

fake his identity or to live a double life as a kind of Norwegian and as a back-stage Lapp. The Indian highlander is always an Indian whether at home or interacting with Ladinos. His destiny is shaped by a situation in which his Indianhood is the very basis for interaction.

¹ Former capital of the State of Chiapas, still seat of the bishopric. It is recognized as *Cabecera de Distrito*, i. e. 'capital' of the Highland district.

² Cf. Blom and La Farge 1927; Blom 1956; Aguirre Beltrán 1953; Guiteras Holmes 1946; Pozas Arciniega 1948, 1959; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1939; Villa Rojas 1942-44, 1947; Cancian 1965; Vogt 1966; Siverts 1965a; Pitt-Rivers and McQuown 1964.

³ Within the tribal border trade takes place at three levels: a) delayed exchange between close relatives and neighbours; b) trade in kind (bananas for beans) with indirect reference to Mexican currency between remote relatives and acquaintances: 50 ¢ = 1 bundle bananas = *pulato* (pot) beans, sizes of measures varying with the season; c) ordinary exchange by means of currency between unrelated and distant living tribesmen.

⁴ Cf. the case of 'calling military assistance' to Oxchuc in 1960 during a period of alleged 'unrest' (Siverts 1964: 368).

⁵ It is characteristic that Ladinos always address Indians in 2nd person (plural and singular) which is otherwise insulting. The use of 2nd person plural is considered an archaism elsewhere in Mexico where the 3rd person is reserved for a non-specified plurality (of persons).

⁶ The neologism Ladinization (Ladinoization) is borrowed from McQuown and Pitt-Rivers 1964.

⁷ Cf. the discussion of the 'peripheral market' (Bohannon 1963: 240 ff.).

⁸ Teachers receive salaries from *Instituto Nacional Indigenista*, relatives provide labour for cultivating their fields, and friends and neighbours frequently bring gifts to their households.

⁹ 'Indianhood' in this sense only exists among romantic intellectuals and certain idealistic absentee politicians.

¹⁰ Pan-Indianism is as foreign to the Oxchuquero or Cancuquero today as it was during the uprisings of yesterday, notably the great insurrection of 1712 when these two tribes temporarily joined forces in a frustrated attempt to fight the Spaniards (Pineda 1888). It is perhaps symptomatic that they lost an obvious victory because hesitation and disorganization were more prominent features of the military operations than determination and coordination; and this may serve as a dramatic expression of the poly-ethnic situation where a highly segmented majority fails to make a concerted effort at neutralizing a dominant and organized minority. But of course, the Spaniards never constituted a real minority; they represented the larger society just as the Ladinos do today.

