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**PROSPERITY AND VIOLENCE**

**SECOND EDITION**

## 2

# AGRARIAN SOCIETIES

*Every family naturally tended to become larger and the head of every family wanted to grow richer, so that he could . . . increase the numbers of men and women . . . in his household.*

—GEORGES DUBY, *FRANCE IN THE  
MIDDLE AGES, 987-1460*, XI

**SOCIETIES THAT ARE NOW** urban and industrial were once rural and agrarian. Prior to the great transformation, the lives of their people resembled the lives of those who now dwell in what we call developing societies. They lived in homesteads and hamlets, supported themselves by farming, and organized production, social life, and the affairs of their communities through the medium of their families.

In agrarian societies, families organize production, consumption, and the accumulation of wealth, be it monetary or in the form of cattle, land, or dependents. They also manage the use of power. Not only daily life but also affairs of state flow through the

networks spun by birth, marriage, and descent. For better or worse, the actions of the Habsburgs, the Romanovs, the Tudors, and the Bourbons dictated much of the history of what are now the advanced industrial nations of Europe. And the House of Saud in Arabia, the al-Tikriti clan in Iraq, the Gandhis in India, the Bhuttos in Pakistan, the Zias in Bangladesh, or the "dynastic families" (Paige 1997) in Central America—the Ariases, Cristianis, Chamorros, and others—shape the course of politics in today's developing nations.

Societies dominated by kinship are often seen as static. Political sociologists, such as Weber, view them as preoccupied with the "eternal yesterday" (1958, 78) and therefore as tradition bound and unchanging. Anthropologists often cast them in the "timeless present," describing the lives of their members as if they were suspended in amber. And while conceding the efficiency of their practices, neoclassical economists nonetheless stress the poverty of such societies, which results, they claim, from their failure to invest in technical change (e.g., Schultz 1976). Unwittingly forging a consensus that spans the ideological divide of our times, Marxist anthropologists (e.g., Meillassoux 1981, Godelier 1972) join in this characterization, consigning kinship societies to the category of "pre-capitalist." Their members may occupy land; through kinship, they may organize and control labor, and thereby engage in exploitation; but they lack capital, and therefore can merely replicate, rather than transform, themselves.

The argument of this chapter is that this consensus is wrong. If only as a consequence of demographic change, such societies are dynamic; they expand, differentiate, and engage in exchange and conflict. Pace Weber, in the presence of change and differentiation, their members employ reason and make choices; pace the Marxist anthropologists and neoclassical economists, they form capital, albeit in the context of kinship rather than markets.

This point was forcefully taught to me by an old man in the copper belt of Zambia. Although among the last regions of Africa to be occupied by the British, the copper belt soon became one of the most industrialized; within fifty years of its occupation, a score of mining towns rendered it among the most urbanized as well. As astronomers use the light cast by receding stars to study the origins of the universe, so too have social scientists studied the life of the Zambian copper belt to comprehend the formation of modern societies. As a graduate student, I journeyed there to probe the process by which industries grow, cities form, and labor forces assemble. "Look behind you," the old man said: "See that smelter?" Pausing for effect, he then announced: "I built it." The mine's records confirmed that he had indeed been employed in its construction. From him I then learned of how his family, hearing of new jobs to be had in the town, had given him food and *indalama* (money) for his journey; how, having secured a job, he had sent back first for his younger brothers and then for his nephews; how, while in town, he had sent money to his mother and uncles and visited his village to take part in weddings and funerals; and how, as his retirement drew near, he then sent money home to purchase cattle and build a toolshed and a *duka* (country store) on land set aside for him by the village headman, into whose family his sister had married.

This man's family had invested in his migration to town. He had helped to build the plant that refined a major portion of the ores mined in Zambia. He in turn invested the money he had earned in town in his family and his village. Through his life, the aged miner had demonstrated how persons in agrarian societies probe for opportunities and, drawing on the resources of kin, form capital.

