Agnates, Affines and Allies:
Patterns of Marriage among Pakhtun in Kunar,
North-East Afghanistan

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This article contains a discussion of marriage and the determinants of marriage patterns among sedentary Pakhtun agriculturalists. Pakhtun practice different types of marriage and the resulting patterns vary considerably not only between spatially distinct Pakhtun groups, but also within specific local communities. This variation is analysed both in terms of the general implications of certain basic features and notions of Pakhtun social organization, and of the differing and situational interests and opportunities, which together define the social contexts in which the marriages of specific families and descent groups take place.

A basically similar approach is common in the literature on kinship and marriage in Middle Eastern societies, and, as Barth and Bourdieu have convincingly argued, its analytical relevance is vindicated by the character of the system that is investigated (Barth 1973; Bourdieu 1977). The critical feature which distinguishes the patrilineal descent systems of the Middle East from unilineal descent systems found elsewhere is the absence of any rule of exogamy, and this also applies to that of the Pakhtun. Outside the narrowly defined sphere of incest, there are no rules restricting marriage with certain categories of kin or prescribing it with others.¹

As a result marriages between all categories of cousins are allowed and, moreover, marriages between patrilateral parallel cousins (FaBr-Da/FaBrSo) are commonly considered as preferential, as is also the case among other Muslim peoples of the Middle East.² But although this preference is expressed both by Pakhtun in Kunar and elsewhere (Glatzer 1977: 148; Ferdinand 1978: 184; Ahmed 1980: 243), and appears to be held by many if not most Pakhtun, it is not invariably held, as Barth has shown for Pakhtun in Swat where practical considerations render it unfeasible (Barth
This contrast between the Pakhtun in Swat and some of the other Pakhtun groups illustrates that the preference for patrilateral parallel cousin marriage may be differently valued and emphasized by Pakhtun depending on the specific social contexts in which their marriages are established. The implication is that endogamous and exogamous marriages constitute real and available alternatives for Pakhtun, and that the frequency with which either is practiced consequently depends on considerations concerning that which unites or separates in relations with either agnates, affines or non-kin.

This co-existence of a preference for patrilateral parallel cousin marriage and a basic openness concerning the choice of marriage partners corresponds to a patrilineal descent system with a strong normative emphasis on solidarity between patrilineal kinsmen, but where at the same time the actual closeness of agnates is crucially influenced by variable interests that may either bring them together as allies or separate them as rivals or enemies. According to Pakhtun thinking social nearness and solidarity should ideally be defined through common patrilineal descent as something given. But, as Pakhtun realize quite clearly and also deplore, in actual life nearness and solidarity do not derive simply from agnation; relations even among close collateral agnates are always fraught with tension that may easily bring estrangement. So while the relations among agnates contain the assumption of a premised solidarity, this solidarity nevertheless requires the existence of perceived joint interests in order to endure. In this important respect the relations among agnates resemble those relations of friendship and alliance that are established with non-agnates. However, in the case of non-agnates the joint interests on which the relationship rests do not strengthen something which should already be there, but on the contrary bridge what would otherwise be a premised tension or even hostility.

In this social setting where endogamy and exogamy constitute alternatives and where either solidarity or hostility can be characteristic of the relations between both collateral agnates and non-agnates, both forms of marriage are equally usable for expressing and confirming social nearness. Thus, the practice of patrilateral parallel cousin marriage should not be viewed as something completely different from and opposed to what goes on in descent systems with prescribed exogamy. The difference between exogamy and endogamy is of course real on the level of formal group formation, because endogamy tends to blur the distinction between patri- and matrilineal descent creating groups with a bilateral composition, while exogamy establishes a clear distinction between descent lines and thus between descent group and alliance group. But viewed in terms of functions, exogamous and endogamous marriage do not signify the difference between alliance and something else; both forms of marriage are essentially of the same nature, and depending on the context both can equally well define political alliance.

However, while there are no rules that impose restrictions or prescriptions on marriages with kin, there do exist important normative conceptions influencing the choice of marriage partners among non-kin. Pakhtun hold a clear preference for marriages between social equals, and ideally patrilineal kinsmen should be so by definition. They also regard hypergamy as acceptable, but women should never be given in marriage to someone who is considered socially inferior (cf. Barth 1959: 19, 37-38; Ahmed 1980: 249).
damage to crops and the like often become quarrels between collateral agnates. Moreover, the division of landholdings through inheritance periodically accentuates the possibility of disputes and arguments between close kinsmen, and such tension often survives those directly involved and becomes part of the relationship between their offspring.

So both solidarity and opposition are implied by the system of landholding, though to different degrees. If threatened by outsiders the joint interests deriving from landholding may constitute the basis for corporate political activity, but such lineage unity is always situational and short-lived and endures at best as long as the crises that caused it. On the other hand, both the daily productive tasks and the development cycle of households continually create the possibility of disputes between agnates and thus contain the conditions of lasting enmity and fission in mutually opposed lineage segments.

However, landholding is not the only source of tension and conflict between collateral agnates. The competition among agnates for influence and leadership constitutes another equally, if not more, important source of tension and conflict, which contributes to the emergence of opposed lineage segments within the lineage that holds joint rights in pasture and forest land. While control over land is an economic precondition as well as a symbol of autonomy, leadership more than anything else confers status and prestige by demonstrating the ability to maintain autonomy and independence in relation to others. It is therefore intensely contested both between opposed lineage segments and also within such segments.5

Among Pakhtun leadership is generally informal and there are no clear rules of succession to such positions (Barth 1959: 24, 73-74; Anderson 1978: 169; Ahmed 1980: 141). Within a group of brothers relative seniority plays only a limited role for the allocation of authority, although younger brothers are expected to show deference to their elder brothers. There is a tendency for the eldest son to succeed to his father’s position, but this is far from always the case. Considerable age differences between brothers can of course be of importance in this respect, but generally the equality of brothers as heads of households means that leadership is something that has to be personally achieved and actively maintained in the face of similar attempts from other members of the same lineage segment.

Among Pakhtun in Kunar a person’s success in establishing himself as influential within his lineage segment depends to a large extent on his ability to create a personal network of alliance, patronage and friendship with outsiders, in which he occupies a role as middleman representing the outside to his agnates and vice versa. Since more than one person in a group of brothers and cousins may be able to create such personal networks, the leadership of descent segments is often not unequivocally vested in one person. Different persons may emerge as leader and spokesman on behalf of their descent segment depending on who it is that maintains the closest relations with the outsiders involved in the issue at hand. As a result of this diffuse internal distribution of authority, the cohesion of the lineage segment requires constant conciliation and mediation of the interests of its members. To attain such internal agreement through adjustment of interests is important, because usually a person’s value to his external allies and clients depends to a large extent on his ability to maintain the cohesion and support of his own lineage segment.

