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CHANGING ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC AND FAMILY STRUCTURES  
IN KALĀRDASHT,  
A DISTRICT IN NORTHERN IRAN, UP TO 1978.

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Preface

This thesis is based on field work carried out in Kalār-  
dasht in 1977-1978 and, except where specific reference is made  
in the text or footnotes and for acknowledgments which follow,  
is the product of my own individual work. This dissertation  
has not been submitted for any degree, diploma, or other qualifi-  
cation at any other university. It does not exceed the limitations  
of length prescribed by my faculty.

Changing Aspects of Economic and Family Structures

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a District in Northern Iran up to 1978

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This thesis is offered as a contribution to the ethnography of Iran. As such it is concerned with the description of some aspects of the economic and familial life in Kalārdasht, a mountainous district in the Caspian provinces of Iran. It is concerned with the examination of the process of continuity and change in the economic and family structures in rural Iran and attempts to show how the structure of the family is changed by the involvement of the younger generation in an economy based on non-agricultural wage labour.

The study is based on field work carried out in four villages of the district from August 1977 to October 1978. One of these villages, Rūdbārak, has experienced dramatic change, due to economic and administrative penetration of the region. The other three villages, due to their relative isolation, have retained their traditional way of life to a greater extent. A comparative dimension is inherent in the research sample: while analysis of the isolated villages provides some insight into the traditional economic structure and domestic organization, analysis of the rapidly changing village furnishes data on the areas of economic and familial life where change has taken, and is taking, place.

The thesis is divided into two major parts. The first part offers an introduction to the villages under study and describes the traditional economy and recent changes in the economic structure. It illustrates the significance of external factors in transforming

the socio-economic structure of the villages in the region; it also shows how over the past two decades the traditional subsistence economy of some of these villages has given way to wage labour based on non-agricultural activities.

The second part deals with family organization and focuses on two particular aspects: marriage and the structure of the household. The study of changes in the traditional family in Rūd-bāarak, and comparison with the three isolated villages, reveals important changes taking place in both the marriage system and the developmental cycle of the household. The new economic independence of young men, facilitated by the availability of non-agricultural employment, not only allows them a greater voice in the selection of their brides, but it also modifies traditional criteria in the evaluation of a potential suitor and traditional expectations in regard to marriage transactions.

The ideal and actual patterns of formation of domestic groups among different socio-economic sections are discussed and it is argued that these various groups differ in terms of the realization of the ideal pattern. Further, the impact of socio-economic changes on the structure of the household is not uniform among the various socio-economic groups.

However, the data from Kalārdasht suggest that it is misleading to analyse the process of change in family structure solely in terms of residential arrangements. For instance, the very fact that due to the availability of outside work, a married son now has the option of leaving the father's household has repercussions not only in the sphere of his relationship with the father but also on other interpersonal relationships within the household (e.g., mother-in-law and the bride).

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I am especially appreciative of the training, assistance, and friendship which my first supervisor, Dr. Esther Goody, has given me. She supervised my research at its early stages and visited me during my field work and made a number of useful suggestions. In the later stages of my work, I benefitted from the guidance and encouragement of Professor J. A. Barnes, who supervised my research from summer 1979 until its completion. He has read several drafts of the thesis and his comments were a great help.

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It is impossible to list individually all those who, by their friendship, guidance, and assistance, have made this project feasible. I hope that all those whose names have not been mentioned will not interpret this omission as a token of ingratitude.

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## Notes:

## 1. transliteration

The transliteration of Persian words into English generally follows the scheme approved by the Royal Asiatic Society, with the exception of zammeḥ (ز), which has been translated into (o) in some places where this is more compatible with the local pronunciation. Certain proper names and Persian words have been retained in the form in which they are known in English (e.g., Tehran, Elburz, toman). Persian words are underlined the first time they appear in the text.

## 2. currency

The principal units of currency are the riāl and the toman; each toman equals ten rials. Although the rial is the official unit of currency, toman is commonly used in expressing prices or sums over ten riāls. According to the rate of exchange in 1977-1978, one pound sterling equalled between 14 and 16 tomans.

## 3. calendar

The Iranian solar year starts at the beginning of spring and can be converted to the Gregorian calendar by adding 621. For example, the Iranian year 1359 corresponds to 1980 (strictly, to the period <sup>21<sup>st</sup></sup>March 1980 - <sup>21<sup>st</sup></sup>March 1981).

Chapter I:

Introduction: Problems and Methods

This thesis is the result of field work carried out in Kalārdasht, a district in the northern part of Iran. It has two interrelated aspects. First, it is offered as a contribution to the ethnography of Iran. As such it is concerned with the description of some aspects of the economy and family life in the region. Secondly, it is concerned with the examination of the process of continuity and change in the economic and family structures in rural Iran. Changes in rural communities as a result of the transition of the broader society of which they are a part have attracted much attention in recent years. Here a number of such economic and familial changes are presented, documented for Kalārdasht in 1977-78.

The first sections of this chapter present introductory discussions of Iranian society and those changes which have occurred in the country since the turn of the century, and of the changing family in Iran. The object of these sections is to provide necessary background for understanding the recent changes with which this thesis is concerned. These are followed by a discussion of the scope of the thesis and an account of field work and methodology.



## I. Iranian society and change

The twentieth century has been an era of unprecedented rapid social and economic change throughout Iran. At the turn of the century a large proportion of the population consisted of nomadic tribes and peasants; only about one-fifth of the population lived in small towns. Agriculture was the primary occupation, and the virtual absence of roads, railways, or other transport facilities made it essential for each geographic region to be self-sufficient in foodstuffs.<sup>1</sup>

Over the past seventy years, the continuous and increasing communication with the West, the development of a modern industrial sector, the introduction of a modern educational system, the increase in oil revenues and the important role of this revenue in developing the infrastructure of the country have all caused great changes in the social and economic life of the country. Without embarking upon a detailed analysis of this transformation and its limits, this section will attempt to provide some initial data on the changing character of Iranian society since the turn of the century, and in particular on changes in demography and the economic activities of the population.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>. Bharier (1971:19).

<sup>2</sup>. For references related to the problems of economic development in Iran, see bibliography.

Iran, or Persia,<sup>3</sup> stretches from the Caspian Sea in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south, and has an area of 628,000 square miles. Although it is a country of widely varying climate and altitude, it can be divided into two clearly defined regions: a dry region, occupying over two-thirds of the total area; and the moist and thickly forested region which includes the provinces in the vicinity of the Caspian. At least 50 per cent of the total area is desert, much of it in the centre of the country. The desert and the harsh mountain ranges that cross the country have in the past divided the population centres from each other, and it is only in recent decades that a unified communication system and a unified administration have been imposed on the country.

There are three demographic features that help to illuminate the structure of Iranian society. The first is the extreme unevenness of population density due to the geographic characteristics of the country. The greatest concentration of population is in the Central Province, which includes Tehran; in 1976 this province accounted for 6.9 millions, or over one-fifth of the total population. Apart from the Central Province, the most populated provinces are those in the north, where abundant rainfall allows the richest agriculture in the country; and Khuziṣtān, the oil-producing province in the south.<sup>4</sup>

The second significant feature is the linguistic and ethnic diversity of Iran. The peoples of Iran have generally been

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<sup>3</sup>Iran was substituted for the name of Persia in 1935. Both names are now officially recognized, but Iran is more associated with modern Persia. See Wilber (1976:1).

<sup>4</sup>See Behnām (1968:469-70).

classified in terms of their languages.<sup>5</sup> There are two major language groups, Persian and Turkish. Those who speak Persian or related dialects constitute three-fourths of the population and of these groups the largest is comprised of those who speak Persian itself. The Kurds, Gīlakis, Māzandarānis, Lurs, Bakhtiāris and Baluchies speak dialects related to Persian. Some of these dialects are very different from standard Persian (Farsi) which is the official language of the country. Turkish is the second most common language; the largest sub-group speaks Āzarbaijāni and lives in Āzarbaijān, a province in the western part of Iran.

The third feature is the presence of a nomadic population in Iran, all of it drawn from tribes speaking languages other than standard Persian. The tribal populations are referred to as 'īlāt and 'asayir', and are scattered mainly in the western part of the country.<sup>6</sup> The proportion of the population that is nomadic has been declining rapidly. In 1900 between a third and a quarter of the total population may have been unsettled. Since the 1930s the central government has been restricting the migration of nomads and has attempted to make them sedentary; at the same time, economic pressures have attracted nomadic men away from pastoralism and into construction and other non-agricultural activities.<sup>7</sup> According to the 1976 census two million people, 6 per cent of the total population, were still classified as

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<sup>5</sup> Elwell-Sutton (1952); Frye (1960); Minorsky (1926).

<sup>6</sup> See Field (1939); Minorsky (1945); Barth (1964).

<sup>7</sup> Bharier (1971:31-2). See also Stauffer (1965) and Sunderland (1968).

'unsettled'.

Although the 'modernization' of Iran dates back to the early 1930s,<sup>8</sup> it was not until the 1950s that development plans were extended to the rural areas. Rural development programmes for the first time brought villages into direct contact with the urban way of life. In the 1960s special corps were set up to introduce new ideas into the village. The Literacy Corps (established in 1963) and the Health and Development Corps (1964) both utilized young educated military conscripts to teach illiterates and establish schools in the villages, to provide medical services, and to introduce agricultural techniques to rural areas.<sup>9</sup> In terms of recent transformations of rural Iran, the programme of land reform, which began in 1962 and officially ended in 1971, has immense importance. The land reform resulted in the subsequent decline in the position of tribal leaders and landowners; it has gradually increased the power and control of the government at the village level.<sup>10</sup> This programme aimed to transform the countryside economically by changing the pattern of landowner-

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<sup>8</sup>. Banāni (1961); Conolly (1935).

<sup>9</sup>. See Blandly (1966).

<sup>10</sup>. In the assessment of recent changes in Iran, the land reform programme has been the focus of attention from many disciplines. In general it can be said that there are two different interpretations of the motives underlying the policy and its factual achievements. One view, which was supported by the pre-revolution Iranian government, assesses the reform as a progressive measure which improved the condition of the peasants. (For example, see Denman, 1973; Sanghvi, 1967.) The other view holds that the reform must be analysed in the context of international and domestic political factors, and considers the major aim of the reform to be the consolidation of the central government and expansion of capitalistic relations. (See Keddie, 1968, 1972; Mahdavi, 1965; Kātouziān, 1974; Bill, 1972.) For information on the various phases of land reform, see Lambton (1969).



ship and creating a new class of small owners. Those peasants who were title-holders (nasaq) received land under the Land Reform Act. Generally, these peasants were already among the well-to-do strata of the village, having ownership of a pair of oxen and heading the agricultural work group (boneh). The reform in effect excluded a large number of peasants from the agricultural activities in the village.<sup>11</sup> Prior to the land reform these 'title-less' peasants (khushnishin) stood a chance of being included in the agricultural work group by the headman or the landlord of the village. The reform, by virtue of granting land to only a special category of peasants, encouraged the transformation of 'title-less' peasants into labourers. Since those who received small plots of land tended to cultivate it by using family labour, the landless labourers eventually became potential migrants.

At the same time, as a result of the changed economic system and the country's increased industrialization, more jobs were created and new opportunities became available in the urban centres. Thus urban centres began to attract people from rural areas, causing great changes in the distribution of the population. Until the 1930s the balance of rural and urban population remained relatively stable, with around 21 per cent of the total population in urban sectors; by 1956 this had risen to 31 per cent, by 1966 to 39 per cent, and by 1976 to 47 per cent. However, despite this shift, Iran's population is still marginally more rural than urban,

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<sup>11</sup>. See Keddie (1968, 1972); Craig (1978:145-6); and Ājami (1356=1977). Ājami and Craig note that in two villages in central Iran, while there has been a marked improvement in the condition of those peasants who received land under the land reform law, the rest had to migrate to urban centres in search of work.



with 53 per cent of the population living in villages (places with less than 5,000 inhabitants). Moreover, although the rural proportion is declining, absolute numbers are rising and the rural population is projected to increase from the current 18 millions to 20 millions by the mid-1980s.

In 1900 the great majority (90 per cent) of those (predominately male) individuals who were economically active outside the home were either agriculturalists or nomads. The remaining 10 per cent were in handicrafts, trades and services; there was almost no industry. This pattern changed little before the 1940s. Since then, however, there have been profound changes in the employment pattern, with the result that in 1972 it was estimated that only 39.8 per cent of the population were engaged in agriculture.<sup>12</sup>

At the present time Iran, with a population over 35.5 millions, is a large and highly diverse nation in many respects. Over the past decades the central government, through increasing influence, oil revenues and investments, have brought about rapid and significant changes throughout the country. The impact of the rural reforms and increased government investment in education, health and welfare services, mass media, and industrial planning have been considerable in terms of social and economic change. Therefore, many major developmental problems of transitional societies exist in Iran: rapid growth of population, redistribution of population from rural to urban centres, the growth of several large

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<sup>12</sup>. Aminzādeh (1976:190).

cities,<sup>13</sup> and the sharp contrasts between urban and rural population in terms of income, degree of literacy, and standard of living.<sup>14</sup>

Rapid economic growth emphasized urban expansion and accentuated economic and ethnic divisions. Urban growth, while eroding traditional village communities, increased the urban-rural economic gap. Westernization and an economic boom had strikingly unequal effects on different segments of the population. Vast differences in incomes and amenities now exist between the growing middle class and the poor, between the urban and the rural inhabitants, and among the various regions in the country.

## II. Family and change

Given the social and economic changes which have occurred in Iranian society, it is only reasonable to expect that changes are also taking place in the domain of the family and domestic organization and relationships.

In the past few years, the family has been the subject of intense inquiry almost everywhere, particularly in Western countries. In studying changes in family systems, a macroscopic approach has often been adopted and considerable attention has been focused on the search for highly abstract explanatory variables.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>. See Bharier (1972); Behnām (1968).

<sup>14</sup>. Pesaran (1976).

<sup>15</sup>. Edwards (1969:13).

Industrialization and urbanization are the two variables which have been assumed to be the main factors producing change in family structure. Various sociologists concentrate on this approach, and suggest that with increasing industrialization the family structure is altered from an extended type to an essentially conjugal form.<sup>16a</sup>

W. J. Goode, after examining data from six different cultures, both Western and non-Western, concludes that at the present time a somewhat similar set of influences are affecting all world cultures and all of them are moving towards industrialization, although at varying speeds and from different points. Their family systems are also approaching some variant of the conjugal system. He notes the lack of 'fit' or theoretical harmony between the extended family and industrial society. However, Goode maintains that the degree of change is not a simple function of industrialization and urbanization. He also emphasizes the independent power of ideological variables and attempts to take into account the differences between 'traditional' family systems in predicting the direction in which change is taking place in different societies.<sup>16b</sup>

However, in recent years research has pointed out that an urban-industrial revolution may take place without a small nuclear family as a result.<sup>17</sup> Examining data from Barbados, Greenfield

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<sup>16a.</sup> For example, Parsons (1955); Ogburn and Nimkoff (1950, 1955); Burgess and Lock (1953); Goode (1963, 1964, 1968).

<sup>16b.</sup> Goode (1963)

<sup>17.</sup> Johnson (1960:13)

advances the hypothesis that the small nuclear family, as the predominant type of family structure, exists even without the presence of urbanization and industrialization. He concludes that there is no sufficient and necessary relationship between the nuclear family and urbanization/industrialization; any relationship that exists may result from the presence of the small family in North Europe prior to the industrial revolution.<sup>18</sup> Laslett questions the validity of the assumption that large and extended households were a standard feature of an earlier non-industrial world.<sup>19</sup> Edwards questions the treatment of the family as the dependent variable and points out the complexity of the interaction of economic and familial factors.<sup>20</sup> Litwak suggests that occupational mobility due to industrialization has not destroyed the extended family.<sup>21</sup> A few studies of the Western family underline the supportive role of the bilateral extended kin in providing material, services, and advice, both in everyday life and on special occasions.<sup>22</sup>

However, in spite of the differences among scholars regarding the appraisal of future trends of family structure, the literature on the subject does suggest that a world wide series of changes are taking place in family patterns, and that the change is towards

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<sup>18</sup>.Greenfield (1961).

<sup>19</sup>.Laslett (1972, 1979).

<sup>20</sup>.Edwards (1969).

<sup>21</sup>.Litwak (1960).

<sup>22</sup>.For instance, see Bott (1967); Young and Willmott (1957).

a nuclear family system, in which the keystone is the conjugal bond rather than ties of consanguinity.

In Iran, most social institutions including the family have not yet received detailed scholarly attention. It is only recently that a small number of scholars have begun to study families in Iran.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, descriptions of attitudes and cultural orientations of Iranians as seen by Western authors have appeared in two different categories. In the first, travellers, diplomats, and orientalist have written accounts of Iranian culture and character on the basis of their own experiences, observations (usually in the 19th and early 20th century), and the study of Iran's history.<sup>24</sup> In the second category, social scientists have described and analysed the cultural values, attitudes, and psychological attributes of Iranians in the contemporary social, economic, and political context.<sup>25</sup> As Spooner rightly pointed out, professional ethnography did not reach Iran until the late fifties; and the anthropologists who have worked in Iran since then have concentrated their attention on pastoral nomads.<sup>26</sup> Little work of any significance has been done on the village sector of Iranian society.<sup>27</sup>

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23. See for example, Behnām (1968, 1352-1973); Toubā (1972, 1974, 1975); Gulick and Gulick (1975, 1978); Spooner (1965).

24. See for example, Curzon (1966); Skye (1910, 1914); Rice (1923); Suratgar (1951); Browne (1950).

25. See for example, Lerner (1958); Jacobs (1966); Bill (1972); Zoniş (1971).

26. Spooner (1971:1). For works on nomadic population see Barth (1953, 1964); Beck (1978); Tapper (1978).

27. See for example, Alberts (1963); Ājamī (1968); Holmes (1975).

If contemporary studies of the Iranian family, particularly of the rural family, are few and of indifferent quality, literature on the pre-modern family is virtually totally non-existent. Only the vaguest idea exists of the types of family that prevailed before the introduction of modern social and economic conditions. Although certain literary sources convey some ideas of family structure in the past, it is debatable whether and to what extent such sources can be accepted as portraying accurate representations of social reality. The rules of Islam may help to define family norms, but it must be stressed that many family traditions are not part of Islamic law and the religious law may be overruled in practice by contrary customs. In general, it has been said that the traditional family in Iran, as in most of the Islamic countries of the Middle East, is characterized by the following five traits: (1) extended, (2) patrilineal, (3) patrilocal, (4) patriarchal, and (5) the preference for marriage within the kin-group.<sup>28</sup>

Generalities are often superficial and misleading and to employ a stereotype version of the 'traditional' Iranian family is to obscure the fact that there must have been many different traditional forms of family organization in Iran. Since Iran is a large and heterogeneous nation, all aspects of family life could never have been uniform throughout the country. Obviously, for instance, the character of the 'traditional' family organization would have been affected by ecological differences between the nomadic, village, and urban ways of life. Nevertheless, certain aspects were probably widely shared -- notably the patrilineal ideology and the

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<sup>28</sup>. See Patai (1962:84-114); Costello (1977:52); Behnām (1968 and 1352=1973).



authority of the male family head.

A patrilineal ideology and a patriarchal authority structure, however, provide limited descriptive or analytical perspective on the Iranian family in general and the rural family in particular. To discuss the peasant family as a single and uniform pattern of domestic groupings would be a simplification and would give rise to the creation of stereotypes. As recent studies have revealed, village communities do not consist of undifferentiated social groupings of peasantry. The socio-economic position of the household is a very important factor in shaping family form and organization,<sup>29</sup> since the resources at the disposal of the household and the work relations required to utilize them undoubtedly affect the structure of the family and the relationships within it. The effect of economic change on families in different socio-economic positions will not be the same; and this factor must be considered.

If changes in the family system are to be considered part of an ongoing process, it becomes necessary to take differences (both in the traditional situation and in the modern era) into consideration, differences, for example, between urban and rural families, as well as among different socio-economic groups within these broad categories. To do this it would be necessary to select instances of family change from various sections of Iranian society and to try to work them up into a kind of synthesis. However, the problem with such a synthesis is that it explains familial change by reference to general concepts, such as industrialization, urban-

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<sup>29</sup>.<sup>c</sup> Ajami (1968).

ization, and modernization. Each of these terms covers a wide range of phenomena, which can affect the institution of the family in a number of different ways. The ideology underlying these general concepts implicitly assumes that familial change will be in the direction of a very specific type of family, resembling the family in the West. If, on the other hand, we consider the process of family change in detail within a particular rural society in Iran, we can move from the general to the specific and test broad concepts against empirical data. Although this approach will not allow us to predict much about change in Iran as a whole, it may in fact provide more insight into the process of change as this has actually taken place in a specific rural community.

### III. Scope of the present thesis

This thesis examines economic and familial change in Kalār-dasht, a district in the northern part of Iran. It focuses upon four villages in this region, one of which has experienced dramatic change, due to economic and administrative penetration of the region; and three of which, due to their relative isolation, have retained their traditional way of life to a great extent. A comparative dimension is inherent in the research sample; while analysis of the isolated villages provides some insight into the traditional economic structure and domestic organization, analysis of the rapidly changing village furnishes data on the areas of economic and familial life where change has taken, and is taking, place.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>. For the reasons for the selection of these particular villages, see the next section.



Since the 1930s there has been a systematic effort to modernize the economic and social structure of Iranian society. Iran is a large and complex society where many aspects of life appear to be changing dramatically. It is not easy to distinguish the reality of change from its appearance, or to know exactly what is changing and whether there is any single direction of change; this is partly because there is so little systematic information available about the initial conditions. The most that can be said is that these initial conditions were highly heterogeneous. The absence of systematic data on the different sections of Iranian society has given rise to stereotypes of the traditional family as well as of the changes introduced into it by 'modernization'. One of the important contributions of a detailed study of a region can be to examine and challenge these stereotypes. Certainly, the structure of the household varied greatly among the various ethnic groups and the various classes. Also the family in the rural areas is different from the family in an urban setting. By making a detailed and systematic study of four small communities, which differ in their dominant mode of economy and ethnic composition, one can construct a general pattern of domestic organization, and at the same time identify the factors behind variations in this pattern.

Thus, the present thesis attempts to present a 'field view' of the family, that is, to describe the marriage system, the composition of the household, and the prevailing relationships within the household as they have actually been observed and studied within one region of Iran. The study is also concerned with the impact of changes in the broader Iranian society on the traditional economy

of the region. It maintains that these external forces played a crucial part in bringing about significant modifications in the economy of these villages. However, owing to the differing internal situations in these four villages, the external factors have not produced uniform results. By providing an analysis of contemporary change in Kalārdasht, this study will, I hope, provide a baseline for future studies.

The analysis of change in the economic structure and family organization in Kalārdasht is not intended to constitute a 'typical' example of change in Iran; indeed, Kalārdasht is atypical of Iran in many respects. Tribal populations were settled in the region by the central government in the eighteenth century in order to control the turbulent natives; therefore, the district is among those few communities in northern Iran which have a mixed ethnic composition. Likewise, the landownership pattern as well as share-cropping arrangements in the region differ from those in the rest of the country; because of the high rainfall there are no water-rights, unlike other parts of the country, where the control over water resources is an important feature of agricultural organization. The economy in Kalārdasht has traditionally been based on a mixed agriculture and pastoralism, supplemented by migration to the nearby Caspian coastal areas; recently the district has become a tourist centre which has brought about drastic changes.

The thesis is divided into two major parts. The first part consists of two chapters and concerns the economic organization of the four selected villages. The second part contains three chapters and deals with the family organization.

Chapter II offers an account of the geographical location and history of the region. I have attempted to place Kalārdasht in the broader Iranian context in terms of its geography, history, population trends, and other aspects and have pointed out in what respects Kalārdasht is representative of the country as a whole. The chapter also contains an analysis of the impact of the arrival of the tribal population on the socio-economic structure of the region. The settlement of tribal groups is an important event in the history of Kalārdasht and has had significant repercussions on settlement patterns, landownership, and the mode of economy. More recently and equally importantly, the contact of Kalārdasht with the outside world has been facilitated by improvements in transportation and the construction of a road which linked the region to the main road in the 1930s. This has led to the greater integration of the region with the broader Iranian society and to the expansion of tourism in the region.

Chapter III first offers a brief introduction to these selected villages and their traditional economy. It then reviews the complex forces which have dramatically altered the economic system of Rūdbārak, the changing village, and attempts to illustrate how over the past decade the traditional subsistence economy of this village gave way to wage labour and non-agricultural activities. The differences between Rūdbārak and the three isolated villages are analysed.

Against the background of differential economic change described and discussed in these chapters, the subsequent chapters consider the ways in which the marriage system and family organization are changing.

Marriage, in so far as it establishes each nuclear family as a distinct unit within the extended household and eventually in the village, must form the core of any consideration of the family in Kalārdasht. The structural importance of marriage is reflected in the great ceremonial emphasis it receives. Each wedding is the occasion of a whole series of ceremonies in which the bonds which unite and divide the betrothed couple within the kin-group are symbolized. Chapter IV thus first describes the customs and ceremonies related to marriage with the object of providing an understanding of traditional marriage arrangements. Then the modifications which have been/are being brought about under the influence of the new economic forces are noted and considered. The following dimensions of the institution of marriage have been selected for examination in an attempt to document the areas and processes of change: marriage ceremonies; age of marriage; marriage transactions; choice of spouse (decision-making); divorce, remarriage, and widowhood; and birth control.

Chapter V considers the ideals concerning formation and organization of households and presents empirical data on the actual composition of households and the prevailing patterns of interrelationships within them. It is noted that the ideal pattern tends to be more commonly observed in practice among herders and landowning farmers than among resourceless groups. The reasons for this variation are considered in the following chapter.

Chapter VI looks at the developmental cycle of households among different socio-economic groups within these villages. The chapter illustrates how and in what ways the actual household formation and developmental cycle differs from the ideal discussed in

Chapter V. Resource-holding households conform to the ideal pattern to a much greater extent than the resourceless groups whose lack of resources renders the realization of the ideal an impossibility. The chapter argues that even in the traditional setting, there was not a single type of domestic grouping and that the structure of the household varied according to its socio-economic position. Similarly, the various groups within the village have adapted/are adapting differently to the new economic system, in which new job opportunities facilitate the son's independence of his father's household.

The final chapter summarizes the arguments and conclusions derived from the foregoing analysis of economic and familial change in Kalārdasht.

#### IV. Field work and methodology

The present study is based on field work in four villages of Kalārdasht district over a period of fourteen months, from August 1977 to October 1978. During this period, I stayed mainly in Rūdbārak and used this village as a base. I spent shorter periods of time in the three isolated villages and also made several trips to the nearby Caspian coastal towns.

##### 1. Selection of the region and four villages within the region

Because this study is primarily concerned with change and particularly with the effect of economic change on other aspects of social organization, the selection of a village which was experiencing a high amount of contact with the urban centres and

a drastic shift in its economic system away from traditional agricultural activities and towards wage labour was desirable. The Kalārdasht district, which recently has become one of the tourist attractions of the country, provided a good setting for this purpose. Although all the villages in the region have been affected by tourism and the availability of work opportunities because of governmental development programmes, those with a good system of communication were affected to a much larger degree than the isolated villages. Thus differential isolation and the resulting differential degrees of change provided scope for comparative analysis. The final selection of four villages in the Kalārdasht region was based on three factors: (a) the degree of contact with urban centres (or degree of isolation); (b) the dominant mode of the village economy; and (c) the ethnic composition, as reflecting the major ethnic groups in the region. The following four villages were selected.

(1) Rudbārak represents a village which has a great deal of contact with the urban centres. It is used as a summer resort by a large number of town people, some of whom own villas and property in the village. A good transportation system facilitates contact with the urban centres. The economy of the village, which previously was based on mixed herding and agriculture, has undergone a drastic change towards wage labour. There are five major ethnic groups in the village: the Gilaks, the native population of Kalārdasht; the Khwajvands, Laks, and Turks, who were among the tribal population relocated in the region by the central government in the late eighteenth century; and Tālaqānīs, who are recent migrants from Tālaqān, the district immediately south of Kalārdasht.



(2) Gulāmra is the most isolated village in the region; it is located in the mountains and has Gīlak inhabitants and an economy dominated by herding.

(3) Payambūr is located in the forest, is less isolated than Gulāmra, and has a Turkish population; its economy is based on mixed herding and agriculture.

(4) Chalājūr is connected to the Kalārdasht main road by a road which can only be used during summer. The village has an economy based on agriculture; its inhabitants belong to the Khwajvand tribe.

Lak and Tālaqānī villages were not selected for the following reasons: Laks have come to the area under the same conditions as did the Turkish and Khwajvand tribes. Their number is quite small in Rūdbārak and they are very well mixed with Gīlaks. Tālaqānīs are late-comers to the area and, as they migrated individually without having a tribal structure, they are scattered in different villages on the route of their migration into the area. For this reason there is no village in Kalārdasht in which the population consists of Tālaqānīs or is dominated by them. As Khwajvand, Turkish, and Gīlak villages comprise the major ethnic groups in Kalārdasht, I have confined my study to these four villages as representative of the region.

Gulāmra, Payambūr, and Chalājūr are isolated villages, with almost no direct contact with urban areas. Each village depends to some extent on the seasonal work migration of its young male population. In this respect at least the male population is affected by their experiences outside the village. However, this is

the situation in all of the villages in this hill district. The size of each of these villages is small in comparison with Rūd-bāarak. The ecological conditions, i.e., land shortage, geographical isolation, and lack of direct transportation facilities, are to a large extent responsible for their small populations.

## 2. Data collection

It was decided in the early stages of the study to collect and combine in the final analysis several kinds of data, including a number of case histories and records of intensive interviews with selected families in each village, supplemented by participant observation. Statistical data were obtained by means of six questionnaires. The first questionnaire was a census form, the objective being to identify each household in the village and to obtain general information on which to base a more highly structured questionnaire. The census form, which was first to be completed for all the resident households in all the four villages, included not only demographic data, but also general details on the household's economic situation, such as occupation and housing conditions.

A sketch map of each village was prepared and the location of every household was marked. The questionnaires were completed by visiting each house and asking the relevant questions of the household head or his wife. Conducting the census provided a good opportunity for further contact and rapport with villagers.

On the basis of data collected by means of the census, the second questionnaire, the household questionnaire, was constructed. The purpose of using this questionnaire was to obtain systematic



data on economic and familial aspects of the households. Among the items of information which were obtained by this survey for each household were: occupational activity of each member in the household, seasonal migration, permanent migration, land and herd ownership, number of marriages, age at marriage, kin relationship between spouses, pattern of residence after marriage, number of pregnancies, etc. These data were supplemented by a number of partial surveys on related topics, such as seasonal work migration at the time of rice harvest on the coast and during winter. The household questionnaire was used for all households in each village; the manner of completion was unstructured and allowed further interviewing and observation.

By using these two sets of questionnaires, I was able to identify non-agricultural groups as well as large land/herd owners who mainly relied on traditional activities as the main source of income in each village. The extended households, widows, and permanent migrants from the villages were also identified. In order to obtain further data related to each of the above categories, four more questionnaires were used. Data concerning permanent migrants, that is, those from the village who do not reside in the village and whose families are away from the village if they are married, was acquired by means of questionnaires administered to resident households in the village. Each household was asked "Do you have a son or brother who is living away from the village?" If this was the case the subsequent questions were asked. A list was compiled and cross-checked to eliminate double entries.

The data were collected by means of focused interviewing using a broad list of questions, which could be developed during the period of interviewing. This method had the advantage of permitting the clarification of questions which were not understood by the respondent, and at the same time providing the opportunity for more discussion. This was considered to be the best approach as little was known about various possible answers that would be elicited. These data were processed by hand. The data obtained from the census and household questionnaires were processed by computer using the SPSS package.

In addition to these surveys of each village as a whole, intensive case studies of representative families were conducted. The data obtained by means of the household questionnaire provided the necessary information for the selection of families who were representative of various socio-economic and ethnic groups in the villages. Case studies provided intimate descriptive accounts of the histories of a number of families from the points of view of different members of the household. They provided qualitative material about domestic organization, patterns of residence after marriage, relations within the extended household of the husband's father, division of labour, changes in the occupation of the household head, differences between siblings in terms of their education, occupation, family type, etc.

As will now be clear, the field material was of two kinds. There was straightforward factual information in a form capable of statistical analysis; this data were derived from the census and household questionnaires principally and to some extent from the others as well. The second kind of material was that derived from

the various series of 'intensive' interviews, detailed case histories, and participant observation. In the final analysis these two types of data were combined. The possible inter-relationships between certain variables found through observation and in the case histories were explored by computer analysis of the statistical data. The independent variables of primary interest were ethnicity, occupation of members of the household, the dominant economic mode of the household, its ownership status, and degree of contact with urban centres. The dependent variables chosen for measurement and comparison were the type of the household and its developmental cycle. However, the possibility of the variables acting as intervening variables was considered and controlled.

### 3. Other sources

Apart from the data obtained through field work, two other sources of data were utilized.

(1) Documents concerning the history of the region. Of these the majority are in Persian and few are available in English. The section dealing with the history of the region is based mainly on these sources. Relevant literature concerning the recent social, political, and economic changes which have occurred in Iranian society and their impact on the traditional family system have been reviewed.

(2) Information obtained from each census carried out by the Iranian Statistical Centre since 1956 at ten yearly intervals. I was able to gain access to the original census questionnaires

used by the Centre for three of these villages.<sup>31</sup> The relevant information on each questionnaire was copied out, enabling me to compile a file for households in each village. The data obtained through the Statistical Centre's forms were kept in a separate file from my original data. Whenever Centre data are used in the course of the analysis the source is cited.

However, in the present work no attempt is made to compare the data from Kalārdasht with other studies for the following reasons: (a) A comparative dimension already exists in the research sample. (b) There is a general lack of field studies of the rural family in Iran,<sup>32</sup> and none concerning the northern part of Iran where Kalārdasht is located. The other available studies either make only passing reference to family structure or subordinate the study of the family to other questions and problems.<sup>33</sup> (c) The aim of the present thesis is to present

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<sup>31</sup> Census data were available for Rūdbārah for the 1956, 1966, and 1976 censuses. For Chalājūr and Gulāmra only 1966 and 1976 data were available. For Payambūr only the 1976 questionnaire data were available from the Census Office; I did not, however, use this data, as there was no previous census data with which to compare it and I had already completed my own census of Payambur before the 1976 census data became available to me.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Farokh, then deputy of the Statistical Centre, in providing me with the original questionnaires.

<sup>32</sup> There are three field studies of rural Iran which also focus on the family: Alberts (1963); Holmes (1975); Watson (1979), but all of them were carried out in central or other parts of Iran.

<sup>33</sup> For instance see bibliography for works of Toubā on the Iranian family; Behnām (1352=1973); Safinijād (1355=1976); Ājami (1356=1977).

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an intensive study of the changing economy and family in Kalār-  
dasht; a discussion of hypotheses regarding family and economic  
change are of secondary importance. Thus, involvement in super-  
ficial comparative analysis or theoretical dispute would defeat  
the purpose of the present thesis.

Part I:

GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, AND ECONOMY OF KALĀRDASHT



## Chapter II:

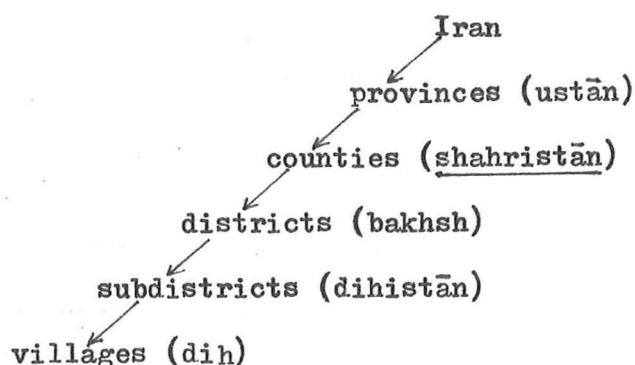
The Setting

This chapter is an account of the geographical location and the history of Kalārdasht. It is divided into three sections: (1) geography, (2) demography, and (3) history. In the first section there is a brief discussion of topography, rainfall, and the location of the villages, mainly as these relate to the economic life of the villagers. The second section is concerned with the distribution of population as between rural and urban areas, and as between the different ethnic groups which constitute the population of the region. The third section of the chapter deals with the history of the region.

According to the administrative divisions adopted in 1965,<sup>1</sup> and each ustān is divided into a number of counties (sub-governorate) Iran is divided into thirteen provinces (ustān), Each ~~county~~ is divided into a number of districts (bakhsh), and each district into a number of subdistricts (dihistān), which contain a number of villages. The scheme of division can be illustrated as follows:

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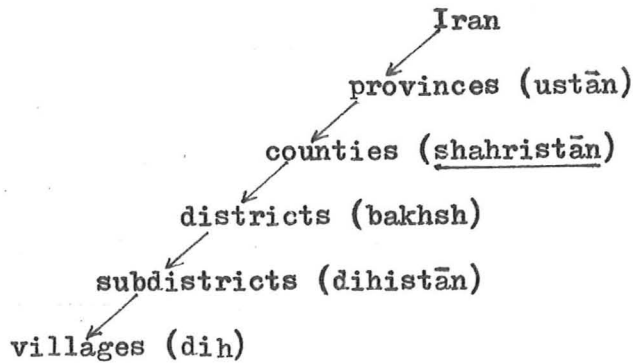
<sup>1</sup>. A new administrative division of the whole country was adopted in 1937 but as the population increased there were further divisions, the last one being adopted in 1965.



Kalārdasht is one of the districts of Naushahr shahristān in the Māzandarān province. The district consists of four dihistān (or groups of villages): (1) Bīrūn-Bashm, (2) Kalārdasht, (3) Kuhistān-i-Sharq, and (4) Kuhistān-i-Gharb. (See Maps I and II.) The study is mainly concerned with Kalārdasht and Bīrūn-Bashm dihistāns. (Kalārdasht subdistrict, although a part of Kalārdasht district, has the same name as the district.) The other two dihistāns are formally attached to the district but are separated by high hills and mountains from the Kalārdasht plateau and do not share the same historical and ethnic features of the Kalārdasht subdistrict. The people of Kalārdasht dihistān are aware of these distinctions. They refer to themselves as Kalārdashti, meaning inhabitants of the Kalārdasht and a part of the Bīrūn-Bashm subdistricts as opposed to people living in the two other dihistāns of this district. The district of Kalārdasht was in the past a part of Rustamdār, a border area between Māzandarān and Gīlān.<sup>2</sup> But according to the new administrative division Rustamdār is now

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<sup>2</sup> See Rabino (1928:30 and 1913:445). In fact the central government, in order to diminish the solidarity of ethnic minorities in the country devised the policy of dividing them between different ustāns (provinces), shahristāns (counties), or even districts and subdistricts. Therefore, this divisive administrative arrangement is not particular to Kalārdashtis.



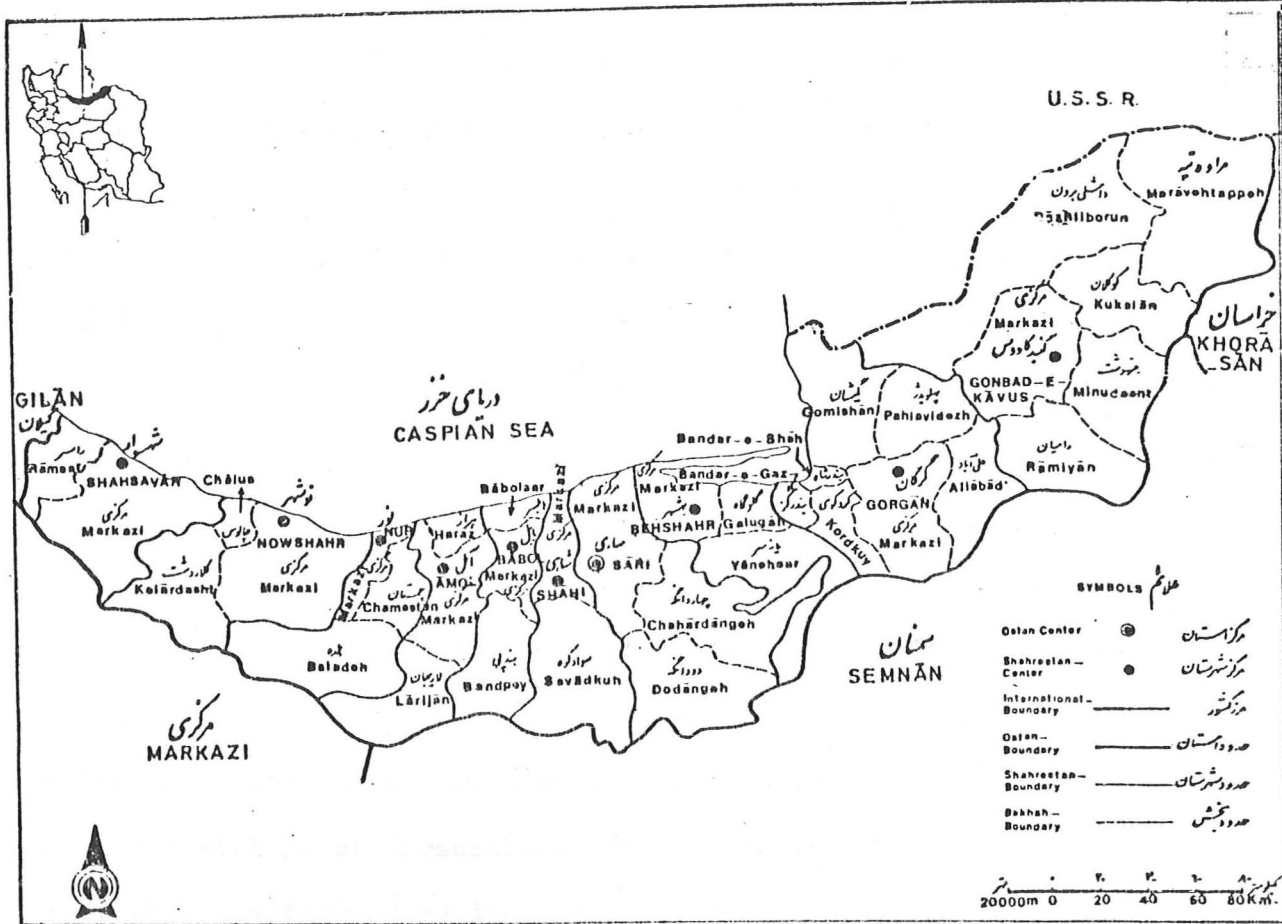
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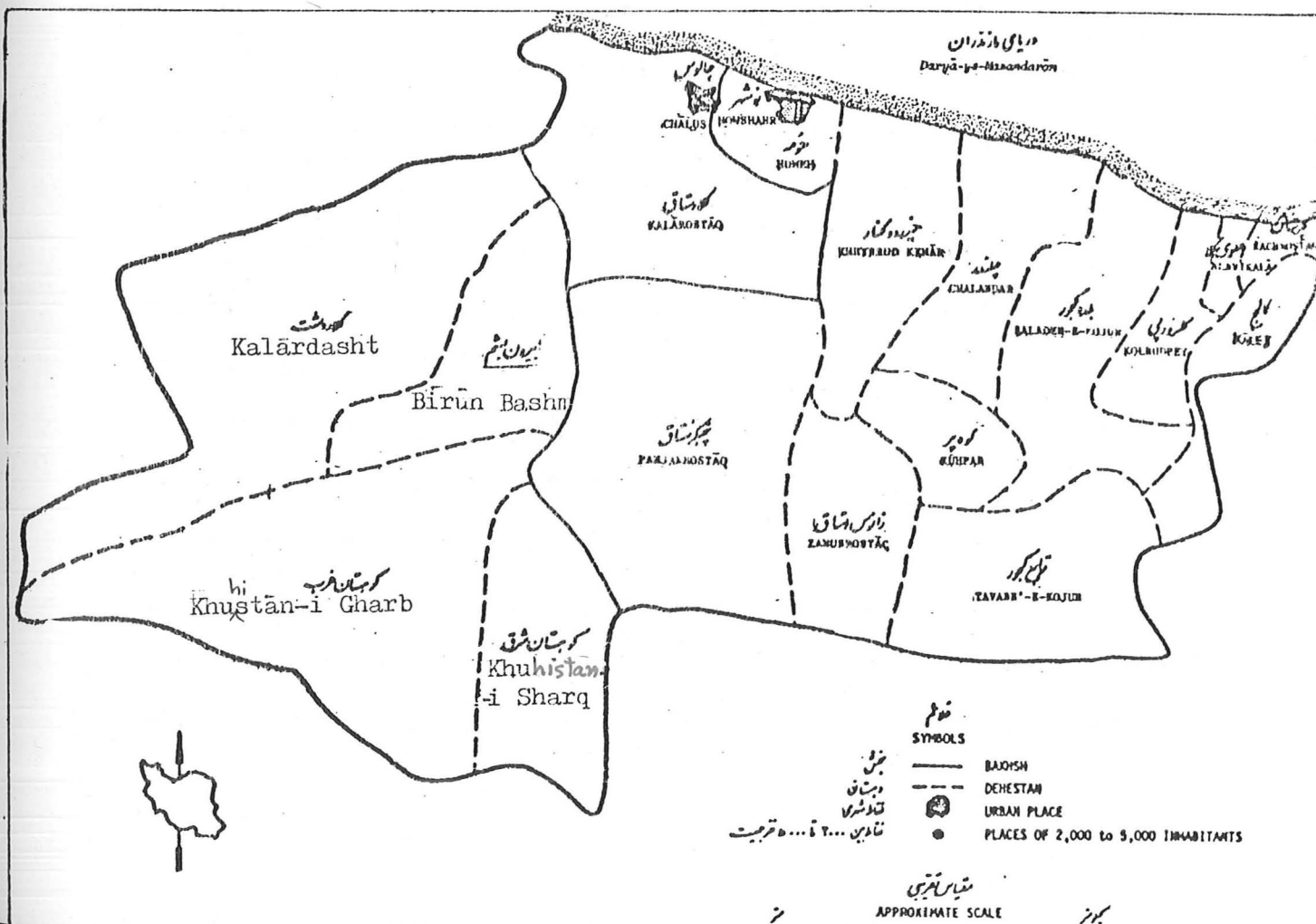
Map I: Māzandarān Ustān by Shahrīstān and Bakhs̄h.

Source: Statistical Centre of Iran, 1976 Census Map.



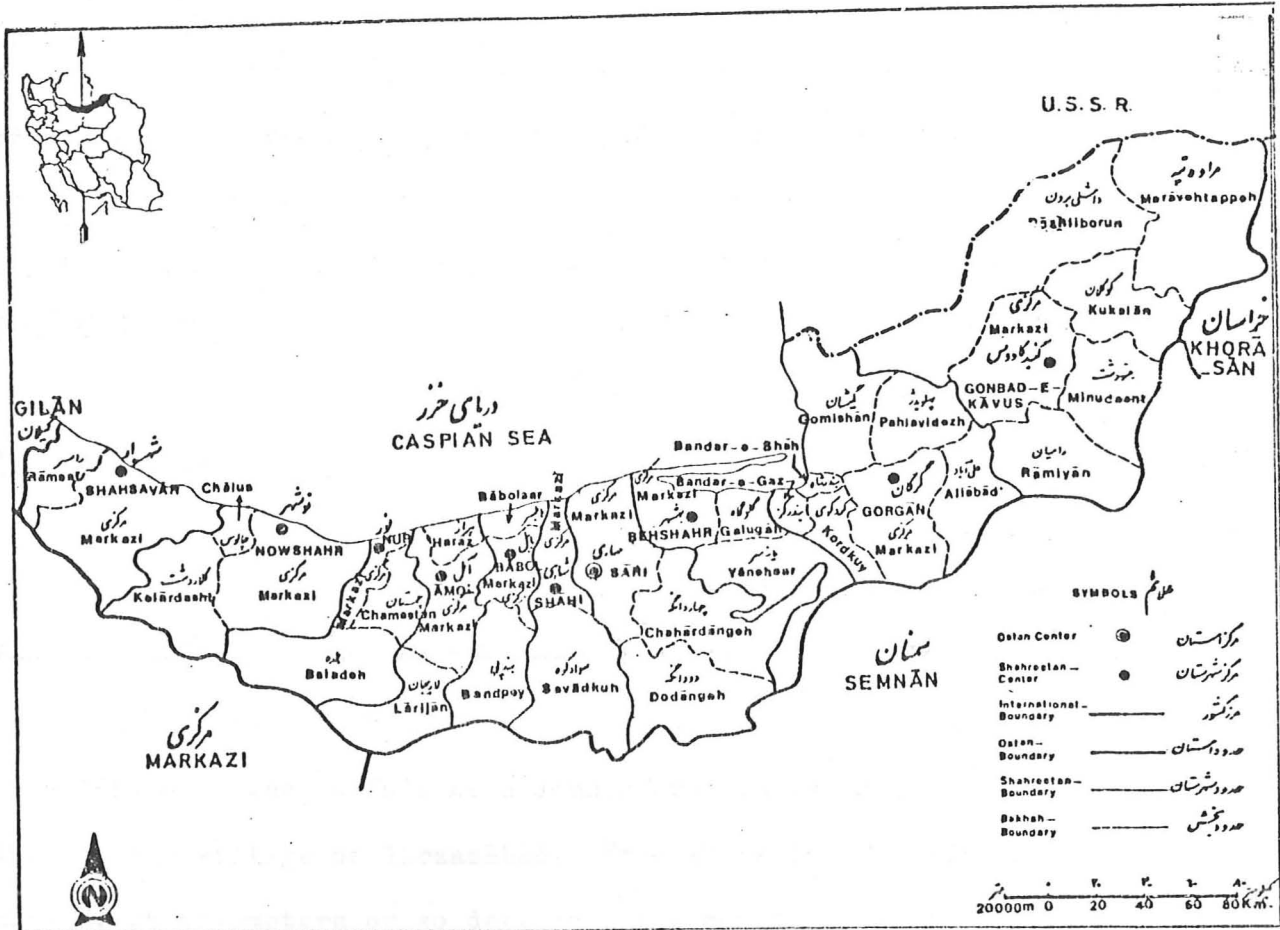
Map II: Naushahr Shahrīstān, its Dīhīstāns, and Urban Places.

Source: Statistical Centre of Iran, 1976 Census.



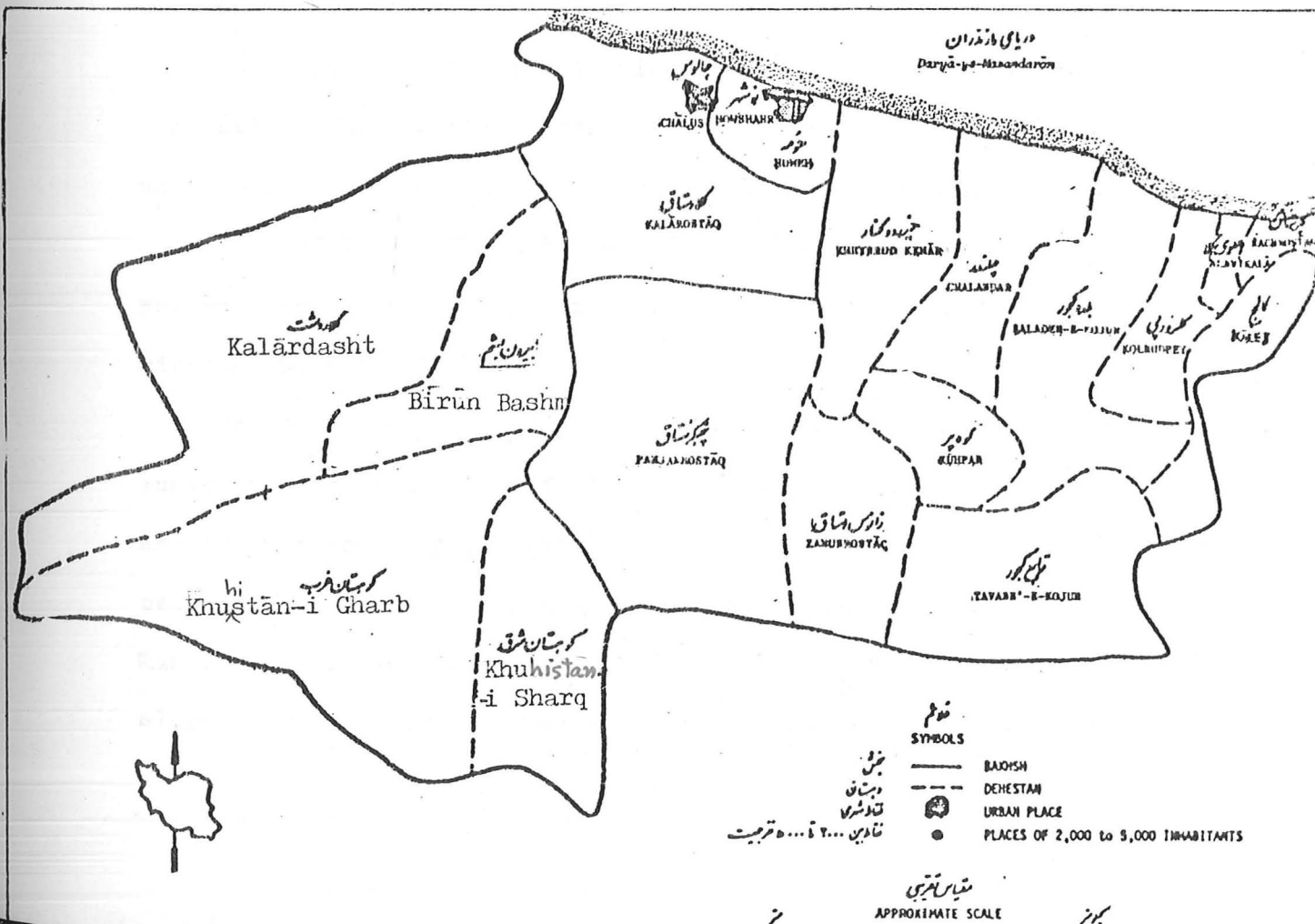
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Source: Statistical Centre of Iran, 1976 Census Map.



Map II: Naushahr Shahrīstān, its Dīhīstāns, and Urban Places.

Source: Statistical Centre of Iran, 1976 Census.



a district of Māzandarān province. The Kalārdasht people still identify themselves as Kalārdashtis and not as Māzandarānis. Neither they nor Māzandarānis accept their designation as members of that county; Māzandarānis identify the Kalārdashtis as Gilaks (from Gilān). (See Map III.)

### 1. Geography

Kalārdasht is located at a distance of 170 kilometers from Tehran. Chālūs, a town on the Caspian coast, is the closest urban centre to Kalārdasht being only 30 kilometers distant. The road from Tehran to Chālūs follows a mountainous route as it passes through the village of Marzanābād. From there it continues for another 25 kilometers or so deep into the mountains before reaching the Kalārdasht plateau.

Kalārdasht is one of the mountainous regions of Māzandarān province. It is convenient to discuss the Māzandarān province as consisting of two distinct regions: the low lands near the coast and the mountains which are a part of the Elburz range, the northern mountains of Iran. The natives refer to the mountainous regions as yailāq (summer quarters), and the low lands near the Caspian sea as qishlāq (winter quarters).