Building on the insights offered by the wizened miner from

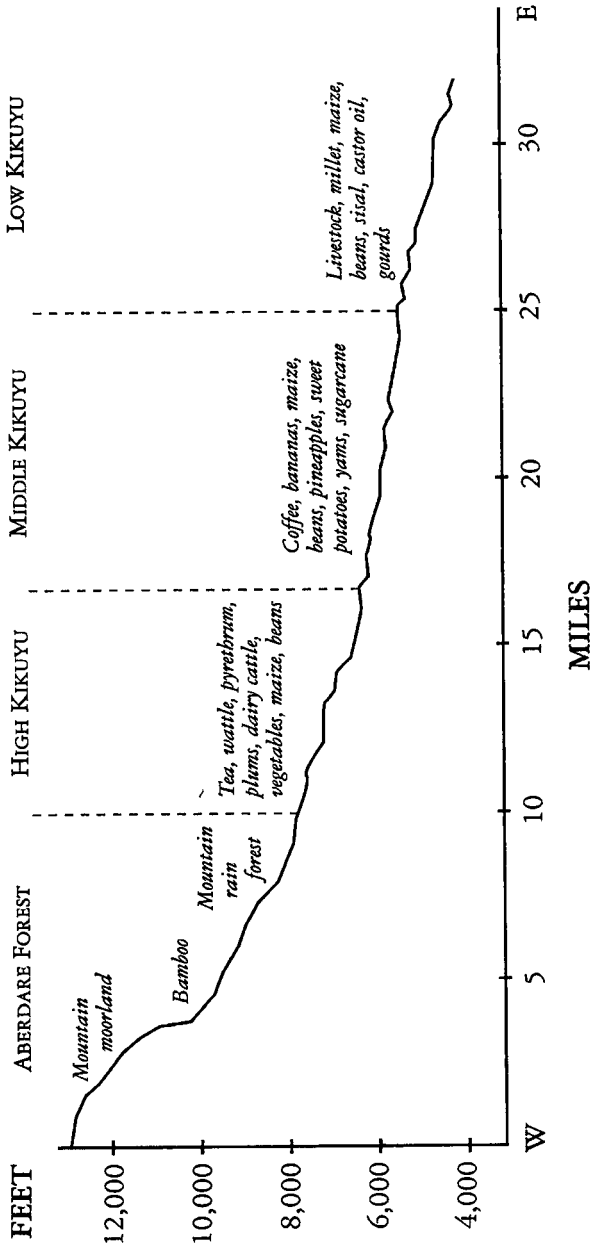
the copper belt, this chapter explores the economic role of families in developing societies. It also evaluates the quality of the protection that they provide against damaging acts of nature and human beings. While stressing on the one hand the economic vitality and political capabilities of kinship societies, on the other it stresses that their political institutions constrain what their economies can achieve. Confined by the institutions that structure their lives, members of lineage societies confront a trade-off between prosperity and peace—a trade-off they later escape as part of the great transformation.

### THE ECONOMICS OF KINSHIP

In addressing the economics of lineage societies, we may best start with an example. Of the many from which to choose, I select the Kikuyu, a society in central Kenya. As I shall several times return to this example, I provide (Figure 2.1) a cross section of a portion of the highlands wherein they dwell.

The mountains of central Kenya, with their rich volcanic soils, temperate climate, and abundant and reliable rainfall, offer the Kikuyu a highly favorable location for agriculture. Growing beans, vegetables, maize, and fruit, and raising livestock, the Kikuyu have prospered and multiplied and their homesteads have spread into the lower elevations. Livestock use more land than do gardens; and as the highlands became crowded, families dispatched their goats and cattle to the lowlands. Releasing lands from pastoral use, the Kikuyu thereby freed up space for gardens in the core. As the younger members of the family herded cattle on the periphery, they marked out sites for new homesteads. Where they made contact with other peoples, they negotiated rights of passage for their herds and

**FIGURE 2.1**  
*Topography of Central Kenya*



Source: Adapted from D. R. J. Taylor, "Agricultural Change in Kikuyuland," in *Environment and Land Use in Africa*, eds. M. F. Thomas and G. W. Whittington (London: Methuen, 1959), p. 485.

rights of occupation for new settlements—rights they hoped, by guile or force of numbers, to turn into rights of ownership. Expansion, infiltration, settlement, and the dispatching of younger households to the periphery—this dynamic marks the history of this people and its constituent kinship units. The story of the Kikuyu is paralleled in Africa by the story of the Mossi, the Ashanti, the Nuer, the Tswana, and the Tiv.<sup>1</sup> In Latin America it finds its parallel in the history of settlement in Antioquia in central Colombia (Parsons 1949); in North America, in the spread of settlers through the Ohio Valley and into the Western Plains; in Asia, in the expansion of Russian peoples to the south and west (Blum 1961); and in Europe, by the sweep of the Germanic tribes west and south into the territories claimed by Rome (Ausenda 1995; Bartlett 1993).

