

# Power and Patronage in Pakistan

by  
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Dr. Peter S. C. Parkes, Supervisor

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**Bhalot Village.**

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## Abstract

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Asymmetrical power relationships are found throughout Pakistan's Punjabi and Pukhtun communities. This thesis argues that these relationships must be examined as manifestations of cultural continuity rather than as separate structures. The various cultures of Pakistan display certain common cultural features which suggest a re-examination of past analytical divisions of tribe and peasant societies. This thesis looks at the ways power is expressed, accumulated and maintained in three social contexts: kinship, caste and political relationships. These three social contexts are embedded within a collection of 'hybridising' cultures (i.e. cultures which exhibit strong mechanisms for cultural accommodation without loss of 'identity'). Socialisation within kin groups provides the building blocks for Pakistani asymmetrical relationships, which may usefully be understood as a form of patronage. As these social building blocks are transferred to non-kin contexts the patron/client aspects are more easily identified and studied; however, this thesis argues that the core relationship roles exist even in close kinship contexts. The emphasis on asymmetry in personal relationships leads to rivalries between individuals who do not agree with each other's claims to equality or superiority. There are mechanisms for defusing the tension and conflict when such disagreements arise. State politics and religion are examined for the ways in which these patron/client roles are enacted on much larger scales but remain embedded within, and must respect, the cultural values underpinning those roles.

# Power and Patronage in Pakistan

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## Note on foreign words.

*When and how I use Urdu, Punjabi and Pushto words.*

The first instance of all Urdu and Punjabi words is italicised, thereafter italics are dropped. For simplicity sake, I denote the plural of Urdu, Punjabi and Pushto words by the addition of an 's'. I have used English translations where I felt they were adequate to convey the meaning of the original.

*Landlords.*

I have opted for the term 'landlord' rather than an indigenous term because the local terms for landlord do not hold same meaning across Punjab. In Bhalot and the surrounding villages, the word *zamindar* is reserved for large landowners (landlords). Small scale farmers refer to themselves as *zimidars*. However this distinction does not hold for all Punjab. In other places zamindar refers to any farmer and landlords are referred to by other terms. When I speak of landlords the terms Malik, Khan Choudry and Sardar all indicate titles of respect, but in other contexts these may simply be names. Malik, Choudry and Sardar are placed before the name of the landlord (Malik Asif Nawaz, Choudry Jamshaid, Sardar Tariq Jang etc.). Khan goes after the landlord's name (Asif Khan). Finally, it is not uncommon for people to employ a Punjabi and a Pathan title (Sardar Ovais Ali Khan, Malik Mohammed Afzal Khan etc.) though in those cases Khan may be considered as much a name as a title.

*Villagers*

There was not an adequate term to refer to non-landlord villagers. They were most often called *gao rehné wala* (person who lives in a village) or just *gao wala* (village person). In English people said 'villager'. Only rarely do landlords describe themselves as villagers in the village (though they sometimes do when in the city). Nor do non-landlord villagers refer to landlords as villagers. I have opted for the awkward term of non-landlord villagers or sometimes just villagers when it is clear who is being discussed. My apologies to all the *gao rehné walé* who might prefer a different designation.

## Preface

Malik Sahib walked into his *déra* followed by three men. Unlike his cousins, he was an early riser and on this particular Sunday he had no where he needed to be. He therefore felt an obligation to attend to his villagers in his guest house. One of the men following was his servant, Rasheed, who was trailing along to find out what chores Malik Sahib wanted done that day. He had been up since 4:30 and had already fed and milked the buffaloes, fed the chickens, and cleaned the garage. He had gone into Malik Sahib's house to make his breakfast tea but had not been quick enough and Malik Sahib had seen him and called him out to the *déra*. He would have time for tea later and would simply content himself with a cigarette for the moment. If he were lucky there would be some important guest and he would be sent to fetch tea. There was usually enough left over for him.

The second man following Malik Sahib was an old man, Baba Raheem. He had spent his life working land that belonged to Bhaloti Maliks. His father had worked land for Malik Ghulab Khan, Malik Asif's grandfather. In his youth Baba Raheem had worked for Malik Asif's father, Malik Nawaz. Later Baba Raheem had wanted better land so he started working for Malik Azam Khan. When he had disagreed with Malik Azam Khan on the division of wheat one season he became angry. He had been a young father then and still allowed his pride to influence his decisions. He had quit Malik Azam Khan and gone to work for Malik Azam's brother, Malik Afzal Khan. Later when his son had needed medical attention Malik Afzal had found reasons to delay giving Baba Raheem any money and Baba had got angry again. He had gone back to Malik Azam who promised him money for his son's medical needs. As he grew older and was no longer able to work at the same pace he relied more and more on his sons to work the land. They were not as obedient as they should have been. His youngest son had run away to join the army but was rejected for illiteracy. He had complained bitterly at his father's lack of connections. His oldest son was more obedient but was still fragile. He had polio as a teenager and his body had never quite recovered. He was willing to work any number of hours but he simply could not lift heavy things and tired easily. Today Baba needed help from the

Maliks for his second son. His son needed an identity card but was illiterate. No one in his family could read or write and so filling in the application form was a frustrating impossibility. He had tried to get Malik Azam's help but Malik Azam was angry at him for the moment. He had wanted Baba Raheem and his sons to work some land for him the previous month. It was land for which another sharecropper was responsible and Baba Raheem had already helped that lazy man many times but he had refused to reciprocate. Baba Raheem and his sons had left early in the morning and spent the day in Taxila. When Malik Azam's servant had come to collect them they were nowhere to be found. When Baba Raheem had gone to Malik Azam the next week Malik Azam had started talking about that day and how much he had done for Baba Raheem. Malik Azam had agreed to help but was delaying his services as a punishment. So now Baba Raheem was trying a new strategy. Malik Asif still had a bond of loyalty to him because he had worked for his father and his father had worked for Malik Asif's paternal grandfather, his *dada*. Malik Asif could not turn him away for something so trivial.

The third man following Malik Asif was a landlord from a neighbouring village. As the men approached the entrance to Malik Asif's *déra* he signalled to two men squatting on the path a few metres away. They both rose and followed the party. This man, Zahir Khan, had no favour to ask of Malik Asif for himself. He was an equal of Malik Asif and he would never ask Malik Asif to sort out his own problems. Today he was making a request on behalf of one of the men coming with him. He was a Pathan from the tribal areas. He had shown up a few days before with some story about fighting between *chachazad* (cousins). Zahir Khan did not know whether to believe the Pathan or not but he had come with a letter from one of his *mamou* (mother's brother), who was a landlord in Hazara District. Out of respect for his *mamou* he had to do something for the man. He did not need any more sharecroppers but he knew that Malik Asif was looking for someone good. Malik Asif had 50 *kanal* of irrigated land neighbouring Zahir Khan's lands so Zahir Khan and Malik Asif paid close attention to the activities of each other. Malik Asif had invested a fortune in his tubewell and wanted the land to be properly cared for. He was hoping to find a sharecropper that would do it all for him and not require his constant attention. So far he had had no luck. Zahir Khan knew all this and thought that if the Pathan were any good then Malik Asif would be very grateful for the recommendation. If the Pathan were

a liar and knew nothing about farming then he would not be any worse than half the sharecroppers in the area.

The *charpai* were arranged in a square 'U' shape. Malik Asif sat at the open side of the square. His chair and table were the only objects on that side of the square. He was not yet feeling friendly or joking. For the moment he was serious and busy calculating all that needed to be done that day. He knew what each of the men in front of him wanted. He knew about Baba Raheem's problems. He had to decide how to help Baba Raheem but needed to do so without seriously upsetting his uncle. He also wanted to know what sort of work Baba Raheem's sons were capable of. Zahir Khan was here to pawn off some sharecropper for whom he had no room. Malik Asif was suspicious but he needed someone badly and he did not want anyone from his village.

More people wandered in when they realised that Malik Asif was staying in the village and was seeing people. Malik Asif ordered Rasheed to his house for tea and biscuits. Not every man there was exactly a guest but some were guests therefore every man would get tea-- perhaps not all at the same time but eventually they would all drink tea together. The people slipping onto every charpai except that occupied by Zahir Khan were all well known to Malik Asif. One or two had already asked Malik Sahib for a favour and were here to pester him into actually doing what he said he would do. Sometimes Malik Sahib said he would do things but somehow never get round to it. Malik Asif knew all this. It was a delicate balance-- agreeing to do things you knew you could not or would not do just to maintain the loyalty and obedience of a servant. Eventually he knew he would have to do something for them but he had to figure out what exactly that would be-- only Malik Sahib dictated what he would do for his villagers and he would do what they needed, not necessarily what they wanted.

He spoke to Zahir Khan first. They chatted very briefly about one of Zahir Khan's relatives who was a local politician and then Khan Sahib told him that he had a man to take over Malik Sahib's irrigated land.

'He's honest and hard working. He knows farming and he comes from a good family. His family is friends with my mamou,' Khan Sahib told him.

'Where's he from?' Malik Sahib asked.

'Mardan,' Khan Sahib lied.

The two men spoke for a moment or two more then Malik Asif turned to the Pathan sitting on the charpai. He began a long lecture about discipline and obedience and loyalty and hard work. The Pathan occasionally nodded his head and said, 'Absolutely Malik Sahib.' Sometimes he called him Khan Sahib. Once he called him Badshah-- 'king'. It seemed to make little difference. In the end Malik Sahib agreed to give him a chance. The Pathan did not say thank you.

Malik Asif then spoke to Baba Raheem. Before Baba Raheem had a chance to say anything Malik Asif turned to one of his servants, an old man who was very close and intimate with Malik Asif's family. The old man was called Malik in spite of the fact that he had no land. He was not usually called Malik Sahib but in more playful moments Malik Asif even gave him this honour.

'Malik,' Malik Asif said to his old servant, 'This Baba is very sneaky,' he said pointing to Baba Raheem.

Everyone laughed and Baba Raheem reached over and took the chillum from Zahir Khan who had finished.

'He wants to ask me a favour but he never comes to my dera to drink tea. He doesn't come in the evening to watch my television. He only comes to see me when he needs a favour. And this time around he's already asked my family for a favour but he wasn't happy with the favours that other Maliks give him. Only Malik Asif can satisfy Baba-ji, isn't that right?' Malik Asif said. He punctuated this little speech with a slap on his servant's back. The servant squinted his eyes up and said, 'Ai-ai-ai' in mock pain.

'Malik Sahib,' Baba Raheem began, 'You know that I have a sick son-- he needs my attention. I'm a very poor old man. I worked for your father many years and he treated me so well that I worked too hard-- now I'm just a tired old man.'

Malik Sahib laughed.



# 1 Power, patronage and 'hybridization'

This is a thesis about power and the ways people in Pakistan get it and use it. It is a thesis about the ways in which expressions of power emerge from culture. Ultimately it is a thesis about the principles which organise Pakistani society. We may consider three complementary types of relationships underlying Pakistani social organisation: kinship, caste and political<sup>1</sup>. I have chosen to focus on the way power is expressed within each of these sets of relationships to try and show that through all of them there is a cultural continuity. Individuals invoke different relationships at different times. Sometimes the bonds of the relationships impose themselves on individuals.

The ways in which power is expressed are not separable from the culture in which it exists. Pakistani culture encourages collective action over individual action. Pakistanis encourage indebtedness as a cultural expression of allegiance. They encourage people to think of the strength and position of their group as if it were a direct reflection of their individual strength and position. All members of a group (however the group may be defined) bask in the glory of any other member of that group. This cultural pattern has meant that Pakistanis have developed a culture of intervention in which problems are solved through the involvement of allies. The economy of the household often renders this the only possible way of solving problems since most household members may not work outside the home. Women living in a household observing purdah, for example, are dependent on their male relatives for interaction with the 'public' sphere. Sons who do not work are dependent on their fathers for spending money, food, clothes and education. This intervention is encouraged both positively and negatively. Intervention is offered for even trivial matters and refusal of help is tantamount to a denial of the importance of the relationship. It is antisocial to refuse help from family and friends. With interventionist expectations embedded within household relations and wider family relations, it is a matter of transferral to the extra-domestic and non-kin domain for intervention to become

a part of the social norms of the wider society. These relationship patterns emerge from asymmetrical relations of age within the family (i.e. father:son::elder brother:younger brother::mother-in-law:daughter-in-law etc.). With expectations of reciprocal intervention or mutual service they become manifested in patron/client roles when transferred to non-kin. To be sure, patronage often uses the metaphor of the family without necessarily meaning that the family is the building block of patronage, but in Pakistan there are very strong parallels between the ways individuals behave and relate within their family and the ways they do so with non-kin.

This thesis is not only about power within the family. Rather, it is about power in society and how asymmetrical power relations form the cornerstone of Pakistani society. The fundamental cultural relationship that Pakistanis seek out with other individuals is asymmetrical. Close relations of equality are problematic for Pakistanis and seem to occur only in very limited conditions. In general, when Pakistanis meet, they weigh up the status of the person in front of them and behave accordingly. This can lead to tension when two unknown individuals do not share the same assessment of each other's status. Power and status are not the same thing but are related. High status, arguably has more power. Low status has a different kind of power. All kinds of power must be wielded in specific ways if they are not to backfire. This thesis is about the ways in which people manipulate the power they can access and the ways in which they can make the power of others serve their interests. I focus neither on the very weak nor the very powerful but rather a group of men who are somewhere in the middle. Within their own domain, they are very powerful, but their domain is geographically small. They are surrounded by men who are far more powerful than them. Yet these men have far more power, status and authority than one would predict either from the number of their clients or the economic resources over which they have direct control. The power they can command directly is not impressive, but the extent to which they can make use of the power of others has rendered them very powerful.

Throughout the thesis I examine the role of patrons and their clients. When do individuals become patrons and when can they be considered clients. How do patrons attract clients? How do clients attract patrons? Why does anyone participate in what is obviously an

asymmetric relationship? Why do Pakistanis not shun these relations of inequality as they enter the global economy and have greater contact with Europe and North America, where equality and democracy have become fetishized and made sacrosanct? Pakistan is a part of the global economy (albeit not a net beneficiary) and the values of the West are not alien to Pakistanis. They know far more about us than we know about them. Yet they continue to form and maintain relationships of inequality at all levels of society, in both public and private spheres. Werbner's [1991] study of factionalism in the Manchester area of the United Kingdom, suggests that even when alternative structures are available, asymmetric relations of patronage persist.

If one assumes that asymmetrical relations are inherently wrong, then one might think my thesis should provide mechanisms for alleviating inequality. Instead, I argue that asymmetrical relations cannot easily be eradicated from Pakistan and even if they could, would leave the people in a perilous state for at least the short term future. Asymmetrical relations, and the culture of intervention, have become the *modus operandi* of the society. One may blame the State for failing to provide stable infrastructural alternatives, or one could blame the culture for preventing the State from doing so. Either way, one is left with the result that Pakistanis have grown to depend heavily on asymmetry and inequality. When individuals find themselves faced with problems they must rely on personal relationships to deal with them. The weak need more powerful patrons to work on their behalf and, as I show in this thesis, one indicator of an individual's power is the quality and number of his clients. So my thesis will not provide a blueprint, or strategy, for making Pakistan more like European or North American industrial democracies. Instead I offer greater understanding of relationships of power in a patronage dominated culture.

## **Power**

Specifying power is not a trivial endeavour. There are phenomena which are observable and centred on conflicts of interest where something called power is clearly identifiable. There are other phenomena which are far more difficult to observe, but which involve expressions of power nonetheless. It would be wrong to insist that power can only be understood through an examination of conflict; yet there are risks in interpreting situations without conflict as expressions of power.

The ability to control people may be either positive or negative; that is, having the power either to make another person do something or to prevent another person from doing something they might have done. Power implies control of both material as well as cultural resources. It need not be coercive, though it may be. Furthermore, it need not be perceived by the effected person as being an imposition, though again, it may be. The mechanics of establishing power vary in different instances and according to the starting position of an individual or group. The measure of power, on the other hand, may be more uniform. If power is the ability to effect the environment, including people, then one can measure the occurrence of such instances and compare it with instances when attempts to effect some change have failed. In this way, one may arrive at a relative measure of an individual's power. It may therefore be easier to begin with an evaluation of the degrees of power of different individuals and groups before dismantling the processes of attaining that level of power.

My starting point for the study of power is Weber. His typology is of great interest for its elaboration of power and the mechanisms by which it may be instantiated. Weber defines power as:

'Power' (*Macht*) is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests. [Weber 1947: 152]

One of the mechanisms by which power may be enacted is imperative control:

'Imperative control' (*Herrschaft*) is the probability that a command with a specific given content will be obeyed by a given group of persons [Weber 1947: 152].

While this mechanism does not describe all the cases with which I am concerned, it is one of the most important. I address situations in which one person or group is able not only to carry out their own will, but control others to obey that will as well. To this end I require a definition of power which can be applied in a variety of situations. My understanding of power is compatible with Foucault's notions of power, in that I do not necessarily imply 'negative control of the will of others through prohibition' [Gledhill 1994: 126], though nor do I eliminate this possibility. Indeed bribery and gift giving may provide the means

for controlling others, thereby conferring power on the giver without recourse to prohibitions. This may be done with the complete voluntary participation of the receiver. Indeed, as Lukes points out, power may be as much about controlling possibilities as events:

...is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial? [1974: 24].

The manipulation of discursive arenas where certain issues are allowed to emerge, he argues, is a product of power. Nor is this definition of power incompatible with Bourdieu's analysis in *The Logic of Practice* [1990]. The ability to garner symbolic capital necessitates control of material resources or people, both of which may become symbolic resources in certain contexts. The exertion of symbolic, or 'gentle' violence on others, is an expression of power in situations of covert conflict.

I am wary of studying power in the absence of conflict, though I suggest it is necessary. There are inherent problems in speculating on areas of potential conflict which would emerge if only the subordinated party had not had 'their perceptions, cognitions and preferences [shaped] in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things' [Lukes 1974: 24]. If there is no observable conflict (either overt or covert), then how are external observers supposed to assume there should be? Subordination to societal norms is certainly one of the defining characteristics of the concept 'society'. How does one research areas of conflict that do *not* happen? Lukes raises fascinating philosophical issues which are valuable to conceptions of power but are exceedingly problematic for sociological analysis. In Pakistan, the dilemma becomes unavoidable. Individuals readily participate in situations which are clearly not to their own material or social advantage. They do this because these actions, and the actions of those whom they obey, conform to a set of shared 'perceptions, cognitions and preferences'. In other words, they reproduce asymmetrical power relationships because they conform to the values common to both dominant and subordinate participants. While powerful people may manipulate much of

the circumstances in which conflict arises, they must do so within the constraints of this shared set of values.

Finally, I wish briefly to mention the relationship between physical violence and power. Hannah Arendt says 'to speak of non-violent power is actually redundant' [1970: 56]. While it seems extreme to suggest that violence may never be legitimate, as Arendt argues, I agree with her to the extent that instantiated violence may paradoxically *undermine* power. The rapid escalation of violence in the Balkan conflicts would tend to support Arendt's argument that actual physical violence is incompatible with power [see Bowman N.D., for a discussion of the ways Milosevic used threats of violence as a substitute for Titoism]. It was precisely the breakdown of state power which led first to its manipulation of antagonisms and then to its use of direct physical violence [Bowman N.D.]. The end result has been a substantial decrease in the power of the Yugoslavian state. The parallels with various Pakistani governments' attempts to use actual physical violence either internally or externally (against India), while outside the scope of this thesis, have similarly led to significant decrease in the power of the state.

The uninstantiated *threat* of violence, however, may form an important basis of power. Power may be measured in support for the will of a group or an individual<sup>2</sup>. While this does not preclude the use of violence, that would certainly indicate a lack of support, hence a lack of power. Both in the Punjab and NWFP, there is a rhetoric of violence which exceeds real physical violence. The risks of carrying out overt physically violent acts against another person are severe and both societies have devised strategies of expressing power which rest on rarely enacting threatened violence. I argue that while power and violence are not opposites neither are they necessarily interdependent.

### **Patronage**

There has been considerable work done on patronage and clientage. Some of this work has been focused on elements of society deemed to be 'criminal' (notably work on Mafia patronage [Boissevain 1966; Blok 1974]). This work offers interesting and valuable analytical concepts, however, I would emphasise that Punjabi landlords should not be perceived as a criminal group. Despite the obvious parallels in strategic behaviours Punjabi landlords are not mafia and, like their Sicilian *borghesi* counterparts [see

Boissevain 1966: 25-28], may perform acts which are illegal but *not* immoral. Some of the roles adopted or imposed on groups and individuals in Punjab, therefore, are indeed similar to those attributed to the Mafia, or Mafia-like social networks. Thus, while one should resist the temptation to equate Punjabi landlords with criminal Mafia groups, the considerable literature on patron/client relations in the Mediterranean region nevertheless offers a rich analytical resource.

The study of patron/client roles and relationships expanded tremendously in the 1960's. According to Roniger this was a reaction 'against evolutionary assumptions regarding the allegedly generalized move toward Western liberal forms of political development and bureaucratic universalism' [1994: 3]. Part of the dilemma for anthropologists was how to accommodate the ubiquitous presence of patronal relations in societies which were apparently moving towards more modern capitalist institutional structures.

The following definitional points of patron/client relations are relatively accepted. First, patron/client relations exist systemically [Boissevain 1966; 1974; 1980; Davis 1977; Gellner 1977]. That is, while the patron/client relationship is personal and dyadic it involves the human networks of each of member of the dyad. It exists within systems of patrons and clients. Second, patron/client roles are voluntary and reciprocal. Unlike the ascribed obligations of kin relations, patron/client relations are achieved and create an obligation 'which entails a reciprocal service that must be repaid on more or less a *quid pro quo* basis' [Boissevain 1966: 22]. Third, while idioms of 'friendship' are employed between patrons and clients this should be understood as 'instrumental' friendship rather than 'emotional' friendship, following Wolf's distinction between the two. Likewise, where idioms of kinship are employed, this should be understood as providing the 'language of patronage' rather than offering an explanatory device [Gellner 1977: 2]. Fourth, patron/client roles are hierarchical [Boissevain 1966; Davis 1977; Gellner 1977; Gilmore 1977; Scott 1977]. Thus Boissevain suggests, extending Kenny's argument, that there are only two basic roles in a system of patronage: patron/client and client/patron. The client/client role is ruled out by Kenny [1960], who argues that as soon as one client offers another a service he ceases to be a client. Boissevain applies the same logic to the patron/patron role, noting that it too is a 'logical impossibility' [1966: 24].

While these definitional points would seem to be accepted, it can not be said that anthropologists of the Mediterranean all agree that the concepts and terms of patronage are relevant. Thus in his study of the Akkar region of Lebanon, Gilsenan [1986; 1996] does not rely on the analytical concepts of patronage to understand relationships of domination; instead focusing on narratives of domination invested in a group of individual men. Gilsenan provides ample historical and economic evidence which I would suggest demonstrates the importance of patronage, however his analytical focus does not employ such tools. Elsewhere Gilsenan [1977] argues that patron/client analyses mask the more significant aspects of those societies. He writes that patron/client ties are simply a collection of traits which must be 'cobbled' together 'based to an uncertain degree on specific empirical situations' and are ultimately inadequate [1977: 167-168]. Gilsenan instead sees these situations as the 'cementing of ties between the favour givers who have a common interest... in excluding favour seekers and keeping them dependent' [182]. In effect Gilsenan is suggesting that the situation in Lebanon (and by extension most societies typified as patron/client societies) should be seen as societies divided by class interests. Pakistani landlords demonstrate similar group self interest, in that they do reinforce the horizontal links between landlords, and to that extent one might conclude that perhaps social analysts should follow Gilsenan's lead and eliminate the notion of the dyadic asymmetrical reciprocity of patronage for a more class based analysis. However, this would deprive social analysis of a very important tool for understanding patron/client roles beyond the scope of landlord-peasant interaction. As I argue throughout this thesis, the role of patron is not the exclusive domain of the rich, nor is the role of client excluded from the rich. Indeed, as Boissevain states, 'most persons in fact occupy roles as both patron and client' [1966: 24]. Consequently I believe Pakistani patron/client systems, and by extension other patron/client systems, should be understood as a system which operates around a set of roles rather than economic positions. .

Similarly Colclough [2000], though not denying the validity of patron/client ties when looking at elections in the town of Ascoli in Italy, understands local alliances and divisions as expressions of kinship networks rather than patron/client networks. Colclough finds that kinship relations provide more powerful explanatory mechanisms for the phenomenon which he tries to understand. One could, therefore, approach societies with



systems of voluntary asymmetry based on personal reciprocity in other ways. Not all such societies should necessarily be analysed as patron/client systems; however, one of the benefits of using such an analysis is that, like other established anthropological analytical strategies, it renders comparison more feasible (though see below for a discussion of borrowing concepts across geographic and cultural boundaries). Furthermore, when understanding the specific material of Pakistan, there are valid reasons (See "Patronage within the family" on page 93.) for allowing the rigid distinction between kinship and patronage to become more blurred than Colclough would accept for Ascoli.

The impact of patron/client studies of the 1960's and 1970's has been profound and has been extended far beyond the Mediterranean region. Scott [1972; 1977; 1985] has written extensively about patron/client networks outside of the Mediterranean basin. Scott [1985] has, in particular, examined mechanisms of resistance available to clients in South East Asia. This resistance is not, he argues, a negation of the patron/client system, at least it does not lead either to clients or patrons rejecting the asymmetrical reciprocity, but is rather a tool for the weak to ensure that the powerful continue to maintain their part of the contract. Due to the connection between the Iberian peninsula and Latin America, it is to be expected that Latin Americanists have made profitable use of patron/client analytical tools for their own areas of interest. Wolf, of course, was influential to Mediterraneanist writers and made effective use of patronage for comparative purposes between Latin America, the Mediterranean, Europe and South East Asia [Wolf 1973]. He looked at the occasions when peasants have gone to war representing peasant interests. While Wolf does not restrict his analysis to an examination of patronage in those conflicts, including introduces class factors as well, he does rely on the analytical concepts of patronage throughout his discussion.

One aspect of some of the writing on patron/client systems has been a focus on clientalism. Some writers have deliberately opted to focus on the role of client (see Günes-Ayata 1984; 1994; Mahmood 1987; Roniger 1994; and Roniger and Günes-Ayata 1994). To some degree this is basically substituting the word clientalism for patronage and includes discussion of the role of patron. Despite inclusion of the role of patron, there is little consideration for the multiplicity of role behaviours that individuals may assume.

Like Gilson's argument, a focus on clientalism is valuable for its identification of horizontal links between categories of persons identified as 'patrons' or as 'clients' but does not address the presence of individuals who are positioned as clients vis a vis the wider society but who may nevertheless adopt patron roles within other domains.

There are of course more approaches one could take other than analyses based on narratives reinforcing horizontal linkages, kinship and patronage/clientalism in order to describe and understand hierarchical relations of asymmetrical reciprocity. Notions of feudalism are embedded in certain popularisations of cultures like these. In Pakistan the imagery of feudal lords is applied to landlords. One landlord I met in Baluchistan waved his hand expansively over a group of men working a field and announced in English, 'These are my peasants. I am their lord and they belong to me. It's like your feudal system and they are my serfs.' Anthropologists do not normally explain modern Pakistani agricultural communities as feudal, however, there has been a substantial body of work done in related fields which has explored the possibility that in Pakistan one is dealing with a society which had been characterised by a particular type of feudalism (South Asian feudalism). It would not be useful to review that literature extensively here, but it is worth noting since idea of feudalism holds some sway within the country [see Chaudhary 1999, Hussain 1999, Uchikawa 2000]. It is contentious to describe any non-European society as feudal except if one is trying employ a Marxist framework to typify a society. The question with which political scientists and economists were concerned when this issue was being actively debated, was whether India had been a feudal society (or at least part of India), and if so do the modern states of the Indian sub-continent demonstrate feudal or manorial principles of organisation. Leach [1959] understood Sinhalese (Sri Lankan) society as a form of caste feudalism because the power structures were fragmented. Although the Sinhalese king conformed more to Marx's Oriental (centralised) form of despot the villages and regions had significant autonomy. Much of Leach's argument concerns the way large scale projects like irrigation, can be achieved in the absence of centralised authority which can call on mass *corvée* labour. Leach describes the construction and maintenance of the Sinhalese irrigation infrastructure as being a partially working system at the best of times, constructed over centuries. It did not, therefore, therefore require the kind of Oriental despot necessary to construct or maintain the whole

irrigation structure. Sharma [1985], looking at historical India, agrees with Leach that the relationship between castes, the *jajman* system, was a form of South Asian or caste feudalism. Mukhia [1981; 1985] and Singh [1993] on the other hand contest the idea that one can make historical South Asia, particularly the *jajman* system, conform to Marxist frameworks. The presence of free labour, they argue, denies the possibility of applying a feudal model, which in Europe involved bonded labour. While it seems quite clear that Pakistan is not a feudal society today because it lacks the economic characteristics of such a society (no kings for example), it may be useful to employ notions of a manorial system in order to understand some aspects of emergent class relations. While this thesis examines the mechanisms of interpersonal power relations which are not primarily concerned with class, I am prepared to re-examine my findings within a different framework of manorial (or residual feudal) relations in order to address different questions about emergent class structures.

Hardiman [1982] has been critical of analysing South Asian political behaviour through factions and, by extension, through patron/client ties. Hardiman presents historical material of political conflict during the colonial regime. He describes a situation in which groups were defined by their alliance to, or opposition to, Gandhi's nationalist movement. He acknowledges that on the surface one could see these groups as political factions or patron/client networks (cross cutting kin, caste and class affiliations). This, he argues, misrepresents what happened for a number of reasons. First he argues that the group leaders did not behave as 'factional' leaders. The leader of a pro-Gandhi group, Vallabhai Patel, acted primarily as an agitator and did not 'lead' the peasants into protest movements [1982: 204-205]. Instead, Hardiman writes, Vallabhai Patel simply followed the peasants in the direction in which they were already moving. He did not instantiate any patron/client networks in order to initiate peasant action. Hardiman says that other group leaders similarly did not conform to behaviours associated with factional leaders. One such leader assumed formal office when the nationalist movement was losing support but relinquished his office as soon as the nationalist movement had increased in popularity [1982: 205]. Instead of factional leaders influencing the peasant movements, Hardiman argues that this was a peasant or class based political movement in which some of the local elites simply went along. Hardiman points to examples in which the patrons failed to enforce their will

[1982: 206]. Ultimately Hardiman argues that there are 'no real grounds for believing factionalism to be more central to Indian political life than conflict between classes' [1982: 230]. While demonstrating some of the limitations of a factionalist approach to understanding both District and village level politics, Hardiman's critique is problematic. If one tries, like Lewis [1958], to understand Indian political behaviour as the interaction between megalithic factions which unite 'high' caste kin groups with 'low' caste kin groups, then there Hardiman and others can easily point to anomalous cases which effectively negate the approach. However, if one looks at patron/client roles and relationships as the foundation for personal relationships that do not require any member of the dyad to be an 'elite', then Hardiman's case study does not negate a patron/client approach. Hardiman's group leaders do not conform to Lewis' factional leader stereotypes, but did they adopt the roles of patronage in their interaction with others? Hardiman does not say but it would be interesting to know exactly how they behaved. That factions are not homogenous blocks which endure through time [see Werbner 1991] is not a novel concept but it is one that Hardiman ignores. Thus it is quite irrelevant whether Hardiman's group leaders assumed public, formal roles of leadership of factions that had emerged from previous conflicts. What is relevant is the social tools they employed in their interaction with peasants and others. Nor is the fact that patrons are not always able to enforce their will a contradiction of patronage. In this thesis I argue, like Scott, that clients have 'power' over their patrons and that they have 'weapons' to ensure that patrons not only satisfy their obligations, but restrict their demands. Patrons have public power mechanisms which are easily equated to the powers that the state tries to monopolise. Clients must rely on other power mechanisms which may go unacknowledged but which nevertheless may have considerable influence on behaviours.

### **Crossroads cultures: areas of 'hybridization'**

It is empirically demonstrable that cultures do not respect national or state boundaries. Prior to the emergence of the nation-state cultural exchange was not formally problematised. Areas where linguistic or ethnic groups meet reflect this exchange. Donnan and Wilson suggest that 'borderlands' merit generic examination [1999: 11-14]. They focus on national boundaries and the impact of these on the cultures of borderlands

(and vice versa), but as they point out, anthropology has long been concerned with social boundaries which do not correspond to state delimited borders. Borderlands are areas in which the inhabitants are 'influenced by, and sometimes share the values, ideas, customs and traditions of, their counterparts across the boundary line' [Martinez paraphrased in Donnan and Wilson 1999: 5]. They are areas of accommodation as well as conflict (both international and ethnic). Attock District is not an area that Donnan and Wilson would have included in their study since it does not lie directly on an international frontier<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless it has important borderland features. It lies on the internal provincial border between NWFP and Punjab, provinces associated with two of the major ethnic and linguistic groups within Pakistan. It has long been the buffer zone between Pukhtun (or Pathan) culture and Punjabi culture. Significantly, Attock District was a state patrolled border at one time. Attock District represents more than simply a borderland between NWFP and Punjab however; it may be seen as a microcosm of what occurs throughout northern Pakistan. I argue that the anthropology of border cultures may shed light on critical aspects of Pakistani culture and society. Pakistan may rightly be viewed as a nation of 'border cultures'. This has clearly been exacerbated by a succession of weak states but I argue that it has been a major factor in the development of culture and society in the area now known as Pakistan, at least as far back as the early civilisations of Taxila, and perhaps as far back as the days of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. The term borderland culture, however, risks confusion. I am only peripherally interested in those borders that have been created since Partition in 1947. Though they have had an impact on the society it has not necessarily led to fundamental cultural transformations. Nevertheless, the cultural accommodation and conflict present throughout the modern nation-state of Pakistan must be addressed. Studying cultures with respect to the ways they are influenced by their neighbours provides useful methodological possibilities. To this end I adopt two related concepts which may be equated to borderlands but do not imply state imposed borders or boundaries: crossroads cultures and hybridizing cultures.

Crossroads culture areas do not automatically lead to hybridizing cultures. The former term refers to geography, the second to the kinds of cultural mechanisms inhabitants employ to cope with outside influences. Areas which lay along important trade routes or routes of conquest fall into the category of crossroads cultures. Regardless of the degree

of integration cultures may be located on the crossroads of culture areas. Hybridizing cultures, on the other hand, are something slightly different. This refers to cultures and societies which have mechanisms for cultural accommodation without loss of identity. Pakistanis, for example, are able to blend a bewildering variety of eclectic cultural practices together rendering them categorically 'Pakistani'<sup>4</sup>. I call this cultural characteristic, hybridizing: the ability to incorporate potentially conflicting cultural traits. Pakistan lies at the crossroads to three major culture areas: India, the Middle East and Central Asia. The northern half of Pakistan, in particular, has seen thousands of years of migration, war, trade and domination involving people from across Eurasia. The dilemma for Pakistan scholars is to incorporate all of these cultural influences in ways which are meaningful and integrated, rather than merely developing a body of review literature from other places. The impact of these culture areas on Pakistan has not simply created a 'multicultural' nation (though multicultural patterns certainly hold some relevance) but forged a hybridizing culture, which is, as yet, largely uncongealed as a nation-state. In my thesis I do not argue that Pakistan is a homogenous culture area where all influences are distributed equally, but that there are patterns of roles, values and world views which run across the nation. I therefore concur with Lindholm when he writes that the 'resemblances between the social order of the Pukhtuns and structure of lowland Pakistani society are primarily in scale' [1996: 74].

In many of the core social values and principles of social organisation Pukhtun or Pathan, and Punjabi culture and society, do reflect differences of scale rather than type. The ideals of *pukhtunwali* and *izzat*, for example, bear more than passing resemblance. The foundation of both, as I argue below, is control. A person who 'does' *pukhtunwali* or 'does' good *izzat*, is a person who controls him or herself and those around them. The mechanisms for each social category or process follow similar patterns. The important points are: hospitality, women, agnatic cousin rivalry, refuge and blood feud. Refuge and hospitality are linked. One must provide refuge to one's guests from all harm. The control of women, through seclusion or other means, is vital. Women represent the nuclear family, the household and the lineage. If their behaviour is immoral or disreputable this reflects poorly on all their relatives. If they are attacked or otherwise molested, this reflects poorly on a family's ability to defend itself. Both situations imply poor *izzat* in Punjab and a

neglect of pukhtunwali in NWFP. In NWFP women are meant to be secluded, yet in villages where Pukhtun women work in the fields this is no more practical than it is in Punjabi villages. Due to greater population density in the Punjab strict seclusion of women is frequently impractical, however one should not infer from this that the ideal is significantly different.

These roles, values and world views come from the hybridization of different cultures Indian, Central Asian, Middle Eastern and indigenous cultures like those of the Taxila hills. Without forming a durable nation-state or even a true 'Pakistan' identity, the people of Pakistan do manifest some distinct culture patterns from their neighbours. To be sure, many of the roles, values and world views which I discuss are present in India, Central Asia and the Middle East; however it is not the isolated constituent elements alone which define the structure. Pakistan and India achieved independence and partition in 1947. In just over half a century each country has chosen very different political and economic paths which have had an important impact on social institutions and cultural conceptualisations. The differences are far deeper than could simply be accounted for since independence however. Pakistan is a very young State, but a very old culture. Pakistan has had to accommodate a steady flow of migrants back and forth on their way to somewhere else. One can hardly speak of a culture as old as Pakistan as a hybrid; however, the people of present day Pakistan have shown a remarkable ability to adapt and integrate a wide range of representatives of other cultures, hence the label hybridizing culture area.

### **Central Asia and the Middle East**

Of the Central Asian influences, arguably some of the most important political and linguistic impact has come from the Turks. They came to Pakistan from Central Asia and Asia Minor steadily for trade and war. Their migration began in earnest with the Afghan invasions. Mahmud of Ghazni raided India for the first time in 1000, and is said to have followed this with some 17 further raids over the next 25 years. Mohammad Ghauri, a fellow Afghan, carried on the activities of Mahmud Ghaznavi a century and a half later (1182-1206). The Turkic military incursions into South Asia culminated in the formation of the Moghul dynasty which endured for over three centuries, from 1526 to 1858. The

Middle East, under the Ottomans, was likewise influenced by Turkic Asia. Equally important has been the flow of Pushto speaking Afghans. This influence is more immediately discernable from the ethnography of Pakistan. In areas further north than my own study, it would of course be critical to look at the impact of the Uzbecks, Kazaks, Mongols and related groups. The northern areas of Pakistan may share far more with those Central Asian groups than the populations of the Punjab. The primary influence, for the purposes of this thesis however, remains Afghanistan and the Arabian peninsula. The Pathan invasions and the idea of Arab migration<sup>5</sup> have had a profound impact on social relations and organisation in Pakistan.

### **India**

The impact of India, of course, has been tremendous. Pakistan is clearly a variant of South Asian culture. The syncretic nature of Islam, as practised in Pakistan, bears unmistakable similarities to Hinduism. The presence of occupational caste categories is likewise a holdover from Hindu social organisation. Linguistically, Urdu and Hindi are merely dialects of the same language (with a different script). The division of Punjab in 1947, has some basis in historical divisions but these do not represent significant cultural rupture, but rather past political cease fire lines (and even there, the map makers cheated in order to include Amritsar in India). Once the Turkic speaking invaders established their Moghul dynasty they very quickly became Indian leaders, not Turkic leaders of India. The greatest Moghul of all, Akbar, went so far as to marry Hindu women and experiment with fused religious beliefs (which were disavowed by his descendants). So while I look at much of the influences from Central Asia and the Middle East I do not underrate the importance of other parts of the Indian Sub-Continent.

I will introduce some anthropological concepts from neighbouring regions, however, the focus remains on Pakistan. The goal of my thesis is to produce an ethnography of Pakistan which accounts for influences from Central Asia, the Middle East and India and demonstrates the resultant hybridising society which belongs, if not to a unique culture area, at least to an area which presents several important sociological features distinct from its neighbours. An additional goal is to demonstrate that there is not a sharp divide between rural and urban. There is a cultural continuum that runs from the villages to the



highest economic spheres of the urban centres. Such areas of intense demographic movement, over time, of different ethnic, linguistic and political groups are both fascinating and invaluable to a study of human culture and society.

### **Hierarchy and dominance**

Material divisions within Pakistani society are such that it is visually evident who may be considered dominant or subordinate in many contexts. Within narrower subdivisions of the society, where individuals may fall in similar economic situations, there are other indicators, or mechanisms for determining dominants or subordinates. In this thesis I will examine the ways dominance or subordination are expressed or manifested, the strategies for establishing these categories, and the expected privileges and responsibilities associated with the categories. Furthermore I propose an explanation of why individuals participate in a system of inequality as both subordinates and dominants and how this system perpetuates itself beyond the traditional rural setting of a village.

This chapter examines some anthropological approaches to relevant themes in regions outside of Pakistan. The anthropology of Pakistan has been fortunate to some extent in its lack of regional ethnosociological frameworks from which to work. It has allowed anthropologists to make use of theory derived from Indian as well as Middle Eastern studies, and to some extent, Donnan and Werbner argue, has created a schism in Pakistani ethnography [Donnan and Werbner 1991: 2-6]. I demonstrate that while the various theoretical approaches associated with these regions may be suitable for highlighting certain aspects of Pakistani society, they fail to convey a coherent picture of the commonalities of Pakistani culture. Moreover, they neglect certain aspects of hierarchical relationships of power which are fundamental to an understanding of Pakistani society and culture. That paradigmatic approaches might influence the results of research is neither an original nor a new idea. Van Velsen [1967] argued over thirty years ago that the types of data sought after and, consequently, what is perceived as data is, to some extent, shaped by theoretical approach. Although Van Velsen suggests that this does not necessarily determine the fieldwork, it can guide it in a way that should be made explicit. More recently Holy and Stuchlik [1983], Fardon [1990] and Parkin [2000] have highlighted the fact that while anthropologists may be more aware of the influence of paradigms on their

results, it is not sometimes difficult to do more than be explicit about those concepts one may have 'imposed' on one's data (though Fardon and Pakin do provide valuable insights for avoiding some of the reifications with which I am concerned). Where this paradigmatic 'pre-disposition' has led to a reinforcement of reified divisions of 'tribal' and 'peasant' societies in Pakistan, I argue, it is problematic (though not without value in other ways).

The regional literature from which the anthropology of Pakistan has borrowed, is not without certain inconsistencies which render it problematic. Theory does not always account for empirical evidence yet there are occasions when inconsistent aspects of theory remain entrenched. These theoretical 'articles of faith' do not go unchallenged within the regions from which they emerge, however when Middle Easternists or Indianists themselves point out the discrepancy of theory with available empirical evidence, the discrepancies may remain entrenched, for example the tendency of Middle Easternists to separate honour from material position [Davis 1977: 89-101], or the insistence on the supremacy of the Brahmins on the part of Indianists, in spite of glaring empirical contradictions [Quigley 1999]. I focus on traditions that have been imported, rather than a broad literature review.

### **Important concepts from the anthropology of the Middle East and the Mediterranean**

Honour and tribe are particularly problematic terms. Their imprecision in English renders their analytical use somewhat delicate. They require some definition and constraint if they are to serve as suitable translations of indigenous terms. The Urdu word, *izzat*, can be translated conveniently as honour, but this translation must then be qualified to indicate where it diverges from honour in different parts of the world. Indeed, qualification is necessary to distinguish between the various uses of honour within one part of the world [Pitt-Rivers 1965; Stewart 1994]. Equally tricky is the word *biraderi*, which may be translated as family, tribe or even caste (though caste is not in fact an acceptable translation). Once again, if the term tribe is used as an analytical category for Pakistan, care must be taken to specify what tribe means in that context. Comparative analysis requires analytical meta-categories and these terms can be made to serve that function.

The introduction of new or alternative terms carries the same risk of imprecision and falling back on exclusive use of indigenous terms makes comparison all but impossible.

For the purposes of this thesis, honour is by far the more critical term. Izzat is frequently cited as a justification of action as well as a measure for ranking people. The ubiquitousness of izzat demands that it be clarified in ways which render comparison feasible. Mediterranean and Middle Eastern anthropology has provided the most useful set of analyses of the concepts of honour. I will examine some anthropological approaches in order to unpack the ways that this term has been applied to Pakistan in ways that have both clarified and confused the ethnography of the region.

Davis discusses idioms of stratification and their relation to political representation in the Mediterranean. He looks at both the material as well as the symbolic bases for stratification. In so doing, he provides some useful tools for unwrapping one of the key concepts in Pakistani culture: honour. In the Mediterranean context, Davis argues that the three main forms of stratification are bureaucracy, class and honour. He then associates each of these to a particular form of political representation: 'insistence on citizen's rights; class struggle; patronage' [1977:76]. Bureaucracy and class exist in Pakistan but they suffer from poor communication and lack of solidarity. Bureaucratic officials may wield a great deal of job security and relative protection from the frequent shifts in government, but they can effectively be sidelined if they interfere with the less bureaucratic agendas of their superiors. The Weberian notion of impersonalised office holder as a cornerstone to modern bureaucracies is extremely limited in the Pakistani context. Class has rarely been a successful mobilising instrument in Pakistan because individual loyalties are primarily kin and caste based. Both of those categories cut across class lines. No politician, since Z. A. Bhutto, has seriously attempted to mobilize the masses by appealing to class interests. Moreover, Bhutto's attempts to manipulate the class consciousness of the rural peasant to his own ends did not prove an entirely satisfactory experiment for anyone. The weakness of bureaucratic state structures and class mobilization have a direct effect on the kinds of stratification and power relationships within a society. In the Mediterranean this has led to a strengthening of honour derived systems of stratification. Accepting the limitations of using analytical tools cross culturally, there are fundamental issues dealing with honour

that Davis illustrates which are pertinent to explications of Pakistani notions of izzat (which may be translated as honour of a particular sort, though perhaps not precisely the same as Southern Europe<sup>6</sup>).

Honour, Davis argues, is a 'moral attribute of groups or individuals' [1977:77]. It is necessarily local because it depends on a great deal of knowledge about the person's conduct as well as material position, which Davis convincingly argues is inextricably linked to the concept of honour. One cannot, therefore, determine the honour of a complete stranger. Honour hierarchies tend to be absolute rankings:

in which each ranked unit-- a person, a family, a descent group-- occupies, or potentially occupies, a unique position, superior or inferior to each other unit. Indeed, when two units occupy similar positions the ethnographer may expect them either to be in conflict, struggling to become unequal, or to be unknown to each other... [Davis 1977:78].

Attempts to completely divorce honour from material position would seem to be ill founded.

Stewart [1994] offers a further elaboration of honour. Ultimately, he argues that honour must be understood as a right. Defined as a right, this definition of honour can encompass the two branches of the bipartite concept of honour. Whether it is public external honour (one's reputation), or personal internal honour (one's integrity), Stewart's argument allows us to view both as the right to a certain kind of respect. Clearly if the core of the term can be identified as clearly and precisely as Stewart does, then it provides an excellent comparative tool. Izzat, then may be a right to a certain kind of respect in return for certain kinds of behaviour and certain inherent properties of the individual and his or her group affiliations.

One needs to understand the obligations an individual must assume in order to attain the varying degrees of izzat and what rights are then bestowed. As Davis rightly points out, the obligations an individual may comply with are only part of the phenomenon. Individuals have no choice about some aspects of izzat and this must be accounted for as well. Furthermore an individual's izzat, like his or her hierarchical position within the society, is not immutable. Further I argue that Pakistani society is above all, fluid.

Individuals are constrained by certain parameters which do indeed seem immutable, but within those parameters, individuals manoeuvre and manipulate situations to make the best of any possible situation. Izzat is one of these flexible categories which vary according to the specific micro context. An individual may be deemed to 'do good izzat' (*aca izzat karna*) in some circles, while in others he or she may receive no such recognition. Internally, individuals may believe they possess certain inherently good izzat qualities when compared to some individuals but not in relation to others.

In Bhalot izzat would be the right to reputation and respect, both by others as well as by oneself. Not all actions which might garner an individual respect necessarily imply good izzat. Carrying guns, drinking, gambling, womanising, violent outbursts all might earn a man respect in the sense that other men will treat him with respect (perhaps out of fear), but they will not say that he is a man who does good izzat. If however in carrying out some of these actions he protects his family, expands his group interests and generally places himself in a position to be an effective head of household, then he may be seen as doing good izzat in spite of clearly bad habits. If on the other hand, a man prays five times a day, is faithful to his wife, gives charity to the poor, is courteous to everyone but in the end cannot ensure his family's protection against competitors, he will be seen to do good izzat but will not be respected as a man, which in turn will lead to his izzat being questioned. He has not earned the right to be seen to do good izzat in spite of his good deeds because he has not performed the most important deeds.

As the concept becomes removed from specific actions, what emerges are questions of control. Izzat implies a man can control his family first. That garners a minimum level of izzat. Every extension of this control outside the family increases the level of izzat. While I have the utmost respect for Pitt-Rivers, Davis, Stewart and all those who have advanced debates of honour I feel that control is the key to Punjabi notions of izzat. The contribution of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern anthropologists on this point is therefore an important one, but illustrative of the dangers of non-critical borrowing.

### **Discourses of honour, power, violence and hierarchy**

There are abundant ethnographies from the Middle East which exemplify the intricacies of honour, power, violence and hierarchy. Gilsean's [1996] account of a Lebanese

agricultural area, *Lords of the Lebanese Marches* provides a good comparative case. He concentrates on how men use narratives to justify and explain both existing and changing relationships.

Like Attock District in Punjab, the area of Akkar in northern Lebanon, was a peripheral area in a pluralist Muslim dominated empire. Subsequently, Lebanon was briefly dominated by a European power, the French. Throughout Lebanon's history, Akkar has remained an economically underdeveloped region. At the time of Gilsenan's field work, in the early 1970's, he says that some landlords, or *beys*, had a policy of preventing development, in order to maintain their position [1996: 14].

Beys in Akkar divide their time between the urban centres of Lebanon, Beirut and Tripoli, and the villages. In this they resemble Pakistani absentee landlords, similar to those discussed in S. Ahmad's [1977] work on class in the Punjab. Though this differs from the village in which my own fieldwork was based, where most of the landlords resided full time in the village, this is not uncommon in Pakistan. As in Akkar, this reduces the intimacy between landlord and villager. It creates an overseer category, in Lebanon called *aghawat* or *aghas*, which represents the interests of the bey and ensures that the peasants, *fellahin*, continue to uphold their side of the sharecropping relationship. Beys, meanwhile, focus their time and energy on external matters. Some are involved in regional and national politics. Others live extravagant lives which may end up bankrupting their family's wealth and position. Gilsenan examines the narratives these men use to make sense of, and even redefine, the violence and changes in power to which they are subjected.

'The experience of domination is central to the social definition of space and settlement' [Gilsenan 1996: 14]. The village is not a 'romantic' or nostalgic' place for beys, aghas or fellahin. The experience of the village is intertwined with forcibly imposed hierarchy. Gilsenan recounts these conflicting narratives, not as a way of getting at the historical 'truth' but rather to understand the way the people of Akkar make sense of this experience of domination. People who live in situations of extreme violence must arrive at conceptual strategies to classify that violence as 'normal'. It becomes a part of the local definitions of honour and manhood. While Gilsenan does not always make explicit what honour means,

it clearly emerges from a man's ability to control. A man's extravagance is an expression of his honour but unless it is accompanied by an ability to control it is not, in itself, a mechanism for attaining honour.

Gilsenan employs narrative analysis to illustrate the subtleties of the ways domination may be expressed and couched in terms reflecting honour and power. The 'olive grove' narrative is presented through two versions as told. Gilsenan then suggests a third possible narrative. A summary of the narrative is as follows:

An agha and a bey were riding together and the bey was eating an orange. The agha asked for a piece of the orange. The bey refused. The agha then told the bey that he would offer him the nearby olive grove in exchange for a piece of the orange. The bey gave him a piece of orange and the agha immediately signed over the olive grove [1996: 121].

The three competing narratives are as follows:

1. the agha as the man who gives up his olive grove in exchange for a piece of orange.
2. the Turkish exploitation and manipulation of a famine they engineered which resulted in the aghas forcefully losing their land.
3. the 'agha' is an expression of honour and power for both past and present relations.

The first narrative straightforwardly follows the story as told. By itself, it does not offer easily decipherable cultural meaning. The second narrative, an explanation offered by Gilsenan's informants, makes sense of the first narrative. By placing it in the context of unequally distributed severe economic hardship may be understood metaphorically. Finally the third narrative, which Gilsenan offers as an unarticulated narrative. He says of the teller of the narrative that:

...perhaps his words are not as transparent as it appears in the versions and glosses I have given. What if his words, particularly his responses to the lord's challenge, hit his audience and his bey with a rhetorical force lost in the [telling]... [1996: 125].

Gilsenan offers the narratives behind power relationships. He does not dwell on the observable economic or political events except to contextualise the narratives. What matters is not what happened, but the way people in Akkar perceive and shape real events to accommodate real violence and domination. In addition to providing a superb

ethnography of relationships of power in northern Lebanon, Gilsenan combines the best of empirical and discursive approaches. There is power in the narratives of domination, honour and force (and indeed, power itself). They do not create reality, but in changing perceptions of reality (i.e. empirically observable events and relationships) these narratives allow individuals the flexibility to renegotiate their own position. In the context of Akkar, force, including physical force, Gilsenan says, is a legitimate form of domination. The members of Akkar society use narratives as a means of self validation as well as resistance to the mechanisms of domination in which they live.

One of the striking things about Punjabi villages is that while the narratives have a strong component of violence, the daily situation is quite different. There is some violence in rural Punjab but the narratives expand these incidents to impossible frequencies. In particular, if urban Pakistani narratives were an accurate reflection of the level of violence in the villages there would hardly be a man left alive or a women left un-raped. I indulge in slight exaggeration myself but the discrepancy between the narratives and actual incidents of violence are instructive. In Akkar, narratives may serve to make sense of quite high levels of physical force as a means of domination. In Pakistan, the potential of physical force is always present and the narratives may serve to reinforce that potential, thereby *absolving* individuals of the need to actually resort to physical violence. As I argue above, the manifestation of excessive physical violence, would tend to undermine both the power and the authority of the person committing the act. The narratives of violence, therefore, provide both dominant and subordinate individuals and groups the means to both redefine and shape relations of power. Dominant people may employ narratives to alleviate the need for physical violence. Subordinate people may use the narratives in a similar way, reconciling a code of honour/conduct which prescribes physical violence in situations where they lack the resources to carry it out.

The structure of power and authority in Northern Punjab and Northern Lebanon are remarkably similar. Landlords control the majority of economic resources in the region. This in turn gives them control over certain human resources. The fact that they have stable bases of control and power enable them to cultivate human resources outside the region, which in turn can enhance their control and power inside the village (if they do it



right). They operate as the leaders of collectives, not as individual agents. They must respond to the cultural values of both overseers and peasants. In Akkar, Gilsenan reports that physical force is not only a legitimate but a common form of domination. In Pakistan domination takes the form of social force far more often than physical. Where Gilsenan's analysis is less appropriate to Pakistan is precisely on this point. If one were to perform an analysis of narrative in Pakistan, one would assume similar levels of violence but this would be misleading. The narrative reflects an ideology of violence, honour and domination which is absent in the way the people actually behave. Gilsenan's discursive analysis does not account for why the people of Akkar resort to violence, rather it accounts for the ways they accommodate the levels of violence in which they must live. Explanations of the origins of the high levels of physical violence must be sought elsewhere.

