Peasant Classes and Primordial Loyalties

by

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To establish a theoretical framework for the analysis of the social contexts of peasant political action, this article examines critically various approaches in social anthropology and Marxism. In the context of peasant societies, it considers the problematics comprehended in a distinction between a class-in-itself (an economic category) and a class-for-itself (a political group) recognising that the process of transformation of the one into the other is mediated by primordial ties such as those of kinship. For the analysis of such ties various approaches in social anthropology are examined, and emphasis is given to underlying conceptual problems in structural-functional holism and methodological individualism in the light of a Marxist conception of the dialectical unity of man and society. It outlines an approach which seeks to extend the framework of class analysis.

This essay is concerned with methods of analysing the social contexts of peasant political action. The study of peasant societies, as a distinctive project within the science of society, defining its specific problems and approaches, has by and large languished at the periphery of academic enterprise, which tends, furthermore, to fragment the science of society into social sciences. The peasant has indeed made his presence felt in the field of history; but the focus of the valuable contributions of historians is largely on dramatic moments when the peasant has intervened in the arena of political events. The uneventful normality of peasant social and political life, however, demands no less attention. The subject is relatively neglected in sociology and political science, where the scope for fresh creative work is great. Of the two academic disciplines that are most involved in the subject, economics and social anthropology, it is the latter with which we shall be most concerned in the present context, with the caveat that the author is not by profession a social anthropologist. An increasing involvement of social anthropologists in the study of peasant societies in recent years has brought to the surface fundamental methodological questions, some of which we must examine. The study of peasant societies has been well established in the Marxist

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tradition. There, too, important questions arise concerning an extension of the theoretical framework for analysis of complex mediations of social action, such as those of primordial loyalties, in peasant societies.

The peasant has stepped into the arena of political anthropology hand in hand with a manipulating individual replacing, conceptually, the role performer of structural-functional analysis. Together they have called into question a whole theoretical tradition established in social anthropology. Many social anthropologists have, especially in the last decade, turned to alternative methodological approaches which focus on the purposive actions of individuals rather than on the prescriptions of cultural norms. An examination of the two alternative approaches, in relation to one another, highlights some basic issues which neither approach resolves satisfactorily.

Real man has reappeared, with fresh questions, in another theoretical tradition. He was lost to a generation of Marxists who could see no more than his shadow moving inexorably across the screen of history, his future already inscribed indelibly in that which was yet to unfold. Goldmann associated that tendency with the fact that 'Western non-socialist thought in the second half of the nineteenth century was characterised by a break with the dialectical tradition, and the progressive triumph of historicism and of scientism'. He continues: 'This conception rapidly became dominant among the main theoreticians of so-called orthodox Marxism (Kautsky, Plekhanov, etc.), who transformed the dialectical concept of "scientific socialism" into the scientistic concept of science "in the indicative mood", which was objective and foreign to any value judgment' [Goldmann, 1968: 14]. It is noteworthy that those advocates of scientistic, non-dialectical, 'orthodox' Marxism moved out of the main-stream of revolutionary Marxism, while their theoretical formulations and deterministic outlook were re-incarnated in Stalinist orthodoxy.

Marx himself did not take such a view. 'The premises from which we begin', he wrote, 'are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity' [Marx and Engels, 1963: 7]. The real man, a social being, is recognised not in himself in isolation but in the context of his relationship to the structured social whole, which is 'a sum of productive forces, a historically created relation of individuals to nature and to one another . . . which, indeed, is modified by the new generation on the one hand, but also on the other prescribes for it its conditions of life and gives it a definite movement, a special character' [Ibid: 29]. The social whole and the individual social being are not defined independently of their dialectical inter-relationship: each transforms and re-transforms the other so that the one is not reducible to the other.

Such a conception of man and society is elaborated in classical
Marxism primarily with reference to the (economic) ‘structure’, for which it offers a highly elaborated conceptual framework and a theoretical system. Questions relating to various aspects of the ‘super-structure’, such as social and political relationships and institutions, are not pursued in the same detail, and insights offered in that sphere are not fully articulated by an elaboration of concepts and theoretical formulations comparable in analytical power to those provided for analysis of ‘structure’. With the contemporary recovery of Marxism, and the rediscovery of real man, these questions, however, have been brought to the surface. Sartre has expressed this need, for Marxism, to identify a ‘hierarchy of mediations . . . to grasp the processes which produce the person and his product inside a class and within a given society at a given historical moment’ [Sartre, 1963: 56].

