

A State of 'Tribal Lawlessness'? Rural and Urban Crime in Fars Province, c. 1910–15

Mattin Biglari

A Qashqai said to me ... that in modern Persia the rifle is a sceptre and that every rifleman is a Shah

Arnold Wilson.¹

As has now been well established, Iran's modernizing elites in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw overcoming the country's supposed 'tribal problem' as crucial for national salvation.² Central to the 'myth of the saviour' built around the person of Reza Shah was his ability to suppress the tribes after a period of so-called 'disintegration' between 1911 and 1921, following the Constitutional Revolution.³ This was unquestionably partly due to the power possessed by the large tribal confederations that had the potential to undermine central authority. But it was also because on a more local level these pastoral nomadic groups seemed to represent the absence of authority, especially by virtue of their association with banditry on the country's main trade routes.⁴ By their very nature, tribes were seen as a 'dangerous class' on the margins of society, culturally imbued with criminality.⁵ Indeed, such perceptions shared many similarities with the concept of a 'criminal tribe' existing elsewhere, which assumed tribespeople were habitually or even hereditarily inclined to a life of crime.⁶

Such a view has been reproduced in historiography, meaning banditry in modern Iran has often been explained away with culturally essentialist references to a supposedly traditional tribal culture of raiding, leaving little or no room for other contributing factors. For example, Mansoureh Etehadieh, in her study of criminality in the late Qajar period, asserts:

We see that most of the robbery and looting was done by tribes, which was probably as much a way of life as due to economic circumstances. The worst affected areas were not necessarily those suffering most from economic regression.⁷

Granted, there had been a long-established culture of raiding amongst the tribes in Iran, as there had been across most of the Middle East and North Africa. Yet there are several problems with solely relying on this fact in explanations of banditry.

Eric Hobsbawm's work on 'social banditry' has been greatly influential in showing how, far from only being the result of a supposedly inherent propensity to steal, banditry could be a rational activity carried out as a form of survival or even social protest.⁸ Although there have been some powerful critiques concerning both Hobsbawm's methodology and the content of his thesis, and indeed he himself made revisions to his own argument, the social banditry thesis has opened up a discussion allowing historians to point to the changing socio-economic and political factors behind banditry, especially in societies experiencing oncoming modernization. Moreover, like broader works on crime and society, it has revealed how subalterns viewed so-called criminal activities as legitimate – what historians have labelled 'social crime' – even when not explicitly framed as resistance.⁹ As historians in this field have shown, the very characterization of an act as a 'crime' delineates points of inequality and alternative notions of justice throughout history. For instance, Muir and Ruggiero argue: 'what societies label crime usually represents perceived ruptures or breaks in the ties that bind people together, the little deaths of social life'.¹⁰ Crime, then, should be viewed as a 'shifting moral concept' largely – though not exclusively – defined by those in power.¹¹

As Stephanie Cronin has pointed out, although the social banditry thesis has been a subject of much discussion concerning various geographical areas, it has been of little interest or value to historians of the Middle East and North Africa region examining it in the rural context.¹² As regards the Middle East, historians have mostly stressed bandits' links to state networks of power and their plunder of defenceless peasants, for example Karen Barkey on the Ottoman Empire or Nathan Brown on Khedival Egypt.¹³ Thus, they have tended to agree much more with Anton Blok's famous critique of Hobsbawm's social banditry thesis.¹⁴ Blok argued that far from being a form of peasant resistance or 'primitive rebellion', banditry primarily preyed on and suppressed the peasantry. The association of pastoral nomadic tribes with banditry in the Middle Eastern context would, on the surface, seem to support such a view: tribes certainly were important in the maintenance of state power – especially in Qajar Iran – and they did predominantly live away from villages.¹⁵ Even Hobsbawm himself made a distinction between banditry proper and the raiding of nomadic tribes such as those of the Bedouin, suggesting the latter could never be seen as legitimate by the peasantry.¹⁶

In this chapter, however, by focusing on the southern Iranian province of Fars in the years between 1910 and 1915, I argue that banditry could be a rational form of protest or survival, and cannot be sufficiently understood solely with reference to the tribal culture of raiding. I show that banditry was not necessarily a tribal phenomenon but rather involved a variety of actors, including settled villagers, townspeople and even those charged with fighting crime. Such fluidity belies the notion of a static 'dangerous class', stemming instead from shared and similar lived experiences – especially destitution, dearth and disaster, all of which were becoming increasingly common. Even if one were to accept that tribal raiding had always been a conscious response to such phenomena, we must be aware of the qualitatively different scale of change in living conditions experienced at this liminal moment, shaped by a vibrant revolutionary and post-revolutionary political culture as well as Iran's increasing integration into the world economy.¹⁷ To focus on raiding culture alone diverts attention away from

such historicity, meaning we are not able to understand why banditry was apparently increasing so rapidly at this time. It would also overlook many important concurrent processes such as state formation, the commercialization of agriculture and the loss of customary tribal rights.

These processes should not be taken to conceptualize banditry as symptomatic of a great divide between state and society. Such a view would seem to assume that rural society exists as an autonomous obstacle to statecraft, which, as scholars of the Middle East and North Africa region have warned, would lead us on the mistaken quest to uncover the lost perspective of the liberal humanist subject.¹⁸ As has been established, the agency of the popular classes in Qajar Iran was realized within the framework of the existing polity not externally in opposition to it.¹⁹ Nevertheless, as this chapter will show, although we need not romanticize banditry as a bastion of premodern resistance, its prevalence can still be understood as a survival strategy in response to the accelerating processes of modernization – especially when its near-universality is taken into account.

At the same time, it is necessary to understand how, more than being a mere survival strategy, banditry could potentially serve as a form of political protest. As John Chalcraft argues, it is too teleological to argue that capitalist development or socio-economic modernization determined the nature of protest in the Middle East and North Africa.²⁰ Rather, we should look to the agency and creativity of people to frame the forms of opposition that cannot be neatly explained by the context.²¹ I argue that, especially when understood alongside contemporary forms of articulation in the urban protests of the Qajar period, banditry could be linked to ideas of social justice. It was at this time that, distinct from the traditional notions of raiding, banditry increasingly functioned as a weapon against new state-imposed forms of justice. Modernization did not determine this outcome, but it helped undermine the existing system of consent and negotiation that had marked Qajar Iran, and it was this moment of 'hegemonic contraction' that enabled new forms of political articulation and a refashioning of old ones.²²

To be sure, historians have acknowledged the political nature of banditry in the Iranian case. Stephanie Cronin reveals the fluidity of banditry and its links to forms of protest against the processes of modernization in the Bakhtiari lands around Isfahan, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, while Khazeni's study on the same tribal confederation reveals some links between the notions of justice and highway robbery at the turn of the twentieth century.²³ Concerning the Qashqai confederation in Fars, Lois Beck goes as far as arguing that 'theft on the trade routes ... was not a "tribal" problem', while Safiri's thesis on the South Persia Rifles draws some attention to the phenomenon of settled villagers taking to banditry.²⁴ Finally, Nouraei and Martin provide a broader account of the rise of banditry across the country in this period and link it to the problems of scarcity and tribal notions of justice.²⁵

In this chapter I build on these studies with a more micro-historical focus on criminality in Fars during a shorter period, especially in the final section examining the case of Kazerun. A micro-historical methodology, particularly in the way of *Alltagsgeschichte* (the history of everyday life), can provide a more qualitative picture of the anonymous 'multitudes in their workaday trials and tribulations.'²⁶ It

shifts attention to the *lived* experiences of everyday life where subaltern agency is realized. As Lefebvre argues, the everyday is the site in which forces of quotidian praxis 'modify' apparent structures in 'perpetual movement'.²⁷ It is this coming together of 'noneveryday eventfulness' with the repetition of the everyday that allows us to understand how participants were simultaneously 'objects of history and its subjects'.²⁸ Adopting a micro-historical approach does not mean we are confined to telling a bounded, narrow story. Rather, micro-history enables one to demonstrate how spatial localities, far from being rigidly fixed, are constantly constructed by a plurality of material practices between the local and the global.²⁹ As Jefroudi points out, it is the site of the local that is the setting in which even some of the most global processes, such as the development of capitalism, can be best discerned.³⁰ I also argue that such fluidity of space also existed between town and country, which makes rural banditry understandable only in relation to practices in urban areas. Farzin Vajdani has successfully demonstrated how a micro-historical focus on crime in the Iranian context can map out the connection between social relations, space and daily practices, not just within a city but also its vicinity.³¹ In adopting a similar focus on crime 'from below', I aim to show how a micro-history of banditry in Fars can offer a bottom-up perspective of crime in Iran more generally, complementing recent informative studies on the views of Iranian authorities and intellectuals.³²

Trade, tribes and banditry on the Bushehr-Shiraz Road

Because of its proximity to the Persian Gulf, Fars had long been one of Iran's main trade regions. As early as 1763 Karim Khan Zand signed a treaty with the East India Company giving Britain a trade monopoly on woollens in the country as well as the sole right to have a trading station at Bushehr. As a result, trade along the road between Bushehr and Shiraz greatly increased, especially after the advent of steam navigation in the Persian Gulf and the creation of the Suez Canal in the second half of the nineteenth century made Iran's southern ports much more accessible.³³

The increase in trade along the road also provided opportunities for loot for those living in its vicinity. Thus there was a rise in robberies reported by many foreign firms at that time, so much so that a road toll system known as *rahdari* was developed to ensure safe passage of caravans along the route: this was levied at different toll stations and entitled each caravan to a night watchman and an escort of guards up to the next station.³⁴ But as Beck points out, the continued delegation of authority along the road in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the *rahdari* system become increasingly unregulated. Those responsible for collecting tolls competed against each other by raising the rate, often by way of organized robbery to artificially inflate the price of guards.³⁵ In this context, *rahdari* increasingly operated as a form of blackmail, levied with the veiled threat of robbery if not paid.