### **Important concepts from the anthropology of India**

Pakistan shares much of its history with northern India. It would therefore be reasonable to conclude that the anthropology of Pakistan might benefit from comparison with that of India. Unfortunately much Indian anthropology has been dominated by a focus on certain aspects of Hindu caste systems. Dumont in particular has had a profound influence on the study of the Indian caste system. He provides a coherent explanation of the nature of the Hindu *varna* (caste) as a social system based primarily on notions of purity and impurity. The argument is attractive to Indianists, in part, because it corresponds to the 'received wisdom' on caste, but offers a demonstration of that wisdom rather than just an assertion. He takes as a fundamental tenant of the *varna* that Brahmins constitute the highest or purest category, Untouchables the lowest, most impure. His definition of caste is based largely on Bouglé's definition however he places the emphasis on the opposition between pure and impure. Caste systems are:

composed of hereditary groups... which are both distinguished from one another and connected together in three ways:

- (1) by gradation of status or hierarchy;
- (2) by detailed rules aimed at ensuring their separation;

(3) by division of labour and the interdependence which results from it [Dumont 1970: 80-81].

He then argues that in this ideological system, temporal power is subordinate to spiritual status. Kings are subordinate to priests in the cosmology of Hinduism, if not in the empirical condition of India. The Brahmanic monopoly on religious functions, Dumont argues, led to two 'fundamental facts'. First, there is a 'pure type of hierarchy' which is separated from power. Second, this hierarchy is expressed in the opposition between pure and impure [1970: 259-260].

Wholesale use of Dumontian theories on caste is untenable in a non-Hindu society. Dumont is critical of the application of caste structures to non-Hindu societies, such as Barth's [1960] attempts to utilise caste among the Swat Pathans. In that case, Dumont argues that they do not have a caste system but rather a 'system of patronage and clientship which has assimilated caste-like and... Hocartian "liturgies"' [1970: 256]. Anthropological research on Pakistan does not attempt to argue that a caste system, as elaborated by Dumont, exists in Pakistan, but some researchers have tended to focus on caste and caste hierarchy as the primary organising principles in society. Moreover, they have tended to view these castes as continuations of Dumontian caste organisation minus the extremes, that is to say, with no Brahmin and no Untouchable categories<sup>7</sup>. Simultaneously, anthropologists like Eglar [1960] and Chaudhary [1999], rightly deny the existence of ideological purity and pollution associations while constructing a pattern of social organisation based on occupational specialisation.

If Dumont outlines the principles that anthropologists should not import to Pakistan, Quigley offers a more apt analysis. Quigley [1999] builds on the work of Hocart to argue that the status of brahmins<sup>8</sup> is contested. Caste offers an alternative mechanism for organising social relations which contrasts with the organisational mechanisms of kingship. Rather than providing the over-arching rules of social organisation, caste is one of a pair of competing organisational tools with which Hindus work. This approach offers some interesting applications for the study of Muslims in South Asia and may potentially be the point where anthropologists of India and Pakistan may find common ground. Indeed much of the ethnography of Pakistan discusses the multiplicity of organisational strategies. In Pakistan it is typically not kingship offered as the alternative, but rather

kinship or contractual alliances. The rejection of Quigley's argument by Indianists is unfortunate as it complicates the possibility of Indo-Pakistani cultural comparison; it does so precisely in areas where the most fertile comparisons might be made.

The value of Indian ethnography is therefore not so much in the area of specific concepts or tools, which seem to have limited value in the Pakistani context, but rather in the representations of complex social strategies. It is in this complexity of multiple organising strategies available to both individuals and groups that I find India studies have a great deal to offer. I argue that there is strong evidence suggesting that while there are multiple organising strategies, one of the reasons this is so successful is because underlying each of these organisational mechanisms are important common values and roles, which are in themselves the building blocks of social organisation.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter is to lay some of the background for the study of power embedded within a patronage dominated culture caught between major culture areas. I have tried to show that Pakistan should be understood in its entirety and not divided piecemeal as areas of 'tribal' or areas of 'peasant' social organisation. The tribal is present in the peasant and vice versa.

In chapter Two, I present a brief background to the village which was my primary field site. I also describe some of the methods I used to conduct my research. Following this, in chapter Three I review a selection of ethnographies from Pakistan: two from Pukhtun areas and two from Punjabi areas. My intent is not to critique so much as to extract important data and concepts. In chapters Four through Ten I present case studies drawn from my research in a northern Punjabi agricultural village, itself an interstitial, 'crossroads', area within Pakistan. I look at the ways power is manifest in the three relationship contexts I have selected. I begin with the domestic sphere and kinship. Then I move to an examination of village level organisation, which involves both caste and political relationships. I then move to the level of regional politics and the interaction of provincial level politics and the village. Finally I look at ways these power relationships and roles are embedded into certain religious contexts as well. I conclude by tying these village and regional political and conflict issues to the provincial and national level.

Cultural and social expression in Pakistan is unique. Pakistani culture draws from neighbouring traditions, but it does not do so in ways that may be understood through the anthropological theories of those culture areas. Anthropology relies on comparative analyses, yet in order for this to be possible one must fully unpack the constituent elements to be compared. This thesis takes up the implied challenge laid down by Donnan and Werbner [1991] by contributing to a greater understanding of the cultural mechanisms which are not only common in Pakistan, from rural to urban contexts and across ethnic boundaries, but are also unique to Pakistan.

## 2 The village, region and methods

The research for this thesis was carried out from January 1998 to September 1999 on three separate visits. The first visit was for two weeks and allowed me to select the centre for the study. The second trip, in April and May of 1998, was just over four weeks, during which time I was able to further consolidate my relationships in the village, make more concrete arrangements for my living arrangements and begin initial inquiries about the demographics and layout of the village. My final visit to Pakistan was from December 1998 to September 1999, a total of 10 months. Having previously lived in Lahore, Pakistan for just over 18 months in 1982 and 1983, I was familiar with many of the things I encountered such as clothing, food, religion and language. I was not fluent by any means in either Urdu or Punjabi when I arrived, however I was able to become functional in the language more quickly than had I arrived for the first time in the country in 1998. My initial visits were sponsored by Mr. Alan Bicker who was attempting to establish a new kind of aid to Pakistani farmers. Because of my previous experience and interest in Pakistan, he asked that I accompany him to act as assistant and general helper during his negotiations with local farmers, government representatives and local elites. He had already selected the village of Bhalot, in Attock District to be one of the centres for his new aid scheme. After a few days visit to the village, one of the landlords, Malik Asif Nawaz, learned that I wanted to carry out long term field research in a Pakistani village. We discussed it at some length and I described what my goals were. He very graciously urged me to select his village as the base for my research.

### **The Country**

Pakistan is geographically part of the South Asian subcontinent. It is bordered by India to the east, China to the northeast, Afghanistan to the north and west and Iran to the west. The southern part of Pakistan lies directly on the sea in the area where the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean meet. Pakistan is currently under the leadership of a military regime. Since October 12, 1999, the leader of Pakistan has been General Pervez Musharraf. Since

Pakistan achieved independence in 1947, it has shifted from civilian to military rule with an alarming frequency. Prior to 1947, Pakistan was a part of British India. It is divided into four provinces: Balochistan, North West Frontier Province, Punjab and Sindh. In addition there are Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) which have some autonomy from both provincial and national governments. Finally, since 1948, Pakistan has been locked in a seemingly endless dispute with India over the fate of Kashmir. Pakistan holds a small part of the state/province of Kashmir which it calls Azad Kashmir (Free Kashmir). Pakistanis refer to Indian Kashmir as Maqbooza Kashmir (Occupied Kashmir). The Kashmir conflict is not treated in this thesis, however, the skirmishes which regularly take place in Kashmir reached a critical point during the summer of 1999, during my field research. The Kargil Crisis, as it was called, probably hastened the departure of the civilian government which has an indirect impact on many of the features of this thesis. With the development of the 'Islamic bomb', in 1998, and the accompanying rocket technology which can deliver the bomb up to 2500 kilometres, the Kashmir crisis has taken on altogether more serious implications for both the region and the world. Pakistan has had three wars with India. The first followed Partition in 1948, and resulted in the division of Kashmir. The second, in 1965, was a failed attempt to unify Kashmir. The third, in 1971, came from a civil war between East and West Pakistan and led to the creation of an independent East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). There is a strong militaristic discourse in Pakistan which seems to permeate all sectors of society.

Following the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, there was a bloody and disturbing exchange of populations across the border. Hindus and Sikhs fled West Punjab while Muslims fled East Punjab. Estimates of the number of people murdered run as high as several million. This wholesale shift of populations continues to have an enormous influence on Pakistan. The result is that Pakistan is now an overwhelmingly majority Muslim country (97% Muslim, 3% Ahmedi, Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Buddhist [Talbot 1998: 34]).

### **The Village and Region**

Bhalot village lies in northern Punjab, in Attock District, in Fateh Jang *tehsil*<sup>9</sup>. It is approximately 50 kilometres from the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Agriculturally it falls in a *barani* (rainfed) region, which the National Agriculture Research Council classes as semi-arid. Traditionally this area has had slightly more rainfall than a strict interpretation of semi-arid would suggest (1200 mm/year), but the majority of this occurs during one three week period in the year, the monsoons of late summer. During the two years I visited the area this was probably not the case, but locals commented on the abnormal rain patterns of recent years. In the past, apparently, rainfall was slightly more predictable than today. The recurring droughts since 1997 indeed suggest significant changes in climatic patterns. Attock District borders the North West Frontier Province to the north and the west. To the north is Hazara District. Hazara, like Attock, is an ambiguous region. It is officially part of NWFP but the population in Hazara share a great deal of cultural affinity with the Punjab. Attock has been attached to both NWFP and the Punjab and, like Hazara, is seen to be a mixture of both.

### **Demographics**

Bhalot has approximately 230 households (buildings housing families, either joint or nuclear but sharing a common cooking hearth). The population is disputed but my census suggests a figure of not more than 2000 inhabitants. Actual population is extremely difficult to determine for several reasons. Among the ambitious members of the village there is a political interest in presenting the population as large as possible. There is one representative of the Union Council for every 10,000 inhabitants. A village with a population of 10,000 or more, therefore, has the right to its own Union Council representative. When I first arrived in the village I was told that the village had a population of precisely 10,000. This figure is extremely unlikely, even counting all remote *dhoks* (hamlets). The estimates dropped in proportion to the time I spent in the village. Ultimately a fairly regular figure of 2500-3000 was offered as the total village population. My own census and house counting suggest a lower figure but this could be explained in different ways. Many individuals live and work in nearby cities but may continue to count their primary residence as the village. Furthermore, there are a great many outlying *dhoks* which I did not visit because of their attachment to landlords with whom I did not interact as often. I am willing to concede, therefore, that my estimate is low, but remain skeptical of a population as high as 3000.

The sex distribution of the village seems to follow national trends. There are slightly more males than females (sex ratio 1.075:1). I was initially suspicious of the national trend because a cursory analysis of sex ratio statistics over the past 40 years showed a marked drop in the female to male ratio with the Islamization of General Zia-ul-Haq. I and my colleagues<sup>10</sup> surmised that this may have been indicative of an increased reluctance to report females rather than a surge in female infanticide or other female linked death rates. Although I was not at liberty to interact freely with the females of Bhalot, I sensed no reluctance on the part of village males to discuss the number of females in their households, nor in the kinds of normal activities these women engaged in. This was in marked contrast to some of the Afghan migrant labourers with whom I spoke. Several of them became distinctly silent the moment I asked how many females were in their family. The silence would occur after we had spoken some time and I felt the rapport was very good<sup>11</sup>. Given the Punjabi willingness to discuss certain aspects of females, it seems reasonable to conclude that the sex ratio that emerged from my census is indicative of the village trend. The exact figure is of course subject to some margin of error, however, the slightly higher male population is almost certainly correct.

Bhalot offers advantages and disadvantages as a village. Unlike some villages in the area it has not had the benefit (or detriment) of large numbers of emigrants to the Middle East, Europe or North America. There have been a few, however the effect of foreign remittances has been negligible on the village. This perhaps allows one to project back in time more easily, but given the importance of remittances on the Punjabi economy one might reasonably argue that a remittance rich village is more typical of the Punjab today. Some of the neighbouring villages did feel the impact of remittances far more than Bhalot and this is immediately apparent. Multi-story houses with marble facades are scattered throughout the village centres. On a less material level, the influence of traditionally prominent individuals is greatly diminished as a larger number of households have access to independent resources. Bhalot has not, for better or worse, been seriously affected in the same way. There are no families who can seriously rival the landowning families for prestige or influence within the village. Furthermore, because of the lack of emigration, there is a reasonably well distributed age pattern. Bhalot has young, middle aged and elderly people who reside and work in the village itself. Some villages in the Punjab are



noticeable for their lack of males between the ages of 18 and 50. Not all men migrate abroad of course. Much of the migration in the Punjab has been to the cities of Pakistan (particularly Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi and to a lesser extent the industrial cities of central Punjab and Gujerat). Men often leave their wives and small children in the village with their elderly male relatives and return home when their jobs permit.

### **Physical environment**

Attock District is predominantly dry. The *tehsil* in which Bhalot lies, receives approximately 1000-1200 mm of rain per year. In the past the majority of this has come during the monsoon, in late summer. In recent years, however, locals say that the rains have become increasingly erratic. Until the past two decades the vast majority of agriculture was rain fed (*barani*). This placed enormous constraints on the extent of cultivated areas as well as the crops grown. With the introduction of tubewells in the late 1970's and early 1980's, irrigated agriculture became possible. Farmers expanded both the diversity of crops and the area of cultivation. This has had positive as well as negative effects. The positive effects probably outweigh the negative ones. The increased population locally and nationally has placed an increasing burden on farmers to produce more food. Simply keeping pace with the food demand has been a major constraint on Pakistan's infrastructural development since independence. This has mostly been achieved by cultivating previously uncultivated areas. This has been made possible by the introduction of non-rain dependent irrigation. It has meant, among other things, that Pakistan was able to cope with an influx of between 2-4 million Afghan refugees during the Soviet-Afghan war and the subsequent Afghan civil war. It has also meant that Pakistani smugglers have been able to evade price controls imposed on staple crops by selling to the Central Asian states and *not* provoke famine locally. It is extremely difficult to establish how much of Pakistan's staple crops are siphoned off to the Central Asian states but given the price differences one might imagine the figure to be rather high<sup>12</sup>. Nevertheless, Pakistan has managed to provide sufficient food for its population to at least avert widespread violent uprisings<sup>13</sup>.

Exacerbating the irregularity of the rains is the extreme summer temperatures. Beginning in May temperatures in the 30°'s (C) are the norm. From June until the arrival of the

monsoons, temperatures in the high 30's and low 40's are not uncommon. Temperatures exceeding 45 are not unheard of either. As might be expected, this has an impact on people's activities. Agricultural work begins early and is interspersed with breaks in the shade from 10.00 to 16.00. Afternoon naps are very common. Following the midday prayer (beginning around 13.00-13.30 and ending 30 minutes to 2 hours later depending on the mosque) most villagers disappear to the coolest spot they can find for a rest which may last from one to three hours. On extremely hot days some men may disappear from early afternoon and not be seen again until after 17.00 or 18.00 in the evening.

Winters are mild in comparison to northern Europe but by local standards may be considered bitterly cold. Temperatures during the day are usually between 5° and 15°. At night they may drop close to 0° or slightly below. The temperature rarely stays below 0° longer than a few hours, though when it does it may cause quite serious problems. In 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 winter was preceded by extended dry spells. Each of these autumns was noticeable for the complete absence of rain. The communal water catchment area completely dried up<sup>14</sup> in these years which places much greater strain on underground water sources. Villagers, as well as government agricultural extension workers, complain that new wells have to be dug much deeper and run dry more often than before. Punjabi houses are not particularly well designed for cold weather. There tends to be very minimal insulation in the structures themselves. The Punjabi solution to cold is to sit close to friends and make use of shawls and blankets. The traditional Punjabi winter blanket, *rizai*, is a very heavy bed covering which will keep most anyone warm. Men gather in the tea shops or the *déra* and huddle together on *charpai* (local bed/cot/sofa) or on the floor and share body warmth while they watch television or chat.

One further technique for overcoming the cold is the construction of very deep holes in the sides of hills. Livestock are maintained in these underground shelters through the coldest parts of the year. People stay with the animals in the very dark and rather unhygienic dwellings, and what they lack in clean air or light they make up for in warmth. Throughout the coldest parts of the year these holes can be kept very warm indeed just from the body heat of the animals.

Bhalot lies in the foothills of the Kala Chitta mountain range. The Kala Chitta forms a natural barrier between the Punjabi plains and the NWFP mountains (Hindu Kush, Himalayas). Bhalot is somewhat hilly however the areas that have been under cultivation for more than one generation are usually quite level. Newly opened cultivated areas remain surrounded by hills and gullies, and suffer from poor irrigation as a result. Newly developed fields may dry out too quickly or become water logged. Older cultivated fields tend to have reasonably good drainage and farmers are able to maximise what irrigation is available to supplement rainfall when necessary. The impact of human activity on this area cannot be over stressed. The area has probably been inhabited for over a millennium. The genealogies and family histories I was able to put together for two of the local landowning families suggest agricultural activity going back at least as far as 1000-1200 years ago. There is no reason to suppose that there were not pastoralists using the land even further back than that. Indeed, according to local legend the ancestors of many of today's Bhalotis were on hand to greet Alexander the Great over 2,000 years ago<sup>15</sup>.

The human impact has therefore been extreme. Long standing cultivated areas have been levelled. Forests are, without exception, managed. Dove [1992] reports that farmers in Attock District are very enthusiastic about trees and Bhalot is no exception. As elsewhere however, wild forests are hardly possible. The ubiquitous presence of pastoralists ensures that any sapling is destined for fodder unless protected. Demands for fuel further exacerbate the situation. There are trees on every cultivated plot and in almost every household courtyard, but there are very few patches of large numbers of trees together. Where one does find large numbers of trees there is often a shrine in the area. The largest area of tree cover near Bhalot is on the mountain immediately adjacent to the village. The presence of the *pir*, Baba Sheikh Daud, has meant that the wood from this mountain is protected. Baba Sheikh Daud does not want the trees from this mountain to be cut (though any branches that fall naturally may be collected and used). This type of supernatural decree is apparently quite widespread throughout the Punjab and further afield in South Asia.

## **Village history**

Before Bhalot became the landlord dominated village it is today, it was a community of farmers. The earliest story I heard about settlement of the village by ancestors of the present residents, dates perhaps as far back as 1000-1200 years. In all likelihood the area has been the site of a settlement even further back than that. Approximately 1000-1200 years ago a man who is now remembered as Daggar Khan cultivated the area which now bears his name (*daggar zamin*). *Daggar* is a Punjabi word for land which is not cultivated and difficult to cultivate. It is characterised by ravines and other geographical features which make plowing difficult, even relying on animal power. This probably was not the name his parents gave him but rather, an identifier bestowed upon him after his cultivation of *daggar* lands. He is said to be the common ancestor of all Bhaloti Maliks. He was, therefore, a Gujar. Whether he was indigenous to the area or had migrated there from some other part of the Punjab, or South Asia is unknown. All that is known is his name and the land that he cultivated. The land is said to have been the first site of Bhalot village.

The site of Daggar Khan's lands happens to lie on the edge of Sher Shah Suri's grand highway which ran from Peshawar to Calcutta. The road is now used as an access road for tractors. One can still take the road to Taxila where it joins the present Grand Trunk Road (GT Road). It is a dirt road, as it would have been in Sher Shah Suri's time, but I was told it was very wide during the Moghul period and has since been narrowed to make more land available for cultivation. At one time, the village itself is said to have existed on this site. There are some potsherds and other archaeological evidence which suggest people have settled on the site at some time, but without a more serious archaeological study of the area, exactly when and how many people lived there, is mere speculation.

Where ever the first site of Bhalot was, by the end of the 18th century the village was situated approximately 500 metres southwest of its current location. It lay between the two hills which mark the southern limit of Bhalot. There is evidence that a settlement existed at the base of Baba Sheikh Daud's mountain (the taller of the two hills) but as the site continues to be used for ritual purposes one would have to sift out the past two hundred years of archaeological material in order to describe the site as it was in 1800. Some time during the reign of Ranjit Singh (early 19th century), Bhalotis relocated their village to its

current site. The main part of the village now sits on the top of the third hill to the north east. People say this was following numerous raids, perhaps by Ranjit Singh's armies, or perhaps by marauders taking advantage of the occasions when Ranjit Singh's armies were occupied elsewhere. Whoever the raiders were, the villagers decided to move to the top of a hill which might be defended more easily than the low area between two tall hills.

At the time of the village relocation, there was a man named Baba Sheikh Daud. He was not the first Sheikh Daud in the Gujar landlord family, but he is probably the man for whom the mountain was named. If there is actually a body buried at the top of the hill, then it is probably his<sup>16</sup>. The shrine at the top of Baba Sheikh Daud Mountain is dedicated to him. The story around his miracles makes no mention of marauding Sikhs or Pathans. It is an intimate family tale. A sister who has been claimed by two marriage parties, both arriving at the same time, goes on the mountain and prays to Allah to protect her. Allah opens the mountain and the sister is swallowed by the mountain. Her shawl can still be seen at times, where it was trapped by the closing mountain (though I have not seen it myself). What Baba Sheikh Daud did during his life is very vague. He is said to have been very *bazourk* (spiritually or magically powerful) in his day. A few of the better educated older men, say that he was a brilliant strategist and organiser who helped Bhalotis defend their village from the frequent raids.

From this period the history becomes better documented. Bhaloti Gujars became *jagirdars* (receivers of land grants from the British or Moghuls). The village, along with the village of Hissar, is mentioned in the Attock Gazetteer as one of two Gujar strongholds in an otherwise K'hattar and Awan dominated region. By the end of the Sikh kingdom in the Punjab, the present landlord family was well established as the dominant landowners of the village. The land gifts they received from the British reinforced what may have been a pre-existing asymmetry between village social groups. The consolidation of the British Raj further enhanced the position of Bhaloti landlords as they learned to manipulate the British desire for order and single representatives to their advantage. By all accounts, the Bhaloti landlords have been very cagey political manipulators for at least 150 years.

The period following the 1857 War for Independence (or Mutiny, depending on one's perspective), was a time of expansion and consolidation for both the British and Bhaloti

landlords. By the beginning of the 20th century, all the land now considered as Bhaloti land, was owned by two men. Two families controlled 100% of the land, both cultivated and uncultivated. They owned approximately 16000 *kanal* of land (1 *kanal*= 1/8 of an acre). Today there are six households of landlords who own at least 95% of the 16000 *kanal* which make up Bhalot land.

Since the death of these two Bhaloti landlords, the village lands have been increasingly subdivided with each generation. During the British Raj, Bhaloti landlords were reasonably loyal supporters of the British colonial administration and maintained some close personal relationships with local administrators. In the late 1920's and early 1930's a British police inspector, who later became a District administrator, spent a week in the village with Malik Akbar Khan. They reportedly remained friends until the British left India and went on hunting trips in Kashmir together. At the same time however, other members of the Bhaloti landlord family were agitating for independence. Malik Mohammed Afzal, Malik Akbar Khan's eldest son, was arrested just before independence and spent 17 days in Attock City Jail (then Cambellpur). This seems to have been a common strategy throughout Bhaloti landlord history. It is probably not the result of concerted organisation but rather the result of the family's awareness of the importance of networks which extend as far as possible, including potentially rival camps. The history of non-landlord villagers, is less clearly articulated. Individuals often know approximately when their family moved to Bhalot (if the move occurred in the last 100 years, otherwise they believe their family has been there forever). They may know which landlord their ancestors worked for and what they did (their occupational caste affiliation is a historical reminder of sorts). They do not have many tales of specifically what their ancestors did during any of the major events of the past two hundred years however. It would be difficult to ascertain whether non-landlord villagers supported the 1857 War for example, and if so, how they might have participated. Bhaloti landlords, in contrast, have a reasonable notion of what certain family members did during events such as this<sup>17</sup>.

Sometime during the 19th century, a division arose between the upper Maliks (*uppr walé malik*) and the lower Maliks (*nicé walé malik*). The two rival Malik groups were not at war but there was an underlying hostility and animosity between them. They did not

exchange women in marriage for several generations. The cause of this rift is unknown by most people and if it is known by some, they did not deign to inform me. The generation of heads of household during Partition and Independence, set about repairing this rift. Through judicious marriages between the two sets of cousins they effectively ensured the solidarity of Bhaloti Maliks for the foreseeable future. The generations born since the 1950's have close relations with both upper and lower Maliks (though the distinction persists) and they have brought the two Malik divisions even closer in subsequent generations through more upper and lower Malik marriages. Malik children born in the 1980's and 1990's may have only a vague idea about what it means to be an upper or a lower Malik.

### **Religion: Sunni Islam, Barelvi, Wahabi**

The residents of Bhalot are all Sunni Muslims. There are Shi'a villages nearby and a very large and active Shi'a shrine less than three kilometres away but within the village all residents are Sunni. This does not mean that there are not religious divisions within the village. There are two important groups within Bhalot, Wahabis and Barelvis. Wahabis reject the power of *pirs* (saints) and argue that the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Holy Prophet are the only true guides for Muslims. The majority of the village are followers of the Barelvi tradition. Barelvis believe in the spiritual authority of *bazourk* (powerful) individuals who become *pirs*. In most cases there is no conflict between these two groups. When conflicts do arrive they tend to be short lived and coincide with tension in other ways (for example the emotional context of funeral rites where the surviving offspring differ on the correct rites to perform). Islam is an extremely important point of reference for everyone in the region. In Chapter 10 I examine some of the authority and power relationships embedded within local Islam in order to show how some basic social roles are reproduced and thereby reinforced within a religious idiom.

### **District and regional identity**

Ahmed suggests that a unique Hazara identity has developed as a result of an interstitial position [Ahmed 1990], a hypothesis which has some flaws but for which I find some support. Rather than discussing a unique Hazara identity, it may be more useful to look at the Districts bordering NWFP and Punjab in this light. Certain of these Districts lie off

major trade routes and seem to have played a less important role in the migration of people and populations between the mountainous regions of NWFP and Afghanistan and the plains of the Indus, so they should probably be considered separately. Both Attock and Hazara, however, have faced waves of invaders from the north and a steady flow of migrants from many directions. In recent years the influx of Afghan refugees has been especially heavy in both Districts, in part because relations between groups in these Districts and Afghanistan and NWFP pre-date the recent wars in Afghanistan.

Linguistically these areas speak dialects of Hindko [Shackle 1980; Rensch 1992]; however, as in other parts of Attock District, people in *tehsil* Fateh Jang do not usually call their language Hindko but rather the term Punjabi [Rensch 1992:7]. In Bhalot they say they speak local Punjabi which is quite different from Lahori Punjabi. Grierson places Hazara, Peshawar and northern Attock Hindko within the North-Western Lahnda Hindko dialects [Rensch 1992:9]. In northern Punjab, Hindko is best known as the language spoken in the Peshawar area. This is the area where Hindko films, television and radio shows are often produced. Much of the demand for Hindko as a separate language has also emanated from the Peshawar area. There is little to suggest that Bhalotis look on their language as a tool for political deployment at the national level at present. If Ahmed's analysis of Hazara-wal identity is correct, then the potential of this interstitial Pushto-Punjabi influenced area may well include parts of *tehsil* Fateh Jang in Attock District as well.

There are certain historical parallels between Hazara and Attock. Hazara was invaded several centuries ago by Swati Pathans. This group managed to wrest control of the area from locals and have maintained dominance in the District ever since. In Attock the invasion came slightly earlier and is somewhat unique. The invasion of the Afghan armies of Mahmud of Ghazni and Mahmud of Ghauri left large bands of mercenaries behind. These mercenaries, it is said, form the core of Attock's K'hattar caste or qaum (see Chapter 6 for a more complete history of the K'hattars) which dominated all of Attock District for several hundred years. The area controlled by K'hattar families has receded but is still considerable. Unlike Pathans, though, K'hattars only exist in any number in Attock District. The dominance of a group which claims Central Asian origin (or Middle



Eastern origin) has an influence on all groups which aspire to positions of influence. Although the Gujar landlords, with whom I worked most extensively, do not claim either Middle Eastern or Afghan origin, they must work within the constraints set by the dominant groups around them. In this case, they are surrounded by K'hattars in the immediate vicinity, and Swati Pathans directly to the north. Furthermore, the family connections between Bhaloti Gujars, extend into every Gujar dominated village in northern Attock and southern Hazara, through intermarriage and regular visitation. Bhaloti landlords, in addition to their own village lands, have a stake in land as far away as several hundred kilometres to the north in Hazara District. In all of the areas in which they have land claims, however, they must contend with dominant groups with claims to Afghan or Arab ancestry. Consequently, the discursive ideals of the region are deeply influenced by Afghan and Arab institutions (which admittedly are not one and the same, however they both differ somewhat from the institutions of the Indus plains).

More recently, both Districts were used by the British as buffer zones between the 'civilized' Indus plains and the 'barbarism' of the tribal Pathans. As buffer zones they were intentionally kept underdeveloped. As stated earlier, the lack of surface water in the past led to limited agricultural capacity. While this did not necessarily cause problems for transhumance lifestyles, it led to problems for settled farming villages whose populations began to grow. Attock and Hazara became recruiting grounds for the military. First the British colonial military and later the Pakistani military. Pakistan's military is clearly dominated by Punjabis, and a common local belief is that it is in fact dominated by northern Punjabis from Attock, Hazara, Rawalpindi and Chakwal. I cannot say with any certainty that this is the case since it was not the focus of my research, however I can say that I have met no shortage of high ranking officers who came originally from one of these four districts.

The argument for an interstitial identity which is not simply an opportunistic political ploy, rests, therefore, on language, environment, economic activities and power relationships. I find enough evidence to suggest that Attock, Hazara, parts of Rawalpindi and parts of Chakwal, do indeed share certain very strong similarities in these areas. Whether it is useful, analytically, to employ this kind of micro cultural division or not is

problematic. The entire notion of culture areas as bounded units is highly contested<sup>18</sup> and taken to the extreme is patently absurd. My thesis is not therefore to argue that Attock and Hazara form a unique culture area with a separate identity, but rather to examine the various strands which unite these unique areas, culturally, to all parts of NWFP and Punjab. Moreover, I suggest that further comparative research, might show that these cultural strands run right through Pakistani society, and form the basis for a discussion of Pakistani culture. Pakistani culture is quite clearly the product of indigenous and foreign influences and it owes much to India, Central Asia and the Middle East however certain patterns have evolved in the region both before and after Partition which have led to a unique Pakistani social organisation. It is perhaps a mistake to suggest a unique Pakistani 'culture' however it is not a mistake to suggest, and demonstrate, that Pakistan has social roles and institutions which have taken on more importance here than in any of the surrounding nations.

## **Methods**

The methodology used in the data collection phase of my thesis was both traditional and innovative. I undertook a village study. I lived in a Pakistani village for a period of approximately one year. I wore Pakistani clothing, ate local food, spoke in Punjabi, Urdu and English. I spent as much time as possible with Pakistanis in their everyday situations. I lived in a room off the storage room and garage of my friend Malik Asif Nawaz. He and his family lived on the floor directly above me. Malik Asif had a new toilet installed (so I had my choice of either western or Asian toilet). He had the room fitted with electricity and a phone line for my benefit. His servants acted as liaison between me and his household ladies. Malik Asif's ladies and servants prepared my food, washed my clothes and cleaned my room. So while I was only able to meet the Malik ladies on brief occasions and certainly never had extended conversations with them, I know I owe them a great deal. I followed villagers around during different times of the day, different days of the week, different times of the year. I tried to get as much of a feel of what villagers do as possible. A great deal of my research method, therefore, involved unstructured and informal interaction with local people in which I allowed the situation to dictate where I went and what I did, following what Bernard [1995] calls 'informal interviewing'. In this way I

ended up attending numerous weddings, political meetings, strategising meetings between individuals, various celebrations, funerals and other types of social gatherings without any particular 'objective'.

### **Going into 'business'**

The 'aimless' strategy was more pronounced in the beginning. After three months of my extended field trip, I mixed this strategy with more directed use of my time through unstructured interviews [Bernard 1995: 210-236]. I selected individuals with whom I felt I had a rapport, or who held key positions in the village, or who were members of groups about which I knew very little. So, for example, in February, 1999, I began to spend time with a family of Pathan sharecroppers. I accepted all invitations from this family and did extensive video and audio recording of them for several weeks. I even went into 'business' with this sharecropper family with the purchase of a ram. This involved going with my Pathan friends to the livestock market in Taxila and evaluating the rams on offer. I purchased the ram and in exchange we split the profits from the lambs. This placed me in an interesting position. The Pathan family had five ewes, however these ewes belong to the landlord who was hosting me. The lambs produced by the ewes were already committed to a 50/50 split with the landlord. How then, could I take 50% of the profit of the lambs when 50% of the lamb already belonged to one of the Maliks? Did this mean that I would split the 50% of the sharecroppers lambs with him, leaving me only 25% of the lamb? Or was the Malik going to accept 25%? Or was the sharecropper simply going to look after the animals and give the profits of the lambs to the Malik and me? In ordinary circumstances this sort of problem would not have an easy solution since the investment of 2000-5000 rupees is not inconsiderable for most Pakistanis. In my case however I merely deferred my share. I have not completely relinquished it but have told my Pathan partners that I will only claim my share if I am in trouble and need money. They assured me that if I were in trouble I would have no need of a share for them to come to my aid. The Malik was not as easy to placate. I had discussed the possibility prior to purchasing the ram but I suspect he did not think I would really spend that much money on one of his sharecroppers. On the one hand he was very pleased. His guest was lavishing money on his sharecroppers. Anyone who may have criticised him for opening the village to

expensive foreigners would have to admit that there were some small material benefits to my presence. Thus, my own 'generosity' was attributed to my host. Of course, from my point of view this was not generosity, this was like paying £30 for lessons in animal husbandry and Pathan culture. If I were to sign up at Wye College in Kent I would pay considerably more for the animal husbandry part of the course and get none of the Pathan culture part. On the other hand, Maliks spend a great deal of their time ensuring that their sharecroppers remain dependent exclusively on them and no other. It is an affront to the izzat of a Malik if his sharecroppers turn to someone else for help. It is a Malik's responsibility to look after his 'own' people.

Unfortunately, this turned out to be as close as I could get to doing what villagers do. I was always welcome to observe villagers at work and if I wanted to play a role such as investor, they were happy to make use of my money. When I tried cutting wheat I was allowed to do this for about 10 minutes but was quickly stopped. The overseer who had allowed such an affront to my dignity was concerned that if neighbouring villagers saw me cutting wheat they would say that Bhalotis do not know how to treat their guests. When I was in the presence of the Maliks I was their guest. I lived with them and spent most evenings with them. However when I was alone with other villagers (which was quite often) I became *their* guest. It simply would not do for me to be seen doing manual labour. Of course, if some of the Maliks had learned that I was allowed even to cut wheat for 10 minutes they would probably have had cross words with the responsible villagers. The role of honoured guest is well defined in Pakistan and does not include doing manual labour. Consequently, I was never able to carry out one of my proposed research methods. Although I had been promised two kanal of land which I could cultivate as I chose, this land somehow never materialised. So I got some participation of managing sharecroppers but no direct participation of what it is like to do a sharecropper's work.

### **Map making**

When I arrived in Bhalot it was just before the Holy month of Ramzan. During Ramzan, of course, people are meant to refrain from drinking, eating and smoking (and a few other requirements but these are the important ones) from sunrise to sunset. When Ramzan began I found that most of the village was asleep in the afternoon and so I had gone from

being surrounded by masses every waking minute to being in a ghost town for two hours every day. I used this time to draw a map of the village. I had intended to draw the greatest map any anthropologist had ever drawn, but did not manage. In fact, I drew a very poor map which is of use to me but is scattered over a dozen sheets of A4 paper and I am not even sure I can remember how all the pieces go together now. However, this brought me into every quarter of the village. I was able to determine through this that there is a trend towards caste clustering of housing (though it is not absolute) and that the ownership of the houses was disputed. Both Maliks and villagers claim ownership of their homes. Prior to Zulfikar A. Bhutto in the 1970's, all property belonged to the Maliks. Under the Bhutto regime, some villagers were given deeds to the structures and land on which they lived. These deeds are not openly contested because Maliks have never been eager to dislocate villagers, however, nor are they recognised. It may seem odd that I needed to produce a map to get this information but it is the case. The process of making a map caused me to investigate questions of location and ownership in some very fruitful ways.

### **Interviews**

I carried out structured and unstructured formal and informal interviews throughout the year. Sometimes I used a translator for these, sometimes I conducted the interview myself in a mixture of Urdu and Punjabi. On occasion I discussed some of the issues I wanted in advance with someone who knew the interviewee and then I merely watched while someone else carried out the interview. Each technique had both advantages and disadvantages. In the end I found that most formal interviews simply could not be sustained for long and the most interesting things emerged in less structured conversations (or *gobshop*) after the interview. The formal interview was a valuable crutch at times, however. Occasionally, I met men who had an idea of what social science research should be. They believed I should have questionnaires and measuring callipers to get cranial measurements. I could explain the futility of cranial measurements but I could not persuade them that there was a research value to drinking tea. So on occasion, I conducted formal structured interviews with people who held these views to try and convince them that I was a 'serious' social scientist. Once interviewed, I generally found this kind of person very helpful and enjoyable to spend time with. Formal interviews and

questionnaires seem to represent credibility to some people and they do uncover certain kinds of data so I think they were more than worthwhile, even though I have not ended up doing very much quantification in my thesis.

### **Computers, the internet and websites**

In addition to the traditional anthropological field research techniques described above, I used the internet during my research. I did this in several ways. First I established a website to make my research public as I carried it out [Lyon 1999; 2000]. I provided weekly updates on what I was doing and occasionally longer reports about some of my findings. I made edited field notes available on the website. I showed this website to villagers in an effort to help them understand the goals of my research and what I was doing with the information they gave me. I also showed them other websites both as enticement to get them to come to my room and to see the kinds of things they would want to see. Finally I was able to use the internet to good advantage to follow up on information from the village. I received numerous email comments from around the world about my website and I was in regular email contact with anthropologists in Britain, particularly the University of Kent. I do not consider that this resulted in a radical departure from traditional methods, but rather an addition. I did many of the things other anthropologists have done but I also did internet and computer oriented things. No doubt I did less of some things than other anthropologists.

The utility of having a web site with my informants was questionable. Throughout the field work I used information on the web site as a point of discussion and people in the village and nearby cities were pleased to know they had potential access to my work. Unfortunately, very few of my informants were interested in spending very much time looking at the web site devoted to their village and my research. By and large, they seemed to want to use the internet much like people in Europe and the United States. At times of crisis they were eager to have international news, particularly during the Kargil Crisis in the summer of 1999. They were curious about illicit subjects available on the world wide web (pornography, alcohol, guns, gambling etc.). They enjoyed looking at web sites devoted to cars. Ultimately I was able to document web usage of a small number of people but was unable to effectively demonstrate cultural specificity based on this material. If the

purpose of the experiment were simply as a knowledge elicitation tool, I would be forced to conclude that it was a failure. If, on the other hand, the positive social benefits in the field of being more transparent, then I can state categorically that the experiment was a success. The people with whom I worked were not very interested in my research but they were very interested in me as a person. The web site allowed them to get some idea of what I considered was interesting and relevant and in that sense, allowed them to know me better.

## **Fieldnotes**

I used the CSAC Content Codes [Fischer et al. 1996] to create meta categories in my field notes based on the content. I did this on a daily basis. I wrote up my field notes in the evening and sometime the following morning I entered the content codes and wrote an abstract for every note. At the end of every month I made an edited copy of the previous month's field notes available on the website [Lyon 1999: <http://anthropology.ac.uk/Bhalot/fn.db.html>]. While content coding is of obvious value for the post fieldwork phase of research, it is equally valuable during the data collection phase. After allowing myself the liberty of 'stream of consciousness' field note writing, I forced myself to focus on what my notes were about. What was my field note entry actually saying? Who was involved? Were issues of time, language or location important? All questions I was able to answer easily in the field, but for which I would probably have no answer now. Content coding allows cursory formal description without complicating the research in sophisticated analysis before all the information is produced. Apart from other considerations, if I did not understand what my field notes were saying the day after I wrote them, then I was doing something seriously wrong and the content codes served to keep me aware of that. The CSAC Content Codes extend what the Outline of Cultural Material (OCM) codes do for the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF). Where the OCM are hierarchically organised and non-propositional, however, the CSAC CC provides a way of producing 'flat' meta tags which can be meaningfully linked (in ways more sophisticated than simply boolean searches). That is, tags are not hierarchically organised and may be combined in any combination to construct contextual propositions about data. The following abstract of a field note offers an example of how coding for social and cultural context may

enhance the usability of qualitative material [this is a modified version of the Appendix in Lyon 1998]:

*Abstract:*

```
{T:Thread DocProj: {{K:EthnoInt:GoodEx: {{L:MetaCon:Behav:intervu
{{M:Agent:Grp: {{N:Prep:down:
{{O:Role:Care:low{{H:Jur:Prot:{D:Soc:Status:[Down at the hotel
and barbershop conducting some semi-formal interviews about when
and why people go to zamindars for help. Most people do go to
zamindars (sometimes indirectly through the elder members of their
family) for everything from food to broken tractors to ill children
to enemies who want to beat them up. Not all zamindars help peo-
ple. Heads of households seem to take this role more seriously.
People from outside Bhalot reported that they went to Bhaloti Ma-
liks before their own village zamindars. There were logical rea-
sons for this (neighbouring land, they do most of their work for
Bhaloti Maliks, their dhok is closer to Bhalot than the official
village it is attached to),}}}}}}}}
```

*{T:Thread DocProj:*

I had three major strands to my research. The first was my thesis. I created a Thread called DocProj (Doctoral Project) which could label all notes directly concerned with my thesis. I also had a Thread to identify notes related to Ethnicity, and a Thread to identify notes on Development. This allowed me to globally extract data for inclusion in different simultaneously run projects.

*{K:EthnoInt:GoodEx:*

The Ethnographic Intent (EthnoInt) term is a meta-meta tag. It helps to isolate ethnographic incidents by their use-value to me. In this case the incidents provide me with good examples of particular types of behaviour.

*{L:MetaCon:Behav:intervu*

Meta Context (MetaCon) allows me to extract notes based on the conditions in which the incident occurred. It functions best in coordination with the Ethnographic Intent term. So here, using these two terms together, I know that this note provides good examples of behaviour as described in interviews. This helps me evaluate the strength of my data by maintaining a record of whether the behaviour examples were observed, came up spontaneously in conversation or may have been prompted by me.

*{M:Agent:Grp:*

Content Codes allow the ethnographer to make a distinction between Agents and Patients. This is somewhat arbitrary as it depends on the emphasis the ethnographer chooses. I began coding my notes by trying to make Agents doers of action and Patients receivers of action. Sometimes it is as straightforward as that, while at other times this is simply inadequate. Receivers of action may have



played an important and active role in ensuring that they would receive the action. In this case I chose only to use the Agent term and indicate that this note concerns Group (Grp) action. Since this note concerns behaviours displayed by members of two different groups, the individuals who actually perform the action are acting within the constraints of behaviours deemed appropriate for their group.

*{O:Role:Care:low*

This term allows ethnographers to make propositions. The Role Attribute term and the Agents and Patients terms is what makes Content Codes fundamentally different from the OCM codes used with HRAF files or keyword searches. Processes may be described using meta language rather than individual traits. Here I have used the role Care. One group of people in the village Cares for the other. Here this is meant very literally to look after and provide for rather than any emotional or affectionate role.

*{H:Jur:Prot:*

The Jural (Jur) term is used here because one of the behaviours associated with the landlord group is protecting the lower status group from the outside (police, other landlords etc).

*{D:Soc:Status:*

Finally, I used the Society term Status. The relationship between landlords and non-landlords is very hierarchical in the village. This fieldnote provides some examples of Status differences.

The bridge between thick description and formal description (which by their nature dispense with thick description in favour of concision and precision) need not be onerous or cumbersome. Using content codes provide the tools to produce relatively chaotic field notes of disparate thick descriptions while simultaneously maintaining sufficient organisation of those notes to render them into, at the very least, semi-formal descriptions.

### 3 A selected anthropology of Pakistan

This chapter presents some of the anthropological literature of Pakistan written since independence. Each of the ethnographies discussed illustrates alternative methodological insights on issues central to this thesis. I examine the ethnographies for their particular relevance to the following topics: political leadership, caste, class, agnatic rivalry and izzat. While there is a great deal of literature from which I might have chosen, each of these ethnographies offers samples of approaches which have been taken up by others. I realise I neglect a substantial body of literature produced prior to the independence of Pakistan. This is for both methodological as well as space considerations. I am primarily interested in the ways the social sciences have represented Pakistan since its creation as a nation-state, elsewhere in the thesis I refer to earlier works which may help to place this thesis (and the ethnographies cited in this chapter) within a historical context. Sepcifically I have selected anthropologies which represent common ways of understanding particular phenomena. Thus, in their own way, each of the principle ethnographies in this chapter have reinforced some of the analytical and cultural stereotypes present in the distinction of Pakistan into 'tribal' and 'peasant' regions.

Pakistan is a nation-state which offers a dilemma to the anthropologist. It is clearly organised around corporate action and identity yet individuals apparently determine the course of action for their corporate group. How do social scientists reconcile the need to reflect both the importance of corporate identity and action with the very obvious need to account for the impact of individual action? Barth's seminal study of politics in the valley of Swat offers an elegant way of understanding the seemingly chaotic system of alliances and enmities that exist in some of the tribal areas of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). His contractualist approach provides a way to represent the manoeuvring and strategising on the part of individuals embedded within a cultural system.

Eglar [1960] takes an entirely different and more anthropologically and sociologically traditional approach. The individual becomes a role fulfiller for socially recognised

attributes. This is not to say that she views individuals as mindless automata simply carrying out social norms, but rather that she does not see as much flexibility built into the system. Punjabis have little room for manoeuvre within the context of her research, indeed their individual manoeuvring is hardly credited in her account. Her focus on gift giving<sup>21</sup> has been influential. Partly this is because her focus on women addressed a glaring lacuna in the anthropology of Pakistan. Equally important however, her ethnographic account of gift giving provides useful complementary evidence for other phenomena. Her study allows other researchers to provide a more holistic account of Pakistani society. The 'gift' has implications far beyond simple exchange and the expression of solidarity between the giver and the taker, as Eglar recognised. Eglar provides the data for one aspect of a society in which a certain kind of patron/client relationship is deeply embedded.

Ahmad's sadly unfinished monograph, *Class and Power in a Punjabi Village*, offers a Marxist analysis of village relations. Ahmad does not quite manage to reconcile class in Punjabi villages with behaviour determination in the context of political positions, however, his consideration of differing access to resources (both material and symbolic) does reveal an important factor in Pakistani society.

The final ethnography comes from Akbar Ahmed [1980]. His ethnography provides a more comprehensive examination of the ideals of Pukhtun society than Barth's earlier ethnographic account of Swat Pukhtuns. He studied the Mohmand tribe of Pukhtuns. He sets out to avoid representations of equilibrium which imply stagnation. He tries, like Barth, to account for the individual manoeuvring of politics among Pukhtuns, but he places greater emphasis on cultural values as motivators of action rather than Barth's more abstract goals of political 'game points'. *Pukhtun Economy and Society* is a significant contribution to the understanding of concepts like *pukhtunwali*. Ahmed's typology suggests a strong rupture between Tribal Area Mohmands (TAM) and Settled Area Mohmands (SAM), which I suggest may give too much weight to some of the trappings of cultural values and under appreciate the similarities. In other words, this kind of typology tends to neglect that a common set of cultural values may have many manifestations.

These ethnographies cover a period of approximately 30 years. Zekiye Eglar and Barth did their fieldwork in the 1950's and published in the late 1950's and 1960's (though I do include some of Barth's later responses to critiques of his work). Ahmad conducted fieldwork in the mid 1960's and his work was published posthumously in the mid 1970's. Ahmed conducted his fieldwork in the 1970's and the works to which I refer were published in the 1970's and 1980's. There is thus almost two decades difference between the most recent of these works and my own fieldwork. The Punjab and North West Frontier Province have seen considerable change in that time which renders some kinds of comparison problematic. Throughout the rest of the thesis I have included more recent references to show that much of what Eglar, Barth, Ahmad and Ahmed argued continues to have considerable influence on anthropology of Pakistan. Similarly, in other parts of the thesis I refer to prior works to show that these authors were themselves part of an inherited tradition. I have selected these works precisely because they are representative of anthropological work of Pakistan and certain themes can usefully be drawn out from their work. While I am critical of certain aspects of each of these writers, I have selected them because their work provides sound attempts to understand various social and cultural phenomena in Pakistan which have had tremendous influence on later anthropologists (including myself).

### **The nature of political leadership**

Mechanisms of political leadership emerge from cultural, economic and sociological contexts. In Pakistan there are clear parallels in the nature of political leadership across the northern provinces of NWFP and Punjab. Systems of arbitration, alliance creation and maintenance, and other types of human resource networking present striking patterns of similarity between these two regions. In this section I will compare some of the ways that political leadership has been dealt with; in particular I focus on Barth and Eglar because of some of the apparent overlapping ethnographic descriptions.

Barth identified an important social phenomenon and developed a theoretical model which accounts for individual politicking. He analyses Swat society by focusing on the leaders of political factions. He is concerned with the ways factional leaders enter into alliances with one another and recruit the followers necessary for their faction to be viable;

and perhaps most importantly, how they manage to have relatively peaceful coexistence in the context of violent ideological discourses which appear to demand bloodshed in retaliation for certain actions.

Barth's analysis, in some ways, places Swat Pathans firmly in the camp of Middle Eastern tribes. He makes the comparison plainly in *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans*. Pathans, like the Bedouin, Barth says, retain tribal institutions as a 'stable and successful adaptation to the natural and social environment in which they find themselves' [1959a: 133]. Pathans, he says, contrast lands with organised government (*hukomat*) to lands of 'freedom and rebellion' (*Yaghestan*) [1959a: 133]. His work is centred on one Yaghestan area, Malakand in Swat. Yet he does not slavishly follow Middle Eastern sociological traditions when he discusses the principles underlying political alliances. Political alliances between factions, or blocs as he calls them, are the result of contractual agreement between bloc leaders. Blocs are composed of different strata of society and cut across kinship and socioeconomic ties but alliances are made between equals, bloc leaders. These contractual alliances, Barth declares, are distinct from other affiliations:

Political solidarity between equals is not an implicit aspect of any other relationship, such as common descent or kinship, common membership of a congregation, territorial propinquity, etc. It is a separate subject of contractual agreement and thus of free individual choice. [Barth 1959a: 105]

These alliances do not present the same fusionary/fissionary capacities of segmentary lineage based alliances. Swati alliances, Barth says, must be respected regardless of who the ally's enemies may be [1959a: 106]. In times of conflict Swatis expect their allies, rather than their kinsmen or neighbours, to come to their aid.

Barth goes on to describe some of the characteristics of alliances. Alliances, he says, tend to be made with those people with whom one is not in competition. Given the importance of *tarburwali*<sup>22</sup>, or cousin rivalry, it is no surprise then that individuals try to form alliances outside their own kin groups. The unique system of land redistribution (*wesh*) which Barth reports existed prior to the 1920's no doubt contributed to added tensions within lineage groups [1959a: 65-66]. Kinsmen not only had to resolve inheritance

problems on the death of their elder relatives, but also had to negotiate complete redistribution of land every ten years.

Elsewhere Barth uses game theory to describe the 'rules' of political action [1959b; 1967]. He contrasts segmentary lineage with game theory and argues that Swati Pathans are motivated by a desire to maximise their political advantage [1959b]. It is political influence, not economics, which is the prize for Swati leaders. There are rules, as with games, and there are winners and losers. Indeed there must be one in order to have the other. It is a game which ideally does not bring about the total loss of the participants however. Many of the strategies involved in these leadership 'games', are in fact devised to prevent excessive accumulation of power by any one group. Swat has developed a 'traditional system of opposed blocs, maintaining balance by occasional changes in allegiance' [1959a: 132]. Swati alliances, Barth argues, are long term, though not immutable, and like segmentary lineage alliances, may be called upon when needed and dispersed at other times. Unlike segmentary lineage alliances, the system of contractual agreements does not display the potentially extreme characteristics of fusion and fission. Perhaps this is because they are not as immutable as kin alliances and therefore require more consistency if they are not to disappear altogether.

These contractual alliances do not replace other obligations. They cover a restricted set of potential disputes. So while one may call on one's contractual allies before kinsmen or neighbours in some contexts, in others, this is not the case. 'Conflicts in defence of honour' are not part of contractual alliances [1959a: 106]. These, Barth states, can only be handled by an individual's 'own might' [1959a: 106]. Barth is no doubt correct that people believe a man should be able to defend his honour individually and receives greater credit if he can do so [1959a: 82-83]. However, brothers, sons and paternal cousins are implicated by each other's honour [1959a: 84]. The five case studies he provides in the appendix to *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans*, indeed, suggest that defence of honour is *not* an individual affair [1959a: 136-138]. In each of these case studies violations of honour against an individual were dealt with by members of the individual's collective. In some cases the 'victim' did not personally participate in the redressal of wrongs, but rather relied exclusively on the actions of members of his kingroup. The implication is that

honour is not the property or characteristic of individuals but of groups. Indeed if one uses Davis' definitions of honour [1977: 77], it is difficult to see how one may assess an individual's honour without reference to collective relationships. Barth argues that the principles of segmentary lineage theory apply in cases of honour (i.e. the level at which the 'alliance' is made depends on the scale of the conflict), which further suggests that while there may be an ideology of individual redressal of honour violations, however in practice that must only rarely be the case.

Barth's study is supported by other regional studies of Pukhtun political manoeuvring, notably Lindholm [1982; 1996]. Lindholm examined the social mechanisms for reproducing the cultural and social values underpinning much of what Barth describes. While Lindholm accepts that ethnographies of Pukhtuns, such as Barth's [1959] or Ahmed's [1976; 1980], tend to exaggerate some phenomena [1996: 50] he does not dispute Barth's basic description of contractual alliances, agnatic rivalry and discourses of individualism, honour and violence. Other parts of South Asia also seem to exhibit similar patterns of political leadership. Pettigrew [1975] sees factional alliances as the key to understanding Sikh political organisation. She argues that the Punjabi factions she observed during her fieldwork have their origin in traditional principles of social organisation [1975: 29]. Factions, she says, create vertical links which cut across kin and residential groups and serve to tie local people to wider regional and state networks [1975: 145-167].

Eglar [1960] discusses relationships of power and hierarchy in Punjabi villages as the background to reciprocal gift relations within kin groups. Zamindars, or landlords, she says, fulfil a number of social roles. They:

- form 'a link between the people and the government'
- ensure that in 'times of distress' the village gets government loans
- ensure that the village takes part in any public benefits on offer
- use their influence on behalf of villagers involved in court cases or otherwise in trouble
- 'in cases of theft, elopement, or dispute in the village' call together the village council [Eglar 1960: 31].
- In addition they should display generosity with food and money [Eglar 1960: 44-45].

One of the means of ensuring they are able to carry out all these responsibilities is by establishing a semi-public guest house. These are restricted to men but are open to all villagers and visitors who seek help from the zamindar. It is the meeting place where the zamindar is able to remain informed about village affairs [Eglar 1960: 30].