In discussing issues which arise in these contexts, and examining alternative models of power in peasant societies, I have in mind general features of those societies. Some of the arguments, however, may be illustrated principally with reference to one peasant society, namely that of the Punjab in Pakistan. Perhaps it is too early to speak of a consensual definition of ‘peasant’ society. In particular, it is not very easy to draw a sharp distinction between so-called ‘primitive’ societies and ‘peasant’ societies. Post [1972] looks at the problem in a perspective of societal evolution. He conceptualises the two types of societies as models or ideal types, and identifies a process of ‘peasantisation’ in Africa as a process of transition from the one polar type towards the other. Eric Wolf’s classic essay on ‘Peasants’ still stands out as a valuable synthesis in the conceptualisation of peasant societies [Wolf, 1966] and more recently Shanin [1971b] has offered a systematic survey of various approaches and themes, which helps greatly towards a definition of the subject. Certain features of particular relevance to the questions we propose to discuss in this essay are highlighted in these attempts to identify general characteristics of peasant societies.

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In distinguishing ‘peasant’ from ‘primitive’ societies, the aspects of the former which are generally emphasised are their economic and political encapsulation and penetration by larger societal wholes, the emergence of economic and political hierarchies and the extraction of an ‘economic surplus’ from the peasant cultivator: these features being absent from stereotypes of ‘primitive’ societies. Analysis of such ‘structural’ differentiation, conflicts of interests between ‘structurally’ differentiated classes, and the dynamic of social change inherent in the incompatibility of class interests, are central to Marxist analysis, the concept of ‘structure’ being premised on the mode of production.

Much comment on Marx’s view of the peasantry fastens on the
following much quoted passage: 'The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse ... Insofar as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, their culture from those of other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these smallholding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond, and no political organisation among them, they do not form a class' [Marx, 1951: 302-3]. It would be a mistake to read into this passage a statement of some universal attributes of peasants in the field of political action. Ascription of absolute characteristics to any group, regardless of historical context, is alien to the Marxist method. That statement, it should be noted, was made specifically with reference to the French peasantry and in the particular context of its role at a moment of crisis in French history. Marx's work on rural societies in general reflected his central focus on the development of capitalism in Western Europe. He analysed a variety of structural forms of rural societies [e.g. Marx, 1969: Vol. III Ch. XLVII] particularly with reference to the transition from feudalism to capitalism and with reference to precapitalist economic formations [Marx, 1964], which illuminated his analysis of capitalist development. In the context of a bourgeois revolution and with the perspective of a proletarian revolution, the question of the political role of the peasantry was not a central issue in the relevant political debate.

In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the peasant question was central to the political debate. All the great figures in Russian Marxism contributed vigorously to a discussion of the subject. Even Plekhanov — to whom is attributed the remark that the peasantry was 'not a class but a notion', which might imply a rather off-hand and contemptuous dismissal of the peasant question by Marxists — devoted a considerable part of his work towards its analysis. His conclusion, in sum, was that 'Our village community, once so dear even to certain socialists, but which in reality has been the main buttress of Russian absolutism, is becoming more and more an instrument in the hands of the rural bourgeoisie for the exploitation of the majority of the agrarian population. The poorer peasantry are forced to move to the towns ... The proletariat which is being formed as a result of the disintegration of the village community will strike a mortal blow at the autocracy. The revolutionary movement in Russia can triumph only as the revolutionary movement of the workers' [Plekhanov, 1961: 451-2]. Plekhanov did visualise, however, that 'The proletarian, ejected from the countryside as an impoverished member of the village community, will return there
as a Social Democratic agitator. His appearance in that role will change the present hopeless fate of the village community' [Ibid: 410]. That statement is vague, because Plekhanov does not indicate which members of the village society might thereby be affected and why; and he tends to employ the term 'village community' ambiguously, for it could mean either the village commune or the whole of the rural society.

