

Labor of the Undead:  
Segmentarity, Globalization and the Temporality of Inequality  
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The notion of segmentarity has generated more confusion in North African anthropology than any other idea in the last thirty-five years. Segmentarity is one of Abu-Lughod's three key "theoretical metonyms" of the Arab world (1989:274), topics so tired that addressing them now requires we begin with apologies. Specifically in Morocco a generation of anthropologists has been fixated on Ernest Gellner's understanding of segmentarity, whether Gellner was "right," or, more usually, why and in what ways he was wrong. While reluctant to resuscitate what is now widely deemed irrelevant, I too return (apologetically) to Gellner because it seems to me that the problem is not that he took an anthropological wrong path, but that he did not see what path he was on, and thus did not go far enough down it. I will not deny that much of what Gellner had to say is, as David Hart once wrote, "simply not so," but I want to explore some significantly broader implications to segmentarity that Gellner raised but glimpsed only dimly.

I believe that the available evidence, including my own fieldwork, supports the claim that there exists in the Atlas mountains a cultural understanding of socio-political sodality something like (but not exactly like) what Gellner labeled "segmentarity." While defenders of Gellner retreat, murmuring that that "the degree to which Gellner's ideal-type model is in line with the facts of actual behaviour might not be the most appropriate question for appraising his theoretical contribution" (Kraus 1998:2), I want to suggest the opposite. The significance of Gellner's model is precisely that it can help us to understand "actual behavior," despite the fact that Gellner himself failed to do so (c.f. Hammoudi 1980, Munson 1993, 1997).

I will argue that the exclusivity of Gellner's segmentary model is wrong, that the stated coherence of it is illusory, but that the particular discourses underpinning the social operation of segmentarity are in fact quite common and quite important --both within Morocco and beyond. Understanding how these discourses animate processes of social order in Morocco offers us a useful platform to suggest how social intercourse more generally produces both "durable inequalities" (Tilly 1998), and longer term *equitable inequalities*. Of particular interest here is the way opportunities generated through the dynamics of local transactions are seized by ambitious men at key moments to capitalize on larger economic and political structures. This illuminates one way that "globalization"<sup>2</sup> is manifest in the Moroccan countryside.

### What Gellner Said

The case of segmentarity has been well reviewed.<sup>3</sup> Here I focus only on Gellner (rather than the whole discourse within and beyond the Middle East), and only on what I take to be the core of his definition. Gellner writes "In ... segmentary society, similarity is not merely lateral but also vertical: it is not simply that groups resemble their neighbors at the same level of size, but it is also the case that groups resemble, organisationally, the sub-groups of which they are composed, and the larger groups of which they are members" (Gellner 1987:31). The assertion is that segmentary society is fractal, that social units are isomorphic with one another whatever their size and, thus, there is a single, exclusive logic by which all of a segmentary society is organized. In other words, "What defines a segmentary society is not that this [segmentation] does occur, *but that this is very nearly all that occurs*" (Gellner 1969:42 emphasis added).<sup>4</sup> While conceptually attractive, this last statement is ethnographically unsupportable, as

Hammoudi (1980), Munson (1996) and others have shown. A great deal occurs in High Atlas society that cannot be called segmentary, which is why Berque's classic account of the matter is definitively plural: *Structures sociales du Haut-Atlas* (1955).

One significant part of Gellner's claim – a part that gained it enthusiastic opponents-- is that it seems to define an archetypal “other,” a way of being that is entirely unlike European society. Gellner writes “In complex societies, the state or the city are quite unlike the family. In a segmentary tribe [by contrast] there is a resemblance between the tribe or clan on the one hand and the family on the other, not merely in terminology, but also in reality” (1969:49). This putative distinction between segmentary and complex societies is founded, Gellner says, on Emile Durkheim's opposition between mechanical and organic solidarity, an opposition that Durkheim had mistakenly based on the ethnography of Kabyle Berbers<sup>5</sup> in Algeria (Roberts 2002). As Durkheim puts it, “Thus, among the Kabyles, the political unity is the clan, constituted in the form of a village (djemmaa or thaddart); several djemmaa form a tribe (arch'), and several tribes form the confederation (thak'ebilt), the highest political society that the Kabyles know. The same is true among the Hebrews.... These societies are such typical examples of mechanical solidarity that their principal physiological characteristics come from it” (1964 [1893]: 178).<sup>6</sup> The argument is that “We say of these societies that they are segmental in order to indicate their formation by the repetition of like aggregates in them, analogous to the rings of an earthworm, and we say of this elementary aggregate that it is a clan, because this word well expresses its mixed nature, at once familial and political” (Durkheim 1964 [1893]: 175).<sup>7</sup>

