cellars bulge with treasures. But why should I pray? Am I mighty? Have I a palace, horse, rich clothes and golden belts?

To pray, when I do not possess a single inch of

earth, would be pure hypocrisy."

The group well-known in the West by the name Assassins belongs to the Neo-Isama'ilites of Hasan Sabbah (1124 A.D.).

61. Bibliographic sources for this section can be found in : Sauvaget (1964); Pearson (1958, Supp. 1962); UNESCO (1961). Hershlag (1964 : 279-386); and Landen (1970 : 3-49) provide useful documentary evidence. Hitti (1953); Gibb and Bown (1950); Saunders (1966); Lewis (1963); and Inalcik (1975) provide an essential glimpse into the formative stages of the Ottoman Empire. Aspects of the economic history are discussed in Cook (1970, parts One and Two); Hershlag (1964 : 7-52); and Al-Duri (1969 : 117-143).
62. The culmination of the Islamic State according to Jacques Weulersse (quoted in Hershlag, *op. cit.*, p. 1) was reached in 1516 at the time of Selim I. From that point on "même status de la terre, même hierarchie sociale, même politique del'Etat, même role de la

- nyi et. al., 1957 : 320-341); and more recently Cahen (1970). See also footnote (38) above for references concerning the predominance of the "military aristocracy."
58. Massignon's (1934 : 436) original statement which started a considerable continuing debate, identifies workers corporations of the ninth century with the Qaramitan movement, which he describes as "half religious and half social, socialistic in origin." He called these corporation Guilds following the Qaramitan custom of organizing into guilds. Massignon's conclusion which is rather farfetched is that "since 1917 the ancient Muslim guilds have tended to become (naqabat) or syndicates for the new professions, dependent on the Third International (Moscow)."
59. The majority of the writers who are inclined to refute the existence of merchant and craft-guilds in this period take issue with Massignon's inaccurate statement. They contend that guilds as professional organizations did not make their appearance until the sixteenth century under the Ottoman rule and only in an elementary form. See: Baer (1970); Lapidus (1969 : 49, 93-95); Goitein (1968 : 255-278, especially pp. 267-270). The latter author emphasizes that there was no strict separation between industry and commerce. If the distinction we introduced in the text between these associations and guilds is proper, then we should take note of several references to these associations, primarily in a political context. Al-Duri (1969 : 67) mentions the role of these associations in textile craftsmen disturbances in Baghdad in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Levy (1971 : 89) refers to the Shi'ite sectarian nature of the Persian "fraternities" in the fourteenth century. Remnants of these fraternities were found in the Turkey of this century, whose relationships with the Janissaries were intimate, and in later Sudan in the Mahdi movement. Al-Duri (1969 : 72-81, 95) quotes the classical historians making derogatory references to these

- of African slaves (Zindj) in Sothorn Iraq which led to the slave uprising (869-882 A.D.) Al-Bun mentions the figure of 300,000 slaves in that region alone. The emphasis on the term "tax farming" comes from Weber.
56. Rodinson (1973 : 4-11) defines the capitalistic sector (as distinguished from the capitalistic mode of production and the socio-economic formation in which the capitalistic mode of production is predominant) of a precapitalist formation as the sector of merchant and financial capital in which:
- (1) money wealth (vis-a-vis landed wealth) dominates;
 - (2) whole-sale trade and other monetary transactions are the primary ones;
 - (3) economic rationality of the enterprise exists;
 - (4) capital accumulation with the petty commodity production and wage labor, is discernible.
- For a more detailed study of this sector in the Islamic Empire, see Ashtor (1976; especially Chap. III, and pp. 132-160). On the monetary system of this period and its relation to social stratification, see A. S. Ehrenkreutz (in Cook, 1970 : 37 especially p. 40 passim). And on the wealth of the Islamic State, see: Zaidan (196 Vol. 1, Section II).
57. This is clearly one of the unsettled issues which has yet to be tackled convincingly. Weber's argument that Islam did not develop into an ascetic this-worldly-religion, and the reasons he gives to suport his argument are quite at odds with historical evidence. Perhaps this confusion is the result of the lack of accurate periodization of Islamic history, a point which Zubaida (1972), whose essay was designed to counter Weber's argument, does not take into account. Another reason for the failure of Islamic society to develop toward capitalism can be attributed to the lack of social surplus which made these societies vulnerable to unforeseen disturbances, external or internal, and to economic fluctuations. On this point see : Mandel (1968, Vol. I. 42-45, 122-125); Lewis (1937), Pearson (in Pola-

trend. The net result was that bureaucratic centralization "progressively eliminated classical civic and social institutions, replacing the independent city corporation with centrally designated authorities" with religious and ecclesiastical identification. See also footnote no. 36 above.

51. Rodinson (1973 : 65-66) proposes an alternative classification of modes of production to "traditional" Marxist methods of successive modes of production. In Muslim societies of this period he speaks of agrarian and urban modes of production with regional variations. Amin (1974 : 137-142) prefers to speak of "Oriental and African formations" marked by : "(1) the predominance of a communal or tribute-paying mode of production (more or less evolved toward a feudal mode of production); (2) the existence of simple commodity relations in limited spheres; and (3) the existence of long distance trade relations." The predominance of one of these modes over the others determines the degree of development a society has reached. See also Terray (1972).
52. On this point, see: Turner (1974 : 171-184); Mandel (1971 : 116-139); Hobsbawm (in Marx and Engels, 1968b : Introduction); and Udy (1950). For general critical remarks see : Leitchtham (1973).
53. This conclusion is based on the evidence suggested by Goitein (1968 : 217-241), Rodinson (1973 : 13-117; 1970); and Ashtor (1976 : 109-114).
54. The presence of feudalism as a mode of production is a highly questionable issue. There are several references by Weber and others to "Arab Feudalism" and "Sultanism" but no convincing evidence. There is a general agreement among most leading authorities on the Middle East (e.g., Poliak, 1939 and Gibb and Bown, 1950) that Feudalism did not develop in this period. See : Rodinson (1973 : 58-68); Lambton (1969 : Chap. III); and Ashtor (1976 : Chap. II).
55. Al-Duri (1969 : 72) and Zubaida (1972) make reference to the widespread use

- a special position in the Islamic society of this period. Most historians attribute this position to the several pronouncements in Qur'an favouring commerce and trade, and to the fact that Islam originated in a trading community. Rodinson (1973 : 12-27 passim) provides a thorough investigation of this aspect of stratification. Later pronouncements by the classical writers such as Ikhwan Al-Şafa', Jahith, and al-Ghazali support this view. See: Al-Duri (1969). Ashtor (1976:33) draws attention to a "curious parallel" between the 'Ibadi Kharijite merchants' practices and Ideology, whom he portrays as "the protagonists of the worldwide Moslem trade," and those of the English Puritans of the 16th and 17th centuries.
47. Ibn Khaldun (*op. cit.*, p. 428) noted that most scholars are non-Arabs, and (p. 317) that Arabs, of all peoples, are least familiar with the crafts. See also Al-Duri (1969 : 66-72) on the position of the crafts in society.
48. See : Levy (1971 : 298). Zubaida (1972 : 327) also emphasizes this aspect and its impact on the class structure, "the political position and influence of rich merchants were purely individual and personal." It largely depended on patronage of members of the aristocracy, or what he calls "the military-bureaucratic classes."
49. Grunebaum (*op. cit.*, p. 212) remarks that "the will of the prince could transfer a subject from one class to another with the greatest speed." Ibn Khaldun (*op. cit.*, pp. 307-8) stated that only when the "dynasty" flourishes, those who enter the service of the ruler have certain capabilities. But when "disturbance" occurs, "many people of the low classes come up to fill high ranks, and many people of higher classes have to step down on that account."
50. Lapidus (1969 : 22) maintains that the trend toward centralized bureaucracy began with the triumph of the higher religions of Christianity and Zoroastrianism. Islam continued this

- sid era. In the first land category (State land), land was given to military commanders and noblemen in the form of ('Iqta), which translates into English as "feudal estate," for military and administrative purposes. See . Al-Duri (1969, pp. 60-62; 1974 : 39-71); Levy (1971 : 305-320, 407-450, especially p. 412 passim); Rabie (1970); and Lambton (1969)
42. Lapidus (1969 : 47-79) points out that one of the most distinctive features of urbanization in the Classical period was that the differences between urban settlements and rural settlements were less pronounced than what is commonly assumed. He states that there were important "resemblances between villages and towns in the class and occupational characteristics of population, in the facilities available, and in the functions served." He also notes that the distinction between city and village was jurisdictional more than geographic. Furthermore, the fact that many factories, particularly in the textile, sugar and paper industries were located in villages and small towns lends support to this claim.
 43. The analytical distinction between the level of strata formation and the level of class structure has been explained in the introduction.
 44. The general fluidity of the stratification system of the Classical period is conveyed in Grunebaum's (1971 : 211-2) statement: "Political influence, military power, administrative rank, wealth, birth and schooling, in every possible combination, strengthened or counteracted one another in assigning a given individual his place in society."
 45. According to professor Grunebaum (*op. cit.*) there is a close parallel between the ashrafs (the 'Alids) and the "European phenomenon of a class" like the aristocracy in the Third French Republic, "maintaining its social prerogative while withdrawing from the leading positions in the State." See also Zaidan (1967: Vol. II : 537-8) concerning the ashrafs.
 46. The merchants occupied

and "feudal knights" during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He (p. 114) goes as far as arguing that "many orientalists have overlooked the fact that for three hundred years (846 A. D., onward) the Near Eastern Bourgeoisie tried to resist the feudal lords and that the struggle between these two classes was one of the leit-motifs of oriental history."

3. Ibn Khaldun (op. cit., p. 305) defined rank and social position interchangeably as "the power enabling human beings to bring fellow men under their control and to have forceful superiority over them." This is not very dissimilar to Weber's definition, but unlike Weber Ibn Khaldun did not conceive of prestige of a rank as determined independently of social class position.
40. Ibn Khaldun (op. cit. pp. 318-9) ranked the crafts as follows: (a) necessary crafts, such as agriculture, architecture, carpentry, weaving and midwifery; (b) noble crafts, such as medicine, the art of writing (calligraphy), scholarship and the profession

of the sciences; and finally (c) artistic crafts. Levtchenko (1969:95) cites the classical writings concerning the transition from kin affiliation (nasab) to craft affiliation -- in which the craft's name assumed the form of a title.

41. The classical writers provided little systematic information on the development of the land reform in the Classical period. There were three types of land categories: (i) State land, (ii) Kharaj and "tax land" which comprised most of the conquered land; and (iii) Mawat land, which later became known as "ushr-unreclaimed" land. Alongside tax-paying communal villages, there were agricultural estates and privately owned land. The latter paid taxes directly to tax collectors (jubar). It seems that peasants with small holdings avoided paying heavy taxes or the extortion of tax collectors by seeking the patronage and, in some cases, registering the land to persons with high rank and influence. This was known as (ilja) which gave rise to large estates in the Abbas-

evidence. The ideal of birth continued to coexist and perhaps to counteract the possibilities of achieving wealth and political office, as we shall see. This should be pointed out to counter the argument of Islam's egalitarianism, as preached by official theology. On this point see: Rodinson (1973): and, Ashtor (1976: 23-26).

36. Ibn Khaldun (1969: 273-300) develops his theory of civilization from different combinations of these elements. The role played by profit as the result of labor and its supply in pre-capitalist business cycle should be of particular interest. On profit (pp. 273-280, 297-99, 304-312). On the pre-capitalist business cycle (pp. 284-289, 311-312).
37. In Ibn Khaldun's (*op. cit.*, pp. 133-136): "First: as we have stated, royal authority, by its very nature, must claim all the glory for itself Second: as we have said before, royal authority, by its very nature, requires luxury Third: as we have mentioned, royal authority, by

its very nature, requires tranquility. These are also the three major stages in the life cycle of the regime of power (or dynasty) leading to its "senility" and stagnation and the dispersal of the sedentary (pp. 136-154). For a brief description of the Islamic State bureaucracy see: Grunebaum (1971: 142-169) and Levy (1971: 271-354).

38. Ibn Khaldun (*op. cit.*, pp. 28-2). Sufficient evidence on this conflict is provided by Hitti (1953); Rodinson (1973, especially, p. 57); Goitein (1968); Al-Duri (1969); Lewis (1937); and Zubaida (1972, especially pp. 326-7). In fact neither Ibn al-Faqih nor Nizam al-Mulk, referred to earlier, assign merchants and craftsmen an honorable place in the social scale. See: Grunebaum (1971: 215). Al-Duri (1974: 258-264) documents the frequent instances of confiscation of property and fortune of merchants by wazirs and rulers. Ashtor (1976: 225-231) accounts briefly for the "bourgeoisie" resistance to the encroachment of princes

- (the second successor of the Prophet) time," and Plato's Republic. See also Watt (1961) and Grunebaum (1971, especially pp. 199-210).
30. Also quoted by Zaidan 1967. It is really surprising how this description agrees, even in matters of terminology, with the classification of Arab society by the modern writer Van Nieuwenhuijze (1965) as composed of the three groups; top, élites of power and culture; "in between," those who are identified with the élites; "bottom, or a shapeless subservient mass."
 31. Resa'il, Vol. I, p. 221 in the original Arabic (my translation). Also cited by Al-Duri (1969: 151). It should be mentioned here that Ikhwan al-Şafa' were a secret learned society which flourished in the 10th century. It was itself highly st. itified.
 32. Quoted from Al-Maqrīzī's essay: **Ighathet Al-'Ūmah Bikeshf Al-Ghūmah**, written about 1405 A.D., published in Cairo by: Lejnet Al-Te'lif wel Terjemh wel Nashr, 1940 ed., pp. 43, 72-75 (my translation).
 33. Cited by Levy (1971: 69). For a more detailed summary of a similar but earlier treatise by a Persian nobleman, Ibn al Maqaffa' (The Book of Companions), see Goitein (1968: 150-167). According to Goitein (p. 164), this 8th century writer was the first to argue for the secularization of the State.
 34. For a summary of these listings of classes (ṭabaqat) see: Zaidan (1967: Vol. II, especially pp. 525-571). He (Vol. I: 386-417) also provides some information concerning the income and salaries of various social strata derived from classical sources. On the question of income and salaries of social strata see also Ashtor (1976: 133-160).
 35. Professor Levy (**Ibid**) declares that by abolishing the ideal of birth "the struggle for equality had been won." What he meant, I presume, is "equality" of achievement in terms of wealth and political office. This does not quite square with the