Indeed, those who were tasked with guarding the road were often the ones accused of organizing the robberies that occurred along it. These were often the tribal chieftains of the Qashqai confederation, which many British traders considered to be the 'most troublesome ... of the bandit tribes'.³⁶ Ever since 1865, when Qashqai nomads cut

several miles of telegraph wire, British authorities had condemned the ‘lawlessness’ of the confederation.³⁷ In 1893 Edward Browne claimed an Armenian traveller had also warned him:

The only people that I have seen worse than the Lurs ... are the Kashkais, for though the former will usually rob you if they can, and would not hesitate to murder you if you refused to give up your possessions to them, the latter, not content with this, will murder you even if you make no resistance, alleging that the world is well quit of one who is such a coward that he will not fight for his own.³⁸

Nevertheless, British traders and authorities relied on the Qashqai khans – especially the head of the confederation, the *ilkhani* – to enforce order within the tribe to ensure security on the roads.³⁹ By 1904 Isma‘il Khan Sowlat al-Dowleh established himself as the *ilkhani* and all those possessing local authority for sections of the road, even if not members of the Qashqai, were nominally answerable to him.⁴⁰

Yet under Sowlat’s authority, security on the road deteriorated, especially during the Constitutional Revolution. Already as early as 1909 the British firms Messrs Ziegler and Co. and Dixon and Co. complained to the Board of Trade that ‘in recent years, caravan robberies on a large scale have taken place, and certain tribes have made a regular and profitable business of stopping and robbing caravans.’⁴¹ This correlated with an increase in *rahdari* rates: they rose dramatically from 3.7 krans per mule in 1907 to 11.15 in 1910.⁴² Such was the state of the road, and such were the security issues associated with the tribes, that the British embassy issued the so-called ‘British Note’ in October 1910. The note complained that ‘the principal channels through which British trade used to pass to the interior of the country are now practically closed by the depredations of tribesmen, who appear to be completely beyond the control of the central Government.’⁴³

The rise in robberies also coincided with the reported increase in arms distributed throughout the province. In 1892 the Qashqai were said to be in possession of two hundred Martinis, but by 1900 this number was estimated to have risen to two thousand, increasing even more by 1910.⁴⁴ When *The Times* correspondent Arthur Moore visited in 1909, he claimed that ‘every town possesses stores of rifles, and the bazaars are full of Mausers, Winchesters, Martinis, Mauser pistols, and Belgian Brownings, exposed for sale to any purchaser who will pay.’⁴⁵ A major factor behind this trend was the growth in arms smuggling from Muscat, while many weapons were also acquired through robbing the caravans of foreign companies. British political officer Arnold Wilson, who was ‘impressed by the large supplies of arms and ammunition in the hands of the tribes between the coast and Shiraz’, found upon close inspection the majority of the arms seemed to have arrived in the area through arms trafficking by French firms.⁴⁶

Yet despite the continued increase in robbery throughout the whole province as the Constitutional Revolution came to a close, it was *rahdari* along the Bushehr-Shiraz road that was consistently the main grievance of British authorities. Indeed, *rahdari* rates would go on to jump to 28.12 krans per mule by 1912.⁴⁷ Thus, although many other tribes – such as the Khamseh Confederation (the other main tribal confederation in Fars) as well as smaller independent ones such as the notorious Boir Ahmadi –

were associated with robbery, it was the Qashqai who continued to figure as the most dangerous in the minds of British companies and authorities by virtue of Sowlat's nominal control of the roads. Moreover, increasing *rahdari* rates was only possible due to the prevalence of robberies along the road, which was attributed to Qashqai raids and Sowlat's unwillingness or inability to maintain security.

Iranian observers were equally damning of the tribes' role in creating chaos. The pages of *Vaqaye 'e Ettafaqiyeh* – a collection of daily reports on Fars written by the Iranian staff at the British consulate in Shiraz – are replete with numerous episodes of banditry and complaints about the state of wickedness/villainy (*sherarat*) prevailing in the countryside because of the tribes, especially the Qashqai. For example, one report claimed that the Qashqai 'rob everywhere without any regard for the states around Fars' and for a month had established a situation of 'disorder (*eghteshash*) and theft (*dozdi*), the severity of which worsens day by day'.⁴⁸ By 1910, such views were becoming increasingly common in constitutionalist discourse, linking the 'lawlessness and anarchy' in the country to the power of the regional tribal leaders.⁴⁹

A culture of raiding?

However, attributing this so-called lawlessness to the tribes and to a traditional, habitual culture of raiding would not be particularly helpful. First, it diverts attention from some of the many ongoing processes at the time that might have been crucial to the rise in banditry, especially the change in people's access to subsistence. Since the mid-nineteenth century, both Iran's increasing integration into the world market and the depreciation of its silver currency had caused a great shift in agricultural production from the growing of wheat – the country's main subsistence crop – to more profitable cash crops for export, such as tobacco, opium and cotton.⁵⁰ This 'commercialization of agriculture' also exacerbated the rise in food insecurity: land was increasingly transferred from state ownership into the possession of profit-seeking landlords who usually forced the predominantly share-cropping peasantry to produce cash crops instead of subsistence crops.⁵¹ As the value of land continued to rise, sharecroppers became increasingly indebted and unable to pay rents. As a result, the period saw a higher degree of stratification within villages, including the rise in the number of landless peasants forced to either seek wage labour in the village or to move to nearby towns.⁵² In addition, as grain started to function more as a form of currency, many merchants periodically took to hoarding it and thus contributing to the dearth of foodstuffs.⁵³ The commercialization of agriculture was particularly pronounced in Fars province because it was a key region for producing cash crops, especially opium and tobacco. This helps explain why the province – especially Shiraz – had been one of the most politically volatile parts of the country.⁵⁴

As has been well established, there is a strong connection between banditry and dearth once rural populations become unable to meet their own subsistence needs.⁵⁵ In the Iranian case, many settled villagers took to banditry as early as the great famine of 1871 to 1872, while there was an increase in tribal plunder because of the severe loss of fodder for nomads' animals at the same time.⁵⁶ In the post-constitutional period, then,

it is hardly surprising that robberies should be so common in a region experiencing severe dearth, as sources indicate. In February 1911, for instance, one Western traveller reported that ‘in the last two years more than one quarter of the total corn-land of Fars has gone out of cultivation.’⁵⁷ By 1913 the situation had apparently not improved, with the Shiraz consul reporting that ‘a general scarcity of grain of every kind prevails already all over the province, with correspondingly high prices.’⁵⁸

As a result of such scarcity in the province, many settled agriculturalists evidently took to banditry. We see in various reports that whole villages were sometimes abandoned. Moir, for example, was struck on his return to the once ‘prosperous village’ of Mahyar to find that seven years since his last visit it was ‘practically deserted’, as were Maqsud Beik, Aminabad and Shurjestan.⁵⁹ Whether this was a direct consequence of the commercialization of agriculture or mainly a response to increased plunder remains unclear, but it was unquestionably a rising trend correlating with the prevalence of dearth. And it is certain that these settled agriculturalists, once ‘peaceful villagers’, were now themselves ‘taking to brigandage as the only means of earning a living.’⁶⁰ For example, in 1911 the settled Kordshulis had suddenly turned to cutting telegraph wires and blackmailing passing caravans at Tange-ye Bolaghi.⁶¹ In fact, in a list of claims made by British firms concerning robberies between 1908 and 1911, ‘villagers’ were recorded as the attackers on no less than fourteen occasions (in addition to settled tribes such as the Kordshulis, who were excluded from this category).⁶² The prevalence of robberies committed by non-nomadic elements explains Arthur Moore’s 1914 observation that ‘Fars is full of masterless men who have cast off, or never had, any tribal allegiance, and live by plunder.’⁶³ That the majority of British authorities and company officials should mistake these people for tribesmen is testament to their conflation of banditry with the ‘tribal problem’, but this was far from reality.

Even when we do come across instances of banditry committed by tribal nomads, its nature hints at wider processes of change. One notable phenomenon in Fars at the time is the existence of inter-tribal bandit gangs. In the attack on the gendarmerie captain Eckford on 11 December 1912, for example, it was reported that a band of some two to three hundred tribesmen comprising Boir Ahmadis, Mamasanis and Kashkulis (the latter being a Qashqai sub-tribe, or *tireh*) was responsible.⁶⁴ But why members from different tribes should work together can only be understood in the context of the eroding vertical relationships of tribal authority at the time. As Stephanie Cronin shows in her comprehensive account of the Bakhtiari confederation, the period following the Constitutional Revolution was marked by increasing intra-tribal stratification between more senior khans and junior khans as well as between these figures and more subaltern tribesmen under their authority. As senior tribe members came to buy and assert their right to land and be drawn more into urban politics, junior khans and subaltern tribesmen began to resist the inequalities in wealth and loss of customary rights.⁶⁵ This was symptomatic of a wider process of ‘hegemonic contraction’, whereby the existing systems of consent and forms of authority were becoming undermined by the prevailing trends of modernization and integration into the world economy.⁶⁶

Several sources testify to the hegemonic contraction within the Qashqai and Khamseh tribal confederations at the time. According to the Shiraz consul, Walter Smart, for instance, the Khamseh were reported to be in ‘a chronic state of

insubordination'. Even Qashqai tribesmen – traditionally more coherent and loyal to their *ilkhani* – were said to be becoming 'more and more insubordinate', with *kalantars* (chiefs of tribal units responsible for liaising with the *ilkhani*) creating 'for themselves a position of independence against which no *ilkhani*, under present conditions, can successfully assert himself'.⁶⁷ One of the notable figures leading the wave of defection from Sowlat within the Qashqai at this time was Muhammad 'Ali Khan Kashkuli, hence the Kashkulis were operating independently or with other tribes and often directly against the interests of Sowlat. Thus, in contrast to the traditional function of raiding to secure vertical bonds of authority, these inter-tribal bandit robberies can be interpreted as evidence of linkages along more horizontal lines in opposition to senior tribal leadership.⁶⁸

In addition, many robberies at that time reveal a struggle over inequalities in wealth, especially discernible when one examines reports of 'plunder' against landowners. In a report of 28 May 1912, for example, the Shiraz consul wrote that a number of landowners had 'been threatening to take refuge in Consulate' to protest the government's inability 'to protect their properties against tribesmen'.⁶⁹ Such attacks were sometimes directed even against one's own tribal leader: the Khamseh were said to not only be ignoring their *ilkhani*, Qavam al-Molk, in his 'injunctions against their freebooting exploits', but also going so far as to plunder his own estates.⁷⁰ Furthermore, it is evident that the label of 'plunder' used in official sources could sometimes conceal acts of land expropriation. Occasional slippages in the sources reveal that far from being about the raiding for booty that the term 'plunder' would suggest, attacks on wealthy landowners' property were in reality about controlling subsistence. For example, one report states that most landowners had seen their properties 'pillaged' by tribesmen that had in many cases 'actually taken possession of the land'.⁷¹ Such acts can be read as attempts to tackle inequalities in access to subsistence, either by staying to cultivate land or deny its cultivation to others – much like the famous peasant uprisings in Gilan during the Constitutional Revolution.⁷²

To be sure, plunder was still regularly committed against poorer villagers, who sometimes fought back. But, as has been shown, settled populations could also turn to plunder; as Cronin points out, there was no rigid boundary between sedentary and nomadic life in Iran, especially not in Fars because of the agricultural opportunities offered by the Zagros Mountains.⁷³ Thus, in contrast to Hobsbawm's view, plunder was not necessarily a tribal phenomenon targeted against the peasantry but rather it could be an endogenous aspect of peasant survival.⁷⁴

Urban crime: Theft, protest and justice in Shiraz

If we situate banditry within a wider context of criminality by shifting the focus to urban crime in this period, we begin to see that theft could serve as a form of social protest, especially as sources covering the urban context provide greater voice to subaltern grievances.

