Ethnic Groups and Boundaries

The Social Organization of Culture Difference

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Preface

This collection of essays presents the results of a symposium in which a small group of Scandinavian social anthropologists cooperated in a joint effort to further the analysis of ethnic groups. The symposium meetings, supported by a grant-in-aid from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, were held at the University of Bergen, 23rd to 26th February 1967. The participants were Klaus Ferdinand, Aarhus; Karl Gustav Izikowitz and Karl Eric Knutsson, Gothenburg; Peter Kandre, Stockholm; Axel Sommerfelt, Harald Eidheim and Helge Kleivan, Oslo; and Henning Siverts, Jan-Petter Blom, Gunnar Haaland, and Fredrik Barth, Bergen. A brief statement of problems and a sketch of analytical concepts by Barth was circulated with the original invitation. Participants then prepared their essays in advance of the meeting, and these were circulated. After the meetings it was decided to publish the results in one book, and each participant was invited to revise and rewrite his essays as he saw fit. Seven complied with this wish, and Barth wrote the general introduction, basing it on his original points and on the results of the discussion, drawing freely on the essays in their original or revised forms. The result is thus in a real sense a joint product from all the participants which, we feel, illustrates the application of some common analytical viewpoints to different sides of the problems of poly-ethnic organization in different ethnographic areas. As host to the symposium I wish to thank all the participants for their contribution to its success, and to express our joint appreciation to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for making our work possible.

Bergen, January 1969

Fredrik Barth
Introduction

by Fredrik Barth

This collection of essays addresses itself to the problems of ethnic groups and their persistence. This is a theme of great, but neglected, importance to social anthropology. Practically all anthropological reasoning rests on the premise that cultural variation is discontinuous: that there are aggregates of people who essentially share a common culture, and interconnected differences that distinguish each such discrete culture from all others. Since culture is nothing but a way to describe human behaviour, it would follow that there are discrete groups of people, i.e. ethnic units, to correspond to each culture. The differences between cultures, and their historic boundaries and connections, have been given much attention; the constitution of ethnic groups, and the nature of the boundaries between them, have not been correspondingly investigated. Social anthropologists have largely avoided these problems by using a highly abstracted concept of 'society' to represent the encompassing social system within which smaller, concrete groups and units may be analysed. But this leaves untouched the empirical characteristics and boundaries of ethnic groups, and the important theoretical issues which an investigation of them raises.

Though the naïve assumption that each tribe and people has maintained its culture through a bellicose ignorance of its neighbours is no longer entertained, the simplistic view that geographical and social isolation have been the critical factors in sustaining cultural diversity persists. An empirical investigation of the character of ethnic boundaries, as documented in the following essays, produces two discoveries which are hardly unexpected, but which demonstrate the inadequacy of this view. First, it is clear that boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across them. In other words, categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information.
but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories. Secondly, one finds that stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations are maintained across such boundaries, and are frequently based precisely on the dichotomized ethnic statuses. In other words, ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction and acceptance, but are quite to the contrary often the very foundations on which embracing social systems are built. Interaction in such a social system does not lead to its liquidation through change and acculturation; cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence.

General approach
There is clearly an important field here in need of rethinking. What is required is a combined theoretical and empirical attack: we need to investigate closely the empirical facts of a variety of cases, and fit our concepts to these empirical facts so that they elucidate them as simply and adequately as possible, and allow us to explore their implications. In the following essays, each author takes up a case with which he is intimately familiar from his own fieldwork, and tries to apply a common set of concepts to its analysis. The main theoretical departure consists of several interconnected parts. First, we give primary emphasis to the fact that ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people. We attempt to relate other characteristics of ethnic groups to this primary feature. Second, the essays all apply a generative viewpoint to the analysis: rather than working through a typology of forms of ethnic groups and relations, we attempt to explore the different processes that seem to be involved in generating and maintaining ethnic groups. Third, to observe these processes we shift the focus of investigation from internal constitution and history of separate groups to ethnic boundaries and boundary maintenance. Each of these points needs some elaboration.

Ethnic group defined
The term ethnic group is generally understood in anthropological literature (cf. e.g. Narroll 1964) to designate a population which:
1. is largely biologically self-perpetuating
2. shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms
3. makes up a field of communication and interaction
4. has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.

This ideal type definition is not so far removed in content from the traditional proposition that a race = a culture = a language and that a society = a unit which rejects or discriminates against others. Yet, in its modified form it is close enough to many empirical ethnographic situations, at least as they appear and have been reported, so that this meaning continues to serve the purposes of most anthropologists. My quarrel is not so much with the substance of these characteristics, though as I shall show we can profit from a certain change of emphasis; my main objection is that such a formulation prevents us from understanding the phenomenon of ethnic groups and their place in human society and culture. This is because it begs all the critical questions: while purporting to give an ideal type model of a recurring empirical form, it implies a preconceived view of what are the significant factors in the genesis, structure, and function of such groups.

Most critically, it allows us to assume that boundary maintenance is unproblematical and follows from the isolation which the itemized characteristics imply: racial difference, cultural difference, social separation and language barriers, spontaneous and organized enmity. This also limits the range of factors that we use to explain cultural diversity: we are led to imagine each group developing its cultural and social form in relative isolation, mainly in response to local ecologic factors, through a history of adaptation by invention and selective borrowing. This history has produced a world of separate peoples, each with their culture and each organized in a society which can legitimately be isolated for description as an island to itself.

Ethnic groups as culture-bearing units
Rather than discussing the adequacy of this version of culture history for other than pelagic islands, let us look at some of the logical flaws in the viewpoint. Among the characteristics listed above, the sharing of a common culture is generally given central importance. In my view, much can be gained by regarding this very important feature as an implication or result, rather than a primary and definitional characteristic of ethnic group organization. If one chooses to regard
the culture-bearing aspect of ethnic groups as their primary characteristic, this has far-reaching implications. One is led to identify and distinguish ethnic groups by the morphological characteristics of the cultures of which they are the bearers. This entails a prejudiced viewpoint both on (1) the nature of continuity in time of such units, and (2) the locus of the factors which determine the form of the units.

1. Given the emphasis on the culture-bearing aspect, the classification of persons and local groups as members of an ethnic group must depend on their exhibiting the particular traits of the culture. This is something that can be judged objectively by the ethnographic observer, in the culture-area tradition, regardless of the categories and prejudices of the actors. Differences between groups become differences in trait inventories; the attention is drawn to the analysis of cultures, not of ethnic organization. The dynamic relationship between groups will then be depicted in acculturation studies of the kind that have been attracting increasing interest in anthropology, though their theoretical inadequacies have never been seriously discussed. Since the historical provenance of any assemblage of culture traits is diverse, the viewpoint also gives scope for an 'ethnology' which chronicles cultural accretion and change, and seeks to explain why certain items were borrowed. However, what is the unit whose continuity in time is depicted in such studies? Paradoxically, it must include cultures in the past which would clearly be excluded in the present because of differences in form — differences of precisely the kind that are diagnostic in synchronic differentiation of ethnic units. The interconnection between 'ethnic group' and 'culture' is certainly not clarified through this confusion.

2. The overt cultural forms which can be itemized as traits exhibit the effects of ecology. By this I do not mean to refer to the fact that they reflect a history of adaptation to environment; in a more immediate way they also reflect the external circumstances to which actors must accommodate themselves. The same group of people, with unchanged values and ideas, would surely pursue different patterns of life and institutionalize different forms of behaviour when faced with the different opportunities offered in different environments? Likewise, we must expect to find that one ethnic group, spread over a territory with varying ecologic circumstances, will exhibit regional diversities of overt institutionalized behaviour which do not reflect differences in cultural orientation. How should they then be classified if overt institutional forms are diagnostic? A case in point is the distributions and diversity of Pathan local social systems, discussed below (pp. 117 ff.). By basic Pathan values, a Southern Pathan from the homogeneous, lineage-organized mountain areas, can only find the behaviour of Pathans in Swat so different from, and comprehensible in terms of, their own values that they declare their northern brothers 'no longer Pathan'. Indeed, by 'objective' criteria, their overt pattern of organization seems much closer to that of Panjabis. But I found it possible, by explaining the circumstances in the north, to make Southern Pathans agree that these were indeed Pathans too, and grudgingly to admit that under those circumstances they might indeed themselves act in the same way. It is thus inadequate to regard overt institutional forms as constituting the cultural features which at any time distinguish an ethnic group — these overt forms are determined by ecology as well as by transmitted culture. Nor can it be claimed that every such diversification within a group represents a first step in the direction of subdivision and multiplication of units. We have well-known documented cases of one ethnic group, also at a relatively simple level of economic organization, occupying several different ecologic niches and yet retaining basic cultural and ethnic unity over long periods (cf., e.g., inland and coastal Chuckchee (Bogoras 1904-9) or reindeer, river, and coast Lapps (Gjessing, 1954).

In one of the following essays, Blom (pp. 74 ff.) argues cogently on this point with reference to central Norwegian mountain farmers. He shows how their participation and self-evaluation in terms of general Norwegian values secures them continued membership in the larger ethnic group, despite the highly characteristic and deviant patterns of activity which the local ecology imposes on them. To analyse such cases, we need a viewpoint that does not confuse the effects of ecologic circumstances on behaviour with those of cultural tradition, but which makes it possible to separate these factors and investigate the non-ecological cultural and social components creating diversity.

**Ethnic groups as an organizational type**

By concentrating on what is socially effective, ethnic groups are seen as a form of social organization. The critical feature then becomes item (4) in the list on p. 11 the characteristic of self-ascription and ascription by others. A categorical ascription is an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identity, presumptively determined by his origin and background. To the extent that actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for
purposes of interaction, they form ethnic groups in this organizational sense.

It is important to recognize that although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. The features that are taken into account are not the sum of 'objective' differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant. Not only do ecologic variations mark and exaggerate differences; some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored, and in some relationships radical differences are played down and denied. The cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies would seem analytically to be of two orders: (i) overt signals or signs — the diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity, often such features as dress, language, house-form, or general style of life, and (ii) basic value orientations: the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged. Since belonging to an ethnic category implies being a certain kind of person, having that basic identity, it also implies a claim to be judged, and to judge oneself, by those standards that are relevant to that identity. Neither of these kinds of cultural 'contents' follows from a descriptive list of cultural features or cultural differences; one cannot predict from first principles which features will be emphasized and made organizationally relevant by the actors. In other words, ethnic categories provide an organizational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems. They may be of great relevance to behaviour, but they need not be; they may pervade all social life, or they may be relevant only in limited sectors of activity. There is thus an obvious scope for ethnographic and comparative descriptions of different forms of ethnic organization.

The emphasis on ascription as the critical feature of ethnic groups also solves the two conceptual difficulties that were discussed above.

1. When defined as an ascriptive and exclusive group, the nature of continuity of ethnic units is clear: it depends on the maintenance of a boundary. The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change — yet the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the changing cultural form and content.

2. Socially relevant factors alone become diagnostic for membership, not the overt, 'objective' differences which are generated by other factors. It makes no difference how dissimilar members may be in their overt behaviour — if they say they are A, in contrast to another cognate category B, they are willing to be treated and let their own behaviour be interpreted and judged as A's and not as B's; in other words, they declare their allegiance to the shared culture of A's. The effects of this, as compared to other factors influencing actual behaviour, can then be made the object of investigation.

The boundaries of ethnic groups

The critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses. The boundaries to which we must give our attention are of course social boundaries, though they may have territorial counterparts. If a group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signalling membership and exclusion. Ethnic groups are not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories; and the different ways in which they are maintained, not only by a once-and-for-all recruitment but by continual expression and validation, need to be analysed.

What is more, the ethnic boundary canalizes social life — it entails a frequently quite complex organization of behaviour and social relations. The identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgement. It thus entails the assumption that the two are fundamentally 'playing the same game', and this means that there is between them a potential for diversification and expansion of their social relationship to cover eventually all different sectors and domains of activity. On the other hand, a dichotomization of others as strangers, as members of another ethnic group, implies a recognition of limitations on shared understandings, differences in criteria for judgement of value and performance, and a restriction of interaction to sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest.

This makes it possible to understand one final form of boundary maintenance whereby cultural units and boundaries persist. Entailed in ethnic boundary maintenance are also situations of social contact between persons of different cultures: ethnic groups only persist as significant units if they imply marked difference in behaviour, i.e.
persisting cultural differences. Yet where persons of different culture interact, one would expect these differences to be reduced, since interaction both requires and generates a congruence of codes and values — in other words, a similarity or community of culture (cf. Barth 1966, for my argumentation on this point). Thus the persistence of ethnic groups in contact implies not only criteria and signals for identification, but also a structuring of interaction which allows the persistence of cultural differences. The organizational feature which, I would argue, must be general for all inter-ethnic relations is a systematic set of rules governing inter-ethnic social encounters. In all organized social life, what can be made relevant to interaction in any particular social situation is prescribed (Goffman 1959). If people agree about these prescriptions, their agreement on codes and values need not extend beyond that which is relevant to the social situations in which they interact. Stable inter-ethnic relations presuppose such a structuring of interaction: a set of prescriptions governing situations of contact, and allowing for articulation in some sectors or domains of activity, and a set of prescriptions on social situations preventing inter-ethnic interaction in other sectors, and thus insulating parts of the cultures from confrontation and modification.

Poly-ethnic social systems
This of course is what Furnivall (1944) so clearly depicted in his analysis of plural society: a poly-ethnic society integrated in the market place, under the control of a state system dominated by one of the groups, but leaving large areas of cultural diversity in the religious and domestic sectors of activity.

What has not been adequately appreciated by later anthropologists is the possible variety of sectors of articulation and separation, and the variety of poly-ethnic systems which this entails. We know of some of the Melanesian trade systems in objects belonging to the high-prestige sphere of the economy, and even some of the etiquette and prescriptions governing the exchange situation and insulating it from other activities. We have information on various traditional polycentric systems from S.E. Asia (discussed below, Izikowitz pp. 135 ff.) integrated both in the prestige trade sphere and in quasi-feudal political structures. Some regions of S.W. Asia show forms based on a more fully monetized market economy, while political integration is polycentric in character. There is also the ritual and productive cooperation and political integration of the Indian caste system to be con-
sidered, where perhaps only kinship and domestic life remain as a proscribed sector and a wellspring for cultural diversity. Nothing can be gained by lumping these various systems under the increasingly vague label of ‘plural’ society, whereas an investigation of the varieties of structure can shed a great deal of light on social and cultural forms.

What can be referred to as articulation and separation on the macro-level corresponds to systematic sets of role constraints on the micro-level. Common to all these systems is the principle that ethnic identity implies a series of constraints on the kinds of roles an individual is allowed to play, and the partners he may choose for different kinds of transactions. In other words, regarded as a status, ethnic identity is superordinate to most other statuses, and defines the permissible constellations of statuses, or social personalities, which an individual with that identity may assume. In this respect ethnic identity is similar to sex and rank, in that it constrains the incumbent in all his activities, not only in some defined social situations. One might thus also say that it is imperative, in that it cannot be disregarded and temporarily set aside by other definitions of the situation. The constraints on a person’s behaviour which spring from his ethnic identity thus tend to be absolute and, in complex poly-ethnic societies, quite comprehensive; and the component moral and social conventions are made further resistant to change by being joined in stereotyped clusters as characteristics of one single identity.

The associations of identities and value standards
The analysis of interactional and organizational features of inter-ethnic relations has suffered from a lack of attention to problems of boundary maintenance. This is perhaps because anthropologists have reasoned from a misleading idea of the prototype inter-ethnic situation. One has tended to think in terms of different peoples, with different histories and cultures, coming together and accommodating themselves to each other, generally in a colonial setting. To visualize the basic requirements for the coexistence of ethnic diversity, I would suggest that we rather ask ourselves what is needed to make ethnic distinctions emerge in an area. The organizational requirements are clearly, first, a categorization of population sectors in exclusive and imperative status categories, and second, an acceptance of the principle that standards applied to one such category can be different from that applied to another. Though this alone does not explain why cultural
differences emerge, it does allow us to see how they persist. Each category can then be associated with a separate range of value standards. The greater the differences between these value orientations are, the more constraints on inter-ethnic interaction do they entail: the statuses and situations in the total social system involving behaviour which is discrepant with a person’s value orientations must be avoided, since such behaviour on his part will be negatively sanctioned. Moreover, because identities are signalled as well as embraced, new forms of behaviour will tend to be dichotomized: one would expect the role constraints to operate in such a way that persons would be reluctant to act in new ways from a fear that such behaviour might be inappropriate for a person of their identity, and swift to classify forms of activity as associated with one or another cluster of ethnic characteristics. Just as dichotomizations of male versus female work seem to proliferate in some societies, so also the existence of basic ethnic categories would seem to be a factor encouraging the proliferation of cultural differentiae.

In such systems, the sanctions producing adherence to group-specific values are not only exercised by those who share the identity. Again, other imperative statuses afford a parallel: just as both sexes ridicule the male who is feminine, and all classes punish the proletarian who puts on airs, so also can members of all ethnic groups in a poly-ethnic society act to maintain dichotomies and differences. Where social identities are organized and allocated by such principles, there will thus be a tendency towards channelization and standardization of interaction and the emergence of boundaries which maintain and generate ethnic diversity within larger, encompassing social systems.

Interdependence of ethnic groups

The positive bond that connects several ethnic groups in an encompassing social system depends on the complementarity of the groups with respect to some of their characteristic cultural features. Such complementarity can give rise to interdependence or symbiosis, and constitutes the areas of articulation referred to above; while in the fields where there is no complementarity there can be no basis for organization on ethnic lines — there will either be no interaction, or interaction without reference to ethnic identity.

Social systems differ greatly in the extent to which ethnic identity, as an imperative status, constrains the person in the variety of statuses and roles he may assume. Where the distinguishing values connected

with ethnic identity are relevant only to a few kinds of activities, the social organization based on it will be similarly limited. Complex poly-ethnic systems, on the other hand, clearly entail the existence of extensively relevant value differences and multiple constraints on status combinations and social participation. In such systems, the boundary maintaining mechanisms must be highly effective, for the following reasons: (i) the complexity is based on the existence of important, complementary cultural differences; (ii) these differences must be generally standardized within the ethnic group — i.e. the status cluster, or social person, of every member of a group must be highly stereotyped — so that inter-ethnic interaction can be based on ethnic identities; and (iii) the cultural characteristics of each ethnic group must be stable, so that the complementary differences on which the systems rest can persist in the face of close inter-ethnic contact. Where these conditions obtain, ethnic groups can make stable and symbiotic adaptations to one another; other ethnic groups in the region become a part of the natural environment; the sectors of articulation provide areas that can be exploited, while the other sectors of activity of other groups are largely irrelevant from the point of view of members of any one group.

Ecologic perspective

Such interdependences can partly be analysed from the point of view of cultural ecology, and the sectors of activity where other populations with other cultures articulate may be thought of as niches to which the group is adapted. This ecologic interdependence may take several different forms, for which one may construct a rough typology. Where two or more ethnic groups are in contact, their adaptations may entail the following forms:

1. They may occupy clearly distinct niches in the natural environment and be in minimal competition for resources. In this case their interdependence will be limited despite co-residence in the area, and the articulation will tend to be mainly through trade, and perhaps in a ceremonial-ritual sector.

2. They may monopolize separate territories, in which case they are in competition for resources and their articulation will involve politics along the border, and possibly other sectors.

3. They may provide important goods and services for each other, i.e. occupy reciprocal and therefore different niches but in close interdependence. If they do not articulate very closely in the political
sector, this entails a classical symbiotic situation and a variety of possible fields of articulation. If they also compete and accommodate through differential monopolization of the means of production, this entails a close political and economic articulation, with open possibilities for other forms of interdependence as well.

These alternatives refer to stable situations. But very commonly, one will also find a fourth main form: where two or more interspersed groups are in fact in at least partial competition within the same niche. With time one would expect one such group to displace the other, or an accommodation involving an increasing complementarity and interdependence to develop.

From the anthropological literature one can doubtless think of type cases for most of these situations. However, if one looks carefully at most empirical cases, one will find fairly mixed situations obtaining, and only quite gross simplifications can reduce them to simple types. I have tried elsewhere (Barth 1964b) to illustrate this for an area of Baluchistan, and expect that it is generally true that an ethnic group, on the different boundaries of its distribution and in its different accommodations, exhibits several of these forms in its relations to other groups.

Demographic perspective

These variables, however, only go part of the way in describing the adaptation of a group. While showing the qualitative, (and ideally quantitative) structure of the niches occupied by a group, one cannot ignore the problems of number and balance in its adaptation. Whenever a population is dependent on its exploitation of a niche in nature, this implies an upper limit on the size it may attain corresponding to the carrying capacity of that niche; and any stable adaptation entails a control on population size. If, on the other hand, two populations are ecologically interdependent, as two ethnic groups in a symbiotic relationship, this means that any variation in the size of one must have important effects on the other. In the analysis of any poly-ethnic system for which we assert any degree of time depth, we must therefore be able to explain the processes whereby the sizes of the interdependent ethnic groups are balanced. The demographic balances involved are thus quite complex, since a group's adaptation to a niche in nature is affected by its absolute size, while a group's adaptation to a niche constituted by another ethnic group is affected by its relative size.

The demographic problems in an analysis of ethnic inter-relations in a region thus centre on the forms of recruitment to ethnic groups and the question of how, if at all, their rates are sensitive to pressures on the different niches which each group exploits. These factors are highly critical for the stability of any poly-ethnic system, and it might look as if any population change would prove destructive. This does not necessarily seem to follow, as documented e.g. in the essay by Siverts (pp. 101 ff.), but in most situations the poly-ethnic systems we observe do entail quite complex processes of population movement and adjustment. It becomes clear that a number of factors other than human fertility and mortality affect the balance of numbers. From the point of view of any one territory, there are the factors of individual and group movements: emigration that relieves pressure, immigration that maintains one or several co-resident groups as outpost settlements of larger population reservoirs elsewhere. Migration and conquest play an intermittent role in redistributing populations and changing their relations. But the most interesting and often critical role is played by another set of processes that effect changes of the identity of individuals and groups. After all, the human material that is organized in an ethnic group is not immutable, and though the social mechanisms discussed so far tend to maintain dichotomies and boundaries, they do not imply 'stasis' for the human material they organize: boundaries may persist despite what may figuratively be called the 'osmosis' of personnel through them.

This perspective leads to an important clarification of the conditions for complex poly-ethnic systems. Though the emergence and persistence of such systems would seem to depend on a relatively high stability in the cultural features associated with ethnic groups — i.e. a high degree or rigidity in the interactional boundaries — they do not imply a similar rigidity in the patterns of recruitment or ascription to ethnic groups: on the contrary, the ethnic inter-relations that we observe frequently entail a variety of processes which effect changes in individual and group identity and modify the other demographic factors that obtain in the situation. Examples of stable and persisting ethnic boundaries that are crossed by a flow of personnel are clearly far more common than the ethnographic literature would lead us to believe. Different processes of such crossing are exemplified in these essays, and the conditions which cause them are shown to be various. We may look briefly at some of them.
Factors in identity change

The Yao described by Kandre (1967b) are one of the many hill peoples on the southern fringe of the Chinese area. The Yao are organized for productive purposes in extended family households, aligned in clans and in villages. Household leadership is very clear, while community and region are autochthonously acephalous, and variously tied to poly-ethnic political domains. Identity and distinctions are expressed in complex ritual idioms, prominently involving ancestor worship. Yet this group shows the drastic incorporation rate of 10% non-Yao becoming Yao in each generation (Kandre 1967a: 594). Change of membership takes place individually, mostly with children, where it involves purchase of the person by a Yao house leader, adoption to kinship status, and full ritual assimilation. Occasionally, change of ethnic membership is also achieved by men through uxorial or local marriage; Chinese men are the acceptable parties to such arrangements.

The conditions for this form of assimilation are clearly twofold: first, the presence of cultural mechanisms to implement the incorporation, including ideas of obligations to ancestors, compensation by payment, etc., and secondly, the incentive of obvious advantages to the assimilating household and leader. These have to do with the role of households as productive units and agro-managerial techniques that imply an optimal size of 6-8 working persons, and the pattern of intra-community competition between household leaders in the field of wealth and influence.

Movements across the southern and northern boundaries of the Pathan area (cf. pp. 128 ff.) illustrate quite other forms and conditions. Southern Pathans become Baluch and not vice versa; this transformation can take place with individuals but more readily with whole households or small groups of households; it involves loss of position in the rigid genealogical and territorial segmentary system of Pathans and incorporation through clientage contract into the hierarchical, centralized system of the Baluch. Acceptance in the receiving group is conditional on the ambition and opportunism of Baluch political leaders. On the other hand, Pathans in the north have, after an analogous loss of position in their native system, settled in and often conquered new territories in Kohistan. The effect in due course has been a reclassification of the settlement communities among the congeries of locally diverse Kohistani tribes and groups.

Perhaps the most striking case is that from Darfur provided by Haaland (pp. 58 ff.), which shows members of the hoe-agricultural Fur of the Sudan changing their identity to that of nomadic cattle Arabs. This process is conditional on a very specific economic circumstance: the absence of investment opportunities for capital in the village economy of the Fur in contrast to the possibilities among the nomads. Accumulated capital, and the opportunities for its management and increase, provide the incentive for Fur households to abandon their fields and villages and change to the life of the neighbouring Baggara, incidentally also joining one of the loose but nominally centralized Baggara political units if the change has been economically completely successful.

These processes that induce a flow of personnel across ethnic boundaries will of necessity affect the demographic balance between different ethnic groups. Whether they are such that they contribute to stability in this balance is an entirely different question. To do so, they would have to be sensitive to changes in the pressure on ecologic niches in a feed-back pattern. This does not regularly seem to be the case. The assimilation of non-Yao seems further to increase the rate of Yao growth and expansion at the expense of other groups, and can be recognized as one, albeit minor, factor furthering the progressive Sinization process whereby cultural and ethnic diversity has steadily been reduced over vast areas. The rate of assimilation of Pathans by Baluch tribes is no doubt sensitive to population pressure in Pathan areas, but simultaneously sustains an imbalance whereby Baluch tribes spread northward despite higher population pressures in the northern areas. Kohistani assimilation relieves population pressure in Pathan area while maintaining a geographically stable boundary. Nomadization of the Fur replenishes the Baggara, who are elsewhere becoming sedentarized. The rate, however, does not correlate with pressure on Fur lands — since nomadization is conditional on accumulated wealth, its rate probably decreases as Fur population pressure increases. The Fur case also demonstrates the inherent instability of some of these processes, and how limited changes can have drastic results: with the agricultural innovation of orchards over the last ten years, new investment opportunities are provided which will probably greatly reduce, or perhaps for a while even reverse, the nomadization process.

