

there in increasing numbers. This is apparently a recent situation which came about only after Amir Abd-ur-Rahman of Afghanistan defeated and subjugated the Hazara. Before that, ethnic intermixture seems to have been limited. The Hazara were a poor mixed farming population of mountaineers, organized under petty chiefs and capable of defending their territory, while the Pathans held the broad valleys and plains.

The basis for this former exclusive territorialism should be sought in a combination of political and ecologic factors. As mixed farmers, the Hazara exploit both an agricultural and a pastoral niche, so both Pathan farmers and nomads constitute competitors to them. Moreover, a tribal political system of petty chieftains, as found on both sides, has very little capacity to provide for the articulation of differently organized ethnic groups in a larger system. The relationship between tribally organized Hazara and Pathan communities would thus inevitably be one of competition and mutual attempts at monopolization of resources along the border. The apparent stability of the border between them can be understood as a result of a balance between gains and losses: with the forms of political units that obtained, the costs of conquest and penetration of Hazara country by a Pathan tribe were greater than the expected returns.

The relative pacification that resulted from the incorporation of Hazarajat into the state structure of Afghanistan radically changed these circumstances. Competition in the exploitation of resources was freed from the concomitant costs of defence and penetration, and pastoral nomad Pathans started moving in seasonally to utilize the summer pastures. Moreover, greater freedom of movement has opened a niche for traders, and Pathans, with access to the sources of trade goods, have swiftly moved into this niche. Whereas trade in settled towns is somewhat despised and largely left to special, low ranking groups, the life as a trading nomad, who, heavily armed, penetrates foreign areas and takes large risks both personally and financially, is one that provides rich opportunities to demonstrate male qualities valued among Pathans. Through the institutional device of credit with security in land, these traders have not only been able to create a profitable volume of trade, but are also gaining control over agricultural land. As a result, there is a progressive trend towards settlement of Pathans as landowners among the Hazara.

This trend exemplifies a pattern of extension and ethnic co-residence which is characteristic of many Pathan areas. Pathan expansion northward and eastward, which has been taking place over a very

long period, has certainly occasionally taken the form of migration and conquest with wholesale eviction of the previous population; but more frequently it has resulted in only a partial displacement of the non-Pathan autochthones. In these cases, Pathans have established themselves in stratified communities as a dominant, landholding group in a poly-ethnic system. Through much of the western area, the dichotomy is between Pashtun and Tajik, i.e. Persian-speaking serfs, while in the eastern areas, Pakhtuns are contrasted with a more highly differentiated, but largely Pashto-speaking, group of dependent castes.

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

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

Several patterns of this are found, among them that of Swat, where

those who lose their land also lose their descent position, while Saints and others who are given land are none the less excluded from participation in council meetings or in men's house hospitality. Thus conquering Pathans are able to integrate other populations in a political and social system without assimilating them; other ethnic groups and status groups can also infiltrate the system in dependent positions where niches are available, as have pastoral Gujars or trading Parachas. However, the cultural differences that go with the Pathan identity versus dependent dichotomy clearly tend to become reduced over time. Within the whole stratified community there is a very close and multifaceted integration that furthers this trend. Most social life can be related to a religious context of dogmatic equality. There is a constant circulation of personnel through hypergamous marriages as well as loss of land and rank. Finally, there are a multitude of contexts where a fellowship of ideals and standards are made relevant to groups that cross-cut strata: in games, in hunting, in war and bravery, non-Pakhtun and Pakhtun are joined, and judged and rewarded by the same standards of manliness.² As a result, the whole stratified population tends to approach a uniformly Pathan style of life as well as speech. Therefore, though the local version of the ethnic name (*Pakhtun* in the case of Swat and Peshawar) continues to indicate the dominant stratum internally, it is increasingly used collectively to designate the whole population in contrast to the population of other, non-Pashtospeaking areas. In this sense, then, the internal boundary tends to lose some of its ethnic character.

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

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

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

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

I have analysed elsewhere (Barth 1956a) the ecologic factors that determine the limits of Pathan distribution to the north: the critical limits of double cropping, beyond which the surplus-demanding

political structure based on men's house hospitality, as found in the northern Pathan areas, cannot be sustained. North of this very clear geographical and ethnic boundary is found a congeries of diverse tribes collectively referred to as Kohistanis. But this boundary also is not entirely impermeable to the passage of personnel: several groups and segments of Pathans are traditionally reported to have been driven out of their territories in the south and escaped to Kohistan, while one such group was encountered during a survey of Kohistan (Barth 1956b: 49). After residence as a compact and independent community in the area for four generations, this group was like neighbouring Kohistanis and radically unlike Pathans in economy, social organization, and style of life. It is reasonable to assume that Pashto, still used as a domestic language among them, will soon disappear, and that other Kohistani areas contain similar segments of genetically Pathan populations that have been assimilated to a Kohistani ethnic identity.

