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Pukhtun Economy and Society

Traditional structure and
economic development in a
tribal society

Akbar S. Ahmed



Pukhtun Economy and Society

First published in 1980, this groundbreaking *Routledge Revival* is a reissue of an original and authentic anthropological account of Pukhtun society by Professor Akbar Ahmed. Combining extensive fieldwork data collected among the Mohmand tribe in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan with historical and literary sources, Professor Ahmed's study seeks to construct an ideal-type model of Pukhtun society based on the ideal Code of the Pukhtuns and to analyse the conditions of its maintenance and transformation.

The author's thesis is that this ideal model exists within Pukhtun society when interaction with larger state systems is minimal and in poor economic zones. In this way he posits an opposition between the Tribal Agencies along the border with Afghanistan, where ecological conditions are poor and state influence minimal, and the Settled Areas under state administration where Pukhtun society is forced away from its ideals.

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To Babar

with love

Contents

Acknowledgments	xv
Dramatis Personae	xvi
Part one	
Introduction	1
1 Introduction	3
I <i>Problem</i>	3
(a) <i>The problem</i>	3
(b) <i>The problem restated</i>	4
II <i>Methodology</i>	8
(a) <i>Method in the field</i>	8
(b) <i>Role of the field-worker</i>	18
III <i>Theory</i>	22
IV <i>Model</i>	29
2 The Mohmand ecological and administrative framework	35
I <i>Mohmand ecology</i>	35
II <i>Administrative systems and the Mohmand</i>	47
3 Tribal society and the historical process	57
I <i>Colonial encounters and tribal strategy</i>	59
II <i>Historical process and agnatic rivalry</i>	71
Part two	
Tribal models	79
4 Segmentary tribes and models of Pukhtun social organization	81
I <i>The tribe</i>	81
	vii

II	<i>The Pukhtun ideal-type model</i>	88
(a)	<i>Pukhtun ideal-type</i>	89
(b)	<i>Social diacritica: diet and dress</i>	100
(c)	<i>Religious symbolism among the Pukhtun</i>	105
III	<i>Typology of Pukhtun social organization</i>	116
5	Lineage and leadership organization: alliance and conflict	126
I	<i>Unilineal descent as organizing principle in tribal society</i>	126
II	<i>Leadership and authority: 'chiefly' model</i>	141
III	<i>Tribal conflict</i>	150
(a)	<i>Intra-lineage conflict: case-studies</i>	150
(b)	<i>Inter-clan conflict: case-study</i>	155
6	Non-Pukhtun groups: patron and client relationships	160
I	<i>Sayyeds, Mians and Mullahs: 'saintly' model</i>	161
(a)	<i>Mians</i>	161
(b)	<i>Mullahs</i>	166
II	<i>Occupational groups</i>	168
7	Pukhto paradigm	181
I	<i>Tarboorwali: agnatic rivalry as expression of the nang principle</i>	181
(a)	<i>Case-study: TAM</i>	183
(b)	<i>Case-study: SAM</i>	196
II	<i>Tor: female chastity as expression of the nang principle</i>	202
8	Settlement and domestic structure	213
I	<i>Ethno-dynamics of tribal settlements: spatial mobility and lineage politics</i>	214
II	<i>Dwa-kora: the concept of dual residence</i>	219
III	<i>Types of tribal settlements</i>	222
(a)	<i>TAM settlements</i>	223
(b)	<i>SAM households</i>	230
IV	<i>Pukhtun marriages</i>	242
9	Economic structure and lineage ideology	259
I	<i>The agricultural cycle</i>	262

II	<i>Income, consumption and expenditure</i>	271
(a)	<i>Income, consumption and expenditure</i>	272
(b)	<i>Expenditure on rites de passage</i>	285
III	<i>Mohmand daily diaries</i>	289
IV	<i>Inheritance</i>	294
V	<i>Market function in the tribal economy</i>	297
(a)	<i>TAM market</i>	298
(b)	<i>The shops of Bela Mohmandan</i>	300
Part three	Encapsulating systems, economic development and tribal strategy	305
10	Encapsulating systems and tribal strategy	307
I	<i>The role of the Political Agent in tribal society</i>	310
II	<i>Encapsulation: prison and parliament</i>	315
(a)	<i>Case-study: prison</i>	315
(b)	<i>Case-study: parliament</i>	317
III	<i>Education as a factor of encapsulation</i>	319
IV	<i>'Peasantization' and perception of change in tribal groups</i>	326
(a)	<i>'Peasantization' of tribal groups</i>	326
(b)	<i>Perception of change in society</i>	333
11	Economic development and encapsulation	337
I	<i>The Mohmand road as a factor of encapsulation</i>	338
II	<i>Economic development: penetration and emigration</i>	341
(a)	<i>Development schemes</i>	342
(b)	<i>Emigration</i>	345
III	<i>The Bela Mohmandan Cooperative Society: lineage politics and development schemes</i>	349
12	Conclusion	356
	Appendix	
	<i>Teega: formal and written tribal peace agreement</i>	363
	Glossary	366
	Notes	368
	Bibliography	379
	Index	399

Illustrations

Plates

between pages 176 and 177

- 1 Tarakzai country in the Agency
- 2 Frontier Constabulary post at Michni
- 3 The colonial encounter and the Mohmand, 1897 (from National Army Museum)
- 4 Mohmand attack on Shabkadar Fort, 10 August 1897 (from National Army Museum)
- 5 Mohmand tower in Gandab blown up by No. 1 Company Mohmand Field Force, 1908 (from National Army Museum)
- 6 Shahzada and Shah Khan (Musa) in former's *hujra*
- 7 Mazullah (Ranra) in his *hujra*
- 8 Shahmat (Musa)
- 9 Shahzada and his cannon
- 10 Hassan, son and grandson (Ganjian)
- 11 Shamsudhin (Kado) at Bela
- 12 Hamesh (Madar) in his courtyard
- 13 Hussain (Jano)
- 14 Amin (Do) *kashar* of Bela
- 15 Author as Political Agent with *jirga* during inter-clan conflict, Chapter 5 (courtesy of *Mashriq* newspaper)
- 16 Mian Jalil outside his house
- 17 Shahzada and Mullah in former's mosque
- 18 Imam of Bela
- 19 Bela mosque with cot for dead
- 20 Eed prayers in Bela mosque
- 21 Grandsons of Hussain in Bela with sacrificial sheep at Eed
- 22 Arsal (barber) shaving Amirzada
- 23 *Tatari* visiting Bela
- 24 *Baghwan* visiting Bela

25	Shamshudin's kitchen
26	Kado girl carrying fuel in main Bela lane
27	Bela children
28	Shahzada's <i>bruj</i>
29	Malok well and village
30	Entrance to Malok village
31	A Malok, Mian Jalil and author (l. to r.) in Malok <i>hujra</i>
32	Destroyed Malok village facing Shahzada village
33	Lakhkar's tower
34	Lakhkar village
35	Malok mosque and <i>hujra</i> with tower in background
36	Malok children in front of village
37	Shati Khel cemetery
38	Mian Mandi
39	Bela sugar-cane <i>ganrey</i>
40	Bela shop and owner
41	Bela canal number 3
42	Akbar Jan outside Lakhkar village
43	Ihsanullah at home
44	Deputy Commissioner, Peshawar, in Bela <i>hujra</i>
45	Bela school
46	Shati Khel school
47	Entrance to Mohmand Agency, Ekka Ghund
48	Construction at new headquarters, Ghalanay

