Perspectives

Comparative Perspectives on Central Asia and the Middle East in Social Anthropology and the Social Sciences (Part 1 of 2)

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This article argues that there is a need to examine critically the applicability to Central Asia of concepts and models developed in social anthropology in general and especially in the anthropology of the Middle East. It highlights some of the shortcomings in current approaches by focusing on the notion of segmentary lineage organization as a basic feature of tribal societies. Recently not only social anthropologists but also others, including political scientists, have applied this concept in analyzing political systems in post-Soviet Central Asia. Indeed, the notion of political system could be expanded to include the historical relations of tribal societies with states and empires in the region, as well as the clientelism prevalent in Central Asian politics today.

The emergence of a genuinely comparative approach may be illustrated by examining two key concepts in the Western tradition of social anthropology that social scientists in other disciplines now apply to Central Asia. These concepts are "tribe and state" and "segmentary lineage organization in tribal societies." This discussion will also show why interdisciplinary approaches are necessary, particularly as other disciplines increasingly seek to make use of concepts from social anthropology.

The General Situation of Social Anthropological Studies of Central Asia

Social anthropology occupies an undeservedly marginal position within Central Asian studies, a field that was itself for decades a blind spot in Western scholarship. Social anthropology's delay in beginning to create knowledge in the field of Central Asian studies contrasts with the growing number of studies published by scholars from other disciplines. The number of publications devoted to the social anthropology of Central Asia is fairly limited, its scientific community is somewhat small, and the participation of social anthropologists in international meetings devoted to the region has in recent years been relatively restricted. Also, the position of social anthropologists studying Central Asia within social anthropology as a whole is rather peripheral. Beyond these weaknesses lie questions about which theoretical and methodological approaches proper to social anthropology would be appropriate to Central Asian studies.

There are a number of reasons for the weak state of the field today, related both to its history and to its present situation. For decades, with few exceptions, Soviet Central Asia remained closed to Western social anthropologists. The handful of Western social anthropologists who carried out research in Soviet Central Asia included Bacon (a few weeks in the 1930s and the 1960s) and Schoeberlein (extended fieldwork during 1986-91), while some other anthropologists (e.g., Aberle, Krader) did research with Soviet émigré groups and Soviet sources; a few also worked in other parts of Soviet Eurasia, including Dragadze in Georgia, Balzer in Sakha and Humphrey in Buryatia. [1] Scholars such as Bacon, Balzer and Humphrey were able to do fieldwork only in the context of officially controlled visits or within the framework of short-term field expeditions organized by Soviet ethnographers.

Prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union, Soviet ethnographers and anthropologists undertook most of the research in the region. Their research findings were usually published only in Russian, a language not widely used by Western social anthropologists. Consequently, their work found only a small readership in the best of cases. Also, a

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[1] See bibliography for a listing of works by these scholars and those mentioned in subsequent sections of this article.

very limited number of Soviet anthropological works on Central Asia were translated into other languages; Khazanov (1984) is the only prominent exception, though it is based more on history than anthropological field research. Western scholars, such as Dunn and Dunn (1974), Balzer (1990) and Dragadze (1984), introduced their colleagues to the research of their Soviet counterparts through edited volumes. Western journals such as *Soviet Anthropology and Archaeology* and *Central Asian Review* offered English translations of Soviet research in the social anthropology of Central Asia, while occasional articles appeared in edited volumes (e.g., Basilov (1984), Bikzhanova (1961), Dzhabbarov (1973-1975), Esbergenov (1964), Karmysheva (1981), Lobacheva (1967, 1969, 1975-1976), Snesarev (1958, 1963 a, 1963 b, 1971-1977, 1971 a), Zhdanko (1978).