- rriors and "non-Arab working classes" was from the outset the major problem of the caliphate.
27. The major sub-groupings of the new Muslim aristocracy were: Muhajirun, Ansar, Hashimite Ashraf who were kinsmen of the Prophet, and who were the descendents of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law and his fourth successor. Among the mawali the previous nobility of Persia (i.e., dihqans) retained some of their past status and wealth, and the old craftsmen who were independent of the peasantry. See Hitti (1953). See also Al-Balathuri (1970); Tabari's Annals; and Levy (1971: 80).
 28. Ibn-Khaldun's use of the term "forced labor" indicates that he had in mind the type of labor performed for a man of rank to seek his favor or protection. Slaves were acquired regardless of their race in that period, but African slaves in particular were given a very inferior status to other Muslims; to the extent that Jahith wrote a major treatise in their defense: "The Book of the Superiority (Fakhr) of the Blacks over the Whites." Between 869-883 A.D. a major slave revolt took place in Southern Iraq (Thowrat Al-Zindj) as a consequence of this situation. For a brief treatment of slavery in Islam, see Levy (1971: 72-88).
 29. Goitein (1968: 149-154) and Levy (1971: 67-72) draw attention to the parallel development of the stratification system of the 9th century Arab society and that of the pre-Islamic Persia. This parallel is important to keep in mind, provided that certain structural discontinuities, especially changes in the structure of the land regime, are recognized. The Persian dihqans maintained their power and influence, before they were integrated into the merchant class, by acting merely as agents in the tax collection. Goitein, in an interesting footnote, observes the similarity between the "original Muslim State, as it was formed approximately in 'Omar's

- vaguely of the emergence of what he calls "Muslim Feudalism," in this period. See also Gibb (1955).
24. The extent of the importance of the land-tax (kharaj) to the public treasury can be seen from the details provided by Abu Yūsuf, Balathuri, and Maqrizī. Abu Yūsuf who dealt extensively with Kharaj reported that in the 'Umayyād regime the land tax reached 40% and even 45% of the produce on agricultural land owned by Mawālī. Maqrizī also provides detailed information on the method of tax collection and the distinction between tribute (jiz-yeh) and kharaj. See also Balathuri (Al-Balathuri 1970, pp. 185-205 in the original Arabic). Ashtor (1976: 58-70), contrary to the claims accepted by many classical historians, maintains that an additional factor, that of the decrease in the size of land under cultivation beginning in late 8th century had a greater impact on the economy. The writings of Maqrizi (15th century) could be interpreted to support this view.
25. Two relatively stable regimes lasted only briefly in this stage. The onite-ismā'ili sectarians instituted a rival caliphate in Egypt and North Africa between 909-1171 A.D. and the Turkish Seljūqid dynasty in Iraq, Persia and part of Turkey in the years 1040-1140. The disintegration of the Seljūqid rule was a prelude to the incipient Ottoman Empire. See: Lewis (1963), and Hitti (1953). See also Ashtor (1976: 121 passim) who links the process of fragmentation to the Zindi revolt, large-scale unemployment, and growth of the propertied classes.
26. Both Al-Balathuri (1970) and Abu Yūsuf mention that this distinction was originally introduced by Omar (the second successor of the prophet) among Muslims according to their date of conversion and to their contribution to Islam. See: Al-Duri (1969: 16); and Grunetbaum (1971: 177-198). Ashtor (1976:22-23) who states that the antagonism between Arab war-

ptive and achievement principles". They continue: "Some ascriptive features of the system may be regarded as vestiges of an earlier epoch (to be extrapolated as rapidly as possible)". The polarity between description — achievement suggested by the Functionalists does not seem to be realistic in any concrete sense

19. On the principle of periodization, see Balibar (in Althusser and Balibar, 1972: 208-211); and Mead (1970: 108-112, especially pp. 213-277); and Anderson (1971: ch. 10: 51).
20. The main body of research for this and the following sections is included in Al-Naqeb (1976: Chap. 3).
21. For a detailed information on the formative stages of the Islamic Empire see Watt (1961); and Rodinson (1971, especially chapter six on the origins of Islamic State). Hitti (1953) and Brockelmann (1979) provide a general historical sweep of the development of Arab societies. For bibliographic sources in this section, see: Sauvaget

(1964). Most works cited on the classical period were based on primary classical sources such as the great historians of the period; Balathuri, Tabari, and Mas'udi; the theologian Abu Talib Al-Makki, the geographers — travellers Ibn al-Faqih, Ibn Battuta and Maqdisi; as well as literary and other sources such as Maqrizi, Asfahani, Abu Yūsuf (the judge), Jahith, Mas'udi, Yāqūt, Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Sa'd. Extensive references to Ibn Khaldun will be found in the text. Sources with particular significance will be referred to later on.

22. Al-Duri adds a fifth "and final stage before the modern era" which comprises the Ottoman rule, in which, he suggests, a form of "military feudalism" was established.
23. On this point see Watt's (1961) excellent treatment. The emergence of the Muslim State and the bureaucratization of government in Islamic society were treated by Goitein (1968: 148-196) in two important papers. Goitein (1968: 159) speaks very

to Europe — is provided by Professor Issawi (quoted by Polk and Chambers, 1968: 5-6). In order to find the counterpart of the European bourgeoisie in the 19th century Middle East, Issawi proceeds by defining the bourgeoisie in Europe as follows: "They were the non-landlords, the non-peasants, the non-industrial workers. They were the people whose resources stemmed from trade and finance and, at a later date, from industry. In the Middle East the group which fits closest to this definition of bourgeoisie consisted throughout the nineteenth century mainly of foreigners."

16. This writer takes the extreme position that the concept of stratification is not applicable to Middle Eastern societies. His whole argument — which is not supported by evidence — rests on the vague notion that the Middle East cannot be compared to the "typical situation in Europe" since social categories in the former are "articulated by convergence" and not by "integra-

tion" as in the latter. By this he means convergence of the village, the town, and the tribe — each with a distinct social structure and mode of rating categories not primarily based on occupation. The thesis of convergence vs. articulation is a common Functionalist theme which finds its origin in Durkheim.

17. The present conceptual and methodological schemes are derived from the author's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Al-Naqeeb, 1976: Chapt. 2).
18. In Labrousse's (1974:93) terminology, the historical sources of upper class stability are a combination of family, function and fortune, which represent the triune symbols of the superiority of the bourgeoisie. Blau and Duncan (1967:163-164) in their most definitive work to date, on the American occupational structure were well aware of the fact that when "the stratification system of any moderately large and complex society is described, it is seen to involve both ascrip-

- class, status group, and power) distinction."
12. See Marx and Engels (1969, I : 398-487; III : 306-334); and Lenin (1970, I : 289-329). For a brief critical treatment of the Marxian view of State bureaucracy, see Lefort (1974 : 35 passim).
 13. For a critical evaluation of the contributions of Marx and Weber to the analysis of authority in general, see : Giddens (1971 : 224-242); Lopreato and Hazelrigg (1972 : 88-89); and Lefort (1974).
 14. The Weberians are induced by the concept of "Patrimonialism" to think of "Islamic society" and "Islamic State" as representing a monolithic religio-cultural mode to be contrasted with the model of European Feudalism, cf., Geertz (in Hagen, 1962 : 385-407); Gellner (1963); and Fallers (1973). Turner (1974 : 173), although he criticized Weber for failing "to accurately periodize Islamic history," himself committed the same error. Whereas to those Marxists who subscribe to rigid and successive modes of production, the Asiatic mode of production appears to be an indefinite transitional stage to Capitalism. See Wittfogel (1957); Godolier (1965); and Varga, among others cited by Tarabishi (1972). Wittfogel (1957) and more recently Sa'ad (1974a, 1974b, 1978) considers the Ottoman empire in the 18th century, ancient China, as well as Pharaohs' Egypt as classical examples of the Asiatic type. Mandel (1971 : 116-139) and Eric Hobsbawm in his introduction to Marx's *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, make the distinction between the analytical and chronological purposes of the construct : Asiatic mode of production. The objections which we have raised concerning the usefulness of these two concepts of Patrimonialism and the Asiatic Mode were repeatedly made earlier by Rodinson (1973) and Anderson (1974 : 462-549, especially pp. 496 passim). See : Hindess and Hirst (1975) for a recent treatment of this concept.
 15. An illustration of this method of negative elimination — in this case applied

linked with income, so wealth or property ownership and if the wealthy family's offspring are more likely to be wealthy than are offspring of a poor family.¹¹ Affluence is not explained by chance alone but rather by cumulative effects generated by the structure of wealth stratification (Bourdieu, 1989).

1. This point is well stated by Tudin and Plotnicov (1970: 3-4) which runs contrary to a large body of anthropological literature.
See : Blau and Duncan (1967: 6 *passim*); Hodge, Geigel and Rossi (1966: 322 *passim*). See also, Edwards (1980); North, Hatt (1960); Bierstedt (1967); Duskoiff (1971); and Al-Masheeb (1973).
2. The functionalist "theory" of stratification has been the center of debate for three decades since it was stated by Davis and Moore (1945) and Parsons. For a summary, see : Tumin (1953); Wright (1956); Hazerligg (1972), and Tudin and Plotnicov (1970). Bottomore (1971: 62) seems to dismiss the func-

- [illegible]

**Preliminary Studies in Social
Stratification in Arab countries**

FOOT NOTES

1. See for example: Glass (1954); Bendix and Lipset (1957, 1966); Posoién (1962); Leeds (1967); Jackson (1968); Heller (1969); Bottomore (1971); Parkin (1971); Thielbar and Feldman (1972); Loppreato and Lewis (1974); and Rossides (1976).
2. Some important research papers on comparative stratification are contained in the following: Hodge, Thierman and Rossi (1966); Hodge, Seigel and Rossi (1966); Smelser and Lipset (1966); Bavelle (1970); Plotnikov and Tudin (1970); Baum and Plotnikov (1970); Fallers (1973); Kael (1974); and Thernstrom (1975).
3. Arab countries of the Near East include Egypt, Iraq, and the geopolitical regions of Syria and Arabia. They are considered together on the assumption that the stratification system of these countries displays "Functional association" resulting from common history. On the question of functional association, See, Naroll (1968 : 258-262).
4. The collections of recent studies published by Polk and Chambers (1968) and Cook (1970) clearly illustrate these controversies.
5. By history we mean the cumulative effects of the persistence of stratification which gives rise to a certain structure or pattern manifested in the inter-temporal predictability of individual and group positions. As such the historical dimension of stratification transcends the current practice of defining the persistence of stratification as an intergenerational predictability judged against some chance occurrence. To give an example, a society is said to be stra-

abandoning of [this strict line of separating the two classes] as the main cause of the empire's decline" (Inalcik, 1975 : 69). In the national struggle against the colonial powers which ensued after WW I, the nationalist leaders who came into power were not only the national representatives but also a class in themselves, recruiting freely from the circulating élites and developing corporate interests at the same time.

Is it then a one class system in which the ruling class has actively been preventing the various social strata of the population from developing into a self-conscious class with coherent ideologies and demands ? Why were the urban communities and the peasantry left helplessly exposed to the marauding Beduins and tribesmen freely pillaging and plundering until the

very recent past?

Finally, our preliminary studies indicate that until the 1950's — when the military regimes made their appearance by usurping the State institutions — the structure of stratification in the Near Eastern Arab countries was still unstable. In other words, the process of transition into capitalism in those countries has not reached its culmination. But one may wonder as to what form of capitalism those countries are transitioning into ? Were the military regimes of the 1950's and 1960's a necessary stage in this transition ? ¹⁰⁶ The phrase "State capitalism" which characterizes military regimes is more a universal form of underdevelopment than a new social system — a variant of capitalism.

riods. For this reason a clear and thorough understanding of the process of stratification arising in a particular division of labor, and of the workings of the economic and political systems and of the cultural milieu, are prerequisites for accurate occupational classification. But some researchers are clearly in error when they manipulate their historical data to achieve equivalence in occupational designations in different periods. Such equivalence is not necessarily a prerequisite for comparability of occupational structures.

(8)

The social strata derived in the manner we have devised are not merely passive occupational and status groups. They are dynamic concrete social groupings which at times achieved awareness of stratum position and even possessed a clear ideology. Their dynamic features have often been displayed by common cleavages and frequent polarization, e.g., Arabs vs. mawali, oligarchy vs. aristocracy-in-power, "ra'eya" vs. "askeri", landlords — oligarchy vs. middle and laboring strata, or simply rich vs. poor etc.

In figure 1, we have identified

at least five major social strata clearly delineated by (overlapping of) status and occupational determinants. But can we speak of social classes in the Near East? How many classes? According to Wallerstein (1974 : 351) it is by definition not possible to have more than two self-conscious classes. He argues that "to say that there cannot be three or more classes is not however to say that there are always two. There may be none, though this is rare and transitional. There may be one, and this is most common. There may be two, and this is most explosive."

In the Near East the ruling stratum has always been the national class which was not only self-conscious but also perceived in definite terms "the geographical scope of its self-definition (Wallerstein, 1975 : 351).¹⁰⁵ In the Classical period, as El-Kodsy (1970 : 16) put it, "the ruling class was the cement that bound the whole (society) together."

The Ottomans, in the Intermediate period, divided the population of the empire into the military class and the great mass of the "re'âyâ." "The Ottoman writers of the early seventeenth century regarded the

the brunt of the structural discontinuities brought about by the on-coming of the Modern period and became a source of social mobility in both directions: upward and downward. Needless to say, the composition of the middle stratum in the Modern period has been completely transformed due to the relative spread of literacy and to the changes in the functions of bureaucracy and in the structure of the economy.

(5)

The modern strata commonly known as the self-employed, other than the oligarchy, have their origins in the small merchants (ba'at), the skilled craftsmen and artisans in the urban centers, and the peasants in the countryside. The social history of these strata in the Near East is most interesting and richly documented. They have been involved in almost all of the early urban uprisings and revolutions. They have been the main backbone of popular rebellions which are sectarian overtones of the popular culture which incorporated many pre-Islamic customs.

(6)

It may be broadly said that the lower stratum of Near Eastern

Arab countries encompasses the laboring groups which include an incredible variety of groups and a very large section of the population: the common laborers, the wage-workers, the poor and the landless peasants, and the slave laborers. These sub-strata have very little resemblance to the modern industrial proletariat, and there are no legitimate reasons to compare the two. But the laboring stratum has been the truly exploited class in the Near Eastern countries.

An appendage to this stratum may include the urban poor and the sub-urban ones, an unclassifiable, such as the *bayman*, *Al-Shuttar*, and *Al-salikh*. They are unclassifiable because they either do not have a particular occupation or craft or have no visible source of income, or of regular means of earning a living, whichever one case may be.

Many scholars have stated that (Lundström, 1934; Hansen and Lohat, 1934; Lundström in Rowney and Graham, 1941; Katz, 1972, and Fleming, 1980) occupational designations do not convey the same meaning in different historical pe-

(3)

The second stratum in the Arab countries of the Near East consisted of the oligarchy and latifundia groups. The oligarchy was an oligarchy of finance, of commerce and industry, commonly referred to as Al-Tujjar or merchants. The latifundists were a group of large landowners who attained possession, in contrast to ownership (private property) of the land, by various means; e.g., 'iqta', 'ilja', muqāsama, muqata'ah, timar holding, 'iltizam, etc. The turning point in the development of this group was the conversion of miri land into private property, represented by the tapu title in the mid-15th century.