Durkheim's formulation fit conveniently with the prejudices of social evolution, as in “The Hebrews remained in [a segmental social condition] to a late date, and the Kabyles never passed beyond it (Durkheim 1964 [1893]:177), or in Gellner's review of the matter, “Durkheim used [Masqueray's Kabyle] material to highlight not the mechanisms of cohesion operative in nineteenth-century European societies, but the mechanism *we have left behind*, and which illuminates *our condition* only by contrast” (1987:41 emphasis added). It is unclear here whether Gellner shares the hypothesis that contemporary Moroccan Berbers represent the pan-European past. What is clear is that Gellner was in no way addressing Moroccan or a wider Muslim intelligentsia; the “we” and the “our” refer to “European societies.” Combining Orientalist *and* Darwinian tropes to make the case for segmentarity guaranteed rejection by a wide variety of post-colonial scholars. This framing has led many to reject the idea of segmentarity *tout court* -- as a cultural model or as social reality.

There is, however, a more intriguing theoretical point. Durkheim suggests an irony in the emergence of what Elias (1994 [1939]) and others call “civilization,” which is that an increasing specialization of labor gives rise to deeper and more binding ties between people. Even if Berbers cannot be considered Europe's contemporary ancestors, it makes some logical sense to imagine that societies with less specialization of labor may be less densely dependent (parts can survive independently, more like the segments of a worm rather than the limbs of a mammal) while the individual is also less free to pursue her or his particular calling (because there are fewer callings available in a non-specialized society). From this perspective a compelling interdependence is the price of our contemporary “freedom.” This is a Rousseauian twist to the social evolutionary model. It echoes Freud, Foucault and others in that it is modern society and its fine-grained divisions of labor and status that smothers the soul with surveillance, with a pervasive discipline required of extreme interconnectedness. Contemporary theorists of globalization have taken up this thread, arguing that “The qualitative difference between traditional and modern life-stories is not, as many assume, that in older corporate and agrarian

societies various suffocating controls and guidelines restricted the individual's say in his or her own life to a minimum, whereas today hardly any restrictions are left. It is, in fact, in the bureaucratic and institutional jungle of modernity that life is most securely bound into networks of guidelines and regulations" (Beck 2000:166). In this sense Gellner is not simply commenting on the obscure customs of North African agro-pastoralists and the saints who litigate on their tribal borders. He is addressing fundamental questions of social order.

And there is more. While Durkheim, as the title *De la division du travail social* suggests, was interested primarily in the division of labor, Gellner extended this concern to political organization. Durkheim writes "We do not have to show the analogies between the type which replaces the preceding one and that of organic societies. *In one case as in the other, the structure derives from the division of labor and its solidarity*" (1964 [1893]: 192, emphasis added). Gellner's contribution was to extend Durkheim's framework for the social division of labor to political organization, or at least to explicitly connect Evans-Pritchard's political model of segmentarity (1940:139-191) to the broader Durkheimian thesis.<sup>8</sup> Gellner makes strong claims for his political model, too, writing that amongst Berbers in the Moroccan mountains "a separation of powers is not merely a check on tyranny, as intended in classical political theory, but also a check on inequality. The inegalitarian potential of society is as it were drained by the saints. *Here, at least, equality and liberty go together*" (1969:64, emphasis added).

This is a venerable theme and Gellner's promise to have ethnographically located a contemporary social order of free men and "balanced" power imprinted itself on a generation of scholars—even as the framing of it excited explosive opposition. Thus, since the 1970s the notion of segmentarity has staggered on, undead. Despite demonstrated theoretical weakness and a lack of empirical support, at least in Morocco, segmentarity will not stay buried.