However, the Russian language was not the only problem preventing Western scholars from considering the research results of their Soviet counterparts. The strength of ideological strictures on scholars and institutions in the Soviet Union led most Western social anthropologists to neglect or reject outright the research results of their Soviet colleagues, based on assumptions that research results were biased. The combination of limited access to the region, the language problem, and the neglect of Soviet research findings had both institutional and theoretical implications. Whereas Western social anthropology had well established research traditions regarding other regions of the world, research on Central Asia remained outside of mainstream social anthropology. Very few institutions had a long-standing commitment to the region, and few scholars could claim a background in fieldwork there. It follows that their research findings seldom shaped the discourse in social anthropology. Among the exceptions were Bacon's (1958) concept of the *obok*, Krader's (1955a, 1968, 1978, 1980) reflections on the emergence of the early state, work by Lindholm (1986) on kinship and marriage and by Barfield (1991) on tribe and state relations.

Only since the early 1990s have larger numbers of social anthropologists shifted their interest to the newly independent states of Central Asia and adjacent regions. Among senior European social anthropologists, those moving into Central Asian research often initially had carried out research on the Middle East and on Turkey in particular. Increased interest in Central Asia has led to a growth in curricula, institutions, and research

grants. CESS formed in North America, the European Society for Central Asian Studies [ESCAS] was established, and so were various special programs at American and European universities. The Central Asia Research Initiative of the Open Society Institute deserves mention for offering forums targeted at MA and PhD students in Central Asian studies. The Central Asian research program of the newly founded Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/Salle, Germany, also is noteworthy (Max Planck Institute 2003). This rise in institutional resources has been accompanied by an increasing number of conferences, workshops, and panels at international conferences.

Topics concerning Central Asia that are under current or recent investigation by Western social anthropologists, and by other scholars who study similar themes, include mahalla structure, gender issues, religion and ritual and their place in post-Soviet Central Asian societies and politics, nomadism, NGOs, socioeconomic and environmental problems and survival strategies, sociopolitical transformation processes, identity questions and nationalism, migration, diaspora, and transnationalism.[2]

Yet despite rising interest and the removal of many earlier obstacles hindering research, the number of social anthropologists doing research on Central Asia is still small as compared to other regions. One important general reason for the small number of social anthropological publications and research projects — as compared to studies and publications by political scientists — derives from methodological approaches in social anthropology. Whereas political scientists refer mainly to quantitative and macrolevel data, social anthropologists conventionally pursue in-depth analysis based on long-term field studies to collect qualitative data.

Not only is the social anthropological research approach very time-consuming, but it also requires other resources. Depending on the topic and the chronological period, an individual social anthropologist may need to know Persian/Tajik, Chaghatay, modern Turkic languages, and Russian in order to collect data and use vast local archival resources, including results of Soviet period social anthropological research. Moreover, in order to

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[2] For a specific listing of recent scholarly works on these topics, see the section immediately following this article's text, p. 9.

make good use of local anthropological studies, the Western anthropologist of Central Asia must be well versed in Soviet anthropological approaches.

Social anthropologists working on Central Asia still face a number of other challenges, mainly related to the marginal position of the social anthropology of Central Asia in anthropology as a whole, but also connected with mainstream anthropology's recent tendency to deemphasize the importance of fieldwork, especially in "unexplored" places, due to the popularity of "post-modernist" approaches. It is to these more particular obstacles that I now turn.

The Development and Fate of General Anthropological Concepts of State and Tribe

Conventionally a tribe has been defined as "a culturally homogeneous, non-stratified society possessing a common territory, without centralized political or legal institutions, whose members were linked by extended kinship ties, ritual obligations, and mutual responsibilities for the resolution of disputes" (Winthrop 1991: 307). Tribes were seen as primitive, illiterate, isolated and self-sufficient societies. Mainstream anthropology initially regarded tribe and state as successive stages of sociopolitical organization. Service (1975), for example, distinguished among bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states; Fried (1967) differentiated egalitarian, ranked, stratified, and state societies; and Flannery (1972) saw a combination of egalitarian societies, chiefdoms, and stratified societies. In all these schemes, the crucial elements distinguishing different sociopolitical formations and access to resources were kinship ties and their function in the political domain: in general, bands, tribes, and chiefdoms were defined as societies and political entities in which kinship ties shaped politics; states, on the other hand, were seen as polities in which kinship ties had ceased to play a role. Closely related to this perspective was the distinction between stateless and state societies (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940).