Therefore the extent to which such conciliation is attempted is influenced by the ability of individual members or groups of brothers to stand on their own in case of fission of the lineage segment to which they belong. If they are strong enough to stand up to their competitors and enemies while at the same time retaining their value as allies within their own network of alliance and patronage, this may reduce the inclination to give concessions in order to maintain the unity of the segment when internal disagreements arise. The ability to stand alone politically is crucially dependent on the extent of land concentration, since large landholdings imply both direct control over people as tenants and thus as dependent political followers and over a large economic surplus which can be used to create a political following through redistribution (cf. Barth 1959: 112). Thus, among the Yusufzai Pakhtun in
the Swat valley, where the ownership of land is highly concentrated, and where political leaders control large landholdings (Barth 1959: 44, 79), patrilineal descent groups do not emerge as political units, but they do so in those tributary valleys where the concentration of land is less pronounced (Barth 1959: 30, 89, 112). Although Barth does not give any figures concerning the size of landholdings, the concentration of land in Swat appears to be much higher than is the case in Kunar. The variation in the degree of land concentration between the main valley areas and the tributary valleys is also found in Kunar (Christensen 1980: 86), but even where land concentration is most developed, the pattern found today is one where petty feudalism co-exists with small peasant proprietors who constitute the majority of the population. Large landholdings very seldom exceed 16 hectares (about 80 jerib) of irrigated double-cropped land, which can employ between eight and twelve tenants, and most large landowners possess considerably less. As a result single households or even groups of brothers are usually not strong enough to dispense with the support of their collateral agnates, and among the large landowners in the main valley areas lineage segments with a genealogical depth of three to four and occasionally even five generations constitute political units. But, nevertheless, in Kunar as in Swat (Barth 1959: 112) the possibility of fission increases when the sons of brothers and later the sons of cousins are faced with the difficult task of maintaining the lineage segment as a political entity, and sooner or later tensions develop into conflicts and further segmentation takes place.

Pakhtun in Kunar see this possibility of solidarity or rivalry between collateral agnates as corresponding to two different forms of political organization, either quami (from quam = descent group) consisting of patrilineal kinsmen acting jointly, or gundi (from gund = faction or party) where collateral agnates are opposed and allied with distant kinsmen and non-kin (Christensen 1981: 101, 107). Although gundi is looked upon as regrettable since it ranges agnates against each other, it nevertheless defines the basic pattern of political organization, while at the same time containing quami as part of this pattern, and the organizational forms that are actually realized comprise features of both. Landholding lineage segments confront other segments from the same lineage in competition for local influence and access to resources. These lineage segments, and their tenants if they have any, constitute the core of local factions and maintain relations of patronage and support with politically weaker landowners, who may or may not belong to the same lineage, as well as with non-landowners. At the same time each of the lineage segments that form the core of competing local factions maintain mostly mutually separate networks of alliance and friendship with a varying number of similar landholding lineage segments, which may belong to their own lineage or be more distant agnates or even non-kin.

The General Implications of Agnatic Solidarity and Opposition for the Establishment of Marriage Relations

This form of political organization, where lineage segments from the same co-resident landholding lineage compete with each other for local hegemony and form the core of factions while maintaining separate networks of alliance with other similarly situated lineage segments, constitutes one of the basic structural contexts of marriage among Pakhtun in Kunar.

Since marriage signifies friendship (dosti), the choice of marriage partners that a man makes for himself or on behalf of his daughters and sons is significantly influenced by political considerations, and therefore tends to follow the pattern of alliance that he or his segment holds. However, among Pakhtun marriage does not create alliance, it is alliance that creates marriage in the sense that marriage relations are used to confirm and express already existing relations of friendship and joint interests, which may involve agnates as well as non-agnates, by turning them into relations between affines. Since a man may have up to four wives at the same time, and since he decides on the marriages of his daughters and sons, a number of significant relationships of friendship and alliance can be confirmed by marriage, but at the same time a household or lineage segment may hold other
decisions. However, marriage relations are not strong enough to maintain other considerations since they are partly or wholly the result of his own marriage of a man is likely to reflect the political interests of his household alliances where this is not the case. Because of the authority of the heads of households concerning the marriages of the household members the first marriage of a man is likely to reflect the political interests of his household or lineage segment. while his subsequent marriages may be governed by other considerations since they are partly or wholly the result of his own decisions. However, marriage relations are not strong enough to maintain an alliance if quarrels develop between affines, and since divorce (talaq) is extremely rare among Pakhtun marriage relations endure while alliances may be broken.

The importance of marriage as a means to express and confirm alliance and coincident interests, and the general patterns of marriage that result from this, can be illustrated by the marriages established by competing lineage segments consisting of petty feudal landowners belonging to a lineage from the Mamund sub-tribe of the Tarkan Pakhtun. This lineage – the Rauf Khel – has been settled in the lower Pech valley for about 150 years and represents part of the extreme westward expansion of the large Mamund sub-tribe, which has its main settlement area in the tributary valleys to the east of the Kunar river and in the adjoining Tribal Agency of Bajaur in Pakistan (cf. Christensen 1980: 81).

In the beginning of this century one of the members of Rauf Khel, a man named Haji Mohammad Anwar Khan, succeeded in establishing himself in a position of local influence in alliance with Mir Zaman Khan, who was at the time one of the most influential khans in Kunar. Mir Zaman Khan, who lived at Nawabad in the main Kunar valley, together with his younger brother Khan Mohammad Khan maintained close relations with the central government in Kabul, for which they performed various functions as local officials (zabet) and tax-collectors (amel, edjaradar) in Kunar. Their relations with the central government in part derived from the network of alliances they maintained with lesser khans who were living in various parts of the area, one of them being Anwar Khan. At the same time the influence and wealth of these lesser khans were crucially dependent on their own close relations with Mir Zaman Khan. However, while Mir Zaman Khan shared power and influence with his younger brother, this was not the case with Anwar Khan, who did not make his considerably younger brother Osman Khan his associate, but on the contrary tried to prevent him from gaining influence in favour of his own three sons. The succeeding rivalry for local influence between the descendants of these two brothers has dominated the politics in the area inhabited by the Rauf Khel up to the present day. This was not the first case of fission within the Rauf Khel, since in a previous conflict the weaker party was forced to leave the main Rauf Khel village and settle on their land nearby, where they built a village that came to be known as Sharalu Kalai, which means 'the village of the expelled'. But this older split-up was overshadowed by the succeeding rivalry between Anwar Khan and Osman Khan and their descendants, and the lineage segment in Sharalu Kalai became part of this rivalry as an ally of one of the new segments.

As a token of their close relationship Mir Zaman Khan’s sister was married to Anwar Khan. Their three sons succeeded Anwar Khan in the position of local leadership, and the eldest of these, Rahim Khan, who became the most prominent, married his mother’s brother’s daughter, a marriage which re-confirmed the friendship and alliance between the two lineage segments. Rahim Khan and his two brothers were able to maintain and expand the influence and the control over land gained by their father, and they all contracted polygamous marriages which created affinal relations with a number of both territorially close and distant leaders.

Although the comparatively younger cousins of Rahim Khan emerged as his main opponents and succeeded in increasing their control over land somewhat, they were for a long time unable to seriously rival the influence of Rahim Khan and his brothers, and their position as the temporary losers in the local power struggle is reflected in the marriage relations which they established. With the exception of two marriages contracted by members of the second generation with territorially distant local leaders, the marriages of both Osman Khan and of his sons and daughters are mostly with members of local lineage segments which are not politically powerful, and which in a sense represent the leftovers from the marriage policies of the stronger lineage segment headed by Rahim Khan. In contrast to the territorially wide ranging network of alliance expressed in the marriages contracted by the segment headed by Rahim Khan, the marriages of his rival cousins reflect the attempt to build up a predominantly local network of alliance with those who rescinded the dominant position of Rahim Khan’s segment. Thus, Osman Khan’s sons contracted marriages with their more distant cousins in the other weaker Rauf Khel lineage segments both in the main Rauf Khel village and in Sharalu Kalai. Osman Khan had been married in an exchange marriage (badalei) to a woman from the weaker lineage segment in the main Rauf Khel village, and the marriage of a woman from another branch of this segment to one of his sons not only repeated the affinal relations, but made them more inclusive.