Semi-public guest houses are present in both Barth's and Eglar's description. In the area in which I conducted field research, these guest houses are called *déra*. In NWFP they are called *hujra*. They provide a focal point for a family's prestige and importance as well as meeting places. In Swat one's presence in a landlord's *hujra* is an expression of solidarity and may express membership in a common political bloc. In times of crises a man may expect all of his bloc followers to congregate in his *hujra*. Eglar describes the guest houses as more than simply a landlord's office (though Barth refers to them as *daftar*, office [1960: 131]). Guest houses provide one of the mechanisms by which landlords may implement their policies. It is curious that the Mohmand do not seem to rely on *hujra*, guest houses, in the same way as Swati Pukhtuns [Ahmed 1980]. The role of these houses should not therefore be established as a critical comparative feature between Pukhtun and Punjabi, as it is not necessarily a feature of all Pukhtun groups. It is not, however, unique to Pukhtun groups, as both Eglar and my own research indicate.

The source of the zamindars' power is land. In Swat, Barth reports that the traditional *wesh* land redistribution system, prevented any single lineage from accumulating political power or dominance; however possession of land was one of the most critical prerequisites for establishing oneself as a bloc leader. Likewise in Punjab Eglar says that land is an important determinant in the establishment of power [Eglar 1960: 45]. While landlords may be generous with food, money and other consumables they will not be generous with land. Land is the quasi-sacred origin of a lineage's *izzat*.

Eglar does not provide detailed information on the nature of asymmetrical relationships, nor does she provide any further explanation of how land is acquired beyond the fact that it may be purchased. She has very little to say about how zamindars maintain their networks of contacts in order to be in a position to influence affairs on behalf of villagers. This, of course, is not her goal. These are background considerations from which she



quickly departs. As such, *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan* provides a skeletal depiction of the relationship between landowners and other villagers and between landowners.

Political leadership in Pakistan is a difficult phenomenon to represent. The following points highlight what I believe are some of the important factors of Pakistani political leadership, which may be drawn from existing literature:

- Factions, or blocs, cut across socioeconomic boundaries.
- These factions are led by individuals who must conform to the shared cultural values of the followers.
- Factions are organised around personal loyalties rather than common ideology or even common interest. That is, the common interest lay in the strength of the bloc rather than the position of any given member. Individuals may in fact not improve their material position in every allied transaction but they will persist with the relationship because of the longer term benefits and security.
- In real situations, individuals have choices about which network they may choose to invoke. Barth's contractual alliances operate in contrast to kin alliances. An anthropology of Pakistan must find some way to account for this multiplicity of strategies.
- Pakistan has contractual alliances which may be long term but, unlike kin based alliances, are not immutable. These alliances can, and are, broken under certain conditions.

These points relate very directly to my thesis. Eglar's description of the obligations incumbent on village leaders, zamindars, and Barth's examination of political bloc strategies provide useful complementary data. While Eglar does not investigate contractual alliances, her description of the role of zamindar corresponds very closely to aspects of landlords in my research. Barth's contractual alliances, likewise, offer intriguing parallels. Throughout this thesis I approach these disparate ethnographies as potentially compatible. That is, I observed elements from the literature of NWFP and the Punjab in the same geographic location with the same individuals. For that reason, I suggest that there is still a great deal of utility in employing Barth's concept of contractual alliances. However I see these contractual alliances being far more complex in organisation than Barth describes. In the context of the Punjab, with its myriad human alliances extending geographically and socially across vast domains it is not helpful to visualise these alliances in bounded terms. They are far too amorphous. They expand and contract in ways which I discuss throughout this thesis. Non-kin based alliances are one area which demand much flexibility, or perhaps fluidity, in theoretical approach.

## Caste

Eglar provides a more elaborate description of caste relations in Punjabi villages. Like Ahmad [1977], who did research a decade later, Eglar identified the primary caste division as being between *zamindar*, landlord/farmer, and *kammi*, service/occupational caste. Ahmad classifies the important castes as cultivator and non-cultivator (though he quickly rejects caste as a useful analytical basis and examines them rather as classes). Eglar's *zamindar*, however, is not simply a cultivator. She states categorically that 'the mere fact of owning land does not make a *zamindar* of a *kammi*' [1960: 28]; nor, it would seem, does the fact of owning *and* cultivating land since *arain* (a gardener caste found in large numbers in parts of Punjab) caste members, who cultivate vegetables on land they own are also denied *zamindar* status [1960: 32]. *Zamindars* are the landowning managerial caste; but unlike Ahmad, Eglar makes no attempt to analyse this relationship as one of class. She describes the *zamindar* and *kammi* castes as intimately linked through a relationship known as a *seyp*. *Seyp* is, in all practical respects, simply another word for the Indian *jajmani* relationship [cf. Wiser 1958; Beidelman 1959]. It is a long term relationship of asymmetrical reciprocity between families. The *zamindar* families provide food, money and favours in exchange for *kammi* services and labour. Each half of this relationship provides stability and security for the other.

Barth's [1960] attempts to establish caste as a universal structural category allowed him to analyse caste among Pukhtuns in ways which reinforce *seyp* notions. The critical aspect of caste for Barth, Eglar and later anthropologists like Chaudhary [1999] is the long term relationships of asymmetrical reciprocity between families which are characterised by economic interdependence. Barth offers this justification for employing the concept and term caste in non-Hindu contexts:

It is a hierarchical system of stable social groups, differing greatly in wealth, privilege, power, and the respect accorded to them by others...In any such system the organization of one stratum may only meaningfully be described with reference to its relations to the other strata... My concern is with social structure, not with ritual or religion, and, for my purpose, although the people of Swat, as Sunni Moslems, fall far outside the Hindu fold, their

system of social stratification may meaningfully be compared to that of Hindu caste systems [1960: 131].

Both Leach [1960: 5-6] and Dumont [1970: 256], however, argue that the universalisation of caste is misleading. Rather it is the systemic cultural ideology which accompanies these hierarchical relationships which is the salient feature of caste. If Quigley's arguments and ethnographic evidence of real caste contexts is to be ignored, then surely Leach and Dumont are correct and caste cannot be applied beyond the Hindu context. Since I remain sceptical of Dumontian analyses for India's Hindus, Barth's application may serve as an interesting cross-cultural comparison of caste-like relationships.

Ahmad dismisses caste as a viable conceptual tool for analysing social stratification in what was then West Pakistan. Caste, as a system of stratification, he says, is only applicable among kammiss, or village artisans. Kammiss, he reports, have a more 'defined and distinct' hierarchy, 'suggesting a more caste-like structure' [1977: 83]; however, this caste based hierarchy is not significant when kammiss, zamindars and sharecroppers are grouped together. At the level of interaction between these socioeconomic groups, Ahmad finds that the 'social structure can best be described in terms of class, or of occupational categorization' [1977:84].

## **Class**

One of the most powerful critiques of contractual and structural functional analysis has come from Marxist inspired anthropologists like Asad and Ahmad. Asad argues that Barth has neglected the importance of class in Swati political actions. Ahmad goes one step further and attempts to produce a class based ethnography of a Punjabi village. The presence of status and wealth hierarchies suggest that class might serve as a useful analytical comparative tool. Ultimately, however, I suggest that class is a poor predictor of political behaviour in Pakistan. I argue that while socioeconomic position is highly relevant to the strategies available to individuals, Marxist-based analyses are largely inadequate as a framework in which to explain or describe the various subcultures of Pakistan.

Saghir Ahmad's *Class and Power in a Punjabi Village* was published in 1977 following his premature accidental death. He had carried out his field work from 1964-1965 and his

posthumous publication was a revised version of his doctoral thesis. Ahmad and Asad mirror each other in assigning primacy to class categories in explanations of Pakistani social organisation. They examine the structural constraints on individual action which Barth's contractual alliances and Eglar's ties of reciprocity overlook.

In order to make sense of Ahmad's analysis it is necessary to note that his use of the term occupation is not meant to indicate the tasks an individual performs, which would contradict Marx's denial of 'the equation of class with income or occupation'. Rather he uses the occupational terms to refer to positions within the organization of production. He cites Marx as defining these positions as 'the way in which an individual cooperates with others in the satisfaction of his basic needs of food, clothing and shelter' [1977: 84-85]. Ahmad links occupation, referring to caste label, to socioeconomic status categories. He defines socioeconomic status as the 'position that an individual or family occupies with reference to prevailing average standards of cultural possessions' [Barber quoted in Ahmad 1977: 85]. Ahmad recognises the need to adapt Marxist categories to the micro level and consequently identifies two classes within the village: cultivators and non-cultivators (reminiscent of Eglar's zamindar and kammi, though admittedly still quite different). He argues that occupation membership corresponds closely to socioeconomic status. This is a better indicator of behaviour than either religious practices, religious knowledge, or *qaum*<sup>23</sup> membership, which Ahmad reports as being a separate ascribed category from occupational caste (something which I found in my research as well, which suggests a pan-Punjabi conceptualisation of the distinction between *qaum* and occupation). He goes on to argue that socioeconomic status should not be treated as the determining variable either since it is impaired by the 'changing value attached to cultural possessions' [1977:90]. Socioeconomic status is therefore a dependent variable on occupation, or class, there being two distinct classes defined for the Punjabi village of Sahiwal, that of cultivator and non-cultivator.

Asad, adopting a similar Marxist method, argues that Barth did not recognise the significance of class interests when focusing on dyadic contractual relationships in Swat [Asad 1972]. Asad's critique of Barth's study centres on the extent to which individuals

are truly able to enter into revocable contractual alliances. Asad would give primacy to the class interests of landlords versus non-landlords:

Nevertheless [the landlord] acquires his political authority by virtue of his membership in a politically dominant class, not by persuading freely consenting individuals to become his political followers [1972: 85].

While Asad is correct to draw attention to the fact that class limits the potential contractual alliances into which an individual may enter, it is not true that landlords acquire political authority solely 'by virtue of [their] membership in a politically dominant class'. Membership in the politically dominant class is often a necessary prerequisite but it does confer political authority by itself, any more than it confers political power. Authority and power must both be garnered through negotiations and actions. Membership in the politically dominant class confers *potential* political authority which must be actualised and it is these processes with which Barth is concerned.

For Barth, the considerations of Asad are macro-features which emerge from actions and decisions that people make. Society, he argues, is an epiphenomenon which is:

...how things happen to be as a result of all manner of activities and circumstances. The thrust of analysis is not to show that it must be like this, but to show what must be since it is like this— i.e. to discover the major determining factors and processes [Barth 1981: 129].

Barth is concerned, above all, with 'deep structures' which may 'generate all the major variants of form which can be observed' [Barth 1981: 133]. Class and history, he argues do not reproduce themselves; they are rather, the result of people making decisions and calculating the best option within any given set of constraints.

Group membership, then, allows certain kinds of alliances and behaviours to be instantiated and renders others infeasible, however, there is no guarantee that those alliances and behaviours *will* be instantiated. Barth offers a coherent description of one of the processes by which individuals may instantiate, or actualise, certain potentials emanating from group membership. Barth's and my own analyses should be placed within the context of hierarchical societies in which choices are partly dictated by one's position within the hierarchy. This should not, however, lead to the conclusion that knowledge of

the hierarchical positions is a sufficient basis for understanding the mechanisms of the society.

Ahmad, like Asad, tends to neglect individual manoeuvring in his conclusions. In Ahmad's ethnographic account of power relationships, however, he does not pursue these same Marxist inspired class groupings. Instead he describes a situation in which cultivator and non-cultivator become peripheral to expressions and exercises of power. The 'major source' of authority and power is held by the absentee landlords. Their authority and power is exercised by local managers. The village is divided into two *pattis*, or divisions of agricultural land owned by different landlords. Each *patti* has its tenant farmers and village servants whose loyalty, or obedience to the landlord of their *patti* may be assumed. The village artisans, or service labourers, may be dependent on exclusively one landlord. Finally, some villagers are not economically dependent on either landlord, or *patti*, and so may choose one *patti* over the other at different times. One of the most important arguments of Ahmad's thesis is that political position is dependent on economic position. He examines the relationships of power between landlords, managers, dependent tenants and servants, dependent artisans and independent villagers as being a measure of economic position. Ahmad looks at the ways land redistribution and democracy reforms under Ayub Khan affected rural Punjab. Elections, he says, became vehicles of political position for landlords, albeit frequently by proxy. Landlords did not need to present themselves, or one of their own 'class', in order to secure political position, they needed merely sponsor someone loyal to themselves and their agenda, which, Ahmad argues, is the protection of their own class derived interests [1977: 91-94]

The subsequent discussion of the strategies employed for political position indicate that economic position is indeed important. Membership in either the cultivator or non-cultivator 'class' impacts on the position an individual may plausibly assume in the factions. A comparison of Ahmad's *patti* factions and Barth's political blocs is instructive; the basis of hierarchy within each is in part derived from land ownership. Ownership of land confers potential leadership on people. Ahmad describes a situation in which the owners of the land are themselves absent, so it is their agents who benefit from potential power. It is the agents, rather than the landlords, who must assume the politicking that

Barth attributes to landowners in Swat (though from Ahmad's description the absentee landlords are no strangers to political manoeuvring). Ahmad's Punjabi village, with its absentee landlords, now begins to resemble Gilseman's similarly structured Lebanese village. At this point the difference between cultivator and non-cultivator fails to adequately address the individual politicking which Ahmad presents. The relevant divisions which may be considered independent indicators of behaviour in these domains of activities would seem more convincingly to be patti membership and socioeconomic status. Ahmad's data suggests that factional politics are the dominant mode of political operation and that the faction followers' 'affiliation with factional leaders is based in most cases upon the economic dependency and real or perceived economic or political benefits rather than upon kinship or caste' [1977:103]. He successfully dismantles caste and kinship as determinant variables for political position at Union Council level. What he does not do is account for the ways individuals may attempt to manipulate patti rivalries and negotiate their own alliances.

Both Asad and Ahmad neglect two critical facts: rivalry between factional leaders and the significance of izzat. Non-cultivators, it is true, are unlikely to be patti, or factional (or bloc) leaders, because they do not have the correct prerequisites, yet they are able to manipulate the leaders of the factions in two important ways. First, my own research, as well as Ahmad's data (and Barth's and Lindholm's for that matter) suggest that factional leaders actively poach the followers of rival factional leaders. Second, a man's izzat is measured in part by what people say about him. If a person who is nominally close to the man insults or denigrates him, that is a serious blow to his izzat, in part because it is an indication of lack of control over one's followers. Faction followers, thus, have some abilities to manipulate factional leaders.

The organizational concept which comes most readily to mind, given Ahmad's data, is patron driven factions. While Ahmad identifies class as a sociological category that may be produced from his data, this does not provide an explanation of individual political manoeuvring within factions. Class divisions certainly exist in Pakistan. There are real differences in wealth, socioeconomic status and effective control of the means and surplus of production. The extent to which a class analysis of Pakistan may reflect people's

political consciousness or behaviour is questionable. I suggest that while class variables are important for an understanding of an individual's most likely role eligibility, which is extremely important information, they should not be given primacy when trying to make sense of the kinds of phenomena with which Barth, Lindholm or my own research is concerned. Just as Asad's market model fails to explain why particular individuals become factional leaders while other eligible individuals do not, Ahmad's class model serves only to give a very crude picture of group relations with no insight into the mechanisms in use within those groups. Nevertheless, Ahmad and Asad draw attention to an important aspect of Pakistani society. The social strategies individuals have at their disposal are firmly embedded within a culture of groups who have grossly different access to, and control of, material and social resources.

### **Agnatic rivalry and *izzat***

Ahmed sets as his theoretical goal, the development of analytical categories of Tribal Area Mohmands (TAM) and Settled Area Mohmands (SAM). He goes about establishing the criteria which constitute a TAM and a SAM. In some respects his assessment of TAM's and SAM's is reminiscent of Ibn Khaldoun's [Simon 1978: 93-103, 123-124] notions of the transition between tribal and urban peoples. The tribals are 'pure' and embody the 'true' culture. As they become more urbanised they become 'corrupted' and weakened. In effect, it is an attempt to re-invigorate the concept of the 'noble savage'. Ahmed describes two forms of encapsulation of the Pukhtuns. One form of encapsulation leads to Ibn Khaldoun's 'corruption' of 'pure' cultural values, and this is what Ahmed says has happened to the SAM. The second form of encapsulation does not necessarily involve the loss of those values.

The critical difference between Ahmed's Pukhtun types lay in the way each group lives up to the 'ideals' of *pukhtunwali*. It is the degree to which groups follow the code of *pukhtunwali* which defines them as either TAM or SAM. The TAM are the more pure cultural representatives. Ahmed says the central features of *pukhtunwali* are 'agnatic rivalry (*tarboorwali* [sic]) and the preservation of the honour of women (*tor*)' [1980: 3]<sup>24</sup>. *Tarboorwali* is of primary importance to Pukhtun social organization. In turn, this agnatic rivalry brings about a secondary principle of an 'intense spirit of democracy'. These two



principles are accompanied by a third which concerns women and their chastity [1980: 5-6]. All of these principles combine to impact on the conception of manhood and honour. The encapsulation<sup>25</sup> which the TAM were undergoing at the time of Ahmed's research had left key symbols of manhood and honour intact: the men's guest house (*hujra*), the gun (*topak*) and the council of elders (*jirga*) [1980: 6]. Ahmed concurs with Barth's argument that TAM actions are motivated 'around the pursuit of power, status and honour' rather than economic material gain [1980: 6]. In his ideal-type model the division between TAM and SAM may be reduced to two indigenous glosses: *nang* (honour) society versus *qalang* (rent or taxes) society [1980: 24]. Nang society lives pukhtunwali through maintenance of those cultural symbols and the three principles. Qalang society, on the other hand, through encapsulation, have begun to resemble the peasant agriculturalist in settled areas and have abandoned the pursuit of living the ideals of pukhtunwali.

Ahmed makes use of the theoretical contributions of Weber and Leach to suggest that there is a shift from one ideal-type to another. He cites the presence and importance placed on the cultural 'symbols'<sup>26</sup> of *hujra*, *topak* and *jirga* as measures of proximity to the ideal-type. Ahmed's work offers an invaluable elaboration on the constituent elements of the ideal-type; nevertheless, I question the utility of the final ideal-types. *Hujra*, or *déra*, as they are called interchangeably in northern Punjab, are very much a part of groups which make no claims to living pukhtunwali. Guns have become ubiquitous throughout Pakistan and remain an important symbol of masculinity and power. *Jirga* and other types of councils of elders are found throughout NWFP and the Punjab regardless of proximity to the nang ideal-type. I do not suggest that non-Pukhtun groups should be categorised with the nang ideal-type (though perhaps Ahmed would). The presence of these cultural symbols and institutions suggest rather that there are cultural values which are present throughout Pakistan, or at the very least NWFP and the Punjab. The creation of ideal-types which highlight the differences construct divisions that may inadvertently create artificial culture groups.

Ahmed, to be fair, does not argue that the ideal-types exist as such. Both TAM and SAM have some features of the ideal-type and both claim to live pukhtunwali. I do not object to

the elaboration of ideal-types however in this case they reinforce centuries old beliefs in the 'purity' of the tribal peoples. If a Tribal Area Mohmand Pukhtun had written *Pukhtun Economy and Society* (assuming he was conversant with Weber and Leach), he may have produced a very similar explanatory mechanism for highlighting the distinction between himself and a Settled Area Mohmand. Ahmed provides a superb account of some important cultural concepts but at the same time reinforces what I believe to be an artificial division between the 'tribals' and the 'peasants' of Pakistan. There is, however, evidence which suggests that the principles underlying pukhtunwali are fundamentally similar to the principles underlying Punjabi izzat. The difference is in the way those principles get expressed and the extent to which there are alternative ways of satisfying the demands of these values. I therefore agree with Lindholm when he says these differences are primarily one of 'scale' rather than structure [1996: 74].

In order for these ideal-types to be useful in the study of real societies one would have to see more than simply a difference in implementation of shared cultural values. There would have to be evidence that not only is the implementation altered, but the underlying principle, the structure, itself has changed.

## **Conclusion**

The ethnographies of Pakistan which I have discussed in this chapter each make important contributions to the anthropology of Pakistan. Barth's examination of the contractual alliances among the Swat Pathans highlights an important political phenomenon in Pakistan. Eglar's study of gift giving and the role that women play in maintenance of family honour and status is invaluable. She provides only a cursory description of the mutual obligations between kammi and zamindar and why such privileges and duties are reproduced, nor does she go into detail on other extra-kin, extra-caste social bonds. *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan* is therefore not adequate for an understanding of the kinds of phenomena with which I am concerned. It provides a partial explanation of the principles of social organisation and neglects some very important non-kin, non-caste alliances. Like Ahmed, Eglar has inadvertently contributed to the construction of what I believe to be artificial divisions in the anthropology of Pakistan. Interestingly, Eglar's evidence and analysis suggest very strong links between the rural and urban contexts of Pakistan.

Kinship, she argues, ties Pakistan's urban and rural communities. In the 1950's, at the time of Eglar's field work, Pakistan was overwhelmingly a rural state, (82% rural in 1951 [Eglar 1960: 7, 13]). She cites the frequent visits between rural and urban kin as evidence that 'there is no large gap between village and city life' [Eglar 1960: 13]. It is not only kinship relations, however, which link the village to the city. I argue that urban and rural people share relationship role behaviours in the three dominant social contexts of Pakistan: kinship, caste and political relationships. Eglar's emphasis on family gift exchange did not require a detailed analysis of the type of alliances and relationships which Barth was trying to understand. Unfortunately, the fact that she did not discuss these relationships allows the schism between tribal NWFP and peasant Punjab to go unchallenged. The analytical division of Pakistan is a direct result of this kind of ethnography.

Where Eglar's work is of tremendous value to this thesis is in the area of competition between equals. If all social phenomena in Pakistan must be placed within the context of hierarchical groups which limit the potential choices of individuals, then it is imperative to explore the ways people are able to jockey for position within those groups as well as between them. I argue that the role relationship underlying Pakistani social organisation is one of asymmetry and Eglar provides valuable evidence of the mechanisms people of relative equality may use to impose asymmetrical relations. This is made more pertinent by the presence of an Islamic ideology of equality combined with inherited Hindu caste categories which are inherently asymmetrical.

Ahmad does a competent job of exploring the possibility of understanding Pakistan in class terms, but does not make a sufficient case for class as a mechanism for either motivating or predicting behaviour or consciousness. One could argue that class is an organising principle in some cases in Pakistan. It would have to account for actual factional affiliations within family, caste and extra-kin (i.e. issues of consciousness), however, and not simply be descriptive of relative disparities in wealth and status. As with Asad's analysis of Swat Pukhtuns, group membership plays a role in determining which choices are likely to be available but not which choices will be made. Finally Ahmed's approach offers some very welcome detail on the concepts which make up important

cultural values. He breaks down very difficult indigenous terms in ways which render them more useable for analysis. Nonetheless, his conclusions reinforce Pakistani cultural stereotypes which mask important cultural continuities.

Pukhtunwali and izzat may both be translated loosely as honour. Stewart's account of honour in Europe and the Mediterranean basin, however, highlight the need for anthropology to treat such definitions with scepticism. The defining features of Pukhtunwali include: hospitality, agnatic rivalry, the honour of women, blood revenge, and refuge. A corresponding list of the features of izzat would include all of these. The gun may have traditionally been more common among Pukhtuns but it is no less a symbol of masculinity and strength in the Punjab. The jirga, by which decisions of pukhtunwali may be expressed, has its equivalent institutions throughout the Punjab (often even called jirga). Throughout all of these features there is a clear thread: the ability to control oneself and others. The ethnography of the Pukhtuns has consistently stressed the discourse of pukhtunwali. As a result, the impression of an egalitarian and violent society has obscured the presence of a society which, by and large, avoids blood feuds and excessive violence and is rife with socioeconomic status disparity. If one re-focuses attention on NWFP and the Punjab as a contiguous cultural area, the picture that emerges is one of startling similarities. Thus, I suggest that representations of both provinces would do well to ensure that behaviour and ideology are treated in more integral ways. Rather than Leachian shifts between ideal-types, it may be more useful to conceptualise a patchwork of differing levels of instantiation of shared ideals and principles of social organisation scattered throughout all of northern Pakistan and possibly Sindh and Baluchistan as well.

The anthropological literature of northern Pakistan's neighbours, India and Afghanistan, represent divergent cultural traditions. Pakistan, lying between these cultures, as a geographic crossroads from one to the other, must necessarily borrow elements from each. This has been reflected in the analytical division of Pakistan into tribal and peasant areas. While this division has had enormous value for unpacking some of the concepts which contribute to social identity and social organization, it is not productive to maintain a divided-Pakistan theory. I focus on power in this thesis as a means of elaborating one of the most important areas of Pakistani culture: the cultural continuity of northern Pakistan.

I suggest that Pakistani culture should be considered as more than simply an amalgam of borrowed cultural practices but as a nation-state characterised by hybridising cultural mechanisms. A study of power in Pakistan not only contributes to the anthropology of Pakistan but to ongoing debates in and out of anthropology regarding development and political representation.

## 4 Family Relations

The family is frequently cited as the cornerstone of Pakistani society. Interaction within Punjabi kin groups demonstrates collusion with hierarchical power relations. There is an imbalance of power between members of the family, yet family members do not rely primarily on negative sanctions but rather positive rewards or else withdrawal of support. Children are taught to relate to kin categories rather than individuals. They learn to depend on the extended family and to subsume their sense of individual self within a category which has a place within the extended family. As they mature they find themselves confronted with demands and risks which they are incapable of dealing with alone. Some of those risks, indeed, emanate from within the family itself, but the solutions also come from within the family. As young men enter the economically active period of their lives, they face increased social and commercial competition and it is their family which provides the most reliable source of support and protection and, paradoxically, the most frequent competitors. When men become heads of households and are the primary source of support and protection for their own nuclear family, they rely on family resource networks to attract more patrons and clients. These new patrons and clients then become part of the family resource networks and contribute to the standing of the entire family. Virtually everything a Punjabi individual does, has an impact on the family. Punjabis are socially encouraged to relate to representatives of groups rather than individuals, so relations between individuals constitute relations between groups.

Gellner [1977] and Boissevain [1966] see a value in excluding patronage from kinship relations. In the Mediterranean context this seems feasible and indeed highly appropriate for kin relations since the 1960's. I suggest that patron/client roles do exist within the family in Pakistan, though concur with Gellner and Boissevain that nuclear family relationships should not be seen primarily as patronal. Boissevain in particular, while carefully defining kin reciprocity of a different order than patronal relations, states that he believes 'a conceptual distinction can be made between kinsman, on the one hand, and

patronage and friendship, on the other, although *in actual operation of the system they overlap*' [1966: 21 emphasis added]. It may, therefore, be practical to conclude that while there are useful distinctions between the two, the similarity of role and relational expectations may mean that having the capacity to function in one context implies the ability to function in the other.

Inclusion of the Punjabi nuclear kin group as an example of patronage is consequently problematic. Extended kin relations, however, should not necessarily be excluded from consideration as patronal relations. In this chapter I argue primarily that the rudiments of patronage are socialised within the family unit and secondarily that patron/client roles form one of the expressions of kin relations. While in most other respects I find Gellner's and other Mediterraneanists' analytical tools for the study of patronage very useful, in this definitional domain, I am afraid I must differ.

In this chapter I will look at the life-cycle of a landlord in Attock District. A non-landlord villager life-cycle differs in some of the details but follows parallel patterns. Landlord and villager life cycles each spring from a common set of expectations and values so it would be surprising indeed if there were serious fundamental differences.

Early childhood socialisation is a time when the core values of the culture and the society are transmitted. Punjabi notions of hierarchy and patronage are instilled before children are able to communicate these ideas verbally. Punjabi childhood and early adulthood reinforce group dependency. This is also the time when Punjabis have the opportunity to fulfil some of the role requirements they will meet in later life. As adults, both landlords and non-landlords engage in patronage relationships as a mechanism for coping with the obstacles they find in life. Competition for resources and unstable state structures increase dependency on kin groups. Underlying kin group relations is a principle of hierarchy and patronage. Childhood is the occasion to learn the 'tools' of patronage and hierarchy which allow adults to assume their positions within society.

The landlords with whom I did my research provide a very clear example of the fluidity of patron and client roles. Their relative status to those around them provided me an opportunity to witness the same individuals satisfying both dominant and subordinate roles. They are patrons within their village, but most of them are clients within their

family. The few that are significant patrons within their family, may be clients outside their village. The image of an individual at the centre of multiple links to other individuals, leading up and down, is critical to a proper visualisation of patronage in Pakistan. This is equally true for villagers, though their contacts outside the village tend to be more based on family, where the blatant nature of patronage may be disguised as a kin role. Landlords provide the opportunity to compare kin roles with roles that are unquestionably patronage roles, using the same individuals, and generalise about the nature of both roles.

### **Family defined**

There are problems with identifying who qualifies as 'family' in a Pakistani village. The kinds of power relationships with which I am concerned are centred around the nuclear and the extended family, as these terms are understood in the west. In the village the people who reside in a common *ghar* (household) may include members of both categories. Fellow *ghar* members, exclusive of any unrelated, live-in servants, all draw from a shared pool of symbolic capital as well as material resources. The *izzat* of one member impacts on that of the other members. It does not tend to be in the interest of any individual member, therefore, to undermine externally the position of other members. The more influence, authority and power one member attains, the greater the potential benefit for other *ghar* members.

One of the reasons I have opted for a definition based on residence rather than genealogy is the difficulties of eliciting workable boundaries from my informants. One of the early conversations I had with one of my informants, Malik Nawab, illustrates the problem:

Me: [speaking about a visitor who had just left] So he's *rishtidari* (family).

Malik Nawab: Yes, yes, *rishtidari*. No, not really. He's part of my *biraderi* (patilineage).

Me: But I thought he said he was your maternal great uncle's daughter's husband?

Malik Nawab: Yes, so he's distant. He's part of my *biraderi* because his father was related to Malik Hafez's [the maternal great uncle] grandfather.

Me: [confused] But I thought he was a Bhatti Rajput? And you're a Gujar?



Malik Nawab: [perplexed at my confusion] Yes. You don't understand. He's not close but he visits often and he's part of our family like you. We love him like he was a member of our family. I don't know if he's really related or not. Maybe he is.

My informant was not wrong. He tried to express information that went beyond the simple genealogical categorisation that I sought. In other words, he was talking about something 'real' and I was trying to make an abstraction which necessarily required reduction of the 'real'. A combination of residence and status, ultimately, proved a more reliable tool for defining a domestic unit with which I could proceed analytically. This definition solves some problems while leaving others unaddressed. In this work I do not try to make sense of the more elastic and situational concept of 'family' that I encountered in conversations such as those above.

The izzat of one ghar impacts on the izzat of related ghars. The villages in the area in which I worked, mostly had multiple nuclear-kin ghar (i.e. ghar of extended families, or 'joint' family households). When possible, kin members maintain their ghar very close to each other, though they often maintain separate cooking hearths. Nonetheless, members of the same extended family plus all other common descendants of a known ancestor (biraderi), have increased mutual obligations and rights with each other compared with non-kin. In the first part of this chapter, the category of family with which I am concerned is comprised of one or more ghar, living within easy walking distance for children (within the same village or close lying hamlets). As individuals get older and have increased control over their mobility, this becomes extended to other kin in the region. The decisive criterion for the definition, or delimitation of ghar identity, is those people with whom one may freely enter the house and interact with the ladies of the house, and who claim common descent, paternally, maternally or both. Although the significance of people who satisfy this requirement shifts and expands with age and increased mobility, they constitute the subject matter for this chapter.

### **Life-cycle**

Not all men from landlord families behave in the same way. Behavioural roles correspond to one's position within the family, education, location and intelligence. The order in which boys are born thrusts certain roles upon them regardless of personality or

preference. Residence in or out of the village also imposes behavioural expectations from which deviation may be difficult. In this section I look very specifically at the life-cycle of a man who could become the head of household of a wealthy and influential family, and who has ambitions to prominence within his village. I believe, moreover, that many of these critical phases in a village landlord's life are mirrored in other sectors of the country. Understanding how a landlord becomes an influential landlord helps unravel how other people become influential in Pakistan.

### **Childhood: early socialisation of status, group identification and dependency**

Benedict [1959] and Mead [1930; 1955; 1961; 1964] suggested studying childhood as a way of understanding collective and individual adult behaviours. Mead argued that while there were important universal aspects of childhood (noting that all children must learn to feed, walk and talk for example), there were 'conspicuous differences' which shed light not only on the adult behaviours of other societies but on 'our own conception of education' as well [1964: 163]. Mead, for example, observed child rearing practices in Bali and saw a connection with a reliance on ritual and child rearing. Children in Bali, she argued, were taught to rely on ritual to confront all dangers and insecurities, which led to increased dependence on having the appropriate social context (only available with other Balinese); hence the Balinese reluctance to confront unusual situations alone [1955: 40-51]. Benedict [1959], similarly, suggested that the practice of swaddling infants in Russia led to particular adult attitudes and behaviours. One interesting contrast Benedict notes is the strict control of infants' bodies combined with an apparent lack of control of children's emotions. Benedict infers that Russians believe that emotions cannot be controlled but bodies can. Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, while not restricted to a study of childhood socialisation, suggests closer examination of this period of the life-cycle. *Habitus* is the 'internalization of externality' which provides individuals the generative logic by which they can think and behave as members of a particular society (or class) [1990: 55]. Bourdieu argues that *habitus* gives 'disproportionate weight to early experiences,' because earlier structures (the 'logic' of *habitus*) 'in turn are the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experiences' [1990: 54]. Bourdieu, therefore, outlines a

more sophisticated set of analytical tools than Mead and Benedict for understanding the logic underlying culturally specific (and for Bourdieu, individual and class specific) thought and behaviour; however, in both schools of thought, early childhood socialisation is understood to have a profound impact on the individual in reproducing collective perceptions and values. In addition to providing useful tools for understanding the way things 'are', an examination of changes in child rearing contributes to the study of wider social change (for example the ways that childhood socialisation may reveal generational changes among immigrants to the United States [Mead 1955]).

Some anthropologists of Pakistan have indeed tried to understand the origins of collective values and behaviours in early childhood socialisation. Lindholm [1982; 1996] describes the early socialisation of Pukhtun children and the ways that core values of pukhtunwali are reproduced long before explicit teaching is possible. He describes the process by which Swati children learn that they must be 'competitive, clever, and completely ruthless in the pursuit of [their] own personal advantage' [Lindholm 1996: 20]. All societies transmit values and roles long before children are able to walk and talk or act as independent agents. Children create cognitive categories long before they are able to express those categories linguistically. Punjabi socialisation shares common features with general South Asian childhood socialisation. The socialisation that Lindholm describes is not unfamiliar in Punjabi villages (particularly the ways hospitality is reinforced in very small children); however, the similarities extend at least to parts of India as well. Moreover the similarities of this socialisation would seem to cross cut religious divisions (as one would expect). There are mechanisms for reinforcing the importance of the extended family [see Hitchcock and Minturn 1963 for similarities with Hindu Rajputs of India], as well as instilling notions of obedience to elders, particularly elder males. One of the most important aspects of early childhood socialisation in the villages of Tehsil Fateh Jang is the way in which individuals become subsumed within group categories. Thus, while father is an extremely important category, there are men who fall into this category other than the *pater*. Among Bhaloti Maliks this point is underscored by the common use of the term *baba* for father. Very small children refer to most of the elder men of their family as *baba*, much to the distress of villagers who want to make more of a distinction between 'father', *abu* and 'old man', *baba*. Similarly, the category of cousin includes a

great many people. Distinctions are made between maternal or paternal cousins, but the socialisation children receive tends to subsume the individuals within the general category of cousin. This simultaneously encourages small children to be confident in their situation, since the loss of any individual does not threaten their continued care, while simultaneously undermining their confidence in themselves as individuals, since they too are 'replaceable'.

Visitors to Pakistan can not miss the irony of a state and a culture which has an appalling record on child labour and yet is so loving and affectionate to very small children. One aggravating factor is the age at which children are seen to be mature. Rajput Hindus of India believe that children who are unable to speak are unteachable; further, they are born 'pure' with no sin and sense of good and evil [Hitchcock and Minturn 1963: 311]. Pukhtuns believe that children are 'incapable of feeling or understanding anything' before the age of seven [Lindholm 1996: 22]. In tehsil Fateh Jang, although people do not commonly express such ideas explicitly, they share the notion that very small children should not be corrected or disciplined. They are both innocent and unteachable.

The age at which children cease to be indulged is partially dependent on the economic situation of the family. Very poor people tend to stop indulging their children at a relatively early age (6-10), while the wealthy may indulge and spoil their children well into young adulthood, though admittedly this is of a different order than spoiling a toddler. Village landlords are part of this same cultural phenomenon. Children under the age of five are indulged to an extent that might make many Anglo-Saxons shudder.

On one occasion I sat in one of the landlord deras with a group of men who were watching Malik Nawazish show off his two year old grandson, Aswand Yar. Malik Nawazish had given the child a 50 rupee note to play with. The child was chewing on it while his grandfather simultaneously laughed and chided him. The grandfather tried to remove the money from the child's mouth but the little boy screamed and hit his grandfather screaming, 'Nei!'. the grandfather, along with the rest of us, laughed at this. Finally he got the idea of pouring some sugar into the boy's mouth. He took a spoonful of sugar and placed it in the palm of his hand. The little boy dropped the 50 rupee note and held his

head back while the grandfather poured the sugar into his mouth. When the first handful of sugar was gone the little boy screamed for more and his grandfather obliged.

This same little boy was in my room one afternoon with his father. Aswand Yar wanted to play with my computer. He was, as all two year olds are, rather rough with the screen and keys. I told him to stop. His father, Malik Imran, said to me, 'No, no it's ok Steve Sahib, let him play. He's just a boy.' Needless to say I developed a reputation for intolerance about some things. People did not seem to understand the constraints I tried to impose on small children.

Landlords with either their own children or their nieces and nephews above the age of 8, however, become stern disciplinarians. Nine and ten years olds may visibly tremble in the presence of their fathers and *chachas* (paternal uncles). In the presence of their *taya* (father's elder brother) they may be a nervous wreck. These children, who five years earlier had been breaking *abu's* fine tea set, or ripping rupee notes in half to the amusement of their fathers, now find that nothing they can ever do will satisfy their fathers.

The same Malik Nawazish who was prepared to laugh about his two year old grandson eating his money was almost a different person with his 14 year old nephew, Ovais Ali. On one occasion he called his nephew into the buffalo stable and wanted to know why his nephew was not doing well at school.

Malik Nawazish: Are you stupid?

Ovais Ali: [no reply-- looking down at the ground]

Malik Nawazish: Go on, what's wrong? Are you stupid? Is that why you don't do well in school?

Ovais Ali: [looking extremely uncomfortable but still saying nothing]

Malik Nawazish: [yelling] Get out of here you stupid boy!

Similar exchanges happened throughout my stay in Bhalot. When fathers and uncles questioned adolescent children they were often met with frightened silence. On occasion this was dealt with physically by slapping the child (if it was a boy) who cringed but only rarely cried.

My host's son, Wasif, was sent to me to learn English during the summer holidays. He hated English and he hated taking the time away from his holiday with his cousins. Once he skipped his appointment with me. His father called him to my room in the evening. Wasif had obviously been crying. I knew that Malik Asif had already scolded him upstairs. Malik Asif began to chastise his son again for my benefit:

Malik Asif: [in English] You have wasted Steve Uncle's precious time. Why?

Wasif: [looking down, shrugging his shoulders but remaining silent]

Malik Asif: [getting frustrated, slapping his son's head and continuing to speak in English which the boy hardly understood] Explain to Steve Uncle why you've wasted his precious time! He has come all the way from England to study our village! He's taking precious time to teach you English! Explain yourself!

Wasif: [bursting into tears and trying to run away]

Malik Asif: [in Urdu now] Stop it! Stop crying! [being slightly more gentle and continuing in Urdu] Explain to Steve Uncle why you didn't come to learn English today.

Wasif: [in English] I'm very sorry Uncle. I will not do it again.

Malik Asif: [getting irritated again and yelling in Punjabi] Get out!

After Wasif had left the room Malik Asif and I discussed his role as a father. He explained:

My son is afraid of me. He must be afraid of me. He also loves me but right now he is more afraid of me. It's very difficult, Steve Sahib, you don't understand. If I weren't strong then I couldn't teach Malik Wasif to be a landlord. His mother cries when he goes to school and she's very soft with him. If I'm not hard with him then he won't learn that my Pakistan is a very difficult place.

Fathers are in a difficult position. Fathers clearly love their small children, so it stands to reason they must feel affection for their older children. Malik Asif loves his son very much. When his son is not present he speaks of him in glowing terms and is full of pride. The burden of being the guide and patron of children who can be held accountable in the eyes of the public, however, leads fathers to establish an emotional distance between themselves and their children, or at least their sons. A man should provide his son with a righteous and noble model of what it means to be a man. If providing a consistent model

of a noble and *sharif* man is impossible, he should impose ideal behaviour on his sons. Hitchcock and Minturn argue that father is the 'disciplinarian' while father's father and father's brothers are the 'defenders' of children [1963: 324]. The role of stern father seems extremely widespread in South Asia once children reach school going age (regardless of whether they actually go to school or not). Lindholm goes further and argues that it would in fact be an unkindness to be gentle with children, as they would not then learn the necessary skills for their society [1996: 18-26]. The early life of Punjabi villagers then, is a confusing combination of total acceptance followed by a stern set of conditions upon which the child's acceptance is based.

Throughout this changing relationship with the father there are relationships with the rest of the family, servants and other villagers. Both landlord and non-landlord children learn to accept a large number of adults as caretakers long before they can walk. In one village the landlord family is made up of about 80 individuals. Any adult might decide he or she wanted to take one of the small children for a walk (women walk around within the compounds of their houses and as a group regularly go to the nearby shrines). It is not unusual to see young men in their 20's walking around with a toddler. They show them off to people they know and trust in the village. Children often shift houses for a few days. Even as toddlers, children stay a few nights with an aunt or an uncle who may feel like having his or her small relatives in the house. As children get older (8 and above), they may spend most of their time with an extended family member in order to attend a particular school. In some cases, the displacement does not seem to be for practical reasons. If a child and grandparent have a particular attachment, for example, the child may live weeks or months in the grandparent's home. Not only do they learn to trust the extended family, they learn to obey categories rather than individuals. Father, father's brothers, father's father, father's paternal cousins (of the father's generation or older) are all disciplinary figures, as soon as a child reaches the end of his or her indulgent phase. Children become dependent on groups rather than individuals as a result of this. They may be very fond of their parents and particularly attached to them, nonetheless, their loyalties and affections are far more distributed to the extended family network because of the frequent and regular contact they have with them.

Landlord children spend a large amount of time with servants. This provides some of the opportunities for them to learn that they are different from most people in the village. Young landlord children often imitate the movements and activities of the servants. I have seen two and three year olds squatting, servant like, and making sweeping motions with a stick. When their father witnessed this he scolded the children and told them they were dirty. I asked him if this was to prevent them from being like servants and he smiled.

‘You’re very clever,’ he said, ‘Yes, children don’t know how to behave. Landlord children spend time with villagers and they copy them but they aren’t like villagers. They must learn to be landlords.’

Another landlord explained to me that zamindars are not servants, they are noble and respectable people who do not sweep or clean dirty things like servants. Before they have finished primary school, landlord children have a clear notion that there are different categories of people, some squat and clean the floor, others sit in chairs and tell the first group what to do. It may be difficult for Westerners to come to terms with this socialisation of inequality, but it is important to make sense of the ease with which status differences are accepted. Islam tells people that all humans are equal. It tells them that all Muslims are brothers and sisters. Pakistani culture tells them that this ideal equality is in the eyes of Almighty Allah alone.

### **The school years**

The teen years do not seem especially difficult for landlord children. They cannot hope to win the unconditional approval of their fathers, nor probably of many of their elder relatives, but for the most part this is only a factor in the presence of those people. One can spend a great deal of time with one’s age mates and avoid contact with disapproving generations. When in the presence of disapproving fathers or uncles, most teenage boys remain ominously silent. Even when asked direct questions, their conditioning to remain silent in the presence of these men is so strong that one often has to ask a question four or five times. If the answer requires more than a one syllable response or a head nod, then it becomes even more difficult. This is the age when most landlord children are out of the village during the school year. Landlord boys do not attend the local middle school. No landlord child has attended the local primary school in the last 20 years. Landlord children



begin living outside the village at the start of primary school and as adolescents, seem to be more urban than village. These boys come back to the village for weekends and holidays and spend their time playing cricket with each other or watching television. They do not generally mix with village children of their own age at this point in their life. The only village children with whom they play are child servants or the children of their adult servants or particularly trusted sharecroppers. These boys also do not generally wander very far from the landlord housing compounds (clustered together in most villages). They move from one landlord house to another. At this stage there is little for them to worry about. They get some pressure to do well in school but this is sporadic and, as far as I could tell, ineffective. As young as 14 or 15, people have come to understand the ambiguous nature of doing well in school. On the one hand, it may open doors, but on the other, it will not open any doors that could not equally effectively be opened through family connections. Obtaining a place, and even a degree, in a Pakistani university can be accomplished through contacts rather than studying<sup>19</sup>. Landlord boys are surrounded by very successful men who have little education. The fact that they are able to read and write at all makes them better educated than the vast majority of people in the village. Success is not measured by education in a Pakistani village, although people are very proud of a relative who has a good education. Education alone is not sufficient, and I believe this has resulted in people focusing more on human relations as vehicles for success than on education.

### **Early adulthood**

During and immediately following the time that landlord boys are in secondary school is the time when they begin to establish a reputation apart from that of their family. Specific incidents during this time may not be remembered but general reactions and attitudes influence the way others view a landlord later in life. As long as a young man's father is still alive, or he is under the direct protection and care of his grandfather, uncle or elder brother, the consequences of this time can be minimal. This is a time for young landlords to make mistakes. This may also be the last phase of life when a landlord can truly be friends with others, especially his cousins. After a man assumes responsibility for a household friendships take on implications of service and patronage, even between ideal

equals. When a young man is old enough to move about freely in the village, the region and even the country, but before his elder family protectors are dead, is the time for young landlords to demonstrate to other landlords, villagers and family members that they are strong enough, and intelligent enough to be given family authority. There are differing degrees of what is allowed, based on sibling order, but in general young landlords with living fathers, may react excessively aggressively on little provocation from time to time and trust that their fathers will smooth ruffled feathers. In this way young landlords are able to invoke sufficient uncertainty about their reactions to cause others to hesitate before taking too much advantage of them.

Eldest sons have the greatest amount of pressure on them not to make mistakes. They are more closely identified with their father and in the event of premature death of the father, they assume responsibility for their younger siblings (though they will be assisted by uncles and grandfathers). Younger sons may act aggressively in a seemingly irrational manner. In some cases, this is tacitly encouraged by fathers. When a man reaches a certain position within the village, however, it is inappropriate for him to be seen to act like a thug. Once a man attains this social position of influence and power, his eldest son may also feel obliged to behave more calmly. Younger sons, however, are apparently less constrained by these expectations. Younger sons are frequently the ones who get irate about slights against their family and go to exaggerated public spectacles of aggression to assert their and their family's honour. These men may resort to shouting, pistol waving, kidnapping and destruction of property. For the most part, they do not kill. The few occasions of reported murders committed by landlords were not done as acts of bravado and done with as few witnesses as possible. This, I have been told, varies from region to region. In Hazara, landlords apparently regularly shoot at each other and occasionally kill each other. Many landlords carry guns and travel with bodyguards because of family feuds. This is of a different magnitude and constitutes serious feuds based on competition for economic resources. Punjabi landlords are disinclined to kill for honour, unless there is some economic importance attached to it (which there often is, so I should not want to imply that Punjabi landlords are any less ferocious or courageous than Baloch, or Pathan landlords are rumoured to be). What is surprising about landlords at this stage of their life is that they do not all get killed or kill other people. They swagger, boast and act like

serious *vadera*<sup>20</sup> landlords. Behind them of course, they have mothers and fathers who pacify villagers who feel their children have gone too far. They may be in a position to take discipline out of the hands of the police and assume that role themselves. When fathers live a very long life, this period of reduced consequences may last a very long period indeed. A man may find he is able to indulge himself and his friends well into his thirties or forties and his father will repair any damage inflicted upon others. Many of the worst cases of landlord abuse in the Punjabi newspapers come from young landlords with living fathers. The cases of rape of village girls, beatings of villagers and shooting up buildings are done by young men who are not absolutely responsible for their household or its honour. If a family can keep the scandal of such excesses quiet then they will, as they do anywhere in the world. This does not mean they do not have to pay. Rape is a very serious matter in Pakistan and if a village girl were to be raped by one of the local landlords, then the ramifications could be potentially life threatening for landlords. I did not hear of any cases of rape in any of the villages in which I worked; however, reported cases from other villages lead me to believe that there is great shame associated with a relative who has committed rape and the family would do everything in their power to compensate the girl's family financially. This of course, is wholly inadequate, but prison is also an inadequate punishment in many cases. In any event, no landlord with any contacts worth having could allow his son to go to prison, no matter what crime he had committed. The consequences of allowing a child to go to prison undermine not only the family's izzat, but also the perception of the father as an influential man.

#### **Case study: Early adulthood aggression**

I will now look at a particular incident which typifies the most common assertion of status as a landlord. Aggression serves to dispel fears that a man may not be strong enough to protect his clients or serve his patrons and for young landlords evidence of this is best done well before they are in a position to lose their family wealth (i.e. before they become head of household themselves).

Malik Ibrahim<sup>27</sup> had recently married. He is in his mid twenties. He is the fourth of five sons and his father was very much alive and in control of his family position. Malik Ibrahim generally showed little interest in being a landlord, apart from enjoying being the

centre of attention and getting the most prestigious seat on occasions when he was with villagers. He had a rhetoric of Islamic equality and mixed freely with some of the village boys. He managed the village cricket team and divided his time between playing cricket with villagers and watching television.

During one of the cricket matches against a rival village, a workman drove his Suzuki onto the cricket pitch. The workman was not from the area. He began dumping a load of gravel onto the edge of the cricket pitch, effectively stopping the match. One of the young landlords who was also playing cricket went over and ordered him to move his vehicle. Malik Ibrahim arrived about the same time. The workman was disdainful. He told the young Maliks to go home. He told them that Maliks should stay at home and watch television and let people who worked do their jobs. The first young landlord tried to slap him. In the versions of the story, he sometimes slapped him very hard, and sometimes completely missed him. He was then pulled away by a group of village boys. Malik Ibrahim began kicking the workman. When he too was pulled away he retreated and grabbed a brick. He waved the brick menacingly in the air and approached the workman who began to run away. Malik Ibrahim then dropped the brick and grabbed a cricket bat. He then swung, apparently with all his might, and hit the workman repeatedly in the side with the cricket bat. I was surprised and relieved to see the workman run away with no apparent damage. The workman ran away from the scene and the Suzuki driver quickly drove his vehicle off the cricket pitch.

I happened to have been video taping that cricket match so was able to get this incident on video. I copied that small section of the video to my computer and played it back frame by frame. The astounding thing when I did this was that Malik Ibrahim pulled his bat away just at the point when he made contact with the workman. The damage could have been severe, broken ribs or a broken hip for example, but there was no damage. Malik Ibrahim was making a point, he was not trying to hurt anyone. Afterwards I wondered who the point was being directed at. The workman? He was not from the region and his opinion of that Malik family was of little importance to anyone in the village. The villagers? Was Malik Ibrahim sending a signal to all villagers that he, like his violent brothers, was prepared to defend his family reputation? His family members? Was he telling them that

he was strong enough one day to assume a leadership role in the family? The workman was not the intended receiver of this message and if he had said something similar out of the village and out of earshot of any villager Malik Ibrahim might simply have verbally insulted him and left it at that. The workman insulted the Malik family in front of dozens of villagers who accept that the most powerful people in the village, and therefore the most valuable protectors available, was this family of Maliks.

Most landlords have stories like this told about them in their youth. At some point in most landlords lives, before they become head of household, they act savagely and brutally in reaction to some minimal provocation. They do this in a public venue where it may be seen and reported to others. In general there are no further consequences because the incident is primarily a show, a spectacle. The young men need to be seen to be aggressive but they do not seem to want to cause serious harm to others or their property. Like Gilsonan's [1996: 115-123] narrative of the 'olive grove of the orange', when these stories are retold they take on new meanings for contemporary purposes. They serve to reinforce the unpredictability and danger of a young man, and they may serve as proof of the young man's izzat (though some stories may need more 'twisting' than others for this purpose); and again like Gilsonan's narratives, there may be competitive versions and meanings.

An interesting parallel to this case study comes from an evening outside of Bhalot. I was with a group of young Pukhtun men, all about Malik Ibrahim's age, from different parts of Hazara and Attock District. Most of the young men were related in some way. The evening began peacefully but sometime during the evening one of the young men spoke 'loosely' about a woman towards whom another young man felt protective. There was a great deal of shouting and gun waving. The dispute culminated with the young man who had spoken the offending words handing the gun to his cousin shouting.

'Go ahead! Kill me! Shoot me now!' he screamed trying to force his pistol into his cousin's hand.

My role of observer became too much for me at that point and I took advantage of my privileged position as 'guest', demanding that I be given the gun. I then took all the guns from all the young men and gave them to a servant to keep safely until the morning. By morning, although the two cousins were not speaking to each other, they were both

laughing and joking about the altercation, as was everyone else. At this point in their life it is important to establish a reputation as *potentially* violent men. Had they really intended to hurt each other I suspect that they would have ignored my intervention, regardless of my status as guest.

### **The real tests**

One of the most difficult moments in a landlord's life is when his primary patron and protector dies. This is most commonly his father but may also be his grandfather. If he has had a chance to establish himself as a father and head of his own household then the transition may be relatively simple. If, on the other hand, he has not yet married and has not yet begun to manage family enterprises then this can be a devastating time for a household. These are the occasions when other members of the *biraderi* may decide to capitalise on the inexperience of the new family leader. They may not feel that they are doing anything unfair, since they may feel they are redressing wrongs done to them by the deceased or other members of that immediate family. Even if they do feel they are doing something morally wrong, the consequences of a premature death of a man with unprepared sons is usually detrimental to the economic position of the sons. In this section I look at some cases of men taking over from their father.

### **Case study One: This generation's heads of households**

Malik Qadeer's father died when he was 22 and away at university. His plan at the time was to continue with his education. His father had not trained him to manage a farm (as very few landlords seem to do these days) so his initial time as a landlord was extremely difficult. One of his uncles took advantage of the situation to manoeuvre control of some land away from Malik Qadeer and his brothers. In the long run they had to accept this loss because the uncle helped fend off attacks from their immediate paternal cousins, which was the more serious threat at the time. It is extremely difficult to determine exactly how much land Malik Qadeer and his brothers did or did not lose at this time, since accounts vary decidedly from person to person. People do not necessarily lie about situations like this, but depending on what rationale one uses, many plots of land may be claimed by any one of a number of landlords. Each feels absolutely vindicated in his claim, and to some extent they all have some justification for this. When Malik Qadeer's father died, he and

his brothers had divided their father's land between themselves. They neglected to formalise this in the *potwari*'s office however so what they decided has not been reflected in the legal documents. After the death of the brothers, their children may not have known exactly what the terms of agreement were for land that no one actually cultivated. Approximately half of Malik Qadeer's father's land is uncultivated. If he and his brothers do not formalise the division of this uncultivated land in some document then the exact boundaries may be hotly contested in the future. The most obvious time to stake a claim to contested land is shortly after the death of the man who might have made the strongest claim himself. His children will be disoriented because of their emotional loss, and there is a good bet that they may not actually know the precise boundaries and will not contest a rival claim at all.