Moreover, following a model from Evans-Pritchard's (1940) findings on the Nuer, the segmentary lineage organization was considered as the ideal-type for conceptualizing the structure of tribal societies. In Evans-Pritchard's view, lineages integrated people horizontally by establishing their mutual relations on the basis of descent from a common ancestor. Such lineages acted as corporate

groups but were subject to processes of fusion and fission, and they lacked a distinctive leadership. These societies tended to segment along genealogical lines without creating a hierarchy among the different segmented lineages. These relations, defined by genealogy, established the pattern that linked individuals and groups to one another. (Other mechanisms for creating social cohesion might include such affiliations as secret societies, cult associations, and age classes.)

Another of Evans-Pritchard's assumptions that other anthropologists adopted widely was that segmentary tribal societies were acephalous and more or less egalitarian. In cases of conflict and need, specific blocs of individuals or groups would join against other blocs similarly formed. This mechanism was called "complementary opposition." Conceding that leading lineages might emerge, the proponents of this ideal-type of tribal society nevertheless believed that complementary opposition prevented the crystallization of strong and permanent leadership. Evans-Pritchard's focus on genealogical descent as the guiding principle of social organization gained enormous momentum, especially in the "descent theory" school.

The concept of tribal societies, indeed the very term itself, came under heavy criticism from various directions. First, the assumed isolation of tribal societies was called into question (Wolf 1966: 1). Second, how to define tribes was itself at issue. Helm (1968), for example, argued that no single definition could ever cover the wide range of different sociopolitical formations originally subsumed under the term "tribe." Third, in contrast with the received assumptions about egalitarianism, attention was drawn to tribal groups exhibiting a clear hierarchy in their social relations: it was found that different lineages or clans could be ranked according to their genealogical position relative to the group's real or fictive ancestor; these were called "conical clans" (Winthrop 1991: 32, Barfield 1991). Fourth, in view of the absence of structural and functional differentiation between tribes and other kin-based societies such as local communities, the very distinctiveness of the internal organizing principle of tribal societies was itself brought under criticism. As a result, many anthropologists started using the designation "ethnic group" in preference to "tribe," refusing even to mention the latter term.

Other scholars expanded the analysis of tribes by introducing various subtypes and by ceasing to focus on genealogical ties, which had earlier been

considered the backbone of tribal societies. Research came to focus on other mechanisms that shaped politics in this type of sociopolitical entity, such as the complementary character of various forms of associations. This approach included the analysis of organizational forms providing horizontal links between individuals and groups, such as secret societies, sodalities, networks, and age classes. Another major approach dealt with marriage as a way of creating social relations, not only in the sense of Lévi-Straussian alliance theory but also as political tools to create or to reaffirm existing political alliances (Bruck 1989; Cole 1984; Gingrich 1989; Peters 1990).

In contrast to the notion of a tribe, a typical anthropological definition of the state was "a society characterized by autonomous political institutions, sovereign control of territory, centralized appropriation of surplus, and support of authority through legitimate force" (Winthrop 1991: 272). Social anthropology originally focused primarily on the characteristics of early state formation, and numerous theories sought to address the motive forces behind it. Anthropological theories on the origin of the state were, like those concerning tribes, in the beginning highly conceptual and ideal-typical. For example, Carneiro (1970) argued that warfare represented the main origin of state formation. However, subsequent research led to a re-evaluation of the state as well: anthropologists abandoned monocausal approaches to explaining state formation. Scholars such as Claessen and Skalnik (1978) suggested that state formation was a long-term process. Such an approach could differentiate between the inchoate, i.e., nascent, state and its transitional and mature developments. Research on more recent state formations dealt with the problems of nation building in the post-colonial era.

In general, however, social anthropology did not consider the political sphere in its own right. As Seymour-Smith remarked, "while analysis of the political dimension has formed an important part of the majority of anthropological studies, this dimension has usually been interpreted as an aspect of or as embedded in other domains such as kinship, religion, economy, and so on, and has been little analyzed for the features of a political system per se" (Seymour-Smith 1986: 226). When anthropology eventually began to study the political domain, network analysis and action anthropology made the most significant contributions. These approaches analyze political action and interaction, as well as authority and power structures and the question of

legitimacy, by locating the individual in the framework of social organization. (An excellent precursor is Barth (1959).)

