Encyclopædia Iranica

ANTHROPOLOGY
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Published: December 15, 1985
Last Updated: February 27, 2013

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ANTHROPOLOGY (New Persian *mardomšenāsī*), social and cultural, in Iran and Afghanistan (see also Afghanistan iv). Anthropology as an Iranological discipline evolved from a Western interest in non-Western and especially non-literate societies; over the past fifty years it has developed a holistic and relativistic approach to the ethnographic description of life in small, largely face-to-face communities, and to the analysis and explanation of variation in human experience generally. Iranians who have turned to anthropology more recently, primarily as a framework for the study of life in their own country, have tended to treat it as a branch of sociology and apply it only to the study of tribes and of rural material culture. The terms "social" and "cultural" derive from the historical distinction between focuses on interaction (behavior) and ways of thinking (culture), though they are not always easily distinguishable in recent work. The term "ethnology," used mainly in Europe, is identified with a tradition that has paid particular attention to material culture. For convenience, in this article the simple and comprehensive term "anthropology" is used for work from all three traditions. (Physical anthropology is not included here.)

As ethnography became professionalized in the first half of this century, "participant observation" as a research method and "culture" as a heuristic concept became the twin hallmarks of the discipline. By the 1950s anthropology had begun to take the whole world into its purview—adding, first, non-Western literate societies, such as Iran, and, finally, Western society itself. During the 70s anthropology in Iran underwent spectacular growth and

partial transformation. Although it still bears some of the burden of its history, this burden is only partly shared by the still small but growing number of Iranian and other non-Western practitioners—who are, however, so far only sparsely represented in the literature. Choice of subject matter during this decade has shifted from early emphasis on pastoral nomads and tribal minorities to agriculture, rural-urban relations, and urban and national life. Most recently some anthropologists have attempted to explain and interpret the difference in experience between the majority modern urban cultures of Iran and the West—joining the historian in the hermeneutics of a literary tradition.

This entry reviews the contribution of anthropology to the study of Iran in three sections: (1) the evolving library of ethnographic description, by ethnic and geographical community and by social and cultural category; (2) the record of social and cultural analysis, synthesis, and interpretation; (3) institutional development. A representative selection of published work is listed in the bibliography.

Ethnographic documentation. The most important anthropological contribution to the study of Iran lies in the ethnographic work accumulated in the second half of this century providing descriptive detail about communities and aspects of social life which have lain beyond the reach of historians and orientalists. It builds out not only from documentary and textual sources, but also from the amateur writings of foreign travelers from earlier periods. The first professional work in the Iranian area was carried out in the 1930s by anthropologists representing each of the three traditions identified above. Bacon, from the American tradition of cultural anthropology, visited the Kazakhs in Soviet Kazakhstan in 1933-34 and the Hazāra in Mašhad and Quetta in 1938-39; Feilberg, a Dane working in the European ethnological tradition, visited the Lor in Iran in 1935; and Leach, from the English tradition of social anthropology, carried out a five-week field survey among the Kurds in Iraq in 1938. Leach intended to return for a full-length study, but his plans were interrupted by the political developments in Europe. No more work was attempted until 1951 when Barth worked for six months among the Kurds in association with an archeological expedition from the Oriental Institute (University of Chicago). Beginning in the 50s also other Danish scholars, from the National Museum in Copenhagen and the Danish Scientific Missions to Afghanistan (1953-55), worked in the eastern, central, and southwestern provinces of Afghanistan (Ferdinand), and in Lorestān (Edelberg) and

Kurdistan (Hansen).