The topography of the district of Kalārdasht consists of mountain lands and a relatively flat plain; the plain extends for 20 miles and is surrounded by forests, hills, and snow-covered peaks. These peaks are some of the highest in the Elburz range and include 'Alam Kuh (4,850 m.) and Takht-i-Sulaimān (4,650 m.). The hills and upper slopes of the valley are well-forested. The two subdistricts of



Kalārdasht and Bīrūn-Bashm are situated on the fringes of the plain, while the two other subdistricts, Kuhistān-i-Gharb and Kuhistān-i-Sharq are situated to the south of the actual plain of Kalār.

From the foregoing geographical account it is clear that the district of Kalārdasht is not a single natural or geographic unit; rather it is broken up by hills and mountains which form barriers between subdistricts and sometimes between villages as well. Thus the Kalārdasht subdistrict is separated from the other subdistricts by groups of hills and forests. The two subdistricts of Kuhistān-i-Sharq and Gharb, which are more mountainous, are completely isolated from the Kalārdasht and Bīrūn-Bashm subdistricts.

Some of the Bīrūn-Bashm villages and almost all the villages in the Kalārdasht subdistrict are situated in a single valley or on the plain; while the rest are closer to the two other subdistricts. As a result of a relative geographic unity, Kalārdasht and Bīrūn-Bashm subdistricts have existed as a political and social unity; as a result of the recent administrative divisions, the two other subdistricts are now beginning to share this unity.

Owing to its proximity to the Caspian sea, this mountainous region enjoys a relatively high rainfall (90 cm). The high rainfall combined with the fertility of the land has given rise to a cover of thick vegetation. Whereas a wide range of crops can be cultivated in the low lands of the Caspian, crop growing in Kalārdasht district is limited to wheat, barley, and millet. However, because of the fertility of the land and the level of rainfall, irrigation is not required. Moreover, the Sardāb Rūd river, which originates from the Takht-i-Sulaimān slopes, passes through a number of villages in Kalārdasht and the low lands before emptying



itself into the Caspian Sea.

The climate of Kalārdasht is humid, with long cold winters and cool pleasant summers. The district is used as a summer resort by the inhabitants of coastal towns and, in recent years, by Tehranis as well. The mountains and other elevated parts of the district are covered with snow for five months of the year, during which time there is no agricultural activity.

## 2. Demography

According to the census taken in 1976, the total population of Iran was 33,662,176; since Iran covers a vast territory of 1,648,000 sq. km., this means there is fairly low numerical density. The urban population constitutes 46.92 percent of the total population, and the rural population (including semi-nomads) 53.08 percent. The corresponding figures at the 1956 census were 30.1 percent urban and 69.9 percent rural.<sup>3</sup> The population is distributed over 49,000 settled areas of which 186 are towns (i.e., places with more than 5,000 inhabitants).

A rapid rate of population growth (the result of the high birth rate -- about 43 per thousand -- while the mortality rate is about 20 per thousand); the youthfulness of the population (49 percent of the inhabitants are under 20 years of age); and the rural exodus (the drift from the country to the towns) are among the salient features of population trends in Iran.

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<sup>3</sup> Results of 1976 Iranian National Census, based on 5% sample, Iranian Statistical Centre.

The population of Naushahr shahristān, of which Kalārdasht is one of the districts, is 146,799, of which 28.6 percent was urban<sup>4</sup> in 1976 (21.6 percent in 1966). The urban areas consist of Naushahr city (the county capital) and Chālūs. The population density of the county was 39.7 persons per square kilometer in 1976 (29.2 in 1966). Table I.1 presents the distribution of households by sex for urban and rural areas for Naushahr shahristān.

Table I.1: Naushahr county: Number of households and population by sex, urban and rural areas.

Area	Households	Both sexes	Male	Female
Urban areas	8,419	42,045	21,777	20,268
Chālūs city	5,149	25,782	13,352	12,430
Naushahr	3,270	16,263	8,425	7,838
Rural areas	18,595	104,754	52,340	52,414
Total	27,014	146,799	74,117	72,682

Source: Statistical Centre. 1976 Census, Iran.

<sup>4</sup> According to the census definition, places with a population of 5,000 or more at the time of enumeration were considered 'urban'. In addition, all county capitals (shahristān centres), regardless of size, were also defined as 'urban'. Thus Naushahr city, despite having a population of only 3,270, is regarded as an urban centre. It must be pointed out that some population centres that are technically urban because they have more than 5,000 residents remain essentially rural in their characteristics.

Table I.2 presents the county population and sex ratio for major age groups. Of the total population 46.7 percent were under 15 years of age, 50.0 percent were between 15 and 64 years of age, and 3.3 percent were 65 years of age and over. These percentages for 1966 were 48.5, 48.5, and 3.0 respectively.

Table I.2: Naushahr county: Population by sex ratios for major age groups.

Age	N	Both sexes %	Male	Female	Sex ratio
Total	146,799	100.0	74,117	72,682	102.0
0 - 14 years	68,514	46.7	35,360	33,154	106.7
15 - 64 years	73,441	50.0	36,396	37,045	98.2
65 years plus	4,844	3.3	2,361	2,483	95.1

Source: Statistical Centre. 1976 Census, Iran.

Tables I.3 and I.4 present data on the literacy<sup>5</sup> of the population aged six years or more and on school attendance.

There are 31 villages in Bīrūn-Bashm, 26 in Kalārdasht dihistān, 10 in Kuhistān-i-Sharq, and 27 in Kuhistān-i-Gharb. The total population of Kalārdasht district is 23,154, comprising 3,943 households. Hasankīf is the capital of the district and the centre of governmental organizations. This village is growing rapidly and

<sup>5</sup>According to the census definition, "all persons who could read and write a simple text in Persian or in any other language, regardless of whether or not they had an educational certificate" were considered literate.

Table I.3: Naushahr county: Percent literacy by sex, urban and rural areas.

Area	Both sexes %	Male %	Female %
Urban areas	68.7	76.8	59.9
Rural areas	44.8	52.7	32.7
Total shahristān	51.9	63.2	40.5

Source: Statistical Centre. 1976 Census, Iran.

Table I.4: Naushahr county: Percent school attendance by broad age groups, urban and rural areas.

Area	6 - 11 %	12 - 14 %	15 - 19 %
Urban areas	95.6	90.7	63.8
Rural areas	82.7	66.8	30.0
Total shahristān	86.1	74.1	40.8

Source: Statistical Centre. 1976 Census, Iran.

absorbing population from surrounding isolated villages. The main street in Hasankīf, which is the continuation of the road to the region, is the bazaar, with shops concentrated on both sides of the road. The street serves as the meeting place of the inhabitants of surrounding villages.

One of the features of the villages in Kalārdasht is the diversity of their ethnic composition, resulting from the policy of tribal displacement carried out by the central government in the

eighteenth century and earlier. While some villages are inhabited by the indigenous population, the Gilaks, others have populations of tribal origin, such as Laks, Kurds, and Turks; and some villages contain several different ethnic groups. Appendix I gives the ethnic composition and the distribution of population in the two subdistricts of Kalārdasht and Birūn-Bashm.

### 3. History

In order to appreciate the contemporary scene and to interpret and understand the pattern of change, it is necessary to consider briefly the history of the region.

There is no recent documentation of the history of Kalārdasht. However, in recent years a few scholars (Rabino, 1913; Stark, 1934; and De Planhol, 1961) visited Kalārdasht and commented briefly on the available documents. The written source materials are limited to some references to the region in a few historical books concerning the northern part of Iran until the seventeenth century.

I have distinguished three important landmarks in the history of the region: (1) the Arab invasion and conversion to Islam in the seventh century; (2) the policy of tribal displacement carried out by Nādir Shāh Afshār and the early Qājār kings in the late eighteenth century; and (3) the beginning of the end of the region's isolation occasioned by the construction of a road linking Kalārdasht to the outside world during the reign of Rezā Shāh in the 1930s. By the early 1960s the process of breaking down the isolation of Kalārdasht was virtually complete.

### A. Kalārdasht in history

In Persian historical documents, the territory which lies between Gurgān and Gilān inland from the Caspian sea is referred to as Ṭabaristān. Kalārdasht is situated in a part of Ṭabaristān which was then referred to as Rustamdār or Rūyān. Studeh, an Iranian historian, in an introduction to a fourteenth century history of Māzandarān (written by Maulanā Auliya' Āmulī in 764 A.H. = 1362-63 A.D.), maintains that Rustamdār and Rūyān formed the same territory which was a part of Ṭabaristān.<sup>6</sup> He divides Rūyān or Rustamdār into eleven districts, one of which was called Kuhistān (lit. mountains) and included Kalārrestaq, Bīrūn-Bashm, Miyān-Bashm, and Kalārdasht. Rabino in 1928 writes: "The district of Kalārrestaq extends along the coast from Namakābrūd on the west to Chālūs on the east and is situated between the districts of Tunakabun and Kajūr. It comprises four subdistricts: Bīrūn-Bashm, Dasht, Kalārdasht, and Kuhistān."<sup>7</sup>

It can be noted that the boundaries of Kalārdasht district as defined by the state in 1937 do not correspond to former boundaries. However, the villages in the present subdistricts of Kalārdasht and Bīrūn-Bashm have been perceived as part of Kalārdasht district since the fourteenth century. This study, as previously mentioned, is mainly concerned with these two subdistricts (dihistāns).

Shut off by the mountains from the rest of Persia and differing from it in climate, character, and interests, the Caspian provinces

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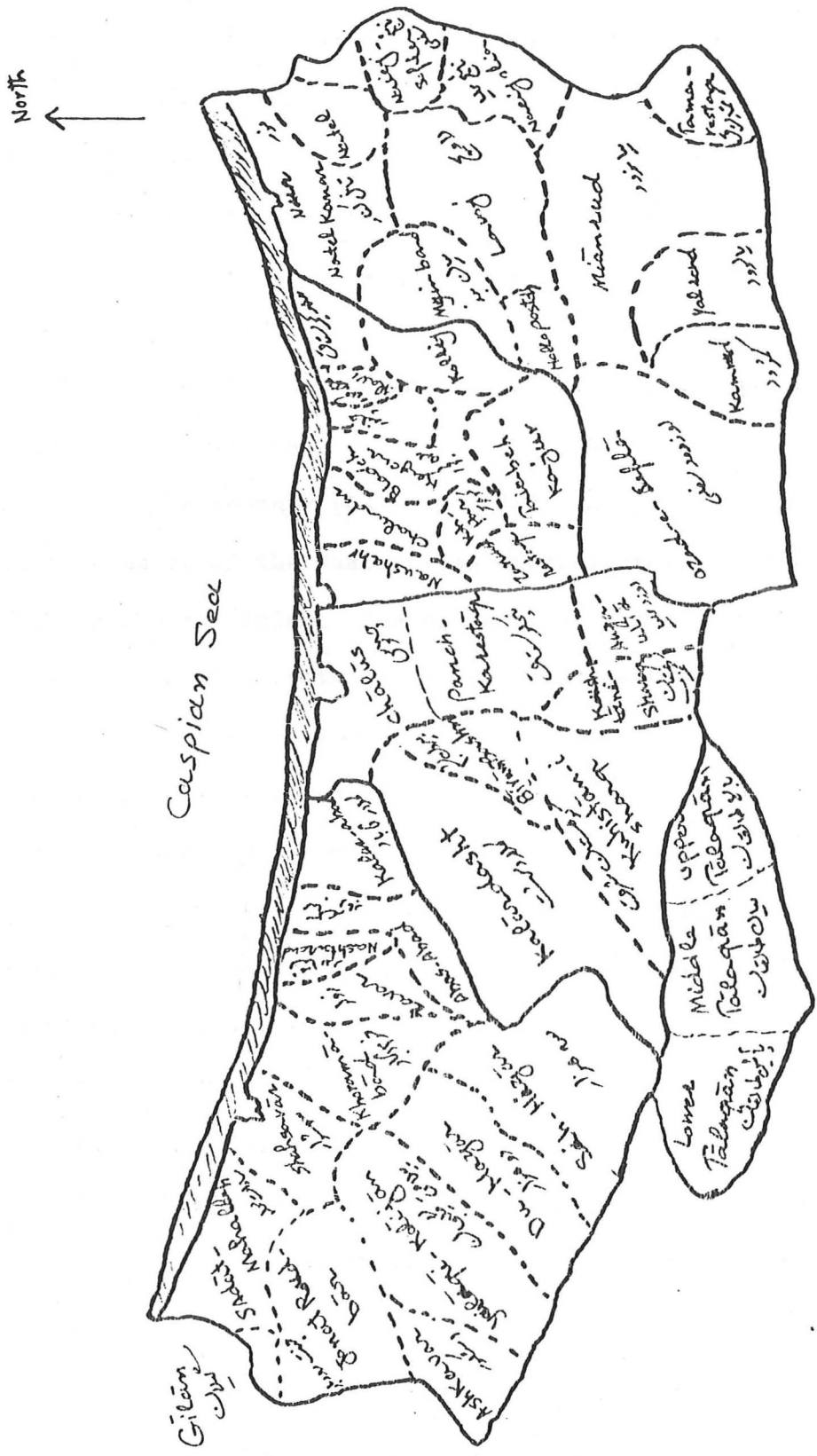
<sup>6</sup> Studeh (1348 = 1969:15).

<sup>7</sup> Rabino (1928:8).



Map III: Map of Rūyān and Rustandār adapted to the present boundaries of Māzandarān, using the old names of each locality.

Source: J. Nushin (1355-1977).



have necessarily played a somewhat independent part in Persian history. In the geographical section of Avesta, the sacred book of Zoroaster (c. 600 B.C.), there is no reference to this territory in the list of areas comprising Persia. The listings of countries comprising the Persian empire to be found in the epithets of Darius, the second king of the Achaemenid dynasty, again contain no reference to Māzandarān. The absence of any reference to this part of Persia in all historical documents prior to the Sassanian period (226-641 A.D.) indicates that none of the dynasties ruling Iran before the Sassanian had control over this territory.<sup>8</sup> The whole story of the region is full of gaps. After the Arab invasion in the seventh century (642 A.D.) the coastal regions along the southern shore of the Caspian sea fiercely resisted the penetration of the Arabs and Islam. The protection of the lofty Elburz mountain range enabled the coastal regions to escape the main thrust of the conquering Arab armies; early Arab invasions were only partially successful.<sup>9</sup> In the year 650-651, under the Caliph 'Uthmān', Māzandarān was conquered for a short time, but it was lost to Arab dominance during the struggle between Ali and Muāwyeh for the Caliphate. In the year 661 an attempt by the Caliph to conquer Tabaristān (the old name of Māzandarān) resulted in a defeat. Tabaristān at this time was ruled by the dynasty of Ispahbads and was a stronghold of Zoroastrianism. In 759, the Caliph Al-Mansūr ordered war against Ispahbad; within two years Tabaristān was conquered and henceforth ruled by Muslim governors residing in Āmul. Their

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<sup>8</sup> Mashkūr, "Introduction" in *Tasbihi* (1345 = 1966:7).

<sup>9</sup> Madelung (1975:198).

first task was to secure Muslim domination over the newly subdued territories.<sup>10</sup>

Maulānā Auliya' Āmulī, who wrote the history of Rūyān around the fourteenth century, refers to a town called Kalār in the mountains of Tabaristān.<sup>11</sup> Also Yāqut in the thirteenth century (632 A.H.) refers to this town as the capital of the plain of Kalār (Kalārdasht).<sup>12</sup> The town of Kalār, which was located in the present sub-district of Kalārdasht, played a very important role in the Dailamiān mountain country. (Dailamiān was a local autonomous dynasty which ruled the region in early Islamic history and Kalārdasht bordered on this territory.<sup>13</sup>) Kalār was ruined by Mongols in the early thirteenth century but was rebuilt and walled in 1346 A.D. The town later constituted a part of an independent state which was ruled by Padhusbān from the end of the seventh century A.H. to 1595 when Shāh Abbās turned against the dynasty and finally destroyed it.<sup>14</sup> Freya Stark, who visited the area in the 1930s, believes that the city of Kalār was located near the village of Gavitar (a village in Bīrūn-Bashm).<sup>15</sup> Although this seems acceptable, there are no substantial documents to support such an hypothesis. Rabino, during his journey to the Caspian area in 1908, was also looking for the city of Kalār. He suspected that this city was located on the

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<sup>10</sup> Madelung (1975:210).

<sup>11</sup> Studeh (1348=1969:12).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Minorsky (1965:189-195).

<sup>14</sup> Rabino (1928:144).

<sup>15</sup> Stark (1934b:216).

Mound of Kalār in Kalārdasht, but the small size of the remaining ruins led him to believe that they were remains of a castle rather than a city.<sup>16</sup>

The prosperity of the region starts from the seventeenth century during the reign of Shāh Abbās Safavid. Māzandarān, his mother's birthplace, was a special favourite with Shāh Abbās.<sup>17</sup> Here he built a series of palaces and ordered the construction of a causeway along the Caspian shores which linked this area to other parts of the country. The causeway was finished in 1621.<sup>18</sup> The only part of the causeway which left the coast and climbed up through the forest is that portion between Āmul and Dailam. Freya Stark uses this deviation from the coast as additional evidence of the existence of the inland cities of Rūyān and Kalār.<sup>19</sup> Rabino writes that a portion of the causeway that still existed was reported to him in Kalārdasht during his journey to the region in 1908.<sup>20</sup>

However, the crucial changes occurred towards the end of the eighteenth century when Safavid kings as well as Nādir Shāh Afshār and Qājār shāhs encouraged the development of this part of the country. The constant resistance by the native Gilak to the intrusion of central government and their attempts to defy the control of the central government led to further change. Through a policy of large-scale tribal displacement, Nādir Shāh and early Qājār

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16. Rabino (1913).

17. Curzon (1966:372).

18. Rabino (1928:7).

19. Stark (1934(b):216).

20. Rabino (1913:36).

monarchs attempted to neutralize the local unrest. A policy of settlement of Kurdish tribes from Garūs and Ardallān in the region diluted the native people.

B. Settlement of the tribal<sup>21</sup> population in Kalārdasht

Because of these policies there are now, in addition to descendants of the original settlers of the province, many tribal groups distributed over the area who were brought into Māzandāran at different periods by various monarchs and who were granted rights in land in return for military service. Rabino writes: "They have become so mingled with the country folk that they cannot be distinguished from them; apart from the Kurds and a few Turks, they have altogether forgotten their original languages and are now Mazandarānis to all intents and purposes."<sup>22</sup>

In fact, the conditions and the exact dates of the events which led to tribal settlement in the region are not clear. All the

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21. The term tribe is used as the translation of the Persian word *īl*. *īl* in Persian refers to those people who live by means of herding, are transhumant, and are under the control of a *khān* who is either from the *īl* or from another adjacent *īl*. The tribal population of Kalārdasht originally belonged to such groups, but at present they do not continue the *īl* way of life, although they have retained some features of their tribal origin such as having a *khān*, moving herds from one type of pasture to another, and carpet-weaving, which was brought by them to the region. In this study the term tribe is employed merely to distinguish the in-coming population of the region who have tribal origins without implying that their present way of life has tribal features, i.e., to distinguish between ethnic groups of indigenous and exogenous origin.

22. Rabino (1928:11).

existing sources, with the exception of H. W. Field, suggest that this tribal settlement was carried out in the reign of Āqā Muḥammād Khān Qājār, the founder of the Qājār dynasty (1779-1797). Field<sup>23</sup> suggests that the tribes in Kalārdasht were originally brought from Garūs and Kurdistān by Nādir Shah Afshār (c. 1740). A part of the tribe (II) returned to their native country at the end of the reign of Karim Khān Zand (1750-1794) and were brought back by Āqā Muḥammad Khan Qājār (1796) to keep down the turbulent inhabitants of these districts.

Field recognizes five subsections of the tribe of Khwajvand (Kurdi) in the Kalārdasht plain: (1) Sultān Quli Khāni; (2) Kākāvand; (3) Lak; (4) Khwajvand; and (5) Dilfān.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, Rabino classifies the inhabitants of the Kalārdasht as Lak tribes and divides them into four branches: (1) Karak; (2) Dilfān; (3) Turk; and (4) Nanakoli. He also indicates that the Khwajvand tribes are settled in Pul and Kajūr and does not mention Kalārdasht. Rabino suggests that these tribes were brought from Ardalān and Garūs by Āqā Muḥammad Khān Qājār to protect the capital, Tehran, against any rising of the inhabitants of these parts.<sup>25</sup>

As can be seen, the two listings of the tribes do not correspond. Although both agree on the origins of the in-coming tribes, they differ in the dates of their arrival in the area as well as in

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<sup>23</sup>Field (1939:168).

<sup>24</sup>Ibid. He spells Khwajvand as follows: "Khwajahvand".

<sup>25</sup>Rabino (1913:441). He spells Khwajvand as follows: "Khajavend".



the names of subsections of each tribe. There is no mention of any of these tribes by name in the Persian historical books concerning Māzandarān. In fact, almost all of the Persian historical books about Māzandarān follow the history of the area only from the tenth to the seventeenth century; the only available recent source refers to Khwajvands who reside in Kalārdasht and Kajūr as tribes brought over from Kermānshāh and Kurdistān during the reign of the late Zandieh and early Qājār kings.<sup>26</sup>

However, the name of the Khwajvand tribe is still familiar and used. Tribes of the area also refer to themselves as a whole as Il (tribal), while the inhabitants are referred to as Gil (short for Gilak). There is a legend well known by the people of Kalārdasht which was told to me to explain the origins of tribes in the area: During the reign of Āqā Muhammad Khān Qājār (1779-1797) the governor of Kalārdasht, Na'im-Shāh Kalārdashti, claimed the kingdom. He minted coins in his name and asked for independence from the central government. The ruling shāh sent his troops, which consisted of tribal people,<sup>27</sup> to deal with the ambitious subordinate; Na'im-Shāh was defeated. When the shāh's troops withdrew, Na'im-Shāh rebelled again. In order to secure the control of the central government over the turbulent region, various tribes under the leadership of the Khwajvands were settled in the region and given land in return for their service. The tribes remained part of the

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<sup>26</sup> Nushīn (1355 = 1976:105). This source is in fact the only recent documentation of the events concerning the region; it relies heavily on the sources that I have already cited.

<sup>27</sup> Before the formation of the modern army in Iran *ilat va 'ashāyir*, which can be translated as tribal people, comprised the army; at the time of war they were summoned for service.



army until the reign of Reza Shāh (1925), who organized the modern army of Iran. The trained forces of the Iranian army replaced the tribal people who had historically comprised the army levies.

It can be concluded that the settled tribes of the region, who originally were brought from Ardallān and Garūs, belonged to different tribal groups. But all tribal groups were brought for the same purpose -- to put down turbulence in the region caused by the native population, the Gilaks. In less than two hundred years since settling in the region these tribes have lost most of their tribal characteristics; they have settled on the land and mixed with the indigenous population. I find it more meaningful to classify the tribal population of Kalārdasht on the basis of their religious affiliation. They fall into two categories: (1) Khwajvands who belong to the Ahl-i-Haqq sect, which observes special ceremonies and abjurs orthodox rituals of prayer and fasting.<sup>28</sup> Khwajvands are in turn divided into two subdivisions: (a) Dilfān and (b) Abdul Malaki. (The latter have been removed from the area; only a few families still live in Kalārdasht.<sup>29</sup>) Their different religious practices isolated them from the native inhabitants of the region. As they also speak the Kurdish language (as opposed to the local Gilaky), Khwajvands are easily identified. (2) Those incoming tribes who adhere to Shi'ite Islam and who, therefore, have mingled with the native people more easily. They are also divided

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<sup>28</sup>.The Ahl-i-Haqq sect, although a part of the Islamic tradition, emerged from the politicized Sufi orders and members of this religious group ignore the Shariah and many of the devotional practices of orthodox Muslims. It should be stressed that this sect is different from the Ali-Allāhi, another Islamic sect. See Nūr ALi Elahi (1354 = 1976) and Minorsky (1960:260-63)..

<sup>29</sup>.See Rabino (1928:122).

into two subsections: (a) Lak and (b) Turk, who originally were brought from Qara-Yāgh. Turks still retain their identity through their language which is Turkish. But Laks, especially those who have settled down in Gilak villages are almost unaware of their tribal background and refer to themselves as Gils in relation to Khwajvands who are referred to as Ils. (This is the case in Rūdbārak, where Laks assimilated to such an extent with the Gilaks that they call themselves Gilakis.)

Among these tribes only Khwajvands held military positions. Before the reign of Rezā Shāh, the chief of the tribe or khān was centred in Hasankīf (capital of the region) and held military rank. The soldiers, who consisted of tribal men, were under his command. The grandfather of the present khān of Rūdbārak used to be "Yavar" (a military rank) and was under the command of the chief in Hasankīf.

After the reorganization of the army by Rezā Shāh, these tribes were disarmed and their chiefs lost their military position. In order to reduce their power, all khāns in Kalārdasht were disarmed and exiled to different parts of the country by Rezā Shāh. Their land was subsequently confiscated. But after Rezā Shāh's abdication, the khāns returned to Kalārdasht and re-claimed their lands. Gradually gendarmerie and government agencies gained greater control of the area. Finally, after land reform and nationalization of the pastures and forests in 1962, the power of the khāns, which rested principally on control of pastures, was again reduced. For instance, the father of the present khān of Rūdbārak, who was sent into exile for some years, held much power in the village: village headmen were always appointed by him and he virtually controlled the life

of the villagers; disputes were arbitrated by him; etc. At the present the only one of his sons who lives in the village has almost no personal hereditary power; although he is the head of the village council, he is elected by the villagers and his power depends upon his office. With the increased influence of governmental agencies in the rural areas, the role of the traditional leaders in the village communities has decreased, while deprivation of their military power and of control of most of their land has crucially limited their authority.

### C. Settlement patterns; ethnic composition of villages in Kalārdasht

I have discussed the limited historical data available concerning the settlement of these tribes. Although some of these tribes have mingled to a very large extent with the indigenous people, it is still possible to distinguish between the in-migrating tribes,  $\bar{I}$ ls, and the indigenous population,  $\bar{G}$ ils. The arrival of the tribal population in the region has had a decisive impact on the settlement patterns and the system of land ownership.

De Planhol, writing about the villages in Kalārdasht, points out the different economic patterns distinguishing the tribal and indigenous populations. He refers to an agricultural-dominated economy of the indigenous people ( $\bar{G}$ il), and a pastoral-dominated economy of the tribal population (the  $\bar{I}$ l), and argues that although prior to the arrival of the tribal groups small-scale herding existed among  $\bar{G}$ ilaks, the high pastures were not utilized. Therefore, the tribal groups, because of their pastoral way of life, tended to

settle in the highlands of Kalārdasht.<sup>30</sup> The settlement patterns in the region lend support to De Planhole's argument: the ethnic composition of the villages in the Kalārdasht region shows a distinct tendency on the part of the Īls to settle on the highlands, for ease of access to high pastures. Prior to the nationalization of pastures and apart from some of the highlands which were controlled by Gīls, almost all the pastoral mountains were in the hands of the tribal (mainly Khwajvand) population.

Before the arrival of these tribes, the control of some of these high pastures had been in the hands of Gīlak landowners, but the tribal khāns, by virtue of the military power granted to them by the central government, seized control of most of these pastures. Thus relations between in-migrating tribes, who were involved mainly in pastoralism and who occupied the high pastures of the region, and the indigenous inhabitants, who were forced to pay them high levies to pasture their animals, were not good. Moreover, as a great majority of these tribes belonged to the Ahl-i-Haqq sect this created another base for conflict with Gīlaks who adhered to orthodox Shi'ism.

The hostile relations that existed between these two groups have been commented upon by a number of scholars who visited the region in the early years of the present century. Stark refers to the existing animosity between different groups on the basis of their different religious beliefs.<sup>31</sup> Rabino remarks that: "The Khwajvands and Laks, as a whole, are hated by the other inhabitants

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<sup>30</sup>•See De Planhole (1961:191).

<sup>31</sup>•Stark (1934(a):326).

of these parts, not only on account of their religion, but also principally because they occupy the best yailāqs (highlands) of the district."<sup>32</sup> Apparently the indigenous population strove to remove the tribes from their land but did not succeed. Rabino refers to an event in 1855 when a governor, who already had removed the Abdul Malakis from Nūr, failed to remove the Khwajvands from Kalārdasht because the sum required for their removal was not paid to him by the indigenous population.<sup>33</sup>

To avoid open confrontation Īls, as far as possible, tried to settle away from Gilak settlements. This was possible in the localities in which land was available, such as in Birūn-Bashm. But in the regions such as Sardāb-Rūd valley, where Gilak settlements already existed and where, because of its rich mountain pastures (yailāqs), land was extremely valuable to the in-coming tribes, there was no alternative to mixing with the indigenous population.

Table I.5 and Map IV show the preponderance of Īls in the parts of Kalārdasht district with high pastures closest to the Elburz range. As the table suggests the number of Īl-populated villages in Birūn-Bashm is relatively small and there is one village with mixed population. On the other hand, in Kalārdasht subdistrict which is particularly close to the highlands, the Īl had to mix with the indigenous population: the number of villages with a mixed population is high and there are only three Gilak villages.

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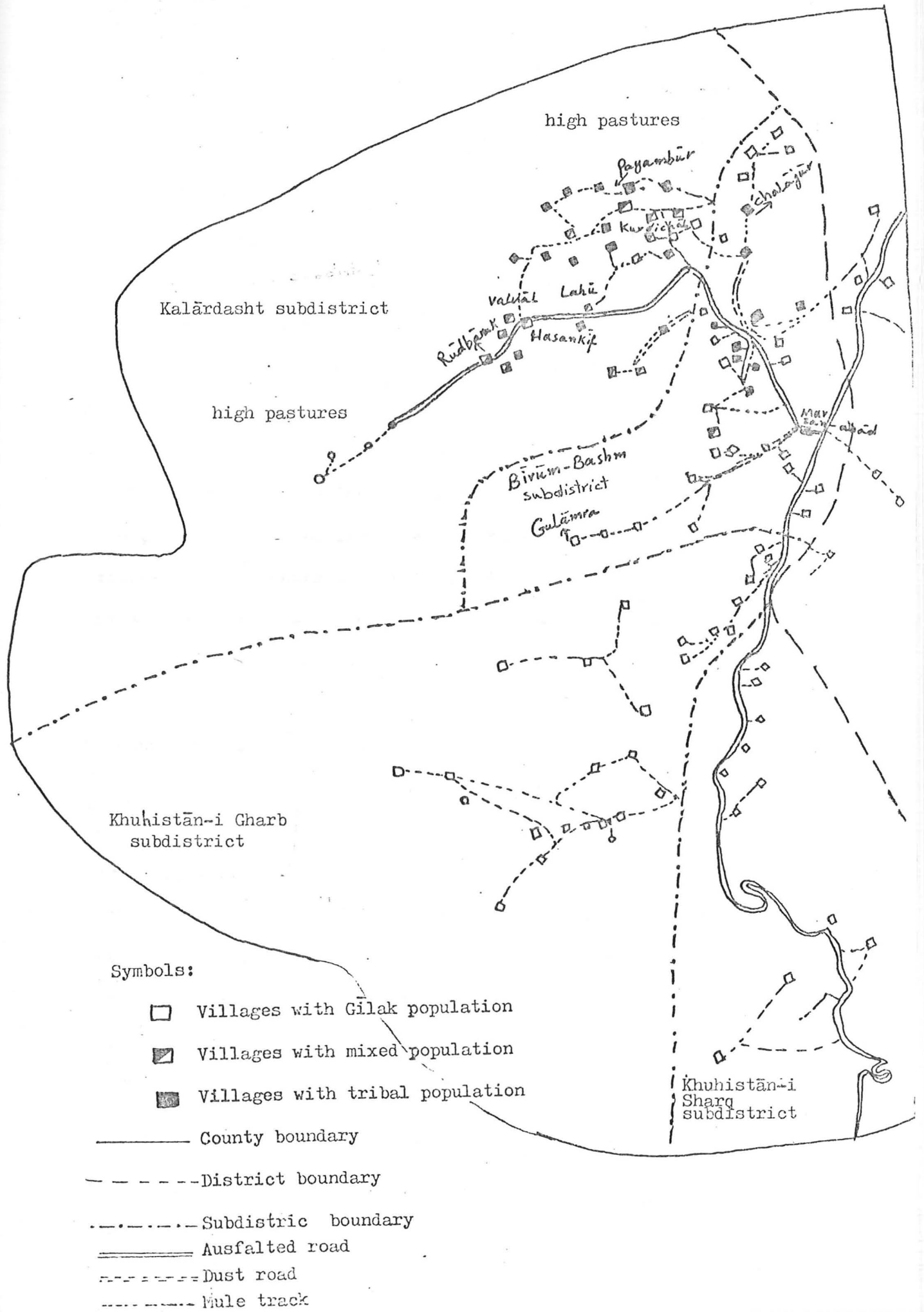
<sup>32</sup>. Rabino (1928:22, 1913:441).

<sup>33</sup>. Ibid.

Table I.5 : Ethnic composition of villages in Kalārdasht district.

Dihistān (subdistrict)	Īl villages	Gil villages	Villages with mixed population	Total No. of villages	Location
Birūn-Bashm	9	21	1	31	Some villages are located in high lands but very few high pastures
Kalārdasht	12	3	11	26	High lands with fertile agricultural land
Kuhistān-i-Sharq	0	10	0	10	Mountains
Kuhistān-i-Gharb	0	27	0	27	Mountains

Map IV: Villages in Kalārdasht district according to ethnic composition





However, whenever Īls had to settle in a Gīlak village, they gathered in a separate quarter of the village away from the Gīlaks. In Rūdbāarak, a mixed village in Sardāb-Rūd valley, Gīls are gathered around the mosque in one locality and the Īls live in the lower part of the village separated from them. Exceptions to this rule of separation occurred when Īls as individual families or in small numbers settled down in Gīlak settlements and herded their animals with those of their neighbours.<sup>34</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, a third group from Tālaqān migrated to this area. The basic reason for their migration was their poverty and Kalārdasht's relative prosperity. In the past, a sort of trading relationship existed between Tālaqān and Kalārdasht, located on opposite sides of the mountain range. There existed trading routes that followed the north-south gaps across the Elburz mountains. Along these routes rice, wheat, fish, and textiles from the Caspian plains were carried southwards for sale in southern and western Iran, and this stimulated a return traffic of manufactured articles and animal products.<sup>35</sup> Such a route exists across the mountains lying between Tālaqān and Rūdbāarak. Tālaqānī pedlars brought salt and walnuts from Tālaqān and exchanged them for rice, dry fish, and wheat in Kalārdasht. The fertile plain of Kalārdasht attracted some of these poor pedlars, who gradually settled down in the area. Tālaqānī migrants tended to settle in villages near the routes of their migration. Their numbers in Rūdbāarak, Hasankīf, and nearby villages are higher. Since Tālaqānīs

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<sup>34</sup>. See De Planhole (1961:92).

<sup>35</sup>. Fisher (1968:54).

who live in Rudbārak arrived not more than three generations ago, they can easily trace their origins and the date of their grandparents' migration to Kalārdasht. They mingled indifferently with Īls and Gīls and engaged mainly in trades or worked as landless labourers for landowners.

Table I.6 presents a summary of information on the ethnic origin, language, and religion of inhabitants of the region.

Table 1.6: The ethnic groups in Kalārdasht district -- language, religion, and origin.

Ethnic affiliation	Language	Origins and religion
Gīlaks	Gīlaky (a dialect of Persian)	Native inhabitants of the region. Shi'ite Muslims.
Khvajvand	Kurdish	Tribe originally brought from Ardallān and Garūs; held military positions up to the reign of Reza Shah. Most numerous of the in-coming tribes. Followers of the Ahl-i-Haqq sect of Islam.
Laks	Gīlaky	Came into the region under the same conditions as did the Khvajvand but are of a different tribal origin. Shi'ite Muslims.
Turks	Turkish	Tribe originally brought from Qara Yāgh; were under the leadership of Khvajvands. Shi'ite Muslims.
Tālaqānis	Gīlaky	Recent migrants to the area from Tālaqān; came three generations ago. Shi'ite Muslims.

D. Landownership prior to the arrival of the tribal groups

The native population of Kalārdasht, the Gilak, are regarded as the original owners of land. Each Gilak clan recognized ownership of agricultural land and a part of forest. Although specific data on pre-tribal settlement conditions of Kalārdasht are almost non-existent, the settlement patterns of villages and their ethnic composition, as well as the narratives of the aged inhabitants, all suggest that prior to the arrival of in-coming tribes to the region, the indigenous Gilak inhabitants were settled mainly in five localities: (1) Rūdbārak and Mijil; (2) Valvāl; (3) Hasan-kif; (4) Lāhū; and (5) Kurdi-chāl. These five localities are still the main centres of Gilak population; other parts of the district are dominated by non-Gilak populations (see Map V). The family name of Gilak landowners in the area ends with 'ej'; this acts as a sort of possessive suffix showing their ownership status and distinguishes them from other Gilaks.

In Kalārdasht, unlike most parts of the country, the pattern of landownership has been based on small holdings (khūdeh mālikī) rather than large landed estates (ūmdeh mālikī). The term mālik is the Persian equivalent for landowner. A mālik who owns one village (dih) in its entirety is called umdeh mālik (principal mālik or owner) and one who shares possession of one village with other māliks, and who might be either owner-farmer or an owner who allows peasants to cultivate land in return for rent, is called khūdeh mālik (small mālik or owner). Informants say landholding in Kalārdasht has always been based on khūdeh mālikī; Stark, writing about

Kalārdasht, confirms this point.<sup>36</sup> Three factors can be responsible for this situation: (1) Due to abundant rainfall throughout the year, the supply of water is not a problem as it is in other parts of the country. In the northern part of Iran, water is a free good. Since costly hydraulic installations are not necessary, the small holders are able to maintain their independence in relation to big estates. Large estates are more likely to be found in the areas where irrigation is costly.<sup>37</sup> (2) Large land ownership is found less commonly in hill districts.<sup>38</sup> (3) In Māzandarān any clearing made in the forest belongs by custom to the person who performs this work. The right so acquired is known as "ḥaq-i-tabar tarāshi" (i.e., the right derived from felling trees).<sup>39</sup> Many landowners in the district acquired their land in this manner prior to the nationalization of forests.

In this part of the country the manner in which the crop is divided between landowner and sharecropper also differs from the rest of the country. Prior to land reform in most parts of the country, generally the manner in which the crop was divided between landowner and peasant was based on the five elements of production: land, water, draught animals, labour, and seed. A great variety of practices were found and this variety was influenced by the nature of farming, irrigation systems, and local customs. In extreme cases,

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<sup>36</sup> Stark (1934(a):327).

<sup>37</sup> Behnām (1968:478).

<sup>38</sup> Lambton (1953:75, 267).

<sup>39</sup> Lambton (1953:297).

the landowner received as much as four-fifths of the crop in payment for his contributions of land, water, animals, and seed, whilst the tenant received as little as one-fifth in return for his year's work.<sup>40</sup> In Kalārdasht the situation was different and sharecroppers were in a relatively favourable position. According to the traditional sharecropping system practised in the region before land reform, the sharecropper was entitled to half of the crop; in return he provided one draught animal, the labour force, and half of the seed. The crop was divided equally between landowner and sharecropper. Gilak landowners let their land for cultivation to sharecroppers, who might own small plots of land or no land, according to this arrangement. The tenure arrangement is another indication of the prevalence of small landownership in the region.

#### E. Landownership after the settlement of tribes

After the movement of tribes to the area by the central government in order to control turbulent local peoples, the best lands and pastures were occupied by tribes. Khwajvands and other tribes operated on a tribal basis: the head of the tribe, the khān, was nominally owner of all the land and had it cultivated indirectly by tribesmen. As a result, in Rūdbārak the Khwajvand landowner whose father was a tribal khān holds as much as the total amount of land owned by all the Gilak landowners. Landownership among Gilaks is still based on small holdings, but Khwajvand khāns who own land tend to be large

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<sup>40</sup>For sharecropping arrangements in other parts of Iran see Lambton (1953).

landowners. Arrival of the tribes in the region completely upset the system of land-tenure practised among the Gilaks. Khwajvand-dominated tribes who occupied Gilakis' land refused to pay the usual share of the crop to the owner. The occupation of land gradually was established as a right of the tribal population. The occupation right could be sold or transferred to another person by the occupant. Thus, a Gilak landlord could have one of two tenure relationships with his sharecropper: (1) If his sharecropper tenant were Gilak, the landlord-tenant relationship was formed and the owner received the due share of the crop. (2) If his tenant were an Il, the occupant of the land refused to pay the due share. The tribes operated according to their tribal system, which gave all the rights of occupation to the head of the tribe; Gils found resistance extremely difficult for they were confronted with a tribe, not an individual. Gilak landowners had to accept that their lands were occupied by incoming tribes who refused to pay any share of the crop to the former owners.

The law in Iran recognizes two types of ownership: (1) "A'yānī" ownership, which normally refers to rights in tangible property erected or growing on a piece of land, such as buildings, trees, crops, etc. (2) "Arseh" ownership, which refers to rights in the land itself as distinct from crops or buildings on the land. The de facto<sup>41</sup> right to occupy a piece of land usually acquired by incoming tribes through force, was recognised as a'yānī ownership in Kalārdasht, without reference to the existence of buildings and crops. This right was registered in documents called "Bonchāq"

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<sup>41</sup>See ibid., p. 423.

and later on was recorded in shahristān (county) registries. The original ownership of a piece of land was legalised as 'arseh ownership. In this way, the in-coming tribes acquired a'yānī ownership of a piece of land without completely ousting its original owners. Gilak landowners although retaining 'arseh rights, could not make use of them and had no other choice but to sell the a'yānī ownership to tribes at a low price.

A landowner in Kalārdasht can thus be in one of three situations: (1) having only a'yānī ownership, that is to be the legally recognised occupant of a piece of land; (2) having only 'arseh ownership, that is to be recognised as having rights of original ownership of a piece of land which was occupied by Īls; or (3) having both 'arseh and a'yānī rights of ownership. Gilak landowners belong to the second or third category, whilst members of in-coming tribes belong to the first category or, in some cases, to the third.

This was the bone of contention between Īls and Gīls. The struggle by tribes to occupy more land against resistance from native people was the natural outcome of the situation. In 1853 Gilak landowners were prepared to pay large sums to governors to remove Khwajvands from Kalārdasht. Tribes were predominantly engaged in herding. This could be one of the reasons for their inclination to occupy high pastures near Rūdbāarak despite the fact that Gilak settlements already existed there. Possession of high pastures was extremely valuable to Khwajvand khāns as it formed the basis of their power.

Even after they were settled in the area the tribes continued their transhumance and lived in tents for part of the year. Rabino writes: "The Khwajvands, although now inhabiting villages, still



move about in tents during the hot season. They keep cattle and breed a fairly good race of horses."<sup>42</sup> Carpet-weaving was introduced into the region by these tribes. Kalārdasht is the only region in the Caspian where local carpets are produced.<sup>43</sup> This is another indication of differences in their mode of economy from that of the indigenous cultivators.

To recapitulate, the arrival of the tribes had the following impact on the socio-economic system of the area:

1. It upset the existing landlord-sharecropper relationship.
2. It changed the modes of landownership and put an emphasis on a'yānī ownership.
3. Large scale herding became a part of the economy of the region which previously was based on agriculture.
4. The custom of summer pasturing became common.

#### F. Impact of the outside world on Kalārdasht

Due to the poor transportation linkage with the outside world, largely the result of the rugged topography of the area, and because of the subsistence nature of its economic system, Kalārdasht settlements were both geographically and culturally isolated from the other parts of the country and from the main currents of change in Iranian society. There were no improved roads linking this part of the Caspian to central Iran until the 1930s, when the Chālūs road was

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<sup>42</sup>•Rabino (1928:22).

<sup>43</sup>•Turkoman carpets, which are produced by Turkomans in Turkoman Sahara in the north-eastern part of Caspian are very different in quality and pattern from carpets locally produced in Kalārdasht. See Noel (1921: 412).

built, connecting Tehran to Caspian coastal towns.

Various forces of change were nevertheless gradually bringing the outside world closer. Two major policies of Rezā Shāh affected this region. One was the organization of a modern army in Iran.<sup>44</sup> Central government extended its control over the whole country even to remote areas such as Kalārdasht. Tribal khāns lost their military positions and their tribal levies were replaced by army forces which were sent from the capital. The establishment of gendarmerie also undermined the local powers and enforced the central government's control on the area. In order to remove their power, tribal khāns were sent into exile and their land and property were confiscated by the state.

Also during the 1930s a significant number of settlements in the northern part of Iran passed into the control of the crown, and large areas of land were acquired by Rezā Shāh as his personal estates; the latter were administered separately from the Khāliseh (state) land.<sup>45</sup> In Kalārdasht large landowners were obliged to sell their land to the Shāh for almost nothing. In Rūdbārak the khān with his family was sent into exile in Shiraz and his land was confiscated by the state.

In 1941 after Rezā Shāh's abdication, exiled tribal khāns came back to the region with increased power, partly due to weakened central government as a result of the political crisis, and re-claimed their lands. These trends affected the balance of power between Īls and Gils in the area. In spite of the increased power

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<sup>44</sup>•For a full account of Rezā Shah's modernization plans see Banānī (1961).

<sup>45</sup>•See Lambton (1969:49) and Fisher (1968:57).

of the central government and the presence of gendarmerie, conflict between them increased. The conflict in Rūdbārak reached its climax after the murder of a Gilak landowner by one of his cousins. It is believed that the atrocity was instigated by a Khwajvand khān to undermine the unity and cooperation of Gils, and in this way to diminish their power.

The abdication of Reza Shāh led to an increase of power for tribal khāns. Reza Shāh's personal estates, amounting to over 2,000 villages or parts of villages, were transferred to the state by a decree dated 11 September 1941 and became known as Amlāk-i-vāgozāri (the transferred estates). In 1942 a law was passed for the return of both a'yāni and 'arseh rights to some of the original owners, and special courts were set up to effect the transfer.<sup>46</sup> In this way some of the Khwajvand and Gilaki landowners recovered their land. But 'arseh rights in four out of every six dāngs<sup>47</sup> of Rūdbārak's land were still retained by the crown until the land reform in 1962.

Since the 1930s considerable changes have occurred; the construction of motorable all-weather roads, paralleled by the rapid growth of Tehran, created a two-way economic movement. Reza Shāh's interest in the region and his palace in Ojābiet (a village very close to Rūdbārak) caused the influx of courtiers and town people. The Tehran-Chālūs road was constructed in the 1930s. A mule track from Marzanābād to Kalārdasht, built by Nāsir al-din Shāh (1848-1896)

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<sup>46</sup> See Lambton (1969:49).

<sup>47</sup> Each village or any kind of estate is divided into six parts. A dāng is a one-sixth share of any piece of real estate.

in order to enable him to take his entire harem with him to his hunting resort in Kalārdasht,<sup>48</sup> was up-graded to accommodate vehicular traffic and connected to the Tehran-Chālūs road. For the first time in its history, the region was brought into close contact with the outside world and the integration of Kalārdasht into the larger economy of Iran was facilitated. From this time a new process of change began.

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<sup>48</sup>. Noel (1921:412).

Chapter III:

The Changing Socio-Economic Structure of  
Kalārdasht and the Four Selected Villages

In the preceding chapter I have presented an outline of certain features of the historical socio-economic organization of Kalārdasht, based on the limited records of the past. I have throughout taken the view that Kalārdashti history is one of accommodation to externally imposed forces and events. The culminative effect of these changes has been to link Kalārdasht more closely with the broader society of Iran. This chapter seeks to analyse the changes that have come about in the economic organization of the four selected villages of Kalārdasht as a result of the region's greater involvement in the national economy. It is only incidentally concerned with the changes in the broader Iranian society.

The chapter begins with an introduction to each of the four villages which have been selected for this study. It then proceeds to a discussion of some aspects of the traditional economy of these villages, as well as of the changing situation in Rūdbāarak, and offers a comparison between Rūdbāarak and the three isolated villages.

## I. Introduction to the four selected villages

### Rūdbārak

#### 1. The setting and the village history

Rūdbārak, a large village in Kalārdasht dihistān, lies almost at the foot of the Takht-i Sulaimān Peak. It is the last village before the Elburz Peaks. Sardāb Rūd, a river which originates from the Takht-i Sulaimān slopes, passes through Rūdbārak, which is the first village on its way; the river divides Rūdbārak in two. The main street of the village consists of a path along the banks of the Sardāb Rūd.

There is no evidence available about the foundation of the village. It seems certain that Rūdbārak has been continually inhabited since long before the arrival of tribal population in the region in the late eighteenth century.

Rūdbārak has relatively good means of communication: the road which links Kalārdasht to the Tehran-Chālūs main road terminates in Rūdbārak. There are a large number of cars using the road especially during the summer when town people spend their week-ends in the village. Few Rūdbārakis own cars, and there is a bus service to Chālūs (a coastal town) and other parts of the coast. In fact, Rūdbārak is one of the villages with the highest amount of urban contact in the region, partly due to Tehranis who own villas in the village and spend their summer vacations there, and Rūdbārakis who reside in urban centres (Tehran, Chālūs, Naushahr) and commute to the village frequently.

## 2. Population and Ethnic composition

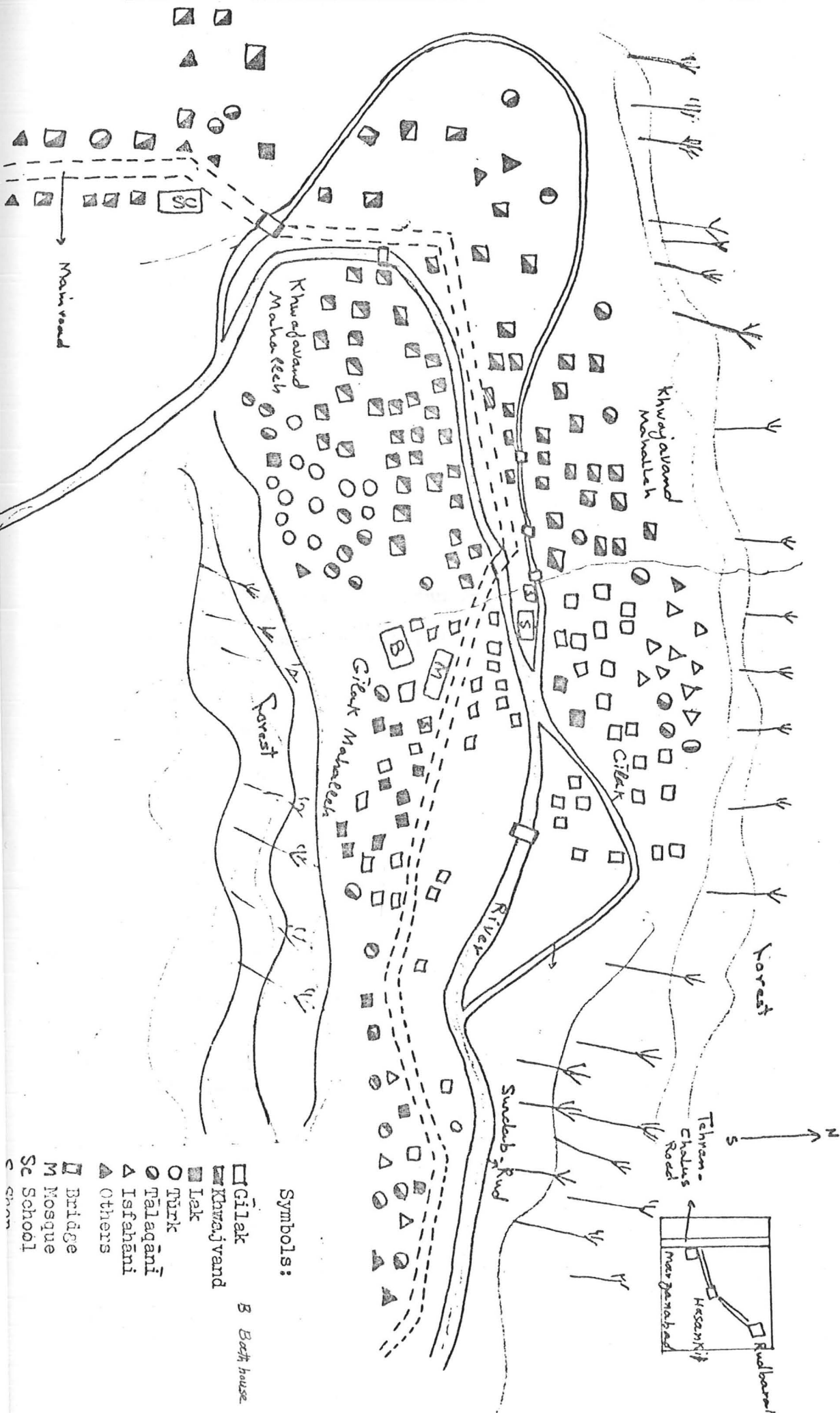
Rūdbāarak's population in 1978 consisted of 227 households, 1,324 persons; it is one of the ethnically mixed villages of Kalārdasht. There are five major ethnic groups in Rūdbāarak; Table II.1 shows the ethnic composition and distribution of the village.

Table II.1: Ethnic affiliation of household heads and the locality where they live in the village of Rūdbāarak. (Summer visitors excluded.)

Ethnic affiliation	Number of households	%	Locality of residence
Gīlak	44	19	Around the mosque (central part)
Khwajvand	76	34	Lower part of the village
Lak	21	9	Around the mosque and upper part of the village
Turk	13	6	Close to Khwajvands' quarter
Tālaqānis	43	19	Scattered in village
Isfahānis	14	6	Close to Gīlaks' quarter
from other Kalārdashti villages	11	5	Scattered in village
from other parts of the country	5	2	Scattered in village
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>100</b>	



Map V: Rudbarak, distribution of ethnic groups within the village.



Gilaks, as elsewhere in Kalārdasht, are original inhabitants of Rūdbāarak. Khwajvands, Laks, and Turks are among the in-coming tribes to the village; khāns in Rūdbāarak have always been Khwajvands. Tālaqānīs, who are migrants from Tālaqān, came to the area towards the end of the nineteenth century; they have lived in Rūdbāarak for three generations. About the origin of Isfahānis there are two different accounts: according to the first they came as servants of Khwajvand khāns, while the second relates that they came as artisans to work on the shāh's palace. Isfahānis still work as artisans in the village; blacksmiths and carpenters are traditionally from this group. There are sixteen households that still regard themselves as belonging to other villages of Kalārdasht or other parts of the country. They are also among the recent migrants; some are settled in the village temporarily, working as teachers and mine supervisors.

After the settlement of armed Khwajvand tribes in Rūdbāarak, Gilak landowners were forced to accept their authority. Gilaks' lands were occupied by these tribes, who refused to pay land dues and acquired control of pastures. In the village as well there was hostility between Gilaks and Khwajvands; Gilaks remained in one locality of the village (around the mosque) while Khwajvands gathered in the lower section. Apart from their conflicting interests, the differences in religious affiliation between Khwajvands (Ahl-i-Haqq) and Gilaks (Shiā) was another factor that until recently kept them in constant animosity. By contrast, Laks mingled with Gilaks more easily. Two factors facilitated this: (a) Laks were also a part of a tribe under Khwajvand authority, without a military position, and were probably as much oppressed

as Gilaks by Khwajvand khāns; and (b) they had no religious differences with Gilaks.