The history of agrarian societies, such as the Kikuyu, can be addressed as a series of themes. Taken together, they offer insight into the origins of, and limits to, prosperity in kinship societies.

## MIGRATION

The first families to arrive in a region naturally tend to settle in the ecologically most favored locations. While rainfall may be sparse, seasonal, or erratic in the lowlands, the mountains often receive high levels of moisture the year round, and at regular intervals. While temperatures may vary dramatically in the lowlands, they remain relatively stable and temperate in the moisture-laden atmosphere of the higher elevations, providing a favorable climate for agriculture. At times of peril, moreover,

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Leakey (1977); Evans-Pritchard (1940); Bohannon (1989); Werbner (1993); and Saul (1993).

the inhabitants can take refuge in upland redoubts, and thereby protect themselves from aggressors. As was the case of the Kikuyu, migrants may therefore settle first in the rich volcanic soils of the highlands.

Seeking to farm well and safely, families therefore settle in favored locations. With the passage of time, as new households form, population increases and, with it, the density of settlement. To increase their food supplies, families may press into service the elderly or very young. Alternatively, they may bring into production less fertile lands: those that lie on thin or rocky soils, or those that lie in more remote or forested locations and therefore require greater inputs of labor. Because of the use of either less productive labor or more marginal land, the increase in population is not matched by comparable increases in output. The average level of consumption therefore declines.

In response to diminishing returns in the core, population begins to spread to the periphery. Families begin to search for new farm sites. Staking a younger member to food and funds for his journey, inhabitants of the old settlement dispatch the cadet as if he were a scout, sending him out to explore the periphery. Once the junior locates a favorable locale, his kin soon follow. As families grow, they therefore expand both in number and extent, ramifying through diverse ecologies and infiltrating new territories. Families thereby acquire new resources. The investment in the initial costs of migration yields a subsequent return.

The family thus functions both as an instrument of territorial expansion (Sahlins 1961) and of investment. Even in pre-capitalist societies, people form capital.

## MARKETS

The process of migration generates a dispersion of population. As a consequence, families come to occupy a diverse set of eco-



logical niches. They therefore gain the opportunity to specialize in production and to engage in exchange; that is, they form markets and thereby increase their welfare. By doing so, they not only increase their expected incomes but also reduce the level of the risks they confront in rural life.

Returning to Figure 2.1, we see that the East African highlands constitute a diverse terrain with opportunities for specialization and trade. The higher elevations yield timber and bamboo from the forests and vegetables from the clearings. As the elevation declines and the forest becomes less dense, people shift into the production of maize, potatoes, and beans. The duration of the growing period diminishes as the altitude declines, and at lower altitudes the production of maize therefore gives way to the production of millet and sorghum, which ripen more quickly. At still lower elevations, precipitation becomes uncertain, and standing crops therefore give way to grazing livestock that can be herded to where rain has recently fallen. Homesteads along the lakes in the valley below provide base camps for the cattle herders, places to plant gardens, and opportunities for fishing.

The diversity of the ecosystem thus promotes diversity in production and, with it, exchange over space. Traders move up the hills, bringing fish, meat, and leather; they return down, bearing timber and vegetables and medicines gathered in the forests. The diversity also promotes exchange over time. As the rains abate, the growing season ends and the harvest begins. Typically the end of the growing season arrives first at the lower elevations; the harvest then moves upward from the lowlands to the plateau and foothills and then up the sides of the mountains. At the end of the harvest, families possess more food than they can consume; many therefore sell a portion of their crop to others who have not yet harvested, only to purchase foodstuffs later in the year as they await the ripening of their crops.