## Exhumation

Amartya Sen calls it a "category mistake" to oppose liberty and equality since "Liberty is among the possible fields of application of equality..." (Sen 1992:22). This gives us a clue as to why Gellner's formulation offers a starting point as much as a dead end: the particular field that Gellner and his informants choose to emphasize as "equal" illuminates something more general about the way inequality operates (or is made to operate) in society. This assertion builds on Sen's observation that "...the major ethical theories of social arrangement all share an endorsement of equality in terms of some focal variable, even though the variables that are selected are frequently very different between one theory and another" (Ibid. 3). While here we are trying to ascertain Amazigh "theories of social arrangement" rather than the views of professional social theorists, I believe there are important convergences between the "idiots" (Robertson 2001:104) and the putative savants. Here I will emphasize the importance of time to inequality (Pickering 2004, Verdery 2001) and argue that we need to contextualize "spaces of inequality" in time. Only thus can we explore how local inequalities intersect larger systems, how they concatenate through time into "durable inequalities" (Tilly 1998), or are "drained" (in Gellner's terms) to transform short-term inequalities into longer term equity.

There is, however, some question as to whether such equity existed in the first place. Abdellah Hammoudi, for instance, has argued convincingly that the political reality in the area controlled by the Ait 'Atta was not, in fact, genealogically organized or egalitarian in any real sense. Instead of segmentary equality (notwithstanding the distinction between saints and lay tribes) Gellner's anthropological object is more correctly parsed into a three-tiered, stratified

system of *immazighen* (often translated as “free men,” the shepherds and warriors), “saints” or *igurramen*, and the *iharaden*, who “work the land and practice crafts”—divisions that are strongly endogamous (1980 [1974]:287). These groups are said by Hammoudi to be “like castes” and “a genuine division of labour divides these three categories” (Ibid.). Munson too finds almost nothing to empirically substantiate Gellner’s theory (1991, 1993), though Hart, in the same note where he expressed substantive doubts about Gellner’s ethnography, still writes that he finds *Saints of the Atlas* “full of good ideas.”<sup>9</sup> However good the ideas, Gellner confused a stratified caste system with one imagined to have an egalitarian balance or rotation of power in the Middle Atlas. In his later rebuttals to critics Gellner addresses this obliquely, arguing that “lay tribes” were “at the edge of [his] field of vision” (1996:641), but this undermines the argument that the saintly tribes were crucial mediators, and certainly the idea that segmentarity is distinctively Berber.

The area of the Western High Atlas where I work reveals yet another pre-colonial history: the complete domination of a region by one of the two moieties (called *lfuf*, sing. *leff*) and the ascendance of a series of fathers and sons within one *leff*. There is no “balance” here, and no rotation of power except where power is seized. I rely on Hammoudi and others to debunk the Middle Atlas claims, but before and during the Protectorate the section of the High Atlas south of Marrakech, between the Haouz Plain and the Sous Valley, was in the hands of men labeled the *grand caids*, petty-dictators with absolute authority over their domain. The Agoundis, the specific valley where I conducted research, had fallen under the control of Si Ahmed Ait Lahcen of Tagoundaft around the middle of the nineteenth century (Montagne 1930:14). It is he who spawned the political category “the Goundafi,” and his sons Mohammed and Tayeb inherited the title when they grew in turn to take power.<sup>10</sup> The people living under the Goundafi *caid* came to be called “the Goundafa” on French “tribal” maps, but there was nothing very tribal about this arrangement, at least if we conceive of the term to involve an imagined genealogical link between the people and their leaders, the succession of Ait Lahcen *caids* from Tagoundaft.<sup>11</sup> Nobody in the Agoundis imagines themselves to be so linked. The people of the Agoundis were political subjects, pure and simple. One could call them a “branch” of the Goundafa, but this would only be true in the sense that their territorial *nisba*<sup>12</sup> was part of the broader politico-territorial *nisba* by which the term “Goundafa” gains meaning. The genealogical principle does not today extend far, if at all, beyond particular villages, similar to the situation Roberts identifies in Kabylia (2002:120). Segmentarity accomplishes no significant larger-scale social or political organization in this region.