The reason for combining the oligarchy and latifundia into one class is that these two groups have been urban-based throughout their long history. The activities of both groups contributed in the Classical period to the growth of the dynamic, predominantly cash capitalistic — as distinct from the capitalist sector. With the failure of Arab mercantilism and the return to an agrarian economy in the Intermediate period, this stratum lost in status and

in wealth for the bureaucratic officials of the askeri stratum, only to emerge in the Modern period as the ruling class for the first time, but under the tutelage of the colonial administration.

(4)

The middle stratum in the Near Eastern socio-economic and cultural set-up is composed of the bureaucratic officials, the 'ulama, the qadis and the scholars, i.e., the literate social groups. In the course of the Classical period, these groups attained a certain measure of mobility closure, and a status and influence far greater than their actual social standing entitled them to. The classical writers repeatedly allude to this stratum as having converted its function into fortune²⁰⁰

As the other social groups of the middle stratum were relegated in social status and wealth to a lower position in the Intermediate period, only the 'ulama survived and maintained their high position partly through their control over the waqf institution. Gradually they merged with the oligarchy and latifundia. The middle stratum of the Intermediate period bore

tion that the structure of this ruling class is characterized by alternating asker and sultans in an endless repetitive succession of regimes.

It is perhaps more appropriate to think of the ruling class (being a national class less affected by regional or tribal variations) as composed of the rulers who belonged to the aristocracy and/or to the asker (or military generals). In fact, these two groups (i.e., the aristocracy and the military generals) had been inseparable throughout the Classical and the Intermediate periods. Every regime (or dynasty in Ibn Khaldun's terminology), such as the 'Umayyads, the Abbasids, the Seljuqids, the Fatimids, the Mamluks, and the Ottomans, developed its own aristocracy in power.

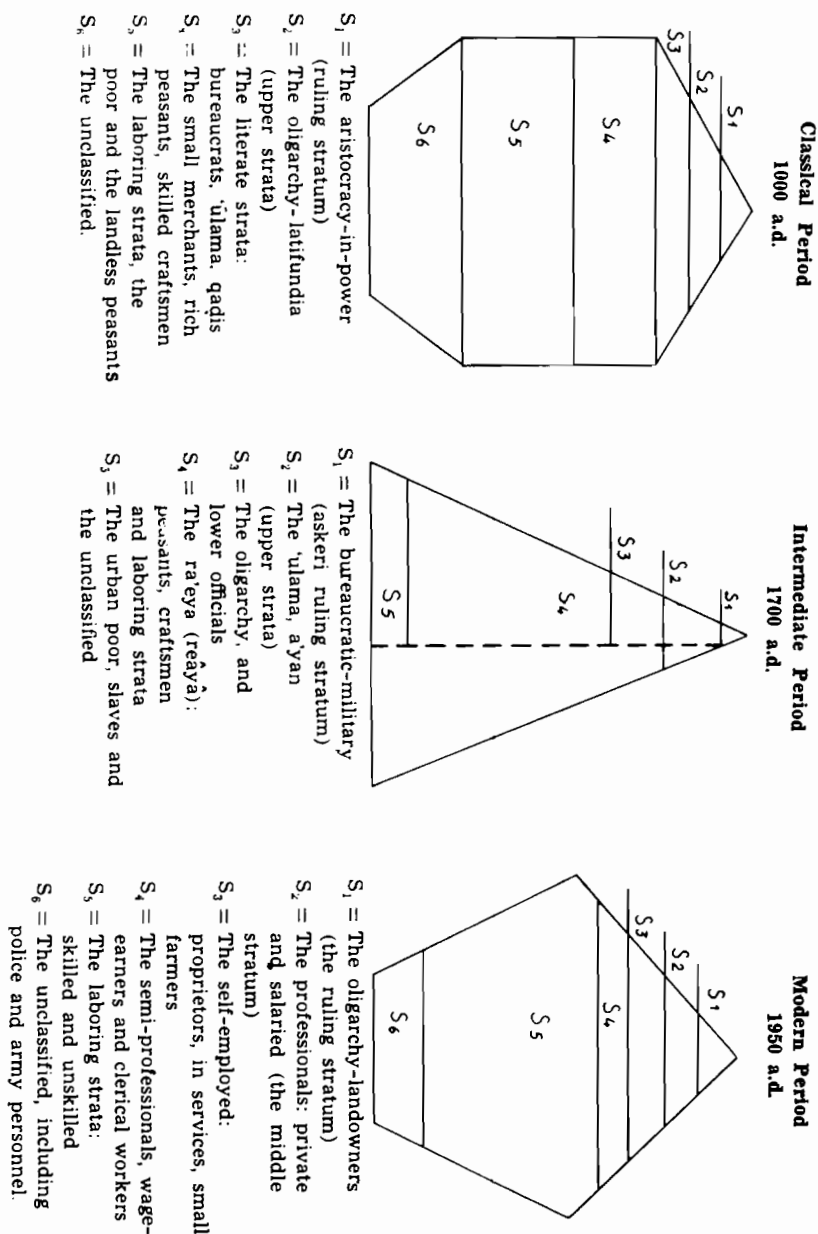
It was characteristic of this class — as a class and not as the person of the ruler, however absolutist or despotic the regime may have been — to hold an effective monopoly of power and authority in society. In terms of structural mobility, there were glaring differences between the ruling classes of the three major historical periods; differences in terms of

methods of recruitment into, composition and legitimation of the aristocracy-in-power.

The aristocracy-in-power of the Classical period was mixed in terms of composition. Its members entered into competition with merchants and landowners; and princes, as Ibn Khaldun noted, became landowners and carried on commercial activities. In the Intermediate period the aristocracy-in-power was not only foreign in origin, it was also purely bureaucratic and ascriptive. For this reason the ruling class of the Classical period was relegated to second position with sayyeds and ashrafs, being prestige groups, remaining transitional in character.

It was not until the establishment of the colonial administration and the post-Tanzimat upheavals that the effective monopoly of power of the traditional ruling class was broken. And by then the a'yans and the oligarchy were in the ascendance, emerging as the ruling class, forging an alliance not of an aristocracy-in-power, but of feudalists, industrialists and merchants, compradorial by function.

FIGURE 1.
Economic Expansion And Decline (Structural Mobility) And Changing Population Composition
In The Three Historical Periods



rent indefinite cultural continuity, there were structural discontinuities of sufficient magnitude to warrant a proper periodization of Near Eastern history with regard to social stratification.

It is not our intention to enter the debate concerning the conventional concepts of Asia-tism, Patrimonialism and Feudalism. But the re-examination of the information made available by recent research demonstrates convincingly that such concepts are of limited applicability to Near Eastern countries, at least in the last twelve centuries.

This conclusion is of utmost importance to social stratification, for without such concepts (and the more general category of the mode of production), there can be no theory of the social division of labor (i.e., theory of the abstract relations of production). And without such a theory of the basis of stratification, social strata become merely a conglomeration of social groups arbitrarily classified in a descriptive discourse.

Is a theoretical synthesis possible? Rodinson (1973) and

Amin (1974) do provide an outline of a synthesis aimed at retaining the category of the mode of production as applied to Near East and African societies, but their claims have yet to be put to the test. It has been made quite evident, however, that approaching the Near East with preconceived, unqualified concepts, can at times be a dangerously misleading enterprise indeed (cf., Eisenstadt, 1973; and Said, 1978).

Braudel (1973 : vol. 1, p. 738) once remarked, "[after] all, we historians are forever using terms we have invented ourselves, **feudalism, bourgeoisie, capitalism**, without always keeping an exact record of the disparate realities such terms may cover in different centuries."

(2)

Our preliminary studies are summarized in figure 1.¹⁰² They reveal that the understanding of the structure of the ruling class (and its substrata) holds an important key to the understanding of the working of the Near Eastern stratification system. Our preliminary studies also reveal that it is of little value to retain the simplistic no-

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

(1)

There is no doubt that many of the questions asked by the modern investigator concerning issues in the social and economic history of the Near East remain unanswered. Unfortunately, this cannot be attributed only to paucity of information or dearth of data. Our preliminary studies of social stratification in Near Eastern Arab countries are intended to raise specific, more or less precise questions which are of particular interest to sociologists, related more to theoretical analysis than to general history.

What we have set out to accomplish can be summed up as follows :

- (1) to sketch out the historical development of the contemporary social stratification

system in the Near Eastern Arab countries, for the purpose of ordering and analyzing information made available by recent research.

- (2) to extricate the concept of structural mobility from the overburdened Western empiricism and in this way place social strata as concrete social groupings against their essential historical background; i.e., their political, economic, and cultural moorings¹⁰⁰
- (3) to suggest a method for utilizing, comparatively, the concept of structural mobility over long periods of history, to show that the "statis thesis", which claims that Asian societies have no history, is an oversimplified misconception¹⁰¹. That, in fact, beneath the appa-

It is important to note that the rural strata of those countries have played a very significant political role in the first half of this century. (Fisher, 1955; abd Antoun and Harik, 1972).

The general patterns of social stratification in the Near Eastern countries have experienced major modifications during the upheavalsof the process of transformation taking place since the end of WW II. Two aspects

of the process of transformation are of particular interest from the point of view of stratification : (1) the massive bureaucratization of society prior to (or without) industrialization; and (2) the emergence of military regimes in the major agricultural countries vs. the non-agricultural countries. A systematic study of structural mobility, we anticipate, might reveal the magnitude of these two aspects in the system of social stratification.

peasants and craftsmen become proletarians in the strict sense; they rather remain semi-proletarians and a semi-pauper army of reserve labor. The proliferation of the non-proletariat mass of workers tends to cluster around the industrial proletariat proper and hence tend to keep the proletariat small.

Gordon and Fridman further report that the main features of the deformation of the working class are : (1) High concentrations in certain enterprises and in certain regions (urban); (2) relatively homogenous productivity (no differentiation of skills); (3) long-term retention of a variety of ties with the village, either for economic reasons or because of the recentness of migration ; and (4) these peculiarities continued after national independence.

The stratification system in the countryside has been studied more extensively by anthropologists. They have established the claim that the main determinants of stratification are: (a) ownership / non-ownership of land, and (b) the occupational tasks performed. These two determinants of stratification have been shown to be fairly stable across regions and over time.⁹⁷

Given these determinants, we are inclined to classify the peasantry as : (a) the large-scale landowners who were more likely to be the urban oligarchy and the tribal feudalists up to the 1950's; (b) the rich peasants of moderately - sized land plots, and (c) the poor and landless peasants (e.g., Hussein, 1973 : 45). The criteria for establishing cutting points along the size of land continuum have not always been precise or sufficiently justified.

There are, to be sure, certain variations in this pattern of stratification. One variation, reported by many anthropologists, is associated with determining the position of social groups whose livelihood is not derived from the land, such as the sayyeds who are a prestige group in certain regions, the bureaucrats, the professionals, and the shopkeepers and craftsmen.⁹⁸ Furthermore, transitional variables, such as social affiliation, have been reported to be either reinforcing, or at times cross-cutting the occupational determinants of stratification.⁹⁹

The main conclusion, however, is that there are gross similarities in the order of ranking social groups in the rural population of all Arab countries.

TABLE No. 5

IMAGES OF THE CLASS STRUCTURE IN MIDDLE EASTERN SOCIETIES

	Halpern (1963: 41-112)	Berger 1964: 246-52)	Bill (1979: 127-86)	Levy (1986: 207-22)
UPPER CLASSES	—Kings (aristocracy) —Landlords —Traditional Bourgeoisie	—Big Landowners —Bankers and Industrialists —Highest government and military Leaders	—Traditional Ruling Class —Ruling Families —Tribal Nobility —Landowners —Military Elites	—Landowners —Large-Scale Merchants —Industrialists —Entrepreneurs —Large-Scale (contractors)
MIDDLE CLASSES	—Salaries Classes —Technocrats —Military Politicians —Administrators	—Higher Civil Servants and Army Officers —Independent Professionals —Self-Employed Small Merchants and Manufacturers	—Traditional Middle Classes: —Bureaucratic —Clerical —Merchants —Businessmen	—Professionals —Religious Leaders —Civil Servants —Army Officers —Artisans and Tradesmen
LOWER CLASSES	—Peasantry —Artisans and Skilled Workers —Wage-Workers —Landless Labourers	—Lower Professionals —Shopkeepers —Skilled Workers —Peasants, Labourers and Service Workers	—Lower Classes: —Peasants —Nomads —Workers	—Wage-earners —Unskilled Workers —Landless Peasants (No Fixed Livelihood)

Hasan (1970 : 363 - 366) portrays the occupational structure of Iraq as composed of two major categories of occupations : urban and rural. According to the 1957 census, the rural category, or the agricultural sector, "consists of two principal classes : (a) tribal and urban landowners (3,360 persons); and (b) the class of landless and poor peasants (164,640 persons).

Hasan conceives of the industrial (urban) sector in Iraq as consisting of two main classes: the industrial class, and the working class numbering 442,000 persons. He arrives at this estimate by adding up all the workers in transport and communication, and in private and public activities. Accordingly, the size of the industrial sector in Iraq has grown from 7% of the labor force in 1947 to 15% in 1957. A third sector—commerce and trade and public services (government employed) — consists of the following selected occupational groups : (a) 8,600 persons "of the business class;" (b) 58,000 persons working on their own account or self-employed; (c) 39,000 working in the professions and technical services.

The reliability of estimates of

this type are not particularly useful for making inferences concerning social stratification. In addition to the reliability problem there is, in my opinion, the more serious problem of utilizing conventional labels, such as bourgeoisie, middle class, and proletariat, without, as is usually the case, specifying what precisely is meant by these labels or how they are derived. The outcome of fixing conventional labels is most often mere listings of such labels with no indications as to the distinctive structural and cultural features of occupational groups thus labelled. The following table (no. 5) based on information derived from four authors, is given here as an illustration of this problematic approach.

Conventional labels, furthermore, do tend to obscure the peculiar features of working classes in underdeveloped countries. Gordon and Fridman (1963), who made an extensive study of the working classes in India and Egypt, point out that the major factor in the "distortion" of the development of Western type proletariat could be attributed to colonial conditions. They (1963:47-57), found that very few economically ruined

TABLE No. 3
URBAN MIDDLE CLASS IN EGYPT, 1947

Occupation	Number	Percent of Middle Class	Percent of Labour Force
Merchants	254,388	51	3.00
Chief Clerks and Agents	127,876	26	1.51
Professionals	94,339	19	1.11
Businessmen and Clerks	22,561	4	0.27
Total :	499, 164	100	5.89

TABLE No: 4
URBAN MIDDLE CLASS
OCCUPATION IN EGYPT, 1957

Occupation	Number of Persons	Percent of Force
Professional and Technical	171,000	2.4
Managerial	65,000	0.9
Clerical	193,000	2.8
Total	429,000	6.1

Source : Morroe Berger (1964). **The Arab world today** New York: Anchor Books (Doubleday), pp. 252,254.

precise estimates, however, is to give some idea about the configurations of the occupational

structure of the "most" developed country of the Near East, i.e., Egypt.