Thus, though the processes that induce change of identity are important to the understanding of most cases of ethnic interdependence, they need not be conducive to population stability. In general, however,
one can argue that whenever ethnic relations are stable over long periods, and particularly where the interdependence is close, one can expect to find an approximate demographic balance. The analysis of the different factors involved in this balance is an important part of the analysis of the ethnic inter-relations in the area.

The persistence of cultural boundaries

In the preceding discussion of ethnic boundary maintenance and interchange of personnel there is one very important problem that I have left aside. We have seen various examples of how individuals and small groups, because of specific economic and political circumstances in their former position and among the assimilating group, may change their locality, their subsistence pattern, their political allegiance and form, or their household membership. This still does not fully explain why such changes lead to categorical changes of ethnic identity, leaving the dichotomized ethnic groups unaffected (other than in numbers) by the interchange of personnel. In the case of adoption and incorporation of mostly immature and in any case isolated single individuals into pre-established household, as among the Yao, such complete cultural assimilation is understandable: here every new person becomes totally immersed in a Yao pattern of relationships and expectations. In the other examples, it is less clear why this total change of identity takes place. One cannot argue that it follows from a universally imputable rule of cultural integration, so that the practice of the politics of one group or the assumption of its pattern of ecologic adaptation in subsistence and economy, entails the adoption also of its other parts and forms. Indeed, the Pathan case (Ferdinand 1967) directly falsifies this argument, in that the boundaries of the Pathan ethnic group crosscuts ecologic and political units. Using self-identification as the critical criterion of ethnic identity, it should thus be perfectly possible for a small group of Pathans to assume the political obligations of membership in a Baluch tribe, or the agricultural and husbandry practices of Kohistanis, and yet continue to call themselves Pathans. By the same token one might expect nomadization among the Fur to lead to the emergence of a nomadic section of the Fur, similar in subsistence to the Baggara but different from them in other cultural features, and in ethnic label.

Quite clearly, this is precisely what has happened in many historical situations. In cases where it does not happen we see the organizing and canalizing effects of ethnic distinctions. To explore the factors responsible for the difference, let us first look at the specific explanations for the changes of identity that have been advanced in the examples discussed above.

In the case of Pathan borderlands, influence and security in the segmentary and anarchic societies of this region derive from a man's previous actions, or rather from the respect that he obtains from these acts as judged by accepted standards of evaluation. The main fora for exhibiting Pathan virtues are the tribal council, and stages for the display of hospitality. But the villager in Kohistan has a standard of living where the hospitality he can provide can hardly compete with that of the conquered serfs of neighboring Pathans, while the client of a Baluch leader cannot speak in any tribal council. To maintain Pathan identity in these situations, to declare oneself in the running as a competitor by Pathan value standards, is to condemn oneself in advance to utter failure in performance. By assuming Kohistani or Baluch identity, however, a man may, by the same performance, score quite high on the scales that then become relevant. The incentives to a change in identity are thus inherent in the change in circumstances.

Different circumstances obviously favor different performances. Since ethnic identity is associated with a culturally specific set of value standards, it follows that there are circumstances where such an identity can be moderately successfully realized, and limits beyond which such success is precluded. I will argue that ethnic identities will not be retained beyond these limits, because allegiance to basic value standards will not be sustained where one's own comparative performance is utterly inadequate. The two components in this relative measure of success are, first, the performance of others and, secondly, the alternatives open to oneself. I am not making an appeal to ecologic adaptation. Ecologic feasibility, and fitness in relation to the natural environment, matter only in so far as they set a limit in terms of sheer physical survival, which is very rarely approached by ethnic groups. What matters is how well the others, with whom one interacts and to whom one is compared, manage to perform, and what alternative identities and sets of standards are available to the individual.

Ethnic identity and tangible assets

The boundary-maintaining factors in the Fur are not immediately illuminated by this argument. Haaland (pp. 65 f.) discusses the evaluation of the nomad's life by Fur standards and finds the balance between advantages and disadvantages inconclusive. To ascertain the compara-
bility of this case, we need to look more generally at all the factors that affect the behaviour in question. The materials derive from grossly different ethnographic contexts and so a number of factors are varied simultaneously.

The individual's relation to productive resources stands out as the significant contrast between the two regions. In the Middle East, the means of production are conventionally held as private or corporate, defined and transferable property. A man can obtain them through a specific and restricted transaction, such as purchase or lease; even in conquest the rights that are obtained are standard, delimited rights. In Darfur, on the other hand, as in much of the Sudanic belt, the prevailing conventions are different. Land for cultivation is allocated, as needed, to members of a local community. The distinction between owner and cultivator, so important in the social structure of most Middle Eastern communities, cannot be made because ownership does not involve separable, absolute, and transferable rights. Access to the means of production in a Fur village is therefore conditional only on inclusion in the village community — i.e., on Fur ethnic identity. Similarly, grazing rights are not allocated and monopolized, even as between Bagga tribes. Though groups and tribes tend to use the same routes and areas every year, and may at times try in an ad hoc way to keep out others from an area they wish to use, they normally intermix and have no defined and absolute prerogatives. Access to grazing is thus an automatic aspect of practising husbandry, and entails being a Bagga.

The gross mechanisms of boundary maintenance in Darfur are thus quite simple: a man has access to the critical means of production by virtue of practising a certain subsistence; this entails a whole style of life, and all these characteristics are subsumed under the ethnic labels Fur and Bagga. In the Middle East, on the other hand, men can obtain control over means of production through a transaction that does not involve their other activities; ethnic identity is then not necessarily affected and this opens the way for diversification. Thus nomad, peasant, and city dweller can belong to the same ethnic group in the Middle East; where ethnic boundaries persist they depend on more subtle and specific mechanisms, mainly connected with the unfeasibility of certain status and role combinations.

**Ethnic groups and stratification**

Where one ethnic group has control of the means of production utilized by another group, a relationship of inequality and stratification obtains. Thus Fur and Bagga do not make up a stratified system, since they utilize different niches and have access to them independently of each other, whereas in some parts of the Pathan area one finds stratification based on the control of land, Pathans being landowners, and other groups cultivating as serfs. In more general terms, one may say that stratified poly-ethnic systems exist where groups are characterized by differential control of assets that are valued by all groups in the system. The cultures of the component ethnic groups in such systems are thus integrated in a special way: they share certain general value orientations and scales, on the basis of which they can arrive at judgements of hierarchy.

Obversely, a system of stratification does not entail the existence of ethnic groups. Leach (1967) argues convincingly that social classes are distinguished by different sub-cultures, indeed, that this is a more basic characteristic than their hierarchical ordering. However, in many systems of stratification we are not dealing with bounded strata at all: the stratification is based simply on the notion of scales and the recognition of an ego-centered level of 'people who are just like us' versus those more select and those more vulgar. In such systems, cultural differences, whatever they are, grade into each other, and nothing like a social organization of ethnic groups emerges. Secondly, most systems of stratification allow, or indeed entail, mobility based on evaluation by the scales that define the hierarchy. Thus a moderate failure in the 'B' sector of the hierarchy makes you a 'C', etc. Ethnic groups are not open to this kind of penetration: the ascription of ethnic identity is based on other and more restrictive criteria. This is most clearly illustrated by Knutsson's analysis of the Galla in the context of Ethiopian society (pp. 86 ff.) — a social system where whole ethnic groups are stratified with respect to their positions of privilege and disability within the state. Yet the attainment of a governorship does not make an Amhara of a Galla, nor does estrangement as an outlaw entail loss of Galla identity.

From this perspective, the Indian caste system would appear to be a special case of a stratified poly-ethnic system. The boundaries of castes are defined by ethnic criteria: thus individual failures in performance lead to out-casting and not to down-casting. The process
whereby the hierarchical system incorporates new ethnic groups is demonstrated in the *sanskritisation of tribals*: their acceptance of the critical value scales defining their position in the hierarchy of ritual purity and pollution is the only change of values that is necessary for a people to become an Indian caste. An analysis of the different processes of boundary maintenance involved in different inter-caste relations and in different regional variants of the caste system would, I believe, illuminate many features of this system.

The preceding discussion has brought out a somewhat anomalous general feature of ethnic identity as a status: ascription is not conditional on the control of any specific assets, but rests on criteria of origin and commitment; whereas performance in the status, the adequate acting out of the roles required to realize the identity, in many systems does require such assets. By contrast, in a bureaucratic office the incumbent is provided with those assets that are required for the performance of the role; while kinship positions, which are ascribed without reference to a person's assets, likewise are not conditional on performance you remain a father even if you fail to feed your child.

Thus where ethnic groups are interrelated in a stratified system, this requires the presence of special processes that maintain differential control of assets. To schematize: a basic premise of ethnic group organization is that every A can act roles, 1, 2 and 3. If actors agree on this, the premise is self-fulfilling; unless acting in these roles requires assets that are distributed in a discrepant pattern. If these assets are obtained or lost in ways independent of being an A, and sought and avoided without reference to one's identity as an A, the premise will be falsified: some A's become unable to act in the expected roles. Most systems of stratification are maintained by the solution that in such cases, the person is no longer an A. In the case of ethnic identity, the solution on the contrary is the recognition that every A no longer can or will act in roles 1 and 2. The persistence of stratified poly-ethnic systems thus entails the presence of factors that generate and maintain a categorically different distribution of assets: state controls, as in some modern plural and racist systems; marked differences in evaluation that canalize the efforts of actors in different directions, as in systems with polluting occupations; or differences in culture that generate marked differences in political organization, economic organization, or individual skills.

**The problem of variation**

Despite such processes, however, the ethnic label subsumes a number of simultaneous characteristics which no doubt cluster statistically, but which are not absolutely interdependent and connected. Thus there will be variations between members, some showing many and some showing few characteristics. Particularly where people change their identity, this creates ambiguity since ethnic membership is at once a question of source of origin as well as of current identity. Indeed, Haaland was taken out to see 'Fur who live in nomad camps', and I have heard members of Baluch tribal sections explain that they are 'really Pathan'. What is then left of the boundary maintenance and the categorical dichotomy, when the actual distinctions are blurred in this way? Rather than despair at the failure of typological schematism, one can legitimately note that people do employ ethnic labels and that there are in many parts of the world most spectacular differences whereby forms of behaviour cluster so that whole actors tend to fall into such categories in terms of their objective behaviour. What is surprising is not the existence of some actors that fall between these categories, and of some regions in the world where whole persons do not tend to sort themselves out in this way, but the fact that variations tend to cluster at all. We can then be concerned not to perfect a typology, but to discover the processes that bring about such clustering.

An alternative mode of approach in anthropology has been to dichotomize the ethnographic material in terms of ideal versus actual or conceptual versus empirical, and then concentrate on the consistencies (the 'structure') of the ideal, conceptual part of the data, employing some vague notion of norms and individual deviation to account for the actual, statistical patterns. It is of course perfectly feasible to distinguish between a people's model of their social system and their aggregate pattern of pragmatic behaviour, and indeed quite necessary not to confuse the two. But the fertile problems in social anthropology are concerned with how the two are interconnected, and it does not follow that this is best elucidated by dichotomizing and confronting them as total systems. In these essays we have tried to build the analysis on a lower level of interconnection between status and behaviour. I would argue that people's categories are for acting, and are significantly affected by interaction rather than contemplation. In showing the connection between ethnic labels and the maintenance
of cultural diversity, I am therefore concerned primarily to show how, under varying circumstances, certain constellations of categorization and value orientation have a self-fulfilling character, how others will tend to be falsified by experience, while others again are incapable of consummation in interaction. Ethnic boundaries can emerge and persist only in the former situation, whereas they should dissolve or be absent in the latter situations. With such a feedback from people's experiences to the categories they employ, simple ethnic dichotomies can be retained, and their stereotyped behavioural differential reinforced, despite a considerable objective variation. This is so because actors struggle to maintain conventional definitions of the situation in social encounters through selective perception, tact, and sanctions, and because of difficulties in finding other, more adequate codifications of experience. Revision only takes place where the categorization is grossly inadequate — not merely because it is untrue in any objective sense, but because it is consistently unrewarding to act upon, within the domain where the actor makes it relevant. So the dichotomy of Fur villagers and Baggara nomads is maintained despite the patent presence of a nomadic camp of Fur in the neighbourhood: the fact that those nomads speak Fur and have kinship connections with villagers somewhere does not change the social situation in which the villager interacts with them — it simply makes the standard transactions of buying milk, allocating camp sites, or obtaining manure, which one would have with other Baggara, flow a bit more smoothly. But a dichotomy between Pathan landowners and non-Pathan labourers can no longer be maintained where non-Pathans obtain land and embarrass Pathans by refusing to respond with the respect which their imputed position as menials would have sanctioned.

Minorities, pariahs, and organizational characteristics of the periphery

In some social systems, ethnic groups co-reside though no major aspect of structure is based on ethnic inter-relations. These are generally referred to as societies with minorities, and the analysis of the minority situation involves a special variant of inter-ethnic relations. I think in most cases, such situations have come about as a result of external historical events; the cultural differentiae have not sprung from the local organizational context — rather, a pre-established cultural contrast is brought into conjunction with a pre-established social system, and is made relevant to life there in a diversity of ways.

An extreme form of minority position, illustrating some but not all features of minorities, is that of pariah groups. These are groups actively rejected by the host population because of behaviour or characteristics positively condemned, though often useful in some specific, practical way. European pariah groups of recent centuries (executioners, dealers in horseflesh and -leather, collectors of night-soil, gypsies, etc.) exemplify most features: as breakers of basic taboos they were rejected by the larger society. Their identity imposed a definition on social situations which gave very little scope for interaction with persons in the majority population, and simultaneously as an imperative status represented an inescapable disability that prevented them from assuming the normal statuses involved in other definitions of the situation of interaction. Despite these formidable barriers, such groups do not seem to have developed the internal complexity that would lead us to regard them as full-fledged ethnic groups; only the culturally foreign gypsies clearly constitute such a group.

The boundaries of pariah groups are most strongly maintained by the excluding host population, and they are often forced to make use of easily noticeable diacritica to advertise their identity (though since this identity is often the basis for a highly insecure livelihood, such over-communication may sometimes also serve the pariah individual's competitive interests). Where pariahs attempt to pass into the larger society, the culture of the host population is generally well known; thus the problem is reduced to a question of escaping the stigmata of disability by dissociating with the pariah community and faking another origin.

Many minority situations have a trace of this active rejection by the host population. But the general feature of all minority situations lies in the organization of activities and interaction: In the total social system, all sectors of activity are organized by statuses open to members of the majority group, while the status system of the minority has only relevance to relations within the minority and only to some sectors of activity, and does not provide a basis for action in other sectors, equally valued in the minority culture. There is thus a disparity between values and organizational facilities: prized goals are outside the field organized by the minority's culture and categories. Though such systems contain several ethnic groups, interaction between members of the different groups of this kind does not spring from the complementarity of ethnic identities; it takes place entirely within the framework of the dominant, majority group's statuses and institutions, where identity as a minority member gives no basis for action,
not correlate in any simple way with a reduction in the organizational relevance of ethnic identities, or a breakdown in boundary-maintaining processes. This is demonstrated in much of the case material.

We can best analyse the interconnection by looking at the agents of change: what strategies are open and attractive to them, and what are the organizational implications of different choices on their part? The agents in this case are the persons normally referred to somewhat ethno-centrically as the new elites: the persons in the less industrialized groups with greater contact and more dependence on the goods and organizations of industrialized societies. In their pursuit of participation in wider social systems to obtain new forms of value they can choose between the following basic strategies: (i) they may attempt to pass and become incorporated in the pre-established industrial society and cultural group; (ii) they may accept a ‘minority’ status, accommodate to and seek to reduce their minority disabilities by encapsulating all cultural differentiae in sectors of non-articulation, while participating in the larger system of the industrialized group in the other sectors of activity; (iii) they may choose to emphasize ethnic identity, using it to develop new positions and patterns to organize activities in those sectors formerly not found in their society, or inadequately developed for the new purposes. If the cultural innovators are successful in the first strategy, their ethnic group will be denuded of its source of internal diversification and will probably remain as a culturally conservative, low-articulating ethnic group with low rank in the larger social system. A general acceptance of the second strategy will prevent the emergence of a clearly dichotomizing poly-ethnic organization, and — in view of the diversity of industrial society and consequent variation and multiplicity of fields of articulation — probably lead to an eventual assimilation of the minority. The third strategy generates many of the interesting movements that can be observed today, from nativism to new states.

I am unable to review the variables that affect which basic strategy will be adopted, which concrete form it may take, and what its degree of success and cumulative implications may be. Such factors range from the number of ethnic groups in the system to features of the ecologic regime and details of the constituent cultures, and are illustrated in most of the concrete analyses of the following essays. It may be of interest to note some of the forms in which ethnic identity is made organizationally relevant to new sectors in the current situation.

Firstly, the innovators may choose to emphasize one level of identity...
among the several provided by the traditional social organization. Tribe, caste, language group, region or state all have features that make them a potentially adequate primary ethnic identity for group reference, and the outcome will depend on the readiness with which others can be led to embrace these identities, and the cold tactical facts. Thus, though tribalism may rally the broadest support in many African areas, the resultant groups seem unable to stand up against the sanctioning apparatus even of a relatively rudimentary state organization.

Secondly, the mode of organization of the ethnic group varies, as does the inter-ethnic articulation that is sought. The fact that contemporary forms are prominently political does not make them any less ethnic in character. Such political movements constitute new ways of making cultural differences organizationally relevant (Kleivan 1967), and new ways of articulating the dichotomized ethnic groups. The proliferation of ethnically based pressure groups, political parties, and visions of independent statehood, as well as the multitude of sub-political advancement associations (Sommerfelt 1967) show the importance of these new forms. In other areas, cult-movements or mission-introduced sects are used to dichotomize and articulate groups in new ways. It is striking that these new patterns are so rarely concerned with the economic sector of activities, which is so major a factor in the culture contact situation, apart from the forms of state socialism adopted by some of the new nations. By contrast, the traditional complex poly-ethnic systems have been prominently based on articulation in this sector, through occupational differentiation and articulation at the market place in many regions of Asia and Middle America, or most elaborately, through agrarian production in South Asia. Today, contending ethnic groups not infrequently become differentiated with respect to educational level and attempt to control or monopolize educational facilities for this purpose (Sommerfelt 1967), but this is not so much with a view to occupational differentiation as because of the obvious connection between bureaucratic competence and opportunities for political advancement. One may speculate that an articulation entailing complex differentiation of skills, and sanctioned by the constant dependence on livelihood, will have far greater strength and stability than one based on revocable political affiliation and sanctioned by the exercise of force and political fiat, and that these new forms of poly-ethnic systems are probably inherently more turbulent and unstable than the older forms.

When political groups articulate their opposition in terms of ethnic criteria, the direction of cultural change is also affected. A political confrontation can only be implemented by making the groups similar and thereby comparable, and this will have effect on every new sector of activity which is made politically relevant. Opposed parties thus tend to become structurally similar, and differentiated only by a few clear diacritica. Where ethnic groups are organized in political confrontation in this way, the process of opposition will therefore lead to a reduction of the cultural differences between them.

For this reason, much of the activity of political innovators is concerned with the codification of idioms: the selection of signals for identity and the assertion of value for these cultural diacritica, and the suppression or denial of relevance for other differentiae. The issue as to which new cultural forms are compatible with the native ethnic identity is often hotly contended, but is generally settled in favour of syncretism for the reasons noted above. But a great amount of attention may be paid to the revival of select traditional culture traits, and to the establishment of historical traditions to justify and glorify the idioms and the identity.

The interconnection between the diacritica that are chosen for emphasis, the boundaries that are defined, and the differentiating values that are espoused, constitute a fascinating field for study. Clearly, a number of factors are relevant. Idioms vary in their appropriateness for different kinds of units. They are unequally adequate for the innovator's purposes, both as means to mobilize support and as supports in the strategy of confrontation with other groups. Their stratification implications both within and between groups are important; they entail different sources and distributions of influence within the group, and different claims to recognition from other groups through suppression or glorification of different forms of social stigmata. Clearly, there is no simple connection between the ideological basis of a movement and the idioms chosen; yet both have implications for subsequent boundary maintenance, and the course of further change.

Variations in the setting for ethnic relations

These modern variants for poly-ethnic organization emerge in a world of bureaucratic administration, developed communications, and progressive urbanization. Clearly, under radically different circumstances, the critical factors in the definition and maintenance of ethnic boun-
daries would be different. In basing ourselves on limited and contemporary data, we are faced with difficulties in generalizing about ethnic processes, since major variables may be ignored because they are not exhibited in the cases at our disposal. There can be little doubt that social anthropologists have tended to regard the rather special situation of colonial peace and external administration, which has formed the backdrop of most of the influential monographs, as if this were representative of conditions at most times and places. This may have biased the interpretation both of pre-colonial systems and of contemporary, emergent forms. The attempt in these essays to cover regionally very diverse cases is not alone an adequate defence against such bias, and the issue needs to be faced directly.

Colonial regimes are quite extreme in the extent to which the administration and its rules are divorced from locally based social life. Under such a regime, individuals hold certain rights to protection uniformly through large population aggregates and regions, far beyond the reach of their own social relationships and institutions. This allows physical proximity and opportunities for contact between persons of different ethnic groups regardless of the absence of shared understandings between them, and thus clearly removes one of the constraints that normally operate on inter-ethnic relations. In such situations, interaction can develop and proliferate — indeed, only those forms of interaction that are directly inhibited by other factors will be absent and remain as sectors of non-articulation. Thus ethnic boundaries in such situations represent a positive organization of social relations around differentiated and complementary values, and cultural differences will tend to be reduced with time and approach the required minimum.

In most political regimes, however, where there is less security and people live under a greater threat of arbitrariness and violence outside their primary community, the insecurity itself acts as a constraint on inter-ethnic contacts. In this situation, many forms of interaction between members of different ethnic groups may fail to develop, even though a potential complementarity of interests obtains. Forms of interaction may be blocked because of a lack of trust or a lack of opportunities to consummate transactions. What is more, there are also internal sanctions in such communities which tend to enhance overt conformity within and cultural differences between communities.

If a person is dependent for his security on the voluntary and spontaneous support of his own community, self-identification as a member of this community needs to be explicitly expressed and confirmed; and any behaviour which is deviant from the standard may be interpreted as a weakening of the identity, and thereby of the bases of security. In such situations, fortuitous historical differences in culture between different communities will tend to perpetuate themselves without any positive organizational basis; many of the observable cultural differentiae may thus be of very limited relevance to the ethnic organization.

The processes whereby ethnic units maintain themselves are thus clearly affected, but not fundamentally changed, by the variable of regional security. This can also be shown by an inspection of the cases analysed in these essays, which represent a fair range from the colonial to the poly-centric, up to relatively anarchic situations. It is important, however, to recognize that this background variable may change very rapidly with time, and in the projection of long-range processes this is a serious difficulty. Thus in the Fur case, we observe a situation of externally maintained peace and very small-scale local political activity, and can form a picture of inter-ethnic processes and even rates in this setting. But we know that over the last few generations, the situation has varied from one of Baghara-Fur confrontation under an expansive Fur sultanate to a nearly total anarchy in Turkish and Mahdi times; and it is very difficult to estimate the effects of these variations on the processes of nomadization and assimilation, and arrive at any long-range projection of rates and trends.

**Ethnic groups and cultural evolution**

The perspective and analysis presented here have relevance to the theme of cultural evolution. No doubt human history is a story of the development of emergent forms, both of cultures and societies. The issue in anthropology has been how this history can best be depicted, and what kinds of analyses are adequate to discover general principles in the courses of change. Evolutionary analysis in the rigorous sense of the biological fields has based its method on the construction of phyletic lines. This method presumes the existence of units where the boundaries and the boundary-maintaining processes can be described, and thus where the continuity can be specified. Concretely, phyletic lines are meaningful because specific boundaries prevent the interchange of genetic material; and so one can insist that the reproductive isolate is the unit, and that it has maintained an identity undisturbed by the changes in the morphological characteristics of the species.
I have argued that boundaries are also maintained between ethnic units, and that consequently it is possible to specify the nature of continuity and persistence of such units. These essays try to show that ethnic boundaries are maintained in each case by a limited set of cultural features. The persistence of the unit then depends on the persistence of these cultural differentiae, while continuity can also be specified through the changes of the unit brought about by changes in the boundary-defining cultural differentiae.

However, most of the cultural matter that at any time is associated with a human population is not constrained by this boundary; it can vary, be learnt, and change without any critical relation to the boundary maintenance of the ethnic group. So when one traces the history of a ethnic group through time, one is not simultaneously, in the same sense, tracing the history of 'a culture': the elements of the present culture of that ethnic group have not sprung from the particular set that constituted the group's culture at a previous time, whereas the group has a continual organizational existence with boundaries (criteria of membership) that despite modifications have marked off a continuing unit.

Without being able to specify the boundaries of cultures, it is not possible to construct phyletic lines in the more rigorous evolutionary sense. But from the analysis that has been argued here, it should be possible to do so for ethnic groups, and thus in a sense for those aspects of culture which have this organizational anchoring.

1 The emphatic ideological denial of the primacy of ethnic identity (and rank) which characterises the universal religions that have arisen in the Middle East is understandable in this perspective, since practically any movement for social or ethical reform in the poly-ethnic societies of that region would clash with conventions and standards of ethnic character.
2 The difference between ethnic groups and social strata, which seems problematical at this stage of the argument, will be taken up below.
3 I am here concerned only with individual failure to maintain identity, where most members do so successfully, and not with the broader questions of cultural vitality and anomie.
4 As opposed to presumptive classification in passing social encounters — I am thinking of the person in his normal social context where others have a considerable amount of previous information about him, not of the possibilities afforded occasionally for misrepresenting one's identity towards strangers.
5 The condemned behaviour which gives partial position to the gypsies is compound, but rests prominently on their wandering life, originally in contrast to the serf bondage of Europe, later in their flagrant violation of puritan ethics of responsibility, toil and morality.
6 To my knowledge, Mitchel's essay on the Kalela dance (Mitchel 1956) is the first and still the most penetrating study on this topic.

When Ethnic Identity is a Social Stigma
by Harald Eidhein

The problem of delimiting ethnic groups as contrasting cultural units, and of defining ethnic borders, has occupied many anthropologists, in particular many of the cultural anthropological school. The distribution of cultural and other 'objective' traits has usually been the empirical evidence on which their approaches have been built. Analyses of such data may provide us with a statistical and distributive picture (if it is possible to agree on a definition of a trait) and may show how the concentration of traits correlates with named groups. However, if ethnic groups should not happen to coincide with contrasting economic systems or with firm and enduring political groups, there will always be the problem of 'transitional zones', i.e. where such criteria give ill-defined ethnic borders. Yet in many such areas, people themselves apparently have no difficulties in ascribing ethnic membership, i.e. we might find a high degree of 'homogeneity' (rather insignificant distribution of objective traits) but still indications of ethnic diversity, expressed in native theory and also articulated in the routine of interpersonal behaviour (cf. Nadel 1947, Garvin 1958, Moerman 1965).