Maps

1	The North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan	10
2	Mohmand Agency: geographical and administrative features	36
3	Bela Mohmandan in relation to the Agency	41
4	Mohmand Agency: tribal map	46
5	Shati Khel: shifting settlements and lineage politics	
	(i) Shati Khel: 1900	215
	(ii) Shati Khel: 1935	216
	(iii) Shati Khel: 1976	217
6	Fields of Bela Mohmandan: lineages and lands	232
7	Bela Mohmandan: lineages and residential arrangements	234

Figures

1	Age and sex breakdown of TAM/SAM population	44
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2	Mohmand administrative changes	52
3	Levels of tribal conflict	73
4	Pukhtun putative genealogy	129
5	Mohmand genealogy: respondents and their eponymous ancestor	130
6	Shati Khel: 'operative lineages'	134
7	Bela Mohmandan: 'operative lineages'	136
8	Consanguineal and affinal terms among the Mohmand: formal and informal	140
9	Agnatic rivalry and its dilemmas for Feroz	194
10	Kado Khel agnatic rivalry and intermarriages	200
11	<i>Tor</i> cases (TAM)	204-6
12	<i>Tor</i> cases (SAM)	206-9
13	Lineage domination and settlement arrangements	219
14	Cyclical and intergenerational movements of Malik Lakhkar and Malik Dilawar	221
15	TAM settlements:	
	(i) Nuclear family: Lakhkar village	225
	(ii) Compound family: Shahzada Malik village	227
	(iii) Joint family: Sar Gul/Malok village	230
16	SAM households:	
	(i) Nuclear family: Shamshudin (Kado Khel)	237
	(ii) Joint family: Mehr Gul (Sabah Khel)	239
	(iii) Extended family: Morcha Khel (carpenter)	240
17	Bride-wealth patterns	254
18	Exchange (<i>badal</i>) marriages	255-7
19	Levirate marriage	257
20	Sororate marriage	257
21	Hussain Khan: employment and status	268
22	Mohmand economic activity: input and output ratios	284
23	Inheritance: a deviant case	295
24	The Saida Jan case	316

Tables

1	Mohmand Agency population, 1971	45
2	Tribal characteristics	85
3	Mohmand and non-Mohmand groups	172
4	Rites: functions of sexes and groups	178-9
5	Population, houses and lands of Bela Mohmandan	235

6	Tribal endogamy:	
	(i) Universe	244
	(ii) TAM and SAM	246
7	Shati Khel endogamy	247
8	Marriage expenditure: 1976	253
9	The agricultural cycle	265
10	Economic situation of TAM/SAM: 1976	270
11	Annual income: 1975-6	274-5
12	Recurring monthly expenditure: 1975-6	276
13	Annual expenditure: 1975-6	277
14	(i) Weighted income per consumption unit	282
	(ii) Weighted expenditure per consumption unit	283
15	<i>Rites de passage</i> expenditure (1972-6)	286-7
16	Mian Mandi/Peshawar prices: 1976	300
17	Native apperception of themselves	329
18	People working abroad from TAM/SAM:	
	(i) People working abroad from Shati Khel	346
	(ii) People working abroad from Bela Mohmandan	347
19	People employed by government: TAM/SAM	347

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Dramatis Personae

The following names of male living persons appear frequently in the text and are reproduced below in order to introduce them to the reader who may also wish to relate them to each other in the social universe. Females, often the wives and daughters of the following, were also interviewed formally and informally by my wife and her sister.

	<i>Shati Khel</i>	<i>Bela Mohmandan</i>
senior lineages:	Shahzada Malik Mazullah Khan	Shamshudin Hamesh Gul
junior lineages:	Dilawar Khan Kabil Khan	Mehr Gul
affiliated lineages:	Haji Hassan	Hussain Khan
religious groups:	Mian Jalil	Imam of Bela
occupational groups:	Aziz Ingar (blacksmith)	Morcha Khel (carpenter)
young groups (<i>kashar</i>):	Feroz Akbar Jan	Ihsanullah Shamshur Rahman Amin Khan

The field-work was conducted primarily in Shati Khel and Bela Mohmandan and I would like to clarify a possible source of confusion. Shati Khel is a section of the Halimzai clan and also the name of the geographical area where they live in the Mohmand Agency. Similarly Kado Khel, the dominant Tarakzai sub-section of Bela Mohmandan which lies in the Peshawar District, gives its name to an area called Kado Khel or Kado Korona (houses of Kado) a mile north-west of Bela but inside the Agency. I will refer to Mohmands in the Agency as Tribal Area Mohmands, TAM, and those in the Settled Area of the District as Settled Area Mohmands, SAM. TAM and SAM in the text also refer to their respective areas.

Part one

Introduction

1 Introduction

I Problem

(a) *The problem*

The problem before me is to construct an ideal-type model of Pukhtun¹ society primarily from field-work data and based on the ideal Code of the Pukhtuns (*Pukhtunwali*). The central features of *Pukhtunwali* are locally perceived as agnatic rivalry (*tarboorwali*) and the preservation of the honour of women (*tor*). Honour and status are conferred by society on its members through acts approximating to the ideal especially in these two features. In the ideal matters relating to social behaviour and organization such as household settlements, marriage and expenditure patterns are also affected by *Pukhtunwali*. The discussion of the ideal-type will raise questions about the causal variables that create conditions among tribal groups for maintaining, or deviating from, *Pukhtunwali*.

I will attempt to illustrate the high degree of similarity between the ideological model and the immediate or empirically observed model. The study will attempt to prove that the behaviour and organization of social groups approximate to the ideal model. My main aim is to put forward the thesis that the ideal model exists within Pukhtun society when interaction with larger state systems is minimal and in poor economic zones.

My study further sets out to establish that *Pukhtunwali* continues to be operative for Pukhtun groups in spite of the severe constraints of an encapsulated situation implying different jural and administrative sanctions and various points of moral disjunction. Tribal Area Mohmands (TAM) will allow us to examine how the model appears in the ideal; Settled Area Mohmands (SAM) will provide an opportunity of actually testing the hypotheses by allowing us to view how the model behaves in an encapsulated condition. The complexity and extent of deviance from the model may be measured in the SAM situation and the thesis tested; verification or refutation of the thesis is thus possible.

(b) *The problem restated*

The study will examine tribal groups and their changing internal and external relations to exogenous economic and political situations. The thesis postulates that *Pukhtunwali* survives political and administrative encapsulation. Two groups of the Mohmand tribe will be examined to test the thesis, one, TAM, unencapsulated due to special administrative arrangements deriving from its geo-political situation and organized largely to approximate to its original tribal model, and the other, SAM, encapsulated within larger state systems. An examination of the problem will enable us to see how unencapsulated tribal social organization presupposes a political situation which in turn antecedes its form.

I am distinguishing and conceptualizing two polar methods of encapsulation; the one I call encapsulation and the other 'penetration' based on tacit tribal agreement; the end results are often the same – integration of the smaller into the larger system. They are thus aspects of the same phenomenon. Encapsulation as discussed in general anthropological literature involves larger state systems based on different organizational principles encapsulating smaller systems, which does not preclude but does not necessarily imply the naked use of force. None the less it involves encirclement, absorption and enveloping, and provides the encapsulated society with little choice and limited strategies. It is therefore encapsulation both in a metaphorical and literal sense. It assumes larger and more powerful systems engaging weaker and smaller structures in which encapsulation is an inescapable factor and ineluctable destiny. The concept of encapsulation implies the absorption of a smaller system by a larger one and presupposes the surrender of a certain loss of identity of the former system. The terms and pace of encapsulation are decided by the encapsulators and their putatively higher civilization or culture with its symbols of dress, speech, diet, etc., is henceforth dominant (Bailey, 1957, 1960, 1961; Caplan, L., 1970; Caplan, P., 1972; Fürer-Haimendorf, 1939, 1962, 1977; Vitebsky, 1978; Yorke, 1974). In such situations 'the modernizing elite may wade in regardless of the consequences and the cost' (Bailey, 1970: 177). A certain moral disjunction of values is inherent in the situation which could either lead to integration or expressions of local self-assertion.