Barth went on to work first among the Yūsofzay Paštūns (Pathans) in Swat (1959b and c, 1969), then with the Bāṣerī, a Persian-speaking tribe of the Ḵamsa confederacy in Fārs (1959a, 1960, 1961, 1964b). Later, he stayed briefly with the Marri Balūč (already studied by Pehrson, whose data were published posthumously by Barth in 1966) and some of their neighbors in northeast Pakistani Balūčestān (1964a and c). Barth's 1961 monograph inspired a generation of cadet anthropologists; between the early 60s and the mid-70s ethnographic research was carried out in most of the major tribal populations, especially among nomads, throughout the Iranian world, and written up as doctoral dissertations in America, England, France, Germany, and Iran. In the Zagros, from northwest to southeast, different tribes of the Baḵtīārī formed the subject of studies by Brooks, Digard, and Varǰāvand; Black worked among the Lor; Salzer, Afšār-Nāderī, Fazel, and Beck among different tribes of the Qašqāʾī; Wright in the Došmanzīārī section of the Mamasanī; Friedl and Löffler among the Boir Aḥmadī; Pourzal among the Barāftovī in Fārs (one of few examples of work on nomads not part of a larger confederacy); and Bradburd on the Komāčī, another small unfederated population in Kermān. Further east in 1963 N. and W. Swidler worked among the Brāhūī of Sarāvān, Jhalāwān, and Kacchi in Pakistan 1963-65; Spooner began a series of studies among the Balūč of Sarāvān (Iran) and Makrān in 1963; Salzman worked among the Šahnavāzī Balūč of the *sarḥadd* (Iran) starting in 1967; C. and S. Pastner among the Balūč of Panjgur (Pakistan) in 1969; and J. Bestor among the Kurds of the *sarḥadd* (Iran) in 1976. In Azarbaijan N. and R. Tapper began work with the Šāhsavan in 1963; Rudolph and van Bruinessen among the Kurds in Kurdistan (Iran) in the 60s and the 70s respectively; while in the northeast the Yomūd Turkman were studied by Irons starting in 1965, and the Göklen Turkman by Bates (briefly) in 1973; the Persian-speaking Tīmurī by Singer in 1970; and the Kurds in Khorasan by Peck in 1967. Lastly, in the far southeast of the Iranian world, among the Paštūns in Afghanistan Anderson worked with the Ḡilzī south of Kabul, Glatzer with the Nūrzī in Farāh, N. and R. Tapper with the Dorrānī in the north; in Pakistan Ahmed with the Moḥmand, and Lindholm with the Yūsofzī again in Swat—all in the 70s. Meanwhile, in the far northeast, in Badaḵšān Barfield studied an Arab group, and Shahrani worked among the Qirḡiz. Unlike the earlier work, most of this post-1960 ethnographic research is geared to the explanation of the form and process of the life of a particular community in relation to others, rather than coverage of the ethnographic map. It should, however, be noted that an ethnographic mapping project was

started by C.N.R.S. (Paris) in cooperation with the Anthropological Center of Iran (Ministry of culture, Tehran) in 1972 (Bromberger and Digard).

Although the greater part of the ethnographic effort in Iran so far has been concentrated on tribal and nomadic populations, interest in peasant and urban or national life increased in the latter half of the 70s. The first significant professional study of a non-tribal agricultural community was carried out in 1956-1957 in Garmsār, 100 km southeast of Tehran, by Alberts, whose dissertation (1963) remains the most comprehensive study of a village cluster. In 1959 Ṣafīnežad began research in Ṭālebābād, also in the Central Province, which led in 1345 Š./1966 to the most comprehensive study so far of a single village. As with tribal studies, towards the end of the 60s the number of projects increased and became more problem-oriented, leading to shorter publications. For example, Uberoi worked among Tajiks in Andarāb (Badaḵšān) 1959-61; during the 60s Canfield worked among the Hazāra, Centlivres in north Afghanistan, and Spooner in south and southwest Khorasan (1965, 1974a), while in Tehran J. Āl-e Aḥmad edited a series of community studies (Pūrkarīm, Sāʿedī, and Ṭāhbāz). In the 70s Antoun worked outside Gorgān, Shahrani with the Wāḵī in Badaḵšān, Kramer in Kermānšāhān, Goodell in Ḵūzestān, Horne, Martin, and Nyerges in Ḵār o Ṭowrān (Semnān province), and Hegland in Fārs.