This poses the general problem of how ethnic diversity is socially articulated and maintained.

To analyse the social organization of ethnic borders we need a relational frame of reference, in which we can single out those objective phenomena that we somewhat dubiously called 'traits', by concepts logically consistent with a relational language. The basic axiom for such analyses is that ethnic groups are social categories which provide a basis for status ascription, and consequently that inter-ethnic relations are organized with reference to such statuses. My material shows a situation where an ethnic status (or identity) is, in a sense, illegitimate, and therefore not acted out in institutional
fake his identity or to live a double life as a kind of Norwegian and as a back-stage Lapp. The Indian highlander is always an Indian whether at home or interacting with Lados. His destiny is shaped by a situation in which his Indianhood is the very basis for interaction.

1 Former capital of the State of Chiapas, still seat of the bishopric. It is recognized as Cabecera de Distrito, i.e. 'capital' of the Highland district.
3 Within the tribal border trade takes place at three levels: a) delayed exchange between close relatives and neighbours; b) trade in kind (bananas for beans) with indirect reference to Mexican currency between remote relatives and acquaintances: 50 e = 1 bundle bananas = pulato (pot) beans, sizes of measures varying with the season; c) ordinary exchange by means of currency between unrelated and distant living tribesmen.
4 Cf. the case of 'calling military assistance' to Oxoach in 1960 during a period of alleged 'unrest' (Siverts 1964: 368).
5 It is characteristic that Lados always address Indians in 2nd person (plural and singular) which is otherwise insulting. The use of 2nd person plural is considered an archaisch elsewhere in Mexico where the 3rd person is reserved for a non-specified plurality (of persons).
6 The neologism Ladinization (Ladinization) is borrowed from McQuown and Pitt-Rivers 1964.
7 Cf. the discussion of the 'peripheral market' (Bohannan 1963: 246 ff.).
8 Teachers receive salaries from Instituto Nacional Indigenista, relatives provide labour for cultivating their fields, and friends and neighbours frequently bring gifts to their households.
9 'Indianhood' in this sense only exists among romantic intellectuals and certain idealistic absentee politicians.
10 Pan-Indianism is as foreign to the Oxoquero or Cancuero today as it was during the uprisings of yesterday, notably the great insurrection of 1712 when these two tribes temporarily joined forces in a frustrated attempt to fight the Spaniards (Pineda 1888). It is perhaps symptomatic that they lost an obvious victory because hesitation and disorganization were more prominent features of the military operations than determination and coordination; and this may serve as a dramatic expression of the poly-ethnic situation where a highly segmented majority fails to make a concerted effort at neutralizing a dominant and organized minority. But of course, the Spaniards never constituted a real minority; they represented the larger society just as the Lados do today.

Pathan Identity and its Maintenance

by Fredrik Barth

Pathans (Pashtuns, Pakhtuns, Afghans) constitute a large, highly self-aware ethnic group inhabiting adjoining areas of Afghanistan and West Pakistan, generally organized in a segmentary, replicating social system without centralized institutions.

A population of this size and organization, widely extended over an ecologically diverse area and in different regions in contact with other populations of diverse cultures, poses some interesting problems in the present context. Though the members of such an ethnic group may carry a firm conviction of identity, their knowledge of distant communities who claim to share this identity will be limited; and intercommunication within the ethnic group — though it forms an uninterrupted network — cannot lightly be assumed to disseminate adequate information to maintain a shared body of values and understandings through time. Thus, even if we can show that the maintenance of Pathan identity is an overt goal, for all members of the group, this will be a goal pursued within the limited perspective of highly discrepant local settings. Consequently the aggregate result will not automatically be the persistence of an undivided and distinctive, single ethnic group. How then can we account for the character and the boundaries of this unit? The following analysis attempts to answer this question by analyzing and comparing the processes of boundary maintenance in different sectors of Pathan territory. Since our questions concern processes over time which have produced and sustained a pattern that we observe today, I shall concern myself with the traditional forms of organization which have predominated and still largely obtain in the area, and not with the recent process of penetration of some parts of Pathan country by modern administration.

Pathan communities exhibit a great range of cultural and social forms (see map on p. 118). (1) In a central belt of barren hills running
through most of the country are found villages of mixed agricul-
turalists, organized in egalitarian patrilineal descent segments with an
acephalous political form. (2) In favoured localities in the mountains,
and in the broader valleys and plains, more intensive agriculture is
practised, based on artificial irrigation; in these areas Pathans proper
are landowners or owner-cultivators, while part of the village popula-
tion consists of tenant Tajiks (south and west) or servile tenant and
menial castes (east and north). Political forms are largely based on
the segmentary organization of the Pathan descent groups, some places
in acephalous systems, elsewhere integrated in quasi-feudal systems
within the prevailing states and increasingly subject to bureaucratic
administration. (3) Other sectors of the Pathan population live as
administrators, traders, craftsmen or labourers in the towns of Afghan-
istan and Pakistan, as an integrated part of those two states. (4) Parti-
cularly in the south, a large sector of the ethnic group lives a pastoral
nomadic life, politically organized as tribes with, in part, very great
autonomy. Finally, some groups practise extensive labour or trad-
ing migrations which bring individuals and small groups periodically
far outside the geographical boundaries of Pathan country.

Such diversities of life style do not appear significantly to impair
the Pathans' self-image as a characteristic and distinctive ethnic unit
with unambiguous social and distributional boundaries. Thus the
cultural diversity which we observe between different Pathan com-
munities, and which objectively seems to be of an order of magnitude
comparable to that between any such community and neighbouring
non-Pathan groups, does not provide criteria for differentiating per-
sons in terms of ethnic identity. On the contrary, members of this
society select only certain cultural traits, and make these the unam-
biguous criteria for ascription to the ethnic group.

Pathans appear to regard the following attributes as necessarily
associated with Pathan identity (cf. Caroe 1962, Barth 1959):

1. Patrilineal descent. All Pathans have a common ancestor, who
lived 20–25 generations ago according to accepted genealogies.
Though genealogical interest is considerable, knowledge of accepted
genealogies varies both regionally and individually. The acceptance
of a strictly patrilineal descent criterion, however, is universal.

2. Islam. A Pathan must be an orthodox Moslem. The putative
ancestor, Qais, lived at the time of the Prophet. He sought the Prophet
out in Medina, embraced the faith, and was given the name of Abd-
ur-Rashid. Thus, Pathans have no infidel past, nor do they carry in
their history the blemish of defeat and forcible conversion.

3. Pathan custom. Finally, a Pathan is a man who lives by a body of
customs which is thought of as common and distinctive to all Pathans.
The Pashto language may be included under this heading — it is a
necessary and diacritical feature, but in itself not sufficient: we are
not dealing simply with a linguistic group. Pathans have an explicit
saying: ‘He is Pathan who does Pashto, not (merely) who speaks
Pashto'; and ‘doing' Pashto in this sense means living by a rather
exacting code, in terms of which some Pashto speakers consistently fall
short.

Pathan customs are imagined by the actors to be consistent with, and
complementary to Islam. Parts of this body of custom have been formalized and made overt by tribal councils and administrators as custom law, while some written and a considerable oral literature concerns itself in a normative and patriotic fashion with the distinctiveness of Pathan culture. The value orientations on which it is based emphasize male autonomy and egality, self-expression and aggressiveness in a syndrome which might be summarized under the concept of honour (izzat), but which differs from the meaning that this word has been given in Mediterranean studies, in ways that will become apparent as the analysis proceeds.

Together, these characteristics may be thought of as the 'native model' (cf. Ward 1965) of the Pathan. This model provides a Pathan with a self-image, and serves him as a general canon for evaluating behaviour on the part of himself and other Pathans. It can clearly only be maintained if it provides a practicable self-image and is moderately consistent with the sanctions that are experienced in social interaction; and some arguments in my analysis of boundary-crossing will be based on this point. However, this 'native model' need not be a truly adequate representation of empirical facts, and for our analytic purposes I believe that Pathan custom can more usefully be depicted in a few central institutions of Pathan life. These combine central value orientations, by which performance and excellence can be judged, with fora or other organizational arrangements in which the relevant behaviour can be consummated and exhibited. The analysis of boundary-maintaining processes in different parts of the Pathan area, which will be made below, requires an understanding of three such institutions which dominate three major domains of activity: melmastie=hospitality, and the honourable uses of material goods, jirga=councils, and the honourable pursuit of public affairs, and purdah=seclusion, and the honourable organization of domestic life.

Hospitality involves a set of conventions whereby the person who is on home ground has obligations towards the outsider to incorporate him into the local group, temporarily be responsible for his security, and provide for his needs. The obligation is brought into play by the visitors' presenting himself in the alien setting. Accordingly, a stranger on the road who passes close to someone who is having a meal will be offered food, someone coming to a village will be greeted and helped by residents, a friend making his appearance will promptly be made welcome. In return, the guest is obligated to recognize the authority and sovereignty of the host over property and persons present. In this host-guest relation, any single encounter is temporary and the statuses thereby reversible and reciprocal, and hospitality is thus easily an idiom of equality and alliance between parties; a consistently unilateral host-guest relationship, on the other hand, entails dependence and political submission by the guest.

The appropriate forum for hospitality among Pathans varies in distinctness and scale according to local circumstances, but involves the allocation of publicly accessible space to the purpose: a special men's house, a separate guest room, or merely a place to sit. The space and occasion together may be described as a forum because they provide the opportunity to act out behaviour which can be publicly judged according to scale and quality. Specifically, it gives the host an opportunity to exhibit his competence in management, his surplus, and the reliance others place on him. More importantly, it shows the ease with which he assumes responsibility, and implies authority and assurance—basic male Pathan virtues. On a deeper level, it confirms basic premises of Pathan life: that wealth is not for amassing, but for use and is basically without importance, that only the weak man is attached to property and makes himself dependent on it, that the strong man bases his position on qualities within himself and people's recognition of these qualities, and not on control of people by the control of objects. The self-esteem of a poor hill farmer can thus be maintained in the face of the wealth and luxury of neighbouring Oriental civilizations—yet at the same time a means of converting wealth to political influence through hospitality is provided within the terms of Pathan values. While strangers are made to recognize the sovereignty of local people, local leaders can build up followings by feasting fellow villagers in a unilateral pattern. Apart from the way in which these ideas about hospitality facilitate the circulation of persons and information in anarchic territory, and protect locals from invidious comparisons with strangers, they can also further the political assimilation of servile dependents under Pathan leaders.

The council among Pathans is a meeting of men, called together by one or several of those present so as to arrive at a joint decision on a matter of common concern, and may thus refer to an ad hoc meeting or to an instituted tribunal. The matter of common interest may be a conflict between the parties present or the planning of a joint action. The relationship between members of a council is one of equals, with no speaker or leader; the equality is emphasized by circular seating on the ground and the equal right of all to speak. The body does not
finalize its decision in a vote: discussion and negotiation continue until the decision is unopposed, and thereby unanimous and binding as an individual decision by each participant. A faction which will not accept a decision can only avoid commitment by leaving the circle in protest.

The council is thus a forum where important Pathan virtues, such as courage, judgment, dependability, and morality can be acted out, while a man's influence and the respect shown him is made apparent through the procedures. On the more fundamental level, this organization of councils confirms the basic integrity and autonomy of men, and the basically voluntary nature of the social contract among Pathans. It allows groups of men to arrive at joint decisions without compromising any participant's independence; it produces binding corporate decisions about concerted action without disassembling the structure of egalitarian balanced segments through the introduction of any one's right to give commands.

Finally, seclusion establishes an organization of activities which allows a simultaneous emphasis on virility and the primacy of male society, and prevents the realities of performance in domestic life from affecting a man's public image. Pathan value orientations contain a number of contradictions if they are to be made relevant simultaneously in behaviour before mixed audiences. Thus, the emphasis on masculinity and virility has an aspect of sexual appetite and competence — yet eagerness to indulge oneself is 'soft' and severely ridiculed. Agnostic ideology and the emphasis on virility implies a high evaluation of males and male company over females; yet it must be through the company of females that the essence of virility is consummated. Finally, there is the problem of vulnerability through 'things' and the infringement of rights. We have seen how explicit valuations of freedom and autonomy are furthered through hospitality, through the denial of attachment and importance in things. Yet male rights in women, in sisters and wives, cannot be denied and liquidated in that way: a male is dependent on, and vulnerable through, his women.

To all these contradictions, the seclusion of women and encapsulation of domestic life is an adequate behavioural solution. It also makes possible a domestic organization that allows a realistic accommodation between spouses. The sexuality, dominance, and patriarchy demanded by public male values need not be consummated in public; the primacy of male relations can be confirmed in the public sphere without any associated sexual passivity; and at the same time the interaction between spouses need not be perverted by a male performance designed for a public male audience. The resultant pattern of domestic performance is difficult to document; but its adequacy is suggested by the relative absence among Pathans of divorce or adultery murders, by the trust placed in females by nomads and migrants who absent themselves periodically from their wives, and by the traditional view of mothers and sisters as upholders of family honour, spurring their men to bravery, etc.

These three central institutions combine to provide Pathans with the organizational mechanisms whereby they can realize core Pathan values fairly successfully, given the necessary external circumstances. They also facilitate the maintenance of shared values and identity within an accephalous and poly-segmentary population. The public fora provide opportunities to perform and be judged by other persons regardless of residence and political allegiance; they mediate judgement and public opinion over large areas. Whenever men meet in councils, wherever guests arrive and hospitality is dispensed, core Pathan values are acted out and adequacy of performance is judged and sanctioned. Thus, agreements can be confirmed and maintained and the reality of shared identity perpetuated despite the absence of any nuclear, prototype locus or example.

Moreover, the values thus realized are shared, in general terms, by surrounding peoples: success as a Pathan implies behaviour which is also admired by non-Pathans. The ethnic identity therefore remains one that is highly valued by members also in contact situations, and is retained wherever possible. An understanding of the boundary mechanisms of the Pathan ethnic unit thus depends on an understanding of the special factors that can make it untenable or unattractive to sustain this identity. These vary in different marginal areas of Pathan country, and will be discussed in turn.

The southern Pathan boundary is one where Pathan descent groups, organized politically through lineage councils, face centrally organized Baluch tribes along a clearly demarcated territorial border. This border does not coincide with any critical ecologic difference, though there is a cline from lower and drier areas in the south to slightly wetter and more mountainous country towards the north. During recent historic times, the ethnic boundary has been moving northward through the intermittent encroachment of Baluch tribes on marginal areas.

The main factors involved in this process have been analysed else-
where (Barth 1964a) and need only be summarized briefly. The critical factor is the difference in political structure between Baluch and Pathans. Baluch tribes are based on a contract of political submission of commons under sub-chiefs and chiefs (Pehrson 1966). This is a form that freely allows for reorganization and assimilation of personnel, and the evidence for the historical growth of Baluch tribes through confederation and individual and small group accretion is quite conclusive.1

Southern Pathans on the other hand are organized in localized segmentary descent groups. Though many of them are chiefs, these are headmen of descent segments from which clients are excluded; and political decisions are made through egalitarian councils. Assimilation of non-descent members can only take place through clientship under persons or sections of the tribe. It involves, for the client, an inferior, non-tribesman serf status, attractive merely as a last resort. What is more, the arrangement is not very attractive to the potential patron either, for several ecologic and social reasons. A client in this area can produce only a very limited surplus from which a patron could benefit, whereas the patron’s obligations to his clients are quite comprehensive. He is not only responsible for protecting and defending him; he is also held responsible for any offence which the client may cause. And in an egalitarian society where security springs from a man’s ability to rally communal support, the political advantages of controlling a few clients are very limited. Thus, whereas Baluch chiefs compete for influence and tax income by incorporating new members into the tribe, people seeking attachment are turned away from Pathan groups due to the inability of that structure to incorporate them. Any person or small group who through war, accident, or crime is torn loose from his social moorings will thus be drawn into a Baluch political structure. Furthermore, as centrally led units, these are less capable of pursuing long-term strategies than are the bodies of Pathans, mobilized through fusion and ad hoc councils; and though Baluch tribes may lose battles, they consequently tend to win wars — swelling their own ranks in the process by uprooting fragments of personnel — and thus steadily encroach on Pathan lands.

The result is a flow of personnel from Pathan groups to Baluch groups, and not vice versa. Indeed, large parts of some Baluch tribes acknowledge Pathan origin. However, the incorporation of Pathans into Baluch type political structures goes hand in hand with a loss of Pathan ethnic identity, so the categorical dichotomy of Pathan tribes and Baluch tribes remains. The reasons for this must be sought in the clash between Pathan values and political circumstances.

Naturally, participation and success in a Baluch tribe requires facility in Baluch speech and etiquette and thus a certain assimilation of Baluch culture. However, this degree of versatility and bilingualism is widely distributed and so the external situation does not seem to require a change in identity. Rather, the critical factors are connected with the actor’s own choice of identification, and all bias him in the direction of Baluch identity. I have discussed how the council provides a favoured forum for Pathan political activity, which allows Pathans to act jointly without compromising their autonomy. Membership in a centrally directed Baluch tribe, on the other hand, does irrevocably compromise this autonomy: a man must make himself the dependent, the client, of a leader and cannot speak for himself in the public forum. Judged by Pathan standards, clientship places a man among the despised failures, subordinates among independent commoners. Among Baluch, on the other hand, self-respect and recognition as an honourable commoner does not require this degree of assertion and autonomy; the costs, by Baluch standards, of being the client of a chief and nobleman are very slight. Virility and competence need not be demonstrated in the forum of political councils, to which commoners have no access, but is pursued in other fields of activity. By retaining a Pathan identity in a Baluch setting, a man would run the risk of being judged by standards in terms of which his performance is a failure, while judged by the standards current in the host group his behaviour is perfectly honourable. It is hardly surprising, then, that any one assimilated has chosen to embrace the identity that makes his situation most tolerable. As a result, changes in political membership are associated with changes in ethnic identity, and the clear dichotomy of persons and tribes is maintained despite the movement of personnel. Only one small category of people forms an exception to this: a few families and segments of Pathans who have been subjected by Baluch as serfs or slaves (cf. Pehrson 1966:12), and being the dependents of Baluch commoners cling to an identity which can at least offer them a claim to honourable origin, though no recognition among free Pathans.

The western margins of Pathan country exhibit a very different picture (cf. Ferdinand 1962). Here, the adjoining area is largely occupied by Persian-speaking Hazara, and Pathan pastoral nomads and trading nomads penetrate deep into Hazara territory and settle
long period, has certainly occasionally taken the form of migration and conquest with wholesale eviction of the previous population; but more frequently it has resulted in only a partial displacement of the non-Pathan autochthones. In these cases, Pathans have established themselves in stratified communities as a dominant, landholding group in a poly-ethnic system. Through much of the western area, the dichotomy is between Pashtun and Tajik, i.e., Persian-speaking serfs, while in the eastern areas, Pakhtuns are contrasted with a more highly differentiated, but largely Pashto-speaking, group of dependent castes.

One of the preconditions for these compound systems is clearly ecological. From the Pathan point of view, it is obvious that dependents will only be accepted where the disadvantages of having them, i.e., increased vulnerability, are estimated to be less than the economic and political advantages. In the barren hills of the south, I have argued that this leads to the rejection of clients. In richer agricultural areas, on the other hand, particularly where there are opportunities for artificial irrigation, farm labour produces very large surpluses so that profitable enterprises can be based on the control of land. As a result, the option of establishing oneself as a landowner and patron of others is an attractive one. Political supremacy may variously be maintained through an integration of serfs as true clients (hamsayay), or it may be based on the less committing obligations that follow from unilateral hospitality. Where surpluses are very large, this latter pattern is most common, as seen in the development of men’s house feasting in the north (Barth 1959: 52 ff.); and by this means Pathans can gain political influence over dependents without very greatly increasing their own vulnerability.

Pathan identity can readily be maintained under these circumstances, since they allow an adequate performance in the various fora where such an identity is validated. However, political autonomy in the system is founded on land ownership. Long-term ethnic boundary maintenance will thus presuppose mechanisms for monopolization and retention of land on Pathan hands. Persons who lose control of land must either be given reallocated fields on the basis of descent position or else denied rights as Pathan descendants and sloughed off from the group. On the other hand, land acquisition by non-Pathans must be contained and their participation in Pathan fora prevented unless they can be fully assimilated to Pathan status.

Several patterns of this are found, among them that of Swat, where
those who lose their land also lose their descent position, while Saints and others who are given land are none the less excluded from participation in council meetings or in men's house hospitality. Thus conquering Pathans are able to integrate other populations in a political and social system without assimilating them; other ethnic groups and status groups can also infiltrate the system in dependent positions where niches are available, as have pastoral Gujars or trading Parachas. However, the cultural differences that go with the Pathan identity versus dependent dichotomy clearly tend to become reduced over time. Within the whole stratified community there is a very close and multifaceted integration that further this trend. Most social life can be related to a religious context of dogmatic equality. There is a constant circulation of personnel through hypergamous marriages as well as loss of land and rank. Finally, there are a multitude of contexts where a fellowship of ideals and standards are made relevant to groups that cross-cut strata: in games, in hunting, in war and bravery, non-Pakhtun and Pakhtun are joined, and judged and rewarded by the same standards of manliness. As a result, the whole stratified population tends to approach a uniformly Pathan style of life as well as speech. Therefore, though the local version of the ethnic name (Pakhtun in the case of Swat and Peshawar) continues to indicate the dominant stratum internally, it is increasingly used collectively to designate the whole population in contrast to the population of other, non-Pashto-speaking areas. In this sense, then, the internal boundary tends to lose some of its ethnic character.

The eastern margins of Pathan country, towards the rich and populous Indus plain, illustrate a different combination of some of these factors. Repeatedly through history, tribes and groups of Pathans have swept out of the hills and conquered large or small tracts of land in the Panjab or further east, establishing themselves as landlords. Yet, here it is the conquerors who have become progressively assimilated, and the limits of Pathan country have never moved far from the foothills area, except for the almost enclosed area of the Peshawar plains. The ethno-dynamics of this boundary may thus be simplified as a continuous pressure and migration of personnel from the Pathan area, balanced by a continuous absorption of the migrants into the plains population, with the rates of these two processes balancing along a line at a certain distance from the foothills. The direction and rate of assimilation must be understood in terms of the opportunity situation of Pathans settled in the plains. These plains have always been

under the sway of centralized governments; for purely geographical and tactical reasons they can be controlled by armies directed from the urban civilizations there. Any landholding, dominant group will therefore be forced, sooner or later, to come to terms with these centres of power, or they will be destroyed. However, Pathan landlords can only come truly to terms with such superior powers by destroying the bases for the maintenance of their own identity: the defence of honour, the corporation through achaeanilous councils, ultimately the individual autonomy that is the basis for Pathan self-respect. Such landlords are trapped in a social system where pursuit of Pathan virtues is consistently punished, whereas compromise, submission, and accommodation are rewarded. Under these circumstances, Pathan descent may be remembered but the distinctive behaviour associated with the identity is discontinued. To the extent that such groups retain the Pashto language, they run the risk of ridicule: they are the ones scathingly referred to by Pathans as speaking but not doing Pashto, and retaining the pretence of being Pathans is not rewarded.

A few less ambitious niches are, however, found in the social system of the Indo-Pakistan area where Pathan identity can be perpetuated on a more individual basis. As money-lenders and as nightwatchmen, Pathans can defend and capitalize on their virtues as fearless, independent, and dominant persons, and in these capacities they are widely dispersed through the subcontinent.

Internally, a somewhat analogous loss of identity has traditionally taken place in the areas immediately under the control of the Afghan (Pathan) dynasty of Afghanistan, particularly in Kabul and the other urban centres. Here the proximity to the centralized authority is so great that it becomes very difficult for people of any importance to assert and exhibit the autonomy and independence that their identity and position demand. Somewhat incongruously, the elite and urban middle class in this purely Afghan kingdom have shown a strong tendency to Persianization in speech and culture, representing — I would argue — a sophisticate's escape from the impossibility of successfully consummating a Pathan identity under these circumstances. With the more recent developments of modern Afghan nationalism, this has changed and new processes have been set in motion.

I have analysed elsewhere (Barth 1956a) the ecologic factors that determine the limits of Pathan distribution to the north: the critical limits of double cropping, beyond which the surplus-demanding
political structure based on men's house hospitality, as found in the northern Pathan areas, cannot be sustained. North of this very clear geographical and ethnic boundary is found a congeries of diverse tribes collectively referred to as Kohistanis. But this boundary also is not entirely impermeable to the passage of personnel: several groups and segments of Pathans are traditionally reported to have been driven out of their territories in the south and escaped to Kohistan, while one such group was encountered during a survey of Kohistan (Barth 1956b: 49). After residence as a compact and independent community in the area for four generations, this group was like neighbouring Kohistanis and radically unlike Pathans in economy, social organization, and style of life. It is reasonable to assume that Pashto, still used as a domestic language among them, will soon disappear, and that other Kohistani areas contain similar segments of genetically Pathan populations that have been assimilated to a Kohistani ethnic identity. That this should be so is consistent with the dynamics of assimilation elsewhere. Pathan identity, as a style of life in Kohistan, must be compared and contrasted to the forms found in the neighbouring valleys, where a complex system of stratification constitutes a framework within which Pakhtun landlords play prominent parts as political leaders of corporate groups based on men's houses. By contrast, Kohistanis have a simple stratified system, with a majority of owner-cultivator commoners and a minority stratum of dependent serfs, plus a few Pashto-speaking craftsmen. Politically the area is highly anarchic and fragmented.

In general value orientation, Kohistanis are not unlike Pathans; and analogies to the institutional complexes I have described as fora for Pathan activity are also found. Kohistani seclusion of women is at the same time even stricter and more problematical, since women are deeply involved in farming and thus must work more in public, occasioning more demonstrative escape and avoidance behaviour. Councils are limited to instituted village councils, with men seated on benches in a square formation and grouping themselves as lineage representatives. Finally, hospitality is very limited, for economic reasons, and does not provide the basis for leadership: dependents are landless serfs who are controlled through the land.

In the contact situation, it is a striking fact that Kohistanis overcommunicate their identity through the use of several archaic features of dress, most strikingly footwear—puttees of poorly cured hides, and long hair. Pathans find these rustic features very amusing, but at the same time recognize the qualities of independence and toughness that Kohistanis exhibit. Politically the Kohistani owner-cultivator is an autonomous equal to the Pakhtun landowner and men's house leader, though he speaks for a smaller group, often only his own person. Kohistanis and Pakhtuns are partners in the non-localized two-bloc alliance system that pervades the area.

