Leadership Categories and Social Processes in Islam: The Cases of Dir and Swat

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LEADERSHIP CATEGORIES AND SOCIAL PROCESSES IN ISLAM: THE CASES OF DIR AND SWAT

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Political leaders in Muslim societies have often been religious leaders as well. The separation of church and state has never been an Islamic precept; in fact, from the very beginning Islam has asserted a right to dominance in the political realm. In this paper I intend to show how several Muslim political actors in Pakistan’s Northwest Frontier Province use indigenous Islamic categories in their struggles for power. But the categories are not completely plastic, to be manipulated at will. The actors are themselves constrained, and their actions structured, by these same concepts and beliefs.

The religion of these tribal leaders is not, however, equivalent to the religion of Muslim urbanites. Islam is a faith both of orthopraxy and orthodoxy, of action and of learning, of local belief and of scholarly exegesis. This difference in emphasis has been correlated to the mundane realities of rural and urban life. The urbanite lives in history and is aware of the chaos of contingency, the multiplicity of realities to choose from, the absence of any certainty in the flux of change; the villager, on the other hand, lives in nature and sees continuity and order both in the pattern of the seasons and in the highly personalized structure of his society. The city dweller wishes to capture history and create order through the learning of the scholar, while the tribesman/peasant stresses repetition, ritual, and the personal intercession of charismatic holy men (el-Zein 1977:248; see also Gellner 1981:114-30 who makes the distinction between the urban “doctor” and the rural “saint”).
Furthermore, the tribesman is concerned less with religious interpretation than he is with the activity of the holy man as an arbiter. Living outside the boundaries of the state and enmeshed in a culture that is based upon self-help and the feud, tribal Muslims use religious practitioners as go-betweens interposing not only with God but with other men as well (Morsy 1984:44-45). The “saint,” by virtue of his status, his command of religious discourse, and his position outside lineage rivalries, has the capacity to adjudicate, mediate, and even to unite: a capacity that makes him indispensable in peace as well as a potential leader in war (see Lindholm 1981:153 for the Swati case).

The urban and rural traditions are not necessarily antagonistic to one another. If we consider the urban tradition to be that of the Ulema (Scholars) and the folk tradition to be that of the Sufi, then it is well to remember that in the history of Islam a man could be both scholar and ecstatic. And we should also remember that the rural holy men were often trained in the urban centers, while the reformist movements in Islamic history have often arisen in the tribal regions. But, today, challenges of Westernization and modernization threaten the tradition of Islam by transforming the economic and social base upon which it rests. In a defensive response, many wish to affirm Islam as absolute and unitary, denying the validity of the less articulate (but deeply grounded) traditions of the countryside. The increasing importance of the city and the ever greater power of the state have also naturally magnified the religious influence of the center, while the practices of the periphery have become suspect. Perhaps, as some argue, this process is irreversible, and Islam will indeed become an orthodox monolith.

But the success or failure of this movement does not rest upon the power of argument or upon the supposed truth of the reformer’s message. The pattern Islamic institutions will take in the future derives from a complex interaction between local social organization and the religious values exemplified by individual actors. It is not simply a case of universal truth overcoming local heresy. It is more like a discussion between different approaches to Islam. This way of looking at Muslim life is, I believe, within the
realm of orthodox interpretation, since Islam is the most democratic of all major 
religions, relying on consensus among believers to determine law. The reliance on 
consensus is essentially anthropological and contextual. What the anthropologist 
(whether Muslim or non-Muslim) does is simply to reveal what some believers make of 
their faith. It is for the future to decide which version is most appropriate; but it is the 
duty of the anthropologist or sociologist to present the version of the people he has 
studied, so that their reality, which is unwritten, can also be made a party to the 
discussion.

The method I wish to use in my contribution is comparative and historical, showing 
the activities of several political figures over time and explaining some social correlates 
for what appear to be quite radical shifts in the emphasis on religious institutions and 
values. The areas chosen for examination are Swat and Dir, where I did anthropological 
fieldwork for approximately two years starting in 1968 and ending in 1977. Much of the 
material I will use in this comparison is from this fieldwork and is not generally 
available in the literature (Ahmed 1976; Barth 1959a; Caroe 1965; Wadud 1965), though 
some of it can be found in my ethnography (Lindholm 1982a) and in an earlier paper 
(Lindholm 1982b). The specific configuration I wish to render intelligible is as follows: 
Dir has been for generations a secular state, yet it has recently witnessed an impressive 
movement toward leadership by religious figures; Swat, on the other hand, was founded 
and ruled by religious charismatics, yet politics there has been increasingly secularized.