Urban and national studies came later. Apart from the work of Amānallāhī on the Lūṭī and Loeb and Magnarella on Jewish communities, little attention has been paid by anthropologists to non-tribal minorities. Two studies have been made by anthropologists of the subsociety of an urban bazaar, one in a large city (Tehran, by Thaiss), the other in a small town (Tāškūrḡān, by Centlivres). The Western interest in the social position of women, which was reflected in anthropology generally, also found expression in ethnographic work in Iran. A. and Z. Ahmed, Beck, Hegland, N. Tapper, C. Pastner, and Wright wrote about the cultural significance of women's status and activities based on their tribal and rural work, and Bauer (south Tehran), Betteridge (Shiraz), J. and M. Gulick (Isfahan), and Fischer (Qom) treated women in the urban and national context. These latter were concerned less with particular communities than with particular dimensions of Iranian life. Fischer's major interest was in the dynamics of the religious establishment relative to the society as a whole. Other important examples of this more recent type of work include Thaiss on religion in the urban bazaar, Beeman on popular forms of entertainment and the role of the media, and both Beeman and Bateson on aspects of national

character.

Finally, the accelerating rate of social and economic change throughout the 70s, which culminated in revolution in 1978-79, also attracted ethnographic interest. For example, Antoun worked on aspects of rural modernization in Gorgān, Löffler in Boir Aḥmad, and Ahmed and Anderson among Paštūns. Beeman, Fischer, and Thaiss attended to changes and continuities in patterns of thought and documented metaphorical transformations between religious and political thinking in the events leading up to and through the revolution. From November 1979 to early 1984 (the time of writing) there was little or no ethnographic activity by either Iranians or foreigners.

Cultural and social analysis. The major purpose of most anthropologists working in Iran is to contribute not so much to Iranian studies as to a largely philosophical discourse concerning human experience and human nature in general. The consciousness of scientific problem has developed noticeably during the period under review. For example, the interest in material culture which provided the focus for Feilberg's work in the 30s was museological, and went into eclipse in the 50s and 60s. It reappeared in the 70s in the form of ethnoarchaeology (ethnography aiming to produce information that will facilitate the interpretation of archeological data) in work by Watson, Kramer, and Horne in America, and in a neo-Marxist framework in France, especially in work by Digard. The interest in documenting material culture for its own sake has, however, continued throughout in Iran (*Honar wa mardom*), and appears also in Löffler et al. (1967, 1974). The context of the early work by Bacon was an American interest in establishing the "culture areas" of the world. Insofar as it survived, this interest was subsumed in the 50s and 60s into cultural ecology, which was the term used at the time for work on the larger theoretical problem of explaining the relationship between human activities and natural processes. Cultural ecology played an important role in conditioning the work on nomads. The continuity between early and recent work is most obvious in the relationship between Leach, whose interests centered on social relations, and Barth (acknowledged in Barth 1953), and between Barth's work on the Bāṣerī and the numerous doctoral students who followed his leads in Iranian tribal populations in the ensuing decade and a half. This movement was, however, partly due also to an increased interest in the Middle East generally and the relative freedom for anthropological research at that time in Iran. The Zagros nomads were—and continue to be—a major attraction for anthropologists because (among other reasons) they still

provide opportunities for the study of social processes which are within the state but relatively unconstrained by its bureaucratic and other sanctions. The clarity and richness of Barth's presentation on one of these tribes were catalytic; a dozen or so students went to Iran to test hypotheses generated by his insights. They discovered a challenging diversity of structures and systems that continues to be reflected in the diversification of theoretical interests and the geographical spread of their work, of which only a small proportion has yet been published.