In this diversified ecological setting, then, markets dot the mountainside or stand at crossroads in the flatlands below. Each exhibits a wide range of products, each produced in its own special habitat. The dispersion of settlement down the mountainside and into the foothills, plateaus, and lowlands thus results in specialization and trade.

### RISK

Agrarian societies are societies at risk. Drought, disease, erosion, flood; too little water, or too much—these acts of nature have a direct impact upon the welfare of rural societies. Nature can be bounteous, but it also can be cruel.

Industrial societies possess markets for risk. People can purchase insurance, thereby protecting themselves against misfortune. Through financial markets, they can borrow in times of need. But pre-industrial societies lack such opportunities. People in such societies cannot shed risk by transacting in markets. Instead, they must directly bear the costs of uncertainty; they must self-insure. Two of the most obvious ways in which they do so is by making "conservative" decisions and by "failing" to specialize.

Technocrats often bewail the reluctance of peasant farmers to grow crops with demonstrably greater yields than those that they traditionally cultivate. But like most people, farmers are risk averse. In comparing two streams of income, they therefore evaluate not only their average but also their variability; it is the latter that suggests the likelihood of a bad outcome. They accept a lower expected yield as the price they must pay for a lower variance. As a result, they make "conservative" decisions: they grow crops that while offering a smaller harvest nonetheless offer one that is more certain.

Farmers also diversify. Rather than specializing in the production of maize or wheat or rice, many instead grow a full array of crops; in other words, they grow "food." Should birds descend upon the millet crop, the gourds and vegetables at least might be spared. Farmers thus often remain subsistence producers. They are reluctant to plant pure stands of maize or wheat or to specialize in the production of cash crops. Uncertainty thus limits the degree to which they specialize. In a world pervaded by risk and devoid of means for shedding it, the necessity for self-insurance induces caution.

Both conservatism and the failure to specialize impose costs. A farmer who clings to a practice that is tried and true will fail to secure the benefits of technical change. The farmer who grows "food" will fail to secure the profits to be made by devoting his resources to the production of a crop that he could then profitably exchange for others. The costs in terms of the diminution of income yield, however, the benefit of increased security. It secures the peace of mind that comes from decreased risk in the face of hostile nature.

People in agrarian societies possess another form of insurance: their families. Return to Figure 2.1 and recall the attendant discussion. Those who lived at different elevations dwelt in different ecosystems, with different endowments of land, moisture, temperature, and sunshine. As a result of living in different ecosystems, they produced different crops. More to the point, they also faced different kinds of risks.

It is useful to think of a farm as an asset. Like any asset, a farm yields a stream of income that possesses an expected return that is uncertain. The mean provides a measure of the expected value of that return; the variance, a measure of its uncertainty. Farm sites located at different points in the topography—one high up the mountain, another in the coffee zone, a third on the

plains below, as depicted in Figure 2.1—can therefore be thought of as yielding streams of income, each with its own mean and variance.

In such a setting, it makes sense to retain large families. For the mathematics of chance tells us that the expected value of the combination of two independent assets is the sum of their means. But it also tells that the variance of the combination of two independent assets may be *less* than the sum of their variances.<sup>2</sup>

Consider a household dwelling on the plains, for example. By the rules of the lineage, this household would possess a right to share in the earnings of other households in the kin group, including those dwelling higher up the mountain. Given the diversity of the environment, a bad year for the household in the plains might correspond to a normal one at the higher elevation. And given the norm of kinship property, a family subject to drought in the plains possesses the right to take refuge with more fortunately situated kin. Family members can exercise the right to a share of the property of other relatives to insure themselves against risk. By extension, all members of the kin group likewise benefit from this source of insurance. Each ecological niche may be subject to random shocks; but by dwelling in kin groups that span diverse locations, people reduce their exposure to risk.