Shiraz had long been considered a town full of disorderly elements.⁷⁵ In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it experienced a huge number of protests

and uprisings in which supposedly criminal figures played a key role. They mostly comprised *lutis* – gangs of young men who undertook various prominent activities in public life, such as leading religious ceremonies or protecting neighbourhoods.⁷⁶ Their ability to enforce their will outside the law and their supposedly disorderly and improper behaviour made them a potential source of danger and criminality in the view of many authorities and foreign onlookers.⁷⁷ Yet the *lutis*' self-declared concern for social justice and their frequent involvement in protests meant they were often lauded by the popular classes as champions of the people against tyranny and injustice.⁷⁸ Central to the *luti* ethos was a value system combining the Islamic concept of chivalry (*javanmardi* or *futuwwat*) with Iranian heroic mythology.⁷⁹ For many urban poor, this justified the acts of theft that *lutis* were so often implicated in, even if in reality they might target the poor from outside their neighbourhoods or be used by the authorities to crack down on popular protest.⁸⁰ Thus, in their idealized form, encapsulated most famously in the figure of Sattar Khan during the Constitutional Revolution, *lutis* can be considered urban versions of Hobsbawm's mythologised social bandits, stealing and fighting in the name of people's justice, much like the popular conceptions of 'ayyaran in earlier times.⁸¹

In Shiraz during the period under study, British onlookers frequently attributed protests to the *lutis*' opportunism and criminality. According to the British consul in Shiraz in 1910, the presence of a large number of *lutis* 'who depend on the more or less prolonged agitations which ... furnish not only a daily wage, but an opportunity for pilfering cartridges, making petty extortions, etc.' was the 'root cause' of unrest in the town.⁸² Such conceptions understood the *lutis* as devoid of any genuine political motive or value system that might legitimize their actions; in other words, they were seen as nothing more than petty criminals using protest as a source of income. As recent works have shown, such perceptions were simplistic; although *lutis* were often paid to agitate and steal on behalf of the ulema or even the government authorities, they saw those actions as compatible with their own ethical code and sense of justice.⁸³

It is also evident that the legitimacy of theft could extend to other actors and groups involved in popular protest. In reports on political demonstrations of the time we find regular incidences of looting existing side by side with articulations of dissent. In one Moharram procession of 1910, for example, it was reported that a large crowd went around the town singing constitutional songs, while at the same time 'pilfering on the way'.⁸⁴ Although the exact social composition of such crowds is rarely specified, research on protest in Qajar Iran has demonstrated the large number of non-*lutis* involved; women in particular often played a leading role.⁸⁵ Large-scale looting also periodically targeted minorities, especially Jews: the famous pogrom in the Jewish quarter in October 1910 is a case in point.⁸⁶ These incidents, all of which were centred on a major grievance, suggest that, far from being the preserve of opportunistic professional criminal gangs, theft could be used by the population as a political weapon. Of course, just like rural banditry, it might also be used against the most vulnerable. But as Martin finds, theft could be compatible with ideas of justice ('*adl*'), balance (*al-mizan*) and order (*nezam*), which were so central to protests in Qajar Iran.⁸⁷ These ideas were especially important in a town like Shiraz, where the political culture and discourse had been so vibrant during the Constitutional Revolution.⁸⁸

The compatibility of such ideas with theft in popular opinion is further supported by the fact that even those tasked with preventing theft (especially soldiers) could be implicated in it. According to the British consul, in 1910, soldiers were 'doing a lot of thieving in the town', even being so bold as to target the house of an agent of the foreign firm Ziegler.⁸⁹ Similarly, the soldiers who had been ordered to put down the pogrom in the Jewish quarter later that year were said to have soon joined the looting.⁹⁰ Such acts were unquestionably linked to the destitution the soldiers in Shiraz were suffering at the time, nearing starvation as their pay was often months in arrears. This is perhaps why the soldiers who had taken part in looting often took sanctuary (*bast*) immediately before or after. For example, on 11 March 1911, soldiers took *bast* in the Shiraz telegraph office demanding to be paid, yet they had fought with the townspeople and pillaged some shops in the bazaar just before that.⁹¹ As Vejdani argues, taking *bast* often accompanied crimes because it offered a legal 'space of exception' to delay or avoid punishment.⁹² In this sense, it directly appealed to public opinion and popular understandings of justice as an informal means of exoneration.⁹³ Thus *bast* had to have at least some element of protest to justify one's actions, especially as it had been such an important form of contestation during the Constitutional Revolution.

The timing of such incidents over the years, particularly in periods of dearth, suggests that the soldiers' willingness to maintain order was linked to authorities' capacity to provide subsistence for them.⁹⁴ For instance, in May 1902 there was a severe grain shortage that meant most bakeries across Shiraz had to close. Large crowds of up to two hundred people scrambled for bread outside the few bakeries that were open, sometimes so frantically that several individuals were trampled and children were pushed onto bakery hot plates. On one occasion during this shortage, a soldier had quarrelled with a townspeople outside a bakery by Masjed-e Vakil and was subsequently hit, before retaliating by bringing his regiment to fight the locals and loot the local shops.⁹⁵ The records mention a number of similar episodes, which suggests that attitudes to theft were not rigidly defined. If the very people responsible for preventing theft were themselves stealing because of their poverty, then theft could be entirely justified by one's circumstances. Moreover, as Vejdani highlights, in late Qajar Iran what was considered a crime depended more on particular socio-spatial relations: for example, what neighbourhood someone came from or whether they had vertical relations to higher-status individuals.⁹⁶

Thus, as the state's imposition of justice was becoming increasingly formalized from the beginning of the Constitutional Revolution, it faced active opposition on a large scale. In Shiraz artefacts of state justice, such as gallows, were targets of attacks and robbery, building on a tradition of opposition to secular punishment.⁹⁷ But whereas previously such opposition had targeted local law enforcement authorities, now it was also being levelled at the depersonalized justice system emanating from the central government. It was at this time, after all, that the Ministry of Justice ('*adlieh*') became popularly known as *zolmiyeh* (or the House of Oppression) across the country.⁹⁸ Evidence of such sentiment can be observed in Shiraz too, such as in November 1910 when a crowd stormed and sacked the Courts of Justice, taking away or destroying all the legal documents in its archive.⁹⁹

The meaning of such acts can be better understood in the context of the changing nature of law. As Enayat points out, up until the Constitutional Revolution, acts defined as one of the ‘four crimes’ – murder, assault, rape and theft – were outside the domain of *shari‘ah* courts. They were instead dealt with in the secular customary (‘*orf*’) courts, which were unstructured and informal and subject more to the decisions of local authorities than a codified law (not unlike *shari‘ah* courts in this sense but with less popular authority).¹⁰⁰ Thus, depending on one’s connections, one could escape punishment. After the Constitutional Revolution, however, the Ministry of Justice took over the responsibility for such matters through local courts and state-appointed judges.¹⁰¹ Theft was criminalized through the formal codification of the penal law. Popular opposition to the Ministry of Justice, then, can perhaps in part be read as a widely felt disregard for the state’s formal criminalization of theft – especially so, as Martin argues, given that theft had been a matter people would take into their own hands as it was outside the parameters of *shari‘ah* law.¹⁰² Indeed, there was a great deal of debate about the role of *shari‘ah* and ‘*orf*’ law during the Constitutional Revolution, which continued to be unresolved during the period in focus.¹⁰³ During the decade after the revolution, several statesmen debated about what defined crime and how it should be punished, resulting in various abandoned attempts at passing a penal code.¹⁰⁴ Even the very definitions of ‘theft’ and ‘thief’ were matters for public debate well into the 1920s, becoming, for instance, a topic of a running essay competition in the *Shefaq-e Sorkh* newspaper.¹⁰⁵

The contemporaneous wave of rural banditry in Fars must be understood in this context. Rural Iran was not shut off from the ideas of justice that so animated the political discourse in the towns, with there being much movement between urban and rural areas. Peasants and semi-pastoralists would regularly come to Shiraz to sell their produce and were exposed to the public life of the street and bazaar. Ordinary tribesmen were perhaps even more exposed to protests, as they were often brought into the town by their leaders to prevent them, for example by denying access to the British consulate to would-be *bastis*. However, sometimes tribesmen participated in *bast* themselves.¹⁰⁶ In turn, urban actors, especially members of the ulema, travelled to the countryside to agitate the rural population. The communications infrastructure, particularly the telegraph system, was also important in disseminating ideas. At various places along the telegraph line people protested in ways similar to those in towns, making the same appeals for justice. For example, in February 1913, 250 villagers took *bast* in the telegraph office in Dehbid, while in March a group of muleteers did the same in Borazjan, leaving two thousand mules without oversight.¹⁰⁷ It was by such communication means that constitutionalist urban politics, revolving around the creation of the *majles*, was transmitted to the countryside, allowing peasants to rearticulate and improve their rights (*hoquq*).¹⁰⁸

This fluidity between town and country helps explain why the actions of rural bandits may be framed as a form of protest. Certainly, by their very status as outlaws, the bandits opposed any attempts to formalize the justice system. Even the country’s most notorious bandit, Nayyeb Hossein Kashi, went out of his way to attack the Ministry of Justice building in Tabbas in 1913 as protestors had done in Shiraz in 1910, setting fire to the local judge’s dossiers and taking away his seals.¹⁰⁹ Of course, bandits did steal

from both the poor and the wealthy, but they also justified some of their actions by appealing to social justice. As Nouraei and Martin highlight, the nomads engaged in highway robbery, distinguished between plunder (*gharati*) and stolen goods, with the former seen as a legitimate means of restoring equality, especially when exacted from foreigners and the wealthy.¹¹⁰ Similarly, in his study of the Bakhtiari, Khazeni finds that tribesmen considered banditry a legitimate form of resistance to 'oppression and unjust exaction' by the government.¹¹¹ Such conceptions of justice may have also derived in part from the bandits' own rural traditions: for example, tribal custom or, for non-tribal bandits, the notions of collective responsibility and 'moral economy' evident in many peasant societies (and traditionally articulated in the form of the 'Circle of Justice' in the Iranian context).¹¹² Nevertheless, the bandits' actions and values should not necessarily be seen as inherently opposed or external to the state's authority even if they were against particular policies or failings. Rather, they should be viewed as appeals to the state authorities to restore justice and the balance that had underpinned the 'Qajar Pact'.¹¹³ After all, the discussion on justice in the countryside had been animated by the constitutionalist project. This political culture, combined with increasing state encroachment and the commercialization of agriculture, constituted a moment of hegemonic contraction that did help spur new forms of articulation, but they took place within the existing hegemonic framework.¹¹⁴

To be sure, even if it is clear enough that banditry was commonly accepted as a legitimate means of survival, the links between banditry and protest were not always articulated explicitly. Sources on the rural areas do reveal instances of protest but not to the same extent as in the cities. Thus, although for some individuals banditry was clearly a means of protest, it is difficult to generalize given the dearth of sources. Nevertheless, the next case study, on the town of Kazerun and its vicinity, will demonstrate that where sources allow, a micro-historical approach can elucidate a clearer link between theft and political protest in a rural location.