The marriages of the third and fourth generation members of the two competing lineage segments combine a high frequency of patrilateral parallel cousin marriage within the segments – something that is now possible – with an equally high frequency of exogamous marriages involving the same allied groups with whom they had already married in the preceding generations (see Fig. 2 & 3). Such repeated marriages with exogamous affines – that is, affines not belonging to ones own lineage segment – are either regular cross-cousin marriages with first or second cousins, or they involve
1. MoBrDa.
3. MoBrSo.
4. Elder sister's husband's agnate.
5. MoBrDa.
7. FaSiSo.
8. FaFaWiBrSo.
9. FaFaBrWiBrSo.
11. FaBrWiBrDa.
12. FaSiSo.
13. FaSiSo.
14. FaSiSo.
15. FaSiHuBrSo.
16. FaSiHuBrSo.
17. FaSiHuBrSo.
18. FaSiHuBrSo.

Consecutive exogamous marriages confirm relations with five different lineage segments.

1. Agnate of FaWi and FaSiHu.
2. Agnate of FaFaWi and FaFaSiHu.
4. FaSiDa.
5. FaBrWiSi.
6. Agnate of FaSiHu and FaBrWi.
7. FaSiSo.
8. FaSiSo.
10. FaSiDa.
11. FaSiDa.
12. Agnate of FaWi and FaFaWi.
13. FaSiHuBrSo.
15. FaFaSiSoDa.
16. FaSiHuBrSo.
17. Agnate of FaSiHu and FaBrWi.
18. FaSiHuBrSo.

Consecutive exogamous marriages confirm relations with nine different lineage segments.
other relations among the agnates of one’s affines (see Fig. 4 & 5). The patrilateral parallel cousin marriages involving first cousins in the third and second cousins in the fourth generation reflect the continuity of the lineage segments as political units, while the repeated marriages with exogamous affines express a remarkable stability of the wider network of alliance and friendship.

In the lineage segment comprising the descendants of Anwar Khan (Segment A, Fig. 2), seven out of the eleven men in the third generation are married to patrilateral parallel cousins from the segment (64%), and all but one man, the oldest in his generation, are married to either close agnates from their own segment or to exogamous affines (91%). The corresponding figure for the marriages of the women from this generation is 75%, and altogether 83% of the men and women from this generation are married either to patrilateral parallel cousins from the segment or to exogamous affines cum allies. In the fourth generation this pattern is continued as five out of eleven persons are married to patrilateral parallel cousins (45%), and 82% are married either to these or to exogamous affines. The repeated marriages with exogamous affines confirm enduring relations of friendship and alliance with five different lineage segments.

Of the third generation descendants of Osman Khan (Segment B, Fig. 3) only four out of fifteen men are married to patrilateral parallel cousins from the segment (27%), but eight are married to exogamous affines (53%), and thus 80% of the men are married either to their close agnates or to exogamous affines. For the women of the lineage segment the figure is thirteen out of fourteen (93%). The total figure of marriages to either close agnates or exogamous affines including both the men and the women of this generation is 86%, and the repeated exogamous marriages are made to nine different lineage segments.

The pattern defined by the distribution of marriages in the third and fourth generations does not include all those marriages that have significant political implications. Other marriages are also established which do not correspond with the general pattern but require consideration of the specific fortunes of the descent segments involved. Such divergent marriages often represent the confirmation of new alliances, and since they are innovative in the same way as most of the marriages of the first two generations of the segments, they are often based on more direct political considerations than is necessarily the case with those that just follow the general pattern of already established relations.

Thus, the balance of power between the two rival lineage segments changed after the suppression of the so-called Safi-Rebellion in Kunar in 1945, when the hitherto dominant segment together with the Zamani lineage and others were forcibly exiled for their alleged participation in the revolt, and the segment of their rival collateral agnates emerged as the most influential partly due to their success in establishing close relations with the central government. Since their return from exile the members of the formerly dominant lineage segment have consistently tried to regain their lost position, and this has also involved the attempt to obtain support among some of the local lineage segments that were the allies and affines of their opponents. Their partial success in this respect is reflected in one marriage in the third generation, where a woman was married into the Rauf Khel lineage segment in Sharalu Kalai, and another marriage in the fourth generation with a woman from the weaker lineage segment living in the main Rauf Khel village. Another relatively recent marriage where a woman was given to a man from the third generation of the segment of their rival collateral agnates likewise belongs to the category of such innovative marriages. This cross-factional marriage is not only radically innovative, but also more ambiguous than most other marriages, and it was locally interpreted either as an expression of the will to reach a compromise and restore quami, or as a sophisticated move in the game of gundi. While both the wife-givers, and the wife-taker expressed the first interpretation, the father and uncles of the man saw it as a ploy to create disunion within their lineage segment, and although this was his second marriage, they nevertheless tried to prevent it from taking place and beat up the man to make him comply.

The pattern of marriage which has been described above is not only characteristic of the politically dominant lineage segments involved in the struggle for political hegemony among the Rauf Khel, but its general features appear to be common for the marriages of similarly situated lineage segments throughout Kunar. However, since this pattern results from a specific form of factional political organization which requires certain conditions to emerge and endure, it should not be taken to represent the general pattern of marriage among Pakhtun. Not only is the pattern of marriage itself historical in the sense that its emergence contains the movement from exogamy to a combination of endogamy and marriages with exogamous affines or occasionally with new allies. But its present prevalence is the result of historical processes which have created a relatively low concentration of landownership and the corresponding necessity for close agnates to stick together politically and maintain the lineage segment as a corporate political group.

The marriages contracted by the wealthy and powerful Zamani brothers represent a variation on this pattern. Whereas exogamous marriages usually relate a co-resident lineage segment with a number of more or less territorially distant allies, the members of the Zamani lineage segment are dispersed and live in different localities, where they have acquired land and where they have established marriages with their local allies. These mar-
Mar Rauf Khel

lineage segment A.

Fig. 4.

The two sons of Mir Zaman Khan included in this figure both held land adjacent to the local area where the Rauf Khel is settled.

riages with local allies, such as the segment from the Rauf Khel, have often been repeated over the generations.

This dispersed settlement of the Zamani lineage segment is a result of their former position as one of the most influential in Kunar. Their relations with the governments of Habibullah (1901-19) and Amanullah (1919-29) enabled them to gain control over considerable landholdings in various parts of the area, either through regular or forced buyings, through outright seizure, or in the form of gifts from the government for services they had rendered. The sons of Mir Zaman Khan and his brother were sent to live on these landholdings, and both their security and the maintenance of control over the land required the establishment of local alliances that were usually confirmed by marriage. However, such marriage relations, even when repeated over the generations, are not sufficient to prevent conflict between the allies cum affines when the occasion arises. Thus, rivalry for local leadership and influence broke out between Rahim Khan and Sher Mohammad Khan after the killing of Mir Zaman Khan by Shinwari Pakhtun in Shin Koruk around 1930.

The Yusufzai Pakhtun in Swat present a more drastic deviation from the pattern of marriage prevalent among the politically dominant lineage segments in Kunar. But although the Yusufzai pattern of marriage is different, it is nevertheless of a kindred type, and its specificity derives from a variation in the same underlying conditions of landholding and political organization which created the pattern described for Kunar. The very high concentration of land in the Swat valley enables single households or groups of brothers to stand alone politically, since they control sufficient resources and dependants to dispense with the support of their close collateral agnates, who are often instead their rivals and opponents in the competition for influence and control over land. The result is that marriages are rarely sought with close agnatic collaterals and affinal relations are instead preferably established with distant allies in order to strengthen existing ties (Barth 1959: 40). Whereas the networks of alliance remain fairly stable in Kunar, this is apparently not the case in Swat. While the Yusufzai do marry their allies, these allies often become their opponents when the political constellations change (Barth 1959: 40), and there is consequently no basis for repeated marriages with exogamous affines.