The area does have “saints.” The Agoundis abuts the territory of the neighboring Glaoui *caid*, and above the village where I worked, on the ridge leading into Glaoui territory, there is a shrine to the *marabout* Lalla Azzou Lahcen and next to it a village of *igurramen* at Zaouite n Oumslane. They seem to have been unable to broker much peace, however, and only intermittently proved able to use their *baraka* to protect raiders fleeing either the Goundafi or the Glaoui. They certainly were not able to facilitate egalitarian rule at an inter- or intra-tribal level or dampen the aggressive impulses of the two great *caids*. These days *igurramen* farm, like everyone else, and I could find no one who paid much special attention to them at all. Today the particular village in which I worked is clearly under the authority of the Moroccan state. Though it received its first road in 1996 and a school in 1998, everyone has long recognized the Rabat-appointed *caid* as the final arbiter of crime and punishment. He is based 20 km away in Talat n Yacoub and is assisted by a coterie of officials appointed from amongst the local population.

There is nothing –absolutely nothing—segmentary about any of this. Venema may be correct that local political institutions in the Middle Atlas remain “vital” (2002), but vitality is different than segmentarity, at least in Gellner’s terms. As near as I can tell there has been nothing segmentary about the political organization of the Agoundis since at least the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Locals understand three distinct political periods: the time of the Goundafi *caids*, the time of the French *caids*, and the current period when *caids* are imposed from Rabat. Each period is undeniably characterized by authoritarianism, though each period is seen as an improvement over its predecessor. None of these categories has or had anything to do with genealogical reckoning, at least outside of the family from which the *caids* were drawn.

Given the historical and spatial diversity in Berber political organization, and the many extended critiques of the segmentary model, it is telling that we still read that “Ethnographic and anthropological studies of the Berbers are *almost unanimous* in their insistence on one overwhelming characteristic of Berber society: its segmentary organization” (Brett and Fentress 1996:231, emphasis added) and that “Berber social organization is based on what structural-functional anthropologists call the segmentary lineage model” (Ilahiane 1999:28). The notion of segmentarity is not dead, and it seems quintessentially Amazigh.<sup>13</sup> Few claims are made about Arab segmentarity in Morocco.

### The Social Operation of Segmentarity – A Case

If the segmentary model has been overextended to encompass all of the socio-political organization of all Amazigh people at all times, there is still one important application of the concept in the village where I work: collective labor for canal repair.<sup>14</sup> Collective labor is essential in the winter (when irrigation canals are washed away by rain) and in the summer (when the water level in the river drops low enough to require a series of temporary dams to be built), as well as for one-time, village-wide projects. Villagers aim to create five balanced labor groups of four men each, or twenty total men for the duration of any project. There is a clear ideal of “fairness” in the construction of these groups. However, the social units that should be “fair” (i.e. Sen’s “focal variables”) are *both* lineages (*ighsan*, or “bones”) and households (*tikatin* or hearths). Segmentarity does not “specify its own application” (Dresch 1986:312), but this does not imply that “a new set of actions... that does contradict the original categories becomes possible only with explicit redefinition” (Ibid. 320). The “original categories” are both plural and practically contradictory. People *produce* coherence; coherence is not immanent in the structure of the categories.<sup>15</sup>

As I have noted elsewhere (Crawford 2003:466) one difficulty is that households cannot possibly contribute to a project equally at a given time.<sup>16</sup> A newly married couple who form an independent household cannot, for instance, send a man to work on a broken canal or a new dam and continue to irrigate the household fields; an extended family household with half a dozen or more adult men would have no problem sparing one or more men for collective projects. The social unit “household” in fact describes a wide variety of empirical situations (Mundy 1995:5), and thus households do not suffice to manage collective property. This claim has been critiqued as “functionalist,” but it seems to me undeniable that the dependence of “private” property (fields) on “public,” village-owned irrigation canals demands a creative organizational response, some way of achieving larger social purposes. Households are vastly different over their life spans (Robertson 1991), and are not “simple units that can be added up,” a critique Donham has leveled at Sahlins and Meillassoux (1999:102). One response to the variability within

households has been, in the Agoundis Valley at least, to exchange labor between households over the long term.<sup>17</sup>

These exchanges depend on cultural norms of “fairness,” but, again, these are contradictory: households should 1. contribute male labor equally to the group, but 2. no household should be overburdened to the point that the domestic economy is threatened. The local solution has been to agglomerate households into five larger groups –*temaideen*—and within these allow larger households to contribute more labor now (to compensate for smaller households), while presumably the smaller households grow and support other new families in turn. The number five seems arbitrary, though my informants stressed the importance of five to Islam in terms of the number of daily prayers and the five pillars of the faith.<sup>18</sup> Importantly, the fairness or equality in this scheme is necessarily *fairness over time, not fairness at any particular time*. Grouping households allows flexibility so that men can exchange labor to meet public responsibilities and private irrigation requirements.