THE SETTING: SWAT AND DIR

Those who have lived in Pakistan certainly will know Swat and Dir, if not by personal 
acquaintance, then by legend. Swat is “the Switzerland of Pakistan,” a lush valley 
nestled in high mountains with good trout streams and spectacular scenery. The royal 
family, now deposed, has a well-earned reputation for urbanity and sophistication, and
Swat itself is perceived as the most “advanced” of the frontier regions. Dir, a valley just to the northwest of Swat, is in some respects in marked antithesis to its neighbor. It is dry and harsh, and difficult of access. Dir too had a royal family, also now deposed, but it took pride in its conservatism and isolation: traits shared by the valley as a whole. The two valleys thus offer strong contrasts in some ways, yet they are much alike in others. Both are dominated by Yusufzai Pukhtun (landholding tribesmen), both stress the code of *Pukhtunwali* with its values of revenge, refuge, and the offering of hospitality, both practice rigid purdah, both are populated by strict Sunni Muslims. In other words, not only are the inhabitants of the two valleys cousins genealogically, but also in terms of social life.

The similarity I wish to emphasize here is structural. Both societies understand their social world through the use of a segmentary lineage model. This model, typical of Middle Eastern tribal peoples, bases alliance and antagonism on patrilineal kinship. Kinship determines inheritance of land, so that close male relatives live and work next to one another and are rivals with one another for the land of their common ancestor. This patterned rivalry extends throughout the two regions, so that individuals oppose neighbors in a ward, wards oppose other wards in a village, and villages oppose one another within a district (see Lindholm 1981). This model has been discussed and argued about ad infinitum, and I will not distract the reader with a restatement of the pros and cons of using it as an interpretive device. I will only note that the most crucial aspects of Pukhtun life, such as land rights, obligations to take blood revenge, political alliances, and residence, are all built up through the segmentary structure and also that all recent writers on the NWFP have accepted the local model and found it a valuable tool for understanding Pukhtun social life (Hart 1985; Ahmed 1976, 1980; Lindholm 1982a).

The model is, however, crosscut and complicated by a dual bloc system of political and marriage alliances, so that each genealogical unit is in fact split in two. The dualistic blocs (*dullah*) have made for many misinterpretations of the Pukhtun social system, with
bloc alliances being taken as the foundation of the structure (see, for example, Barth 1959a:113). However, like the dualistic political alliances of other Middle Eastern tribesmen, the most famous being the *liff* of the Berbers (Montagne 1973; Gellner 1969:67; Hart 1970:45), the parties are actually an artifact of lineage rivalries between close male relatives. In daily life, a man’s opponent is his most powerful cousin, and he allies himself with more distant relatives against this cousin on the ancient political axiom that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” Three elements are really involved here: the manipulating political individual, his temporary allies, and his temporary opponents. Each person is acting in his own personal interests against his most salient opponents and will switch sides with alacrity when advantage is perceived. For instance, if one cousin is very successful in his political maneuverings, he will find his allied cousins joining his enemies to humble him. This leads to a long-term balance of oppositions (Barth 1959b:15-19). But political alliances do not supersede blood ties, and a man must take revenge if a close cousin who is an enemy is killed by a genealogically more distant political ally (Salzman 1978:62).

Another element worthy of note here is the important role of third-party intervention in this structure. Opposing lineages may be incited to war by neighbors who hope to obtain advantage from the violence, while outside groups may also be recruited to help a warring party gain an upper hand in the struggle. But outsiders are also utilized to unite lineages in battle against external aggression and to mediate between segments engaged in interminable feud. These latter functions are, in fact, the specific duties of the holy lineages and religious charismatics of the valleys. Holding authority by virtue of their conduct and heritage, religious figures have stood symbolically outside the hostility of the segmentary system. The Pukhtun, who will cede authority to no other man, will give way to the word and leadership of one who is an emissary of Allah. As Evans Pritchard (1949:87) writes, the tribesmen’s “need was for some authority lying outside their segmentary lineage system which could compose intertribal and sectional disputes and
bind the tribes and tribal sections together within an organization and under a common symbol.” This is a need filled by religious practitioners.