Barth explored the ecology of the Bāṣerī as a dimension of their economy. He posed a series of important questions: To what extent is nomadic pastoralism to be explained as adaptation to the opportunities and constraints of the natural environment, or to other factors, such as political and economic pressures? Can ecological theory be applied usefully to the analysis of nomadic social forms? Is nomadism an embarrassing anachronism? Can the territories traditionally used by nomads be put to better use by means of more modern technologies? Do nomads really abhor agricultural work? In what ways do nomadic and settled populations interact? Are they historically and culturally exclusive? If not, under what conditions does a nomad become a farmer and vice versa? Finally, what does it mean to be a nomad? Much preliminary light was thrown on these questions by Barth's own work, which despite criticisms still stands essentially uncontradicted; in fact it has been vindicated by the considerable literature that has now grown up after it. For example, W. Swidler established the connection between ecological conditions, the technological requirements of herding and pastoral production, and the social dynamics of camping groups. Spooner (1973) elaborated on Swidler's work by exploring how much of nomadic life both in the Iranian area and elsewhere might be explicable ecologically. This interest was pursued later in more detailed studies of herding technology as a problem of exploiting particular domesticated species with specific, biological requirements and behavioral characteristics (Casimir, Nyerges). More light has been thrown on the economics of nomadic pastoralism in Iran by Huntington, Kielstra, Black, and Bradburd. Pursuing the ecological dimension, Salzman (1972) showed how nomads may rely on a variety of unrelated resources and use their mobility to enable them to exploit each geographically separate resource at the appropriate season; he has also explored the relationship between ecological adaptation and political organization and the conditions under which nomads might modify their ecological adaptation and become sedentarized (see also Afšār-Nāderī). Irons (1974) showed that nomadism could be explained as a

response to political rather than ecological conditions, and that politically nomads were not necessarily egalitarian as had generally been supposed (1972, 1979). The political questions have been explored further by Irons, Salzman, and Black (Black-Michaud) among others. Finally, Irons has used his data on the Yomūd as a basis for participation in the sociobiological discussion of neo-Darwinian work on human female reproductive strategies (1983; Chagnon and Irons 1979). All of these students of nomadic populations have contributed to some degree to the discussion of the nature of tribalism in the Iranian area as a form of human society and its function and meaning in the lives of tribesmen and in history. This debate has been admirably summarized and synthesized by Tapper (1979a and c, 1983).

Barth also made the first statement about the cultural dependence and borrowing of tribal societies with his conceptualization of the Kurdish cultural "shatter zone" (1953). He pursued the idea further (though not in the same terms) in later publications, especially 1969, and it was taken up by Spooner, who argued on the one hand the vitality of tribal social forms and on the other the dependence and porosity of tribal society to concepts and values from the larger society (1973, 1984). Fazel, Irons, and Salzman have concentrated on the social and political aspects of the relationship between tribe and state in terms of the encapsulation of the tribal societies. The whole question has been explored in relation to the recent history of both Iran and Afghanistan by a number of anthropologists in papers edited and introduced by Tapper (1983). Perhaps the broadest significance of Barth's work lies in his ethnography and analysis of the Yūsofzay Paštūns of Swat (1959b). This work is based on his longest period of field research in the Iranian area, which was the basis of his doctoral dissertation. In his attempt to improve our ability to explain social process, Barth analyzed his Paštūn material—his purpose became clearer in later theoretical papers (e.g. 1966, 1981)—in terms of transactions and the pursuit of personal advantage rather than the then commonly used structural frameworks. The apparent (to the outsider) anarchy of Paštūn life seemed to lend itself to this approach, and during the 70s ecological interest in the tribes of the Zagros gave way to a more social interest in the transactional Paštūns. This process happened to coincide with some degree of opening up of first Afghanistan and then Pakistan to anthropological research. The Paštūns, perhaps the largest tribal population in the world (an estimated fifteen million on either side of the Afghan-Pakistan border), are now also one of the most studied, to the point where they have become a locus classicus in Iranian ethnography. But, more interesting, the attempt in this case has been not so

much to follow Barth's leads but to see what alternative explanations of Paštūn life might be sustained. As usual in anthropology, the possibilities are of two basic types: materialist (social) or mentalist (cultural). Apart from the interpretations of the ethnographers themselves (Ahmed, Anderson, Barth, Dani, Glatzer, Lindholm, N. and R. Tapper) two more have been offered: one Marxist (Asad), and one particularly promising new anthropological application of an old idea: the irrational value of heroism and the threat of violence in tribal society as complementary to the rational pursuit of personal advantage (Meeker). The debate started by Barth's work on the Paštūns is by no means over.

