

Annex 1- Political leadership among Swat Pathans: A model Summary and questions

Chapter1

Introduction

In the introduction , Barth states that his ethnography is a descriptive analysis of the political system of Swat in Northern Pakistan with special references to the sources of political authority , and the forms of organization within this authority is exercised.

Chapter2

General ecology and Ethnology of Swat

The important features introduced here that are critical to the ethnography in general, include:

- a) A description of endogamous marriage between families of equal social status and political/economic power
- b) An overview of the history of the Yousafzai Pachtuns tribe: who entered the swat region as conquerors and claimed ownership and jurisdiction over all land with some exception? Initially, land was divided based on closeness to patrilineal ancestors, using a complex process of land division, administered by a prominent holy man. According to the land tenure system that evolved, emphasized the division between land owning Yousafzai conquerors and their subjects , the former being dominant, cosmopolitan gentry, the latter a parochial subordinate population, serving a succession of different land lords.

- c) A description of the political relationships among Swat people:

The relation between the landowners who may or may not belong to the dominant tribe is symbiotic, and includes political and economic dependence of the tenants.

The saints or holy men also have a political function in the village

The political status among the Swat Pathans landowners is precarious, dependent on complex system of reciprocity, dependency, alliances, support, and participation in rituals of dependant and allies.

Barth uses this chapter to introduce several key aspects of social organization of political leadership among the Swat Pathans. Important points in this chapter pertain to the ways in which the landowners consolidate and maintain political support through an elaborate and on-going process of reciprocity, gift-giving and patronage. Although land is principally owned by the Yousafzai, the political authority is shared by that of the Saints who invoke descendancy to claim authority, patronage and disciples/following. A landowner also competes with other landowners to maintain and build his political authority. Landless are under no obligation to support a particular landowner/chief/saint, and base their support to a particular one, on the benefits received from such a support.

Barth also draws a comparison between the Hindu cast system and hierarchy within the Muslim Swat Pathans to note that the latter have fluid positions /identities that are in relation to others within the community. Men may marry women who have a lower social status. Women are exchanged through marriage as a means of forging or/and consolidating political alliances and social relations. If marriage takes between equals, the same status group is not a primary determinant for consolidating a political network of followers. Political authority is extremely valued among the Swat Pathans

Chapter3

The underlying frameworks of Organization

In this chapter, the three frameworks that order population into categories and groups are discussed in detail.

- a) The territorial or spatial framework pertains to the village or ward of residence of an individual and his family. According to Barth, village is the most important reference for a Swat Pathans, and its occupants are the main focus of his loyalties. The village also has religious significance, serving as a common ground for religious congregations at a shared village mosque, and site of all domestic rituals.
- b) The stratification /caste based framework refers to an individual's position based on his parentage, and may be analogous to jati among the Hindu communities. Membership is determined by birth. However, unlike the Hindu caste system, it carries no religious significance, and is based on secular status and rank. Barth persists in the analogy with the Hindu caste system and includes a discussion of purification, integral to the caste system. According to him, although Islam has notions of pollution, it is fluid and derived from the physiological or body processes such as elimination, sexual intercourse and death. Importantly, caste is fluid and defined in terms of one's current economic status, occupation, and political power (categories that can change with the time). Caste fixes one's marital and affinal relations and limits his political and financial ambitions. Yet every man is free to choose to which particular groups he wishes to belong.
- c) The patrilineal and descent groups are the third most important framework for categorizing populations into groups. According to Barth, Pachtuns may lose their membership. This happens if they lose their whole share of the joint estate. Membership depends on inherited title to tribal land; and if all the land is lost, the title lapses and the person or the section of the patrilineage in question loses its status as member of the land owning descent group.
- d) Pathans give importance to males and presuppose their authority over females in all situations in both the private and the public spheres.
- e) In the family, the husband and father has all authority, he controls the social intercourse of the family members to the extent of being able, at his pleasure, to cut his wife off from all contact with her natal kin; he control all property; he may use physical compulsion to enforce his authority; and he alone has the right to dissolve the domestic unit or expel its members, by divorce or disinheriting the children. These are his formal rights. Among the Pathans, people are often unable or unwilling to assert their rights. There are hen-pecked husbands and bullied fathers. Moreover, there are effective checks on abuse of male authority.
- f) In all relations outside the circle of close kin, the men represent the household; indeed, with respect to right to make contracts, take decisions, or in any way commit the domestic unit as a whole, they are the household. Mother has no rights which could be transferred to her children, either in her natal home, nor does she control any productive resources.