The logic by which households are assembled into groups is clearly segmentary in that it relies on idealized genealogical relationships and demonstrates a concern with balance between the segments constructed from these ideals. The creation of the five culturally necessary *temaideen* involves the linked processes of fission and fusion (Gellner 1969:60) --“linked” because fission provides the ideological framework for division and balance, while fusion is practically necessary to stitch together shreds of familial relatedness left from the detritus of history, from variations in fertility and migration. *Temaideen* are what lineages ought to be. Assembling groups that nominally accord with the segmentary pattern ensures an ideal parity between groups and a useful authority within them. The elder men of all of the five *temaideen* work together by invoking their authority over the younger men of their particular labor group. Any particular project involves both equality (among older men and between labor groups) and inequality (within labor groups, since younger men are made to work by their elders). The system is only “fair” to younger men if they remain involved long enough to become elders, and thus to benefit from the long term “structural duration” of the operation (Gluckman 1968:221).

Gerontocracy is hardly the only form of inequality embedded in this determinedly “equal” arrangement, however. Different households own very different amounts of property, for instance, which means that any given project benefits some far more than others. No attempt is made to render labor commitments commensurate with property ownership. Households with two fields irrigated by a canal are just as responsible for that canal’s maintenance as households owning twenty. This demonstrates again Sen’s thesis: actualizations of particular forms of equality imply other forms of inequality.

More interesting for the question of segmentarity are the inequalities in the structure of the groups themselves. For example, one of labor group is made up of the Ait Ali and the Ait Hussein lineages, who evenly split the labor requirement of their group – two men from each lineage per day per project. This is “balanced” in a segmentary sense; the lineage founders Ali and Hussein were brothers; their father Mohammed is the eponymous founder of the larger Ben Oushen lineage, to which both the Ait Hussein and the Ait Ali belong. Two other sons comprise a second work group and split their labor “equally” too, thus the descendents of each of Mohammed’s four sons contribute the same amount of labor to communal labor projects.

This formal equality is in other ways quite obviously unfair. The Ait Ali have more than twice as many laborers as the Ait Hussein, and many more fields. We do not know if the Ait Hussein will eventually grow larger than the Ait Ali and render today’s inequality equitable in a more extended temporal framework, but we should not simply assume so if for no other reason

than such recurrent, cyclical labor exchanges still happen in historical time and thus articulate with the non-recursive flow of events. Time itself flows one direction no matter how humans arrange the rhythms of their lives within it (Gell 1992:36).

The Ait Hussein do not like the present disadvantageous but segmentarily sensible division, but they lack an idiom to effectively challenge it as unfair. Not surprisingly members of the Ait Ali are amongst the most enthusiastic proponents of village development projects, as the labor for these projects is organized according to a system which favors them. The Ait Ali rely on an ideology that privileges *certain aspects of fairness* to maintain a system that benefits them. Sen's work suggests that this is quite common; discourses of equality often justify social advantage, whether in the United States, the People's Republic of China or highland Morocco.

In the Agoundis Valley the point is that some Ait Ali patriarchs are using this (perhaps temporary) local advantage to tap larger economic and political systems. My main informant Abderrahman, for instance, was able to lobby Moroccan government officials in Marrakech for financial help getting a tourist guesthouse started. He is able to do this because he is not himself laboring and has the time to go to Marrakech and petition in various offices. Abderrahman is simultaneously at the peak of his household productive power (he has several adult sons to do the physical labor required by the household economy) while at the peak of his lineage's productive power (Abderrahman is a member of the Ait Ali and the Ait Hussein shoulder half the labor responsibilities for the labor group). This fortunate conjunction –the lucky intersection of two cycles of in/equality-- puts Abderrahman in a position to seize advantages in the world outside the village.<sup>19</sup>