Anthropological reasoning on tribal and state societies became more realistic. Ideal-typical models were rejected in favor of more complex and multidimensional approaches, and earlier evolutionary concepts were abandoned. It was especially the anthropology of the Middle East that made crucial contributions to the current understanding of tribe and state in anthropology. Since this represents the background of a good number of senior social anthropologists now engaged in studies of Central Asia, it is to that subject that I now turn.

Concepts of Tribe and State in the Anthropology of the Middle East

The coexistence of tribe and state, together with their oft-observed mutual influences, motivated in anthropology a severe critique of the formerly prevailing evolutionary conceptualization, according to which tribes and states were two stages in the evolution of sociopolitical organization (Service 1975, Fried 1967). Among those who have argued that tribe and state cannot be analyzed in mutual isolation are Tapper (1983, 1991), Beck (1991), Barfield (1991), Gellner (1983, 1991), and Barth (1959). Tapper (1991: 51-52) and Gellner (1983: 438-39) in particular recognized that tribes and states have coexisted for centuries in the Middle East, and that the majority of the governing dynasties in the region originated from tribal backgrounds. These writers also address significant and interesting problems about the conceptualization and definition of tribal societies, the role of Islam and holy men in the formation of state entities, the cyclical model of dynasties, the variations of political structures in tribal societies, and related subjects.

So Western social anthropology of Middle Eastern societies rejected the aforementioned notion of tribal isolation. It was argued, instead, that research must focus on the interconnectedness between state and tribe, and on their complex and multiple interrelations. Indeed, Tapper (1983: 48-51, 1991: 66-71) has shown that the strategy applied by each depends upon factors, both external and internal, characterizing the respective political system and producing differentiated responses in the given tribe or state.

The interdependence of tribe and state became, indeed, one of the major postulates of the modern anthropology of the Middle East. Beck (1991: 191), focusing on Iran, remarks that "tribes and states need to be defined in relation to each other," while Tapper, referring to Afghanistan and Iran, comments (1983: 67) that "there is 'state' within every tribe, and 'tribe' within every state; state is partly defined in terms of tribe [and] tribe in terms of state." From this it follows that tribe and state may be considered, each, as a political system that interacts and changes with the other. For example, the state might transform the tribe and operate with institutions borrowed from the tribal systems, using tribal chiefs to become intermediaries between the tribe and the state (Salzman 1973, 1974). Similarly, the tribe may seek to undermine the authority of the state by manipulating state agencies and using the infrastructures of the state for its own benefits (Salzman 1973, 1974; Hager 1983; Tapper 1983: 53-54, 1991: 66-67; Beck 1991: 216-19). The use of tribal leaders as instruments of the state creates a double role for the former, who act as "intermediaries, mediators and brokers," thereby constituting a link between the tribal and the state system. Yet at the same time, it provokes alterations within the tribe itself, since the power and influence of tribal leaders may be strengthened through their close relations with the state, permitting them in turn to develop relations with former tribal associates that are more like patron-client relations (Hager 1983: 94-95; Salzman 1973, 1974: 206, 2004; Beck 1991: 190-194; Tapper 1991: 70). These mutual and reciprocal influences thus lead to permanent changes in those social formations labeled as states or as tribes.

Another major contribution of the anthropology of the Middle East to the general debate on tribe and state was the rejection of the term "state." In contrast to the general assumption that states are characterized "by the existence of a centralized government, which has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force by way of conducting public affairs within a specific territory" (Seymour-Smith 1986: 266), most Middle Eastern states do not exhibit these features. In spite of enhanced centralization and nation building efforts, particularly during the twentieth century, Middle Eastern states have rarely been successful in monopolizing political power and in penetrating society as a whole with their institutions. Likewise, attempts to create unity and a common patriotic feeling among their citizens have shown only limited results. At best, state power and its institutions (administration, jurisdiction, and the capacity to take reprisals) controlled the capital — the seat of the ruler — and its immediate surroundings. The rest of the territory, by contrast, enjoyed extensive autonomy and was only indirectly bound to the center of power.