Anthropologists have seen tribal societies as passive recipients of exogenous pushes in the form of developmental and technical changes (Sahlins, 1968, 1969). I am arguing that TAM are not passive recipients of exogenous pushes. In the Tribal Areas military encapsulation failed

over the centuries but from 1974 onwards began what can only be termed as economic penetration; it was encapsulation in economic terms but with major distinctions. The terms and pace were set by the TAM; the penetrators wore the clothes, spoke the language and ate the food of the penetrated. In a sense the encapsulators were allowing themselves to be encapsulated. However, this is palpably a temporary and strategic phenomenon for in the end the results will most likely be the same as that of the encapsulation of SAM, although the method has been diametrically different.

Encapsulation of tribal societies assumes the reordering of certain vital features of social organization such as settlement patterns, marriage rules pertaining to endogamy and exogamy, lineage politics and the two key components, *tarboorwali* and *tor*. The thesis will attempt to show that this is not always so.

It is axiomatic that social structural change can be measured or examined in relation to an anterior form of social reality. Hence the need to construct from historical accounts, case-studies and field-work data a model of Pukhtun tribal society. The economic situation pre-determines the social situation and acts to underline the principles of agnatic equality, relationships which subsume agnatic rivalry. I will be showing through case-studies how social organization is affected by the geographical situation and economic constraints. For instance, shooting during feuds cannot last for more than a few days at a time especially when one party has captured the water-well, the key to the village, of the other party. Victory is then assumed and conceded and some sort of agreement invariably reached. A political point has however been clearly made, the point of lineage hegemony. The poor economic base, one half-nourished crop if it rains that year, along with their geopolitical situation, have brought together a combination over the last centuries to create three survival patterns for the tribals which help us to understand tribesmen and their strategy *vis-a-vis* encapsulating systems: 1 emigration; 2 unorthodox and often illegal sources of income such as smuggling and dacoity; 3 political allowances by encapsulating or larger societies in return for concessions in the form of penetration.

What then are the fundamental principles of Pukhtun social organization? The underlying principles are threefold and interconnected: the primary principle rests on *tarboorwali* which in turn crudely ensures a ceiling to the wealth and power an individual may accumulate and therefore more or less forces the second principle, which is an intense spirit of democracy that finds ratification in the tribal charter. The

third principle is that of honour deriving from certain features of the Pukhtun Code particularly regarding women and their chastity (Chapters 4 and 7). The model as built through the case-studies reveals a man's world in the most chauvinistic sense of the concept. There is manifest and constant glorification of *machismo*. The entire concepts of Pukhto revolve round the concept of manhood (*saritob*) and honour which in turn involves man's ideal image of himself. The highest compliment is 'he is a man' (*saray day*). The three key and prestige conferring symbols of tribal society, the male guest house (*hujra*), the gun (*topak*) and the council of elders (*jirga*), are exclusively the reserve of Pukhtun males. In the most profound sense it is a man's world.

The central issues in Pukhtun society revolve around the pursuit of power, status and honour, a pursuit that is closely related and limited to agnatic kin on the tribal genealogical charter. The symbolism of unilineal descent from a common apical ancestor is effective in articulating a great deal of the organizational functions of these groups. As I hope to illustrate in the study, the operative segment of the tribe which defines the genealogical and geographical boundaries, the arena of conflict, and produces its leaders and alliances, is the sub-section. I shall analyse tribal social organization and political activity in terms of the sub-section as the operative lineage. The single most important feature of society with far-reaching socio-economic ramifications is that of agnatic rivalry. As Freudian man is charged with hostility towards his father and Malinowskian man against avuncular authority, the object of hostility to the Pukhtun is his Father's Brother's Son (*tarboor*).² The answers to questions underlying both psychological and sociological motivation invariably lie in agnatic kin or *tarboor* relationships and at the core of the concept of agnatic rivalry translated in society as *tarboorwali*. There is thus a significant dividing line between true siblings and classificatory siblings. 'Balanced opposition' in tribal structure means the opposing subgroups of cousins, usually of that generation.

The Pukhtun model presupposes that politics is a central activity involving competition for power and as a mode for acquiring honour and status in society. I will be arguing that *Pukhtunwali* survives and that its main aim is political domination at a certain lineage level and not economic aggrandization. Political domination gives political status which in turn affords access to political administration, which may or may not give direct economic benefits. The implications for agnatic rivalry are obvious: while appropriating power agnatic rivals are excluded from it. It is a 'zero-sum' situation (Barth, 1959). The structure of

political domination is at once a behavioural and an ideological phenomenon. Briefly, the problem concerns the Pukhtun view of his world and the changes set in motion within it as a consequence of encapsulation. Deviance from and compromise of the Pukhtun model are social mechanisms of adjustment. The awareness of deviance poses an acute dilemma for the Pukhtun: either he rejects his Code or removes himself to those unencapsulated areas where he can practise it. The dilemma is still unresolved, as the study will illustrate.

Tribal life on varying social and political levels is a constant struggle against attempts to capture, cage or encapsulate it by larger state systems. However, it is already totally imprisoned in the bonds of its own Code. For SAM the test is severe; the Code still survives to an extent in the face of the rather shabby symbols of and feeble attempts at encapsulation. The encounter debilitates the tribal system by attacking it at its most vulnerable and yet vital spot: the Code – the very core and essence of Pukhtunness and that which forms and defines a Pukhtun. In this encounter there can be no synthesis, no harmonious absorption of one system into another; there can be only stages of rejection. I am arguing that SAM is an *aspect* of TAM as a consequence of political operations.

I will show how lineages, particularly the operative lineage, interact with each other in conflict and alliances around the concept of *tarboorwali* through extended case-studies from TAM and SAM over three and four generations (Chapter 7). How one lineage emerges and in direct proportion the other lineages decline, resulting in changing settlement arrangements, marriage patterns, economic and political activity, is thereby made clear (Chapters 8 and 9). The important variable is the interaction with the colonizing power and its vast resources (Chapters 3, 5 and 10). Administrative patronage confers status and income as it creates a broker role for the Maliks (petty chiefs or headmen). Another important factor is the expulsion from the Tribal Areas into the Settled Areas of groups who over two or three generations make their fortune, first as tenants then as subinfeudators and collaterals of land, and return to reinvest it in the continuation of lineage feuds. In short, I shall show the relationships of lineages to changing political situations, which, in turn, involve changing attitudes towards each other and towards social and cultural values. Pukhto is still *spoken (wai)* but more difficult to *do (kai)*. I will relate the shifting lineage positions and conflicts to encapsulating systems and, in turn, to tribal strategy, which will illuminate theoretically how lineage structures and Pukhto concepts

undergo changes as a result of such encounters. Part of the thesis involves the concept of encapsulation which in turn brings with it the awareness of Mohmandness in the act of migration, an awareness successfully manipulated for political or professional purposes, as I shall show through case-studies (Part Three).

The total period during which I was studying the Mohmands, between 1974 and 1977, confirmed part of my thesis that *Pukhtunwali* survives in its ideal form if given the right ecological environment and the condition of political unencapsulation. With changing economic factors, such as development schemes bringing new sources of income and a form of encapsulation through penetration, values even in TAM have begun to change (Part Three). In 1973, the year the development schemes began, the last agnatic killing was committed. A certain correlation is apparent. If the peace in Shati Khel becomes a permanent condition it would, paradoxically, imply deviant Pukhtun behaviour if we are able to refer to the ideal-type.