In order to improve their relationship with the local people, Khwajvand khāns selected their wives from Gilak landowning families. In this way they made new alliances. Intermarriage improved their relationships to some extent.

After the nationalization of pastures and forests the main cause of animosity was removed. Also the expansion of governmental agencies and gendarmerie in the region reduced the power of Khwajvand khāns greatly. Although there is still an underlying mistrust between Khwajvands and Gilaks, their relationship is based on outward tolerance and cooperation.

### 3. Language and literacy

Four languages are spoken in Rūdbārak: Gilaky, Kurdish, Turkish, and Persian. Gilaky is the lingua franca. Kurdish is used by Khwajvands and Turkish by Turks. Apart from some old men and women, almost all villagers can speak Persian. Persian is used for contact with outsiders; the greater use of Persian in the village has followed the arrival of tourists and the summer residents, Tehranis.

The majority of grown men in the village are illiterate (77.2 percent) and few women can read or write. In recent years there has been an increase of literacy in the village because of the availability of the modern educational system. At present there is a primary school in Rūdbārak; it has 252 pupils, of whom 112 are girls. The school was founded in the 1950s.



Plate 1: Rūdbārak, the changing village with ethnically mixed population.



Plate 2: Gulāmra, the isolated village with Gilak population. Note the two mahallehs (quarters) of the village, separated by a narrow valley.

A secondary school up to 3rd year (part one), which is called guidance school, was established in Rūdbārak in 1976. The secondary school is used by two other nearby villages as well. There were 127 boys and 61 girls registered in 1978. Forty students from Rūdbārak attend high school (part two) in Ḥasankif; there are 11 girls among them. Some students go to Chālūs or other coastal towns to continue their education; 28 male students from Rūdbārak attend school in Chālūs (the nearest coastal town).

### Gulāmra

#### 1. The setting and village history

Gulāmra is a small mountain village in Bīrūn-Bashm dihistan. It is not an old village, having been founded approximately 150 years ago by two brothers, Hassan and Gholām, who belonged to Shahrīstān (a nearby Gilak village). At that time the whole area now called Gulāmra was forest and animal pasture. The brothers gradually cleared the forests and made land available for cultivation, their objective being to secure pastures for their animals.

Almost the whole population of the village are descendants of the two brothers who founded the village. The only household heads who are not descendants of the brothers are two men who are originally from other villages of the region and who came to settle down in Gulāmra after marrying in the village.

The descendants of Hassan all live in a quarter (maḥallah) called "Hassan Ābād", while the descendants of Gholām live in another quarter called "Valley Ābād". (Valley, the eldest son of Gholām, is still living and claims that he is 140 years old.)

These two quarters are separated by a narrow valley. (See Plate 2 .) Valley recalls an incident in which the village was raided by Khwajvands and 500 sheep and goats were taken. This shows that even remote Gīlak settlements were not left untouched by Khwajvands.

Gulāmra is probably the most isolated village in the region. There is no road leading to the village. The nearest village to Gulāmra is accessible by road only during the summer.

There is a shrine on one of the peaks near Gulāmra (Imām-Zādeh). It is believed that an Imām's son is buried there. Valley, who is the attendant of this shrine, stays there for the whole summer when people from other villages come on pilgrimage.

## 2. Population and ethnic affiliation

At present the population of Gulāmra consists of 24 households, 165 persons. According to the 1966 census, Gulāmra had 22 households. The rate of population growth is small because of migration.

Apart from one Khwajvand woman who married in Gulāmra, the whole population consists of Gīlaks.

## 3. Language and literacy

Gīlaky is the only dialect used in the village. Most men, particularly the young men who are labour migrants, speak Persian as well. Very few women can speak Persian.

After the arrival of a member of the educational military corps in 1971, villagers became more familiar with Persian since Persian was used as the medium of education in the school.

All the household heads are illiterate and only one of them has a Quranic education. Some of the young men in the village have an elementary education consisting of not more than three years of schooling, but none of the women can read or write.

There is an elementary school in Gulāmra which was established in 1971 by the first member of the literacy corps, who was sent to the village and stayed there for 18 months. After his departure five teachers were sent to Gulāmra. Each of them stayed for less than a year and asked to be transferred, mainly because of the difficulties in communication and Gulāmra's isolation. The present teacher intends staying in the village for another year. The total number of students in school is 28, 8 of whom are girls. The school has up to 5 grades; there are no girls in the fourth and fifth grades. Those who wish to continue their studies after elementary school must leave the village as there is no secondary school in Gulāmra or in any of the neighbouring villages.

### Chalājūr

#### 1. The setting and village history

Chalājūr is a small village in Bīrūn-Bashm dihistān, populated by members of the Khwajvand tribe. All the villagers could tell me about the history of the village was that many years ago Chalājūr was located very close to Samā' Lake (a small lake in the mountains near Chalājūr) and had a mixed population of Gīlaks and Khwajvands. An earthquake destroyed virtually the whole village; only six households out of 600 survived. The survivors moved to their present location which is also called Chalājūr and is further



away from the lake. Assuming that this story about the village is true, and also assuming that the Khwajvands settled in this region in the late eighteenth century, we have a historical account of the village from the late eighteenth century onwards, but there is no account of the events preceding that date. The fact that Chalājūr is the closest village to Samā Lake and its fields are located near the lake may confirm this historical account narrated by the villagers.

Chalājūr is close to one of the largest Khwajvand populated villages in Birūn-Bashm, Kalanu. It seems that in the past, at the time of tribal disputes, a small Khwajvand village like Chalājūr could survive only by being near to a large Khwajvand settlement and having its support. Chalājūr is still very much in contact with Kalanu; for instance, at the time of Khwajvand religious ceremonies there is a great deal of cooperation between these two villages.

There is a path which links Chalājūr to the Kalārdasht road; this path, which has been repaired recently, is useable only during the summer.

## 2. Population and ethnic affiliation

The population of Chalājūr consists of 20 households, 143 persons. According to the 1966 census, Chalājūr had a population of 16 households. Apart from one Gilak woman who married in Chalājūr the whole village consists of Khwajvands.

## 3. Language and literacy

Kurdish is the language used in the village; most men speak Gilaky as well and use it to communicate with Gilak villages in the



Plate 3: Chalājūr, the isolated village with <sup>Khwajuand</sup> population.

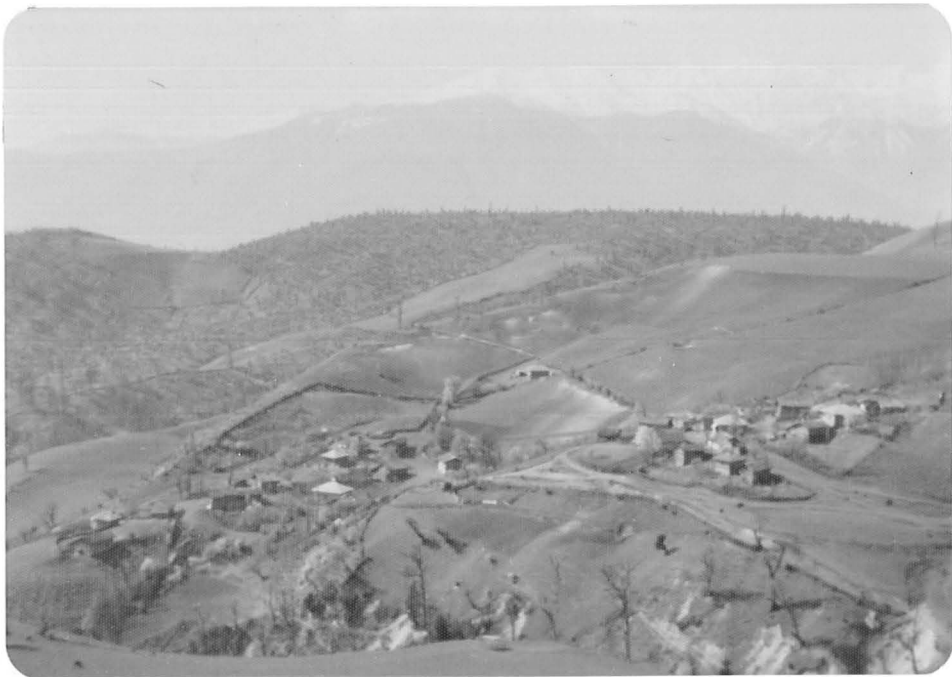


Plate 4: Payambūr, the isolated village with Turkish population. Note the two mahallehs (quarters) of the village, separated by a narrow valley.

region. Although some of the men can speak Persian, few women can.

There are two household heads in Chalājūr who have had some school education; one of them has had five years of elementary school elsewhere, while the other, a young man, has had high school. Apart from these two men and four other household heads who can read and write, none of the villagers has had any education.

There is an elementary school in the village which was established after the arrival of the first members of the literacy corps in 1971. Each member of the literacy corps is expected to stay in the village and teach in the school for 18 months. There are 30 students at the school, 10 of whom are girls. Students who wish to continue their studies after elementary school attend secondary school in Kalanu or Hasankif.

### Payambūr

#### 1. The setting and village history

Payambūr is populated by Turkish tribes and is located in the forests of Kalārdasht dihistān.

It is a new village; the founder of the village is Bābā Ḥaydar (father Ḥaydar). His father died when Ḥaydar was a small child and his mother married in Bāzārsar (a Turkish village near Payambūr). Ḥaydar and his brother moved to the present location of Payambūr, which is mountainous and was heavily forested at the time. They cleared the forest for cultivation. The main reason for their settling in Payambūr was to acquire land, as they were landless orphans and had no rights of succession to their stepfather's land.

Apart from those household heads who married Ḥaydar's or his brother's daughters and settled in the village, all the inhabitants of the village are descendants of these two brothers. The descendants of Ḥaydar live in the lower section of the village which is called "Pāein Maḥallah" (lower Quarter). The descendants of his brother Fazlollah live in the upper section called "Bāllā Maḥallah" (upper quarter).

There is no road to Payambūr, which is located in the forest. Pyshambūr, the nearest village to Payambūr, is accessible by road. Payambūr is in close contact with two nearby villages, Pyshambūr and Bāzārsar; most villagers have kin in these villages through intermarriage. Recently a path from Pyshambūr to the village was built by an American firm in order to transport equipment which was required for a power project it was executing for the government. However, the path can be used only by jeeps and tractors.

## 2. Population and ethnic affiliation

The population of Payambūr consists of 16 households, 126 persons. The 1966 census data were not available for Payambūr. Most of the population (68.8 percent) consists of Turkish tribal people who constitute 11 households. Two other households belong to the Khwajvand tribe (12.5 percent). The remaining 3 households (18.7 percent) are Gilaks. All the Khwajvand and Gilak household heads are migrants from other villages in the region who married daughters of Ḥaydar or his brother and settled in the village.

### 3. Language and literacy

Turkish is the language used in the village, but all of the men speak Gilaky; those who have connections with the Khwajvands speak Kurdish as well. Persian is spoken by men and also by the young generation who attended school; very few women can speak Persian.

Except for a young household head who has had six years of elementary schooling all of the household heads are illiterate.

The village school is taught by a member of the literacy corps; thus far four educational military members have taught in the village for a period of 18 months each. Since there is no school building, the members of the corps teach in the house of one of the villagers. Altogether there are 18 students, 9 of whom are girls; 16 other male students attend schools in nearby villages.

## II. Traditional economy of the four villages

In this section I shall describe the traditional economy of these four villages. Prior to any analysis of the economic system, it should be stated at the outset that at present there are three main types of economic activity: (a) agriculture, (b) herding, and (c) wage labour of various kinds. The balance between (a), (b), and (c) is both variable and subject to change. In fact, the most important feature of economic life in the area is the change in the balance between these three principal kinds of economic activity; this change has gone quite far in Rudbāarak, but it is also discernible in the three other villages despite their isolation.

In the traditional setting, the majority of the villagers in the region gained their livelihood through cultivating grain and rearing sheep. This mixed farming and animal husbandry, which I call agro-pastoralism, was supplemented by seasonal migration to coastal areas to work on the rice fields and fruit gardens. These three activities were the only source of income and the main occupations. However, the region is undergoing rapid change and in some of the villages, such as Rūdbārak, there has been a radical change in the methods by which villagers earn their livelihood. In the traditional economy of these villages (such as prevailed previously in Rūdbārak and still prevails in the isolated villages) there was a close relationship between agriculture and herding; this relationship is now likely to be increasingly disturbed. I have analysed the process of change first by describing the traditional economy and then portraying its changing features.

This section is divided into three parts: the first part concerns the agricultural system; the second describes animal husbandry; and the third deals with seasonal migration to the coast to work on the rice fields and fruit gardens.

## 1. Agricultural system

### (a) Land use

The type of mixed agriculture and herding practised in Kalār-dasht requires considerable diversification; consequently land is used in many ways. The community developed a system based on co-operation among villagers, while allowing each person to maximize his own economic operation. This system developed historically

in response to extreme limitations imposed by the environment: the shortage of land and the diversity of physical and climatic conditions.

The settled area of each village is surrounded by a territory within which agricultural land and pastures identified with the village are located. Some villages are identified also with patches of mountain pastures separated from their main territory. The cultivated land within the village territory is divided among the various owners. In these four villages a system allowing land to be cultivated and fallow on a regular basis operates. However, in Rūdbārak, as in some other villages, there are two types of agricultural land: (1) Basic lands (bonyānī), which are located in the village āyish (open fields) which are irrigated. There are three āyishs, one of which is left fallow each year. Each āyish constitutes a part of the agricultural land of the village, in which individuals own plots of land. (2) New land, which lies on the slopes of hills and which, until it was cleared recently, formed part of the forest. The cultivation of these lands is based on dry farming and does not follow the order of rotation of the āyishs.

Each āyish is irrigated by streams which are diverted from the Sardāb Rūd, the river which passes through Rūdbārak. There is some coordination in usage of water. The plots closest to the river are first irrigated, then the excess water is passed to the others. The owner of each plot of land in turn assumes the responsibility to supervise the irrigation of the entire āyish.<sup>1</sup>

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Footnote 1 next page.



In the past, one āyish was allocated each year for barley and wheat cultivation, one for millet cultivation, and the third left fallow. Cultivation of millet ended five years ago.<sup>2</sup> According to the villagers there were two main reasons for this: (1) It was believed that cultivating millet makes the land infertile. (2) Since consuming millet flour was considered a sign of poverty, as the villagers prospered millet growing declined and was finally abandoned.

In 1978, two of the āyishes were allocated for wheat and barley and the other was left fallow; thus an āyish was cultivated for two years and allowed to lie fallow the third. Soon after the completion of the harvest, autumn ploughing and sowing on the fallow land begins; one of the āyishes from which the crops have been reaped becomes fallow for the next year. This system prevents any individual from planting the same fields for more than two successive years.

The individual plots of land within each āyish are separated by strips of unploughed land. Each man farms his own land quite independently of his neighbour, so that he is free to plough and sow when he wishes or miss one or more turns of the cycle. That is, he can leave his land fallow for more than one year, so long as he does not cultivate it in a year when it is a part of the village pasture.

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<sup>1</sup> Unlike most parts of Iran, in Kalārdasht the allocation of water has not developed into a system in which each owner of land, depending on the size of his holdings, has access to a limited amount of water. This is mainly due to high rainfall in the region and availability of water.

<sup>2</sup> Stark in the 1930s considered millet one of the main cultivations in Kalārdasht (1934:268). De Planhol in 1958 mentions that millet cultivation is decreasing in the region (1961:97).

In the past, one āyish was allocated each year for barley and wheat cultivation, one for millet cultivation, and the third left fallow. Cultivation of millet ended five years ago.<sup>2</sup> According to the villagers there were two main reasons for this: (1) It was believed that cultivating millet makes the land infertile. (2) Since consuming millet flour was considered a sign of poverty, as the villagers prospered millet growing declined and was finally abandoned.

In 1978, two of the āyishes were allocated for wheat and barley and the other was left fallow; thus an āyish was cultivated for two years and allowed to lie fallow the third. Soon after the completion of the harvest, autumn ploughing and sowing on the fallow land begins; one of the āyishes from which the crops have been reaped becomes fallow for the next year. This system prevents any individual from planting the same fields for more than two successive years.

The individual plots of land within each āyish are separated by strips of unploughed land. Each man farms his own land quite independently of his neighbour, so that he is free to plough and sow when he wishes or miss one or more turns of the cycle. That is, he can leave his land fallow for more than one year, so long as he does not cultivate it in a year when it is a part of the village pasture.

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By contrast with Rūdbāarak, where village lands are divided into three āyishs, in Gulāmra, Chalājūr, and Payambūr there are only two āyishs in each village, one of which is left fallow in alternate years. Agricultural land in these three villages is not irrigated.

(b) Agricultural work

Ploughing starts in early September and the land is sown by the end of October. The time of ploughing and sowing can vary according to the climate. When the weather is mild wheat sowing can be postponed until the first snow of that year. The ploughing is done by a pair of trained oxen, using an instrument called jit-azil. The yoke (jit) is placed on the shoulders of a pair of oxen; the drawbar (azil) is located between them. One end of the azil is attached to the plough and the other end is controlled by the farmer. After the land has been ploughed in this manner, seed is broadcast by hand on the ploughed row and then the same row is ploughed once again in the reverse direction. Ploughing of land is a male activity, but at the harvest season women and children also work on the land.

Reaping takes place between May and July, according to the altitude. The grain is cut with a short sickle. Normally, when two or three men are reaping, a woman follows them and collects wheat clusters and ties them together in large sheaves called kar. Before the end of the work all the sheaves (kars) are heaped in one part of the field to form stooks (kolleh). By the end of the reaping there are various stooks in different parts of the field. Finally all the stooks are gathered and arranged on a wooden

platform, which is called kopā (stack). Each stack is covered with straw to shelter the harvest from rain. (See Plate 5 .) In this way a farmer can preserve his yield from animals and the elements and can take his time in threshing his crop.

The threshing is done by a horse tramping the heaped grain. For winnowing a simple wooden fork is used. In Rūdbārak some landowners use a threshing machine which speeds up the process and can be hired from Hasankif.

Wheat and barley are the main crops but the yield is generally low throughout the region. Yields vary a great deal from field to field and from year to year on the same field. According to Kalārdashti classification, first class land, which is usually irrigated, produces a five-fold yield. Non-irrigated land in a bad year may barely reproduce the seed. There is also a considerable variation in the number of man-days necessary for ploughing and harvesting. The most important variables are whether the land is hilly or irrigated, the quality of the soil, and the speed of oxen and workers. The total number of man-days needed for production of one acre of wheat or barley ranges from 8 to 26. (See Appendix II.)

In every village each household maintains a small kitchen garden near the homestead. This location allows the farmer's family to irrigate and tend the garden. Both women and men work in the gardens to raise crops like tomatoes, onions, garlic, etc. for immediate consumption by the household.



Plate 5: Rūdbāarak. Kopās (stacks) after harvest of wheat in one of the āyishs (open fields).

barzgar), who work on the land of a zari' or landowner a  
share of the crop. After land reform zari's received 1

is less over  
his own land.



Plate 6: Chalājūr

## (c) Landholding and sharecropping

As discussed previously, landownership in the region has always been based on small holdings (<sup>h</sup>kurdeh māliki).<sup>3</sup> Prior to the land reforms those who were engaged in agriculture could be divided into three groups: (1) Landowners, who could be further divided into two sub-categories: (a) those who cultivated their own land, that is owner-farmers; and (b) those who allowed peasants to cultivate their land in return for a rent or according to sharecropping arrangements. (2) Persons who possessed a traditional and heritable right to cultivate a special portion of the village lands on payment of one-fifth of the crop to the landlord. A person possessing such a right is termed zāri' and the due is called bahreh mālikāneh or landlord tax. A zāri' is entitled to have sharecroppers working on his land. (3) Agricultural labourers (barzgar), who work on the land of a zāri' or landowner and receive a share of the crop. After land reform zāri's received land in Kalārdasht; most of them were Khwajvand and gained full ownership of the land they had previously occupied as tenants.

In Rūdbārak, as elsewhere in the region, Gilaks are original landowners. Nearly 64 percent of Gilaks in the village presently own land; apart from two families who are large landowners, the rest own only small amounts. Among Khwajvands, on the other hand, land is less evenly distributed. Nearly 57 percent of the Khwajvands own land. The largest landowner in the village is a Khwajvand khān who owns as much land as the total amount of land owned

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<sup>3</sup><sup>h</sup> Kurdeh māliki is a system of landownership in which the agricultural land of the village is owned by a number of owners. (See above, p. 52.)



by all the Gilaks of the village. A few Turks and Laks have small landholdings, and Tālaqānīs are the main landless group in the village. Prior to the nationalization of forests in 1962, some Tālaqānīs were able to acquire land by clearing forests; their lands are not located in the 'āyishs.

In each of the three isolated villages almost every household owns land and the average size of landholding is small. Those few household heads without land are either recent migrants to the village or are sons of a landholding father who is still living. (Distribution of landholding by households will be given in a different section.)

As a result of the Land Reform Act villagers in Chalājūr acquired full ownership of the land which originally they occupied. However, land reform had no impact on Gulāmra or Payambūr, as here villagers had acquired the ownership of their lands through the clearing of forests prior to the land reform. But the nationalization of forests, enacted at the same time as the land reform (1962), stopped any further clearing of the forests. In Rūdbārak only one landowner owned more land than the limit set by the second phase of the Land Reform Act (40 hectares); five of his zāri's, all of them Khwajvands, received title to land in accordance with the Act.<sup>4</sup>

The sharecropping arrangement practised in the region is called nisfa-kāri, which means 'half cultivation', that is dividing the crop into two equal shares. According to this contract, the landowner provides the land and half of the seed, while the sharecropper

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<sup>4</sup>For information about land reform in Iran, see sources cited in the bibliography.



is responsible for the other half of the seed, plus all the labour and one plough animal. The produce is divided equally between them, and straw goes to the sharecropper.

Depending on the size of his holding, a landowner may have more than one sharecropper working on his land. Sharecropping in these villages is not a system of permanent landlord-tenant relationship. There is no definite date for fixing contracts and neither side has any right to continue the arrangement beyond one season. Fluctuations in man- and ox-power in one household, dissatisfaction with each other's conduct, and changes in the socio-economic situation in the village have great influence on the renewing of the contract. As a result of availability of work opportunities and the resultant wage increases, sharecroppers are now demanding a greater share of the crop. In some cases the landowner must provide or pay for the hiring of one of the oxen. The threshing cost is traditionally shared by both parties.

In 1978 only four Rūdbārak landowners had sharecroppers working on their lands; a few left fields uncultivated as they could not persuade any sharecropper to take the land. Until a few years ago, a large number of the households with either no land or only small holdings relied on sharecropping as the main source of their income. In recent years, because of the availability of other employment opportunities in the village, the increase in wages, and the low price of wheat in the market, the villagers have become reluctant to become sharecroppers. Most of those who are now engaged in non-agricultural activities have sold their plough animals because of the high cost of upkeep. As a result it now costs as much as 120 tomans per day to hire a pair of oxen with a worker,

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i.e., more than three times the price a few years ago. The high cost of hiring plough animals is one of the factors responsible for the decline of farming in Rūdbārak.

In Chalājūr and Payambūr sharecropping is still very much practised; in Gulāmra, however, sharecropping is not common, mainly because the amount of land owned by individual households is small.

## 2. Animal husbandry

Agriculture and herding went together in the traditional economic system; there was a close relationship between these two types of activity. The large landowners were at the same time the large herdowners. Prior to the nationalization of pastures enacted in 1962, the pastures of these villages were controlled by Gilak landowners and Khwajvand khāns. Pasture levies were received from the herders in the form of clarified butter. In fact, control of pastures constituted the basis of the power of the Khwajvand khāns. After the nationalization of pastures, herders were able to acquire pasturing rights in the pastures where they were grazing the animals at that time, according to the quantity of their stock, for a fee of 20 rials for each animal. Animal husbandry for sale is confined to sheep and goats. Although a large number of households keep cows, they are held only for household consumption or for the sale of products to neighbours. The cows are kept in the village throughout the year.

The two main features of herding in Kalārdasht are the constant movement of herds of sheep and goats from one type of

pasture to another and communal herding while the animals are in these pastures. There are four types of pastures, one for each season of the year.

At the end of winter, when the weather becomes mild in the region, the herds of sheep and goats are either brought back to the village from the winter pastures in the coastal area or, if they have been kept for the entire winter in the village, they are taken out of the stables. The animals graze in the pastures surrounding the village for a short while, during which time each herd is milked separately by its shepherd and its yield is turned into cheese and butter which is used by the herder's household. Herds stay in the pastures surrounding the village for about 10 days, and then towards the middle of April they are moved to the spring pastures.

#### Spring pastures

After reaching the spring pastures, which are located near the villages, each herd is milked separately for 10 to 20 days, depending on the weather and the quality of the grass. Once again the dairy produce is sent back to the village to be consumed by the herder's household or to be sold to other villagers. This is done on the assumption that after the winter the animals need to graze in spring pastures for a while before they reach the best level of milk productivity. After this period, all the herds belonging to different owners are milked collectively and the milk is turned into cheese and butter by some of the shepherds while others look after the herds.

Before the collective herding starts, usually 10 days after arriving in the spring pasture, the amount of milk produced by each herd is measured. This is done on a day called dah-dūsh (milking after 10 days). A special container is used as the unit of measurement. The milk produced by each herd is measured and recorded by a mirzā (a literate person who is brought to the pasture for this purpose). Most of the time the herd is only accompanied by a shepherd who might be either a member of the herdowner's household or a wage labourer, but on the day of dah-dūsh all the owners of the different herds gather in the pasture. The herder whose animals produced the highest yield is obliged to kill a sheep and provide the meat for the feast of the day. On this day also the food consumption of each shepherd for the entire period of the stay in the spring pasture is assessed. The owner of each herd is responsible for providing necessary food staples such as wheat flour, rice, and tea.

At the end of the period of stay in the spring pasture, which is usually about mid-June, the dairy produce of all the herds is divided among the herdowners. Each receives a share of cheese and butter on the basis of the amount of milk produced by his animals at the day of dah-dūsh. The day on which the dairy produce is divided is called sarā-kishī (lit., to divide).

While the herds are in this pasture, the spring shearing of sheep is carried out separately by each shepherd. The wool is sent back to the village to be prepared for carpet weaving. The herds are then moved towards summer pastures by their respective shepherds.



Plate 7: Gulāmra. Milking the sheep herd at summer pasture close to the village.



Plate 8: A shepherd from Gulāmra tending the herd in autumn pastures, before moving to low lands on the coast.



### Summer pastures

Summer pastures are located in the mountains. These are rich pastures used by the herds of several villages. Each herd is milked separately for 10 days, until they get used to the quality of the grass, and the level of milk production is relatively fixed. The ceremonies of dah-dūsh and sarā-kishī are carried out in the same way as described for the spring pastures.

While the animals are in these pastures, the milk is turned into clarified butter which is produced for selling to buyers who come to the mountains or to the villagers on their way back to their own village. Animals stay in these pastures until early September, by which time the weather is turning cold in the mountains and the grass is exhausted.

Before arriving at the autumn pastures, the herds which were mixed in the summer pasture are separated on a certain day called judā-kunī (lit., to separate).

### Autumn pastures

The pastures used in the spring are used again in the autumn. Here again dah-dūsh and sarā-kishī are carried out. The milk is turned into cheese. As the herds gradually move towards the villages the cheese is sold, or stored by the herder's household for winter consumption. Animals are kept on these pastures until the first snow of the year, usually sometime in early November.

### Winter pastures

Before moving towards the winter pasture, animals are usually kept for a few days in the pastures surrounding the village; then



they are moved to the coastal areas where the winter pastures are located. The climate on the coast is mild and animals can be grazed throughout the winter. A shepherd goes with each herd to the qishlāq (coast) and remains there until the first days of spring when the animals are moved back to the villages again, before going once again to spring pastures. The journey to the coastal pastures takes about four days, and pregnant animals give birth there.

In the past a large number of Rūdbāarak herders took their animals to the winter pastures in qishlāq. But there is only one herdowner who still uses the pastures on the coast. Most of the herders lost their grazing rights after the nationalization of pastures. Now they keep their animals in the village for the whole winter and have to feed them.

The care of small animals falls in the domain of men's activity; there is almost no work for women. Shepherding is the most vital part of animal husbandry in all these villages and there is an acute need for a full time shepherd to stay with the herd in the different pastures and thus be away from the village for the greater part of the year. Boys start to accompany experienced shepherds at the age of seven and when they reach twelve years of age they can be responsible for a herd. Gradually a man with grown sons gives up shepherding and supervises his sons' activities.

Little attention is given to cattle husbandry. For most of the year, cattle graze on the fallow lands and in the fields after the harvest. Milk cows and plough-oxen are given fodder only during the winter and care of cattle consists mostly of guarding

them against becoming lost or being stolen. During harvest time a shepherd is hired by the villagers to keep cattle away from the fields. Each cattle owner contributes to the shepherd's wage according to the number of his cattle. Women are mainly responsible for milking and feeding the cattle, although men may occasionally help. Turning cow's milk into dairy produce is women's work.

### 3. Seasonal migration to the coastal areas (qishlāq)

Climatic differences in agricultural seasons have led to the seasonal migration of agricultural labour in Kalārdasht, quite apart from migration to towns. There has always been some seasonal movement of labour from the mountains (yailāq) to the low lands on the coast (qishlāq). Because of the climate, crop growing in the mountains is limited to cereals whereas a wider variety of crops are produced on the coast. Seasonal work migration to the coast has always been the means of providing for the household's rice consumption. The end of the harvest in Kalārdasht coincides with the beginning of the rice harvest on the coast. During the winter, when there is no work available in the mountains because of the cold weather, it is fruit-picking time in the orange gardens of qishlāq. Only men go in search of work during winter, but at the time of rice planting in early spring, women constitute the great majority of the migrant work force. Women of each village form two or more groups and go to work on coastal rice fields. Their wages are paid in rice and are collected, either by themselves or by their husbands, in late September at the time of the rice harvest.

Table II.2 sets out the work cycle during the year. As the table makes clear, shepherding is a full-time job and therefore a shepherd usually cannot participate in work migration or agricultural activities. The agriculturalist is available for migrant work at a time when his labour is needed in areas outside Kalārdasht. Table II.2 does not mention carpet weaving or wool spinning and it is worth noting that women and girls in Rūdbārak and Payambur are engaged in such activities during most of the year. There is no carpet weaving in Gulāmra or Chalājūr.

### Summary

The existence of large and fertile lands in the plains of Kalārdasht combined with the nature of an agricultural activity which demands labour only during the peak season has given rise to a collectivized form of farming and animal husbandry. Moreover, a climate which limits the type of agricultural produce and the period of agricultural work has induced a pattern of seasonal migration to the coastal areas.

Animal husbandry is carried out entirely by shepherds who, in most cases, are male members of the household and are necessarily absent from the village for a large part of the year. Herding small animals is carried out collectively with the cooperation of shepherds from different villages of the region. It is a totally male activity. Women have no role in caring for small animals but they are responsible for the care of cattle which, in most cases, do not number more than five per household. By appointing a son or a male member of the household as a shepherd, the household head and other

Table II.2: Work cycle of activities in Kalārdasht throughout the year.

Months	Agricultural work	Animal husbandry	Work migration
March	----	Animals brought back to village from winter pastures.	----
April	----	Herds moved to spring pastures.	Preparing land for rice planting. (men)
May	----	Making butter and cheese.	Rice planting. (men and women)
June	Beginning of harvest.	Herds moved to summer pastures; making clarified butter, cheese.	----
July	Harvesting, threshing.	" " "	----
Aug.	Threshing.	End of summer pasturing; herds moved toward autumn pastures.	Beginning of rice harvest.
Sept.	Ploughing, sowing, fencing.	Herds in autumn pastures; making cheese, butter.	Rice harvest continues.
Oct.	Cultivation continues.	" " "	----
Nov.	----	Herds moved to village, then toward coastal areas.	----
Dec.	----	Herds in winter pastures, or wintering in village.	Fruit picking in orange gardens. (men)
Jan.	----	" " "	" " "
Feb.	----	" " "	----

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Feb.	----	" " "	----

members are freed for other activities.

The harvest has to be gathered before the rainy season in early October, and sowing must be completed before the first snow in early November. There is therefore a heavy demand for both male and female labour for this short period of the year only. Cereals are the only produce of the region. Thus seasonal work migration to the coast fits well with the pattern of agricultural and herding activities in the region. It also meets those needs of the household which cannot be provided for by agro-pastoralism.

In recent years, however, the close relationship between the three principal types of economic activities which was necessitated by ecological factors involved in winning a living from this harsh environment has been disturbed. The work opportunities available in the region and the nearby towns has had the effect of upsetting this traditional balance and has induced a pattern of constant change in the economic organization of villages in Kalārdasht. The following sections will attempt to analyse these changes.

### III. Changes in Rūdbārak's economy

The population of Rūdbārak grew steadily between 1956 and 1976, increasing 46 percent from 860 persons in 1956 to 1,261 in 1976.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, agriculture expanded to the point where every available piece of land was utilized; the land, however, could not meet all the demands of the village.

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<sup>5</sup>The first national census was carried out in 1956; the exercise has been repeated every ten years. Source: Three national censuses, Iranian Statistical Centre.

At the beginning of the century Rūdbārak enjoyed relative prosperity and had attracted migrants from Tālaqān. At present there are 49 Tālaqānī household heads who are descendants of migrants who came to the village in search of work.<sup>6</sup> It seems that when the first generation of Tālaqānī migrants came to Rūdbārak, the economy of the village, which was mainly based on mixed agriculture and herding, offered the prospect of a better life.<sup>7</sup> By the late 1950s this was no longer the case, for the rapid increase of the population and the scarcity of land were forcing the inhabitants to seek alternative means of earning a living. Land shortage in Rūdbārak combined with the opening of communication to produce a pattern of constant shift in the economic system of the village.

Upon the completion of the construction of Kalārdasht road, landless labourers, mainly Tālaqānīs, found work in charcoal-burning. The production of charcoal, by burning oak and other species of tree from the forests of Rūdbārak, became one of the most important sources of income for many families, particularly the poor and landless. Charcoal-burning demanded very little capital and few tools and utilized forests owned by large Gilak and Khwajvand landowners who readily granted permission upon the payment of a fixed daily rate to them. The product was sent to Tehran or the coastal towns. Charcoal-burning constituted a convenient source of income for landless peasants and a supplementary source of

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<sup>6</sup>For migration of Tālaqānīs to the region, see above, p. 50 .

<sup>7</sup>Noel (1921:411) refers to Kalārdasht as one of the three main grain growing regions in Caspian: "these mountains merit being called the granary of the Caspian Province."



income for those who owned land and herds. However, by the late 1950s the government began to impose severe controls in order to prevent the destruction of the forests, and after nationalization of forests in 1962 charcoal-burning was completely stopped.

The problem of unemployment became particularly acute during the 1958-62 period because of the government's control over the use of forests enforced by local gendarmerie (para-military rural police force). De Planhol in 1958 comments that already barley and wheat produced in the region were insufficient to meet the needs of the population. Charcoal-burning was a means of providing employment for the displaced. He points out that work migration would be the inevitable outcome of the economic situation in the region; charcoal-burning could have only delayed the migration for a short time.<sup>8</sup>

This was the situation in Rūdbārak when changes in the country opened up new work opportunities by expanding the industrial sector and governmental projects. The general changes in the country during the later 1960s and 1970s are most important for the current economy of the region. The period following the reform in 1962 is chosen as the turning point not because the region itself was industrialized but because the indirect effects on the region were marked and profound. Opportunities for wage employment became increasingly available in nearby towns or on government construction projects in the region.<sup>9</sup> The significance of the economic changes

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<sup>8</sup> de Planhol (1961:28). His prediction holds true for the majority of the villages in Kalārdasht, but in Rūdbārak events took another course.

which followed the increased interaction of Rūdbārak with the national economy can be seen when they are considered within the social context of the village.

Prior to the construction of the road which linked the region to the outside, money had been relatively unimportant in the subsistence economy of Kalārdasht. Money was used occasionally outside the region, but transactions in the daily lives of the villagers were based almost exclusively upon reciprocation and barter. The economics of self-sufficiency as it was practised in Kalārdasht did not require a steady source of cash income; what little cash the people needed they could raise by selling an animal or some dairy products, or perhaps a carpet woven by the women at home. The wages of seasonal work migrants to qishlāq on the coast were paid in kind and provided the rice for household consumption. But after the connection of the region to other parts of the country a new emphasis was put on money. Certainly the change-over from a barter to a money economy was a gradual process, just as it was a sporadic one. The use of money can be traced back many years; yet it did not begin to dominate the rural economy until very recently. The changing emphasis upon cash, and more important the creation of a perceived need for it, would not have had a great impact if there had not been a source of employment. The work opportunities available in the nearby towns and in the region created that employment potential. Thus the effects of the broad economic changes in the country filtered out into the region

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<sup>9</sup>In 1962 the so-called "White Revolution" introduced a series of social and economic reforms throughout the country. These included land reform and nationalization of forests and pastures. The main objective was to transform the agrarian basis of Iranian society and open the way to industrialization. (See above, Chapter I.)

indirectly and reliance upon the cash economy spread at the same time as agriculture and herding ceased to provide a source of income.

The lead mine of Rūdbārak, owned by a Khwajvand landlord in the village, started production in 1951. In the early years of its activity non-local personnel were employed, but later the mine provided unskilled employment for a number of Rūdbārakis. In the summer of 1977 the mine employed 25 labourers from the village and 5 skilled workers from outside. However, since September 1978, due to losses suffered by the mining corporation, a change of policy was adopted and the number of local workers was reduced. Although the mine provides a non-agricultural source of income and employment for some villagers, it is not primarily responsible for the drastic change from agriculture to non-agricultural activity.

Tourism has been the most important factor in the economic change in the village since the early 1970s. It is not directly related to the industrialization in the country, although certainly it has been facilitated by the development of a modern transportation system. The economic developments in the broader Iranian society and the increased wealth of a certain class of urban population provided the impetus for the tourist industry. The Caspian provinces attracted a large number of tourists from all over the country for the summer and New Year vacations.<sup>10</sup>

Tourism in Kalārdasht dates back to the reign of Reza Shāh and his interest in the region. His palace was the first innova-

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<sup>10</sup> For the expansion of tourism in the Caspian provinces, see Nūshin (1355 = 1976).

tion which attracted the royal family to the area for hunting holidays. He also ordered the construction of a large hotel in Hasankif, which remained unfinished after his abdication; the ruins of the hotel are still an impressive visible relic of his ambition for Kalārdasht.

Although since the 1940s the region has been opened to the tourists, it was not until the 1970s that the Ministry of Tourism attempted to create comprehensive tourist facilities in the area, including several hotels, guest houses, swimming pools, etc. Construction on these projects started in 1976.

However, long before the government had any plans for tourism in Kalārdasht, Rūdbāarak served as the base for mountain climbers. Most early visitors were mountain climbers or members of the Mountaineering Federation drawn to Rūdbāarak in the summer. Transportation difficulties kept the valley closed for much of the autumn and winter. The Federation employed two mountain guides from the village and villagers provided accommodation for climbers. Recently (1978) the Federation started construction of a rest house for its members and this project has provided employment for more villagers. A large number of town people, especially Tehranis, spend their summer in the village to escape from the hot summers of the city.

One of the major effects of increased tourism on the economy of Rūdbāarak has been the creation of new jobs in the village. The construction of villas for Tehranis and of governmental buildings for the tourist centre provided employment for many workers. Moreover, outsiders who own villas in Rūdbāarak employ caretakers from the village to look after their property while they are away

and to provide domestic services during their stay in the village. In 1978 caretakers numbered about fifteen and as more Tehranis build villas this number will increase. The increased demand for transportation has meant that nine men are now drivers, either owning a car or lorry or employed by bus service agencies.

Villagers are eager to take advantage of the new sources of income which are becoming available to them in their village. There are about 45 households who receive Tehrani guests during the summer and their number is increasing rapidly.<sup>11</sup> Rental income is for some an important part of their total income. The first mountain guide employed by the Federation converted his house into a guest house and derives his income solely from this source.

The censuses for the years 1956 to 1976 indicate the change in the occupational structure of the village, as agriculture gave way to wage labour in non-agricultural activities as the main source of income. In 1956 agriculture and herding clearly dominated the village economy, with 78 percent of the work force engaged. In 1966 the movement from agricultural to non-agricultural activities had not yet begun and the occupational distribution was much the same as it had been 10 years previously. It was not until the early 1970s that the major shift in the economy of Rūdbārak occurred. This coincided with the increase of tourism in the area, the purchase of land by Tehranis, the beginning of villa construction, and governmental development plans.

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<sup>11</sup>. During the first summer of my field work (1977) this number was 30; thus, there has been an increase of 50 percent.

Table II.3 presents the distribution by occupation of all Rūdbārak household heads over two decades. Some of the household heads are in fact engaged in more than one category of economic activity but, for the purpose of compiling the table, each of these men is classified under the category which indicates the greater part of his economic activity.

The economic-occupational groupings presented in Table II.3 require some explanation. The occupational groups should be seen in transition; what was true for 1956 was no longer true for 1978. Moreover, it is significant to note that the occupational groups in 1956, and even in 1966, were all essentially peasants. They should be regarded as groupings of peasantry divided mainly by ownership chances. For instance, "farmer/herder" designates those who owned resources (land/herd) and worked their land and tended their animals, or might have hired outside labour. "Sharecropper/shepherd" includes those who were landless (herdless) or had very small holdings. Sons might become shepherds, agricultural labourers, etc., and then, on receiving their inheritance, they would become proprietors. Thus these categories do not represent differences in means of livelihood, all of which were derived from agro-pastoral activities. Neither do they represent differences in occupational tasks, since all were dictated by the demands of agro-pastoralism. Due to the changing economy, the occupational groups which mainly revolved around agro-pastoral activities in 1956 gave way to predominately non-agricultural activities; the extent of this occupational transformation is revealed by the data for 1978. Skilled and unskilled workers are now permanent groups which both economically and occupationally



Table II.3: Rūdbārak: Comparison of the occupation of household heads over two decades.

Occupation of household head	1956		1966		1978	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
(1) Farmer/herder (having ownership)	52	36	50	35	42	19
(2) Sharecropper/agricultural labourer, shepherd (without ownership of resources)	61	42	55	38	18	9
(3) Skilled labourer (welder, driver, carpenter, stone-cutter, blacksmith)	8	6	12	8	66	31
(4) Unskilled labourer (mine worker, construction, charcoal, etc.)	17	12	19	14	70	33
(5) Shopkeeper (trader, pedlar); land-dealer	5	3	4	3	12	5
(6) Government employee (teacher, mountain guide, clerk)	0	0	3	2	7	3
Not known	23		35		12	
Total	166	100	178	100	227	100

Source: Iranian Statistical Centre data supplemented by my own inquiries and my own census in 1978.

Note: Data for 1956 and 1966 are taken from national censuses carried out by the Iranian Statistical Centre. Data for 1978 are from my own census. The large number of unknown cases in 1956 and 1966 is due to the fact that the data contained in the Census questionnaires in some cases were not adequate to permit a clear distinction of the household head's major activity; whenever possible, the Statistical Centre's questionnaires were completed with the help of informants. In cases where the household head was involved in more than one type of activity, the activity which contributed most significantly to his source of livelihood was taken as his occupation.



are determined by the demands of the labour market both inside and outside the region.

One striking difference between the occupational division of household heads in 1978 as compared with the data for 1956 and 1966 is the sharp decline in the proportion of those engaged in agro-pastoralism as sharecroppers, agricultural labourers, and shepherds (i.e., those who owned neither land nor herds). While the decline in the category of owners involved in agriculture/herding is relatively small (17 per cent from 1956 to 1978), the decline in the same period in the proportion of men engaged in agriculture/herding activities who do not own resources is substantial (33 per cent). (See Table II.3.) In this uneven decline we can clearly see that the impact of change affected most dramatically those without land and property. As the table shows and as the discussion of the traditional economic system illustrated, in the past the only employment for the landless/herdless was sharecropping/shepherding or simple agricultural labour.

The land reform is partly responsible for the drastic decrease in sharecropping in Rūdbārak. The Land Reform Act, which granted the right of ownership of a piece of land to its tenant (zāri'), has created a climate of suspicion and uncertainty in the landowner-sharecropper relationship. As some sharecroppers claimed to have a tenancy right (nasaq) to the land they sharecropped, many landowners preferred to hire agricultural labour in order to protect their property rights.

However, a more important reason for the decrease of sharecropping is related to the astronomical increase of wages which followed the introduction of tourism as an important factor in the village economy and the resultant high demand for labour

in construction work. Inflation in the country has undoubtedly also had some effect on wage levels in Rūdbārak. According to villagers, ten years ago an unskilled labourer was paid 70 riāls for a day's work; in 1978 the minimum wage was 250 riāls. The wages of a skilled worker can amount to 2,000 riāls per day.

As a result of wage increases, agriculture and herding have suffered. Large land/herd owners who sharecropped their land or hired agricultural labour or shepherds at the peak season are not able to compete with the newly created labour market. A shepherd previously could be employed for 20,000 riāls a year; now the lowest wage asked is 120,000 and even at this salary young men are reluctant to accept the hardships of a shepherd's life when they can easily earn as good a living by working on construction in the region. This is the main reason given by herders for the decline of herding. Twenty households have sold their herds and abandoned herding altogether in the past ten years.

For similar reasons, many landowners did not cultivate their lands this year. The wages of agricultural workers is high and the price of wheat is low in the market.

The shift from the traditional economy to wage labour based on non-agricultural activities has been facilitated, at least in part, by the government's policy of importing major agricultural staples, such as wheat and rice. As imported wheat flour can be obtained relatively cheaply from the shops in the village and Ḥasankīf (centre of the region) at subsidized prices, production for consumption is no longer economical for a landowner with scattered small holdings. A man earning wages on a construction site -- and such employment is mostly available during the peak agricultural

season -- receives more income than he would by devoting his labour to cultivation of his small scattered plots of land. Only farmers with relatively large concentrated holdings can profitably exploit their land by intensive cultivation. But they face the problem of finding a sharecropper and paying high wages to secure labour on their land. In 1978 only seven landowners, five of them with large holdings, cultivated their land. Other landowners considered it uneconomical and their land stood idle.

Moreover, the wheat grown in Kalārdasht is dark brown in colour and is inferior in quality to the imported flour. The produce is, therefore, used by the growers partly for their own consumption and partly for selling locally within the village. As opportunities for work on other activities have increased many villagers have been abandoning those plots which are uneconomical to cultivate under present conditions and have sold them to Tehrani summer residents of the village. By summer of 1978 approximately 90 town people, mostly Tehranis, owned small plots in the village; 42 of them had already built a villa or were in the process of building. The average size of their land is one acre; only two own as much as 20 acres of land. The first piece of land was purchased in 1964 by a Tehrani who is now engaged in constructing a hotel in Rūdbārak. The price of land has increased astronomically.

The declining interest in agriculture and the financial difficulties of many families created an ideal situation for someone with the right contacts and enough cash. A class of land-dealers emerged, consisting of those villagers who began by purchasing land for outsiders and then contracting for villa construction. They act as middle men between outsiders and villagers; they hire

workers to work in villas or arrange work for them outside the village. Their income is extremely high in comparison with that which can be derived from agricultural or herding activities.

The recent economic changes have brought serious changes to another branch of the traditional economy -- that of herding. Until recently herding played an important role in the village subsistence economy. The reasons for the decline of herding are several. Most herders lost their grazing rights in pastures on the coast after the nationalization of pastures. This meant that they had to keep their herds in the village for the entire winter and provide fodder, an arrangement which proved to be costly and uneconomical. The Khwajvand khāns, who were the large herdowners, gradually started selling their herds after losing their control over pastures. The khān of Rūdbārak and some of his kinsmen, who were among the large herdowners, sold their animals in 1969. Above all, it has become difficult to find shepherds as most of the potential recruits to such employment are electing instead to work for wages in the non-agricultural sector. Further, as a result of the expansion of education, boys who traditionally would have served as shepherds are now attending school. Out of the five shepherds in the village in 1978, only three were professionals, and these had already succeeded in getting higher payment for their services than ever before.

In sum, these recent socio-economic trends created a transformation in the economic activities not only of sharecroppers/shepherds, but also of land/herd owning classes.



Plate 9: The old section of Rūdbārak, with old style houses.

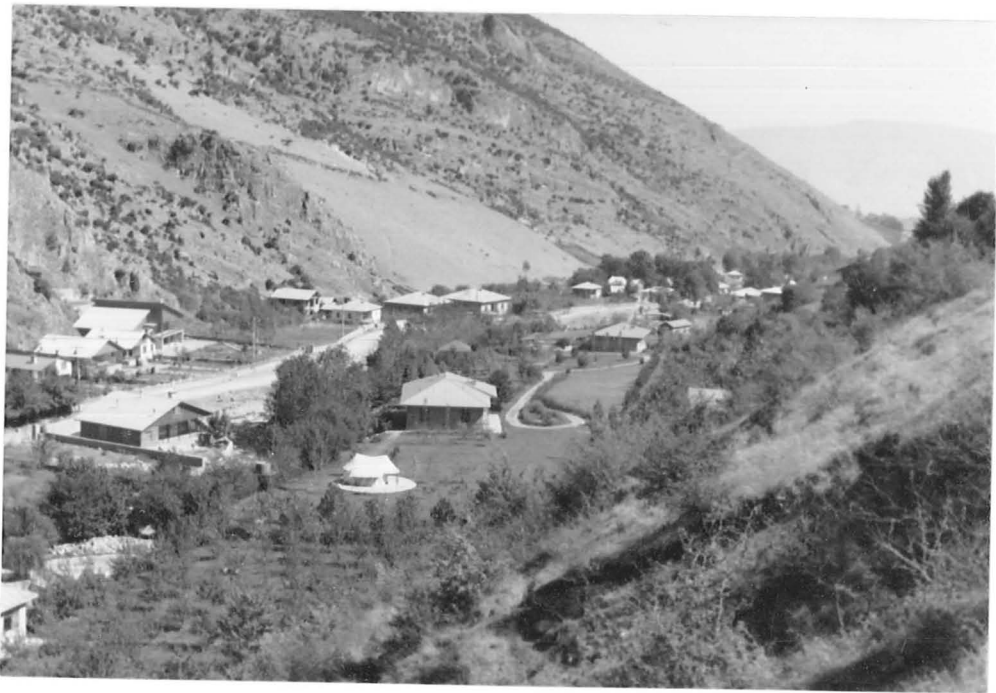


Plate 10: The modern section of Rūdbārak, with Tehrani villas.

#### IV. Rūdbāarak compared with the three isolated villages

The extent to which individual villages of Kalārdasht have been affected by the forces of change varies greatly. Some villages located on the main road or nearby have been affected much more than remote and isolated villages. Rūdbāarak has been most affected by the tourist industry; on the other hand, tourism has had no direct impact on the economy of such isolated villages in the area as Gulāmra, Chalājūr, and Payambūr. Although tourism and government projects have created a labour market in the region as a whole, this labour market is extrinsic to the economy of these three villages, which remain isolated.

Census data were available for 1966 and 1976 for two of these villages, Gulāmra and Chalājūr. These statistics show that there have been few changes in the economic structure of these villages in contrast to the dramatic changes in Rūdbāarak. The occupational distribution of these villages remains similar to that of Rūdbāarak prior to the arrival of Tehranis in the early 1970s. (See Table II.4.)

A comparison between the occupation of the household head and that of his father reveals that in the three isolated villages the change in the last generation has been relatively small. In Rūdbāarak, on the other hand, the shift from agricultural and herding pursuits to the cash economy based on non-agricultural activities is very much greater. (See Table II.5.) The data in Table II.5 also indicate that the isolated villages vary among themselves. In Payambūr and Chalājūr, the shift to wage labour is small. In Gulāmra by contrast, ten (42 percent) of the house-



Table II.5: Comparison of occupation of household head with that of his father, by village.

Table II.4: Comparison of occupational distribution of household heads over two decades, by village. (See note to Table II.3.)

	1956				1966				1976			
	Agri + herding		Non-agri		Agri + herding		Non-agri		Agri + herding		Non-agri	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rūdbāarak	100	77	30	23	95	71	38	29	35	35	65	65
Gulāmra					20	100	0	0	12	63	7	37
Chalājūr					16	100	0	0	12	86	2	14



Table II.5: Comparison of occupation of household head with that of his father, by village.

Occupation	Rūdbāarak				Gulāmra				Chalājūr				Payambūr			
	HH		HH's father		HH		HH's father		HH		HH's father		HH		HH's father	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Farmer/herder (landowning)	42	20	86	39	11	46	20	83	9	50	14	74	10	63	12	75
Sharecropper/ shepherd (resourceless)	19	9	91	41	3	12	3	13	7	39	5	26	1	6	4	25
Total involved in agro- pastoralism	61	29	177	80	14	58	23	96	16	89	19	100	11	69	16	100
Unskilled labourer	69	32	10	4	10	42	1	4	0	0	0	0	4	25	0	0
Skilled labourer	65	30	21	10	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	1	6	0	0
Trader (shop- keeper, pedlar, land-dealer)	12	6	14	6	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Government employee	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total non-agri	153	71	45	20	10	42	1	4	2	10	0	0	5	31	0	0
Unknown	13		5		0		0		1		0		0		0	

hold heads are involved mainly in migrant work, in spite of the fact that Gulāmra is, relatively speaking, the most isolated village in the region. It seems that the change towards wage labour in non-agricultural activities in these villages follows a three step pattern: Rudbāarak on the one extreme shows the greatest amount of change, there being a difference of 51 per cent between the generations; whereas, Chalājūr shows a difference of only 11 percent. Gulāmra and Payambūr fall between these two extremes, with differences of 38 percent and 31 percent, respectively.

An explanation for this variation may be found in an analysis of the resources available in each village and its dominant mode of economy. In Rudbāarak, for reasons already discussed, the percentage of the villagers without land is much higher than in the isolated villages, while herding is also declining rapidly. Among these villages, Chalājūr and Payāmbūr rely on agricultural activities as their main source of livelihood. Here the majority of households own land, but those with only a small amount of land or no land at all work as sharecroppers for the large landowners in the village and sometimes for those of the surrounding villages as well. (See Table II.6.)

Table II.7 shows the number of sheep and goats owned by households. As mentioned earlier, in Rudbāarak herding is declining rapidly. Since the relevant table was completed, two households with large herds (over 100 animals) have sold their animals and given up herding altogether; thus, there are now only 5 households which rely exclusively on herding as their main source of income.

Table II.6: Acres of land owned by households in each village.