Under these power relations the state — which very frequently lacked sufficient economic and military means, skilled manpower, and a comprehensive ideology — was usually confronted with the problem of how to neutralize other contenders for power. Those controlling the state thus found themselves under permanent pressure to balance their own interests and the interests of those segments of society (tribes, non-tribal local groups, etc.) they aimed to control. The relationship between the state and the tribes living within its boundaries was especially crucial in this respect. This was so not just because many Middle Eastern states emerged from a tribal background. It was so also because the tribes remained militarily and politically effective opponents of the state, despite increasing attempts to centralize power in the hands of the state. The contradictory nature of the state's claim to monopolize power was further hampered by the frequent disunity and struggle for power within the ruling elite of the state itself, whether these were dynastic quarrels, for example, or quasi-bureaucratic conflicts among the state's administrative and military personnel.

These newer notions on the nature of tribe and state and their mutual interdependence have gained wide acceptance among anthropologists working on the Middle East and beyond. To summarize, states in the Middle East did not resemble the centralized, monopolistic polities conventionally defined as states. Gellner (1991: 109, 119), Tapper (1991: 69), Beck (1991: 192, 218), and others have proposed terms like "proto-state," "tribal state," or "tribal quasi state" to label these state-like political entities in the Middle East, so as to take into account the great impact of tribal structures on state structures and the lack of pervasive, monopolistic institutions. However, the assumption that all Islamic tribal peoples are fundamentally similar — especially in having egalitarian, segmentary, and genealogically defined sociopolitical structure — led those notions to be employed in a wider regional context, in particular in studies on Central Asia and Afghanistan. Yet comparative studies (Lindholm 1986; Barfield 1991) have demonstrated the

existence of significant structural differences within Islamic societies. I turn now to this question.

Problems in Application: Barfield's Analysis of Segmentary Lineage Organization in Central Asia

Some Western social anthropologists currently studying Central Asia, especially most of the senior ones, come from a background in Middle Eastern and/or Islamic studies. Their perspective on Central Asian societies is often colored as a result, so that they frequently seek to apply to Central Asia — either implicitly or explicitly — concepts and theories developed in anthropological studies of the Middle East. However, to do so assumes not only that Islam had a major impact on the pre-Soviet societies of Central Asia, but also that the whole Muslim world exhibits a degree of cultural uniformity. Many in the field of Islamic studies have acutely criticized the latter assumption — that there exists one uniform Islam — yet only a few anthropological studies seem so far to have highlighted the problematic nature of such an approach. Perhaps the most notable example of this procedure is the treatment of segmentary lineage organization as the backbone of kinship and politics in society. (Another is the prevalent dichotomy between "orthodox" and "folk" Islam.)

Lindholm (1986) and Barfield (1991) have compared kinship structures and tribe and state interactions in the Middle East and Central Asia (specifically Afghanistan), and they have illustrated the existence of major differences between the two regions' social and political relations, the common importance of Islamic traditions notwithstanding. Using Lindholm's comparison of tribal cultures of the Middle East and Central Asia as a starting point for his own analysis, Barfield highlights the presence of two distinct types of tribal cultural traditions with different styles of political organization.

The first type, egalitarian lineage groups, is dominant in the Middle East. These tribes are characterized by a strong emphasis on genealogical ties as an organizing principle for social and political relations, by a lack of perennial leadership due to complementary opposition, and by the prevailing occurrence of close kin marriages leading to the formation of rather inward-oriented lineages with little or no potential for creating large-scale alliances. In total these egalitarian tribes correspond significantly to the segmentary lineage model,

briefly described above, which had for a long time dominated in Western anthropology.

The second type, hierarchical Turko-Mongolian tribes, prevailed in Central Asia. Here "kinship terms made distinctions between elder and younger brothers, junior and senior generations, and noble and common clans. This created a structure of nested groups, called a conical clan, in which all patrilineally related members of common descent groups were ranked and segmented hierarchically along genealogical lines" (Barfield 1991: 164). This culturally accepted legitimacy of a hierarchical kinship organization not only rendered possible the emergence of strong, little contested leaders, but also allowed for the crystallization of elevated lineages from which hereditary leadership was drawn, producing dynasties of unparalleled duration.