However, the thesis that Pukhtun social structure and Code survive encapsulation is partly refuted and partly substantiated by the very application and nature of the model in TAM and SAM respectively and its geo-political requirements, as I will show. Diachronic analysis of the model will enable us to examine the historical and structural circumstances of its appearance, reproduction and, finally, processes of alteration and reduction in SAM as epiphenomenon. The two important features making for its empirical validity are the *stability* of the model and its capacity to *reproduce* itself successfully over some four centuries at least. These features provide the basis for the formulation of the problem: what social and cultural criteria determine the transmission of values from one generation to the next? Or, through what social mechanism does a society prevent breakdown of transmission in the face of encapsulating systems that herald social and economic change? The answers are central to my study.

II Methodology

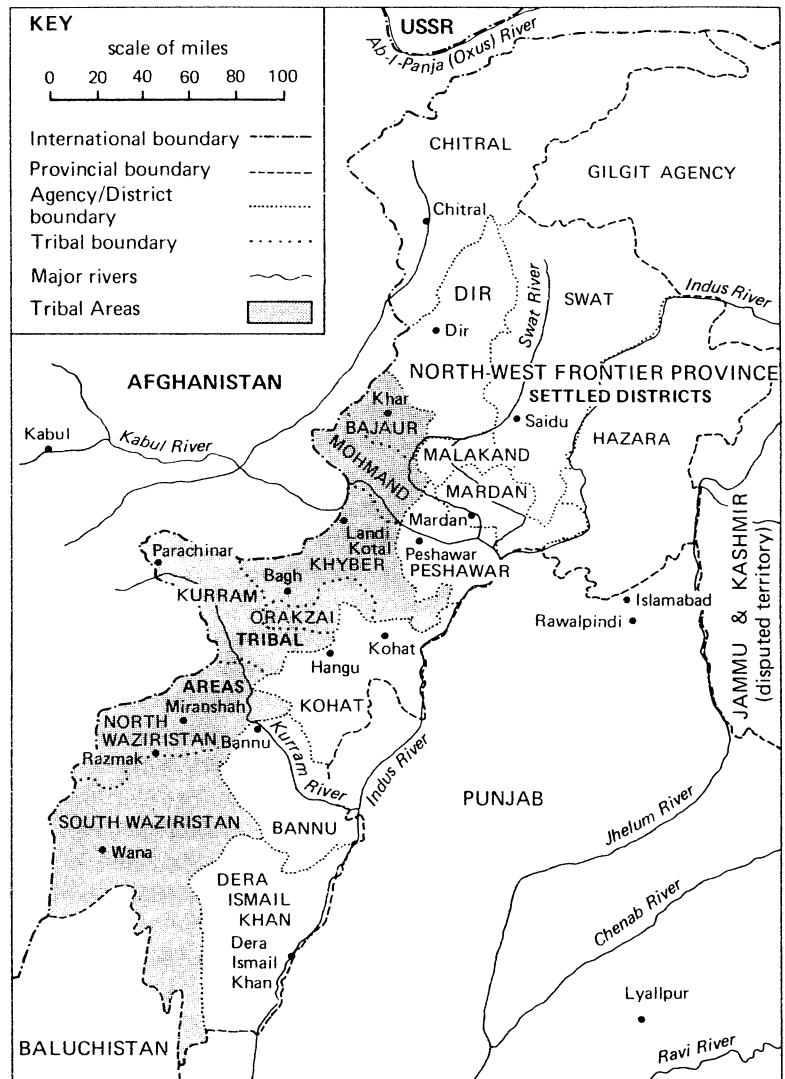
(a) *Method in the field*

The study will be worked out within a framework of Pukhtun life that includes both the grand symmetry of tribal lineage structure with its varying and interconnected arches and spans, and also, on another level, the trivia and minutiae of daily existence: the cold

geometrical arrangements and precision of anthropological tribal lineage charts combined with the smells and sounds of everyday village life. I will not be concerned only with the area of the village, heads of animals, extent of rural credit, lineage charts, etc., in themselves, but as part of larger structural arrangements of social organization. I wish to present the whole range of ethnographic data reflecting the humdrum of everyday life that the average informed reader may wish to see for himself in order to learn about the Pukhtuns, but at the same time I will order the data in such a manner as to illustrate clearly the underlying principles of Pukhtun social organization. The former without the latter is to my mind heuristically an unrewarding and even incomplete anthropological exercise. But the latter without regard to the former risks the danger of becoming a rarified model and losing touch with social reality.

First, a few words about my field-work areas. It is important to understand clearly the distinction between Tribal Areas and Settled Areas, as it provides the basis of division among the Mohmands with far-reaching ramifications. The Tribal Areas of the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan consist of seven Political Agencies (Map 1). They differ from the Settled Areas in that:

- (1) no criminal or civil procedure codes of Pakistan apply;
- (2) they are not subject to the payment of taxes or rents of any kind. Many peripheral Islamic tribes like the Kababish Arabs pay taxes (Asad, 1970:154) and there are officially appointed Sheikhs to collect them;
- (3) they are loosely administered through a political administration whose main aim is to ensure general tribal peace, especially in headquarters and on major roads. The administrative arrangement of 'Pax Britannica', confirmed in the tribal treaties of 'accession' at the turn of the century, that whatever happens 100 yards off the road on either side is no concern of the administration, was respected by the government of Pakistan. The designation of the head of the Agency, the Political Agent, underlines the contractual and political nature of the relationship. His designation contrasts with the officer in charge of a Settled District who is called by three names and wears three hats: for purposes of taxes he is District Collector, for administering law, the District Magistrate and for maintenance of law and order, the Deputy Commissioner. The Tribal Areas are federally administered but are attached to the Provincial Government of the North-West Frontier Province for administrative purposes because of geographical and historical reasons;
- (4) no political parties or modern politics are allowed as stipulated in



MAP 1 *The North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan*

the original tribal treaties. The voting right is reserved for the officially listed Maliks.

Living in one or other Area is a political condition of which the tribal

people are explicitly aware. Tribesmen contrast *ilaqa Sarkar* (literally Government Area) with *ghair ilaqa* (outside the Area) and conceptualize the two as antithetical forms of social and political organization. *Ghair* literally means alien, foreign or strange. *Ghair ilaqa* tribesmen live in a state of *siba* or 'institutionalized dissidence' (Gellner, 1969a:1). I prefer the description of such tribal societies as living in 'institutionalized dissidence' to the more usual reference to them in anthropological literature as 'ordered anarchies' (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, 1970; Middleton and Tait, 1970). 'Dissidence' implies an outside authority which the tribe disagrees with, rebels and rejects in order to keep it at bay. Dissidence is thus implicit in rejection. 'Anarchy', on the other hand, implies a state of chaos within the tribal universe although segmentary societies may be structurally 'ordered'. I will be arguing that to maintain and perpetuate its own social organization based on its tribal normative standards and Code, Pukhtun social history is one of dissidence implying rejection of larger systems.

For purposes of the study I shall define the Mohmand universe geographically as restricted to those lineages living in the Mohmand Agency or conterminous with and along the Peshawar border. Mohmands in Afghanistan, forming half of the entire Mohmand population, and the large groups in the Settled Areas of Mardan and Charsadda, fall outside the scope of my study.