The seminal work which established a clearly articulated framework for a Marxist analysis of peasant societies was Lenin's major study of Russian rural society, which was a part of his study of the development of capitalism in Russia [Lenin, 1956]. In that work he established a 'model' on which subsequent Marxist analyses of class relations in rural societies are based, including Mao Tse-tung's work on the subject. Lenin laid aside generalised cultural definitions of the peasantry and formulated his analysis on the basis of the Marxist conception of class, which is defined by relations of production. He identified three types, namely i) feudal relations of production, comprising landlords and sharecroppers, ii) capitalist relations of production, comprising the capitalist farmer (the kulak) and wage labourers (the rural proletariat), and iii) the 'middle peasant', who cultivated his own land but, in Russia, was tied to the commune. Recently the 'differentiation debate' relating to the period in question, has been subjected to a searching examination by Shanin [1972] who has emphasised mobility between categories. On the other hand, Mao Tse-tung recognised that Lenin's broad categories might be elaborated further, for there are significant differences between sub-groups within some of the categories. Initially, therefore, Mao differentiated no less than 8 classes of the rural population of China. They did not include the class of capitalist farmers, for rural capitalism had not developed in China. Other categories were further subdivided so that, altogether, eleven categories were distinguished. Those categories, however, were elaborations of the basic structural classification established in Lenin's work; in his later writings, Mao reverted to the simpler classification.

Lenin used the structural analysis of classes in the rural society of Russia as a matrix, with reference to which he made evaluations of the prospective roles of different strata of the peasantry at different moments in the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia. His evaluations altered in the light of actual experience and with changes in the situation as a whole. Lenin looked upon the classes in the capitalist sector of the agrarian economy, rather than feudal serfs or the 'disintegrating' class of middle peasants (who were in conflict with the feudal landlords in a struggle for 'cut-off lands'), as forces for dissolution of feudalism. Initially, he speculated about that role of the rural proletariat; later he thought that the rural capitalist, the kulak, constituted the vanguard of bourgeois revolution, against feudalism.
He wrote off the communal 'middle peasants' as a backward and reactionary class. That view was, however, revised by Lenin in the light of the actual experience of the Russian revolution. In China, where there were no rural capitalists, Mao focused principally on the revolutionary potentiality of 'poor peasants'. But, in revolutionary practice, the important role of 'middle peasants' was not overlooked.

The analyses put forward by Lenin and Mao and the experience of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, and the peasant movement in India, vis-a-vis the roles of different strata of the peasantry, have been examined elsewhere [Alavi, 1965], where a thesis about the respective roles of 'middle peasants' (the smallholding independent peasant proprietors) and 'poor peasants' (the sharecroppers and labourers) in revolutionary movements was put forward. That thesis was reiterated by Eric Wolf [1969a] in his essay 'On Peasant Rebellion' and tested by him further in the light of other historical examples in his study of Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century [Wolf, 1959b].

From an examination of the actual experience of the Russian and the Chinese revolutions it was found that, contrary to expectations, the 'rural proletariat' and the 'poor peasants' were, initially, the least militant classes of the peasantry whereas the smallholding independent peasant proprietors, the 'middle peasants', were initially, the most militant. Despite their importance in imparting an initial impetus to militant political action, however, their perspectives and aims remained limited by their class position. On the other hand, when certain conditions were realised, poor peasants took to revolutionary action. Lenin [1947: 647] reached those conclusions after considering, retrospectively, the experience of the Russian revolution. Our study was concerned with an examination of conditions in which different classes of the peasantry take to militant political action and the roles that they consequently play, at various stages in the progress of revolutionary movements. Insofar as Wolf appears to visualise militancy of 'middle peasants' and non-militancy of 'poor peasants' as absolute qualities, deriving from their given circumstances, our analysis differs from his. For us the central problem is that of the conditions in which the different classes of the peasantry engage in militant or revolutionary political action. Militancy or non-militancy are not absolute conditions but, rather, they are contingent on changing conjunctures of social circumstances and movements.

The tradition of Marxist analysis of peasant political action, however, pursues the implications of only one, though crucial, dimension of the social situation, namely that of the economic structure; and it is focused on peasants in revolutions or peasant revolutions (a distinction which, too, is sometimes overlooked) and does not refer to other contexts and modes of peasant political action. There is an underlying assumption in the analyses, which
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should be made explicit and subjected to examination. This assumption is that, given an appropriate conjuncture of circumstances, a class, defined in Marxist terms with reference to relations of production, will act in the political arena on behalf of its class interests. Further questions which arise in that connection may, however, be seen in the light of Marx's comments on the French peasantry, which we have quoted above. He made a distinction between the French peasantry constituted as a class by their mode of production i.e. a class-in-itself, and the fact that they did not, by that token, automatically form a class, i.e. a class-for-itself, insofar as 'the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond, no political organisation among them' [Marx, 1951: 302-3].