The fluidity of criminality: The case of Kazerun

Located approximately halfway along the Bushehr-Shiraz road, Kazerun county is situated in a large fertile valley in the southern Zagros mountains. This setting provided abundant opportunities for the production of grains, beans, fruits (especially oranges), tobacco and opium.¹¹⁵ The area was suitable for a sedentary lifestyle, having been host to the ancient Sasanian city of Bishapur. In 1912 it was home to a total population of 20,000 (12,000 in the city of Kazerun). Its location in the *garmsir* (warm zone), excellent grazing land and agricultural possibilities also drew pastoral and semi-pastoral nomads, especially during winter months. In particular the Kashkuli Qashqais, who Arnold Wilson described as 'extensive agriculturalists', spent a great deal of time in the area and were heavily involved in local politics.¹¹⁶ Overall, the boundaries between sedentary and nomadic life were especially porous.

The whole population was dependent on the trade flowing through the Bushehr-Shiraz road. As eyewitness accounts testify, many people settled along the road evidently seeking to earn a living from it. This could be through various means, such as

employment as a muleteer or road guard; Kazerun was often cited as being notable for its large populations of muleteers. But one might also choose to take advantage of the situation by engaging in blackmail or robbing the passing caravans. Being a *tofangchi* – a gun-owner – enabled one to have flexibility of choice in such matters. There are many reports of instances when road guards suddenly turned to robbing or blackmailing the very caravans they had been paid to protect.

Rahdari proved to be especially lucrative, with the rates increasing rapidly in 1911 and 1912. Such was its value that competition for nominal control over the road and the right to levy the road tax could be fierce, leading to the emergence of several rival groups in the area. Around 1905, the *kalantar* of Kamarej, Haidar Khan, took control of the road to Kazerun by force. When Haidar Khan died in 1909, power passed to his ‘black confidant’, Khorshid.¹¹⁷ In spring 1911, Muhammad ‘Ali Khan Kashkuli, with the support of governor general Nezam al-Soltaneh, attacked Khorshid in Kamarej and took control of Shahpur and Rahdar (north of the ‘no-man’s land’ of Tange-ye Torkan),¹¹⁸ which were important strategic positions for the control of *rahdari*.¹¹⁹ After Khorshid re-established authority in Kamarej itself, he formed an alliance with Kazerun against the Kashkulis, resulting in a highly anarchic and unstable situation for the passing traffic, marked by an increase in attacks and robberies.¹²⁰ But there were also other means to undermine rivals: in 1911 the Kashkulis began diverting traffic from the Tange-ye Torkan via Shahpur to Shiraz, bypassing Kazerun altogether and denying its population profits from the passing caravans. In response Khorshid and the Kazerunis avoided Kashkuli territory by directing caravans along a ‘very precipitous route’ from Kamarej to Kazerun through the mountains. Due to this state of uncertainty caravans needed additional protection, causing *rahdari* rates to rise even more and, in turn, further fuelling competition for the right to levy it.¹²¹

Muhammad ‘Ali Khan Kashkuli in particular profited from this situation. His *ilkhani*, Sowlat al-Dowleh, had been expected to reap the greatest rewards from the attack on Kamarej, but Muhammad ‘Ali defected from him soon after. This was no doubt in part because of Sowlat’s uncompromising levying of the *maliyat* tax whose rate he kept increasing, which caused widespread loss of support from other Qashqai *tirehs*. Sowlat’s redirection of the caravan route from Kazerun to Jirreh in 1910, denying the Kashkulis income from the road, also caused resentment.¹²² In October 1911, once Sowlat had been stripped of the title of *ilkhani*, Qavam al-Molk granted Muhammad ‘Ali Khān nominal control of the Bushehr-Shiraz road.¹²³

It was in this context that Muhammad ‘Ali Khan engaged in a sustained campaign of banditry against both the local population and the passing caravans from late 1911 to 1913. This included regular attacks on and looting of Kazerun, the capturing of various villages in the area as well as the building of forts. By 1913 he was said to have attained ‘such an influential position that he had made himself practically master of large areas north and north-west of Shiraz’, and one of his letters reveals his intention to become the master of Mamasani county.¹²⁴ Local resistance to his activities did occasionally occur. Sometimes villagers and townsmen attempted to fight off Muhammad ‘Ali’s men; in other instances they protested at the local telegraph office, appealing to higher authorities for action.¹²⁵ But it would be wrong to assume that there was a strict town-tribe divide. Sedentary townsmen or villagers sometimes decided to take up arms

and join Muhammad 'Ali's bandit gang; the most notable person to do so was 'Ali Muhammad Kamareji, who achieved notoriety among British authorities as a 'brigand' and 'outlaw' for his deeds on behalf of the Kashkuli khan.

Muhammad 'Ali Khan's gang often targeted foreigners, a trend that can be understood within the wider context of growing xenophobia and anti-imperialism in the area. There were many reports of robbery committed against European travellers throughout 1912 and 1913, in conjunction with allegations of harassment at the hands of the Iranian road guards. The villages in the Konar Takhteh plain were said to be 'particularly notorious for the ill-treatment of caravans, extortion, general turbulence and insulting behaviour to Europeans'.¹²⁶ Similarly, according to the Shiraz consul, Walter Smart, the attitude of 'roadguards, especially at Rahdar, towards European travellers is disgraceful. Apart from being heavily blackmailed, European travellers must expect to be treated with violent discourtesy, even threatened with pointed rifles, by these servants of the Kashkuli Khans'.¹²⁷ Indeed, Smart himself became the victim of an attack in December 1911, when eight hundred of Muhammad 'Ali's men – reported to have been led by 'Ali Muhammad Kamareji – ambushed him and his accompanying troops from the Thirty-Ninth Central Indian Horse regiment near Kazerun. It is clear that although Smart was quickly given shelter by Muhammad 'Ali himself, the attack was fuelled by xenophobia, especially against Indians. In Muhammad 'Ali's exchanges with Smart, he characterized Smart's Indian companions as 'black idolaters' who had no right to be involved in policing the road because they were inferior to the Qashqais.¹²⁸

But it is evident that Muhammad 'Ali Khan also especially resented the British presence. Muhammad 'Ali was reported to have told a German merchant robbed by his gang that 'after the blood which had been shed, it was lucky for him that he was not an Englishman'.¹²⁹ This cohered with a wave of anti-British feeling that was sweeping the countryside, largely moving from urban centres to rural areas. In Bushehr and Shiraz the ulema had already organized a boycott against the increased British incursion into the country.¹³⁰ Soon some mullahs were travelling into rural Fars in order to mobilize local opposition: for example, Sheikh 'Ali Dashti went from Bushehr to Borazjan in January 1912.¹³¹ Such ideas were also transmitted via the telegraph, with messages lauding the Kashkulis' recent actions against the British sent to Muhammad 'Ali Khan even from Tehran.¹³² The effect of such agitation is apparent in the crucial role that local villagers played in the attack on Smart, when 'every village and tower' along the retreat to Kazerun contributed riflemen to open fire on the foreign troops.¹³³ Thus as far as banditry committed against foreigners was concerned, there was a great deal of local support.

Furthermore, this support could also extend to resisting the state's attempts to bring the roads under control. After the threatening 'British Note' of October 1910, the Iranian government agreed to create a gendarmerie to enforce law and order on the roads, but this was not realized in Fars until the summer of 1912.¹³⁴ The gendarmerie was given the task of enforcing new governor general Mokhber al-Soltaneh's policy of abolishing *rahdari*, but British intelligence at the time suggested that this would face popular opposition. For example in July 1912 Smart claimed that *rahdari* could be moderated but not abolished because 'any attempt to abolish *rahdari* entirely and immediately would mean that the gendarmerie would be faced by the hostility of both

the Kashgais and the settled population along the road', rendering 'the task of the gendarmerie quite impossible'.¹³⁵ Similarly the British Resident Sir Percy Cox asserted that despite the insecurity caused by *rāhdāri*, 'a large part of the sedentary population along the road is vitally interested in the maintenance of the present condition of affairs'.¹³⁶

Such claims were soon proven true: gendarmes were regularly attacked when attempting to apprehend prominent bandits. In one particularly notable incident in November 1913, gendarmes endeavoured to capture the now notorious 'Ali Muhammad Kamāreji. They encircled his gang at the Tūl-e Kolāh fort but 'Ali Muhammad and his companions managed to escape. When the gendarmes pursued the bandits to Kāzerūn, many villagers from along the way flocked into the town to attack them, soon followed by 'Ali Muhammad and his gang, who had been hiding in the neighbourhood.¹³⁷ Meanwhile, those from other settlements such as Kamārej also began rising against the gendarmes: even a gendarme officer at the Rāhdār caravanserai defected to 'Ali Muhammad.¹³⁸ It was reported by the Kāzerūn signaller that 'all prominent local people are in favour of 'Ali Muhammad', who had evidently framed his efforts as part of a national struggle by sending out letters all over the country that incited people to oppose the gendarmerie.¹³⁹ Thus, there could have been some political purpose behind the actions of this so-called 'bandit', even if he so often engaged in stealing from the local poor. That he had popular support on this issue is testament to the depth of *rāhdāri*'s popularity and legitimacy in the eyes of many local people. Crucially, they also framed its defence as part of an anti-imperialist struggle; according to Safiri, the Kazerunis justified the attack of November 1913 by claiming the gendarmerie represented British interests.¹⁴⁰ It can be argued, therefore, that in the area around Kāzerūn, the bandits seeking to defend *rāhdāri* shared similarities with Hobsbawm's social bandits, insofar as they were conscious upholders of popularly held values against the social injustices of modernization, especially imperialism.