### **Case study Two: Next generation's heads of households**

Malik Shafiq was 23 when his father died prematurely in his mid-fifties. He was completely unprepared for the challenges that awaited him. His first taste of the reality of being a landlord was that men who had previously accepted his relationship with their enemies suddenly put pressure on Malik Shafiq to cut off all contact with them. This was extremely delicate as he was being asked to disregard either his maternal or his paternal family. In a rare moment of candour, honesty and, I believe, genuine compassion, a fellow landlord advised Malik Shafiq to sell his land to either his chacha or his mamou immediately and move to Britain or America and pursue his education. Let the family fight over the land but for Malik Shafiq to steer well clear of being a landlord. The man told Malik Shafiq that he was not prepared to be a landlord and if he chose to stay and run his land then he had to be prepared to see his dearest relatives turn into his rivals. Malik Shafiq chose not to heed his advice and when the other landlord realised that Malik Shafiq was going to stay, he too went on the attack and began whittling away Malik Shafiq's assets to get as much as he could. He told me afterwards that he did not want to hurt Malik Shafiq, but he knew that Malik Shafiq could not defend himself against his uncles and this landlord was not fond of the uncles. Taking from Malik Shafiq was a way of taking from the uncle's as well. It was a way of reestablishing his own household's dominance after those same uncles had robbed him after the death of his father.

At this stage of a landlord's life he remains dependent on relatives for their human resource networks. If he is in his early 20's then his own network is not yet in place. His friends, who will form part of his future network, have little to offer directly. They can make use of their family networks on behalf of each other but at this age his friends will not yet have developed a network that they may employ independently of their family, except for activities like dating, drinking or youthful parties. This is the time when landlords may see some of their family land taken over by others, and they may find much of their wealth contested by other family members, but they continue to rely on those same family members to act on their behalf. It is probably the most difficult time of most landlords' lives.

### **Consolidation and expansion**

Landlords learn how to protect their land and other types of wealth, or they lose it. Either way, within a few years after the death of their father, landlords begin the process of consolidating and trying to expand their wealth. Not all landlords are able to do this. Some allow family assets to dwindle considerably, so this is not a model of a phase of life that all landlords live homogeneously. The core arguments of this thesis are best represented during this phase of a landlord's life. The patron/client relationship attracts both superordinates and subordinates by its promise of rewards for both as much, if not more, than by its threat of sanctions when rejected. Furthermore, a patron is only as valuable as the quality of his patrons and his clients. In other words, one needs to be both a patron and a client to be an attractive patron. People are judged by the extent of their human resource networks. This is the phase of life when landlords work desperately to establish their own networks which may operate outside their family's control, and ideally outside the latter's knowledge but this is probably unattainable. Landlords become involved in politics, socialise with government representatives and other landlords, they court NGO representatives, extension workers and bankers. They struggle to develop reputations as men whose hospitality is lavish and generous. This phase of life may be plagued by disputes with neighbours and family members over land inheritance but now they should not exclusively be in the position of defender. They have also learned how to attack.



After the initial losses that will almost certainly be incurred after the death of his father, a landlord has the arduous duty of rebuilding his family situation. The first thing he must do is reassert control over his sharecroppers and other villagers who formed the core of his father's client base. Although he has economic authority over them, they have a great deal of effective economic power over him. He may have the right to order them to do something, but they can do it badly if they choose. They know the exact harvest size and until a young landlord understands that he must sometimes sit in the fields and watch the harvest for days on end, he may never really know how much his land yields. Landlords learn this before too long. Many villagers become bitter about their former landlord friends. Landlords change from being friendly young men, hanging out and buying liquor for everyone, to being serious taskmasters who have forgotten their friends. Shakespeare's Hal and Falstaff illustrate one aspect of a landlord's life. While a landlord may be able to retain many of his friends, he will forcefully have to remind some of them that they are now his clients and must conform to his will. While this may seem harsh, it is the price that landlords and villagers must pay to maintain effective patronage. Villagers rely on landlords to provide protection and influence. As soon as the friendship becomes an asymmetrical relationship of reciprocity the participants must assume their respective roles. Villagers may want landlords to be friends but they also expect those same landlords to provide protection and influence on their behalf. Unless they are in a position to reciprocate they will accept the role of subordinate. Subordinates are not friends, whatever term may be used to address them. The longer the patron/client role persists the more the friendship will simply be a distant, though fond, memory.

While regaining control over his sharecroppers and some portion of villagers who were loyal to his father, a landlord must also busy himself establishing contacts with other landlords, buyers and sellers in the markets, politicians, policemen and bureaucrats. If his father was an important landlord, then initial contact is easy. Most of these men will come to the father's *janaza*, funeral, to pray for the deceased and pay their respects to the survivors. An important landlord may have thousands of people come to pay their respects and the surviving sons will be on hand to greet all of them. If there are brothers then this task may be distributed, however the elder brother will want to ensure that he personally greets the most important of these men. If a landlord's father lived long enough to allow

his son to manage some part of the family lands then the transition from the serious testing phase to the consolidation phase may pass more quickly. If the father died prematurely, however, it can be a very long and difficult process. Meeting and remembering everyone who comes to the janaza is important because these are the people who form the family's human resource network and even if they might not have been close to the father, they may be cultivated by the son. Once he can free himself from constantly defending his inheritance, he can then begin visiting these people. He will go to their weddings, their janazza, their political rallies, he will work for them on their elections and will take advantage of any other opportunity that arises to meet and get to know them.

So while a landlord is busy asserting his control over his sharecroppers, servants and villagers while simultaneously courting other landlords, politicians, bankers, bureaucrats and other notables, he must also find the time keep up contacts within his own family. Family remains the most reliable base of clients and patrons. If he was unmarried at the time of his father's death then he relies on other members of his family to arrange a marriage for him. If his mother is still alive, she will be an important part of the process (as she would be even if his father were alive [Donnan 1988; Fischer, 1991; Fischer and Finkelstein 1991]). He may need his uncles to help pay for part of the wedding. He will want to take advantage of the wedding to make a public declaration about his izzat and his generosity as a host. Landlord weddings must be bigger and better than villager weddings. With the money from overseas remittances, villagers' weddings have become increasingly lavish, so landlord weddings have escalated as well. Guest lists of 500 to 1000 are not considered unusually impressive for landlords. These weddings are part of an investment in the future. Quite apart from the gifts, which can be considerable, they provide a venue for more meeting and greeting, though admittedly much less for the groom himself, who has a certain role of modesty imposed upon him. In order for his own grand events to succeed, a landlord must go to all of his family's functions as well. This reaffirms his continued support and loyalty to his own family.

Building human resource networks is a critical part of consolidating one's position. These provide the protection necessary to fend off attacks from others. These also provide the tools for expanding a family's position. Expansion is not just about increasing financial

wealth. The human resource networks are valuable in themselves, so to some extent expansion in that area is considered a goal in itself, but what I am concerned with here is material expansion. Rural landlords are not primarily motivated by cash, but they are intensely motivated by status, prestige and power. In order to achieve these things, material wealth is an important prerequisite. There are two obvious ways to increase wealth on a farm: cultivate more land or increase yield per acre. Since the Green Revolution landlords are aware that land can be made to yield more than it presently does. Most landlords have some programme in place for increasing yield. They meet with extension workers from the government and NGO's as well as representatives from agrobusiness suppliers to try and understand what it will take to get more out of their land. They lobby for tubewells to be put in their area. They buy tractors. They do what farmers around the world do; they investigate many possibilities in the hopes that they might increase yield without an increased burden of high cost inputs. The other strategy of cultivating more land may be achieved in one of two ways: make use of *banjr* or uncultivated land that one already owns, or else acquire land from other people.

Cultivating previously uncultivated land is problematic. There may be good reasons why land has remained uncultivated. This is a strategy most landlords adopt to some extent but it gets less tenable with each generation. Although most landlords in the area seem to have a great deal of uncultivated land, there is little hope that most of it can be effectively cultivated because of lack of water. Before the majority of this *banjr* land may be cultivated the landlords or the government is going to have to deal with the water situation. Acquiring land from others has some advantages. If one purchases land from someone else then there is no real social advantage. The land is purchased and one can begin cultivation quickly (assuming that no rival claims emerge once the money has changed hands).

Claiming a relative's land has certain social advantages, on the other hand. If the relative in question has his eye on bits of the landlord's land and, perhaps, has already made claims, then an effective distraction is to claim land for oneself. This strategy results in an almost endless parade of claims and counter claims to land in the rural areas. It is a delicate strategy because one must not get too distracted by claims and counter claims and forget

to cultivate human resource networks, control sharecroppers and oversee farming. There is a danger that a landlord can get so wrapped up in one aspect of this set of activities that he loses control of the others. A man may be a good farmer and earn a great deal of money, but if he has neglected to build his network of patrons and clients among the politicians, bureaucrats, police and other landlords, he may find himself in serious trouble someday and no help is forthcoming. Likewise, if a man neglects his farming for his networks, he may find that the only thing that allows him to survive is his ability to broker other people's interests.

In between this balancing act of activities, a landlord must also find time to have a family of his own. Fathers demands on their sons are, therefore not surprising, when one sees the demands on men at this phase of their life. They know what lies in wait for their eldest son, and several of them told me they would not wish it on their worst enemy. They do their best to prepare the boys for a world in which there are few trustworthy friends but many demands.

### **Letting go**

If a man is lucky, he may live long enough to establish his own son as a proper landlord. This does not really happen before a young man is married and has at least one child. Although a young man might dabble in farm management and certainly will be made to oversee some labour, he will not really be trusted until he is married with children (though probably still living in his father's house or compound). It begins with sending the son to weddings and funerals as the representative of the father. The son will also begin to accompany the father at political meetings and visits to the tehsil and district civil service offices. The son should make his own relationship with the police, including normal officers and the SHO. The son will be given responsibility for some limited aspect of the lands. He will probably not be given a plot of land to cultivate but instead will be asked to oversee different aspects of production. If a man is lucky, there will be occasions when there is a conflict with limited potential consequences. He can then assign his son to this and watch him deal with the situation. If he does well then the incident can serve to enhance the son's (and therefore the father's) reputation. If he fails then it means the son needs more time.

This phase of a landlord's life brings its own pitfalls. It would be very rare for a man to push his own father out of his own home, but allowing the son to broaden his authority can lead to more direct competition between son and father. The two men may become rivals competing for the same resources. Fathers are generally safe so long as they remain active and do not try to control their sons too strictly. Attacking one's father is tantamount to an attack against oneself so a direct attack against the father's resources must be very rare indeed. Sons often resent the control their fathers have over them and may spend some of their time asserting their independence through activities which bring some scandal to the family. A certain amount of disreputable activity is tolerated and even tacitly encouraged, since it strengthens bonds between age mates. Too much becomes intolerable to the father and the rest of the family, however. If the son has been allowed enough latitude to develop his own networks and client base then the father may find him very difficult to control. If that happens then the father suffers a drop in his prestige. A man who cannot control his son or his ladies must suffer insults, most commonly behind his back. In addition he must somehow deal with other family members who tell him he must begin controlling his son and generally interfering in his business. In short, a son who is allowed to become influential but who is not yet responsible for his household may pose one of the greatest challenges to a family's izzat. The dilemma is that if a man does not prepare his son to replace him, then the losses to the family situation upon his death may be significant.

### **Patronage within the family**

Villagers do not have land disputes on the scale of landlords but they do have them. Cousins compete for the same resources. Men who die prematurely leave their children in a very awkward situation if they have not had the time to prepare one of them to assume the role of head of household. While brothers may be very close, this closeness often does not extend to each other's children. A man may feel that to take something from his brother is to take it from himself. His brother's children may not be identified so closely with himself. As a result, men who die young leave children who are at the mercy of their uncles and grandfathers. Whatever wealth the father had accumulated then risks being distributed throughout other members of the family. Family members need to be cared for

but they also provide the most potentially lucrative resource available. As a result of this, the more vulnerable members of the family find themselves facing a choice of losing everything, or giving up some things in the short term in exchange for longer term protection. By choosing one's patrons, or accepting the patronage of those who offer it, individuals make decisions about their long term goals and plans. They must bide their time and wait for a time when they are less vulnerable and can assume some of the roles that their patron, in this case a family member, had taken on in their place. The price to pay may be quite high. Some family patrons are extremely demanding. Even the most demanding ones must fulfil their side of the relationship.

This patronage role becomes increasingly important when an individual must deal with non-family members. For landlords and villagers alike, the first point of contact in a dispute with a non family member, will often be an elder from their own family, either nuclear or extended. These patron/client relationships are among the most stable and enduring of all patron/client relationships in Pakistan. A bureaucrat or politician may be a patron for a time and then find himself having to be a client to his former clients. A *taya*, the eldest brother of one's father, will always be a *taya* and, as such, must assume a certain share of the burden of the patron role in relation to his nieces and nephews. An individual may opt to avoid his family patrons most of the time, and a very lucky person might succeed in spending his entire life needing almost no intervention from family patrons, but that is exceptional in Pakistan. Moreover, it must be an individual who is willing to allow himself and his family to suffer from time to time.

## **Conclusion**

Early childhood socialisation in Punjabi villages leads to a more pronounced tendency to conflate individuals, including the self, with kin categories. This, in turn, leads not only to increased dependency on categories rather than individuals, but also on cultural roles associated with inter-categorical relations. As soon as children are considered 'teachable', adults around them begin consciously inculcating notions of obedience, hierarchy and status within small children. The relationships which are the most supportive and in which an individual may have the least amount of direct confrontation and competition, are relations between individuals of different status. The trials of young adulthood,

particularly the period immediately following the death of the father, reinforce dependency on superordinate individuals. Although one cannot deny the negative sanctions that accompany a rejection of early patron/client type relations within the family, one must not ignore the tangible rewards for compliance. Even for those individuals who may never realistically hope to attain a very high status in the society at large (or even within their own family), acceptance of another's superordinate status leads to increased protection and care from the outside world. For most villagers and landlords, their primary patron, the one they rely on in the greatest range of contexts and to whom they turn to most often, will be a member of their own family. Paradoxically, children and young adults also learn that the person they are most likely to need protection *from* is also a member of their own family. Punjabis do not express cousin rivalry as often as is reported for Pukhtuns, however, land disputes are most frequently between people who each believe they have some legitimate claim to the land. Thus, as land is not easily sold in the Punjab this is almost always between relatives.

If Punjabis, and indeed Pakistanis, have a tendency to impose some kind of kin relation on all individuals with whom they interact regularly, it is then a very small step to imposing similar kinds of categorical roles to those people. The fundamental role between most individuals in the family is one of differing status. One owes obedience to grandfathers, fathers, uncles, elder brothers, elder cousins and, at least while young, to grandmothers, mothers and aunts (unless there is a very large age gap, elder sisters are not generally reported as being authority figures over their brothers). Punjabis learn that most of the people around them should either obey them, or should be obeyed. When a Punjabi then transposes this set of kin relations onto non-kin, some of this obedience and loyalty crosses as well. The relationship of obedience and loyalty continues through life, with individuals shifting from obeying most of the people around them, to being obeyed by most people (if they live long enough). This, in turn, informs political, religious and economic activities.

Socialisation and adult behaviour do not form single variable, cause and effect formulae. The experience of Punjabis in childhood is necessary to perpetuate the culture of patronage which exists in Pakistan, but it is perhaps insufficient to maintain that system.

Once beyond the early socialisation stage, Punjabis learn that the most stable and reliable forces in their society are their human resource networks, which are collections of patrons and clients. Somewhere in the network an individual must find a place for him or herself and, as with kin groups, contribute to the general betterment of the network even if they do not have a superordinate position within that network. An individual's position within a network may be subordinate, but if the network is influential and includes people who are dominant in the wider society, then the lowest rungs of that network will find advantages in the wider society as well.

An important part of my argument is the role that socialisation within the family plays in providing the building blocks of the Pakistani patronage system. In the following chapter I will look at the ways kinship idioms may be employed directly in non-kin relations and more importantly, the ways in which the relationship roles learned within the family may be extended to non-kin labour relations within the village.



## 5 Labour Relations

Labour relations in the Punjab are not homogenous. Variations occur due to proximity of industrial centres, major urban centres, village size, average land holding size among other things. Certain critical factors run through much of the specifics, however. How one gets labourers, pays them, disciplines them, rewards them and dismisses them demonstrate some of the best and worst characteristics of the Pakistani landlord system. Traditionally a *seyp* relationship existed throughout much of the Punjab [Eglar 1960; Ahmad 1977; Chaudhary 1999]. *Seypi* relations were very close to, if not the same as, *jajmani* relations. Eglar describes *seyp* relations as the work contracts between groups. These work contracts revolve around the occupational specialities of families and once created, endure across generations. The obligations between landlord, farmer and service provider were binding. The relationship cannot be understood as merely an economic one however; it is a 'social and moral relationship whose obligations are felt by both parties' [Eglar 1960: 35-36]. The work provided by the *kammi* for the *seyp* is not necessarily paid for in money. Nor is an exact account of the labour maintained. Each party to a *seyp* keeps general tabs on the reciprocity but Eglar reports that this is not discussed between *seypi* (parties to a *seyp*) [1960: 36]. It is possible that this system continues to exist in the more remote parts of the country, but in many parts of the Punjab the availability of industrial and government work has undermined *seyp* relations. Chaudhary adopts Eglar's definition of *seyp* and says that while there remain *seyp* relations between farmers and *kammis*, the latter are no longer dependent on the farmers and so the system is changing [1999: 9, 36-37]. The *seyp* system has, nonetheless, influenced current thinking about labour relations.

Within the village there are different category of labourers which involve different levels of obligation. I have divided these levels of labourer by the degree of mutual obligation between employer and employee. The highest level of mutual obligation is found, not surprisingly, in the relationship with home servants. Following that is sharecroppers. Then there is a pool of labourers who work sporadically but over long periods of time for the

same employer, or group of employers. Finally there are seasonal labourers who come for a finite period of time, either once in a lifetime or repeatedly over many years. The first two categories are the most important, since they are the ones most intimately involved in patron/client relationships with landlords. I will look at some of the expectations of a home servant and the ways in which they may be disciplined, as well as the implications of different types of discipline. I will then look at the position of sharecroppers in the area. Where they come from and how they are managed and, at times, dismissed. In the final section, I look at the most common types of labour relationships which do not imply ongoing patron/client bonds, but may result in sporadic patronage events throughout the lives of the people involved.

### **Home servants**

Servants who work in the home typically form the highest degree of mutual obligations with their employers. These relationships are difficult to break and impose a social, as well as an economic relationship. Both men and women may work as home servants and the tasks performed overlap. Women are less problematic for households which maintain *purdah*, or female seclusion from non-relatives. *Purdah* requirements may be circumvented in one of three ways: employ a relative, employ a minor, transform the male servant into a family member. The strategies are not mutually exclusive and all house servants are transformed to some degree into classificatory kin.

### **The status of home servants.**

In the household of Malik Asif there are four regular servants. Three women and one man are allowed free access to the Malik household and may enter any room and interact with the Malik family ladies. In addition to these regular home servants there are several other servants who may serve as needed. These temporary servants do not undergo a categorical transformation but instead are selected from non-prohibited categories (women, pre-pubescent males, extremely old males).

The female servants are spoken of as sisters, and indeed addressed as some type of sister, either same or elder generational sister, or if younger, as daughter: *bhaji*, sister of same generation, *massi* mother's sister (elder than the speaker), *béti*, daughter. Their closest

contact is with the female members of the Malik household and they are expected to maintain their modesty in front of the male members of the household. Categorically these women are sisters or daughters and are therefore, theoretically, under the same proscription of sexual relations as real sisters, i.e. if they are seen to be 'loose' then their honour must be protected. The behaviour of female home servants impacts on the employer family, though to a lesser extent than the behaviour of those women categorised as 'real' kin. The *aya* (nanny), Jamila, who looks after Malik Asif's toddler niece and nephew, is called sister, *bhaji*, by the two small children she cares for. She is addressed either by name or as daughter, *béti*, by Malik Asif, his brother, his mother, his wife and his sister-in-law. Her hours in the household vary but she is normally present throughout the day and night except for a few hours in the afternoon when she returns home to visit her mother and brothers and sisters. In addition to her duties in the village she acts as travelling nanny for Malik Wajjid's children, when his wife and children accompany him on government duty in different parts of the Punjab. When she is away from the village her 'work' hours are potentially continuous, though Malik Wajjid and his wife do try to ensure that she has time to rest during the day. Jamila's workday typically begins before morning prayers; this varies according to the time of year but is before sunrise. She helps prepare breakfast for the adults as well as the children. While the adults eat she may be asked to distract the small children. After the adults have eaten either she or the children's mother will feed the children. Then Jamila prepares her own breakfast, though she might have drunk tea earlier than that. The rest of the morning is spent playing with the children while helping to clean the house and prepare the midday meal. During the harvest season, when the Maliks are responsible for feeding a large number of seasonal labourers, the midday meal may be an enormous affair. This task is carried out under the supervision of either Malik Asif's mother or his wife and Jamila and the other female home servants will carry out the work as directed. In addition, although I have never witnessed any of these activities, Malik ladies do a great deal of the cooking themselves. Jamila was 15 or 16 at the time I did my field work. Because of her youth, her family situation and my status as quasi-family member and honoured guest, I was allowed to see Jamila early on during my field work. I did not speak to her for several months and we never had more than a 10 minute conversation; however, both Malik Asif and Malik Wajjid were very proud of

Jamila and occasionally told me about her and her family. Jamila's father had died when she was very young. When I first encountered her I was told she was an orphan. Later I met a woman in the village who told me she was Jamila's mother. When I inquired further I discovered that the reported information was deemed accurate because a child without a father is no better off than an orphan. Jamila's paternal family is very poor. Not only are they unable to care for Jamila and ensure her upbringing and care for her, they need the money she can earn from work. When her father died Malik Asif's mother or wife was approached and asked if they would take her in and provide her with work. In part this appeal was made on qaum affiliation, Jamila is also a Gujar, but the appeal was not dependent on this association. Any poor villager might feel free to make a request like this to any of the Bhaloti Maliks, regardless of qaum. They took Jamila into the house as a general maidservant to assist the other servants. Shortly after Malik Asif's son was born and she began caring for him. The boy left for boarding school at around the age of five so Jamila reverted to being a maid and looking after the boy on holidays. When Malik Wajjid had two children she resumed being a full time *aya*. As her father is dead, Malik Asif and Malik Wajjid have pledged to provide her with a dowry. Although the payment of dowry is frequently denied in the area, in this context neither man had any hesitation in using the term. They will oversee the arrangement of the marriage, with their mother and wives, to ensure that Jamila goes to a respectable family and a respectable young man who can provide for her and treat her well. In addition they have assumed the bulk of responsibility for Jamila's family. She has an elderly mother who also works in their home, though not permanently. She has one handicapped brother. He contracted polio as a small boy and is now unable to walk upright. He either uses a single stick and drags his legs, or does a squatting walk using his hands for support. When someone in Jamila's household requires medical attention, food, clothes or anything else on an urgent basis, they turn first to Malik Asif's family, typically the request will go to Malik Asif's mother or his wife. Jamila's behaviour is of extreme importance to the Maliks. They have designated her as being like a daughter and subject to many of the same benefits of a daughter, therefore she must conform to some, though not all, of the standards for Malik ladies of her age. She is permitted to go unveiled in public, though by choice she too will draw her *chadr* (shawl) across her face when passing a strange man, but she would not be

allowed to have lengthy conversations with a man outside her family. Even her conversations with me were not entirely approved of, but the situation was delicate since they insisted on the one hand that I was 'family' and not *némharam* (prohibited male) they could not then chastise me for conversing with the woman who brought my food and clothing. Out of respect for her and the Maliks we did not have long conversations and I restricted my questions to details about her daily routine and the health of her family. If she felt she were being mistreated she would have to make use of similar channels as a real daughter to address the situation. She could not, for example, approach Malik Asif directly with a complaint, as he is a figure of fear within his family. In general only his mother and his second brother approach him directly. His wife, sister-in-law, son, niece and nephew will all make their complaints through a more indulgent person who is not in a position to fear *Bhai-jan* (Malik Asif). Just as most girls in the village, at this vulnerable and dangerous age of adolescence, would tend not to go directly to their father with a problem, but rather request the aid and alliance of another, softer, relative.

The male counterpart to Jamila is the man who served as one of my primary informants. Rasheed. Rasheed was also described to me as an orphan and, like Jamila, I discovered that he did indeed have a mother. Rasheed is in his mid thirties, just a few years older than myself. His father died when Rasheed was 12 or 13. His family is from one of the poorest qaum in the village. His grandfather was a *jeula* (weaver), and his family are known for this specialisation though none of the living generation practise weaving professionally. Rasheed's father was a barber. Rasheed married the daughter of a barber. His self-declared qaum is Bhatti. Bhattis from outside Bhalot occasionally get angry at him for claiming Bhatti status but Malik Asif supports his claim. Malik Asif explains that every village has barbers, weavers, cobblers and that these people had to come from some tribe or qaum first. Most people, he argues, have forgotten what their qaum was to begin with so all they can tell you is their family's occupation-- but they are wrong, this is not their qaum. So Rasheed calls himself Rasheed Bhatti when asked, and avoids the subject when possible. He began working for all of the Maliks as a water carrier. He had a donkey with water sacks. He filled the water sacks from the well and carried the water to the Malik cisterns. He also carried water for other villagers but his primary responsibility was the Malik family. At the same time he began helping Malik Asif's father's buffalo herdsman and



looking after Malik Asif's father's animals and household. Because of his youth, Rasheed was allowed into the house. When electricity was introduced to the village and tubewells were dug the job of water carrier disappeared (except for the extended periods of electricity failure which occur from time to time). Rasheed then began to work primarily for one Malik household. He looked after Malik Asif's animals and did odd jobs around the house, the *déra* (guest house) and in the fields. Rasheed is now referred to as Malik Asif's 'PA' (Personal Assistant). It is said throughout the village that Malik Asif's household could not function without Rasheed. His work hours are similar to Jamila's. He begins work before sunrise, tending to the buffalos. He feeds them, milks them and cleans up after them before most of the Maliks are awake. He is responsible for being the liaison between the *ghar* (household) and the outside world in Malik Asif's absence. He greets all guests and makes sure that they have tea to drink and if they are of the right status, a meal. He fends off unwanted visitors, a job that Malik Asif can do only very delicately. Malik Asif should not let it be known that any visitor is unwelcome because his *izzat* is, in part, determined by the way in which he treats his guests.

Rasheed, like Jamila, is referred to with kin terms. Malik Asif's mother calls him son, *béta*. Malik Asif and his brothers call him brother, *bhai*. Rasheed has a troubled family situation which occasionally requires his attention. On those occasions when he or one of his family members need money, or a favour from the police or other government official, they expect Malik Asif and his family to provide for them.

Rasheed is more ambivalent about his status within the Malik household. Although he has a great deal of affection for some of the members, he is not unaware of the wealth difference. He works from around 5:00 in the morning until Malik Asif lets him go home, often after midnight. He is given enough leeway to be able to rest periodically during the day and all his meals are provided by Malik Asif. When he wants extra tea or milk he helps himself to Malik Asif's supplies. Malik Asif is aware that Rasheed 'pilfers'. Rasheed knows that Malik Asif is aware. Both men seem to avoid bringing the subject up except on the occasions when Malik Asif is angry at him about something else. Rasheed is acknowledged to be an extremely clever man. He fixes electrical problems, motor problems on the tractor, does minor construction jobs. The Maliks claim that Rasheed can

fix anything. His contribution to the household is praised and valorised yet his financial recompense is insufficient for his needs. He complains bitterly near the end of each month about his lack of money. He does not receive enough money to provide for his family, who live and work in the nearby city of Taxila as house servants to an industrialist. He lives in the village with his mother-in-law and his young daughter (6 years old at the time of field research). He is acutely aware that although the Maliks call him brother they do not try to maintain his standard of living as their own. Nevertheless he accepts the role of disadvantaged younger 'brother' voluntarily. He is free to leave, as his brother, uncle, several cousins and other relatives have done. He could earn more money working in a city but he believes, and he is probably correct, that Malik Asif protects him in a way that few other employers would do. After nearly 20 years in Malik Asif's service his tenure is guaranteed. Rasheed is virtually non-dismissible.

### **How home servants are controlled and disciplined.**

All employees, no matter what the job or the country, must be managed. This is a polite way of saying controlled. Servants are given a set of responsibilities and some check must be put in place to ensure that they carry them out. I will now look at two cases of home servants who were perceived by a landlord to have misbehaved. Not all misbehaviour is punished. Not all punishments are carried out. As with much of the violence, either physical or otherwise, carried out by Maliks, the perception of violence is often more important than the reality. The first case involves an incident of misbehaviour which was not explicitly punished. The second involves a man who was physically punished, but for which the moral culpability fell on the punisher.

#### **A case of non-punishment**

Rasheed came to me and said that one of his family members in Rawalpindi was involved in a *jirga* (arbitration). He needed to go to Pindi to support his relative and he needed Rs. 1000 (about £10) in order to do this. I had been told by Malik Asif not to give Rasheed money, but had regularly disregarded that order. I was suspicious of the circumstances since I had never seen or heard of a *jirga* which happened so suddenly. Generally one had at least a day or two of notice. I wanted to help him, however, so I gave him part of the money. I gave him Rs. 400. He thanked me but said this was insufficient. I apologised and

told him he had to ask Malik Sahib (Malik Asif). He went to Malik Wajjid (Malik Asif's younger brother) and asked him for money. Malik Wajjid was very sceptical and after initially refusing gave him Rs. 100 (or so I am told-- perhaps it was more, perhaps less). He then asked Malik Asif's wife and mother who each gave him a small sum of money. He then disappeared before Malik Asif had returned from the fields. He had said he would return that night. Rasheed did not return for four days. This was the height of Malik Asif's wheat harvest and he was furious. He had to spend virtually every waking hour in the fields supervising the labourers and operating the tractor to fill in for Rasheed. When he spoke about the situation he was seething with anger and I expected Rasheed would be in serious trouble. Other Maliks came by Malik Asif's *déra* to inquire innocently about Rasheed's whereabouts. As soon as Malik Asif was out of the room they let loose their glee at Malik Asif's misfortune. Not only had Rasheed placed Malik Asif in an economically difficult situation, he had embarrassed him in front of his cousins. While Rasheed was gone, his mother-in-law apparently came to Malik Asif's mother and told her that Rasheed had gone to Pindi to have a party for three days. She said he was buying hashish, drinking alcohol, chasing women and gambling. When Rasheed returned he came first to my room. He swore to me that he had not done what his mother-in-law had said. She was angry at Rasheed because he was looking after his own *rishtidar* rather than her. While we were speaking Malik Asif joined Rasheed and me. He looked at Rasheed for a long moment but said nothing. He then said brusquely that it was dinner time and Rasheed was letting the guest (me) go hungry. Rasheed said nothing in reply but went upstairs to get the food. Malik Asif then explained to me that Rasheed had indeed been sinning in Pindi but that he was an illiterate and uneducated man. I asked if he was going to dismiss Rasheed from his employ. He smiled and shook his head. He said:

Europe is very good. If a man lies to his boss and steals from his boss then you can fire him. In Pakistan a man can not fire his villagers. Sometimes Rasheed goes crazy. He disappears for a few days and then comes to his senses and comes home. This is not Rasheed's fault. The fault lay with the men who provide too much hashish to villagers. Many of the villagers were going bad because hashish has become too common.



When Rasheed returned with our dinner he sat silently on the floor beside us while we ate. Occasionally Malik Asif would chastise him for being irresponsible. He frequently used me as the prime victim. He told Rasheed that for three days no one had been there to bring me tea. No one had polished my shoes. No one had swept my floor. The fact that I usually did the latter two tasks myself was irrelevant. Finally Malik Asif insisted on having an explanation. Rasheed did what became extremely familiar to me, he seemed to regurgitate a litany of complaints and oaths about his honesty. Without seeming to breathe at all he listed the ways in which he was maltreated and that he was very honest and that his mother-in-law had lied about him. Malik Asif let him speak for a short time and then told him to shut up. He then told him what needed to be done in the fields and sent him out to supervise the threshing of the wheat (at that point in they were threshing around the clock). So Rasheed collected our dishes and left.

One of the differences between a successful and an unsuccessful landlord head of household, is the ability to gauge how far they may push their labourers. In this case, Malik Asif knew Rasheed very well. They had known each other as teenagers and grown up together. Malik Asif pays poorly by Pakistani standards but he is not the stingiest employer in the area. What he lacks in salary compensation he makes up for in service and goods. He is extremely generous with grain and with his political influence. He is aware that he does not pay well and argues that if he paid better he would have to hire better people. He pleads poverty on occasion but there is usually a glint in his eye when he does so. He is an ambitious man who invests his cash in his land and his hospitality. He counts on personal loyalty from his servants and in exchange offers them personal loyalty back. He understood that Rasheed's flight was in response to the fact that Malik Asif had probably been working him too hard during the harvesting and threshing of the wheat. In his own eagerness to complete the jobs he had asked Rasheed to work 24 hours a day several times in a row. Rasheed was exhausted and needed a break. Malik Asif was astute enough to know that a real punishment at that time would have been counterproductive. Rasheed had his rest, and was prepared to go back to work and was prepared to obey orders. If Rasheed had refused to show Malik Asif respect upon his return or if he had refused to obey his orders then Malik Asif would probably have felt obliged to enforce his position but he did not do so needlessly. Rasheed, for his part, also understood that Malik

Asif had been unfair earlier so he did something which he himself later acknowledged was unfair. He felt refreshed after a few days off and was prepared to return to Malik Asif's employ. He does not question Malik Asif's authority in any serious way because he also recognises that he has a great deal invested in the relationship.

**Punishment perceived to be unjust.**

This is one of the most delicate sections of this thesis. The following case is not 'true' in the sense that the details about the individuals are patched together from several landlords, including details which were only reported to me but which I did not personally witness. I have put together a composite of several incidents involving different people from different villages. There are several reasons why I have chosen not to describe one 'true' event. Landlord/servant relationships are close and by their nature, somewhat private. They involve a certain level of privacy similar to relations between family members. My composite case illustrates an example of how people behave when they have transgressed the norms of acceptable behaviour within the relationship. Consequently the events may embarrass the individuals involved. The composite events I describe below are nevertheless typical of what happens when a servant is physically punished. Incidents such as this were the first inclination I had that landlords did not have the absolute power as portrayed in films such as *Daku Rani* (loosely based on the real case of the Bandit Queen in India). The relationship of unequal power between landlord and villager is real, but it does not mean that landlords can do absolutely anything. A great deal depends on the position a landlord holds within his family and the position his family holds in the area. I frequently heard claims that the landlords I knew did not carry out excessive abuses but in middle Punjab and Sindh, those landlords, called *vadera*, most certainly did. However, every time I left Attock District I was told that Attock landlords were indeed guilty of the most heinous crimes against villagers, so I have become somewhat sceptical of reports of gross and open abuse.

Young landlords have a great deal more free time and money than most people in the village. Their social obligations are interspersed with long periods of idleness in which some of them go through a period of self indulgent entertainment involving alcohol, drugs and women. One such landlord, Choudry<sup>28</sup> Arif had a personal servant, Liaqat, whose

primary occupation was preparing hash cigarettes and pouring whiskeys. One night Choudry Arif was very drunk and alone with Liaqat. He got angry at Liaqat, who was also drunk, for being disrespectful. He then beat Liaqat severely. Liaqat dragged himself home and told his wife and mother what had happened. In the morning Liaqat's mother went to Choudry Arif's mother and told her what happened. She pleaded with Choudry Arif's mother to do something to make up for the unfair beating her son had received. Choudry Arif's mother was furious at her son. It is not a simple matter to say why she was so furious. Being a very religious woman, she might have been incensed that her son was drinking whiskey in her house so carelessly. She also might have been very concerned about the needless abuse of a servant whose family had worked for her own family for over a century. She may simply have been angered that she had her breakfast interrupted by a complaining old woman and she was now going to have pay money to the woman to prevent her from complaining up and down the village (which old women have been known to do). Whatever the prime cause of her fury, she was not prepared to tolerate the situation. She woke her son up from his drunken stupor and berated him for being an idiot and beat him with her slipper. He had only a very vague memory of the incident and assured her he would take care of the matter. Choudry Arif then sent another man to Liaqat's house to see how he was. The servant returned and said Liaqat needed to go to hospital. Choudry Arif arranged for a Suzuki to pick Liaqat up from his home and take him to hospital in a nearby city. Choudry Arif paid for all of the expenses. Liaqat spent two days in hospital recovering from the beating, in which he had broken a rib and lost a tooth. Upon his return Choudry Arif sent for him. When Liaqat entered Choudry Arif's room, Choudry Arif burst into a smile and pointed an accusing finger at Liaqat. He then jokingly berated Liaqat for causing him so much trouble and costing him so much money. He then took a bite off of a large chunk of hashish and threw it at Liaqat. 'A gift,' he tells the servant. Liaqat squatted gingerly on the floor with a smile on his face through all of this.

The fictional nature of this account is to protect individuals from embarrassment. Every particular aspect of the story I either witnessed first hand, or had reported to me as being 'true'. While the incidents are put together from different incidents the general flow of the story is not exceptional. Landlords are embarrassed about excessive abuse. Their family

members are not tolerant of punishments which lead servants to start questioning whether they could not do better elsewhere. Loyalty is expected between landlords and servants, and landlords understand that anyone can be pushed too far. Gone are the days when the landlords of this area held a monopoly on all economic resources. Mothers of young landlords do intervene to demand more 'righteous' behaviour from their sons. Mothers, it has been reported, may be quite ferocious to their non-head of household sons. Sadly, I was never able to interview a landlord mother in any village, but these ladies were frequently cited as being the individuals who pressured landlords into doing what was perceived to be morally correct. This power seems to be very much linked to the position of the offender within his own family. One man told me he would do anything his mother told him. If his mother told him to give money to a servant or not to punish a servant then he would obey. His elder brother, who is the one who is normally responsible for punishing servants or paying them, told me the following day that he would never be disrespectful to his mother but that she was a very noble lady who did not understand the world. A man cannot let his decisions be influenced by women, who do not understand the harsh realities of life, so no, he would not obey his mother if she told him to do something contrary to his own opinion. So it would be wrong to assert that Punjabi mothers hold dominion over their sons and their households, however, there are some women who have a very effective way of influencing their sons behaviour.

The incident of Choudry Arif meeting Liaqat again after the beating is also taken from an actual incident. Landlords and their servants frequently have a joking way of relating to each other. One of the ways a landlord expresses his disapproval of non-serious indiscretions is to tease a servant. Rasheed, from the first case, has a beard which he is not seen to merit (beards may be seen as an expression of one's devotion to God). He is frequently teased by landlords that he should shave. They know that this is not a serious violation of any rule and that it does not interfere with Rasheed's ability to carry out his job so they do not order him to shave. They do express their disapproval, however, and he does consistently ignore them. In this case, Choudry Arif is in a difficult situation. He recognises that he was in the wrong, but landlords do not, as a rule, apologise to servants. He wants Liaqat to know that the beating will not occur again and that he holds no grudges against Liaqat. Liaqat may or may not hold a grudge against Choudry Arif but he has

accepted the offer of continued employment and is now prepared to allow Choudry Arif to give him more small gifts-- not the least of which is the steady supply of hashish and alcohol which comes with the job.

### **Sharecroppers**

Sharecropper is not a term used in the area. When people speak in English they call the people I refer to as 'tenants'. The economic relationship between landlord and these people however is not one that involves an exchange of money. These people do the farming of a plot of land and in exchange split the harvest 50/50 with the landlord<sup>29</sup>. The landlord may or may not be responsible for large inputs, such as providing tractors, fertilizers, insecticides and some seed. The landlord is usually responsible for finding extra labourers during critical times in the agricultural season. During exceptionally bad years, the harvest division may be altered to help the sharecropper, as in the *jajmani* system in India. The division of the crops is not fixed and varies from region to region and from landlord to landlord. I have not opted for the local term, tenant, because this relationship more closely corresponds to that which we call sharecropper.

### **How sharecroppers are found.**

Finding sharecroppers is a problem these days. Sharecroppers are the primary controllers of production and if they are not competent then the landlord's income will suffer. Unless a landlord gives a sharecropper good land in large quantities, a sharecropper cannot hope to do more than subsist. The best and brightest young men of the area are not easily tempted by mere subsistence so sharecroppers must be found among those men who are desperate for some reason other than incompetence. The greatest number of new sharecroppers probably come from NWFP or Afghanistan. Pathans, as they are locally called, for reasons beyond their control have moved down from their homes looking for opportunities in the rest of Pakistan. Finding new Punjabi sharecroppers is not straightforward. The Punjab has more employment opportunities than other parts of Pakistan, so the most competent and best educated young men tend to opt for something with greater rewards than sharecropping.

Pathans have provided a valuable source for good sharecroppers since the war in Afghanistan. Millions of Afghan refugees have flooded into Pakistan. Some of these Afghans have made their way into the area and they have been taken on as sharecroppers. Other Afghans did not stray so far from the Afghan border and have managed to push out Pakistani Pathans. A further complication is the increased availability of arms in NWFP which has led some Pathans to decide that staying in their home villages is no longer worth the risk of being killed in agnatic feuding. Pathans remain a minority in the area, but they have quietly managed to entrench themselves as part of the landscape. Attock District landlords are ambivalent about taking on Pathan sharecroppers. On the one hand, they know that many of these Pathans are very bright and very ambitious but because they have left behind their normal human resource networks, they do not have access to the better paid opportunities in the area. On the other hand, they have very large families and there is a commonly held belief that Pathans are very quick to anger and quick to resort to violence. Most landlords in the area seem to believe they can control their Pathan sharecroppers and are consequently willing to engage one or two Pathan families.

Finding local sharecroppers seems to be more difficult. Most sharecroppers in the area were in fact inherited from previous generations. They may not be the most educated or the most intelligent but their fathers' fathers worked the same plots of land so they know the job, they understand the economic pact and they have accepted the social role of sharecropper within the village. This may not last. One man, Chacha Akram, is considered to be one of the finest farmers in the area. He has been working Malik Asif's lands for most of his adult life and has managed to achieve a good deal of material wealth by being very good. His sons however, will not be sharecroppers. His eldest son went into the army and saved his money to open a flour mill in the village. His second son works with his brother and is looking for employment in either Rawalpindi or Islamabad. His third son is going to the nearby middle school and his father has great hope that he will pursue his education further than either of his brothers. Chacha Akram does not want his sons to follow in his footsteps as a sharecropper and Malik Asif will not force them, although he bitterly regrets losing such a hard-working family and quietly hopes the second son does not find satisfactory employment in the city. Other villagers who may want a chance to be a sharecropper are discouraged for several reasons. Sharecroppers are asked to do far more

tasks for their landlord and all of his family members than non-sharecropper villagers. For many of the young men, who are quite proud, this is an unpalatable burden. For those villagers who have invested in their children's education, becoming a sharecropper is tantamount to spitting on that education. While many villagers might like the opportunity to be in control of a piece of land, they also suspect that landlords will not leave them in control but will constantly look over their shoulder and order them about. The reasons why villagers choose not to ask for land are many and are derived, in part, from speculation. As for landlords, they resist taking on local villagers as sharecroppers or tenants because they want someone they perceive to be 'hard-working'. Local villagers are, rightly or wrongly, thought of as very lazy.

### **How sharecroppers are controlled or dismissed.**

The ease or difficulty of dismissing sharecroppers depends to some extent on the length of time they have been working the land. Unlike home servants, sharecroppers can effectively be driven off the land if the landlord is determined that they go. I will now look at two instances of sharecroppers who have been dismissed in the area. The first involves a sharecropper being driven from a particular plot of land, but not from the village and not from all lands. The second case was more definitive and left the sharecroppers with no land to work in the area.

#### **Case one: forcibly driving a sharecropper from a plot of land.**

The background of this case has little to do with the sharecropper in question. A small plot of land near the village was being traded between landlords and the new owner of the plot of land claims he was unaware that the sharecropper had been working the land. He did not have a complaint against the sharecropper but had acquired the land to work for himself, not to leave it in the hands of a sharecropper.

Malik Azam and Malik Nawazish agreed to exchange plots of land. Malik Nawazish wanted a small plot of land, about 20 kanal, on the main road running through the village. Although this was not irrigated land, it was considered good land because of its proximity to the village which allows ease of fertilization and maintenance. After the two landlords had agreed on the exchange Malik Azam took over his new plot of land with no problems. Malik Nawazish discovered, after the fact, that a man named Sultan had been using the

plot of land for 20 years. They claimed usage rights to the land. Malik Nawazish apparently left the management of this dilemma to his son Malik Imran. Sultan did not cultivate on the plot of land but used it to gather his harvest and store his straw. Malik Imran saw that Sultan was using the land to gather his harvest. He was angry because Sultan had not asked for permission to use the land. He told Sultan to remove his crops immediately. Sultan's son asked for a few days to gather the crop and thresh it and then he would have all of the crop off of that plot of land. Malik Imran agreed. As the threshing was taking place, however, Malik Imran saw that Sultan and his son were setting up their straw piles on the land. The straw piles are very large and once established, are not easily relocated. Malik Imran again ordered Sultan and his son to remove their straw and their crops from his land. They agreed but asked for a few more days. Malik Imran was angry but agreed to wait until they had finished threshing. He ordered them to cease setting up straw piles on that plot of land. Either the next day or the day after Malik Imran saw that Sultan and his son had set up more straw piles and were ignoring his command. At this point Malik Imran was a young man who had not yet been tested. Had it been his father who had given the command Sultan and his son might have obeyed. Young Maliks are sometimes rather easy to bully into things since they are, as yet, unsure of the limits of their authority and are often contradicted by their elder male relatives. Malik Imran decided that this incident had to be dealt with harshly. He called his tractor driver, Moula Bunta, and sent for around 40 Pathans with rifles. That evening he went with his tractor and the armed Pathans and shot at Sultan's house, buffalo stable and the piles of straw. His tractor driver then drove the tractor over the straw destroying Sultan's fodder crop for the season. The estimated damage was Rs. 20,000 (about £200). This was a significant economic blow to Sultan and his family. Sultan's son was extremely angry and left the village. He may or may not have threatened Malik Imran. Malik Imran, at that point, was satisfied. He had made his point and the land was now accepted as his and his father's. Unfortunately, within the week, Sultan's son was murdered in Taxila. The rumour that Malik Imran had played a role in the murder spread through the village. While I do not believe that Malik Imran had anything to do with the murder, the events of that evening and the rumours connecting him to the murder have proven to his advantage as a young landlord. He is one of the most obeyed landlords of his age and family situation. In part



his confirmed position is a result of the fear in which his father is held, but more significantly, villagers are unsure to what extent Malik Imran is willing to go to protect his interests and his position.

**Case two: displacing sharecroppers from the region.**

In one of the neighbouring villages there is a very successful landlord named Sardar Tariq Khan. After the death of his father Tariq Khan left the region to live in Rawalpindi for several years. He was tired of the constant battles with his cousins and other landlords and disliked the scrutiny under which he had to live his life in the village. As his children reached adolescence however he decided that he needed to increase his income if he wanted to ensure their current lifestyle. He studied farming through speaking to successful farmers in the region and government extension workers. He read a great deal of agricultural literature. He felt that what his land needed was a radical transformation of the way it was managed in order to increase the yield from the same land. In order to effect this he felt it necessary to dismiss the sharecroppers who had been managing his lands up to that point. They employed old fashioned methods that were suitable for subsistence farming in *barani* or ramified areas. His ambition was to transform his land into irrigated land and make use of the finest available seed, fertilizers, insecticides and techniques. His sharecroppers were not happy to be displaced. Some of them agreed to practise farming the way Tariq Khan told them to. They would do everything just as he said. Some of those people were allowed to stay. People that Tariq Khan felt would be unable to change their ways were told to leave. In these instances Tariq Khan did not need to employ the brutal show of bravado that Malik Imran found necessary. His family are the politically and economically dominant family in the area. Tariq Khan made it very clear that those who resisted displacement would find themselves without support. The police station in the area is on land adjacent to Tariq Khan's land. His family are intimately involved in selecting and retaining the local Station House Officer (SHO), who is the highest ranking policeman in a police station. The sharecroppers all left without a struggle. By leaving in this way, they may have hoped to count on continued patronage from Tariq Khan and his family. They are probably mistaken about Tariq Khan, but they are not mistaken about his family. Many of those sharecroppers found new plots of land with Tariq Khan's cousins. In the final instance, there is no pretence at justice for individual sharecroppers in cases

like this. The relationship is not as stable as it is reported to have been in the past but this is in part due to the increased availability of employment outside the agricultural field. Landlords are less hesitant to drive someone away if they know that they can either find land elsewhere or find waged labour in the urban areas.

**Case three: making it the sharecropper's choice**

The last case is brief. It occurred over the time I carried out my field research and it was done with more finesse than either of the previous cases. It is probably the most typical method employed by medium sized landlords for getting sharecroppers to leave. Malik Asif had great plans for a fifty kanal section of land which he had irrigated. He had allowed a Gujar from the tribal areas of NWFP<sup>30</sup>, Gul Wali, sharecropping rights to adjacent *barani* land, but employed him to work the newly irrigated land as well. He was not satisfied with Gul Wali's work. He did not doubt Gul Wali's hard working nature, nor did he question his loyalty. He felt, like Tariq Khan, that the man simply was unable to employ the most modern techniques. he was an older man and illiterate. He could not read the directions on the packages of fertilizer or insecticide and did not understand the necessity of irrigating at particular flows. Gul Wali either did not irrigate enough or irrigated too much. Gul Wali was primarily interested in his goat herd, which Malik Asif had helped him to start. Malik Asif probably did not make a conscious decision to drive Gul Wali from his land. His motivation was probably more positive than that. He restricted Gul Wali's ability to expand with his goat herd or his farming until Gul Wali proved he could assume the new techniques and increase yields from Malik Asif's irrigated lands. Gul Wali complained repeatedly that the 20 kanal Malik Asif had given him did not provide him with enough fodder for his animals and food for his family. Malik Asif had to allow him more land and had to help him get more goats. Malik Asif refused and berated Gul Wali for being an inefficient and old fashioned farmer. Gul Wali brought relatives of his down from Swat and Hazara to help him manage Malik Asif's fields and increase yields so he could then claim more land. Malik Asif decided he liked one of Gul Wali's relatives and wanted to keep him but was not so interested in keeping Gul Wali. He did not dismiss Gul Wali but nor did he give him more land. In any event the yields were not good that year due to drought so Gul Wali's plan failed. The following season Gul Wali took his brother, wife and children and left to work land for a farmer in Hazara.

One of his relatives, the one that Malik Asif liked, stayed and took over sharecropping Gul Wali's 20 kanal, the part of the goat herd that Malik Asif had kept, and became Malik Asif's employee on the irrigated lands.

### **Drivers, carpenters, seasonal field hands and others.**

After home servants and sharecroppers come a host of other service providers who enjoy varying degrees of mutual obligation, based largely on the length of service an individual, or his or her family, have provided a given family. In this category are drivers (a recent occupation but one which tends to be occupied by men who previously performed other tasks for the family), carpenters and other builders, seasonal field labourers and supervisors, caterers for weddings and other meetings and others.

Drivers are a special category because they may find themselves working sufficiently closely with one family to be able to demand some of the obligations and responsibilities that a home servant or a sharecropper might expect. They may, however, maintain more independence by driving a Suzuki or a Hilux on a commuter route between the village and Taxila. A driver without his own vehicle will almost certainly be identified with a particular landlord. He will be called that landlord's driver. In fact he may find himself being the driver for that man, all of his family, all of his brothers and their families, all of his cousins and their families and friends of any of the above. Drivers go between extremes. At times they have a very easy life and do very little work. At other times they may find themselves driving from 7:00 or 8:00 in the morning until well after midnight, several days in a row. Exactly how much service a driver may expect from his employer is largely determined by each of the men's position and how long he has worked for the family. Driver is a relatively recent occupation. The first jeeps came to the area in the 1960's but they were very rare. The first tractors came in the 1970's, but again, they were not common and there was not much call for a large number of drivers. The occupation of driver became a very high status option for men from kammi castes. For many of the very poor, driver was perhaps the best they could ever hope for. Many drivers, today, come from retired military personnel. The military in Pakistan has a rather young retirement age for enlisted personnel. They may serve fifteen years and then they are pensioned off and sent home. As a result men in their early to mid-thirties find themselves with a large

amount of cash and a driver's licence (something not easy to come by for ordinary villagers). The occupation remains reasonably high prestige in the village. Drivers are given more markers of respect than other labourers. They will drink tea after landlords and important guests, but before other servants. They will often (though not always) be invited into restaurants to eat modestly at the same table as the landlords (though they tend to eat very little and spend their time staring out the window at the car). When they are not invited to eat with the landlord they are given money to get food somewhere nearby. Drivers spend a great deal of their time in their employer's company and when not directly in his company they may linger in his kitchen or in his *déra*.

Carpenters and builders do not hold the same status as drivers. They do not work as closely with their employers as drivers or home servants, so they do not expect the same degree of demands or support.

Builders tend to work for a family repeatedly. The economic relationship of employee/ employer contains an important social element in the village. Builders from within the village may frequently do small jobs for no direct cash payment. In return they will not hesitate to ask for money during times of trouble or weddings. They will also go to their periodic employers if they find themselves in trouble with state institutions like the Police. They do not go to their employer on a daily basis however. They do not linger in the employer's *déra* unless they are currently working on a job or they are currently requesting some kind of help.

Seasonal field labourers and supervisors should not, in fact, be classed together. The relationship between landlords and seasonal field labourers is very tenuous and neither party normally seeks the other out beyond the initial agreement to work. If an unknown field labourer is arrested for something, a landlord might intervene if he had some reason to think that the labourer was basically a good man. In the absence of evidence to suggest he is a good man, however, a landlord might choose to let the labourer sit in jail. Much would depend on the crime for which he was arrested. A combination of gambling, alcohol drinking and fighting might well earn the labourer time in jail. Simple possession of hashish accompanied by emphatic promises by his family that the man is good, might encourage a landlord to intervene. While hashish is not condoned by most landlords, they

frequently voice the opinion that illiterate men do not understand well enough to control themselves. Fighting and getting drunk, on the other hand, does not seem to be tolerated at all by most landlords (though it must be said that not all landlords are able to control their villages equally). These men typically do not spend a great deal of time in landlord run déras but prefer to go to the village 'hotels' or tea shops.

Other seasonal labourers come from the village, and they can reasonably expect to be looked after unless they have committed the same crime repeatedly. Regardless of the relationship between the individual labourer and the landlord, if his family comes from the village there is a connection and he will be known (or perceived to be known). Village labourers may or may not spend many of their evenings in the landlord's déra. This is where they will eat their evening meal and many of them will stay there afterwards to watch television, chat and occasionally stay the night.

Supervisors of field labourers are quite different. These men come from the village. They and their families tend to have long established relations with their landlord employer. Often they are former full time employees of landlords who have taken on other jobs but remain in the village. They are trusted men and as such, can expect a great deal of loyalty from their employer, especially during the time they are actively working for them. These men, like the labourers from the village, often spend a great deal of time in the landlord's déra. They generally feel quite free to lounge in the landlord's déra at any rate, and make themselves at home.