Chapter4

Neighborhood, Marriage and Affinity

Territorial framework, hereditary caste framework, patrilineal descent charters are fixed and unchangeable. On the contrary, relations of neighborhood, kinship and marriage can be changed and formed by one's actions, and are affected by political events and political designs. At the neighborhood level associations, community is emphasized through participation at rituals associated with birth, marriage and death. These rituals are public and express alliances and show solidarity within a community. They are also politically significant, and emphasizes community beyond one's kinship group but distinction is made between affiliation and social relations that

are customary and those that invoke community identification with one's association. These rites are milestones in one's life, and relatives of all kinds are expected, not only to take an interest, but actively to participate in the ceremonies, both of sorrow and happiness. These rituals have a political significance and demonstrate reciprocity. Moreover recurring rites re-iterate ties among neighbors. The participation and the number of people in these rituals reflect the host's power, his status and importance in the local community and beyond.

Chapter 5

Relations of inequality and Authority

Most of the relations of inequality result of the production relationships around land and economic contracts. Relations of authority are more complex. All of the resulting relations are internally differentiated and recruitment is done through contractual agreement with a leader. Contract is voluntary. The explicit subordination in economic contractual relationships and the use of a leader's men's house provides a leader/ landowner with the tangible sources for political authority. In each of the relationships, the subordinate has expectations of protection and security in time of crisis; similarly, the land-owner expects loyalty and support in times of conflict. The saints can have disciples who are also members of a men's house. The saints are distinguished by three features: one, they have ownership of graves of ancestors that serves as shrines; two, they have the privileged role as advisors and mediators; and three, they lay claim to spiritual leadership due to legal knowledge and moral dedication. All groups have over-lapping membership, none are explicitly political. Each is characterized by an internal authority system formed by dyadic contracts between leader and subordinate.

According to Barth, it is the relationship of the members of a group to the leader that defines a group not the relationship between members themselves.

Chapter 6

Land tenure and Political Relations within Local communities

This chapter develops the relationships between the landowners/chiefs and the tenants/landless. The latter, according to Barth's analysis, live barely above subsistence levels, outnumber landowners, know irrigation better than their landlords and their loyalty and services are needed for landed to maintain and assert their position. Barth defines the list of the benefits of alignment or non-alignment with a particular leader and the extent to which these benefits may strengthen and improve more integrated community and affiliation with other landless, ensuring participation in one's domestic rituals and building informal relations.

Chapter 7

Authority and following of the Chiefs

The activities of the corporate groups are seen in terms of the actions of the leader of the group. Indeed, the groups are created by action of leaders. Groups include all people mobilized in times of conflict; solidarity is based on the leader's authority, and established through gifts and reciprocity, commitments of support, leader's own prestige, and moral and ethical fitness, or compelled by force.

The controls of the sources of livelihood, the distribution of wealth, the defense of the family honor are the main sources of authority conferred to the leader.

Honor is an important feature of the social pattern of the Swat Pathans.

The ideal personality of a leader is virile and impetuous, given to extremes rather than compromise, sometimes unwise, but always brave. The man who manages to extract a proper

revenge when shamed has defended his honor, proved his worth and demonstrated his ability to defend his own interests. Such a man is chosen as a leader by many, and is able to command the respect and obedience of these followers through their confidence in his ability to defend their interests as well as their own. Fornication or adultery with a woman, if it becomes the subject of common gossip, reflects on the honor of her male relations, her kinsmen, particularly brothers and sons, and her husband, can only wipe out of the stain by avenging themselves on the seducer. Defense is a means to restore one's political virility and family pride. The followers of a leader pressure him to seek revenge.