Acres of land owned by house- hold	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No land	119	53	2	4	0	0	5	31
1 - 5 acres	79	35	17	71	10	53	3	19
6 - 10 acres	14	6	5	21	6	31	6	38
11 - 20 acres	12	5	0	0	3	16	1	6
more than 20	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

In Chalājūr, as elsewhere in the region, villagers were involved in small scale herding until three years ago, when most of them sold their herds because they were faced with a shortage of shepherds and suitable grazing zones. Currently there are 3 households which own up to 50 sheep and goats. Their animals are cared for by the son of one of the villagers who owns 20 sheep. He serves as the shepherd of the village, and the animals are kept in the village for most of the year.

In Payambūr 44 percent of the households own sheep and goats but in rather small numbers, i.e., 100 or less. Sheep and goats are kept in the village during winter and for most of the autumn, as they have no access to pastures in the coastal areas. In spring the animals are moved to yailāq (summer pastures in the mountains). These summer pastures are near Rūdbāarak and are also used by other Kalārdasht villages. Two shepherds from the village accompany the herds of Payambūr. In 1978, for the first time the herds were kept

Table II.7: Number of sheep and goats owned by households in each village.

No. sheep/goats owned by house- hold	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	190	84	1	4	16	84	9	56
Up to 50	26	11	15	62	3	16	4	25
51 - 100	4	2	3	12	0	0	3	19
more than 100	7	3	5	21	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

Table II.8: Number of cows owned by households in each village.

No. cows owned by household	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	78	34	3	12	1	5	1	6
1 - 3	119	52	11	46	9	48	5	31
4 - 6	24	11	9	38	8	42	7	44
7 and more	6	3	1	4	1	5	3	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

in the pastures surrounding the village, since there was a rumour that a widespread animal disease was spreading in the summer pastures.

Although herding of small animals is not prevalent in some of these villages, almost all households, especially in the isolated villages, keep between one and four head of cattle. The dairy produce is used by the household, the surplus being sold in the village. Table II.8 shows the number of cattle owned by households in each of the villages. While almost every household in the isolated villages owns at least one cow, in Rūdbāarak 34 percent of the households keep no cattle and a majority of those who keep cows own between one and three. In the isolated villages cattle play an important role in the village subsistence economy, serving as a source of food, a means of barter, and a means of raising cash to meet contingencies.

In Gulāmra herding is the main mode of livelihood; eight households rely almost entirely on herding (33 percent) and for the rest it is an important source of income. Until 1976 the agricultural land of the village, which is located on the slopes of the hills, was cultivated. The produce was used by the growers for their own consumption, and the barley was given to animals. But as a result of the relatively cheap price of wheat flour in the market and the availability of work opportunities outside the village, the land is no longer cultivated. For most of the year the herd is cared for by the shepherd, normally a son of the household head; the household head is thus free to participate in labour migration. Because of the dearth of resources available in this village, work outside the village is necessary to supplement household

incomes.

A comparison of the occupation of the household heads in Rūdbāarak with those in the isolated villages (Table II.9) shows that new occupational groups, such as land dealers, masons, welders, stone-cutters, drivers, and government employees (i.e., teachers, clerks, and mountain guides) have emerged in the village. In fact, an important feature of this wage employment of Rūdbāarak is that it has not necessitated the migration of the labourers or their prolonged absence from the village. The new jobs taken up by Rūdbāarak are available in the village itself or within commuting distance given the transportation facilities available. On the other hand, in the isolated villages the skilled or unskilled labourers must leave the village to participate in wage employment. This is particularly the case in Gulāmra and Payambūr, where the lack of means of communication prevents the daily return of migrants to the village.

Parallel to these changes in economic opportunities there are changes in the order of ranking in terms of wealth and social prestige. In the traditional setting (and even now in the isolated villages) there was little social differentiation in terms of wealth among village households. With the exception of the Khwajvand khāns and a very few Gilak large landowners, land was evenly distributed among villagers. Agriculture and herding combined with seasonal work migration to the coast were almost the only sources of livelihood and supplied the bare necessities of subsistence. But in recent years the high wages of skilled workers, the opportunity of selling land at extremely inflated prices to Tehranis, the profits made by land-dealers, and the prestige

Table II.9: Distribution of the occupation of household heads in each village.

Occupation of household head	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Landlord (does not participate in physical labour)	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farmer/herder (does participate in labour)	37	17	11	46	13	73	10	62
Sharecropper/agricultural labourer, shepherd	18	9	3	12	3	17	3	19
Shopkeeper	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Land dealer	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Government employee	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Migrant labourer (working temporarily outside the village)	0	0	10	42	1	5	3	19
Mine worker	18	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unskilled worker (construction)	44	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caretaker	8	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mason	22	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stone-cutter	18	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carpenter, welder, blacksmith	17	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Driver	9	4	0	0	1	5	0	0
Unknown	12	--	--	--	1	--	--	--
Total	227	100	24	100	19	100	16	100

Note: This classification is based on the major type of activity of the household head in cases where a man is involved in more than one type of activity.



Table II.10: Classification of households according to the main source of livelihood in each village.

Source of livelihood	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Entirely on land/herd; supplementary sources minor	15	7	7	29	8	42	7	44
Both wage labour and land/herd	23	10	13	54	8	42	5	31
Largely from wage labour	189	83	4	17	3	16	4	25
Total	227	100	24	100	19	100	16	100

attached to government employment have led to substantial social differentiation in terms of wealth and social prestige among the village households. Tables II.10 and II.11, which present data on the sources of livelihood and income levels of the households by each village clearly illustrate these points.

For the purposes of analysis of the source of livelihood, households have been divided into three groups in each village.

- (1) Those depending almost entirely on their land or herd and using other sources of income only to a minor degree in emergencies.
- (2) Those normally using both land or herd, as well as wage labour.
- (3) Those deriving the main part of their income from wage labour, in Rūdbāarak mainly inside, and in the three isolated villages mainly outside, the village. The boundaries between these divisions are not clear cut, and the classification is based on my own assessment and analysis of the following factors: (a) amount of resources

Table II.11: Distribution of total income of households in each village.

Income level of households	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Up to 5,000 T	9	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
5,000 to 10,000 T	47	21	19	79	9	48	9	56
10,000 to 20,000 T	88	39	5	21	8	42	5	31
20,000 to 30,000 T	42	18	0	0	2	10	4	13
30,000 to 50,000 T	29	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
50,000 T and more	12	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	227	100	24	100	19	100	19	100

Note: The Table is based on my own assessment of the household's income on the basis of the following factors: (a) amount of resources owned by the household (land/herds), (b) the occupation of the household head, (c) activities of other members in the household (e.g., carpet weaving of women, migration of son), (d) number of days in the year that members of the household participated in migration, (e) the current level of wages paid to various skilled and unskilled workers (e.g., wages received by carpenters, masons, etc., and salaries of government employees).

In fact, I found it most difficult to obtain accurate data on the income of the households in Rūdbāarak, as villagers were unwilling to discuss their earnings. In the three isolated villages they were more cooperative and even grateful for my calculations. Thus the data presented in the Table can be considered as a rough approximation. Nevertheless, the Table reflects variations with regard to the income levels among villagers and discloses real contrasts in income levels both within a given village and between the four villages.

owned by a household, i.e., land and animals; (b) main occupation of the household head, i.e., the activity that he is engaged in for most of the year; (c) occupation of other members of the household.

Table II.10 illustrates that in Rūdbāarak the majority of households (73 percent) rely on the income derived from non-agricultural activities as the main source of their livelihood. Non-agricultural income is less significant in the three isolated villages, but is gradually gaining importance in providing the needs of the household.

Two major points may be inferred from Table II.11, which presents data on income levels: the higher level of the income of households in Rūdbāarak and the greater discrepancy of the income levels within Rūdbāarak in comparison with the three isolated villages. Both are related to the changes in the internal economy of Rūdbāarak which have enabled those with skill or education to benefit from the available opportunities. Almost all the household heads with incomes over 30,000 T. are either land-dealers, masons, or government employees; while the nine households with the lowest level of income (below 5,000 T.) are the households headed by widows. In the isolated villages, the available work opportunities in the region and coastal towns remain an external factor in the village economy; villagers participate in work migration because their village economy cannot satisfy all the needs of their households. Those who leave the village in search of work belong to the households without sufficient resources (land/herd) and almost all of them are unskilled; this will be discussed below in more detail.

## V. Changes in the pattern of labour migration

In Rūdbāarak traditional migration to coastal areas to work in rice fields and fruit gardens is declining. The availability of work opportunities in the village which provide sufficient income for the households renders work in the distant rice fields unnecessary. Even in the traditional setting, only the poor were seasonal migrant workers; a man with sufficient land and herds had no need to be involved in work migration.

For women, working in rice fields involves very hard labour and it is also considered improper for them to work outside their own village. Women who complain about their 'bad luck and hard life' often mention the number of rice plantings (nashā<sup>3</sup>) in which they have participated. Female work migration to the coast has special characteristics differentiating it from male migration. With few exceptions, all the females involved are married and belong to the poor households; they go to the coast only during the period of rice planting. They go in groups of five to fifteen; the members of each group go together, work together, and come back together. They are usually recruited through a kinsman or a villager who gets the order from the owner of the rice plantation. Their wages are collected by the same man or by their husbands who work in the same plantation at the time of the rice harvest. In the past wages were paid in kind, but now there is a tendency to ask for cash. In recent years the number of women involved in labour migration has decreased drastically for two major reasons: (1) The increase in the level of income of the households as a result of the availability of work opportunities

in the villages. (2) The growth of carpet weaving in the villages which is in turn related to the increased incomes of a majority of the households and a desire to improve household furnishings. Therefore, a great number of women, especially unmarried girls, are involved in carpet weaving throughout the year. In 1978 only ten women from Rūdbāarak went to plant rice on the coastal plantations; two of them were widows who had to work for their livelihood and the rest were wives of unskilled workers with low incomes and large families. Five women from Payambūr also went for rice planting. But in Gulāmra and Chalājūr villagers say, "It is not our custom to send women to qishlāq (coastal areas)". This may be due to the isolation of Gulāmra and the relative prosperity of Chalājūr which renders women's labour outside the household unnecessary.

I am only concerned with male labour in the following attempt to quantify changes in the pattern of labour migration.

In the three isolated villages, migration to the coast for work still serves to satisfy needs which cannot be met by the local agricultural and herding activities. However, in these villages, seasonal migration in rice fields is giving way to long-term migration based on wage labour in non-agricultural activities.

Table II.12 shows that in Rūdbāarak men who, until ten years ago, migrated seasonally to coastal areas but who have now abandoned it completely, constitute 62 percent of the adult male population. Now they can find work and increased income in the village. The proportion of those from the three isolated villages who previously worked in rice fields but now have stopped doing so is much smaller than in Rūdbāarak.

Table II.12: Number and percentage of household heads in each village and participation in rice cultivation as seasonal migrants.

Participation in traditional seasonal migration	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Never gone	39	18	1	4	3	17	0	0
Went prior to 1970 but not subsequently	134	62	9	37	8	44	7	44
Still going	42	20	14	59	7	39	9	56
Unknown	12				1			
Total	227	100	24	100	19	100	16	100

Table II.13: All villages: Relationship between age of household head and seasonal work migration.

Age of household head	Never		Went pre-1970		Still going		Total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Up to 25 years	4	50	0	0	4	50	8	3
26 - 35 years	14	22	30	48	19	30	63	23
36 - 45 years	10	13	44	57	23	30	77	28
46 and over	15	12	83	66	27	22	125	46
Total column	43	16	157	58	73	27	273	100

Table II.13 shows that in the higher age groups the percentage of those who still migrate to qishlāq is lower. The Table also indicates that the percentage of men who previously went on work migration in rice fields increases with age group, suggesting the decline of this traditional type of migration in the new generation.

Those who leave the village in search of work for a period of one year are usually unskilled workers. Household heads with little land or no alternative source of income are more likely to seek work outside the village. These villages vary greatly in the numbers who migrate and in the degree of skill possessed by migrants. These migrants engage in whatever jobs they can find. They may work on rice cultivation for a short time and when the rice harvest is over, seek employment on building sites, in factories, etc. The duration of their stay outside their own village is influenced by the financial situation of their households that particular year, the availability of jobs in the village or outside in the coastal areas, the quality of the harvest, and other related factors.

It is difficult to classify migrants into specified categories; however, five types of labour migration can be identified:

- (1) Traditional work migration to rice fields and fruit gardens.
- (2) Winter migration for wage labour.
- (3) Long-term (i.e., more than four months of the year) migration for unskilled wage labour.
- (4) Long-term (i.e., more than four months of the year) migration for skilled labour.



(5) Permanent migration to town or coastal areas.

The boundaries between categories 1, 2, and 3 are not clear cut. The duration of the migration and type of job performed depend on the internal situation of the household, as well as the availability of jobs both inside and outside the village. The skilled workers in category 4, most of whom are builders and carpenters, follow the opportunities to use their skill elsewhere if their own village does not provide them.

In Gulāmra ten household heads can be classified as category 3; the duration of their stay outside the village depends on their household situation and whether they can find employment. They also sometimes work on rice cultivation, act as shepherds in other villages, and in short engage in whatever job they can find.

In general, migrants from these villages can be divided into two main groups:

(1) Temporary migrants, categories 1 to 4 above. These are household heads, resident in the village, whose families remain in the village, whose absence is temporary and varies according to internal and external factors.

(2) Permanent migrants who have left their own village and have settled with their families in towns or other villages. They keep their contacts with the native village, and usually they are sons of household heads in the villages.

Table II.14 presents a summary of information on the household heads who currently migrate annually. The Table also indicates the changing nature of seasonal work migration and its conversion to long-term male work migration. As agricultural and herding activities in the isolated villages have never produced sufficient

income to satisfy the needs of villagers, they have had to rely on seasonal work migration. At the present time, because of increased work opportunities in urban areas, the seasonal work migration is giving way to a quasi-long term work migration in non-agricultural activities.

Tables II.15 to II.21 present a summary of information on age, duration of migration, place of migration, work in the village before migration, type of work after migration, and educational level of migrants, as well as literacy levels of resident household heads.

Fifty-nine percent of households in Rūdbāarak have at least one permanent migrant member. In the isolated villages this percentage is 66, 65, and 56 in Gulāmra, Chalājūr, and Payambūr, respectively. The high percentage of permanent migrants from Rūdbāarak in spite of the work opportunities in that village is related to the better contact of Rūdbāarakis with the urban centre. The recommendation of influential Tehranis who spend their summer weekends in the village facilitates the process of migration for those villagers who are seeking jobs in towns. In addition most of the migrants from Rūdbāarak had gained educational qualifications after leaving their village and hence have become government employees or highly skilled workers. Suitable jobs for them are not available in the village. Tables II.19 and II.20 offer a comparison between the educational level of these migrants with that of the resident household heads of the villages. As the Tables suggest, the proportion of those with some education is much higher among the permanent migrants.

Table II.14: Number and percentage of household heads who are engaged in seasonal work migration, duration of their stay, place of migration, and type of job performed, by village.

Village	N and % who still partic- ipate in seasonal migration		Duration of stay away from village each year						Place of migration						Type of work at place of migration			
			Less than 3 months		more than 3 months		qishlāq (rural)		qishlāq (urban)		Tehran & suburbs		Trad- itional activities (rice fields, fruit gardens)		Other types of work			
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Rūdbāarak	43	20	43	100	0	0	31	72	11	26	1	2	29	68	14	32		
Gulāmra	14	58	4	29	10	71	4	29	9	64	1	7	4	28	10	72		
Chalājūr	7	37	7	100	0	0	6	86	1	14	0	0	5	71	2	29		
Payambūr	9	56	9	100	0	0	3	33	5	56	1	11	4	44	5	56		

Table II.15: Place of migration of permanent migrant according to each village.

Place of migration	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Coast (urban)	20	15	5	31	4	31	4	44
Coast (rural)	3	2	4	25	0	0	3	34
Tehran	98	72	4	25	5	39	1	11
Other parts of country	12	10	0	0	2	15	0	0
Other villages of Kalārdasht	2	1	3	19	2	15	1	11
Total	135	100	16	100	13	100	9	100

Table II.16: Period of time of migrant worker's absence from the village according to each village.

Duration of migration	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less than 1 year	6	4	1	6	1	8	1	12
1 - 5 years	41	31	12	75	7	59	4	44
6 - 10 years	46	34	2	13	3	25	4	44
11 - 15 years	18	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
more than 15 years	24	18	1	6	1	8	0	0
Unknown	0		0		1		0	
Total	135	100	16	100	13	100	9	100

Table II.17: Type of permanent migrant's job at the place of migration according to each village.

Type of job of migrant	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Government	62	47	1	7	6	54	3	38
Skilled work	55	41	3	20	5	46	1	12
Unskilled work	5	4	8	53	0	0	2	25
Student	8	6	3	20	0	0	2	25
Agriculture	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	2		1		1		1	
Total	135	100	16	100	12	100	9	100

Table II.18: Type of job held before migration in his village.

Type of job before migration	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Government	5	4	0	0	1	8	0	0
Skilled	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unskilled	51	39	2	12	4	33	0	0
Student	66	50	3	19	2	17	4	44
Agriculture	7	6	11	69	5	42	5	56
Unknown	5				1			
Total	135	100	16	100	13	100	9	100

Table II.19: Education level of permanent migrants according to each village.

Educational level of migrant	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No education	20	15	10	62	5	39	4	44
Up to 6 grades	13	9	0	0	2	15	0	0
Up to diploma	59	44	6	38	0	0	5	66
Diploma and higher	43	32	0	0	6	46	0	0
Total	135	100	16	100	13	100	9	100

Table II.20: Distribution of literacy levels of resident household heads by each village.

Educational level of household head	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Illiterate	173	77	23	96	13	69	15	94
Old system (Quranic education)	16	7	1	4	4	21	0	0
Up to 6 grades	12	6	0	0	1	5	1	6
Up to diploma	17	8	0	0	1	5	0	0
Diploma and higher	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	3		-		-		-	
Total	227	100	24	100	19	100	16	100

Table II.21: Age group of permanent migrants according to each village.

Age group of migrant	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
15 - 20 years	14	10	6	38	3	23	3	33
21 - 30 years	73	54	4	25	7	54	0	0
31 - 40 years	40	30	2	12	3	23	4	45
41 and over	8	6	4	25	0	0	2	22
Total	135	100	16	100	13	100	9	100

These migrants keep contact with their village and send money to their families; they spend their vacations there, but they no longer provide labour. Through these migrants and their urban experiences, villages are even more exposed to the urban way of life. Presently there are 16 household heads (all males) in Rūdbāarak with urban experience. These individuals have lived in towns, mainly Tehran, from one to seven years and as Rūdbāarak started to prosper, they came back to their village. The majority of them are now skilled workers or drivers.

### Summary

One of the problems encountered in discussing the economic change in Rūdbāarak in particular and in the region in general is that of relating external influences to internal change. The wide variety of changes in Rūdbāarak have been paralleled by an equally wide variety of changes in the broader Iranian society. The increase



of the village population and the resulting land shortage forced some villagers off the land; the nationalization of pastures led to a decline in animal husbandry. These are the primary factors which have forced those villagers without sufficient resources (land/herd) to seek alternative sources of livelihood. For a short period charcoal-making, which entailed the use of the surrounding forests, provided villagers with an alternative source of income. But this activity was stopped in the late 1950s by the government in order to preserve the forests. The gradual inability of Rūdbārak's traditional economic activities to satisfy the demands of its expanding population occurred at a time when programs of economic development were being introduced in the country. These national changes all affected the village: the implementation of rural reform programs, the expansion of education, industrialization, improvement in transportation, and, finally, the expansion of tourism in the Caspian provinces. Although an internal pressure for change had existed within the village and should be considered as an important element in the subsequent events, the important factors responsible for the recent changes in Rūdbārak's economic structure are the external technological and administrative changes which have removed the isolation of the village and promoted tourism as an important village industry.

In the preceding pages, I have attempted to describe the changing economic system of Rūdbārak, and have offered a comparison between Rūdbārak and the three isolated villages, Gulāmra, Chalājūr, and Payambūr. In Rūdbārak farming and herding have lost their importance in providing the requirements of the household; non-agricultural work, either inside or outside the

village, is now the primary source of livelihood for the majority of households. The most fundamental consequences of this change are economic diversification and economic stratification.

The diversification of Rūdbāarak's economy has resulted in closer integration into the national economy. Some Rūdbāarakis are now employed by the government as teachers, clerks, and mountain guides. Some have become land-dealers who act as a link between villagers and outsiders: they arrange the sale of village land to Tehranis and for villagers to work outside the region. A number of new shops have been opened in the village to cater for the needs of tourists and the more affluent villagers.

Probably the most important impact of tourism on the economy of Rūdbāarak was the redistribution of wealth and a re-allocation of economic resources. Some villagers sold their land and acquired cash which they then used to buy a car to start a new business, or to open a shop, or to build new houses in which to accommodate more Tehrani guests. At the same time cash became available to some individuals who acted as land-dealers.

In her analysis of economic development in South India, Epstein has pointed out that "incompatibility provides a clue to change, it causes friction and leads to change".<sup>12</sup> This observation is applicable to an analysis of economic change in Rūdbāarak. A major part of the traditional economic structure of the village was incompatible with the new economic environment in which villagers now operate, and as a result most economic relations have changed. Sharecropping has declined rapidly in the village; many

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<sup>12</sup>. Epstein (1962:316).

large landowners left their land uncultivated because they could not persuade a sharecropper to take the land. Now that other work based on cash is available, it is uneconomic for landless labourers to act as sharecroppers. Similarly, men are reluctant to be hired as shepherds; although hiring rates for shepherds have increased, there has been a further decline in herding. The economic roles of wives have changed since the advent of the cash economy. In the traditional economic setting, they participated in the agricultural work at harvest time, at the time of rice planting they used to migrate to qishlāq, and they engaged in carpet weaving. Now that some Rūdbāraki husbands have sufficient income to meet the expenses of the household, it has become a matter of prestige for them that their wives no longer work outside the home.

On the other hand, in the isolated villages the undiversified economy allows the persistence of indigenous economic relations. Although wages have increased in the region, sharecroppers are demanding a higher share of the crop, and shepherds are demanding higher wages, the principal economic relations are still intact.

The change in Rūdbārak's culture and society that will eventually follow from these economic trends have only started, but even in the initial phases of transition the effects have been marked. The general outlook on life has shifted from "the hereditary and personal principle" to the "impersonal competitive principle", as Epstein has termed them.<sup>13</sup> The advocates of this transition are the growing number of higher cash income earners, the educated salaried men employed by government, and the affluent

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<sup>13</sup>. Ibid., p. 324.

land-dealers and masons. The influence and impersonal emphasis fostered by these new economic trends has meant a new emphasis on individual ability at the expense of hereditary and family standing. The younger, better educated, and skilled men command respect on the basis of their qualifications and demonstrated success.

The traditional basis of social stratification within Rūd-bārak has gradually been displaced as a result of the cash economy. Tourism has contributed to this change to a large extent by placing large amounts of money in the hands of a few villagers. Those who have been able to build houses in the same style as Tehrani villas or to provide the educational expenses of their sons outside the village certainly benefited in terms of rising prestige in the community. The economic change has weakened the traditional criteria of rank and prestige and gradually is bringing readjustment in status differentials, as is apparent in the increasing influence of land-dealers and government employees in the village at the expense of the khān and landowning families. The land has lost its importance for the new generation. Land itself has acquired a new meaning: it is valuable for non-agricultural purposes; it is valuable as real estate in a commercial market; it can be sold to secure money for investment in other activities. For the young generation land is the means of gaining access to education or skill in the urban centres. They find farming and herding unrewarding and tedious; they perceive the alternative opportunities in emerging professional and entrepreneurial activities. The expansion of education, mass media, easy travel, and more contact with the urban way of life through affluent

tourists continue to influence them to a larger degree.

To recapitulate: tourism and government development programs have had the following impacts on the socio-economic structure of Rūdbārak:

- Creating a labour market for both skilled and unskilled workers.
- Increasing the wage level; this has led to the decline of agricultural labouring and herding as land/herd owners are not able to compete.
- Purchasing of land by Tehranis has led to an increase in the price of land, and given it a value as exchange instead of as a means of production.
- The possibility of permanent migration has increased, as villagers, through influential Tehranis, are able to secure jobs in urban centres.
- Traditional seasonal migration has declined as the increased income of the households and the availability of work throughout the year renders seasonal migration unnecessary.
- Government agencies have continued to expand at the expense of the local traditional system of authority.
- A sharp distinction between income levels of villagers has been created, mainly because of the high income of land-dealers and masons which has upset the social stratification which existed in the village.
- An urban style of living has been diffused because of contact with tourists and urban experience of former migrants.
- Transportation facilities have been expanded and improved, making it possible to commute to work outside the village.

The impact of these changes in the region is inducing steady but slow changes in the isolated villages as well. The three isolated villages have retained their traditional economy to a large extent. The economy is essentially a household economy of small herd/land owners whose primary motive for production is subsistence; but it is not a self-sufficient economy and probably has never been. Every village in this mountainous district has always depended on seasonal migration to the coast.<sup>14</sup> However, the nature of this type of migration is changing; it is giving way to a longer-term work migration based on cash. It is too early to say what the ultimate effect of this will be, but one can assume that gradually villagers without enough resources will be drawn more towards work outside the village. The trend can be noticed in Gulāmra, a village with poor quality land which has always relied mainly on herding; currently about 42 percent of its household heads participate in quasi-long-term migration.

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<sup>14</sup>. The economic interdependence between yailāq (mountains) and qishlāq (low lands) of the Caspian provinces has been pointed out by a number of scholars, including Fisher (1968), De Planhole (1961), and Behnām (1968).

Part II:

THE CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURE



## Chapter IV:

Marriage

In the preceding chapters I have discussed how Rūdbāarak and the three isolated villages have changed since the expansion of tourism and the availability of work in the region. I have also pointed out why change has been so rapid in Rūdbāarak compared with the isolated villages. The main reason is that the internal structure of the village was such that it facilitated change once the factors which precipitated change actually appeared. In addition, this village was bound to be more affected by change due to its geographical location.

An important interest of this study is the analysis of the impact of economic change on family organization. The present chapter is concerned with marriage and seeks to analyse traditional marriage in these villages and its changing aspects in recent years.

The chapter begins with the description of the marriage ceremonies, in the hope that this can offer an insight into the norms governing the institution of marriage in these villages. The discussion will be continued by further detailed analysis of the changing features of some aspects of the traditional marriage in the region, including age of marriage, selection of spouses,

marriage transactions, divorce, and birth control.

The marriage ceremony is, in many respects, the embodiment of norms and values attached to marriage. Therefore a detailed discussion of it in the first section of the present chapter will serve as a basis for an appreciation of the traditional setting. The formalities of the ceremonies are fully observed in the three isolated villages, but in Rūdbārak, especially in recent years, there is a tendency to curtail the traditional ceremonies in favour of the marriage customs prevalent in Tehran. This is mainly a result of the increased contact of villagers with Tehranis who are summer residents of the village, and the increasing number of marriages between migrants from the village and urban women.

#### I. Ceremony and customs

Marriage is the most important event in the life of an individual in all these villages and this importance is reflected in the great ceremonial emphasis it receives. The marriage ceremonies also reflect the fact that marriage is not merely the union of two individuals; it also concerns two bodies of kin and establishes a new kind of relationship between them. In the initial stages at least, the two individuals who enter this relationship play quite a small role and are absent from the ceremonies. Their absence symbolizes the importance of the kin-group at the expense of the individuals who are partners to the marriage.

The season for weddings is summer, preferably late summer or early autumn. During my stay in the area (summer 1978) I witnessed seven weddings in Rūdbārak, two in Gulāmra, and one in Payambūr.

The betrothals for all these marriages had been arranged in the previous autumn or winter; as villagers say, "betrothal in winter and wedding in summer." Weddings are the most celebrated occasion in village life and, apart from the New Year festivities, provide almost the only opportunity for organized celebration and merry-making. The social and ritual importance of the marriage celebration is reflected in the expense involved. A marriage may involve the investment of an amount equal to the total annual income of a household; all or a large part of this outlay may be recovered in cash or gifts after the completion of the ceremonies.

A proper marriage consists of three ceremonies: (a) khwast-gārī (marriage proposal), (b) qand-shikanān (formal betrothal), and (c) 'arūsī (wedding).

(a) Khwastgāri

After the selection of a suitable girl for the would-be groom (see Section IV below), the indirect approaches to her household begin. The initiative rests with the household of the groom. However, prior to any formal contact with the bride's father, his implicit consent to the proposal is secured; otherwise no formal approach would be made by the groom's father because a rejection would involve loss of face and may jeopardize the future relationship between the families. These initial and informal negotiations take place between the women of the two households concerned. The groom's mother, sister, or some other close female relative discusses the proposal with the womenfolk of the bride's household. If there is no serious objection to the proposal from the bride's side, it is assumed that her father will be agreeable as well. It is con-

sidered improper for a household to appear too eager to marry off its daughters; therefore, their willingness should be expressed implicitly. Having ensured the implicit agreement of the would-be bride's father or guardian, the groom's father sends a message to him that he is intending to pay a visit to his house. The purpose of the visit is clear to the bride's family; if her father indicates his probable agreement by consenting to receive the groom's father, the purpose of the visit can be announced to the other relatives of the groom as well as to those of the bride.

This first visit is called *khwastgārī* (lit., marriage proposal). The visit for the purpose of *khwastgārī* always takes place at night after supper time. From the groom's side, his father, elder married brothers, and paternal uncles are present (the groom himself is absent). Other close kinsmen of the groom may be invited to accompany the groom's delegation. At the house of the bride's father, where the meeting takes place, a number of her close male relatives, in addition to her father, are present.

The person from the groom's delegation who is the most senior and thus the most respected, starts the negotiations with the bride's father. The groom's father does not himself commence the discussions because he wishes to avoid any embarrassment in case of a direct rejection. For this reason, influential men of the village never attend the first meeting; other kinsmen, preferably their sons or brothers go on their behalf. The marriage proposal always begins with the following phrase: "With your permission, we are here to ask you, who are the father of Z (name of the girl), to accept X (name of the groom), who is the son of Y, as your servant." If the bride's father has no specific objection in respect to the

compatibility of the two families involved, or of the future spouses, he expresses his consent by putting forward his conditions concerning the marriage ceremony. Otherwise he shows his disagreement by articulating his objections or by putting forward extremely difficult conditions in regard to the matters of shir-bahā (lit., milk price) and mahr (deferred dower). According to the custom, the bride's father should never express his consent explicitly; to do so would be regarded as a sign that he is too eager to marry off his daughter. Moreover, he can gain more in the marriage negotiations by showing himself reluctant; a show of reluctance may enable him to bargain for a higher shir-bahā and mahr. Having secured the implicit consent of the bride's father to the proposal, the person who initiated the negotiations on behalf of the groom orders the youngest man in the groom's party to kiss the right hand of the bride's father. By this gesture, the negotiations are successfully concluded; both families can announce the betrothal to their kin-group.

Before a week has passed after this first visit, a small party is given in the bride's house for which all the expenses are borne by the groom's household. This party is called lab-shirīnī (lit., to sweeten one's lip; that is, to eat sweet things). Only close maternal and paternal relations of the bride and groom are invited. All the guests are served with tea, sweetmeats, and fruit. A ring and other gifts for the bride (e.g., dress material, scarves, stockings, etc.) are presented to the bride's family. Neither the groom nor the bride is present on this occasion which marks their informal betrothal for the village. From now on the bride is regarded as betrothed and marriage proposals from any other source would be inappropriate. However, should her family return the

betrothal gifts to the groom's family, this would be interpreted as a sign that the betrothal has been rescinded.

After the announcement of the betrothal in the village, the groom's household sends a complete meal of cooked food to the bride's household. The menu includes a large pan of rice (about 3 kilos), two or more chickens, and other side dishes. The food, which is accompanied by presents for the bride (usually dress material and a scarf) is placed on a large tray which is carried by the groom's sister to the bride. This unilateral offering of food is called bali-pulau (lit., yes rice) and symbolically marks the occasion when the bride's father said 'yes' to the marriage proposal.

Up to this time, both the future spouses have been excluded from all the ceremonies. However, within a month of the announcement of the betrothal in the village the groom is invited to a dinner by the bride's household. He attends the dinner accompanied by his brothers and some of his kinsmen in his age group. Only male members of the two families are present. After the meal, the groom and his party place money on a small tray which has been provided. This payment of money is called rū-namā (lit., seeing the face of a bride). Contrary to what might be expected from its name, the payment is not made in order to secure permission to see the bride; in fact, once the parties are betrothed the bride should not be seen by the groom until the wedding. The payment instead symbolizes the fact that the groom will pay for all the expenses which his future bride's household may incur on his behalf.

From this point, social intercourse between the two concerned households, who might already be related by ties of kinship or affinity, enters a new phase which lasts until the completion of

the marriage ceremony. The bride-to-be, who previously was freely in contact with members of the groom's household, must now avoid them completely. She should neither be seen by the groom or any member of his household nor engage in conversation with them. If the groom's family lives nearby or if the intended spouses are patrilineal parallel cousins (in which case the two households may live in close proximity, perhaps even in the same house) the girl must take all necessary precautions to avoid any contact whatsoever with the groom and members of his household. This behaviour on the part of the girl is regarded as indicating her extreme respect for her future in-laws. If a girl fails to observe these traditional rules of etiquette, it is assumed that she is not willing to marry into that household and that the marriage was arranged against her will. It seems likely that the bride's observance of the avoidance rules is the means by which she publicly accepts the betrothal. The avoidance imposed on the bride after betrothal symbolizes the transitional period that she goes through before her incorporation into her husband's household. The custom serves to emphasize the status change of the betrothed girl, and those among whom she will live will expect her to regulate her pre-nuptial conduct to match her new status.<sup>1</sup> This is the first step towards regularizing the conduct of the bride-to-be in the house-

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<sup>1</sup>The imposition of avoidance may be regarded as a rite of transition; see Van Gennep (1960). It has been argued that if the bride does not change her residence at marriage, problems arise because she continues to act (as before) as a child, rather than assuming adult responsibilities. One 'solution' is to have elaborate female initiation rituals which 'transform' the girl into an adult woman with adult responsibilities. The imposition of avoidance for betrothed girls in Kalārdasht seems to have the same function. See Brown (1963:837-853).



hold of her future husband. She is gradually informed about the proper code of conduct, a code which is based on minimum contact (a) between herself and her husband in order to prevent the development of any emotional feelings between them and (b) between herself and her in-laws in order to prevent any future friction and discontent.

Another explanation for the observance of avoidance on the part of the bride, particularly in regard to her intended husband, may be that it is not impossible that the betrothal might be broken off by one side or the other before the marriage. If the bride-to-be had had any contact at all with her betrothed, in the event of a cancellation of the projected marriage her honour would be severely compromised and her family would experience difficulty in arranging another suitable match for her. As long as the etiquette of avoidance has been properly observed, a broken betrothal does not damage the personal honour of the girl.

After the betrothal has been agreed, the groom's household provides gifts for the bride on all the ceremonial occasions when custom requires gift-giving. These occasions include the Persian New Year (21st March), the thirteenth day of the New Year (2nd April), the sacrifice ceremony, and the thirteenth day after the

completion of the harvest.<sup>2</sup> The amount and value of the gifts sent to the bride's household varies with the status of the two families concerned. The gifts are placed on large trays which young girls from the groom's household carry on their heads to the house of the bride. These gifts include presents for the bride (dress material and scarf), a complete meal of cooked food, sweetmeats, and in recent years packaged biscuits.

However, the flow of gifts will change direction after the marriage. Once a girl has left her father's household to live in the household of her husband, it is the duty of her father or

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<sup>2</sup>Three of these occasions -- the New Year ('Aid-i Naurūz), the thirteenth day of the New Year (Sīzdah-bidar), and the sacrifice ceremony ('Aid-i Qurbān) are national holidays all over the country and are celebrated by the majority of the population, although in varying degrees. But the thirteenth day after the completion of the harvest (Sīzdāhi) is particular to Kalārdasht. This is the thirteenth day of the month of Tir which dates the end of the harvest and the move of the herds to winter pastures according to an old calendar used by shepherds of the region.

brothers to send gifts (similar to those mentioned above) to her in her new household on all the appropriate ceremonial occasions. After the death of her father, each of her brothers is obliged to send gifts to her. But the value of the gifts received by her decreases over time unless her brothers are from a landowning household.<sup>3</sup> As can be seen, the bride's household of residence is the recipient of the gifts and cooked food: while the bride-to-be is living in her father's house, her paternal household receives gifts from the household of her future husband; after her transfer to the groom's household gifts will move in the opposite direction, i.e., from her paternal household to that of her husband.

(b) Qand-shikanān (formal betrothal)

This ceremony is arranged on a much larger scale than the previous ones; its purpose is the public announcement of the betrothal. The formal betrothal takes place after a firm agreement concerning the financial aspects of the marriage contract (shīr-bahā and mahr) has been concluded.

Prior to the betrothal ceremony, the groom's delegation is invited to dine at the bride's house with some of her close and influential male kin. When the supper is over, negotiations begin with two aims: (1) agreeing on the shīr-bahā and mahr, and (2) fixing the dates of the betrothal and marriage ceremonies.

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<sup>3</sup>It should be noted that the gifts which are sent to the bride after her marriage by her paternal household cannot be regarded as a part of the marriage ceremony. These gifts are assumed to be her share from her natal household (see Chapter V, Section II).

The groom's father must accept the responsibility of providing a certain amount of money which is called *shīr-bahā* (lit., price of milk). This money should be handed to the father of the bride prior to the marriage ceremony and he is expected to spend it buying a trousseau for the bride. Also an agreement must be reached as to the food staples that should be provided by the groom's household for the marriage feast. And, finally, the amount of money or property to be pledged as *mahr* by the bridegroom in the marriage contract must be agreed. (These financial aspects of marriage are discussed in detail below, Section III.) The process by which agreement on these matters is reached by the two families concerned is long and often exhausting; in the course of it the father of the bride may leave the room several times as a sign of protest. However, each time he is persuaded to come back and resume the negotiations by other members of both the groom's kin-group and his own. In fact, the function of kinsmen on both sides is to act as intermediaries between the groom's father and the father of the bride and to prevent argument or loss of face on either side. After these practical financial matters have been settled, the dates are fixed for the two subsequent ceremonies of formal betrothal and marriage.

The betrothal ceremony, which is referred to as *qand-shikanān* (lit., smashing sugar loaves), takes place at the house of the bride but all the expenses are paid by the groom's father. Unlike the previous ceremonies, which included only close relations, all the groom's and bride's kin as well as other friends and villagers are invited to the formal betrothal ceremony. In recent years the invitations are extended by sending cards to the households who



Plate 11: Rūdbārak. Girls carrying trays containing cooked food, fruit, and a gift to the betrothed bride of their brother.



Plate 12: Rūdbārak. Betrothal ceremony (Āandshikinān). Note the sugar loaves and fruit.

are invited. Before the ceremony, those households who have kinship connections (both paternal and maternal) with the groom send gifts to the house of the groom; these gifts consist of a large sugar loaf (3 kilos), cloth, tea, fruit, and sweetmeats. Both quantity and quality vary with closeness of kinship ties with the groom's father as well as with the economic position of the household. The consanguineal kin, especially paternal kin, are expected to provide more valuable gifts than others. All the gifts received by the groom's household are placed on large trays and covered with coloured cloths; the trays are then carried on the heads of young women relations of the groom to the bride's house. The household of the groom's father provides the largest tray of gifts; among the items on this tray will be cloth and jewellery for the bride. The procession of gifts, accompanied by women who sing and dance and followed by the groom and his family, makes its way to the house of the bride where the other guests have already gathered. Men and women are entertained in different rooms; the trays containing gifts and sugar loaves are placed in the middle of the men's room.

When tea is served, the man who is in charge of the ceremony (preferably the mother's brother of the bride), having received permission from the bride's father, faces qibla (the direction Muslims face during their prayers) and breaks the pointed head of one of the sugar loaves with a special axe. This act is followed by applause and congratulations for the two families. The rest of the sugar loaves (perhaps as many as 150 loaves) are broken into pieces in the same manner; approximately half of them are distributed among the guests with sweetmeats and fruit. The man in charge of



the ceremony retains the head of the first loaf which is bought for a considerable price by the groom. Then the gifts (various items of clothes and jewellery) which were brought for the bride are displayed.

Traditionally the bride herself is kept in the background and does not take part in the ceremony. However in Rūdbārak, in recent years there have been two occasions when a bride was present in the women's room. On one of these occasions (on which I was also present), young people, mainly sisters and cousins of the bride, insisted that she should come and exchange rings with the groom in the same manner as Tehranis. The father of the bride would not agree to this, although the bride's mother did not object and even appealed to the father's sisters to make her husband change his decision. But the father of the bride remained adamant, replying emphatically to all entreaties that the groom would not see his daughter prior to marriage. (Of course, the groom had in fact seen the bride on many occasions in the village before the betrothal ceremony.)

(c) 'Arūsī (wedding)

There are two ceremonies performed for a marriage. The first is called 'aqd and is the solemnization of the wedding conducted by a mullā (religious functionary) either in the house of the bride or in a town registry office. There is no celebration surrounding this ceremony; it is a formal and legal act. The mahr (deferred dower) already agreed upon is pledged and recorded in the marriage contract by the mullā. The mullā recites the marriage vows and a number of verses from the Quran. The groom is asked whether he accepts the



bride and vice-versa. As a matter of form, the bride often declines to answer until the third time she is asked. A representative of each of the spouses (normally their fathers) and two witnesses on each side are also present. Once this ceremony is performed the couple are legally married.

In the past 'aqd was always performed in the house of the bride; now it is usually performed in a registry office. Although since 1931 the law has required every marriage to be registered,<sup>4</sup> it is only in recent years and as a result of the greater penetration of the central administration into the rural areas that this provision has been enforced and observed in areas like Kalār-dasht. Villagers are encouraged by members of the educational corps and village councils to register their marriages. Today in all the four villages the 'aqd almost always takes place in a town registry office, unless the bride is under age (in which case the marriage cannot be registered until she comes of age). Even 'aqd for the two marriages involving spouses from Gulāmra that I witnessed took place in Chālūs (a nearby town). Since couples have to go to town to obtain a blood test and health certificate<sup>5</sup> (another provision long on the statute books but only recently observed), this excursion to town is used to deal with the other legal formalities as well. If 'aqd takes place in the house of the bride, the mullā (who is often a member of the registry office

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<sup>4</sup>•See Mahmood (1972:155).

<sup>5</sup>•In order to determine that neither of the potential spouses suffers from venereal disease, the law requires each of them to obtain a certificate of blood test; the wife should also obtain a certificate to the effect that she does not suffer from tuberculosis. No marriage can be registered without producing these health certificates.

staff) has the responsibility of registering the marriage.<sup>6</sup>

However, from the religious and social (as well as legal) points of view, a marriage performed by a mullā is legitimate and valid (ḥallāl); the validity of the marriage is not affected by failure to register it, although the defaulter is liable to criminal sanctions.

The second ceremony, which is celebrated after the completion of 'aqd, is called 'arūsī and consists of three days of festivities. All the villagers are invited to this ceremony. In the past invitations were extended by the relatives of the groom riding decorated horses and calling on each house. In recent years, however, invitation cards are sent. The groom's close kin send to his house gifts of food staples, e.g., rice, sugar, tea, chicken, yoghurt, etc. All these items are collected by the mother of the groom. Once again, the closer a household is to the groom in kinship terms, the more it must provide.

The first day of the ceremony is called hizombār (lit., the carrying of firewood). On this day, the requisite amount of wood for cooking the wedding feast is carried to the bride's house by the groom's relatives. The second day is called kharj-e bār (lit., the carrying of food staples). On this day, all the food items that the groom's father had previously agreed to supply for the feast are taken to the bride's house. The food supplies are loaded on horses by the groom's relatives, who check the items against the list which is held by the bride's father in order to confirm that

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<sup>6</sup>. In Iran almost all the marriage registries are controlled and staffed by Islamic scholars who are experts in Islamic law; thus the 'aqd, whether conducted in a house or in the marriage registry is performed by a mullā.



Plate 13. Gulāmra. Relatives of the groom bringing food items for the wedding to the house of the bride (kharj—e bār).

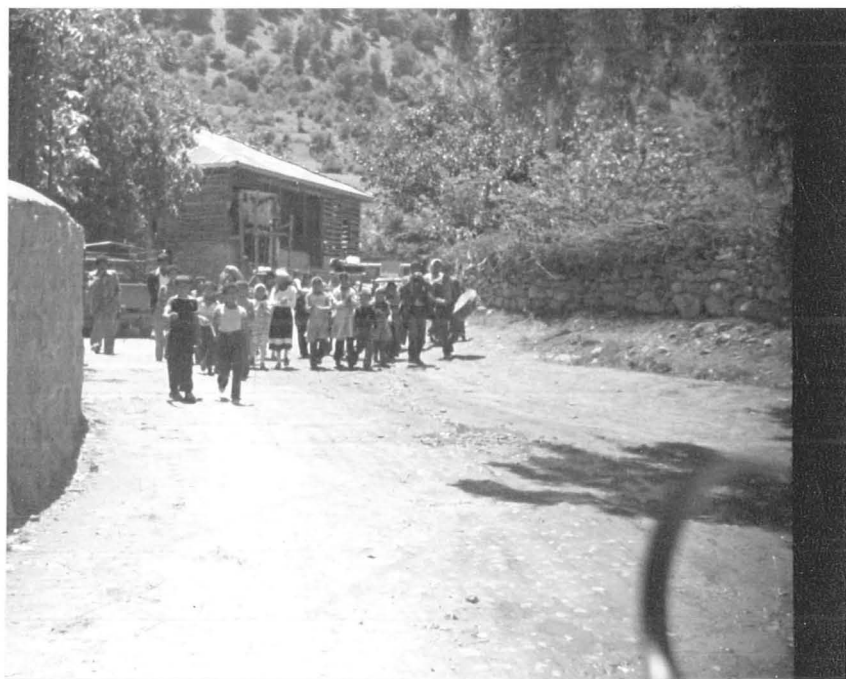


Plate 14: Rūdbārak. Taking the groom to the village bath house. Note the drummer and piper accompanying the procession.

the groom's father has fulfilled his promises.

On the same night the ceremony of ḥennā bandān (dying with ḥennā) takes place at the house of the groom; only men are invited. After dinner is over, a bowl of henna paste in which coins have been buried and trays of fruit and sweetmeats are brought into the room. The groom's best-man, termed damād brādar (lit., groom's brother), having obtained the permission of the eldest person present, puts ḥennā-covered coins on each palm of the groom. The other members of the party then proceed to colour their own hands with ḥennā. The female relatives of the groom are now allowed to join the party; dancing and singing will continue late into the night. The same ceremony is held for the bride in her house attended by female members of her kin group. A married woman (usually a sister or cousin of the bride) acts as the bride's maid (varnashīn); her duty is to inform the bride about her marital life.

The third day of the ceremony, which is the day of greatest celebration, culminates with the bride being taken to the house of the groom for consummation of the marriage.

A large party is held at the house of the groom to which all his kinsmen and kinswomen are invited, although men and women are entertained separately. Drummers and pipers provide the music; guests dance and sing; men wrestle; in short, a large variety of entertainments are provided. Around noon, lunch is served on a large piece of cloth spread on the floor and the men sit around it to eat; the women's lunch is served in another room after the men have finished eating. The groom, however, eats his meal in complete privacy accompanied only by his best-man. After lunch the groom is taken to the village bath house, escorted by kinsmen and

kinswomen and musicians. While the groom is in the bath with his age-group kinsmen, the dancing continues in the street. After bathing, he is conducted back to the house, again with music and dancing; on the way back his sisters present him with gifts of silver coins.

Meanwhile, the other guests are drinking endless cups of tea and awaiting the groom's return; when he enters the room, all the men stand up and welcome him. The groom is not supposed to talk; his best-man does all the talking on his behalf. The groom is seated on a chair before a large silver tray containing sweets, candles, a mirror, and an empty container. All the kinsmen and other guests congratulate the groom's father and contribute money, placing it in the container. The groom's best-man announces the sum contributed by each person and also that person's kinship relation to the groom. The close paternal kinsmen, especially the father's brothers, are expected to contribute the most. When all have contributed, the total amount of money collected is announced and handed over to the groom's father. This money defrays a large part of the expenses which he has incurred in arranging the marriage.

Meanwhile, there is a celebration on a much smaller scale at the bride's house. Men and women are, as usual, entertained in separate rooms, but the bride takes no part in these festivities; she is secluded in a private room where she is dressed and prepared for her departure by women of her age-group. During the party a delegation on behalf of the groom, consisting of his siblings and cousins, approaches the bride's house and announces that the time of the bride's departure has arrived. The bride's procession is headed by horses bearing her trousseau. The bride, completely



Plate 15: Gulāmra. The bride leaving her natal household at marriage.



Plate 16: Gulāmra. The groom joins the bride's procession.



veiled in a white chādūr, follows on horseback and is in turn followed by her brides maid, also on horseback. The party gathered at the bride's house sees her on her way and kinsmen and women join her procession on foot.

Simultaneously with the bride's departure from her house, the groom and his kinsmen leave his house to welcome her. The two processions meet somewhere on the way and stop. The groom throws small lumps of sugar, an orange, and a pomegranate over the bride's head as a sign of good will. A baby boy is placed in the bride's arms and she makes a wish that her first child will be a boy. The two processions are now linked and move towards the groom's house. The bride refuses to cross the threshold until the groom's father presents her with a gift, usually either gold or a cow; in return she gives the groom's father a coin, indicating that she has accepted the bargain.

The arrival of the bride at the groom's household, which coincides with nightfall, completes the ceremony. The groom and his bride retire to a room for the consummation of the marriage. The bride's maid and close women relatives of the groom's household wait outside the room to examine the proof of the bride's virginity. The presence of the bride's maid is essential in order to ensure that the proof of virginity is acknowledged by the women of the groom's household. Virginity is highly valued and the bride is expected to bleed at her deflowering. The white cloth which is provided for the purpose and spread on the marriage bed is inspected by the women of the groom's household and the bride's maid who acts as a witness. The absence of blood is taken as proof of unchastity; an unchaste girl should be sent home, in which case her father must



repay the shīr-bahā and all the marriage expenses. However, if the groom admits that he had deflowered her prior to the marriage ceremony the matter is overlooked. The proof of the bride's virginity (the white cloth spotted with blood) is sent to her father's household the following morning.<sup>7</sup>

On the night following the consummation of the marriage, the new bride is obliged to wash and dry the feet of all the members of the household. This gesture indicates her subordinate position in the household and her willingness to serve the other members. For a period of time she is expected to stay inside the house as much as possible and in particular may not openly visit her own kin. However, the new bride and her husband do make a clandestine visit to her parents during this period. Although all the members of the groom's household know about this, extreme care is taken to conceal from them the real purpose of their departure from the house. This symbolizes that the bride now belongs to the household of the groom and she should not openly defy its rules, regardless of what she might do in secret. In fact, this ceremonial clandestine visit demonstrates both that the groom's household realizes that the new bride cannot be completely severed from her own kin, and that they are prepared to accept this fact as long as the bride does not come into open conflict with their rules.

During the bride's first week of residence in the household of her husband's father, her mother invites all the kinswomen of

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<sup>7</sup>I have not heard of any case in these villages where a bride was sent back because she was not a virgin (see below, Section V). The importance attached to the bride's virginity is not confined to these villages; it is noted in most of the Middle Eastern societies. For a discussion of this subject in Iran, see Vieille (1978:454) and Najafi (1959:90-2).

both the bride and the bridegroom to the house of the groom's father where she gives a luncheon party; all the cooked food is brought from the household of the bride's father. At this party every item of the bride's trousseau is displayed and each woman contributes some money, which is collected by the bride's mother and given to the bride herself. Her close relatives are expected to make the greatest contribution.

I have described the betrothal and marriage ceremony in detail, with the aim of showing the norms of the society as well as the importance of the role that kinship plays throughout the ceremony. It can be seen that marriage involves not only two individuals and their respective households, but also a wide range of other relatives. In the process of arranging his son's marriage, a man becomes indebted to other kinsmen and is in his turn obliged to provide money and other contributions at the time of the marriage of their sons. We have also seen that the flow of gifts to the bride's household begins with the official announcement of the betrothal and continues long after the marriage, irrespective of her household of residence. Her husband's household and afterwards her natal household continue sending gifts to the household where she lives.

In recent years the traditional marriage ceremony has tended to be modified. This change is more conspicuous in the case of Rūdbārak, where the economic system has undergone a drastic shift from subsistence agro-pastoralism to wage labour based on non-agricultural activities. Moreover, the intensive contact of the village with urban centres and especially with Tehran (through

Tehrani summer residents in Rūdbārak and Rūdbāraki migrants who work and marry in Tehran), has facilitated the process of change. The motorcar has replaced the horse for transferring the bride and her trousseau; young people demand a greater involvement in the ceremony, as illustrated by the occasion when it was insisted that the engaged couple should exchange rings. In all the weddings in Rūdbārak, the bride was dressed in exactly the same way as brides in Tehran, i.e., without veil and with lots of make-up. On one of these occasions the bride, who was a Tehrani girl, herself took part in the dancing and merry-making.

In addition, apart from changes in the customary and ceremonial aspects of marriage, there have been marked changes with respect to age of marriage, shīr-bahā and mahr, choice of bride, divorce, and birth control. These will be examined in detail in the following sections of the present chapter.

## II. Age of Marriage<sup>8</sup>

According to the traditional norms of the village, a girl should be married by her late teens. If she is not, it reflects on the status and prestige of her family, for no one has sought to be allied with them; and on her own status, for it implies that she lacks the qualities desired in a wife. A boy should be married between sixteen and twenty-two. There were two cases in the recent past where boys were married younger than sixteen, but this is not

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<sup>8</sup>•See Momeni (1972) for a general discussion on age of marriage in Iran and of the socio-economic conditions which encourage early marriage in spite of governmental attempts to establish a minimum age of marriage for both sexes.

considered proper.

Tables<sup>9</sup> I.1 and I.2 present data on age at marriage for men and women in each village. As the tables indicate, women marry at a much lower age than men: while 80 per cent of women in all four villages are married by the age of 18, only 9 per cent of men are married by the age of 18. The age of marriage, both for men and women, is significantly lower in Gulāmra than in the other villages. This difference is due to the fact that Gulāmra has retained its traditional way of life to a much greater extent than have the other three villages. Gulāmra, because of its geographical location and relatively extreme isolation, has experienced relatively insignificant change in its economic structure. Herding is still the dominant mode of livelihood. The fact that parents control critical resources gives them greater authority over young people, while the division of labour within a herding household means that the labour of a son is essential if the household is to be economically viable. Early marriage encourages a son to stay in his father's household by increasing his dependence on the resources of the household; this will be discussed in the following chapters.

A question of equal importance to that of age of marriage is that of age differential between spouses. Custom demands a significant age gap: while differences of 5 to 10 years are common, it

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<sup>9</sup>All the tables presented in this section (except Tables I.4 and I.5) contain data which only pertain to the household head and his wife. In cases where the household contained more than one married couple, data related to age at marriage only for the household head and his wife have been included in the tabulation. This has been partly due to computer programming problems and has undoubtedly caused some bias in favour of longstanding marriages.

Table I.1: Age of household head at marriage, by village.