I should now like to say something about my field-work schedule. The idea of conducting a micro-level survey in the Mohmand Agency first came up in 1972 when I was Deputy Secretary, Home and Tribal Affairs Department, to the North-West Frontier Province Government and as a result of my dealing with information on the Tribal Areas. When I was appointed Registrar of the Cooperative Societies, NWFP, in early 1973, I decided to focus my study on economic problems related to kinship structures and selected two sets of Mohmand villages, one in the Mohmand Agency and one in the Peshawar District, after visiting many settlements in the summer of 1974. My primary aim was to select an 'all-Mohmand' village in the Settled Area which, because of its isolated situation, still retained its tribal social customs and structure but was nevertheless in a broader administrative structure, and to draw comparisons with unencapsulated Mohmand villages deep in the Tribal Areas: a comparison between those approximating to the ideal-type and those exposed, juxtaposed or susceptible to encapsulating systems and social change. A largely simplified cause-and-effect study of encapsulation and its impact and ramifications on tribal structure could thus be made.

The questions arise as to how and why I finally selected Shati Khel and Bela Mohmandan. The tribal settlements were selected after detailed discussions with the Commissioner of the Peshawar Division and the Political Agent, Mohmands. As this was to be the first study of its – or any – kind in the Agency these officials were keen to suggest villages near the main, and only, road of the Agency, which ran in a direct northerly direction up to the Nahakki mountain range. In any case, travel into the Agency beyond Ekka Ghund, the Agency headquarters, requires clearance from the political authorities for non-locals and an official escort of tribal levies (*badragga*). Traffic, which began as a result of the general opening of the Mohmand road in 1974, comes to a standstill before dusk when people try to return to the sanctuary of their homes. There are at least four check-posts on the main road between Michni and Nahakki (one at Michni, two at Ekka Ghund and one at Yakh Dand) manned by the Frontier Scouts (in the Agency) and the Frontier Constabulary (at Michni) which scrutinize travellers and transport for smuggling, kidnapping and unauthorized entry.

My concern was to select a village away from the road so as to approximate to as pure a picture of tribal life as possible. The road itself was no international or commercial highway. It was brought up to the Nahakki Pass in 1935 by the British as a strategic military move and triggered off the Mohmand campaign of that year. After this event the authorities tacitly let the road fall into disuse and no further attempts were made either to repair or extend the road until 1974. I finally decided on the Shati Khel area, which touches the main road at one end but is about two miles off the road and almost at the foot of the Nahakki range, which symbolized the furthest point of penetration until then. As this area was virtually untouched it promised a rich source of original anthropological material. My hopes were not to be disappointed and during field-work I found myself constantly checking a tendency to be prejudiced in favour of concentrating on TAM to the detriment of SAM.

Structurally and empirically TAM society fitted into the now classic mould of segmentary and acephalous tribal systems in anthropological literature (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, 1970; Middleton and Tait, 1970). Here was a patrilineal and egalitarian society with segmentary groups arranged in symmetrical order, dividing and subdividing to exhibit 'nesting attributes'. Territorial boundaries corresponded to tribal segmentary boundaries.

The selection of Bela Mohmandan presented a different type of

problem. Many of the Mohmand villages in the Peshawar District which I visited were ethnically mixed and often contained two or more tribes. A selection of any of these would have distorted the comparison and severely affected the variables involved. Bela Mohmandan served the purpose admirably. Although it was remote enough not to have electricity, tube-wells, etc., it was located in the Province's foremost district and was about a furlong from the Agency border. Administratively Bela was part of the Daudzai Police Station which is one of the few areas in the Province selected for the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

Full-time field-work was conducted between August 1975 and March 1976. From March 1976 to August 1976 I was able to continue part-time field-work in my official capacity as instructor in rural sociology and applied anthropology at the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, Peshawar. The ethnographic present is 1975-76 in the study. Between August 1976 and August 1977 I was posted as Political Agent in the Orakzai Agency which enabled me to complement my field-work by a macro-view of tribal Pukhtun society. My contact with the Mohmands did not cease. They came to stay with me at my headquarters in Hangu from both TAM and SAM and it was a rare week when I did not have a Mohmand, often with his family, staying for a few days. This kept me up to date with fresh developments in my field-work areas.

As there is a need to be precise in spatial terms in describing field-work areas and universe, so there is an equally important need for precision in delineating time-periods and their wider socio-historical context. My study in diachronic analysis uses historical data to place in context the synchronic study of 1975-76. A study in the ethnographic present almost by anthropological definition precludes historical diachronical analysis and as a result reinforces conceptualization of social structure based on consensus and harmony. The very vocabulary of structuralism and functionalism is indicative of this: structure, harmony, equilibrium. The two outstanding exceptions are, of course, the studies of Cyrenaica (Evans-Pritchard, 1973) and highland Burma (Leach, 1977). On the ground, societies on the Indian subcontinent are subject to changes with the various dynasties, rulers and invasions in Indian history. Lord Curzon, the creator of the North-West Frontier Province, once reflected that 'no man who has ever read a page of Indian history will prophesy about the Frontier' (Curzon, 1906:43).

If there is an anthropological lesson that one learns about tribal social life during field-work it is that social networks on various levels at

one point or the other are interconnected. This was dramatically brought home to me by a murder that was committed during my field-work in 1975 outside Bela Mohmandan by a closely related agnate of the Subdivisional Officer of the Public Works Department at Hangu, Orakzai Agency. Although the murderer was in jail, the officer had become the prime target, partly because of his eminence, and could not visit his home area in 1977 until the time I was in Hangu.

Added to the problem of open hostility to surveys or official inquisitiveness (Ashraf, 1962; Hussain, 1958:1-2) is the problem of shortage of archival material. There are almost no records, either local or foreign, on the Mohmand, except for routine troop movements recorded by British punitive expeditions with little of ethnographic interest. The only available account was written by an officer, part of whose charge included the Mohmand. Although it is an incisive monograph, it was written by someone who knew little of the social organization in the interior of the Mohmand country and therefore concentrated almost entirely on the history of the hierarchical Khan-type Mohmand organizations in Lalpura in Afghanistan (Merk, 1898). Worse still, there were almost no learned men with special knowledge who could talk about Mohmand history or culture. Those learned Mohmands living in Peshawar or Mardan had little or no knowledge of their cousins in the Agency. Even the Political Agents and Political Officers, who were often knowledgeable on their tribes in other Agencies, administered the Mohmands until 1973 from outside the Agency in Peshawar.

Not surprisingly the Mohmands are the least known Pukhtuns and their Agency 'one of the most isolated areas along the Frontier' (Dichter, 1967: 66). They are among the Pukhtun tribes that have discouraged 'ink-blot tests, anthropometrics, and statistical anthropology' because of 'their ferocity and inaccessibility' (Spain, 1963: 63). Mohmand inaccessibility is mainly responsible for incorrect ethnographic descriptions of their social lives and deviances from Pukhtun custom. They are accused, for instance, of inhospitality and their villages are supposed not to contain male guest rooms (Spain, 1963: 45-6). The accusation of Mohmand inhospitality was found incorrect by my assistants and myself and also by the first wave of officials in 1974-5. Chapter 8 will show that every settlement, however small, has its own *hujra*. Statistical mistakes continue to crop up: for instance there is an incorrect genealogical addition in the Mohmand genealogy published by the Border Publicity Organization (May 1975: 14) which differs from my own investigations which are corroborated by Merk (1898) and General Staff

(1926). Wrong ages (by ten to fourteen years) have been shown on electoral rolls prepared for the Agency in 1977: Shahzada, seventy-four, is shown as sixty and Dilawar, forty, as thirty. The Rural Academy in its publications has quoted Bela Mohmandan as having 153 households and a population of 1,013, both more than double the actual figures (Khan and Shah, 1973: 4). It is conceptually as well as factually erroneous to categorize Mohmand landlords living in the style of the Yusufzai Khans in Mardan as Mohmand tribesmen of the Agency (Spain, 1962: 81-93). Needless to add that none of the above authors actually visited the interior of the Agency.