This, too, was certainly aided by the absence of commonly accepted legal boundaries criminalizing banditry in an abstract sense. As has already been pointed out, there was a great deal of fluidity between guarding and robbing the passing caravans in the area. Perhaps the greatest indicator of the ambiguity of law was shown in the way even gendarmes could move between the two. In February and March 1914, gendarmes and their hired *tofangchis* clashed with the locals again but on this occasion also took to looting parts of Kāzerūn for several days. Even the chief army instructor in Fārs, Colonel J. N. Merrill, testified that he witnessed most gendarmes engaging in widespread pillage and rape, especially targeting the Jewish neighbourhood.¹⁴¹ This soon spread outside Kāzerūn, and there were many reports of gendarmes stealing mules from muleteers in the town's vicinity.¹⁴²

Although these gendarmes were in opposition to the local population by virtue of their official posts, their disregard for law and lack of concern for criminality can, in fact, be considered symptomatic of the feelings held widely among the locals. This is because, in Fars at that time at least, gendarmes were largely recruited locally. Since 1912, Major Siefert had led a recruitment drive for the gendarmerie in villages along the road to Bushehr.¹⁴³ In addition, many gendarmes complained about arrears in pay and also lack of food, making the same appeals to justice that we find in other protests

at the time. Their actions in Kazerun, then, should be understood within the context of local protest and socially accepted means of responding to destitution and starvation.

Despite the resistance to the abolition of *rahdari*, by late 1914 the practice had virtually stopped on the Bushehr-Shiraz road. The Gulf Residency Administration report from the end of the year states:

The last six months of the year have shown the province to be in a state of tranquillity, unparalleled any time these past five years. On the Bushire-Shiraz road, *Rahdari* has ceased, caravans and travellers have passed practically unmolested and credit must be given to the Gendarmerie for having brought about, for the moment, this satisfactory state of affairs.¹⁴⁴

This had been helped by the British government offering the Iranian government £100,000 in 1913 for the maintenance of the gendarmerie in Fars.¹⁴⁵ Not only did this money go towards recruiting and maintaining more troops, it also was used to pay subsidies to the khans holding authority along the road as a compensation for the loss of *rahdari* income. Another factor was the return of Sowlat al-Dowleh to the position of *ilkhani*; with the backing of the new governor general, he launched a campaign against the dissidents within his confederation, especially the Kashkulis.¹⁴⁶

Nevertheless, such was the depth of anti-British feeling that when the First World War broke out, a large section of the population in Fars supported the German war effort by renewing attacks and robberies on British troops. This was accompanied by a wave of anti-imperialist agitation calling for the defence of both nation and Islam, spread in the region especially through telegraphs and newspapers.¹⁴⁷ Both Muhammad 'Ali Khan Kashkuli and 'Ali Muhammad Kamareji evidently took part in this struggle. The latter continued his attacks until his death in 1915, and was subsequently remembered locally as an anti-imperialist fighter.¹⁴⁸ According to the local nationalist newspapers of the time, the former was said to have joined the nationalist cause against the British, making 'protestations of patriotism' and expressing his 'desire to guard Islam'.¹⁴⁹ Although his later switch of allegiance to the British towards the end of the war may cast doubt on the genuineness of his anti-imperialist feelings, his connection to the nationalist struggle problematizes his designation as a mere 'bandit' or 'outlaw' living on the margins of society. Rather, both of these figures, much maligned in British sources, demonstrated an awareness of wider social sentiments and appealed to these to gather support; whether they did so instrumentally or not, their acts of theft and robbery had wider popular legitimacy, challenging any normative judgments regarding their criminal status.

Conclusion

Many of the themes that characterized the Fars province at the time can be observed in Kazerun on the micro-level. These include the fluid and temporary nature of criminality; the connection between banditry and socio-economic and political processes; the breakdown of tribal authority; the blurring of legal boundaries; as well

as the link between theft, protest and concepts of justice. Although there were local particularities in the Kazerun context, the parallels between this county and the wider province concerning banditry and theft can be explained in part by comparable levels of dearth, destitution and disempowerment resulting from state encroachment and the commercialization of agriculture. Added to this was a vibrant political discussion on justice during the Constitutional Revolution, which spread as a result of modern infrastructure and means of communication. Overall, Kazerun, like Fars and the rest of the country, was experiencing a moment of 'hegemonic contraction' that undermined the existing system of consent and authority. This meant that not only was theft becoming a survival strategy for an increasing portion of the population but it was also allowed to become part of new forms of political articulation. It was increasingly framed with reference to the social injustices perpetrated by the state and the imperial powers.

References to primordial cultural traditions, in this case tribal raiding, do not help us illuminate the changing context. That is not to argue that tribal politics did not figure at all in the prevalence of banditry in Fars; as has been shown, the rivalries between and within tribes, especially for control of the Bushehr-Shiraz road, were often very important in the outbreaks of banditry. But tribes are not static, unitary entities; rather, their politics are realized within a particular spatial environment and historical moment.¹⁵⁰ In certain spatial-temporal moments, even an old tribal practice such as raiding could attain relatively new meanings and practitioners.

Above all, banditry was not a practice confined to a particular 'dangerous class' exogenous to 'society'. Banditry was not committed *against* the peasantry or townspeople. To hold such an opinion would presuppose that banditry existed in an inherent opposition to law-abiding society. But in practice banditry had no normative attachment to law on the popular level; rather, it could be contingently legitimate in a given moment. It was in this sense that banditry was truly 'social', unlike the activities of the famous bandits discussed by Hobsbawm. Although we can detect Robin Hood-like traits in some Fars-bandits, the reality presents a more complicated picture that defies the romantic ideal of the 'noble robber': bandits did defend popular values against the authorities and yet still also frequently targeted the most vulnerable.¹⁵¹ In truth, banditry was most often a 'weapon of the weak' used against the weak, even if wealthier landlords and merchants occasionally fell victim to it or some notable bandits emerged to capture romantic imagination.¹⁵² Similarly, in this case we cannot point to a 'straight world' against which an 'underworld' of 'antisocial crime' can be defined – a distinction Hobsbawm makes in his cases of social banditry.¹⁵³ In reality Iranian society was made up of many different groups with potentially conflicting attitudes towards crime. Thus we have to be open to the possibility that even when committed against the poor, crime may not have been just a means of survival for its perpetrators but also potentially a form of protest. When we speak of 'social crime', then, we must be aware of its potential to oppress other groups.

This raises the question as to whether we can delineate between 'good' and 'bad' crime at all and points to the related discussion concerning the possibility that *all* crime might hold the potential for protest, which Hobsbawm himself has addressed.¹⁵⁴ It is clear by now that we should not view the law as a mere instrument for the ruling

class to maintain power and only criminalize activities that directly threaten it. As Stuart Hall and Phil Scraton have remarked:

The undoubted role of the law in maintaining a particular set of economic relations, in establishing class hegemony and legitimating a system of power, does not adequately account for the real, historical complexity of its functioning. The 'rule of law' is a contradictory social relation, an arena of struggle. It is something which the poor and the oppressed have struggled *against*, struggled *within*, and sometimes struggled *for*.¹⁵⁵

Not only may laws be popularly consented to, they might even be used by the poor for personal gain.¹⁵⁶ It is for this reason that the law must be studied in its particular historical moment rather than treated as a static, 'silent constant'.¹⁵⁷ Ultimately, however, only those with a certain degree of power have the ability to define acts as 'crime' in the legal sense. Thus it is easy enough to see how some illegal acts could be popularly viewed as direct forms of protest. It also means, more significantly, that illegal acts that were less obviously framed as protest could still be a form of defiance as they indirectly challenged the ruling authority. In this sense, although John Rule is correct to stress that the most important aspect of 'social crime' is the element of popular approval and legitimacy rather than protest, we should also acknowledge that the degree to which an illegal act is consciously a form of protest does not necessarily affect its subversive impact on the established order.¹⁵⁸

For this reason banditry and theft in places such as Fars influenced wider nationalist discourse in Iran. By the end of the Constitutional Revolution, their prevalence across the spectrum of the disempowered popular classes presented a problem for the formalization of law and order. Even for the former democrat of the Constitutional Revolution, Hassan Taqizadeh, the masses were nothing more than 'thieves and self-interested people'.¹⁵⁹ For the modernizing elites, theft was something that could only be remedied through a reform of the people's character and mind. For them, democratic politics could no longer be entrusted to the population. Rather, what was needed was a turn towards discipline, governmentality and authoritarian control. Among the 'dangerous classes' of society supposedly responsible for lawlessness, the tribes were to be one of the central targets in Reza Shah's efforts to control the country, whether through means of suppression or co-option.¹⁶⁰ The abstract rule of law, after all, demanded a legible and detectable population – something that the tribes seemed to inherently defy by their very existence. The 'tribal problem', then, would continue to live on in elite discourse until much later in the twentieth century.

- 78 After the First World War, these bounties could reach the phenomenal amount of 10,000 francs. Administrateur adjoint de Batna, novembre 1920, ANOM, 1F33.
- 79 See Diaire des Pères blancs de Médina, 10 octobre 1914, Rome, Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique, D-OR-35.
- 80 Rapport du sous-préfet de Tizi Ouzou, 1894, ANOM, 1F33.
- 81 Procureur général près la cour d'appel d'Alger à Monsieur le Garde des Sceaux, Alger, 7 mars 1904, AN, Paris, BB18-2275.
- 82 Antonin Plarier, *Le banditisme en Algérie pendant la Première Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Karthala, forthcoming).
- 83 Eric Hobsbawm, *Les Bandits* (Paris: Zones, [1969] 2008), 9.

Chapter 7

- 1 Arnold Wilson, *SW. Persia: A Political Officer's Diary 1907–1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), 189.
- 2 Stephanie Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran: Rural Conflict and the New State, 1921–1941* (London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2007); Kaveh Bayat, 'Riza Shah and the Tribes: An Overview', in *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah, 1921–1941*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), 213–219.
- 3 Oliver Bast, 'Disintegrating the "Discourse of Disintegration": Some Reflections on the Historiography of the Late Qajar Period and Iranian Cultural Memory', in *Iran in the 20th Century: Historiography and Political Culture*, ed. Touraj Atabaki (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 55–68; cf. Stephanie Cronin, *The Army and the Creation of the Pahlavi State in Iran, 1910–1926* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996).
- 4 See, for example, the public discussion about tribes during the Constitutional Revolution in Afsaneh Najmabadi, *The Story of the Daughters of Quchan: Gender and National Memory in Iranian History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998).
- 5 The term 'tribe' is used here as a translation for various Persian terms commonly referring to nomadic pastoralist groups such as 'ashayer or ilat. As such, I employ it differently to its function as a designation of primordial racial difference in wider British colonial discourse and administration, which is beyond the scope of this study.
- I use the term 'dangerous class' here not so much in the classic sense of a being a feature of urban poverty and mass urbanization as set out famously in Louis Chevalier, *Labouring and Dangerous Classes in Paris during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Frank Jellinek (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, [1958] 1973). Rather, I use it metaphorically to refer to a social group seen to be highly or necessarily susceptible to criminality, similar to Marx and Engels's idea of the lumpenproletariat, but less specifically concerned with an underclass of the urban working class; see Robert L. Bussard, 'The "Dangerous Class" of Marx and Engels: The Rise of the Idea of the Lumpenproletariat', *History of European Ideas* 8, no. 6 (1987): 675–692.
- 6 The term 'criminal tribe' emerged in colonial British India to refer to certain tribes that the authorities believed to be naturally inclined to crime, even from birth; see Anand A. Yang, 'Dangerous Castes and Tribes: The Criminal Tribes Act and the Magahiya Doms of Northeast India', in *Crime and Criminality in British India*, ed. Anand A. Yang (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 108–127; Stewart N.