Age (male) at marriage	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Below 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15 - 17	4	2	2	8	0	0	1	6
18 - 21	91	43	16	67	7	39	8	50
22 and over	114	55	6	25	11	61	7	54
Total	209	100	24	100	18	100	16	100
unknown	18		0		1		0	
median	21.8		19.7		22		20.5	
mean	22.1		19.8		22.3		21.1	
mode	20		18		22		20	

Table I.2: Age of wife of household head at marriage, by village.

Age (female) at marriage	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Below 15	47	21	17	74	6	32	0	0
15 - 17	121	55	6	26	12	63	13	81
18 - 21	48	22	0	0	1	5	3	19
22 and over	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	220	100	23	100	19	100	16	100
unknown	7		1		0		0	
median	15.7		13.6		15.1		16	
mean	16.0		13.7		15.0		16.2	
mode	15		13		15		15	

Table I.3: Marriage of bachelors and spinsters: Age of man by age of woman at time of marriage.

Age (husband)	Age (wife)								total row	
	below 15		15 - 17		18 - 21		over 21			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
below 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15 - 17	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0	4	2
18 - 21	29	31	50	53	15	16	0	0	94	40
over 21	30	22	71	53	28	21	6	4	135	58
total column	60	26	124	53	43	18	6	3	233	100

is not unusual for a man to be as much as 15 years older than his wife. The early age of marriage for women has created a situation in which few women are available in a man's own age group, thus forcing him to seek a younger woman. Table I.3 shows the relationship between the age at first marriage for men and women in cases of first marriage for both spouses and suggests that a majority of men are married to much younger women. For instance, while 22 per cent of men (30 persons) in the age group of those over 21 years have married women less than 15 years of age, only 4 per cent (6 persons) have married women of the same age group.

In recent years, the age at marriage has increased, especially in the case of men. There are three main reasons for this: (1) The exigencies of modern life: for instance, boys must complete their military service and may have to acquire education and training and/or to secure a job prior to their marriage. This is related to the individualisation of economic activity within the household and the decreasing dependence on the traditional economy. (2) State legislation concerning minimum ages of marriage, with which the villagers are increasingly aware as a result of the spread of the central administration to the rural areas. (3) The new trends in the process of mate-selection, which gives a relatively greater choice to men in the decision-making concerning their own marriage; this is largely a consequence of (1) above.

With the expansion of education in these villages,<sup>10</sup> and also the availability of higher education in nearby urban centres, a

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<sup>10</sup> See above, Chapter III, for the educational facilities available in each village and nearby towns.



large number of boys and, to a much lesser degree, girls attend school. While a girl in school will readily be withdrawn in order to be married, the marriage of boys is usually postponed until the completion of their studies. The number of girls attending school beyond the primary level in comparison with boys is extremely low. In none of the isolated villages have girls been allowed by their parents to continue their studies after they finished primary school at the age of 13. In Rūdbāarak there are only 11 girls above the age of 15 who attend the secondary school (part II) in Ḥasankif; the corresponding number of boys attending high school outside the village is 68. There are 30 girls in the village between the ages of 13 and 16 who attend the first stage of the secondary school (guidance school) available in Rūdbāarak. In order to continue their studies beyond this level, they will have to commute to Ḥasankif; whether any will be allowed to do this is uncertain.

On the whole, it seems that fathers are reluctant to allow their daughters to attend school beyond the primary level. Several arguments are advanced by the fathers to explain why a girl does not require higher education. In the first place, woman's work -- domestic duties, working in the fields, carpet weaving, caring for cattle -- does not demand schooling; thus investment of family resources in female education is a waste. Secondly, it is feared that a girl may lose her honour (nāmūs) and thereby diminish her chances of a good marriage because schooling will bring her into contact with men outside the prohibited degrees. Thirdly, her services are needed in her parental household during her short stay there.

In contrast to the negative view taken of female education, the education of boys is highly valued. It is widely accepted that a boy who is educated or skilled stands a better chance of securing a job, good wages, and a higher standard of living. A boy's marriage is willingly delayed until the completion of his education. Further, it is compulsory for boys above the age of 18 who are not in school to join the army for a period of two years and it is considered preferable to delay their marriages until after the completion of their military service.<sup>11</sup>

Until 1975 the legal age of marriage was 15 for girls and 18 for boys; under special circumstances and with the permission of a court, these ages could be lowered to 13 and 15 years, respectively.<sup>12</sup> In 1975 the Family Protection Act<sup>13</sup> raised the minimum age of marriage to 18 for girls and 20 for boys. According to this Act, if parents wish to marry their child before the minimum age, they must obtain the permission of the court, but in no case will the court give permission for a girl to be married below the age of 15 years.

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<sup>11</sup>•Students are exempted from doing military service as long as they are attending educational institutions. Girls who are educated beyond diploma level may volunteer for military service; some do so in order to improve their employment prospects.

<sup>12</sup>•Iranian Civil Code, Section 1041.

<sup>13</sup>•After the Revolution in February 1979, the Family Protection Act ceased to be applied; the provisions of the Civil Code concerning age of marriage (15 years for girls), registration of marriages and divorces, health certificates, etc. continue in force.

Table I.2 indicates that the earlier legislation establishing 15 years as the minimum age of marriage for girls was not enforced or observed in these villages in the past: fully 25 per cent of the wives of present household heads in these villages were married before this age. At least prior to the administrative penetration of the region, the legislation was irrelevant and extraneous to the practices of the villagers. If a girl was not married before the legal age, it was not because of the legislation but because of circumstances in her own household. It is perhaps too early to assess the effect of the more recent legislation (1975) raising the age for a girl's marriage to 18 years. While I know of a number of recent cases in these villages where a girl was married before the age of 18, I did come across one case in Payambūr where the marriage of an engaged girl was delayed because she was younger than the (post-1975) minimum age of 18. She was engaged to a member of the educational corps who had taught in the village and had returned to his home town after completion of his service. The delay in her marriage may have been due to the fact that he was an outsider, from an urban area, and, therefore, would be considered to be a government agent. Under the circumstances, her father did not wish to be seen to violate the law.

As in the case of the legal requirement that a marriage be registered, contravention of the statutory provisions concerning minimum ages does not invalidate the marriage, although it invites

penal sanctions.<sup>14</sup>

If a father wishes to marry his daughter before the minimum age, he can claim that the date on the birth certificate is incorrect and ask the court to alter it to an earlier date. In fact, it is not uncommon for the age recorded on a birth certificate to be incorrect. Villagers often do not register the birth of their children until 2 to 5 years after the birth, or they may give the birth certificate of a dead child to a new-born one. For practical reasons, there is a tendency to record the age of boys as less than their true age (in order to evade military service) and the age of girls as more than their true age (in order to evade difficulties which may arise in regard to her marriage). Alternatively, a father wishing to marry an under-age daughter may simply have the 'aqd performed (which results in a marriage which is not legally invalid and which is socially and religiously sanctioned) and delay registering the marriage until the girl is of age.<sup>15</sup>

The third factor responsible for the increase in the age of marriage is the greater voice which a man now has in selecting his future spouse. This will be discussed in Section IV below. However, it should be stressed that this factor, which derives from the fact that a man now is expected to complete his studies and military service and to find a job before getting married, affects the age of marriage only for men. It, therefore, confirms the age

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<sup>14</sup>.E.g., those established by the legislation of the 1930s specified punishment of imprisonment for six months to two years if the girl is above 13, and for two to three years if the girl is below 13. In either case, a fine may also be imposed. See Mahmood (1972:159).

<sup>15</sup>.Safinijād (1976<sup>a</sup>:417-418) refers to similar practices in other Iranian villages in cases where the age of girls is below the statutory minimum.

gap between the spouses and may in fact even increase it.

Tables I.4 and I.5 illustrate the relationship between the present age of married men and women and their ages at marriage. The data presented in these two tables includes cases of recent marriages of sons of household heads and their wives who are presently residing in the household of the husband's father. The tables indicate that the age of marriage has increased among the younger age groups. The increase is more significant for young men: 70 per cent of men in the age group of 21 to 30 years married when they were above 21, while 80 per cent of the women in the age group of below 20 years married when they were below 18 years.

Table I.4: Relationship between present age of men and their age at first marriage.

Present age of man	Age at first marriage									
	below 15		15 - 17		18 - 21		over 21		total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
21 - 30	0	0	1	2	16	28	39	70	56	19
31 - 40	0	0	3	4	30	38	45	58	78	26
41 - 50	0	0	7	9	31	41	38	50	76	25
51 and over	0	0	5	6	46	52	38	42	89	30
total column	0	0	16	5	123	42	160	53	299	100

Table 1.5: Relationship between present age of women and their age at first marriage.

Present age of woman	Age at first marriage									
	below 15		15 - 17		18 - 21		over 21		total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
up to 20	8	23	20	57	7	20	0	0	35	11
21 - 30	18	23	38	48	21	27	2	2	79	26
31 - 40	21	25	51	61	10	12	2	2	84	27
41 - 50	22	32	33	48	13	19	1	1	69	22
over 50	26	61	10	23	6	14	1	2	43	14
total column	95	31	152	49	57	18	6	2	309	100



In an attempt to assess the attitudes of parents, they were asked what they considered the suitable age of marriage for boys and girls. The replies varied, but on the whole the large majority of villagers stated that "it is no good for a girl to be married too early, she must reach the age of maturity". However, they nearly all agreed that a girl should be married before she reaches her twenties. In regard to boys, practically all villagers stated that a boy must at least finish his military service and preferably find a job before getting married; this cannot be accomplished before his early twenties.

The reasons most often stated in support of an early age for a girl's marriage were: fear of unchastity, with the resultant loss of her chances for a suitable union; a man's desire for a younger wife, motivated by the relatively rapid ageing of women and the higher potential fertility ahead of a young girl; the belief that the domestic training of a girl should take place in the household of her mother-in-law; and the preference for exploiting the often-present opportunity to exchange women, i.e., to give one's daughter (sister) to another in exchange for the latter's daughter (sister) as a bride for a male member of the original household.

The data on attitudes to marriage reveal the strength of the view that every girl should be married and her marriage should not be delayed excessively after she has reached puberty. Different considerations clearly operate in defining the optimum age of

marriage for boys and girls respectively: education and military service are acceptable reasons for delaying the marriage of a boy, but a girl's future lies in her marriage and she should be settled in her situation early.

### III. Marriage transactions: shīr-bahā, mahr, and jahīz

In the description of marriage ceremonies, we have seen that in these villages marriage entails exchange of wealth. The betrothal is marked by a number of ceremonial offerings of food and gifts to the bride's natal household and by drawing up a contractual agreement with respect to the marriage transactions. Apart from sending food and gifts on ceremonial occasions to the bride's household of residence, the exchange of wealth can be subsumed under three main categories: shīr-bahā (lit., price of milk), jahīz (dowry), and mahr (deferred dower).

Shīr-bahā traditionally consists of two parts: (1) A small cash payment from the groom or his father to the father or guardian of the bride. (2) Food staples, wood for cooking, and other items provided for the wedding party which is held in the house of the bride, as well as all the expenses of the party organized in the groom's house.

Jahīz or jahīziya consists of household items such as kitchen utensils, carpets, bedding, and items of female clothing which the bride brings with her to the groom's household. Jahiz is regarded as the exclusive property of the bride, although some of the items are for general household use. In case of divorce or the death of the husband, the jahiz is returned with the bride to her

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father's household. The cash portion of shir-bahā received by the bride's father is supposed to be spent on buying the jahīz. Mothers usually start collecting jahīz for their daughters when they are still children, and some of the items are actually made by the girl herself. In particular, the carpet is often woven by the bride. To some extent, therefore, shir-bahā is a recompense for work done in the past by the women of the household.

While shir-bahā and jahīz are sanctioned by custom, mahr is an inherent component of every Muslim marriage and is sanctioned by Islamic law. Mahr consists of a sum of money, property, or any valuables which the groom promises to pay to the bride upon her request. Although according to the religious law a wife is entitled to claim the mahr whenever she wishes, in practice she receives it only when and if she is divorced. Therefore, mahr acts as a restraint on the husband in regard to his right of unilateral termination of the marriage and as insurance for the wife in case of such an eventuality. A husband cannot divorce his wife without paying the mahr if the divorce is without justified ground; a wife must forego the mahr if she seeks a divorce. Thus in actual terms, no financial transaction takes place at the time of marriage; by pledging mahr and writing it in the marriage contract a husband merely promises to pay a certain amount of money (mahr) to the wife if he should divorce her without just cause. In practical terms, mahr is a dower for the bride, provided by her husband, with which she can support herself if she is unjustly divorced.<sup>16</sup>

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Footnote 16 next page.

Thus the exchange of wealth at marriage in these villages can be termed indirect dowry.<sup>17</sup> Shīr-bahā and mahr are different from what has been referred to as bridewealth or brideprice. Bridewealth consists of money/goods transferred from a groom and his kin to the father of the bride or her kin and is usually used by her brothers to acquire their own brides. In Kalārdasht, on the other hand, the ultimate receipt of that part of the shīr-bahā which is not utilized to provide the feasts and festivities marking the marriage and of the mahr (if it is ever paid) is the bride, not her father or kin group. Theoretically the cash portion of shīr-bahā ought to equal the jahīz and consists in this roundabout way of a gift from the groom's kin to the bride. The portion provided in the form of food staples is used for the wedding festivities.

The amount of shīr-bahā is directly related to the value of jahīz that the bride brings to her husband's house and the scale of the wedding festivities; to term it 'brideprice' is to disguise the real function of this type of marriage payment. There is,

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16. It has been suggested that historically the acquisition of a wife, before, during, and after Mohammad's time, might have evolved from bride capture to brideprice to marriage by contract in contemporary Muslim society. During the transition period the system of brideprice may have evolved when payment was made to the father or closest male kin in exchange for the cost of raising the girl. This arrangement offers no real security to the woman should her husband decide to divorce her. The Prophet saw the evils of the system and, in order to give more security to women, suggested that the mahr should go directly to the person of the bride, either paid promptly or on a deferred basis. See Levy (1957:95) and Mutāherī (1974:199-204). The argument seems to be a rationalization of the existing practice.

17. The terms 'indirect dowry', 'dowry', and 'bridewealth' follow the usage of Goody and Tambiah (1973).

however, a tendency to equate shīr-bahā with brideprice or bride-wealth and to regard it as a payment to the father of the bride for the expenses that he has undergone in raising her. This notion probably originated from the literal meaning of the term shīr-bahā, i.e., the price of the milk that the bride was fed on.<sup>18</sup>

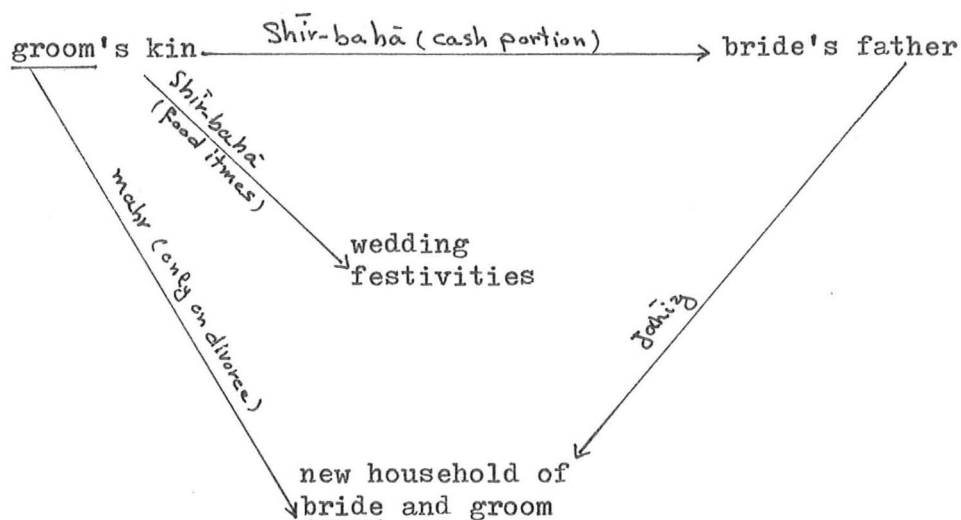
Jahīz is a custom observed throughout Iran (and other countries as well); shīr-bahā is confined to Kalārdasht. The two practices are integrated in that in Kalārdasht the cash portion of shīr-bahā is supposed to be spent on providing jahīz (dowry) for the bride. In effect, the Kalārdashti father is reimbursed, not for raising the girl, but for his outlay in providing her with a dowry to take to her husband's household. The public examination of the bride's jahīz both on the wedding day and one week later at a party given by the bride's mother, makes skimping easily detectable. Since other kinsmen contribute in providing the shīr-bahā and since one important aim of the marriage proceedings is to acquire higher prestige in the community, the arrangement provides a public sanction against deceit on the part of the bride's father.

The direction of shīr-bahā, mahr, and jahīz can be illustrated in the form of a simple diagram. (See next page.)

The father of the groom does not bear all the expenses for the marriage of his son unaided. The groom's relatives contribute by sending food staples to the household of the groom some days prior to the ceremonies of betrothal and marriage. And at

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18. See Safinijād (1976:416)<sup>1355a</sup>. Stirling (1965:185) refers to a similar marriage transaction in Turkish villages, but he uses the term brideprice to translate the term 'baslik' (lit., 'headthing'); the function of baslik appears very similar to that of shīr-bahā in Kalārdasht.



a ceremony called *pūl-andāzī* on the third day of the wedding, all the relatives of the bridegroom in attendance present money, which is collected by the best-man of the groom and handed over to the groom's father. Names of contributors and the amount of the contribution are recorded. The closer a man is linked by kinship to the father of the groom, the more he is expected to contribute. A man with many sons is also expected to contribute more as he will receive more, on the whole, through arranging the marriages of all his sons. This money covers a large part of the expenses that the groom's father has incurred since the beginning of his son's betrothal.

Although a father incurs great expense in marrying his son, he is reimbursed on the last day of the wedding ceremonies. At the same time, however, the father becomes indebted to his kinsmen and other villagers who have contributed in one way or another to the marriage of his son; he must repay these debts as each of these benefactor in turn marries his son. On the other hand, if the groom's father had previously contributed towards



the marriage expenses of other kinsmen, he recovers these contributions on the occasion of his own son's marriage. A man who wants to marry his son often says, "I have been to many weddings, and now it is time for me to arrange the marriage of my son." This remark refers to the fact that he has already contributed money or gifts for the marriages of a number of kinsmen or other villagers; by arranging his own son's marriage he will have the opportunity of recovering these contributions.

The amount requested as shīr-bahā varies greatly from marriage to marriage and from village to village. Shīr-bahā is higher in Rūdbāarak than in the isolated villages because of the relative prosperity of the former. Similarly, shīr-bahā is higher in Payambūr and Chalājūr than in Gulāmra, which is a far less prosperous village. The average, based on the arithmetic mean of shīr-bahā (taking into consideration only the proportion paid in cash), for the married women in these villages is as follows: Rūdbāarak, 707 tomans; Gulāmra, 229 tomans; Chalājūr, 647 tomans; and Payambūr, 687 tomans. These averages are based on shīr-bahā paid for currently-existing marriages of all household heads in the villages and are biased in favour of long-standing marriages for reasons previously explained. The amount of the cash portion of the shīr-bahā has been rising in recent years because of inflation, the prosperity of the villages, and the relatively easy access to cash due to the availability of wage labour opportunities.

Informants in Chalājūr, the Kurdish village, told me that the shīr-bahā for a Khwajvand girl is higher than for a Gilak girl because the Khwajvand girls are more skilful and can weave

carpets. However, my data from Rūdbārak suggest that there is no difference in the amount of shīr-bahā received for a girl among the different ethnic groups in the village. Therefore, the claim made by the inhabitants of Chalājūr cannot be supported. In fact, I believe that the sharp difference between Gulāmra, the Gīlak village, and the other two isolated villages which have populations consisting of in-coming tribes, is due to differences in the standard of living and the income level of the villagers in these communities rather than to their ethnic composition. As Table I.6 suggests, the shīr-bahā rises with the rise in income and is higher among those in higher income groups. Moreover, it is higher among lower age groups, a fact which suggests that it has increased in the case of recent marriages. (Table I.7.)

The amount of shīr-bahā, which in turn influences the value of jahiz and the scale of the wedding festivities, varies according to the social status of the two families concerned and the nature of the marital union being contracted. Shīr-bahā is lower for widows and divorcees and the scale of festivities at such marriages is also much curtailed. Shīr-bahā is also lower for marriages between close kin, as these marriages are usually celebrated on a small scale. On the other hand, shīr-bahā is much higher among the wealthy and landowning families, as the scale of festivities is much greater. (Table I.6.)

There are some cases of marriages between an immigrant man and a woman from the village in which no shīr-bahā was paid and the father of the bride also paid for the marriage festivities. In all these cases the immigrant groom was already working for the father of the bride; after the marriage he continued to work for

Table I.6: Relationship between income level of household head and cash portion of shir-bahā.

Income of household head	Low		Medium		High		Total row	
	Below 100 T	100 - 500 T	100 - 500 T	Over 500 T	Over 500 T	N	%	
1,000 - 4,999	9	100	0	0	0	0	9	3
5,000 - 9,999	74	88	5	6	5	6	84	29
10,000 - 49,999	147	81	30	16	4	2	181	63
over 50,000	7	58	5	42	0	0	12	4
Total column	237	84	40	14	9	8	286	100

Table I.7: Relationship between age of wife of household head and cash portion of shir-bahā.

Age of wife of household head	Low		Medium		High		Total row	
	Below 100 T	100 - 500 T	100 - 500 T	Over 500 T	Over 500 T	N	%	
up to 20	3	25	8	67	1	8	1	8
21 - 30	44	59	29	39	1	1	74	26
31 - 40	79	94	2	2	3	4	84	30
41 - 50	67	97	1	1	1	1	69	24
over 50	36	84	0	0	7	16	43	15
Total column	229	81	40	14	13	5	282	100

Note: Shir-bahā and income are given in tomans.

him without receiving any wages and lived in his house. The resident son-in-law worked for his father-in-law as a member of his family, not in order to pay off a brideprice. In Payambūr, where it was possible to acquire land by clearing forest, the resident son-in-law was entitled to a share of the land which he helped to clear. But in Gulāmra and Rūdbāarak, where these resident sons-in-law were mostly shepherds, they were not entitled to any share of the animals they tended, apart from those which they might have owned prior to joining the bride's household. (See Case No. 5 .)

The economic independence of young men facilitated by the availability of non-agricultural employment, not only allows them a greater voice in the selection of their brides, but it also modifies traditional criteria in the evaluation of a potential suitor and traditional expectations in regard to payment of shīr-bahā. I know of two cases in Rūdbāarak in which the groom did not pay any shīr-bahā and the wedding festivities were subsequently extremely minimal and paid for by the bride's family.

In recent years, especially in Rūdbāarak, increases in real income have enabled the villagers to spend more money on marriage ceremonies. In 1978 in Rūdbāarak the amount a respectable family would normally pay for shīr-bahā was about 2,000 to 4,000 tomans in cash, in addition to the following quantity of food and the firewood to cook it: 100 kilos of rice, 3 sheep, 2 kilos of tea, 5 kilos of sugar, 12 kilos of clarified butter, and generous quantities of various vegetables. All these items should be received by the bride's household prior to the wedding day. The cash payment must be received at least a month in advance of the

wedding in order to allow the bride's father sufficient time to prepare the dowry. Dowry or jahiz usually includes a carpet (or two if this is within the family's means), kitchen utensils, mattresses and quilts, curtains, and, in recent times, a gas cooker. In addition to the jahiz, the bride receives gifts on different ceremonial occasions during the period of the betrothal. Like the jahiz, these gifts remain her property and include a gold ring, a watch, jewellery, and items of female clothing.

Apart from the rise in the value of shir-bahā and jahiz, in recent years the tendency has been to demand the entire shir-bahā in cash. The father of the bride then assumes the responsibility for providing the food staples required for the wedding festivities out of the cash he receives. This tendency is most pronounced in Rūdbārak and is a reflection of the importance of the cash economy in this village. The following example illustrates the point:

#### Case No. 1

Fozeieh, a daughter of one of the large Gilak landowners, became betrothed to a high school graduate employed by the government as a clerk in the Ministry of Education in Ḥasankif. His father is a Tālaqānī shopkeeper in the village. Both families are among the respected and well-to-do villagers. Fozeieh is also a high school graduate and is teaching as part of her military service.

During the negotiations prior to the formal betrothal ceremony, her father and brothers asked for 20,000 tomans for shir-bahā in cash and said that they would provide all the food and wedding festivities. They also requested a sum of 100,000 tomans for mahr to be written into the marriage contract. (This amount is extremely high, even considering the high status of both families.) But the groom's father turned down the suggestion and offered instead 10,000 for shir-bahā (including the amount to be used to purchase food staples) and 50,000 for mahr. His proposal caused offence to the bride's party and they left the house in protest. After mediation of other

kinsmen, both families agreed to *shir-bahā* of 10,000 tomans and *mahr* of 70,000; the bride's household was to provide all the food and wedding festivities.

In another case, a villager's son, who is a permanent migrant and works in Tehran, married a Tehrani woman. The son paid for all the expenses of the wedding, which was held in Tehran. In addition, his father arranged a wedding party in the village in his own house to which the bride was brought by car for the consummation of the marriage. Although he had not paid any *shir-bahā*, the groom's father claimed that he had incurred expenses of 6,000 tomans for the wedding of his son (a claim, on the face of it, highly unlikely); at the wedding party 7,000 tomans were collected. The groom's father had undoubtedly contributed to the marriages of the sons of kinsmen in the past and was unwilling to pass up the opportunity of recouping his dues in turn, even though he had not paid any *shir-bahā*. The omission of the *shir-bahā* payment was explained by remarking that the bride was not a *Rūdbāraki* and that *shir-bahā* was not the custom of her people. The bride, however, brought a dowry for the independent household that would be established by the couple in Tehran.

These two examples are typical of the financial arrangement of recent marriages among educated *Rūdbāraki* and marriages between *Rūdbāraki* men and urban women who have different customs from the *Kalārdashtis*. The influence of urban customs can be seen clearly and most conspicuously with respect to the increasing importance of *mahr* and *jahīz* at the expense of *shir-bahā*. In Tehran, *mahr* and *jahīz* represent the only institutionalized exchange of wealth

at marriages. The bridegroom is responsible for all the wedding expenses directly and not by passing *shīr-bahā* to the bride's family for the purpose; *jahīz* is the responsibility of the bride's family and they are not provided with the cash with which to purchase it by the groom's family.

According to Islamic law, *mahr* is an essential component of every marriage contract; even if no *mahr* is specified in the contract, it nonetheless constitutes an inherent part of the contract itself and the wife would be entitled to claim an amount calculated on the basis of local custom and family status. Pledging a specified amount of *mahr* in the contract obviously offers greater protection (at least theoretically) to the wife; inclusion of a large *mahr* also enhances the status and prestige of the families involved (although, in fact, the amount pledged may never be paid).

In the past, the practice of specifying *mahr* in marriage contracts was not followed by many villagers and if *mahr* were specified it was usually a very small amount. When older and middle-aged women (aged 40 years and above) were asked about the amount of *mahr* stipulated in their marriage contracts, they frequently replied: "Nothing much, those were old days; women had no value." The precise amount was seldom higher than 100 tomans; in some cases no *mahr* had been specified. The women, however, added that *mahr* was not important at the time of their marriage and that it had only gained importance in recent years. Indeed, in almost every instance the women felt that they needed to explain that their *mahr* was low because it was not then common to pledge a high amount of *mahr*; this explanation seemed important to them,



because under the changed conditions a low mahr now reflects on the honour and status of the woman involved. Presently in Rūdbāarak, as in the urban centres, mahr is related to the status and qualities of the woman and the social standing of her family. Mahr is higher for a virgin, attractive, educated bride; the mahr of girls from wealthy families is always considerable.<sup>19</sup>

Table I.8 presents data on the amount of mahr for all the current marriages of household heads in these villages. The data suggest that the amount of mahr is much higher in Rūdbāarak than in the three isolated villages. This reflects the effect of urban influences in Rūdbāarak, which has had much more extensive contact with the urban way of life.

Tables I.9 and I.10 show the relationship between the age of women and the amount of their mahr in Rūdbāarak and the three isolated villages respectively. The data suggest that the amount of mahr is correlated with the age of the women; it is higher among the lower age groups, indicating that it has increased in recent marriages. This correlation is stronger in Rūdbāarak than in the three isolated villages, suggesting that the recent increase in the value of mahr is linked to recent socio-economic changes.

Paralleling the tendency for shīr-bahā to be paid in cash is a tendency for a larger proportion of shīr-bahā to be spent on jahīz as opposed to festive feasting and celebration. This reflects the growing importance of the conjugal family in comparison with the extended family during recent years. This is especially true

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<sup>(1339)</sup>  
19. See Behnām and Rāsīkh (1960:91); and Momenī (1972).

Table I.8: Amount of mahr pledged in the marriage contracts of wives of household heads by village.

Amount of mahr (tomans)	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
below 100	49	22	9	38	5	28	2	13
100 - 499	63	28	9	38	5	28	3	21
500 - 999	33	15	3	12	6	33	8	53
1,000 - 4,999	40	18	3	12	1	5	2	13
over 5,000	28	13	0	0	1	5	0	0
Total	223	100	24	100	18	100	15	100
unknown	14		0		1		1	
mean	2,573		558		1,140		1,046	
median	500		225		210		350	
mode	400		14		500		500	

of the educated Rūdbāarakis and permanent migrants who have been in greater contact with the urban way of life than the other villagers. The shīr-bahā and jahīz now allow the newly married couple to set up an independent household; they do not have to be dependent on the bridegroom's family. Further, wage employment has enabled young men to provide for their own marriage expenses; no longer totally dependent on their elders for the financing of their marriage, young men are able to modify the traditional arrangements to fit their new aims and to have a greater voice in the selection of their brides. It is also interesting to observe

Table I.9: Rūdbāarak: Relationship between age of wife of household head and the amount of mahr pledged in her marriage contract.

Age of wife of household head	Low		Medium		High		Total row	
	Below 100 T	N %	100 - 500 T	N %	Over 500 T	N %	N %	
up to 20	0	0	0	0	10	100	10	4
21 - 30	11	18	35	56	16	26	62	28
31 - 40	59	91	2	3	4	6	65	29
41 - 50	50	96	2	4	0	0	52	23
over 50	28	80	1	3	6	17	35	16
Total column	148	66	40	18	36	16	224	100

Table I.10: Three isolated villages jointly: Relationship between age of wife of household head and the amount of mahr pledged in her marriage contract.

Age of wife of household head	Low		Medium		High		Total row	
	Below 100 T	N %	100 - 500 T	N %	Over 500 T	N %	N %	
up to 20	0	0	1	50	1	50	2	3
21 - 30	4	33	7	58	1	8	12	21
31 - 40	16	84	3	16	0	0	19	33
41 - 50	15	88	1	6	1	6	17	29
over 50	8	100	0	0	0	0	8	14
Total Column	43	74	12	21	3	5	58	100

that in the majority of cases of recent marriages where the bride had taken her jahiz to the household of her father-in-law, she did not unpack it but kept it stored for later use in her independent household. This, in fact, has become a bone of contention between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law, the former accusing the new bride of intending to separate her son from the household of his father. Among many young couples, the establishment of an independent conjugal household is assumed, even in cases where the couple initially reside in the household of the groom's father.

#### IV. Selection of spouses

In this section the traditional pattern of selection of spouses is described and the changes which have occurred in the system are discussed. The traditional pattern is still followed in Gulāmra and the two other isolated villages, but in the case of Rūdbāarak, it is changing rapidly under the influence of the new socio-economic environment.

From the previous discussion of the betrothal and marriage ceremonies, it is evident that traditionally marriages are arranged by the parents of the young people. A son or daughter is expected to act upon the decision of his or her parents in this matter, just as he or she is in other matters of greater or lesser importance. In theory, therefore, young people themselves have no say at all in the selection of their spouses. The matter is entirely in the hands of the elders, and is particularly the responsibility of the groom's father, who makes the initial formal approaches and bears the financial burden. In fact, however,

the decision of the groom's father is influenced to some extent by the wishes of his son. A boy who wishes to marry a particular girl usually expresses his desire to his married sister or his mother. It is through his wife that a father comes to know about his son's inclinations. The girl's father receives proposals of marriage but is not supposed to initiate them; a girl is required by cultural values to refrain from showing any interest whatsoever in matters concerning her marriage.

The fact that young people are not permitted to select their spouses is reflected in the betrothal ceremony. The prospective spouses are totally excluded from the initial stages of negotiations and decision making; in the later stages they play the most minimal role. Moreover, the custom that a girl should avoid any contact with her betrothed and members of his family acts as a barrier to courtship. Thus there is no opportunity before the betrothal for the young people to participate in the selection of their future spouse; there is likewise no opportunity after the betrothal for them to ratify or repudiate the choice which has been made for them. Any notion of courtship is foreign to a culture where traditional customs prevent any sort of social contact between members of the opposite sex who are not within the category of persons with whom marriage is prohibited on grounds of consanguinity or affinity. This rule applies strictly to young people of marriageable age, although it is relaxed somewhat after marriage and is relaxed considerably with advanced age.

The incest rule of Islam prohibits marriage with those who are considered maḥram. The prohibited group includes grandparents,

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The incest rule of Islam prohibits marriage with those who are considered maḥram. The prohibited group includes grandparents,

parents, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, and grandchildren. Significantly, it does not include first cousins; cousin-marriage is in fact commonly practised and highly preferred. The incest rules also recognize a relationship created by wet-nursing. The breast-feeding of an infant by a foster mother creates the rīzāʿī kinship (lit., milk relationship) between the child and the foster mother, as well as between all children breast-fed by the same wet-nurse; such a relationship is equal to the biological one for the reckoning of incest. In Payambūr there are three families who are linked together by this means and marriages between them are forbidden. In fact, at the present time, as a result of close kin relationships among villagers, all the unmarried Payambūr women are mahram to the unmarried men of the village; thus marriage partners must be sought outside the village.

The children of paternal and maternal siblings as well as more distant cousins are beyond this exogamous barrier and traditionally represent desirable marriage partners. In general, marriage within the kin-group is preferred. It is believed that if a daughter is given in marriage to a kinsman, the webs of kinship provide greater protection against maltreatment because of the control that the kin-group can exert over the husband.

Marriage with a patrilateral parallel cousin (FBD) is stated to be the ideal by informants in the villages. There is also a religious belief that marriages between brothers' children are prescribed by Islam;<sup>20</sup> this is supported by the proverb that

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<sup>20</sup> There is neither a Sūra from the Quran nor a Ḥadith to support



"father's brother's daughter and father's brother's son are betrothed in the sky," i.e., this is the holiest type of marriage.<sup>21</sup> The villagers explained their preference for marriage between brothers' children in practical terms. Firstly, the bride's father can be confident that his daughter will be treated well in the household of his brother, and can have some measure of control over his son-in-law with respect to the treatment of the bride either directly or through his brother. Secondly, it is assumed that the bride will be received kindly by her mother-in-law, who will not dare to treat her badly for fear of incurring the anger of the household head. Thirdly, as a result of her pre-existing kinship ties, the new bride will be less inclined to cause friction in the household of her in-laws or to persuade her husband to separate and establish a new household. Finally, the marriage between children of brothers involves fewer formalities and less expense and the father of the bride would be much more cooperative in the negotiations as he would be dealing with his own brother.

However, as Goode has pointed out, these statements "are not 'reasons for' the creation or the maintenance of a custom. They are consequences or the rationalizations that people might give

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the alleged preference of the Prophet for FBD marriage. Khuri (1970:298). Nevertheless, people in Kalārdasht (and probably in Iran) believe that Islam honours this type of marriage.

<sup>21</sup>. Fischer (1978:198) refers to two traditional sayings cited in support of endogamy in Yazd (in central Iran): "Trade out, marry in" and "father's brother's daughter marriages were/are sealed in heaven". He also states that there are Hadiths "opposing as well as supporting cousin marriages". In support of this statement, Fischer cites Falsafī, who is an Islamic scholar. However, it should be mentioned that Falsafī is mainly concerned with the Quranic view on endogamy in general, not only patrilateral cousin marriages.

for the custom."<sup>22</sup> Scholars have offered various explanations as to why this particular marriage pattern became so entrenched in Muslim societies of the Middle East.<sup>23</sup> Generally speaking, these explanations tend to fall within three broad categories: (a) Those which explain patrilineal parallel cousin marriage in terms of the devolution of property.<sup>24</sup> (b) Those which regard the function of such marriages as the basis for the alignment of factions within the descent group.<sup>25</sup> (c) Finally, those which concentrate on the lineage identity and explain FBD marriage in terms of its operation within the system of descent which facilitates the segmentation process.<sup>26</sup>

These explanations appear to have little relevance in the context of Kalārdasht.

The first argument is evidently based on the fact that according to Islamic law, daughters are entitled to a share of the inheritance, taking a very high proportion (particularly in Shī'a law) in the absence of any surviving son of the propositus and a share equal to one-half that of a son in the presence of a son. Thus it has been argued that marriage with patrilineal parallel cousins is preferred in order to prevent a stranger taking

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<sup>22</sup>•Goode (1963:93).

<sup>23</sup>•See Patai (1962: ch.6) for a summary of this practice in the Middle East; and see also Khuri (1970) for a recent discussion.

<sup>24</sup>•Granqvist (1931); and Rosenfeld (1958).

<sup>25</sup>•Barth (1954).

<sup>26</sup>•Peters (1959); and Murphy and Kadsan (1959).

possession of family property.<sup>27</sup> However, the effect of FBD marriage in retaining control over property depends on women actually being given property in the form of inheritance or dowry or both.<sup>28</sup> In Kalārdasht, as will be discussed in the following chapter, the Quranic injunctions with respect to women's rights of inheritance are not observed in practice; and as noted above the bride's dowry is essentially provided by the husband's family as it is purchased with the cash portion of *shir-bahā*. Thus the property argument cannot explain the villagers' preference for this type of marriage.

The second and third arguments concerning the function of FBD marriages within the lineage and descent group are not particularly relevant to the case of Kalārdasht. In these four villages, lineage organization, in any real sense of the term, is absent. People who bear a common name are spoken of as 'qum va khīsh' (lit., those who are related by ties of consanguinity). These are often patrilineally related kin who recognize a common descent. They are not clans in any sense; they do not own common property; and they do not have a common symbol or a single head. As a result of the patrilocal pattern of residence after marriage, those who are descendants of a common ancestor tend to live in a certain quarter of the village. In fact, this proximity of residence is the only common feature of the descent

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<sup>27</sup> See Granqvist (1931:81, 92, 94-95); and Rosenfeld (1958<sup>a</sup>:37).

<sup>28</sup> See Barth (1954:170). It has been pointed out that neither dowry nor inheritance of property by women are practised in all Muslim, or all Middle Eastern, societies. See Murphy and Kadsan (1959); and Khuri (1970).

groups in Kalārdasht. These descent groups are very similar to those described by Stirling in his study of two Turkish villages.<sup>29</sup> Although Stirling terms these groups lineages, the applicability of the term lineage to such a descent group has been questioned.<sup>30</sup>

Further, in Kalārdasht, although FBD marriage is the most ideally preferred, a man has no recognized right to marry his patrilateral parallel cousin. A man is free to accept or refuse any proposal of marriage with his daughter and he is not obliged to pay compensation or to offer symbolic gifts to the brother's son should he agree to marry her elsewhere.<sup>31</sup>

The data from Kalārdasht suggest that patrilateral parallel cousin marriage is more prevalent in the isolated villages where the circle of suitable girls for marriage is narrow due to the lack of contact with other villages. It further suggests that this type of marriage is not related to ethnic and economic factors in these villages. There is no correlation between patrilateral parallel cousin marriage and the amount of land owned by the household, or the level of income, or ethnic affiliation. In the Kalārdasht villages, patrilateral parallel cousin marriage appears to be a factor of both village endogamy and demography. Patrilateral parallel cousin marriage is highest in Gulāmra (33 per cent) and,

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<sup>29</sup>. See Stirling (1965:158).

<sup>30</sup>. See Benedict (1976:237-38); and Peters (1976:32).

<sup>31</sup>. In some Middle East societies a man has an established right to marry his father's brother's daughter and she can only be married to someone else with his consent, and sometimes he must be compensated. See Patai (1955); Rosenfeld (1958); Granqvist (1931). Patai (1955:383) notes a similar practice in Azarbiajān (a district in the northwestern part of Iran).

although it is also spoken of as the ideal in Payambūr, the frequency of its occurrence there is the lowest (6 per cent). In Payambūr, Bābā Ḥaydar who founded the village is much senior in age to his brother and his children from his first wife are all girls. As a result of the norm which demands that a man should be older than his wife, marriages between children of the two brothers were not possible. Bābā Ḥaydar's daughters were married to outsiders and patrilineal cousin marriage in this village did not occur until the next generation.

Marriage within the kin-group is preferred because it is convenient and does not involve much expense. The practice of patrilineal parallel cousin marriage in Kalārdasht should be analysed in this context. A man who seeks a bride for his son normally begins by looking to his brother's household, as he trusts his brother more than any other person in the community to give his daughter to his son. The simple formalities involved in marriages of brothers' children, coupled with the fact that a daughter continues to live in close proximity to her natal household, further encourages FBD marriages. For similar reasons marriages with other cousins, close kin, or neighbours are preferred. Marriage with outsiders is only arranged when no suitable woman in the village can be found.

Tables I.11 and I.12 illustrate that a substantial majority of marriages take place between members of the same village, and out of these a significant number of spouses are related to each other. Gulāmra has the highest degree of village endogamy (88 per cent), as well as the highest percentage of marriages within the kin-group (71 per cent). The isolation of the village is

Table I.11: Kin relationship between husband and wife.

kin relationship (H & W)	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
none	149	66	7	29	13	68	9	56
patrilateral parallel cousins	23	10	8	33	4	21	1	6
other cousins	29	13	5	21	1	5	2	13
remote kin	25	11	4	17	1	5	4	25
Total	226	100	24	100	19	100	16	100
unknown	1		0		0		0	

Table I.12: Natal village of wife.

Natal village of wife	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
same village	196	87	21	88	8	42	11	69
other Kalār- dasht village	21	9	3	12	11	58	5	31
coastal village (qishlāq)	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
other parts of country	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	226	100	24	100	19	100	16	100
unknown	1		0		0		0	

responsible for these high percentages. Indeed, people from other villages are not willing to marry their daughters into Gulāmra because of its remoteness as well as its low subsistence level. As Table I.12 shows, there are only three women from other villages who married into Gulāmra; all three are from a small nearby village. The corresponding figure for Chalājūr is eleven (58 percent); nine come from the two nearby Kurdish villages, and the remaining two from a Gilak village and a mixed population village, respectively. Many Chalājūris have relatives in the large nearby Kurdish village (Kalnau); thus the process of choosing a bride from outside the village is facilitated. Payambūr also has extensive relations with the two surrounding villages. One of these villages, Bāzārsar, a Turkish village, is the native village of the founder of Payambūr and three of the women who married into Payambūr are from this village; the remaining two belong to other surrounding villages. The extensive contact of Chalājūr and Payambūr with their surrounding villages, coupled with the fact that villagers already have relatives in these villages, encourages village exogamy.

In Rūdbārak, out of 226 marriages, 196 (87 percent) were between villagers. This proportion is similar to the intra-village marriage rate in Gulāmra (88 percent), but strikingly different from the percentages for village endogamy in Chalājūr and Payambūr (42 percent and 69 percent, respectively). Payambūr and Chalājūr have smaller populations and there are fewer women who are eligible for marriage, particularly in view of the age and incest taboos. Most of the outside women who married in Rūdbārak belong to the two nearby villages. Twelve belong to Mijil, a mixed



Table I.13: Marital status of permanent migrants by village.

Marital status (migrants)	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
never married	35	26	7	44	6	42	3	38
married in own village	55	41	4	25	2	15	1	12
married in Kalārdasht	9	7	4	25	4	31	3	38
married in qishlāq	13	10	1	6	1	8	1	12
married in Tehran/other parts	23	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	135	100	16	100	13	100	8	100
unknown	0		0		0		1	

population village at a distance of less than two miles; eight belong to a nearby Kurdish village; the remaining nine are originally from outside the region, six from the coastal areas and three from other parts of the country.<sup>32</sup>

The percentage of stranger marriages is much higher among the permanent migrants from these villages who are mostly resident in urban centres. (See Table I.13.) Out of the total of 121 married permanent migrants, 59 (49 percent) are married to women from out-

<sup>32</sup> Quantitative data on Rūdbāraki women who marry outside the region are not available; some do marry on the coast.

side their natal village; the corresponding percentage for all these villages is 17 per cent. Twenty-three (19 per cent) of these stranger marriages are with women from Tehran and other urban centres. Two obvious factors are responsible for the higher percentage of stranger marriages among permanent migrants: (1) their contact with outsiders, and (2) their freer choice in the selection of their brides. Migrants enjoy a greater freedom in their choice of a wife as a result of their economic independence and their ability to pay for their own wedding expenses.

Table I.14 shows the intermarriage of different ethnic groups which form Rūdbārak's population; Table I.15 shows the same data on the three isolated villages grouped jointly. Not surprisingly, in isolated villages which contain only one ethnic group, intermarriage between the different ethnic groups is much less frequent than in Rūdbārak. This is conspicuous in the cases of Gulāmra and Chalājūr which are surrounded by Gīlak and Khwajvand villages respectively; but Payambūr like Rūdbārak is located in a part of the region which has the highest number of ethnically mixed population villages.

In Rūdbārak, although (with the exception of Turks and Laks) marriages within each ethnic group are generally more frequent than marriages with any particular single ethnic group, within each group (including Turks and Laks) the total marriages outside the ethnic group exceeded the marriages within the ethnic group. Thirty-eight per cent of the Turks married Tālaqānī women, while an equal percentage of Laks married Khwajvand women. In both cases this was a higher percentage than those who married within the respective ethnic group; at the same time, Laks and Turks had the lowest percentages of

Table I.14: Rūdbāarak: Ethnic affiliation of household head by ethnic affiliation of his wife.

Ethnic affiliation of household head	Gīlak		Khwajvand		Lak		Turk		Tālaqāni		Other		Total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gīlak	17	39	9	20	5	11	0	0	6	14	7	16	44	20
Khwajvand	12	16	33	44	7	9	5	7	8	11	10	13	75	33
Lak	4	19	8	38	6	29	0	0	2	10	1	5	21	9
Turk	1	8	2	15	1	8	3	23	5	38	1	8	13	6
Tālaqāni	3	7	10	23	3	7	2	5	20	46	5	12	43	19
Others	6	20	11	37	2	7	2	7	2	7	7	23	30	13
Total column	43	19	73	32	24	11	12	5	43	19	31	14	226	100

Table I.15: Three isolated villages grouped jointly: Ethnic affiliation of household head by ethnic affiliation of his wife.

Ethnic affiliation of household head	Gilak		Khwajvand		Turk		Other		Total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gilak	21	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	100
Khwajvand	2	10	16	80	1	5	1	5		
Turk	1	9	1	9	9	82	0	0	11	19
Others	3	43	1	14	3	43	0	0	7	12
Total column	27	46	18	30	13	22	1	2	59	100

marriages within the ethnic group (29 percent and 23 percent, respectively). The number of Turks and Laks in the village is relatively small; thus the probability of finding a bride within the ethnic group is reduced. It would appear that the preference for village endogamy over-rides considerations of ethnicity. The Turks and the Tālaqānīs reside in the same part (mahallah) of the village and this in part explains the high proportion of Tālaqānī brides among Turkish men.

In recent years, there have been some significant changes in the pattern of arranged marriages in Rūdbāarak. By contrast, changing attitudes towards marriage have not been evident in the isolated villages, at least not among the resident villagers; the permanent migrants of these villages share these changing attitudes with migrants from Rūdbāarak. More recently individuals have enjoyed a degree of freedom in the selection of a spouse. However, it should be stressed that this increased freedom is confined to men and especially to those men who have been able to gain their economic independence through non-agricultural employment. The changed economic system which offers work opportunities to the individual has enabled young men to gain their economic independence prior to their marriage. Thus they are able to pay their own marriage expenses if the marriage is opposed by their elders. The process of change can be best illustrated by some actual cases from Rūdbāarak. The first case is representative of the traditional procedure, while the rest show the pattern and direction of change as well as factors which are responsible for it.

## Case No. 2: Rūdbāarak

Goul is a 25 year old woman with two children. She has been married to Rassūl for twelve years, and is still living in the household of her husband's father with his unmarried siblings. Goul has a remote kin relationship with her husband (her mother is the second cousin of her husband's father); and for this reason she calls her father-in-law dā'ie (maternal uncle). Her natal house is located two doors away from her husband's home; therefore, the two families, apart from being related by ties of kinship, were living very closely at the time of her marriage.

Rassūl's father decided on this marriage when Rassūl was 17 years old; the main reason was that, as he has no daughter to help his wife with the domestic duties, he wanted his son to marry as soon as possible. Rassūl has an older brother who married four years after him. The elder brother was doing his military service at that time and he strongly opposed the suggestion that he should marry first on the grounds that he was a driver and wanted to migrate after completion of his military service.

Rassūl, being totally dependent upon his father and working under his direction, was not in a position to oppose any decisions made by his father. Although he was 17, he was not even consulted about the matter of his marriage.

Goul was 13 and, as she recalls, was not aware of the importance of marriage. In her own words: "One day, my mother called me and said, 'You are going to live in the house of your uncle, next door from next week. You must do whatever your uncle's wife wants you to do. As from now on Rassūl is your husband.'"

This case is in many respects typical of the arranged marriages of young couples in Rūdbāarak in the past as well as in the isolated villages today. The main consideration of Rassūl's household was for a son to marry in order to secure domestic help. The marriage of the elder son was not possible, as he was doing his military service. Moreover, his wider experience and his partial economic independence due to his employment prospects as a driver enabled him

to oppose an early marriage arranged by his father.

The consideration of Goul's family was to take advantage of the opportunity to marry one of their daughters to a neighbouring household, as they had five other unmarried daughters at the time. This case is, in fact, an example of the practical considerations which are involved in arranging the marriage of two young people.

However nowadays, as the age of marriage has increased (due to those factors which have been discussed earlier), individuals are not as unaware of their marriage arrangements as were Rassūl and Goul. Although arrangements are still in the hands of the elders, young people are fully aware of the events which concern their future, and men have the opportunity to reject a choice which is contrary to their wishes (just as Rassūl's brother rejected the suggestion that he submit to an arranged marriage at a time inconvenient in terms of his own career plans).

Case No. 3: Rūdbāarak

Salim is a high school graduate who is employed by the government and teaches at a school in Ḥasankif. He has been employed for three years and was living in the household of his brothers prior to his marriage. As his father died when he was 14, the completion of his education was financed by his brothers.

A year after beginning employment, Salim came to know a girl in an evening class that he was teaching at that time in Mijil (the village closest to Rūdbāarak). He fell in love with the girl and informed his mother about his wish to marry her. But his mother and brothers disagreed with his choice because they had chosen his cousin (mother's brother's daughter) as his future wife and the preliminary negotiations had already been started by his mother. Salim tried to persuade them to consent to khwastgārī (asking for marriage), and at one point his mother agreed to do so; she was, however, prevented from doing so by his brothers. thus, none of the members of his household was willing to



to help him in arranging the marriage he desired. As a sign of protest, Salim left the house and moved to the village where he had a teaching post. He sent a kinsman (FBS) to the house of the girl to propose.

The girl's family welcomed the proposal, as Salim's job and his education were highly valued in the community. They said, "He is an independent man. He has a salary and can accept the responsibility and provide for our daughter."

Therefore, Salim started negotiations directly and agreed to the *shīr-bahā* and mahr. The *shīr-bahā* was set at 5,000 tomans, and the mahr at 35,000 tomans; the bride's dowry equalled the *shīr-bahā*. It took Salim a year to finance the marriage; all the expenses were paid by him alone. His mothers and brothers did not attend the marriage ceremony, but after a year other kinsmen intervened and brought them together.

Salim set up an independent household after his marriage. His wife's *jahīz*, which was purchased with the *shīr-bahā*, provided the furnishings of their new house.

There are two other cases similar to that of Salim and where the groom's family maintained their objection to the choice of bride until the last moment, denying any help to the groom. In both cases, after the marriage the groom's family came to terms with the situation. In two other cases, the groom's family were against the marriage in the initial stages, but eventually agreed to it and helped their son to meet the marriage expenses. It is interesting to note that in all these cases, the bride's family were in favour of the marriage; in one case they even agreed not to receive any *shīr-bahā*. The reason for this lies in the fact that they considered the groom to be in a desirable situation, either because of his education, salary, or skills, or because of his higher social status both as a result of his individual achievement and his family standing. Indeed, without this assistance on the part of the bride's family these marriages would have been

impossible. Another point is that in all these cases, the groom was educated; in four cases he had a permanent income and in one case he was a skilled mason with a good income. Under the circumstances, the young man could afford to lose his father's support for his marriage, because he was able to pay for the marriage expenses and maintain his wife after the marriage with no financial help from his father. This last point weighs strongly in a young man's favour in securing the support and cooperation of the bride's father for the marriage arrangements.

It is also interesting to note that in all these cases, it was the man who opposed the wishes of his father or kin-group in the choice of a bride. For a girl it is almost impossible to disobey the wishes of her family who have chosen a husband for her. The following case will further illustrate this point.

Case No. 4: Rūdbāarak

Simā is the daughter of a Khwajvand landowner in Rūdbāarak. She attended school up to the third year of secondary school; her father withdrew her from school when she was 15. A boy from Shahsavār (a nearby coastal town), who had relations in Rūdbāarak, became interested in her. He sent a number of letters asking for her; she indicated her interest. His parents came to Rūdbāarak asking for her hand in marriage, but they were confronted by opposition from her parents. They refused the proposal on the grounds that the boy was not from the village, so they did not know his family well enough. At that time, although she wanted the marriage very much, Simā did not dare to put forward her case for fear that if she insisted this might be interpreted as indicating that she had been too intimately involved with her suitor, and thus her honour would be compromised.

Shortly afterwards, she was engaged to another man from Shahsavār (the coastal town) against her wishes. As this marriage was arranged by her parents, they did not object to the fact that the second suitor was also a stranger to

their village. She appealed for help to her uncle (MB), who is the son of the khān and a very influential man both among the Khwajvands and in the village. Being a liberated man and against any forced marriage (this was his justification for his intervention), he advised her to send back the ring and presents. When there was an opportunity and her parents were on a visit outside the village, she sent back the ring and presents to some relatives of the groom's family who live in the village through her younger brother. Her parents were furious with her when they became aware of her action, but as her uncle was supporting her case, they did not pursue the matter any further. The subsequent request of her ex-fiance was refused.

However, within six months she was again engaged, this time to a teacher from Rūdbārak. Although it was again against her wishes, her uncle did not intervene, probably because he was in favour of the second man who was a teacher. He might also have thought that his intervention would be ineffective in the second case.