### **What people expect in return for service: intervention for oneself and one's group**

Labourers may not restrict their requests for help to themselves. When one person enters the employ of another they assume that their employer will take on responsibility not only for them, but for all those who have a connection with them. Depending on the connection with the employee, the connection with the person in need of help may be very tenuous indeed. So a long standing employee, like Rasheed for Malik Asif, could introduce virtually anyone to Malik Asif and request his help. Malik Asif would be obliged to at least listen to the problem and may find it difficult to refuse without suffering much criticism within his village.

The following cases illustrate the ways that employees may approach their employer with requests for help. They may request help directly from their employer on their own behalf. They may request help on behalf of a relative. They may request that the employer ask a member of his own human resource network to intervene on either his or his relative's behalf.

### **Help on behalf of relatives**

When a Taxila relative came to visit the village, his driver, Gul Khan, took advantage of the opportunity to request a meeting with one of the well connected village landlords. Although the Taxila relative has his own contacts in Taxila, this problem concerned the local Station House Officer (SHO) from the neighbouring village, thus outside the direct sphere of influence of the Taxila relative. Gul Khan had not been working for the Taxila relative very long, only a few years, but his brother had worked for the man for many years before that, so the mutual obligations are felt to carry over to the brother. Gul Khan, as his name suggests, was a Pathan and one of his relatives was a Suzuki driver. His relative had been driving along one of the many commuter routes from one of the villages to a nearby city. Unfortunately for him, that particular route was controlled by a local landlord. One of the landlord's drivers stopped Gul Khan's relative and ordered him to abandon the route. The Pathan refused. They fought and the Punjabi driver was injured. The landlord who employed the Punjabi then went to the SHO and filed a First Incident Report (FIR) against Gul Khan's relative. Gul Khan wanted his employer to ask his well connected relative to ask the neighbouring landlord to drop the charges. Gul Khan's relative had agreed to leave that route and work elsewhere but the charges had to be dropped and Gul Khan's relative had to be released from prison. The landlord did speak to the other landlord, who had got what he wanted, a monopoly on the commuter route, and persuaded him to drop the charges. The Punjabi driver, if he had wanted to pursue the charges on his own was in a difficult situation. He was not in a position to get an FIR filed without the support of his landlord, so I presume that he quietly went along with the landlord's decision.

### **Routine tasks that require intervention**

In addition to the great many serious interventions that occur, there are also occasions when ordinary procedures are made impossible without some kind of intervention. Things as mundane as getting identity cards become very challenging tasks for illiterate people with no record of their birth. Proving one's identity to the satisfaction of a state bureaucrat is not always an easy thing to do. There are two men in the village empowered to verify the identity of villagers in these cases. Zakat Committee chairmen and the local numberdar<sup>31</sup> both have the right to verify a person's identity. These are not formally remunerated positions. Men volunteer for these positions for the enhanced prestige they bring as well as the opportunity to control some state resources in a way which can direct them to 'deserving' groups. I saw no evidence to suggest that either numberdars or Zakat committee representatives tried to benefit monetarily in any direct way. It seems instead that the office provides sufficiently enhanced prestige and potential influence to offset the increased workload.

In Bhalot as well as other villages, illiterate villagers bring their electricity bills to wealthier individuals to help them pay. They do not generally seek to have the money provided for them but want someone to read the bill and make sure that they are paying what they should. In some cases they want someone else to physically take the bill and the money to the proper office for payment, either because they are intimidated by the thought of going themselves (especially women) or displacement is a great deal of trouble.

### **The greatest expectation**

By far, the thing that all servants, labourers and other employees expect the most from their employer is food. The closer the labour relation, i.e. the most regular and the most amount of time an employee spends in service to his or her employer, the more food he expects. Rasheed and Jamila expect that virtually all of their food will come from their employers. Sharecroppers do not need the basic food staples since they keep 50% of each season's crop, however they have little opportunity to earn cash so they rely on their landlord to either provide them with milk or with the opportunity to earn enough cash for commodities like milk. Furthermore, every time a sharecropper is working directly for a landlord, a type of *corvée* labour, they expect to be fed. Field labourers and supervisors

also expect to be fed on the days they work. They expect a *parat'ha* and tea in the morning, *lassi* and *chapati* mid morning, a midday meal of *chapati*, *dhal*, vegetables and *lassi*, and an evening meal of *chapati*, *dhal* and vegetables. In addition they can expect a few tea breaks in the day. Villagers who perform some kind of sporadic labour for landlords, such as barbers, expect and receive a portion of grain from each season's crop. The amount varies according to the degree of involvement with the landlord family. The barber and his family receive 40-60 *maunds* (1 maund=40 kilograms) of wheat and about half that of maize for a year. This seemed an awfully large amount of wheat to me but barbers are expected to perform a great many functions beyond barbering. They are on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The only respite a barber has is to be very ill or out of the village. If he can walk and is present in the village he may be called upon to carry out some task. Other villagers who perform tasks for landlords through the year may receive 30-50 maund of wheat and, again half that quantity in maize for one year. I did not encounter a single person who was not closely related to someone who received a substantial quantity of grain from a landlord. While this does not entirely feed the village, this goes some significant way to subsidizing every man, woman and child who lives within the village area or in one of the dependent *dhoks* (hamlets).

While working for a landlord, people expect to be fed cooked food, to have *lassi* and milky tea provided to them throughout the day. If they work for a landlord from time to time during the year, they may also expect to receive a large supply of grain.

## **Conclusion**

I often wondered why anyone would be willing to work for a rural landlord. In general they do not pay generously. They can be remarkably demanding of other people's time. They frequently use harsh and insulting language. I understood why the Afghan migrants might want any opportunity for a chance to earn some food but I could not understand why villagers continue to provide *corvée* labour for landlords, nor why anyone would willingly accept to be a home servant for a rural landlord. The liaising that landlords do between villagers and the state seemed an important but inadequate explanation. Surely other employers might also be persuaded to carry out these functions. I had seen in Lahore employers who protected their servants from the police and who helped them make sense



of legal documents, so I knew that these services might be provided elsewhere. When I discovered that landlords were significantly subsidizing villagers' food supplies, in many cases in exchange for what amounted to a few weeks labour, I began to understand a little better. Villagers will readily offer complaints about various landlords. They will tell you of times when landlords failed to protect them, or worse, times when landlords forced them to do something against their will. They only seem to mention the fact that landlords provide them the bulk of their food, however, when asked directly about food contributions. Like landlords who are unusually reticent to speak about times they may have beaten a servant, villagers seem equally reticent to admit that landlords have been feeding their families. Both actions may tend to contradict people's preferred self image. Landlords desire to be perceived as strict but fair and just, while villagers often promote the idea that they are blameless hardworking people who are unfairly exploited by landlords. Neither representation should be taken as either entirely true or untrue.

Food subsidies by landlords may be a pragmatic way of pacifying people. People who have enough to eat are less interested in revolution. There is, no doubt, a certain grain of truth in this logic. There is also a more generous way of looking at it. Landlords are surrounded by poverty. They did not establish the economic relations as they are; they have inherited them. They have concentrated on bettering the position for themselves and their families, generally by attacking each other, since very poor villagers have only their labour which interests landlords. The point of course, is not to make value judgements about Punjabi labour relations but to understand how they operate. In this chapter I have looked at some of the interactions between landlords and the people they employ. I have highlighted three main categories of relationship. While the degree of mutual obligation differs in each category, and indeed within each category depending on individual criteria, there is sufficient evidence to draw certain conclusions. The employee/employer relationship cannot easily be understood in purely economic terms. Even when the relation is extremely limited, as with seasonal labourers, there are certain social expectations during crises which are not part of ideal capitalistic labour relations. As employer/employee relations grow close, the idiom of family is invoked. Whether it is the closeness which brings about the kin idiom or the reverse, the result is the same. Once the idiom of kinship becomes the norm the level of mutual obligation is intensified. Patron/client roles

are important between long standing labour relationships. It is difficult to imagine a long term employer in the Pakistani context who could easily refuse the role of patron. It is equally difficult to imagine an employee who would refuse to turn to his employer in times of need, when he or a member of his human resource network required a 'patron'. As one would expect, labour relations are expressions of asymmetrical power. In each of the categories I have discussed in this chapter issues of control have been central. The mechanisms employed to control employees, and by which employees may resist control, emerge from existing cultural values. Individuals invoke cultural values as a means of controlling each other. If they violate the cultural values in some ways they must accept a loss of control. Thus the Choudry who unjustly beat his servant, was forced to acknowledge the 'crime' and make amends. The home servant who disappeared for several days, on the other hand, was expressing his own belief that his employer had 'violated' certain cultural values in excessive expectations. The employer was forced to acknowledge the 'violation' and was not in a position to enforce a punishment for the servant's 'crime'. In all cases the relationship works because both employers and employees do possess a body of shared values.

Labour relations offer an interesting combination of kinship, caste and political relations. For the most part they should be considered political relations since the element of kinship and caste is secondary. The idioms of kinship and caste are nonetheless invoked whenever possible. I strongly suspect that a further comparison of labour relations in urban areas would reveal a similar breakdown of categorical obligations for equivalent classes, particularly in the private sector. I have spoken to urban industrialists in Lahore who complain bitterly about being unable to dismiss lazy or incompetent employees. Complaints about house servants in the urban area are common. People employ cooks who cannot cook, guards who fall asleep on the job, laundrymen who burn clothes while ironing them and yet they do not dismiss them. Labour relationships in Pakistan are not exclusively economic work contracts; they are significant social bonds of asymmetrical power relationships.

After kinship and labour relations, there might be several ways of escalating the scale of analysis. In the next chapter I have chosen to examine the significance of caste. Caste

combines kinship and labour in very illuminating ways. It provides a simple mechanism for invoking kinship roles in a variety of situations between people who may not claim any common kinship bond. The ways in which power is expressed and manipulated in caste relationships demonstrates the overlapping nature of the three relationship contexts I have proposed.

## 6 Caste and Tribe as Vertical organisations for patronage

One of the common threads found throughout much of the literature on caste in Pakistan is the notion that caste organisation is 'horizontal' [Eglar 1960; Chaudhary 1999]. There is a tension between this tendency to borrow from literature on India which stresses that hierarchical relations are characteristic of inter-caste relations and the rhetoric of Islam which states that all men are equal. The Islamic principle leads Pakistanis to declare forcefully that all of their 'caste' brothers are their equals (as are all other castes with the exception of Syeds). This is problematized by the fact that caste is one of the primary sources of favours, hence asymmetrical reciprocity. Although I am sympathetic to the argument that caste does not exist in Pakistan [Alavi 1972], something called caste, clearly does. Equally clearly, however, it is not the same entity as Dumont describes. One cannot ignore the fact that indigenous categories such as *zat* and *qaum*, both of which may be used to indicate caste terms, are important. In light of my own data and Quigley's [1999] recent critique of Dumont's reliance on Vedic ideology, I want to reconsider the role played by caste and tribe in Pakistan and neighbouring regions.

In this chapter I will look at the role of caste at village, tehsil, district, provincial and national levels to show that these categories provide mechanisms for resource management that are manipulated similarly to ethnic categories, as suggested by Barth [1969]. Further, intra-caste relations are an area where power relations are manifested, providing supporting evidence that, in the current situation, actors willingly participate in the establishment of hierarchies at all levels. I will look at the terms caste and tribe in the context of the border area between Punjab and NWFP. Firstly, I will discuss some of the terms which are frequently translated as either caste or tribe. Secondly, I will provide a brief demographic summary of these categories in Bhalot village. Thirdly, I look more closely at two examples of these categories from the area. I will provide histories for these groups, both as they present it and as others present it. I will also look at the ways in which

each group plays a role in local economic and political spheres. Fourthly, I look at some examples of the ways in which these categories enter into provincial and national politics. Ultimately, I argue that as with other forms of differentially expressed power, it is not useful to understand these relationships in terms of top down oppression. Caste and tribe fit neatly into a system of patronage which primarily survives because all the actors involved actively participate, from top to bottom. Finally, the relationship between different castes is not an adequate measure of the organisation of the society. There are certain ideologies which might suggest some inter-caste formulae of behaviour but, as Quigley [1999] argues for India these must be highly contextualised and are subject to much manipulation.

### **Caste, tribe, qaum, zat, rishtidar, biraderi, sharika.**

The terms caste and tribe are problematic [Fardon 1990; Parkin 2000]. Outside the Middle East and indigenous North America, the term tribe may ultimately prove inappropriate. Nevertheless, tribe holds currency in Pakistan and is frequently used to translate such terms as biraderi and qaum by Pakistanis themselves. Caste, likewise, is complicated. Originally a Portuguese word, it has become firmly associated with a distinctively South Asian, Hindu, phenomenon. Within Pakistan both terms are 'justified' using biological arguments as well as cultural ones.

Chaudhary [1999: 10-14] provides concise definitions for the terms qaum, biraderi and sharika and suggests that qaum and biraderi provide the most significant principles and idioms of organisation in Punjabi villages. Qaum and zat for Chaudhary clearly originate with Hinduism. They are a South Asian phenomenon and as such he seeks comparison with Indian caste. Compounding the confusion, he writes that when making comparisons with North India, the word caste may be substituted for biraderi [1999: 2]. Chaudhary understands biraderi to be of the same order as caste, that is to say hierarchically ranked interdependent groups. The hierarchy of occupational castes is well documented in the literature. While Chaudhary states that these notions of occupational caste hierarchy do not apply in Pakistan, he nonetheless wants to employ the organisational principle by interpreting biraderi as a kind of caste.

In the area in which I conducted my field work the most common term was qaum. This refers both to categories that might be viewed as 'ethnic' groups (i.e. corresponding to linguistic, religious and place of origin criterion, for example Gujar, Pathan, Baloch, German), as well as categories closer to Leach's notion of caste based on occupational specialisation (i.e. barber, tailor, cobbler etc.). The term serves as a catch all for categories which may be tribe, caste, nationality or ethnicity. As such, qaum is simultaneously highly useful, versatile and amazingly frustrating as a point of reference. *Zat* the term employed by writers describing areas closer to Lahore [Eglar 1960; Fischer 1991; Fischer and Finkelstein 1991], seems to be less common. This probably reflects the closer proximity and resulting influence of perceptions of Pukhtun culture, which is seen to look down on Hindu 'pollution' of Islam in the plains of northern India. The terms rishtidar, biraderi, sharika describe varying degrees of kinship. This too is complicated because of commonly held beliefs that zat and qaum are biologically founded categories. Thus a man might say of a fellow qaumi that they are rishtidari as well, especially if he has taken or received a woman in marriage. While the two men may not be of the same lineage genealogically, because they share membership within a common qaum they may feel justified in claiming kin status (see origin myths of Gujars below). Biraderi and sharika may be understood to be 'blood' kin, that is to say, patrilineal kin, yet these terms too may be equated indigenously with terms like zat or qaum [Chaudhary 1999: 235-236]. Moreover the terms also serve as classificatory categories to describe particular sets of role expectations between people. Hence one's sharik (cousin) is someone that must not be allowed to know one's weakness, because sharik are the people most likely to lay competing claims to resources. My objective in this chapter is not to provide the definitive argument to caste or tribe theoretically but rather to elaborate on the ways in which these categories play a role in the area in which I worked. Nevertheless, meta categories are critical to make sense of the case studies. To that end I have chosen to rely on the most common indigenous term, qaum, to refer to categories of persons that might otherwise be translated as tribe or ethnic group and will retain the use of the word caste to refer to occupational specialisation, which may or may not correspond to an individual's qaum (either self or other ascribed). I should stress, at this point, that I do not believe that caste, as Dumont describes, has a great deal of relevance in the Pakistani context. This is not to

say that caste is irrelevant or that there is not caste discrimination, simply that the coherent ideological system which Dumont argues as fundamental to India is not applicable.

### **Caste and Qaum in the village**

When I arrived in Bhalot I was introduced to dozens of men every day for the first few weeks. Each time I was given a chance to practise my budding Urdu and Punjabi by asking the men's names, their occupation and their caste. I discovered rather quickly that Bhalotis vigorously resisted equating their qaum with their occupation. Thus I was told that a man was a *nai* (barber) but his qaum was something different. When I probed further I found that although the *nai* might claim affiliation with one of the other qaum, he was not ascribed qaumi status as such by other members of that qaum. There were a few castes in particular which were singled out for this discrimination: *nai*, *mochi* (cobbler), *jeula* (weaver), *musali* (sweeper). Members of one caste seemed torn as to whether or not they wanted their occupation to be used as their qaum: *lohar* (blacksmith). *Lohari* would proudly tell me they were *lohari* when I asked what their qaum was but quickly withdrew the claim when others around them shouted that *lohar* was an occupation not a qaum/caste. In point of fact very few *lohari* worked as blacksmiths, though many of the men in their thirties claimed they had learned the trade as children. In the nearby urban centre of Taxila many of the people involved in the smith trade were not from families that had *lohar* backgrounds, but were simply poor people who had managed to get a job through a friend or relative<sup>32</sup>. Landlords, in particular, resisted attempts to equate qaum with occupation. Every village, they explained, had *kammi*, or service castes, but this was not the individual's qaum. Thus every barber or cobbler had to have some other qaum to which they could claim membership. Qaum is described as being based on parentage, not behaviour.

### **Caste/Qaum breakdown of Bhalot village.**

As in most villages in the Punjab, not all possible occupational castes are represented. There are eight categories identified as 'legitimate' qaum within the village. This includes one category which is also an occupational designation (*Mistri*). The designation Pathan is, of course, a gloss for several qaum. People designated as Pathan are outsiders whose origin is either NWFP or Afghanistan. These outsiders tend to identify themselves simply

as Pathans to non-Pathans. There are, however, more occupational castes identified, as well as further distinctions among Pathans. There is a tendency for marriage partners to be selected from within corresponding occupational caste groups; however, people do not always conform to such tendencies [see Donnan 1988; Fischer, 1991; Fischer and Finkelstein 1991]. The preference is not expressed as a caste preference but rather a *rishtidar*, or family preference. Identifying cross caste marriages is problematic as it indicates marriage outside the family, which is frowned upon. The most consistent way of determining cross caste marriages was indirectly by asking about male grandparents. Village men, in most cases, are reluctant to provide much information about their female relatives and will insist that their wives and mothers are indeed of the same caste. When their male grandparents are identified cognatically, however, caste determination of each parent is made possible. In this way I was able to discover marriages between 7 of the 8 qaum identified in the village (the exception, *chachi* is only represented by one household and is a recent migrant to the village). Marriage between occupational caste, likewise, occurs but is somewhat down played. The motivation for stressing same occupational caste marriage is, in all cases, stated as a preference for same *rishtidar* marriage and not same occupational caste marriage. This confusion between qaum and caste is therefore at both the indigenous user level as well as the external analytical level. There are religious, political, social and economic reasons for emphasizing kin based qaum over occupation based caste, and it is not at all clear to me that Leach's emphasis on occupational specialisation is necessarily fruitful in this region (something which he no doubt would agree with [see Leach's criticism of Barth, 1960]).

### **Qaum history and organisation**

Qaum origin myths play an important role in establishing who may be eligible for membership, though they are not the exclusive determinant. I will now look at some of the history of two qaum in the *ilaqa* (area) of Bhalot village. They are the histories of two of the landlord families of two neighbouring villages. Each is presented with two versions. The first is the version given by qaum members themselves. The second is one attributed to that qaum by members of other qaum. The first qaum, Gujar, has multiple myths to choose from. It is a large qaum in population and its place of origin has not been



historically isolated to one location. The history below was the one put forward with the most conviction. Origin myths which suggested Hindu metaphysics, such as Gujars being descended from a cow, were rejected out of hand. In both cases members of these qaum opt for a fundamentally genealogical explanation for their beginning and their existence. Flying in the face of even a cursory glance of available evidence, members of these qaum construct a closed world, in which they may present their qaum as able to intermarry and reproduce exclusively with itself, or at the very least, a world in which their own ladies are never married out. Yet, the very real resistance to accept such caste individuals as barbers into their qaum, suggests the endogamous preference is not strictly a question of genealogy. There are castes, or qaum, which are both empirically and symbolically excluded. My more open minded informants argue that this is residual Hinduism. It is part of the contamination of their shared history with their pagan Hindu neighbours. The critical point is that when constructing their qaum history, they consistently opt for a 'tribal' discourse. When attacking the history of other qaum, they use a wider variety of tactics, however, one should bear in mind that these attacks, although vicious, are usually a form of entertainment.

## **Gujars<sup>33</sup>**

### **Gujars as seen by themselves**

The Gujar qaum has one of the largest populations of any qaum in Pakistan. It is represented in every province. I have heard estimates as high as 30 million Gujars in Pakistan, though this figure is hotly denied by others (including other Gujars). I have heard claims that Gujari language is the original South Asian language and the root language for Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi.

Gujars originate in the region of Georgia, on the Black Sea. This land was originally known as Gujaristan. Gujars migrated across Asia and Europe. Today Gujars are found throughout Central and South Asia. Chechens are identified as fellow Gujars and Chechen is a sub-qaum of Gujar, which may be found in Pakistan and in the region of Bhalot. The once powerful Qajar dynasty of Iran is sometimes identified as a Gujar family (a corrupted 'G' sound). Gujar is not identified with Islam. This is a pre-Islamic category and Gujars may be Christian, Muslim or Hindu (or presumably animist but no one ever mentioned this

possibility to me). When the Gujars first came to South Asia they were prolific and successful. They dominated the areas which now bear their name, Gujerat, in both India and Pakistan. At the time of Babar, the first Moghul emperor, they refused to submit to Moghul rule and were dispersed across all parts of South Asia up to Afghanistan in an attempt to avoid submission. The shining moment of Punjab independence, the Sikh dynasty begun by Ranjit Singh, was the ascendent period for Gujars. Ranjit Singh himself was a Gujar, as are many other Sikhs. I was told that all Sikhs are Gujars by one man but this was immediately denied by other Gujars in the room, in any event it is not supported by even a cursory review of the literature (in particular Pettigrew's [1975] history of the Sikh community, in which she claims that it is primarily a history of the Jat community). Following the fall of the Sikh kingdom in the 1840's the Gujars of Taxila region revolted against the British and were treacherously betrayed by other qaum in the region (specifically the K'hattars). As a result of Gujar heroism and ferocity in battle the British developed a prejudicial portrayal of Gujars. The Punjab Gazetteer describes Gujars as lazy and dishonest. This description is the result of Gujars refusal to acknowledge the supremacy of any external group, starting from the Moghuls, including the British regime and up to corrupt Pakistani governments. In short, anyone who describes Gujars in less than glowing terms is reacting to their independence and solidarity as a qaum rather than any true character trait they might possess.

### **Gujars as seen by others**

In colonial literature the Gujar history was firmly placed in Central Asia by General Cunningham, who performed a massive survey of the Sub-Continent in the early part of the 19th century. Ibbetson, following Cunningham, traces the origin of Gujars to a tribe of Eastern Tartars. This tribe, known as the Yúchi or Tochari, conquered Kabul about a century before Christ. The descendents of this group then moved further south to areas around Mumbai, where they established a Gujar kingdom from about the 5th to the 9th centuries. Ibbetson rejects the possibility of 'aboriginal descent' for the Gujars because of the Gujar's 'cast of countenance'. The Gujar, he says, is a 'fine stalwart fellow, of precisely the same physical type as the Jat' [1916: 184]. Ibbetson's estimation of Gujars' merit is less flattering:

He is lazy to a degree, and a wretched cultivar; his women, though not secluded, will not do field-work save of the lightest kind; while his fondness for cattle extends to those of other people. [1916: 184].

Ibbetson reports the same history of antagonism between the Gujars and the Delhi Emperors and adds that Gujars remain ever ready to 'take advantage of any loosening of the bonds of discipline to attack and plunder their neighbours' [1916: 184]. Volume II of the Imperial Gazetteer of India is equally harsh: Gujars are 'a blackmailing, turbulent tribe' [1979: 422].

Outside of the Gujar dominated village in which I lived, K'hattar qaum members described Gujars as small and dark; they stressed the South Asian origins of Gujars. They contrast this with their own perceived height, fair skin and Arab origins. K'hattars further argue that Gujars are disdainful of formal education, preferring to teach their children how to be farmers and look after buffalos. These men readily give credit to Gujars for their prowess with buffalos and goats but also repeat accusations of thievery found in colonial literature.

One very specific description of the landlord Gujars of the area is their lack of democracy. K'hattar landlords claim that they allow their people more political and economic freedom. I was asked by one neighbouring landlord why I thought there was so little crime in Bhalot. He then went on to explain to me that it was because Gujar landlords require absolute obedience from villagers. K'hattars, he said, allow their villagers to be adults and make more decisions for themselves.

### **K'hattars**

K'hattars are the dominant qaum of *tehsil* Fateh Jang. Although they are not numerically in a majority, the majority of Attock District land is owned by members of the Khattar qaum. Similarly, most of the important political offices are held by members of the Khattar qaum. At the time of my research the civilian government of Nawaz Sharif was still in power so the structures of democratic office were still in place. At that time K'hattar members held all important posts above Union Council level. The Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) from the area was a well connected K'hattar allied to the Choudry Shajaat wing of the Muslim League. Under Benazir Bhutto's government one of

the local K'hattar landlords was a Minister in the provincial government. Like the Gujars, their political affiliations seem not to be based on political dogma or ideology but rather on human resource networking strategies.

### **K'hattars as seen by themselves**

K'hattars claim descent from the Holy Prophet's family. Their genealogy runs from the Prophet's paternal uncle. The history, as documented by Sir Sikandar Hyat, traces the movement of K'hattar ancestors from the Arabian peninsula to Spain, where they participated in the conquest, to Central Asia where they formed part of the mercenary army of Mahmud of Ghazna. On Mahmud of Ghazna's final raid on the Indus plains he left the K'hattars along the banks of the Indus river to safeguard Islam in the region. They were given the land from the Indus across the Kala Chitta mountain range, descending as far south as southern Attock District and as far east as what is now the Grant Trunk Road (GT Road) in Rawalpindi District.

### **K'hattars as seen by their neighbours**

The K'hattar version of their history is denied with great glee by members of other qaum. Their affiliation with Mahmud of Ghazna is not denied but rather than being a 'pure' qaum of Syed origin, they are the descendants of Mahmud's mercenaries (who were themselves of questionable Central Asian origin) and the prostitutes that Mahmud had picked up from further south in India. Mahmud left this group of men and his prostitutes, with lots of money, in what is now Attock District, on his final raid to India. They were told to await their 'master'. They spent their time getting drunk and stoned and terrorising the hard-working local populations. The 'purity' of their blood line is further impugned by the suggestion that these prostitutes, being women of loose morals, slept with local men of Attock as well. The group known today as K'hattar, therefore, are the descendents of these ladies of poor character who had sold their honour to follow a group of less than reputable mercenaries, as well as whatever other local man they might have sold their body to. A local saying, not said directly to K'hattars of course, is that a K'hattar woman will sleep with any man who has a moustache. Given that in the rural areas of the Punjab virtually every male above the age of 13 has a moustache, this is particularly condescending.

This rather cruel variant of K'hattar history must be taken with some degree of skepticism. Elements of the insult represent precisely those areas where a Pakistani's izzat is most vulnerable. The character and reputation of females is paramount to male izzat so it is not infrequent to hear, behind a man's back, slurs against the ladies of his family or household. A man who cannot control his ladies, or who pays too much attention to their desires, is afraid of women. Consequently both a man's manhood and his izzat are diminished.

### **What qaum means in the village.**

In the village qaum and caste are confused and disputed. As noted above, when individuals try to equate qaum with caste, others will shout them down. This does not mean that those who are silenced are wrong, of course. There seem to be two competing local models at work however. On the one hand there are caste notions centred on occupational speciality, of which many people are quite proud. Lohars (blacksmith), and Tarkhans (builders) in particular frequently offer their occupational caste name as their qaum. They do not intermarry exclusively within this category, though probably a majority of marriages do occur within them. It is therefore a tendency to marry within the same caste but not an absolute rule. They do not marry from any random caste however. The category of people with whom they may choose a spouse is mostly restricted to other *kammi* (service) castes. As a result virtually all members of what may be identified as *kammi* castes are now labelled Awan. There are some who append the sub-qaum identifier of Qutb-Shai Awan, denoting common descent from a semi mythical ancestor called Qutb-Shai, while denying it to other *kammi* Awans. This seems to be an area where notions of 'tribe' intersect with notions of caste. As Muslims, everyone in the village should reject Hindu categorizations of caste, therefore they should not refer to people by occupational caste names (unless that is indeed their occupation). They have therefore opened the ranks of non-caste groups, such as Awan, but made sure that a distinction could be retained. Since intermarriage between Qutb-Shai and non-Qutb-Shai Awans does take place the distinction is made somewhat irrelevant, but it remains an exclusionary strategy nonetheless.

The landlord family are Gujars. This probably accounts for why there is less of a tendency for kammi individuals to claim Gujar status. The landlord family are reasonably alert to

usurpers of their qaum and will publicly ridicule people who pretend to be Gujars. On one occasion a barber told me he was a Gujar. A young landlord laughed at him and told him he could be Awan if he wanted but not Gujar. Gujars, he said, are *sharif* (noble) men, not hashish smoking barbers. The barber remained silent. A few days later I asked the barber's brother what his qaum was and he told me he and his brother are Awan. A discussion with his brother after that was revealing.

Barber: There are no good Muslims in Pakistan.

Me: What do you mean? What's a good Muslim?

Barber: Allah commands us to be brothers-- the same. But Pakistanis are all Hindus in their heart. They think barber is a qaum. They think all barbers are dirty and unholy [*haram*]. Barber is my job-- like your job is studying people. It's not my qaum [nation/tribe/caste]!

Clearly his status was ambiguous. Nai is not a qaum, yet nais were not really eligible for qaum membership with anyone else. Even if they might occasionally marry someone from another *kammi* caste (which does happen) the children of a nai father are labelled nai. Furthermore, even if non-nai are engaged in the profession of barbering they do not automatically become nai. An example of this is a *jeula* (weaver) family which had two generations of barbers, yet the third generation, who did not work as a barber, is not called a nai but rather a *jeula*.

Qaum is not a driving force for action on a daily basis in the village. It comes into play when there is a conflict and may form the basis for alliances and for the selection of a *jirga* or other arbitration procedures. Bhalot is predominantly a Gujar village. Slightly over half the population comes from Gujar families (rough estimate 50-55%). The second most populous qaum is Awan (approximately 40%). Awan, as I have said, are less homogenous than Gujars in this area, so the term Awan itself has lost some of its salience. It simply does not mean very much to say one is Awan in Bhalot. A further qualifier is necessary to place one in any meaningful social group. Gujar, although a more homogenous category than Awan, also requires further elaboration within the village. It is not sufficient to identify oneself as a Gujar, but rather one must identify from which Gujar family, the primary distinction being landlord and non-landlord Gujar. Landlord and non-landlord

Gujars do not intermarry now, though I was told by both landlord and villager informants that they married in past generations (prior to the 1950's).

### **Qaum-ism organisations**

Qaumism is a convenient term I have coined from something used in the area to describe political and networking activities centred around qaum affiliation. I have only ever heard the term used to refer to these activities among Gujars but I have seen the activities among other qaum, so I have borrowed the idea. It is not Gujar activism, that is to say, it is not the promotion of Gujar interests as a corporate entity, though it has elements of that. Gujarism involves doing much of what is done among other forms of *rishtidar*, having tea, going to weddings, exchanging gifts, doing favours, but there is an emphasis on doing these things with qaumi brothers. On occasion, as in the 1970's under Zulfikar Bhutto, Gujarism organisations made an effort to promote the cause of certain sectors of their qaum who were perceived to be disadvantaged in parts of NWFP (notably Hazara and Swat). These actions are beyond the scope of this thesis however. Some individuals were motivated on altruistic grounds to help their brothers, but there was more going on in this dispute, so it is perhaps more profitably viewed in terms of wider power struggles. Typically Gujar organisations do not promote the welfare of Gujars *en masse* but rather the interests of individual members.

There are numerous qaum associations in Pakistan. Qaum, like ethnicity, at this level is probably more elastic than village level qaum identification. Thus the MQM may construct a qaum from their common identity as immigrants from India. I am concerned here with qaum organisations which are less politically coherent than the MQM appears to be. These organisations remain rooted in the more routine aspects of life and do not, currently, have ambitions of overtly running the state, though they lobby the state through their qaumi brothers and sisters (the few qaumi sisters that are available in politics, that is). I was fortunate to work in an area which has a handful of very prominent Gujarists of northern Punjab. These men are members of an organisation called the Gujar Youth Forum (GYF). They publish pamphlets and short books, a newsletter, a telephone directory of members in the Rawalpindi area and visit each other extensively. During all of these visits they inquire about the activities and connections of each other. The

organisation serves more than one purpose, but the main *raison d'être* seems to be favour-brokering. Men who do not have a great deal of personal resources, are able to employ the resources of other members of the GYF in such a way that they may be able to act as patrons elsewhere. I will provide an example of a case where Gujarism was called in to play to resolve a local problem. Although this case begins in a village, in order to resolve the dilemma the actors had to employ resources at much higher levels.

### **Qaumism case study: Getting a telephone exchange.**

In one Gujar village not far from Rawalpindi, one of the Gujar landlords decided he wanted a telephone exchange set up in his village. Up to that time there were no telephones in the village but an exchange was going to be built in a village less than four kilometres away. The landlord thumbed through his GYF telephone directory until he found someone who looked like he might be in a position to influence Pakistan Telephone (PakTel) decisions. He then called someone else and explained the situation. The man he called was a low level clerk in the government. He is a man who has no extraordinary power of influence from his job, nor from his personal wealth nor family background. But he is one of the men who put together the telephone directory and he is a known conduit for favours within the GYF. While this clerk was busy making contact with the appropriate person, an analog telephone exchange was constructed in the nearby village. PakTel does not normally allow two exchanges to be built so close to each other for such a small population. The neighbouring exchange might serve both villages easily. The landlord was not satisfied. He had heard about digital exchanges and wanted one of them. He wanted greater potential for long distance calls, faxes, multiple phone lines and other trappings of wealth and power. Through the clerk he was able to meet with the Gujar from PakTel and explain his problem. Meetings like this may take place anywhere, but it is not uncommon for the broker to push everyone to meet at his own home. He provides the most lavish hospitality he is able to (even borrowing from his neighbours if necessary). In this case the meeting went smoothly and the PakTel Gujar was persuaded that, indeed, no respectable man should be deprived of the capabilities of a digital telephone. This case was not a question of bribery. The Gujar landlord had numerous favour-reciprocating possibilities and the PakTel Gujar was made well aware of that prior to the meeting. The



secret of a good broker is knowing how to whisper in everyone's ear to tell the things that each man wants the other to know but cannot say directly. The village now has a digital exchange almost within view of the analog exchange in the neighbouring village, thanks to Gujarism.

The 'horizontal' aspects of these relations are misleading. The Gujar landlord called the government clerk as a Gujar brother. There is a rhetoric of equality in their exchanges. This is rooted not only in Islam but in notions that are embedded in the category tribe. The PakTel Gujar, an urban resident, meets on equal terms with the landlord, a somewhat rustic village man. All men are equal-- all men are qaumi brothers. The rhetoric, in this case, is a very shallow veneer. The PakTel Gujar and the landlord Gujar may well be equals but they can not simply go to one another and request favours. Favours are asked up or down. Since the men had no relationship prior to the telephone issue they each require a broker to act in their interests. In this case a relatively poor man was empowered, furthermore, as a result of his skill in brokering favours, he has become a relatively powerful man in the area. He is not powerful in the way a landlord or wealthy industrialist is, but rather he is powerful because it is known that he has access to a great many powerful men. It is in his interest to make every one of those men more powerful, wealthy and influential. His own prestige and influence increase with every new contact, or friend, that he establishes. If he is able to facilitate solutions to problems for others, through his contacts with people who are generally powerful or those who just happen to be in the right place at the right time, then his status and reputation are enhanced. These brokers do not, to be sure, become patrons to the powerful men for whom they perform favours; however, through the favours they provide to the more powerful they are able to establish themselves as patrons in other domains.

### **Qaum in government and politics**

Pakistanis will happily tell foreigners that their politics are driven by qaum and biraderi. Elections are contested on qaum grounds. Appeals are made to the electorate based on common qaum membership. There is certainly no doubting that when a politician finds him or herself in front of an audience made up entirely of his or her own qaum, they manipulate that category to the best of their abilities. The rise of fundamentalist parties,

most notably the Jamaat-i-Islami, the is an attempt, marginally successful, to cross cut qaum and caste based politics. These parties have not, however, managed to do more than be effective lobbyists on a few issues [Nasr 1995; Talbot 1998]. Qaum combined with factional alliance has thus far proven a more reliable foundation upon which to effect electoral victory. The success of the Mohajir Qaumi Mahaz (MQM), for example, is very much based on the fact that they have managed to construct a qaum out of displacement. So while the members of the MQM do not actually share a common qaum, they are able to use the rhetoric of qaum fidelity and affiliation to include members of a variety of qaums. Finally, sometimes minority qaums are very influential and win elections without appealing to the language of qaum membership. To say that qaum is the driving force behind Pakistani politics is no more accurate than to say it plays no role. There are two areas where qaum plays an important role: elections and favours. First I will look at how a minority qaum has consistently won the important elections in their area, an example of qaum not being the vital factor. Then I will look at the role of qaum in the civil service, an area where qaum seems to be more important.

### **Winning elections**

Of the two qaums I have presented in this chapter, the Gujars are by far the majority in the district, yet they are not as successful in winning elected office. The K'hattars hold most of the important seats for Attock District and all of the important seats for the *tehsil*. Gujars in the area win seats on the Union Council, and even get to be Union Council Chairmen, but they do not get to be district council chairman, provincial assembly member or national assembly member. Those spots are reserved for the minority qaum, the K'hattars. K'hattars have managed this by very cleverly distributing themselves very thinly across Attock District. There are no villages which have a majority of K'hattars, yet most villages are owned by K'hattars (in the sense that all the land was traditionally owned by K'hattars and today virtually all agricultural land is owned by K'hattars). Many of those K'hattar controlled villages are made up of a majority of Gujars. yet the Gujars in those villages do not vote in sufficient quantities for Gujar candidates, and most times do not field their own candidates. They vote to support the candidate selected by the landlord who owns the land upon which they are dependent. This is a good example of how qaum

loyalties are only one of a host of possible relations which may be instantiated. In these K'hattar villages, when it comes to politics, qaum is not the decisive factor; primary patron/client affiliation takes precedence. Further, even in the Gujar controlled and dominated village, for those key offices which are K'hattar held, the powerful Gujars support K'hattars against each other. The Gujar landlord family has had difficulty in the past, fielding candidates for offices higher than Union Council. Their own internal divisions have prevented them from competing successfully with their K'hattar neighbours and they have, for the past 30 years, supported K'hattar MPA's. This is of a different order than K'hattar sharecroppers supporting them however. Gujar landlord support is valuable to the K'hattar politicians but not guaranteed, so they are able to influence the politicians as if they were qaumi brothers. To some extent they also view themselves as sharing a common agenda. They are both landlord families and they both want the government to provide more help for farmers (landowners who farm that is, I have heard very little expressed desire for government help for absentee landlords or for sharecroppers).

In this area, the politically dominant family serves the interests of a particular segment of the population, which shares their own economic and political agenda. Because they are a small qaum, they are not often called upon to serve the interests of their qaum over their economic partners. They are dependent on non-qaumi landlords at election times and in return they have constructed something like a pragmatic qaum of landlords (which does not allow intermarriage however). In this instance, true qaum, the category into which one is born and determines who one should preferentially marry, does not play a significant role, but is subsumed under common economic objectives. While this might tend to suggest the kind of analysis which Ahmad [1977], Asad [1972] or Hardiman [1982] argue is appropriate for South Asia, it neither explains nor describes the mechanisms within the system as a whole. Class-like solidarity is applicable on some occasions in some arenas, but it fails to explain wider and more fundamental aspects of interpersonal relations. The following example demonstrates the kind of behaviour that is expected following elections which effectively negates the class solidarity employed for certain electoral purposes.

## **The civil service**

The Department of Punjab Affairs<sup>34</sup> is subject to the whims of the government. When the Prime Minister was pleased with them they were left largely unmolested. If he became embarrassed about something they did, then the Secretary for the Department was replaced. During the two years I was going to Pakistan for my field research the Secretary was replaced 4 times. Each of these times the Secretary was a member of a different qaum. When I began, the Secretary was a member of a qaum which I did not know. I had no friends in the qaum and, consequently, while I found a great deal of cooperation among Department employees lower down, there was no support from the Secretary. I interpreted this at the time as a lack of interest in my project. When I returned for my second trip the Secretary had changed. He was now of the same qaum as the people I had worked with on my previous trip. They had been transformed and were now able to make decisions and get projects rolling. Suddenly my own affiliation with this Department looked terribly advantageous. Then I returned to Europe to prepare for my long field work. While I was gone the Secretary was again dismissed because he did something which upset Mr. Nawaz Sharif (apparently something fairly easy to do in his last few years in office). Upon my return I was told that the Department would be able to do very little for me because the new Secretary was again of a different qaum, and his own qaumis were getting the allocations at the moment. This changed once more while I was in Pakistan and has changed again since General Musharraf took power but I learned that I would have difficulty counting on support from the Department because the government was so cavalier about dismissing Secretaries. The dismissals themselves, and subsequent appointments, were not based on qaum or caste, but the ramifications on the Department were decidedly qaum and caste oriented. Part of the problem is that following the nuclear bomb tests of 1998, foreign donor funds began to disappear. So there were a great many worthy projects that had begun but which could not be completed due to lack of funds. Each Secretary had to make something of an arbitrary choice as to which project would be allowed to continue. They made that choice based on who the project leader was. In the absence of any in depth knowledge of Department personnel, the Secretaries trusted that at least they could count on the internal support and loyalty of a qaum brother or sister. In

such a cutthroat situation where they knew perfectly well the longevity of their predecessors, it is difficult to blame them.

## **Conclusion**

Qaum and caste are significant social categories in Pakistan. They have an impact on the selection of marriage partners and play a role in politics and employment. They are not the only influence and they are far from the key decision making element. If one were to write a computer expert system which would predict an individual's behaviour in a given hypothetical situation, one would have to be very careful how to include qaum and caste information. It must be given sufficient weight that in some instances, it does indeed provide the justification for an action, but ensure that it is not so strong that it determines the outcome every time. Outside of marriage, qaum and caste only seem to be the determining factor when most other economic factors suggest a similar course of action. In this part of the Punjab, where caste is ambiguous and disputed, it is not surprising that individuals play with the possibilities of caste affiliation, emphasizing common caste status when it suits them, and subsume it under a qaum or other status when it does not. In the cases I have presented, qaum played a role in establishing a situation where participants could approach each other. Shared qaum membership did not guarantee the outcome but it provided the venue for individuals to meet. Failure to support qaumis is not, as far as I can tell, a particularly detrimental thing in politics, but one must be clever about doing so. Qaum plays an important role in establishing asymmetrical relations of patronage and clientage. The fact that two men are qaumi is not as important as the fact that they have entered into a patron/client relationship. This is made easier by common membership in a qaum because it allows each of them an avenue for accessing the other. Once contact is made, they then assume the roles to which each of them may gain the most advantage, either client or patron.

The rhetoric and much of the literature of Pakistan, suggests strongly that qaum and caste members are all equal. There is hierarchy inherent in relations between caste (i.e. occupational specialisation) but not necessarily between qaum. That is to say that between any two qaum, there will not be agreement of superiority or inferiority, with the possible exception of Syeds (being widely recognised as a more noble qaum because of its

connection to the Prophet). I argue that qaum provides the justification for making contact between individuals who have no direct *rishtidar*, family ties, but the contact is not made between equals. It is made between qaumi brothers or sisters and the hierarchical aspects of the relationship are quickly established. When one seeks help or a service one is not seeking an equal. When Punjabis contact someone based on qaum affiliation they are not looking for an equal-- they are looking for either a subordinate or superordinate of the same qaum. Qaum affiliation does not make men equal, it makes them approachable. So while qaum organisation itself is not hierarchical, it is one mechanism for establishing contact between strangers who then immediately assume hierarchical roles.

At this point in the thesis I will shift the direction of my analysis. In this and the preceding two chapters I have moved in scale from the smaller to the larger unit. I have been interested in the ways in which power and patronage are manifested in three important contexts: kinship, labour relations and qaum. The next chapter does not follow this escalating structure, rather it discusses ways that individuals may challenge each other in such a system of asymmetrical power. It would be foolish to pretend that just because individuals collude with systems of patronage they *like* their patrons. In looking at a particular rice giving ritual common throughout the Punjab and parts of N.W.F.P. I hope to show one of the strategies available for asserting challenges which do not disrupt the patronage system.

## 7 Symbolic violence and rivalry between 'equals'

*dég* (1): n. a large cauldron used for cooking rice. Cooked over an open fire.

*dég* (2): n. a public feeding. An individual (usually) arranges a large quantity of rice to be prepared and distributed to anyone who comes. This may be done to give thanks to Allah for a particular incident (like the birth of a child) or to honour an important visitor.

In this chapter I will focus on the *dég* ritual and its social impact. I examine notions of modes of dominance, particularly dominance expressed or asserted by 'symbolically' violent means. I focus on one *dég* which was significant by its excess, thereby providing a clear example of the roles of the 'giver', the 'receiver' and the rivalries which exist between collateral groups. Bourdieu's notions of symbolic, or gentle violence are important in that they provide one analytical social pattern of a mode of domination. I do not dispute Bourdieu's analysis so much as extend it both conceptually and geographically, furthermore, I believe that Bourdieu would not be uncomfortable with this extension. The violence in this case study does not fit Bourdieu's pattern in that the direction of symbolic violence, or assertion of control through non physically violent means, is not directed against the receiver. I suggest that the analytical pattern must be expanded to include indirect symbolic violence in which the receiver is incidental to the intended direction of domination.

Orenstein [1980], comparing traditional Western feudal society to traditional Melanesian big man society, argues that institutionalised asymmetrical reciprocity can take two forms. The giver may indebt the receivers through excessive giving, or conversely, the giver may place themselves further in a position of indebtedness in relation to the receivers. The form of indebtedness (i.e. giver to the receivers) is characteristic of egalitarian societies. Thus, societies with models of asymmetrical reciprocity similar to potlatch societies (of the North West Coast of North America) would be expected to exhibit weaker

leadership lacking in strong and insitutionalised authority. This is clearly not the case in Punjabi, Pakistan. Nor would one expect this to be the case, since Punjabi landlords do not rely on giving as their primary strategy for gaining prestige and authority. Yet there remain interesting parallels with potlatch and big man cultures and the culture of patronage evident in northern Pakistan [see Goodell 1985 for a more general discussion of the comparison of patronage and potlatch]. What must be explained, therefore, is why a hierarchical society, such as that of the landlord dominated areas of Pakistan, practices asymmetrical giving reminiscent of more egalitarian societies in Melanesia and North America. This chapter examines this question in the context of Mauss' theory of the gift and Bourdieu's theory of violence and dominance expressed and asserted through the excessive gift. The various ways of expressing or asserting dominance between equals is important for two reasons. First, they underscore the importance of hierarchy in Pakistani culture. This goes some way to demonstrating my earlier assertion that Pakistanis actively try to impose asymmetrical relations in all social contexts, even where ideally there are no apparent hierarchical differences between the individuals involved. Second, they illustrate some of the ways that patron/client roles may be initially established. Gift giving is a way of asserting asymmetry between giver and receiver which can then be transformed into roles of patronage [see Eglar 1960; Werbner 1998]. *Dég* rituals provide another mechanism for either challenging an existing asymmetrical relationship or introducing asymmetry in a relation of equality which can not be disrupted through normal gift giving.

### **What is a *dég*?**

The first *dég* I attended was a complete surprise. I woke up in the rural Punjabi village expecting that day to be like the previous 10 days I had spent in the village. I expected to be shown off to any visiting landlords, to drink three or four times as much tea as my stomach was comfortable with, and to while away the evening in one of the *déra*, or men's guest houses, of the prominent landlord family. The morning passed as previous days. After eating breakfast of fried *parat'ha* and honey (collected by Afghan migrants), eaten with some of my hosts and their servants, I moved to one of the *déra* for some 'structured' interviews and audio recordings. This was frequently followed by a visit to the tea shop or one of the fields. On my way to the tea shop however, I was called over to the tallest of



the three hills on the edge of the village. A large number of people had gathered at the base of the hill and were sitting in the shade eating. As I approached I saw that three or four men sat huddled together around a single large plate filled with rice. They all ate the rice directly with their hands and chatted and laughed while doing so. I sat down next to some men I had met that week. They explained to me that this was a *dég*.

‘What’s a *dég*?’ I asked.

‘That’s a *dég*,’ one said, pointing to one of the large cauldrons cooking rice.

‘No! No!’ another yelled at him. He turned to me earnestly and said, ‘that’s a *dég* for cooking. This,’ he spread his hands expansively over the people eating around us, ‘is a *dég*!’

They all laughed and the first man intervened again, ‘When a man has a problem, he asks Almighty Allah to help him. If Allah helps him, then he gives a *dég* to thank Allah.’

The second man added, ‘If a man’s child is ill, a man will give a *dég* in his child’s honour so Allah will help the ill child.’

A third man hushed the other two, ‘A man gives a *dég* when he wants to thank Allah for something-- anything. A man gives a *dég* when he wants to rejoice in Allah’s greatness.’

They all laughed and told me to eat more.

All *dégs* are run in a similar fashion. Some household decides to organize the ritual, usually on rather short notice. It is a household enterprise, though the head of household will usually be given most of the credit. Specialist cooks are called, either from within the village or from nearby towns. In either case, the cooks are often known for this activity and one way of measuring the prestige of a *dég* is by seeing who is doing the cooking. For small *dégs* (4 cauldrons or less), the cooks will usually be villagers. Larger *dégs* may require more help. In all cases I viewed men doing the cooking. Cooking is done in public view so women do not participate in either cooking or preparation. The *dég* begins with a prayer, usually by a group of men including a prayer leader, who may or may not be a *maulvi* but is probably considered to be well versed in the Quran. General thanks to Allah are given and recitation of passages of the Quran are performed. People begin gathering long before the rice is ready. Men and children linger in the area and chat and play while

the food is being prepared. Depending on their relationship to the host of the ritual, they may help in some way in the preparation. When the rice is ready it is distributed in plates to those nearby. People share plates. The custom in the Punjab is that rice and bread are not eaten together, so the rice is eaten with the fingers. Very few ladies eat at the site of the *dég*. If they come, which they do, then they will bring a sack or some other plate and have it filled to be taken away. Very often women send their children to the site with sacks or plates and the children receive a portion. The danger of this is that the person distributing the rice may not give a child as much as he would give an adult woman. Children are occasionally told not to be greedy and sent away with only half a sack of rice. The very poor children use the front of their long *kamiz* (long shirt) as a container. They hold out their shirt and the rice is spooned in.

People sit in clumps and tend to stay together. They chat and joke while they eat and in every sense the occasion is treated as a festive break from the normal routine. Rice is expensive for poor people since it is not grown in northern Punjab. It must come from regions further south. As a result, for many poor villagers, these ritual *dégs* are the most frequent occasions for them to eat rice. Rice is also associated with weddings which further marks the festive aspect of the ritual. Anyone passing by is expected to participate, including complete strangers, like truck drivers or passing goat or sheep herders.

Status hierarchy is marked in various ways in *dégs*. High status guests are never asked to sit directly on the ground. If the ritual is performed in someone's courtyard or guest house, high status guests are given a *charpai* or chair to sit on. If the *dég* is performed in a field then a *chaddar* will be laid on the ground for the important guest to sit on. High status people eat first, except for the host, who eats very little and usually after the first wave of guests have started eating. The host may or may not sit close to his guests but in every case I witnessed, the host is clearly identifiable. He will sit on a *charpai* and will be conspicuous by the absence of food or the indifference he shows to the food. There will be some men around him laughing and joking deferentially with him. He will, from time to time, order the cooks to do something different. The order itself often seems irrelevant but the act of giving orders and expressing superiority seems to be of extreme importance. High status guests are expected to greet the host personally and sit with him while they eat.

Dégs end less formally than they begin. As the rice runs out people drift away. By the time the rice is finished, the only people left are the host, his entourage and the cooks who may or may not be responsible for cleaning up.

The reasons a household may organize a dég are varied: to honour Haj pilgrims both prior to departure and upon their return, for the birth of a child, to mark the arrival of a new bride to a household (usually after the official wedding ceremonies of *nikkah*, *mehndi* and *walima*), to thank Allah for saving the life of an ill relative or perhaps to thank Allah for providing a relative with a good job or some windfall profit. The reason is always stated as being linked to some benevolence on the part of Allah and generally involves thanks for some event which was not entirely in the host's control.

### **Symbolic violence**

Bourdieu writes that in a world, or 'universe', where a 'man possesses in order to give', an unreciprocated gift becomes a debt. Further:

In such a universe, there are only two ways of getting and keeping a lasting hold over someone: debts and gifts, the physically economic attachments created and maintained by the generous gift... [Bourdieu 1990: 126]

An important thread in this argument is linking the market with non market determined decision making. The economy of rural Punjab is clearly not pre-capitalist, however, there are aspects of rural exchange relations which are not market driven, and are certainly derived from pre-capitalist economic conditions. Like the *suq* in Algeria, the economy of rural Pakistan is neither purely 'traditional' nor 'rational'. Bourdieu argues that the *suq* in Algeria supplies both 'traditional' and 'rational' information [Bourdieu 1990: 124]. In these conditions, the economy does not provide the 'conditions necessary for an indirect, impersonal domination secured quasi-automatically by the logic of the labour market.' [Bourdieu 1990: 123]. The opportunities for physical violence and other means of physically ensuring the subordination of individuals is limited within the village. The mechanisms in place for restricting powerful individuals' ability to physically dominate the less powerful would tend to make that avenue of domination less efficient than the more economical assertion of dominance through symbolic violence. The systems in which symbolic violence occurs are, in Foucault's terms, '

Physical violence in Pakistan carries risks which extend beyond the individuals involved or particular events. Among Pukhtuns, Barth [1959a], Ahmed [1980] and Lindholm [1996] write that physical violence is an accepted part of the cultural discourse, even between close patrilineal kin, yet the consequences of blood feud are severe. The ideal prescribes violence in more cases than what actually occurs. Punjabis share a system of values which praises violence as a response to certain actions, but they also tend to avoid it if possible. Individual disputants may indeed wish to commit physically violent acts, but are discouraged by their patrons and kin members. Despite journalistic accounts<sup>35</sup>, the incidence of physical violence in Punjabi villages is remarkably low. Even in the reputedly more violent Pukhtun areas, Lindholm argues that the cost of violence between clans is exceptionally high and consequently rare:

despite the impression generally created by ethnographies of the Pukhtun (including my own), violence in the valley is quite rare and everyday life is certainly more courteous and safer than ordinary life in many supposedly less violent societies. [1996: 50].

So while there is clearly a rhetoric of aggression and violence, similar to the situation described by Gilsenan [1996] in northern Lebanon, this is not reflected in the incidence of actual physical violence. The most frequent mode of domination between collaterals, therefore, is symbolic.

When physical violence is directed against status and material subordinates the risk of blood feud is reduced but there are, nevertheless, serious consequences which must be addressed. Landlords have the economic resources to commit acts of physical violence against villagers with little fear of effective physically violent reprisal, but must contend with other forms of revenge. Villagers, who constitute the labour force in agricultural villages, may respond by increasing complaints and lack of cooperation. Villagers can and do evade calls for *corvée* labour. The families of affected individuals may rally behind their relative and collectively interfere with the daily operations of running a farm. Gossip composed of insults and backbiting is common within a closed circle of people, but it may become an effective tool for checking the power of others, even the very high status, if spread to outsiders [see Gluckman 1963 on the power of gossip to check behaviour]. Villagers may insult landlords in village tea shops in the area. News of discontent spreads

quickly between villages and rival landlords pay close attention to potential weaknesses of each other. In a society which places such a high premium on izzat (both individual and collective), claims that a man or his family are stingy or unjust or cruel, are taken seriously. Every landlord family has legends about the generosity and indulgence of its members, in order to demonstrate that they are benevolent.