**TYPOLOGIES OF RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP: FROM MAHDI TO MUFTI**

Ahmed (1983) has distinguished three ideal types of religious figure in this region: the mullah, the Sufi, and the Sayyid. The contrast is roughly between the learned man (who is a servant of the village and officiates at the mosque), the ecstatic charismatic leader, and the descendant of the Prophet who validates his authority by reference to genealogy. These categories actually meld one into the other. The mullah is rarely very learned and may become a charismatic leader (as Ahmed documents) and may, perhaps, even dare to claim Sayyid status. Sayyids, despite their genealogies, may sink to earning their livings by reciting from the Koran or working as landless laborers, while some successful Sayyids may validate their position by following “sufi” practices. Sufis are also not so simple to classify and, like the Sayyids, also have a genealogical charter. As Trimmingham (1971) documents, there is a general evolution in Islamic tradition from the charismatic individual to the formation of a religious school and the eventual institutionalization into a cult. Even within this framework, the positions are not always clear. For instance, the Sanusi described by Evans-Pritchard (1949) were an orthodox order, but were seen by the Bedouin as a cult. Nor was the mullah described by Ahmed of one type. Instead, he attempted to move “up” from the inferior category of mullah/village servant to the exalted role of ecstatic leader, “alternating between a secular political program and a religious-charismatic one” (Ahmed 1983:160).

Rather than use Ahmed’s triadic schema, I would like here to follow the four-stage model offered by Brett (1980), who uses movement between learned (Mufti), warrior (Murabit), arbitrator (Marabout), and inspirational leader (Mahdi) to understand Islamic history in North Africa. This model, which focuses on leadership, may allow us to
escape a strict dichotomy between secular and religious action and to see the larger
pattern. Brett’s processual argument, enriched with detail on the interaction between
social organization and religious institutions, should help us make sense of the apparently
counterintuitive historical movements of Swat and Dir.

In order to understand these movements, we need to look more closely at the historical
and environmental contexts. As mentioned above, Swat is richer and far more populous
than Dir. “Swat is soft, Dir is hard,” says a local proverb. This difference has had a
profound effect on the evolution of political hierarchies in the two regions. A further
divergence concerns the surrounding political structures. Both Swat and Dir are at the
very edges of the Pukhtun world, a world that, like all segmentary lineage systems, tends
to expand at the expense of less well organized neighbors (Sahlins 1961). But whereas
the northern frontier of Swat faces the harsh mountains and fierce but impoverished
peoples of Kohistan, Dir instead looked toward the wealthy and ancient kingdom of
Chitral.

The effect these two factors has had on the evolution of leadership in Swat and Dir is
profound. Dir, unlike other mountain tribal regions, has had a centralized state from the
seventeenth century. The Painda khel lineage, living in the furthest northern regions,
managed to decisively defeat Chitral and achieve hegemony throughout Dir, so that
Elphinstone, writing in the Early nineteenth century, was able to report that Qasin Khan,
the head of the Painda khel, was “by far the most powerful Khaun among the
Eusofzyes…He can imprison, inflict corporal punishment, and even put to death.”i Swat,
on the other hand, had a more typical Pukhtun system of shallow hierarchies, continually
shifting alliances, and internal warfare, interrupted only by moments of unity inspired by
attempted invasion.

The causes for the variation in political structure lie in the factors cited above. Dir,
unlike Swat, faced a sophisticated and wealthy kingdom at its northern border. This is a
classic situation for the evolution of secondary state systems.ii In attempting to conquer
and subdue Chitral, Dir itself developed centralization, a centralization that was validated by success and by booty. Swat did not have this opportunity for state building. Instead, the Swati Pukhtun were fought to a standstill in the mountain lairs of the Kohistani, who had neither booty to take nor an organization to copy. Dir, then, built up a centralized hierarchy through confrontation and through the wealth extorted from Chitral. With its superior organizational and economic capacity, the powerful Painda khel lineage was able to move south and bring under its sway the relatively sparse population of the rest of the valley and to establish a long-lasting kingdom. The situation in Swat did not permit such a movement. Even a strong lineage could not move south into the densely populated lowlands. The resistance was simply too massive. A low surrounding population density and the proximity of a wealthy state to emulate and exploit were the primary factors in the evolution of Dir into a small but powerful kingdom.