Here we see that a girl's wishes to marry a particular man, if her family is absolutely against it, cannot be realized. The only remaining course for her would be to elope with him. Elopement is the only traditional way for a young couple to exercise free choice despite opposition from their elders. In the previous cases we have seen that if the girl's family is in favour of the marriage, they will make some concessions and support the bridegroom; thus, despite the opposition of the groom's parents the marriage can still take place. Elopement, however, is different; it requires the connivance of the boy's parents or some member of his kin-group.

In fact, there are certain rules which constitute an acceptable elopement procedure. The first is that the girl must be considered mature enough to give her consent. The second is that she should steal away from her home unnoticed; there should be no confrontation with her parents. The third involves refuge in the house of a socially respectable family. This family assumes responsibility

for the honour and safety of the girl. Preservation of honour is of critical importance to the girl's parents. The fourth rule requires prompt notification of what has happened (usually the next morning), and sincere efforts at reconciliation.

In the majority of cases, elopement is chosen as the last resort with the consent, if not open encouragement, of the boy's family. The couple stay with the boy's parents or another relation until the performance of the religious marriage ceremony ('aqd). Usually the girl's parents commence normal relationships with the couple after the birth of the first child. However, there are not many girls who are prepared to take the risk of alienating their parents and losing their support by eloping with a man. The status of an eloped bride is much lower in the household of her husband's kin, as the formalities of marriage ceremonies and shīr-bahā were not carried out for her and she has no jahīz. In addition, her kin would not support her fully in any disputes with her husband's family. Cases of elopement occur seldom in these villages. I heard of three in Rūdbārak and two in the isolated villages, but there may have been others about which I was not informed because it is usual for the parties involved not to wish to talk publicly about it.

During my stay in the region I came across one case which can be treated as elopement. A boy from Rūdbārak who was working in Tehran as a construction worker fell in love with a Tehrani girl who was living in the same locality in Tehran. The boy's father, as a result of his son's insistence, agreed to go for khwastgāri, but the girl's father refused the proposal in very strong terms. When the couple realised that her father would not agree to their

marriage under any circumstances, they decided to elope. Thus the girl came to Kalārdasht to stay with a kinsman of the boy who lives in another village. Her father followed her to the village and accused the boy of deceiving his daughter; he appealed to gendarmerie in Kalārdasht to return his daughter to him and to detain the boy. However, he agreed to release the boy after medical examination revealed that the girl was still a virgin. The boy was released and went back to Tehran; the girl was taken home by her father. It is interesting to note that the girl was determined to marry the boy despite the absolute disagreement of her father. She told her father in the presence of the gendarmerie official, as well as the boy and his father, "There is nothing that you can do to prevent me from marrying him. If you would kill me I will still marry him!" I do not have any information about further developments in this case, although I heard from the boy's family that they were planning to stage a more successful elopement. Considering the girl's evident determination, one can expect that despite her father's disagreement they will eventually marry.

However, in none of these four villages did I come across any case in which a girl from the village who wanted to marry a particular boy was insistent about the matter. Case No. 3 is a typical example of what happens in the villages. This can be related to the lesser freedom enjoyed by Kalārdashti girls in comparison with urban girls.

Since even in the traditional arranged marriage, the wishes of the boy were taken into account to some extent in these matters, it is not surprising that educated or economically independent young men are now tending to seize the initiative. The crucial factor

is the lack of any established system by which young men and women can meet one another socially. The school recently established in Rūdbāarak for adult education is not co-educational; nevertheless it provides an opportunity for young men and women to see each other on the way to school or to exchange letters. In discussing the greater freedom of choice in marriage partners, I am not implying that couples establish any sort of substantial relationship prior to their marriage. It is simply that, as a result of the higher age at marriage as well as the relatively greater contact with the opposite sex, they cultivate a liking for a particular person whom they may desire to marry. It is the ability to form and express preferences in the matter which may be regarded as conferring a freer choice of spouses in these villages.

In Rūdbāarak, the traditional custom which requires that a betrothed girl avoid her future husband and in-laws is withering away. Among some families an engaged girl is free to appear when her fiance pays a visit to her house and to socialize freely with her future husband's family. This leads to greater contact between the two individuals who are destined to marry each other. Recently, there was a case in Rūdbāarak where an educated girl (in her last year of high school) became engaged to her cousin (MBS) who is a university student in Tehran. Whenever he came to the village he paid a visit to his aunt's (girl's mother's) house, and once the girl went to Tehran and stayed with the boy's sister who is married in Tehran. However, just before I left the village, I learned that the girl wanted to send back the engagement ring on the grounds that they could not get along and on one occasion her fiance had even beaten her up. The dispute between them, which



involved their households also, was eventually settled by the intervention of other relatives, and the marriage ceremony was scheduled to take place in early autumn. I came across no cases where the engaged couple were allowed to socialize freely in the three isolated villages.

In an attempt to ascertain how the villagers feel about the selection of their spouses, the married villagers were asked if they were consulted about decisions concerning their marriage. They were also asked if they were in favour of the choice made for them. The replies of all the respondents to these questions can be summarized in three categories. (a) Although they were not consulted and were in some cases too young to understand the implications of marriage, they had no objection to the choice made for them. (b) They were not consulted and disapproved of the marriage but were forced into it. Practically all the women who married before 15 years of age replied in terms of either (a) or (b). (c) They had indicated their preference to a member of their kin-group and thus they welcomed the choice. This remark was made by men only. On the whole, I realised that the questions were meaningful only to a limited number of respondents, i.e., only to those who were strongly against the choice made for them or those who welcomed it. As a result of the almost complete lack of contact between marriageable members of opposite sexes, there is no opportunity to develop intensive liking or disliking for each other. In the majority of cases, at least in the past, the question of choice was not the important issue. Particularly for a girl, the fact of getting married is more important than the identity of the person to whom she is married. For a girl to



reach the age of 20 and still be unmarried creates an uneasy situation in the village, because it indicates that she has not been considered eligible enough by other families in the village for one of them to ask for her hand in marriage. As a result of the cultural values which dominate the village society, the question of taking into account the girl's choice in the matter is irrelevant.

## V. Divorce, widowhood, and remarriage

### I. Recent changes in the law relating to divorce<sup>23</sup>

Islamic law grants to men the right of unilateral, extra-judicial divorce; the marriage is dissolved simply by the husband's pronouncement of the verbal formula (ṭalāq), "I divorce you". The formula may be pronounced at the husband's will alone; he need have no particular reason or ground for the pronouncement. While Islamic law recognizes extra-judicial divorce by mutual agreement between the spouses, the right of a wife to obtain a divorce without her husband's consent and against his will is extremely limited. The wife in such a situation must approach a court and the only grounds which classical Shī'a jurisprudence recognizes as entitling her to a divorce are the fact that the husband is incapable of consummating the marriage or the fact that the husband is suffering from venereal disease, leprosy, or insanity. The Civil Code legis-

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<sup>23</sup>I am indebted to Dr. Lucy Carroll Stout for explaining and summarizing the provisions of Muslim law and Iranian law to which reference is made in this work.

lation of the 1930s increased the grounds on which an Iranian Muslim wife could obtain a judicial divorce by recognizing such grounds as ill-treatment and failure to maintain.

The Family Protection Act, 1967,<sup>24</sup> introduced radical changes in the law of divorce by (1) enlarging the grounds on which a wife can petition for a judicial divorce and (2) abolishing the husband's right of unilateral extra-judicial divorce. Under the Family Protection Act, a divorce by either spouse can only be obtained by means of a Certificate of Impossibility of Reconciliation. Such a Certificate must be obtained from a court and, in the absence of the mutual consent of the spouses to a divorce, will only be issued upon specified grounds. The Certificate is essentially permission to effect a divorce; no divorce results until the party who has obtained the Certificate registers it, and registration must be done within three months or the permission to divorce lapses.

A woman may apply for a Certificate of Impossibility of Reconciliation on the same grounds as are available to a man,<sup>25</sup> as well as on the basis of additional grounds available only to her, e.g., that her husband fails to maintain her, has married a second wife without her consent, or fails to treat co-wives with

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<sup>24</sup>The Family Protection Act, 1967, was repealed and replaced by an act of the same title in 1975. The latter act essentially retained the divorce provisions of the earlier legislation and, for instance, raised the minimum ages for marriage (see above).

<sup>25</sup>E.g., insanity, sterility, inability or unwillingness to have normal sexual relations, desertion, affliction with a number of specified diseases, imprisonment for not less than five years, commission of an offence of following an occupation 'repugnant to family honour'.

equal justice.

On the other hand, a husband cannot obtain a Certificate, no matter how anxious he is to divorce his wife, unless he can establish one of the grounds<sup>d</sup> recognized in the Act and on which only (in the absence of her agreement to be divorced) a Certificate will be issued. This constitutes the most dramatic restriction of the husband's classical right to divorce his wife at will that has been instituted in any Muslim country which still purports to follow the Shari'a in the area of family law.

The Family Protection Act also introduced some restrictions on polygamy. A husband must now obtain permission to marry an additional wife from the court. Such permission will only be granted if the existing wife has consented to the marriage or is unable or unwilling to perform her marital duties, is insane or afflicted with some incurable disease, is sterile, or has deserted her husband or disappeared or been sentenced to imprisonment for a period of at least five years. A polygamous marriage in the absence of the requisite permission is valid but the parties are liable to criminal penalties. Further, a man who has been previously married cannot register a subsequent marriage without producing either a divorce certificate or a certificate granting him permission for a polygamous marriage.

In the past, in these villages divorce procedures were extremely simple. If a man were dissatisfied with his wife, he simply pronounced the divorce formula and expelled her; the wife returned to her nearest living male kinsman, usually her father. If a wife were dissatisfied, she simply returned to her father's household. What happened next depended on circumstances. The

interest of the couple's own kin in maintaining the marriage or facilitating its dissolution played an important role in subsequent events. Particularly as Shi'a law does not recognize the 'triple ṭalāq' common in Sunni law (in which the pronouncement is immediately final and irrevocable) and (with few exceptions<sup>26</sup>) allows a period after the pronouncement during which time the divorce is revocable, there is an opportunity for elders to attempt mediation and reconciliation of the spouses.

Under the new legislation, the pronouncement of the divorce formula itself cannot dissolve the marriage; the husband must first obtain the Certificate of Impossibility of Reconciliation from the court and to do this he must be able to establish one of the recognized grounds for a divorce. At the same time, the Family Protection Act facilitates the process of divorce in cases where divorce is desired by the wife and opposed by her husband. As a result of the presence of members of the educational corps in the village and the greater control of gendarmerie on village affairs, villagers are encouraged to comply with the state legislation.

Before the new legislation, although the husband possessed the legal right to unilateral divorce, the social sanctions in the village community imposed some limitations on the completely arbitrary exercise of this right. These social sanctions continue to operate, although the economic independence sons may now achieve

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<sup>26</sup>.E.g., in a case where the divorce formula is pronounced before consummation of the marriage, or a case where the wife is divorced for a third time by the same husband. In these situations the pronouncement of divorce is irrevocable.

through exploitation of the wage labour opportunities renders family and social pressures less effective. The institution of mahr may also impose practical sanctions against capricious divorce in some situations. The mahr is most usually requested at the time of divorce and, although the amount specified as mahr was relatively low (and none in some cases) in the past, it has dramatically increased in recent years.

## 2. Cases and causes of divorce

Table I.16 presents data on the number and percentages of marriages which have ended in divorce according to village. The data presented in the table are based on the marital histories of living wives, widows, and divorcees. As the table indicates, a small number of marriages in these villages terminate in divorce. The slightly higher percentage of divorces in Chalājūr is due to the three Khwajvand Sayyids who live in the village. These Sayyids are part of the religious elite of the Ali-i-Haqq Khwajvands and enjoy easy access to marriage partners because other Khwajvands are willing to marry their daughters to them on extremely easy conditions, asking little or nothing for shīr-bahā and mahr while hoping to have a grandson who is a Sayyid (the title being transmitted through males). All three of the Chalājūr Sayyids have experienced more than one marriage. One has a polygamous household consisting of two wives. Another has been married five times; he divorced three of his wives because they could not get along with his first wife and presently lives with his last wife, who remained in his household after the death of his first wife. The

Table I.16: Divorce ratios calculated for each village, using J. A. Barns' procedures (1967:61-67).

	Extant marriages	Ended in divorce	Husband's death	Wife's death	total	Ratio A %	Ratio B %	Ratio C %
Rūdbāarak	239	16	27	2	284	5.6	35.5	6
Gulāmra	36	2	3	1	42	4.8	33.3	5.2
Chalājūr	22	4	2	-	28	14.2	66.6	15.4
Payambūr	17	2	1	-	20	10	66.6	10.5

$$\text{Ratio A} = \frac{\text{No. divorces}}{\text{All marriages}}$$

$$\text{Ratio B} = \frac{\text{No. divorces}}{\text{No. marriages terminated by death or divorce}}$$

$$\text{Ratio C} = \frac{\text{No. divorces}}{\text{Extant marriages} + \text{divorces}}$$

third Sayyid has been married twice; he divorced one wife because she failed to produce a son. (All these divorces took place prior to the Family Protection Act.)

In Gulāmra, two out of the 42 recorded marriages ended in divorce. The first case of divorce occurred about twenty years ago. Zamān divorced his wife (his FBD) soon after the death of his father. The marriage had been arranged against his will, but as long as his father was alive he 'did not dare' to divorce his wife. After the divorce, he married a widow from his own village; his divorced wife returned to her brother's household from which she was married in another village. The second Gulāmra divorce involved the recent case of a twenty year old woman who failed to produce a child. She had been married for seven years and after doctors had certified that she was barren, her husband (her MBS) obtained a Certificate of Impossibility of Reconciliation on the grounds of sterility and divorced her. She was remarried in the summer of 1978 to a bachelor from a nearby village, who insisted on marrying her despite the disapproval of his kin-group.

Both cases of divorce in Payambūr concerned Fātima. Her first divorce was due to the fact that her husband (her MBS) was opposed to the marriage from the beginning and was virtually forced into it by the insistence of both households. After he obtained work in the town, he divorced her and married a woman of his own choice. The divorce was obtained after a Certificate had been awarded on the basis of the consent of both spouses to the termination of the marriage. Initially both Fātima's father and her husband's brothers were strongly opposed to the husband's desire for a divorce, but eventually they agreed after he had threatened suicide. After this



divorce, Fātima returned with her two children to her father's household. Fātima's second marriage with a man from the coastal area also ended in divorce. Her second husband already had one wife and Fātima had constant quarrels with her co-wife. In this case, it was Fātima who desired a divorce because of quarrels with the co-wife and her husband's drinking habits. Her husband consented to a divorce and a Certificate was issued on the grounds of mutual consent. Again Fātima (who had no children from the second marriage) returned to her father's household. She is 40 years old and it is likely that she will marry again. Her mahr in each of her marriages was very small: her first marriage was to a kinsman (which usually involves a small mahr) and her second marriage was as a divorcee (which again involves a small mahr).

Five of the sixteen divorces in Rūdbāarak occurred as a result of the wife's failure to produce a child. In one case which occurred during my field work (1978), the wife initiated the divorce because of her husband's sterility. After her divorce she returned to her father's household; there were rumours that her kin encouraged her to seek a divorce as they considered that she stood a good chance of remarrying and having children. Her husband was against the divorce and she was only able to obtain it because of the Family Protection Act (1975) which recognizes sterility in either spouse as grounds for granting a Certificate of Impossibility of Reconciliation. (A wife previously had no right to a divorce because of the sterility of her husband.) In another case, the wife was divorced because she had failed to produce any children. She was later married to another villager and gave birth to a son; her husband also married again and also has children from

his second marriage.

In two cases (both before the Family Protection Act) the wives were divorced because they behaved disrespectfully towards their husbands and mothers-in-law. In one of these cases the wife cursed her husband while he was beating her for acting 'shamelessly' to his mother. She was sent back to her father's house and was divorced shortly afterwards. She remarried within a short period. In the other case, the wife was married to a widower with a married son and accused her husband of showing undue affection towards his daughter-in-law. The conflict which accompanied this accusation involved the wife's brothers as well and eventually resulted in her being divorced. She has not remarried and presently lives with her mother who is a widow. She is around 50 and claims that her divorce was an excuse for her ex-husband to remarry; he did marry a young girl shortly afterwards.

In four cases the divorce was due to conflict between the wife and her husband's family. In another case the husband was unwilling to marry the bride chosen for him, and the wife's subsequent failure to get along with his mother intensified the disharmony between them; the result was divorce, and the wife was remarried to an outsider. In another case, similar to the case in Gulāmra, the husband was not willing to marry the selected bride but consented because of his father's insistence. He divorced his wife after the death of his father and each partner remarried shortly afterwards.

One of the present divorcees of the village is a former widow who married the cousin of her deceased husband (her FBS). Her second husband was already married with grown up sons who live and

work in Tehran. These sons as well as her own were opposed to the marriage. Because of constant quarrels between the two co-wives, the second wife demanded to be maintained in a separate household. Without the financial support of his sons the husband was not able to do this, although he was very much inclined to keep the second wife. His sons insisted that they did not want their mother to have a co-wife, and were not prepared to help their father solve the problem by maintaining the second wife separately. Being unable to meet his second wife's demand for a separate household, the husband was forced to agree to her request for a divorce. The widow's sons had also deserted her as a result of her re-marriage to a married relative which resulted in 'bringing shame' to them. Polygamy is in fact rare and is socially frowned upon. To marry a daughter to a man already married diminishes the prestige of her family (unless, in the case of the Khwajvands, the man is a Sayyid), and quarrels among co-wives are legendary in village folklore.

The final case of divorce which occurred during my stay in Rūdbārak illustrates a situation where the wife demanded and obtained a divorce in spite of her family's initial opposition, as well as the opposition of her husband. Marafat, a young woman aged 25, had been married to a man aged 42 for seven years. Her husband had a reputation in the village for being slow-witted. Marafat was unwilling to marry him but was forced into the marriage by her parents. (Rumour has it that she had lost her virginity while working as a maid in Tehran; her parents arranged this ill-matched marriage to protect the family's honour.) In spring 1978, she decided to ask for a divorce on the grounds of her husband's

insanity. Her decision was strongly opposed by her husband and also, at least initially, by her family. Her family finally agreed to take her back and she returned to her father's house, leaving her children behind. She applied for and was granted a Certificate entitling her to a divorce on the grounds of her husband's mental incapacity.

In the divorce cases which have been discussed above, mahr was not an important consideration, either for the husband or the wife, because the amount involved was very small. Only in the case of Marafat was the amount of mahr relatively substantial (2,000 tomans) and she agreed to forego it. Her husband claimed that he was unable to pay the amount and Marafat preferred to avoid further legal action which an attempt to obtain it would involve.

Just as in the matter of arranging marriages, the kin-group and elders play an important role in the matter of divorce. The authority of the husband's father may prevent a husband from divorcing his wife, as the cases in which the husband divorced his wife immediately after his father's death illustrate. As long as the father was living, his influence was sufficient to prevent divorce, but after his death the husband was able to terminate an imposed marriage with which he was dissatisfied. The stability of marriage thus depends to some extent on the sanctions that the village community and the kin-group impose on individuals. Without the support and backing of her family, it is difficult for a woman to take advantage of the changes in the divorce laws which grant her easier access to divorce, while a husband's kin may restrain him from seeking divorce.

As men obtain a greater say in the selection of their spouses, it may be expected that they will also obtain a greater freedom in rejecting an incompatible spouse. The recent opportunities for young men to gain economic independence enables them to disregard the authority of their elders in regard to matters affecting their marital life. As in the Payambūr and two recent cases in Rūdbārak, as soon as the husbands had acquired economic independence through securing work outside the village, they terminated an unwanted marriage. The new legislation, however, has made divorce at the husband's initiative and without the consent of his wife much more difficult to obtain.

Another factor which affects marital stability is the disharmony introduced in the marital relationship of permanent migrants as a result of contact with urban centres. In summer 1978 there were two cases of marital conflict which could be traced to such tensions. In both cases the couple live in Tehran where the husband is employed as a skilled worker. The conflicts reached such severity that the husbands sent their wives back to the village to their respective kinsmen's households, justifying their action in each case by accusing the wife of adultery. In the first case the woman's kin, in order to preserve their honour from further damage, agreed to the divorce and to forego the mahr. The wife's father was dead and as she had no siblings she stayed with her paternal uncles until she was married to an outsider. However, in the second case the parties concerned failed to reach an agreement and the wife, who was staying with her widowed mother, claimed that the accusation was completely false. Nevertheless, she said that she would agree to a divorce if the husband would repay

all the expenses her mother had incurred on her behalf during the period of fifteen months that she had been staying with her. The husband refused to pay for her maintenance and applied to the court for a Certificate enabling him to divorce her; the court refused the Certificate. It seems that either the wife eventually will agree to the divorce in return for compensation for her arrears of maintenance, or the kin-group will intervene and reconcile the spouses.

With the exception of these two cases involving permanent migrants, there was not a single case in which a normal fruitful first marriage ended in divorce. The data presented in Tables 1.17 and I.18 confirm the stability of marriages. Table 1.17 presents data on the number of marriages of household heads and their wives. A large majority of both spouses have experienced only one marriage: 82 per cent in Rūdbāarak; 75 per cent in Gulāmra; 58 per cent in Ghalājūr; and 88 per cent in Payambūr. The percentage of individuals who entered more than one marriage is relatively small, with the exception of Chalājūr where the marital activities of the Sayyids increase the percentage.

Where the marriage is the second one for the wife and the first for the husband, the situation is usually one of levirate, where the man married his deceased brother's widow. There are seven cases of widow<sup>inheritance</sup> in Rūdbāarak and one in Chalājūr. The main reasons for the practice of widow<sup>inheritance</sup> are: (1) The desire of the widow and her in-laws that she should remain in the household of her deceased husband in order to look after her children; in all the cases of widow<sup>inheritance</sup>, the widow had children from her first husband. (2) To prevent fragmentation of household resources.



Table I.17: Number of marriages for household head and his wife, by each village.

No. of marriages	Rudbārak		Gulāmrā		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1st marriage for each spouse	185	82	18	75	11	58	14	88
2nd marriage of husband; 1st of wife	18	8	3	13	3	16	1	6
2nd marriage of wife; 1st of husband	9	4	1	4	2	10	0	0
2nd marriage for each spouse	12	5	2	8	2	10	1	6
husband has two wives	1	1	0	0	1	5	0	0
total	225	100	24	100	19	100	16	100
unknown	4		0		0		0	

Although the widow's children from the first husband inherit their father's property (lands or herd), the uncle who marries their mother will have the right to manage this property until the children come of age. Most cases of widow <sup>inheritance</sup> in these villages concern households with resources. (See Case No. 9.) (3) The husband's household has already invested money in the woman (shir-bahā, gifts, etc.) and has no desire to see the woman and her property go to another household. Further, the marriage expenses are low for a widow and are even lower in the case of widow <sup>inheritance</sup>. Similar reasons also apply to marriages between a widow and another close kinsman of her deceased



husband. There are three marriages of widows to close relatives other than brothers of their deceased husbands in Rūdbāarak and one in Gulāmra.

There are two cases of sororate in Rūdbāarak. In both cases the man chose to marry his deceased wife's sister because she would have sympathy and concern in looking after the children by his first wife.

A young widow, like a young divorcee, stands a good chance of remarriage. Three of the 33 widows in these villages subsequently married a widower. Nine became a widow for a second time and one widow has already lost three husbands. Table I.19 shows the relationship between the age of women who are now married and whether they have had more than one husband. As the table indicates, the percentage of those who have experienced more than one marriage increases with the age group of the women. Among women 51 years of age and older, 44 per cent have been married more than once. In light of the small number of divorces in these villages, it can be argued that this relatively high percentage is related to the fact that as a result of the substantial age gap between spouses, many women become widows while they are still young and stand a fair chance of marrying again. All widows in the three isolated villages except one live with their married sons. Fifteen of the 32 widows in Rūdbāarak live in independent households with or without unmarried children; the rest live with their married sons.

The number of widowers is much lower than the number of widows. This is partly a result of the age differential between spouses which increases the probability that a woman will be widowed while decreasing the probability that a man will become a widower. It is

Table I.18: Present marital status of those villagers who have ever been married, by each village.

Marital status	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
married	477	93	72	95	43	91	34	94
widower	2	0.2	1	1	0	0	0	0
widow	32	6	2	3	4	9	1	3
divorcee (women)	4	0.8	1	1	0	0	1	3
total	515	100	76	100	47	100	36	100

Table I.19: Relationship between age of wife of household head and number of marriages.

Age of wife of household head	Number of marriages ever entered					
	one		more than one		total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
up to 20	11	92	1	8	12	4
21 - 30	66	89	8	11	74	26
31 - 40	79	94	5	6	84	30
41 - 50	51	74	18	26	69	24
51 and over	24	56	19	44	43	15
total column	231	82	19	44	282	100

also a result of the fact that a middle-aged widower has a better probability of remarrying than does a middle-aged widow; the widower can marry a much younger woman while custom does not permit a woman to marry a man younger than herself.

#### VI: Birth Control

I have selected the issue of birth control as a measure of stability and change in these villages for three main reasons: (1) To consider the impact of a recent family planning program carried out by the government on the views of villagers towards birth control. (2) As it has always been the ideal to have many children, any deviation from this ideal indicates change. (3) As a result of the changing economy, children are no longer resources for the household and instead constitute charges upon the family purse in terms of educational expenses, etc. It can be assumed that under the new circumstances parents will desire fewer children in order to be able to provide for their expenses.

After the publication of the nation-wide census of 1966, which showed a high rate of population growth,<sup>27</sup> the Iranian government launched a family planning program in 1967 with the aid of the Population Council of the United States. A family planning unit was established under the auspices of the Ministry of Health; the unit has expanded its activities to the rural areas as well,

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<sup>27</sup>The first national census in Iran was carried out in 1956. The average annual rate of growth for the 1956-1966 period was 3.1. See M. E. Gulick and John Gulick (1975, 1978); and Mary-Jo Devecchio Good (1978) for two recent studies of birth control in two Iranian towns, Isfahān and Marāgheh.

and distributes contraceptive pills to the villagers. In Rūd-bārak, members of the unit, which includes women doing their military service, provide advice as well as contraceptives to women in the village on a regular basis. As yet the unit has no program in the three isolated villages; however, due to the extensive contact of Chalājūr and Payambūr with their large surrounding villages where the unit operates, women of these two villages have indirect access to the unit's facilities.

As in many other parts of rural Iran, villagers in Kalār-dasht place a high value on having children, especially sons. To refuse to have children because of economic considerations is to express a lack of faith in God who is the provider. The village saying, 'he who gives teeth, gives the bread', meaning that as God gives the children, so also will he provide for their necessities, is indicative of this traditional attitude.

Children, especially sons, have traditionally been highly regarded for their economic value. Because boys labour in the field, tend the family herds, or whenever necessary can be hired out, they are viewed as a source of support, not only in a father's old age, but also in his maturity. There is a strong moral injunction for sons to relieve their father of his burden of supporting the family and a middle-aged man with grown up sons can not only expect their immediate assistance, but also can count on their support in his old age. The object of marriage is considered to be the production of healthy sons; a woman with children, especially many sons, is assured of her position in the household of her husband.

Table I.20: Average number of pregnancies, living children, and dead children of ever married women, according to each village.

	. Rūdbāarak .	Gulāmra .	Chalājūr .	Payambūr
Average No. of pregnancies	7.41	8.29	8.56	7.58
Average No. of living children	5.09	4.92	5.67	5.87
Average No. of dead children	2.95	3.21	2.67	2.60

Note: Average number of dead children includes still births, miscarriages, and those who died in infancy or childhood.

Given this pattern of values and beliefs, it is not surprising that the birth rate is high in all these villages. Furthermore, as a consequence of high mortality in the past, a high birth rate has been necessary to ensure the survival of several children. Table I.20 presents data on the average number of pregnancies, living children, and dead children of ever married women according to each village. The Table shows that the average number of pregnancies of women in Rūdbāarak is lower than the corresponding averages in the three isolated villages. At the same time, the average number of living children per woman is the lowest in Gulāmra which has a higher average number of pregnancies, suggesting a higher rate of infant mortality in Gulāmra, which enjoys less access to medical facilities and is a less prosperous village.

In an attempt to assess women's awareness of and attitudes toward birth control, they were asked about the number of children they would like to have and have had. The replies to this question can be divided into four major groups which are summarized in

Table I.21: Ideal number of children as stated by women, according to each village.

	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. "God decides"	24	11	9	37	4	21	2	12
2. "No more children"	53	24	10	42	5	26	3	19
3. "Not too many"	28	12	5	21	4	21	4	25
4. 2 - 4 children	118	53	0	0	6	32	7	44
total	223	100	24	100	19	100	16	100

Table I.21. (1) Relatively a small proportion of women considered the question fatalistically and answered "these matters are decided by God, so they are beyond human control". (2) Some replied that they did not want any more children and the number they have is enough. Any attempt on my part to find out the number they considered to be 'ideal' failed, as they insisted on the same reply. It was clear that they were unable to grasp the idea that couples could or should limit the number of their children. In a majority of cases the women answering in terms of either (1) or (2) were over forty and had more than five children. (3) Some had vague ideas about the 'ideal' number of children and replied that "it is better not to have 'too many' children" because of the consequent physical burden that women have to suffer in giving birth and caring for 'many children'. It must be borne in mind that 'too many' was defined within the cultural framework of these

Table I.22: Contraceptive methods used by women of each village.

Contraceptive	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Never used; has no intention of using	63	28	22	92	12	64	8	50
Never used; past menopause	43	19	2	8	2	10	2	13
Recent birth; has intention of using	26	12	0	0	3	16	3	18
Using pills	47	21	0	0	2	10	1	6
Other methods (withdrawal, condom)	36	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sterilization	9	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
total	224	100	24	100	19	100	16	100
unknown	3		-		-		-	

villages which favour a large number of children, certainly more than five, but the replies did indicate awareness of the possibility of limiting fertility. (4) Some appeared to be very clear about the number of children they considered to be 'ideal' and specified between two and four children. Some of these women already had more children than their 'ideal' number.

As Table I.21 suggests, these villages vary in regard to attitudes towards birth control as reflected in the 'ideal' number stated by the women. On the whole, a large proportion of women from Rūdbāarak and the two isolated villages, Chalājūr and Payam-



bur want fewer children than they have or are likely to have.

Despite their stated desire to have few children, only a small number of women in the three isolated villages actually practice birth control (see Table I.22). In fact, I noticed that some women who claimed to practice birth control were either pregnant or had recently given birth. Some complained that although they wanted no more children, their husbands would not agree to practice birth control. Some who had no son or only one son desired to have more children in the hope of producing sons. Taking these factors into account, the percentage of women using some kind of effective birth control is likely to be smaller than is shown in Table I.22. There are nine women in Rūdbārak who have undergone a sterilization operation. However, each of these had already had more than six children and in four cases the operation was recommended by doctors on health grounds. In one case, the new born child, a son, died shortly after his birth and the woman, who had only one son, was extremely unhappy about her operation.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that even among those women who expressed a desire to have fewer children, there is considerable ambivalence over actual family size, the 'ideal' number of children, and the use of contraceptives. This can be inferred from the above tables. Table I.20 indicates that in every village the number of living children is already above the highest specified 'ideal' number of four (Table I.21). And if the average number of pregnancies is considered, this number is almost double. As elsewhere in rural Iran and among the lower class urban population, the traditional family size norms in Kalārdasht are quite high.<sup>28</sup> At

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<sup>28</sup>. See Gulick and Gulick (1975, 1978b); and Delvecchio Good (1978).

the same time, the government, by means of the Family Planning Program and its propaganda campaign, has been trying to modify this norm.<sup>29</sup> Women in Rūdbāarak and two of these isolated villages, through contact with staffs of the Family Planning Unit, are aware that the government advocates a limit of two or three children and that this is achieved by educated town people. This awareness was expressed in a large number of responses given by the women. Thus it appears that in the majority of cases the small number of children stated as the 'ideal' by women who clearly specified a number may be due to the influence of the Family Planning Unit.

There is a marked difference between the attitudes of young and older women on the issue of birth control. While a substantial majority of younger women (especially in Rūdbāarak) consider that it is desirable to have fewer children and some of them use (or profess to use) contraceptives, the older women consider that the number of children is decided by God and do not approve of birth control. Tables I.23 and I.24 support this statement. Table I.23 shows the relationship between the age of women and their attitude towards the ideal number of children; 89 per cent of women who are below 30 desire to have small families, while only 32 per cent of women who are above 40 show such a desire. To some extent, the attitude of the older women may reflect the fact that they have passed the age of reproduction or have already produced a large number of children and, therefore, are not concerned with the issue any longer. On the other hand, the generation gap in regard to

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<sup>29</sup> See Delvecchio Good (1978:218-220) for an interesting discussion on the impact of the Family Planning Program on attitudes of women in Marāgheh, a provincial town in Northeastern Iran.

Table I.23: Relationship between the age of women and their attitude towards birth control as reflected by their responses to questions concerning the 'ideal' number of children.

Age of women	Fatalistic/ unaware		Aware of birth-control/ desire fewer children		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Up to 20	1	9	10	91	11	4
21 - 30	8	11	66	89	74	26
31 - 40	25	30	59	70	84	30
41 - 50	42	62	26	38	68	25
over 50	34	79	9	21	43	15
total column	110	39	170	61	280	100

Table I.24: Relationship between the age of women and contraceptive usage.

Age of women	Never used		Uses some method		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
up to 20	8	67	4	33	12	4
21 - 30	32	43	42	57	74	26
31 - 40	50	60	34	40	84	30
41 - 50	52	75	17	26	69	24
over 50	43	100	0	0	43	15
total column	185	66	97	34	282	100

birth control indicates that younger women are deriving their values and information in regard to this important area of married life from their peer group and from external agencies (i.e., the Family Planning Unit), rather than from the traditional source of marital information, the older women of their kin-group and village. The attitudes of a majority of the older women are in contrast to the values advocated by the Family Planning Unit, which appears to have successfully influenced the younger women.

Table I.24 shows the relationship between the age of women and the use of contraceptives. The table clearly illustrates that the practice of birth control is more prevalent among younger women, with the exception of those who are below 20. These women are newly married and a large majority of them have not yet produced a child; the desire for a child and the social pressure to demonstrate their fertility prevents them from using contraceptives at this stage, despite the fact that they also prefer to have fewer children in the course of their marital life.

It seems fair to conclude that although the concept of birth control is still new, even in Rūdbāarak, a large number of women are familiar with it and some desire and plan to control the number of their pregnancies. But in Gulāmra, where as a result of its isolation the Family Planning Unit has not yet operated and where women have not been in contact with the Family Planning staff, few women are even familiar with the issue.

### Summary

As is apparent from the foregoing discussion, all aspects of marriage in these villages are embedded in the wider kinship system. The responsibilities for arranging, celebrating, and sustaining marriage involve the kin-group; the symbolic rituals of marriage are group-, rather than individual-, oriented. However, change has brought about a process of individualisation culminating in the emergence of the individual from the kin-group.

I have tried to illustrate the process of change by first describing certain aspects of the traditional marriage procedure and then portraying its changing features. At present, both the traditional and the modified system of selecting spouses and conducting marriage ceremonies co-exist. While the new trends are gaining acceptance and are even practised in Rūdbārak, the traditional marriage rituals remain intact in the three isolated villages: Gulāmra, Chalājūr, and Payambūr.

The description of the traditional marriage procedure makes it evident that marriage in Kalārdasht has been a systematically organized compact between two households; it was not the result of the mutual choice of the two prospective spouses. This statement is illustrated by a number of existing marriage rituals, for example, the ceremonial exchange of gifts and pūlandāzī (the ceremony at which the kin contribute money). However, recent changes in some aspects of the marriage rituals indicate corresponding changes in the norms that have governed the institution of marriage. For instance, an expansion of the roles given to the would-be spouses throughout the marriage ceremonies reflects

the increasing participation of individuals in their marriage procedures.

In recent years, especially in the case of Rūdbārak, an overwhelming majority of young men engage in wage labour; this grants them a degree of financial independence and enables them to provide for their own marriages, should their choice of spouse be opposed by their father. Similarly, financial independence makes it possible for them to resist an undesirable choice which might be inflicted upon them by the family. The economic independence of young men, as well as their greater contact with the urban centres which necessarily involves exposure to differing life styles, enables them to introduce or even impose some modifications in the traditional marriage arrangements.

The changes which have occurred in the sphere of marriage transactions offer the young men a much greater degree of independence from their father and their kin-group. The increased importance of mahr, which does not involve any immediate exchange of wealth, and the possibility of replacing shīr-bahā by paying for the costs of a limited festivity, weaken the limitations on choice of a spouse that are inherent in traditional marriage transactions in which the shīr-bahā constituted the major component and both mahr and jahīz had insignificant roles. The jahīz (dowry) that a girl brings into the marriage now provides a part of the material preconditions for establishing a new household.

It is significant to note that the recent changes have affected men to a much greater extent than women. In fact, in the matter of choice of a spouse, a girl still has virtually no say. It is only the man who has acquired economic independence as a

result of changes in the economic system; and it is the man who always had the right to take the initiative in matters concerning his marriage. The recent changes have further enhanced male prerogatives without any corresponding advance for women.

The new economic system and the resultant increase in contact with urban centres have affected the various aspects of marriage in differing degrees. Although marriage ceremonies have been modified in Rūdbāarak, they still remain more or less intact in the isolated villages, especially in Gulāmra. Apart from the changes in the marriage ceremonies, the changes described in other spheres of marriage are limited in their impact to the villagers who are educated, those who are engaged in wage labour inside the villages, or those who are migrants living in urban areas. As far as other villagers are concerned, marriage arrangements show a greater conformity with the traditional system than with the modified systems. The reasons for the variations among the four villages, as well as for the variations among the different socio-economic sections within each village, are to be found in the differential degree of change each village has experienced and the differential impact of change on the various groups within the village.



## Chapter V:

The Household and Family Structure

The present chapter is concerned with the household dimensions of the family in these four villages. It must be noted from the outset that in these villages there exist considerable variations in occupational activities, in education, and in urban contacts; it is thus natural to expect great variations in family structure as well. Space does not permit me to elaborate on all aspects of the domestic relationships within the households of different socio-economic groups. Thus the discussion is confined to presenting a general picture of the range of household types and the prevailing internal relationships within each type.

The ultimate aim of this chapter is to provide the necessary background for the analysis of change in the developmental cycle of the households which is the subject of the next chapter. The households in these four villages have been classified into types on the basis of their numerical and kinship composition, and the pattern of interpersonal relationships in each type is discussed in some detail.

### I. Households: definition, types, and distribution

The household in Kalārdasht may be defined as a group of people who live under the same roof and whose food is cooked in common. It is one of the most important functional units in the social system of the village in Kalārdasht and is the centre of practically all the joint activities of the domestic unit. All members of a household are close kin, except in the infrequent case of resident male servants (nukars).<sup>1</sup>

The term khāneh is used to designate both the household and a house. Houses in Kalārdasht are normally one story buildings constructed of wood and stones. The roof is covered by wooden plates which are held in place by heavy rocks. Almost every house is surrounded by a yard with a kitchen garden and one or more outbuildings. These buildings are much smaller than the actual house and they differ from it both in their function and architecture. An outbuilding may be a stable, a storage place, or a kitchen with a tanūr (an underground hole where the bread is baked). In almost all houses, with the exception of the new houses built in Rūdbārak similar to Tehrani villas, the kitchen is separated from the residential buildings and may be used by more than one house-

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<sup>1</sup>There are only two households in Rūdbārak which include resident male servants; they are employed on an annual basis. Although they get their food from their master's kitchen, they are not considered a part of the household by other household members. They consider themselves as belonging to the household of their parents or, if married, their own household. I was told that in the past a large number of wealthy households had resident servants, but the practice has decreased rapidly, as a result of the availability of other kinds of employment, such as caretaking of villas and working as unskilled labourers. Also the decline in agricultural activities has resulted in less need for hired labour within the household.

hold, each of which maintains a separate purse and cooks separately. A house may be easily extended by building more rooms in the yard or, if appropriate, by building another storey. (See Plates 17<sup>e</sup> 18.)

In all four villages some households are inhabited by more than one family, each with its own kitchen. Only close observation can reveal their existence. In other cases, married sons may eat in a separate kitchen and live adjacent to their father's household, but hold economic resources (land or herd) in common with the father's household. Despite the fact that in economic matters they are partly dependent on their father's household, each son is regarded as the head of his own household comprised of his wife and children. On the other hand, in some cases a member of a household (normally a migrant son) may continue to be considered a member of the household although he lives away from the village. An individual will be considered a member of the household as long as he contributes to the household income or shares the resources produced and earned by other members of the household (e.g., students studying outside the village).

Thus there are three fundamental facts about a household:

(a) Residential unity, i.e., living in one house or in a certain quarter of a house. (b) Economic unity, i.e., sharing resources produced and earned by household members. (c) A household (except in the rare case of a widow living alone; see below, p. 260) contains more than one person and the members of a household are united by close kinship ties. These three facts about a household are well recognized by villagers; if a household lacks any of these three attributes it is always pointed out. Households are usually called by the name of their heads, for instance Ali's household or

Muhammad's household.

The range of kinship composition, as well as of numerical size, of the households is wide. The structure of the household cannot be divorced from its existence in time and in the wider kinship system in which it is embedded; the household must be examined both as a process and in the context of the wider kinship structure. As a starting point of the analysis, I propose to present a synchronic classification of households in Kalārdasht, first by size and then by kinship composition; and whenever appropriate to compare these with the distribution of households both in Naushahr county and Iran.

Table II.1 shows the classification of households in the four villages according to numerical size; household population ranges from one to fifteen members. The mean for the three isolated villages is higher than the mean for Rūdbārak, indicating the higher frequency of larger households, as well as the absence of single person households in the isolated villages. Households with one to four members may be categorized as small; those with five to eight members as medium; and those with nine and more members as large. Totals and percentages for households of each of these categories are shown in Table II.2; the corresponding percentages for Naushahr county and Iran<sup>2</sup> are given in Table II.3.

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<sup>2</sup>At present the Iranian Census provides the only national statistics on the family. The Census defines private households (as opposed to collective households, e.g., barracks, dormitories) as follows: persons living together in one residence, sharing living expenses, and eating together. A private household may consist of only one person. Members of a private household are not necessarily related to each other by kinship. The Census definition approximately corresponds to the households in Kalārdasht; thus comparisons are permitted.

Table II.1: Distribution of households by number of members in each village.

Number of members	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	16	7	0	0	0	0	1	6
3	12	5	2	8	2	11	0	0
4	26	12	1	4	1	5	1	6
5	37	16	4	17	1	5	0	0
6	50	22	4	17	4	21	2	12
7	28	12	3	12	3	16	1	6
8	25	11	4	17	3	16	6	38
9	17	8	3	12	2	10	1	6
10	5	2	2	8	2	10	1	6
11	2	.8	1	4	1	5	2	12
12	1	.4	0	0	0	0	1	6
13	1	.4	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	1	.4	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	227	100	24	100	19	100	16	100
mode	6		6		6		8	
mean	5.8		6.9		7.0		7.9	
median	5.8		6.8		7.0		8.0	

Table II.2: Numerical size of households by each village.

Household size	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
small (1 to 4)	60	26	3	12	3	16	2	13
medium (5 to 8)	140	62	15	63	11	58	9	56
large (9 plus)	27	12	6	25	5	26	5	31
Total	227	100	24	100	19	100	16	100

Table II.3: Household size for Naushahr County and Iran.

Household size	Naushahr County		Total Country	
	% rural	% urban	% rural	% urban
small (1 to 4)	36.2	47.6	42.2	48.3
medium (5 to 8)	51.1	44.9	49.1	45.7
large (9 plus)	12.7	7.5	8.7	6.0

Source: National Census of Population and Housing, November 1976; based on 5% sample. Total Country, Table 40, pp. 146-148; Naushahr County, Table 40, pp. 121-122. Statistical Centre of Iran, Plan and Budget Organization.

These tables suggest that compared with Naushahr county and Iran, each of our villages has more medium size households and fewer small and large size households.

For purposes of definition, the households in these villages have been classified by kinship composition into two broad categories: (1) simple households and (2) complex households. Simple households are divided into two sub-categories: (a) conjugal households and (b) incomplete households. A conjugal household contains one married couple with or without children. It is an independent residential unit which centres around the spouses and their children. An incomplete household contains no married couple; it contains a widowed mother and unmarried children, or a widow living alone.<sup>3</sup>

All other households, i.e., those composed of more than one conjugal family, are classified as complex households. These can be divided into two major sub-categories: (a) augmented households and (b) extended households. An augmented household is composed of a conjugal unit plus some other kin. There are two sub-types: (i) husband, wife, unmarried children, and one of the parents of the husband; and (ii) husband, wife, unmarried children, and siblings of the husband, with or without a parent.<sup>4</sup> An extended household consists of at least two married couples related either

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<sup>3</sup>In this context widowers and divorced men whose children are living with them are considered as married couples; partly because a wifeless man and his children form an autonomous domestic unit in a way that a husbandless woman and her children do not; and also because in all cases the widowers are seeking remarriage. There is only one such household in Rūdbārah and none in the other three villages.

<sup>4</sup>In all these villages, there is no case in which parents or siblings of a wife live in the household.



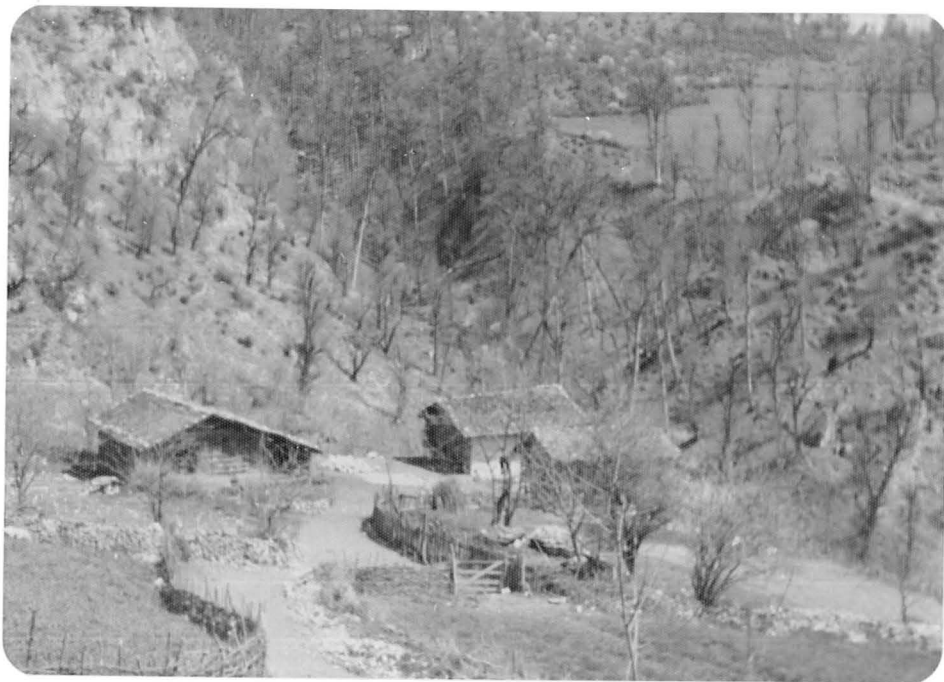


Plate 17: Payambūr. The house of Bābā Ḥaydar, consisting of a residential unit, a stable, and a kitchen.

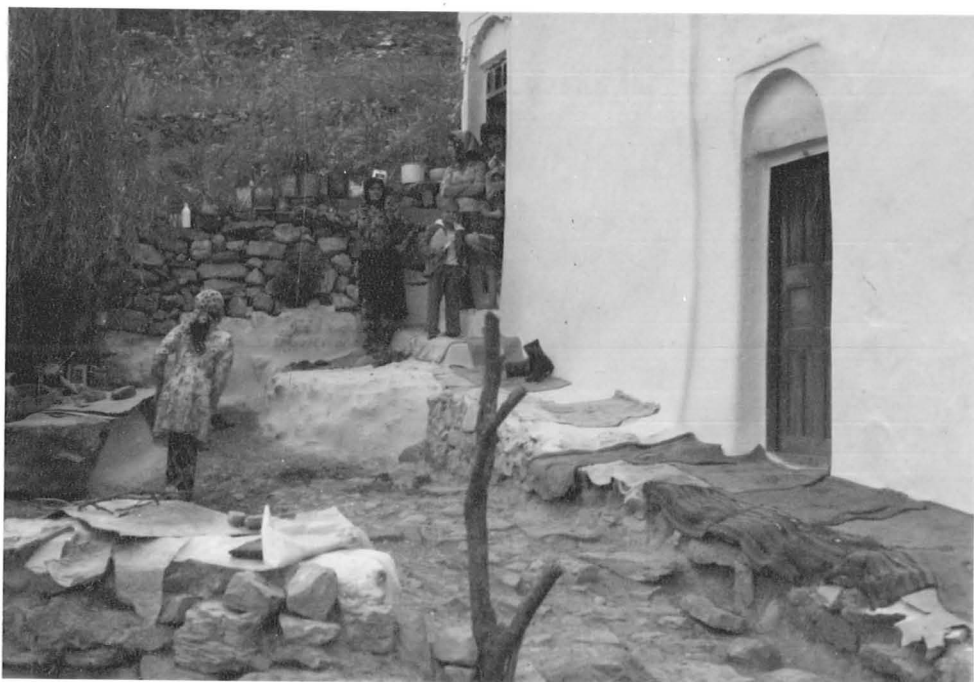


Plate 18: Rūdbāarak. A typical compound. The two adjacent rooms are occupied by the independent households of two brothers; the households, however, use a common kitchen.

lineally (e.g., father, mother, and one or more married son) or collaterally (e.g., two or more married brothers).

Table II.4 presents the classification of households by each type for each of these villages.<sup>5</sup> Simple and complex households are discussed in sections II and III of the present chapter. Since an adequate understanding of households presumes a knowledge of norms governing their formation and organization, these norms are discussed prior to any discussion of the nature of the households and the interpersonal relations within them.

## II. Ideals relating to household formation and organization

There exists an inter-related set of ideals concerning the formation and organization of a household which almost any villager could articulate. These ideals and expectations may or may not be completely realized in actuality. This section summarizes the ideals concerning household formation and organization; the extent to which they are observed in practice and their inter-relationship with other aspects of the social organization are discussed in Chapter VI, which deals with the developmental cycle of the households in these villages.

Ideally a man and his wife should start their married life in his parental household and continue to live there afterwards. Accordingly, at the time of marriage a man brings his wife to his

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<sup>5</sup>The distribution of household types for 1976 Census was not available. However, according to the 1966 Census, 73 percent of both urban and rural households were found to consist of parents and unmarried children. See Tobā (1972:16).

Table II.4: Distribution of household types by each village.

Household types	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr		Total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<u>Complex</u>										
Extended household	21	9	9	38	2	11	1	6	33	12
Augmented "	16	7	3	12	2	11	1	6	22	8
Total of complex households	37	16	12	50	4	21	2	12	55	19
<u>Simple</u>										
Conjugal household	175	77	12	50	14	74	14	87	215	75
Incomplete "	15	7	0	0	1	5	0	0	16	6
Total of simple households	190	84	12	50	15	79	14	88	231	81
Grand total	227	100	24	100	19	100	16	100	286	100

father's household, thus forming an extended household. The basic principle of the extended household is that, while the female patrilineal descendants of a male ancestor go away to live with their husbands, the male patrilineal descendants and their wives should live together. The wives should be incorporated into their husband's domestic group. Unmarried children should stay with their parents; in the event of divorce or death of their mother, they should stay with their father or his male patrikin. In the event of the early death of the father, the paternal grandfather of the children or their paternal uncles are responsible for their maintenance. Their mother either remains in the household and marries a brother of her deceased husband, or has to leave her children behind and return to her father's household.

The father, as the head of the household, is the property owner; all the belongings of the family are controlled by him and he can dispose of them in whatever manner he chooses. He also controls the labour force of his sons; they work for him on his land, with his flocks, or in some other activities. If there is little land and the sons have to work as wage labourers or sharecroppers, they hand over all their earnings to their father. Theoretically, none of his sons, regardless of age or contribution to the household income, is allowed to make any decisions concerning the finances of the household without his approval. A man whose father is alive has neither property nor independent capital, irrespective of his age or marital status. Only at the death of their father do his sons receive their shares of his property.

The Iranian system of inheritance in land and other property is governed by the general Shi'a principles of inheritance as

codified in the Civil Code. In contrast to Sunni law, Shi'a law favours the nuclear family at the expense of distant agnates and most of the inheritance passes to the children of the deceased. The share of the surviving spouse depends on whether the deceased left any children. In the absence of children, a widow takes  $1/4$ ; the presence of children reduces her share to  $1/8$ . In the absence of children, a widower takes  $1/2$ ; the presence of children reduces his share to  $1/4$ . In competition with a brother, a sister takes a share of her father's estate equal to half that taken by her brother; in the absence of a brother, a daughter will take the bulk of the estate. Although these provisions of Shi'a law are legally enforceable, they are not observed in these villages, where local custom in practice determines patterns of succession.

Although custom permits a daughter to succeed to the property of her father when he has left no sons, no woman who has a brother should demand her share of her father's property. It is argued that her share of the inheritance is given to her at the time of her marriage in the form of jahiz which she takes to her husband's household. This argument would apply equally to daughters without brothers (who are allowed to inherit) as to daughters with brothers (who are not allowed to inherit). And, in any case, as noted in the previous chapter, jahiz is not a dowry in the sense of representing a portion of the bride's family's wealth, but is instead provided out of the shir-bahā payment made by the groom's family. The custom of not allowing daughters to inherit in the presence of sons is further explained by the fact that the daughter receives gifts throughout her life from her father's household on various ceremonial occasions. While such ceremonial gifts would

cease with the death of her father unless she had brothers, if the daughter has brothers, each brother is obliged to continue the gift-giving. These gifts may, however, be mere tokens, bearing no relationship to the value of the inheritance she was legally entitled to receive on the death of her father. It is further argued that the daughter with brothers has a perpetual right to be maintained and protected by them whenever she requires this assistance (e.g., after a divorce and before remarriage).

Similarly, custom decrees that a widow with sons should never insist on receiving her share of the inheritance. It is the duty and responsibility of her sons to look after her.

After the death of the father, the extended household may not immediately break into individual elementary families headed by each of his sons. The brothers should continue to live in a common household for a period, at least until all of them are married. Then they may separate if it is economically wise for them to do so. The separation of brothers is approved; it is believed that brothers should separate and each form an independent household. Villagers say, "It is the household of brothers that should divide sooner or later." But it is highly valued that all the sons should remain within the father's household until his death. A good and dutiful son is the one who stayed with his father until his death. It is often said that a son who leaves his father will always be unhappy and unsuccessful. The mother normally stays with the eldest son after the partition, but gradually, as she ages, she loses her authority over her daughter-in-law.

These principles represent what is considered to be the ideal by the villagers. It is significant that these ideals are common



to the different ethnic and occupational groups within these villages. However, in these villages, which have considerable variations of class and significant differences in education and urban contacts, it is only natural to expect great variations in the extent to which families in the different groups conform to the common pattern of ideals and ethics. The degree of conformity to the ideal varies in response to economic requirements (and strains); this will be explored further in the next chapter which is concerned with the developmental process.