Matters are made worse by the general inaccessibility of literature on the Tribal Areas for various reasons, often because they contain politically 'sensitive' material. For example, the authoritative monographs by Howell on the Mahsuds (1931), King on the Orakzais (1900) and Merk on the Mohmands (1898) are practically unknown and are not found in the bibliographies of standard works on the Frontier (Barth, 1972; Elliott, 1968; Miller, 1977; Spain, 1962, 1963).

Anthropological surveys in Muslim tribal societies confront a problem regarding the interviewing of women (Barth, 1953: 29; 1970, 1972). I was fortunate in having my wife and her sister present to act as interviewers of women and interpreters of their cultural codes, which helped add an important dimension to my study. My wife and her sister were probably the first outside women to enter the Agency as far as Shati Khel, and certainly the first beyond the Nahakki Pass and as far as the Safi Habibzai Kandahari areas where the ancestors of their agnatic ascendant, the Akhund of Swat, are said to be buried. It would not surprise many people if I were to state that females do play a full part in the political and economic life of the Pukhtuns. As the case-studies in Chapters 5 and 7 will show, women are often in the forefront of upholding Pukhtun ideology, an aspect of society that can be overlooked for lack of data and therefore remain unanalysed.

My data were collected mainly from 101 formal questionnaires: twenty questionnaires were subsequently excluded as fifteen were of women of households already included in the interviews (seven from TAM and eight from SAM) and five were rejected as they appeared to be faulty and inaccurate. The remaining eighty-one households have a total population of 802: Shati Khel³ 321 (twenty-four households including four entire settlements of its twenty), Kado Korona 117 (twelve of the village's seventy-seven households), Bela 260 (thirty-two of its sixty households) and Kodo 104 (thirteen of the village's thirty-four

households). Of the total population of 1,031 in Shati Khel, 253 people of the 321 involved in my investigation represent the four settlements I investigated intensively and the rest are religious and occupational groups living outside Shati Khel but socially connected to it. As the above figures show, I also interviewed people from the other nuclear settlements in the Shati Khel area (Map 5, iii). I also visited Shabkadar, the other house (*kor*) of many Shati Khel elders and the two villages near Bela, Kado and Kodo. Some households of the Kado lineage of Kado Korona and Bela share property, keep in close contact and refer to each other as the other *kor*. The important point to remember is that though Kado is only about a mile from Bela it is in the Agency (Maps 2 and 3). Certain data I considered injurious to the interests of the individuals and groups I studied have been omitted and anonymity has been preserved where it was felt necessary.

Methodologically I am in full agreement that 'we begin to realise that the ideal model of the small-scale isolated primitive community is a myth' (Cohen, 1974: 51). Astraddle across the Agency-District border and the international border, the Mohmands interact with the state to their own advantage and when and how it suits them. Reference to the encapsulating system or state is an integral part of tribal social organization even if it merely re-defines their unencapsulated condition. For purposes of methodology 'the anthropologist must *deliberately* formulate his problems in such a way as to make reference to the state a necessary part of his analysis' (ibid.: 129). Unfortunately, apart from a few exceptions this acceptance of the larger state or region has been largely ignored in anthropological studies of small-scale primitive and tribal societies (ibid.: 126; Velsen, 1969: 145). I agree that for purposes of methodology 'in tribal studies the tribe has too often been treated as if it were factually isolated from external cultural, economic and political influences' (Velsen, 1969: 145). For instance, Professor Bailey records of his village: 'I was able to isolate Bisipara from its surroundings' (Bailey, 1960: 5). I maintain that to study a village in 'isolation' is to risk the danger of reductionism. Certain outstanding studies may be mentioned as having extended beyond the spatial universe of the village as a social unit and linked it to the region and wider networks (Asad, 1970; Barth, 1972; Boissevain, 1974; Cohen, 1969, 1972; Epstein, 1962, 1973; Gellner, 1969a; Mayer, A. C., 1966) both among the individualist and holist anthropologists. Indeed at one point both analyses require a knowledge of 'linkages' and 'networks' to encapsulating systems (individualist) or superstructure (holist). Unfortunately,

too few studies extend diachronically over time. This is one of the reasons I find the studies of the Sanusi (Evans-Pritchard, 1973) and the Burmese (Leach, 1977) to be among the most effective tribal analyses. In these two examples, both space and time are extended to explain synchronic social phenomena and organizations. Social reality becomes polychrome. I will therefore consciously extend my own study spatially and temporally, without which a full understanding of tribal social structure would not be possible. Encapsulating systems and their links, both over time and space, subsume social history in a connected series of on-going social events that give meaning to and help us to understand the logic behind such fundamental Pukhtun social activity as agnatic rivalry. If I turn to the question of social causality I will in part be turning to historical processes.

I hoped to avoid either an 'ethnocentric' or a 'synecdochic' bias in my study (Ahmed, 1976). I therefore ensured information from and communication to the various groups and strata among my field-work areas by subdividing them thus: men (elders and *kashar*), women, Pukhtun, non-Pukhtun, religious and occupational groups. I was fortunate to interview some of the oldest men in Shati Khel, like Shahmat (Musa) who died during my field-work at what was claimed to be an age over 110 years, Umar Gul (Malok) now said to be the oldest man in TAM at over 100 years old, and Noor Mohammad the oldest man in Bela. From these I learned of social conditions prevalent at the turn of the century. It is fair to point out that Pukhtun society is patrilineal, male-orientated and comprises a population that is self-consciously and almost entirely homogeneous, descended as it is from a common apical ancestor apart from limited religious and occupational groups. Young or old, rich or poor, the Pukhtun sees it as his world and upholds his social values by the prevalent Pukhtun ideology. I shall show by a combination of 'the extended case-method' (Gluckman, 1961) and 'situational analysis' (Velsen, 1964, 1969) based on information provided by informants from various strata and groups, and making allowances for their value judgments, that in certain features, specially those which revolve around the two key concepts of agnatic rivalry and chastity of women, ideal and empirical Pukhtun behaviour coincide to a large degree.

This is not a study of a society 'before' and 'after' (Epstein, 1962, 1973; Firth, 1936, 1959) or of 'hills' versus 'plains' tribes, but a simultaneous study of two groups belonging to one tribe living in differentiated administrative environments. The latter situation creates problems

of choices of action and limitations of strategy, both for individuals and groups. I will be arguing that TAM and SAM are not alternative models of social organization but aspects of the same model. The study should allow us to see for ourselves the intervening *processes* of change and not merely the *stages* of change. These will give occasion through extended case-studies to examine normative and deviant behaviour as well as showing up social regularities and irregularities. The influence of modernization (roads, schools, electricity, etc.) on social morphology through the changing economic balance in traditional symmetrical tribal order activate conflicting norms which are themselves a symptom and consequence of the encapsulating process. A section on methodology could not have a more appropriate closing statement than the following: 'These demands are for a synchronic analysis of general structural principles that is closely interwoven with a diachronic analysis of the operation of these principles by specific actors in specified situations' (Velsen, 1969: 149).

(b) *Role of the field-worker*

The role of the field-worker has been insufficiently dealt with in analytical anthropological monographs. I think it is necessary to know why he is there, who sent him, what his relationships are with his respondents, for whom he will write up his study and what specific problems he faced in the field. I am in full agreement that for

the processes of feedback ... nowadays it becomes essential to know a great deal more about the way in which the field anthropologist has gone about his task: how well he knew the local language; whether he lived among the people as a prince or a beggar or like an 'ordinary' person; who were his friends and who told him what and when and why, and what, if anything, he did about the things he was told (Gluckman, 1969: xviii).