An enduring interest of anthropologists wherever they work (which is a function of their historical concern with small non-literate face-to-face groups) is in the dynamics of different cultural ways of defining, organizing, and manipulating kinship ties, arranging marriage, and forming primary social groups and associations. This interest can be seen to underlie much of the work discussed above, especially on tribe and camping group. It is also dealt with in the studies of agricultural village communities, by Alberts, Spooner (1965), and in most systematic detail by Uberoi. Uberoi demonstrates how the transfer of property (land) in marriage and inheritance bridges the problematical social gap between the domestic sphere of the family, which, though it is the only exclusive social grouping recognized in Islamic law, lasts only a generation, and the public identity of the male family heads of the community, who strive to maintain the integrity of their estates from generation to generation. Even so there is barely enough information available yet on the organization of kinship and marriage in non-tribal communities to allow comparison with tribal situations. Information on non-kinship forms of association is even more meager though the distribution and organization of the *bona*, a form of cooperative share-cropping team, has been studied in some detail by Ṣafīnežād. Other work on villages focuses on organizational problems of irrigation (Spooner 1974) and conservation (Martin 1980, 1982). Only Goodell has attempted a more ambitions task: to explain the mode of production in Iranian peasant agriculture in a comparative framework (1980).

The interpretation of women's roles includes examples among pastoral nomads of close cooperative domestic relationships with no single-sex groupings among the Qašqāʾī (Beck 1978) and conspicuous segregation leading to a women's sub-society among the Šāhsavan (N. Tapper 1978; see also 1980

where Tapper provides an important comparison of female values in the two societies she worked in, Šāhsavan and Dorrānī Paštūn). Several studies show that domestic male-female relationships are commonly disrupted by modernization and integration into the national society. The religious dimension has received relatively little attention. Information on the evil eye is summarized and interpreted by Spooner (l970, 1976). The Ḏekrī sect of Balūč in Makrān is discussed by C. and S. Pastner. Canfield discusses the symbolizing of sectarian differences in Afghanistan. Thaiss, who in 1971 and 1972 discussed religion in everyday life in Tehran, in 1978 argued that the belief system of Islam is used by the religious leaders as a "symbolic backdrop" for conceptualizing the processes of social change and modernization. By far the most ambitious anthropological work on religion in Iran is by Fischer (1980), who explores the religious discourse in Iranian Shiʿism from the historical development of the *madrasa* to the transformation of religious idiom into political protest and its role in the process of revolution at the end of the 1970s. The attention to metaphor in social life in these last two works is taken one stage further by Bateson (1979) in a discussion of the themes of hypocrisy and pessimism in Iranian life and their meaning for Iranians.

This quasi-literary interest in Iranian conceptualization and symbolization during a period of rapid social change is one of two noticeable trends in recent anthropological work on Iran. The other is increasing attention to history, both context and process (e.g. Tapper 1983). Both of these trends are reflections of what is happening in anthropology outside Iran, but they happen to be particularly appropriate to Iranian studies today. Barth's *Nomads of South Persia* (1961) was the first anthropological work on Iran to find extensive readership among non-Iranists. Iranian material is now becoming commonplace in anthropological literature because of its intrinsic cultural and historical as well as theoretical interest; the selective bibliography at the end of this article includes works from over fifty authors. As current restrictions on further ethnographic research in Iran and Afghanistan leave these ethnographers with time to work on their material, anthropological writing on Iran is likely (after only twenty years of research) to become standard reading for the anthropology of non-Western complex societies, as material from Australia and Africa have in the past for smaller and non-literate societies. This development, the beginnings of which are obvious in the enormous increase in anthropological publication on Iran between 1980 and 1984, is changing the structure of Iranian studies in Western universities.