The hierarchical cultural traditions in Central Asia provided the basis for a much less disputed leadership than the egalitarian cultural tradition of Middle Eastern tribes. Prevailing rules of exogamy and an emphasis on reciprocal marriages in Central Asia allowed the creation of "patterns of alliances that crosscut the seemingly rigid set of patrilineal relationships within a conical clan..." (Barfield 1991: 164) and helped to closely bind neighboring non-patrilineally related groups. Tribal leaders' polygynous marriages supported the incorporation of unrelated tribes into regular relationships.

Contrasting these two types of tribal cultures and the two styles of political organization — egalitarianism and hierarchy — Barfield then analyzed two manifestations of the state: large empires and small regional states. Empires "were centralized states that encompassed a wide variety of peoples and places whose resources could be mobilized against tribal peoples within the state and on its borders. Their political structures are remarkably stable, with long-lived dynasties and large standing armies." Regional states "were organized around a far more limited set of resources that could support only relatively weak military forces ... Their political structures were inherently unstable and subject to regular collapse" (Barfield 1991: 155).

This distinction of two types of states led Barfield to look more closely into the foundations of the large Central Asian confederations. Similar to the Middle Eastern tribes, relationships among clans or lineages in Central Asia were closely tied to kinship roles. On the higher level of supratribal political organization, however, the ties were more

political than genealogical. Here, it was mainly the acceptance of hereditary leaders who usually originated from long established ruling lineages, and the occurrence of a variety of non-kin based loyalty patterns (e.g., the swearing of exclusive loyalty to the supreme leader by his followers), that created the potential for unifying large groups of people. Local lineages, clans, and tribes of various origins became the building blocks of political-military coalitions that formed enduring tribal confederations bound together by powerful leaders.

However, Barfield argued that the hierarchy of the Turko-Mongolian social structure does not fully account for the rise of strong leadership and enduring tribal confederacy. Another major element in securing cooperation and support was the ability to deliver goods and trade opportunities for the members of the confederacy. The predatory policy of the tribal rulers towards their neighboring sedentary states (especially China) provided them with tremendous wealth that they redistributed among their followers.

The confederations that eventually formed large empires emerged due to the relationship of the Turko-Mongolian tribes with their sedentary neighbors. "To deal with these powerful sedentary states, tribal societies had to organize their own state structures of sufficient power to force their neighbors to treat them as equals." The imperial confederacies thus could force their wealthier neighbors to trade with them. Barfield therefore concluded that "politically and financially, the imperial confederacy had its roots in foreign relations, not in the evolution of social organization on the steppe itself" (Barfield 1991: 167).

In sum, Barfield contrasted two ideal models: the egalitarian-lineage based groups, which he associated with the formation of regional states prevailing in Arabia and North Africa; and the Turko-Mongolian tribal confederation, which he associated with Central Asia and upon their spread further to the west with the creation of imperial states on the Iranian and Anatolian plateaus. While Turko-Mongolian tribes formed predatory confederacies, Arabian tribes "established more symbiotic relationships with regional states with whom they shared a common cultural background" (Barfield 1991: 180).

Barfield's focus on structural differences in the cultural traditions of tribal societies and states in the Middle East and in Central Asia was an important contribution to the understanding of tribe and state relations as a whole. However, by creating a new (ideal) model — the hierarchical Turko-Mongolian tribe — that stands in sharp contrast to the prevailing model of the egalitarian Middle Eastern tribe, the combinations of egalitarian and hierarchical patterns in the sociopolitical framework of the region were once again left out of the equation. Furthermore, other equally relevant aspects such as specific historical developments, ethnicity, and nation building were not taken into account or only treated to a very limited extent in these models (Nölle 1997; Rasuly-Paleczek 1999). These issues will be addressed in the second section of this article (in CESR 5/1, Winter 2006), along with potentially stronger models, and proposals for new directions in Central Asian social anthropology.