Some of my informants, both landlord and non-landlord, reported that the incidence of physical acts of violence committed by landlords against villagers has decreased as a result of the democratization processes under Ayub Khan and Z. A. Bhutto. They also report that increased economic opportunity for villagers in cities has afforded them greater protection from rural landlords. Neither increased democratization nor economic autonomy, however, fully explain the reluctance on the part of powerful men, resident in the village, to engage in physical violence. It is, rather the contrary which would be surprising. If past landlords really did commit gross acts of violence against villagers then *that* is what would require explanation. I suggest rather that landlords have never been free to employ violence as a primary means of controlling villagers.

Landlord reluctance to commit violence stems, in part, from their desire to be perceived as 'just' and benevolent. They want to be respected as well as feared, and while they may speak about their 'peasants' loving them, heads of household landlords rarely believe that villagers love them. The authority of landlords rests in large part upon the acceptance of their personal authority, which 'can only be lastingly maintained through actions that reassert it practically through their compliance with the values recognized by the group' [Bourdieu 1990: 129].

The separation of power and violence [Arendt 1970: 46-56; Lukes 1974: 28-30] provides an additional explanatory device for this hesitancy towards physical violence. If a landlord commits frequent acts of physical violence it implies, paradoxically, a *lack* of power. A powerful landlord *should* be able to assert his will without recourse to physical violence. It is precisely situations like this to which Bourdieu refers. Where the opportunity for physical violence is, for whatever reason, curtailed, individuals employ other means to assert their 'personal authority' and domination.

I have some misgivings about applying Bourdieu's terminology to Pakistani giving. On the one hand, gift giving is a highly elaborated process in Pakistan. Individuals keep a careful record of the amounts of every gift and gifts may indeed be perceived as expressions of hostility, or somehow interpreted as aggressive. Gift 'aggression' is observable in the manner in which a gift may be received or rejected [Eglar 1960: 173-174]. Gifts must be reciprocated and when this is not possible the nature of the relationship shifts. The relation is no longer that of co-equal but of super- and sub-ordinate. It may then develop into a clear patron/client relationship. There can be little dispute that dominance, or at least hierarchy, may be asserted or expressed in gift giving. When dealing with highly formalized sets of exchanges, like marriages, Bourdieu's analysis is thoroughly appropriate. The act of giving and receiving is calculated and involves voluntary participation by all parties. It can be negotiated and is measured and finessed throughout the process. Each side jockey for some position which allows them the 'upper hand', in of symbolic capital terms, if not in a materially economic one. It is rather, Bourdieu's use of the term 'violence' which I find contentious. In Pakistan guests are sacred. The manner in which one treats one's guests is a reflection of one's own value as a family and as an individual. Moreover, there is a widespread belief in Islam that guests are always the guests of Allah. Stinginess towards a guest of Allah would, of course, be an insult tantamount to blasphemy. An individual may well attempt to garner some accumulation of symbolic capital, or impose a debt on another individual as a means of effecting more control over some aspect of life, but the term 'violence' may be misleading. I would be more comfortable with a term such as symbolic aggression but of course this may encompass far too many acts. So while I am not entirely sure the term is appropriate, I find the concept thoroughly apt, so will accept the former in order to retain the latter.

The religious phenomenon of *langar* (public kitchens attached to Sufi shrines), mirrors the *dég* ritual. *Langar* are organised around shrines to *pirs* (saints). In the *langar* the 'giver' and 'receiver' become symbolically, if not materially, confused. The *pir* is the redistributor of goods and food provided by his *murid* (devotees). He is not perceived to be a 'receiver' because he does not 'need' the gifts provided. Werbner reports that the recently deceased Zindapir of Ghumkol Sharif in Pakistan was a vegetarian, 'perpetual giver' [Werbner 1998: 107]. Like God, a true saint needs no sustenance from his fellow humans. The

saint's sustenance comes directly from God himself. In other words, a saint, like God, cannot be a receiver. His status and position preclude the possibility of him assuming a subordinate role with other individuals, therefore even if he materially receives, the exchange must be redefined to negate the receivership of the saint. There is clearly a sense of status and prestige associated with giving and receiving. To what extent one may categorise this as 'violence' however is less clear, as indeed, is the particular status or prestige assigned to the givers and receivers. The act of receiving is an admission of 'needing' which is itself a result of 'imperfection'. The case of pirs and their 'good faith economy' suggests, the status associated with 'giver' and 'receiver' may be open to some manipulation in order to shift the direction of status and prestige. Indeed, the intellectual gymnastics required to transform giving and receiving into some other category provide entertaining examples which lend additional support to Mauss' seminal thesis (see Laidlaw 2000 for the ways Jains in northern India may receive without being 'receivers').

In the following case study, however, I believe that the term 'violence' is not only appropriate from the outside analyst's point of view, but that it also resonates with an indigenous understanding of the process. The violence is not directed at any of the participants of the 'gift', but rather at a co-equal of the giver who may or may not partake in the ritual. The ritual is an act of aggression and an expression of rivalry. The receivers, in this case the individuals and groups who actually eat the rice, may be equated to the scoreboard in a sports event. They, along with the number of cauldrons prepared, are the objective measure by which the aggression may be deemed to have 'succeeded' or 'failed'.

### **Case study: the largest dég in the history of the village**

During my field research, I attended many dégs, which were held for many different reasons. Some of them were modest and some were very lavish. All were imbued with religious symbolism and ritual, regardless of the stated 'reason' for the dég. Most dégs involved fewer than 10 large cauldrons, some as few as two. All of them were divided equally between sweet and savoury rice. Every dég was open to all guests. Anyone who showed up on the day was given rice, so long as quantities lasted. The largest dég I witnessed in the village, reputedly the largest ever to take place in the village, lasted from

just after sunrise to just before sundown. Somewhere between 25 and 30 large cauldrons of rice were prepared for everyone in the village. Villagers who could not walk to the *dég* area, had rice brought to them by children. No household did not have some representative helping to eat the rice. The reason for this *dég* was kept particularly secret. The host was my best friend and host in the village, Malik Asif Nawaz.

Malik Asif and I kept very few secrets from each other, but on this occasion he did not choose to share his thoughts. Speculation on why Malik Asif was being twice as generous as anyone ever had been ran wild: he was taking a second wife, he was going to have another child, I was going to take him to Europe with me, he had arranged a Pakistani wife for me, I was converting to Islam, he had managed to get compensation for his land destroyed by the nearby motorway construction. None of those explanations were true. Later Malik Asif gave me some clues as to his reasons. He felt that Allah had wanted him to feed his village so he did. The *dég* was in honour of his God. I accept his stated reasons (and those of others) as partial explanations. The reasons people give for such social phenomena, however, should not be taken as complete or thorough explanations of the social impact.

### **Indirect symbolic violence**

Bourdieu's symbolic violence is already an indirect expression of aggression so it may seem odd that I have chosen to use the term indirect symbolic violence. It might be more accurate to adopt a terminology similar to English kin terms for cousins: symbolic violence once removed (or twice removed, etc.). Symbolic violence is an indirect way of expressing 'violence' against a giver, which is not the focus of this analysis, but rather the 'violence' directed against someone who may not form a part of the giving directly. So the 'target' of the violence is removed from the event, hence the cousin terminology. I find 'symbolic violence once removed' an awkward term, however, so I have opted instead to risk redundancy for the sake of linguistic ease.

The interesting part of this *dég* is that from the giver's point of view, the receiver is somewhat incidental in his assertion of dominance. That is to say, the giver requires a great many receivers but domination over the receivers is not his primary goal. The giver's



target group, so to speak, is the very few individuals in the village who are in a position to sponsor such events of this magnitude.

There are several reasons why I believe this to be true, both emically as well as etically. First, the efforts involved in swaying someone's primary loyalties far exceed a single gift - even a highly valued one such as a good meal of rice. Typically landlords spend months cultivating the sharecroppers and servants of other landlords in order to get them to work for them. The actual 'indebtment' or domination over a villager usually coincides with some problem of the villager which the landlord is in some position to alleviate. Within the context of the *dég*, all wealthy men are somewhat obliged to host them on occasion. As I said before, the concept of *izzat* is extremely important for Punjabis, indeed for all Pakistanis as far as I know. The last thing any landlord wants said of him, is that he is miserly or stingy. Feeding villagers is therefore not an attempt to control villagers or indebt them, but rather an act which satisfies an obligation which exists *because* the landlord is dominant. In this sense, then the *dégs* are not attempts to exert domination over villagers.

Nor can they be seen as merely expressions of domination over villagers since in a large *dég* the entire village may freely participate. Other landlords and their children will also enjoy other people's *dégs*. Moreover, the act of eating rice at someone's *dég* does not incur a debt to the host of the *dég*. I say this with some confidence because hundreds of people may eat the rice and on no occasion did I hear about any landlord reminding someone that he had eaten at his *dég* to influence the person in the future. Other favours and gifts, however, do get brought up in the future in order to pressure individual's and groups into cooperation or compliance. So indigenously, there is not a sense that eating a man's rice at this ritual incurs any future obligations. Nor does it incur an obligation of reciprocity to feed a landlord. The obligation to feed one's guests is ever present in the Punjab and does not become heightened because one has received food. The presence of villagers heavily in the debt of other landlords and of complete strangers who have no connection to the village, such as truck drivers or passing pastoralists, goes further to negating the idea that *dégs* may be seen as some kind of expression of dominance over the receivers.

Furthermore, there is no real obligation to attend the *dég* of the landlord to whom one is closest. If one is in the village then there is certainly a positive social pressure to attend, the events are very festive and provide a welcome break from the routine of village life so villagers will certainly go to the *dég* if they have any connection to the host. If for any reason they must be out of the village, the host does not interpret absence as a withdrawal of loyalty or any other expression of animosity. The exception to this would be if villagers boycotted a *dég en masse* in which case that would most certainly be construed as an expression of disloyalty and lack of respect.

There is an expression of aggression involved in *dégs* however. In order to understand this I will look more closely at the relationship of Malik Asif to his *biraderi*, his patrilineage which, given the incidence of patrilineal cousin marriage effectively means his cognatic relatives as well as the majority of his affines. One of the activities of Punjabi landlords is either claiming a relative's lands or defending against rival claims to their own lands. There is frequent land 'poaching' between cousins. While the concept of *sharik*, or cousin, does not seem to have the same animosity in the Punjab as does the equivalent *tarbur* among Pukhtuns, there is tension associated with *sharika*. One's *sharik* is both one's close family and most frequent rival. Malik Asif had been engaged in a very serious land dispute with his fraternal cousins for the previous year. He had also recently settled a multiple generation dispute with one of his father's fraternal cousins (though the dispute is not settled in such a way that it cannot arise again when the elder disputant dies). Between close family like this there is very little room for any physical violence. They may yell at each other and certainly engage in some serious rumour mongering and backbiting, but serious physical violence is culturally unacceptable. They must therefore find other ways to exert dominance. Hence my application of Bourdieu's symbolic violence. The personal authority landlords may assert over each other 'can only be lastingly maintained through actions that reassert it practically through their compliance with the values recognized by the group' [Bourdieu 1990: 129]. In this case, the group is restricted to the landlord families, which do not allow their members to try and kill or beat each other except in very limited circumstances. Indeed on the few occasions when intra-family tension has mounted to the level of physical violence, the entire *biraderi* become involved to resolve

the dispute. The social pressure placed on family members to refrain from physical violence is such that it is an extremely rare occurrence.

When Malik Asif inherited his land he was a student in Punjab Government College in Rawalpindi. Within the first year of assuming control of his father's land he estimates he lost several hundred *kanal* of land (1 *kanal* = 1/8 of an acre). In the 16 years that have passed since then he has managed to recover some, but not all of that land. He has, in the past decade made a considerable effort to increase the profitability of his land by increasing his yield through the use of chemical fertilizers and irrigation. In the last five years he has begun a very ambitious project to build a citrus orchard. Citrus orchards are one of the symbols *par excellence* of landlord wealth and prestige. There is at present, only one citrus orchard in the village, and that belongs to one of the men that Malik Asif believes was responsible for taking much of his family land. This orchard belongs to his maternal uncle (who is nevertheless part of the same patrilineage). Relations between these men are very close and they frequently work together but there remains a good deal of tension and 'jockeying' for control. Malik Asif, being 20 years younger than his *mamou* (maternal uncle) has limited room for open rebellion. He must abide by the 'values recognized by the group' [Bourdieu 1990: 129]. One of those values stresses obedience and respect to elders. This does not stop Malik Asif from being an ambitious landlord however and wanting to assert his own position of 'controller' or dominant landlord.

The 'violence' expressed in Malik Asif's *dég* is therefore directed at two generations of his own family. First he is making a direct challenge to the elders of his family, whom he perceives as being responsible for his own loss of land and wealth. Second, he is making a statement to those of his own generation that he intends to be the most influential landlord in the village when the current elder generation retires or dies.

This is achieved by raising the stakes of the 'giving' within the village. By hosting such a large *dég* Malik Asif has raised the level of expectations. To be sure, no one expects to have such a large *dég* on a regular basis, but it has become the objective measure by which other *dégs* are evaluated. Among Malik Asif's generation, none of them can truly hope to host such a *dég*. While they could probably pay for such an event, it requires a great deal of organizational cooperation which Malik Asif spent a long time cultivating. They have,

by and large, not cultivated such an organizational network and so are at a disadvantage in hosting such an event. The only landlords who have both the wealth and the organizational ability are the elder generation-- and probably only two men among that generation. Of those two men, one is the *mamou* who Malik Asif feels is responsible for his own loss. The *dég* inflation affects them far more than Malik Asif's fraternal cousins. They *could* host such an event so if they do not then the explanation is that they are stingy or miserly. I have not heard of an equally large *dég* being hosted since my departure but I expect that it may happen, if only to demonstrate that the elder generation is as generous as Malik Asif.

Where Bourdieu's symbolic violence seems most appropriate is precisely between these men. The constraints of family are such that they cannot easily assert dominance, as landlords, over one another in any physical way. They must then make use of debts to control each other. If they can manage to out-give one another then they may successfully get one another in their debt, or more importantly, under their control. Giving between landlords is extremely costly however. Malik Asif could not hope to win control over his uncles by direct gifts, and it would almost certainly entail a serious sacrifice to his own family. By elevating the scale of *dég* giving Malik Asif is able to enter into a kind of 'giving' competition with men who are far wealthier and more influential than himself. The challenge, or symbolic violence, is made indirect and deniable. Malik Asif's uncles cannot openly accuse him of challenging them but they remain obliged to respond by hosting their own *dég* or suffer the consequences of allowing Malik Asif to be seen in the village as the most generous landlord.

The attraction of such a challenge, or expression of dominance, is that if it succeeds it does not disrupt family harmony and if it fails there is no serious loss of *izzat*. The family members who decline to engage in the *dég* inflation can continue to host their own, more modest *dégs* and will be seen to assume their obligations to both the villagers and to Islam. Those that choose to host equal, or larger *dégs*, may be able to assume the role of 'most generous' landlord but they will not detract from Malik Asif's generosity. He will be seen as one of the generous Maliks, if not the most generous.

## Conclusion

Dégs express rivalries in ways which are socially sanctioned. They are not effective means of garnering power but they are necessary expressions of power. I have included an analysis of this excessive dég because it demonstrates some of the tensions inherent in relationships of equality in Pakistan. Where individuals try to assert equality there will be tension. This event, and others like it, provided me certain clues as to why Pakistanis so readily assume roles of asymmetry even when there is no immediately apparent need to do so, at least from an outside observer's viewpoint. I also offer this example as supporting evidence for Lindholm's argument that the differences between Pukhtun and Punjabi culture are ones of scale rather than kind. Dégs provide a condoned mechanism for expressing collateral aggression, which, as in this case, may often be agnatic rivalry. The underlying principle of tarburwali can not, therefore, be understood as the exclusive domain of Pukhtun culture. It is an important and vibrant motivator of behaviour in Punjab, but like Pukhtun society, the repercussions of physical violence are normally considered excessively detrimental to the interests of all landowning clans; consequently Punjabis employ symbolic mechanisms for expressing their equivalent of tarburwali.

From the preceding argument I make two further generalizations which may be applied to wider anthropological debates. One, Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is less useful when examining patron/client relationships, but would seem to have more currency when dealing with groups or individuals that may be seen as co-equals. Two, the intended 'victim' or target of symbolic violence may not only be outside the giver-taker dyad, furthermore that a receiver may not even be necessary.

The first generalization is drawn directly from the case of dégs. The relationship between patron and client is such that excessive giving from the patron can hardly be considered symbolically violent or even an attempt to assert control. It is the patron's obligation to give. It is the client's obligation to serve. If a servant works an extra three hours in a day should one consider that as an attempt to increase his patron's indebtedment to him or herself? That is the nature of the relationship and any symbolic violence should be identified in other areas. Where the notion of symbolic violence does seem useful however is between equals who may be vying for some indebtedment on the part of another person.

In this case, it is imperative that individuals consider the obligations associated with every gift. As in the situation that Eglar describes, where people may refuse part or all of a gift if they feel its value exceeds their ability to reciprocate, a gift may indeed be a declaration about hierarchical relationships. That situation pre-exists the patron/client relation however and may be seen as an attempt to establish such a relationship. Once the relationship is in place the notion of violence expressed through gift giving loses its utility.

The second generalization may be the one which is far easier to relate cross culturally and harkens back to Maussian notions of reciprocity and the gift. The notion that an individual's, or a group's general level of expenditure may somehow constitute a challenge to others of the same economic position. Specifically, I refer to the expense of a *dég* and the act of escalating that amount is, in fact, a challenge to other potential *dég* hosts. Not only does it eliminate poor people from the competition, it makes it more expensive for fellow landlords to compete in the stakes for the position of 'most generous' landlord. Beyond the level of the village and this specific ritual, the manner in which a person spends his or her money makes a statement to others of the same economic group. Thus the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's ostentatious personal spending offers a direct challenge to those of similar economic situations. Not only did he have a new road built through Lahore from his home to the motorway, he had parks built, he bought property in Britain, he and his family drove expensive cars and wore expensive jewellery and clothing. All of this excessive spending was directed at themselves, so there is not even a 'receiver' to keep score (though in other ways there were very much receivers of Nawaz Sharif's generosity). I argue that this kind of spending is no less an act of symbolic violence, but of an indirect kind. He escalated the cost of what it means to be an important and influential man in Pakistan, thereby limiting the number of individuals who may reasonably consider participating. Out spending in that category of persons is extremely dangerous. Spending on oneself is far safer and any challenge which may be inferred can be denied.

Professor Paul Stirling used to ask postgraduate students why human society was possible at all. How did groups of people manage to live together at all? What prevents human beings from trying to kill each other whenever there are conflicts of self-interest? These

symbolic challenges that individuals engage in provide interesting examples of the tensions that exist between individuals who may be striving for equality or dominance which allow peaceful coexistence. Not all challenges offer non-physically violent escapes, however. In the next chapter I look at one social response to potentially physically violent challenges. Traditional arbitration councils have long served as mechanisms for confronting and defusing situations that have either become physically violent or appear as if they will do so.

## 8 Local Arbitration and conflict deferment

Landlords frequently bear the brunt of responsibility for Pakistan's underdevelopment. Urban Pakistanis seem fond of explaining to visitors that landlords impede development and intentionally keep the rural areas 'backward' in order to maintain control. The relationship between landlords and peasants is seen as exploitative and unfair. Dispute settlement systems are said to be biased in favour of landlords which leaves peasants without legal representation. A director at the World Bank expressed this dissatisfaction with Pakistani landlords in an article in *Dawn*, one of the major Pakistani daily newspapers:

...at the time of independence, Pakistan had a land tenure system in Punjab and Sindh dominated by zamindars and jagirdars. Basically, the zamindars and jagirdars possessed large tracts of land and practised an exploitative system in which peasants were without legal protection and the forum of settlement of disputes was heavily biased in favour of the zamindars [Husain 1999].

Long before overt Marxist arguments surfaced in South Asian social sciences, however, landlords and the structures of power in the rural areas were subject to criticism. Sir Malcolm Darling, a British colonial administrator no less, wrote in the first half of the 20th century that '...the landlord is too often just a parasite' [1947: xxix]. He also accused landlords of being an impediment to agricultural development:

...the landlord who lives on his rents... has little desire to develop his lands, as his rents are generally sufficient to maintain him in comparative ease, and more than this he does not usually desire. For him, therefore, agricultural development is less a matter of economic need than of *social obligation* [emphasis added. 1947: 257-258].

Darling's economic survey of the Punjab is highly instructive. His conclusions and recommendations would not be out of place within current debates in Pakistan on the best



strategies for agricultural development; however Darling's appraisal of landlords is ambiguous. While on the one hand he is generous in his criticism of absentee landlords, he recognises the social obligations incumbent on residential landlords. He writes that:

a *good* landlord is a valuable addition to a countryside of peasants. He will finance his tenants at low rates of interest, perhaps charge no interest at all; he will settle their disputes, stand by them in times of stress, and lend them implements and make experiments which they cannot afford [1947: xxix].

At the risk of being accused of being an apologist for rural elites, I want to focus on these 'good' landlords and in particular their role in dispute settlement. Landlords, or zamindars, who live in the villages in which they own land, are part of those communities and have little choice but to respond to the communities' demands. Pakistani peasants do not seek 'legal protection' from the government in the first instance because they know that it will not be forthcoming. In order for a poor villager to file a First Incidence Report (FIR), a necessary step to reporting a crime, he or she must have the endorsement of someone known to the police. I was told by the local Station House Officer near Bhalot, that he was far too busy to allow his police officers to become involved in illiterate people's affairs. He requires poor villagers to first have their case filtered by someone of good reputation known to him or his officers.

Poor villagers also hesitate to go to formal courts because in most cases the objective of the courts is incompatible with the objective of the plaintiffs. Court cases in Pakistan can take years to complete. Furthermore, the system of appeals tends to favour wealthy plaintiffs who can afford to engage lawyers for extended periods of time. All of the villagers with whom I spoke told me that they wanted rapid resolution to their problems. They want the judge or arbiter to consider aspects of the case which may not formally be considered under rules of evidence. Finally, they want to know something of the character of the person or people involved in rendering the final decision. The impartiality and formality of Pakistani courts, along with the cost and the requirement that documents be produced, encourage poor villagers to opt for local arbitration in the first instance. Moreover, I disagree with Pakistani urbanity condemnations of landlords for one further reason; landlords provide the bridge for a society which is shifting from traditional

patterns (disrupted by colonialism, wars, population explosion, radical economic transformations etc.) and emerging patterns of modernity, by which I mean a shift towards Weberian rational-legal authority. Without this bridge, the burden of transition would fall predominantly on the state, a burden for which it is currently ill-equipped.

Rural elites act as arbiters in local disputes. Their position as educated, literate members of the community in addition to their personal and family networks, which include police and other government officials, are an important resource for villagers. At times this arbitration takes place within very formal indigenous structures and at other times it is very informal. Disputes between individuals or groups within the village may have serious ramifications on village harmony and so landlords have a collectively recognised responsibility (by both villagers and landlords), as leaders of the community, to contain and defuse tensions. There is therefore a fundamental difference between the motivation of landlord dispute resolution and state court systems. Local arbitration seeks, above all, to defuse and defer conflict rather than actually bring about definitive resolution. State courts are unable to deal with parties that may not seem formally involved with a particular case and strive rather to arrive at decisions which, in principle, should put to rest particular disputes. I argue in this chapter that far from resolving disputes between parties, local arbitration satisfies wider community needs for a suppression of conflict.

I contest the argument put forth by Ahmad [1977] that village 'settlement' works due to 'negative' sanctions but serves only to strengthen landlord interests. Ahmad argues that landlord intervention is corrupt and founded on the fear of negative sanctions [1977: 104-105]. Ahmad's assessment of the case is not entirely wrong but he ignores the possibility that local level dispute resolution may not be governed by a sense of justice for individuals but rather a desire to prevent disputes from spreading to the wider community.

I will look at three cases of arbitration which illustrate some of the limitations of local arbitration as well as some of the strengths. All of these cases come from Northern Punjab in north eastern Attock District and are based on fieldwork conducted there between 1998 and 1999. The first case provides an example of a situation which highlights the overlapping jurisdiction of many conflicts. It involves a child custody case in the village in which the disputing parties were from different locations, one of which fell outside the

direct sphere of influence of any one set of landlords. The second case is typical of the kinds of disputes which provoke formal arbitration council hearings (jirga). Land disputes between landlords must be contained or they risk causing disruption across all socioeconomic layers of the village. This dispute demonstrates the palliative, yet inconclusive nature of jirga decisions. The final case study shows the clearest case of local arbitration functioning effectively. A relatively minor dispute, but one which had the potential to cause great disruption to economic activities in the area, was dealt with summarily by one of the landlords. Although the landlord who finally settled the conflict may have been pursuing his own objectives in allowing the dispute to arise at all, in the end he was able to contain hostilities sufficiently so that life could resume as before.

### **Conflict resolution**

From the early days of Malinowskian anthropology [see particularly Malinowski 1926], anthropologists have recognised that analysing conflict can be a useful way of making sense of society. Llewellyn and Hoebel [1941] argued that studying a societies' methods for dealing with conflict is a useful way to understand the social norms and values. Gluckman [1955; 1965] and Bohannan [1957] examined conflict resolution for the mechanisms it provides society to reinforce and reproduce itself and its underlying values. Comaroff and Roberts [1981] suggest that there should not be a distinct subfield such as legal anthropology; the law, they argue, is such an integral part of culture and society that it makes no sense to pretend that it can be studied in isolation. More recently, Caplan [1995] and Moore [1995], in critically re-evaluating the work of Gulliver and Habermas, have examined competing inductive and deductive approaches to the analysis of dispute; both approaches, in fact, attempt to unravel other (i.e. non-legal) aspects of culture and society. Colson [1995], while arguing against the notion that dispute settlement is about a restoration of *communitas*, points out that the theatricality of dispute settlement renders it particularly compelling subject matter for both locals and anthropologists [see Zeitlyn 1994 for a case in which dispute resolution is used to help understand local religious practice]. Disputes offer participants and observers a means to assess relationships and qualities which may be unrelated to particular disputes.

Gluckman's [1955] and Bohannan's [1957] seminal work on law in non-industrialised societies provides much of the theoretical background for understanding disputes as not exclusively divisive. Conflict may paradoxically serve to unite factions in the face of common foes or opponents. To that end, conflict should not necessarily be seen as something which individuals within a society might feel the need to completely eradicate. This is particularly relevant to the apparent absence of definitive conflict resolution in Punjabi arbitration in contrast to some other customary judicial processes. The Barotse, for example, may have striven for more definitive resolution. The Barotse judicial process, Gluckman says 'corresponds with, more than it differs from, the judicial process in Western society' [1967: 80]. There are, nonetheless, important similarities with the traditional legal process of Barotse land. The evidential phase of Barotse trials is remarkably similar to Punjabi dispute settlements:

In order to bring out all the facts that are relevant to this kind of dispute, the judges allow each party to recite the full tale of his grievances. The judges, who at the capital may number a score or more, helped by anyone else attending the session, cross-examine the parties as well as the witnesses these have brought. They call for further evidence. There is no paring down of the facts in advance for presentation to court, and any judge who knows the parties may contribute that knowledge; the fiction of judicial ignorance is missing in all respects... [1965: 9].

In the Punjab the notion of judicial ignorance is not only absent, it is antithetical to the principle which lends credibility to the proceedings. Judges, or arbiters, are presumed to have prior knowledge of the individuals and facts involved. This is cited as one of the reasons they are more just. Like the Barotse, Punjabi arbiters allow participants the opportunity to air their grievances. This includes parties who may have no direct involvement in the dispute in question but who may be affected by the consequences of the dispute. Judges, or arbiters, are expected to interrogate the disputing parties and all witnesses. All information may be presented to the judges regardless of its conformity to formal requirements of inclusion (of which there are no firm rules). Finally, like the Barotse, the judges are expected to make use of all of their knowledge, including

knowledge that may not have emerged from the trial, to arrive at a settlement which is perceived as fair.

Al-Krenawi and Graham, looking at a specific conflict-resolving ritual among Bedouin argue that mediation occurs in two ways. The first reinstates a 'sense of mutually agreed upon justice' between individual disputants while the second restores 'stability, order, and harmony to social relations' [1999: 163]. They stress the potentially therapeutic benefits to participants in the ritual. In their case studies however, what is striking is that the *bisha* conflict-resolving ritual seems not to address any of the underlying causes of conflict<sup>36</sup>. In both the Bedouin and Punjabi cases the potential for similar disputes remains open. Rather than resolving disputes, traditional arbitration councils seem to defer disputes for the benefit of the community or communities affected. The underlying goal of arbiters is not to see justice done-- which they often have an extremely hard time enforcing in any event-- but rather to effect a resumption of normal relations within the community. With this goal in mind it would seem that absolute concepts of 'justice' or 'right' are irrelevant (though certainly not irrelevant to the discourse of arbitration). This differs from the underlying goal of a legal system built, in large part, upon a British legal system which seeks to create a corpus of precedents which may play the role of law and which may be enforced by the executive arm of the State. Customary law, Quranic law, British law and post-independence Pakistani law co-exist and make the process of adjudication exceedingly complex. In part this plural legal system helps explain the existence of parallel legal structures and why any single legal structure in the country seems woefully inadequate to deal with all situations.

## **Legal systems**

The formal legal system of Pakistan came out of the Islamic legal tradition<sup>37</sup> (as practised in South Asia under the Moghuls) and the British legal tradition<sup>38</sup> (as practised in the colonies). Since independence Pakistan has attempted to rid itself of customary law, in so far as the formal courts are concerned. The state's attempts at judicial reform<sup>39</sup> of the legal tradition notwithstanding, Pakistani courts remain confusing and intimidating. This should be no surprise given the rather chaotic background from which they were created. The state has implemented shari'at to govern domestic law. Shari'at, which began as a

pragmatic attempt to cross cut indigenous loyalties both in Arabia and the peripheries of the Islamic world, today may be seen as a viable modernist legal code. The Pakistani state's adoption of the shari'at and British legal systems has left little room for customary law in the formal court system of Pakistan today. Effectively the only decisions that may be based on custom are those of the arbitration councils in the rural areas. Decisions based on customary law become problematic in urban situations where populations have come from a dozen or more different sub-cultures, each with its own customary law. The lack of uniformity between customary laws of different regions (even within one province) has served to undermine these traditional judicial systems in areas of intensive migration. Nevertheless, traditional justice in the villages remains common.

Chaudhary [1999] suggests that the role of traditional justice in the Punjab has undergone dramatic change with modernisation. Prior to the introduction of the Basic Democracies Act, under Ayub Khan in the 1960's, the traditional system had both authority and power. Traditional punishments, he says, were effective. He lists these as ostracism, fear of disgrace, fines and a variety of other highly situational punishments [1999: 101-105]. With the introduction of centralised justice, the traditional systems began to lose some legitimacy (though this did not happen immediately-- he writes that the initial state sponsored adjudicators were not deemed respectable enough to replace traditional arbiters or judges [1999: 107-108]). As the villages become more embedded in capitalist market activities the authority of traditional systems has become even further eroded [1999: 108-110].

Local narrative accounts of arbitration suggest that these councils had more authority in previous generations. Malik Asif told me that no man would dare to contradict a jirga decision of his grandfather, Malik Ghulab Khan. Malik Ghulab apparently carried a stick and beat men on the back for the slightest infractions of his orders. At the same time, Malik Asif told me that Malik Ghulab were seen to be absolutely fair. Villagers are not as enthusiastic about the fairness of previous generations of Maliks, however, they concur with present day landlords that contradicting jirga decisions in the past was extremely rare. The economic consequences of the loss of landlord support could mean destitution

for an entire household. Even if an individual might have wished otherwise, his or her relatives would have strongly encouraged compliance.

At the time that Barth, Eglar or Ahmad carried out their fieldwork (in the 1950's and 1960's), it may well have been that the traditional judicial system was significantly different to what exists today. I want to be very careful about making comparisons with the past since Pakistan has clearly undergone major changes over the past 30 years; however, I suggest that the role which I propose in this chapter has probably always been an important aspect of traditional arbitration. That is, arbitration councils have probably always served to defer conflict thereby circumventing the need to resolve disputes. In the past, they may also have provided more definitive solutions, such as Gluckman suggests Barotse jurisprudence does, but with the introduction of state courts and police they have foregone this role, if indeed they ever had it. I suggest, like Bohannan [1967: 53] that in Pakistan, any *corpus juris* which exists is a post-event construction (as far as I can tell only an activity of anthropologists) and does not serve to guide traditional arbiters or adjudicators.

The legal tradition of Pakistan since independence, for all its flawed and schizophrenic aspects, is an attempt to create precedent which may act as guide in the judicial process. It seeks to make absolute decisions in particular cases and then generalise from those cases. Increasingly the Pakistani state has attempted to eliminate ambiguity plurality in its laws by reducing the scope and importance of customary law. Presently, customary law has no formal recognition by the Pakistani state. In so doing they have tried to establish an explicit blue print of 'legal' and 'illegal' and more philosophically 'right' and 'wrong'. Moreover it has formal pretensions to neutrality which are not always achievable but are at least present. Decisions in Punjabi arbitration, as I will demonstrate, have a very different goal that is similar to the origins of the shari'at in Arabia and its application during the expansion of Islam but incompatible with what shari'at has become. Its goal is to facilitate normality within the community by preventing excessive disruption to groups and it may achieve this goal through partiality and pragmatism without fear of setting future precedent. The role of arbitration is to defuse the present situation; it is not to establish a principle by which all similar situations may be governed.

## Case Studies<sup>40</sup>

### Case One: Child custody.

The first case study illustrates one of the most serious shortcomings of arbitration. The failure of this case is due in part to a possible miscalculation in the jirga council selection but also to the fact that this was a case where loss was completely unacceptable to both parties. All compromises ended up being interpreted as a loss. Furthermore one of the parties who was by consensus in the wrong, was sufficiently financially independent and distant from the members of the jirga council that they felt they could take the risk of not complying with the jirga decision.

In Islam children are considered to belong to their father's family and religion. Fathers are deemed in all cases to be the 'guardian' of their children however Islam recognises that in the interest of young children it is the mother who should care for them. In cases of separation or divorce the age at which children may be separated from their mother differs by sect from two-seven years and by custom often older (mid teens). The person caring for the child must be 'sane, trustworthy and of good morals' [Pearl 1988: 92]. In the event that the mother does not satisfy these requirements it may be necessary to remove young children from the mother's care and placed in the care of other female relatives-- usually from the father's side. Equally if the father may be demonstrated to be insane, untrustworthy or of bad morals, he may lose his rights of guardianship. Within Islam however this would not necessarily mean that the children would be left with the mother and her family but rather with other members of the father's family. In the event of the death of the father children may normally live with their mother until the age they would go to live with their father in cases of divorce. In the following case it was the mother who died, leaving her husband with a two year old daughter.

Abdul, the father, was born and lived in a nearby village. His wife had come from one of the large cities in the area. The marriage had been arranged by the parents and while they were not relatives they came from the same qaum. When Abdul's wife became seriously ill, she returned to her parents' home in the city to recover. Abdul had only himself and his elderly parents in the house so they were not in a position to care for a toddler and an ill woman. When the woman died the little girl was in the care of her deceased mother's



parents. In the Barelvi Islamic tradition prominent in rural Punjab, the bereaved should mourn for forty days during which time they are available in the courtyard of their homes to receive guests who come to pray with them. During this time Abdul had no sisters or sisters-in-law living nearby and his own mother was very old so it would have been difficult to care for his daughter during the mourning period. In addition Abdul said that he had hoped that caring for the daughter of their daughter would lessen the pain of his parents-in-law. Upon completion of the forty days of mourning Abdul sent word that he was ready to take back his daughter, at which point he was told that the little girl would remain with her maternal grandparents. Abdul arrived at the house and was barred entry. His in-laws yelled at him and chased him away from the house. Abdul's father, Javaid, became involved at this point and tried to persuade his son's parents-in-law to be reasonable and return the daughter. He reminded them of Islamic law and assured them that his household was prepared to care for the little girl properly. They also refused to be persuaded by Javaid.

Javaid decided that they needed the help of the local landlords, the zamindars. He first approached a younger Malik who was the son of the old Malik for whom Javaid had worked years before. Malik Saddiq listened to the situation and sent for Abdul to come tell the story again from his side. Malik Saddiq had already heard that there were problems from other sources but the situation was potentially quite volatile so he explained to me that it was essential to let every person have his or her say and to hear them all. When Abdul had given his side of the story Malik Saddiq then sent for a representative of the deceased woman's family. Her brother came to the village and accused Abdul of being a bad husband, bad father, a drug user and a drinker of *koop*i, the locally brewed grain alcohol. Therefore they had a right under Islam to keep the little girl. Prior to this case I had hardly spoken to either Abdul or his father so I had no idea what to make of these accusations. I knew many of the people who used drugs in the area and I had never heard Abdul's name mentioned among them nor had I ever seen him hanging out in the areas where those activities occur. Malik Saddiq dismissed the accusations out of hand. He claimed that he knew all the substance abusers in his village and Abdul was not one of them. Abdul was a hard working man in the building trade. Malik Saddiq told me he could not comment on Abdul's qualities as a husband or a parent but he had never had cause to

think that Abdul was abusing either his wife or his daughter and so in the absence of concrete evidence he was not prepared to take the charges seriously. The brother of the deceased woman left unpersuaded. In any event the goal of that meeting was not to persuade him but rather to hear his family's version of events.

Malik Saddiq decided that the case required more experience and clout than he possessed and sent Javaid to his uncle, Malik Hafiz. Malik Hafiz was a retired police officer who had a good knowledge of Pakistani law, shari'at and local custom. He had served on numerous jirga councils and had served as arbiter throughout the Punjab. He was seen to have the wisdom, maturity and authority to resolve a case as complex as this one. At this point more men from the village were brought in on the problem. Some of Malik Saddiq's and Malik Hafiz's elder sharecroppers were invited to review the problem and help in resolving it. Over the following two months parties from the village went to the nearby city and had long meetings with Abdul's parents-in-law and their family. After about five weeks they returned to the village and announced that the matter had been resolved. The grandparents of the little girl had agreed to return her in exchange for a return of the dowry. Many people told me that this was what the matter had been about all along. The in-laws had wanted to make some money out of Abdul and his family.

Abdul then had some of the dowry returned but not all. He explained to me that he would return all of the dowry when his daughter was returned to him. This was unacceptable to his in-laws however, who demanded that all of the dowry be returned prior to relinquishing control of the little girl. Opinion among many villagers was that the in-laws were not serious about submitting to the jirga nor did they have any intention of giving back the little girl. Since the in-laws did not live in the village there was little more that the landlord controlled jirga could do to them. The in-laws had their own patrons in the city and did not depend on village landlords to provide favours (such as jobs, food, references etc.). There was no one on the jirga council upon whom they depended sufficiently to cause them to comply with a jirga decision they did not like.

Abdul and his father had few choices once it became apparent that the in-laws were not going to abide by the decision. They then took their case to the Pakistani courts system. They expect the process to take much longer than the arbitration process and be very

costly however if the courts decide in their favour the police will enforce the decision in a way that village landlords, outside their sphere of influence, cannot.

This case could be seen as an outright failure of arbitration however it did provide a 'cooling off' period for the father and his family. In the initial stages of that case the potential for violence was high in spite of the fact that neither side had a history of violence. The issue was extremely serious and generated a great deal of emotion at what was a very fraught time for everyone. The arbitration sessions lasted approximately two months and when a decision was reached disputants decided not to comply with the decision but instead to pursue the matter with Pakistani courts. From the point of view of the village which had close ties to the father and his family this is far less disruptive than had he attempted to kidnap the child or in some other way take matters into his own hands. His own biraderi (patrilineage) would have been obliged to come to his aid at a time like that. This easing of tensions however did not eliminate them. The father may yet resort to kidnapping and at which time a new round of arbitration would no doubt take place to placate the man's in-laws and prevent the level of violence from increasing. In the village this case was seen as a failure because it did not result in Abdul retrieving his daughter and certainly it failed to achieve that. I argue however that if recovery of the little girl had truly been the goal of the arbiters they might have accomplished it.

A special relationship exists between police and local elites in Pakistan. In rural areas police are acutely aware of the position that local elites hold. They rarely do anything to directly offend them. In one village in the area the police arrive at a landlord's home ostensibly to pay their respects and drink tea, but in practice to declare their intention of arresting someone in the village. At that point the landlord either tells them he has no problem with the individual in question being arrested or he would prefer the police to let him handle the matter himself. The police are perhaps not entirely culpable in these situations. The police are more aware than most people that prisons and jails are bad places to put delinquents. Young men who simply have too much time on their hands or have some youthful angst may form lifelong patterns of criminality. A landlord, if he decides to take an interest in someone, can effectively control their behaviour by providing them work. If a landlord tells the police not to arrest someone then generally what he is saying

is that he himself will provide the man with an activity which prevents him from wrongdoing and will assume the role of punisher if the need arises. That is the positive aspect of the relationship. A more negative effect of the close relationships landlords enjoy with the police is the ability some landlords have to get the police to do their punishing for them. When the offence is an offence against Islam or against the statutes of the State then it is entirely appropriate for the police to be involved however there are a few landlords (not all by any means) who have enough influence with the police to get them to enforce unjust situations. The police have been used in the area to dislocate sharecroppers who were given deeds to land under President Z. A. Bhutto's land redistribution schemes. Under the law ownership of the land was transferred to sharecroppers but no one easily gives up ownership of something that has been in their family for generations. Landlords resisted and connived their way out of most redistribution and what did manage to slip through the cracks is occasionally taken back with force-- sometimes using the strong arm of the law.

Given that the landlords in the area and the police have such an intimate relationship it would not then be difficult to imagine a scenario where Malik Hafiz asked the police to help enforce his decision. This would indeed be a rather straightforward use of the police as the question of child custody is clearly defined in shari'at codes (which are the basis for Pakistani personal law). The deceased mother's parents had no evidence other than their own declaration that Abdul's character was immoral or that he was in any way insane. Even if they had shari'at would still have proscribed that the daughter be placed with someone in Abdul's family, not the family of her dead mother. Had Malik Hafiz opted for this action then the level of negotiation would not have been between Abdul and his wife's family but rather between Malik Hafiz and the in-law's patrons. Malik Hafiz would have had to persuade the patrons of the grandparents that his actions were just since he might have had trouble influencing city police officers to go against the wishes of their local patrons. To my knowledge Malik Hafiz never considered turning to the police, in any event he did not go to the police if he did consider it. He also restricted his appeals and decisions to the level of Abdul and his in-laws and did not include patrons of the in-laws. Without criticising Malik Hafiz or the other members of the jirga council, the implication is clear-- their priority was never the fate of the child nor even Abdul. They became

involved because they saw that one of their clients was about to find himself in a position in which his izzat and his family were being threatened and in that position men may feel they have few options other than violence. Had that situation turned violent the police would have become involved and Abdul, who is considered by many, including myself, to be a good man, might have found himself in far more serious trouble. The pressure on his biraderi and his patrons to extricate him from trouble would be high and therefore potentially costly for everyone concerned. In short, the goal of the arbiters was the resumption of normative (i.e. non-disruptive and non-violent) behaviour on the part of Abdul and his closest relatives.

### **Case Two: Land Dispute**

The second case also involved a formal jirga council. In this situation however the results were more or less successful, though by no means did they produce a definitive end to the dispute. The dispute was between paternal cousins over three generations and multiple jirga sessions. The jirga decisions have been respected by all participants until something changes, at which point the dispute gets re-enacted with slight modifications.

At the turn of the 19th century there were only two real landlords in one of the villages in the area. These men, Malik Ali Khan and Malik Shafiq Khan, were related paternally and one of the men had married a sister of the other. This particular dispute arose after the death of these two men. The eldest sons of each of these men, Malik Khaled Khan and Malik Munawar Khan, both felt they had a legitimate claim to small plot of land approximately 25 *kanal* in area (8 *kanal*= 1 acre) which had not up till that time been cultivated. They could each trace a claim through their fathers however Malik Khaled's paternal claim was greater since his father had actually used the land during his lifetime for livestock grazing. The second man, Malik Munawar, argued that the land had actually belonged to his mother's father who was also a paternal relative of his and that this double claim was stronger than Malik Khaled's claim. A jirga council was established and the two men ended their dispute peacefully. Malik Munawar's grandsons claim that the jirga had decided in his favour and Malik Khaled's grandsons argue the opposite. The land remained uncultivated and continued to be used only for grazing animals.

Malik Khaled had two sons, the eldest was Malik Babar. Malik Munawar had five sons. Malik Munawar died in the 1950's and his sons, the eldest in his early 30's at the time, found themselves embroiled in a new attack on the land. At that time they were distracted by disputes between themselves on how to partition their land so perhaps they did not give the 25 *kanal* of disputed land enough of their attention. There was another jirga council which discussed the issue and, once again, prevented any violence and settled the matter. The sons of those men however disagree on what the jirga decided. The land again lay uncultivated and the men went back to dealing with more immediate problems.

Finally in 1997, one of Malik Munawar's grandsons, Malik Nadeem, made a bold move to establish once and for all that the land belonged to him, or at least had rightfully belonged to Malik Munawar (in which case he still needed to establish that the plot would have gone to his father and then to himself). He planted several hundred eucalyptus trees on the border of the land that adjoined land that he was already disputing with his immediate paternal cousins. He managed to plant the trees quickly and quietly enough that Malik Khaled's son, Malik Babar, did not notice immediately. When Malik Babar discovered the manoeuvre he was furious. He demanded that the trees be removed at once. Malik Nadeem first argued that the land was his father's and his father's father's and he had the right. Malik Nadeem also argued that if Malik Babar had thought the land was his then he should have said something while the trees were being planted. Lack of a claim at the right time, Malik Nadeem argued, proved that Malik Babar was not convinced of his own claim.

The stories now become extremely contradictory, however certain facts are agreed upon by all participants. One of Malik Nadeem's sharecroppers took his goats onto the disputed land to graze. There is some suspicion that Malik Nadeem had encouraged him to do that by telling him the land belonged to him. Malik Babar's son then captured some of the man's goats and locked them up. When the sharecropper came to recover the animals he was insulted and told that the animals would be sacrificed to Almighty Allah and given to the poor (this allegation is hotly contested but there is no question that by this time tempers were high). Malik Babar's son was called to his mother's sister's home (the mother of Malik Nadeem). She pleaded with him to return the goats because the sharecropper was a

poor man and the dispute was between Malik Nadeem and Malik Babar, not the sharecropper. As a favour to his aunt, Malik Babar's son told her to send the sharecropper to the buffalo stable and he would return the goats. When the sharecropper arrived he was not alone. He had several male relatives who were all extremely angry at the alleged insults and threats that Malik Babar's son had made earlier. They insulted Malik Babar and his family (again a contested allegation). Malik Babar's son then called his servants who chased the sharecroppers away. Malik Babar's son then got his automatic rifle and his pistol. He met Malik Nadeem at Malik Nadeem's buffalo stable and yelled at him. One version of the story is that Malik Babar's son pointed the rifle at Malik Nadeem and said he was going to kill him. Both Malik Nadeem and Malik Babar's son deny this and say that the rifle was not being pointed at anyone. Malik Babar's son says he told Malik Nadeem he was furious and Malik Nadeem had to punish his sharecropper, to which Malik Nadeem replied that the problem was between the sharecropper and Malik Babar's son. Malik Babar's son then said he was going to kill the sharecropper. Malik Nadeem then, allegedly, replied, 'Then kill him! It's your problem, you deal with it!' Malik Nadeem claims he made no such statement and that Malik Babar's son has embroidered the story for my benefit. No matter which parts of the narrative actually happened, the following day Malik Babar and his son arrived at the police station to file a First Incident Report (FIR) against Malik Nadeem and his brother (who was not in the village during any of these incidents).

At this point the rest of the family realised that the entire situation was getting out of hand. Some of the elder relatives stepped in to pacify things. They agreed that a new jirga would be called to settle once and for all the fate of this 25 kanal plot of land. In the meantime however everyone had to calm down. The sharecropper and his family left the area which eased tensions somewhat (there were no mysterious circumstances to this departure-- they were not from the area originally so they moved on to another area where they had not made an enemy of one of the local landlords). The jirga council was made up of some members of the family, some other landlords from the area and one civil servant who worked for the National Agricultural Research Council. All members of the jirga had something to offer both participants therefore refusal to abide by the council's decision would potentially have made some tasks much more difficult. The council met on the

disputed land under the same tents that are used for wedding receptions. There was a generous meal provided by Malik Nadeem. The jirga decided that both men did indeed have a claim to the land but that Malik Nadeem had been trying to use the land and it was adjacent to land he had begun to cultivate heavily therefore he should get the land. Since Malik Babar had a rightful claim however, he should be compensated. Malik Nadeem was ordered to pay Rs. 350,000 to Malik Babar and his brother. Both men were delighted with the decision and felt absolutely vindicated in their actions.

If the story stopped there then one could presume that jirga arbitrations had effectively resolved the situation. Malik Nadeem was supposed to pay the Rs. 350,000 within one month. He arranged afterwards with Malik Babar to pay within 6 months. After 6 months he still had only paid one tenth of the agreed price but had begun serious cultivation on the 25 kanal of land. Malik Babar began to put pressure on him through other family members to pay the money since the two men had stopped speaking to each other. Finally after almost a year Malik Nadeem paid the money that he owed to Malik Babar but not to Malik Babar's brother. In 1999 Malik Babar's brother died prematurely leaving a young son who was not in a position to pressure Malik Nadeem to pay the money. In addition this young man had very little training in being a 'Malik' and so in the first few months after his father's death found himself besieged with requests for help from his father's, now his, sharecroppers. Malik Nadeem would never admit that he has no intention of paying and perhaps does not even believe that, however there is no indication that he has any intention of paying quickly. If in ten year's time Malik Nadeem were to die and Malik Babar's nephew decided he wanted the land he would have a legitimate claim to half of the land from Malik Nadeem's son on the grounds that Malik Nadeem had failed to uphold his end of the jirga agreement. Malik Nadeem might be able to defend himself since he is an astute manipulator and negotiator, but his son will be in the same position that Malik Babar's nephew is in now-- plagued by all the other responsibilities in a Malik's life and unprepared for an attack from one of the men that cared for him when he was a child. Although Malik Nadeem is quietly criticised for not paying the money promptly no action is taken because he satisfied the most important part of the jirga decision-- he paid the most volatile disputants, Malik Babar and his son. Furthermore, he is using the land in a way that increases his family's position in the area.



The goal in arbitrating the land dispute between Malik Babar and Malik Nadeem was not to make an ultimate decision of right and wrong. The situation between the two households was growing more tense by the day and people's izzat and their livelihoods were being threatened-- both highly prized entities in the Punjab and NWFP. The risk of actual violence had been realised, albeit through the kidnapping of animals. The risk of violence to people was high. Direct threats to kill people were allegedly made and the police were becoming aware that there were serious problems within the family. Once the police became aware then it was a sure thing that other landlords in the area had learned of the dispute as well. The situation therefore threatened both intra- and extra-village harmony. Land encroachment is not restricted to family members after all. Landlords seem extremely eager to 'absorb' small bits of land of their neighbours but are wary of encroaching upon the land of other powerful landlords. If that Malik family were busy feuding however the possibility of slipping something by them increased. From the point of view of the other members of Malik Babar's and Malik Nadeem's biraderi the situation risked exploding in all of their faces. The fact that the same bit of land had been in dispute in previous generations was not in itself terribly exceptional and therefore probably not of immediate significance to the men asked to serve on the jirga. What mattered was that the disputants had arrived at a stage in which they needed help to find a way to avoid actually killing each other. For all the discourse of violence among landlords there is in fact a great reluctance to use it. For most problems the appearance of violence is sufficient but in some circumstances the appearance simply is not enough. It is on those occasions, I argue, when arbitration is most likely to be called. Many in the village felt that the case had been successfully resolved and yet Malik Nadeem had not paid all of the money even two years after the jirga decision. Success however is as much in the reconciliation of two powerful branches of a very close extended family. Within the landlord family there are still tensions but few people expect that the same plot of land will provoke any more disputes between those branches of the family for this generation. The young landlord who has not been paid is not in a position to contest Malik Nadeem and is unlikely to be in such a position in the foreseeable future. The land may be the centre of a dispute in the future but not at a precisely predictable time, at some vague time in the distant future (distant being perhaps ten years or more).

At the risk of being overly repetitive, I stress here that if the goal of village level arbitration were actual resolution of conflict then this arrangement would be unacceptable. Once the young landlord has accumulated his own power base then it is almost certain that he will provoke a dispute in the future. Since the land is unquestionably being cultivated by Malik Nadeem's household the issue will be even more complicated and torturous the next time (just as it was more complicated this time than in the previous generation). Arbitration served to defuse a tense situation without attempting to ask powerful men do anything they would feel obliged to refuse outright. Two close relatives were given a solution which allowed each of them to maintain respect and 'win' without actually having to do more than they were already prepared to do. Malik Nadeem complains of the high price that the jirga council set on the land but since he paid just over half the sum and will pay the rest in dribs and drabs in fact he has done quite well financially. It is as if he received an interest free loan to buy the land and before he has paid off the loan the land will have appreciated in value to more than compensate his inconvenience. Malik Babar did receive his half of the money (though again much later than promised) and has in fact been released from the constant worry of keeping an eye on a bit of land he had no intention of cultivating.

The only losers are the sharecropper family which felt obliged to relocate and the young landlord. The young landlord, however, can also be said to have won in a sense. He has found himself, like his father before him, often trapped between the wishes of his elder relatives. His mother is also closely related to Malik Nadeem's mother and he is very closely related to Malik Nadeem. Malik Nadeem is one of the future 'stars' of the village. Tense relations between Malik Babar and Malik Nadeem place the young man in a precarious position. Until he has established his own network of well placed civil servants, bankers, landlords, sharecroppers, etc. he must rely on the networks of his family. The more of those networks he has access to the greater his chance of success as a landlord. The money he is owed for that 25 kanal is a small price to pay to have access to Malik Nadeem's network as well as Malik Babar's. In one sense arbitration has worked by defusing the situation however the arbiters and participants left enough latitude for participants in the dispute to raise the issue again at some as yet undefined time in the future.

### **Case Three: Semi-Formal Arbitration Kidnapped Animals**

The final case demonstrates how arbitration is only as useful as the position of the arbiter. It involves a violent flare up between sharecroppers over the right to graze animals.