Institutional development. The anthropology of Iran is embedded in a series of different national institutional frameworks. Though in the past there was little or no connection between anthropological and other Iranological training, by the 1970s this situation had changed, and by the end of the decade the institutional overlap between the anthropology of Iran and other Iranological programs was almost complete. This process was greatly facilitated in the U.S. by the Office of Education program in critical languages, which provided fellowships for graduate students to learn Persian (among other languages) while working towards a disciplinary degree.

Of the three anthropologists cited above who worked in Iran in the 30s, Bacon was sponsored by Yale University, Feilberg by the National Museum in Copenhagen, and Leach by London University. The Copenhagen Museum has continued to support Iranological work only intermittently (Ferdinand 1981). Iranian studies in America and England have expanded considerably. Barth's work with the Kurds was done in association with an archeological expedition from the Oriental Institute (University of Chicago), but his major piece of research, in Swat, was for a doctorate at Cambridge. Alberts' work in 1956 was done out of the University of Wisconsin; the Swidlers 1963-65 were from Columbia University. Since then at least twelve American universities have awarded doctorates in anthropology for dissertations based on Iranian work. Of these Chicago, Columbia, and Michigan have shown the most consistent interest. More recently, the Turan Program, a series of ecologically oriented projects in the Turan Biosphere Reserve (Semnān province) operated out of the University of Pennsylvania in association with the Department of the Environment (Tehran), sponsored four anthropologists. In the United Kingdom, London, Oxford, and Cambridge have continued to train anthropologists to work in Iran. Apart from Iran itself, other countries have shown relatively little interest, except France, where C.N.R.S. in 1972 entered into a cooperative program with the Anthropological Center of the Ministry of Culture (Tehran) for ethnographic mapping. But most French work has been done as part of projects in archaeology or geography. The record of French and Swiss work in Afghanistan has been written up by Centlivres (l972b). In Germany, the Südasien-Institut in Heidelberg maintained an institute in Kabul through the 70s, but focused its interest on Nūrestān and the neighboring areas of Pakistan and included little anthropological work. Holland, Austria, and Japan have each provided two or three anthropologists. Soviet work is not extensive, and has been concerned only with the Turkic peoples of the Central Asian republics. It is available to English readers in *Soviet Anthropology and*

Archaeology 1962-. The only Afghan anthropologist of note (Shahrani) was trained in the United States.

The institutional development of anthropology in Iran is more complex. It was first recognized in the Institute of Social Studies and Research established by French-trained sociologists in the University of Tehran in 1958. The institute's activities and positions were divided between urban, rural, and tribal sections, the last of which was equated with anthropology; it has specialized mainly in short-term sociological team projects financed by government contract and oriented toward development; it has also published a series of monographs including much of the most important Iranian ethnographic writing. Not until the 70s did anthropology find acceptance as an independent social science in the Iranian university system. In 1971 a Faculty of Social Sciences was formed at the University of Tehran and a teaching department of anthropology was established. But although courses in anthropology were instituted in several other universities, most notably in Shiraz, no other programs were developed.

During the 70s the Iranian government became interested in two categories of anthropology: documentation of traditional culture and rural development, especially in tribal communities. Responsibility for the first category was taken on by the Ministry of Culture and Art, which had set up a Folklore Office in 1958 and commenced publication of a journal, *Honar o mardom* ("Art and people"), in 1963. The office was later renamed and expanded as the Center for Anthropological and Folklore Research and started a bilingual journal entitled *Ethnologie et traditions populaires de l'Iran* or *Mardom-šenāsī wa farhang-e ʿāmma-ye Īrān*. In 1977 the Institute of Peasant and Rural Studies was established by the Plan Organization under the directorship of N. Afšār-Nāderī from the University of Tehran; the Institute was mandated to produce information on rural and tribal communities that could be usefully fed into development planning. The Faculty of Social Sciences at the Reżā Shah Kabīr University in Māzandarān included a program of anthropological research in which both Iranians and non-Iranians participated, but it was dissolved in 1979. Very little of this Iranian work has been published.

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