Membership in families is costly. If living in a low elevation, a household can expect to have to support relatives from

<sup>2</sup> Consider the value of two assets,  $x$  and  $y$ , each of which is randomly distributed with variances  $\text{Var}(x)$  and  $\text{Var}(y)$ . By distributing his holdings equally among the two, an economic agent could secure a stream of income whose variance would be:

$$\text{Var}\left(\frac{1}{2}x + \frac{1}{2}y\right) = \frac{1}{4}\text{Var}(x) + \frac{1}{4}\text{Var}(y) + 2\text{Cov}(xy).$$

Because the variance of the value of each is reduced by  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and because the covariance can be negative, the diversification of holdings reduces risk.

the high zones when conditions there turn bad. But such costs constitute the price of insurance. Acknowledging the rights of family members to a share of the income generated by "its" farm entitles the household to live off the proceeds of highland brethren when misfortune strikes. That property rights inhere in families, rather than in individuals, renders families a means of insurance.

In an earlier section, I argued that families provide means for investing; costs devoted to migration reduce the impact of diminishing returns in the core and yield control over assets in the periphery. In this section, I argue that expansion not only yields higher incomes; insofar as it entails dispersion, it yields incomes that are more certain as well. The dispersed location of the family estate yields a diversified portfolio of income-generating assets, thus reducing the level of risk.<sup>3</sup>

RURAL SOCIETIES ARE DYNAMIC. As population increases over time, families disperse and ramify. Rural societies form capital. Elders sponsor the emigration of younger kin and, in so doing, increase the welfare of the family and its claim over resources. Through migration and settlement, agrarian societies promote the formation of markets and put in place means not only for raising the expected level of their incomes but also for lowering their risks.

Rural societies thus devise means for enhancing their welfare. And yet, as already seen, they confront limitations in their

<sup>3</sup> It is notable that in the East African highlands, lineages and ethnic groups run vertically up and down the mountain in strips, rather than girding the mountain in rings. By doing so, they decrease the covariance among the ecological niches that they occupy.

ability to do so. In the absence of technological change, diminishing returns reduces the per capita level of income; as people crowd upon the land, the average income declines. Conservatism ties people to the use of low-yielding crops. And self-insurance offers an expensive form of risk bearing; limiting specialization reduces the benefits to be gained from market exchange. The arrangements that agrarian societies forge, while admirable, thus constrain the wealth they can generate.

Just as families and kin groups self-insure against the risks of nature, so too do they self-insure against risks arising from the conduct of other human beings. Further constraining the economic performance of kinship societies is the nature of their political institutions. While offering a means for protecting property, the private provision of security by family and kin, I argue, also limits the accumulation of wealth.

### THE POLITICS OF KINSHIP

Anthropologists stress that in agrarian societies, economic relations are not just related to social arrangements but rather "embedded" in them (Sahlins 1971, 8). So too are political relations, as people seek to render their families sources of security and instruments of protection in the face of threats by others.

In such societies, coercion is often privately supplied. People not only produce and consume. They also fight. Among the arts they practice are the arts of war.

Some fight in order to increase their wealth. History is filled with legends of conquest, as bands of warriors set out in search of plunder. Others devote resources to the defense of their possessions. Whether by building walls, digging moats, or withdrawing into remote locations, or whether by training in

combat, honing skills and weapons, or cultivating fearsome reputations, people seek to deter others from encroaching upon their persons or their property. The need for such defenses increases with the value of their possessions. The more numerous and precious their belongings, the greater the incentive to steal and the greater therefore the need to organize protection.

The migration of people, the accumulation of assets, and the growth of trade: as each then contributes to the growth of income, each also increases the temptation to engage in predation—and the value of deterring it.

#### AN EXAMPLE: THE NUER

Evans-Pritchard, a noted anthropologist who worked among the Nuer of southern Sudan, sought to explain how a society based purely on kinship—i.e., one lacking a bureaucracy, a court system, or police—nonetheless curtailed theft and defended rights in property (1940). Among the answers he gave was one based upon what he called “segmentary opposition”; phrased differently, the answer lay in the threat of retaliation by others, or the feud.<sup>4</sup>

The Nuer are a pastoralist people. While they do cultivate gardens, they engage principally in herding. As Evans-Pritchard puts it, the Nuer “not only depend on cattle for many of life’s necessities but they have the herdsman’s outlook on the world. Cattle are their dearest possession” (1940, 16). Cattle provide the principal store of wealth for the Nuer, he writes, and the joint family—the father, his sons, and their wives—constitutes the elementary property-holding unit. Each family seeks to care for and increase its cattle holdings.