TABLE No: 2
EGYPTIAN OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE IN THE 1950'S :
MAIN OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AS PERCENTAGES
OF THE TOTAL POPULATION, AND AVERAGE OF
PER-CAPITA INCOME

	Total Population (Thousands)	Total Population (Percent)	Average Per-Capita Income (Egypt pounds)
I. URBAN CATEGORIES:			
(i) Working Class	790	10	60.8
(ii) Unskilled and sub-proletariat	1,520	19	29.4
(iii) Unemployed	2,983	37	
(iv) Petty-Bourgeoisie			
-Minor Employees	1,117	14	105.6
-Traditional Entrepreneurs	736	9	127.7
(v) Cadres (Professionals)	614	8	133.5
(vi) Big Bourgeoisie	240	3	845.8
TOTAL URBAN	8,000	100	73.4
II. RURAL CATEGORIES:			
(vii) Landless Peasants and Owners of a Fraction of Feddan	15,075	79	4.8
(viii) Semi-Rich and Rich Peasants	3,725	20	57.1
(ix) Big Landowners (20 Feddans or more)	150	1	773.3
TOTAL RURAL	18,950	100	17.1

Source: Mahmoud Hussein (1973). *class conflict in Egypt: 1945-1970*.
New York: Monthly Review Press, p. 45.

OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION AND THE COMPOSITION OF VARIOUS STRATA

So far we have confined ourselves to illustrating the emergence of the new pattern of stratification through the process of structural mobility. It can be deduced that alongside the criteria of status and wealth, educational attainment which is necessary for modern skills (viz-a-viz traditional skills) has entered as a major factor into the formation of a non-manual stratum differentiated primarily by such skills. As to how the occupational structure can be interpreted with regard to social stratification, there is yet no clear answer.

Large scale empirical studies have never been undertaken to answer this question, and the official ideology, whether religious or political, has denied the existence of strata and classes. This obviously does not provide a favorable climate for empirical research.⁹⁴ Most of the data relevant to stratification have been, in the majority of cases, derived indirectly from other sources or by manipulation of the official census figures.⁹⁵

The latter method has been utilized by Hussein (1973:44 passim) to construct the following Table (No. 2) which depicts the Egyptian occupational structure in the 1950's. It is very difficult to draw any conclusion from Hussein's figures, since he does not define his occupational categories. Berger (1964:251-255), on the other hand, presents estimates of the Egyptian urban middle class between 1947 and 1957 (Tables 3 and 4). He defines the middle class as encompassing "(1) those self-employed merchants and small manufacturers whose income and influence are not great enough to place them among the really powerful men in political or economic life; and (2) a more mixed group including such independent professionals as doctors and lawyers, employed managers, technicians, and administrative workers such as clerks and bureau chiefs in the civil service." Berger's definition of middle class occupations is rather imprecise and subjective. The purpose of presenting these im-

The majority of the so-called new middle classes is recruited from the lower strata of the previous structure, of whom Halpern (1963 : 52) speaks thus : "Leadership in all areas of the Middle East life is increasingly being seized by a class of men inspired by non-traditional knowledge, and it is being clustered around a core of salaried civilian and military politicians, organizers, administrators, and experts." The role this stratum is supposed to play in the process of development has been subject to controversy and dispute, particularly with regard to the military.⁹³

A more plausible explanation of the role of the middle class civilian-military alliance involves the problem of the failure of Arab countries to industrialize, to extricate themselves from the state of external dependence and from the state of po-

litical polarization between the ruling alliance of landowning-commercial strata and the rest of the population. The shift toward the public sector and the military takeover in the fifties are viewed as entrusting the extension of the capitalist sector to the State bureaucracy and the stratum in control of it, i.e., the military-technocracy, labelled by some writers as "State bourgeoisie" (Abdel - Malek, 1968; Hussein, 1973; and Khafaji, 1974, 1979).

In the Arab countries the working class proper (i.e. proletariat) in the modern sense is still relatively small, and the structure of this small sector of the working class exhibits certain features peculiar to underdeveloped countries. That the socio-economic origin of the working class is the traditional craftsmen and displaced peasantry is not doubted or disputed by most writers.

managerial skills to man the private and public bureaucracies. Beginning with the 1930's, compulsory universal education was introduced to fulfill this function and in the process, education became a major determinant of social stratification.⁹²

At first, the emergence of social groupings with Western technical skills and training created a conflict between those with traditional skills and the modern managers, civil servants, doctors, lawyers, and engineers, etc. (Berger, 1964 : 258-262; Gulick and Abu-Lughod in Lapidus, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-187). Artisans, religious functionaries ('ulama) and small tradesmen who belonged to the former groups suffered the most. For instance, a survey conducted by the Mandatory Government in Syria shows that between 1913 and 1937 the number of artisans in Syria, which was an important center of traditional handicrafts, declined from 110,673 to 71,824. It shows further that this decline was more pronounced in small cities than in large urban centers (quoted by Baer, 1966 : 213). At the same time modern industry did not develop at a comparable rate.

In the absence of empirical

data, the socio-economic origin of the so-called modern middle class may be tentatively traced to the 'ulama and the land-owning commercial sub-strata. In the first place, the position of the 'ulama was seriously undermined when the iltizam or tax-farming was abolished. The introduction of Western education which came soon afterwards, reduced their social importance in the cultural life of the society. Large numbers of people with modern education entered government service and began to attain high social status (Baer, 1962 : 214-8).

Secondly, a small section of the so-called middle classes came from the landowner-commercial strata. The enormous expansion of the modern bureaucracies in the Arab countries in the fifties, and the general economic shift to the public sector mentioned earlier have drawn some of the upper and ruling strata into the upper reaches of civil service. This is especially true of the late fifties in Egypt, concerning which era Professor Berque (1965) remarks : "L'entrepreneur du moment, c'est l'activité bureaucratique."

ings to the wealthy city notables. In such cases the peasants continued to exist as tenants of the emerging stratum of big landowners.⁸⁸ As the colonial-administrations of the Arab countries retained the Ottoman Land Code and encouraged the transfer of State land to private ownership, the two groups of tribal sheikhs and urban-based notables became a large land-owning class and wielded political power as community leaders and national representatives.⁹⁰

By the 1950's the notables (merchants, ashrafs and tribal sheikhs) appeared as the ruling political bloc with a consolidated economic interest. Top civil servants, military élites, and professionals were recruited from these notables. The extent of their landholdings was by this time enormous. Warriner (1966:77) reports that the landlords who acquired land in this way were "rarely farmers and may not even visit the villages they owned. In Dier ez Zor, for example, on the Euphrates, one family is said to own thirty-two villages."

In Egypt, 1.4% of landlords owned over 50% of the cultivated land in 1936 (Hershlag, *op. cit.*, p. 216, Table XXVII). In the

early fifties only 1% of the rural population owned 20 feddans and over (Hussein, 1973: 44-49). In Iraq, 3% of the population owned two-thirds of the agricultural area, according to the 1958 census (Hasan, 1970: 362).⁹¹

The development of modern bureaucratic system in Arab countries was associated with three major trends which were made necessary by the prevailing socio-economic conditions. These trends were summarized by Issawi (1966: 505-511) as three main shifts in the economic power: (a) from foreigners to nationals; (b) from the landed interest to the industrial, financial, commercial and managerial interests; and (c) from the private sector to the State, i.e., public sector. The role played by the nationalist movements in these shifts is significant, but its relevance is beyond the scope of the present investigation.

What these shifts entailed for the stratification system is related to two phenomena: the emergence of the so-called middle classes, and the "proletarianization" of the peasantry. The growth of both the private and public sectors required trained professionals with technical and

division of labor, legitimately derived from the analysis of the

distinctive occupational structure of Arab countries.

THE PROCESS OF STRATIFICATION :

STRUCTURAL MOBILITY

In the previous section we encountered the urban notables who were subsumed under the label a'yan as the second major stratum in the Ottoman hierarchic stratification system.⁸⁰ This stratum and all its heterogeneous sub-groups emerged as the main beneficiary of the Land Code of the Tanzimat period. Awareness of the transformation of these heterogeneous subgroups into a consolidated ruling class of the modern period is crucial for the understanding of subsequent developments.

The tribal sheikhs and village chiefs gradually emerged as a land-owning stratum. This is primarily due to the confusion created by the conflict between the new ownership system (Tapu Law) and the customary musha' system. The peasants, fearing that land registration "was a preliminary to call for military service, or for taxation purposes, falsified the returns, registering the property either in

the name of the head of the tribe or in the name of a member of the family who would not be liable for military service" (Warriner, in Issawi, 1966 : 76).

In practice, the peasants disregarded the titles and continued to cultivate the land according to the old system. Meanwhile, the Departments of Land Settlement (during the Mandate) recognized the actual holders of ownership titles, who happened to be tribal Sheikhs and surkals (agents). In some parts of Syria (Palestine excluded) the new administration recognized the musha' system and in these cases considerable fragmentation of land holding took place (Granott, 1952).

The Perpetual indebtedness of the peasants with small holdings (due to various factors) drove them into borrowing from city notables; i.e., merchants, ashrafs, etc., at high rates of interest. This eventually forced those peasants to sell their hold-

was a milestone in the social history of the Middle East, both from the point of view of its relation to the government's financial policy and its long range effects on social stratification." From the point of view of stratification, Professor Karpát's assessment is certainly correct, as we shall see presently. Suffice it to say for the moment that the *tapu* law served as the basis for the formation of the ruling strata in the modern era.

These economic and legal innovations underwent certain modifications during the colonial administration which was established after WWI (Mandate period), and in the "independent" nation-states of Iraq, Syria and Egypt, although Egypt was colonized earlier (1882).

However, these innovations remained in effect, in broad outline and in spirit, until the military take-over and the introduction of Agrarian Reform Laws in the 1950's — (Arabia was an exceptional case).

The modifications of the land ownership laws should be properly understood in the context of the intense political upheav-

vals which characterized this era, beginning with the Tanzimat period to the present. The emergence of the nationalist movements was associated with the resistance to the Tanzimat in the Asian provinces and, later, to the "Turkification" of the national question (Lutsky, 1969). The political struggle against the colonial administration and against the ruling strata associated with it, (and the political ideologies which this struggle spawned,) also continued to be dominant political forces in a variety of forms down to the 1950's.

The general pattern of the mode of stratification in this phase is clearly discernible. Drastic shifts in the social division of labor and in the process of bureaucratization had already taken shape. The basically subsistence economy was by then completely transformed into export-import propelled economy. The growth in the private and public sectors was substantial. The traditional agrarian structure gave way to new relations of production in the countryside. These developments make it possible to outline a modern pattern of stratification based on the emergent

Chambers, 1968 : 93-108).

Hence, the consequences of the Tanzimat and of the Capitulatory system combined and coincided to produce the gradual transformation of the social structure and to create a "new" division of labor. The gradual process continued uninterrupted through the colonial administration which, in many ways, was keen to preserve the main backward features of the previous structure despite cosmetic modern appearances.

In the urban centers the influx of European finished goods and the breakup of indigenous monopolies resulted in the collapse of craftsmen and artisans guilds. The privileged and protected status of the European businessmen and of their agents who were either foreigners (Greeks, Italians, Armenians) or from Christian or Jewish minority groups, gave them an edge to dominate the dynamic sectors of the economy: export-import, industry, trade and finance.⁸⁴

A commercial-compradorial Arab stratum did not begin to form until after WWI (except in Syria which witnessed relatively early expansion).

In the countryside, the Tanzimat abolished the tax-farming (iltizam) and timar systems.⁸⁵ In 1858 a new Land Code was proclaimed which for the first time gave a legal definition of private property in land as distinct from "possession" or relative ownership. This in effect abolished the musha' or communal ownership of land discussed in the previous section.⁸⁶

Accordingly, miri land (State owned) could be transferred to mülk (freehold or privately owned) upon receiving a certificate of title called *tapu* (the Tapu Law). Instead of the old tax system, direct taxation by salaried bureaucrats was instituted. And the military function of the old system was replaced by the introduction of universal conscription into the army.

Although the original purpose of the law was to increase the State's direct control over land administration, it was hailed by many scholars as the true turning point in the emergence of the modern 'Middle East'.

Professor Karpav (1968 : 84-90) declares : "the Land Code

Extensive trade relations were established between the European Powers and the Provinces of the Empire directly, over which the central government did not have any control. The export-import sectors of the economies of the provinces began to be entirely managed by European capitalist countries through their companies and agents.⁸² Furthermore, the European financial penetration was taking new dimensions through the establishment of the Deutsche Orient Bank, the Deutsche Bank, the Credit Lyonnais and the Banque Ottoman. In 1856 the Banque Ottoman was accorded the exclusive right to issue currency within the Empire. Thus the European financial penetration began to have very serious consequences.

The European banks' control over credit and financing was extended to include investment in services, mining, railways, ports, power and water supply, and commercial and agricultural enterprise in general (Herzlag, *op. cit.*, p. 47). By 1883, the central government as well as the provinces (e.g., Egypt) handed over their main agricultural exports (i.e., tobacco and cotton) to joint companies controlled by foreign capital.

In short, then, the actual conditions which prevailed in the Arab countries between 1858 and 1914 were those of dependent economies, well before the direct European colonial administration which was established after WWI, except in Egypt which was occupied in 1882. Thus when the reform proclamations (Tanzimat) were made, the objectives which they were intended to accomplish coincided with the socio-economic consequences of the Capitulatory system, and in the end facilitated the expansion of foreign interests and the dismemberment of the Empire.

The primary objectives of the reform proclamations, or the Tanzimat, were the following: (1) to reduce the growing technological gap between the Empire and Western Europe in the military field; (2) to increase the efficiency of the bureaucracy by instituting the concept of public and civic responsibility in the fields of education, communication, and other public services; and (3) in order to accomplish these two objectives, basic changes in the agrarian structure and land regime became necessary (Hurewitz, 1968 : 63-108; Lewis, 1961 : part II; and Darvison in Polk and

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORIGINS OF THE MODERN PERIOD

In the preceding section we have pointed out that two transitional processes accounted for the structural discontinuities which characterized the Intermediate period. The first is the collapse of Classical mercantilism and the emergence of a feudalized bureaucracy founded on a particular land regime; and the second is the revival of European mercantilism with its subsequent domination of Mediterranean trade, and the rise of industrial capitalism in Western Europe. It seems quite feasible to argue that these two processes provide the essential socio-economic background of the Modern period (Braudel, 1974 : Vol. 1).⁷⁹

The Capitulatory system of commercial concessions which in the end prolonged the life of the Ottoman Empire, began against this background, but it reached its most extensive development in the nineteenth century (Hershlag, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-6). Beginning with the concessions granted to the Italian states in 1528, other capitulations or trade concessions, with

specific privileges to the subjects of the countries concerned were in the course of time granted to France (1535), to England (1580-83), to Holland (1613), to Russia (1717), to Austria (1718) and to Prussia (1740).