The answers to these questions may provide insight into the mind of the researcher and his own relationship with the topic of his study. From the reader's viewpoint, they may increase empathy with the study and create sympathetic understanding of the problems faced by the field researcher.

'Field-work is an extremely personal traumatic kind of experience' (Leach, 1971a: 1) which can even be 'painful and humiliating' (Wax, 1971: 19), and the first weeks invariably produce a 'feeling of

hopelessness and despair' (Malinowski, 1964: Introduction). One is in a sense always *asking*: asking for information, for time, even for social acceptance however temporary and superficial. In return there is palpably so little to give. In terms of reciprocity a sophisticated monograph produced a couple of years later will neither change the lives of the people studied nor be read by them generally. I agree that 'the personal involvement of the anthropologist in his work is reflected in what he produces' (Leach, 1971a: 1) and that 'Anthropologists are also influenced to an enormous extent by the nature of their field experience' (Winter, 1973: 171).

In my own case I found I was pushing myself physically almost beyond endurance. I was beginning to be socially cut off from my service colleagues and friends and even family. My service colleagues were advancing to better jobs while I felt frozen in my study, a victim of a feeling of suspension which bordered near alienation and even depression. In identifying and living with marginal groups one runs the danger of becoming marginal. I found myself asking what I was doing, a question which I am sure was reflected in the minds of many who knew me. Was it the honour and challenge of obtaining a Ph.D degree alone? Was it some instinct in me to serve a less privileged people by documenting their life and bringing their condition to light? Was it simply to understand people and through them myself? Or was it a form of escape? Perhaps, as with all anthropologists, it was a combination of these factors. None the less, in retrospect and as with many anthropologists, I found that some of my happiest moments of companionship were spent in the villages and some lasting friendships were made during my field-work.

The difficulties of method in survey work in the Tribal Areas are mentioned by the author of *Tribal People of West Pakistan: a demographic study*:

It was often heart-breaking to find the interviewee absent from his hut after the enumerator had walked all the long and difficult miles of a mountain country. One way out would have been to hold the interviews in the evening when the interviewee was expected to be back from work. But, in many cases, this was not possible, firstly, because the difficult terrain made it hard to find the way after sunset, and secondly, because, a stranger, despite all peace and calm in these regions, still could not expose himself to the danger of moving about at night (Ashraf, 1962: 12).

The above quotation is from one of the few surveys conducted in the headquarters of the 'open' and 'safe' Tribal Areas. It did not involve residence or 'participant observation' and was limited to a formal questionnaire. In contrast, mine was the first survey of any kind on any scale in the Mohmand Agency, far from the headquarters, in a closed area and especially significant as it involved full participant observation.

The actual physical dangers of doing work in the trans-Indus tribal tracts cannot be minimized. At least one anthropologist, Robert Pehrson, died recently in Baluchistan due to the severity of the field-work conditions (Pehrson, 1966). Scarcity of water, lack of electricity, sanitation, etc., make life difficult and uncomfortable. My wife and I contracted a species of body lice called scabies from sleeping in the beddings provided in TAM that took months to cure, and drew a withering comment on the physical filthiness and standards of sanitation of their hill cousins from the elders of Bela.

Apart from physical discomfort there is always the presence and undercurrents of what the British termed in the last century 'the Great Game'. Shots fired at officials or kidnappings are not uncommon in the Tribal Areas as a result of international political tension. I was conducting my field-work from 1975 to 1976 when relations along the international border were more tense than normal.⁴ Very few outsiders ever stayed the night in Shati; officials would either hurry home to Peshawar before dusk or, as in the case of some junior officials after 1973, to Ekka Ghund to their quarters.

In spite of the difficulties mentioned, I had few problems conducting my field-work. The reasons, as I can see them, were that I had no problem of assuming the kinship role offered to me as a field-worker, nor was I working within an alien culture. Above all, I was introduced to TAM and SAM areas before my actual field-work through my contacts with them in the summer of 1974. I had, in fact, appointed two sub-inspectors of cooperative societies from among my field-work groups, the grandson of Shahzada Malik,⁵ and Shamsur Rahman of Kado, and tried to help others in various ways. Shati and Bela elders (*mashars*) had visited me in my office and home. Through the tribal network I was quickly known, accepted and therefore assisted. After the initial reservations expressed by those I had not met earlier I was taken into complete confidence. Thus there was no 'pre-involvement', 'introductory' or 'probationary period' (Firth, 1966: 307). When I started field-work in August 1975 the stage was set and waiting. I could therefore 'put aside camera, note-book and pencil' and 'plunge'

into and participate in the 'imponderabilia of actual life', which afforded me the opportunity 'to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his version of his world' (Malinowski, 1964: Introduction).

A remarkable sociological characteristic is the almost poker-faced truthfulness of tribesmen. Facts about sensitive issues that were difficult to accept at face value because of their startling frankness were repeatedly cross-checked and invariably found to be accurate. Perhaps social life in *ghair ilaqa* does not create the inhibitions and complexes which cause people to conceal things or lie about them in more civilized social environs. In such an open and face-to-face society there are no secrets. I found that at the slightest hint of deviance from the truth, whether in genealogical lines or in inflated figures about property or income, there would be an immediate and normally good-humoured rebuke either at that moment if an elder were present, or later should I happen to counter-check or my assistants inquire in cases of doubt. This is not to deny that many Mohmands were probably responding to me in the hope that I would take over as their Political Agent or be appointed to some other senior job and therefore be in a position to grant patronage. While not exactly sure of what I was about initially, many would 'humour' my mundane and tedious questioning and regarded me as a harmless and eccentric type of officer.

It may be significant to point out that I lived and travelled throughout my field-work period unarmed and unescorted, a rare attribute shared perhaps only with the Mians and the occupational groups among the Mohmand. For even the Political Agent, like the most minor official, had some form of armed escort, if only for prestige. Like the Mians, members of religious groups, I was unanimously placed in a 'neutral' category and could go and come as I pleased.

During the initial stages of my study the two groups of informants expressed their anxieties in ways which reflect their particular political contexts. TAM groups wondered why I was so interested in sociological questions and not the usual political ones, for instance regarding 'Pukhtunistan'. Was my questioning the prelude to abolition of the institution of the Maliks? Was I noting names of wanted criminals, the Proclaimed Offenders, who escaped the arms of the law and sought refuge in the Agencies? Were we working for the Intelligence Department in an attempt to assess and check international smuggling? However, in SAM fears reflected those of agriculturalists: was this a survey to end the revenue remission they traditionally enjoyed, or to impose a new tax?

By the summer of 1974, I had settled down to a 'pseudo-kinship role' in both areas. The assignment of this role by TAM and SAM is of interest in revealing the attitudes of the two areas. For TAM I became a younger 'brother' of two of the Shati Maliks and pseudo-kin on the lineage charter as a classificatory sibling. I was defined in terms of the tribal charter involving the creation of a fictitious lineage link on it. To the people of Bela I became a 'Belawal', a villager or a person belonging to the village and defined in a spatial sense.

I was acutely aware that as a local officer I could become, however unwittingly, an agent of change – a role I wished to avoid, initially at least, for purposes of academic neutrality and purity. I therefore minimized my role as an official and accepted passively the role allocated to me by TAM and SAM.