- Gordon, 'Bhils and the Idea of A Criminal Tribe in Nineteenth-Century India', in *Crime and Criminality in British India*, ed. Anand A. Yang (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 128–139. For a powerful critique of the discursive concept of 'criminal tribe' see David Arnold, 'Dacoity and Rural Crime in Madras, 1860–1940', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 6 (1979): 140–167.
- 7 Mansoureh Ettehadieh, 'Crime, Security, and Insecurity: Socio-Political Conditions of Iran, 1875–1924', in *War and Peace in Qajar Persia: Implications Past and Present*, ed. Roxane Farmanfarmanian (London: Routledge, 2008), 181.
 - 8 Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, new edn. (London: Abacus, [1969] 2001); cf. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959).
 - 9 Douglas Hay, Peter Linebaugh, John G. Rule, E. P. Thompson and Cal Winslow, *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, rev. edn. (London: Verso, [1975] 2011); and E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975) have been especially influential in this field. The concept of 'social crime' has been subject to much critical historical debate; for an overview see Paul Knepper, *Writing the History of Crime* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); and Paul Lawrence, 'The Historiography of Crime and Criminal Justice', in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Crime and Criminal Justice*, eds Paul Knepper and Anja Johansen (London: Oxford University Press, 2016), 17–37. For more recent attempts to defend the concept see John Rule, 'Social Crime in the Rural South in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in *Crime, Protest, and Popular Politics in Southern England, 1740–1850*, eds John Rule and Roger A. E. Wells (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), 153–168; and John Lea, 'Social Crime Revisited', *Theoretical Criminology* 3, no. 3 (1999): 307–325.
 - 10 Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, eds, *History From Crime* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 226.
 - 11 Florike Egmond, *Underworlds: Organized Crime in the Netherlands, 1650–1800* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 19.
 - 12 See Chapter 5, in this volume. Notable exceptions in the Middle East and North Africa context are David Prochaska, 'Fire on the Mountain: Resisting Colonialism in Algeria', in *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa*, ed. Donald Crummey (London: James Curry, 1986), 229–252; and David M. Hart, *Banditry in Islam: Case Studies from Morocco, Algeria and the Pakistan North West Frontier* (Wisbech: Middle East & North African Studies Press, 1987). For a discussion of the social banditry thesis in relation to Latin America see Richard W. Slatta, ed., *Bandidos: The Varieties of Latin American Banditry* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987). For Australia, see Pat O'Malley, 'Social Bandits, Modern Capitalism and the Traditional Peasantry. A Critique of Hobsbawm', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 6, no. 9 (1979): 489–501. For the USA, see Richard White, 'Outlaw Gangs of the Middle Border: American Social Bandits', *Western Historical Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (October 1981): 387–408. For China, see Robert J. Antony, 'Peasants, Heroes and Brigands: The Problems of Social Banditry in Early Nineteenth-Century South China', *Modern China* 15, no. 2 (April 1989): 123–148. For a Southeast Asian example, see Boon Kheng Cheah, *The Peasant Robbers of Kedah, 1900–1919: Historical and Folk Perceptions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988). For numerous examples in sub-Saharan Africa see essays in Donald Crummey, ed., *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa* (London: James Curry, 1986). And for India see the essays in Anand A. Yang, ed., *Crime and Criminality in British India* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985); and Kim

- A. Wagner, *Thuggee: Banditry and the British in Early Nineteenth-Century India* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
- 13 Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to Centralization* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); Nathan Brown, 'Brigands and State Building: The Invention of Banditry in Modern Egypt', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32, no. 2 (April 1990): 258–281; a more nuanced account is provided in Fulya Ozkan, 'Gravediggers of the Modern State: Highway Robbers on the Trabzon-Bayezid Road, 1850s–1910s', *Journal of Persianate Studies* 7 (2014): 219–250. Suraiya Faruqi perhaps goes furthest to explain the socio-economic and political dimensions of banditry in the Ottoman Empire, including the motivations of bandits themselves; see Suraiya Faruqi, *Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire, 1550–1720* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1995); cf. Chapter 8, in this volume.
 - 14 Anton Blok, 'The Peasant and the Brigand: Social Banditry Reconsidered', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 14, no. 4 (September 1972): 494–503.
 - 15 On the role of tribes in Iranian governance, see Richard Tapper, 'The Tribes in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Iran', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 7, eds Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly and C. P. Melville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 506–541. On the importance of tribes in state formation in the Middle Eastern context more generally see the essays in Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, eds, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
 - 16 Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, 20.
 - 17 It has been long acknowledged that raiding, at least against sedentary populations, could be an economic necessity for survival in times of difficulty. For example see Louise E. Sweet, 'Camel Raiding of North Arabian Bedouin: A Mechanism of Ecological Adaptation', *American Anthropologist* 67, no. 5 (October 1965): 1132–1150.
 - 18 John Chalcraft, 'Engaging the State: Peasants and Petitions in Egypt on the Eve of Colonial Rule', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005): 303–325; Kyle J. Anderson, 'The Egyptian Labor Corps: Workers, Peasants, and the State in World War I', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49 (2017): 5–24. On the perils of uncovering the liberal humanist subject in subaltern studies see Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia', *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 1 (1988): 189–224. For a related discussion concerning resistance in a Middle Eastern context see Anne Clément, 'Rethinking "Peasant Consciousness" in Colonial Egypt: An Exploration of the Performance of Folksongs by Upper Egyptian Agricultural Workers on the Archaeological Excavation Sites of Karnak and Dendera at the Turn of the Twentieth Century (1885–1914)', *History and Anthropology* 21, no. 2 (June 2010): 73–100; Lila Abu-Lughod, 'The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women', *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 1 (February 1990): 41–55; Timothy Mitchell, 'Everyday Metaphors of Power', *Theory and Society* 19, no. 5 (October 1990): 545–577; and Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).
 - 19 Vanessa Martin, *The Qajar Pact: Bargaining, Protest and the State in Nineteenth-Century Persia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005).
 - 20 John T. Chalcraft, *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 15.

- 21 Ibid. On the creativity of protest in late Qajar and early Pahlavi Iran, especially see Stephanie Cronin, *Soldiers, Shahs and Subalterns in Iran: Opposition, Protest and Revolt, 1921–1941* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- 22 As Chalcraft explains in reference to Gramsci, hegemonic contraction involves the eroding of existing forms of consent previously underpinning the authority of elites, as well as elites' inability to subsequently find new sources of legitimacy; see Chalcraft, *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 36–39.
- 23 Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran*; Khazeni, *Tribes & Empire on the Margins of Nineteenth-Century Iran*.
- 24 Lois Beck, *The Qashqa'i of Iran* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 127; Floreeda Safiri, 'The South Persian Rifles' (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1976).
- 25 Morteza Nouraei and Vanessa Martin, 'Part II: The Karguzar and Security, the Trade Routes of Iran and Foreign Subjects 1900–1921', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 16, no. 1 (April 2006): 29–41.
- 26 Alf Lüdtke, 'Introduction: What Is the History of Everyday Life and Who Are Its Practitioners?', in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Alf Lüdtke, trans. William Templer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 4.
- 27 Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: The One-Volume Edition* (London: Verso, 2014), 453. Cf. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
- 28 Lüdtke, 'Introduction: What Is the History of Everyday Life and Who Are Its Practitioners?', 6. In this argument I am, of course, also drawing on E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, rev. edn. (London: Penguin, [1963] 2013).
- 29 For a theoretical discussion on the interaction between the local and the global in the construction of space, see Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005).
- 30 Maral Jefroudi, 'The Opening-Up of the Past and the Possibilities of Global History for Iranian Historiography', in *Iran in the Middle East: Transnational Encounters and Social History*, eds Houchang Chehabi, Peyman Jafari and Maral Jefroudi (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 235–248.
- 31 F. Vejdani, 'Illicit Acts and Sacred Space: Everyday Crime in the Shrine City of Mashhad, 1913–1914', *Journal of Persianate Studies* 7 (2014): 22–54.
- 32 On the attitudes of Iranian elites and intellectuals towards crime see, for instance, Cyrus Schayegh, 'Serial Murder in Tehran: Crime, Science, and the Formation of Modern State and Society in Interwar Iran', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47, no. 4 (October 2005): 836–862; Darius M. Rejali, *Torture & Modernity: Self, Society, and State in Modern Iran* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994); and Hadi Enayat, *Law, State and Society in Modern Iran: Constitutionalism, Autocracy, and Legal Reform, 1906–1941* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- 33 Charles Philip Issawi, *The Economic History of Iran, 1800–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 152–205.
- 34 Pierre Oberling, *The Qashqa'i Nomads of Fars* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 84.
- 35 Beck, *The Qashqa'i of Iran*, 90.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid., 83.
- 38 Edward G. Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1893), 192–193.