In the eighteenth century every European power (including the United States, 1818) was added to the list.⁸⁰

By the mid-nineteenth century the spread of foreign concessions was so extensive, which coincided with the general economic crisis in the Ottoman Empire and the horrendous increase in its foreign and public debts, that the central authority became almost totally ineffectual. The 1838 Treaty between Turkey and Britain officially ratified this situation. Ottoman productive and trade monopolies were broken up. European merchants and their subjects were exempted from tariff-taxes. They were allowed to own land, and to transport merchandise within the Empire, without any restrictions whatsoever.⁸¹

III. THE MODERN PERIOD : SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND PERIPHERAL CAPITALISM

The major turning point in the transition to the modern period was the reform decrees of 1826-1858, commonly referred to as the **Tanzimat** (Karpas, 1968; Hershlag, 1964 : 27-52). As a large part of the responsibility for the reform proclamations lay with the Great European powers who had a major stake in the preservation of the Capitulatory system, these two developments (i.e., the Tanzimat and the Capitulatory system) must be considered together, rather than in isolation.

The historical events which transpired from this turning point down to the present have been recounted and repeated, but unfortunately they have not been fully or systematically investigated. Many of the recent studies on the causes and consequences of the underde-

velopment of Arab countries suffer either from the lack of clear understanding of the historical dimension (i.e., the development of social forces), or from a carry-over of the concepts of Asiatism and Patrimonialism. Thus, most writers have been preoccupied with generic phenomena of finding parallelisms to European development, e.g., forces and events which have counterparts in European evolution, such as westernized élites, viz. European entrepreneurs.⁷⁸

The objection to this approach, which we have persistently raised throughout, is concisely stated by Anderson (1974 : 548-9) : "Asian development," he writes, "cannot in any way be reduced to a uniform residual category, left over after the canons of European evolution have been established."

ty) due to the collapse of the Classical Islamic mercantilism. ⁽⁷⁶⁾ Under such conditions, social mobility between strata was rather restricted, partly as a political control mechanism. But mobility within each stratum was not restricted (Inalcik, 1975 : 68-9).

Finally, in the final phase of the Ottoman Empire, i.e., in the late eighteenth century and in the nineteenth century, occasional documented revivals of capitalistic activities began to appear (Issawi, 1966; Cook, 1970 : Part II). This was partly due to the deterioration of central authority and to the in-

crease in the volume of European trade. One expression of this revival was the appearance of modern entrepôts in the semi-autonomous and peripheral regions of the Empire. Beirut (in Lebanon), and Muscat, Bahrain and Kuwait (in the Arab Gulf) were the most important. ⁷⁷

In the next section, we will attempt to demonstrate that the transitional processes responsible for the formation of the modern stratification system have been modified by the acute imbalances between internal and external contradictions we label as peripheral capitalism.

erned by the same overall structural determinants of stratification. Provinces, religious and national minorities were more or less extensions of the empire-wide gradational model in which the 'askeri stratum held sway.

A. J. Sussnitzki (in Issawi, 1966:115, *passim*), in an essay published in 1917, wrote: "For in fact the occupational structure in Turkey coincides in many respects with the racial differentiation. The social stratification which is thus determined can be traced without difficulty, in the manifold gradation of the national [i.e., empire-wide] structure. Each single ethnic community is, as it were, a mesh in the greater economic web of the empire . . . "

The ethnic division of labor as a component of the stratification system contributed in a significant way to the foreign domination of almost all entrepreneurial activity in the early part of the Modern period, as an auxiliary feature of European capitalist penetration. The fusion of the institution of the Millet and the stratification system introduced a political-nationalistic dimension into this arrangement, which at the turn

of the nineteenth century gathered such a momentous primal force for social change that it came to constitute the dynamic core of the Empire's internal contradictions.⁷⁴

Thus far, we have spoken of a hierarchic gradational stratification system. The major strata in this system were the askeri (military-bureaucracy), the a'yan (urban based upper strata), the urban labor, and the peasantry. These strata are intended to represent very rough approximations to social aggregates, highly heterogeneous and with very complex histories.⁷⁵

The social strata were determined by their position in the social division of labor which was based on the land regime and bureaucratic administration and processes. We have already noted that the urban exploitation of the rural population had led to gradual social and cultural isolation of the countryside. Therefore, it is fair to assume that the hierarchic nature of the stratification system stemmed from the shift in the process of bureaucratization made necessary by the low level of the development of the productive forces (and productivi-

by the central authority in a very highly centralized system. In the later phases, however, and particularly toward the end of the seventeenth century, the disruption of the timar system and the continuous resistance of the conquered population extremely weakened the central authority, and forced it to depend heavily on local intermediaries to control the population. Since the early eighteenth century, the a'yan began to fill the position of such local intermediaries.

The bureaucratic control of the urban strata also extended to the regulation of labor, trade and commercial transactions. In this phase the Ottoman craft and artisan guilds developed into professional and occupational corporations proper. These Ottoman guilds performed the following important functions (Lewis, 1937) :

- (1) They served as units of taxation.
- (2) They regulated the supply of labor through monopoly over crafts and trades.
- (3) They supplied labor for non-military occupations in the military service.
- (4) They served as residential units (Hara or city quarter).

The basic structure of craft and artisan guilds was also based on a hierarchy of masters (ūṣṭā), journeymen (Khalfa) and apprentices (mubtadi'). Each guild was headed by a sheikh, assisted by a naqib (keeper of traditional and professional lore) and a council of elders. The appointment of the guild's sheikh was sanctioned by the qaḍi and ratified by bureaucratic officials. The hierarchic structure of the Ottoman guilds in Arab countries was not very rigid, but the guilds' organization was highly regulated by the local authorities.⁷³ For this reason, in the early nineteenth century, the State bureaucracy organized guilds for all occupations and trades to the extent that these guilds included the bulk of the urban population (Lutsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-22)

The hierarchic stratification system of the Ottoman period was apparently reinforced by the Millet system or the autonomous structure of religious and ethnic minorities. In each of these communities a certain hierarchy of status and wealth developed within the national bureaucratic structure -- more as enclaves than as separate entities. This hierarchy was gov-

Hershlag (1964:17) declares that "two separate arenas of history were thus created — the town and the village." The immense disparity between the rural and urban settlements could perhaps be traced back to this period which stands in contrast to the Classical period in which this disparity was less pronounced (cf. Lapidus, 1969: 69 *passim*). The rural-urban disparity continued to develop and widen until the very recent past for other reasons which will be discussed in the next section.

The peasantry sought the protection of the local urban notables and their sheikhs and representatives who in the process, especially in the late nineteenth century, developed a claim of their own on the land and emerged, as we shall see, as the new class of landowners. Nevertheless, some regional Arab leaders did play a role in the peasant uprisings in this period and did achieve semi-autonomy as was true in the case of Lebanon, Interior Syria (Druze) and Southern Iraq (Lutsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-37).

The hierarchical stratification system was also prevalent in the major Arab cities and

towns. The bureaucratic subjugation of the Arab provinces took the form of organising and integrating the urban strata into the vast network of the Ottoman State. Obviously, the 'askeri stratum also dominated the urban institutions. This stratum's distinctive hierarchy was based on both the size of land it administered and the grade of bureaucratic office its various factions and subgroups occupied. (Inalcik, 1975).

As for the higher local urban stratum commonly called a'yan — which occupied a lower position than that of the 'askeri stratum — it had its own hierarchy of status and wealth.⁷² Local tax farmers, tribal sheikhs, 'ulama, merchants, and ashraf (sayyeds), all formed a hierarchy of position, status and wealth. In this period, however, the a'yan stratum was less developed than the 'askeri stratum and its local bureaucracy, and was overshadowed by it (Gibb and Bown, *op. cit.*, part II, Chapter 13).

The hierarchic character of the Ottoman stratification system is a reflection of the changing nature and function of State bureaucracy. During the early phases of Ottoman rule the provinces were governed directly

political-bureaucratic control of the subject population. Thus the most striking features of the process of stratification in this period, in contrast to the Classical one, emerge as the following : (1) the land regime was basically an urban phenomenon; (2) the stratification system based on it was highly hierarchic.

Hourani (in Issawi, 1966 : 28) writes: "in the Near East, land ownership is an urban phenomenon, not only in the obvious sense that the landowner usually lives in the town and not on his estate, but also in the sense that his claim on the land is usually created and made effective by urban processes. It was the urban government which created the landowning classes of 'feudal' cavalry (Sipahi) and tax-farmers; and there gradually developed another class with claims on the land in those districts under the protection of the urban government and where the Beduins had not yet planted their authority."

The link between the central bureaucracy and the strata of producers consisted of the askeri class of provincial administrators (Pashas and Beyler Beys), Sipahis and Janissary aghas. In

the Arab provinces, this askeri class constituted the ruling Turkish stratum. The peasantry or ra'eya— the landless cultivators — occupied the lowest position in the hierarchy. This lower status was ascribed to them by birth, regardless of whatever subsequent positions they came to hold (Karpas, 1968 : 74-5). The peasants were also subjected to the double exploitation, exaction and extortion at the hands of the various intermediaries such as tax collectors, and government agents. The short tenure of the tax farmers was particularly a strong motivation for their vicious exploitation of the peasantry.⁷¹

It was due to this peculiar urban nature of the land system and to the fact that the ruling 'askeri stratum was both urban and foreign that the stratification system was nationally and ethnically askew. The village and rural communities isolated themselves from the urban centers so as to insulate themselves from the 'askeri stratum and to prevent this stratum from penetrating into the village. Thus, the 'askeri stratum was confined throughout this period to the cities and to the regional administrative centers.

which was supervised by a "surkal" and assigned to a number of families or persons on an annual basis. The central authority encouraged this system but it never recognized it legally. The tribal sheikh or community chief in this system received only a share of the crop in his capacity as a representative of the community.⁶⁹

The last two categories of land were Waqf land and Mawat land. The original purpose of the Waqf was either charitable endowments or family endowments, normally administered by qadis or judges. A parallel institution of "quasi-waqf" on State land or miri was instituted by miri land holders who sought to perpetuate the control of State land in their families and thus protect themselves and their families against sequestration and the limitations imposed by the land's miri status (Hershlag, 1964 :

39-40). The growth of this institution resulted in the proliferation of small land holdings of an insecure legal status.⁷⁰ Mawat land was unreclaimed land. When cultivated, in accordance with Sunni tradition (Abu Hanifa interpretation), this category of land passed as private property, just as **mulk** land.

In Arab countries of the period, the miri and musha' lands were the most important land categories. The various forms of control and administration of these lands constituted the vital bases of the Empire's institutions. The fact that the forms of control were varied, made fiscal organization through central bureaucracy crucial. Thus the land regime served, in many important ways, as the basis of strata formation. This is the problem to which we now turn our attention.

THE BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE AND STRATA ORGANIZATION

The agrarian foundations of the Ottoman bureaucratic administration had by necessity shaped the stratification sys-

tem of this period. The various forms of the administration of the land system were designed to fulfill military, financial and

Two groups of the Ottoman bureaucratic regime, namely, the Janissary (or military élites) and the Sipahis constituted the backbone of the regional administrative system. They perpetuated their position by inheritance and relative independence from the central authority. In Arab societies, Pashas and Beyler Beys (Provincial commanders) represented the Sultan and ruled with the assistance of the Janissary aghas (or chiefs), Sipahis (wherever present) and the local tribal chiefs. The 'ulama performed the important function of legal counselors and of interpreters of the religious law (Shari'a). In these capacities the 'ulama provided the sanctioning of the actions of the local administration.

Most references to Ottoman feudalism relate to the Sipahis and the tax farming systems. The weight of evidence does not support the feudalist thesis in this period. *iltizam* or tax farming was highly developed in Egypt and in parts of Syria. Tax farmers were selected from Turkish families and were leased State-owned land (*miri*) in return for prefixed payments to the treasury. The land was subleased to peasants and was

supervised by the representatives of the original lease-holders who resided in the city. The function of these holders relative to the central authority was primarily financial, but it also served a military purpose at the time of congressional expansion.

It is very difficult to re-basel feudalist relations in the strict sense of the term *feud* does not exist under these conditions. But the difference between the Classical and the Ottoman social regimes should be, by now, apparent. In the latter, the land regime represented the core of the economic process upon which social strata were formed. Social strata, particularly, primarily military, had no share in the administration of the system. It was not until the eighteenth century that a feudalized system of relations appeared, but by then the *iltizam* system had begun to disintegrate.⁸⁶

As for the tribal areas of Southern Iraq and parts of Syria and Palestine, tax was assessed and imposed collectively on the local community. This gave rise to a type of communal system known as *musha'*. According to this system, land was divided into parcels, each of

teenth century to be a major factor contributing to the rise of modern capitalism and perpetuating the backward nature of Ottoman social structure.⁶⁶

It is in this sense that we speak of the Ottoman period as a prolonged and protracted

process of transition into the modern capitalist world, long before the colonial penetration which was not formalized until mid-nineteenth century. We could identify the socio-economic origins of the Arab Modern period, in this transitional Ottoman period.

THE OTTOMAN LAND REGIME AND STRATA FORMATION

When the askeri class of the Ottoman ghazis finally consolidated their rule over the Arab East in the early sixteenth century they instituted a land regime derived from the earlier Seljuqid model. The administration of the land system went through several phases of development. Both the fiscal and feudalized systems of administration followed, to some extent, historical and geographical divisions : "the system of awarding fiefs in return for military service took place mainly in Anadolia and the conquered European provinces, while in the Arabian peninsula, Iraq and Egypt, the prevalent practice was to grant domains in return for lump sums and annual tax payments to the

Sultan. The main intermediaries between the State and the cultivators were the Sipahis (timar holders or cavalry)" (Hershlag, 1964 : 11; Braudel, 1973 : Vol. 2, pp. 718-25).

In Arab countries, the form of land administration varied from region to region. In Egypt, the prevalent form was *iltizam* or tax farming. In Northern Syria and Iraq, Sipahi or feudalized administration was introduced in the early years of the conquest. In the rest of Syria and in Southern Iraq a communal system, with a local chief or tribal sheikh in charge, was directly administered by bureaucratic and military officials (Al-Duri, 1969 : 117-128; and Lutsky, 1969 : 10-18).⁶⁷

pletely transformed by the turmoil of the tenth and thirteenth centuries. The Ottomans were able for the first time to establish a stable dynastic rule, based on their own tribal tradition which did not require religious legitimation in the same form as did the Classical Islamic State. The emergent ruling class (i.e., the askeri class or the military aristocracy) found its *raison d'être* in this tradition rather than in Classical Islam (Lewis, 1963 : 10-64).

The Ottoman bureaucratic rule, therefore, emerged in different socio-cultural milieu and served different functions. The Islamic peoples and the national minorities became themselves subject people. Two consequences of this situation are critical for understanding the historical specificity of the Ottoman period.

- (1) The formalization of the ethnic, religious and national division of labor, i.e., the Millet institution as a microcosm of power distribution.
- (2) The transformation of the composition of the socio-economic categories under changing conditions of the economy and society.⁶³

The Ottoman Empire emerged at the time out of the immense collapse of Arab mercantalism which began in the thirteenth century and ended with the successful Portuguese control of maritime long-distance trade routes in the fifteenth century.⁶⁴ The collapse of the dynamic, primarily cash, commercial sector signalled the return to a predominantly agrarian, relatively feudalized economy during the early and middle Ottoman rule (cf. Bloch, 1971, Vol. 2:441-447). Strata formation and class structure with whatever resemblances they bore to the classical system, gradually, but not completely, faded away.