The case of Abderrahman Ait Ben Oushen may shed light on the rural dynamics of what is often termed “globalization.” Abderrahman demonstrates that social revolution need not spring from a majority, or even a sizable minority, and it need not involve a cataclysmic, transformative moment. Abderrahman is not “typical,” both because of his interest in “modernity” and his determination to seize its advantages for himself. His success at putting the larger political and economic system to work for personal gain means his co-villagers are going to have a very difficult time regenerating a society of equals. Beck argues that “active management... is necessary for the conduct of life in a context of conflicting demands and a space of global uncertainty” (2000:170), but I would contend that all social orders require such “active management.” Uncertainty is hardly a function of modernity. The segmentary organization of labor in the Agoundis is not a predetermined cultural script merely enacted by farmers in a stable environment, but a set of contradictory and inchoate discourses that are put to active use by sensible and often cunning men (Dresch 1986:318, Dumont 1980:6, Roseberry 1989:10). “Just because what is done is culturally logical does not mean the logic determined that it be done –let alone by whom, when or why...” (Sahlins 1999:409).

Abderrahman got money for his tourist hut from the government; he worked with a local Peace Corps volunteer, with the new school teachers, with other development agents, with me. He now has two sons working in the city and returning their wages to the village and no labor shortage at home. These days Abderrahman is able to hire labor for projects, sell goods, “invest” in a locally understood sense of the term, and buy his way out of communal obligations that in other circumstances might have allowed for the “draining of the inegalitarian potential” of society. In this sense global capitalism, state power and development efforts are merely the latest manifestations of encompassing economic and political systems that ambitious and lucky local men have managed to employ. The fleeting “temporalities of the market” (Miyazaki 2003) are incorporated into local circumstances because they are purposefully articulated by men

whose power is based in localized social rhythms, in longer term transactions of in/equality. If segmentarity remains alive in Morocco, it is because it continues to be practiced –put to work by men with interests beyond the reproduction of the social order.

### Conclusion: Segmentarity as Undead

Ernest Gellner pointed us towards the significance of segmentarity in the Moroccan countryside, towards the discourse of equality that animates it, and towards the roots of the concept in Durkheim’s influential theories of mechanical solidarity. However, Gellner failed to pursue Durkheim’s lead and examine the social division of labor before theorizing the political order of the High Atlas. In restricting himself to political labor, and then only the labor of saints, Gellner missed an opportunity to discover the practical applications and limitations of the segmentary discourse in Morocco.

Gellner imagined that only segmentary logic existed in Amazigh society, though he confined his claims to saints among the Ait ‘Atta later in life (Gellner 1996). More problematically Gellner did not examine the implications of how a logic that privileges balance between lineage “segments” operates in an economy founded on household production.<sup>20</sup> Households are the primary unit of production and consumption in the High Atlas, not lineages. The articulation of household dynamics with larger social entities is central to understanding how particular “productive inequalities” at one level play out at another (Donham 1999:100).<sup>21</sup> Importantly, “reproduction is as likely to determine economic activities as *vice versa*... because economic and reproductive processes are *not* simultaneous, but operate and interact in different timespans” (Robertson 1991:153, emphasis original). Understanding the economic role of segmentarity demands attention to the patterned transformations of households, “the ultimate dialectic of mating and the family” (Kelly in Levine et al, 2002:74). A “structure” like segmentarity that is elsewhere said to be employed to mitigate political conflicts works differently when used to organize agricultural labor.<sup>22</sup>

This touches on the debate about the concept of “structure” itself, and charges that such a notion is “ahistorical” or ignores “agency.” A thorough review of this literature is beyond our scope here, but in his defense of the idea of structure Sahlins states explicitly that cultures or traditions are “fundamentally... atemporal” (1999:412). One problem with such a claim lies in the ambiguity over the sort of temporal process denied; another lies in the visual and physical resonance of the word “structure.” Rhythm, or more particularly the interplay of rhythms, allows for a more useful –and inescapably temporal—understanding of structure, and in this sense we can say that the social division of labor must be *orchestrated*. Such orchestration is necessary because the most basic productive inequalities in society are only comprehensible in the context of their specific durations –irrigation rotations, seasons, and the slow flow and ebb of lifetimes. More broadly than just labor organization, Amartya Sen’s Nobel prize-winning work has made it clear that any framework of equality necessarily invokes the question “equality of what?” (Sen 1992:ix). Here we suggest that it also involves an “equality of when.”