- 39 For a brief summary of the role of the *ilkhani* and the structure of hierarchy within the Qashqai confederation, see Oberling, *The Qashqai Nomads of Fars*, 21–25; for a more thorough account, see Beck, *The Qashqai of Iran*, 163–234.
- 40 Beck, *The Qashqai of Iran*, 91.
- 41 Messrs Ziegler and Co. and Dixon & Co. to Board of Trade, 29 December 1909, L/PS/10/163, India Office Records (hereafter IOR).
- 42 Memorandum by Chick enclosed in telegram from Cox to Grey, 15 December 1912, L/PS/10/299, IOR.
- 43 Barclay to Persian Government, 14 October 1910, L/PS/10/163, IOR.
- 44 ‘Report on Fars by Captain A T Wilson, Indian Political Department’, p. 39, L/PS/20/7, IOR.
- 45 Arthur Moore, *The Orient Express* (London: Constable & Company, 1914), 121–122.
- 46 Wilson, SW. *Persia: A Political Officer’s Diary 1907–1914*, 191.
- 47 Memorandum by Chick enclosed in telegram from Cox to Grey, 15 December 1912, L/PS/10/299, IOR.
- 48 ‘Ali Akbar Sa’idi Sirjani, *Vaqaye ‘-e Ettefaqiyeh: Majmu ‘eh-e Gozareshha-ye Khafiyeh Nevisan-e Inglis Dar Velayat-E Jonubi-ye Iran Az Sal-e 1291 Ta 1322* (Tehran: Entesharat-e Novin, 1362), 712, 2 Jomada Avval 1321 [27 July 1903].
- 49 Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906–1911 : Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, & the Origins of Feminism* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1996), 269.
- 50 Hooshang Amirahmadi, *The Political Economy of Iran under the Qajars: Society, Politics, Economics and Foreign Relations, 1796–1926* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 23; John Foran, ‘The Concept of Dependent Development as a Key to the Political Economy of Qajar Iran (1800–1925)’, *Iranian Studies* 22, no. 2–3 (1989): 5–56, esp. 25–28; Issawi, *The Economic History of Iran, 1800–1914*, 18; Ahmad Seyf, ‘Commercialization of Agriculture: Production and Trade of Opium in Persia, 1850–1906’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16, no. 2 (May 1984): 233–250.
- 51 Ann K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 152–153; Amirahmadi, *The Political Economy of Iran under the Qajars*, 23.
- 52 Amirahmadi, *The Political Economy of Iran under the Qajars*, 23; Foran, ‘The Concept of Dependent Development’, 31. For a more detailed outline of the stratification of villages, see Amirahmadi, *The Political Economy of Iran under the Qajars*, 51–54; Eric J. Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran, 1960–1980* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 10–35; and Farhad Kazemi and Ervand Abrahamian, ‘The Nonrevolutionary Peasantry of Modern Iran’, *Iranian Studies* 11 (1978): 259–304.
- 53 Ranin Kazemi, ‘Of Diet and Profit: On the Question of Subsistence Crises in Nineteenth-Century Iran’, *Middle Eastern Studies* 52, no. 2 (2016): 335–358. The connection between the commercialization of agriculture and political protest in late nineteenth-century Iran has also been examined in Stephanie Cronin, ‘Bread and Justice in Qajar Iran: The Moral Economy, the Free Market and the Hungry Poor’, *Middle Eastern Studies* 54, no. 6 (2018): 843–877.
- 54 Idem, ‘The Tobacco Protest in Nineteenth-Century Iran: The View from a Provincial Town’, *Journal of Persianate Studies* 7 (2014): 251–295.
- 55 This was identified by Hobsbawm himself in *Bandits*. For a forceful articulation of this point, see Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).

- 56 Nouraei and Martin, 'Part II: The Karguzar and Security', 31; Beck, *The Qashqa'i of Iran*, 84.
- 57 Report by Moir enclosed in telegram from Smart to Barclay, 3 February 1911, L/PS/10/163, IOR.
- 58 Extract from Shiraz Diary, No. 40, for the Week Ending 4 October 1913, L/PS/10/404, IOR.
- 59 Report by Moir enclosed in telegram from Smart to Barclay, 3 February 1911, L/PS/10/163, IOR.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Knox to Barclay, 6 November 1911, FO 228/1036, The National Archives of the United Kingdom (hereafter TNA).
- 63 Moore, *The Orient Express*, 122.
- 64 'Report on Fars by Captain A T Wilson, Indian Political Department', p. 31, L/PS/20/7, IOR.
- 65 Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran*. This view was also put forward by Arnold Wilson in his reflections on his travels in Iran, writing that by c. 1911, 'government by tribes and great families was at an end: the system had broken down' in Wilson, *SW. Persia: A Political Officer's Diary 1907–1914*, 187.
- 66 For an account of hegemonic contraction resulting from such processes in the Middle East and North Africa region more generally see Chalcraft, *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*.
- 67 For Khamseh quote see 'General Situation in Fars', Smart to Townley, 24 June 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA; for the quote by Qashqai, see 'Review of General Situation in Fars During the Past Six Months', report by Smart enclosed in telegram from Cox to Government of India, 14 November 1912, L/PS/10/357, IOR.
- 68 On the traditional relationship between vertical tribal authority and raiding, see Richard Tapper, 'Raiding, Reaction and Rivalry: The Shahsevan in the Constitutional Period', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49, no. 3 (October 1986): 508–531, esp. 526, 529; and Pierre Oberling, 'The Tribes of Qaraca Dag: A Brief History', *Oriens* 17 (December 1964): 60–95, esp. 60–64.
- 69 Telegram by Smart, 28 May 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA.
- 70 'General Situation in Fars', Smart to Townley, 24 June 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA.
- 71 Diary of Shiraz Consulate for the Week Ending 21 December 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA.
- 72 On the peasant rebellions in Gilan see Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution*, 154–162.
- 73 See Cronin in this volume. A similar point is made by Faroqhi in relation to the Anatolian Steppes in Faroqhi, *Coping with the State*, 158.
- 74 Mirzai has shown how slavery could have a similar function in times of destitution in Iran; see Behnaz A. Mirzai, *A History of Slavery and Emancipation in Iran, 1800–1929* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017).
- 75 Martin, *The Qajar Pact*, 49.
- 76 On the roles of *lutis* in public life, see Reza Arasteh, 'The Character, Organization and Social Role of the Lutis (Javan-Mardan) in the Traditional Iranian Society of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 4, no. 1 (February 1961): 47–52.
- 77 Martin, *The Qajar Pact*, 115. Bell has recently made a convincing case for the overlap of gender and sexuality in the criminalization of *lutis* as deviant, dangerous subjects

- on the margins of society; see Robert Joseph Bell, 'Luti Masculinity in Iranian Modernity, 1785–1941: Marginalization and the Anxieties of Proper Masculine Comportment' (MA thesis, City University of New York, 2015).
- 78 See Cronin in this volume. Cf. Martin, *The Qajar Pact*, 113–132; and Asghar Fathi, 'The Role of "Rebels" in the Constitutional Movement in Iran', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10, no. 1 (February 1979): 55–66.
- 79 Martin, *The Qajar Pact*, 113.
- 80 Ibid., 122. For a thorough account of the complicated role of *lutis* in urban politics more generally, see Willem M. Floor, 'The Political Role of Lutis in Iran', in *Modern Iran: The Dialectics of Continuity and Change*, eds Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 83–95.
- 81 See Cronin in this volume; Fathi, 'The Role of "Rebels"', 57. For a discussion concerning whether Sattar Khan can be considered a 'social bandit', see Anja Pistor-Hatam, 'The Iranian Constitutional Revolution as Lieu(x) de Memoire: Sattar Khan', in *Iran's Constitutional Revolution: Popular Politics, Cultural Transformations and Transnational Connections*, eds H. E. Chehabi and Vanessa Martin (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 33–44. The existence of bandits in the 'Robin Hood' mould goes far back in Persian tradition in the form of 'ayyaran. Some have argued for the origins of the phenomenon in pre-Islamic society; for example, see Mohsen Zakeri, *Sasanid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society: The Origins of 'Ayyaran and Futuwwa* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995). The noble robber depiction of 'ayyaran in popular Persian romances of the medieval period such as *Samak-e 'Ayyar*, which were probably based on oral tradition, perhaps reveals the popularity and legitimacy of social banditry in wider society at the time in some form and stands in contrast to the authorities' largely negative conceptions of 'ayyārān. For an overview of these depictions see Ameneh Gazerani, 'Thugs, Thieves, Tricksters or Popular Heroes? A Comparative Look at the Phenomenon of 'Ayyari' (MA thesis, Ohio State University, 2003); and Claude Cahen and William L. Hanaway, Jr., "'Ayyar", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Available online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ayyar> (accessed 7 August 2018).
- 82 Bill to Barclay, 26 March 1910, FO 248/1003, TNA.
- 83 For a recent, nuanced analysis of *lutis* and their relationship to conceptions of justice, see Farzin Vejdani, 'Urban Violence and Space: *Lutis*, Seminarians, and *Sayyids* in Late Qajar Iran', *Journal of Social History* 52, no. 4 (2019): 1185–1211; cf. Chapter 10 in this volume.
- 84 Shiraz News for Week Ending 2 February 1910, FO 248/1003, TNA.
- 85 Martin, *The Qajar Pact*, 95–112.
- 86 Vejdani argues that minority neighbourhoods, especially Jewish quarters, were legal 'spaces of exception' where the law was suspended insofar as the looting of these so-called 'morally polluted' areas was widely considered legitimate, helping explain why theft here was especially prevalent; see Vejdani, 'Urban Violence and Space'.
- 87 Martin, *The Qajar Pact*, esp. 124; cf. Vejdani, 'Urban Violence and Space'; Rejali, *Torture & Modernity*, 30.
- 88 For an overview of Shiraz's local politics and discussion during the Constitutional Revolution, see Vanessa Martin, *Iran between Islamic Nationalism and Secularism: The Constitutional Revolution of 1906* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 147–168.
- 89 'News', report by Smart, 6 August 1910, FO 248/1003, TNA.
- 90 Smart to Barclay, 9 November 1910, FO 248/1003, TNA.
- 91 Shiraz News for Week Ending 11 March 1911, FO 248/1035, TNA.