Furthermore, when placed in the larger context of the Mediterranean geo-politics and particularly when set against the rise of European mercantilism, the failure of Arab mercantilism reveals an additional dimension of huge historical proportions. Even at its zenith the Ottoman Empire had already begun to form a peripheral sphere of the economic world order, then in its process of formation.⁶⁵ The European mercantilist penetration, which Arab historians portray as mere commercial contacts, proved as early as the six-

II. THE INTERMEDIATE PERIOD : THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The period extending from the fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries is, from the vantage point of strata formation and class structure, a truly turbulent period of prolonged and protracted process of transition into the modern capitalist world.⁶¹ On the surface, to many Arab and European writers alike, the historical period within which the Ottoman Empire flourished and declined represents the culmination of the Islamic State and its final demise at the hands of capitalist imperial Europe.⁶² Closer examination will reveal that the Ottoman conquest set into motion economic and political processes which affected the partial but significant transformation of the division of labor in Arab society.

Both aspects of cultural continuity and structural discontinuity on the one hand, and the socio-economic context which bound them together in a single socio-economic formation on the other, should be explored briefly with regard to the principle of periodization.

The cultural and religious continuity of the Islamic State into the Ottoman period is a sufficiently familiar theme. The legacy of Classical Islam shaped and molded in many ways the early Ottoman rule. One of these ways was the consolidation of the Orthodox Sunni interpretation of religious and legal institutions and of the ruling class. The origins of the Ottoman land regime can be traced back to the Seljuqid era (1092 A.D.) in Iraq and Eastern Anatolia, and to the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria (1250-1517). The early Ottoman ghazis or conquerors conceived of themselves as the bearers of Islam's mission and invoked the earlier image of jihad or holy war (Lewis, 1963 : Gibb and Bown, 1953, part I).

But the establishment of the Ottoman Empire was the result of a set of factors of higher complexity than that which these resemblances lead us to believe. To begin with, the concept of the Islamic State at the time it was transmitted to the Ottoman ghazis, was com-

about the structural discontinuities which distinguished the

Ottoman Empire from all other previous historical periods.

But the popularized form of Islam, with its sectarian and Sūfi connotations, seemed to have produced some paradoxical outcomes, particularly with the decay of the classical Sūfi movement in the fifteenth century (Arberry, 1970: 119-133). First, political and economic cleavages between classes and between strata tended to be translated into religious-sectarian terms (El-Kodsy, 1970: 9-10). Although the relationship between Sūfism and Shi'ism of the seventh century is beyond the scope of our present studies, the Shi'ite movements (Qaramitan, Isma'ili and Fatimid) should be viewed in this context, i.e., as resistance to the Sunni orthodoxy of the ruling classes.⁶⁰ It must be emphasized in this respect that these sectarian movements did not develop into revolutionary rebellions; rather they remained oppositional and quickly succumbed to routinization and acquiescence (Zubaida, 1972: 331-334).

Secondly, the widening acceptance of this version of popularized religion at the time of the breakdown of central authority, transformed its chief interpreters, i.e., the 'ulama, into political and social as well as religious leaders. Lapidus (1969:

52-3) observes that "only one element in the past complex of elites -- the Islamic religious leaders, the 'ulama, survived the political traumas of the tenth and eleventh centuries." By the end of the eleventh century, the 'ulama had managed to control, at least partially, waqfs or permanent endowments of incomes for religious and charitable purposes. In addition, they gradually merged with land-owning, bureaucratic, and merchant families. These developments greatly enhanced their sources of power well into the next period.

Finally, the processes of transition from the Classical period into the Intermediate period (i.e., the Ottoman Empire) which took place between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, remain as one of the obscure historical eras in the history of the Near East (Issawi, 1966: 3-13). The process of enormous decline which this stage represented cannot be explained in strictly economic factors or external military conquest. We can only assume that the internal contradictions, the complex of economic, political, and social factors which accumulated over the whole span of the Classical period brought

In addition to that, capital formation (primitive accumulation of capital) was interrupted either by bureaucratic-military intervention or by foreign conquest, or by both.⁵⁷

The dispute concerning the last point has been a long-standing issue of debate among the specialists in this area of study. The conclusion stated in (e) has been disputed on the grounds that merchants and and craftsmen's associations in the last stage of the Classical period did indeed wield considerable political power (Al-Duri, 1969 : 67-68). Zubaida (1972 : 335), following Massignon's (1934) original thesis,⁵⁸ links the rise of these associations with the appearance of Ṣūfī orders as "a prominent prototype for other forms of urban organization."

It should be noted that there is a two-fold relationship of historical significance in this linkage. On the one hand, the craft associations were formed as a protection against "pillage, extortion and casual violence" and in some cases in defiance of central authority during the decay and fragmentation of the Empire. Ṣūfism was a retreatist religious movement (of dif-

ferent brands), and originated as a covert protest against organized religion and the orthodoxy of the ruling aristocracy.

Thus, when craft associations (aşnaf, singular şinf) adopted the rigid Ṣūfī graduational model (ṭariqa), with its ceremonies and secrecy, Ṣūfism provided these associations with ideological, religious, sectarian as well as political means of expression.

The craftsmen and merchants associations of the Classical period, therefore, do not seem to have been formed as professional organizations of the European Guild type of an occupational organization, nor did they serve the same functions. It should also be borne in mind that these associations were different in structure and composition from the seventeenth and eighteenth century Ottoman Guilds. Otherwise the structural discontinuity in the organization of labor in Arab societies will be completely obscured. Many writers who think of these associations as strictly professional organizations claim, perhaps rightly, that they cannot find any evidence of the existence of such organizations in this period.⁵⁹

This argument raises some crucial but not yet fully evaluated implications for the class structure and we would be ill-advised to speculate on them. On the other hand, the theoretical significance of these implications reduces to a large extent the overstretched and overgeneralized theses of the Weberian "Patrimonialism" and the Marxist "Asiatic Mode of Production." The major part of the debate concerning these two theses could be avoided if the use of these two concepts was restricted to the original intentions of Weber, and Marx and Engels; namely, to explain the differences between two socio-economic systems which accounted for the rise of capitalism in one and not in the other (Anderson, 1974 : 484).⁵²

What we may learn from this comparison is important, but certainly limited, with regard to our subject matter, as the following list of items illustrates :

- (a) Arab societies in the Classical period can be properly thought of as relatively well-developed class societies.⁵³
- (b) The social system of these

societies contained a dualism between "semi-feudalism" (vis-a-vis European feudalism) and bureaucratic centralism.⁵⁴

- (c) On the national level, no particular mode of production dominated : slavery was widely practiced alongside communal ownership, commercial agriculture, tax farming, and elementary petty commodity production and wage-labour.⁵⁵
- (d) Arab societies in this period developed a "capitalistic sector" and a bourgeois class (in the strict sense) with the "typical" features of production for the market (production for exchange), complex monetary transactions, a high degree of economic rationality, and a rudimentary wage-labor.⁵⁶
- (e) Capitalism as a dominant mode of production did not develop in these societies, due to the fact that neither the bourgeoisie nor the craftsmen classes were allowed to attain autonomous institutional bases of power, nor did they at any time come into power as a governing class (as in the typical case of Europe).

high status accounted for a significant part of mobility.⁴⁸

Sponsored mobility within strata, such as holding a public office, promotion within the bureaucracy, or becoming a master craftsman, accounted for another part of mobility. Drastic "upward" and "downward" mobility existed only under certain conditions.⁴⁹

6. The tight centralization of the State bureaucracy prevented social strata from developing institutional bases of power independent of the bureaucracy. Both merchants and craftsmen were closely supervised and policed by the State, ostensibly to prevent cheating and illegal practices (Lewis, 1937). Although merchant and craft associations were formed, they were prevented from developing authority independent of the muhtasib (Gunebaum 1971 : 218). Thus the centralized delegation of authority had in effect made the State bureaucracy a major agent of stratification.⁵⁰

If all this is true, and so far we do not have evidence to the contrary, then the development of a certain class structure, in the modern sense, was highly

conceivable and historically possible. The classical writers as well as the modern historians of the classical period used the term class (Ṭabaqāt) quite liberally. In the present context, social class is strictly defined by a definite set of production relations relevant to a certain mode of production. These production relations in the socio-economic context of the Classical period have been difficult to pinpoint in a conceptually precise manner.

There are two reasons for this. The first is the lack of serious specialized research, and the second is the presence of a variety of relations of production (and hence modes of production) with strongly regional characteristics coexisting side by side (Rodinson, 1973 : 65). The conditions under which no specific single mode of production predominated, such as that of the Classical period, have not been adequately investigated until very recently. Rodinson (1973 : 66) and Amin (1974, Vol. I : 141), among very few others, have raised the possibility that such a system could in fact have consisted "in a co-ordination of different modes of production"⁵¹

- nobility rather than feudal lords, were the dominant strata. Relatively developed commercial agricultural peasantry and slavery co-existed side by side. Long distance trade and specialized crafts constituted the driving force in Islamic society.
2. The formation of the aristocracy (Arab, Mawali, etc.) was mainly due to ascription (by birth). This was especially true for the Hashimites and Ashrafs, i.e., the descendants of the Prophet through Ali, the forerunners of Sayyeds, (Levy, 1971 : 66-81). The mobility closure in the form of ascription applied to social status and not to property or wealth. The Ashrafs formed a status group, with unchallengeable claim to social honor, in the Weberian sense.⁴⁵ This situation did not change even during the Turkish military regimes, although the Ashrafs' political hegemony was broken.
 3. The composition of the merchant stratum was the result of a mixture of inheritance and achievement.⁴⁶ This also applied to the higher professions, such as the upper grades of officials, religious groups (i.e., qadis and theologians, the forerunners of *ulama*), and the scholars. With regard to structural mobility, the pre-Islamic nobility, particularly the Persian nobility, were better equipped to be recruited into all these strata : the merchants, the administrative officials, the religious elite and the scholarly professions. For the Arabs (other than the Qurashite aristocracy who were merchants in pre-Islamic times), attaining such a status was the result of achievement. Once status was achieved, it was passed down to descendants in the form of advantage and influence.
 4. In addition to factors of relative mobility closure in the form of ascription and inheritance, the factor of social distance separating strata, in the form of restricted access to opportunities and of cultural barriers, defined the boundaries of the lower strata (i.e. craftsmen and artisans and peasantry) at least in the early stages of this period.⁴⁷
 5. In the absence of institutionalized forms of recruitment into high social positions, differential association, particularly patronage of an aristocratic family, and marriage into a family of

During the third state of the Classical period, the town merchants and the ruling aristocracy acquired large estates, and emerged as the new latifundia (Ashtor, 1976:155). At the same time tenant farming developed, and in some cases part of the rent was paid in monetary form.⁴¹ Evidence of commercial agriculture close to the urban centers can also be found. In the remote parts

of the Empire the traditional agrarian structure was not affected as long as tribute and tax were paid.⁴² The fragmentation of the Empire brought with it increasing dependence of the State on the countryside, to compensate for the loss of revenues due to stagnating trade and crafts. In this period, frequent revolts occurred with ideological and sectarian overtones.

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS OF CLASS

AND STRATA CLEAVAGES :

SOME UNSETTLED ISSUES

So far, it appears that the process of strata formation was determined by religious-ethnic factors. The religious-ethnic factors were gradually replaced by political-economic ones. We have already stated that the evidence we now possess does not make clear what particular combination of these factors determined the Classical class structure.⁴³ However, there is good reason to believe that certain developments in the fourth and final stage of this period (between the tenth and fourteenth centuries) may provide certain clues to this problem.

In order to examine the problem of class and stratum, we will have to formulate a statement concerning the order of the determinants (i.e., mechanisms of reproduction) of social stratification thus far mentioned. We therefore postulate that the processes of stratification by the end of the tenth century exhibited the following characteristics :

1. The structure of stratification of classical Islamic society was unequal (i.e., multidimensional) rather than hierarchic. Inequalities were based on varied forms of exploitation.⁴⁴ Oligarchic aristocracy and military

Considerable caution should be exercised in interpreting the figures in this table for the following reasons. First, the salaries depicted in the table were more or less average payments at the time, for they varied from one region (and urban center within one region) to another. Furthermore, such payments fluctuated sharply over the years. In fact, salaries began to fall after the second half of the tenth century.

Secondly, salaries of public officials were normally supplemented by other sources of income, some of which were not legal, particularly the sources available to those at the upper end of the salary scale, to whom Ibn-Khaldun's above mentioned remarks aptly apply:

Thirdly, some of the higher officials, if not the absolute majority, were either landowners or owners of some business interests in the private sector. Indeed, some of those higher officials did bribe their way into office so as to increase their own property and wealth (Zaidan, 1967 : vol. 2, pp. 461-467).

Given these limitations, the range of income stratification between the upper and lower brackets of the table must

have been staggering. Judging from the fragmentary information scattered in the classical sources, it appears that income differentials in the private sector of the economy may have been even greater than in the public sector (e.g., Zaidan, 1967).

In the countryside, the relations of production underwent several phases of development. At first the majority of the conquered agricultural lands were declared State land on which tribute and land tax (Kharaj) were levied. The old land ownership systems of Persia and Byzantium were broken. But the rate of land taxes seems to have increased to great levels and to have become an impetus for peasant migration. This seems to have led to the depopulation of certain rural regions, which may have contributed to the swelling of the ranks of the "lumpen-proletariat" in the urban centers, such as the 'ayyarun, al-Shut-tar and Al-ša'alik. Lesser noblemen (dihqāns) turned into agents for tax collection, although others joined them as the tax farming system acquired special importance due to the decline in land revenues (Lambton, 1969; and Ashtor, 1976).

ket police (or muhtasib). Their chances of improving their lot was summarized very eloquently by the common saying of the time: "A craft is security from poverty and insurance against wealth" (cited by Al-Duri, 1969 : 66). Some master craftsmen, however, were reported to have achieved some measure of wealth.

Ashtor (1967) collected and

systematized some interesting information concerning the income of the salaried strata at different stages of the Classical period. It is very instructive at this point to reproduce — with some modifications — one of his tables in order to highlight the process of strata formation, especially with reference to our contention, stated above, that the State dominated the ranking system in society.