Among the Mohmand Pakhtun who live in the Mohmand Tribal Agency in Pakistan, but who are also settled across the border in Kunar, a pattern of marriage can be inferred from the data presented by Ahmed which shows significant parallels to that described for the Rauf Khel (Ahmed 1980: 242-58). While this interpretation differs somewhat from that made by Ahmed himself, who concludes that his findings concerning marriage corroborate those for the Swat Pakhtun, it is nevertheless consistent with his data. The Mohmand in the Tribal Agency practice agriculture on marginally irrigated or un-irrigated land, and landownership appears to be fairly egalitarian. Households cultivate their own land and there is no development of tenancy (ibid: 119, 269). This egalitarian economic structure necessitates political solidarity and mutual support among close collateral agnates and, despite the fragility of their solidarity, lineage segments with a genealogical depth ranging from three to five generations constitute corporate political groups. Such lineage segments face neighbouring segments composed of their collateral agnates from the same lineage in competition for influence and control over land, while simultaneously maintaining alliances with more distantly related lineage segments belonging to their own sub-clan (ibid: 130-31, 214-19). The political importance of marriage, which Ahmed sees as marriage making political alliances (ibid: 243), is clearly revealed by the pattern of marriage which closely mirrors that of political alliance. There is a significant number of patrilateral parallel cousin marriages within the lineage segments (37%), and a high frequency of marriage with allied lineage segments from the same sub-clan (44%). While very few marriages are established with other lineage segments from the same lineage (3%) (ibid: 245). Thus, the pattern which emerges is one where marriage is used to strengthen the cohesion of the lineage segment through endogamy, and at the same time to express and reinforce relations through exogamy with those segments from the sub-clan who are political allies. However, the question whether such exogamous marriages with allied segments are repeated over the generations, as is the case in Kunar, cannot be decided on the basis of the information provided by Ahmed.

The Implications of Ethnic Heterogeneity

So far we have been describing the situation as if marriage took place in a social universe consisting only of Pakhtun, and as if Pakhtun constituted the only landholding group exercising political influence. But this is not the
case, and the marriages contracted by the politically and economically dominant Pakhtun lineage segments in Kunar relate them to other ethnic groups and to people of religious repute both as wife-takers and wife-givers. In this respect, the marriages established by Pakhtun in Kunar differ significantly from those of other Pakhtun groups, where considerations of status and prestige either preclude or critically limit the giving of women in marriage to non-Pakhtun while allowing women belonging to other groups to be received in marriage. However, this difference is not one which concerns the way in which the relationship between marriage and status is construed by Pakhtun in Kunar in comparison with others, but it reflects a situational difference concerning the character of the relations between Pakhtun and non-Pakhtun. In this respect the three Pakhtun groups that have been compared constitute varieties along a continuum, from a situation of absolute Pakhtun hegemony to one where Pakhtun are only one among several different groups who exercise political influence.

Thus, the Mohmand in the Tribal Agency, from which Ahmed has drawn his sample on marriage, live in a social universe consisting almost entirely of other Mohmand, apart from a minority of artisans and people of religious repute—a universe which is consequently also dominated by Mohmand. As a result 98% of their marriages are with other Pakhtun, and the remaining 2% represent women received in marriage by Pakhtun from other groups (Ahmed 1980: 246). Although the Yusufzai in Swat also constitute the dominant group, Pakhtun dominance here is not as unequivocal as among the Mohmand, since influence and power is also exercised by people of religious repute. In Swat the Yusufzai have established themselves as the superior landowning class through conquest and have reduced those among the original population who did not flee to social inferiors, who perform various subordinate functions in a complex division of labour (Barth 1959: 7, 10). As among the Mohmand most Pakhtun marriages in Swat are ethnically endogamous, but the proportion is lower (70%), and while the Yusufzai marry women from lower ranking groups, they also establish marriage relations as both wife-givers and wife-takers with people of religious repute, who are of comparable if not superior status and who may be the political equals of the Pakhtun (Barth 1959: 10, 18-20).

As in Swat, the Pakhtun in Kunar originally acquired control over land through conquest. But unlike what happened in Swat (Barth 1959: 7), Pakhtun settlement in Kunar appears to have been a more gradual and piecemeal process extending over a long period, and it did not result in the establishment of a multi-ethnic stratification system with the Pakhtun as the dominant group superimposed upon the original population. Where it was successful, Pakhtun expansion in Kunar meant the wholesale eviction of the original population, as happened with the then non-Muslim Pashai and Kafir (Nuristani) groups in most of the tributary valleys of the main Kunar valley. But in the lower and middle portions of the Kunar valley proper and in the lower Pech valley, the Pakhtun encountered a group synonymously called Dehgan or Tajik, whom they were neither able to displace nor to wrest land from to any significant extent. These people are probably the descendants of the original Pashai or Kafir populations, and at the time when Pakhtun expansion into the area began, they were already Muslim and were the subjects of a relatively centralized chiefdom-like political organization, the Pashat Khanate. Today the Dehgan resemble the Pakhtun in terms of ideology and social organization, although they lack their encompassing ramified descent organization. While some are still bilingual they all speak Paghdo, though they are considered and usually also consider themselves as non-Pakhtun (Christensen 1980: 79-80). In addition people of religious repute such as descendants of the Prophet (Sayyed, Pachaian) or of renowned religious figures (Mian, Akhunzada) also constitute groups of landowners. The ancestors of some of these local descent groups consisting of people of religious repute may have taken part in the original conquest of land by the Pakhtun, and have received shares of the conquered land like everybody else. In other cases they have settled later, sometimes at the request of the Afghan government which previously with varying success used them to influence the local population, and supported them financially. In addition, their control over land has been gained through compensations for the functions defined by their religious status, i.e. mediation in conflicts, spiritual guidance and magico-religious healing of sicknesses, and they have acquired land either in the form of land grants from the community (seri) or through the sale and reinvestment in land of gifts in kind from religious followers (shukrane).

Thus, in many parts of Kunar the Pakhtun do not constitute the only nor the predominant landholding group wielding political influence, but share this position with groups of Dehgan landowners as well as with people of religious repute. These groups usually inhabit separate settlements, but they may occasionally share hamlets and villages with landowning Pakhtun. Where such heterogeneous situations are found in the main valley areas, as is the case in the locality inhabited by the Rauf Khel, the political divisions do not normally follow those of ethnic affiliation or membership of descent units that share joint rights in pasture and forest land. Instead, the network of political alliance cross-cuts ethnic divisions, and the politically influential Pakhtun lineage segments maintain relations of friendship and alliance with similar segments both among Dehgan landowners and people of religious repute. The position of non-Pakhtun as equals in the competition for local influence and leadership and their value as allies for the Pakhtun lineage segments involved in this competition is revealed in the relations of mar-
riage established between such allies. The proportion of ethnically endogamous marriages contracted by the two dominant Rauf Khel lineage segments is considerably lower (57%) than was the case with the Mohmand and Yusufzai. Both segments have established marriages both as wife-givers and wife-takers with their mutually distinct allies among Dehgan landowners (17%) and people of religious descent (11%). The remaining marriages (15%) almost exclusively involve relations where women have been received from, but not given to client groups. As in other cases where alliances have remained stable, marriages have been repeated in succeeding generations creating cross-cousin marriages with first or second cousins.