So far, I have discussed the two areas as if they had no relationship with one another. But in fact their relationship is crucial to understanding the further permutations of politics, religion, and leadership in the area. I have mentioned above the role of third-party intervention in local quarrels. This pattern is pervasive in segmentary systems. As Schomberg (1935:242) writes, “there have always been two parties in these lawless lands. When one party weakens, it begins to intrigue with some neighboring ruler, hoping to induce him to come in, occupy the country and enable his supporters to work off their vendettas on the stronger opponents, and so redress the balance of power.” In Swat, it was the Dir Nawab who was so invited. But then, finding the solution worse than the original problem, the Swati Pukhtun would unite on the principle of segmentary solidarity and act “to repel the common enemy.” This violent method of “redressing the balance” apparently functioned fairly well until thrown out of equilibrium by the intervention of the British.
Colonial intervention had important ramifications for the political/religious life of both Dir and Swat. Some of its effects in Swat have already been discussed at length by Ahmed (1976:84-129) and myself (Lindholm 1977:46-50, 1982a:38-43), but here I will try to link the developments in Swat with those in Dir and bring both under the typologies proposed by Brett.

Continued external pressure, first from the Sikhs and then from the British, pushed the Swatis toward establishing some form of central authority to coordinate resistance. The onslaught was envisioned as a threat to Islam, and the leaders who arose came from the class of charismatic religious figures. This pattern is implicit in segmentary society, since the temptation for betrayal is inherent within the social structure, as I showed in my discussion of the role of personal interest and manipulation. The only bond of unity is embodied in the person of a charismatic claiming authority not for himself or his lineage, but as a representative of Allah. In Swat, Abdul Gaffur, a Sufi whose austerities and piety had made him well known, was tagged by the Pukhtun as the symbolic figure about whom they could rally. In Brett’s terms, he was viewed as a Mahdi, one of the “rightly guided” who provides the faithful with a transcendent order that can subsume lineage rivalries.

After the defeat of the British at Ambela in 1863, Swat no longer suffered under the same threat of invasion, and the image of the Mahdi was no longer appropriate to the situation (nor, indeed, was it an image that Abdul Gaffur seemed happy to adopt). Instead, he slipped into the role Brett calls Marabout, a holy man charged with maintaining social order as a judge and arbitrator whose authority is sanctioned by supposed mystic power. Such persons, as mentioned above, function within the fragmented and internally hostile segmentary society as the means for defusing tensions; they cease to have a place when the society becomes centralized, and their position is taken by Brett’s Muftis. Acting within the Maraboutic framework as judge through the rest of his life, Abdul Gaffur acquired considerable property and prosperity by way of
gifts from the beneficiaries of his judgments and from believers anxious to gain grace through their donations. His political authority, however, was negligible, as the Pukhtun of Swat returned to their social world of factional struggles and party warfare.

Dir offers an elucidating contrast. The Dir Nawab in his traditional guise is perhaps best characterized as a Murabit in Brett’s terms. By distinguishing Murabit and Marabout, Brett is dividing what is seen in North Africa as one and the same—the two terms are actually different spellings of one word. But there is an important shift in emphasis. Whereas the Marabout is a mediator and keeper of order, the Murabit is a warrior and conqueror “in the cause of God,” a ruler as well as a judge. This is the role characteristic of segmentary leaders in eras of expansion. In such periods when the structure is not threatened, but is instead waxing larger and more powerful, when booty is available to satisfy the followers, then the temptation to betray is greatly lessened. Religious sanction is nonetheless important for strengthening the hearts of the warriors and justifying the cause, but the central figure is interested primarily in practical matters of war and rule. In Dir, for instance, the Painda khel lineage held its power by its success in war but justified itself by claiming descent from a Pukhtun Sufi given mystical rights to rule the valley by his master. The validation of power through legends of this sort is widespread in the frontier.