TABLE NO. 1

**MONTHLY SALARY OF SELECTED OCCUPATIONS IN
THE FIRST HALF OF THE TENTH CENTURY IRAQ, IN DINARS**

(ONE DINAR IS EQUIV. TO 4.2 Gms OF GOLD)

OCCUPATION	MONTHLY SALARY IN DINARS
-- Vizier or Director of Financial Administration	5000 -- 7000
-- Sons of Vizier	500
-- Judge or Chief of Market Police (muhtasib)	100
-- Professor	50
-- High Official	30 and more
-- Middle -- Ranking Government Official	8--20
-- Cavalryman	12--14
-- Subaltern Official or Judge of Lower Rank	4--7
-- Royal Guardsman	3.5
-- Private Clerk	3
-- Skilled Craftsman	2
-- Unskilled Laborer	1.5 (or 91 Kg bread)

Source : E. Ashtor : **A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages**, London : Collins, 1976 : 154.

ple for purposes of "guidance" and leadership, it was also differentially distributed according to the class and status of the person holding it. The greater the importance and influence of a rank the greater was the power and profit derived from it, and vice versa. Thus each class of people in towns and in zones of civilization had power over the classes lower than itself. It is also to be remembered that rank was bestowed by the ruler, so the use of flattery and obsequiousness was more often the road to rank and power (despotism!).³⁹

The growth of the professions opened the door for those who came from poorer and lower strata to be recruited into important positions. Education and schooling were a prerequisite for public office. Of the professionals the administrators (civil servants), judges and theologians ('ulama), and the scientists (scholars), were the most highly regarded.⁴⁰

Although appointment to office was not hereditary, administrative appointments were confined to candidates belonging to a small circle of families. On the other hand, Grunbaum (1971:213) points out

that "all the professions that presupposed special training tended to develop a certain exclusivity." Judgeships as well as the higher, but not necessarily the highest, grades of civil service, not infrequently remained within the same family, or group of families for generations on end (Ashtor, 1976:139-140). Some of these professions were further distinguished by mannerisms and uniform. The religious élite ('ulama) occupied a peculiar position among the professions, which we will examine more fully later on.

Simultaneous with the growth of the professions there was the expansion and differentiation of the crafts in general. The rapid urbanization and the increase in the demand for luxury goods necessitated further specialization among the craftsmen and the artisans. Rodinson (1973:50-51) finds some evidence of the presence of wage-labor, in an elementary form, coexisting with what the Marxists call "petty commodity production," or contracts of partnership. Craftsmen and artisans lived in separate quarters in towns, and were distinguished by their crafts which were regulated by the State through the office of the mar-

power (royal authority), property (including land), Labor (the crafts), and profit (trade and finance). In his opinion, these elements represented the foundations of all civilizations.³⁶

Ibn Khaldun's "royal authority" is an aristocracy-in-power composed of the men of the sword and the men of the pen (Ibn Khaldun, 1969 : 213). Its three main characteristics are : (1) effective monopoly of power, (2) high standard and style of living, (3) coercion and the frequent use of force.³⁷ The characteristic of effective monopoly of power assumed the form of tight centralization of the functions of the State, which inhibited the development of an autonomous institutional framework within which the political process could take place.

For this reason the central bureaucracy of the State dominated the ranking system in society. Political office as well as religious rank were bestowed by the State. The central bureaucracy regulated trade and finance and, on numerous occasions, confiscated land and property. Several classical writers make repeated references to the conflict between the

ruler (and the aristocracy) on the one hand and the capitalist merchants on the other. The former utilized the control of government to seek supremacy, and the latter relied on rank and prestige or association as forms of self-protection.³⁸

The functioning of the ranking system in the classical stratification order is described in some detail by Ibn Khaldun (1969 : 304-308). He found that persons holding a high rank or position obtained either through prestige (jah) or in an official capacity, were more fortunate and wealthy. He explains this phenomenon in the following manner. First, such persons were served by the free labor of others, so that there was less expense for them and the total value from such labor added to their profits and enriched them in a short period of time. Whereas persons who had no rank could have property and acquire a fortune proportional to their property. Furthermore there was evidence that some persons, such as religious scholars and people with good reputations did acquire enormous wealth even without the possession of property.

Secondly, although rank was widely distributed among peo-

A political classification is also provided by Nizam al-Mulk, the vizier (wazir) of the Turkish Seljuqs, in his *Siyásat-náma* (or Treatise on Government) compiled about 1092 A.D.³³ He classified the various officers of the State in the following order : "(1) King, (2) provincial governors or tax collectors, (3) the vizier, (4) 'feudal' landowners, (5) the peasants subject to them, and (6) qadis (judges), preachers (Khatibs), police officers (Muhtasibs), etc.,"

There are various other listings and classifications of clas-

ses and stratified groupings in the classical sources.³⁴ But how the stratification system actually functioned at the time or what precisely were its structural determinants is not entirely clear. Professor Rodinson (1970) suggests that determinants of social classes in the Muslim world are likely to be multiple criteria of religious, political and economic determinants, the combinations of which we are not yet certain of. To avoid simplistic solutions to this problem we must first look for some clues in what is already known.

THE DYNAMICS OF THE CLASSICAL STRATIFICATION SYSTEM

We have already stated that the on-set of the Classical period produced certain structural discontinuities in the social order of the Near East, represented by the break-up of the Empires of Persia and Byzantium. But the transition from the tribal model to the autocratic mode of organization which Islam underwent produced significant and contradictory results. The formation of a new aristocracy-in-power whose religious and ethical legitimacy was highly questionable provi-

ded a continuing source of political and economic activism.

On the other hand, by the ninth century, the pre-Islamic Arabian ideal of birth had already been transformed into either wealth or political office as the new titles to aristocracy (Levy, 1970 : 67).³⁵ The stratification system of the Classical period was produced by a set of factors influencing the political and economic process. To Ibn Khaldun (1969 : 118-119), such a political and economic process consisted in

Ikhwan al-Ṣafa' (tenth century) divided the population into: "(a) craftsmen who work with their own labor-power and tools: (b) merchants who deal in buying and selling and whose purpose is the creation of surplus between what they take and what they give; and (c) men of wealth who own the raw materials and buy the finished products."³¹

Ibn Khaldun (1969:299-300), writing in the 14th century, provides a more detailed classification. He states that "sustenance and profit may be obtained through: (1) Taxation: having the power to take [tax] away from others and appropriate it according to recognized rules. (2) Agriculture: cultivation and reaping natural products. (3) Crafts: application of human labor to specific materials. (4) Professions: application of human labor to nonspecific materials: and (5) Commerce: transport of merchandise or hoarding [it] to obtain surplus which is the margin between purchase price and sale price."

Perhaps the best and most vivid classification and description of the social "classes" as they existed at the end of the Classical Period can be found

in Al-Maqrizi. While expounding on the 1395 A.D. economic crisis in Egypt and on its consequences on the economy and society, he divided the Egyptian population into seven major "sections"³²

(1) Men of the State (Ahl Al-Dauleh), which includes rulers, wazirs, judges, regional administrators etc., that is, those connected with the State in their official or religious capacities.

(2) Men of wealth and of prestige (Jah) who live in luxury; also merchants and privileged persons.

(3) Salesmen (Sellers, ba'ah) and merchants of moderate means, together with those people in their service (Al-sewegeh).

(4) Men of agriculture, such as cultivators of land and residents of villages and of the countryside.

(5) Men of learning such as scholars (Al-Fuqeha'), students (persuers of knowledge; i.e., Tulab Al-'Ilm), and public employees (shuhúd).

(6) Artisans and craftsmen, and people in their employment such as wage-laborers, porters etc.,

(7) Destitute and lowly people who earn their living by begging or those who live on charity.

formed some form of "forced labor" to which Ibn-Khaldun makes several references (1969: 23-242, 304-308).²⁸ The crystallization of these groupings by the 9th century A.D. took place simultaneously with the processes of urbanization (i.e., the emergence of the major urban centers) and of centralized bureaucratization, which transferred political power from the traditional tribesmen to the urban centers.

The crystallization of social strata (the third stage of the Classical period) was accompanied by certain modifications in the determinants of the emergent system of stratification. Thus: (a) the large scale conversion into Islam and the improvement of the social status of the mawali; (b) the accumulation of wealth and capital by certain sections of the aristocracy through trade and landownership; and (c) the increase in differentiation and specialization of the crafts which were dominated by non-Arabs. All these developments can be seen to have contributed greatly to the consolidation of the political and economic determinants and to the weakening of the religious determinant of stratification (Ashtor, 1976:

22-35).

The dynamic effects of these events will be examined in the next section. Let us now illustrate how the consolidation of the stratification system is reflected in the images the classical writers held of their own social order.²⁹ Ja'far Ibn al-Dimishqi (ninth century), whom Professor Rodinson (1973:263) describes as "the theoretician of trade," mentions three ways by which goods were acquired: (i) by force, as in the case of **the State and the criminals**; (ii) by skills, as in the case of craftsmen and traders; and (iii) by mixed ways, such as when trade is carried on by the State, or big "capitalists" who dominate the market and set the prices for small traders.

Ibn al-Faqih (late ninth century), the 'Abbasid geographer, quotes the influential courtier, Faḍl Ibn Yaḥyá, as having divided mankind into four classes: rulers, viziers (wazirs); the upper classes (of wealth); the middle classes (men of culture); and "the remainder are filthy refuse, a torrent of scum, base cattle, none of whom thinks of anything but his food and sleep" (cited in Levy, 1971:67).³⁰

STRATA FORMATION IN THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

The battle of 657 A.D., referred to earlier, between the 'Ummayyáds and Ali followers (Shi'et Ali) bore heavily on the central issue of equality in faith among Muslims. The triumph of the 'Ummayyáds did not settle the issue decisively — rather it created the grounds for the contested question of legitimacy which lasted for centuries afterwards. Furthermore, the 'Ummayyáds dynastic rule created the grounds for the distinction between Arab Muslims and mawali or new Muslims of non-Arab extraction (Levy, 1971:54-62).²⁶

During this formative period certain social groups and subgroups crystalized. Among the major groupings of Muslims, the Qurayshites (the tribe of the Prophet) emerged as the new aristocracy. In an important sense, according to the general rule of the jurist Abu Hanifa school, "all Qurayshites were of equal standing in a class by themselves, and all other Arabs were equal irrespective of their tribes" (Levy, 1971: 63). Among the Qurayshites and Arab Muslims, resur-

gence of tribal loyalties manifested itself in the form of Muhajirun-Anṣar antagonism which took latent forms in the early 'Ummayyád rule (Taha Hussein, 1975, Vol. I:87-181). Antagonism between southern Arabs (Yemenites) and northern Arabs was also evident (Ashtor, 1976:19-29).

Amongst each of the Muslim and mawali major groupings, there were several subgroupings differentiated by factors other than religious or ethnic ones. These factors were mainly political and economic. The new Muslim aristocracy was not the old tribal aristocracy but a stratum of rank and prestige which derived its legitimacy and strength from political and military office as well as from its relation to the Prophet. The mawali were also differentiated by wealth (landed nobility or dihqans), intellectual and political skills (ʿulama and qaḍis and wazirs), and skills in crafts.²⁷

Further major subgroupings were the slaves and poorer Arabs and mawalis who per-

tion of military slaves ultimately led to military take-over by these slaves who established petty dynasties paying nomi-

nal allegiance to the Caliph, which lasted until the Ottoman conquest.²⁵

purity and legality against illegitimate usurpation (Zubaida, 1972; and Hitti, 1953).

Zubaida (1972:317) forcefully points out the historical significance of this turning point: "These events were crucial for the subsequent ideological development of Islam. It was at this stage that Islam spawned both its ideology and its Utopia (in Mannheim's sense). These events . . . supplied the symbols and myths both of legitimation and of rebellions which were to dominate later Islam." The Súfi movements which emerged in the latter part of this stage and during the Abbasid succession gave further religious and ideological depth to these events, in various forms.

The establishment of bureaucratic military rule with a strong central government fashioned along the lines of the Persian and Byzantine models proved an effective instrument in regulating the vast conquered territories as one political entity. And between the seventh and eighth century a rapid process of urbanization took place. The reform of the Persian and Byzantine land systems and the imposing of a

heavy land tax (kharaj) on the non-Muslim populations provided strong impetus to the movement toward the urban centers established by the conquering Arabs (Al-Duri, 1969: 23-30).

This was accompanied by the vast expansion of trade and finance and by the flourishing of the crafts in the urban centers. By the early eighth century, State revenues reached enormous levels. But with military expansion coming to an end in the early ninth century, and the considerable shrinkage of Kharaj land due to conversion to Islam,²⁴ and the amassing of huge individual wealth by the ruling and merchant strata, an empire based on military expansion came to its economic limits (Hitti, 1953; Zubaida, 1972; Al-Duri, 1969).

The process of fragmentation of the empire began with the cession of Al-Andalus (Spain) in 755 A.D. North Africa attained relative independence from the central government in 800 A.D. Khurasan (Eastern Persia) followed its example in 820 A.D. The efforts by Abbasid rulers to regain central rule and suppress internal rebellions by extensive importa-

THE TRANSITION FROM THE TRIBAL TO THE AUTOCRATIC MODEL

Islam as a form of government affected the final breakdown of the dominant tribal-kinship model of social organization. The early Islamic community was conceived of as composed of the believers bound together only by faith rather than by kinship, ethnic or racial boundaries. The social organization of the community of believers, however, did not cause the complete eradication of the tribal model; rather, the image of the religious community resembled that of a tribe with the Prophet as its chief. "This also meant that much of the equalitarianism, the democracy of joint decision making, the accountability of leaders, the voluntarism of joining in common actions, all of which characterized traditional nomadic organization were features of [this] community" (Zubaida, 1972 : 316).

This form of an organization was soon to disappear due to

the expansion of conquest and the rise of the necessities of administering large territories. In 657 A.D. a decisive battle was fought between those who contended to preserve the religious and ethical principles of the Islamic State and those who allied themselves with the dynastic Ummayyad rule. The Ummayyads triumphed and succeeded in establishing dynastic imperial rule which was to have a lasting influence on subsequent Islamic forms of government (Hitti, 1953: 178-186).

The dynastic imperial rule of the Ummayyads (which was established in 661 A.D.) marked the beginning of a process of bureaucratization and empire building and the end of the "equalitarian" participatory model of the early Islamic spirit of reform. These developments were met with rebellion and resistance by Shi'ites and Kharijites who conceived of themselves as fighting for religious

I. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORIGINS OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD ²⁰

The emergence of the Islamic Empire in the seventh century went through several stages, beginning with the expansion from a small Meccan trading community to the rest of Arabia, and later to Mesopotamia, Persia, Syria and Egypt.²¹ Al-Duri (1969:6) summarizes these stages according to a chronological sequence as follows:

- A. The first stage (7th century) which witnessed the formation of the concepts of the "nation" as opposed to the "tribe", and of al-Jihād or Holy War.
- B. The second stage (8th century) in which the ownership of conquered lands (particularly agricultural lands) was a major issue. The appearance of large landed-estates and the distinction between Arab Muslims and al-Mawáli or non-Muslims were two important results.
- C. The third stage (8th - 10th centuries) in which high

levels of urbanization were achieved, with the attendant growth in the commercial and financial institutions and industry, as well as the formalization of the land ownership system.