Pathans who are driven off their lands in the lower valleys can escape subjection and menial rank by fleeing to Kohistan and conquering or buying land and supporting themselves as owner-cultivators. As such, they retain the autonomy which is so highly valued by Pathan and Kohistani alike. But in competition with Pathan leaders of men's houses, their performance in the fora of hospitality and gift-giving will be miserable — what they can offer there can be matched by the dependent menials of the richer areas. To maintain a claim to Pathan identity under these conditions is to condemn oneself to utter failure in performance, when by a change to Kohistani identity one can avoid being judged as a Pathan, and emphasize those features of one's situation and performance which are favourable. Just as Kohistanis find it to their advantage in contact with Pathans to emphasize their identity, so it is advantageous for Pathan migrants under these circumstances to embrace this identity. In the fragmented, anarchic area of Kohistan, with largely compatible basic value orientations, the impediments to such passage are low, and as a result the ethnic dichotomy corresponds closely to an ecologic and geographical division.

In the preceding pages, I have tried very briefly to sketch a picture of the Pathan ethnic group and its distribution. It is apparent that persons identifying themselves, and being identified by others, as Pathans live and persist under various forms of organization as members of societies constituted on rather different principles. Under these various conditions, it is not surprising that the style of life in Pathan communities should show considerable phenotypic variation. At the same time, the basic values and the social forms of Pathans are in a number of respects similar to those of other, neighbouring peoples. This raises the problem of just what is the nature of the categories and discontinuities that are referred to by ethnic names in this region: how are cultural differences made relevant as ethnic organization?

Superficially, it is true that ethnic groups are distinguished by a number of cultural traits which serve as diacritica, as overt signals of identity which persons will refer to as criteria of classification. These
are specific items of custom, from style of dress to rules of inheritance. On the other hand, it is equally obvious that the ethnic dichotomies do not depend on these, so that the contrast between Pathan and Baluch would not be changed if Pathan women started wearing the embroidered tunic-fronts used among the Baluch. The analysis has attempted rather to uncover the essential characteristics of Pathans which, if changed, would change their ethnic categorization vis-à-vis one or several contrasting groups. This has meant giving special attention to boundaries and boundary maintenance.

The essential argument has been that people sustain their identity through public behaviour, which cannot be directly evaluated: first it must be interpreted with reference to the available ethnic alternatives. Ethnic identities function as categories of inclusion/exclusion and of interaction, about which both ego and alter must agree if their behaviour is to be meaningful. Signals and acceptance that one belongs to the Pathan category imply that one will be judged by a set of values which are characteristic or characteristically weighted. The most characteristic feature of Pathan values lies in giving primary emphasis to autonomy: in politics, in one’s relating to material objects, in one’s escape from influence and vulnerability through kin relations. This identity can be sustained only if it can be consummated moderately successfully: otherwise individuals will abandon it for other identities, or alter it through changing the criteria for the identity.

I have tried to show how different forms of Pathan organization represent various ways of consummating the identity under changing conditions. I have tried to show how individual boundary crossing, i.e. change of identity, takes place where the person’s performance is poor and alternative identities are within reach, leaving the ethnic organization unchanged. I have also touched on the problems that arise when many persons experience the failure to excel, without having a contrastive identity within reach which could provide an alternative adjustment, and how this leads towards a change in the definition of the ethnic identity and thus in the organization of units and boundaries.

To recapitulate in connection with the organization of the political sphere: the Pathan pattern of council organization allows men to adjust to group living without compromising their autonomy, and thus to realize and excel in a Pathan capacity. Under external constraints, as members of larger and discrepantly organized societies, Pathans seek other fora for consummating these capacities through bravery and independent confrontation with hostile forces as trading nomads, nightwatchmen, and money-lenders. In some situations, however, Pathans find themselves in the position of having to make accommodations that negate their autonomy: they become the clients of Baluch chiefs, the vassals or taxpaying, disarmed citizens of effective centralized states, the effective dependents of landowner/host. Where alternative identities are available which do not give the same emphasis to the valuation of autonomy, these unfortunates embrace them and ‘pass’, becoming Baluch, Punjabi, or Persian-speaking townspeople. In Swat and Peshawar District, where no such contrastive identity is available, defeat and shame cannot be avoided that way. But here the fact of such wholesale failure to realize political autonomy seems to be leading towards a reinterpretation of the minimal requirements for sustaining Pathan identity, and thus to a change in the organizational potential of the Pathan ethnic identity.

We are thus led into the problem of how, and under what circumstances, the characteristics associated with an ethnic identity are maintained, and when they change. The normal social processes whereby continuity is effected are the social controls that maintain status definitions in general, through public agreement and de facto positive and negative sanctions. But where circumstances are such that a number of persons in a status category, in casu Pathans, lose their characteristics and live in a style that is discrepant from that of conventional Pathans, what happens? Are they no longer Pathans by public opinion, or are these characteristics no longer to be associated with Pathan identity?

I have tried to show that in most situations it is to the advantage of the actors themselves to change their label so as to avoid the costs of failure; and so where there is an alternative identity within reach the effect is a flow of personnel from one identity to another and no change in the conventional characteristics of the status. In some cases this does not happen. There is the case of the Pathan serfs of some Baluch tribal sections, where the serfs sustain a claim to Pathan identity and have this confirmed by their Baluch masters. What is actually involved in this case, however, is a kind of shame identity: the Baluch patrons enjoy the triumph of having Pathan serfs, but do explain that these people were only the serfs of the formerly dominant Pathans. The masters were defeated and driven out, and these Pashto-speakers are not in fact their descendants. And the ‘Pathan’ serfs do not have access to Pathan fora and would not have their identity confirmed by Pathans. Thus, the identity retains its character because
many change their ethnic label, and only few are in a position where they cling to it under adverse circumstances. Only where the many choose to maintain the claim despite their failure — as where no alternative identity is accessible — or where the failure is a common and not very costly one, as in the main body of the population in Peshawar district, do the basic contents or characteristics of the identity start being modified.

The traditional version of Pathan identity has thus been one on which a population could base a feasible pattern of life under certain conditions only, and the distribution of Pathans and Pathan social forms can be understood from this. The system has been most successful, and self-maintaining, under anarchic conditions in low production areas. Producing a demographic excess under these conditions, Pathans have spread outward: extending Pathan territory northwards, northeastward, and recently northwestward, while generating a large-scale population movement through a relatively stable ethnic boundary eastward and southward. Under changing conditions at present, with urbanization and new forms of administration, the total situation has changed so that one can expect a radical change both of Pathan culture and of the organizational relevance it is given.

1 There are also in Baluchistan some persons who are the clients of commoners or corporate groups of commoners — these are few in numbers and socially and economically deprived.

2 Except, that is, for some clearly discrepant groups like Saints, Mullahs, Dancers, etc. who recoil from or are excluded from these activities.

Neighbours in Laos
by Karl G. Izikowitz

Ethnography or social anthropology has hitherto aimed mainly at describing and analysing separate social systems from various aspects with a view to contributing to a general social theory. That the social systems of separate peoples should have received such concentrated attention may perhaps be due in part to the influence of the old national romantic movement, which sought to give prominence to each people's national characteristics and particular system of values. Possibly the countries tended to stress these as a means of holding their own against their neighbours. I shall not, however, go into this matter myself but leave it to be dealt with by historians of ideas.

As soon as a group wishes to improve its status and give prominence to its own way of life, it is faced with the problem of neighbourhoo or — as I should like to call it — the relationship of different peoples living next to each other. One then leaves the study of the separate societies — mono-ethnic groups, and turns to that of neighbouring groups — poly-ethnic groups. In this article I shall give some views on questions connected with this and take as my starting point some comparatively meagre material from Laos, where I did short field-studies in 1936–38 and more recently in 1963–64. As my aim had not been to study these questions, this paper can so far only be a sketch or outline.

Indo-China is very definitely a poly-ethnic society and some very fine studies of it have already been made by E. R. Leach (1954), who deals with conditions in Highland Burma. He has later also published an article 'The Frontiers of Burma' (Leach 1960) which, however, deals chiefly with the differences between the mountain and the valley tribes. Drawing mostly from Burmese material he shows the different structures characteristic of these two different societies, and the connection between them and Indian and Chinese systems.
Ecologic Relationships of Ethnic Groups in Swat, North Pakistan

Fredrik Barth


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Ecologic Relationships of Ethnic Groups in Swat, North Pakistan

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The importance of ecologic factors for the form and distribution of cultures has usually been analyzed by means of a culture area concept. This concept has been developed with reference to the aboriginal cultures of North America (Kroeber 1939). Attempts at delimiting culture areas in Asia by similar procedures have proved extremely difficult (Bacon 1946, Kroeber 1947, Miller 1953), since the distribution of cultural types, ethnic groups, and natural areas rarely coincide. Coon (1951) speaks of Middle Eastern society as being built on a mosaic principle—many ethnic groups with radically different cultures co-reside in an area in symbiotic relations of variable intimacy. Referring to a similar structure, Furnivall (1944) describes the Netherlands Indies as a plural society. The common characteristic in these two cases is the combination of ethnic segmentation and economic interdependence. Thus the "environment" of any one ethnic group is not only defined by natural conditions, but also by the presence and activities of the other ethnic groups on which it depends. Each group exploits only a section of the total environment, and leaves large parts of it open for other groups to exploit.

This interdependence is analogous to that of the different animal species in a habitat. As Kroeber (1947:330) emphasizes, culture area classifications are essentially ecologic; thus detailed ecologic considerations, rather than geographical areas of subcontinental size, should offer the point of departure. The present paper attempts to apply a more specific ecologic approach to a case study of distribution by utilizing some of the concepts of animal ecology, particularly the concept of a niche—the place of a group in the total environment, its relations to resources and competitors (cf. Allee 1949:516).

Groups. The present example is simple, relatively speaking, and is concerned with the three major ethnic groups in Swat State, North-West frontier Province, Pakistan. These are: (1) Pathans—Pashto-speaking (Iranian language family) sedentary agriculturalists; (2) Kohistanis—speakers of Dardic languages, practicing agriculture and transhumant herding; and (3) Gujars—Gujri-speaking (a lowland Indian dialect) nomadic herders. Kohistanis are probably the ancient inhabitants of most of Swat; Pathans entered as conquerors in successive waves between A.D. 1000–1600, and Gujars probably first appeared in the area some 400 years ago. Pathans of Swat State number about 450,000, Kohistanis perhaps 30,000. The number of Gujars in the area is difficult to estimate.

The centralized state organization in Swat was first established in 1917, and the most recent accretion was annexed in 1947, so the central organization has no relevance for the distributional problems discussed here.

Area. Swat State contains sections of two main valleys, those of the Swat
and the Indus Rivers. The Swat River rises in the high mountains to the North, among 18,000 foot peaks. As it descends and grows in volume, it enters a deep gorge. This upper section of the valley is thus very narrow and steep. From approximately 5,000 feet, the Swat valley becomes increasingly wider as one proceeds southward, and is flanked by ranges descending from 12,000 to 6,000 feet in altitude. The river here has a more meandering course, and the valley bottom is a flat, extensive alluvial deposit.

The east border of Swat State follows the Indus River; only its west bank and tributaries are included in the area under discussion. The Indus enters the area as a very large river; it flows in a spectacular gorge, 15,000 feet deep and from 12 to 16 miles wide. Even in the north, the valley bottom is less than 3,000 feet above sea level, while the surrounding mountains reach 18,000 feet. The tributary valleys are consequently short and deeply cut, with an extremely steep profile. Further to the south, the surrounding mountain ranges recede from the river banks and lose height, the Indus deposits some sediment, and the tributary streams form wider valleys.

Climatic variations in the area are a function of altitude. Precipitation is low throughout. The southern, low-altitude areas have long, hot summers and largely steppe vegetation. The Indus gorge has been described as "a desert embedded between icy gravels" (Spate 1954:381). The high mountains are partly covered by permanent ice and snow, and at lower levels by natural mountain meadows in the brief summer season. Between these extremes is a broad belt (from 6,000 to 11,000 feet) of forest, mainly of pine and deodar.

Pathan-Kohistani distribution. Traditional history, in part relating to place-names of villages and uninhabited ruins, indicates that Kohistani inhabitants were driven progressively northward by Pathan invaders (cf. Stein 1929:33, 83). This northward spread has now been checked, and the border between Kohistani and Pathan territories has been stable for some time. The last Pathan expansion northward in the Swat valley took place under the leadership of the Saint Akhund Sadiq Baba, eight generations ago. To understand the factors responsible for the stability of the present ethnic border, it is necessary to examine the specific ecologic requirements of the present Pathan economy and organization.

Pathans of Swat live in a complex, multi-caste society. The landholding Pakhtun caste is organized in localized, segmentary, unilineal descent groups; other castes and occupational groups are tied to them as political clients and economic serfs. Subsistence is based on diversified and well-developed plow agriculture. The main crops are wheat, maize, and rice; much of the plowed land is watered by artificial irrigation. Manuring is practiced, and several systems of crop rotation and regular fallow-field rhythms are followed, according to the nature of the soil and water supply. All rice is irrigated, with nursery beds and transplantation.

Only part of the Pathan population is actively engaged in agriculture. Various other occupational groups perform specialized services in return for payment in kind, and thus require that the agriculturalists produce a consider-
able surplus. Further, and perhaps more importantly, the political system depends on a strong hierarchical organization of landowners and much political activity, centering around the men’s houses (*hujra*). This activity diverts much manpower from productive pursuits. The large and well-organized Pathan tribes are found in the lower parts of the Swat valley and along the more southerly tributaries of the Indus, occupying broad and fertile alluvial plains. A simpler form of political organization is found along the northern fringes of Pathan territory. It is based on families of saintly descent, and is characterized by the lack of men’s houses. This simplification renders the economy of the community more efficient (1) by eliminating the wasteful potlatch-type feasts of the men’s houses, and (2) by vesting political office in saintly persons of inviolate status, thus eliminating the numerous retainers that protect political leaders in other Pathan areas.

Pathan territory extends to a critical ecologic threshold: the limits within which two crops can be raised each year. This is largely a function of altitude. Two small outliers of Pashto-speaking people (Jag, in Duber valley, and a section of Kalam) are found north of this limit. They are unlike other Pathans, and similar to their Kohistani neighbors in economy and political organization.

The conclusion that the limits of double cropping constitute the effective check on further Pathan expansion seems unavoidable. Pathan economy and political organization requires that agricultural labor produce considerable surplus. Thus in the marginal, high-altitude areas, the political organization is modified and “economized” (as also in the neighboring Dir area), while beyond these limits of double cropping the economic and social system can not survive at all.

Kohistanis are not restricted by this barrier. The Kohistani ethnic group apparently once straddled it; and, as they were driven north by invading Pathans, they freely crossed what to Pathans was a restricting barrier. This must be related to differences between Kohistanis and Pathan political and economic organization, and consequent differences in their ecologic requirements.

Kohistanis, like Pathans, practice a developed plow agriculture. Due to the terrain they occupy, their fields are located on narrow artificial terraces, which require considerable engineering skill for their construction. Parts of Kohistan receive no summer rains; the streams, fed from the large snow reserves in the mountains, supply water to the fields through complex and extensive systems of irrigation. Some manuring is practiced. Climatic conditions modify the types of food crops. Maize and millet are most important; wheat and rice can only be raised in a few of the low-lying areas. The summer season is short, and fields produce only one crop a year.

Agricultural methods are thus not very different from those of Pathans, but the net production of fields is much less. Kohistanis, however, have a two-fold economy, for transhumant herding is as important as agriculture. Sheep, goats, cattle, and water-buffalo are kept for wool, meat, and milk.
The herds depend in summer on mountain pastures, where most of the Kohistanis spend between four and eight months each year, depending on local conditions. In some areas the whole population migrates through as many as five seasonal camps, from winter dwellings in the valley bottom to summer campsites at a 14,000 foot altitude, leaving the fields around the abandoned low-altitude dwellings to remain practically untended. In the upper Swat valley, where the valley floor is covered with snow some months of the year, winter fodder is collected and stored for the animals.

By having two strings to their bow, so to speak, the Kohistanis are able to wrest a living from inhospitable mountain areas which fall short of the minimal requirements for Pathan occupation. In these areas, Kohistanis long retained their autonomy, the main territories being conquered by Swat State in 1926, 1939, and 1947. They were, and still are, organized in politically separate village districts of from 400 to 2000 inhabitants. Each community is subdivided into a number of loosely connected patrilineal lineages. The central political institution is the village council, in which all landholding minimal lineages have their representatives. Each community also includes a family of blacksmith-cum-carpenter specialists, and a few households of tenants or farm laborers.

Neighboring communities speaking the same dialect or language2 could apparently fuse politically when under external pressure, in which case they were directed by a common council of prominent leaders from all constituent lineages. But even these larger units were unable to withstand the large forces of skilled fighters which Pathans of the Swat area could mobilize. These forces were estimated at 15,000 by the British during the Ambeyla campaign in 1862 (cf. Roberts 1898, vol. 2:7).

"Natural" subareas. The present Swat State appears to the Kohistanis as a single natural area, since, as an ethnic group, they once occupied all of it, and since their economy can function anywhere within it. With the advent of invading Pathan tribes, the Kohistanis found themselves unable to defend the land. But the land which constitutes one natural area to Kohistanis is divided by a line which Pathans were unable to cross. From the Pathan point of view, it consists of two natural areas, one containing the ecologic requisites for Pathan occupation, the other uninhhabitable.3 Thus the Kohistanis were permitted to retain a part of their old territory in spite of their military inferiority, while in the remainder they were either assimilated as serfs in the conquering Pathan society or were expelled.

From the purely synchronic point of view, the present Pathan-Kohistani distribution presents a simple and static picture of two ethnic groups representing two discrete culture areas, and with a clear correspondence between these culture areas and natural areas: Pathans in broad valleys with a hot climate and scrub vegetation as against Kohistanis in high mountains with a severe climate and coniferous forest cover. Through the addition of time depth, the possibility arises of breaking down the concept of a "natural area"
into specific ecologic components in relation to the requirements of specific economies.

Analysis of the distribution of Gujars in relation to the other ethnic groups requires such a procedure. Gujars are found in both Pathan and Kohistani areas, following two different economic patterns in both areas: transhumant herding, and true nomadism. But while they are distributed throughout all of the Pathan territory, they are found only in the western half of Kohistan, and neither reside nor visit in the eastern half. The division into mountain and valley seems irrelevant to the Gujars, while the mountain area—in hospitable to Pathans and usable to Kohistanis—is divided by a barrier which Gujars do not cross. The economy and other features of Gujar life must be described before this distribution and its underlying factors can be analyzed.

Gujars constitute a floating population of herders, somewhat ill-defined due to a variable degree of assimilation into the host populations. In physical type, as well as in dress and language, the majority of them are easily distinguishable. Their music, dancing, and manner of celebrating rites of passage differ from those of their hosts. Their political status is one of dependence on the host population.

The Gujar population is subdivided into a number of named patrilineal tribes or clans—units claiming descent from a common known or unknown ancestor, but without supporting genealogies. There are sometimes myths relating to the clan origin, and these frequently serve as etymologies for the clan name. The clans vary greatly in size and only the smallest are localized. The effective descent units are patrilineal lineages of limited depth, though there is greater identification between unrelated Gujars bearing the same clan name than between strangers of different clans. These clans are irrelevant to marriage regulations. There is little intermarriage between Gujars and the host group.

The economy of the Gujars depends mainly on the herding of sheep, goats, cattle, and water buffalo. In addition to animal products, Gujars require some grain (maize, wheat, or millet) which they get by their own agriculture in marginal, high-altitude fields or by trade in return for clarified butter, meat, or wool. Their essential requirements may be satisfied by two rather different patterns of life—transhumance and true nomadism. Pathans differentiate persons pursuing these two patterns by the terms Gujar and Ajer, respectively, and consider them to be ethnic subdivisions. In fact, Gujars may change their pattern of life from one to the other.

Transhumance is practiced mainly by Gujars in the Pathan area, but also occasionally in Kohistan (see map). Symbiotic relationships between Gujars and Pathans take various forms, some quite intimate. Pathans form a multi-caste society, into which Gujars are assimilated as a specialized occupational caste of herders. Thus most Pathan villages contain a small number of Gujars—these may speak Gujri as their home language and retain their separate culture, or may be assimilated to the extent of speaking only Pashto. Politically
Sketch map of area of Swat State, Pakistan. Stippled area: under cultivation by Pathans. Broken line: border between Pathan and Kohistani areas. Dotted line: border of area utilized by Gujars (the two borders coincide towards the southeast). p: outlying Pathan communities. g: outlying communities of transhumant Gujars. Gujar nomads spend the summer in the mountains central and north on the map, and winter in the southernmost area of the map. Inset: location of sketch map.
they are integrated into the community in a client or serf status. Their role is to care for the animals (mainly water buffalo and draft oxen) either as servants of a landowner or as independent buffalo owners. They contribute to the village economy with milk products (especially clarified butter), meat, and manure, which is important and carefully utilized in the fields.

In addition to their agricultural land, most Pathan villages control neighboring hills or mountain-sides, which are used by Pathans only as a source of firewood. The transhumant Gujars, however, shift their flocks to these higher areas for summer pasture, for which they pay a fixed rate, in kind, per animal. This rent supplies the landholders with clarified butter for their own consumption. Gujars also serve as agricultural laborers in the seasons of peak activity, most importantly during the few hectic days of rice transplantation. They also seed fields of their own around their summer camps for harvest the following summer.

In Kohistan there is less symbiosis between Gujars and their hosts but the pattern is similar, except that the few fields are located by the winter settlements.

The transhumant cycle may be very local. Some Gujars merely move from Pathan villages in the valley bottom to hillside summer settlements 1,000 or 1,500 feet above, visible from the village. Others travel 20 or 30 miles to summer grazing grounds in the territory of a different Pathan tribe from that of their winter hosts.

Nomads travel much farther, perhaps 100 miles, utilizing the high mountain pastures in the summer and wintering in the low plains. While the transhumant Gujars place their main emphasis on the water buffalo, the nomads specialize in the more mobile sheep and goats. Nonetheless, the two patterns are not truly distinct, for some groups combine features of both. They spend the spring in the marginal hills of Pathan territory, where they seed a crop. In summer the men take the herds of sheep and goats to the high mountains, while the women remain behind to care for the buffalo and the fields. In autumn the men return with the herds, reap the crops, and utilize the pastures. Finally, they store the grain and farm out their buffalo with Pathan villagers, and retire to the low plains with their sheep and goats for the winter.

The true nomads never engage in agricultural pursuits; they may keep cattle, but are not encumbered with water buffalo. The degree of autonomous political organization is proportional to the length of the yearly migration. Households of locally transhumant Gujars are tied individually to Pathan leaders. Those crossing Pathan tribal borders are organized in small lineages, the better to bargain for low grazing tax. The true nomads co-ordinate the herding of flocks and migrations of people from as many as 50 households, who may also camp together for brief periods. Such groups generally consist of several small lineages, frequently of different clans, related by affinal or cognatic ties and under the direction of a single leader. Thus, though migrating through areas controlled by other political organizations, they retain a moderately well-defined organization of their own.
**Gujar distribution.** The co-existence of Gujars and Pathans in one area poses no problem, in view of the symbiotic relations sketched above. Pathans have the military strength to control the mountainous flanks of the valleys they occupy, but have no effective means of utilizing these areas. This leaves an unoccupied ecologic niche which the Gujar ethnic group has entered and to which it has accommodated itself in a politically dependent position through a pattern of transhumance. Symbiotic advantages make the relationship satisfactory and enduring. It is tempting to see the expansion of Gujars into the area as resulting from the Pathan expulsion of Kohistanis from the valley. The Kohistanis, through their own pattern of transhumance, formerly filled the niche and it became vacant only when the specialized agricultural Pathans conquered the valley bottom and replaced the Kohistanis.

But the co-existence of Gujars and Kohistanis poses a problem, since the two groups appear to utilize the same natural resources and therefore to occupy the same ecologic niche. One would expect competition, leading to the expulsion of one or the other ethnic group from the area. However, armed conflict between the two groups is rare, and there is no indication that one is increasing at the expense of the other. On the other hand, if a stable symbiotic or noncompetitive relationship may be established between the two groups, why should Gujars be concentrated in West Kohistan, and not inhabit the essentially similar East Kohistan area? The answer must be sought not only in the natural environment and in features of the Gujar economy, but also in the relevant social environment—in features of Kohistani economy and organization which affect the niche suited to utilization by Gujars.

**East vs. West Kohistan.** As indicated, Kohistanis have a two-fold economy combining agriculture and transhumant herding, and live in moderately large village communities. Although most Gujars also practice some agriculture, it remains a subsidiary activity. It is almost invariably of a simple type dependent on water from the melting snow in spring and monsoon rains in summer, rather than on irrigation, and on shifting fields rather than manuring. The Kohistanis have a more equal balance between agriculture and herding. The steep slopes require complex terracing and irrigation, which preclude shifting agriculture and encourage more intensive techniques. The size of herds is limited by the size of fields, which supply most of the winter fodder, since natural fields and mountain meadows are too distant from the winter dwellings to permit haying. Ecologic factors relevant to this balance between the two dominant economic activities become of prime importance for Kohistani distribution and settlement density.

There are significant differences in this respect between East and West Kohistan, i.e. between the areas drained by the Indus and the Swat Rivers respectively. While the Indus and the lowest sections of its tributaries flow at no more than 3,000 feet, the Swat River descends from 8,000 to 5,000 feet in the section of its valley occupied by Kohistanis. The higher altitude in the west has several effects on the economic bases for settlement: (a) Agricultural production is reduced by the shorter season and lower temperatures in the
higher western valley. (b) The altitude difference combined with slightly higher precipitation in the west results in a greater accumulation of snow. The Indus bank is rarely covered with snow, but in the upper Swat valley snow tends to accumulate through the winter and remains in the valley bottom until April or May. Thus the sedentary stock-owner in West Kohistan must provide stored fodder for his animals throughout the four months of winter. (c) The shorter season of West Kohistan eliminates rice (most productive per land unit) as a food crop and reduces maize (most advantageous in return per weight of seed) in favor of the harder millet.