- 92 Vejdani, 'Urban Violence and Space', 5.
- 93 This is evident in the genealogy of sanctuary-taking in Iranian history, see Peyman Eshaghi, 'Quietness beyond Political Power: Politics of Taking Sanctuary (*Bast Neshini*) in the Shi'ite Shrines of Iran', *Iranian Studies* 49, no. 3 (2016): 493–514.
- 94 For an analysis of the connection between concepts of justice and dearth in this moment of hegemonic contraction, especially with reference to the waning of food provisioning and legal changes in authorities' supervision of markets, see Cronin, 'Bread and Justice in Qajar Iran'. Cronin also reveals that on some occasions hungry soldiers sided with food protests in the 1890s.
- 95 Sa'idi Sirjani, *Vaqaye 'e Ettefaqiyeh*, 672, 8 Safar 1320 [16 May 1902].
- 96 Vejdani, 'Urban Violence and Space'.
- 97 Rejali, *Torture & Modernity*, 30. Many instances of similar attacks on state artefacts of justice can be found in Martin, *The Qajar Pact*.
- 98 Willem M. Floor, 'Change and Development in the Judicial System of Qajar Iran (1800–1925)', in *Qajar Iran: Political, Social and Cultural Change*, eds Clifford E. Bosworth and Carole Hillenbrand (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), 132.
- 99 Smart to Barclay, 9 November 1910, FO 248/1003, TNA.
- 100 Enayat, *Law, State and Society in Modern Iran*, 33.
- 101 *Ibid.*, 71.
- 102 Martin, *The Qajar Pact*, 127.
- 103 Martin, *Iran between Islamic Nationalism and Secularism*, 205–206.
- 104 For an overview of these attempts see Enayat, *Law, State and Society in Modern Iran*, 105–109.
- 105 See, for instance, 'Dozd Kist?' ['Who is a Thief?'], *Shefaq-e Sorkh* 11 (9 April 1922).
- 106 Martin, *Iran between Islamic Nationalism and Secularism*, 163.
- 107 For Dehbid, see Diary of the Shiraz Consulate for the Week Ending 6 February 1913; for Borazjan, see Diary of the Shiraz Consulate for the Week Ending 22 March 1913, FO 248/1077, TNA.
- 108 Martin, *Iran between Islamic Nationalism and Secularism*, 205.
- 109 Enayat, *Law, State and Society in Modern Iran*, 71. Nayeb Hossein Kashi and his followers, although relatively little discussed in Anglophone historiography, remain greatly contested in Iranian scholarship. On one side are those who, using a combination of memoirs and local oral tradition, champion the *Nayebiyān* as upholders of ordinary people's justice and even of constitutional values; notable examples include Muhammad Reza Khosravi, *Toghiyan-e Nayebiyān Dar Jariyan-e Enqelab-e Mashrutiyat-e Iran* (Tehran: Beh Negar, 1368); A. Yaghmaei, *Hamase-ye Fathname-ye Nayebi* (Tehran: Esparak, 1368); and Amir Hushang Aryanpur, *Hamase-ye Toghiyan: Barresi-ye Jonbesh-e Nayebiyān-e Kashan Bar Asas-e Asnad* (Tehran: Ketab-e Ameh, 1388). However many historians have criticized such works and disputed any link to social banditry; see, for example, Kaveh Bayat, 'Toghiyan Bar Zed-e Tarikh', *Nashr-e Danesh* 10, no. 3 (1369): 32–37; Hassan Naraqī, *Kashan Dar Jonbesh-e Mashrute-ye Iran* (Tehran: Entesharate Iran, 1364); and Seyyed 'Ali Al-Davud, *Nayeb Hossein Kashi Dar Khur Biabanak* (Tehran: Ketabkhaneh, Muzeh va Markaz-e Asnad-e Majles-e Shura-ye Eslami, 1394). One reason for the ongoing contestation is the relative abundance of documentary evidence on offer that presents contrasting images of the group. See, for example, the large collection of complaints made by ordinary people on the subject in 'Abdolhoseyn Navaei and Muhammad Baqaei Shireh-Jini, *Nayebiyān-e Kashan*

- (*Bar Asas-e Asnad*) (Tehran: Sazman-e Asnad-e Melli-ye Iran, 1379). For recent, nuanced analyses that make use of this published collection, see Seyyed Mahmud Saddat, Morteza Nouraei and Hoseyn Mir Ja'fari, 'An Analysis of the Performance of Nayebi Exiles to Kashan (Causes and Factors of the Occurrence and Continuance of Their Rebellion)', *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business* 5, no. 1 (May 2013): 113–130; and Abolhassan Hadjiheidari, "'Nayeb Hoseyn-e Kasi Straßenräuber Oder Revolutionar?'" Eine Untersuchung Der Iranischen Geschichte 1850–1920' (PhD thesis, University of Tübingen, 2008).
- 110 Nouraei and Martin, 'Part II: The Karguzar and Security', 30.
- 111 Khazeni, *Tribes & Empire on the Margins of Nineteenth-Century Iran*, 95.
- 112 The concept of moral economy was first developed by E. P. Thompson in reference to the popular values of the English peasantry in the eighteenth century; see the essays on moral economy in E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: New Press, 1993); cf. the famous adoption of the concept as applied to Southeast Asian peasant societies in James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976). Linda Darling has identified the moral economy in the Middle Eastern context (and especially in Iran) in the form of the 'Circle of Justice', which stressed the importance of cooperation between kings and subjects, so that peasants were protected by an army in return for taxation and economic productivity, and demands made of subjects were relaxed in times of disaster. Darling demonstrates the persistence of this idea through time and that, despite its explicit appearance waning in sources of the modern period, it shared many similarities with ideas of justice, law and constitution prevailing at the turn of the twentieth century; see Linda T. Darling, *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: The Circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
- 113 Martin, *The Qajar Pact*.
- 114 Chalcraft, *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*.
- 115 Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the Year 1911, p. 16, R/15/1/711, IOR.
- 116 'Report on Fars by Captain A T Wilson, Indian Political Department', p. 69, L/PS/20/7, IOR.
- 117 Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the Year 1911, p. 14, R/15/1/711, IOR.
- 118 Tange-ye Torkan was frequently referred to a 'no-man's land'. See, for example, Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the Year 1911, p. 14, R/15/1/711, IOR.
- 119 Smart to Townley, 15 July 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA. This is corroborated by Iranian governmental documentary evidence; see letter from Neẓām al-Šolṭāneh to Muhammad 'Ali Khan Kalantar Kashkuli and Nur Muhammad Khan Kalantar, undated, No. 98/293/212, Sazman-e Asnad-e Melli-ye Iran (National Archives of Iran).
- 120 Smart to Townley, 15 July 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA.
- 121 Smart to Townley, 15 July 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA.
- 122 Oberling, *The Qashqa'i Nomads of Fars*, 106–107.
- 123 Telegram by Knox, 24 October 1911, FO 248/1036, TNA.
- 124 Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the Year 1913, p. 19, R/15/1/711, IOR.

- 125 For incident of fighting, see 'Diary of the Shiraz Consulate for the Week Ending 25 January 1913'; for example of protest, see telegraph by Smart, 28 April 1913, FO 248/1077, TNA.
- 126 Memorandum by Chick enclosed in telegram from Cox to Grey, 15 December 1912, L/PS/10/299, IOR.
- 127 'General Situation in Fars', Smart to Townley, 24 June 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA.
- 128 Smart to Barclay, 8 February 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA.
- 129 Memorandum by Chick enclosed in telegram from Cox to Grey, 15 December 1912, L/PS/10/299, IOR.
- 130 H. Lyman Stebbings, 'British Imperialism, Regionalism, and Nationalism in Iran, 1890–1919', in *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective.*, eds Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 162.
- 131 Telegram from Minister of Interior of the Persian Government to the Governor of Bushehr, 13 January 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA.
- 132 Telegram by Knox, 14 January 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA.
- 133 Telegram by Knox, 7 January 1912, FO 248/1057, TNA.
- 134 For a comprehensive outline of the development of the gendarmerie, see Cronin, *The Army and the Creation of the Pahlavi State in Iran, 1910–1926*.
- 135 Smart to Towney, 15 July 1912, L/PS/10/197/2, IOR.
- 136 Memorandum by Chick enclosed in telegram from Cox to Grey, 15 December 1912, L/PS/10/299, IOR. On local support for *rahdari* and opposition to gendarmerie, cf. Cronin, *The Army and the Creation of the Pahlavi State in Iran, 1910–1926*, 22–24.
- 137 Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the Year 1913, pp. 24–25, R/15/1/711, IOR.
- 138 Smart to Knox, 23 November 1913, enclosures 8 and 9, L/PS/10/404, IOR.
- 139 Ibid.
- 140 Safiri, 'The South Persian Rifles', 44.
- 141 Report by Merrill enclosed in telegram from O'Connor to Knox, 13 May 1914, L/PS/11/79, IOR.
- 142 Ibid.
- 143 Smart to Towney, 15 July 1912, L/PS/10/197/2, IOR.
- 144 Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the Year 1914, p. 9, R/15/1/711, IOR.
- 145 Oberling, *The Qashqa'i Nomads of Fars*, 121.
- 146 Ibid., 120.
- 147 See, for instance, Lyman Stebbings, 'British Imperialism, Regionalism, and Nationalism in Iran, 1890–1919', 162–163. In Fars, the German agitation against the British was famously led by Wilhelm Wasmuss, who became known as the 'German Lawrence' for his exploits; for an account of the role he played as well as the wider anti-British struggle in Fars during the war, see Beck, *The Qashqa'i of Iran*, 113–118. On the place of Iran in the First World War more generally, see Touraj Atabaki, ed., *Iran and the First World War: Battleground of the Great Powers* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006).
- 148 See, for instance, 'Yek Sandomin Salgard-e Shehadat-e Qahreman-e Nashenakhteh va Sardar-e Mobarez `Ali Muhammad Kamareji dar Jang-e Jahani-ye Aval beh hame-ye Vatanparastan-e Iran Tabrik Gofteh Mishavad', 26 March 2016. Available online: www.iranfarskamarej.blogfa.com/post/49 (accessed 7 August 2018).

- 149 Extract from article in *Neda-ye Haq*, 13 Rabi' Avval 1335 [7 January 1917], 209r, L/PS/10/612, IOR.
- 150 Rada Dyson-Hudson and Neville Dyson-Hudson, 'Nomadic Pastoralism', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 9 (1980): 15–61.
- 151 This often has been found the case by others exploring social banditry in other contexts; see, for example, the conclusions drawn in Slatta, *Bandidos*.
- 152 By 'weapon of weak' I do not necessarily mean a form of conscious everyday peasant as set out famously in J. C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT; Yale University Press, 1985). Rather I refer to a means for the poor to realize agency in the tumults of everyday life in the face of inequality and injustice.
- 153 The very validity of the term 'underworld' has come under historical scrutiny; see Heather Shore, 'A Brief History of the Underworld and Organised Crime, c. 1750–1950', in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Crime and Criminal Justice*, eds Paul Knepper and Anja Johansen (London: Oxford University Press, 2016), 170–191.
- 154 The distinction between 'good' and 'bad' crime was famously criticized in the preface of Hay et al., *Albion's Fatal Tree*. Hobsbawm addresses the debate in the postscript of the more recent edition of Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, 172–182. For an overview of the debate, see Knepper, *Writing the History of Crime*.
- 155 Stuart Hall and Phil Scraton, 'Law, Class and Control', in *Crime and Society: Readings in History and Theory*, eds Mike Fitzgerald, Gregor MacLennan and Jennie Pawson (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1981), 492. E. P. Thomson had famously articulated a similar view before in Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters*, 262. Such a conception of the law also coheres with Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony; see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, repr. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2007).
- 156 See, for example, Peter King, *Crime, Justice, and Discretion in England, 1740–1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). A similar argument can unquestionably be made for the Iranian case.
- 157 Markus D. Dubber, 'Histories of Crime and Criminal Justice', in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Crime and Criminal Justice*, eds Paul Knepper and Anja Johansen (London: Oxford University Press, 2016), 609; cf. Hall and Scraton, 'Law, Class and Control', 494.
- 158 See Rule, 'Social Crime in the Rural South in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries'.
- 159 Quoted in Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution*, 299.
- 160 This is dealt with extensively in Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran*.

Chapter 8

- 1 Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 291.
- 2 There are specific village monographs based on field studies conducted between the 1930s and the 1960s. Undoubtedly, these pioneering studies presented a vivid picture of social life in Anatolian villages but did not problematize peasant politics. See