- D. The fourth stage (the end of the 10th century through the 14th) marks the beginning of a general downward economic trend and of the return to agriculture, and the subsequent fragmentation of the Empire. In this stage petty dynasties of military rulers, foreign in origin, became dominant until the time of the Ottoman conquest.²²

The processes of transition which allow us to distinguish such stages involve a set of highly complex political, economic, and social factors not thoroughly explored as yet. We can, however, derive in some indirect way certain tentative hypotheses post ipso facto, as to the processes of strata formation.

colonial penetration to post-
Second World War social
transformation.

We shall attempt to establish

that the social stratification
system of each period consti-
tutes a legitimate unit of com-
parison.

Relative structural discontinuities are defined as the changes in the organization of the economy which result either (a) in the transformation of the composition of social strata, and/or (b) in significant shifts in the structural and related mechanisms of stratification (cf., Rossides, 1976 : 94-101).

- (a) The composition of social strata is determined by many factors, the most important of which are the patterns of demand on occupational skills set by the dominant sectors of the economy. Stability of strata composition is associated to a great extent with relative mobility closure due to the functioning of the mechanisms of stratification. Transformation of strata composition is usually the result of the reorganization of the economy which calls for adjustments or a new structural demand for manpower distribution (Blau and Duncan, 1967 : 25-6).
- (b) The structural mechanisms of stratification are the forms by which class and strata inequalities are trans-

mitted, perpetuated, and modified. Two such forms have been emphasized by research: the transmission of strata inequalities by (i) inheritance of stratum position, and/or by (ii) institutionalized mechanisms of recruitment into strata and classes. In other words, societies historically differ in the emphasis they place on the mechanisms of ascription (in which variables of family socio-economic background are determinants), or on the mechanism of achievement in the various forms of occupational and prestige positions and wealth.¹⁶

On the basis of these structural discontinuities we can identify three major historical periods in the development of social stratification in the Arab countries of the Near East.¹⁷

- I. The Classical period, which covers the formation, fragmentation and decline of the Islamic Empire.
- II. The Intermediate period, extending from the establishment of the Ottoman Empire to the mid-nineteenth century.
- III. The Modern period, beginning with the European

THE METHODOLOGICAL SCHEME: THE PRINCIPLE OF PERIODIZATION

The commonly accepted approach to the Near East, whether derived from Marx or Weber, is clearly inadequate. This approach consists in thinking of the Near East in negative terms. Thus Near Eastern societies are considered only inasmuch as they illustrate negatively the factors which in Europe have led, positively, to development and growth in the form of Capitalism.¹⁵

We need not question the fact that in a strictly comparative context this approach is legitimate, as we will demonstrate later on. Its inadequacy, however, is due mainly to the objection that such an approach underscores indirectly the cultural continuity and obscures the structural discontinuities which Near Eastern societies underwent at various points in their history. Van Nieuwehuijze's thesis of the inapplicability of the concept of social stratification to the "Middle East" is an excellent case in point. It shows how this negative approach may produce false contentions to the extent of Euro-centrism.¹⁶

As stated earlier, we will attempt to sketch out the historical development of social stratification in the contemporary countries of the Near East by introducing a different comparative perspective. We will not presuppose that "the typical situation in Europe" constitutes the standard of comparison; rather we will compare the stratification systems of clearly defined historical periods characterized by relative structural discontinuities in the Arab countries themselves.

In the context of the present scheme, social strata formation is considered at an analytically distinct level from the class structure.¹⁷ Social strata may form as occupational groups or as status groups along institutionalized forms (dimensions) of social inequalities. Social strata at this level are concrete historical groupings, which may or may not develop into social classes in the strict sense. Given sound theoretical and empirical evidence, social strata could conceivably be combined to form a social class system.

tically neutral form of organization.¹³

(4) Marx and Weber's accounts of the transition from Feudalism to Capitalism in Western Europe do not permit specific generalizations concerning transitional processes in other socio-economic formations. In fact, both the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production and that of Asiatic Patrimonialism are comprehensive historical categories which lack a chronological order and definite analytical cutting points.¹⁴

One important transitional process which we now term as **structural mobility** was, for understandable reasons, neglected by Marx and Weber. Structural mobility refers to large-scale movement of individuals and groups among classes and strata, associated with the transition from one social structure to another or with drastic reorganization of the economy. Marx explicitly stated that such large-scale mobility can only be possible at an early stage of the transition to Capi-

talism. As capital becomes self-reproducing, the two main classes in time become largely self-recruiting (Giddens, 1973 : 97-8). In the Weberian morphological scheme, it is rather difficult to discern a pattern of social mobility among an infinite number of economic, status and prestige groups, although Weber did mention the passing on of advantage in determining what he called "life-chances."

To sum up, although Marx and Weber left so many unsettled issues in their treatments of social stratification, they undoubtedly provided us with some indispensable methodological and conceptual tools for the historical study of stratification systems, as long as the limitations of those concepts and methods are made obvious and kept clearly in mind. Furthermore, we may point out that there is a great deal of complementarity between Marx and Weber's analyses when applied to the Near East, contrary to the claims of the Neo-Weberians, as we shall see (Parkin, 1971 : 18).

general represented a different socio-economic formation which Marx labelled "the Asiatic Mode of Production" and Weber thought of as "Asiatic Patrimonialism." Neither Marx nor Weber offered an analytical definition of either concept beyond pointing out its dissimilarity from Feudalism.

(2) Marx and Weber acknowledged that social classes — the backbone of their stratification theories — have their origin in the economic sphere of market relations. Marx seemed to have emphasized the so-called dichotomous approach, i.e., bourgeoisie-proletariat, by abstracting class relations from the multifarious groupings at the occupational level (cf, Wallerstein, 1974 : 351-4). Weber contemplated alternative bases for social stratification.

To Weber, class belongs to the economic sphere; status groups belong to the social sphere; and social honor or prestige is the basis for political and economic power (Weber, 1958a : 180-95). In the case of Marx the distinction between class and stratum is not empirically established,¹⁰ while in the case of Weber the trichotomy of class, status group, and

political power cannot be reduced to interrelated dimensions of a single stratification system.¹¹ This problem becomes more obvious when applied to the Asiatic Mode of Production and Asiatic Patrimonialism.

(3) Marx and Weber perceived very accurately that what holds a stratification system together is the structure of social power distribution. The State, as the bureaucracy symbolizing authority, enters into the Marxian analysis as an instrument in the service of the dominant classes. He traced its emergence in the division of labor as a parasitic formation with relative institutional autonomy.¹²

Weber's treatment of bureaucracy as an instrument of rational calculation essential for the development of capitalist enterprise provides a more detailed starting point. But Marxian and Weberian treatments of the functions of bureaucratization and of the role of State bureaucracy in social stratification seem to be rather unsatisfactory when they are applied to the Near East, especially Weber's view of State bureaucracy as a poli-

Recent thinking in stratification theory and research have tended to associate social stratification with occupational classification and to regard the distribution of status and prestige bestowed by the society on occupations as the principal form of evaluation. The occupational classification is thought of as an approximation of the system of inequalities

having two dimensions : occupational skills which may be represented by educational attainment, and material rewards for occupational tasks performed, represented by income. And occupational status is considered as the cultural component with the dimension of prestige and power distributions.⁷

THE RELEVANCE OF MARX AND WEBER

The Functionalist school represents atheoretical trend which considers social stratification in ahistorical terms, tracing its historical universality in all societies to the "functional necessity" of inequality of rewards and abilities in the performance of occupational tasks. Two major weaknesses can be found in this explanation: (1) The sweeping generality of the functionalist propositions greatly limit their applicability to concrete historical situations. (2) The Functionalists have been accused of failing to explain the process which links ranking, differentiation, inequality and stratification.⁸

Comparing Marx and Weber on the other hand, or more ac-

curately, the procedure of contrasting Marxian formulations with Weberian theses, has stimulated a vast body of literature — providing the essential theoretical background of the dominant trends in stratification research. But the problematics of applying Marxian and Weberian "theories" to underdeveloped societies should be pointed out and emphasized.

(1) Marx and Weber's theories of social stratification are deeply rooted in the analysis of a concrete historical phenomenon — that of Capitalism. Capitalism as a "socio-economic formation" emerged as the result of definite historical processes of transition from Medieval Feudalism.⁹ The Near Eastern and Asian societies in

BASIC CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

It is a well known fact that the concept of stratification in Western sociology is defined in a variety of ways, not necessarily consistent with one another. The minimum of generally accepted definition is that social groups are unequally "arranged" along a hierarchy or hierarchies of positions or ranks with regard to certain properties and attributes (Tumin, 1967: 12). Problems arise when the following questions are asked: (a) What are the characteristics of these social groups? (b) What specifically are the dimensions of social inequality? (c) What are the structural mechanisms which govern the unequal distribution of those properties and attributes? (d) What are the historical sources of the mechanism of social inequality? (cf., Pfautz, 1953: 391)

If social stratification is an historical phenomenon of structural dimensions, then it should be made clear that a simple process of ranking, that is, evaluation of individuals and groups according to kinship or biological attributes may not, in the strict sense, constitute

a system of stratification.⁵ Although the process of ranking is common to all known societies, age-groups or sex-groups (sexual division of labor) lack the structural mechanisms which operate independently of individual and biological attributes.⁶

Autonomous structural mechanisms of inequality develop with increasing social differentiation, or more accurately with the social division of labor, associated with the social institutions of property and status. In modern times, we have tended to identify social rank with occupational position. But in terms of the division of labor, rank differences are neither mechanistically based on the differentiation of occupations, nor are they explained by the latter. We associate a rank order with occupational activities through an additional "act" of evaluation which produces a structured system of socio-economic inequalities with structural as well as cultural dimensions (Dahrendorff, in Beteille, 1970:26:8).

Secondly, certain issues in the economic, political, and social history of these societies, which have had critical influence on our subject matter, have continued to be the centre of debate and controversy. (4) Examples of these issues are the following : to what extent does "The Asiatic Mode of Production" or "Asiatic Patrimonialism" effectively describe Near Eastern societies? How was the national economy, specifically the relations of production, organized at different historical periods? To what extent does the concept of Feudalism apply to these societies? What are the phases of the development of the structure of the ruling classes and strata?

Thirdly, historically, class and strata cleavages have been translated into religious and ethnic terms which find their origin in the early formative years of the Islamic Empire in the seventh century. Religious schisms in Islam and the subsequent sectarianisms became vehicles of religious, political and economic

activism (cf. El-Kodsy, 1972 : and Zubaida, 1972). A systematic study of social stratification must bring this peculiar aspect to light in order to understand the cultural dynamics of the contemporary structure of social stratification in the Near East (cf. Eisenstadt, 1973).

Fourthly, without some knowledge of these issues a systematic study of social stratification is not possible and indeed has not been carried out. Therefore, I would like to stress at the outset that the treatment of social stratification in the societies under study is rather sketchy and highly tentative. The objective of a historical survey of this kind is designed primarily to systematize some relevant data made available by recent investigations dealing with previously obscure aspects of history, social structure, economic relations and the like.

But before we embark on our task, a brief statement concerning the conceptual and methodological scheme and the terminology utilized is in order.

PRELIMINARY STUDIES IN SOCAL STRATIFICATION IN ARAB COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

Social stratification is a structured system of social inequalities, which constitutes the core of the social structure of historical societies. A vast body of theoretical and empirical research has shown that such structured inequalities serve both as an organizing principle subsuming stability and as a mechanism of social change.¹ *

The validity of this statement applies to developed and underdeveloped societies in general. But it is also equally valid that the social structure and cultural context of developed and underdeveloped societies are substantially different, and hence the proposition that the stratification system of these societies function in significantly different patterns is not yet completely clarified.²

The present preliminary studies are a contribution to the investigation of compara-

tive social stratification. The primary purpose of these studies is to sketch out the historical development of the contemporary social stratification system in the Arab countries of the Near East.³

We cannot but confess that the task we have set ourselves to accomplish is enormous indeed, but the effort is certainly warranted for several important reasons. First, we have an extensive mass of relevant information and historical data which have remained widely dispersed, uncatalogued, and unexplored, giving rise to confusion and controversy. When Professor Polk (in Polk and Chambers, 1968:25) commented on the state of research on the nineteenth century Middle East, that "we are still dealing more with archeology than history" he was accurately characterizing the state of our knowledge in this particular field of study.

* Note: Direct references are located in the text (with year of publication and page numbers). Footnotes and detailed references will be found at the end of the text, followed by bibliographical listings.

ABSTRACT

This treatise attempts to fill a serious gap in the understanding of the evolution and dynamics of the social stratification system in the Arab countries of the Near East. It reviews the main aspects of the literature on the subject, then it proceeds to analyze the evolution of the stratification system in the light of the two basic concepts : "division of labour" and "structural mobility," and in accordance with the "principle of periodization taken as a methodologically guiding principle.

Consequently, and on the basis of the "Cultural continuity," and the "structural discontinuities", this treatise identifies and studies three major historical periods in the development of social stratification in the Arab countries of the Near East :

- i. The classical Period, which covers the rise, formation, fragmentation and decline of the Islamic Empire.
- ii. The Intermediate Period, which extends from the establishment of the Ottoman Empire to the Midnineteenth century.
- iii. The Modern Period, which begins with the European Colonial penetration into the Arab countries to post Second World War

This treatise establishes the fact that the social stratification system of each period constitutes a legitimate unit of comparison. Thus it shows, in past that the " stasis thesis" wich claims that Asian societies have no history is an oversimplified misconception.

The treatise describes, and analyses, the various social classes (strata and substrata) in each of the three above-mentioned periods : The Origin of each strata, its role, its function, its structure, its composition, the elements that constitute it and the sources from which these elements are recruited. This reveals the developments and changes that took place in the stratification system, and throws some light on the contemporary social stratification system in the Arab countries in the Near East.

ANNALS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS, Volume No. 1, 1980
FIFTH MONOGRAPH (In Sociology)

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	5
BASIC CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY	10
THE RELEVANCE OF MARX AND WEBER	11
THE METHODOLOGICAL SCHEME:	
THE PRINCIPLE OF PERIODIZATION	14
I. The Socio-Economic Origins of the Classical Period :	17
The Transition from the Tribal to the Autocratic Model -	18
Strata Formation in the Classical Period .	21
The Dynamics of the Classical Stratification System .	24
Structural Aspects of Class and Strata Cleavages- Some Unsettled Issues .	29
II. The Intermediate Period : The Ottoman Empire :	36
The Ottoman Land Regime and Strata Formation .	38
The Bureaucratic Structure and Strata Organization .	40
III. The Modern Period: Social Stratification and Peripheral Capitalism	46
The Socio-Economic Origins of the Modern Period	47
The Process of Stratification: Structural Mobility .	51
Occupational Classification and the Composition of Various Strata .	55
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	62
FOOTNOTES	70
REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY	102

ANNALS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS

Issued by the College of Arts, Kuwait University

Volume No. 1, 1980

FIFTH MONOGRAPH IN SOCIOLOGY

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ANNALS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS

Issued by the College of Arts, Kuwait University

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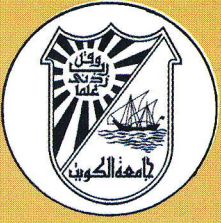
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