A Pathan sharecropper, Gul Khan, had been told by his landlord, Malik Nawab, to protect the crop from grazing animals. The land had recently been opened to cultivation by the introduction of a tube well and an irrigation scheme. A Punjabi sharecropper, Manzar, had grazed his animals near there for years and unless his own landlord ordered him to stop he was going to continue letting his animals graze there. Gul Khan's landlord did not speak to either Manzar or his landlord, who both lived in a different village so the issue remained between the two sharecroppers. After several requests (according to Gul Khan), Gul Khan and his brother captured several of Manzar's cows. They locked them up in the courtyard of their house to make a point. They claim that when they captured the animals they had no intention of keeping them. Their goal was to get Manzar's attention and force him to realise that there would be trouble if he did not start complying with their request. Unfortunately when Manzar and his relatives arrived to claim back their cows, Gul Khan was not at home. His wife spoke to the men through the closed door. They insulted her (an allegation which Manzar and his relatives deny) and insulted Pathans (an allegation which they deny but something they did several times over the next few days with witnesses). They returned home to find some guns with the intention of returning to claim their cows. By the time they returned however Gul Khan and his brother were home and very angry that their ladies and their origins had been insulted. They exchanged gunfire but no one was hurt. Gul Khan sent his brother to their landlord to intervene because at that point he felt he could no longer return the cows without a full apology but he could not negotiate directly with Manzar who had insulted his family honour to get an apology.

Malik Nawab, was away at a funeral in central Punjab so his brother, Malik Shafiq, became involved. Malik Shafiq is a devout Muslim with a very good education and a liberal in his world view. He believes, like his elder brother, in listening to people. He listened to Gul Khan's brother and then sent for Gul Khan and Manzar to come to the village. Both men arrived with relatives and guns. They sat in the landlord's *déra* (or guest house) and glared at each other. The Malik Shafiq listened to Gul Khan's version of events and then asked Manzar to tell what he thought had happened. Manzar began his version

of the story by insulting Pathans and reminding the Malik Shafiq that they were both Punjabis. Malik Shafiq listened carefully but told him to forget about being a Punjabi in this situation. This debating lasted for around half an hour with the Malik Shafiq getting increasingly frustrated. Gul Khan wanted an apology. Manzar wanted his cows. Neither man would give the other what he wanted first. Finally the Malik Shafiq interrupted Manzar and shouted at him. He told Manzar that he was a very stupid man and he wanted nothing more to do with him. Malik Shafiq shouted that he would let Gul Khan keep the cows. Manzar began to mumble placating words to the landlord but he stormed out, followed by a smiling Gul Khan and his brother.

For the next two days Gul Khan and his brother followed Malik Shafiq around as if he were the top zamindar of the area. Malik Shafiq paid little attention to them but he continued to think about arguments he could use with Manzar to persuade Manzar to apologise. Manzar and his relatives appeared again on the night that the Malik Shafiq's elder brother returned home. Malik Nawab was told that there had been a dispute but his younger brother was handling it. He was delighted that his brother was taking an interest in family affairs and decided to let his brother resolve the issue himself. I was speaking with Malik Nawab in another dera when his brother and Gul Khan stormed in. They were yelling about how Manzar was an imbecile who refused to see what was right. Malik Nawab listened for a moment and realised that immediate intervention was required. He yelled at both men to be silent. He sent Gul Khan out of the room and asked his brother for details of the situation. When Malik Nawab heard the story he covered his eyes in exasperation. He ordered his brother to go order Gul Khan to release the cows. Malik Shafiq argued that Manzar had to apologise first. Malik Nawab yelled back that those cows were a man's living and that his family were suffering because he had said some harsh words in a moment of tension. He told his brother that it was not worth letting a family suffer just to get an apology for something stupid.

The younger brother left the room and I asked Malik Nawab why his brother had not made the same decision. He smiled and told me that Malik Nawab was used to modern ways and forgot that in this village a landlord had the power to make things happen. Landlords, he said, must decide what is fair and what is just and if they can see clearly what must be done

then they have an obligation to their villagers to make sure it is done. In this case, he said, his brother had forgotten the bigger picture of village life and was focusing on the small details of the case. He then assured me that in the city his brother was an excellent negotiator.

Of the cases I have presented, this is the one that comes closest to a real resolution. Although both the Pathan and the Punjabi involved are free to attack each other and perhaps may do so in the future, the second arbiter in this case, demonstrated his lack of patience with their problems and his willingness to make an immediate decision which satisfied his objective of harmony. The landlord was the true winner in this case. Using his Pathan to do the dirty work he was able to show the Punjabi sharecropper that continuing to allow his cows to graze on those plots would be more trouble than it was worth, however he remained outside of the fray. Had the Punjabi gone to his landlord to complain about another landlord the situation may potentially have required more delicate handling but an argument, even one with guns, between two men who have very little power is not as serious a threat to the stability and smooth operation of the two villages concerned. This is even more true since one of the disputants was a Pathan and therefore had no real base from which to organise hostilities. He may have thought that the younger brother of the landlord would stand by him but he must have had no illusions that the elder brother would. If he had lost the elder brother's support then he and his family would have found themselves in search of another sharecropping arrangement and as he reported to me, that landlord may be irrational and have a temper but he looked after his people if they obeyed him. His experience in NWFP had certainly taught him that there were worse situations. This case is the most blatant case of arbitration for the sake of group harmony. The younger brother, being urban educated and trained, was in fact seeking a redressal of wrongs and in so doing no doubt wanted to set a precedent which villagers could point to and understand the limits. He was seeking an absolutely 'just' decision. This strategy is not the norm for village level arbitration as was patently clear when Malik Nawab, who is village trained, intervened and made a decision which suited himself and all other villagers who might have got caught up in the escalated violence. In this case he judged that he had enough of a hold over his Pathan sharecropper to enforce a decision. He also gauged, correctly as it happens, that his Pathan sharecropper was manipulating the

situation for his own amusement and his anger had already cooled by the time he arrived on the scene. Since Malik Nawab decided that the potential for violence could be contained without the normal niceties of arbitration he dispensed with them. This case might more accurately be defined as arbitration followed by intervention. Malik Shafiq had attempted to arbitrate a resolution while his elder brother had simply intervened. Although it came closest, this case was still settled without a final resolution; it is rather an example or restoration of a certain kind of relations. The Pathan did not get his apology so the animosity between them remains and they continue to cultivate adjacent plots of land so the potential for flare ups remains. Malik Nawab clearly was not concerned about future flare ups and perhaps felt that it was in his interest that the two groups not become too friendly. The Punjabi sharecropper does, after all, work for a man who is a rival in the influence and power stakes that landlords take part in regularly.

### **Conclusion: Arbitration is not about resolution**

Each of these cases illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses of local level arbitration. The result of each dispute may be considered a success if the objective of the arbitration was group harmony and resumption of normative behaviours. On the other hand each case may be considered a failure if the objective is the application of 'justice' in a manner which may be used to establish rules and sanctions in the future. Chaudhary suggests that traditional judicial systems may have once done this but if so that role has since been passed on to the state judicial system.

There is a flaw in the comparison of village arbitration with courts though obviously the two are related. Upon examination of specific cases it is clear that the overriding result of arbitration is geared towards group harmony. Notions of 'justice' for an individual and the concept that there are 'absolute wrongs' are noticeably absent. The objective in local arbitration, both the formal jirga councils as well as the semi-formal arbitration by landlords or other respected members of the community is to avoid excessive disruption to the wider population. Jirga are called when there is a risk that disputes may spill over and affect more than just the individuals directly involved. Intervention on the part of respected people is likewise requested when disputants find themselves in a position where maintenance of their izzat and/or their livelihood are seriously jeopardised and in

order to preserve those things they will be forced to commit an act which would expand the nature of the conflict.

Pakistani courts, at present, do not serve the role of maintaining community harmony. Shari'at, which governs family law, and the criminal and civil code of Pakistan which grew out of a British tradition, ideally, operate on a very different premise. Courts could serve this role, however it is incompatible with principles of modernity in the judicial process. I will not attempt to offer a complete definition of modernity here as it would tend to distract from the point of the chapter, but whatever else modernity means it should include some notion of independent and neutral judicial processes that are codified and cumulative. That is, decisions handed down by courts should be made upon principles of law and those decisions enter the juridical corpus which influences future court decisions. Courts are poorly situated to try and prevent disruption based on the predictions of the adjudicators. Furthermore, if they act in a prejudicial manner which merely appeases the stronger disputant while giving an 'honourable out' to the weaker then they do not serve the wider public interest. The presence of legal codes, such as shari'at and the Pakistani civil and criminal codes offer partial tools to avoid prejudice in the judicial process if they are applied in a systematic and neutral way.

State court systems, in Pakistan as in the west, aspire to ideals of modernity. Individual rather than collective needs are addressed. Decisions made by courts may not serve to resolve critical situations in a timely and expedient manner but rather to establish precedent which exists above and beyond the needs of the day. The concept of modernity implies the rule of law and the impersonalisation, or de-personalisation of distributed responsibility. I allude here to Weber's 'legal authority' which seem integral to modernity [1947: 329-341]. Within a society striving for modernity, the occupant of the judge's chair is of little relevance (or should be) and what matters is that the role be fulfilled by an individual who has a grasp of the precedents and procedures involved. In truth, no where is this the case, and Pakistan is no exception. Pakistan floats uncomfortably between a state court system which seeks impersonal distributed responsibility and authority and a cultural system which stresses collectives and patronage where the people holding office

represent the relationship networks which put them there. A problematic combination of 'legal' and 'traditional' authority.

Arbitration recognises that many people may have a 'say' in a dispute and, further, recognises the need to get agreement from all affected parties. Arbitration does not require any fundamental agreement but rather an outward, public behavioural agreement. Disputants must walk away claiming satisfaction with the result regardless of what they may feel or think. Courts require no such compliance-- only that disputants obey with the decision and if they do not then courts have recourse to other State structures such as the police or at times the military. Ahmad's argument that villagers comply from fear rather than 'voluntary obedience' disregards the protective role that landlords often play in the lives of very vulnerable people. Negative sanctions exist, to be sure, but the most severe negative sanction is in fact the withdrawal of aid rather than a concerted or directed negative campaign against non-compliant individuals. In the western ideal world the vulnerable would be protected by the State and not dependent on the personal intervention of the right person at the right time. In the reality of the Punjabi world, they do depend on intervention at numerous critical points. No individual is so powerful that he or she may simply rely on the rules or laws of the State for 'justice' and no community is so unified, harmonious and economically sound that it can afford to let itself be torn apart by the conflicts that arise between constituent members.

To return to the criticism of landlords with which I began this chapter, it is difficult to justify the condemnation and recrimination of one class or strata of Punjab's countryside. Landlords do not provide the legal protection to individuals that Husain seems to think they should; instead they provide protection to groups, including their own. One could argue that the status quo, which is in effect what landlords are trying to maintain, serves the interests of landlords, however that ignores the voluntary participation of 'peasants' and other poor villagers. The majority of villagers have a vested interest in seeing the status quo maintained since it is through networks that problems are solved in Pakistan-- not through laws or policies. A poor man who is the servant of an influential and powerful landlord is far better off than a poor man who is the servant another poor man. Villagers



reinforce the power of their landlords not because they are forced to do so but because they can see the benefit of doing so.

Arbitration provides numerous possibilities for the expression and manipulation of political relationships. In the next chapter I shift to the external politics of the state and political parties. Although I focus on the role of patronage in state politics, there is an important link between arbitration councils and state political activities. The most sought after arbiters are men who are part of human resource networks which include state politicians or the kingmakers behind them (although typically, if a man is connected to one then he has access to the other). For the next two chapters I will leave the level of the village and concentrate on the ways in which individuals interact regionally. State political activity provides a very clear case of patronage roles which are able to borrow from the fundamental relationships established in early socialisation, village labour relations and qaum affiliation. State political activities may employ similar goals and strategies present in symbolic challenges and arbitration councils.

## 9 State Politics

The majority of Pakistani villagers are illiterate. Their contact with the state is limited. They have the right, though not the obligation, to attend five years of primary school. Current data suggest that less than 40% of Pakistani students complete five years of primary school education (PEDF Data 2001). As adults they must overcome bureaucratic procedures to obtain identity cards. The police are widely dispersed in rural areas (one police station with less than a dozen policemen typically serves several villages) so they are not generally a significant regular factor for people who do not travel far from their village. Whether they see the state as incompetent, benevolent or malicious, they are aware that it is there but they do not necessarily see it as an organization which serves their interests or in any way benefits them. Villagers told me they do not believe they have any influence in state policies or actions. While they express a desire for protection and resources from state institutions, in reality they expect very little. The extent of this distance between Pakistani villagers and the state is very deeply ingrained, to the extent that even after years in other countries, they retain a fundamental belief that the state exists only for the rich and powerful [Shaw 2000: 262-264; Werbner 1991: 199].

There have been brief experiments with incorporating villagers into state discourse and more general inclusion. Zulfikar Bhutto's unique quality, among national level Pakistani politicians, was the ability to capture the imagination of poor villagers. Some poor Pakistani villagers in the 1970's believed, for a brief time, that the state existed to protect them. It was going to make changes to improve their lives. The execution of Bhutto convinced most of them that the state was not there for them, and would eliminate anyone who tried to modify it in that direction.

Landlords may be equally critical of the state, but they are intimately involved in the processes of the state. Landlords actively participate in elections, either as candidates or behind-the-scenes 'kingmakers'. Villagers, whether they are aware of it or not, are a vital element in the political process. A landlord will pledge all or part of his village support for

a candidate or a party. In the pre-Z. A. Bhutto days, he probably promised, and delivered, all the village. These days there is more political dissension between cousins of landlord families and in many villages there are one or two strong willed men who remember the promise of the Z. A. Bhutto years. A large percentage of landlord's time is spent in government offices in *tehsil* or district seats. Attock District's proximity to Islamabad and Rawalpindi means that visits to Division, Provincial and National offices are also relatively easy for men with private cars. Landlords are concerned about state politics and try their best to influence the state's policies and actions.

The landlord role in the village leaves them with the role of representing individual villagers to the state institutions as well. While villagers may believe the state has little impact on their daily lives, they may not be aware of just how much time landlords devote to manipulating the state (which is not to say they are effective, but they devote a large portion of their activities to interacting with state officials). Some of what landlords do is on behalf of villagers, for example securing public funds for schools, clinics, roads, water projects or more mundane tasks such as reading and filling in official documents. The role of the state in the villages is difficult to define. Much of what the state would do in Europe, is done by landlords. In the previous chapter I discussed the role that landlords play in regulating local disputes, but landlords also serve as the first source of emergency aid in times of economic hardship (a kind of unemployment and retirement insurance leftover from earlier seyp relationships). Very few landlords are actually part of the state apparatus, those that do hold some official position mostly do so in a part time capacity with little or no remuneration (Numberdars, Zakat Committees, Khidemat Committees etc.). Most landlords, however, have no alternative but to aid villagers in ways that would be done by the state in the West. They do this, when possible, by making state resources work for them. They try to manipulate their human resource networks to where problems may be resolved with a minimum of disruption to their own economic and social interests. In this chapter I look at the interaction between state institutions and landlords. I look at the ways that landlords are able to insert themselves into state political processes, and conversely, the ways that these processes can insert themselves into landlords' lives. Most landlords seem to cultivate idleness as a higher art form, but they can become highly

animated and enthusiastic about the political process and are willing to spend seemingly endless days in a row lingering at government offices. Finally, I examine the role of patronage in the relationships between politicians, civil servants and ordinary citizens. Ultimately, I argue, the Pakistani State is not seen as something distinct from its culture. Individuals within the State mechanisms are still intricately tied to their human resource networks and their priority must be their network's agenda. Entry to the State processes is seen, therefore, not as a means of service for the general good, but as one strategy for resource capitalization for the good of a specific human resource network.

## **Landlords in state political processes**

### **Political Meetings**

#### *Formal political rallies and meetings*

Political rallies in the Punjab employ a range of culturally meaningful symbols and tools. Two of the most powerful rituals are weddings and expressions of religious affiliation with saints or *pirs*. Political meetings themselves often mirror weddings, as do some of the rituals revolving around *pirs*.

When Major Tahir Saddiq, Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA), began to make a name for himself as one of the rising stars of the Choudry Shajaat Hussain wing of the Muslim League, politicians around Attock District had to either align themselves to him or alienate him. Alienating Major Tahir Saddiq as a man was perhaps inconsequential, since he was only another landlord like themselves and was not in a position to act independently of landlord interests. However, the Muslim League power brokers in Gujerat counted on him to deliver his constituency as well as influence other constituencies in Attock District. Friendship, or affiliation with Major Tahir Saddiq lead to affiliation with the, then Punjab Interior Minister and all of his network. An MPA from a relatively unimportant part of the Punjab, with no major industry or material resources, had become a conduit to both Provincial and National networks of influence and power. An MNA from Hazro, Sardar Khanzada Khan, decided that he wanted to give his full support to Major Tahir Saddiq. He had been around long enough that his own early patrons were off the scene but he had chosen to align himself with Choudry Shajaat. So the more support he provided Major Tahir Saddiq, the more support Choudry Shajaat's

faction would have in Attock District, which meant more support for Sardar Khanzada Khan. He organised a rally in which he would introduce Major Tahir Saddiq to some of his constituents in Hazro. He invited landlords and religious leaders from across Attock District to join him in welcoming the Major to Hazro.

The material artefacts employed at the rally were the same as those used in weddings. The *shamiyanas*, or tents, which are ubiquitous at weddings throughout South Asia, were erected in front of Sardar Khanzada's home. The chairs were lined up as if for a *walima* and musicians, *khusra* (transsexuals/transvestites) and other beggars were there in force. Major Tahir Saddiq was given a bridegroom's necklace made of rupee notes, which he seemed somewhat embarrassed by, as a proper groom should be. When the crowd was seated and all respectable people were in place on the stage in front, young men in the back began firing pistols and rifles into the air, again, common practice at weddings.

Like at an *urs*, a celebration to honour either the death or birth of a *pir*, there were expressions of loyalty given to the Major and Sardar Khanzada Khan. Men pushed their way to the two men in order to bow down, embrace and shake hands with the two men. The depth of the bow depended on the bower's perceived degree of subordination/superordination between himself and the other man.

All political rallies in Pakistan begin with a prayer sung by a *maulvi*. The *maulvi* is often not a well known or influential man in this arena and may simply be a local man who prays well. The keynote speech at these meetings is generally a fiery affair, listing the inadequacies of the government and the economy. This is usually done by someone who is not the focus of the meeting. It may be an occasion to see if an untested man has potential as a candidate or it may be someone peripheral to the proceedings but a politician in his own right elsewhere [See "Appendix Three: K'huli Kacherri speech translation." on page 239.]. This is followed by calmer, often more entertaining speeches by people more central to the particular meeting. There will always be someone from the Police present on the stage and sitting just to the side of the stage. Important policemen do not travel alone and if the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) is present then there are sure to be a large number of ordinary policemen as well as other high ranking officers nearby. There will also be someone from various *tehsil* and District bodies as well as the Union Council.

These men may not actually speak but they will sit on the stage and applaud, laugh and pray at the appropriate moments. There is a great deal of praying at political rallies. Most politicians seem determined to inject at least one prayer into every speech. Some manage several prayers per speech. Excessive praying at rallies is quietly criticised by some landlords, who question the sincerity and argue that Allah does not take sides in party politics, but they mostly remain mute on the subject in public.

The speeches are, by and large, of little interest to anyone present. They serve as the excuse for the gathering but if the speech were the only thing on offer, I suspect few people would attend. Following these meetings I initiated numerous conversations with men who had attended. The following quotes are typical of what poor people say after attending such meetings:

Political meetings are for everyone but justice is difficult for poor people.

Zamindars [landlords] have family connections-- cousins or brothers are judges or DC or AC. That's how justice gets done.

Justice comes through contacts, the closer the better. Political meetings can allow poor people to voice their troubles but not really solve them.

As one might expect, the landlords who attend the meetings consider them more positively. While playing back the video of political meetings my landlord hosts allowed me to ask the people watching as many questions as I wished, however, they silenced anyone who tried to respond. This was not an attempt to prevent villagers from giving an opinion, but rather reflected the landlords' desire to re-watch the political speeches more carefully. In the end I gave up trying to ask questions while the video played if landlords were present, since it interfered so much with their viewing pleasure.

When the speeches finally end, there is usually a meal. This is one of the domains in which cultural and political objectives overlap. The host of the rally assumes responsibility for the entire rally, including the meal. The situation allows him to display both his political affiliations, let people know who his friends are, as well as the extent of his hospitality. A generous meal, prepared with care and quality, will be talked about when the guests return

to their homes. If they feel they have been well fed then, even if they might criticise the host for his politics, they will praise him for his izzat. There are normally two meals on offer. A meat rich meal of barbecues, curries, rice and vegetables for some, and a meal of rice for the masses of poor villagers who attend. Both groups can expect to eat better than they normally eat at home regardless of which meal they are allowed to attend. The meals are held in separate locations. The meal for the poor is unguarded and all are welcome, including the musicians and beggars. Entrance to the private meal area is discreetly filtered. The criterion for entry is a combination of dress and familiarity. If one is dressed in expensive cloth and is clean then there is little risk of being refused. If one is a powerful, though rustic looking landlord, then someone must be on hand to know. Some of the most influential men of Attock District do not wear fancy cloth and wear *pugri*, a simple cloth turban, like an ordinary villager. These men will be known when they attend political rallies and should any officious servant or family member try to steer them towards the poor people's meal the error will quickly be corrected.

The meal after the speeches is yet another occasion for landlords to meet each other as well as the guest of honour. The guests of honour are besieged with men wanting to greet them and have a 'quiet word' but these are difficult occasions to discuss serious matters. One might hope to arrange a future meeting but probably not actually discuss issues.

#### *Informal political gatherings*

For ambitious landlords, all large gatherings are potentially political opportunities. No wedding, funeral, birthday or other celebration is to be missed if possible. Every one of these celebrations, with the exception of certain funerals, hosted by a landlord are an occasion to express friendship and contact to the public. If invitations are sent, then it is a way of formally identifying those people one thinks may form his or her human resource network. If no invitations are involved, such as with a funeral, then it is an occasion to see who includes themselves in that human resource network. Weddings, in particular, are an occasion to express some kind of connection. For a very important contact, the head of a household will certainly try to attend these gatherings personally. For a less important contact, such as the wedding of a villager, a younger brother or son may be sent in one's place. The way one is greeted and the amount of money one gives as a gift are all expressions of the importance attached to the relationship.

The K'hattar landlords have large weddings. When arranging the weddings they are sure to include invitations to all of the important landlords of the region, the important officers in the police, military officers, Union Council representatives and Chairman, District Council representatives and Chairman, all of the Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPA's) from Attock District as well as the Members of the National Assembly (MNA's) for Attock District. These men all have very close connections to members of the K'hattar families and so will either attend in person or send a close representative in their place. Weddings are divided into three parts in Pakistan: *nikka*, *mehndi*, *walima*. It is the *walima* to which the largest number of non-family are invited. At the time of my research, Pakistani law forbade serving food at a *walima*, and K'hattar weddings were such large and public affairs that they had little choice but to comply (and given that they were such large affairs they must have breathed a sigh of relief at not having to finance a meal as well as a wedding). I was told by one K'hattar landlord, Sardar Ovais Ali Khan, that all K'hattar weddings are large because they are 'political weddings'. When I asked what he meant by a political wedding he said:

Our family is very influential, we hold political office all over Attock District, but we are small in number. In order to keep our influence we must include all the prominent and respectable people of the area in our big ceremonies. We cannot afford to have only family at a wedding because we need the support of all the majority qaums.

Typically I heard about weddings a day or two in advance and was taken to them uninvited. This is not a particularly aberrant thing to do in Pakistan, since everyone is supposed to be welcome at a wedding as it is an occasion for individuals to bless the wedding. By their presence, all guests are publicly expressing their support for the wedding and offering their prayers for its success. My presence at the weddings enhanced the prestige of the fathers of the bride and groom, since I am a white foreigner and my contacts outside the village were well known. While at these weddings men sat politely for a time while the groom was honoured, but as soon as they felt that he had been sufficiently honoured they began to form small groups to chat. They often rearrange their chairs to form small circles in which two or more men can bend their heads low and speak quietly about pressing matters. Much of this talk could be called gossip. They exchange



rumours of landlords were in trouble with the government or other landlords, or which landlord might be thinking of running for office in the future. If there are any serious scandals they might exchange news of those, provided none of the men present were directly involved.

These gatherings, formally for non-political reasons, provide one of the most common means of keeping tabs on political processes in the area. They also allow a venue for lobbying individuals. They are not exclusively about politics and it would be unfair to imply that they are. They serve social, cultural and economic purposes as well. They affirm one's membership in multiple groups. One is representing some portion of one's kin group. By being present, one expresses membership in one or more extra-kin groups. That said, it would be foolish to pretend that politics are not infused in every one of these gatherings of landlords. Landlords may not have a great deal of faith in the political structures of the country but they are astute enough to try and manipulate them to their advantage. This process has probably accelerated since Ayub Khan and Bhutto. Both of these men introduced, on paper, radical policies of democratization and land reform. Rural landlords have learned that if they are not to see their status and position dwindle they must become a part of the larger political machine. They do this with the same mechanisms they formerly employed to govern local areas, as well as the mechanisms more inherent in formal state politics.

*Taking care of 'business': Tehsil and District Head Quarters*

Taking care of tehsil and District business is one of a landlord's most time consuming and important obligations. He will take care of the problems of his own *ghar* as well as some problems for other members of this family as well as on behalf of villagers. Some of the common reasons landlords go to the *tehsil* or District office revolve around land disputes and other disputes over resources. Irrigation problems may oblige them to go to the *tehsil* seat in order to facilitate some kind of deal with the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). The new motorway running through the Punjab has forced landlords to go more often and spend more time in government offices, in their attempts to learn where the motorway path will be and when and how much their compensation might be. They frequently go as a favour to someone else, to find jobs for relatives, close friends or relatives of close friends. In addition to their stated reason for going to

government offices, landlords take advantage of being in a place surrounded by landlords to exchange news and gossip and plot and scheme for the future. On my first visit to *tehsil* headquarters I was more than a little surprised to see hundreds of men milling about smoking cigarettes and drinking tea *in front of* the offices and only civil servants inside. Landlords do visit the offices but generally their work in the office is a matter of a few minutes to explain the problem and then they must wait for a result. They do not waste their waiting time but use it to gather information and lobby others.

### **Service to the State and the people**

Many landlords seem terribly eager to hold some kind of position with the government. They do not necessarily want to do very much work, but they want to be able to print on their business card that they have an official title. Landlords tease each other about vying for different offices but one wonders what condition the government would be in if it did not have this mostly voluntary management resource. Thus, following Pettigrew's [1975] description of the important role that factions serve in linking local people to regional and state sources of power, I suggest that in many respects the state in Pakistan could not function without this voluntarist participation of factional members.

One example of this is the Khidemat Committees. These were established by the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to identify and eliminate corruption in the community. Khidemat Committees had the authority to fine people and to suspend civil servants up to grade 18. They are made up of 'respectable' men from the area. In Attock District this means mostly landlords. The allegations of corruption and abuse of power against some Khidemat Committee members do bring into question the completely benevolent and voluntary motivation of the members, however, there are Committee members who have never personally benefited. By and large the scheme was a failure, not because the Khidemat Committees were all corrupt, but rather because the abuses and corruption they were seeking to stamp out, have their roots in the culture and in the state apparatus itself. No committee can alter cultural obligations by simple decree alone. Khidemat Committees and other voluntary positions bring landlords to *tehsil* headquarters fairly often. When a landlord travels, he does so in a group. When a Khidemat Committee member needs to go to the *tehsil* seat, he will be accompanied by at least one, and usually

two to four other people. These men might be other landlords or they might be villagers. I never entirely understood why villagers went on these trips so readily. They do nothing but sit, smoke cigarettes, drink tea and wait. They chat a little bit, but I always got the impression that if I were not there asking a barrage of questions, they would be content to sit quietly and observe the world around them. I suppose it offered them a change from the routine. If the companions are other landlords then they will be busy speaking to the other men. Many of these men have known each other since they were children. They have been seeing each other at school, at weddings, at funerals and may have worked together on elections or disputed plots of land. They are often relatives if they come from the same qaum. If they have accompanied someone who is on business like Khidemat Committee then the wait can be very long. Their own business, if they had any formal business with the civil servants, might have been concluded in less than half an hour. They then have the remainder of the day to wait.

The men who do fulfil some voluntary role for the state, find the positions bring problems as well as prestige. Khidemat Committees, for example, are widely accused of corruption in the Punjab. It is not as bad as being a Customs and Excise Officer but many people assume that landlords take jobs like this in order to protect their own corrupt dealings and to profit off the corruption of others. The Chairman of the Fateh Jang tehsil Khidemat Committee, Malik Afzal, explained to me that as with Customs and Excise officers, the accusations are true in some cases, and may be true in many more cases, but there are honest men who do not profit from their service to the state. One very real problem, Malik Afzal explained to me was that these men must reconcile the conflict between their position as Khidemat Committee member and some of their mutual obligations as a family member. The Khidemat Committee of *tehsil* Fateh Jang was made up of landlords. Most of them came from the K'hattar qaum. the Chairman, Malik Afzal, was a Gujar. This particular mix of making the chairman someone from the economically inferior, but demographically superior group, may have served to offset some of the demands made on the Khidemat Committee. The Chairman would not have any hesitation at investigating and punishing someone from the K'hattar families. They would have no hesitation to do the same to a Gujar. In this instance their problem was relatively minor because they

investigated primarily crooked urban civil servants and merchants, who do not have the strong relationships of mutual obligation with rural landlords.

Other positions which cause more conflict of interest are the various Council seats (Union, *tehsil* District), Zakat Committees and Numberdar. These are more engaging posts and require far more time from the participants. These posts are responsible for distributing some funds in the Union area (about 10 villages). These are elected positions however and are not entirely voluntary. Zakat Committee members also face some difficult demands however the paltry size of Zakat funds at their disposal leaves them little room for manoeuvring. Zakat is the Islamic charity. All Muslims are supposed to donate a percentage of their income to the poor. This is done in Pakistan by automatically taxing bank accounts based on the amount of money in them on the 31st of December each year. Since the amount of tax owed is based on a single 24 hour period, there is a widespread practice of withdrawing the bulk of money from an account the week before and depositing it a day or two after. The money from this tax is then given to the Zakat Ministry. In the rural areas, the Ministry selects local people to administer the funds. The sheer size of the population leaves them little choice but to trust their representatives in the rural areas. It would not be possible to do very much auditing and dispense the funds to the poor. My observations on the Zakat activities suggest that if there is siphoning of funds then it is done at a higher level than the villages. Landlords do not need the sums of money they have at their disposal and the reward potential for their loyal clients far outweighs whatever benefit they might gain from embezzling funds. The tragedy of the rural situation is that the combination of extended families and extreme poverty mean that even a reasonably well off family may find themselves in desperate need of funds to help a poorer relative. This is where Zakat funds seem to go. They go to the poorest of the poor, but they tend to go to those poor people who have some relative who is able to speak up for them and plead the urgency of their case. The money does indeed go to those it is meant to help, but not on an entirely impartial basis. Embedded within a cultural and social system which dictates that kin must be rewarded before non-kin and which moulds extra-kin relations into classificatory kin status, it would be unfair to expect that Zakat Committees allow their own friends' very real needs to go unaddressed while helping strangers. Numberdars are not responsible for funds and they do not control any State

resources. They are mostly Notaries. They are empowered by the State to sign documents and affirm that the contents are true. There is one numberdar in each village. The post tends to be for life and often goes from father to son. This position probably carried more prestige under the British because numberdars had regular contact with the colonial officers but today it brings few rewards and few opportunities for abuse. Like the Zakat Committee members, it allows a landlord a tool for rewarding people. A numberdar can make a villager's life much easier if he chooses. He can expedite paperwork for security cards through his personal relationships with civil servants, which comes partially as a result of being numberdar. The main benefit of being numberdar is that it gives a man a formal reason for visiting civil servants and forming a relationship. The relationships are valuable, since they may outlive the individuals who began them.

### **Patrons and clients in the political process**

State politics in Pakistan arguably provide the most clear cut examples of patron/client relationships. The alliances created for party politics emerge out of a patron based distribution of resources and contacts. Populist discourses do not allow an individual the latitude necessary to win elections, though they may be necessary to gain votes in the wider arena. Before a man or woman may effectively mount a campaign for office, they must have the support of networks. Gaining the support of networks in Pakistan entails entering into relations of patronage and clientage.

Provincial politics of the Punjab are monopolised by a few groups. Oligarchies of industrialists and landlords dominate Punjab party politics with military support. As of the military coup of 1999, military support was temporarily withdrawn from these oligarchies. Leadership, either military or civilian, in the Punjab has always been contingent upon the support of the dominant groups. Nawaz Sharif's success through the 1980's and 1990's was due to the support he enjoyed by leading industrialists of Lahore and Gujerat. When that support began to dwindle the military became less tolerant of his increasing attacks on their autonomy. By the time the coup actually happened, Nawaz Sharif had effectively lost most of his initial support from the industrialists as well as the population.

One of the men who had delivered much of Nawaz Sharif's support was Choudry Shajaat Hussain. Choudry Shajaat comes from a leading industrialist family of Gujerat. They were not only successful in the heavily industrialised Gujerati economy, they had been very successful local politicians since independence. The family has always been allied with the Muslim League, therefore with Nawaz Sharif, but they have additionally understood the importance of cross cutting party politics at least in their local area. Choudry Shajaat and his faction have established patronage relations with prominent leaders throughout the Punjab. An important aspect of winning the loyalty and support of leaders through the Punjab has been the distribution of resources and favours. Choudry Shajaat has empowered local leaders in the periphery of the Punjab to reward people in their region. One way to do this is through civil service appointments. As Interior Minister, Choudry Shajaat was in a position to approve or reject many Punjab civil service appointments. His local faction did not try to corner all of the posts for themselves. They allowed a certain number of them to go to men recommended by politicians from other regions. The amount of influence a leader might have in this domain was directly proportional to the amount of support and loyalty they provided. Rawalpindi Division is an important Division within the Punjab so Choudry Shajaat seems to have courted leaders from the Districts that make up the Division by allowing them to place their own people.

In return for preferential consideration in civil service posts, local politicians offered themselves as clients in support of Choudry Shajaat's faction within the Muslim League. Through most of the 1990's this was relatively unproblematic. Publicly, Nawaz Sharif and Choudry Shajaat were mutually supportive. With the erosion of Nawaz Sharif's power base, however, this probably would have placed some leaders in a difficult position. Clever politicians across the Punjab had got mileage out of playing both camps within the Muslim League. Had the military not stepped in when it did, the politicians would have been forced to make some hard decisions.

The internal divisions of the Muslim League are clearly factional in nature. Upon examination, these factions emerge as clusters of patron/client relationships. Neither the factions nor the patron/client ties should be understood as enduring or fixed sets of relationships but rather should be understood as flexible bonds which are instantiated for

particular purposes, some of which may appear relatively long term. As Barth [1959], Lindholm [1982] and Pettigrew [1975] suggest in other contexts, they are rightly understood as contractual alliances using the discursive tools of patron/client relations.

### **Favours and services from the top**

In this section I look at two examples of a national level politician intervening on behalf of local landlords. In both cases there is no reason why the politician in question should have extended his influence to help. The problems were not of interest to the politician nor were they in the interests of the State. The first is a straightforward job appointment. The request was made on behalf of a member of a landlord family. After some attempts at giving a less advantageous post, the request was honoured to the satisfaction of most people. The second case was a very minor incident but it allowed a landlord to demonstrate his ties to a national level politician, which both served to enhance his own reputation as well as solidly identify him as belonging to that man's faction.

### **Case One: local political appointments**

Malik Zahir had joined Punjab provincial local government in the early 1990's. He had served as Chief Officer in rural Districts. His posting, when I arrived to do my research, was near Lahore. He enjoyed his job and by all accounts was very competent at his job, though he did not yet have enough seniority to get his first choice of location. Chief Officer is like a managing director for local government. The Chief Officer does whatever is necessary to make local government run smoothly. He must be an organiser for rallies and meetings as well as a negotiator for disputes between factions in the region. He must be available at all times to serve the elected officials of his region.

Malik Zahir and his wife lived all over Punjab with their small children but both were getting tired of being so far from their home village. They wanted a posting closer to Rawalpindi Division, preferably in Rawalpindi Division. They also wanted a posting out of the heat of lower Punjab. Malik Zahir was re-posted to Lahore. It was thought that with the new motorway this might make visiting Attock District easier for him and his family. Unfortunately, while Malik Zahir's contacts had enough clout to get him appointed, he was then directly under a People's Party of Pakistan elected official. The PPP man told Malik Zahir to come to his office and read his newspaper and drink his tea, but not to

interfere with the running of the office. Malik Zahir became depressed about his forced inactivity and returned to his home village. He went to his brother and his uncles and told them the situation and asked them to help him get a better posting, closer to home and with a Muslim League elected official in charge. His uncles and his brother passed on his request to the local MPA, who is firmly in the Choudry Shajaat camp of the Muslim League. Within a few weeks a new posting was offered. This was even further away from the home village than Lahore and in a part of Punjab which is reputed to be even hotter than Lahore. Malik Zahir politely declined. Over the next 8 months, Malik Zahir carefully avoided accepting all postings offered to him. None were any closer to his village than Lahore and all involved living in the extreme heat. Finally, he was offered a post in Choudry Shajaat's base of power, Gujerat City. It was Malik Zahir's first real urban post, since Lahore had been a fiasco from the beginning. The appointment displaced a more experienced man with seniority but who had not allied himself sufficiently to Choudry Shajaat's clients in Gujerat. Malik Zahir was quite open about the favouritism involved in the post. He grinned mischievously as he explained to me that the man he was displacing had considerably more experience than himself. Malik Zahir told me that the appointment was not based on either Malik Zahir's abilities nor directly on his family connections. The appointment was a direct reward for the MPA from Attock District. His choice of Malik Zahir to receive this appointment was based, again, not on Malik Zahir's competence, but on his family connections. His uncles and his brother hold considerable influence in Attock District and their support had been instrumental in the MPA's election as well as his ongoing role as power broker in the region.

#### **Case Two: bypassing bureaucratic hassles**

A friend of Malik Tayyib was returning to Pakistan after many years in the United States. His friend had moved to the US as a teenager and had become successful in sales. He was returning with several suitcases of gifts for his friends and family. He was a neighbour of Malik Tayyib's brother. Malik Tayyib's brother called the village and explained that Javaid Khan was returning to Pakistan and it would not be nice if he had to open all of his suitcases for the customs officers. Customs officers, unfortunately, have a bad reputation in Pakistan. They are reputed to demand fancy gifts from among passengers' luggage in exchange for allowing the rest of the luggage through. Malik Tayyib called a friend of his



who worked for the local MPA, a man who is related by marriage to Malik Tayyib. He explained the situation and his friend assured him that the MPA would call a national political minister based out of Lahore who would see to it there were no hassles. When Malik Tayyib and his party arrived in Lahore to meet Javaid Khan, they called the telephone number they had been given by the friend in Attock District. It was the home telephone number of the personal assistant (PA) of the minister. He then arranged a place to meet. They arrived at the location and the PA took them to the airport, drove them through to a secure part of the airport and escorted them into the V.I.P. lounge of the Lahore airport. They waited until Javaid Khan's plane arrived and then the PA disappeared to escort Javaid Khan directly off the airport and into the V.I.P. lounge. He took Javaid Khan's passport and took care of the immigration procedures while Javaid Khan waited with his friends. The PA returned 10 minutes later with a porter carrying Javaid Khan's many large suitcases. Malik Tayyib and his party were escorted out of the V.I.P. lounge and out of the secure parking area at which point the PA left them.

Once again, the minister did not grant this favour to Malik Tayyib directly based on anything that Malik Tayyib had or would do for him. The favour was to the local MPA of Attock District. The MPA, in turn, did not grant the favour to Malik Tayyib, but rather to his own PA who is a relative of Malik Tayyib. The MPA's PA did not grant Malik Tayyib the favour simply by virtue of Malik Tayyib's position either. The favour was granted because Malik Tayyib comes from a family which is politically influential within their own region and has proved in the past that their support can be tremendously important for the smooth operation of Attock District. Malik Tayyib had described the process to me as being due to the family connection by marriage, and no doubt that played some role, however it probably does not hold more significance than his own family connections among politicians, police and civil servants of all levels of Attock District and Rawalpindi Division.

The benefit to the MPA and the Minister are straightforward. Providing favours of this sort which become publicly known, highlight their position as influential men who can 'make things happen' regardless of rules. These men are stronger than rules. Those individuals and groups who align themselves to these strong men, may also benefit from this 'above

the rules' status. Only in the face of gross abuse will investigating bodies such as the Khidemat Committees or the national Ehtesab Bureau investigate. Neither anti-corruption team is interested in petty abuse of influence to get a friend through, what is perceived to be, a corrupt routine. It further ties the receiver of the favour to their own political camp as well. Malik Tayyib and his family are firmly in the Muslim League, however there are different factions they might choose to ally themselves with. The more favours like this that the MPA does for different members of this landlord family, the more support he can count on from within the family, which will tend to push the family leaders into his camp. The family leaders may allow themselves to be pushed for various reasons, not the least of which, if the MPA had not provided this favour then the favour would have been asked directly of them. They would have had to employ their own contacts and incur a favour debt directly for something which they might feel is too trivial to merit indebtedness. This frees Malik Tayyib's elder relatives from the frequent petty requests for service. Malik Tayyib is pleased to accept the request in spite of the potential indebtedness because it enhances his position with his peers, who now turn to him for resolution of these kinds of petty problems. He has established himself as a conduit to the MPA as well as the Minister. Whatever they might ask of him he is prepared to do. In all likelihood what they will ask of him is easy for him. They may ask him to host a political rally in his village (which will also enhance his own status as a generous man who 'does good izzat'). They might ask him to try and persuade his father, uncles or cousins to do something, but they would not expect him to publicly disagree with them.

## **Conclusion**

Some variation of patronage is almost certainly present in the state politics of all nations. Politicians make deals and alliances which are not based on ideology or policy but rather on political survival. They must protect the people who support them and they expect to be supported when they have supported others. There is, therefore, no criticism of Pakistani party politics or government operations for having or tolerating such relationships. While one may dream of a state in which all politicians are idealistic, ideologically driven and noble people, that is only truly attractive if they happen to share one's own ideology. Politicians must represent a much wider range of people than those

who agree with them. Once they get to the national arena there is little coherent policy upon which they may base their actions. They may have a general agenda of maintaining a status quo of some sort and increasing the overall standard of living, but these objectives are achieved through specific actions which can not possibly satisfy all constituents. Politicians have to make choices about what they do and with whom they do it.

Pakistan is a country with many imposed constraints. High population, foreign debt, hostile neighbours, illiteracy, poor medical facilities, violent religious factionalism and a host of other issues render Pakistan a very difficult place to govern. There is an unfortunate tendency in Pakistan to believe that these problems can not be solved by Pakistan alone. Many people have adopted a philosophy loosely based on dependency culture theory. They blame their colonial past and their continuing economic inferiority in relation to the West. Pakistan can not solve its problems because it has to pay off too much in foreign debts. If Pakistan tried to truly solve the problems the West would intervene and stop them because they like Pakistan to be an elitist driven country full of cheap labour. The United States usually gets the lion's share of blame in this philosophy. The United States wants Pakistan as a buffer state between Afghanistan and India. The conspiracy theories one comes across in Pakistan are terribly creative and abundant. Knight's [2001] 'conspiracy culture' is thriving in the urban areas of Pakistan.

All of these opinions and attitudes are allowed to flourish, in part, because the Pakistani State is largely insignificant. The State has not established conditions in which the economy can prosper. When Pakistan has had healthy economic growth it has been in spite of, not because of, State policies. Even Nawaz Sharif, a businessman who understood the importance of developing the infrastructure of the country, was guilty of the worst kinds of obstruction to ventures other than his own. Pakistani civil servants do not have the freedom to engage themselves in real projects because they must conform to the whims of constantly changing leadership. The leadership, once in place, discover that the problems will not be solved easily and in the meantime there are a substantial number of human resource network debts to be paid. The people at the bottom do not have enough influence to effect any real change, and the people at the top owe too much to their own network to make changes beyond that. There must be far more resources to distribute

before a Western style trickle down distribution might hope to have much of an impact beyond particular factions. So Pakistan has done what is perhaps the most even handed thing. They do frequently change the leadership. Different factions are given a brief period of time to reward themselves and then hand the reins of power over State resources to another group. While there might be enough State resources to make a significant differences to the masses, there are not enough resources after the human resource networks have been compensated for all that they did to get their faction in place.

To return to patronage in other nations, one must think about the State resources available to a country like the United States or a European Union country. Even if the patronage and human resource networks were of the same level as Pakistan, the problem still would not be as severe. The economies of these nations generate a great deal of internal wealth and the State itself generates wealth. Patrons can reward their clients, support their own patrons, and still implement programmes for the good of non-clients. It is only in cases of insulting excess that our media reacts. So when President Jacques Chirac's son is rumoured to be living in government subsidized housing, which happens to be an immense flat in one of the chic neighbourhoods of Paris, then accusations of patronage and nepotism abound. However we think it normal that the party in power give all appointed seats in the government to members of their own party. Pakistanis are not unaware of the inequality of State resource distribution but they understand the principle of compensation to clients which underlies this distribution.

The State is not perceived to be relevant. Even for those who are intimately involved in State politics, it is seen as an extension of a fundamental cultural relationship which permeates all levels of society: patron/client. From the family to the highest levels of the State, individuals count on their patrons to protect them, and seek to be patrons to others. The formal structures of the State are only as effective as the people implementing them. In a State where even the bureaucrats rely more on personal relationships than they do on legalistic rules, there is little hope that ordinary citizens will have faith in State structures.

## 10 Religion and patronage

The Islam of the masses in South Asia is syncretic blend of Arabian Islam and Hinduism and its offshoots. There can be no question that ritual and belief among South Asian Muslims is influenced by Hinduism. Within South Asia, however, there are different Islamic traditions and different practices in different regions and among different groups. One could look at the activities of the State Ministry, the *Auqaf*, responsible for managing religious shrines, or the role of the maulvi in the mosques. One could study the different sects, Shi'a, Sunni, Ismaeli and others to look at the ways that Middle Eastern Islam has been appropriated and syncretised with different beliefs. Perhaps the best example of patronage and hierarchy in South Asian Islam, however, is the relationship individuals and groups have with sufi saints, pir. The relationship between a person and his or her pir is arguably far more symbolically and materially powerful than that between people and their maulvi.

In this chapter I examine the role of pirs and maulvis in rural areas. The two represent different aspects of Islam and illustrate the importance of human resource networks in different ways. The pir is the master of establishing and maintaining human resource networks. As such he becomes an easily integrated part of the Punjab. The maulvi, on the other hand, stands outside these human resource networks, at least in so far as his office is concerned. This results in the marginalisation of the maulvi within the communities in which they work, and the elevation of pirs in those same communities.

Pirs manipulate situations and people in ways that reflect landlords, but it is not a direct parallel. Both landlords and pirs establish their credentials through group connections. Both claim some degree of approval from God. Both are seen to be responsible for the well being of their supporters. Landlords do not require the love of their supporters, while pirs, at least rhetorically, base their relationship on love. The followers of a pir speak lovingly of their holy man and he, in turn, will talk about his love for all of them. Landlords, in general, have few pretences about being loved. Being loved by villagers is not required,

nor necessarily desired. What is required is respect, a little fear and obedience. So the myth surrounding pirs and landlords differ. Each category is said to have different sources for their power and authority. In truth, there is a great deal of overlap in their observable behaviour and the mechanisms for manipulation available to each. It is this overlap with which I am concerned here.

Pirs are perceived as a potential threat to the authority of secular authorities. Ayub Khan's government in the 1960's went to great lengths to disempower pirs with large followings [Ewing 1990], a practice which Z. A. Bhutto's government continued. Bhutto also attempted to capture the symbolic power of the pirs for himself [Ewing 1988: 11] by intentionally emphasising the ambiguities between the roles of Prime Minister and religious pir. Maulvis, while often more overtly political, have not had the same power to undermine other types of authority. The political parties lead by the *ulema* (Islamic scholars), have historically done poorly at the elections [Talbot 1999: 407-408; Nasr 1995: 272]. Nasr [1995: 268] argues that rather than challenging secular authority, the role of parties such as Jamaat-i-Islami (the most prominent ulema lead political party), has been to legitimate state power structures. Village maulvis fulfil a similar demand within their more limited context. They serve to legitimate local elites and reinforce existing hierarchical social structures. Why this is so is intriguing, because maulvis, perhaps even more than pirs, have an inherent power to challenge existing power relationships. Ultimately, they do not challenge existing power structures for the very reason that they are able to do so; they stand outside local human networks of power and authority.

Few outsiders are able to live in Punjabi villages and become an integral part of village life. When new residents come they spend time in the village, bring relatives, intermarry and eventually become insiders. Until a migrant becomes a village insider, subject to all the alliances and constraints of other insiders, he or she has no real role in village life. Maulvis differ from this pattern in very significant ways. They generally come from other villages. They are not native to the village in which they work. They are given a role in village affairs which is predicated on their office, not their kin or patron/client relations. The ways in which villagers and landlords effectively marginalise this office in some villages is instructive. The office of maulvi, although a traditional one, contains some of

the elements of Weberian modernity which potentially might undermine the hierarchical patron/client relationships which are fundamental to other aspects of Punjabi culture.

### **Sufis, pirs and gurus**

Westerners are taught that Islam was spread by the sword. Muslim 'hordes' invaded quiet, peace loving populations and gave them the choice of accepting Islam or losing their heads. Pakistani Muslims deny this. Early Islam, they say, was extremely tolerant of other religions and the early conquerors did not put people to the sword. They cite Mohammed bin Qasim who invaded from Karachi to the north, and Mahmud of Ghazna who swept down from Afghanistan. These men did not kill people for refusing to accept Islam but rather killed as a part of general warfare and are said to have been far kinder than their European, or other infidel counterparts. It may or may not be true that Mohammed bin Qasim and Mahmud of Ghazna are grossly misunderstood, but it probably is true that Islam did not spread primarily to South Asia by force. These conquerors brought Muslim armies into the region but the armies were probably not the most important part of conversion. From the beginning of Muslim contact in South Asia, sufi orders were instrumental in attracting converts. Sufis spread through the northern part of South Asia and are indigenously attributed as being the force behind conversion.

The man who is given credit for bringing Islam to Lahore was not a soldier, but Data Ganj Bakhsh (Data Sahib). His shrine, Data Darbar, is one of the largest in the Punjab. Data Sahib is not reported to have been a man of the sword, but rather a very skilful story teller and talker and a man who could perform miracles. His *caliphats*, a bit like franchises of his own shrine and worship centre, are scattered across the Punjab. There are histories of sufi leaders like this across the Punjab and northern South Asia. These are stories of men who brought Islam to the people, not by force, but by persuasion and miracle.

#### *Baba Farid Shagr Ganj: A Punjabi sufi pir*

Data Sahib does not receive as much attention in Attock District as another, more recent sufi pir (saint), Baba Farid Shagr Ganj. Like Data Sahib, Baba Farid is accredited as being a man purely of God. He was a man for whom Allah was prepared to perform miracles. In the tale about how Baba Farid received his name (Shagr is a kind of low grade sugar), Baba Farid is described as a man who has a temper and a firm sense of right and wrong.

When he first confronts the sinners of Dili (Delhi) his reaction is strong and violent, but another pir intervenes and persuades him that it is not his responsibility to correct the sinners of Dili.

Baba Farid showed up in Dili (today called Delhi) and was upset to see everyone drinking whiskey and gambling and going with women. He removed his turban (pugri) and threw it around Dili. He then pulled his turban back and shook Dili up. Another Saint scolded him saying that Baba Farid had only been there one day and was upset but he had been there for a long time and he knew that at the end of the day all of these sinners would stop their wicked ways and go to prayers. So Baba Farid released Dili. He then went to the king of Dili and asked him to give him a daughter to be his wife. The king said come back tomorrow for his decision. He did this every day for six months. Finally Baba told the king to make a decision one way or the other but today. The king said come back tomorrow and he would definitely have a decision. He then went to his vizir and asked for advice. The vizir scolded him for not coming to him sooner. The vizir told him to tell Baba that there are 1 lakh 25 thousand houses in Dili. If Baba gives 50 kilos of shakr (low grade sugar) to each house in Dili then the king will give him a daughter as a bride. When Baba came back the king told him this. Baba said he would try. He went and prayed to Allah to ask for the shakar. Allah told him to tell people to clean every street in Dili and he would provide the sugar. So Baba told the people and they cleaned every street in Dili and then it began to rain shakar. The king got frightened because the sugar was heavy and it was collapsing his roof so he begged Baba to stop the sugar rain. Baba asked Allah to stop it and he did. Then the king provided a daughter as a bride. She was dressed in fine clothes with jewelry and makeup. Baba rejected her. She went back to the king and the vizir and asked them why Baba didn't want her. She said she has always been modest and had never known another man. The vizir told her that Baba didn't reject her but her clothes. He wanted simple cloth with patches and a simple duputta with patches covering her head. No makeup and no jewelry. She did this and returned to him and he took her as his bride happily. [Punjabi oral story told by Baba Saftar, translated with the aid of Malik Imran Nawazish. 1999].



Today Baba Farid's caliphats are spread throughout the Punjab and are extremely influential. From Baba Farid's original shrine at Pakpattan, near the Indian border, Baba Farid and his successors successfully built a network of shrines who owe their metaphysical capital to association with Baba Farid. The Pakpattan authorised shrines are part of the Chishti tradition. Chishti sufic orders are one of the oldest in South Asia. Long before the Moghuls, and even before Mahmud of Ghazna dominated the politics of the Indus plains, the Chishti sufis were spreading the influence of Islam and gaining converts. The success of the Chishti order was probably born out of the pragmatism of early Islam. Early Islamic proselytisers understood the importance of integrating alien concepts, especially in the peripheral regions of the Islamic world. The culture and dogma that has come to be known as Islam, is a combination of pre-Islamic Arabic Bedouin culture and a new order introduced by the Prophet Mohammed. The first four Caliphs of Islam carried on the Prophet Mohammed's tradition of accommodating new converts in matters that were deemed secondary. The five pillars of Islam were the same for all, but the details of ritual might be bent to make the religion familiar to people of other cultures. The Chishti sufis harnessed some of the ritual of Hinduism and divorced it from pantheism. They very cleverly took the trappings of some Hindu ceremonies and replaced references to the myriad of Hindu gods for a single referent, Allah, as represented by the Prophet Mohammed. In effect the sufis of South Asia developed a syncretic version of Islam. The Great Tradition of Islam was able to carry on as in Mecca or Medina, but the Little Tradition was given the flexibility needed for the masses of South Asia to participate in ways which would be satisfying.

Much has been written of the importance of charisma among sufi orders [see Werbner and Basu 1998]. Individual charisma and the embodiment of certain spiritual and emotional factors are productive avenues of research, however, it is not necessary to rely on these arguments to explain the success of many sufi pirs. Cultivating human resource networks is as important for pirs as it is for heads of households, employers, landlords or politicians. One's charisma plays a part in how one might be able to influence certain segments of a human resource network but the most important variable is one's situation within different human resource networks. Subsuming individuals within categories tends to minimise the impact of personal charisma in any event. Pirs bring together a range of individuals who

are from different qaum, caste, biraderi, economic status and social status. Successful pirs are successful favour brokers. Landlords and politicians claim their status from very material sources, while pirs claim a more metaphysical source. Both however, must engage in the same strategies of patronage to consolidate their claim and to enhance their position.

*Visiting the urs of a Chishti pir*

*Urs* celebrations commemorate either the birth or death of pirs. Different urs are associated with different themes. The following celebration took place in an urs associated with camels. It takes place in a Rawalpindi Division village, Mulpur Sharif<sup>41</sup>, on the edge of the Salt Range of northern Punjab. This was well outside the villages I studied in Attock District but the pir is well respected and admired in Attock. Some of the villagers I worked with claimed to be murid or devotees of one of the pirs at Mulpur Sharif. The urs takes place over several days, but like a wedding, has three important days.