These features serve to restrict the agricultural production of West Kohistan, and therefore the number of animals that can be kept during the winter season. No parallel restrictions limit the possibility for summer grazing. Both East and West Kohistan are noteworthy for their large, lush mountain meadows and other good summer grazing, and are thus rich in the natural resources which animal herders are able to exploit. However, these mountain pastures are only seasonal; no population can rely on them for year-round sustenance. Consequently, patterns of transhumance or nomadism are developed to utilize the mountain area in its productive season, while relying on other areas or techniques the rest of the year. True nomads move to a similar ecologic niche in another area. People practicing transhumance generally utilize a different niche by reliance on alternative techniques, here agriculture and the utilization of stored animal fodder. There appears to be a balance in the productivity of these two niches, as exploited by local transhumance in East Kohistan. Thus, in the Indus drainage, Kohistanis are able to support a human and animal population of sufficient size through the winter by means of agriculture and stored food, so as to utilize fully the summer pastures of the surrounding mountains. In an ecologic sense, the local population fills both niches. There is no such balance in the Swat valley. Restrictions on agricultural production limit the animal and human population, and prevent full exploitation of the mountain pastures. This niche is thus left partly vacant and available to the nomadic Gujars, who winter in the low plains outside the area. Moreover, scattered communities of transhumant Gujars may be found in the western areas, mainly at the very tops of the valleys. With techniques and patterns of consumption different from those of Kohistanis, they are able to survive locally in areas which fall short of the minimal requirements for permanent Kohistani occupation. The present distribution of Gujars in Kohistan, limiting them to the western half of the area, would seem to be a result of these factors.

A simple but rather crucial final point should be made in this analysis: why do Kohistanis have first choice, so to speak, and Gujars only enter niches left vacant by them? Since they are able to exploit the area more fully, one might expect Gujars eventually to replace Kohistanis. Organizational factors enter here. Kohistanis form compact, politically organized villages of considerable size. The Gujar seasonal cycle prevents a similar development among them. In winter they descend into Pathan areas, or even out of tribal territory and
into the administered areas of Pakistan. They are thus seasonally subject to organizations more powerful than their own, and are forced to filter through territories controlled by such organizations on their seasonal migrations. They must accommodate themselves to this situation by travelling in small, unobtrusive groups, and wintering in dispersed settlements. Though it is conceivable that Gujars might be able to develop the degree of political organization required to replace Kohistanis in a purely Kohistani environment, their dependence on more highly organized neighboring areas still makes this impossible.

The transhumant Gujar settlements in Kohistan represent groups of former nomads who were given permission by the neighboring Kohistanis to settle, and they are kept politically subservient. The organizational superiority of the already established Kohistanis prevents them, as well as the nomads, from appropriating any rights over productive means or areas. What changes will occur under the present control by the State of Swat is a different matter.

This example may serve to illustrate certain viewpoints applicable to a discussion of the ecologic factors in the distribution of ethnic groups, cultures, or economies, and the problem of “mosaic” co-residence in parts of Asia.

(1) The distribution of ethnic groups is controlled not by objective and fixed “natural areas” but by the distribution of the specific ecologic niches which the group, with its particular economic and political organization, is able to exploit. In the present example, what appears as a single natural area to Kohistanis is subdivided as far as Pathans are concerned, and this division is cross-cut with respect to the specific requirements of Gujars.

(2) Different ethnic groups will establish themselves in stable co-residence in an area if they exploit different ecologic niches, and especially if they can thus establish symbiotic economic relations, as those between Pathans and Gujars in Swat.

(3) If different ethnic groups are able to exploit the same niches fully, the militarily more powerful will normally replace the weaker, as Pathans have replaced Kohistanis.

(4) If different ethnic groups exploit the same ecologic niches but the weaker of them is better able to utilize marginal environments, the groups may co-reside in one area, as Gujars and Kohistanis in West Kohistan.

Where such principles are operative to the extent they are in much of West and South Asia, the concept of “culture areas,” as developed for native North America, becomes inapplicable. Different ethnic groups and culture types will have overlapping distributions and disconforming borders, and will be socially related to a variable degree, from the “watchful co-residence” of Kohistanis and Gujars to the intimate economic, political, and ritual symbiosis of the Indian caste system. The type of correspondence between gross ecologic classification and ethnic distribution documented for North America by Kroeber (1939) will rarely if ever be found. Other conceptual tools are needed for the study of culture distribution in Asia. Their development would
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seem to depend on analysis of specific detailed distributions in an ecologic framework, rather than by speculation on a larger geographical scale.

NOTES

1 Based on field work February–November 1954, aided by a grant from the Royal Norwegian Research Council.

2 There are four main Dardic languages spoken in Swat State: Torwali, Gawri, and Eastern and Western dialect of Kohistan or Mayán (Barth and Morgenstierne Ms.).

3 The Pathan attitude toward the Kohistan area might best be illustrated by the warnings I was given when I was planning to visit the area: "Full of terrible mountains covered by many-colored snow and emitting poisonous gases causing head and stomach pains when you cross the high passes; inhabited by robbers, and snakes that coil up and leap ten feet into the air; with no villages, only scattered houses on the mountain tops!"

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Segmentary Opposition and the Theory of Games: A Study of Pathan Organization

FREDRIK BARTH

The present essay relates to the extensive discussion in the anthropological literature on the role of unilineal descent groups in politics, i.e. the theory of lineage systems (cf. Fortes 1953). It is, however, concerned with the analysis of a divergent case: a political system in which ramifying patrilineal descent is of prominent importance in politics, yet where larger lineage groups do not emerge as corporate units.¹

The case analysed is the acephalous political system of the Yusufzai Pathans of the Northwest Frontier Province, Pakistan. To elucidate this case, it will be necessary to present considerable detail on their organization. This consists of field material, collected in the course of the year 1954. Further material has been, and will be, published elsewhere (Barth 1956; Mss). In the analysis of this data, I shall utilize some of the elementary concepts and procedures of the Theory of Games (cf. Neumann and Morgenstern 1947; Stone 1948), as well as the relevant anthropological theory relating to descent groups and corporate groups.

The argument of the essay depends on a distinction between the purely structural arrangement of units defined by a unilineal descent charter, and the manner in which these units are made relevant in corporate action. In the description of lineage systems in the literature, this distinction is not often made. The analysis of the solidarity of unilineal descent groups usually relies on a Durkheimian conception of mechanical solidarity. In such a framework, solidarity derives from likeness. The descent charter defines a hierarchy of homologous groups, and thus directs the fusion of political interests within a merging series of such groups.

This particular expression of the descent group charter has been incorporated into our whole conception of lineage organizations, as if it were a necessary derivative of the descent structure. The present case study describes a different political application of unilineal descent. Descent units are arranged in a recognizable manner by patrilineal genealogies, and hold joint rights to large territories. But close collaterals in the system do not join in corporate groups in opposition to more distant collaterals. The genealogical charter is none the less relevant to the structure of the corporate groups that do emerge; essentially, it defines rivals and allies in a system of two opposed political blocs. Closely related descent units are consistent rivals; each establishes a net of political alliances with the rivals of allies of their own rivals. In this fashion a pervasive factional split into two grand alliances of descent segments emerges, with close collateral segments consistently in opposite moieties.

Clearly, though this is a unilineal descent system of a kind, the analysis of the internal solidarity of the political units which emerge can not be contained in a schema based on the concept of mechanical solidarity. Among the Yusufzai Pathans, the recruitment of corporate political units depends on the exercise of individual choices between alternative allegiances. Thus descent charters do not unequivocally define corporate units; these charters are made relevant to political action indirectly through their strategic implications for the choices of individuals. Therefore, the manner of recruitment of Pathan political groups can not be understood directly in terms of the descent system; it requires some analysis of the bases of individual choices and the sources of the internal solidarity of the groups which do emerge. The 'Theory of Games' is designed precisely for the analysis of such strategic choices, and will be utilized in the latter part of this essay. The essay thus falls roughly into three parts: I, a descriptive and comparative account of Yusufzai Pathan unilineal descent groups and political organization; II, an attempted analysis of
some of this data in some of the categories of the Theory of Games; and III, a concluding brief general discussion.

I

Lineage systems have been described in a number of societies in Africa and elsewhere. Their basic features are particularly apparent in acephalous systems, where their expression is not complicated by the existence of centralized political institutions based on other criteria. In these societies, unilineal descent through a line of ancestors defines a hierarchy of descent groups, the more remote the common ancestor, the wider the span of his group of descendants, and the larger the segment defined by his genealogical position. A political system based on this organization is described by Evans-Pritchard (in Fortes & Evans-Pritchard 1940) as characterized by a situational balanced opposition of groups: 'although any group tends to split into opposed parts, these parts tend to fuse in relation to other groups' (p. 284). The political system thus becomes a 'system of fission and fusion, of relativity and opposition of segments' (p. 296).

According to Fortes, 'the guiding ideas in the analysis of African lineage organization have come mainly from Radcliffe-Brown’s formulation (in Fortes 1953, p. 25) of the structural principles found in all kinship systems. Prominent among these are the appreciation of the structural implications of unilineal descent, and the principle of equivalence of siblings.

With a view to the particular orientation of this essay, the implications of unilineal descent may be expressed in terms of their significance for individual choices. For each 'ego' in society, unilineal descent resolves a problem of identification. Through his two parents, two different assemblages of kin have claims on his loyalty and support. Unilineal descent gives primacy, for specified purposes, to one of these relations; it defines a bond which in these situations overrides other bonds. Thus, in a patrilineal society, sons are unambiguously identified with fathers in the culturally defined contexts in which descent is relevant.

A second principle is that of equivalence of siblings, which defines a bond ideally approaching a merging of the social personalities of siblings. We are here concerned with political organization, i.e. the groups and statuses concerned with the maintenance of order and the defence of rights to culturally valued goods in situations of conflict. The two principles of descent and equivalence of siblings combined together and given primacy for political purposes, produce a lineage system as we know it in the literature. In a patrilineal system, there is a fusion of the interests of fathers and sons, of the father with his brothers and of these brothers with their sons, and by the same token with grandfather, grandfather’s brothers, and their descendants, etc. In such fashion, a charter of unilineal descent becomes a charter for the fusion of interests and progressive creation of larger corporate groups along a gradient of collateral distance.

This fusion of interests is situational; it implies an identification in situations of conflict with those more closely related by lineage bonds against those less related, or unrelated. Implicit in the framework of a lineage, then, are both identification and opposition, both fusion and fission. The opposition between near and distant collaterals, defined by their descent from two different ancestors on one level of segmentation, in one generation of the genealogy, is overridden in the case of outside threats by fusion in terms of the sibling bond which unites these two ancestors and defines a common interest for their descendants. The solidarity implicit in such a description of the political system is derived from the likeness of the groups concerned, and their egocentric conception of rights and wrongs. The implied solidarity of groups is thus a mechanical solidarity (Durkheim 1947).

The Pathan kinship system forms no exception to Radcliffe-Brown’s generalizations. The principles of descent and equivalence of siblings are clearly embodied in its structure. But the manner in which they are utilized in political contexts is only superficially reminiscent of African lineage organizations. Charters of unilineal descent define territorial units and administrative councils. But intertwined with this basic frame is a system of political alliances, through which individuals by their own choice align themselves in a political dual division. The groups which for most political purposes act together as corporate units are the regional branches of these
two factions or blocs. Thus the corporate groups in the political system are formed by the strategic choices on the part of the participants, and do not emerge by virtue of a mechanical solidarity deriving from likeness. Such a political system may be analysed in terms of the bases on which the strategic choices are made. In the following account I shall attempt to show that the contexts in which patrilineal kinship is relevant are such as to emphasize the deep opposition of interests between collaterals, which is indeed implicit in any lineage organization. In the patrilineal descent system, the Pathan 'ego' is thus faced with a profound dilemma: the bonds between brothers and the bonds between fathers and sons are given political primacy; yet an organization based on these principles would unite 'ego' with his close agnatic collaterals, who for reasons elaborated below are his prime opponents. The political dual division develops as a direct result of the choices that individuals make in seeking a solution to this dilemma, and the political organization can thus be understood only in terms of the structure of the unilineal descent system. As the dilemma is to some extent implicit in all lineage systems, we may provisionally assume some generality for the problem, and for this pattern of its solution.

As a preparation for what follows, it is necessary to give some background to Pathan society, relating particularly to the Lower Swat Valley (Malakand Agency, North-west Frontier Province, Pakistan). In this area the acephalous system persists unmodified to this day. Yusufzai country consists in the main of fairly barren hill and mountain tracts, cut by a few fertile valleys, mainly those of the rivers Panjkora, Swat, and a section of the Indus. These valleys are very densely settled and intensively utilized, the population supporting itself by cereal agriculture, predominantly dependent on artificial irrigation, with double cropping and manuring. The entire valley bottom and a major part of the surrounding hills are under cultivation; thus there is no free land and practically no possibility of extending the cultivated area. Most cultivators are sharecroppers. Practically all land is owned by a dominant aristocracy of Pakhtuns, numbering, in different areas, from one half to one tenth of the population. These Pakhtuns trace patrilineal descent from ancestors who conquered the area in the sixteenth century. Title to land entails, in the manner of a feudal organization, jurisdiction over persons residing on this land. Except for certain persons of holy status, who may be disregarded in the present context, only the land-owning Pakhtuns have independent political status; tenants, craftsmen, traders, and all other non-landowners are the political dependents, or clients, of the Pakhtun on whose land they reside. The 'persons' who occupy positions in the Pakhtun genealogical charter and who act as units in the political system thus vary greatly in the power they bring to it. One Pakhtun, with little land, represents himself only; another Pakhtun, who owns much land, represents perhaps a hundred male clients, and may figuratively be given a valency of one hundred in the political system. It should however be noted that the relation between Pakhtun and client is a reciprocal contract which may be broken at the will of either party. The relation is not one of adoption or bond serfdom, and changes in the political fortunes of a landowner are quickly reflected in the numbers of his clients. The essential asset of the Pakhtun is his title to land (which is scarce and, with irrigation and terracing, a highly capitalized resource), and only through his control of this resource can he attract the clients with which to inflate his political ego.

The landowning Yusufzai Pakhtuns claim patrilineal descent from the common apical ancestor Yusuf. Indeed, through a genealogical charter of an additional six generations' depth, Yusuf is connected with the ancestors of other Pathan tribes to the first Pathan, Kais, who was converted to Islam and took the name Abdul Rashid.

The Yusufzai control a territory with a total population of more than a million inhabitants; but it is difficult to estimate the number of persons among these who trace lineal descent from Yusuf—they may count about one fifth of the total. The modern descendants of Yusuf are twelve to thirteen generations removed from the apical ancestor. The depth of genealogies varies mainly between different collateral lines, but also with respect to completeness as given by different informants. Pathan genealogies show a tendency to retain genealogical links which are superfluous from the point of view of the segmentation of groups, particularly among the closer ascendants. There is a distinct ideal of genealogies as historical traditions, apart from their value
as charters for the internal segmentation of groups. Such genealogical information was however difficult to uncover; most informants admitted ignorance of the actual traditions, and would reconstruct outline genealogies on the expressly post hoc argument of the names of the segments in the system. In any one level of segmentation, each descent group has only a limited number of subdivisions, usually two or three. Thus, fathers in the genealogies are generally represented as having two or three sons, though the recorded range is from one to five sons. Segmentation between groups of half-brothers is occasionally recognized, in which case the groups carry the names of their respective mothers.

Rights as members of these descent groups are contingent on the additional criterion of ownership of land. The sons of a man who has ‘eaten’ or otherwise lost his title to the whole of his inherited land are no longer regarded as members of the group; and they are forced to establish bonds of clientage to a man who holds such title. This follows from the feudal principle on which the society is based. Descent group membership is thus connected with title to a share of the common landed estate of the group, both in the sense that only members can hold such title, and in the sense that membership lapses with loss of title. The descent group therefore of necessity becomes localized—all members have their permanent residence within the district appropriate to their group. The districts take their names from the descent groups holding title to them, and in similar fashion the whole population of the district, a majority of whom are clients of members and not themselves members, none the less refer to themselves by the name of the descent group. Unilineal descent groups, or lineage segments, form the cores of local territorial groups, or tribal segments, of larger membership, including both lineage members and their clients.

The number of levels of lineage segmentation varies, and their correspondence to territories is complicated by the pattern of land tenure, to be discussed shortly. An example might help somewhat to clarify the situation. The Nikbi lineage (khel) controls a side valley and a section of the west bank of the Swat River, a territory roughly fifteen by ten miles. Of a total population of perhaps 40,000, about 8,000 are Pakhtuns—lineal descendants of Nikbi, and owners of land, while the remainder are political clients—non-landowners who are tenants, craftsmen, and traders by occupation. A simplified genealogical framework of the Nikbi lineage is as follows:

At the time of my field work, the descent segments Manki and Shado co-resided in two small villages of eight hundred inhabitants each, of whom about two hundred in each village were lineage members. The villagers all depended, directly or indirectly, on the landed estate of the Manki-Shado lineage core for their sustenance. The neighbouring villages are owned by the Ghali/Nasar and Awdel lineage segments, partly co-residing in two villages of more than 2,000 inhabitants, as well as occupying several smaller villages. The territories of the Khadi and Zubar segments lie along the river to the south, while the Aba khel major lineage segment occupies the main section of the tributary valley. Within each village, the local lineage segment is divided into separate households.

With the possible exception of the peculiar emphasis on title to land, and the consequent pattern of shedding of members, this formal description of the unilineal structure, its genea-
logical framework and territorial correlates, should fall within the limits of what is usually described in lineage systems. In other words, in its abstract structural arrangement of units, and their expression in terms of residence, the descent system of the Yusufzai Pathans belongs to the general class of lineage systems.

There is however wide variation between societies in terms of the contexts in which this structure is utilized, that is, in the fields of relevance of descent group membership. In this respect, the present case may represent one extreme. Thus, descent groups among Yusufzai Pathans (1) Do not regulate marriage through rules of exogamy of preferential choice. Islamic incest laws as to the forbidden degrees are observed; beyond them, all women are eligible as marriage partners. There is no significant statistical or ideological emphasis on any particular category of relative as a preferential spouse, though there is a strong ideology of endogamy vis-à-vis non-Pakhtun clients. (2) Do not define common jural responsibility in blood revenge. The right to revenge is passed on as a privilege to the person or persons who inherit from the deceased; thus, by Pathan inheritance practice, to closest male agnates and only to them. Revenge is directed against the murderer himself, or in the case of murder by hired thugs, against the person who initiated and paid for the murder.

The main relevance of agnatic descent group membership among Yusufzai Pathans is in the field of government. Members of agnatic descent groups of every recognized level of segmentation meet in councils for the purpose of governing the tribal segment of which they form the core—i.e. for the administration of their joint estate. Thus, in the example on p. 8, there may be council meetings of all of Nikbi khel, of the Asha khel major segment, of Dado khel, or of the members of Manki/Shado khels co-residing in a village. In every case, all adult males of the lineage with an individual title to land—i.e. all heads of Pakhtun households—have a right to speak in the council meeting. Such councils have formal rules of procedure, and usually a permanent employee, without vote, who serves as messenger to notify members of scheduled meetings, and who is paid a yearly rate from the fines which the council collects. This council is highly egalitarian; it does not, in fact, recognize any formal differences of rank between its members. To remove all mechanisms for the expression of precedence, the council members must sit in a circle on flat ground, away from the home of any particular member. All members have equal rights to speak, and no one may interrupt anyone else in the sense of ordering him to be quiet; although several members may speak at once. Decisions must be unanimous, in the sense that there should be no articulate objection raised to the final conclusion—there is, in fact, usually considerable mumbling by a fraction of the members. Some issues may be settled by open debate, but most settlements are arranged by ‘lobbying’ behind a haystack or out of earshot while the council is in session.

These councils thus look in every way like lineage councils. By their formal rules they contain the members of agnatic lineages, who meet as equals to solve the political problems of their territory, to settle conflicts between members and agree on action vis-a-vis the outside world. A hierarchy of councils is defined, corresponding in terms of their membership to a merging series of agnatic descent groups. But when members align against each other in debates, or any other form of opposition, they do not act in terms of such a merging series. In a meeting of a council of a wide area, there is not the fusion of interests of smaller, related segments of a minor council vis-à-vis larger segments which one would expect in a lineage system, and which is exemplified in the above citations from Evans-Pritchard (Fortes & Evans-Pritchard 1940, p. 4). On the contrary, the opposition between small, closely related segments persists in the wider context, and these segments unite with similar small segments in a pattern of two-party opposition, not in a merging series of descent segments.

The opposition between collaterals is a structural feature of any segmentary lineage system; but where one finds a merging series of segments acting as political corporate groups, this opposition is temporarily cancelled by a fusion of interests vis-a-vis larger groups. Within the same formal architecture of a segmentary unilineal descent system, such fusion does not take place among Yusufzai Pathans. Whether or not such fusion takes place, i.e. whether the common
interests of related segments, in their relations to larger units, are stronger or weaker than the opposition which divides them, would seem to be an empirical question, and depends on a great number of cultural variables. From first principles one cannot determine which interest will be the stronger. In the Pathan context, the lack of fusion is understandable in terms of the particular types of issues in which the descent is relevant, i.e. the types of issues with which the councils are mainly concerned. For the purpose of demonstrating this further empirical material must be added. But the general validity of the argument does not depend on the presence or absence of the particular cultural features which I shall describe, but on a recognition that cultural factors are effective in weighting the opposed interests in fusion or continued opposition of close collaterals.

The following section is thus ethnographically specific. The point I wish to make is that nearly all questions of administration relate to land in the Pathan system, and that the Pathan system of land tenure defines prominent lines of cleavage between agnatic collaterals. The tribal councils deal with matters which are basically of two types: the settlement of conflicts, and the co-ordination of joint or public action. Such joint public action relates to the maintenance of public roads and rights of way, and the maintenance of the joint irrigation system. Both relate prominently to land and land rights. The same is true of conflicts between individuals. Land is the *sine qua non* of Pakhtuns. From title to land springs all political power—wealth, the control of clients, and a voice in the councils. Except for questions concerning the honour of women, and revenge, all conflicts among Pathans boil down to conflicts over land.

Finally, the pattern of land tenure is itself regulated by the councils of the agnatic descent units. Yusufzai Pakhtuns hold land as individual property, but they do not own *particular fields*, and their tenure is subjected to a system of periodic re-allotment, known as the *wesh* (division) system, related in conception to the *musha‘a* system of the Near East (cf. Patai 1949, p. 436). This system may best be explained by the analogy of industrial shares, where a shareholder owns a specified fraction of the industrial estate by virtue of holding a certain number of shares; he does not, however, own any particular part of the factory concerned. Similarly the common estate of a descent unit is divided into an absolute number of equal shares. A Pakhtun through inheritance receives a specified fraction of the tribal estate in the form of a specified number of such shares, but no particular plot. He is allotted fields of irrigated and dry land, sand and clay, and marsh in standard proportions, corresponding to the size of his share. But as no two pieces of land are equal, the equivalence in value of each share is assured only through making this allotment temporary, and periodically redistributing the estate between the shareholders. Every fourth, fifth, or tenth year each man is allotted new fields, so through a long cycle the holders of each share exercise rights over all fields an equal length of time (cf. Baden-Powell 1896, pp. 244 seq.).

This pattern of land tenure has been changing in the Yusufzai area during the last generation. Most of the main valley of Swat has increasingly come under the control of a recently established princely state. In this state, the ruler enforced permanent allotment twenty to thirty years ago (in a traditional ten-year cycle), with the exception of river-bank land, where continued reallocation reduces the individual hazards of erosion and undercutting by shifting river courses. In acephalous tribal area in the lower valley extensive fields are still reallocated for four-year periods. The trend towards permanent settlement is too recent and still too far from complete to invalidate the present argument.

The procedure for redistribution follows the segmentary charter of the tribal genealogy within tribal units of between 10,000 and 40,000 inhabitants. The example illustrating the genealogical framework of such a group, on p. 8 above, may also serve as an illustration of the redistribution system. Of the inhabitants of Nikbi *khel* territory, only roughly 8,000 are Pakhtuns, corresponding to a total of some 1,000 independent land-owners, all of whom are the adult male descendants of Nikbi. This group is divided into two primary segments. Similarly, the lineage territory is traditionally divided into two roughly equivalent areas, one including most of the tributary valley, the other stretching along the bank of the Swat River. Until permanent settlement was
enforced twenty-eight years ago, these two segments alternated in their occupation of the two areas, each spending ten years in the side valley, and then moving some ten to fifteen miles to spend the next ten years on the river-bank. Furthermore, each of these areas is subdivided into three traditional sub-areas, corresponding to the three secondary segments of each primary segment. The council of each primary segment meets and allocates one sub-area to each of its component three sub-segments, ideally in a system of rotation.

As these reallocations take place every ten years, the borders of each sub-area of the joint estate are well known to all, their equivalence in value has been established, and no great opposition of interests arises between the major descent segments in the reallocation system. The real problems arise on the lower levels of reallocation, where individuals have their eyes on particular fields, and especially where deaths and transfers change the distribution of shares from one time of allotment to the next. To pursue the present example, Dado khel, comprising about a hundred council members, is divided into two segments. Tensions and conflicts do arise during the division of their joint estate, since the fields granted to one segment are in fact within practical reach of members of the other segment; they are in the order of one or two miles away, and could be worked or controlled by them. But the most intense conflicts develop in the last stage of allotment, when the roughly fifty men of Ghali khel are competing for the actual, individual fields. There is no traditional subdivision of the village lands into the particular configuration of shares represented at that particular time; the men must meet in a council of their small segment and devise a pattern of allotment through negotiation and compromise, or force. This is a type of issue uniquely suited to generate intense factionalism between collaterals; there is an overriding opposition of interests between such groups competing for the slightly better fields. Thus at every periodic reallocation, the opposition of close agnic collateral is dramatized and made acute, while the opposition between segments of higher levels is routinized and involves no particular conflicts.

This opposition stops short of alienating brothers. Their landed property is not divided till after the death of the father, since he retains some measure of control of it through his life; and, even after his death, political pressure is such that few persons have the courage to split away from this minimal nucleus of agnic kinsmen and face the hostile world completely alone.

Other factors combine to make the relation between close collaterals one of peculiar rivalry. Conflicts over inheritance inevitably involve agnates, in a modified Islamic system of exclusive patrilineal male inheritance of land. Conflicts over the borders of fields involve them, since after every new reallocation they still find themselves owning adjoining fields. Conflicts over water for irrigation, particularly intense in the last critical month before the rice harvest, involve them, since with adjoining fields they share the same irrigation channels. Such particular cultural factors combine to place close agnic collaterals in a perpetual relation of opposition and rivalry. This negative charge on their structural relationship is clearly recognized in Yusufzai Pathan kinship terminology. Pathans distinguish between Father, Mother, Father's Brother, and Mother's Brother, but classify Father's Sister and Mother's Sister together. The terms for the two kinds of uncle and for aunt are extended to first and second cousins of the parents as well. Sibling terms are extended to the children of all these persons, except to the children of Father's Brother, own or classificatory (tre), for whom there is a special term (tarbur). A differentiation of kinds of 'siblings' may of course be expressed, but only by constructions such as 'aunt's son' (da tor zo) or 'mother's brother's daughter' (da mama lur). Patrilateral parallel cousin is uniquely separated from all other cousins and siblings by a separate term. Furthermore, this term carries the subsidiary connotation of 'enemy' (cf. Morgenstierne 1927). Thus, where friendly relations do exist, the proper term for such cousins is not used, and they are referred to as siblings by courtesy. Only those collaterals with whom one has unfriendly relations are freely referred to as tarburan, father's brother's sons.