It would appear from the relations of alliance and marriage between the Rauf Khel and non-Pakhtun described above that ethnic endogamy is not an overriding consideration involved in the marriages established by the politically and economically dominant Pakhtun lineage segments. The maintenance of their Pakhtun status does not require that marriages are predominantly with other Pakhtun; instead it is expressed through their ability to contract marriages with other lineage segments of political influence whether Pakhtun or not. The considerations reflected in the marriages of such Pakhtun lineage segments primarily concern the increase or consolidation of political influence vis-à-vis their rival collateral agnates as well as control over resources such as land or access to trade. In other words, what is at stake is the maintenance of their class position. This becomes obvious when the marriage pattern of the two dominant rival segments is considered in the context of the larger co-resident Rauf Khel lineage that holds joint rights in pasture and forest land. When viewed in this context the marriages of the dominant segments not only express their mutual rivalry for local political hegemony, but at the same time reflect a process of segmentation within the larger lineage whereby the initial non-correspondence between descent group and class membership is resolved over time by the fission of the lineage and the formation of new segments which correspond with the actual differentiation between petty feudal landowners and smallholders (Christensen 1980: 84). The creation of new descent segments is manifested in a fairly high incidence of endogamous marriages that define the segment, or its constituent factions, in relation to the larger descent group, and in exogamous marriages with allies belonging to different segments consisting mostly of other petty feudal landowners. This process and the role played by marriage in it is clearly realized by Pakhtun themselves, and the two dominant segments are collectively referred to as the Mar Rauf Khel (the 'satisfied' or 'well off' Rauf Khel), while the poorer segment composed of smallholders is known as the Khwar Rauf Khel (the 'lean' or 'hungry' Rauf Khel). The less fortunate Khwar Rauf Khel resent the dominance of the Mar Rauf Khel lineage segments, which they see as a violation of the equality and solidarity that ideally should characterize relations between co-resident collateral agnates. They explain the situation as a result of the scheming and plotting (chal) of the Mar Rauf Khel, and even occasionally accuse...
The differentiation between feudal landowners and small peasant proprietors of a Pakhtun lineage like the Rauf Khel, which should ideally be composed of equals, emphasizes a crucial phenomenon which permeates the whole hierarchy of social stratification, namely the ambiguity of status and rank.

The basic features of social stratification as conceptualized by the Pakhtun themselves are fairly clear and straightforward. They see the system as consisting of a hierarchy of hereditary occupational groups based on patrilineal descent (Barth 1959 & 1960; Christensen 1980), where the members of each strata are equals and possess a common status distinct from that of other strata. Like the descent groups of Pakhtun tribesmen such groups are known as \textit{quam}^{15}, and the status position of different occupational \textit{quam} derives from their role and functions in relation to the agricultural process of production. Despite the fact that Islam implies the equality of all believers, the reason given by Pakhtun for this hierarchy is nevertheless cast in a religious idiom as well. They argue that those who manage and work with the land, which is created by God and sustains everything living, rank higher than those only indirectly involved in such work, who for their part rank higher than those not involved at all. Thus, landowners are placed at the top of the hierarchy and those who cultivate land as tenants (\textit{dekanaan}) come next. Below them are the artisans associated with the production and maintenance of agricultural tools, that is carpenters (\textit{nejran}) and blacksmiths (\textit{shengaran}), and still lower are those artisans and specialists unrelated to agriculture like potters (\textit{kulalan}), weavers (\textit{joulagan}) and barbers (\textit{guhabi}).

Since marriage should preferably be with social equals, or at any rate not involve the giving of women to those of inferior status, the different occupational \textit{quam} should in principle be largely endogamous. But while the hierarchy of stratification is consistent at the conceptual level, the actual ranking which is found in concrete cases is confounded by different factors, and this ambiguity is both reflected in and resolved by marriage. Besides processes of differentiation like the one described above, the actual definition of relative rank and status is also rendered intricate because the very definition of \textit{quam} identity is not always unequivocal. This complexity enables groups who may be equals in one respect but not in another to accept or reject each other as suitable marriage partners by emphasizing that aspect of status and rank which they have in common or which separates them.\textsuperscript{16} The ambiguity of relative status and rank is naturally most pronounced for those who belong to the intermediate levels of the social hierarchy, and here marriage acquires added significance as an expression and confirmation of status; but even for those who are placed at the top of the hierarchy the situation is not unequivocal.

The ambiguity of status and rank at the top of the social hierarchy concerns the relative ranking of Pakhtun and people of religious repute. As landowners the people of religious repute are part of the basic conceptualization of social hierarchy. At the same time they claim higher status than ordinary tribal landowners with reference to a criterion which is external to this conceptualization – their holy descent – but which is nevertheless cast in the same idiom of ultimate legitimation, Islam. For their part the Pakhtun respect such descent whether from the Prophet or from renowned religious persons, but in general they do not consider people of holy descent as superior to themselves although individual members of holy descent groups can acquire considerable prestige because of their piety and religious knowledge. Nor is the exercise of religious functions as such considered particularly prestigious as is evident from the rather low status bestowed on ordinary village mullahs. Holy descent appears instead to be another criterion of superior status on a par with Pakhtun descent which sets these two groups apart from all those around them who are later converts to Islam.

But despite the Pakhtun claim of equality with people of holy descent, there nevertheless seems to be a tendency for marriage relations to be hypergamous between prestigious holy descent groups and Pakhtun. This tendency is illustrated by the marriages between the small but fairly wealthy \textit{Pachaian} lineage (lineage A, Fig. 7) which has established marriage relations with one of the Mar Rauf Khel lineage segments (Fig. 5). and altogether these \textit{Pachaian} have received seven women from Pakhtun while only giving one of their own women in return. A similar tendency is revealed by the figures presented on Swat (Barth 1959: 20). But this tendency cannot be taken as the general pattern since the other \textit{Pachaian} lineage (lineage B, Fig. 7) on which I have detailed information, a lineage whose members are small peasant proprietors, have given as many women in marriage to Pakhtun as they have received. Instead their hypergamous marriages are with lower ranking groups like artisans and mullahs, and at the same time they complained that they had difficulties finding marriage partners among the other respected groups of holy descent in the area, which are mostly comprised of petty feudal landowners.

The difference in the distribution of marriages between the two \textit{Pachaian} lineages resembles that between the marriages of the Mar Rauf Khel and the Khwar Rauf Khel. In both cases the rank defined by \textit{quam} membership is crucially influenced by the actual wealth and influence possessed by the members of the groups in question. Apart from the marriages linking members of the Khwar Rauf Khel to their richer and more influential collateral...
agnates in the Mar Rauf Khel most of their marriages are with other smallholders. These marriages are predominantly with either Pakhtun or Dehgan, but members of the Khwar Rauf Khel have also contracted marriages both as wife-takers and wife-givers with artisans. However, these marriages where women are given to artisans do not represent an exceptional case of hypogamy; instead they reflect the facts that the status of members of a specific quam is not only influenced by their relative wealth and influence, but that the very definition of quam identity itself can be ambiguous and subject to differing interpretations. Except for one marriage where a women was given to a silversmith – an occupational group (zergaran) whose members are often quite well off – all the other cases where women have been given to artisans involve two groups which also claim Pakhtun descent. Although the richer landowners from the Mar Rauf Khel usually refer to the members of these artisan groups with their main occupation, ahengaran, their Pakhtun descent as Safi and Mohmand is nevertheless generally recognized. So the Khwar Rauf Khel can claim that while they receive women in marriage from non-Pakhtun groups of lower rank, they only exceptionally give their own daughters to such groups but predominantly to Pakhtun and others of roughly similar status like Dehgan and Pachaian landowners.