However Sen’s insightful analysis, it still rests disproportionately on academic arguments about political and economic arrangements. To engage the “untidy welter of living practice” (Mundy 1995:5) Charles Tilly has developed what seems a helpful complement to Sen, a “relational theory of inequality.” Tilly writes “For the neat multi-dimensional space of conventional treatments, [relational theory] substitutes a dynamic tangle of incomplete, clumped, and changing connections. From a relational perspective, inequality appears everywhere, but it

rarely crystallizes into neat, continuous hierarchies somehow arraying whole populations into strata. A relational analysis leads to the conclusion that any such hierarchies... rest on extensive social effort, only emerge under unusual historical conditions, and undergo incessant pressure for modification” (2001:362-63).

It is notable that Tilly writes of *any such hierarchies*, not simply those involved in “modern” or “globalized” conditions, as Beck (2000) and others would have us believe; farmers are as active and careful as sociologists in their determinations of social order, perhaps more so. In many ways local social arrangements in the Agoundis achieve some intended equality over time, and men seeking advantage must look outside the local system for ways to capitalize on momentary fortune. This general condition is probably not new even if the opportunities facilitated by our contemporary situation are unprecedented; the socially ambitious always look for opportunities in larger political and economic systems for the means to consolidate ephemeral local inequalities and render advantage “durable” (Tilly 1998). Today it is through the efforts of men to stabilize temporary good fortune that “outside” state power and capitalist relations are intercalated into village life. Economists’ efforts to capture these processes too often fail because of their emphasis on short-term transactions (Robertson 1991:25).

Thus, equality, inequality and temporality are inextricably linked. Analysis of social reproduction *and* transformation demands that we transcend understandings of time as either a unified, linear progression or a particularized and entirely relative feature of collective consciousness, a shared cultural core.<sup>23</sup> We must examine instead the complex “intermesh” of temporalities involved in society (Gluckman 1968:223), particularly the operations of in/equality through which social life is produced. It is only by parsing temporal frameworks that we can distinguish between “durable inequalities” and more complex, extended, and interrelated sets of transactions I would call “equitable inequalities.”

Understandings –discourses, *diagrammes*, cultural models—facilitate the meshing of temporalities, but these are often plural and difficult to integrate, and are but tools in the pursuit of “structured” desire (Ortner 1999:22). Stone demonstrates something of this plurality in a study of temporalities in music (1986:114), but we need to extend her model to the machinations of labor, to the temporal dynamics of *habitus* and practice that drive history. The “small batch of schemes enabling agents to generate an infinity of practices... have some practical efficacy only to the extent that [such schemes are] skillfully manipulated by the holders of authority” (Bourdieu 1977:16). The structural coherence of practice emerges through the active manipulation of discourses in time.

Imazighen are recognizable to themselves and others because they are perceived to *do things* in certain ways, because they choose and deploy ideas from their social milieu to accomplish goals simultaneously material and ideal. Segmentarity is one such idea and understanding its discursive iterations and practical application helps us to understand the behavior of High Atlas farmers. Significantly, deployments of ideas like segmentarity happen in time, at times, through time, because of time, as Mauss and those Gluckman called “the dialecticians” have, in different contexts, tried to point out. If taken out of time --out of social rhythms or broader, non-recursive history-- such dynamics die. Segmentarity can be said to exist where it is put to work -- in the Moroccan mountains (where it helps in building canals) and in academia (where it has helped build careers). In the latter case the notion has been reified, wrenched from the sensuous and *timeful* flesh of social life in a way that leaves it, at best, undead.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This paper has benefited from incisive comments by Hillary Haldane, Dennis Hodgson, Sandy Robertson, Mark Schuller, Paul Silverstein, and anonymous others.

<sup>2</sup> The literature on “globalization” is vast and contentious and cannot be addressed here at any depth. I accept “globalization” to refer to a linked economic, political and cultural process, a global “combination of deregulated capital movements, advances in information/ communication/ transport technologies, and a shift in the ideology away from social democracy and statism towards neoliberalism and libertarianism” (Desai 2002:299). However, my focus in this paper is on one small part of this, the way that local people in the rural economy put larger political and economic systems to work.