This persisting opposition between collateral agnates prevents their interests from fusing even vis-à-vis outsiders. A Pakhtun's political activities are directed at gaining an advantage over his agnic rivals, as only through their defeat can he achieve his own aggrandizement. He is not
limited, as in many lineage systems, to them as his potential supporters—his clients constitute the main body of his supporters. Any loss by his collaterals means a gain for him—he wrests control of the councils from them, he encroaches on their fields, and he inherits their shares in land if they are exterminated. His political strength vis-à-vis his paternal cousins he assures by political alliances, and in the pattern of these alliances the architecture of the unilineal descent system can be recognized, as if by its very negation. Alliances are sought with small, distant collateral groups against one’s close collaterals, while the latter reciprocate by allying themselves with the rivals of one’s allies. Such alliances involve mutual support against the respective rivals of the partners, both in the debates of the councils, and in the case of warfare.

As will be seen in the figure, this means in structural terms an alliance between segments of the descent system which cannot individually come into opposition with one another. In other words, the alliance takes the schema of merging series of segments into account, but does so in terms of a strategic choice of allies, and by negating such merging in terms of any fusion of interests. ‘a’ are the rivals of ‘b’, and ‘c’ are the rivals of ‘d’. ‘a’ and ‘b’ are segments of ‘A’, likewise ‘c’ and ‘d’ are segments of ‘B’. ‘a’ can form an alliance, alternatively with ‘c’ or ‘d’, since there can be no occasion when they can meet either sub-segment in a simple opposition. Assume that an alliance ‘a’-‘d’ forms. They can only meet in councils, or in any other type of situation, on a higher level where ‘A’ and ‘B’ are structurally opposed—but in this situation, ‘a’ and ‘d’ contract to combine against their respective relatives ‘b’ and ‘c’, whereby they both, if they are successful, will gain victories over their rivals.

Such alliances, if widely and consistently extended, produce a political dual division into two blocs. The Pathan blocs or alliances (dela) have this pattern. Small descent segments of fathers and sons, or brothers, align under recognized leaders in a two-faction split which extends throughout the Yusufzai and bordering areas. I am suggesting that the Pathan pattern represents an alternative way of utilizing the segmentary structure defined by ramifying unilineal genealogies to build a political organization, and that the organization in this case will tend toward a consistent dual division, since the opposition between rivals leads to a dichotomization of their associates into supporters and opponents.

At this point, I should present some description of the resultant Pathan organization, before pursuing the argument further, first with regard to the political structure of the local groups in Pathan society. The group of agnatically related landowners is allotted mainly four types of property: houses in the nucleated village, irrigated garden land, irrigated rice land, and unirrigated land. The percentage distribution of each kind of property should be the same for every shareholder; but the absolute size of individual allotments varies greatly, as shares descend linearly in inheritance, and may also on occasion be bought and sold within the group. Because of the territorial concentration of each type of land, there is a necessary fragmentation of holdings, in that every share is composed of one piece of the good rice land, one piece of the bog, a corner of the irrigated garden, etc., etc. Inevitably, this intermixing of holdings gives scope for continual petty conflicts between adjoining opposed landowners.

With respect to residence, however, opponents separate. The village is a closely packed cluster of houses. But every village is divided in at least two wards, and political opponents occupy different wards. Wards are in a sense miniature villages, occupied by landowners of one political party, and their clients. The wards, not the whole villages, are the operative political and economic units in the following contexts: there is a complex pattern of division of labour
among hereditary specialists of the non-Pakhtun, landless category. Such specialists perform traditional services for the sharecroppers and labourers working on the land of the Pakhtuns, for which each specialist in return receives a traditional fraction of the crop. This pattern, analogous to the Hindu Jajmani system, organizes the main occupational relations between persons, and unites them for corporate productive effort. The units of such corporate economic action are the wards of a village. Correlated with the intimate economic ties within the ward is a pattern of political centralization. There is a headman or chief in every ward. The main duties pertaining to the office are to administer the communal institutions of the ward (men’s house, mosque, wells), to settle disputes between members of the ward, and to co-ordinate its members in protecting their interests vis-à-vis other wards.

A full description of the role of the chief falls outside the main line of the present argument; but the existence of this office becomes important in a later connection. I should emphasize that the office is usually coveted by many pretenders. It offers great personal and strategic advantages to the incumbent. On the other hand, the incumbent can only maintain his position by constant expenditure of valuables; he must continually ‘buy’ the support of followers. To satisfy his men, a chief needs to control extensive rice-lands; thus, the office is invariably held by persons of inherited or achieved wealth in land.

Thus, the economic pattern of division of labour, and the presence of some essential community institutions, prevent political fission from proceeding below the level of the ward. Splits between co-residents of one ward must be solved either by a splitting of the ward into two autonomous and complete wards, or by one party moving to another ward. Of the latter I collected a series of cases; not so of the former. This might be expected, since a splitting of the ward can be achieved only if the rebels are stronger than the established chief of the united ward, in which case one would rather expect that their chief would attempt to usurp the position of the former chief as leader of the whole, undivided ward.

Wards, as geographical subdivisions of a village, are then in practice very stable units; they are conceived of as permanent fixtures by the villagers. But the composition of a ward is changeable, on account of political defections, and the system of periodic reallocation, particularly where, as in most parts, this involves actual migrations of landowners. The co-residents of a ward form an alliance and pledge allegiance to the chief only till the time of the next reallocation. At that time, the landowners of a ward may move en bloc to occupy a common ward in their new territory; or else new alliances may form between landowners over the always fresh problems of allotment. The group of landowners who associate in a ward is thus unstable, but represents the alignment of allies that obtains in a village at any one time. Thus where a descent group containing two major segments occupies a village of two wards, there is a probability that each of the major segments will be split between two parties, and that members of both segments are found in both wards. The wards correspond to the local branches of the political blocs, while the villages of which they form parts correspond to complete descent units.

A wider, but essentially similar framework of organization is built by alliances, in two blocs, of wards of different villages, or within villages, where they contain more than two wards. Most villages contain wards belonging to both blocs, and the bloc which dominates one village or district (bande, ‘the uppers’ or ‘those above’) may be the weaker bloc (lande, ‘lowers’, or ‘those below’) for the time being in the neighbouring area. Influential men may be regarded as the leaders of blocs over wider territories, and there is considerable jostling for recognition of prominence within the bloc. Such important men mobilize large segments of their bloc in defence of their private interests.

The blocs function in protecting the interests of their members, by exerting underhand pressure, by working together in the councils, and as armies in the case of fighting. The flaring-up of actual fighting is now quite local and limited in the Swat valley, but continues on a considerable scale in neighbouring Dir and Bajaur, where a couple of thousand men may be mobilized at times. Units of comparable size are mobilized in the context of council debates in the Swat valley. While large groups of men within one bloc unite for corporate political action, whole
lineages or segments seem totally unable to unite. The several attempts by the Nawab of Dir to conquer major sections of the Swat valley were invariably resisted only by the bloc in power, while their local opponents either joined the invading forces or remained neutral. United defence of the tribal estate, such as met British military efforts in the area, was only achieved through the institution of holy war under the leadership of religious devotees.

The respective fields of relevance of descent groups and party groups should be summarized. Essentially, descent groups are units vested with a joint estate, while alliance blocs are units for the exercise of power in an acephalous political system. Territories and sub-territories in the administrative system are thus defined by descent units; it is the fact of shared rights to land which necessitates an administrative machinery in the form of a hierarchy of descent group councils. But whole council units never fuse for corporate action; their constituent two blocs of allies remain separate, and individually constitute the largest units which fuse politically and internally co-ordinate the actions of members. ‘Agreement’ in a council meeting implies the promise of passive compliance and neutrality of one bloc to the actions of the other, and not active co-operation. Apart from changes in allegiance, the alignment into blocs of allies and opponents is permanent and not situational. This is the main organizational difference from the lineage systems described in the literature, where one’s opponents in one situation fuse politically with one’s own group to become allies in another situation, when the dispute involves units of a higher level of segmentation. In the Pathan system of organization, members of different blocs remain opposed no matter what the situation may be. The territorial unit involved in a dispute (corresponding to a descent group council at a certain level of lineage segmentation) determines how large a part of the blocs will be mobilized, but does not affect the alignment in opposition. As a crude parallel, the opposed parties of individual counties in England persist in wider political contexts: a Labour representative from Middlesex joins the Labour members from London, and remains opposed to the Conservatives from Middlesex, even in the wider context of Parliament.

The local branches of the two blocs thus emerge as corporate groups in opposition at meetings of lineage councils at every level. Through debate, threats, compromise, and occasional use of force on the part of these two blocs, the council may formally reach a decision (though often the meetings break up without any decision being reached). The implementation of this decision still depends on the action of private individuals. What may be achieved by the plaintiff in the dispute is an arrangement whereby he has the support of his own bloc in self-help, within the specified limits, while he is assured of his opponent’s inability to mobilize his bloc in resistance. The relative strength of the opposed blocs, and the importance of the contestants to their respective allies, are more important in settling conflicts than are abstract principles of justice.

Balance between the blocs is maintained, according to the Pathan conception of the system, by the essential cupidity of politicians. The stronger bloc in an area will tend to grow in numbers and land by making good their advantage over the weaker bloc. Inevitably, however, rivalry will develop between the leaders of this growing alliance, until one such leader sees his chance to capture supreme control of the territory by seceding with his followers and joining the weaker bloc, which thereby becomes the stronger. The life histories of some prominent leaders may show one or two such changes of allegiance. But if such are the dominant attitudes, the relative stability of alliances, and the continued relatively peaceful coexistence of the two parties in most villages seems puzzling. One would rather have expected a chaos of constant realignments and a disintegration of the bloc organization. The Pathan conception of political activities as an expression of self interested opportunism on the part of their leaders appears to be contradicted by the evidence.

However, this apparent contradiction must be examined more closely. The political two-bloc system has provisionally been described as if it was derived from a system of strategic choices of allies by the individual landowners among Pathans, and as if these choices were made largely with reference to factors implicit in a relatively small number of structural features of Pathan organization. Before complicating the analysis further by the introduction of additional explana-
For the purpose of disciplining the logical manipulations involved in this kind of argument, the 'Theory of Games' (Neumann 1947) is eminently suitable. On the basis of a limited set of assumptions the authors design concepts and procedures for the analysis of games involving strategic choices on the part of the participants. The authors state that this type of analysis is relevant to the problems of the social sciences in general; yet outside of economics it has proved difficult to apply their methods and concepts. In the following section, I shall attempt to apply some elementary procedures borrowed from this vastly more complex and sophisticated theory. I shall endeavour to keep the somewhat frightening symbolic logic of the theory at a minimum.

In the logical framework of the Theory of Games one may regard the political manipulations of Pathans as a variety of game. This game is subject to certain rules, which embody the factors affecting the choices made by participants in the game. The crucial step in a transformation from real life to a Theory of Games model is the formulation of these rules. To be meaningful, they should express the strategic implications of those factors which one hypothecates to be crucial in the system. In the present case, they should summarize the main points in the preceding description.

In the following I shall attempt to describe a 'game' which may serve as a model for the analysis of the Yusufzai Pathan political organization. Its rules I propose to derive from the main features of the above description. These features, I propose to show, define both the necessary and sufficient conditions for the emergence of a two-bloc system like that observed among Yusufzai Pathans. Stated briefly, they are: (1) The presence of a persisting opposition of interests between wards occupied by collaterals in the agnatic descent system—i.e. there is a persisting direct opposition between some units of the system. (2) The recognition by Yusufzai Pathans of relations of a patron-client type (so that no person is limited to agnatic relatives as potential supporters) and of relations of contractual political alliance between two or several equals, i.e. there is unrestricted freedom for the units of the system to form coalitions on the basis of strategic choices. (3) The recognition and positive value given to the status of chief of a ward and local leader of a party alliance, i.e. there is a set of indivisible ‘bonuses’, the distribution of which is the subject of understandings between persons.

These features correspond to Neumann’s definition of a zero-sum majority game. In a zero-sum (or constant-sum) game, persons are opposed to each other, in time experience a series of victories and/or defeats, and in each case, the victory or gain of the one means a corresponding defeat or loss to his opponents. This corresponds to condition or features (1) above: there is a persisting and simple opposition of interests between opponents in Pathan politics, by virtue of their competition for control of the one basic good—land. As emphasized in the descriptive section, all tillable land is in fact under cultivation, and all other aspects of power and prestige are derived from or depend upon land. In this land tenure and administrative system, any loss to one’s opponents is by necessity a gain to oneself.

Secondly, our model will be the majority game. In cases of opposition, the stronger party, corresponding to a ‘majority’ of players, gains the victory, i.e. we represent this as a simple majority game where no further restrictions or ‘rules’ are presumed. This expresses feature (2) above: the freedom to form majorities through strategic alliances, and the facts of an acephalous political system, where the final sanction is majority in terms of power.

Our model for this discussion is thus the zero-sum majority game, provisionally for three persons (Neumann 1947, p. 222 seq.). By its rules, each player may choose one partner. Two players who choose one another form a couple, or coalition, and are able by their simple majority to extract a value from the third player. Players 1, 2, 3 are each given a positive value a, b, c.
respectively, which they lose if they become outnumbered by opponents. This gives the following possibilities:

- coalition 1, 2 forms: 1, 2 get c, 3 gets -c;
- coalition 1, 3 forms: 1, 3 get b, 2 gets -b;
- coalition 2, 3 forms: 2, 3 get a, 1 gets -a;

or no mutual choices are made, and no player gains or loses. Clearly in this game, by virtue of the rules governing it, coalitions will form for the mutual protection of the values of the coalition forming players and the extraction of a value from the minority. In other words, the emergence of coalitions in Pathan political life seems implicit in the factors as stated.

Consider next the case of a five-person majority game (Neumann 1947, pp. 332 seq.), where each player 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for simplicity is vested with an equal value 1, which he will lose if he finds himself in minority. Each player may choose any number of allies.

One feature immediately becomes apparent: the simple nature of the opposition encourages the formation of a two-party, not a multi-party, system. In a situation where no coalitions form, no player gains any advantage. If one coalition forms, say of 2, 3, the interests of the other persons can only be defended by an opposing coalition. Thus a coalition 4, 5 can defend its members against losses. But in this situation, the third force 1 is in a desperate situation. Both coalitions can gain a victory over him, i.e. rob him with impunity, and since no further rules are presumed, this is inevitable. His advantage from holding the balance of power he can only exercise by joining a coalition. He is thus forced by the strategic implications of the rules of this game to join one or the other coalition: he is forced into the framework of a two-bloc system.

This five-person equal-value example illustrates the argument in its simplest form, but the conclusion may be seen to follow irrespective of the number of players, and also in cases where the players are vested with unequal values a, b, c...n respectively. The necessary conditions for the reduction of the number of coalitions to two relate to features (1) and (2) above, not to the particular numbers and values in the example. The theoretical possibility of a stalemate (i.e. an exact balance in numbers between three or more coalitions) is not considered, as it is assumed that participants are interested in completing the game, i.e. in obtaining a value.

The basic dual division in Pathan political organization would thus seem to be derived directly from the strategic implications of persisting opposition between defined groups with unrestricted possibilities for alliance-forming between these groups, i.e. an institution of contractual political alliance. The system of two blocs does not depend on a recognition of the nature or function of duality, but emerges through the separate self-interested decisions of the persons in the system.

One further consideration has a direct bearing on the relation between the two blocs in the Pathan system. In the gradual crystallization of coalitions in the above five-person game, there is a definite point at which passage from defeat to victory occurs, and thereafter a progressive reduction of the fruits of victory. Consider the situation from the point of view of 1:

1 stands against 2, 3, 4, 5: 1 gets -1 value;
1, 2, stand against 3, 4, 5: 1 gets -1 value;
1, 2, 3 stand against 4, 5: 1 gets \( \frac{1+1}{3} \) value;
1, 2, 3, 4 stand against 5: 1 gets \( \frac{1}{3} \) value;
1, 2, 3, 4, 5 form coalition: 1 gets 0 value.

Every coalition of two persons will be defeated, while any overwhelming majority coalition, of four persons against one, wins a victory of limited value. This brings out one of the strategic rules of the two-bloc opposition. In terms of the simple self-interest of the persons in the winning coalition, absconders from the losing coalition will not be welcomed, i.e. on the basis of this model one would expect the dominant bloc in Pathan politics to be hesitant about accepting absconders and to remain moderately evenly matched in numbers with the weaker bloc, as is indeed the case.

One final feature remains to be accounted for by the Theory of Games model: the relatively
peaceful coexistence of the blocs in one locality, the empirical unwillingness of the stronger bloc to make the most of its advantage and literally run the opposition out of the village. This might of course be readily explained in terms of the numerous bonds, e.g. of marriage and familiarity, which cross the line of opposition; yet such bonds seem surprisingly unimportant in situations when opposition does express itself in open conflicts. All Pathans have some matrilateral kin or affines in the opposing bloc, but in periods of tension they are not visited, and relations with some may be permanently severed. When a man and his sister's husband or mother's brother emerge as immediate rivals they freely oppose one another, and attempt to ruin and even kill one another. Such bonds thus seem insufficient as an effective check on the intensity of factionalism. However, at least a partial answer may be found within the framework already elaborated. Perhaps not surprisingly, factor (3) above, the presence of chiefs of wards and parties, has some relevance to this.

This introduces the problem of unequal distribution into the present model. Imagine in the five-person game above, that the coalition 2, 4 forms, represented by 2 as chief, who thus represents the value of his total following, b. Similarly 3, 5 forms, represented by the chief 3 of value c. Strategically, the game is then reduced to a three-person game of players 1, 2, 3 where 1 is the weakest person and must join either 2 or 3 in a coalition. The coalition which 1 joins will win. But 2 and 3 are 'chiefs', a position of value in terms of which they claim a special bonus, of honour and deference, if not of the spoils, over and above the share due to them in the coalition. This bonus is represented by e, the value attached to chieftainship. Player 1 joins whichever coalition offers him the greater advantage. If coalition 1, 2, 4 forms, 1, 2, 4 get c, 3, 5 get -c. But 2 claims his bonus e, so

\[ I \text{ gets } \frac{c}{3} - e \]  
\[ 2 \text{ gets } \frac{c}{3} + 2e \]  
\[ 3 \text{ gets } -c + e \]  

(since there are three members of the coalition and 1 is merely a follower)

If coalition 1, 3, 5 forms, on the other hand,

\[ I \text{ gets } \frac{b}{3} - e, \]  
\[ 2 \text{ gets } -b + e, \]  
\[ 3 \text{ gets } \frac{b}{3} + 2e. \]

If b = c, it is indeterminate which coalition 1 joins. If on the other hand b ≠ c, 1 will join the weaker party, so that the accruing advantage to the coalition will be greatest (assuming, as we have, that it does indeed represent a majority).

Imagine that coalition 1, 2 forms. As long as b < c, i.e. as long as the fruits of a victory over 3 are greater than those of a victory over 2, 3 can entice 1 to abscond from this coalition, and join in a coalition 1, 3, 5, only by offering him the bonus e, i.e. by offering him the position as chief in the coalition. This is acceptable to 1 if his gain as a chief of the other coalition is greater than his share as a follower in his present coalition, i.e. if

\[ \frac{c}{3} - e < \frac{b}{3} + 2e, \]  
\[ \text{or } ge > c-b. \]

But 3 will offer this only if it is also to his advantage, i.e. if what he gets as a follower in a winning coalition is greater than what he gets as the chief of a losing coalition:

\[ \frac{b}{3} - e > -c + e \]

\[ c > 2e - \frac{b}{3} \]  

or, in the limiting case of b = c, if c > \( \frac{3}{2} e \).

In other words, 3 will offer this enticement only if his loss, -c, while remaining defeated is greater than \( \frac{3}{2} \) of the value he attaches to chieftainship.

This difference defines limits of strategic importance for 2 if he wishes to retain his position as leader of the winning coalition, and thus brings out implicit restrictions on the intensity of opposition, of great interest in relation to the Pathan material. It indicates that as long as the
amount which the leader of the dominant bloc extracts from his opponent does not consider­ably exceed the value which his opponent attaches to chieftainship, there will be no fission within the dominant bloc. For the sake of holding the bloc together, and maintaining his position, the leader of the dominant bloc is thus interested in limiting the intensity of opposition between the blocs so that it will not exceed a critical level. If he extracts too much from his weaker rival, one of his own lieutenants, who by virtue of his private following holds the balance of power, will be enticed to abscond to become the leader of the other faction. That faction thus becomes the stronger bloc, and the leader of the formerly stronger bloc will suffer a loss.

For the sake of the semi-mathematical treatment pursued, it has been necessary to leave the units such as b, c and $e$ unanalysed. In an attempt at transferring the conclusions from the Games Theory back to real life, it is necessary to clarify just what these symbols stand for in the empirical situation. The values b, c represent real gains or loot, i.e. the value of the actual amount of fines or disputed lands extracted from the opponent. In the descriptive section, I have indicated how disputes are discussed in the context of lineage councils, and how the stronger bloc utilizes its position of dominance to arrive at settlements favourable to its members. The numerical value of b, c is thus at any time a mixed function of the total value of the property of the weaker bloc, and of policy decisions by the stronger bloc as to how much pressure should be applied towards the exploitation of the opponent. In the majority game model, these values are assumed to be identical or at least proportional to the weight given the players in establishing majorities, i.e. to their power, while in actual life the relation between these two variables is more complex. However, as the blocs as wholes remain fairly equally balanced through time, this discrepancy does not seriously affect the present argument.

The empirical referent of the unit $e$, the ‘bonus’ granted the chief, is more problematical. It does not merely represent an extra share in the loot. Some chiefs do regularly claim such an extra share, and, what is more important, all naturally direct their bloc’s politics with an eye to their own material gain; on the other hand, chiefs will sometimes claim less than a normal share of the gains, or none at all. To be of any meaning as an expression of the value attached to chieftainship, $e$ must thus stand not merely for an inequality in the distribution of loot, but also for a less tangible inequality: for a value in terms of status differentiation. This merely implies the argument that persons will at times renounce material gains in favour of intangible gains of ‘status’ and ‘esteem’. Strictly speaking, $e$ is thus incommensurate with b and c, as it does not stand for a simple measure of tangible property. Yet chiefs are daily forced to reconcile such incommensurables in making decisions. Pathan leaders are by inheritance and accretion the wealthy men of their respective groups, i.e. they are vested with an initial high value in the ‘game’. They constantly expend their profits through feasts and gifts in the men’s houses which they control, in a pattern analogous to the potlatch in its status implications. The status as chief is thus continually being bought by expenditure of material values. The intangible value renounced by being a follower and gained by being a chief thus has, in some contexts, a tangible material value. The situation in which $e$ is associated with the units b and c above may legitimately be regarded as precisely one such context. Furthermore, over a longer period of time, a chief certainly expects to derive material advantage from his status.

The whole discussion of the political organization in terms of the ‘strategic implications’ of various structural features of the situation raises one further problem: to what extent do the actors themselves realize these implications; to what extent do they determine the choice of strategy? Implications of this type, no matter how logically significant one may demonstrate them to be, are ineffective unless realized in some form by the actors in the system.

This is a simple question of ethnographic fact, and the answer depends on observations of the types of arguments used in arriving at decisions, and the types of circumstances described in native accounts of past political events. In this particular case, the inadvisability of standing alone, outside both party alliances, is rather obvious and clearly expressed by Pathans. The question concerns mainly the degree of realization of two further strategic principles: (1) the
advantage of joining the *weaker* bloc, so victory is won with a narrow margin but the value of the victory maximized (cf. p. 36), and (2) the importance from the point of view of the chief of restricting the intensity of opposition between blocs (cf. p. 38).

Both these principles are in fact clearly realized and expressed. Between 1917 and 1927, a major part of the Swat valley fell under the control of a prominent leader of holy descent, Miangul Gulshahzada Abdul Wadud, who founded the State of Swat. His policy is explicitly described by the politically sophisticated as one of joining the weaker bloc, thereby gaining victories over the richest chiefs, and also, by ‘tipping the scales’, gaining a disproportionate influence in the bloc. His great success is attributed in part to his unique freedom to effect such changes of alliance. Having eliminated the small number of agnatic collaterals in his holy descent line, he was not hampered by persisting opposition with personal rivals, and was at any time equally acceptable as a member of either alliance.

The interest of the chiefs in limiting the opposition between the blocs is proverbial, and has been noted by British political agents, who contrast the attitudes of young warrior ‘hot­heads’ with the more reasonable attitudes of chiefs and headmen (Wylly 1912). Popularly, this interest in maintaining relative peace is related to a great variety of causes; its mere recognition is sufficient for the present argument.

Our ‘inductive test’, aided by the concepts of the Theory of Games, thus appears to support the argument that Yusufzai Pathan political organization develops as the political expression of a unilineal descent system under certain simple, specified conditions. These conditions are summarized in the premises (1)-(3) above. Features (1) and (2), the overriding opposition between collaterals, and the recognition of contractual political alliances, summarize the sufficient conditions for the emergence of a system of two opposed blocs, but do not imply any control on the intensity of opposition between blocs. Feature (3), the positive value attached to the position as chief, has implications which serve as a brake on excessive factionalism.

III

This case study of unilineal descent and political organization among Yusufzai Pathans exemplifies a pattern, not previously described in the literature, of deriving corporate political groups from a ramifying unilineal descent charter. In most lineage organizations, descent segments fuse for political action in a merging series of groups, so that opponents on one level of opposition become allies when the opposition occurs on a higher level of segmentation. Among Yusufzai Pathans, on the other hand, opposition separates small descent segments, and these fuse politically with other segments in a system of two blocs where the opposition between close collateral segments is maintained in all situations.

It might be noted that this is not a unique situation. A two-bloc alliance system of named alliances, *Gar* and *Samil*, is characteristic of southern Pathans as well (Wylly 1912), though in this case the lineage segments which form the units of the blocs are slightly larger. A corresponding division into two factions, the *Hinawi* and *Ghafari*, runs all through Southern Arabia (e.g. Thomas 1929, p. 98).