Barfield's study demonstrates that it is highly problematic to undertake the wholesale transfer of models developed in the social anthropology of the Middle East to Central Asia. Many Western social anthropologists are aware of this difficulty, but social scientists from other disciplines (above all political science) and also many Central Asian scholars may use some of the assumptions arising from Middle Eastern scholarship for explaining Central Asia, perhaps without full awareness of the controversies over models such as "segmentary lineage organization" within social anthropology.

As outlined above, the concept of segmentary lineage organization was developed in social anthropology in the 1940s (Evans-Pritchard 1940). The political scientist Geiss has used it in order to attempt to come to terms with the political system in post-Soviet Central Asia. The idea that segmentary lineage organization was the basic feature of tribal societies was for a long time widely accepted and used as a fundamental category in the study of particular features of different tribal societies. Although Western anthropology has deeply criticized this concept more recently, nevertheless Western political scientists employ it widely in their studies of leadership, factionalism, and alignment structures in Central Asia. Other Western political scientists (Carlisle 2001, Collins 1999, 2002, Schatz 2004, 2005) have used the term "clan" as the basis of analyses of post-Soviet political systems in Central Asia. Even many Central Asian scholars, sometimes driven to distill their "genuine" cultural heritage and identity, apply the concept of segmentary lineage organization when studying their own pre-Soviet history, as a means to reject Soviet traditions in their respective scholarly disciplines. Likewise, scholars in Central Asia often look into

models developed in Western social anthropology to fill the theoretical and methodological vacuum that emerged after the rejection of the formerly prevailing Soviet ones.

Key issues of research in social anthropology have focused on the concepts of tribe and state. Studies of nearly every historical period and every global region have produced insights into tribal and state structures. Other social anthropological concepts used outside anthropology, in particular by historians, include the concepts of tribe and state relations (in the works of, e.g., Nölle 1997; Grevemeyer 1982, 1987; Holzwarth 1980, 1990). Approaches to ethnicity and identity formation first developed in anthropology are also applied by various scholarly disciplines such as history, sociology and political science. The concluding part of this article will continue the discussion of problems of applying concepts developed in the social anthropology of the Middle East to Central Asia.

Selected Recent Works in the Social Anthropology of Central Asia by Topic:

1. Mahalla structure (Abramson 1998; Koroteyeva and Perepelkin 1990; Rasanayagam 2002, 2003; Massicard and Trevisani 2000; Pétric 2002; Sievers 2002).

2. Gender issues (Kandiyoti 1998b; Bellér-Hann 2001; Tett 1994).

3. Religion and ritual and their place in post-Soviet Central Asian societies and politics, especially Islam and its diverse manifestations (Poliakov 1992; Privratsky 1997, 2001, 2002; Baldauf 1989; Bellér-Hann 2001, 2004; Shahrani 1991; Fathi 2004; Schoeberlein 2001).

4. Nomadism and its present significance (Barfield 1981, 1993; Finke 1995, 2004, Forthcoming; Finke, Robinson, and Hamann 2000; Humphrey 1983; Humphrey and Sneath 1996, 1999; Kerven 2003; Khazanov 1978b, 1984, 1990; Khazanov and Ginat 1998; Khazanov and Wink 2001; Shahrani 1978, 1979, 1986).

5. NGOs and their activities (Berg 2003, 2004; Sievers 2000; Liu 1997).

6. Socioeconomic and environmental problems and survival strategies (Finke 2000, 2003; Finke and Sancak 2001, 2002, Forthcoming; Hilgers 2002; Kandiyoti 1998a, 1998b, 2002; Rasanayagam 2003; Werner 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2004; Werner et al. 2001; Zanca 1999; Sievers 2003).

7. Sociopolitical transformation processes (Liu 2002).

8. Identity questions and nationalism (Baldauf 1991, 1995; Esenova 1998, 2002; Ilkhamov 2002, Forthcoming; Khazanov 1995; Privratsky 1997; Schoeberlein-Engel 1994; Shalinsky 1979, 1982, 1986, 1994; Rasuly-Paleczek 1993, 1998, 1999, 2001; Liu 1997).

9. Migration, diaspora, and transnationalism (Monsutti 2000, 2005; Darieva 1997, 2004).

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