The frequency of marriages with exogamous affines is lower among the Khwar Rauf Khel in comparison with the Mar Rauf Khel (and the wealthy Pachaian where it is 67% in the last generation), presumably reflecting that their field of choice of marriage partners is more extensive than is the case with the more influential groups for whom the social universe at their own level of status is sharply divided in friends and opponents. Within the last two generations the proportion of patrilateral parallel cousin marriages is roughly the same for the two groups (33% and 39% respectively). But in contrast to the politically dominant Mar Rauf Khel, the marriages with patrilateral parallel cousins within the Khwar Rauf Khel do not express any clear internal fission in politically contending segments, and marriages are made with both first, second, third and fourth degree cousins. However, the split-up of a descent group in different segments does not necessarily reflect political rivalry. Among the less influential and wealthy such a situation can also be caused by the spatial dispersal of members of the descent group, as the case among those ahengaran Safi Pakhtun who have contracted marriage relations with the Khwar Rauf Khel. Only one segment of this group which resides together has established patrilateral parallel cousin marriages. Their other marriages are also predominantly with people from the same locality, but belonging to various quam ranging from small Pakhtun landowners over Pakhtun tenants to non-Pakhtun artisans.

Just as structurally identical patterns of marriage are not necessarily gene-rated by the same causes, marriages which are formally identical do not always involve the same considerations (cf. Bourdieu 1977: 48). Patrilateral parallel cousin marriages may be established with the intention of consolidating the cohesion of the lineage segment as a political group, but they can also be economically motivated since the brideprice rendered in such marriages is usually lower than would be the case in marriages with outsiders, and sometimes it is not demanded at all. Or these marriages can be influenced by considerations concerning the maintenance of status in relation to other groups when suitable external marriage partners are lacking, since wife-giving may carry connotations of weakness and dependency in relation to the receiver. The same variability applies to exogamous marriages. Although the context is always one of friendship between the parties, the marriage can be motivated primarily by the desire for sex and companionship, as when a mature man, who is already married to one or more wives, wants to marry a young and attractive girl. She will in that case usually come from a politically insignificant or lower ranking family since others would be unwilling to give their daughters in that kind of marriage. While political considerations may be of less importance for those who receive women in hypergamous marriages, they are nevertheless present, and especially so with respect to the wife-givers who in addition to the brideprice obtain a relationship of patronage and support. Formerly, when local political leaders held more influence than is the case today, those needing their friendship and support occasionally gave them their daughters in marriage without demanding brideprice.

However, most marriages involve the paying of brideprice (walwar). While formerly it could be made in kind, consisting of grain or cattle, today it is always paid in money. The size of brideprices varies and depends primarily on the rank and status of the family of the bride as well as on the beauty of the girl. Brideprices range from about 40,000 Afghani for women from prosperous landholding families down to about 10,000 Afghani or occasionally even less for women from families of low ranking artisans like potters or landless labourers. Considering that a day labourer can make between 25 and 40 Afghani a day and that a ser (about 7 kg.) of wheat costs between 40 and 50 Afghani, the brideprice represents a very substantial expenditure which is added that of the wedding (wadō or de duli wraz). Men from poorer families therefore often have to save for years before they can afford to get married. But also the more wealthy can find it difficult to acquire the necessary funds, and borrowing with land as security (gerawi) is a quite common measure even among petty feudal landowners when they have to raise money for brideprice and wedding.

One way to avoid the burden of brideprice is the contracting of an exchange marriage (badalet). Among the wealthy groups of high status such
as the Mar Rauf Khel these marriages are few and almost exclusively with close agnates. Likewise, the more wealthy Pachaian only engage in exchange marriages with other groups of holy descent. But among less wealthy groups such as the other Pachaian lineage, the Khwar Rauf Khel, and the ahengaran Safi, exchange marriages are more common and also involve non-agnates. These marriages are explained by the actors themselves as a means to avoid the economic burden of brideprice. The most successful example was a double exchange marriage contracted by an ahengaran Safi landowner cum blacksmith on behalf of his two daughters and two sons, where even the wedding expenses were reduced by holding both his sons’ weddings on the same day. Besides reducing his expenses the man stressed another advantage deriving from the arrangement since now neither of his two wives could accuse him of favouring her co-wife and her son by having married one son before the other. These exchange marriages included both patrilateral parallel cousins and members of the Khwar Rauf Khel, thus expressing the actual equivalence of status between members of the two groups despite the ambiguity concerning the formal rank of the ahengaran Safi.

Nevertheless, despite the expenditure required in order to marry, polygamous marriages are fairly common, and marriage does involve a very substantial part of the available wealth of the individual households in Pakhtun society. Not surprisingly the frequency of polygamous marriages varies in proportion to the wealth and influence of the different groups. But although most polygamous marriages are found among the highest ranking groups, they also occur quite frequently among the less wealthy.

Since a man’s first marriage is usually arranged, many men strive to establish a subsequent marriage of their own choice (cf. Boesen 1982). Other reasons for secondary marriages can be the interest of political leaders in having close affinal relations with different allies, or that a man’s first wife has born him no sons to succeed him. Yet another reason springs from the latent tension and rivalry inherent in the relations between members of the household itself, as when older men marry again because their grown-up sons prevent them – often forcefully – from sleeping with their mothers.

**Rights and Interests in Women**

As previously mentioned, it is in principle the male household head who decides whom his daughters and sons are going to marry. But in practice the arrangement of a marriage is influenced both by other members of his household (Boesen 1982), and sometimes even by persons who do not belong to the household in question. Paradoxically, such outside interference which compromises the autonomy and namus of the affected household heads appears to occur mostly in the wealthy and politically influential descent segments. The reason is that in segments, like those of the Mar Rauf Khel, which are involved in the competition for local political dominance, and where marriage is used to confirm relations of friendship and alliance, the more prominent leading members will often attempt to influence the choice of marriage partners of members of other households belonging to the segment. In this way they are able to confirm and hopefully consolidate a larger number of important relationships than would be the case if they could only use the marriages involving members of their own household. Such interference is resented by those household heads who are subjected to it, especially since it usually involves the marriages of their daughters. But nevertheless, it seems that they generally comply with the dispositions of the leader since a refusal might mean that his support could be withheld next time it was needed, or it could lead to open disagreement and isolation vis-à-vis the rest of the segment.

Apart from those marriages which are occasionally established in defiance of the wishes of the leaders of lineage segments, conflicts over marriage arrangements also result from the diffuse internal distribution of authority which is often found in the politically dominant lineage segments. Different prominent members of a segment may disagree over the arrangement of a marriage of another member since each wants to use the marriage to strengthen what he sees as the important relations of friendship and alliance. The potential for such disagreements is especially pronounced in situations which involve the marriage of a woman who has no full brothers, since each of her half-brothers (or her paternal uncles) can claim to have the right to decide on her marriage. If such a woman is living permanently in the household of one of her half-brothers (or uncles) he will have the strongest claim. But even in this situation his dispositions concerning her marriage may not be accepted by all the other household heads belonging to the segment. In one recent case where two half-brothers from one of the Mar Rauf Khel lineage segments did not agree on the marriage of their younger half-sister,

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**Fig. 6.**

**Polygamous Marriages.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of wves pr. married man</th>
<th>No. of married men</th>
<th>No. of polygamous marriages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar Rauf Khel</td>
<td>24 8 6 1 2 41 17 41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khwar Rauf Khel</td>
<td>25 10 2 - - 38 12 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pachaian lineage A</td>
<td>6 3 - - - 9 3 33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pachaian lineage B</td>
<td>11 1 1 2 - - 15 4 27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahengaran (Safi)</td>
<td>15 3 - - - 18 3 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82 25 9 3 2 121 39 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
one of the men expressed his discontent by staying away from the marriage feast, an occasion which is generally attended by all who are considered and who consider themselves to be friends of the households involved in the marriage.