The following sections of the present chapter are concerned with the nature and pattern of relationships within each type of household.

### III. Complex households

Out of the total number of 286 households in the four villages, 55 (19 percent) are complex. The percentage of complex households varies among the villages. Gulāmra, the isolated village based on herding, has the highest percentage of complex households, 50 percent. The percentage of complex households in Rūdbāarak, the changing village with its present economy based mainly on non-agricultural wage labour, is 16 percent. The percentage in Chalājūr, a semi-isolated village with an agricultural economy, is 21; while that in Payambūr, the isolated village with an economy of mixed agriculture and herding, is 12. The factors responsible for this sharp variation in the frequency of complex households among the villages will be dealt with in the next chapter.



Complex households can be divided into two major groups:

(a) extended households, consisting of at least two married couples, and (b) augmented households, consisting of one married couple plus other patrikin. The detailed composition of households in these two categories is shown in Tables II.5 and II.6.

The composition of the 33 households which appear as 'extended households' in Table II.5 is based on the principle of co-residence of parents and married sons. It appears that at any one time, only about 12 percent of the households realize this principle in practice. Two of these households are composed of married brothers living together; these two households will be discussed later.

In all the remaining 31 households in Table II.5 in which a father and married son live together, the father is the formal head of the household and the son is supposed to have a subordinate position. The father's authority in the household is strong and sons are expected to obey him; on the whole they do. In course of time, the father tends gradually to transfer to his married son the control of some aspects of household affairs. But formal respect for the father is never relaxed and he remains nominally the head of the household. However, if the father is disabled by illness or old age, his eldest son assumes full charge of the household and the father becomes dependent on him. This happens more often where the father is also a widower. This is why, despite the fact that the father is still alive in two households in Table II.6 (d), the son is treated as the head of the household in the analysis.

The relationship between father and son, like any other relationship within the household, is not static. It changes with

Table II.5: Composition of extended household by each village.

Composition	. Rūd	. Gul	. Chal	. Pay
(a) Father, mother, one married son, his wife and children.	2	2	1	0
(b) Father, mother, unmarried children, one married son and his wife.	0	1	0	0
(c) Father, mother, unmarried children, one married son, his wife and children.	13	4	1	1
(d) Father, mother, two married sons, their wives and children.	2	1	0	0
(e) Father, mother, unmarried children, three or more married sons and their wives and children.	2	1	0	0
(f) Eldest brother, his wife and unmarried children, younger brother, his wife and unmarried children.	1	0	0	0
(g) Eldest brother, his wife and unmarried children, younger brother, his wife and unmarried children, their mother.	1	0	0	0
Total	21	9	2	1

Table II.6: Composition of augmented households by kinship composition in each village.

Composition	Rūd	Gul	Chal	Pay
(a) Married couple, children, husband's younger sibling.	3	0	0	0
(b) Married couple, children, husband's mother.	8	3	1	1
(c) Married couple, children, husband's mother and husband's unmarried siblings.	3	0	1	0
(d) Married couple, children, husband's father.	2	0	0	0
Total	16	3	2	1

the growth of the household and means different things at different phases of its development cycle. In general, the relationship between father and son can be subsumed under one of the following four phases: (a) The father has the ultimate authority; the son works under his direction and does not have much voice in decision making. (b) The son and father have equal voice in making decisions and work in cooperation. (c) The son makes most of the decisions and the father acts as an adviser whose advice is respected without necessarily being carried out. (d) The son has the ultimate voice in decision making and the father, as a result of old age or illness, is totally dependent on his son. As they pass through these phases there is a gradual change in their attitude toward one another. For instance, the son's behaviour in the father's

presence becomes relaxed over time; he may talk freely, smoke, or even argue. When the son is younger and unmarried, the proper code of conduct requires him not to smoke or talk in his father's presence. At the same time, the father begins to show respect for his son, and addresses him by adding the suffix āqā (lit., mister; a title showing respect) to the son's name.

In those 23 households found in Table II.5 in which there are unmarried siblings of a married son, it is the joint responsibility of the father and his married son to look after them. In these households the eldest brother is entitled to respect from his younger brothers and sisters; the respect he receives is almost on a par with that received by his father.

Table II.6 shows 7 households in categories (a) and (c) in which there are unmarried siblings of the household head. He is responsible for their subsistence and for arranging their marriages; in fact, he assumes all the responsibilities concerning them that previously rested on his father's shoulders.

According to Table II.5 there are 31 households in which a married woman lives with her mother-in-law, while the latter's husband is the head of the household. The daughter-in-law is in a subordinate position. The mother-in-law makes the major decisions concerning the domestic tasks and controls the resources available for the internal food consumption of the household. As long as her husband is alive, the mother-in-law wields absolute power over household affairs related to women. The slightest disobedience on the part of her son's wife is likely to result in quarrels between them.

From the time of her betrothal, a girl is referred to as the bride (ārūs) by her in-laws; she will be called by this term through-

out her married life. She is expected to be hard-working, respectful, and obedient, and to conform to severe codes of etiquette. The bride must perform all the menial chores in the household under the supervision of her mother-in-law; also she is subordinate to all other adults in the household. In the past, as villagers recall it, a bride was not permitted to talk to her husband in the presence of her in-laws; she had to eat her meals separately and if she and her in-laws were seated at the same sofreh (a piece of cloth spread on the floor, on which food is served and around which all the members of the household sit to eat), her face would be turned away from the others. In course of time, she was permitted to talk to her in-laws but always in a soft voice and with her mouth covered with a part of her scarf. The bride must not speak to any adult male directly or look him in the face. Particularly she should avoid her husband in the presence of others; no contact or conversation between the new bride and her husband was allowed, except when they were left in complete privacy. It is common for elder women who tease a newly married woman to refer to a local proverb which says, "The new bride's only desire is for her in-laws to be out of the house". These codes of conduct have been relaxed in recent years, especially in Rūdbārak; as a result, the parents of the groom often complain that brides have become shameless.

However, the status of the bride changes gradually within the household. Two events in particular can bring about a significant change in her status: the birth of her first son and the death of her father-in-law. The birth of her first child relieves the bride from the heavy burden for a while; and her mother-in-law shows more

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affection towards her as the mother of the child of her son.

However, for the bride's position to be confirmed in the household of her husband, the child she bears must be a son. And even as the mother of a son, she remains under the control of the mother-in-law as long as the latter is the mistress of the house. The death of her father-in-law may make her husband the head of the household and diminishes the authority of the mother-in-law.

The relationship between 'arūs and her mother-in-law is characterized as one of perennial conflict in many folk songs and folk tales of the villagers.<sup>6</sup> The tense and uneasy relationship is considered almost as a natural outcome of the situation within the household. An affectionate relationship between them, on the other hand, is regarded as both unusual and commendable; for such a state of affairs credit is always given to the bride.

The birth of the first child also brings about a significant change in the behaviour of the husband towards his wife. As mentioned earlier, all the proper codes of conduct prevent the development of any intimacy between the spouses in the early years of their marriage. The husband is not supposed to support his wife during any dispute that she may have with the other women of the household or to speak to her in the presence of other members of the household. After the birth of his first child, however, the husband gradually starts to talk to his wife more freely before other members of the household; and her new role and status, especially if her child is a son, is readily recognized by her husband.

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<sup>6</sup>There is a kind of plant covered with thorns which is called "the tongue of the mother-in-law", indicating the sharp language that a mother-in-law often uses to order the bride, language that always hurts the bride, like the thorns hurt those who touch the plant.



Nevertheless, the husband must also observe certain codes of conduct in relation to his child. He is not allowed to express any overt affection for his new born child; he should not embrace the child in the presence of his parents; he should not show any particular concern about the well-being of the child. At this time a young husband is seen as faced with conflicting loyalties to his parental unit on one hand and to his conjugal unit on the other hand. The behavioural rules require him to formally acknowledge the precedence of the former. However, with the passage of time and the birth of more children, the husband-wife relationship gains increasing importance within the household. The young husband is now faced with choices between the welfare of his own wife and children and that of his parental unit. The contradiction that exists between his roles and his obligations as a son/brother to his parental unit, and as a husband/father to his conjugal unit is bound to cause tension and friction in his relationship with his parents. Despite the inherent tensions, the father's authority remains strong, particularly when the son is economically dependent on him, and the extended household holds together at least until the marriage of a junior brother.

In those households in which there are also unmarried siblings of the married son(s), tension is much greater. The married son feels that his labour and effort goes not only to support his own conjugal unit but to build up the property of the household, which at his father's death will be divided equally among himself and his brothers. If his unmarried siblings are too young to work or are attending school, the matter becomes even harder for married men. The tension reaches its climax when there are more than one married son in the

household, because each brother as the head of his own conjugal unit tends to have conflicting interests not only with his father but also with his married brothers. Moreover, tensions may develop between the bride and her husband's siblings or more possibly with her husband's brother's wife (jārī) over the sharing of domestic chores.

In sum, it can be said that the nature of the existing property and work relations within the household causes more tension as the household grows in size. The fact that the father is the sole property owner and controls all the resources at the disposal of the household, ties the son to him at least for the early years of his marriage and until the marriages of his other brothers. Marriage is an important and essential event in achieving adult status, and it is always arranged and financed by the father. As it involves great expense and this amount is initially paid from the household's common purse (although other kin may recompense the household a substantial part of this outlay), it binds the son to his father and his father's household. After his marriage a son has the duty to help his father and theoretically cannot leave him as long as some of his siblings remain unmarried. (These points will be elaborated upon in the next chapter.)

There are two households in Rūdbārak in which two married brothers live jointly with their wives and children. In these two households the elder brother acts as the head of the household but the brothers work as equals in making as well as executing decisions. One of these households includes the mother of the brothers as well. Although she is respected by her daughters-in-law, she does not enjoy complete authority as the mistress of the

household. The brothers in this household married two sisters. As a result, the household enjoys a greater degree of internal harmony than the other household where two brothers are married to non-kin wives.

In the 17 households enumerated in Table II.6 where a married man lives with his widowed mother, the man is the formal head of the household. Four of these households include unmarried siblings as well as the widowed mother of the household head. In these cases, the household head has the added responsibility of looking after his younger siblings. Here the widow has more authority than in those households which do not contain any of her married son's siblings, for she continues to be a "mother" in addition to her role as widow. She pays special attention to seeing that the married son fulfils his obligations toward her unmarried children. As the property is kept in common and is undivided, she can have more voice in the affairs of the household.

Nevertheless, the power of the mother-in-law within the household diminishes greatly after the death of her husband. This brings a change in her role: previously she was the wife of the household head and therefore the mistress of the house; after the death of her husband she becomes the mother of the household head. Now she is dependent on her son for support, and she gradually passes on her domestic responsibilities to his wife.

#### IV. Simple households

Of the households in the four villages, 231 (81 percent) are simple. This type of household constitutes a decisive majority in three of the villages, while in Gulāmra 50 percent of the households are simple. Further classification of this type of household according to kinship composition is presented in Table II.7 (percentages are given in Table II.4).

Three of the simple household forms listed in Table II.7, i.e., (b), (c), and (d), can be considered as atypical households. In the case of (b), the household head became a widower a month prior to my fieldwork, and for the following year he was actively seeking a new wife. In case (c), the eldest son of the household became a widower while he was living in his father's household; he afterwards migrated to Tehran and left his only child in the household. He still maintains his links with his father's household, but it is not certain whether he will eventually resettle in the village. There were rumours of his marriage to a town woman. Case (d) represents a rather unconventional situation at first sight. Although it is the norm that a divorced daughter comes back to her father's household, she usually has to leave her children with the husband or his patrikin. But in this case her ex-husband, who was also her FBS, refused to accept the children, mainly because he planned to marry his MBZ, who would agree to the marriage only on the condition that his children by his previous wife would not live with them. Therefore, according to an agreement reached between the concerned families, the two children returned with their mother to her father's household.

Table II.7: Classification of simple households by kinship composition in each village.

Composition	Rūd	Gul	Chal	Pay
(a) Husband, wife, unmarried children.	168	12	13	12
(a') Husband, two wives, unmarried children.	1	0	1	0
(b) Widower father, unmarried children.	1	0	0	0
(c) Father, mother, unmarried children, and the only son of a widower son.	0	0	1	0
(d) Father, mother, unmarried children, and a divorced daughter and her children.	0	0	0	1
(e) Husband and wife (elderly).	5	0	0	0
(f) Mother and unmarried children.	9	0	0	1
(g) Widow living alone.	6	0	0	0
Total	190	12	15	14

Type (e) consists of households containing childless elderly couples. These households are of two kinds: (a) Those who never produced children, and who have therefore never been able to form an extended household; and (b) those whose children are grown up and either as daughters left the household upon marriage, or as

sons have separated or migrated from the village. Two of these households have never had any children; one has sons who live separately in the village. They separated after their father married a new wife after the death of their mother. The remaining two have sons who are resident in urban centres. In all these cases the husband and wife are elderly or middle-aged.

As is clear from Table II.7, the majority of households in all these four villages consist of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Among these there are two households in Rūdbāarak and Chalājūr which are polygynous and where the co-wives live in the same household. In the case of the polygynous household in Chalājūr, the first wife failed to produce any children. Thus the husband, a Khwajvand Sayyid, married a second wife. Although there are two wives, there are children by only one. In the case of the polygynous household in Rūdbāarak, the co-wives live together and there are children from both wives; each wife and her children reside in a separate quarter of the house but they cook in common.

Some of the households of married sons, as well as being residentially separate, have complete economic independence. But others, although they have a separate purse and live and cook separately, are economically tied to their father's or brother's household. This practice of semi-economic unity will be discussed in the next chapter. Thus it is significant to note that despite the fact that a majority of families live in conjugal type households, a substantial proportion of them are connected by complex social and economic ties to their extended families.

All these households are based on the relationship of a husband and wife for the procreation of children. The existence of sons is the main requirement of a happy and lasting marriage; a household with no sons is socially incomplete. The social stress on procreation as the main objective of the relationship between spouses is reflected in the fact that it is extremely rare for a marriage which has produced sons to dissolve; it is also extremely rare for a marriage which fails to produce sons to continue happily. If a wife fails to produce a son, her divorce or her husband's remarriage is justified by every one in the village including the wife herself.<sup>7</sup> A woman's position in her husband's household is secured by the birth of her first son; as he grows and as she produces more sons, her position becomes increasingly assured. To give birth to a son is the ultimate wish of every newly married young woman. To express good will for a young woman is to wish her many sons in her marital life; to bless a middle-aged woman is to appeal to the god to keep her sons successful and healthy. It is through her son that a woman can gain status and power in the household, just as she first gains acceptance in it through his birth; it is her son who will look after her after the death of her husband.

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<sup>7</sup>Under the Family Protection Act, failure of the wife to produce male children is not a ground on which a Certificate of Impossibility of Reconciliation will be granted in a case where the wife has not agreed to the divorce; the wife must be completely sterile in order to entitle her husband to a Certificate, and thus a divorce, against her will. Failure to produce sons is likewise not a ground upon which permission for a polygynous marriage will be granted under the Act in a situation where the wife has not consented to her husband's additional marriage; again the wife must be completely sterile if the husband is to be granted permission to take an additional wife on this ground.



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According to the traditional norms of the society, the husband is authoritarian and patriarchal; he is the master of the household and enjoys the highest status in it. He makes all major decisions, and is responsible for the support of the household and the behaviour of its members. The wife is expected to be submissive, faithful, and hard working. She should ask her husband's permission before carrying out every minor decision not completely related to the domestic sphere.

The division of labour is clear-cut; the husband does not concern himself with the house or the children; his work is outside the house. He may participate in cases of emergency, such as repairing the house or erecting the carpet weaving frame, but otherwise doing anything in the house is considered 'shameful' to a man. In Rūdbārak, a male servant of the khān family does the cooking, makes bread, and performs other chores which are considered to be woman's work. He is, as a result, the subject of ridicule in the village. Women carry out all domestic tasks, take care of cows, prepare fuel, and also work in the field at harvest time under their husband's supervision; their contribution to production does not, however, give them any right to participate in decision making in the economic sphere of the household. It is considered merely their duty to render their services whenever needed. Even when they engage in carpet weaving, they have no control over the money that might be received for their work; the money is handed directly to their husband. Likewise, when women go to the coastal areas for rice planting, their husbands will collect their wages at the rice harvest. Women's participation in the economic affairs of the household, whether by working in

the field or earning money through carpet weaving or working on rice planting, does not provide them with any autonomous role within the household.

In short, the authority of the husband over the wife is ultimately absolute. Women regard the fact of their overall inferiority as part of their destiny; as they often say, "This is our share in life". It is not, however, a destiny they necessarily accept as fair and just. In telling their life stories, women are often so overwhelmed by self-pity that they break down and bemoan, "Women are born just to suffer and be miserable".

The position of women in the household varies in some aspects among the different socio-economic groups. In general, women in the households of large landowners, of educated or skilled workers, and of all those who enjoy a high level of income, do not participate in any kind of work apart from domestic chores which are mainly confined to cooking. They are more secluded than the women who are involved in carpet weaving and seasonal migration to work on rice cultivation. As soon as the level of the husband's income increases and reaches a point which enables him to meet all the household requirements, women are withdrawn from the economic sphere of the household. They become housewives without participating directly in any kind of productive activities. If the husband is earning well, a wife might even employ a domestic servant for running the household. If a man can support the household without his wife having to work outside the house, his prestige rises, and consequently also the prestige of his wife, which always derives from that of her husband.

Also there is a marked difference between the public and private behaviour of a man and his wife towards each other. A man must never show affection for his wife in front of anyone else; he should address her with a stern voice, in commands not conversation. Showing affection to his wife is considered a sign of weakness in him. But in the privacy of their house matters can be different; a wife may discuss with her husband all the affairs of the family. In the educated section of the village and among those with urban experience, the husband-wife relationship is typically more intimate and there is some companionship between the spouses. The fact that in some sections of the village a young man has a voice in selecting his future bride has a great impact on the nature of the subsequent conjugal relationship.

Within the household the pattern of authority is governed in general by the two criteria of age and sex: older dominates younger and male dominates female. In the sphere of the mother-son relationship, where these two factors cancel each other, a particular relationship develops. The mother is indulgent and affectionate; she is the source of solace and is more likely to cajole than to order. Her attitude towards her children is different from that of their father, especially in the early years of childhood. She often acts as an intermediary and strives to reconcile father and son at times of strain.

As regards the relationship between brothers and sisters, a sister's age has almost no significance; the brother has considerable authority by virtue of his sex. A daughter is separated from her brothers in interest and activities in early stages of her childhood. She grows up with the womenfolk of the household

and learns her most vital lessons from her mother. Because of the early age of marriage for girls, a daughter leaves the household shortly after puberty. Thus a woman spends a relatively short period of her life in her father's household. After marriage, a woman still looks to her own mother for help and advice. She visits regularly and her natal household is always supportive in case of trouble with her husband's household.

#### V. Households headed by widows

There are 15 households in Rūdbāarak and one in Chalājūr which are headed by widows. Ten of these households consist of a widow and her unmarried children, and in each case the mother is a middle-aged widow. When a woman becomes a widow, if her husband had separated from his father's or brother's household prior to his death, she has to earn her own livelihood and support her children until they marry. This is almost always the case when she is middle-aged and her own father is dead. When the children grow up they help the mother in earning an income. If the widowed mother has only daughters and no son, the daughters go away after marriage and the mother has to lead a lonely existence. If the widow has a son, he gradually becomes the chief earning member, marries, and takes over the position as head of the household. For some period of time, however, the responsibility of running the household is shared by the mother and the adult son; they are jointly responsible for the care of the younger children and for arranging their marriages. After the marriage of her sons, tensions may develop between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, between

brothers, between wives of brothers, and, as a result, between mother and son. Therefore, some or all of the married sons live separately from the mother. In five households in Rūdbāarak and one in Chalājūr, none of the sons of the widow is married; one of the other widows has a married son who lives separately in the village; and none of the remaining widows has a son.

There six <sup>are</sup> households in Rūdbāarak in which a widow lives alone. All these women have adult sons. Three of them have sons who migrated to urban centres and left the mother behind. The sons maintain their link with their mothers and regularly send money and visit them. Two of these widows have sons who live separately in the village. In both cases the son had separated from his father's household while he was still living; the widow continued to live in the household of her deceased husband after his death.

In one case, the remarriage of the widow and her subsequent divorce caused ill-feelings with her sons; as a result they deserted her and she now lives alone and has to work for her livelihood (see p.211-12). In the other case, the widow lives with her divorced daughter. She has sons living separately in the village who help her financially. With the one exception where the widow was deserted by her sons, in all the cases where a widow has married sons who live separately, she is very much protected and supported by her sons. The sons live close by or sometimes in the same building and provide some of her needs, but she has a separate purse and cooks separately.

In the preceding pages I have attempted to present a classification of households by kinship composition as well as to outline the pattern of interpersonal relations within them. As already noted, the distribution of household types varies among these villages. It is significant to note that the variation is not due to the ethnic differences between villages. As Table II.8 indicates, in Rūdbāarak there is no significant difference in household types according to ethnic affiliation of household heads. One might suppose that as Gulāmra is a Gīlak village, which has the highest rate of complex households, there should be a similar household type distribution among Gīlaks in Rūdbāarak; yet it can be seen that the variation is even greater (14 per cent complex households among Gīlaks in Rūdbāarak, as compared with 50 per cent complex households in Gulāmra).

However, as can be seen from Table II.9, complex households appear to be the dominant type of domestic grouping among herders, and are also relatively high among farmers who own land. On the other hand, the simple household constitutes the dominant type of domestic grouping among landless groups and those who are involved in other types of activities based on wage labour. The factors responsible for this variation are related to the need for economic cooperation among resource-holding households, which in turn influences the developmental cycle of households among these groups; these questions will be discussed in the following Chapter.



Table II.8: Rūdbārak: Relationship between ethnic affiliation of household head and household type.

Ethnic affiliation of household head	Simple Households		Complex Households		Total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gīlak	38	86	6	14	44	19
Khwajvand	62	82	14	18	76	33
Lak	17	81	4	19	21	9
Turk	12	92	1	8	13	6
Tālaqānī	34	79	9	21	43	19
Others	27	90	3	10	30	13
Total column	190	84	37	16	227	100

Table II.9: All four villages: Relationship between occupational activities of household head and type of household.

Occupation of household head	Simple Households		Complex Households		Total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Farmer (landowning)	39	67	19	33	58	21
Herder (herdowning)	5	36	9	64	14	5
Sharecropper/ shepherd (without land/herd)	27	93	2	7	29	11
Other activities (wage labour)	146	85	25	15	171	63
Total column	217	80	55	20	272	100

## Chapter VI:

Changing Developmental Cycle of Households

There is a certain pattern in the developmental cycle of the households in these villages. The ideal pattern has been described in Chapter V; this Chapter examines the extent to which this ideal is realized in practice and attempts to relate changes in family structure to the domestic developmental cycle and to secular changes in the economic system of Kalārdasht. The structure of the family in Kalārdasht must be examined as a process, for at any given time we find households at every phase of development in each village. All households are constantly going through what is known in social anthropology as a 'developmental cycle'.<sup>1</sup> Thus, different types of household represent various stages in the life process of individual and household groups. Changes in family structure should be sought in the developmental cycle which a household goes through, rather than in the composition of a household at a particular point in time.

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<sup>1</sup>. Fortes (1958).

My data, which are based on case histories and other qualitative information collected for each household, suggest that the developmental cycle of the households varies according to the type and amount of resources owned by the household and the labour relations required to utilize the available resources. For the purpose of analysis, households are classified into two broad groups on the basis of the occupation of the household head and the ownership of resources: (a) households with resources which are utilized under the direction of the household head; and (b) households which do not own resources (land or herds) and whose head is involved in wage labour. Therefore, I distinguish two modes of economy for households and utilize two models. The actual situation in each of these villages can certainly be more complicated than the models indicate; yet these models correspond approximately to a large number of Kalārdashti households, and they make feasible some illuminating deductions about the changes which have taken place.

In the first situation, the household owns resources and its economy is based on agricultural or herding activities. In the second situation, the household lacks ownership of resources and its economy is based mainly on wage labour. Although these households may participate in agricultural or herding activities, the income from these sources is insufficient to provide for the needs of the household. These two situations often overlap, because every household economy is to some extent a mixed economy. As a result of the availability of non-agricultural work opportunities, every household contains members who might participate in wage labour. However, it is still possible to distinguish the dominant

source of livelihood, that is, the activity which is most vital for the household. In the isolated villages where the traditional economy has been retained to a greater extent, the dominant mode of economy for each household is fairly clear, but in Rūdbāarak the overlap is more evident. The developmental cycle of the domestic group has been treated separately for each of the two models.

#### I. Developmental cycle of households with resources

Two points should be emphasized at the outset: First, the households which own a large amount of land constitute a small minority in each village. The reasons for this situation have been discussed in Chapter III. An additional cause of small holdings and land poverty lies in the system of equal inheritance for sons, sanctioned by both Muslim law and by custom. Thus, if there are several sons in each generation, the third or fourth generation of heirs to a modest ancestral holding may be left with extremely small and uneconomical plots.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, in the traditional economy, the large landowners were simultaneously the owners of herds. However, as a result of recent changes which have affected the region as a whole and Rūdbāarak in particular, herding has declined rapidly; thus, most landowners have abandoned sheep herding and are engaged only in farming, except in Gulamra where herding is still the main economic activity. Therefore, at present the

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<sup>2</sup>See Chapter III, Tables II.6 and II.7 for data concerning the distribution of land.

number of households which own a substantial amount of resources and are involved in agro-pastoralism is relatively low. But prior to the introduction of recent economic changes in the region, the situation was different; many household heads who do not now belong to this group of resource owning households, grew up in households with great similarity to this type.

Households which own many resources tend to remain extended at least in terms of economic activities until the death of the father. While the father is alive, he has absolute control over all the property; the land or herd is in his name and none of his sons, regardless of age or marital status, can claim any share in the property owned by the household. The duration of a married son's stay in the household of his father is influenced by two factors: (a) the amount of land (or size of herd, or both) owned by the household, and (b) the number of sons who have reached the age of marriage or are already married. If the father is a very large landowner, or if he has one or two sons, married sons remain a part of the household until the death of the father. Then brothers might remain together for a while and even if they separate, they might not divide their land because small plots of land are not economical. Therefore, their separation would be partial, that is, each brother with his wife and children live in a separate part of the building or new dwellings are built. Each of the brothers would then head a separate household, which manages its own expenses.

At this point of the discussion it will be useful to examine a few specific cases of households among the resource-holding group in these four villages. The cases are chosen to represent different stages of the developmental cycle and to demonstrate how the

processes work out in practice. These cases also illustrate the differences in the developmental cycle of households due to the type of resources owned (land or herd).

Case No. 5: Payambūr

Bābā Haydar, who claims to be 130 years old, is the only large landowner in Payambūr. He owns approximately 30 acres of non-irrigated land, 60 sheep and goats, and 12 cows. Bābā is the founder of the village. He came with his brother to Payambūr, which was at that time forest and pasture land; he and his brother gradually cleared the land and made it suitable for cultivation (see p. ).

His father was a landless peasant who died when Bābā was a child; his mother remarried in the village of Bāzārsar (the closest village to Payambūr). Bābā started clearing forest in Payambūr and, after his marriage to a girl from Bāzārsar, he built a house in Payambūr and moved there. His only brother was unmarried at that time and lived in Bābā's household. When the younger brother married, Bābā paid for all the expenses. The brothers continued to live together for several years in an extended household headed by Baba. Then his brother separated, took his share of the land and animals, and established a new household.

Bābā's first wife failed to produce a son; she gave birth to three daughters who were married to landless young men from other villages who were working for Bābā at the time. After the marriage of each daughter, each of the sons-in-law lived in Bābā's household for a period of time, as he had no son to help him. They cleared land under his direction. When each son-in-law eventually separated from Bābā and established a new household, he was given a share of the land which he had cleared while working for Bābā.

Meanwhile, Bābā married his second wife in order to have a son. His first wife had no objection to this marriage and, in fact, Bābā's second marriage was arranged by his daughters.

At the present time, Bābā has three sons from his second wife; his first wife is dead. The eldest son has been married for eight years and has three children. His second son married while I was in the village and brought his bride to his father's household. The youngest son is around 15 years old and is attending school. Because of Bābā Haydar's extreme age and his inability to do any work,

his eldest son manages all the household's land and accounts; the two younger brothers work under his supervision.

This case illustrates two points. First, the importance of having a son in a landowning household. Secondly, the mechanisms through which the other members perform the function of a son, without violating the inheritance rules. As a result, in a household such as Bābā's, a labour force of sons-in-law was utilized, while later they are allowed to take their shares of the land which they had helped to clear. The fact that they are not sons of the household head was never overlooked; their stay in their father-in-law's household was considered temporary and as soon as circumstances allowed they separated. There are cases similar to this in Gulāmra and Rūdbārak as well; in all these cases the son-in-law performed the function of a son for a while in a landowning or herdowning household without a son. In most of these cases the household head eventually had a son of his own who assumed responsibility after reaching the age of work.

Case No. 6: Rūdbārak

This is in many respects a typical example of the developmental cycle of large landed families. Until recently the household was an extended household of three married brothers headed by the eldest brother, Ali. Ali's father was a Khwajvand land- and herdowner, with 50 acres of land and 500 sheep and goats. He had three married sons living in his household. After the death of their father, the three brothers continued living together for another ten years.

Recently, however, each brother established a new household, that is, each nuclear family moved to separate quarters of the old house and a new building was made.



But the land and animals were not divided. At times of agricultural activity all brothers and their wives and children work on the land together. A shepherd is hired jointly by the three brothers.

The reason for their partial separation was the lack of space and the difficulty of cooking for a large household. Their mother lives in the eldest son's household.

The property (land and herd) are shared by all three brothers and each household is financed by shared resources; but if any of the brothers or their sons engage in non-agricultural work as wage labourers, this income goes to their respective households.

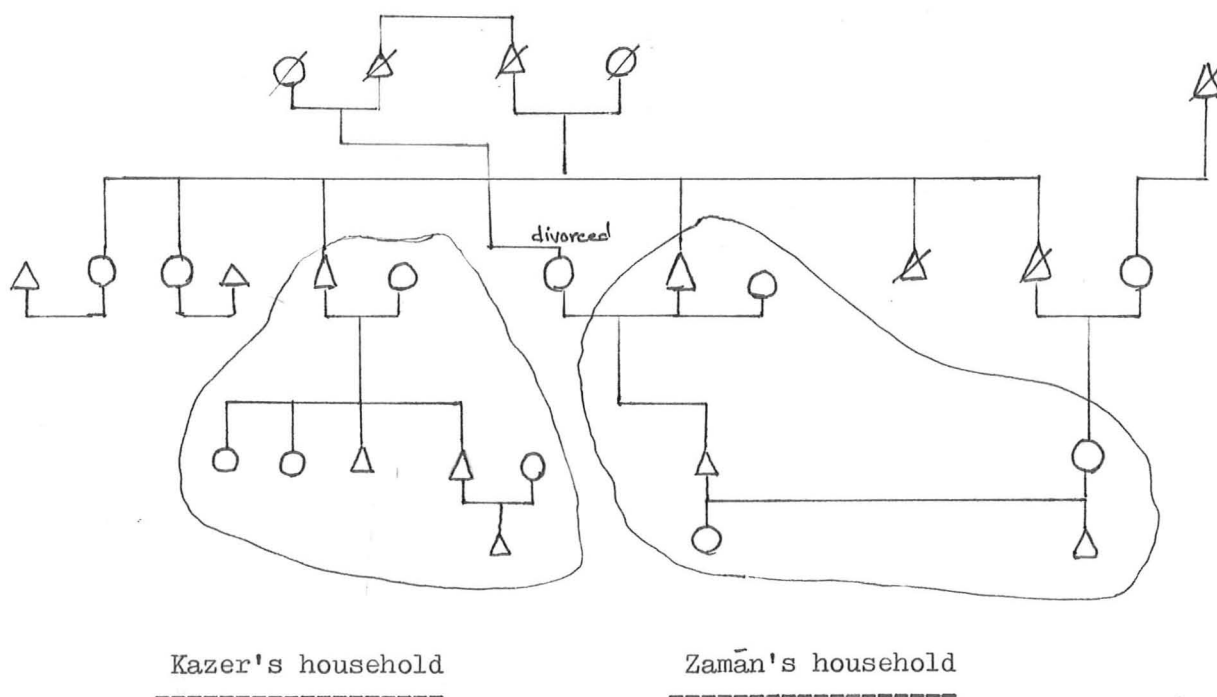
As this case illustrates, in land-owning households, brothers stay together for some time even after the death of their father and the process of land division takes place very gradually; it might not occur until the next generation. In order to prevent fragmentation of land when domestic considerations favour separation, the brothers compromise with the situation by resorting to a partial separation, that is, the place of residence is separated but joint resources are kept intact and exploited jointly. Each such partially separated household retains the wages which are earned from wage labour of its members.

Such economically joint but residentially separate households are uncommon among households which are mainly involved in herding. The division of the herd after the death of the father can be carried out without any major cost in terms of economic viability. As there is no economic reason encouraging brothers to remain joint in ownership after domestic separation, when separation takes place it is not partial and involves separation in both residence and property.

## Case No. 7: Gulāmra

Zamān and Kazer are two brothers; each is the head of an extended household which relies mainly on herding. Zamān is 63 years old and Kazer is 55 years old. Zamān owns 152 sheep and goats and 6 cows; Kazer owns 128 sheep and goats and 5 cows. Each brother owns 4 acres of non-irrigated land, cultivated mainly to provide food for their animals.

The brothers live in one building but on different floors. The eldest brother lives on the first floor with his household, which is composed of his wife, his only son, and the wife and two children of his son. Kazer occupies the ground floor and his household is composed of his wife, his married son, the wife and child of this son, and his two unmarried daughters. He has another son who studies and works in Chālūs (the nearest urban centre). Despite his absence, this son is considered by the other members of the household to still belong to the household.



Zamān and Kazer stayed in the extended household of their father until his death. They had two other brothers who died while the father was still alive. The widow of one of the brothers returned to her father's household. Her only child, a daughter, remained with her paternal kin and was later married to the only surviving son of Zamān (her FBS); she now lives in the household of Zamān. Zamān and Kazer have two sisters who are married in other villages.

Zamān has been married twice. By his first wife (his FBD) he has a son and two daughters. He divorced his first wife and married the second wife, who was then a widow. The children of the second wife by her former husband remained in the household of their uncle (FB) after the remarriage of their mother.

When their father died Kazer was still unmarried. Zamān became the head of the household and soon afterwards arranged the marriage of his younger brother. The two brothers continued to live together for almost 15 years; they were still living together when Zamān's only son married. However, two years after this marriage the two brothers decided to separate because of the lack of space and the large number of household members. An additional floor was added to the house; the land, herd, and all the household property were divided into two equal portions.

At the present time, Kazer's eldest son is also married and lives with his wife and children in his father's household; he serves as the shepherd. Kazer's other son is studying in the town and does not participate in shepherding. However, he helps in other work whenever he is around and gives a part of his wages to his father. The family takes great pride in having a son who is studying and the question of his settling down in the village is not considered. It seems clear to the household that he must finally depart from the village, because there is no suitable job available for him either in the village or in the household. His total departure after his marriage is already envisaged.

Zamān and his younger brother live in one house, their plots of land are adjacent, and they cooperate in almost every type of work; but they consider themselves as belonging to two separate households. They cook in different kitchens and each brother, who is in turn the head of an extended household, is in total control of his herd and land.

Zamān is too old and too weak, particularly after a recent operation, to be able to participate in any kind of labour. Nādali, his son, carries out all the outdoor activities; he acts as the shepherd of his father's herd during spring, summer, and a part of autumn; in winter he goes to nearby towns to find work in the construction industry or in fruit gardens. All his earnings during this period are handed over to his father who stays in the village and cares for the animals which are kept in a stable near the house. The daughter-in-law also works in the field and also collects Buglosse<sup>3</sup> which is sold to the only village shopkeeper. While she is out at work her mother-in-law looks after her

children. The situation in the household of the other brother is very much the same.

These two households are in many respects typical of the extended households in Gulāmra. Out of the total of nine extended households in Gulāmra, two contain two married sons and their wives and children. The remaining seven contain only one married son. In these households, one of the sons or the head of the household participates in labour migration for a period of the year. But as we have seen in the above case, the division of labour within the household takes place in such a manner that the vital activities of the household can be carried out without harming the major activity, which revolves around herding.

The traditional economy and family structure is reinforced in Gulāmra by the absence of economic alternatives. Compared with Rūdbāarak, there are very few work opportunities outside the household and virtually none outside the agro-pastoral sphere. Compared with Rūdbāarak, the young men in general lack the education or skills to participate in the skilled labour market outside the village. For these reasons, in comparison with Rūdbāarak, sons in Gulāmra are more firmly tied to the household of their father.

Case No. 8: Rūdbāarak

Āṣā Bozorg (65 years old) is a herder with 86 sheep and goats and two cows; he is from the Lak ethnic group which

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<sup>3</sup>Buglosse (goul gāw zabān) is a wild flower which grows in the mountains during spring and has medical uses. Women collect this flower, dry it, and sell it to the shopkeeper of the village.

are traditionally the herders in Rūdbārak. He does not own any land. Āgā was the head of an extended household consisting of his wife, his married son, the latter's wife and children, and his two unmarried daughters. Āgā's only remaining son in the household was tending his father's flock and was also employed by another herder in Rūdbārak as a shepherd; he herded the two flocks together.

Recently, however, this son found a job as caretaker of a Tehrani's villa in the village. Therefore, he rented a room and set up an independent household. He has been promised a job in a factory in Tehran by the owner of the villa and intends to migrate with his wife and only child. He stayed five years in his father's household after his marriage, and his wife was involved in carpet weaving with his sister for the father's household. After the separation his wife became a carpet weaver for other households and receives wages for her work.

Āgā vigorously opposed the separation of his son because his services as a shepherd were absolutely essential to the household and because two other sons had already left the household. The eldest son is a migrant worker in an area near Tehran and the youngest studies at the university. Āgā Bozerg is tending the herd himself at the present time, but considers it very improper. He says, "It is shameful. What is the use of having sons? They leave you when you are old and need them." He blames his daughter-in-law for his son's separation, and is hoping to convince him to come back. But as the son explains, "I don't want to be a shepherd anymore". With the availability of other work for him either in the village or outside it, it seems very unlikely that he would rejoin his father's household. Moreover, the inheritance prospect is not very attractive, as his father is only a medium size herdowner without any land, and there are two other brothers to share the inheritance.

Sons may nowadays leave their father's household earlier than they would have in the past due to the availability of job opportunities. This is more frequently the case in Rūdbārak than in Gulāmra, the isolated herding village. However, usually one of the sons who is not educated and does not stand a good chance in the job market tends to remain in the household, particularly if the father is a large herdowner and the inheritance prospect is promising. Āgā's son left the household mainly because he could earn a better living outside and the prospect of inheritance was not attractive.

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But his departure left his father in an awkward position. A father with grown-up sons never participates himself in shepherding as it is considered demeaning for him to do so. This is the main reason for Āgā's intention to sell his flock, as he considers shepherding at his age to be 'shameful'.

However, in spite of the influence of availability of work based on wage labour, it is interesting to note that the percentage of extended households in Rūdbārak is the highest among herders, i.e., 57 per cent as compared with 9 per cent for Rūdbārak as a whole. In fact, this type of household represents one of the phases that a domestic group may go through in its developmental cycle. The fact that this type is more common among herders shows that the developmental cycle of herders is closer to the traditional/ideal model. This is due to work and property relations within the domestic group.

The cases presented above illustrate that the developmental cycle of households which own resources is affected by the type and amount of resources at the disposal of the household. Among the herders, the organization of labour within the domestic group demands the services of at least one of its sons, often more depending on the number of animals owned by the household and other variables. During the summer and winter, when animals are moved to mountains (yailāq) or winter pastures (qishlāq), the household requires at least one shepherd to accompany the herd while the household head has to stay at home to organize other activities. Due to the acute need of the household for a full time shepherd, the son's stay in the father's household after his marriage is essential for the household to be economically viable.



On the other hand, among landed households, the division of labour and the amount of labour required to organize agricultural activities are related to the amount of land owned by the household. The nature of agricultural activities in Kalārdasht demands labour only at peak seasons, i.e., at harvest and ploughing time. During the rest of the year there is almost no agricultural work. For this reason, it is possible to have separate residential units and organize the labour force in a manner which can still meet the requirements of the agricultural activities. Thus, the organization of labour among landed households who rely mainly on farming allows married sons to be residentially separate from the father's household while participating in agricultural activities at harvest and ploughing time. Further, because the division of land into small plots is not economical, sons tend to retain the joint ownership of the land inherited from their father for a long period after his death, although they have separated domestically into separate households.

Villagers themselves use the term savā bodan (lit., being separated) in referring to both economic and residential separation from the extended household. Although residential separation is clearly feasible without economic separation, economic separation is not possible unless there is residential separation as well. Living together means common cooking which entails economic unity; in fact, common cooking is a criterion to which villagers themselves attach great importance. The matter is, however, not free from ambiguity. For instance, a villager may say, "We are living separately but we are not 'savā'", meaning that although they cook separately and live in separate quarters of the house, they hold

land or herds in common with the father's or brother's household and work on the land jointly. Each receives a share of the product according to the share and amount of labour contributed. If one of the brothers is away, his share in the land is recognized, although he might not take a share of the product. Therefore, being savā in fact means being economically as well as residentially independent, and if this is not the case, it is always made explicit, as in the above example.

Table III.1 shows the number of residentially separate households who own some kind of resources (usually land) in common. I term such households 'economically joint'. These are households composed of a man, his wife, and unmarried children, who live and cook separately but share a part of their resources (land or herd) with one or more patrilineally related households. In the majority of cases they own land in common with their father's, brother's, or father's brother's son's household. The number of residentially separate households sharing joint economic resources varies from two to five; the income from the jointly held resources constitutes a significant portion of the income of each of the component units.

The state of being economically joint but residentially separate may be seen as a transitional stage before complete separation. In Rūdbāarak, as a result of the high price of land and the property value attached to it, one can expect that this transitional stage before complete separation will become shorter. There are a number of cases of brothers dividing the land immediately after the death of their father in order to be able to sell it. Also, those who own land jointly want to divide it to be ready in case a good buyer comes along.

Table III.1: Distribution of households according to shared resources owned, in each village.

Type of household	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Residentially & economically independent	149	66	10	42	8	47	8	50
Complex	37	16	12	50	4	21	2	13
Economically joint	26	11	2	8	5	27	6	37
Widow headed	15	7	0	0	1	5	0	0
Total	227	100	24	100	19	100	16	100

There have also been three recent cases in Rūdbāarak where sisters claimed their share in land after the father's death. Although legally a daughter is entitled to inherit land, in practice she will inherit only if she has no brothers; if there are sons, the land is divided among them to the exclusion of the daughter. By not asking for her share in land or flock, a girl retains her claim on her father's household and, after his death, on her brother's household. In the past memories of villagers, a daughter had never claimed her share of her father's land in the presence of her brothers. The following case illustrates one of the recent situations to the contrary.

## Case No. 9: Rūdbārak

Rassūl is around 38; he is head of an extended household composed of his wife and children, his younger married half-brother, the latter's wife and children, and his mother. Rassūl has three married sisters; two of them live in Rūdbārak and the youngest is married to a teacher and lives in the town (Chālūs). Rassūl's household is one of the largest landed Gilak households in Rūdbārak. Rassūl's father died while he was a child and his mother then married her husband's brother by whom she had a son; both half-brothers inherited land, each from his own father.

Recently Rassūl sold a piece of land to a Tehrani and received a large amount of money for it. His youngest sister, who lives in the town, claimed her share of the proceeds from the sale of this plot of land. The incident caused a great quarrel in the family. The two other sisters, who are married to villagers in Rūdbārak (a shopkeeper and a small landowner), did not claim any share and opposed the claim of their sister. The youngest sister, however, persisted and eventually received a fair amount of cash.

Although the sisters are each entitled to a share of the property left by their father according to the legally-enforceable rules of inheritance, villagers say, "It is not our custom to give any land to a daughter". In the other two cases in which sisters claimed their share in land, it was also because the brothers had sold a plot of land. In all these cases, the sister's husband was accused of being responsible; it is assumed that his wife was acting on his initiative and insistence. As Rassūl's mother said, "To please her husband, my daughter wants to lose her brothers".

The willingness of sisters to claim land (or its value) from their brothers can be related to three factors. First, in Rūdbārak, in cases such as the one cited, land is no longer regarded as a means of production but as having property value. Secondly, as a result of changed relationships within the family, there is

a greater emphasis on the conjugal bond at the expense of attachment to the family of orientation; this is especially evident among migrants and educated Rūdbāarakis. Thirdly, the influence of urban values and way of life has brought a new emphasis on conformity with the legal codes of inheritance. (And in this case, Iranian national law and Shi'a religious law are identical, and are opposed to the customary practices of the villagers.)

## II. Developmental cycle of households among landless labourers and small landowners

Due to the changing economy of the region, it is essential to stress that at the present time, in Rūdbāarak and to a lesser degree in the isolated villages, the majority of households are not in any sense corporate productive units. The household is not tied to a plot of land which is the basis of its existence, and the productive activities of its members do not fall into place as part of a total pattern of exploitation of the natural environment. For the majority of households the important consideration is the acquisition of cash income, and cash is, in turn, the means of obtaining necessary goods and services. Subsistence crops and the unsold portion of products occurring from agricultural or herding activities generally are regarded as supplementary to the money income of these households. Most households in Rūdbāarak buy wheat flour and other food staples from the market, which necessitates earning cash. In these households almost all the male members from the age of fifteen participate in wage labour (students work only during the summer). The amount earned varies with the

skill of each individual. Women are involved in carpet weaving, except those who live in Gulāmra, where they help in domestic tasks and collect Buglosse for sale.

I have classified as one group those households which rely on cash income as the main basis of their economy. They engage in a wide range of activities. In this group there are some small land or herd owners, but the overriding consideration is the dependence on a cash income.

Among small landowners and landless labourers, although a son remains in the household after marriage, he tends to stay there for a short period; unless he is an only son, he will separate after a few years. The land of a smallholder is needed by the father to support himself, his wife, and unmarried children. Almost out of necessity, the married sons move off in turn to seek work to provide for the basic needs of themselves and their own families; they are usually reduced to becoming hired workers. The first son usually separates as soon as his junior brother is married, or even earlier. The father, if he can, helps the son to establish a new household by giving him a site on which to build, or by allocating him one room in the household residence.

The case below illustrates some processes associated with the developmental cycle among those with very small holdings.

Case No. 10: Rūdbāarak

Sohrāb, an unskilled labourer, is the head of a simple household. He is 48; his household consists of his wife, his three unmarried daughters, and two sons. The eldest son is 16 and works as an apprentice in a welding shop in Hasan-kif. Two of his daughters, who are 17 and 10, are carpet

weavers who work for other households and receive wages.

Sohrāb and his two married brothers live in three separate households in one building. The ground floor is shared by Sohrāb and his junior brother, who is an unskilled worker with a wife and five children. His youngest brother Shams lives on the first floor with his wife and three small children. Shams is a skilled welder and works in a welding shop in Hasankif; his nephew (Sohrāb's eldest son) works under his supervision. Shams migrated to Tehran after his marriage and lived there with his wife for three years; he acquired his skill while working in a welding shop in Tehran. He and his family came back to Rūdbārak two years ago, because work opportunities were available in the region as a result of the demand for house construction.

Their father was a Tālaqānī pedlar who cleared two acres of forest land long before the nationalization of forests; the land passed to his sons on his death. The three brothers own the non-irrigated land jointly, and it is still undivided. The youngest brother does not take any share in the product from the land because he is earning a good income and, as he explains, "My brothers need the product more". The other two brothers, who are unskilled labourers, cultivate the land jointly and divide the product.

Sohrāb stayed in his father's household for three years after his marriage and separated shortly after the marriage of his junior brother. At the time of the father's death, the youngest brother was still unmarried. When he married he stayed for less than a year with his elder brother; he then migrated to Tehran with his wife and two of his children were born in Tehran.

This case represents a typical cycle for those households with little or no land. Sons stay for a while in the father's household, but eventually each separates while the father is still alive and establishes an independent household. It is interesting to note that brothers who inherit a small plot of land tend to leave it undivided. However, among households with very small amounts of land, joint ownership of land continues after residential separation for different reasons from those among large land holding households. The three brothers in the above case retained the joint

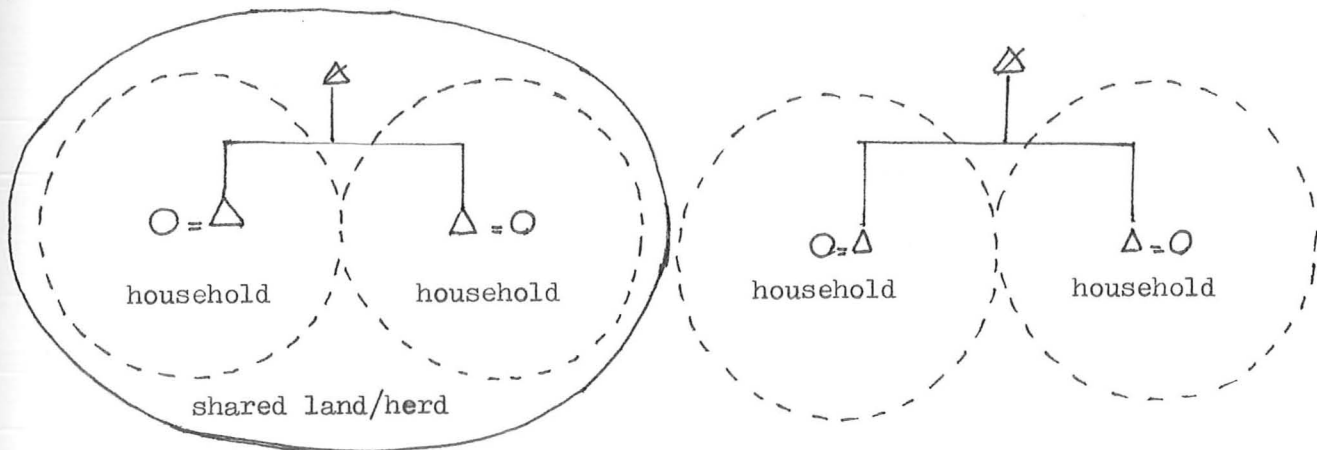


ownership of their non-irrigated land primarily because the land was already too small to be divided and none of them could possibly rely on it as a source of livelihood. Sohrāb and his brothers acknowledge their joint ownership of the two acres, but as it does not contribute substantially to their incomes (one brother declining to take any share of the product), it is not regarded as a bond which can join them economically.

Contrasting the above case with Case No. 6, where the three brothers hold a considerable amount of land and a large herd jointly, illustrates some differences which exist with respect to the developmental cycle of those households without resources and those which do have resources. This difference can be clearly illustrated with the help of two diagrams. As already noted, separation has two potential stages: (a) Residential, which includes both separate living quarters and separated cooking practices; also each wage earner keeps his wages for his own conjugal family. (b) Economic, where any resources such as land or flocks are divided. Obviously in a household without resources there is no possibility of being 'economically joint' though residentially separate. Thus residential separation always entails economic separation for resourceless households. This is true also even for those with small joint holdings, because the scarcity of their joint resources does not permit them to establish economic interdependence similar to that of the resource holding group.

Moreover, the new work opportunities, which have become available in the region in recent years, make the duration of a son's stay in the father's household even shorter. Now that he can find alternative ways of earning a living and supporting his wife and children

Diagram I: Differences between resource-holding and resourceless households.



I.a: Economically joint and residentially independent households of brothers.

I.b: Economically and residentially independent households of brothers.

without having to depend on his father, a son becomes reluctant to spend his earnings acquired from outside on his father's household. The case below illustrates this point and is typical of the new arrangements among resourceless households.

Case No. 11: Rūdbārak

Rezā, a 26 year old mason with primary education, is the head of an independent household consisting of his wife and two young children. He married when he was 22 and stayed in his father's household for only two years after his marriage. The marriage was totally financed by his father and Rezā was working under the direction of his father, who is an experienced mason. He separated from his father because of frequent quarrels among "women", that is, conflict between his wife and his mother, although his unmarried sisters were also often involved. After his separation he rented a room in the village for a while and now he is building a house for himself. He took a loan from a bank in Chālūs; the loan was arranged for him by a Tehrani for whom Rezā was working

as a mason.

His father, Bāgher, is a landless Tālaqānī whose father migrated to Rūdbāarak. Bāgher set up an independent household upon his marriage as his father was already dead and he had no brothers; his sisters were married in the village and were living in the households of their husbands at the time of his marriage.

In addition to Rezā, who is his eldest son, Bāgher has two other sons and four unmarried daughters. His second son, who is a high school graduate, is presently doing his military service and intends to find a job in Tehran. The youngest son is 14 and is attending the high school in Ḥasankif. Two of his daughters who are below 15 are also attending school, but his eldest daughters are engaged in carpet weaving for the household.

Bāgher was extremely unhappy about the early separation of his son. He says that he went through so much for his son's marriage and then his son did not stay to share the burden of supporting a large family with him. He complains that as almost all his children are attending school, his eldest son could have been a great help to him in meeting the needs of the large household. In fact the reason for Rezā's separation lies in his reluctance to share his relatively good income with his father's household. As a mason, his income almost matches his father's; his father has four unmarried children to support, while Rezā at the time of separation had only an infant child. He was not willing to invest his efforts in building up the household resources, which he would have to share with his three other brothers (who were not contributing) after his father's death. Thus, he separated as soon as circumstances allowed him to do so.

In Rūdbāarak, where work opportunities are available in the village and easy access to urban areas facilitates the process of gaining independence, sons separate earlier. In contrast, in the isolated villages, a son has to stay in his father's household for a period and gaining his independence takes longer. This is due partly to the absence of alternative means of earning a living in the village; the only remaining course is work migration. Ironically, migration ties a married son more firmly to the father's household. In the early years of migration a son has to leave his wife and children behind in the father's household until his situation as a

permanent migrant becomes more stable and he has secured a semi-permanent job in the urban areas. Therefore, in Gulāmra, where no work is available in the village, young men tend to be more attached to the father's household as a result of being away from the village for a substantial part of the year. They can neither afford to take their wives and children with them nor can they set up a new household for them in the village. The situation in Payambūr and Chalājūr, which have relatively better contact with large surrounding villages and are close to the subdistrict centre (Ḥasankīf), is somewhat different. The relatively easy access to the outside world means that men can commute regularly to the town for work. Moreover, both of these villages enjoy a much larger degree of prosperity (as a result of the availability of land and contact with nearby large villages) than does Gulāmra (which is mainly based on herding).

Changes in the pattern of residence as well as in the duration of stay within the extended household are considerable in the case of permanent migrants from these villages. Work outside the village in the urban centres provides employment for those with education and skill and work opportunities for unskilled labourers. The educated son tends to separate earlier from his father's household, and in some cases even before his marriage, as his job takes him away from the village. Therefore, in most cases, these sons do not start their married life within the household of their fathers, and establish an independent household upon marriage where they work. This break with the patrilocal pattern of residence is forced on them by their work situation, although in some cases it is chosen.