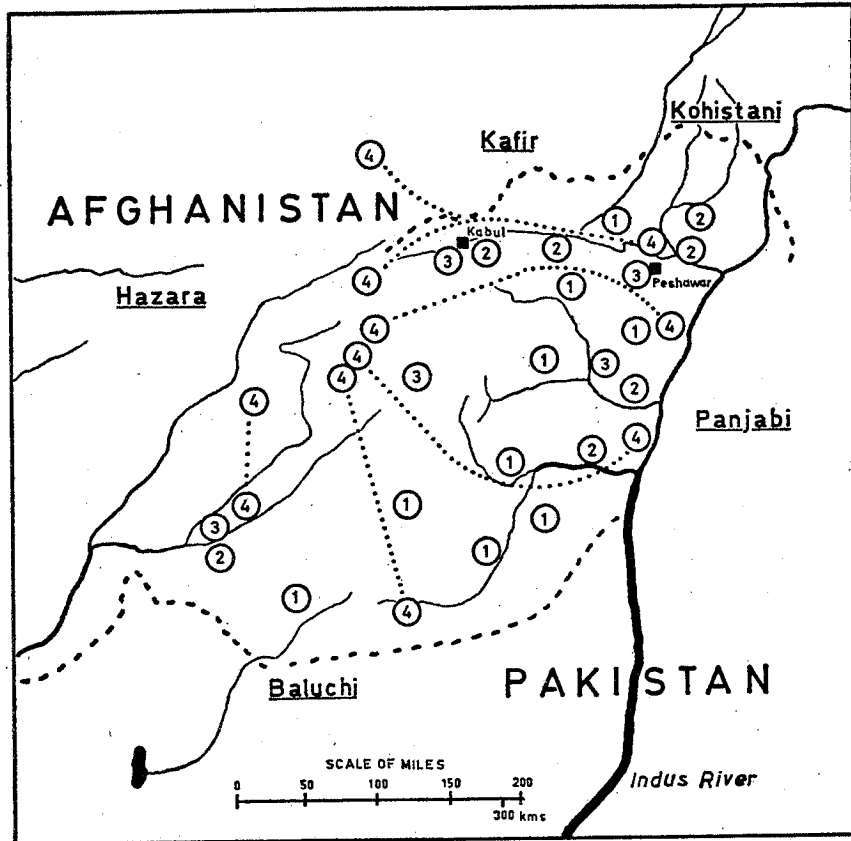
Pathan Identity and its Maintenance

by Fredrik Barth

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

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

Pathan communities exhibit a great range of cultural and social forms (see map on p. 118). (1) In a central belt of barren hills running



Pathan area: distribution of adaptational form.
 Digits refer to numbers in the text pp. 117—119.

through most of the country are found villages of mixed agriculturalists, organized in egalitarian patrilineal descent segments with an acephalous political form. (2) In favoured localities in the mountains, and in the broader valleys and plains, more intensive agriculture is practised, based on artificial irrigation; in these areas Pathans proper are landowners or owner-cultivators, while part of the village population consists of tenant Tajiks (south and west) or servile tenant and menial castes (east and north). Political forms are largely based on the segmentary organization of the Pathan descent groups, some places in acephalous systems, elsewhere integrated in quasi-feudal systems within the prevailing states and increasingly subject to bureaucratic

administration. (3) Other sectors of the Pathan population live as administrators, traders, craftsmen or labourers in the towns of Afghanistan and Pakistan, as an integrated part of those two states. (4) Particularly in the south, a large sector of the ethnic group lives a pastoral nomadic life, politically organized as tribes with, in part, very great autonomy. Finally, some groups practise extensive labour or trading migrations which bring individuals and small groups periodically far outside the geographical boundaries of Pathan country.

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

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

1. *Patrilineal descent.* All Pathans have a common ancestor, who lived 20–25 generations ago according to accepted genealogies. Though genealogical interest is considerable, knowledge of accepted genealogies varies both regionally and individually. The acceptance of a strictly patrilineal descent criterion, however, is universal.
2. *Islam.* A Pathan must be an orthodox Moslem. The putative ancestor, Qais, lived at the time of the Prophet. He sought the Prophet out in Medina, embraced the faith, and was given the name of Abdur-Rashid. Thus, Pathans have no infidel past, nor do they carry in their history the blemish of defeat and forcible conversion.
3. *Pathan custom.* Finally, a Pathan is a man who lives by a body of customs which is thought of as common and distinctive to all Pathans. The Pashto language may be included under this heading — it is a necessary and diacritical feature, but in itself not sufficient: we are not dealing simply with a linguistic group. Pathans have an explicit saying: 'He is Pathan who *does* Pashto, not (merely) who *speaks* Pashto'; and 'doing' Pashto in this sense means living by a rather exacting code, in terms of which some Pashto speakers consistently fall short.