Beneath these warrior/ruler figures are men who fall into the Mufti category: the learned who are used to back up the ruler’s right to power, to administer his army and court, and to take the place of the dangerously independent Marabout judges and mediators. The famous Shaikh Mali, who organized land redistribution when the Yusufzai first entered the frontier region, was such a figure: a Sayyid who was administrative second-in-command of the invading army. Similar men were used by the Dir Nawab and, later, by his rival, the Wali of Swat, as advisors, judges, and bureaucrats at the middle level of governmental authority. But such men can also act as centers for
resistance, since they may deny the ruler’s legitimacy, claiming that he has overstepped the bounds of piety in his use of power.

**NAWAB AND BADSHAH: TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE CATEGORIES**

To return to the historical process, the legitimacy of the Dir Nawab remained unquestioned while his family presided over expansion but began to crumble when that expansion ceased. In 1888 a rebellion in the Jandul region neighboring Dir forced the Nawab (Mohammad Sherif Khan) into exile in Swat. At this point, the British again reenter the picture.

After Swati levies under the charismatic religious leadership of Abdul Gaffur held off the forces of the Raj at Ambela, the colonial power opted for a less-costly approach to dominating the tribes by seeking alliances with existing rulers, such as the Dir Nawab and the Mehtar of Chitral. When the Dir Nawab was thrown out of his kingdom, the British hoped to avoid direct intervention. But in 1895 the colonial garrison at Chitral was besieged, forcing the British to act to protect their interests. Regular troops joined the Dir Nawab’s tribal army and marched through Swat towards Dir. Meanwhile, other colonial troops marched from Gilgit and defeated the rebel army, driving the leader into exile in Kabul. Afraid of further uprisings, the British committed themselves to massive support for the Dir Nawab. Large subsidies were awarded to buy arms and loyalty. Furthermore, the Nawab was given absolute rule over Jandul and Sind in southern Dir. From being in retreat and nearly broken, the kingdom of Dir was once again expanding and solid, but only through alliance with the British.

This pact was soon tested. Aided by Dir, the British had set up permanent outposts in Swat. Incensed by this encroachment, Swat rose in 1897 under the charismatic leadership of a Mahdi figure the British called the Mastan Mullah. Dir was not moved by cries of jihad and supported the British against their old enemies/cousins in Swat. A
large number of Swatis were killed in the resulting cataclysmic defeat. The “cause of God” had taken second place, for the Dir Nawab, to the realities of power.

With British support, and helped by continued party warfare within Swat, Dir soon invaded Swat once again. And again, as had occurred before, Swat united behind a religious charismatic to expel the invader. But casualties were higher than ever, and it seemed that the alliance between the British and Dir would end with Swat eventually losing its autonomy. The power of the Dir Nawab (Aurangzeb Khan, who had succeeded his father) was at its peak, and his victories had only whetted his appetite for more.

At this point, the Swati lineage leaders met to elect someone to head the resistance. The man they eventually selected and entitled the Badshah of Swat was Abdul Wadud, who was the grandson of Abdul Gaffur. Because of this, many looked on him as a Mahdi figure. He utilized this image to rally the Pukhtun behind him and to once again defeat Dir. But, unlike his grandfather, Abdul Wadud was a veteran of very secular lineage struggles, and he had fought and killed his two cousins to assert his authority in his own group. Now that he had gained power in the whole valley, he was not willing to give it up and settle into being a Marabout mediator, as had his grandfather. Instead, he stepped into the role of Murabit, the conqueror, solidifying his rule by invading Buner to the east.

But the politically astute Badshah knew that the possibilities for further conquest were limited and that his rule could not last without external support. Like the Dir Nawab, he looked to the British, who, on their part, were glad to see some form of central authority in Swat with whom they could negotiate. Furthermore, the British were looking for an alternative to the Dir Nawab, who had not permitted any cultural inroads into Dir. The Badshah, as a shaky newcomer to power, was more than willing to listen to and emulate the British, and he quickly built a network of roads and telephones that consolidated his power. But this was not all; he also built Western-style schools and hospitals and
installed a system of formal courts. Meanwhile, the only Western innovation permitted in Dir was the use of a veterinarian to tend to the Nawab’s kennel.