<sup>3</sup> See Berque (1978), Combs-Schilling (1985), Dresch (1986), Hammoudi (1980), Hart (1981, 1989), Kraus (1998), Munson (1991, 1993, 1997), Pascon (1979), Rachik (1992), Roberts (2002) and Waterbury (1991), amongst others. In contrast to the work on segmentarity, Ensel (1999) and Ilahiane (1996, 1998) offer very interesting portraits of institutionalized inequality in the Moroccan context. See Gellner (1996) for a response to some of his critics.

<sup>4</sup> In his more recent “Reply to Critics” Gellner still maintains that what “makes a society segmentary” is the “*near-total* absence of *any other* institution” (1996:649).

<sup>5</sup> In this paper I use Berber / Amazigh and Berbers / Imazighen interchangeably.

<sup>6</sup> This insight is taken from Roberts (2002).

<sup>7</sup> As Fanny Colonna suggests in the introduction to the reissue of Masqueray (1983 [1886]), and as Roberts demonstrates at length (2002:119), Kabyle villages are not comprised of a single clan, and in any case there seems to be no evidence that “clans” of sedentary Kabyle farmers are socially detachable –from each other or from the land.

<sup>8</sup> See Gellner (1987:31) where he comments on the similarity between his notion of segmentarity and Durkheim’s. Durkheim is absent from Evans-Pritchard’s bibliography, though the latter is credited by Gellner with transferring Durkheim’s ideas to anthropology.

<sup>9</sup> David Hart, personal communication.

<sup>10</sup> See Hammoudi (1997, Chapter 4) for both a history of the *caid* and a deconstruction of the terms used to produce such a history.

<sup>11</sup> See Berque (1953) for a classic discussion of the term “tribe.”

<sup>12</sup> See Rosen (1984:30) for a discussion of *nisba*.

<sup>13</sup> The “Berberness” and egalitarian nature of segmentarity has been seized by Amazigh activists as evidence of their distinction from Arabs, a topic that deserves more attention.

<sup>14</sup> This is necessarily *male* labor. The significance of female labor in the Atlas has been dramatically undervalued and consistently ignored. It is not segmentarily organized, however, and thus will be absent from this account.

<sup>15</sup> In replying to Munson in particular Gellner argues that there are but three options for social order in the Atlas: segmentary order, no order, or “order maintained by some other principle” (1996:650). From my perspective the issue is the plurality of “orders” or “principles,” and their discursive foundations, practical interrelationships, and their expression in time.

<sup>16</sup> Principally this is because households are extremely demographically unequal due to the vagaries of biology, ontogeny, and the domestic cycle (Robertson 1996).

<sup>17</sup> Ghosh has argued that “...agrarian rhythms of work have their own equally exacting organizational demands, for they transfer into the axis of time the interlocking of functions which the production line achieves in space” (1985:115). I discuss the household organization of labor in some depth in Crawford (2001).

<sup>18</sup> See the Camps (1984) entry under “cinq” or “semmus” in the *Encyclopédie berbère* for a discussion of the significance of the number five.

<sup>19</sup> I use “in/equality” to stress the complementary relationship between equality and inequality (Crawford 2003).

<sup>20</sup> Abu-Lughod complains that “Economic anthropology has hardly been done in the Middle East” (1989:299) and that there has been an overemphasis on “agonistic” rather than “affiliative” concerns (Ibid. 286), both issues I have tried to address here.

<sup>21</sup> Dalton demonstrates similar temporal dynamics in U.S. families. He notes that household transformations and broader historical changes are “stamped upon... offspring differently depending on their age, sex, birth position, and other individual propensities” (Dalton 2004:B6).

<sup>22</sup> See Rachik (1992) for a fascinating study of how some of the notions of fairness and balance inherent to segmentarity become politicized in the context of a ritual sacrifice in the High Atlas. See Lindholm (1995) for a review of literature on the relationship between power and the ethic of egalitarianism in the Middle East.

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<sup>23</sup> See Fortes (1970), Fabian (1983), Friedman (1985), Gell (1992) and Munn (1992) for discussion of the anthropology of time.

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