The analysis of the Yusufzai Pathan system relies on Radcliffe-Brown’s formulation of the structural principles in kinship systems (Radcliffe-Brown 1950). Most analyses of lineage systems further depend, although this is not always stated, on a Durkheimian concept of mechanical solidarity. But the present case study requires a more general framework for the analysis of the solidarity of groups. That which is utilized is derived from Neumann & Morgenstern’s ‘Theory of Games’ (Neumann 1947), and sees groups as forming through the strategic choices of persons, i.e. the solidarity of groups springs from the advantages which persons obtain from being members of the groups.

The nature of these advantages, and the various restrictions on the choices open to individuals, depend on structural features of the total situation, which in the Theory of Games are expressed as ‘rules’ defining the ‘game’. In such a framework, the groups which do emerge thus
relate to structural features or conditions of any kind which offer the bases for the development of a community of interests of group members.

This wider conception of the bases of solidarity is not altogether a departure. It is, in part, implicit in the growing emphasis in the analysis of lineage systems on the presence of a joint estate, the importance of which was first brought out by Radcliffe-Brown (1935). However, as demonstrated by the present case study, shared rights in a joint estate need not imply a community of interests, and may in fact imply an overriding opposition of interests which inhibits the emergence of corporate unity. The analysis of solidarity deriving from strategic choices requires a more extensive analysis of the strategic implications of the contexts in which persons and groups are mobilized, and should prove fruitful in other instances, as well as the present.

In the case analysed here, solidarity between fathers and sons, and between full brothers, is associated with strong normative emphasis, and an incompleted division of the joint economy till some time after the death of the father. Immediate agnatic kin thus constitute politically indivisible groups. The first potential line of fission is between paternal cousins, and in the descriptive section I have attempted to document how numerous factors combine to lay the foundations for a relation of rivalry and opposition between such close agnatic collaterals. As has been demonstrated, these factors have strategic implications which define the necessary and sufficient conditions under which a two-bloc alliance system emerges. Among Pathans, the factors encouraging permanent opposition assert themselves on a very low level of genealogical segmentation. Occasionally, descent groups among them of three or four generations’ depth may manage to maintain group unity, but frequently permanent opposition splits groups down to the level of paternal first cousins. I should emphasize that in other ethnographic settings, factors with similar implications may impinge on higher levels only of the descent charter. Lineage segments of any size may be the units in permanent political opposition; the point in a descent charter where fusion in a merging series stops, and bloc formation begins, depends upon the factors affecting strategic choices. The distinction between clans and lineages in the description of many African lineage systems, for example, may relate precisely to this point. On the clan level, the lack of genealogies removes the restrictions on strategic choices which presumably are implied in these particular societies by established genealogies.

Thus variable features of lineage organizations and unilineal descent group organizations in general are amenable to analysis in terms of the strategic bases for the solidarity of groups. This manner of analysing the relation between descent charters and actual political organizations, exemplified in the present essay, would seem to be particularly useful in the study of the larger, more complex societies. It is also appropriate to the study of these political systems under conditions of change.

NOTES

1The present paper was written while the author held a Wenner-Gren Pre-Doctoral Fellowship. The original field work was supported by the Norwegian Research Council.

2Fairly complete genealogical tables representing the relations of major groups are given in Ridgeway (1918).

3The structural opposition resulting from such a relationship is implicit in our very term rival, derived from the Roman custom: those who shared the water of a rivus, or irrigation channel (Drower 1954, p. 521).

4It does, however, relate significantly to the possibility for a spectacular rise to power by individuals within the system, exemplified by the great chief Malak Baba who increased his land by a factor of ten in the course of his stormy lifetime.

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THE TWILIGHT OF A SOUTH ASIAN HEROIC AGE:
A REREADING OF BARTH’S STUDY OF SWAT

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Among the ‘heroic peoples’ of the Old World, resort to force and coercion became a central feature of political experience. While this problem shaped the cultures and societies of many hinterland peoples, it has not been closely studied in anthropology. This oversight is associated with presumptions that have guided anthropological methods and theories. A vision of man at home in nature and at peace with himself has obscured the darker side of institutions that stabilise injustice by organised violence. Barth’s study of Swat (1958) is reanalysed to illustrate these arguments. The position that individual political decisions were the basis of a balanced, synchronic system of authority is rejected; nevertheless, the book’s focus on the pursuit of personal advantage is shown to reveal how force and coercion left their mark on the political institutions of Swat. In effect, Barth’s judgement that calculated self-interest was a key to political experience in Swat is defended, but the irrational and disruptive side of this calculation is clarified.

The tribal peoples in much of the Old World can be differentiated from similar peoples elsewhere by one criterion. Before being absorbed into the domains of states and empires, many of these stateless societies passed through an extended period during which the man of arms was the central figure of political experience. The tribal peoples of north Africa, Europe, the Near East and parts of Asia frequently became heroic peoples, not just for a while, but often for centuries, sometimes millennia, before surrendering their independence to other political authorities.¹

This transformation of tribal peoples into heroic peoples can be characterised in terms of two co-ordinated processes. First, there was a steady popularisation of increasingly efficient and inexpensive personal weapons among the peoples of the hinterlands. Perhaps its beginning might be traced to the increasing importance of metallurgy during the second millennium B.C. Second, there was a progressive rationalisation of popular political traditions around the organised exercise of force, for both defensive and offensive purposes. This trend is perceptible in the increasingly masculine idiom of cultural and social norms (patriliney, patriarchy and patrilocality) during ancient times. As a result, the hero became a central figure of political experience in most of the rural border regions and tribal hinterlands.

Almost uniquely a figure of the Old World, the hero is an extreme and special case of the warrior, a far more general phenomenon. Heroic identity turns upon personal strategies and personal instruments devoted to force and
coercion. That is to say, there is an individualistic dimension to the hero who is often specifically associated with the disruption of polity, society and even family. As an ideal in folk epics, he was a member of a small band of adventurers whose very way of life involved extortion, kidnapping, raiding and pillaging. And, in fact, such companions in adventure were often to be found on the margins of polity and society, uprooted from their homelands and separated from their families.

It is unlikely that the transformation of tribal into heroic peoples was a phenomenon peripheral to what is known as 'the history of civilisation'. As a basic part of popular political experience, it must have had some impact on the evolution of states and empires. Consider, for example, the emergence of a heroic identity among the tribal peoples of the central Near East. In ancient Mesopotamia, the man of arms was first associated with states and empires. He was of noble rank, rode in a chariot pulled by a team of horses, wore metal body armour and carried metal weapons. In succeeding millennia, however, the heroic identity was increasingly 'popularised' among pastoralists of the outlying deserts and steppes. By 1000 B.C., the first nomads who rode camels had appeared in Mesopotamia. Sometime around 500-100 B.C. these nomads adopted the north Arabian camel-saddle, a crucial device for increasing the manoeuvrability of the camel as a mount of war. Only a little later, by A.D. 200, they had become horse-breeders as well as camel-breeders, setting the stage for an efflorescence of Arabian culture and society.

This efflorescence began with the heroic age of pre-Islamic Arabia, during which the man on a horse was celebrated and a code of chivalry developed. It reached a climax in the seventh century, in the unity of an Islamic politico-religious movement. Eventually this movement, with the Arabian horseman as its initial vehicle, restructured the ideals and values of Near Eastern civilisation.

This relatively dramatic example of how the history of states and empires was interconnected with a popularisation of the use of arms in border regions could be supplemented with many more instances drawn from north Africa, Europe, south Asia, central Asia and the Far East. It is surprising, then, that anthropologists have not studied how an increasing resort to force and coercion in popular political experience may have affected such cultures and societies. How might the omission be explained? This question, I suspect, raises a sensitive ideological issue.

Since the last century, anthropology has been closely associated with the notion of 'a science of society'. In the name of such an enterprise, anthropologists sought to confirm a moral vision of human experience through the systematic observation of everyday life. Such a science of society has been elaborated by the programme of structural-functionalism during much of this century. In many modern ethnographies, the parochial institutions of everyday life, such as kinship and marriage or myth and rituals, are described as constituting a self-balancing structure with inter-locking functions. The unsettling dimensions of human needs and desires are certainly recognised in much of this work, but in principle almost always seen as effectively limited or contained by a normative framework. As a result, anthropologists have not
been able to gauge the extent to which a tradition was the product of *irresolvable* disruptive processes. Unable to perceive degenerative processes in political experience that are out of control, anthropologists have not fully appreciated the darker side of institutions as a temporary stabilisation of injustice in the form of organised violence.

Such a failing, I would argue, has proven especially troublesome for the anthropology of tribal peoples in the Old World. To illustrate this, I have chosen to discuss in a polemical way a distinguished study of a regional society in northwestern Pakistan. Fredrik Barth is usually considered an eminent critic of structural-functionalism and a thorough realist about the role of political conflict in shaping cultural and social institutions. Yet his book, *Political leadership among Swat Pathans*, is faulted by a moral vision that obscures the implications of violence in political experience. If we reread this study with such a criticism in mind, we can discover a new validity in his account. This study of political activities in the valley of Swat records the twilight of an archaic epoch in south Asia. In it Barth analyses processes that left in their wake peculiar cultural investments and social arrangements. These were processes inherent in the everyday life of ordinary individuals and only indirectly attributable to the policies of states and empires. In this way, he has documented, sometimes unknowingly, problematic dimensions of culture and society in one of the hinterlands of the Old World.

In most of his work, Barth adopts a certain paradigm of political experience that is usually termed 'methodological individualism'. I prefer to characterise his approach more specifically as a form of individualistic rationalism and voluntarism. Most of the time, we find Barth describing persons carefully evaluating their situations in terms of self-interest, as he explains for us how they decide on one of a number of alternative strategies, how they pursue planned courses of actions, and how in doing so they secure some advantage for themselves. *Political leadership among Swat Pathans* is one of the most impressive applications of this approach. In this book, such a paradigm of political experience not only tells us something important about the traditional political situation in Swat, it is also the basis of a trenchant criticism of views prevailing at the time when Barth wrote. In the opening pages of his study, we discover a challenge to the idea that tribal societies could be understood as timeless, coherent moral structures:

> In many anthropological accounts of tribal peoples, one has the impression that political allegiance is not a matter of individual choice. Each individual is born into a particular structural position, and will accordingly give his political allegiance to a particular group or office-holder. In Swat, persons find their place in the political order through a series of choices, many of which are temporary or revocable.

> This freedom of choice radically alters the way in which political institutions function (1958: 1–2).

As criticism, Barth's book still has a value today. It reveals that a quest for personal advantage could flourish in a traditional setting. In doing so, the book
raises a serious question about those Durkheimian currents in anthropology which suggest that, in a traditional setting at least, one may perceive how the shape of relationships unproblematically reflects the moral dimensions of human experience.

But Barth was not content with the role of a critic when he composed his study of the Swat Pakhtun. He did not exactly set out to reveal the limitations of the prevailing opinions of his day, but rather to replace them. We need only read a little further:

Many of the politically active individuals in Swat clearly recognize the distinction between private and group advantage, and when faced with a choice they tend to consider the former rather than the latter. This is most clearly demonstrated by the way in which members of any group may secede and attach themselves to another when this is to their advantage. Thus the authority system—in terms both of the relations of dominance and submission and of the alignment of persons in groups—is built up and maintained through the exercise of a continual series of individual choices.

In these lines, Barth sees the free choice of individuals as the determinant of the design of a political order. Barth would disestablish the paradigms of anthropological Durkheimianism, but he would also establish the paradigm of individualistic rationalism and voluntarism. In Political leadership, the polity emerges as the summation of the multiple decisions of individuals, all of whom are concerned primarily with their own personal advantage. A system of authority and the alignment of groups are the product of an unseen hand at work in a sort of political market-place. Thus a moral vision is reconstituted around the calculated pursuit of self-interest.

My comments are reminiscent of but not entirely consistent with other critics of Barth, such as Asad (1972), Ahmed (1976) and Dupree et al. (1977). The viewpoints of these writers are far from similar, but they do tend to agree on certain key issues. Political leadership places too much stress on the landlords of Swat. It is at best a khan's eye view. It also overemphasises conflict, even among the Pakhtun leaders and landlords of Swat. It is the product of a Western political perspective. Limitations of Barth's analytical paradigm have led to inaccuracies in his descriptions of political experience in Swat; nevertheless, it is concluded, his book remains a good ethnography of Swat overall. I disagree with these views. Barth correctly insists on the role of pragmatic and rational strategies in connexion with the use of force and a resort to coercion. If anything, I shall argue, his humanistic optimism underplays the disruptiveness of a quest for personal advantage in the political history of Swat. His book is a perceptive and even brilliant diagnosis of a fundamental problem of cultural and social history in Swat. In this respect, his khan's eye view and his focus on conflict are justified. Barth does fail, however, to place the problem of force and coercion in a proper historical perspective. He sees it as part of a working system of leaders and groupings rather than as a calamity that left its mark on Swat political experience.

Of course, an anthropologist of Barth's stature does not entirely overlook political history. The facts are not omitted from this book, only certain
conclusions that might follow from these facts. In his Chapter 2, for example, Barth presents us with an incisive portrayal of the historicity of experience in Swat from which most of the institutions and processes that he describes can be derived. Three factors of this historicity are of special importance: (1) sophistication of agricultural production in the valley and the unusually high density of settlement; (2) an archaic history of political disorder during which 'heroic tribes' repeatedly displaced one another in the valley and reduced its population to the status of subject peoples; (3) the wesh system of land tenure as a product of the settlement of heroic tribes among an agrarian population. In later chapters, these three peculiar features of Swat represent the foundation of a political system. However, they are quite clearly historically rather than synchronically related. Before examining just how and why Barth interweaves them into a timeless conception of a political system, let us consider how their historicity is preserved in Chapter 2.

We are dealing with a developed agrarian society in the Old World. To read the description of farming and herding in the valley of Swat is to perceive a people who, although stateless, are not in any other respect like those 'prehistoric' people that anthropologists often study. Different crops are grown in the highlands and lowlands. The fertility of fields is maintained by crop rotation, fallowing, and manuring. Irrigation techniques are extensively employed. Plots are set aside for orchards and gardens. Herding practices are integrated with farming practices. Agricultural implements, although simple, are constructed by local carpenters and blacksmiths. Barth's summary of agricultural production in the valley presses these points home in the following terms:

The important points to bear in mind in the present context are the high density of population, the diversity and complexity of crops and productive techniques, the very high productivity of the land which is carefully maintained, and its high value, which is the result of the above factors, and of the considerable capital investment in irrigation works which is necessary to maintain this level of production (p. 7).

This is a relatively sophisticated farming and herding society. Agricultural activities require diligent day-to-day labour, the close co-operation of various groups, and a high investment of capital. These activities are not only a source of great wealth in Swat; they are by and large the source of wealth.

We now turn to the second factor. Directly following the above summary, Barth portrays a disaster in the political history of the valley:

The Pashto-speaking population of Swat takes its name from the Yusufzai tribes which at present dominate the area. This dominance was established between A.D. 1500 and 1600, when the Yusufzai, driven out of the Kabul valley, entered the northern Peshawar plain as conquerors and progressively wrested control of the Swat valley from the Swati tribe. . . . Some Swati became subject to the invaders; others fled eastwards across the Indus, where one can find their descendants today established as conquerors and landowners in the Hazara district. The Yusufzai invasion was the last of a series of waves of migration and conquests by Pashto-speaking groups which emanated from the mountains to the north-west and flowed into the Peshawar area and towards Panjab, extending incidentally into the Swat valley (p. 7).

Here is a record of what might be called an epoch of conquests. The Yusufzai Pakhtun, a tribal people, moved into the valley of Swat, seized its lands for
themselves and became the masters of its former inhabitants who could not escape them.

The scars of this epoch of conquests were still very much evident when Barth arrived in the valley during the 1950's. A small minority of Pakhtun landowners dominated a large majority of labourers, tenants and craftsmen. These landowners adhered to a strict code of honour, the design of which—violent responses to personal or familial slights—recalled their former career as a tribe of heroic peoples. Some were actively engaged in political contests aimed at bolstering personal prestige and extending personal influence. More remarkably, the Pakhtun still retained their tribal identity, centuries after their conquest of Swat. They were still the Yusufzai Pakhtun who carefully traced their descent from a tribal ancestor and preserved a genealogy that illustrated how the landowners living in different parts of the valley were divided into separate segments of a single tribe. Regional tribal councils were held in which each Yusufzai Pakhtun was given the right to speak and decisions reached by unanimous agreements. These 'landowners', although living on the fruits of agricultural production, had many traditions in common with the most 'egalitarian' and 'militaristic' of the pastoral nomadic tribes of north Africa, the Near East, and central Asia. In other words, the Yusufzai Pakhtun were more than a class of landlords, the term that Barth applies to them. They had seized the land as a heroic people experienced in the exercise of force and coercion. Their status as landowners in the valley of Swat must be understood in the context of this event.

There are two crucial points to keep in mind with regard to the Pakhtun invasion of Swat. First, the Pakhtun conquest was only the last of many similar invasions, the record of which extends back into the archaic period. That is to say, the agrarian societies in this part of the Old World had to take shape under the circumstances of repeated conquests by heroic tribes which, for centuries, perhaps for millennia, competed with one another over the right to dominate various agrarian societies that were reduced to the status of subject peoples.

Second, the final Pakhtun conquest took place a very long time ago. Four hundred years is perhaps enough time to heal the wounds of such an event. After all, the hero, a man who unsettles polity, society and family, has no place in a highly developed agrarian society. He is a disruptive element in a situation where wealth is derived from diligence and co-operation. Time, to be sure, would wear him down as he developed a taste for pleasure and luxury. And yet, as Barth describes so plainly, much to the consternation of many of his readers, this did not happen. For four centuries, many Pakhtun landowners in Swat remained more or less closely identified with violence and anarchy.

Each of these points is closely related to the particularity and historicity of political experience in the valley. Here, we find a devotion to force and coercion in a setting where wealth was derived from diligence and co-operation. This anomalous situation became more or less the centre of political experience. It even became more or less ingrained in the texture of identities and relationships. Heroic peoples bearing down upon agrarian societies over the centuries generated peculiar cultural investments and social arrangements.
This is why the Yusufzai were never altogether worn down. In Swat, there emerged a way of life of ‘landed heroes’ in an agrarian society.

However, we must be more cautious. If we discover such investments and arrangements they should not be understood as the basis of a system. They are founded upon an anomaly of history. They must essentially be, in their very nature, ‘out-of-kilter’ or ‘off-balance’; for they are derived from the fusion of contrary forces (domination through violent contests and wealth through peaceful interdependence) that one might expect to be in tension with one another. This brings us to the third factor of political history in Swat.

In Chapter 2, Barth begins his discussion of the wesh system of land tenure by referring to it as a ‘myth’ or ‘value’ of political life in Swat. He then provides us with direct evidence of its fictional dimensions by citing a Pakhtun tradition:

... The Yusufzai tribes entered the valley as conquerors; their descendants claim ownership and jurisdiction over all land, with exceptions to be noted later. Tradition tells how the conquering Yusufzai had great difficulty in arranging an equitable division of the spoils of conquest; they appealed to a prominent holy man, Shaikh Malli, to do this for them; and he devised a system which was at the same time both completely just and permanent (p. 9).

The Pakhtun do not explain their system of land tenure by uniquely referring to its function in the present. Rather they cite in some detail its origins in the past. Quite specifically, they derive the wesh system from their conquest of Swat. And from the very beginning, their tradition reveals, the wesh system was an attempt to legitimate and to enshrine their violent expropriation of agrarian resources. Only with respect to the viewpoint of heroic peoples, could this system be said to be ‘completely just’. Only in so far as the way of life of such heroic peoples was perpetuated in Swat could it be said to be ‘permanent’. Given the character of an agrarian society, Shaikh Malli’s system was essentially unjust and for this reason basically ‘impermanent’.

In the lines that follow the above tradition, Barth provides a full account of how the wesh system was devised some time during the sixteenth century. The following passage includes the important details:

In other words, he [Shaikh Malli] delimited a hierarchy of territorial segments corresponding to the particular pattern of segmentation within the major Yusufzai lineages. But no two pieces of land are really equal. So rather than vest property rights to specific fields permanently in any one lineage segment, Shaikh Malli decreed that the land should be periodically reallocated. Where the sub-tribe had two main branches, these two should alternate, say every ten years in their occupation of the two halves of the region. Thus after twenty years both branches would have occupied both areas equally long. Where there were three main branches, the sub-regions were passed round in a circle, so as to give a thirty-year cycle. In this system, individuals do not own land in the sense of having rights to particular fields; they hold shares in the total landed assets of the sub-tribe. In this way, a completely equitable division of the fruits of conquest was assured (p. 9).

The last sentence makes it clear that we are dealing with notions of ‘equitability’ among a group of highly mobile, petty tyrants who lived by dominating and exploiting agrarian societies. Enticed by the wealth of the valley, they were tempted to settle down for a while and enjoy the ‘fruits of conquest’. Nevertheless, at the time of their victory, they were too devoted to a life of violent expropriations to become a wholly sedentary gentry and too
egalitarian in their ideals and values to organise themselves in a feudal hierarchy as lords of domains. By means of the *wesh* system, they preserved to some degree their identity as heroic peoples and institutionalised an *unstable* political situation. Thanks to the ingenuity of Shaikh Malli, heroic peoples who lived by resorting to force and coercion became landowners in an agrarian society dependent upon diligent labour and peaceful co-operation.

The background of the political situation in Swat was the invasion of an agrarian society (factor 1) by a heroic people (factor 2) and the institutionalisation of this invasion by the *wesh* system (factor 3). All this is fairly clear from Barth's Chapter 2, although it is not insisted upon in these terms. However, as the book progresses it becomes less and less clear that this political situation embodies a contradiction and that it has been off-balance since its origins in the sixteenth century.

The argument in later chapters can be summarised as follows. There are 'frameworks' of political experience in Swat. Within these frameworks, actors rationally evaluate their circumstances and pursue paths of action in order to secure a personal advantage. Out of this process, a synchronic political system takes shape in the valley. As Barth works out this paradigm, the historical dimension of political experience is suppressed, and the three factors discussed above are reconceived as the basis of a synchronic political system. Essentially, they are reduced to two conditions: (1) Swat is basically an agrarian society, but a conventional system of land tenure (*wesh*) requires landowners to move periodically from area to area. These moves disrupt the normal political alignment between landlord and residents as the basis of the community of agricultural production; (2) the Pakhtun landowners in Swat are hurly-burly types concerned with their honour and proud of their valour. They therefore seek a personal advantage in any way that is open to them, even political violence. Outlining such a political situation, Barth derives from these two conditions several consequences. Let us consider what he makes of them.

First, the system of land tenure (*wesh*): because of the exceptionally weak tie between landowners and residents, he argues, there was no co-ordination of political authority and agrarian communities in Swat. Each landowner was faced every few years with large numbers of labourers, tenants and craftsmen whom he did not know. In response to this problem, the Pakhtun chiefs were obliged to construct 'foci of authority within communities', rather than rule 'delimited units embracing sections or the whole of such communities'. He goes on to conclude:

To pursue the metaphor, the landowner faced with the sea of politically undifferentiated villagers proceeds to organize a central island of authority, and from this island he attempts to exercise authority over the surrounding sea. Other landowners establish similar 'islands', some with overlapping spheres of influence, others having unadministered gaps between them. In other words, the leaders among the landowners do not formally organize the whole community into a single, systematic political structure. This relates to the fact, often repeated in the previous chapters, that most relations between landowners and villagers have the form of voluntary contracts (p. 69).
The first condition (*wesh*) therefore leads to the formation of political associations that are not coordinate with the natural and ordinary community which in a society of farmers and herders would be centred upon agricultural production.

Second, the Pakhtun notion of honour and valour: landowners in the valley of Swat vigorously and energetically maximise their personal interests. Here Barth's argument is quite subtle. This second condition is already written into the consequences that he derived from the first. The following passage, which precedes the above quote, illustrates this, an especially good example of how Barth views actors formulating paths of action as they evaluate their circumstances:

Different Pakhtuns in a local area are competing partners in a privileged position; together they control a resource in the form of a limited area, the gross productivity of which, as a result of the highly developed irrigation system, is practically a constant. A Pakhtun's profits may theoretically be increased in either of two ways. All the Pakhtuns of an area may combine to exploit the non-landowners by demanding the maximum share of gross income for themselves; or an individual may extend his control over a larger proportion of the land, thus increasing his own profits at the expense of other landowners. The second of these courses is that generally adopted, as is apparent from the kinds of bonds between persons described above (p. 68).

That is to say, the formation of factional followings within the community is partly a defensive response to the landowners lack of familiarity with the individuals of the agrarian community (a result of *wesh*), but it is also partly a vigorously offensive response to maximise personal interests at the expense of other landowners (a result of honour and valour).

Now we can examine how the second condition also has specific consequences in its own right. Barth turns to describe how landowners sometimes assemble followings to compete with rival landowners; but there is a particular trenchancy to these conflicts. This is reflected by the fact that conflict tends to arise between *neighbouring* landowners. Pakhtun are so ardently competitive that the closest of neighbours tend to see themselves as enemies. Again Barth understands this situation by analysing it as a result of men rationally evaluating their circumstances and pursuing paths of action aimed at the maximisation of their personal interests. As only one example of a very detailed discussion of this problem, here is his analysis of encroachment where settlement has become permanent:

...a stronger landlord generally attempts to encroach on the land of his weaker neighbours by the slow but steady technique of ploughing the borderpath between the fields. These borders are marked by a low wall. In the irrigated rice-lands this is less than a foot wide, and serves as a retaining wall for irrigation water and a raised path for reaching the further paddy fields. In the natural-flow irrigation system, fields are usually very small, and the 'share' system makes for extreme fragmentation and dispersal of holdings. The total length along which one man's fields adjoin those of others is considerable, and the amount that can be gained by twice yearly adding one furrow along this whole length may be spectacular in the course of a generation. The strategic advantage of this technique is that there is no critical moment in its execution when dramatic counteraction is precipitated. Pathan landowners exercise constant vigilance against it (p. 75).

The *wesh* system (condition 1) plus Pakhtun character (condition 2) therefore
lead to the formation of political associations outside the natural and ordinary agrarian community. The *wesh* system plus Pakhtun character also drive a wedge between neighbouring landowners who, we eventually discover, seek allies among strangers in order to contest those men who live near to them.