A parallel case from the other Mar Rauf Khel lineage segment involving the disagreement of two half-brothers concerning the marriage of their half-sister had far more wide-ranging implications. As in the first case the disagreement was between the two most influential household heads in the segment, and it concerned the marriage of a considerably younger half-sister who had no full brothers. One of the half-brothers, Haji Yusuf Khan, had engaged \( (kholat) \) the woman, Bibi Gui, to Mohammad Nader from the Rauf Khel lineage segment in Sharalu Kalai, which was part of his own network of allies and with which his segment had already several marriage ties. The marriage may have been conceived as a move to counter a relationship established through a previous marriage between a brother of Mohammad Nader and a woman from the rival Mar Rauf Khel lineage segment. However, when Bibi Gui became old enough to be married she opposed the arrangement and complained that Mohammad Nader, who already had two wives, was too old. Her half-brother Haji Fazl Rahim instead engaged her to Faiz Mohammad, a young landowner who belonged to a Dehgan lineage segment which was part of his network of friends and allies. Since engagement is usually considered as binding as a regular marriage there was bound to be trouble, and before the engagement Haji Fazl Rahim had promised Faiz Mohammad that he would protect him both against his own half-brother Haji Yusuf Khan and against Mohammad Nader. Haji Yusuf Khan was unable to persuade his half-brother to dissolve the engagement, and since Mohammad Nader still claimed the girl, a \( jirga \) (council) was assembled which included prominent Mamund leaders from the main sections of the sub-tribe living east of the Kunar river. In the meantime Faiz Mohammad and Bibi Gui had been married properly \( (nekah, \) the marriage agreement, had been made) and Bibi Gui was pregnant, so the \( jirga \) decided that the marriage should last but that Faiz Mohammad should give one of his sisters as compensation \( (bad) \) to Mohammad Nader. This he refused and argued instead that Haji Fazl Rahim could give another woman from his own family if compensation had to be given at all. As a result Haji Fazl Rahim withdrew the support he had previously promised Faiz Mohammad. Mohammad Nader was now free to act without having to oppose Haji Fazl Rahim, and tried unsuccessfully to kill Faiz Mohammad. A new \( jirga \) was assembled and the whole Rauf Khel lineage agreed to pay Mohammad Nader 40,000 Afghani – the equivalent of a brideprice – as compensation. But the money was not used to acquire a wife for Mohammad Nader; instead he paid two men to kill Faiz Mohammad, and they murdered both him and his brother. After the killings Mohammad Nader fled to the areas east of the Kunar river to avoid revenge or possible arrest by the authorities. A third \( jirga \) was called to settle the new situation, and the father of Faiz Mohammad was offered a woman from Mohammad Nader’s family plus some land as compensation. He refused the offer. Instead he tried to get revenge \( (badal = \text{exchange}) \) in the spring of 1978, about six years after the killings, by blowing up the house of Mohammad Nader with dynamite. But the brother of Mohammad Nader and his family who live in the house escaped unhurt. Bibi Gui has not been remarried and now lives with her child in the household of a third of her half-brothers.

The tragic happenings resulting from the differing arrangements concerning the marriage of Bibi Gui emphasize a crucial feature of Pakhtun social organization. Whereas homicide only implicates the close agnates of the victim, like his father, brothers or sons, who have to defend their honour through revenge, matters of honour involving women affect a larger circle of agnates. In the case of Bibi Gui the whole Rauf Khel lineage was mobilized as a political unit, albeit temporarily, when a settlement had to be reached since the situation affected the \( namus \) of all lineage members. Both of the rival Mar Rauf Khel lineage segments took part in the \( jirga \) and contributed to the compensation to Mohammad Nader as did both of the half-brothers whose disagreement had caused the whole affair. So matters of honour involving women represent another area of shared interests beside those deriving from the defence of joint rights in pasture and forest land that can unite descent groups that are otherwise permanently split in opposed segments. Each of these different areas of shared interests are transmitted through patrilineal descent. But whereas those regarding land also imply shared rights this is not the case where women are concerned. Only the father or his successors have any rights over a woman before her marriage, and the instances where authority over her is exercised by others, as when segment leaders interfere in marriage arrangements, derive from situational relations of dominance and dependence within the group, and not from descent relations.

The rights that a father exercises over his daughter are transferred to her husband at marriage \( (\text{cf. Barth 1959: 39}) \). If the husband dies, decisions concerning the remarriage rest exclusively with his close agnates, and in such cases levirate marriages are common. So in this respect the fate of Bibi Gui is quite atypical. But although a married woman’s agnates do not retain any formal rights in her, their emotional attachment to her nevertheless makes them concerned about what happens to her. Thus it is not uncommon that the father or brothers of a married woman are prepared to support her and help her even against her husband. Women do sometimes return to their agnates for shorter or longer periods, and occasionally even perma-
nently, in cases of quarrels or maltreatment in the household they have been married into. So the lack of support for a woman from her agnates does not necessarily derive from an absence of interest in her fate, but rather from the fact that their ability to assist her might be both limited and risky since marriages are either hypergamous or between social equals. Thus, it is only when the wife-givers for some reason are in a stronger position than the wife-takers that a woman can return permanently to her agnates. But even in such instances the marriage is not dissolved and the woman cannot remarry.20

Conclusion
The approach applied by Bourdieu to the analysis of marriage among the Kabyle in Algeria appears equally useful when applied to Pakhtun at the other extreme of the Muslim world: 'each marriage (appears) as a moment in such instances the marriage is not dissolved and the woman cannot remarry.20

The table shows the marriages of men (M) and women (W) belonging to the five descent groups listed across the top of the table with persons from the five descent groups listed vertically. The table is divided into sections for the marriages of men and women, with columns for different occupational groups. The table includes data for Mar Rauf Khel, Khwar Rauf Khel, Pachaian, Ahengaran, and others. The table shows the distribution of marriages within a quantified sample.

The table shows that some occupational groups have higher rates of marriage than others. For example, the table indicates that the occupational group 'Merchants, Teachers' has a higher rate of marriage compared to other groups. The table also shows that there is a variation in the number of marriages by gender and by occupational group.
lation of land can no longer be accomplished as quickly and on the same scale as previously, and there is a progressive fragmentation of feudal landholdings through inheritance which is not offset by a corresponding formation of new large landholdings. At the same time local political influence is significantly dependent on state patronage, and political shifts at the center are accompanied by alternations in the power relations between local blocks of allies.

NOTES

Fieldwork among Pakhtuns in Kunar was carried out between August 1977 and November 1978 together with Inger W. Boesen, to whom I am especially indebted both with regard to the fieldwork itself and for discussions and information in connection with the writing of this article. I would also like to thank Jan Anderson and Jan Ovesen for discussions of various relevant topics. Susan R. White for corrections of language, and Abdul Rasul Amin, formerly lecturer at the Dept. of Philosophy and Social Science at Kabul University, for his invaluable assistance in many respects throughout our stay in Afghanistan. The fieldwork was supported financially by the Danish Research Council for the Humanities, which I gratefully acknowledge.

1. Apart from the category of incest described by Fig. 1., the sphere of incest is extended when a man marries to include his mother-in-law, whom he cannot marry in case of the death of her husband. Nor can he marry her sisters or the sister of his wife. Another category of incest comprises what the Pakhtun call 'milk mother' (shude mor) and milk sisters (shude khor). This refers to a woman other than the man's mother who has nursed him. If he has any of her daughters who are of the same age or younger than the man in question. Older daughters of the woman are not covered by the ban. These categories provide an example of what Pitt-Rivers (1973: 92) has called consubstantiality, and in this case milk although weaker than blood creates sameness and consequently a prohibition of incest.