Table III.2: Marital status of permanent migrants in relation to type of household to which they belonged before marriage.

Marital status	Simple households		Extended households		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not married	34	67	17	33	51	30
Married in the village	44	56	35	44	79	47
Married in other parts	20	51	19	49	39	23
Total	98	58	71	42	169	100

Table III.2 shows that a substantial number of permanent migrants from these villages had been living in extended households (42 per cent). Taking into account the small percentage of extended households existing in these villages (12 per cent), this figure is relatively high. This percentage is even higher among married migrants, 46 per cent of whom belonged to extended households, that is, either one of the migrant's brothers was married and living in the household, or his father's household was part of an extended household. It seems that the reason for their migration can be related to their household type. A large household with a limited amount of resources (land or herd) cannot support a large number of people; sons leave the household after marriage, and if there is no job available in the village, eventually they must leave the village in search of work.

On the other hand it can be argued that extended households which are prevalent among groups which own land or herds can cover

the essential expenses involved when a son migrates to an urban centre to continue his studies. Thus, sons may leave the village to acquire higher education which eventually will lead to their residential separation from the father's household. A large majority of educated migrants continue to live in the town because their village cannot provide them with suitable jobs.

However, irrespective of the reasons which lie behind a son's migration, his link with the father's household is not severed completely; he comes back for the summer holidays to the village and sometimes, if he is doing well in the town, he will help to support his father. If the father owns land or herds, the share of the migrant son is recognized in the household, although he is not able to benefit from his share as long as his father is alive. In fact, if the father is dead, a migrant brother may prefer to retain his joint landownership with one or other of his brothers, and give his share to be cultivated by a brother in the village.

### III. Household fission

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, it is possible to see that the ideal formation of an extended household involves a process of dynamic fission. Ideally each household grows by the birth of children, the marriage of its sons, and, finally, by the birth of grandchildren; ideally this phase lasts as long as the father is alive. His death marks the beginning of the phase of fission. The duration of this phase can vary; brothers may live together for sometime, but finally they separate, and each forms a new household which in turn becomes an extended household by the marriage of its

sons.

Among the landless (resourceless) groups, the developmental cycle differs from the ideal. A son may separate from the extended household upon the marriage of a junior brother and before the father's death for the reasons previously discussed.

Data on the pattern of residence after marriage confirm that there is no significant difference in terms of place of residence immediately after marriage either among these villages or among different socio-economic groups. (Tables III.3 and III.4.) Approximately three-fourths of newly married couples take up residence in the household of the husband's father. Those who set up a new household immediately are either migrants from other villages whose natal household is outside the village or those whose fathers have died prior to their marriage (with the exception of five cases which will be discussed below). Residence after marriage with the wife's natal household, as shown in Case No. 5, is always due to special circumstances, such as being a migrant employed by the girl's father before marriage, or being an orphan who is brought up in his FB's household and then married the FB's daughter.

However, in recent years, due to the changing economy of the region, the developmental cycles of the households both among resource-holding and resourceless groups are undergoing some modifications. The change is more conspicuous in Rūdbāarak. Table III.5 illustrates this point. In Rūdbāarak seventeen men who are heads of their own independent households stayed less than one year in the extended household of their fathers, whereas in the three isolated villages no son left the extended household as early as this.



Table III.3: Place of residence of the household head and his wife after marriage.

Place of residence after marriage	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Independent household	46	21	6	25	5	26	4	25
Husband's father's household	167	77	17	71	14	74	10	63
Wife's father's household	4	2	1	4	0	0	2	12
Total	217	100	24	100	19	100	16	100
Unknown	10		-		-		-	

Table III.4: Place of residence of the household head and his wife after marriage by resource-holding status of households, for all four villages.

	. Place of residence after marriage .							
	Inde- pendent household		Father's household		Wife's father's household		Total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Resource- holding (land/herd)	23	32	45	63	3	4	71	26
Resourceless (agro-pastoral activities)	5	17	23	79	1	3	29	11
Resourceless	30	18	138	81	3	2	171	63
Total column	58	21	206	76	7	2	271	100

Table III.5: Duration of household head's stay in the extended household of his father after marriage according to each village.

Duration of stay in extended HH	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less than a year	17	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 to 3 years	35	21	2	11	5	36	9	75
4 to 7 years	27	16	4	22	2	14	2	17
8 years and more	34	20	4	22	0	0	0	0
until death of parents/ marriage of siblings	54	32	7	39	7	50	1	8
Total	167	100	18	100	15	100	12	100
Unknown or inapplicable	60		6		5		4	

The case of Payambūr, where an overwhelming majority of household heads (92 per cent) stayed in the extended household of their father between one and eight years (Table III.5) deserves some attention. In Payambūr we are facing a typical situation of household fission among small landowning households. Eighty-seven per cent of the households in this village own less than ten acres of land. This is a newly-founded village where land was acquired by clearing forest. Informants claim (and they are supported by the data on the duration of stay in the extended household of the father) that a son stays in the father's household for some years, usually three to five years after his marriage. Then the father

sets up a new household for the son by giving him a site on which to build. The son does not receive his share in land, but works on the father's land and receives a share of the product. Prior to the nationalization of forests, the son was able to acquire land by clearing forest, and could gradually become a landowner in his own right during the lifetime of his father. Now he may work as a sharecropper for other owners or participate in labour migration. Thus, in the past the possibility of acquiring land by clearing forest created a situation in which fathers and married sons could organize their respective households so as to enable a son to establish a residentially separate household while at the same time allowing son and father to cooperate to the fullest extent. This factor is largely responsible for the relatively short stay of sons in the father's household in comparison with the two other isolated villages.

As already noted, when households grow in size by marriage of other sons and birth of their children, tensions within the household increase, and with them pressure to separate. This process is still at work and obviously some of the cases of partition of extended households in recent years are due, at least in part, to its continued operation. But there are other cases of fission of extended households which are a result of a new process which has been set in motion by new economic conditions; this is very evident in Rūdbārak. The following two cases of separation from the extended household of the father, which occurred in Rūdbārak during my field work, clearly illustrate these points.

Case No. 12: Rūdbāarak

Esmāil, who is around 28, is the second son of the only blacksmith in Rūdbāarak. His father owns about ten acres of non-irrigated land. Esmāil is a university graduate employed by the government as a teacher in the high school in Ḥasankif. He went to Tehran for his high school and university education. After his return to the village he married an educated girl who teaches at the school in Rūdbāarak. After his marriage, Esmāil remained in his father's household for less than a year. Now he lives in the household of his father-in-law, who is a well-to-do land-dealer; the father-in-law is away from the village for most of the year with his wife and unmarried children. Esmāil's residence in the household of his father-in-law is temporary; he intends to establish an independent household as soon as he can manage to build a house.

Esmāil's eldest brother, a driver without formal education, remained in the father's household after his marriage. He is married to his FB's daughter; her father died when she was a child and she was brought up in this household. The brother has been married for ten years. Esmāil's father has also two unmarried daughters and a single son who all live in the household.

The reason given for Esmāil's separation was conflict between the women of the household. As his wife was working outside the household as a teacher, she did not share the household chores. The brother's wife complained that "she had become a servant to the teacher's wife". Esmāil's mother puts all the blame on the sons' wives.

The main reason for his separation lies in the fact that as a result of Esmāil's and his wife's work conditions and education, they could not adjust themselves to the situation of his father's household. His interests and those of his wife run parallel. There was no need for him to stay longer in order to be able to gain his independence. Now he is staying in the household of his wife's father which is contrary to the rule of co-residence with patrikin. Previous cases showed that in exceptional situations this might happen: a household without a son needs the labour of the daughter's

husband. But Esmāil is using the house of his father-in-law merely as a place of residence without sharing any economic activities with the father-in-law; he intends to leave as soon as he can secure a new house for his family. However, this temporary residence in the household of his wife's parents brought a great deal of contempt for him in his own father's household; as his mother remarks, "My son stays with the bride's family. It is shameful, as though she is the one who brought a wife".

Nowadays, in Rūdbāarak in particular, a large number of young men take outside employment and provide for their own marriage and therefore soon afterwards leave the father's household to establish their own household. Moreover, in some cases a son marries a woman of his choice in the face of opposition from his kin; in such a situation, the new couple start their marital life in circumstances quite different from those where the marriage had been arranged by the elders. In the former cases, the conjugal bond between the couple has already gained superiority over loyalty towards the father's household. There are five recent cases in Rūdbāarak where the sons established independent households upon their marriages; in all these cases the men were either educated and salaried or had skills and good incomes. Their marriages were strongly opposed by their father's household and they did not enjoy any assistance from their fathers. The ability of a son to be economically independent allows him to sever his ties with his father's household and establish an independent household if the tension within extended household proves to be intolerable. However, early separation from the extended household of the father always causes conflict. The following case shows the process of

this early fission in a landless household.

Case No. 13: Rūdbāarak

Jallil, an unskilled labourer, separated from his father's household one year after his marriage. He is the first son of a wage-earning shepherd who owns 40 sheep and goats. His marriage was financed and arranged for him by his father, and he welcomed the choice of bride. While he was living in his father's household his wages, as well as the wages of his wife who is a carpet weaver, were given to his father.

Jallil has five younger siblings, none of whom work and some of whom attend school. His wife complained about the situation: "Whatever you earn, you spend on feeding your brothers and sisters. In this way, we will never be able to have a house of our own." She did not agree with the practice which demanded that she should also give all her wages to Jallil's father; and she did not get along with her mother-in-law.

Finally Jallil's wife said she would take her jahīz and go back to her father's house. In fact, on one occasion she did this, but returned following mediation by her own family. However, one day after a quarrel with her mother-in-law she left her only child behind and again returned to her father's house. This time her parents supported her and insisted that if Jallil wanted to have his wife back, he had better do something about the situation: they suggested that he should separate from his father. Despite the opposition of his parents, Jallil finally agreed to separation. He rented a room and the couple now live independently on his wages and her earnings.

Conflict is the outcome of such an early separation of the son from the household. Of course, already-existing conflict is also part of the reason for separation, a conflict due to what Rosenfeld calls 'structural contradiction in property and work relations within the extended family'.<sup>4</sup> The conflict is sharpest among the landless/herdless group, as in these cases the wages of the son

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<sup>(b)</sup>  
4. Rosenfeld (1958:1133).

(which may sometimes be considerably more than his father's possible income) are controlled by the father and are spent on all the members of the household. The son feels that his earnings are invested in the household without any prospect of recovering them through inheritance, due to the fact that a propertyless man has little to leave. If the father has a large landholding, then it will be in the son's interest to stay, for even if he does not work on the land, he will still derive the benefit from it over and above the income from his outside employment. Similarly, the only son of a father is also inclined to remain in the extended household until the death of his father. Being the only son, he is the sole heir and can enjoy the benefits of his labour without sharing it with other brothers. Moreover, his sense of filial piety is bound to be strong as there are no other brothers to share with him the responsibility of looking after his parents in their old age.

Table III.6 shows the reasons given for separation of the household head from his father's household in each village. The reasons given by household heads and by their wives sometimes differed. Men were inclined to state that they had to separate because of quarrels among women, while wives suggested that the men of the household were also in conflict. Where at least one of them gave conflict as the reason, I have classified the case accordingly.

I divided the reasons given for separation into three broad categories: (1) Conflict, that is, the son separated from his father's household because of conflict with his father or brothers over the distribution of income, work arrangements, etc.; or conflict between mother-in-law/sister-in-law and the son's wife. (In



this way the differences between the version of the household head and his wife are covered.) In all these cases, the separation from the extended household was a consequence of a quarrel, although in most cases the quarrel was in fact the end of a process of fission which had structural reasons. (2) This category covers all the cases in which the separation was done in a peaceful manner, for some practical reason, i.e., too many people were living in the same house, insufficient space was available, the new couple built a new house with the help of the husband's parents, or the couple migrated and left the village. (3) Death of parents or marriage of siblings, that is, the son stayed in the extended household as long as his father was alive and separated after his death. In some cases when the father was already dead, brothers separated after the marriage of a younger sibling.

Table III.7 shows the reasons given for separation from the extended household by occupation of the household heads. Conflict appears to be the reason for separation more often among landless groups (67 per cent among those without resources and involved in agro-pastoral activities; 38 per cent among those without resources and involved in non-agricultural activities). On the other hand, among the resource-holding groups a decisive majority of men stayed with their fathers until the death of the latter (59 per cent) or separated with his approval (33 per cent).

In most of the cases where conflict is given as a reason for separation, women are blamed by the men for creating quarrels which result in a son's separation from the father's household. It has been noted in the discussion on the complex households that the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is strained

Table III.6: Causes of separation of household head from the extended household of his father/brother, by village.

Cause of separation from the extended household	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr		Total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Conflict	62	38	5	28	5	36	2	17	74	
Too many people; building a new house	48	29	6	33	2	14	9	75	65	
Death of father; marriage of siblings	55	33	7	39	7	50	1	8	70	
Total	165	100	18	100	14	100	12	100	209	
Unknown, inapplicable	62		6		5		4			

Table III.7: All four villages: Reasons given for the separation from the extended household by occupation of household head.

Occupation of household head	Conflict		Death of father		Peaceful separation		Total row	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Resource-holding (agro-pastoralism)	4	8	28	59	16	33	48	23
Resourceless (agro-pastoralism)	16	67	3	12	5	21	24	12
Resourceless (non-agricultural)	51	38	38	28	46	34	135	62
Total column	71	34	69	33	67	32	207	100

and tense and may lead to many household arguments. But the fact that this strained relationship cannot easily break up the extended households among landed/herding groups deserves attention. Also, as noted, the real cause of conflict lies in the 'structural contradictions in property and work relations' within the extended households, as well as the contradiction that exists between the role of a son as the father/husband in his own conjugal unit and that of the son/brother in his father's household in which his conjugal unit is embedded. The scarcity or lack of resources of the household, as well as the availability of outside work, has had the effect of highlighting the inherent contradictions within the organization of the extended household. Nowadays, a son who earns a good income becomes even more reluctant to spend it on the education of his unmarried siblings; he prefers to spend it on his own children. The daughter-in-law becomes reluctant to accept the authority of her mother-in-law; she wants to be the mistress of her own house, now that her husband can provide its material requirements. As there is no incentive for a son to stay with the father who has little or no resources (land/herd), the other factors (e.g., tensions and quarrels within the household and his own ability to earn his living) facilitate this process of early fission. Moreover, the new economic system which values skill and education has resulted in differential occupational opportunities among brothers, who in the traditional setting would have been equals. An educated or skilled son is capable of much higher earnings than his uneducated brother. This increases the inequality of earnings within the household. Thus, although there is some truth in the blame attached to women for creating quarrels which eventually lead to the

break-up of extended households, this is not always the actual cause of separation. As Srinivas writes on a similar problem of the break-up of the joint household of brothers, this can well be a myth:

The conventional explanation that the women who come into the family ultimately break it may be regarded as a convenient myth the function of which is to protect another myth which is that of the solidarity of brothers.<sup>5</sup>

It suffices to add that quarrels between women in the household would not be serious enough to lead to separation, were the men not indirect participants in them and interested in their development. On the one hand, moral values encourage the stay of a son in the father's household; on the other, the internal stresses and strains within the household cause conflict and men eventually separate from the household.

The existence of resources enables a father to find a way of diminishing the tension within the extended family, e.g., by providing separate quarters or a building site for each married son and allowing him to establish a residentially separate household of his own. Moreover, his authority as a property owner is relatively great and can help to prevent quarrels and to suppress the existence of conflict and tension.

It can also be revealing to examine the problem from a different perspective and to ask, "Why do some sons remain in the

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<sup>5</sup>Srinivas (1952:35).

father's household?" Data on extended households show that in Rūdbāarak, among 21 extended households, two are fraternal extended households, headed by the eldest brother. Both of these households are major shopkeepers in the village. In each household, the brothers form a cooperative work group; usually one brother is in charge of the shop, while the other is involved in purchasing from the town or working on the land. One of these households is the largest Gīlak landowner of the village (see Case No. 9). Apart from the need for these brothers to cooperate in order to run the shop, their joint landholding is another factor for delaying their separation. Moreover, their wives are sisters and get along well together. Although the other household does not own any land, the two brothers' work cooperation is essential for running their business.

In the remaining 19 parental households, five are resource-holding households involved in agricultural or herding activities and the son works for the father. In one household, the father is a work migrant and away from the village; the son runs the household in his absence. In another household, the father is a mountain guide and his house is used as a guest house. He works in cooperation with his married son, who is also a mountain guide. In two households, the sons are drivers and are away from the village for long periods. In five households, the father is aged and does not work; in fact, the son acts as household head and enjoys a large amount of autonomy. In another five households, the son has been married for less than three years.

In Gulāmra, all the extended households are paternal extended; a son or sons serve as shepherd, or either father or son participates

in temporary labour migration. In Chalājūr, there are two extended households with one son staying after marriage; both households have large holdings of land. Finally, in Payambūr, there is one extended household where the father who is the largest landowner of the village is very old and depends on his sons to a great extent.

These cases suggest that sons remain in extended households either because they are recently married (26 per cent), or because they are engaged in a complex division of labour which requires two adult men (47 per cent), or because the father is too old to work and the son has become effective household head (26 per cent).

#### Summary

In the preceding sections of the present Chapter and in Chapter V, I have tried to examine the relationship between three factors: (a) ideals concerning the formation of households, (b) the activity which constitutes the main source of livelihood for the household, and (c) the effects of the available work opportunities on the developmental cycle of the households. It has been argued that while cycles of formation and dissolution of extended households are a general feature of family life in all these four villages, the amount of time that individuals spend in various stages of the cycles may vary according to a number of factors, the most important of which are the resources, labour relations, and interpersonal relations within the household. The developmental cycle of the domestic group among the herding and landowning groups differs from that prevalent among landless labourers.



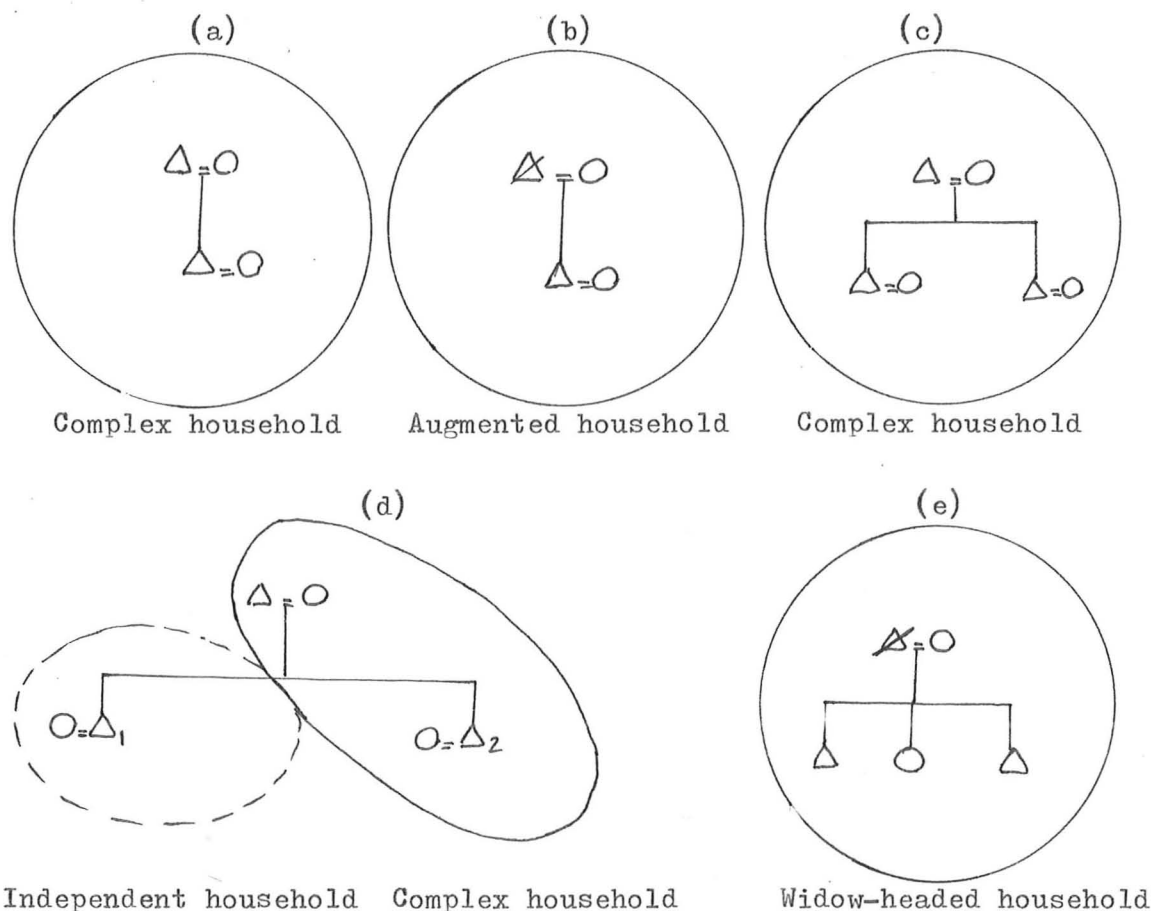
In fact, there is no single developmental cycle through which all households pass, but rather a number of possible cycles involving combinations of various kinds of complex and simple households. This can lead to different proportions of various household types existing at any given time among groups of households classified according to the household's major economic activity.

However, despite differences which exist between these two models of developmental cycle, each model would begin at the point where a couple's son marries and brings his wife into the household, i.e., there is at least a brief phase in which all households are complex (Diagram II.a).<sup>6</sup> This can develop in several different ways. (1) If the father dies, then there will be effective continuity as the widow becomes a member of the married son's augmented household (Diagram II.b). (2) But if while the father is still alive, a second son marries and brings a wife, there are two possible patterns: (a) Where both married sons continue to live with their parents, which is typical of resource-holding households (Diagram II.c); this happens especially where there are both land and herds to be managed as this requires men to be in different places at the same time and therefore a joint organization of labour is adaptive. (b) Where there are no significant resources it is more likely that the elder son would establish an independent household (Diagram II.d); the elder married brother moves out and leaves the newly married brother to fulfil the obligation of filial piety. This produces both a new complex household and a new independent household. If the father dies before a son marries,

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<sup>6</sup> Except for the 20-25 per cent who set up independent households immediately on marriage (see Table III.3 above).

Diagram II: Possible various phases of developmental cycle of households.



the widow has to rear and marry the children (either with the help of her deceased husband's patrikin or alone). Once a son marries, the widow-headed household (Diagram II.e) is converted into an augmented household (Diagram II.b). Finally, only in the resource-holding households is there an economic basis for sharing resources even after residential separation in what I have called economically-joint households (Diagram I).

A discrepancy exists between the ideal developmental cycle of households and the actual cycle among landless villagers. For the latter, the realization of the ideal cycle has never been feasible. But the ideal is not observed in all cases among the resource-holding

group. This discrepancy is justified or explained by villagers through different idioms: "eventually a son has to leave his father", "a son gets nowhere if he stays in his father's house forever", or "women never can get along, so men must separate in order to avoid quarrels". On the other hand, a high value is attached to remaining in the father's household; it is said, "a son who is honourable and remains in the father's household wins entry to heaven". In describing the good qualities of a man, the fact that he stayed with his father in spite of all the existing problems is always included. It is interesting to note that some of those who scold a son for leaving his father have themselves separated from their own father prior to his death.

The reasons for this discrepancy can be sought in the fact that the developmental cycle of the households among large land/ herd owners resembles, to a very great extent, the ideal cycle. Since this group, as a result of their economic and political influence, has enjoyed a great degree of respect in the village, their way of life has gradually become the ideal; the style of life of this elite was recognized as the proper code of conduct in relation to household formation and dissolution.

Therefore, in assessing the nature and direction of change, one must bear in mind that there are two cycles which differ from each other in some important respects. In general, only the resource-holding households can have a phase of economic jointness but residential separation. And, in general, in resource-holding households married brothers tend to remain until the father's death, and even after the father's death married brothers may remain together in fraternal extended households. The greater cohesion of resource-

holding households is clearly based on their joint ownership of resources. By contrast, among those households without resources (land/herd), the length of time a married son remains in the father's household is brief, and one seldom finds two brothers who are married living with their parents. The economic incentive and rewards are in this situation lacking; indeed, economic pressures precipitate early separation.

However, both cycles have been affected by the new economy. Among the landed or herding households new work opportunities, which have resulted in the creation of occupational differentiation within a previously united household, are changing the cycle. In fact, herding has declined rapidly in Rūdbāarak as a result of this. A son is not prepared to look after his father's herd any more; he prefers to work outside the household where he can gain more. A herder with no son to work for him is eventually forced to sell his flock; it is uneconomical for a small herder to hire a shepherd because of increased wage levels in the region and it is demeaning for a middle-aged herdowner to shepherd his own herd. As we have seen in Case No. 8, Āgā Bozorg had no choice but to sell his flocks after the separation of his son.

However, large landed households are adjusting themselves differently to the changing economy. In this group, a son may separate earlier, depending on the amount of land owned by the household, the number of sons, and their education or skills. But his separation is only partial, affecting mainly his place of residence. This arrangement allows him to manage his earnings from wage labour separately, while his share in the father's land continues to be recognized. He works for the father during the agricultural season and receives

a share of the product. Thus, the landed households accommodate change by maintaining joint ownership of common resources while residentially separate units individually control their own other diverse economic activities.

As a result of available work opportunities, the fission which almost always coincides with complete partition occurs earlier among the landless group. Although the extended household in this group has always been short-lived in the developmental cycle, it has now become even shorter.

Moreover, the new educational and vocational opportunities in the urban centres have had a differential impact on households in different socio-economic groups. Among landowning households, a son migrates to urban centres in order to acquire higher education. The acquisition of higher education acts as a barrier to his eventual return to the village, as there are no suitable jobs available for him in the rural setting. Although he and his conjugal family settle in the urban centre, he retains his ties with the father's household and his share in land and other property is recognized. Among the landless group, a son becomes a permanent migrant out of necessity, in order to secure a job and maintain his family. As there is no common property which can tie him to the household, his subsequent relations with the father's household tend to be dependent on inter-personal relationships and other factors (e.g., the number of mature sons and/or the father's financial position).

However, the impact of temporary migration on the developmental cycle of the households is different. Both traditionally and at present those who participate in seasonal migration have

always been the landless group. We have seen that traditional seasonal migration to rice plantations or fruit gardens has given way to a longer-term work migration based on non-agricultural activities. Sons who participate in labour migration outside the village are tied to the father's household as long as they are away from the village because, among other things, they are dependent on their father's household to look after their wives and children during their absence. This situation can change once they have acquired a permanent or quazi-permanent job outside the village and are able to take their conjugal families with them or to establish them in a new and separate household in the village.

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, we may conclude that the observance of ideal norms concerning the formation of households is related to the socio-economic status of the household. The prescribed norms are more closely observed by herding/land-owning households as they are more or less compatible with the economic functions of the household; but the case is different among the landless group. New work opportunities, both inside and outside the region, provide alternative means of earning a livelihood and highlight the inherent contradictions within extended household organization. Because of these economic opportunities, sons are now able to establish their independence at a much earlier age. Patrilocal residence is still the common pattern among all groups, but the duration of stay in the extended household has become much shorter.

## Chapter VII:

Conclusions

In the course of this study I have described the process of economic change in the four villages of Kalārdasht, a district in the Caspian Provinces of Iran. I have compared Rūdbārak, a village which has experienced a drastic change in its economic structure, with the three isolated villages which have retained their traditional economic structure to a greater extent. I have also discussed the modification to the family structure of these villages which have been occasioned by the changes in the economy. In this final chapter I shall summarize my argument by discussing the changes which have occurred in Kalārdasht in the context of the broader Iranian society while referring to the argument presented in the introduction to this study.

The socio-economic changes under discussion are examples of the possible variations which may occur as a result of the interaction of a relatively simple peasant economy with the economy of the modern world. It is well recognized that peasant communities should be studied in the context of the larger society of which



they are, by definition, a part.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, the changes which have occurred in peasant communities as a result of changes in the broader society, have received a great deal of attention.<sup>2</sup> It has been argued that as the larger society moves towards the process of industrialization and urbanization, the peasant communities will disintegrate and gradually disappear. G. M. Foster attributes the inevitable disappearance of peasant communities to their inherent incompatibility with industrialization.<sup>3</sup> This concern is also reflected in the writing of Geertz, who states that as the larger society becomes modern a process of 'depeasantization' may take place.<sup>4</sup> Shanin too relates structural changes in peasant communities to the impact of external forces.<sup>5</sup> However, he makes a distinction between the socio-economic changes of peasant communities which are a part of industrialized countries and those which occur in the so-called under-developed nations. Shanin maintains that in the case of the under-developed societies, the slow rate of industrialization and the resulting inability of the expanding urban economy to absorb the incoming rural population, combined with other factors (e.g., the development of market relations, the eroding of natural resources, and the disappearance

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1. For example, see Kroeber (1948); Redfield (1956); Wolf (1966).

2. See Foster (1962); Geertz (1961); Shanin (1973); Galeski (1968); Potter (1967).

3. Foster (1962:7).

4. Geertz (1961:6).

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of rural handicraft industries), peasants are left without employment in both the urban and rural sectors.<sup>6</sup>

In applying these arguments to countries like Iran, where the state, by virtue of increased oil revenues, is able to increase the rate of industrialization and to introduce agrarian and rural projects, it has been argued that the situation may differ.<sup>7</sup>

However, recent studies have illustrated the temporary effect of urban industrialization in providing permanent and secure employment for migrant peasants.<sup>8</sup> For instance, with regard to the available job opportunities for migrant peasants in urban centres in Iran, Kātouziān states:

[T]here is only one, temporary, source of employment for the migrant peasant: construction. But the construction boom inevitably subsides even if revenues keep pouring in at a high rate and for a long time.<sup>9</sup>

Kātouziān maintains that the increased oil revenues combined with a development strategy which is heavily biased against agriculture and the inevitable depletion of both oil and agricultural resources in Iran will result in a situation where the prospect for peasants will be increasing 'disguised unemployment'.<sup>10</sup> It is significant to note that Kātouziān's prediction for the peasantry in Iran

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<sup>6</sup>. Ibid.:156-7.

<sup>7</sup>. Āmouzgār (1971); Denman (1973); Doroudiān (1976); Kristjanson (1960).

<sup>8</sup>. Keddie (1972); Mahdavi (1965, 1972); Kātouziān (1978).

<sup>9</sup>. Kātouziān (1978:351).

<sup>10</sup>. Ibid.

corresponds to Shanin's prediction for the third world in general.

Given the fact that changes in rural communities do not occur in a vacuum, but rather in response to changes in the broader society of which they are necessarily a part, one may now turn to a discussion of socio-economic changes in Kalārdasht. As is apparent from the discussion in Chapter III, three distinct phases can be discerned in the socio-economic structure of the villages in the region. These phases are as follows: (1) The phase prior to the arrival of the tribal population during which time the economy of the region was based primarily on subsistence grain-growing. (2) The phase which followed the arrival of the tribal population and which saw significant changes in the pattern of landownership and the introduction of large-scale sheep herding as an important element in the region's economy. Nevertheless, the peasant mode of economy remained undisturbed; the isolation of Kalārdasht encouraged the persistence of a subsistence economy based on agro-pastoralism and supplemented by seasonal migration to the coast where work on the rice fields and fruit gardens was available at seasons during which there were no agricultural activities in Kalārdasht. (3) The third phase started with the construction of the road linking the region to the outside world. This broke the isolation of the region and marked the beginning of the integration of Kalārdasht with the broader Iranian society and of structural changes in the subsistence economy of the villages in Kalārdasht. The process of integration was accelerated by the policies of the 1960s and the administrative penetration of the region.

The period following the reforms in 1962 witnessed a broad economic transformation throughout the country. A new emphasis was placed upon industrialization and the 'politics of industry' fostered a rapid development in the areas of transportation and construction. The oil revenues enabled the central government to finance and execute development programmes. In order to transform the rural economy, the central government carried out a series of rural reforms which included land reform, the nationalization of forests and pastures, etc.<sup>11</sup> All these external forces had a great impact on the economy of Kalārdasht. The nationalization of forests ended the possibility of peasants acquiring more land by clearing forests and severely limited agricultural expansion. At the same time, nationalization of pastures resulted in the decline of herding, which had constituted an important element of the subsistence economy of the villages.<sup>12</sup> Thus it may be re-emphasized that although the reforms had no major impact on the pattern of landholdings, as it was already based on small-holdings, they have facilitated, as elsewhere in the country, the transformation of the traditional economic structure of the villages. In Kalārdasht the traditional balance of the indigenous economy was upset by the introduction of wage labour as an important element.

Furthermore, the policy of importing subsidized food staples, especially wheat flour, combined with the availability of new

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11. See Chapter I and bibliography: Iran

12. The decline of herding in other parts of the country as a result of the nationalization of pastures has been noted by other studies. See for example, Katouziān (1978); Nūshīn (1355=1976).

non-agricultural work opportunities in the region and the nearby towns made agriculture less attractive to peasants. Peasant agriculture for subsistence could be continued only where land had little value and where production was mainly for purposes of domestic consumption, as still is the case in the three isolated villages. Even then, as these villages were drawn into the cash economy, the peasant found himself in a situation where he had to rely more on money at a time when it had become increasingly difficult to obtain income from the traditional agro-pastoralism.

Kalārdasht is still an agriculturally backward area; there has been no attempt to improve agricultural production or to introduce cash crops. Whilst the rainfall is fairly reliable and sufficient, the hilly terrain makes irrigation, which would increase productivity greatly, an impossibility except in the three open fields (āyishs) in Rūdbārak. While tractor cultivation is possible, although not common, in these three āyishs, in other types of land in Rūdbārak and in the three isolated villages, the fields are terraced and such mechanization has been impossible. These facts combined with the erosion of the soil and the absence of fertilizers (with the exception of the fallow system) have discouraged the introduction of cash crops. Only those with large holdings are occasionally able to sell small surpluses of crops usually grown for family consumption on the local market.

The culminative effect of changes in the broader Iranian society, combined with the gradual deterioration of agro-pastoralism, has been the growth of wage labour in non-agricultural activities. However, it is significant to note that the four villages studied vary both in the extent to which they have been influenced by

external change-producing factors and their response to these factors.

The developments in Rūdbāarak are, in some respects, different from the trends in other villages in Kalārdasht (and probably from other rural communities in Iran).<sup>13</sup> The job opportunities available in Rūdbāarak, which are the direct result of increasing tourism in the village and governmental projects related to the construction of tourist facilities, have created a job market in the village itself. Moreover, the purchase of land by Tehrani summer residents has enabled some villagers to finance the education of their sons or to start a new business (e.g., by converting their house into a guest house, or buying a car and running a taxi service, or opening a shop, etc.) Thus a diversified economy has replaced the traditional economy. But a similar development has not occurred in the three isolated villages, since the available job market has remained a factor extrinsic to the village economy, although at the same time it has encouraged villagers to seek work outside the village.

Moreover, Rūdbāarak differs from the three isolated villages with respect to the pattern of work migration. Generally speaking, in Rūdbāarak, the bulk of migrants possess education and skills which provide them access to permanent jobs in urban centres. These are young men who have acquired education and skill in recent years as a result of the prosperity of the village and its greater interaction with the urban centres. They leave their own village because

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<sup>13</sup>For instance, see 'Ajami (1356=1977) and Craig (1978) for the effects of land reform and other rural programs on the economy of villages in central Iran. For a general discussion, see Keddie (1968, 1972). See also bibliography for further references.



the urban centres offer them better prospects in terms of jobs and living standards. But in Gulāmra (and to a lesser degree in the two other isolated villages), those who seek work outside the village are generally unskilled labourers from households with insufficient resources (land/herd). In the traditional setting these individuals would have gone to the coast at times of rice cultivation and fruit picking, participating in what I have termed traditional seasonal migration. Now they can find work in the construction industry almost throughout the year. It is essential to note, however, that the jobs available to these unskilled migrants are temporary and do not provide them with security; instead of establishing their independence of the village economy, the temporary migration of unskilled workers in the end enhances their dependence on the traditional economy of the village. Therefore, it is essential to differentiate between the temporary and the permanent labour migration. The former has the same function as the traditional seasonal labour migration; it is a way of supplementing the household income and catering for its needs. The latter is a new process which releases an individual from dependence on the village economy and offers him a viable economic role.

The reality of change must not be confused with its appearance. In Rūdbāarak, the combination of external change-producing factors and the internal situation has transformed the traditional economic structure and relations. Although the three isolated villages have been subjected to varying degrees of change, the changes which have occurred have not been radical and comprehensive. While in Chalājūr and Payambūr there has been an insignificant change

in the occupational structure of household heads, this change has been marked in Gulāmra. However, it is interesting to note that despite this drastic shift (presently 42 per cent of household heads in this village participate in temporary labour migration), Gulāmra has remained the most traditional among the three isolated villages both in terms of its internal economy and of its family structure. The persistence of the traditional way of life in Gulāmra can be attributed to three major factors. (a) Due to Gulāmra's almost total isolation as a result of the lack of communication facilities, the village is less exposed to the outside world. On the other hand, Chalājūr and Payambūr, due to their extensive contact with the large surrounding villages, are affected by the urban way of life as a result of the expansion of tourism in the region. (b) The dominant mode of economy in Gulāmra is based on herding and demands the joint organization of labour within the household. Thus, in order to be economically viable, a herding household must retain the traditional division of labour. This requires the married son to be involved in full-time shepherding while the father is free to take part in other activities, which as a result of changes in the region now means to be involved in temporary work outside the village. Among agriculturalists in Chalājūr and Payambūr, who are mainly small holders, the joint organization of labour is not essential within the household. Sons can be residentially separate while still taking part in joint agricultural activities at peak seasons; wage labour supplements rather than competes with traditional activities. (c) The relative prosperity of Payambūr and Chalājūr, due to the availability of land, has not yet rendered work outside the village necessary

to the extent that the decline in herding and the shortage of land have made outside work essential in Gulāmra. However, it is not far wrong to assume that as times goes on and as the population of these villages increases, without an increase in the amount of land (as the nationalization of forests ended any possibility of acquiring more land), wage labour outside the village will become an important source of livelihood for village households. Nevertheless, as the developments in Gulāmra suggest, as long as changes in the broader economy of the country remain an extrinsic element in the subsistence peasant economy, without developing village industry and improving local agriculture, their significance in transforming the village economy is bound to be limited. At the same time, their influence in eroding the peasant subsistence economy cannot be ignored.

Having discussed the differing degrees of economic change in Rūdbārak and the three isolated villages, we may now review the impact of these changes on the family structure, a major interest of the present study. The data from Kalārdasht have clearly illustrated the importance of economic factors in determining the structure of the household. While the structure of the household is influenced by the amount of resources at its disposal and the activity of its members, the ethnic variations among villagers proved to be an insignificant factor. In fact, it is important to note that there is almost no difference among the various ethnic groups in Kalārdasht in regard to either family ideals or structure; any existing differences among them is due to their different modes of economy. This is demonstrated by data from the three isolated

villages which have different economic structures and ethnic compositions. The family structure in Gulāmra (a herding village with Gilak population) is very similar to the family structure of herders in Rūdbārak (who are mainly from Lak and Khwajvand ethnic groups); while the family structure of Khwajvands in Chalājūr and Turks in Payambūr shows great similarities with that of agriculturalists (from different ethnic groups) in Rūdbārak.

Moreover, the data from these villages show that even prior to the advent of tourism and other socio-economic changes in the region, there was a great diversity in household structure related to the ownership of resources and the household's dominant mode of economy.<sup>14</sup> Despite the fact that various groups within these villages share a single set of ideals in relation to family structure and the pattern of residence after marriage, they differ significantly in terms of realization of the ideal family structure. The developmental cycle among herders clearly resembles this ideal, as joint organization of labour under the supervision of the father is essential to the economy of the household. On the other hand, among large landed households there exists a phase of residential separation while family property continues to be held and worked in common. However, among small landholders and landless groups, due to the lack of common resources and, therefore, the absence of any need for joint organization of labour within the household, the extended family has always been short-lived. It is, thus, important to distinguish between what is considered to be the

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<sup>14</sup>. A number of other studies on the peasant family confirm the significance of landholding upon household structure and size. See Khosrovi (1351=1972); Ajami (1968); Epstein (1973); Tambiah (1958).

ideal pattern of domestic grouping and the realization of the ideal in actuality.

Similarly, it is natural to expect some differences between the various economic groups in terms of their adaptation to economic change. As already noted, among herders wage labour competes with the traditional activities and the loss of sons to jobs outside the herding household compromises the economic viability of the household. The decline of small-scale herding in Rūdbāarak is largely explicable in these terms. The available job and educational opportunities in the village attract young men who traditionally would have served as shepherds away from the household economy. The fact that sons are unwilling to perform their traditional roles has created a situation in which a modest herdowner without the financial means to employ a salaried shepherd and unwilling because of cultural values to tend his own herd, is forced to sell his flock. Here the interrelationship between economic and family structure can be seen; when some aspects of this interrelated system (family and economy) undergoes transformation, there is a corresponding change in the other element. In contrast to Rūdbāarak, in Gulāmra where there are no alternative jobs available in the village and jobs outside do not offer security and permanence, sons have no incentive to leave the household and abandon their traditional roles in anticipation of a better life. Thus the traditional division of labour within the household has remained intact: sons act as shepherds while their fathers assume other responsibilities and, if necessary, participate in temporary wage labour migration. On the other hand, among landowning households, the new economic opportunities have

had the effect of hastening the process of residential separation while retaining joint ownership of family lands. Although this is not a new process and has always been one of the options of traditional family arrangements, it has become more prevalent as the new economic opportunities further encourage its development. The sons or brothers can maintain joint ownership of landed resources while living in residentially separate households and participating individually in wage labour.

With reference to the emergence of the conjugal type nuclear family, it must be emphasized that the nuclear family has always been one of the varieties of traditional family structure and that it has been the predominant type among those with little or no resources. In fact, the extended family, although still regarded as the ideal type in these four villages, has never been the dominant pattern of domestic grouping. It is highly significant to note that among those with resources change has not involved the process of breaking up extended households into simple conjugal type households. Other studies also show the development of a different type of family which is distinguished from both the conjugal nuclear and the traditional extended in terms of its structure and function.<sup>15</sup>

The data from Kalārdasht suggest that it is misleading to analyse the process of change in family structure solely in terms

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<sup>15</sup>For instance, see Cohen (1965); Epstein (1962); Kandiyoti (1975). It has been argued that the newly emerging family type is only transitional. (See Kaldate, 1961.) Nevertheless, as Epstein pointed out, it is important to analyse the operation and function of this type of family because "they seem to play a big part in facilitating economic diversification in rural households" (1973: 208-9). Moreover, the emergence of this type of family lends support to the argument that economic change does not necessarily result in the emergence of the conjugal type nuclear family.



of residential arrangements. It is essential to take into consideration the degree of economic interdependence of the residentially nuclear households with the wider kin-group (e.g., the extent of common ownership of economic resources, occupational cooperation, and exchange of goods and services). Moreover, even in cases in which the structure of the household has retained its traditional features, there may be significant changes in the content of relationships within the household. For instance, the ability of sons to earn their livelihood outside the household greatly undermines the authority of the father, who in the traditional setting as the property owner controlled the means of livelihood and enjoyed a substantial degree of authority. The very fact that due to the availability of outside work, a married son now has the option of leaving the father's household has repercussions not only in the sphere of his relationship with the father but on other inter-personal relationships within the household (e.g., mother-in-law and the bride, etc.).<sup>16</sup>

Paralleling changes in the developmental cycle of the households there have been modifications in important aspects of the traditional marriage system. The new economic autonomy of young men, facilitated by the availability of non-agricultural employment, not only allows them a greater voice in the selection of their bride, but it also modifies traditional criteria in the evaluation of a potential suitor and traditional expectations in regard to marriage transactions. Now a young man's education and

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<sup>16</sup>. See Rosenfeld (1968a) for an interesting analysis of change while the structure of the family more or less remains intact.



and skill, which provide him with means of acquiring a permanent income, has gained importance at the expense of his father's/kin-group's support. In regard to marriage transactions, mahr (deferred dower) tends to gain importance at the expense of the traditional shīr-bahā. Moreover, and especially among the educated/skilled section of the village, a larger portion of shīr-bahā is spent on purchasing a jahīz (dowry) for the bride; the jahīz is assumed to provide the furnishings for the new household of the married couple. This is reflected in the newly-married women's perception of their jahīz; many of them keep it unpacked while living with their husband's family and save it for their independent household as they consider their stay in the extended household transitory.

Thus, the study of changes in the traditional peasant family in Rūdbārak and the comparison with the three isolated villages of the region has uncovered some important modifications taking place in both the marriage system and the developmental cycle of the households. These changes appear to follow world-wide trends recorded elsewhere in rural environments whose traditional economy has been modified. The ability of young men to acquire economic independence and the resultant decrease in the authority of the father lies at the root of domestic changes.

It remains to be noted that any general statement derived from my own research regarding the family in Iran is bound to be tentative at this stage. The gaps in our knowledge are yet too great. Any discussion of the sociology of rural Iran and the changes which are taking place must be prefaced by noting the distinctions among the northern, central, and southern regions,

where such factors as climate, vegetation, demographic characteristics, and patterns of landholding vary markedly. Moreover, in making general statements with regard to changes in the economy and its impact on family organization, differences which exist among tribal and ethnic groups, as well as between rural and urban populations must be taken into account. Patterns of family organization are diverse and have been subjected to varying forces of change. The tribal domestic groupings studied mainly by Barth and others are inherently different from the peasant family in Kalārdasht, and differ from those urban families which have received attention from Behnām, Gulick, Toubā and others. It is hoped that this study of change in Kalārdasht has thrown some light on these problems and has contributed to some extent to narrowing the gap in our knowledge on rural Iran and its changing features.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Limitations of space and the limited data available on the Iranian family, particularly the rural family, have prevented me from comparing the results of this study with other Iranian studies. I have occasionally drawn upon similar studies carried out in Asian countries. I am aware of the limitations of the use of such non-Iranian data; although family organization in Kalārdasht shares some features with the peasant family in the Middle East and India, in some respects it is different. To take one example, in Kalārdasht lineages are virtually absent, while in the cited studies they play an important role in the domain of family and kinship.

Appendix I:

Distribution of population in two subdistricts of Bīrūm-Bashm and Kalārdasht according to households, sex, and ethnic composition. (1976 census)

Name	Households	Women	Men	Total	Ethnic Composition
Total Kalārdasht district	3,943	11,733	11,471	23,154	
Total Bīrūm-Bashm subdistrict	1,206	3,597	3,350	6,947	
Āghuzdārbūn	47	149	130	279	Gīlak
Barār	56	140	97	237	Gīlak
Bulbulakūh	6	16	18	34	Gīlak
Banafshadih	18	48	44	92	Lak
Pardangūn	134	420	425	845	Lak & Gīlak
Chalājūr	20	62	62	124	Khwajvand
Harīs	44	156	118	274	Gīlak
Deymū	42	141	124	265	Gīlak
Razān	20	76	64	140	Gīlak
Sarka'	49	150	159	309	Gīlak

Samā'	24	65	64	129	Gīlak
Sanār-Suflā	40	104	114	218	Khwajvand
Sanār-Uliyā	15	43	37	80	Gīlak
Sang-i Sarak	15	50	46	96	Khwajvand
Sayyid Khaneh Sār	8	25	28	53	Lak
Sir Gāh	23	76	65	141	Gīlak
Shahristān	28	98	79	177	Gīlak
Shahri	19	50	54	104	Lak
Kalnau	173	586	549	1,135	Khwajvand
Kalāk	27	84	87	171	Gīlak
Kanes-Hāll	5	12	13	25	Gīlak
Garmābak	20	62	70	132	Gīlak
Gulāmra	25	76	66	142	Gīlak
Guharkolā	30	79	64	143	Gīlak
Gavitar	125	396	360	756	Khwajvand
Largān	16	45	52	97	Lak & Gīlak

Lurchāl	6	17	14	31	Gīlak
Likreh	21	79	89	168	Gīlak
Masāl	5	18	16	34	Gīlak
Mazkurūd	15	57	49	106	Gīlak
Mūrād-Chāl	6	18	9	27	Gīlak
Mianak	13	34	43	77	Gīlak
Michkār	98	275	229	504	Gīlak
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Total Kalārdasht subdistrict	2,091	6,192	6,164	12,356	
<hr/> <hr/>					
Ojābiet	134	401	406	807	Khvajvand
Ovijdān	19	45	52	97	Khvajvand
Bāzārsar	56	156	163	319	Turk
Fyshambūr	139	508	544	1,052	Mixed
Piqala'	55	157	156	313	Mixed

Payambūr	20	60	64	124	Turk
Tabarsū	28	83	85	168	Mixed
Taluchāl	6	18	24	42	Khwajvand
Rūdbāarak	220	648	613	1,261	Mixed
Shekarkūh	75	229	207	426	Gilak
Tā'eb-Kulāh	58	164	157	321	Khwajvand
Tuvidarah	104	370	359	729	Khwajvand
'Usmān-kulāh	14	47	44	91	Khwajvand
Kurd-Mahalleh	25	88	93	181	Khwajvand
Kurd-i Chāl	175	472	450	922	Mixed
Kulameh	96	245	254	499	Gilak
Kuhpar	56	175	183	358	Gilak
Garak-Paz	6	15	13	28	Khwajvand
Lah-i Sar	14	49	51	100	Khwajvand
Lahū	236	601	621	1,222	Mixed
Mijil	120	306	307	613	Mixed

Mukā	100	289	263	552	Mixed
Makarūd	114	360	387	747	Khwajvand
Vāheh	20	76	68	144	Mixed
Valet	15	57	41	98	Mixed
Valvāl	172	532	508	1,040	Mixed

Source: Mazāndaran Regional Electricity Company, based on 1976 national census, pp. 1-5.



## Appendix II:

Production Value and Cost  
of Cultivating one Acre of Wheat

An analysis of production value and cost is difficult because of the large number of variables to be considered, and also because villagers keep no account of their expenses and do not estimate their own labour in monetary terms. The following account, based on extended interviews with landowners from the four villages under study, is presented with an awareness of some shortcomings. Nevertheless, the disturbing effects of the available work opportunities and the growth of a money economy on the traditional agricultural system of the region are discernible.

Yield and value of production

The amount of land under cultivation is measured in terms of the quantity of seed which is used for its cultivation. The unit of measurement for both land and seed is called kharvār. A kharvār of seed weighs 100 kilos<sup>1</sup> and is used in cultivating approximately one acre of land. Thus a kharvār of land (an acre) is the amount

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Footnote 1 next page.

of land which is cultivated by one kharvār of seed (100 kilos). The average wheat yield of each kharvār of land varies among these four villages. The yield also varies a great deal from field to field and from year to year on the same field. Table I shows something of this range for each type of field and each village. The table illustrates the average productivity of each kharvār of land according to type of land and climatic conditions (i.e., abundant rainfall, early snow, etc.) The figures are based on the villagers' classification of the productivity level of a kharvār of irrigated and non-irrigated land (for Rūdbārak) and of fertile and infertile land (for the three other villages).<sup>2</sup>

Judging from these figures, we would get an average production of five kharvār of wheat (500 kilos) per kharvār of land (one acre), i.e., five times the amount of seed sown. In September 1978 the price of a kharvar of wheat was 125 tomans. Also, each kharvār of land produces four mule-loads (bār-e-qāter) of straw. The price of straw in 1978 was 50 tomans per load. Thus, production value would be 825 tomans per acre of land ( $5 \times 125 + 4 \times 50 = 825$ ).

#### Production time and cost

The most important variables to be considered in the analysis of production time and cost are the nature of the terrain (e.g.,

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<sup>1</sup>. Kharvār is a unit of weight. In most other parts of Iran a kharvār equals 120 kilos, but in Āzarbiajān province a kharvār equals 300 kilos. In Kalārdasht kharvār is also a unit of measurement of agricultural lands.

<sup>2</sup>. See Chapter III for types of land in each village.

Table I: Average productivity of each acre of different types of land in terms of kharvar of wheat produced in each village.

Wheat produced	Rūdbāarak		Gulāmra		Chalājūr		Payambūr	
	Irrigated land	Non-irrigated land	Fertile land	Infertile land	Fertile land	Infertile land	Fertile land	Infertile land
In a good year (favourable climate)	8	5	-	4	10	5	10	5
In a bad year (unfavourable climate)	5	2	-	2	5	2	5	2

lands located on the hillsides of *āyish(s)*, the quality of the soil, irrigation, the speed of the oxen and workers, etc. Thus there is a considerable range in the number of man-days of work required for ploughing, planting, fencing, seeding, and harvesting an acre of wheat. Judging from the data available, the total number of man-days of work needed for the production of one *khar-var* of land ranges from 8 to 26 days, depending on the variables mentioned above. If we were to consider 14 man-days of work as an average we would not be far wrong. Table II presents an estimate of the time spent in the production of one acre of wheat and the average wages received for the various types of labour involved. Although *Kalārdashti* peasants do not estimate their labour in terms of its monetary value, they are familiar with the value of a day's work in money since they occasionally hire labour themselves or themselves work for a wage. Thus despite the fact that labour time is not evaluated locally, I have assigned it a monetary value in order to arrive at some notion of relative production costs. In estimating total production costs I have considered the prevailing daily wage of an unskilled worker and the cost of hiring a pair of oxen as the most important items of costs.

According to the estimate arrived at in Table II, the total cost of cultivating one acre of land amounts approximately to 690 tomans, while the total value of its production estimated earlier is 825 tomans. As can be inferred, the high cost of labour involved, coupled with the low price of wheat in the market, gives landowners a good economic reason not to be too keen on cultivating their lands. To acquire the necessary labour the landowner, particularly in *Rūdbārak*, must compete with the wages available in non-

Table II: Estimate of work-days, wages, and costs for the cultivation of one acre of wheat.

Operation	work-days required	sex of worker	wage/day	cost
1st ploughing	2	male	35	70
2nd ploughing/ seeding	2	male	35	70
fencing <sup>(a)</sup>	2	male	35	70
weeding	2	female	20	40
harvesting	4	male	35	140
trying	2	female	20	40
making stooks	1	male	35	35
threshing	1	male	35	35
hiring oxen <sup>(b)</sup>			90	90
seed sown			100	100
total cost				690 T.

(a) Fields which are located on āyīshes do not require fencing as they are guarded by a watchman (dashtbān). The cost of hiring a watchman, which is shared by landowners, is usually less than the cost of fencing.

(b) Only in Rūdbāarak can a cultivator hire a tractor for ploughing the land, as lands in the isolated villages are too hilly to be ploughed by a tractor. The rate for hiring a tractor in 1978 was 90 tomans for ploughing an acre of land.

agricultural employment opportunities for skilled and unskilled labourers. Because of climatic conditions, the demand for all types of labour is highest during the harvest season. Thus, for a landowner who lacks family labour the profit obtainable from cultivating his land is too low to justify the effort needed to pursue it.

Of course, the situation is different in cases in which the household provides the required labour and oxen. The production costs are lower and a peasant has a good economic reason to carry on cultivating, as is the case in the isolated villages of the region.

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