<sup>4</sup> The following section draws heavily on chapter 1 of Bates (1983).

Among the Nuer, breeding and raising cattle provides one path to prosperity. Theft offers another. Each property owner could make himself better off by stealing the cattle of others. And every indication is that the Nuer are tempted to do so. They certainly raid the cattle holdings of neighboring tribes; thus, Evans-Pritchard writes, the Nuer "gladly risk their lives to . . . pillage [the cattle of] their neighbors" (1940, 16). The strength of their desire to steal is suggested by Evans-Pritchard when he recounts: "As my Nuer servant once said to me: 'You can trust a Nuer with any amount of money, pounds and pounds and pounds, and go away for years and return and he will not have stolen it; but a single cow—that is a different matter'" (1940, 49).

The puzzle, from Evans-Pritchard's point of view, was that despite the potential for theft and disorder the Nuer in fact tended to live in relative harmony. Insofar as the Nuer raided cattle, they tended to raid the cattle of others; raids within the tribe were rare. Somehow the Nuer appear to have avoided the potentially harmful effects arising from greed and self-interest. And they appear to have done so even while lacking those formal institutions so common to Western societies: the courts, the police, and the other appurtenances of the state. Evans-Pritchard devoted much of his efforts to determining how the Nuer, in the absence of such institutions, nonetheless achieved order in their society.

Among the several explanations he advanced, one stands out: the importance of deterrence. Nuer society, he stressed, contains a multitude of internal cleavages. Within villages, families stand in opposition to one another; in conflicts within the larger ward, families in one village align in opposition to the members of another; and within the tribe, the power of one lineage checks that of another. The wrongs that one unit might threaten therefore confront the possibility of retaliation by another.



By Evans-Pritchard's account, the Nuer appreciate the role of deterrence and know that they must unambiguously and forcefully communicate their willingness to retaliate in order to prevent predation. As he states: "It is the knowledge that a Nuer is brave and will stand up against aggression and enforce his property rights by club and spear that ensures respect for person and property" (1940, 171). He further emphasizes the point when he distinguishes between zones of peace and violence in Nuer society. It is precisely in those zones in which a man can recruit kin to engage in battle and thus credibly threaten reprisal, he contends, that disputes are most likely to be settled peacefully (1940, 150ff). The very readiness of the Nuer to employ violence provides a reason, then, that violence so rarely takes place.

Evans-Pritchard's account of the Nuer offers, in the words of Max Gluckman (1955), an account of "peace within the feud." Societies that rely upon households to enforce property rights are societies in which peace is secured by the fear of retaliation. As Evans-Pritchard's account makes clear, such a system *can* work; after all, by his account, the Nuer did live peacefully, in spite of the temptation of theft. But what Evans-Pritchard fails to make clear are the high costs of this political system—costs that include the poverty of Nuer society.

#### THE LIMITS OF KINSHIP

For deterrence to work, the threat of revenge must be credible. This system of governance requires, then, that men be warriors, capable of inflicting harm; it also requires that they be willing to retaliate, and be known to be willing to do so.

In exploring the wellsprings of credibility, students of kinship societies stress the role of beliefs. Some recount the convic-

tion that those who die with anger in their hearts wander, like Hamlet's ghost, between heaven and earth, demanding revenge (Hardy 1963). Others stress beliefs in witchcraft, noting that unpropitiated wrongs result in pain, illness, and misfortune among those who inflicted them, or among those who failed to punish transgressors. Such beliefs harden the hearts and steel the hands of those who might otherwise be reluctant to seek revenge. Other scholars stress the role of values, and especially the importance of honor. Knowing that another is honor-bound to seek revenge, they stress, a potential wrongdoer might pause to recalculate the benefits of transgressing. In societies where families arm themselves and provide their own protection, military prowess lies embedded in codes of honor, from which it derives credibility as a deterrent.