In the Swat Pathans society, there is a principle of obligatory patronage based on the restriction of the contractual freedom of landowners in the employment of occupational specialists (*talgeri* system) which creates a congruence between the different analytically separate fields of commitment, producing a tightly knit, economically, self-sufficient, and territorially compact and delimited community

Chapter 8

Authority and following of the Saints

The chapter focuses on the main sources of a Saint's power, and firstly the ways in which the saints control the land, i.e., acquiring land through inheritance, through receipt of gifts, through purchase, and through military conquest. The chiefs and the saints may co-exist within the same territorial domain, sharing several of the same disciples and followers. However, Barth cites instances from the Swat history that demonstrates strained relationship between the Saints and the Pachtuns, resulting in violent interaction. Importantly, the land owned by the saints is dispersed throughout different wards controlled by several chiefs. Thus, the saints do not depend on any one chief and their power of influence is not spatially bound or limited. This situation provides them an increased room for strategic advantage and put them in position to exploit the followers. The saints have also a role of mediator, due to their reputation for morality and holiness. They spread their web of direct political influence over a much wider area. While the lands of the chiefs help them to build a solid nucleus of control for purposes of administration and military dominance, the lands of saints enable them to extend their influence over many communities, for purposes of arbitration, mediation, the collection of information, and political intrigue. The three zones of influence: one, nucleus, i.e., close agnatic relatives and dependents; two, spatial areas of dependents' residence or disciples' residence (permanent relations between chief and followers/tenants; three, the zone of reputation, which forms the widest area of influence. Chiefs exercise political authority among the all zones of influence.

Chapter 9

Alliances and political blocks

This chapter focuses on the ways in which actual political organization emerges, through the description of the kinds of relationships which imply mutual political support, and situations of opposition.

People have got free choice of association and affiliation. Political alignments to leaders and connective groups are done in reference to different social facts and features. These features such as territorial and descent frameworks are reflected in the composition of the political groups. Alliances are formed between individuals of equal status and power. Alliances warranties help and support in times of conflict. These alliances are formed in public at meeting at the men's house and reinforced through increased solidarity between allied individuals

But alliances can be broken easily. However, one cannot be allied to two people opposed in a dispute. The alliances demonstrate the position of strength in relation to conflict over land, water and crop.

Much of the political activities of prominent leaders are directly concerned with arranging settlements and compromises between groups of allies.

Honor is never a part of the alliances.

The chapter also discusses the assembly meetings, going over issues such as the right to speak at such forums, the constant lobbying for support, and the expression of public support for an allied. Barth remarks that these assemblies, despite being the only institutional setting for a meeting between two opposing blocs, are merely one field for expressing alliances and interests. The meetings provide to the leaders and their followers an opportunity to demonstrate their strength. Demonstration of force consists, indeed, precisely in the massing of allies and their dependents in the men's house or another place and only through visits to men's house the bounds of alliance are confirmed.

The chief is at the center as a member of the village, as a member of a bloc of many leaders of varied strengths who are rivals in opposed blocs or tied to other leaders in neighboring areas. By seeking to expand into their lands, the leader forces a re-alignment in the alliances blocs. Though his land area, and the force of tenants he controls, is increased, he may win or lose allies, and the outcome is a net increase in the number of his followers or opponents.

Questions to Barth Swat Pathans ethnography

Barth's ethnography of the Swat Pathans assumes that the tribal community is politically autonomous and even geographically isolated from the rest of Pakistan. According to Barth, this isolation has remained unchanged and uncentralized the political tribal system. As such, Barth effectively positions his analysis of political development to focus solely on internal factors. The assumption is that the social organization of political leadership, as seen in the men's house, the valuation of honor and revenge, the reciprocity and gift-giving, and the individual choice and strategies in the making of alliances, are unique to Swat Pathans. Barth is unable to situate his ethnography in a broader regional perspective, at least in Pakistan.

Barth undertook his fieldwork around 190, at a time where most of anthropological scholarship was theoretically framed by the structural-functionalism corpus. Barth retains the top-down orientation of most structural-functionalists ethnographies of the time by focusing on landowners, chiefs and the saints. At the same time, Barth departs from the structural-functionalist framework, by showing that Pathans men make rational decisions based on the individual benefits of political alliances and social relationships, rather than collective or even filial/ agnatic benefit