Only a mechanistic interpretation of Marxism would fail to perceive the problematic comprehended in that distinction. Meszaros refers to it as 'the central dilemma of the Marxist theory of classes and class consciousness'. He proceeds to show that: 'Marx, in his assertion of the historical necessity of class-conscious proletarian action, does not simply refer to "economic crises" — the terms of Gramsci's polemics against "vulgar economism" — but to the "being" of the class: i.e. he indicates the line of solution in terms of the complex determinants of a social ontology as contrasted with some economic mechanism. . . . For the "being" of any class is the comprehensive synthesis of all factors which are at work in society, whereas the propounders of an "economic determinism" . . . single out one factor only, and crudely superimpose it on all the others" [Meszaros, 1971: 85-6]. The historical processes by which a class-in-itself is transformed into a class-for-itself are complex and are mediated by a variety of factors, including influences of pre-existing forms of social organisation and institutions which embody primordial loyalties, such as those of kinship or ethnic identity etc; this is especially true in peasant societies. Furthermore, given an hierarchical social order in peasant societies, the absence of horizontal political cleavages along class lines implies the existence of vertical cleavages which cut across class lines. Questions therefore arise about the conditions in which the peasant is obliged to submit, as well as those about conditions in which he has the ability to rebel. This is a field of study in which comparatively little work has been done by Marxists, especially when compared with Marxist contributions to philosophy, historiography, and political economy.

Primordial Loyalties

Social anthropology is concerned with just such problems. It deals, on the one hand, with aspects of social organisation such as kinship and caste i.e. primordial loyalties, with a focus on cultural norms. Its methodological approach was grounded, in the main, on structural-functionalism. That conception of society, premised on a fully integrated set of cultural norms which govern social relationships, fails to take account of contradictions between interests of
individuals and groups in an hierarchically organised peasant society which, moreover, is entangled in a web of economic and political relationships in a larger society. Many anthropologists, in recent years, particularly those involved with ‘complex societies’ such as peasant societies, have turned away from the holistic conceptualisation of structural-functionalism and have adopted alternative approaches of ‘methodological individualism’. Their analyses offer some useful insights, particularly into certain political relationships and the articulation of power between local communities and the larger societies. The conceptual framework of such analyses, however, poses fundamental questions regarding the situation of social transactions, in an over-all matrix of social and economic relationships. To appreciate fully the value and the limitations of theoretical insights provided by either of the two approaches in social anthropology, their methodological foundations have to be evaluated.

There exists a large body of literature which offers critical discussion of the methodology of structural-functionalism. We will limit our comments to some aspects of its conceptualisation of society and social relations. Methodological holism, as practised by social anthropologists in the form of structural-functionalism in the tradition established by Radcliffe-Brown and his followers, is based on the assumption that given the existing division of labour in society, social roles which individuals occupy are reciprocally and collectively ‘functional’, so that society as a whole constitutes a harmoniously integrated system. The social system is maintained, and the interests of the collectivity of men in society are mutually served, by their cooperation in the performance of their respective social roles. It is therefore assumed that it is in the interest of the collectivity of men to ensure the maintenance of the stability of the existing social structure. That is achieved through the functioning of ‘structure maintaining’ institutions and social processes, as well as by institutions of social control which impose sanctions against deviance.

The concept of ‘social structure’ is premised on the Durkheimian conception of ‘social facts’, which he described as ‘a category of facts with very distinctive characteristics: it consists of ways of acting, thinking and feeling, external to the individual and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him’ [Durkheim, 1962: 3]. Radcliffe-Brown wrote: ‘Social structures are just as real as are individual organisms. . . . A particular social relation between two persons (unless they are Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden) exists only as a part of a wide network of social relations, involving many other persons and it is this network which I regard as . . . social structure’ [Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 190-1]. Social structure is defined by jural rules which, in social anthropology, are expressed in the idiom of kinship. Radcliffe-Brown and Forde [1950: v] conceptualise the central role of the kinship system in ‘primitive societies’ more strongly, by saying
that: 'The way in which comprehensive obligations of kinship direct the activities and relations which, in our society, are segregated out as more specifically political, economic, and religious is a commonplace of social anthropology' (emphasis added). 5