Meeting pirs is a bit like meeting landlords. They are never entirely alone. There will almost always be someone within earshot. Typically during an important event they will be in a room filled with men sitting around. When people meet a pir they bow low in respect. They do not expose their backside or the soles of their feet to a pir. They do not address a pir by name, but rather some honorific title. When leaving the presence of a pir one does so by backing out of his presence. On numerous occasions when meeting both pirs and landlords, I have entered the room while the pir or landlord is receiving a leg massage. They recline on pillows while another man presses his hands into the leg muscles. The massage seems either to involve precise pressure applied with the finger tips or an unusual, full handed squeezing technique which looks (and feels) very imprecise and crude. My opinions on Punjab massage are most certainly irrelevant, since these kinds of painful leg massages are more than just a remedy to muscular pain, but also an expression of obedience and devotion. A pir's murid might all be pleased at the opportunity to press their pir's legs. I have been told that kissing a pir's feet is a common action, though the pirs I was fortunate enough to meet did not seem to allow this behaviour.

Chishti shrines are known for their music. Kawali, the music made famous by Nusrat Fatah Ali Khan, is the devotional music associated with the sufi shrines of South Asia.

Any Chishti urs will have a parade of Kawali musicians there to honour the pir and entertain the people. Outside the shrine itself, a *mela* (circus or fair) is erected. The mela has amusement rides, freak shows, animal shows, *khusra* (transvestite/transsexual) shows and merchants. Beggars and marginal people are welcome during urs celebrations, though they may still be disliked. Sufi shrines are open to all who want to attend. Unlike more orthodox religious gatherings, there is a great deal of tolerance for deviant behaviour and these are perhaps one of the best places to take non-Muslim visitors who would like to see Islam in action. The sternness of some orthodox mosques may intimidate many people, but the chaos of Chishti urs will probably remind them of country fairs. That is to say, visitors may get irritated at being pushed and shoved, but they will recognise that there is no grand threat implied. Moreover, it is unlikely that anyone will try to convert them to Islam. Chishti shrines are open to everyone, and while they pray for conversion and are always prepared to discuss the matter, I have never encountered pressure from a Chishti pir, or other shrine personnel, to adopt Islam.

#### *Guru Nanek*

Punjabis understand and respect the power of sacred sites of saints regardless of the saint's theological affiliation. While there are movements to destroy Hindu and Sikh shrines in the Punjab, there are also indications that these sites are respected by local Muslims. Hassan Abdal was a local Sikh centre prior to the partition of the sub continent and it remains an important stop during the annual Sikh pilgrimage. Panja Sahib, as the Sikh temple is referred to, was a place where Guru Nanek himself, the founder of the Sikh religion, was meant to have visited. He is said to have placed his hand on a rock and left an imprint. The shrine was constructed around this handprint and Sikhs come to bathe in the waters and place their hand in the print left by Guru Nanek. During the pilgrimage period I visited the shrine with some of my Muslim neighbours. Ordinarily they would not be allowed entry but my presence dispelled fears that they might be there to cause trouble. My Muslim companions behaved very similarly to times when they visit Islamic pirs. They understood the importance of washing body parts prior to entry to the central hall of the shrine (Sikh religion requires the hands to be washed). Upon entering the prayer hall they automatically covered their heads. We sat quietly and listened to a man read from the Sikh holy book for a time, with our feet tucked under our legs and not exposing the soles

of our feet to the reader or the book. As we left my Muslim friends backed out of the hall, carefully not exposing their backside to the book, just as one does when exiting the presence of a Muslim pir.

Sikhs and their Gurus frequently came up in conversations. The great Sikh king, Ranjit Singh, was claimed as a fellow qaumi by the Gujars in the village. Some of these Gujars expanded the claim to actual familial connection (though this was denied by most). Without exception, Sikh Gurus and leaders were spoken of with respect. There is a respect for power in the Punjab, and Sikhs represent the height of Punjabi power. They instigated the one time in the past 500 years, that indigenous Punjabis have controlled the Punjab as an independent State.

Rawalpindi was a Hindu and Sikh dominated city prior to partition. In the old part of the city, one of the most important Muslim shrines fell under the patronage and protection of a wealthy Sikh. His home was nearby the shrine and he is said to have placed the shrine under his personal protection.

This is not an important element in this thesis but it is significant that the constructed history of Sikh-Muslim relations in the area stresses the compatibility of the two communities. Today, the shrine at Hassan Abdal, like many non-Islamic shrines, is under the protection of a Muslim family. They ensure that Sikhs may come and worship without interference. The local police protect the pilgrims and restrict access to the area by other Muslims. At the very least this suggests a degree of understanding of the other's religious ritual and worship, if not agreement. While this requires further study, it suggests additionally, that the underlying structures of the religions parallel each other. In Barelvi Islam, as practised by the majority of Punjabis, the relationship between devotee and pir is extremely important. The pir is a conduit to the higher powers of God. In the Sikh religion, there is an equivalent relationship established between devotees and gurus (though there are no more living gurus the Book acts as the embodiment of gurus). I believe that this hierarchically based patron/client style relationship is the key to understanding all significant (i.e., ongoing, long term) relationships of the Punjab.

## **The economy of pir worship**

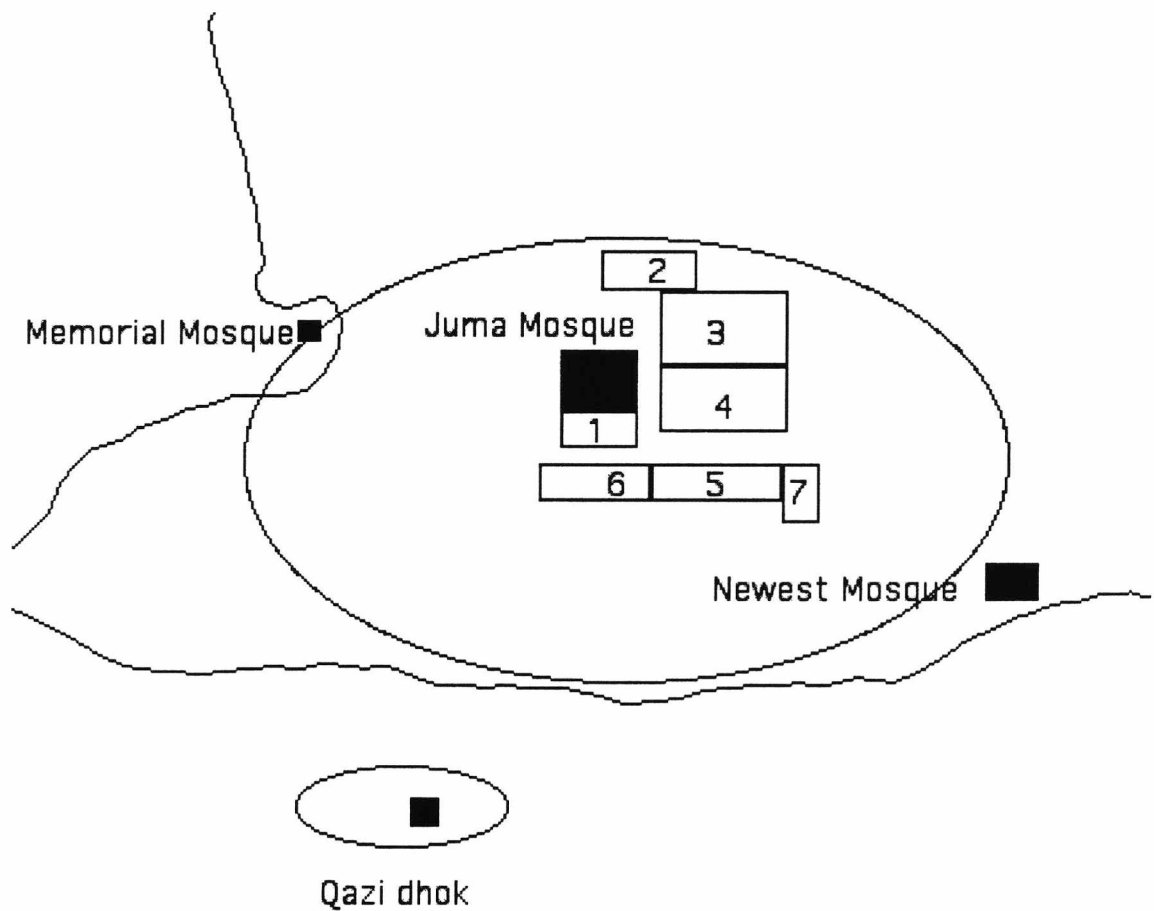
Pirs sit at the centre of human resource networks. For some this represents a vast assortment of men and women from different socioeconomic groups, qaum and caste groups, families and so on. Those who claim to have murid in the tens of thousands may be very powerful men indeed. The role which they attempt to project is based on that of 'perpetual giver' and not receiver [Werbner 1998: 107]. The massive langar, or free kitchens and food suppliers, is a manifestation of the pir's role as a provider. While this can be justified in symbolic terms since the things supplied to the shrine and the langar are not gifts to the pir directly, this is very much an exchange of goods, albeit in a 'good faith economy' [Werbner 1998: 111]. It is not so much the exchange of goods which characterises the economy of pirs, however, as the brokering of human resources. The pir is able to capitalise on relationships to resolve problems within his group. Like the men in Qaumism organisations who negotiate relationships from among the members of their qaum, the pir can bring different people together who are able to solve each other's problems. Some of the acts of a pir are meant to bring individuals the benefit of God's power. The spiritual healing in the form of talismans or prayers, is a direct intervention on the part of the pir, on behalf of an individual. I have been told that one task pirs or their closest devotees perform, is helping people find work. The explanation of the solution may be metaphysical, but that does not deny the role of a telephone call to an appropriate devotee who may be in need of an employee.

## **Maulvis: the case for rational-legal and religious authority**

There are four mosques in Bhalot. Three are in the village itself, the third is in a small *dhok*, hamlet, across the main road. One of the mosques was constructed to honour the deceased son of a landlord. The young man, who died tragically in a car crash just before he was to be married, is buried in front of the entrance to the mosque. His father maintains a beautiful flower garden around his son's grave. The mosque is small but very elaborate. The landlord maintains one full time maulvi and several others who come and go. This is the mosque which houses groups like the *Jamaat-i-Tabliqi* when they come for their three day prayer sessions. The mosque of the *dhok* has no maulvi. The *dhok* is almost exclusively inhabited by members of the *Qazi* qaum, who, in the past, were responsible

for some of the adjudication of disputes and much of the Quranic instruction in the village. Today, virtually all Qazi members in the village are illiterate and those members of their qaum who were inclined to become maulvis have done so elsewhere. They cannot support a maulvi and use the mosque for leaderless prayer. The next largest mosque is the newest mosque. It is currently still under construction and is maintained and paid for mostly by villagers, though landlords contribute money as well. The maulvis in this mosque are unusual, in that they are local villagers. They come from the Miana families in the village. This is the mosque which provides Quranic instruction to most villagers these days. This has become a community run mosque, with some independence from landlords. Affluent sharecroppers and other villagers, organise religious gatherings and prayer sessions several times throughout the year. The older men of the village seem to use this mosque as one of their meeting and discussion areas. The largest, and most elaborate mosque, is the *Juma Masjid* in the heart of the village. The mosque itself is in the middle of the cluster of landlord houses. This is the mosque for *Juma*, Friday, early afternoon prayers. These are the most important prayers in the Islamic week. The mosque can hold up to 500 or 600 men comfortably. Important religious functions, such as *Eid* may see the mosque overflowing. This is the mosque which is perhaps the most typical, perhaps not in material affluence, but in the position of the chief maulvi.

**Figure 10-1.** The four mosques of the village. The black squares represent the mosques. The numbered squares are houses around the mosque. House 1 is the house of the *maulvi*. Houses 2-7 belong to village landlords. The entrance to the main *Juma* mosque opens exclusively to landlord houses.



The *maulvi* in the Juma Masjid comes from another village in Attock District but not from Tehsil Fateh Jang. He and his family live in a house attached to the mosque. He is supported by the village as a whole, but primarily from the landlords. The landlords provide him and his family with the food staples throughout the year, vegetables, flour, meat. Villagers provide money by taking up collections, which landlords also contribute to, at various times in the year. Landlords are unquestionably in control of the mosque, if not the *maulvi* himself. They have maintained the mosque almost as a family mosque since it was built. They do not ask the *maulvi* to intervene in their disputes and they would not approve if he were to introduce party politics in his sermons. The *maulvi*'s job is to say the *azan*, call to prayers, pray, be moral and rest unobtrusive. More than that and he might find that he was no longer needed in the village mosque. This, in part, goes some

way to explaining the rise of the community run mosque, which skirts more political issues (though they also strive to remain neutral generally).

Maulvis hold religious authority. They also hold a kind of ambiguous authority of the independent person. They are not tied to particular qaum or families. Their lack of some important local networks places them in a similar position as saints. Barth [1959] and Gellner [1963] have described the ways in which saints stand outside of the normal expectations imposed on men. Maulvis similarly stand outside some of the 'rules' partly because of their religious position, but also, notably because of their lack of connection to local kin and qaum networks. They are primarily dependent on landlords but not exclusively, so the contribution of villagers to their income is important. They are able to weave their way in between some of the alliances and disputes as independents, which few other individuals may achieve in the village. Their lack of kin connections in the village leaves them potentially powerless and vulnerable in a village where the primary source of influence and protection is kin based. They are in the unique situation of holding an office which commands respect independently from the holder of the office. This is not to say that disreputable maulvis do not get run out of the village, but that there is an inherent respect for the office, even when there is virtually no respect accorded the office holder himself.

This apparently anomalous cultural relationship would seem to contain the seeds for modernity. Islamist reformers like Maulana Maududi or the Ayatollah Khomeini argued articulately that the most natural path to modernity in the Islamic world, was to capitalise on Islam itself. Within Islam were the roots of the modern State. The role of maulvis in rural Punjab is potentially far more threatening to the social order than pirs, since the latter have a vested interest in maintaining indirect, hierarchical patron/client relationships as the underlying structure of society. While individual maulvis may also, and probably do, have a vested interest in these relationships as well, their structural position within the society is not dependent on those relationships (their other relationships in life are, however). Maulvis are one of the very few groups in rural Punjab who would not lose everything if the system of human resource networks built upon hierarchical patron/client relationships were to disappear.



Effectively, maulvis do not pose a threat to the fundamental relations in Punjab. In part this is because, although they are not from the villages in which they work, they are from somewhere and that somewhere is usually a village. They have qaum relations in their home and they know the ways one can manipulate and use those relations. They have children and their children need to be married, which requires human resource networks. They understand the relationships of the village they work in because they are the same fundamental relationships in which they were brought up and which form part of their internalised value system. This is enough to suppress the threat of the vast majority of maulvis. However, as the case of Afghanistan shows, the potential remains, even if unrealised. In the 1970's, Tapper describes maulvis as being viewed as little more than literate (sometimes) beggars. They were not respected as men, they had no connections in the villages and they remained vulnerable to the capriciousness of the communities in which they worked. The invasion of the Soviet Union was a severe shock to the fabric of society and maulvis and other religious leaders fulfilled a leadership and organisational role which they had not previously done. Pakistan is an unstable State and there are maulvis across the country trying to emulate Afghanistan's experience and strengthen the position of the *ullama*.

The attitude of Afghans in the 1970's is not hard to find in Pakistan today. Maulvis, as men, do not automatically receive respect. There is respect for their position, but not for them. Stories of child abuse, alcoholism, illiteracy, financial corruption, political corruption are everywhere. In any village one can hear stories about maulvis who are bad men. The stories are not usually told about the local maulvi but rather a distant, generalised, nameless maulvi in some other village or some other part of Punjab.

In a survey I conducted about who people asked to help them in their problems, not one respondent said they would go to any of the local maulvis for any problem. When landlords spoke about the maulvi it was in response to my questions. They spoke respectfully but as if this person was not of enormous significance to the village. His significance lay in his official position as leader of the prayers. His role as a man was not important. I was told on more than one occasion that a maulvi's job depended on the good will of the people in the community and therefore he must not rock the boat. He must not

upset the wealthy people in the community by suggesting to the poor that they should have a larger share of wealth, nor should he upset the poor by suggesting to the rich that they should be able to demand more labour from the poor. His job is to placate everyone and offend as few people as possible.

One mechanism of control of the ullama was exclusion from villagers. When the Jamaat-i-Tabliqi come to the village they are invited to stay in the smallest mosque, which is separated from the main village by a few hundred metres. Villagers do not pray in this mosque and only the landlord's sharecroppers and servants approach the mosque at all. The Jamaat-i-Tabliqi men are specifically told not to carry out their activities in the main Juma mosque. I was told that when these missionary groups came they upset people and disturbed the maulvi. No one criticised the motive behind the activities, but they were very critical of the heavy handed way outsiders tried to dictate to villagers a more 'correct' version of Islam.

Keeping the maulvi isolated from visiting missionaries may be one way of separating him from external support. He remains exclusively dependent on the village for his livelihood and therefore his interests remain those of the dominant groups in the village. Despite his independence from the qaum and family connections, he remains economically and materially dependent on the village. He may play the role of mediator in certain situations, but he would find it very difficult to assume the role of instigator of anything outside the specified role attributed to the office of maulvi, as defined in the community.

## **Conclusion**

Religion has played a tremendously significant role in the construction of Pakistan as a State and in the development of a sense of national identity. The rhetoric used by the State tries to distance itself from the Islam practised on the ground however. Islam, as practised in both rural and urban areas, is an instantiation of the more basic social roles evidenced throughout the society. Pirs and shrines constitute one of the points of reference for most Muslims. While the Islam of the Quran may invoke equality between men and a direct relation to Allah, the reality of South Asia, and Pakistan in particular, revolves around inequality and patronage. If one requires intervention for the most basic of activities in the secular world, then the habitus that created that requirement leads one to seek a similar

sort of relationship of intervention and protection via third parties in relation to the divine world. The *ullama* of Pakistan stand in a unique position to challenge this basic relationship but they are limited for various reasons. They are not able to stand completely outside the State or the culture, so they cannot achieve the kind of independence which might allow them to truly establish a kind of rational-legal authority in which their office holds the power rather than themselves. They cannot effectively compete with the sufi orders who are able to manipulate categories and networks in ways which are already familiar to Pakistanis, perhaps especially Punjabis. As a result of this, the maulvi in the village may stand for something outside the relationships of patronage and hierarchy; because he is detached from these relationships, however, he has considerable limits on his ability to influence many situations.

## 11 Conclusion

I make many claims in this thesis. My primary argument is that patron/client roles are embedded within several important relationship contexts in Pakistan. In addition, I suggest Pakistan should be understood as a crossroads culture area which exhibits hybridizing characteristics. I have suggested that there are three complementary relationship contexts which must be examined in analyses of any group in Pakistan: kinship, caste and political relationships. I looked at the ways that the building blocks of asymmetrical power roles are socialised in a Northern Punjabi village and suggest that this process is not dissimilar to what is found in NWFP and Northern India. In my discussion of Pakistani families, I also argue that collective self-identification is emphasized over individual self-identification; that children learn to interact with representatives of categories rather than individual people. I suggest that there is a Pakistani rather than just a Punjabi tendency to do this. Northern Punjabi labour relations, likewise, offer evidence of similarity with other parts of Pakistan and clear examples of the ways that the idiom of kinship hierarchies are superimposed on extra-kin contexts. In addition I make strong claims that there are patron roles within extended family relations. I examined the rivalries and alliances within and between families to shed light on the competitive strategies available to individuals in landlord groups. I tie these patron roles to the landlords' interventionist role in village affairs and their connections to state political apparatus. Landlords provide an ideal example of the ways in which kinship, caste and political relationships intersect and demonstrate similarities. I discussed their role as arbiters of disputes and the ways in which they are able to reinforce social harmony and the status quo. I also discussed the role that caste plays in Pakistan. I found that it provided yet another example of asymmetrical exchange relationships within a given caste category. The relationship between castes, it would seem, is not nearly as important as the hierarchical relationships within castes. This is true of the domestic domain (which is to be expected), as well as the public domain. My discussion of the integration of

asymmetrical relationships in state political institutions is neither surprising nor original. They offer unambiguous examples of patron/client roles in many societies. The role of patronage in religion is likewise unsurprising. The factionalism and patronage inherent in religious organisations in Pakistan and among Pakistani diaspora has been discussed in more detail elsewhere [Werbner 1991; Shaw 2000]. My thesis provides a demonstration of some of the areas in which core cultural patterns are replicated in a range of contexts. In other words, this thesis has explored the idea that there are common patterns of power relationships which inform the most important social interactions in Punjab and N.W.F.P. in Pakistan. Finally, I suggest an additional claim in this chapter: one may extend some of these arguments to the level of the nation-state and suggest some cultural factors affecting Pakistani nation-state level practices.

In one sense, my thesis is incomplete. I have not properly made the case for the inclusion of Sindh and Baluchistan nor have I dealt adequately with some of Pakistan's minority communities. This is unfortunate but unavoidable. The area of my research suggested strong continuity between Punjabi and Pukhtun cultures but I had little contact with people from other areas. I lacked the time necessary to properly demonstrate that this continuity extends beyond Punjabi and Pukhtun groups yet have asserted that this continuity is highly probable and is suggested by ethnographic descriptions from other areas (for example Pastner and Pastner [1972] on Baluch kinship and politics). Given the predilection of social scientists and surveyors to artificially divide Pukhtun and Punjabi groups, the possibility of similar artificial analytical distinctions deserves further investigation. In this light, there are additional problems when treating Pakistan's minorities. Parkes' [1994; 1996; 1997; 2000] work on the Kalasha suggests potentially significant structural differences. In particular the frequency of wife elopement and premarital sexual relations among the Kalasha possibly suggest more than simply a difference in scale of gender values (though possibly not, again this calls for further comparative investigation between Kalasha, Pukhtun and Punjabi groups). Parkes' account of their interaction with other Chitrali groups, however, reflects their embeddedness within a system which is not incompatible with my thesis. More troublesome is Berland's [1982] research among the Qalandar, a peripatetic group of nomadic entertainers, which may be the exception that proves the rule. His comparison of the socialisation of Qalandar children and sedentary

agriculturists in Punjab would indicate a departure from both Punjabi and Pukhtun socialisation strategies. While this necessarily deflates some of my more ambitious claims it does not negate my specific demonstrable claims of cultural continuity between Punjabis and Pukhtuns. Nevertheless, both the Kalasha and the Qalandar clearly require an analysis which is sensitive to their socially interstitial position. Having highlighted areas of potential weakness in my overall argument I persist in my call for a more inclusive analysis of Pakistan as a crossroads culture made up of a variety of communities which all draw from a shared set of cultural values, conceptions and mechanisms for implementation. This thesis draws on relationships of power to discuss and demonstrate this continuity.

### **Relationships of asymmetrical exchange**

The roles which individuals assume and seek out are not static patron/client relationships but rather elastic nodes within human resource networks made up of both patrons and clients. The rejection of this relationship is met by fierce cultural resistance; that is to say, individuals who try to assume equality with all or conversely individuals who try to deny their client status in relation to patrons or who deny patron status to clients, without indigenously approved cause must endure certain social consequences. This resistance may take the form of sanctions which are indigenously perceived to be negative. Individuals voluntarily enter into relationships of inequality, indeed they seek to make all relationships asymmetrical.

Asymmetry forms the basis for primary cultural motivating tools, such as izzat and qaum. Pakistani culture emphasizes the ability to control others and influence events either positively or negatively. This is achieved through the process of entering relationships in which one is either super- or sub-ordinate in relation to others. In order for an individual to make the best use of these relationships he or she must be closely involved in several at any given time and must participate both as a super- as well as a sub-ordinate. In the absence of either superiors or inferiors the utility of the strategy becomes undermined and there is an increased likelihood that individuals will lose the ability to fully participate in the social system.

These asymmetrical relationships may satisfactorily be labelled patron/client relationships, so long as it is understood that patrons require patrons as well as clients (which is indeed understood and even required by Gellner's definition [1977: 3] which allows patronage *only* as part of a *system*). Thus, in general, most people will find themselves in both patron and client roles and assume each with equal ease. I have also argued that there are sanctions imposed for individuals who defy the basic rules of these relationships. This relationship of patron and client, forms the nucleus of a wider network that includes both super-ordinate and subordinate nodes. Within the human resource network most, if not all, relationships between two individuals, will be asymmetrical and based on patron/client roles. Where two members of a human resource network are almost co-equals, the role of patron should not be static but dependent on who is in contextual or situational need. In cases where one individual repeatedly requests the patronage of another, the roles of patron and client may become more fixed. The point is that when individuals meet in Pakistan, they are seeking to instantiate a particular type of patron/client relationship because it constitutes the most stable and reliable relationship in which expectations and obligations are the clearest.

### **Impact on anthropological theory and an anthropology of Pakistan**

There are two broad areas in which I suggest certain modifications to anthropological theory and the anthropology of Pakistan. The first involves the methodology of studying patron/client systems and pertains primarily to general anthropological theory. The second is specific to Pakistan. It is a call for an integrated view of Pakistan.

### **Patronage**

**Figure 11-1.** Patron/client 'triad'.



I propose two shifts in anthropological approaches to patronage. The first, arguably the more significant of the two, is to view patronage as a system of relationships rather than

roles. To this end it may be useful to conceive of the patron/client dyad as the visible instantiation of these relationships (see Figure 11-1). They are dyads which require, or imply, triads. There are inherent difficulties in this approach since the extension of the dyad leads to potentially extremely long lists of networked patrons and clients; this extension *ad infinitum* is undesirable. Nevertheless the strategies of the members of a dyad include knowledge about the other individual's clients or patrons. Most importantly, it is the knowledge of the relationship which allows each half of the dyad to fulfil his or her role. Clients may not be clients unless they understand the role of patron and vice versa. This is observable in real situations by the ease with which individuals may assume either a patron or client role depending on the context. Their decision to adopt one role rather than the other is a direct result of their knowledge of the other person's human resource network.

It is the implicit presence of the third member of the relationship which allows the system as a whole to work, so to speak. If extended relationships remain unaccounted for, then patron/client roles and relationships do not make sense. This has always been a dilemma in analyses of patron/client relationships, nevertheless the relationship normally remains characterised as a dyad organised around personal contractual relationships. While I accept that patron/client relations, by definition, revolve around a personal relationship between two individuals, it cannot be reproduced without a third person.

To this end, I suggest a third category of person which must be seen as both patron and client simultaneously. This is more than simply a broker, though the role may well involve brokerage. This category is characterised by the fluidity with which the individual may assume either the patron or the client role. In certain contexts he or she may unquestionably be seen as the patron. In others, they may equally well be the client. I will add one further elaboration to this role; I argue that individuals in patron/client systems mostly satisfy the characteristics of this third category. When they are not, there is social instability. People who sink so low that they are never in a position to be patrons to anyone, are indeed in a marginal and unsatisfactory position. Likewise, those who rise so high that there is no one left to whom they may offer their clientage, find themselves in a very precarious position.



The second shift in patron/client studies follows the previous suggestions. I suggest that a client focused approach to patron/client systems is inadequate. While it is of unquestionable value to have a thorough understanding of the obligations, responsibilities and rights of clients it neglects the possibility that individuals are both clients as well as patrons. This is not to suggest that anthropology should only study the rich or powerful and neglect the poor and weak or the reverse (both of which are absurd) but is rather acknowledging the multiplicity of roles that individuals adopt. People may be powerless in many situations and yet there may be circumstances in which they do indeed adopt the role of patron. This is not to say that anthropologists cannot focus on subordinated groups, but that in systems of patronage the role of patron will be embedded within all strata of the system. I suggest that a truly 'multivocal' ethnographic approach requires an equal emphasis on both patron and client, and following my earlier arguments, the way individuals may be both patron and client. If one accepts that the origins of patronage, in some patron/client systems, is to be found in kinship roles, then the obligation to examine both becomes all the more necessary.

#### **An integrated view of Pakistan**

The suggestion that Pakistan, as a nation-state, should be analysed as a kind of borderland will certainly not meet with universal approval; nor will my hypothesis that Pakistan is a hybridising culture. Nonetheless, the time has come for scholars of Pakistan to critically reassess the broad cultural division of Pakistan into egalitarian tribal models and hierarchical peasant models. The ethnographic record simply does not support such typological divisions for the real world. Banerjee [2000: 26-27] emphasised the fluidity of frontiers when discussing NWFP and suggests the cultural exchange involved in making contemporary Pathan culture. She stops this line of analysis somewhere along the Indus river (the beginning of Punjab), however, leaving one to wonder how the political divisions asserted by the Moghuls, Sikhs and British had such a profound effect on Punjabi culture. Her nuanced treatment of a particular nationalist movement in NWFP suggests, rather, that Pathans have been prematurely typologised and essentialised. I suggest that the same has occurred in Punjab.

Throughout the literature on Pakistan there is an underlying assumption of fundamental cultural shifts, indeed of *different cultures*, in NWFP and Baluchistan (on the one side) and Punjab and Sindh (on the other). While this has served to highlight specific areas of diversity, it has not dealt with those 'deep structures' which generate 'the major variants of form which can be observed' [Barth 1981: 133]. The suggestion that these differences have been exaggerated is not new [see Donnan and Werbner 1991; Lindholm 1996]. The suggestion has not, however, been widely taken up. This thesis is an attempt, therefore, to view a Punjabi region as a particular instantiation of a pan-Pakistani culture which draws on a set of values, beliefs and views shared across all of Pakistan's provincial 'culture' groups.

This type of analysis is necessarily comparative and as such requires either collaboration between multiple researchers or a great deal of time. I have outlined above some of the weaknesses of this thesis which did not have the benefit of either (though I have had a great deal of encouragement and advice from others the final product has not been a collaborative effort). I have presented a reasonably complete argument regarding the nature of power in one region. In order to extend this to other areas and demonstrate that the integration of the anthropology of Pakistan is desirable and useful, I must expand the area of my research and the level at which I collaborate. In the meantime, I repeat that I believe there is sufficient ethnographic evidence that there is such a thing as a common Pakistani culture which unites groups as disparate as tribal Pukhtuns or Balochis and urban Lahoris or Karachi-ites. It is possible to study this commonality through a more detailed comparative analysis of particular social institutions and relationships.

#### **Implications for society and development: patronage and instability**

In Pakistan an interventionist value has become an integral strategy of social organisation. In virtually all activities one must not act on one's own behalf, but rather on behalf of another. Assuming responsibility for one's own problems in Pakistan means arranging with someone from within one's human resource network to actually carry out the solution. In return, Pakistanis spend much of their time handling other people's problems. This should not automatically follow from the underlying relationship I have described above; but given this set of roles and relationships, a system of third party intervention

may thrive. Not only can a system of interdependence work, by satisfying people's needs and being perceived to be advantageous, but it offers some degree of cultural coherence in the absence of national, linguistic, market or political coherence.

This is not the place for an elaborated discussion of the cultural factors in Pakistan's political instability, however, I suggest that attempts by Pakistani national leaders to violate the rules of patron/client roles have hastened their downfall. That is to say that as Pakistan's most powerful leaders began assuming the role of patron without submitting themselves to anyone as client, they placed themselves in a socially precarious position. This social precariousness, in turn, has exacerbated other considerations (notably economic and demographic) which have resulted in political instability.

I posit a cultural variable which contributes, in part, to national political instability. Like Bowman's [1994] psychoanalytical explanation of the ethnic violence in the Balkans, this hypothesis suggests more than it can prove; but the suggestions merit further investigation and discussion as they both have very serious implications for attempts at political and social engineering.

### **Conclusion**

I have provided evidence for many, but not all, of my claims. Some of the claims which I have simply asserted require wider cross-cultural research. Others require more in-depth research in Bhalot and the surrounding region. I have, however, demonstrated the importance of asymmetrical power relationships in different social contexts which goes some way to explaining the reasons of their continued existence. In the first chapter I asked why, if asymmetrical power is so evil, does it persist so durably in Pakistan. I was open to the possibility that the elite groups were forcibly imposing these relationships on the society, but that left unexplained the obvious voluntary participation I observed. After positing that subordinate groups and individuals were colluding with asymmetrical power relationships I set about trying to determine why. Was this a case of the elites manipulating the discursive arena so effectively that subordinates had no language to express resistance? On the contrary, I found that subordinates have sufficient language and awareness to express dissatisfaction with the inequities of their situation; yet they persisted in assuming subordinate roles. Even when the physical environment changed

and Pakistanis move to areas where these roles are not part of the dominant idiom of power (as in the United Kingdom), they replicated these roles, assuming either dominant or subordinate roles depending on their situation. I further found that the individuals had a comprehensive understanding of the demands of both patronage and clientage and were able to adapt their behaviour to either.

When I situated these observations in the context of the nation-state of Pakistan, with all its inherent insecurities and instabilities, I began to understand the emerging patterns of imposed stability. Pakistanis employ very fundamental role relationships which are learned in the security of kin groups to deal with situations in which there is no market, political or other structural security. When looking at the facts of Pakistan's existence in isolation, one is tempted to predict that the whole cannot possibly be a smooth running nation-state, and yet, it arguably is. Although Pakistan has frequent changes in government, high unemployment, high inflation, large foreign debts, hostile neighbours and no real influence in geopolitical affairs which concern Pakistanis, the country functions. By that I mean that people can go about their lives, for the most part, as in any post-industrial nation-state. One is arguably safer in Pakistan than in many parts of the United States. There is such a thing as job security (though mostly it is a result of these cultural relationships in which I am interested). Even Pakistan's military hostilities with India (and occasionally Afghanistan) remain only mildly disruptive.

I will draw this thesis to a close with a quote from the late Professor Paul Stirling's [1965] *Turkish Village* ethnography:

In every human group some members are more, some less admired and respected; some more, some less able to impose their will on others [1965: 221].

While it may be risky to accept this statement as universal fact without more exhaustive investigation of all possible cases, I have attempted in this thesis to explore the mechanisms by which some individuals in Pakistan 'are more, some less admired; and some more, some less able to impose their will on others'. The imposition of hierarchy is neither unique to Pakistan nor unusual in human societies. The investigation of hierarchy and power in Pakistan is therefore an additional layer in the pursuit of explanations of all human societies.

## Notes

1. Political relationships do not require common membership in either kin or caste groups however they do not necessarily preclude common membership either.
2. Arendt argues that individuals never have power but is vested in groups [1970: 44]. I speak here of individuals but concur that in Pakistan this is certainly the case. All individuals represent groups therefore any power they possess is necessarily group power.
3. Though it is within 150 kilometres from the contested Kashmiri border, so perhaps they would have considered that close enough to qualify as a borderland.
4. Cricket is a nice uncontentious example. Cricket is not an indigenous South Asian sport yet it has become a vehicle for the expression of Pakistani nationalism and, in Pakistan, is considered a very 'Pakistani' sport. A laundry list of other adopted British institutions would be very long indeed. I was even told, though I do not believe it, that shaking hands was introduced by the British-- if this were true then it would be a lovely example of Pakistanis domesticating a habit beyond the wildest dreams of the people who introduced it.
5. Arab migration in Pakistan is a matter of historical record. What is in dispute is the extent to which present day inhabitants may be the direct descendants (through the male line) of Arab families. Syeds and Abbasis claim for example to be direct descendants from the Prophet's lineage. Blood tests in the region suggest that not all these claims may be supportable biologically. The belief in these claims, however, is quite valid and must be taken seriously, no matter what the truth of the biology may be.
6. Though it is interesting that in email correspondence with British born Pakistanis in Britain one man referred to izzat in the following way: 'All I can say is the loosest translation of the word izzat would be honour. By honour, I mean honour in a Mediterranean context' [Raja Muzzaffar Khan, personal communication, 2000].
7. Syeds, it may be argued, constitute a kind of Brahmin high status caste. However, if one tries to argue that Syeds are like Dumont's Brahmin, the argument is flawed. Syeds hold no priestly functions by virtue of their 'caste' and there is no proscription against any Syed touching or sharing food with individuals from any other caste. If, on the other hand, one argues that Dumont's ideal Brahmin exists only as an ideal, and one looks at real Brahmins empirically [see Quigley 1999; and Fox 1969 whose ethnography suggests that the status of brahmins is not straightforward], it is possible that Syeds and Brahmins are closer than a study of Dumont might suggest.
8. Quigley refers to brahmins (lower case 'b') as members of the caste. Brahmins (upper case 'B') are brahmins who actually carry out the functions of a priest.

9. *Tehsil* is the Punjabi/Urdu word for a subdivision of a District (*zilla*). I have found no satisfactory translation of *tehsil* and so have opted to retain this Punjabi/Urdu word.
10. This was part of a seminar with Dr. Michael Fischer, Dr. David Zeitlyn and Ms. Sukaina Bharwani in the University of Kent at Canterbury.
11. This should not be construed as evidence supporting a difference of 'kind' of value. Although my rapport was very good with Pathans, it was not as good as with Punjabis. Furthermore, I understand this as a difference in the scale of application of the cultural norms regarding women but *not* as evidence that Punjabis are less concerned with control/reputation of women.
12. I have heard reports that a farmer may get as much as four or five times the price for wheat if he is willing to risk driving it up beyond the area of Pakistani state control.
13. The spate of bombings in 1999-2000 notwithstanding. However, this kind of unrest is not generally considered to be linked to food shortages or hunger.
14. Bhalot's catchment area, a common feature of all villages in the region, is quite large. It is close to 200x100 metres in surface area and at its deepest point is around 3 metres deep. For this amount of water to completely evaporate (or be drunk by livestock) indicates a very long period with no rain.
15. According to local legend, Alexander did not conquer the Taxila region. He was invited to Taxila as a guest. He spent an extended period of time enjoying the local hospitality and then he and most of his troops moved on. Like other regions, there are tales of some of his men remaining behind and leaving descendants. These stories invariably support claims of the good hospitality of local people.
16. My apologies to all Bhalotis. They do not question the presence of an actual body at the shrine and grave site of Baba Sheikh Daud. I do not mean to question their word, but simply cannot assure what I have not personally witnessed.
17. Though for very real political reasons, the accounts do not always agree with each other.
18. See Stewart [1994] on the validity of a Mediterranean cultural area. Where one draws the line of cultural break between one culture area and another is virtually impossible in most cases.
19. Though to be fair, it is said that a First Class degree cannot be had by bribery or nepotism. Apparently *all* Pakistani degrees which have received a First are earned degrees.
20. *Vadera* is a category of landlord. People say that Multan and Sindh have *vaderas*. The local stereotype includes extremely large land holding, large moustache, extreme arrogance and insensitivity to villager needs. Of course, this is the stereotype that some Lahoris have of Attock landlords. Since I know the Lahori stereotype is unfounded I am equally suspicious of the rumours regarding Multani and Sindhi *vaderas*.
21. Eglar focused on a ritualised system of gift exchange known as *vartan bhanji*, which she translates as dealing in sweets (*vartna*= to deal, *bhanji*= sweets). In my own investigation of this term I was told a different translation: *vartan* means dishes. *bhanji* is a

- Punjabi word for sister. Given the length of her field work (over five years), I bow to her greater knowledge of Punjabi. I assume that the translation I was given is either a local variant or a case of someone trying to be helpful beyond their ability.
22. *Tarburwali*: agnatic rivalry [Ahmed 1980: 3]. *Tarbur* is the term for cousin in Pukhto. A similar, though less often rhetorically invoked tension exists between cousins, *sharik*, in the Punjab (a person must not let his or *sharik* know too much about household scandals).
  23. Ahmad refers to caste as occupational speciality which may not reflect actual tasks performed (but may refer to tasks performed by recent ancestors). This occupational caste is somewhat flexible and may be denied by individuals labelled in the service or artisan castes. He says that members of these service castes provide an alternate term when asked to give their 'real' caste as opposed to their 'occupational' caste. This 'real' caste, Ahmad refers to as *qaum* (his spelling *quom*) [Ahmad 1977:74-75].
  24. Lindholm says the three 'cornerstones' of pukhtunwali are hospitality, refuge and blood revenge [1996: 25-26]. Interestingly, blending Ahmed and Lindholm's definition one finds the key elements of Punjabi izzat.
  25. Ahmed argues that TAM remained unencapsulated however they were in the process of becoming encapsulated on terms which left these cultural symbols intact.
  26. Ahmed refers to these as symbols though it seems they are far more than just symbols. The *hujra* and the *jirga* are very real institutions which have a direct impact on people's choices and behaviour. Punjabis believe that in the tribal areas the gun is also far more frequently used as more than just a symbol.
  27. All names used in this chapter are pseudonyms.
  28. I have chosen the title Choudry because, while it is the equivalent of Malik or Khan, there were no Choudries in the immediate area where I worked. My apologies to the many decent Choudries in Taxila and Wah.
  29. In Pathan controlled villages the split is said to be less generous. I was told that in Hazara the typical split was 60/40 in favour of landlords. In Swat it was 75/25. Asad reports that Swat landlords collect 75%-80% of the gross crop [Asad 1972: 84].
  30. Gujars from the Tribal Areas are locally referred to either as Pathans or as Gujar Pathans.
  31. In Bhalot the Zakat Committee Chairman is Malik Asif Nawaz. The village numberdar is Malik Nawazish Ali. Local Zakat committees are responsible for distributing the national Zakat funds to the poor. Numberdar was an office established by the British. The numberdar is an important liaison between the State and village residents.
  32. Taxila has seen an incredible growth in industry since partition. The availability of jobs is often given as an important factor in undermining the position of landlords in the area. As a result of this high demand for labour factories in the area have employed people from all *qaum* for jobs that may have fallen outside their caste specialisation.

33. I should note here that I have received honorary membership into the Gujar qaum. I have been given permission to call myself Steve Gujar, and have been told that when I publish in Pakistan I should do so under the name Steve Gujar Lyon. I sincerely hope my membership to the qaum will not be revoked as a result of this thesis.
34. The Department of Punjab Affairs is a fictitious government department. I have based the cases for this on real civil service departments but have not drawn from a single source. In the interests of avoiding potential embarrassment to anyone I have anonymised this section.
35. In addition to the Pakistani daily newspapers, British newspapers occasionally feature weekend articles describing the horrors of landlord violence. In fact, Pakistan only seems to be newsworthy in Britain if there has been some extraordinary act of violence.
36. Their analysis of the bisha ritual may be somewhat problematic. Stewart has argued that Bedouin arbitration councils operate under very similar premises as courts in Europe. They strive for definitive conflict resolution whenever possible. They resort to this kind of ritual only when they are faced with cases in which there is insufficient evidence to arrive at such a verdict [Stewart, personal communication].
37. Islamic law was introduced in South Asia in the early 8th century when Mohammed bin Qasim conquered Sindh and under the Moghuls enjoyed varying degrees of application/enforcement [Pearl 1987: 20-2; Schacht and Bosworth 1979]. The Islamic legal code which was introduced to South Asia was itself an overlay of Quranic law as dictated by the Prophet Mohammed and the Caliphs Umar and Ali, on top of the customary law of Arabian tribes. The introduction of Islamic law was an attempt to replace tribal loyalties and affiliations with Islamic community loyalties and affiliations [Gilmartin 1988: 43-44] however it did not so much replace customary law as adapt it to new satisfy new demands. In the early part of the Islamic era adjudication was to some extent an ad hoc affair trying to cope with problems as they arose among the newly formed Muslim community [Pearl 1987: 1-7; Schacht and Bosworth 1979]. This tradition of pragmatism continued as Islam expanded. Islam adopted some elements from Byzantine, Persian, Jewish and Roman legal traditions and variation appeared geographically in how laws were enforced. Even within the Arabian peninsula legal schisms appeared relatively early on (prior to the end of the Ummayyad dynasty 750 AD) [Pearl 1987: 8] Given that Islamic legal codes were built upon arbitration in which the primary goal was the establishment of a new community, then refined and expanded in a pluralistic cultural and legal environment, the traditional arbitration councils in the Punjab would seem to be an ideal venue for the implementation of Islamic law. Indeed, there seemed to be little real conflict in the practice of shari'at and customary law in Pakistan until independence. Gilmartin [1988: 44] suggests that Islam provided the framework within which South Asian Muslims were able to accommodate 'competing values' within a single idiom. The Punjab, up to independence, therefore had a history of giving equal weight to customary and personal law (depending on the religion of the person personal law changed).



38. The British gave statutory recognition to custom in the Punjab Laws Act (1872). It stated that in questions of family law decisions were to be made based on either applicable customs or 'Mohammedan Law' [Pearl 1987: 34-35]. British administrators felt it preferable to root their legal presence in indigenous kin based rules rather than ones based on religion. To this end the British conducted a survey to find the universals of Punjabi custom and then established a code of customary law [Gilmartin 1988: 45-50].
39. Since independence Pakistan has attempted to reverse British efforts to codify customary law with the passage of several acts. First the Punjab Muslim Personal (Shari'at) Application Act of 1948, followed by the Punjab Muslim Personal Law (Shari'at) Application (Amendment) Act of 1951 which ruled that in all cases of succession involving Muslims, the decision was to be dictated by Muslim personal law [Pearl 1987: 37]. Since those acts the government has attempted to strengthen the role of shari'at law in family matters by introducing Shari'at Benches in Provincial High Courts (1978), Hadd Ordinances which regulate relations between men and women (1979) [Pearl 1987: 239-243] and more recently the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's attempts to pass the 15th amendment to the Constitution in order that 'The Holy Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) shall be the supreme law of Pakistan', expanding shari'at well beyond the scope of family law. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (in abeyance since 12 October 1999), prior to the 15th Amendment gives the Federal Shari'at Courts the power to examine laws at the jurists' discretion for compliance with Islamic law and repeal those deemed 'repugnant to the injunctions of Islam' [Chapter 3A, Section 203D, Paragraphs 1-3]. The State is striving for a modern judicial apparatus in which judges are guided by law and principle and in which their decisions may have far reaching implications in other areas.
40. All names in this chapter are pseudonyms and some personal details have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals concerned. I have not changed personal details which impact on the key points of the cases.
41. This is not the real name of the village. I attended the urs as an invited guest. I would not like for my analysis or opinions to be taken as reflecting those of the village, the pir, my host nor anyone else. To this end I have chosen not to identify precisely in which village this urs took place.

## Appendix One: How the elite captured power

By Dr. Ishrat Husain, *Dawn* Internet Edition February 11, 1999

ONE of the most interesting questions that has been posed in regard to the thesis of elite capture of economic and political power in Pakistan is: how was this elite class formed and how were they able to capture economic power? There are at least six distinct episodes which have contributed to the formation of various elements of the elite class in Pakistan and it is the interaction and the cumulative force of these different elements that has strengthened their hold on the economic and political power in the country.

First, the inherited colonial legacy of a strong paternalistic "mai-bap" kind of relationship between the British rulers and the population at large was transmitted intact to their successor - the Pakistani civil servants. Unlike their counterparts in India whose unbridled powers were diluted and reined in by the political ascendancy of a strong middle class and elected leadership, the vacuum created by weak and unstable political leadership provided an excellent breeding ground for the emergence of a powerful and self-serving class of civil servants in Pakistan.

Second, at the time of independence, Pakistan had a land tenure system in Punjab and Sindh dominated by zamindars and jagirdars. Basically, the zamindars and jagirdars possessed large tracts of land and practised an exploitative system in which peasants were without legal protection and the forum of settlement of disputes was heavily biased in favour of the zamindars. Land ownership was highly concentrated and the Gini coefficient was as high as 0.64 in 1950.

Unlike East Punjab, no serious attempts were made to limit land holdings. Instead, exemption from income tax, favourable output prices and input subsidies, concessional credit from public institutions, diversion of scarce irrigation water from the share of small farmers generated large economic rents for the landlord class. The feudal relationship and economic power was soon translated in domination of political scene and the shifting

loyalties of the landlords class sowed the seeds of political instability in the country. Third, the settlement of immovable urban and agricultural property evacuated by the Hindus in favour of the Muslim migrants from India presented an excellent opportunity for the use of discretionary and arbitrary powers of the executive branch to benefit a small segment of the migrant population. This hands-in-glove approach made a few thousand officials involved in the settlement operations and a few thousand "awardees" of evacuee property rich overnight but at the same time laid the first building block of a corrupt landscape for the country as a whole.

Fourth, the boom after the Korean War in the 1950s resulting in a dramatic increase in the prices of jute and raw cotton created a commodity boom whereby many traders rushed into the import export business to make quick profits. The combination of overvalued exchange rate, a high tariff structure, a gap caused by the trade disruption with India and the fertile commodity market created a class of industrialists and big businesses. This merchant capitalist class bought raw materials from the agricultural sector at cheap prices and sold them in the foreign markets at a very high mark-up. As import controls were introduced in the aftermath of the Korea boom the domestic prices of consumer goods produced by the same class rose so high that the industrialists were able to recover their initial investments in one or two years.

Fifth, the martial law regime of Ayub Khan during the decade 1958-68 gave rise to a new sub-class of elites - the military officials. The economic benefits conferred to this class took many forms but four modes were predominant. Agriculture land grants in the new areas irrigated by the Gudu and Kotri Barrages in Sindh, award of urban plots of land developed as part of Defence Housing Societies in the prime locations of major cities, employment of serving and retired military officials in key public corporations and enterprises and the setting up of large-scale industrial and commercial firms under the auspices of Fauji Foundation and the like transferred enormous economic benefits to this new class.

This was followed by leakage from large-scale defence purchases, contracts and transfers of arms and ammunition as a result of Russian invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s when Pakistan was once again headed by a military general. There are many reports that a

number of senior military officials and their families amassed fabulous wealth from these deals.

Sixth, the earmarking of development funds from the budget to the politicians under the Basic Democracies of Ayub Khan, the People's Works Programmes of Bhutto, and followed by similar schemes designed by Mohammad Khan Junejo, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif governments paved the way for the enrichment of the elected officials. This was reinforced by the allotment of urban land plots by KDA, CDA and LDA at highly subsidized rates, sanction of loans by nationalized banks and development financial institutions at the instance of the government, grant of licences for setting up sugar mills and other industrial ventures, favoured allocation of scarce commodities out of import/export quotas or domestic production such as steel products.

The growing tendency to use discretionary powers in relaxation of rules and policies in force to benefit or win over the politicians also helped enrich senior managers of the banks and the DFIs, senior executives of the state trading and export corporations, public manufacturing enterprises and the civil servants in positions of authority or responsible for the implementation of these orders.

While these six distinct episodes can be traced to various points of time, the cumulative result of the capture of economic and political power by the elites has been slow and gradual decay of the institutions and a breakdown of the governance structure. Tax officials at all levels collude with unscrupulous taxpayers to deprive the state of its dues and acquire wealth for themselves and the tax evaders. Police officials have become a source of fear and terror rather than that of protection of the common citizen.

Judicial process is so slow, cumbersome and loaded that it is unable to provide relief or redress to those who are wronged. Educational institutions have been taken over by hooligans, bullies and dishonest teachers and heads. Statutory regulatory orders (SROs) are used frequently to confer large windfall gains on the privileged by restricting imports of essential commodities for a limited period and allowing the domestic prices to skyrocket. There are innumerable examples from all spheres of economic life.

In case of Pakistan and other elitist states, the dichotomous relationship between market failure and government failure has become irrelevant. It is the combination of market

failures and government failures mutually reinforcing each other which has created winners among the elite classes while the rest of society is the loser and has to pay for those gains.

(The author is a director at the World Bank. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not represent the views of the World Bank, its management and the executive directors.)

## Appendix Two: Caste and Qaum Tables

**Table 11-1.** Self designated qaum

|          |
|----------|
| Awan     |
| Bhatti   |
| Chachi   |
| Kashmiri |
| Gujar    |
| Mian     |
| Mistri   |
| Pathan   |

**Table 11-2.** Occupational Caste

| Occupational Caste | English Equivalent   |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| <i>nai</i>         | barber               |
| <i>mochi</i>       | cobbler              |
| <i>tarkhan</i>     | construction/builder |
| <i>jeula</i>       | weaver               |
| <i>lohar</i>       | blacksmith           |
| <i>musali</i>      | sweeper              |

**Table 11-3.** Pathan self designation

|          |
|----------|
| Yusufzai |
| Maliyan  |
| Gujar    |
| Qazi     |
| Mushwani |
| Syed     |
| Kamangar |

## **Appendix Three: K'huli Kacherri speech translation.**

The following speech was delivered by Malik Wajjid Ali of Bhalot village, at a K'huli Kacherri. K'huli Kacherri provide an occasion for local people to express their concerns and problems directly to prominent officials, such as the Member of the Provincial Assembly, Police administrators, District, Tehsil and Union Council representatives and others. This K'huli Kacherri took place in February 1999, in the Bhalot boys primary school.

*Transcribed by Malik Tahir of T'hat'ha K'halil.*

*Translated by Malik Tahir of T'hat'ha K'halil and Stephen Lyon.*

In the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful. Major Tahir Saddique, Chief Advisor to Chief minister Punjab, Chairman District Council Attock, S.S.P. Attock, A. C. Attock, A. D. C.G. Attock, Chairman M. C. Hasan Abdal, members of the District Council, members of the Khidemat Committee and honourable people. I and the whole village of Bhalot welcome you to Bhalot. Major Tahir Saddique, I welcome you in particular to Bhalot-- your home. Sir, we are very thankful to you for supporting Bhalot. Whether you were in government of in opposition you have always paid special attention to Bhalot.

I wish to address some of the problems of Bhalot.

1. Village Streets. In your first tenure all the main streets of the village were constructed through the matching scheme, however, the funds were subsequently stopped. After the introduction of the Water Supply Scheme all the streets were dug up to lay the water pipes. Now the streets are in very bad condition. On behalf of the people of Bhalot I request that the necessary funds for the construction and repair of the streets be provided.

2. Main Road. Sir, the second problem is the main road. The Jhang road is metalled from Jhang as far as Fauji Cement Factory but after that, as you have seen for yourself, the

condition is appalling, and beyond that it becomes even worse. We request that the necessary funds for repair and maintenance be provided.

3. Upgrade of School. Sir, the most important problem in our village is the upgrade of the boy's primary school to a middle school. The school in which you are now sitting is the boy's primary school. During the time of minister Ghulam Haider Wain the upgrade from primary to middle school was approved but no action was taken. Again, on behalf of the peoples of the village of Bhalot, I strongly request that a new upgrade be carried out.

4. District Council Dispensary. Sir, you can see the beautiful building of the veterinary hospital across the road. Ample living accommodation is available in the building so we request, in the presence of the Chairman of the District Council, that a civil dispensary be housed in the same building.

5. Employment in Fauji Cement Factory. Sir, we are thankful to you and we are very thankful to the Prime Minister Mohammed Nawaz Sharif who, through your efforts, established the Fauji Cement Factory in our area. Sir, the aim of establishing the factory has not been achieved. We have given our fertile lands and our golden hills to the factory but our people are not benefiting from this factory. People from outside areas like Chakwal, Sarghoda and Khurshab are employed in the factory. The locals, who have made all the sacrifice are not considered for employment. We strongly protest that local people be given equal share in the employment opportunities, especially for Class IV/Labourer positions. Locals should be given priority for these jobs. The factory management attitude is biased against locals but this can be rectified by consideration of the above measures.

6. Girls School. Sir, the final, but very important problem is the girls' education. The current building for the girls school is inadequate. The land for the school is available. We request that a new girls' school be constructed.

Sir, we have every confidence that you will solve our problems as before. We are again thankful that have come to our village. Now I would like to request that the people come forward to the microphone and present their problems, if they have any, to you directly.

Thank you very much.



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