Pathan customs are imagined by the actors to be consistent with, and

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

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

Hospitality involves a set of conventions whereby the person who is on home ground has obligations towards the outsider to incorporate him into the local group, temporarily be responsible for his security, and provide for his needs. The obligation is brought into play by the visitors' presenting himself in the alien setting. Accordingly, a stranger on the road who passes close to someone who is having a meal will be offered food, someone coming to a village will be greeted and helped by residents, a friend making his appearance will promptly be made welcome. In return, the guest is obligated to recognize the authority and sovereignty of the host over property and persons pres-

ent. In this host-guest relation, any single encounter is temporary and the statuses thereby reversible and reciprocal, and hospitality is thus easily an idiom of equality and alliance between parties; a consistently unilateral host-guest relationship, on the other hand, entails dependence and political submission by the guest.

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

The *council* among Pathans is a meeting of men, called together by one or several of those present so as to arrive at a joint decision on a matter of common concern, and may thus refer to an *ad hoc* meeting or to an instituted tribunal. The matter of common interest may be a conflict between the parties present or the planning of a joint action. The relationship between members of a council is one of equals, with no speaker or leader; the equality is emphasized by circular seating on the ground and the equal right of all to speak. The body does not

finalize its decision in a vote: discussion and negotiation continue until the decision is unopposed, and thereby unanimous and binding as an individual decision by each participant. A faction which will not accept a decision can only avoid commitment by leaving the circle in protest.

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

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

To all these contradictions, the seclusion of women and encapsulation of domestic life is an adequate behavioural solution. It also makes possible a domestic organization that allows a realistic accommodation between spouses. The sexuality, dominance, and patriarchy demanded by public male values need not be consummated in public; the primacy of male relations can be confirmed in the public sphere without any associated sexual passivity; and at the same time the interaction

between spouses need not be perverted by a male performance designed for a public male audience. The resultant pattern of domestic performance is difficult to document; but its adequacy is suggested by the relative absence among Pathans of divorce or adultery murders, by the trust placed in females by nomads and migrants who absent themselves periodically from their wives, and by the traditional view of mothers and sisters as upholders of family honour, spurring their men to bravery, etc.

These three central institutions combine to provide Pathans with the organizational mechanisms whereby they can realize core Pathan values fairly successfully, given the necessary external circumstances.

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

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

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

The main factors involved in this process have been analysed else-

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

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

The result is a flow of personnel from Pathan groups to Baluch groups, and not vice versa. Indeed, large parts of some Baluch tribes acknowledge Pathan origin. However, the incorporation of Pathans into Baluch type political structures goes hand in hand with a loss of Pathan ethnic identity, so the categorical dichotomy of Pathan tribes

and Baluch tribes remains. The reasons for this must be sought in the clash between Pathan values and political circumstances.

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

The western margins of Pathan country exhibit a very different picture (cf. Ferdinand 1962). Here, the adjoining area is largely occupied by Persian-speaking Hazara, and Pathan pastoral nomads and trading nomads penetrate deep into Hazara territory and settle

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

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

those who lose their land also lose their descent position, while Saints and others who are given land are none the less excluded from participation in council meetings or in men's house hospitality. Thus conquering Pathans are able to integrate other populations in a political and social system without assimilating them; other ethnic groups and status groups can also infiltrate the system in dependent positions where niches are available, as have pastoral Gujars or trading Parachas. However, the cultural differences that go with the Pathan identity versus dependent dichotomy clearly tend to become reduced over time. Within the whole stratified community there is a very close and multifaceted integration that 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-Pashto-speaking areas. In this sense, then, the internal boundary tends to lose some of its ethnic character.

The eastern margins of Pathan country, towards the rich and populous Indus plain, illustrate a different combination of some of these factors. Repeatedly through history, tribes and groups of Pathans have swept out of the hills and conquered large or small tracts of land in the Panjab or further east, establishing themselves as landlords. Yet, here it is the conquerors who have become progressively assimilated, and the limits of Pathan country have never moved far from the foothills area, except for the almost enclosed area of the Peshawar plains. The 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 over-communicate 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 unfortunates 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.

Neighbours in Laos

by Karl G. Izikowitz

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

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

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