An analytical distinction may be made between two conceptions of kinship in society, generally fused in the literature of social anthropology. One is that of kinship as an organising and directing principle in social organisation, i.e. that 'Kinship, taken as a system of values . . . is unique, in that it is the master principle both for particular activities and for the social structure as a whole' [Fortes, 1949: 340]. We may refer to this as the concept of the primacy of the kinship system. The other view, which may be referred to as that of the autonomy of the kinship system, conceives of it as a social system of the first order, independent of and not derivative from any other social system which may exist parallel to the kinship system. Both Leach and Worsley have challenged the dominant compounded view of the primacy and the autonomy of the kinship system. Referring to Fortes' ideas, Leach writes: 'If anthropologists come to look upon kinship as a parameter which can be studied in isolation they will always be led, by a series of logical steps, to think of human society as composed of equilibrium systems structured according to legal rules. Economic activities come to appear of minor significance and the study of social adaptation to changing circumstances is made impossible. But an alternative possibility is to regard economic relations as 'prior' to kinship relations. In this case the continuity of the kinship system need not be regarded as intrinsic; it is at every point in time, adaptive to the changing economic situation' [Leach, 1961: 8]. By a re-examination of data on Tallensi presented by Fortes, Worsley also arrives at a conclusion contrary to that of Fortes. Worsley concluded that: 'All social relations in Taleland are moulded by the pattern of kinship and expressed in kinship terms, since in Taleland as in all simple societies, the most significant social relations are between kinsfolk and their affines. As we have seen, kinship is the form which the essential relations arising from the needs of agriculture, the inheritance of property etc. take and as these relations change, so kinship changes. Far from being basic, it is secondary. . . . The particular forms which kinship relations will take . . . are largely determined by economic and historical forces' [Worsley, 1956: 62-3].

Whereas Leach and Worsley attempt to show no more than the fact that kinship organisation is affected by economic factors and is not determined independently of them, Terray, a Marxist, demonstrates a correspondence between kinship and economic structures in 'primitive' societies, with reference principally to the work of Claude Meillassoux on Gouro society. He identifies two types of 'production units', in agriculture designated, respectively, 'restricted simple cooperation' and 'extended simple cooperation' and one in
hunting with nets, designated ‘complex cooperation’. Terray shows that ‘The socio-economic formation of the Gouro results from the combination of two modes of production: The first, revealed in complex cooperation is “realised” in what we have called the tribal-village system. . . . (In) simple cooperation . . . work teams and production communities take the form of extended families and segments of lineages or entire lineages — that is, of kin groups. . . . Thus the lineage system appears as a determined totality of kinship relations. . . . Kinship relations do not dominate the overall social organisation of all primitive socio-economic formations; such domination is associated with particular modes of production’ [Terray, 1972: 137-40]. A weakness of Terray’s presentation of the analysis is that it does not throw any light on the encapsulation and penetration of Gouro society by the outside world. Nor does the analysis, given its morphological focus, consider implications of changes in the mode of production in Guro society. The analysis shares the weakness of anthropological analyses which treat the local community as societal isolates and static.

These implications are clarified by Godelier, also a Marxist anthropologist. He recalls that ‘each social structure has for Marx its own content and mode of functioning and evolution’ and emphasises that economic structures of society, namely relations of production and productive forces, and non-economic structures, are not reducible to each other [Godelier, 1967: 111]. ‘What are in fact irreducible’, he explains, ‘are the functions and evolution of structures, so that their differentiation should be explained by the transformation and evolution of their functions’ [Ibid: 112]. Rejecting a simple reductionist thesis, Godelier, nevertheless, poses the question: ‘How, within Marx’s perspective, can we understand both the dominant role of kinship and the determinant role of the economy in the last instance?’ He finds that: ‘This is impossible if economy and kinship are treated as base and superstructure. In an archaic society kinship relations function as relations of production, just as they function as political relations. To use Marx’s vocabulary, kinship relations are here both infrastructure and superstructure. . . . To the extent that kinship in this kind of society really functions as relations of production, the determinant role of the economy does not contradict the dominant role of kinship, but is expressed through it’ [Ibid: 112]. With the appearance of new conditions of production, however, Godelier suggests that ‘beyond a certain limit, the old kinship relations will no longer be able to fulfil these new functions. The latter will develop outside kinship and will bring forth distinct political and religious social structures which will in turn function as relations of production. It is not kinship relations that are transformed into political relations but the political function of the old kinship relations which develops on the basis of new problems. The kinship relations will shift into a new role with a different social importance, and the political and
religious relations, charged with new functions (both infra- and superstructural), will come to occupy the liberated central place' *Ibid: 112-3*. In the highly differentiated capitalist society ‘The relations of production between capitalists and workers and the latter’s obligation to work for the former seem largely independent of the religious, political or even familial ties. . . . Each social structure seems broadly “autonomous”‘ *Ibid: 111*. That would be broadly true of peasant societies also, which are encapsulated in a capitalist economic system. In that case the problematic of indirect and complex relationship between non-economic structures and the economic structure, the ‘determinant in the last resort’, is left with us, unresolved. We shall return to that question presently.