The relation between the British and the Badshah was a close one, and it was useful for both sides. The British gained a brilliant and modernizing supporter, who was strongly allied to them, while the Badshah gained British backing, which helped make his state impervious to attack from either the inside or the outside. Dir was forced to sign a treaty of nonintervention in Swat—a treaty in which Swat was given the lush valley of Shamozai, while Dir was awarded the arid region of Adinzai: a trade-off that perfectly marked the new balance of power in this region.

In Dir, the era of expansion was at an end, and even the conquests gained in the last few years were lost. The warrior ruling house, which had relied on expansion to legitimize its power, was now ravaged by internal splits and antagonisms. Segmentary hostility led to party opposition between close agnates that tore the valley apart for sixty years. After the departure of the British, favoritism was still shown to the Badshah and his family, while Dir was still backward and still racked by warfare and schism. During this period one of Aurangzeb Khan’s grandsons, Shahbuddin, began to gain a following by calling for Islamic reform and strict adherence to the Koran. He himself took the role of imam (preacher) in the mosque, where he raised an outcry against religious laxity and exhorted the people against impious rulers, while at the same time proposing himself as the symbol of piety. Simultaneously, he allied himself with the Mishwani, landless migrants from Afghanistan, to whom he became a patron and something of a savior. Shahbuddin thus moved from the pure assertion of secular leadership in expansionistic war to a more complex transitional position, combining elements from various categories according to the needs of the different constituencies. To the Mishwani, he was something of a warrior offering them the spoils of conquest, something of a prophet leading them out of oppression to the promised land. To other people of Dir, he appeared
as an outraged cleric defending the faith, a position that also moves in the direction of the Mahdi exemplar.

As mentioned above, the segmentary structure favors charismatic religious leadership in periods of external threat, while an expanding system tends toward secular administrators. In Dir, the threat was actually internal, as stagnation crumbled the power base of the Nawab. But Shahbuddin (aided by his father, Shah Jehan) now attempted to stimulate a siege mentality in order to restore the power of the ruling house, not as weak Murabits, but as powerful Mahdis. Shahbuddin claimed that the policies of Pakistan were against Islamic practice. Outsiders who had entered Dir to administer the few hospitals and schools that had been built there were singled out as heathens, and the institutions themselves were called un-Islamic. These allegations did stir up the people, but they also caused problems with Pakistan.

As Shahbuddin stressed prophetic religion in Dir, Swat moved in the opposite direction. The Badshah, far from favoring the rise of religious charismatics, took the precaution of banishing all mendicants and Sufic wanderers from the valley. His own Islamic practice was austere and orthodox, but he carefully denied himself any sacred role and made no claim to fill the holy position held by his grandfather. His sons, meanwhile, were wearing Western suits, learning English, and going to Europe for their holidays. At the same time, he favored a rationalization of the structure, utilizing educated men of religious lineage as bureaucrats and administrators, thus replacing the Marabout with the cleric. Working in tandem with the secular British Empire and presiding over a state expanding in resources, if not in territory, his policies were eminently suited to the real situation, just as Shahbuddin’s approach suited the reality of Dir. Both men were acting within categories structured by social organization and by indigenous models of religious and secular leadership.

Shahbuddin’s efforts, however, were thwarted by intervention from an enemy he himself had conjured up: the Pakistani state. His elder brother, Kushrow Khan, plotted
with Pakistan to overthrow Shahbuddin and Shah Jehan, and in 1960 they were arrested and exiled. Kushrow Khan hoped to copy the Badshah and construct a modern state, drawing the resources and support of Pakistan, just as the Badshah had done with the British. But his situation was not analogous. Whereas the Badshah has been elected and was in fact ruling an expanding system, Kushrow Khan was a usurper attempting to stem a tide of religious revivalism in a crumbling state. Having removed his brother from consideration as charismatic leader, Kushrow Khan thought himself secure, forgetting that charismatic figures are more likely to appear not among princes, but from groups challenging traditional authority. And, indeed, new claimants to leadership in Dir did arise from the religious classes that have historically been the focus for popular discontent: the mullahs and Sufi mediators and mendicants. Furthermore, the Mishwani did not accept Kushrow as his brother’s successor. In 1969, resentment against Pakistan and Kushrow Khan erupted into violence; almost all government offices, schools, and hospitals were destroyed in an upsurge of religious fervor. From being the staunchest ally of the British, Dir had become the center for rebellion against Pakistan.