Note how contrary to intuition this circumstance turns out to be. A system of land tenure only enhances the cleavage of interests between a small class of landowners and the large majority of the agrarian population. Nevertheless, we do not find that the landowners unify as a group to defend themselves against a fairly resentful and near destitute mass of landless peoples. Instead, landowners assemble followings among the landless and engage in contests over the control of agrarian resources. In this setting, moreover, where there is a high level of political insecurity, we do not find the ordinary feudal response to violence and anarchy. Neighbouring landowners do not necessarily join together as a gentry nor submit themselves to lords to find protection from external threats. They are typically in contention with one another, while looking for allies among strangers further afield.

In brief, landowners are separated from residents, and neighbouring landowners are separated from one another. Despite the problem of security in a condition of statelessness, the most ordinary political association in an agrarian society—a territorial community of agricultural production—does not unite to protect the source of wealth (farms and herds) from external threats. Instead, tentative and marginal political associations, composed of chiefs and followers and founded upon 'free choice' and 'dyadic contract', cut across and divide the community into armed camps.

Barth's analysis has been admired for its ingenuity, but not surprisingly it has also been greeted with scepticism. It seems in many ways so counter-intuitive. Barth, it is usually said, has overplayed a quest for personal advantage in Swat. Concerned with a market ideology of free choice, dyadic contract and maximisation of personal interests, he has conceived of individuals as ready to move against community and neighbour to get what they want.

While I have reservations about Barth's underlying ideological orientation, I believe that he is more nearly right about the quality of traditional political experience in Swat than his critics. Political violence was a central feature of history in Swat. The threat of political violence did tend to arise within the community of agricultural production rather than on its boundaries. To an important degree, landowners were divided from residents, and neighbouring landowners were set against one another. Barth has pointed to the crucial dilemma of long-term political experience in the valley, and yet has not satisfactorily analysed it. He retains no view of the background of political history in the later chapters of his book. Thus he sees the *wesh* system as a timeless convention that determines the setting for rational evaluations and pragmatic procedures. He sees Pakhtun character, their honour and valour, as timeless attributes that sharpen the implications of rational outlook and pragmatic behaviour. This opens the way for criticism, precisely because both these conditions were only relatively rather than essentially true.

Just where, when and to what degree was the *wesh* system actually followed in practice? Just where, when and to what degree were the Pakhtun robustly
pursuing their personal interests? Little more than a glance at Barth's argument provides ammunition for those who would argue that he has exaggerated these features of Swat. And are agrarian communities in Swat actually divided into opposed factions so that neighbours typically contest one another? A careful reading of Barth's ethnography turns up passages that seem to contradict his generalisations about this problem. Then there is the issue of rationalism and pragmatism itself. Are personal free choice and dyadic contract really the foundation of a political system in Swat? Are not the near destitute landless masses of Swat compelled to join the followings of Pakhtun chiefs who dominate and exploit them?

These objections undermine Barth's analysis not so much because he is altogether wrong about an important side of political experience in Swat, but because he has failed to keep in view the historical background of the political phenomena that he is discussing. Let us rewrite Political leadership among Swat Pathans, not with the intent of overturning its arguments, but rather to confirm them by properly qualifying their relationship to a phase of political history in Swat.

The Pakhtun were not thinking of their future interests as landowners when they devised the wesh system; they were thinking of their past activities as heroic peoples. Having seized a great booty, the land of an agrarian society, this 'egalitarian' and 'militaristic' people parceled out the spoils among themselves in an equitable manner, much as if they had sacked a city or looted a caravan. As a result, the Yusufzai Pathan became not so much 'landlords' as 'landed heroes'. Such a status involves a contradiction. Their control of the land was closely linked with virtuosity in the field of force and coercion, but the wealth they derived from the land was dependent upon the daily routine of diligence and co-operation that is characteristic of life in agrarian societies. As we read through Barth's ethnography, the consequence of this contradiction becomes apparent. In Swat, the community of agricultural production was sorely troubled by pervasive factionalism, if not anarchy and violence. Barth's account reveals just why this was so, if we simply preserve the perspective of his Chapter 2. Where landowners have been heroic tribesmen, land is construed as an instrument for engaging in political contests while its character as a resource for agricultural production is obscured. Like the camel among the North Arabian Bedouins, land among the Swat Pakhtun was the vehicle of a political identity and involvement and only 'incidentally' the basis of human subsistence and prosperity. Where heroes own land, the more natural and ordinary form of political association in an agrarian society—the territorial community of agricultural production—is disrupted by violent contests. Where heroes own land, the familiar face close to home is a threat while the stranger from further afield is a potential ally.

Among Pakhtun landowners, leaders assembled followings for purposes of engaging in strategic contests. These followings, which were marginal political groups that cut across communities and neighbourhoods, had their own semi-
fortified meeting places, the men's house. More vividly than any other political institution in Swat, the men's houses reflect the continuing importance of heroic ideals and values. As purely masculine associations from which women were excluded, they were dissociated from the family and to some extent from community and neighbourhood. Here in this socially marginal environment, men were entertained during their leisure hours with romantic accounts of the exploits of heroic figures. And here too, political groupings were traditionally mobilised to become the very vehicles of force and coercion in the valley. From time to time, these 'heroic' associations were involved in extorting harvests, seizing agricultural land, raiding rival settlements, pillaging goods, burning crops, taking hostages and killing men.

In so far as these peculiar features of political experience were the centre of and ingrained in the way of life in Swat, they were the heritage of a former epoch during which heroic peoples repeatedly conquered agrarian ones. But just because such circumstances were extraordinary, and impractical in an agrarian society, we may be assured that they were neither the essence of political experience in Swat nor the foundation of a holistic political system. If we look for them, we find a variety of political formations and ideological sentiments in the valley that have to be understood not so much as alternatives, but rather as determined reactions to the relative illogicality and unworkability of the activities and institutions that are the objects of Barth's attention.

Consider the wesh system itself, indeed on closer inspection less than an absolute system. For more than a century, perhaps since its very origins, the wesh system had been only more or less the system of land tenure in Swat. It had prevailed in some parts of the valley more than in others. It had prevailed more nearly in the distant past than in recent times. It had been abolished decades before Barth himself arrived in Swat, even though significantly there were those in Swat who assumed nevertheless that this 'myth' or 'value' was still in force.

In some parts of the valley, for example, the Pakhtun resembled a kind of 'gentry'. This is especially evident in connexion with the system of obligatory patronage (talgeri) which was once practised in various areas. Here, there was 'some degree of congruence between the distribution of political authority and the territorial organization', just the sort of pattern ordinarily found in an agrarian society. Barth describes it as follows:

Stated simply, the system is based on a restriction of the contractual freedom of landowners in the employment of occupational specialists... As a result, the whole ward, not merely the estate of each individual landowner, emerges as a unit of production—duties are allotted and coordination enforced within the whole unit, since the various landowners must share a limited labour force, and depend on the same workshop and transport facilities (p. 87).

He goes on to a revealing conclusion: 'The talgeri system creates congruence between the different analytically separate fields of commitment, producing a tightly knit, economically self-sufficient, and territorially compact and delimited community (p. 87)'.

And if we read even further, we discover that the talgeri system, by which
the Pakhtun resembled a gentry, tended to evolve in some places to the point that the chief among the united Pakhtun of a ward began to resemble ever so slightly the lord of a domain in a feudal system.

By the talgeri system these incongruities are eliminated. The chief of a ward will be the boss of its men's house and leading figure of its association for rites de passage; through these institutions he controls even those tenants and specialists whom he does not himself employ in their professional capacity. Through this control of the labour force of his fellow landowners, he gains a hold over them which he can never hope to have in the unrestricted system. The degree of authority which he normally has over the dependants of his own estate, and his own household, is in part extended to include the whole of the ward over which he presides, and he emerges as the leader of all the landowners of his ward (p. 87).

We glimpse in these various structures something more than 'alternative' political systems, as Barth terms them. They are signs of a tendency for relatively more effective and legitimate kinds of agrarian political arrangements to evolve out of the wesh system.9

But the Pakhtun were not only approaching here and there the status of gentry or lords. There were also, throughout the history of the valley, movements in the direction of founding a state political authority. In past centuries, various religious and political figures had been influential in wide areas of Swat, if not in the valley as a whole. In the period from 1917 to 1926, Barth tells us, a native State had 'become firmly established in the upper two thirds of the valley' (p. 127).

The character of religious and political ideals in Swat suggests that constant thrusts towards the formation of a wider-based religious or political authority were specifically driven by a revulsion against agrarian landowners with heroic identities. Some of these ideals, such as the traditional popularity of Islamic orthodoxy, included elaborate concepts of an organised political community. They were therefore explicitly opposed in principle to the tyranny and anarchy that were part of the wesh system. Others, such as the devotion to religious leaders and religious brotherhoods, were more other-worldly reactions to the problem of political uncertainty and instability. The important point is that all these ideologies represented, in one way or another, hopes and dreams of peace and security. They therefore explicitly or implicitly challenged Pakhtun force and coercion.

Barth fails to analyse the wesh system as the result of a disaster in the political history of an agrarian society. With his concept of a political system being derived from rational and pragmatic behaviour, he obscures how the wesh system had created an imbalance that was redressing itself in this relatively sophisticated agrarian context. The invasion of the valley of Swat by heroic peoples could not be stabilised, once the epoch of tribal conquests had drawn to a close sometime around the sixteenth century. The wesh system cannot be properly understood as the framework of a synchronic political system.

In his Introduction, Barth explains that he will examine political leaders because their behaviour was more easily observed than that of more ordinary
individuals. This is the first of a series of statements that suggest the consistency and homogeneity of political experience among all the people of Swat. Clearly the political activities of these Pakhtun chiefs could not possibly exemplify the behaviour of ordinary individuals. Barth, therefore, grossly overgeneralises the political strategies of a mere handful of exceptionally aggressive landowners. Just such an argument represents the most common criticism of Political leadership among Swat Pathans, that it is at best about a small minority of political leaders among a small minority of landowners. It does not specify just how this segment of the population was more important in the distant past than in others. It does not differentiate the importance of 'free choice' and 'dyadic contracts' among Pakhtun chiefs from the narrowly restricted alternatives of an oppressed majority of landless peoples. Cast as a study of the general characteristics of political behaviour in Swat, this book focuses in fact upon highly restricted phenomena.

These criticisms are not entirely justified. Barth is not wrong to insist upon the importance of rational and pragmatic qualities of political strategies in Swat, nor even wrong to emphasise the role of 'free choice' and 'dyadic contracts'. And certainly he is correct to focus his analysis upon political leadership among the Pakhtun, but surely not because their political activities were relatively more visible than those of ordinary individuals. The political situation of the Yusufzai Pakhtun determined the equation of power and wealth in the recent history of Swat. In this respect, a study of their political activities illuminates a fundamental problem of all relationships in Swat. In this section, I shall show how this is so.

Barth's ethnography of political leadership brings to light central disruptive processes that afflicted human relationships in Swat. These processes are vividly apparent from the extortionary claims of landowners to the harvest, the investment of the harvest in the formation of tentative and marginal political associations, the division of interests between landowners and residents, and the occurrence of conflicts between neighbouring landowners. Now let us recall—and here his critics have usually been forgetful—how Barth is able to demonstrate the centrality of these disruptive processes for the shape of culture and society in Swat.

First of all, he is able to show how pragmatic and rational strategies are part of at least one political structure in Swat. Here for example, is Barth's much abused claim: 'The striking feature of the political organization of Swat is the emphasis on free choice and contract which is fundamental to the organization on lower levels, and also characterizes the wider political alignments' (p. 104).

If one replaces the holistic phrase, 'the political organization of Swat', with the more qualified and restricted, 'one important dimension of political experience in Swat', then this paragraph is beyond criticism; for in the course of his chapter on 'Alliances and political blocs', Barth does successfully bring to light such a mode of politics in Swat. He describes a pattern of pervasive factionalism that involves the strategic formation of tentative and marginal political groupings, more or less through 'free choice' and 'dyadic contracts' at both local and regional levels. The blocs were only one dimension of the political situation in Swat. Their importance at any given moment could be
debated. No doubt, they were as much a part of an ideology of conflict as they were a practical framework of effective political alliances. Certainly, they were traditionally as much the reflection of political dis-organisation as political organisation. Their very existence was derived as much from a readiness to engage in political contests as from a concern to control or to contain them. Nevertheless, Barth's analysis of the blocs does demonstrate that some macro-features of political association were the result of attempts on the part of individuals to maximise their own self-interests, even through strategies of force and coercion.

At the very least, Barth's analysis of political blocs in Swat raises a serious issue for those anthropologists who view traditional societies as coherent moral structures. However, his treatment of another related issue, the structural connexion between the roles of chief and Saint, is even more damaging to the arguments of Durkheimian anthropologists. At first, Barth's discussion of this problem seems to follow an interpretation of Evans-Pritchard. He even begins with a direct reference to the latter's analysis (1949) of the role of the Sanusi religious brotherhood among the Cyrenaica Bedouin.

There was a problem of conflict among the Bedouin. Evans-Pritchard argued, because these nomadic peoples lacked developed political institutions. As a result, there was a place for mediators. When the Sanusi religious brotherhood settled in Cyrenaica, it fulfilled this need for mediators more efficiently than the traditional representatives of the cult of saints whom they replaced. The lodges of the religious brotherhood were built, he observes, at just those points where tribes, as well as maximal and minimal lineages, could segmentarily divide into two or more political groupings. They were located, that is to say, at the interstices of the tribal political structure where the brothers might best play the role of mediators. This pattern reveals how inter-and intra-tribal conflicts were effectively contained and resolved by the representatives of a religious institution. In this respect, Evans-Pritchard's study of the Sanusi religious brotherhood is an extension of his similar analysis of the leopard-skin chief among the Nuer tribes of the Sudan. In both instances we are presented with a picture of political conflicts limited by moral principles among groups living in a finely tuned equilibrium with their natural environment.

Barth's analysis of chiefs and Saints in Swat is slightly but crucially different. For Barth, it is more specifically the exercise of force among the Pakhtun, not a lack of more developed political institutions, that creates a place for religious figures engaged in political mediation. The problem that chiefs create by their political activities opens the way for Saints who work to moderate the threatening implications of those activities. Politics polarised around the exercise of force leads to religion polarised around the value of peace.

But Barth accomplished even more than a clarification of how the exercise of force by chiefs opens the way for Saints to play the role of peace-makers. He also reveals how this problem tends to contort or, one might even say, to corrupt the role of Saints. In contrast to Evans-Pritchard's discussion of the Sanusi lodges in Cyrenaica, Barth notes that communities of Saints and their followers are not exactly located at points where conflict is likely between
chiefs. Rather they are located only where it is *impossible* for any chief to stabilise a following:

Accordingly, Saints are given land of inferior strategic value, difficult to defend, predominantly unirrigated or waterlogged areas, or fields at the terminal end of the irrigation channels; they are given the villages where the population is difficult to control, whether for topographic, economic or cultural reasons. These considerations are quite explicit, and are readily apparent in the distribution of Saints' land in any area (p. 94).

And in addition, we find that the Saint, as the head of a following and as a mediator in conflicts, was also himself inevitably tainted by those circumstances that he sought to control or to contain:

But without some force to back them [the Saints], such manipulations sooner or later fall to the ground. . . . But if the Saint himself disposes of some military power, however little, this greatly enlarges his field of manoeuvre. The Nalkot Pacha, my sometime host, was most explicit on the need to use 'both holy status and force' (pp. 98–9).

Saints have a place in Swat, because chiefs are devoted to force. But Saints themselves are not free from the pervasiveness of the logic of power in Swat. As leaders of followings, as competitors with other saints with followings, and as men whose role as peace-makers require them to exercise authority over chiefs, they too are tainted by a quest for influence and prestige. They are men of peace in principle, but not altogether in fact.

Barth never explicitly states that politics polarised around the exercise of force leads to religion polarised around the value of peace, although this conclusion follows from his analysis. Rather he argues that the status of Saint as a man of peace ‘complements’ the status of the chief as a man of force. This is simply not so. The camel-herding Bedouin of north Arabia were formerly a more turbulent people than the Swat Pakhtun. These tribesmen did not recognise any figures comparable to the Saints in Swat. They even ridiculed the cult of saints to which the settlers in their midst were devoted. Instead the chiefs of the north Arabian tribes made war on some occasions and peace on other occasions. This example illustrates that there is no necessity for the role of war-maker and peace-maker to be differentiated. But if, among a particular people, there was a *contradiction* between making war and making peace then they might well be differentiated. Here is the key to the existence of chiefs and Saints in Swat.

Where we find heroic traditions among agrarian peoples, there is a tension between a readiness to resort to force and coercion and an involvement in diligent labour and peaceful co-operation. The means of controlling wealth is in blatant contradiction with the means of producing wealth. For both defensive and offensive purposes, the Pakhtun and other Swatis turn to chiefs, but in so far as they do so, they raise a question about their agrarian way of life. Such dilemmas are clearly evident from the thoroughly religious basis of the political community in Swat and the relatively mystical aspects of some religious leaders and some religious ideology. This emphasis on the transcendental dimensions of the political community, the relative restriction of actual communal associations to purely ceremonial contexts in this world and the close connexion of these ceremonial contexts with an unseen other-world, is revealing. To a large extent, morality could be conceived in Swat
only in a realm apart from political life. Too often in political life, some groups were pragmatically and rationally devoted to force and coercion in the pursuit of their personal interests. In reaction to this, more ordinary men turned to religion as a solace. And since the latter represented the vast majority in Swat, even powerful individuals, such as the Pakhtun chiefs, could not afford to scoff or ignore this side of popular experience. Indeed, some were inclined to become the most articulate representatives of such popular feelings.

Barth perceives how the Saints were corrupted by the problem of force and coercion, even if he does not realise the significance of the other-worldly dimension of religious ideology. But, unfortunately, he eventually suppresses this insight into the problematic side of political experience in Swat. In his final pages, he argues that Saints complement chiefs, thereby providing for the foundation of a synchronic political system that is aesthetically balanced and historically legitimate. Nonetheless, Barth more nearly than others, such as Evans-Pritchard, reveals the disruptive processes, if not the human suffering, behind the relationship of politics and religion.

When the role of power in Swat is seen as the residue of an epoch of political history, we can understand how the problem of anarchy has cut into the very idiom of cultural conceptions and contorted social relationships. There is a great deal to be learned from Political leadership among Swat Pathan, but curiously, one cannot learn so much if one reads it in a spirit akin to that with which it was written. Let us recall just how badly this very good book ends.

In a closing chapter, the principal rhetorical variants of a ‘science of society’ are invoked to cloud the significance of political activities and institutions in Swat. First we begin with the rhetoric of ‘ecologism’:

The Middle East is the homeland of states and empires; it has known centralized political systems far longer than any other region of the world. . . . The tribal peoples that are found in the region do not retain their tribal institutions through ignorance, but as a stable and successful adaptation to the natural and social environment in which they find themselves (p. 133, my emphasis).

Tribalism in the Middle East, conceived as an adaptation, can be said to represent a form of stability and success. Man is at home in nature. Man is at peace with himself. The possibility that a tribal regime has a tragic dimension is overlooked. The possibility that chiefs and Saints in Swat are indicators of irresolvable problems of political experience that were for a time out of control is not considered. Next we turn to the rhetoric of ‘structuralism’:

Pride, rivalry and virility is expected of chiefs: such behaviour the Pathan villagers remember, encourage and admire. But these characteristics are relative, and are most clearly conceptualized in terms of their opposites: moderation, reasonableness and meekness. This complementary type of behaviour is expected of Saints, and the opposition is carried through to a remarkable extent—for example in the spectacular hospitality of chiefs as opposed to moderation bordering on miserliness among Saints, or in the immaculate white clothes of Saints in contrast to the showy brightness of the garments of many chiefs (pp. 133–4).
A painful dilemma is construed as though it were a system. There are chiefs on the one hand and Saints on the other. The structural attributes of this system have certain aesthetic qualities. 'Pride, rivalry and virility' complement while opposing 'moderation, reasonableness and meekness'. It is all so logically elegant and therefore academically satisfying. Barth, the pragmatist and rationalist, has something in common with a more metaphysical variety of anthropology. His war and peace are much like Mauss’s (1967) giving and receiving, Herz’s (1960) left and right hand, and Lévi-Strauss’s bears and barbers (1963).

And finally, we conclude with the rhetoric of Durkheimianism:

This complementarity is very intimately connected with the difference and interdependence of political roles. The chiefs are members of localized Pakhtun descent groups; they build up their followings and become the leaders of a series of homologous localized men’s house groups in a segmentary, acephalous system. The techniques whereby chiefs compete for power tend to create and increase tensions; the opposition between two chiefs tends towards a mounting intensity of violence.

But the same persons who form the followings of chiefs, and admire and support the kinds of behaviour that produce these tensions, are also the followers of Saints. Moreover, the groups led by Saints tend to cut across those of chiefs, and the following of a Saint is generally much more widely dispersed than that of a chief. In most situations where conflicts arise between chiefs, their conceptual counterparts, the moderate, reasonable and pious Saints, intervene. Their prime political role is that of mediator, and they are continually active in arranging compromises and reducing tensions which the chiefs are unable themselves to resolve. The pattern of behaviour whereby chiefs create their followings and compete for dominance within an area would lead to complete anarchy unless the Saints were also active at the same time. Each presupposes the other, and the political system is the resultant of the activities of both (p. 134, my emphasis).

As Barth ends his book, he resurrects the very position that he has utterly demolished in the course of his ethnography. Marvellously, a quest for personal advantage is contained by a political system based on a coherent moral structure.

Given these final observations, we might wonder why political activities and institutions in Swat ever change. Why should some Pakhtun become a ‘gentry’? Why should some of these ‘gentries’ submit themselves to ‘lords’? Why, moreover, should there have been repeated ‘attempts by prominent leaders to establish domination over all Swat . . . throughout the period for which historical records are available’ (p. 127)? If its tribal anarchy were so adaptive, its political aesthetics so satisfying, its political structure so balanced, society in Swat should have been free of strains, and therefore free of change and dissent. Perhaps in the future, when we read Political leadership among Swat Pathan, we might begin with this last concluding chapter. Reminding ourselves of the lessons that we must not learn from Barth’s study, we may then perhaps build more surely upon what its author has accomplished.

NOTES

1 A recent study of the north Arabian Bedouin, Meeker (1979), raised a number of issues about the role of ‘heroic tribal peoples’ in the political history of the Near East. In the present
article, I have examined this same problem in a south Asian setting. The longer study from
which it is drawn includes an analysis of patterns of inter-personal relationships, as well as
kinship and caste in Swat, advancing a thesis about their relationship with the impingement of
heroic tribal peoples on archaic agrarian societies in south Asia. I am grateful to F. G. Bailey,
G. Obeyesekere, M. J. Swarz, and D. F. Tuzin, all of whom offered criticisms of the longer study.
1 I am not specifically concerned with Barth's analytical paradigm, but only in what it has and
has not told us about culture and society in Swat. Therefore this article does not consider other
works in which he develops this paradigm or the works of other writers who influenced his
thinking. All the same, I have considered how Barth's analytical paradigm shapes the composition
of his book, since it determines his perception of political activities and institutions and narrows
his vision of culture and society in Swat. In this respect, my article sometimes covers the same
ground as other critics, but my intention has been to sharpen rather than to blunt the implications
of Political leadership among Swat Pathans as a study of the uniqueness of political experience in
one part of the world.
2 I have adopted the term Pakhtun in the place of the more Anglicised Pathan throughout the
3 Barth 1959: 78–9.
4 Asad (1979) has discussed the preoccupation with 'essential human meanings' and 'authentic
social categories' in anthropology. I would argue that this preoccupation is derived from an
attempt to confirm a vision of humanistic optimism (man is at home in nature and at peace with
himself) by means of scientific procedures. The result is a complex body of methods and theories
involving a mixture of good intentions and intellectual insights, but marked like all
'authoritative discourse' by self-justifications and self-deceptions. I do not believe that
anthropologists might simply divest themselves of this curious heritage. As successors to founders
of a tradition, we are obliged to work within it, using older concepts for ends that subvert their
original purposes.
5 For example, 'The village is the most important unit of territorial reference for a Swat Pathan',
p. 13, and 'one should show neighbourliness and a positive interest in the life of all
members of one's local community', p. 32. Both passages are cited by Asad (1972: 85).
6 See the discussion of the problem of population pressures on the limited agricultural land of
Swat in Asad (1972).
7 For an analysis of the camel as both an instrument of aggression and the basis of human
subsistence among the North Arabian Bedouins, see Meeker (1979).
8 That is to say, gentry or lords are relatively more effective and legitimate than landed heroes
in an agrarian society, but they are not absolutely effective or legitimate. Barth does not clearly
differentiate between these various kinds of dominant classes. At the outset of his book, he
writes: 'The land tenure system thus emphasized the division between landowning Yusufzai
conquerors and their subjects, the former being a dominant cosmopolitan 'gentry', the latter a
parochial, subordinate population, serving a succession of different lords' (p. 10). All three types
of classes, landed heroes (conquerors), gentry and lords are mentioned in one sentence, but fused
without distinction. Still, Barth is more aware of this issue than some of his critics. Asad
(1972) sees the Yusufzai Pakhtun exclusively as a gentry. In doing so, he makes some interesting
points about this group in modern Swat, but he fails to perceive certain peculiar features of the
Yusufzai Pakhtun as the descendants of what I have termed landed heroes. Ahmed (1976) has an
extended discussion of the categories of nang (honour) and qalang (rent) that clarifies the tribal
and feudal dimensions of traditional Pakhtun culture and society. He also illustrates the
historicity of the wesh system in detail and underlines its status as a 'myth' (a point that must
nevertheless be credited originally to Barth). Ahmed, however, by arguing that nang and qalang
were 'almost polar characteristics', (1976: 35), and by identifying the Yusufzai Pakhtun
exclusively as a qalang feudal gentry (1976: 73–83), clouds the close relationship of honour and
rent generally in Pakhtun (and particularly in Swat) political history.
9 Ahmed (1976) has shown that Sainthood in Swat is less clear-cut a status than Barth's
description would suggest. For simplicity, I have retained Barth's terms and views. However, see
my comments later in the text about Barth's perception of the quality of religious ideals and
values in Swat, a matter that Ahmed (1976) treats in some detail.
10 Ahmed (1976) has shown that Sainthood in Swat is less clear-cut a status than Barth's
description would suggest. For simplicity, I have retained Barth's terms and views. However, see
my comments later in the text about Barth's perception of the quality of religious ideals and
values in Swat, a matter that Ahmed (1976) treats in some detail.
11 The following comments draw upon my study of tribal politics in north Arabia and north
Africa (Meeker 1979).
12 For more details about religion in Swat, see Ahmed (1976). The camel-herding Bedouin of
north Arabia were not troubled by this contradiction simply because the means for
controlling wealth in animals through warfare and raiding was not seriously incompatible with
a daily routine of animals breeding and herding.