When the threat of retaliation works, the private provision of coercion can produce peace, as Evans-Pritchard argued; but the behaviors and beliefs that supply peace also encourage behavior that increases the likelihood of violence. In such societies, private warriors populate public places; people bearing arms and intimating their willingness to employ them strut in the boulevards and cluster in the marketplace. Public places are populated with *provocateurs*; where families are honor-bound to protect their own, hot-tempered youths find protection against the consequences of brazen behavior. Interactions thus take place in a volatile ambience of honor and impudence; young hotheads move to the fore; and a culture of machismo permeates the society. The private provision of security thus creates a hair-trigger society. Provocative acts become commonplace—but also uncommonly dangerous because they can unleash violent reprisals.

The private provision of security is thus fragile. Moreover, it is unforgiving. When retaliation takes place, then honor requires that the punishment itself be revenged. Absent a reputation for

being willing to fight, a person becomes vulnerable. Not only might his enemies view him as easy prey, but also his family and friends will scorn him, since their safety depends upon the support that can be expected from others. The incentives to fight thus run deep and once concord is lost, cycles of retaliation ensue.

Private violence *can* work; it can produce peace. But the peace it produces is fragile. Once triggered, the system inflicts costs that mount over time: families span generations, and the wrongs of one generation cast a shadow over the lives of those who succeed them. Thus it is that the ancients wrote their history in terms of conflict within families, and in so doing shaped our notion of tragedy. Even after the passage of centuries, the destruction of the House of Atreus evokes feelings of pity and fear. And the fate of Romeo and Juliet, victims of a feud between two families, still kindles our tears.

To avoid the costs of private violence, people seek ways of insuring that retaliation will not be triggered. In so doing, they expose another defect of the private provision of security: in the face of the costs of the system, people may seek to increase their welfare by choosing to live in poverty. Students of village societies emphasize the fear of envy. Others describe how those who become wealthy are subject to accusations of witchcraft and sorcery. In such societies, egalitarianism becomes a strategy in which persons forgo consumption for the sake of peaceful relations with neighbors. To forestall predation, they may simply choose to live without goods worth stealing. In such a setting, poverty becomes the price of peace.

As kinship societies expand, families inhabit diverse terrains; they trade and, better insured against the risks of nature, they secure economic gains. But the nature of their political institutions imposes important limitations upon their well-being. The security they supply to the producers and accumula-

tors of wealth is fragile. It lies imbedded in a culture of provocation. And should threats that support the peace have to be acted upon, then the system produces desolation and grief. The political institutions of kinship societies impose a cruel trade-off: peace on the one hand and prosperity on the other.

DURING MY STAY IN UGANDA, I ventured far beyond the confines of Bugisu. As did many others, I joined teams of specialists who sought to aid in the reconstruction of the country, which was just beginning to recover from the devastation inflicted by the tyrant Idi Amin. On long car rides during the day, or while sharing drinks at night, I came to know several of my counterparts well. And they helped me to understand what it is like to live in a world engulfed by violence. For them, the overthrow of Idi Amin had brought an end to their professional isolation; no longer a pariah state, Uganda could now send its technocrats abroad for conferences and training. But rather than feeling exhilarated, they felt depressed. In the war that led to his overthrow, villages and communities had secured weapons; once armed, people began to pillage the property of their enemies and to punish those who had once pillaged them. Within the districts, villages, and neighborhoods where my colleagues resided, friends and family were now caught up in cycles of violence and retribution. Given the circumstances under which they lived, what joy could they take in their new opportunities? What sense did it make to invest in further training? Too often they came to the office to find a co-worker missing or attending the funeral of a friend.

As we got to know one another, our discussion moved from our professions to our families and loved ones. I then learned of a

central question that they confronted: In the midst of violence, how should they best raise their children? How do you teach a child to work hard, to go to school, or to be honest, when that child may die young? And why should a child, or anyone else, do without today, when there may not be a tomorrow?

Members of agrarian societies can and do seek to invest. As in the process of migration, by sacrificing today, they seek to secure future benefits. In such societies, however, the pursuit of improvement is checked. As noted by my Ugandan counterparts, when the future is uncertain, investment, though desirable, may not be a rational act. For the private provision of coercion provides security only within the penumbra of violence.

In the next chapter, I turn to the transformation of the use of force. In so doing, I seek to detect the political forces that break the fetters limiting the development of agrarian societies.