Swat, in contrast, had evolved from being the most troublesome region to being the most tractable and the most “advanced.” The Badshah peacefully abdicated in favor of his eldest son, who was entitled the Wali. The Wali increasingly rationalized and modernized the state, while strengthening ties with Pakistan. In fact, Pakistan’s President Ayub married two of his daughters into the Swati royal family. In comparison with Dir, internal and external relations in Swat were remarkably amicable.

All of this was not to last. Soon after the rebellion in Dir, the princely states were completely merged into Pakistan and the rulers were deposed. The reasons for this move are too complex to be discussed here (see Lindholm 1982b:34-35 for more on this topic), but the consequences tend to validate the point of view offered in this paper. In Swat, where the state was founded by a man of religious lineage, the trend has been toward greater secularism (see Lindholm 1979:497-505 for a detailed account). In the 1977
elections, the north was dominated by parties led by khans who said little or nothing about religion. In the south, the Badshah’s family split into opposing segments along the lines of party formation traditional in segmentary systems. Neither of the segments, however, professed any great religious fervor.

These trends are continuations of the process I have outlined in the preceding pages. In the era of the Badshah, Swat had extended its influence far beyond the borders of the valley. Expansionist and practical, the Swati royal family utilized the clerical bureaucratic tradition of the Mufti administrators under the rulership of the Badshah, a Murabit warrior. The Badshah was himself descended from the charismatic Abdul Gaffur, who became a Marabout-like mediator after his task of defense was accomplished. This heritage helped the Badshah in his climb to power, but it was one he specifically repudiated. It is noteworthy in documenting this process that the shrine of Abdul Gaffur, formerly a major pilgrimage center, gradually lost its following as the Badshah and his family secularized and gained control over a state that was increasingly rational in structure. This process was completed by the Badshah’s son, who succeeded his father to the throne in 1962 and who dismantled old personal patronage ties in favor of more efficient bureaucratic relations. He himself, Western influenced and modernizing, was far more a professional than his warrior father—a Mufti rather than a Murabit (Barth 1985). The evolution in Swat is therefore from a fragmented system under attack, appropriate for the rise of a unifying leader; to one of “institutionalized dissidence” without central rule, where a mediator-judge finds his niche; to an expansive centralized state, where the warrior holds sway; and finally to a bureaucracy, which needs the literacy and skills of the clerical class and rule by a professional administrator.

After the fall of the royal family, the process continued, with the present political leaders competing on the ground of Pakistani politics for advantages and favors. Instead of descending back to the welter of local rivalries typical of segmentary systems in stagnation, Swat now sought to assert itself in the new arena for political warriors: the
national state. It is, it seems, a nice example of the well-known Weberian progress from charismatic to rational authority.

But Weber saw the movement as irreversible, whereas any student of Islam knows it is not. In Dir, as we have seen, leadership has become less secular and has taken on a highly prophetic tone. In the 1977 elections, Kushrow Khan lost his race to a charismatic Sufi, while the other successful candidate was a mullah in a local mosque. In contrast to Swat, the people of Dir did not see participation in Pakistan as an opportunity. Instead, it was perceived as a threat. As a result, Dir rose again in 1976 against the government of Pakistan, which had attempted to intervene in the allocation of wood rights. This further stimulated religious revivalism.

CONCLUSION

At this point, I would like to conclude my excursion into ideal types. The perils of such a venture are many, and I must stress that the categories I have drawn have value not as absolutes, but only as guidelines for understanding cultural complexity. The historical record shows that one man can fill several roles and that the movement from one to the other is by no means unidirectional, but is contingent upon many factors of time, place, and person. Nonetheless, the categories do help us link structural features with leadership types in the context of religion in a way that helps to make sense of the vicissitudes of frontier politics. This paper stops in 1977. Events since have been complicated by increased Islamic revivalism in Pakistan itself. In an earlier paper (Lindholm 1977:64), I claimed that the study of tribal politics can teach us much about the politics of the Middle Eastern state. I leave it to the reader to decide whether this new effort, connecting structural patterns with a typology of leadership and religion, adds any further strength to that claim.
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i Elphinstone 1815, vol. 2:25.

ii Fried 1960.

iii Bellew, 1864, 205.