In social anthropological analyses of economic and political organisation in ‘primitive’ societies, the significance of kinship is not primarily in its domestic and familial aspect but in constitution of corporate kin groups, namely lineages and lineage segments, with duly constituted authority by which their internal affairs and external relations are regulated. In the collection of essays on *African Political Systems*, the classic work which virtually launched the project of political anthropology, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard [1940] made a distinction (which, broadly, is still maintained) between acephalous societies, which did not have duly constituted centralised political authority, and societies with centralised authority structures namely primitive ‘states’. It was shown that in the former, the acephalous or ‘stateless’ societies, political power was organised, or rather that political functions were discharged, within the framework of segmentary lineage systems i.e. a plexus of relationships between (and within) corporate kin groups organised at various levels. In such societies, therefore, all ‘roles’, including political and economic roles appeared in the form of kinship roles.

In societies with centralised authority, the primitive ‘states’, however, another set of ‘roles’ overlay the network of kinship organisation, namely kings, administrators, and judges. Such societies displayed unequal distribution of wealth and power. One might, therefore, expect cleavages between groups in such societies. But we do not find, in analyses of such societies, an exposition of the problematic which might arise out of their stratification and the possibilities of tension or conflict *between groups or classes*, bringing into question the existing structure of social relationships. Gluckman, whose research is mainly concerned with just such a society, particularly emphasises that: ‘My original contribution to anthropological theory was my perceiving that in the Zulu state there could occur *rebellions*, to replace the king, but *not revolutions* to destroy the kingship itself and to establish some new kind of political organisation’ *Gluckman, 1963:8* (emphasis added). The possibility of conflict is limited to that between rival contenders for high office, members of the same class; conflict as between different classes in the stratified societies is ruled out. The analytical framework with
respect to stratified societies is also expressed in terms of an integrated set of roles. The 'preoccupation with lineage theory', which Gluckman deplores, yields ground only to an additional set of roles, defining authoritative offices in the structure of primitive states. The harmoniously integrated model, established in structural-functionalist analyses is, as we have indicated above, premised on the assumption of reciprocity in social relations. Such an assumption is manifestly indefensible in a stratified society constituted in the form of a primitive 'state'.

The focus of the radical debate on the status of the domain of kinship tends, perhaps, to take emphasis away from a fundamental criticism of conceptualising of society and social relations in structural-functionalist analyses: its central organising concept of 'social role'. Abstract and formalised 'actors' play out their roles, in accordance with prescribed norms, on the social stage. Those who deviate attract corrective sanctions from institutions of social control. The logic of the holistic structural-functional analysis is such that 'the individual for whom words and action have meaning is eliminated' [Pocock, 1961:72]. Furthermore, in an hierarchically organised society, such a conception does not identify the hegemonic character of the dominant normative order in society, which is expressed, but is also challenged, in social action and interaction. That approach disregards differentiation in the distribution of resources, inequality of statuses in the social division of labour (except descriptively), and structurally determined differences between interests and aspirations of different strata of society — all of which affect the dynamics of social change.

The individual in society does not participate in the establishing of a social consensus or a given social order with its manifold dimensions. He takes those as the initial premises of his social commitments and his social actions. He is inserted into an ongoing structure of society that exists prior to him. He takes his place in society with an initially given set of social relationships and allocation of resources, which offer him certain opportunities and impose upon him certain necessities, independently of his actions or his will. These are the axiomatic premises of his social goals and his points of departure in social action. This fact is not taken into account by structural-functional analysis. Nor is it considered in methodological individualist approaches. Society is not a set of inert 'social facts'. It is a totalisation of purposive social action; and human goals include not only opportunities that are offered within the framework of an established social system but also possibilities of transforming given systems. Furthermore, men do not act or think in isolation from other men, nor are their goals formulated entirely by private contemplation. They learn from the conditions and experiences of other men and strive to establish a community of interest with those who share their lot, to act in concert with them. It is precisely such strivings of men that give rise to social movement and social movements.
At best, the structural-functionalist perspective offers no more than a snapshot of a moment in the life of society in movement — a movement which its conception of society and social interaction leaves out of its perspective. It ignores the thrust and direction of social processes that reflect competing pursuits of incompatible values and goals by members of different classes in society. It is in consequence of such competition that incompatibilities in structural alignments in society become manifest and a process of social change is set in motion. New structures take shape and grow whereas others are overthrown. Such a perspective is particularly relevant to peasant societies, which are stratified and, contrary to the stereotype of the changeless peasant, are everywhere in the throes of economic, political, and social change.