I was also conscious of the anthropological need to retain a strict neutrality and objectivity during my field-work. The ideal anthropologist in the field in his relation to the people he is studying 'does not want to improve them, convert them, govern them, trade with them, recruit them or heal them. He wants only to understand them' (Mead, 1974: 57). There were advantages and disadvantages in my being a local officer. From an academic point of view I attempted to be as dispassionately objective as possible. However, it would be unnatural to claim that the extreme problems of economic poverty did not move me subjectively and spur me into hoping that my study would throw some light on these problems and in this way bring them to the notice of the concerned authorities for solution.

III Theory

In this section I shall briefly make three theoretical points in an attempt to place my study within a relevant theoretical framework. The first concerns traditional structural tribal studies in British social anthropology. Following from the consensual models above and in opposition to them we arrive at the second point, a discussion of conflict and cleavage models as represented in Marxist anthropology. Finally I will touch on the debate in the social sciences between methodological holism and methodological individualism. My position will be clearly stated and I hope to substantiate it through the ordering of my data and arguments as the study proceeds.

Professor Leach in *Political Systems of Highland Burma* complained 'that British Social Anthropology had rested too long on a crudely

oversimplified set of equilibrium assumptions derived from the use of organic analogies for the structure of social systems' (Leach, 1977: ix). British anthropologists tended to borrow their concepts from Durkheim rather than Marx, Pareto or Weber. Consequently societies revealed 'functional integration', 'social solidarity', 'cultural uniformity' and 'structural equilibrium'. Societies that displayed symptoms of internal conflict leading to structural change were suspected of 'anomie' and pathological decay. At present, however, iconoclasts tear down the old gods of anthropology. Evans-Pritchard's work among the Azande (1937) is a 'romantic and myopic version ... [he] lived for many years as a prince – not a commoner amongst them' (Lamb, 1977: 712). Nadel (1942, 1947) in the field emerges as an offensive, unsympathetic character 'bullying' his Nuba informants. Apparently he had access to a police squad in the Nuba mountains to summon his respondents and was contemptible of their customs. He is the anthropologist as tool of imperialism and oppression *par excellence* (Faris, 1973: 153-70). Evans-Pritchard gets away lightly symbolizing 'the anthropologist as reluctant imperialist' (James, 1973). This is, of course, unfair. I cannot imagine a more sympathetic treatment of the subject than his *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (Evans-Pritchard, 1973).

In a recent reprint of the same book Leach felt that the pendulum had swung too far: 'The pendulum has now swung so far over in the opposite direction that I am obliged to present it as a defence of empirical observation against the encroachments of structuralist Marxist fantasy!' (Leach, 1977: xvii). I would agree that the pendulum may have swung too far. This is a deductive not a polemic statement and is based on field-work data. While Swat provides a neat example of a 'conflict tribal model' (Asad, 1972) Mohmands, ecologically and historically, present a different picture, an opposing ideal model. Conflict exists on two levels in society and works in opposite directions: external conflict with imperial forces reinforce ideal Pukhtun values, and internal conflict, exacerbated as a result of British-backed Maliks, interacts with agnatic rivalry to widen divisions in society (Chapters 3, 5 and 7). In spite of this the Mohmand model of an acephalous, segmentary, egalitarian tribal society is in the classic mould of British social anthropology. To illustrate my point I would like to borrow a description of one such African society which Leach uses as a model to attack:

At every level of Tale social organisation ... the tendency towards an equilibrium is apparent.... This does not mean that Tale society

was ever stagnant. Tension is implicit in the equilibrium.... But conflict could never develop to the point of bringing about complete disintegration. The homogeneity of Tale culture, the undifferentiated economic system, the territorial stability of the population, the network of kinship ties, the ramifications of clanship, and especially the mystical doctrines and ritual practices determining the native conception of the common good – all these are factors, restricting conflict and promoting restoration of equilibrium (Fortes, quoted in Leach, 1977: x).

I would like to postulate that Mohmands in the ideal-type model conform to the description of a tribal society in equilibrium as described above. In Chapter 4 I shall give a fuller account of this type of unencapsulated Pukhtun society revolving around concepts of *nang* (honour) as opposed to Pukhtun groups ordering their social organization around *qalang* (taxes and rents) that imply encapsulation, hierarchy and deviance from the Pukhtun ideal-type. The point of anthropological interest is that this is a picture of social reality as it exists today and not *circa* 1940 when *African Political Systems* was compiled.

Following from the discussion of equilibrium models, there is a tendency in anthropological literature to speak of the tribe as a unit, a whole. For example, Nuer or the Tiv are conceptualized as if they are contained and defined by their distinct genealogical charters (Bohannan, L., 1952, 1970; Bohannan, L. and Bohannan, P., 1953, 1968; Evans-Pritchard, 1940, 1970; Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, 1970). The social boundaries of the universe embrace the tribe in its entirety. Empirically I found the concept of the 'tribe' limiting for purposes of theoretical analysis. My data in TAM and SAM pointed to a lower level of the genealogical chart as the actual, effective social universe. As I posited in the opening statement of the study, the operative lineage in tribal society is the sub-section within which marriage and political alliances, and, above all, agnatic rivalry, are contracted, as I shall illustrate by case-studies. The Mohmand is at the centre and aware of three concentric tribal and diacritical circles, the blueprint of which he carries in his mind: the operative lineage, the sub-section as the immediate and cognitive socially relevant universe, a larger Mohmand circle that defines him as a member of the tribe and finally the phyletic boundary that defines him as a Pukhtun. Similarly three levels have been discerned for membership of castes in India: 'The lowest is that of an effective local subcaste population, which I call the kindred of co-operation' (Mayer,

A.C., 1970: 4). We may conceptualize the tribal sub-section as the 'effective local subcaste population' and could term its members 'the kindred of co-operation'. However, in view of the intense agnatic rivalry that is generated in the sub-section, perhaps 'the kindred of competition' may be a more apt description.

The concept of the operative lineage for analysis of social and political life poses a logical and interesting question: is the operative lineage to be translated in terms of economic activity as the 'lineage mode of production'? (Godelier, 1977). I shall deal with this at length in later chapters but the short answer is in the negative. The intense spirit of individualism and egalitarianism that permeates tribal groups vitiates any concept of sustained or institutionalized, joint or communal economic activity. Income, production and consumption are entirely a function of the household and the family, usually nuclear and in some cases compound families where a patriarch organizes economic activity and is a polygamist. Male married siblings living within the walls of a joint family settlement operate individual budgets and balance their own books (as will be seen in Chapters 8 and 9). The economic and consumption unit is the 'hearth' or *kor*. The 'mode of production' may be called 'familial' or 'domestic' (Sahlins, 1968: 75-81).

With reference to the second point of this section the pendulum of 'equilibrium models' has indeed swung in the opposite direction and conflict models are popular in anthropology today. There is a growing body of Marxist anthropological literature. Professor Godelier's illuminating analysis of Marxist anthropology and reference to the brands of 'vulgar Marxism' (Godelier, 1977), which was probably anticipated by Marx himself and prompted him to utter his prophetic disclaimer 'Je ne suis pas Marxiste', reflects that there is perhaps a band-wagon quality in this trend. Where do I stand for purposes of my study? From a pure and simple academic point of view (if such a view — to borrow a Wildean phrase — can be pure or simple) British social anthropology is still inclined to concepts centring around structure, function, consent and unity in primitive and tribal societies, an academic and almost psychological predilection rooted in its imperial history and the genesis of the discipline. Therefore Marxist anthropology with its emphasis on class, cleavage and conflict is a healthy intellectual corrective and the encounter can only be good for the discipline. For instance, it is interesting to note that Marxist anthropologists see the debate between Substantivist and Formalist economic anthropologists not only as having little actual content but with the two positions coalescing (Godelier,