2. Analysis of the marriage patterns in different Muslim societies (e.g. Barth 1954, Aswad 1971, Alawi 1972) have demonstrated that a high incidence of patrilateral parallel cousin marriage does not result from a single set of conditions found in each case, but that its practice in different societies requires different functional explanations. So what is accounted for by this functional approach is not the existence of the institution of patrilateral parallel cousin marriage, but the conditions generating frequencies and patterns of marriage; that is, the practice of endogamic and exogamic marriages.

3. In his study of the Mohmand Pakhtun, Ahmed makes a distinction between what he labels 'senior' and 'junior' lineages, but judging from his own data it would appear that what is involved is not a Pakhtun conceptualization of genealogical seniority, but actual and shifting relations of political and economic superiority (Ahmed 1980: 132, 135, 213-19).

4. Namix is a segmentary concept, and although it centers on the household it can be situationally extended to refer to larger groupings on various levels of incorporation, even up to that of all Pakhtun or all Afghans as is the case in the present resistance struggle against the Kabul regime and the Soviet forces of invasion.

5. As Anderson (1978: 169-70) has described for Ghilzai Pakhtun, leadership also confers prestige for another reason since the leader who succeeds in rallying his agnates behind him emerges as the one who creates or contributes towards the realization of the ideal of agnatic solidarity and unity vis-a-vis others.

6. The fluidity concerning the internal distribution of authority within descent segments which derive from the competitive attempts of members to express their individual autonomy and increase their prestige, and the consequent instability and variability which characterize such segments as frameworks of solidarity, despite the cultural value attached to this state of affairs, is not something which is restricted to Pakhtun in Kunar and Swat. Its existence as a general feature of Pakhtun political organization is supported by comparable observations concerning the Ghilzai (Anderson 1975: 600), as well as by data presented on the Mohmand (Ahmed 1980: 71-78, 130-59, 181-202).

7. I have only information on one case of divorce, which was in progress during fieldwork, and according to my informants this was the first case they had ever experienced or heard of. It involved a levirate marriage where the man had left his wife to fend for herself during fifteen years. When he heard that she was sleeping with other men he ordered her to move to his house which was in another village. She feared he would kill her, and her agnates called a jirga to settle the issue. The participants of the jirga considered the behaviour of both parties extremely shameful (sharm), but saw divorce as the only feasible solution to the matter.

8. Ralf Kel is a pseudonym as are the other names of lineages or persons appearing in this article, except those of the Zamani lineage segment, since their position and role in the history of Kunar is too well known to be veiled by a fictitious name.

9. On a deeper level the difference between Kunar and Swat involves the explanation of the variation in landownership and political organization. This variation appears to be decisively influenced by the absence of state authority in Swat and its marginal but increasing presence in Kunar in the shape of the Kabul government. Although the ethnographic present in Barth's excellent analysis of Swat political organization is never fixed in historical time, it must be assumed that it is situated in the period before the establishment of the state in Swat (Ahmed 1978: 132-34). Otherwise the description of Swat political organization as an acephalous system where political leaders are able to accumulate land by force would have to be modified analytically by incorporating the effects of state authority on the process of local political rivalry. Such a situation existed in Kunar from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, when the initial dependency of the state on local political leaders enabled these to accumulate considerable landholdings. Later the increasing, although still fairly precarious, state authority not only blocked the possibility of forceful seizure of land on an extensive scale in the main valley areas, but also made it possible for the state to take over most of the functions it had previously vested in local leaders. Thereby denying them their former possibilities of rapid accumulation of land. This in conjunction with other factors has caused a situation where the previously fairly large landholdings of such leaders have been progressively fragmented in smaller units through inheritance (cf. Christensen 1981 b: 315).

10. Lineage segments to the groups called 'sub-sections' or 'operative lineages by Ahmed, and lineage corresponds to 'section', a number of which constitute a sub-clan with a genealogical depth of about nine generations (Ahmed 1980: 130-31). However, it is not entirely clear from the information presented by Ahmed how many generations the lineage segments (sub-sections) span. On page 130 he mentions a genealogical depth to six or seven generations, and on page 359 a depth of three or four generations, while a different genealogical length can be inferred from the information presented on page 316.

11. This land was divided first among the different conquering descent groups, and they among the members of the groups. Although these divisions of cultivated land are referred to as vesht like the periodical redistribution of land among the Yutufoz in Swat, they usually took place only once. But vesht in the form of periodical redistribution has been practiced among the Tarkanis in Kunar. It has been gradually abandoned by the different Tarkanis groups over a long period in favour of permanent private property, but it is said to have been practiced by some groups until about twenty years ago.

12. However, such divisions may occur along the borders of the settlement areas of ethnic groups like Nuristani and Gujar (Strand 1975: 132) or Pakhtun tribal groups like the Shinwari and Mashwani (Christensen 1980: 81), where the groups in question confront each other in competition over access to land.
13. This pattern becomes even clearer if we only consider the marriages of women belonging to the two dominant Rauf Khel lineage segments, since the giving away of a woman involves considerations of the namus of the wife-giver which demands the equality of the wife-taker. Thus, while most of the marriages involving Rauf Khel women were with other Pakhtun (61%), virtually all the remaining women were in marriage to allies among landholding Dehgan (21%) and religious descent groups (16%).

14. I was also told by Pakhtun that the Nuristani were the descendants of inhabitants of Mecca and that the ancestors of the Nuristani had remained faithful to Mecca. This should be compared with the Pakhtun conception of their own Muslinness which dates back to conversion by the Prophet himself of their putative ancestor Qaiz.

15. The most general meaning of namus is patrilineal descent group, and the term is used to refer to a wide range of groupings where membership is ideally based on this principle. It can be used to refer to Pakhtun descent groups on various levels of incorporation, and both ethnic groups and different occupational groups are referred to as namus.

16. For this reason it is dubious if the concept of caste can be applied to the system of stratification of the Pakhtun as Barth has done concerning those in Swat (Barth 1960: 113), despite the fact that the division of labour both in Swat and in Kunar resembles that of the Hindu Jajmani system. If caste systems are defined by – the simultaneous comprehensiveness and clear definition of units – which – results from the summation of many part-statuses into standardized clusters, or social persons, each identified with a specific caste position – (bid.), then the hierarchy found in Kunar cannot be analysed as a caste system. Here the very definition of status and rank through a summation of part-statuses invests actual ranking with an ambiguity that is not compatible with a hierarchy of cases.

17. However, there are contexts where the content of the relationship is not so much one of friendship as one of absence of open hostility or conflict. As previously mentioned the establishment of friendly relations between former enemies are occasionally accompanied by the establishment of marriage relations between the two groups through an exchange of women. In cases of serious offences involving matters of women (Boesen 1982) or homicide, a council (jirga) sometimes requests that the offender give one or more women as compensation (bad) to the aggrieved party. In contrast to the settlement of conflict through an exchange of women between the parties, the unilateral giving of a woman has connotations of weakness. When it takes place those receiving the woman often restrict themselves to using the occasion as a public demonstration of their superiority, and send the woman back when she reaches their house.

18. Pakhtun tell that the Nuristani still pay brideprice wholly or partly in kind, and this is used as another example, besides their recent conversion to Islam, to show their backward and somewhat savage state in comparison with the Pakhtun themselves.

19. Thus, a member of the Mar Rauf Khel had to mortgage two jerd of irrigated land for about 75,000 Afghanis in 1972 to be able to pay the expenses of brideprice and wedding. Part of the money was borrowed from his elder brother.

20. In one such case a woman had fled back to her agnates after the death of her husband because she did not want to marry his brother. Her agnates refused to hand her over to the brother of her deceased husband who was not powerful enough to force them to do so. But he openly stated that he would kill any man that she might be married to by her agnates in the future.