This abstract exposition of our argument might be illustrated by an example taken from contemporary developments in Punjab (Pakistan) villages. An estimated 70 percent of the land is owned by non-cultivating landowners and was cultivated by sharecroppers. In the last decade, with the progress of farm mechanisation, some sharecroppers have been evicted from the land by landowners. On more than 80 percent of the land affected by mechanisation, however, the sharecroppers are deprived of only a part of the land cultivated by them so that, with reduced holdings, they constitute a tied source of seasonal labour required by the landowners for harvesting the crop grown on the part of the land on which mechanised cultivation is introduced [Alavi, forthcoming]. Let us consider the respective ‘roles’ of landowners and sharecroppers as they might appear in a structural-functionalist model. The landowner enjoys a legal title to the land and the law entitles him to take 50 percent of the gross produce from the sharecropper at each harvest. The sharecropper enjoys a legal guarantee of security of tenure; the landowner may not evict him except in the event of default in payment of his share of the crop. The prescribed ‘norms’, in this case validated by the law of the land, allocate to the landowner the ‘role’ of one who extracts and enjoys a share of the produce grown by the cultivator; but he must, in turn, leave the sharecropper undisturbed in the use of the land. The role of the latter, conversely, is to cultivate the land and part with the prescribed share of the produce at each harvest.

A landowner’s decision to buy a tractor and to take away land from his sharecroppers for mechanised cultivation violates ‘norms’ which embody the pre-existing arrangements. It is therefore ‘deviant’ behaviour. But it is not difficult to see that it would be fruitless to attempt to analyse the ensuing sequence of interaction as ‘deviant behaviour’. The ‘structure’ does contain mechanisms for correcting the deviant behaviour which violates the law of the land. But the decision of landowners to invest large sums of money in the purchase of tractors with the knowledge that to employ them they must evict sharecroppers in violation of legal prescriptions which guarantee them security of tenure, would not be taken but for their
confident expectations that, given their positions of power in the society, particularly in relation to the national polity which enforces the law, the mechanisms of social control will be ineffective against them. Their decision, therefore, is based not within a static framework of 'norms' and rules of the established social structure, and recognition of the correct role behaviour appropriate to their 'status'. Rather, their decision is governed by the distribution of material resources and power and their expectation of their ability to disregard the law by repudiating the security of tenure of sharecroppers. Mechanisms of 'social control' do not operate mechanically and automatically, with reference to norms and rules alone, without reference to the power of classes of people in the local and the national political system.

The question of power is not one of an individual alone. A powerful landowner might find it difficult to escape the penalties of the law if he were to violate it in some other respects contrary to the interests of his class as a whole, particularly if such action threatened to undermine those aspects of the social structure and values in which the interests of the landowning class, and the dominant classes in society as a whole, are embedded. On the other hand, in the matter of eviction of sharecroppers, the violation of the law expresses the new interests of the landowning class. The individual landowner may therefore violate that prescription of law with relative impunity. Definitions of social structures in terms of prescriptions of norms and rules cannot explain such changing patterns of social relationships which can be understood only with reference to the locus of power in society and configurations of class interests.

Sharecroppers deprived of their land are faced with a difficult choice. They might seek redress from the law. That is the course indicated by the premises of structural-functional analysis, with its solutions for correction of deviant behaviour. In practice, however, the sharecroppers have a difficult choice of alternative courses of action. Recourse to law not only costs a great deal of money, which the sharecropper may not have, but its outcome is problematic and it is fraught with risks. The law may be known to be slow to act on behalf of the underprivileged; the landowners, given their resources and influence, have a high degree of probability of winning in a legal contest. If the sharecropper challenges the landowner's action unsuccessfully, he runs the risk of being victimised and losing all the land and prospects of supplementary employment for himself and his close relatives.