That this should be so is consistent with the dynamics of assimilation elsewhere. Pathan identity, as a style of life in Kohistan, must be compared and contrasted to the forms found in the neighbouring valleys, where a complex system of stratification constitutes a framework within which Pakhtun landlords play prominent parts as political leaders of corporate groups based on men's houses. By contrast, Kohistanis have a simple stratified system, with a majority of owner-cultivator commoners and a minority stratum of dependent serfs, plus a few Pashto-speaking craftsmen. Politically the area is highly anarchic and fragmented.

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

In the contact situation, it is a striking fact that Kohistanis overcommunicate their identity through the use of several archaic features of dress, most strikingly footwear—puttees of poorly cured hides, and long hair. Pathans find these rustic features very amusing, but at the

same time recognize the qualities of independence and toughness that Kohistanis exhibit. Politically the Kohistani owner-cultivator is an autonomous equal to the Pakhtun landowner and men's house leader, though he speaks for a smaller group, often only his own person. Kohistanis and Pakhtuns are partners in the non-localized two-bloc alliance system that pervades the area.

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

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

Superficially, it is true that ethnic groups are distinguished by a number of cultural traits which serve as diacritica, as overt signals of identity which persons will refer to as criteria of classification. These

are specific items of custom, from style of dress to rules of inheritance. On the other hand, it is equally obvious that the ethnic dichotomies do not depend on these, so that the contrast between Pathan and Baluch would not be changed if Pathan women started wearing the embroidered tunic-fronts used among the Baluch. The analysis has attempted rather to uncover the essential characteristics of Pathans which, if changed, would change their ethnic categorization vis-à-vis one or several contrasting groups. This has meant giving special attention to boundaries and boundary maintenance.

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

I have tried to show how different forms of Pathan organization represent various ways of consummating the identity under changing conditions. I have tried to show how individual boundary crossing, i.e. change of identity, takes place where the person's performance is poor and alternative identities are within reach, leaving the ethnic organization unchanged. I have also touched on the problems that arise when many persons experience the failure to excel, without having a contrastive identity within reach which could provide an alternative adjustment, and how this leads towards a change in the definition of the ethnic identity and thus in the organization of units and boundaries. To recapitulate in connection with the organization of the political sphere: the Pathan pattern of council organization allows men to adjust to group living without compromising their autonomy, and thus to realize and excel in a Pathan capacity. Under external constraints, as members of larger and discrepantly organized societies, Pathans seek other fora for consummating these capacities through bravery and independent confrontation with hostile forces as trading nomads,

nightwatchmen, and money-lenders. In some situations, however, Pathans find themselves in the position of having to make accommodations that *negate* their autonomy: they become the clients of Baluch chiefs, the vassals or taxpaying, disarmed citizens of effective centralized states, the effective dependents of landowner/hosts. Where alternative identities are available which do not give the same emphasis to the valuation of autonomy, these unfortunately embrace them and 'pass', becoming Baluch, Panjabis, or Persian-speaking townsmen. In Swat and Peshawar District, where no such contrastive identity is available, defeat and shame cannot be avoided that way. But here the fact of such wholesale failure to realize political autonomy seems to be leading towards a reinterpretation of the minimal requirements for sustaining Pathan identity, and thus to a change in the organizational potential of the Pathan ethnic identity.

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

I have tried to show that in most situations it is to the advantage of the actors themselves to change their label so as to avoid the costs of failure; and so where there is an alternative identity within reach the effect is a flow of personnel from one identity to another and no change in the conventional characteristics of the status. In some cases this does not happen. There is the case of the Pathan serfs of some Baluch tribal sections, where the serfs sustain a claim to Pathan identity and have this confirmed by their Baluch masters. What is actually involved in this case, however, is a kind of shame identity: the Baluch patrons enjoy the triumph of having Pathan serfs, but do explain that these people were only the serfs of the formerly dominant Pathans. The masters were defeated and driven out, and these Pashtospeakers are not in fact their descendants. And the 'Pathan' serfs do not have access to Pathan fora and would not have their identity confirmed by Pathans. Thus, the identity retains its character because

many change their ethnic label, and only *few* are in a position where they cling to it under adverse circumstances. Only where the many choose to maintain the claim despite their failure — as where no alternative identity is accessible — or where the failure is a common and not very costly one, as in the main body of the population in Peshawar district, do the basic contents or characteristics of the identity start being modified.

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

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

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