The strategy of recourse to law offers the sharecropper a low probability of maximum gain, namely that of keeping all his land, but with a high probability of maximum loss as the alternative outcome. An alternative strategy open to the sharecropper would be less speculative. This would be to acquiesce, which would minimise his gain and, hopefully, also his loss; he would lose part of the land and keep the rest. Not surprisingly, we found that evictions of share-
croppers did not immediately produce a vigorous peasant movement resisting the landowners' actions but, on the whole, acquiescence.

Expectations in social situations are, however, neither single valued nor are they independent of social processes taking place in society at large. The minimum-risk option of sharecroppers reflected one climate of expectations, in which they took a defeatist attitude and in which their horizons of expectations were narrowed down to the immediate present. But horizons of expectations alter. In a different political milieu the balance of expectations is reversed. That happens when, on the one hand, the sharecroppers contemplate their (and their children’s) long term future and consider the possibility of further encroachments by landowners, say, when they buy their second tractor and/or reaper-binders and threshers, which would eliminate their need to retain sharecroppers for seasonal labour in harvesting. Then the landowners might evict them altogether, leaving them no alternative means of livelihood. In the face of that possibility, the risks associated with acquiescence begin to appear greater than those of resistance. Furthermore, when individual sharecroppers witness the fate of others like themselves, their sense of a community of interest broadens and prospects arise of collective action and the formation of peasant unions. In some places, that response has developed on the part of sharecroppers. Where this has happened successfully, in some instances, more sharecroppers have become confident of resisting encroachments on their rights by collective action. The balance of expectations and estimations of risk of the probable course of action are reversed with the creation of a new 'structure', now inclusive of collective action through peasant unions. Structural-functional analyses fail to provide a framework in which such a dialectical interaction of the individual social beings in the social matrix may be examined in the context of their mutual determinations, in which both are progressively transformed.

Encapsulation of Peasant Societies

So far we have focused on conceptual issues arising out of analyses of internal aspects of primitive and peasant societies. At the outset, however, we recognised that amongst their distinguishing features are their economic and political encapsulation and penetration by larger societal wholes. Indeed, the very structure of internal aspects of peasant societies is contingent on their relationship with the larger entity, insofar as the encapsulating state legitimises and enforces property relationships on which their internal differentiation is based. It establishes a whole paraphernalia of 'law and order' which regulates transactions in property and commodities and impinges on a range of relationships between individuals and groups within peasant societies, as well as those between members of peasant societies and those of the outside world.

The problem of relating the peasant community to the encapsulat-
ing polity is recognised, but only nominally. It is ignored in practice. Redfield asked: 'How, in describing the little community, are we to include the fact that it is a community within communities, a whole within other wholes? . . . What forms of thought are available to us for conceiving and describing a whole that is both inclosed within other wholes and is also in some part permeated by them?' [Redfield, 1960:114] but no effective answer was forthcoming. Radcliffe-Brown had also raised that question, by recognising that the societies being analysed were in 'a region which was formerly inhabited by Africans with their own social structure. Europeans, by peaceful or forceful means establish control over the region under what we call a "colonial" régime. A new social structure comes into existence and undergoes development' [Radcliffe-Brown, 1952:201]. But his analysis was constrained by his method, and the issue defeated him. He suggested analyses of the societies as 'composite societies', recognising that they now included Europeans, people with a different culture. The focus still was on persons in the local community rather than on the underlying structure and the new involvements which the Europeans (or other 'outsiders') signified.

The analytical problem is no different now, with the establishment of independent nation states, for the relationships of the local communities with the larger entity must be identified and analysed. The tendency to ignore this aspect of the problem is perhaps symbolised in the nomenclature employed in political anthropology, for the term 'state' is used to refer not to the encapsulating polity, the nation state, but to centralised authority in local communities, i.e. the so-called societies with 'states', as distinguished from acephalous societies. It is perhaps noteworthy that Easton, a political scientist, also missed this central issue in political anthropology in his comprehensive review of the field and criticism of work done by social anthropologists in political analysis [Easton, 1959]. However, recently social anthropologists who have abandoned the holistic approach of structural-functionalism and turned to methodological individualism have become involved in tracing linkages between members of local communities and the larger entity.

The shift in the methodological approach has not only brought to the surface questions about relationships between the local community and the larger national entity, of which it is a part; it is also reflected in differences in the kind of questions raised about 'centralised authorities' within local communities, namely the so-called 'primitive state'. Lloyd conceptualises the impact of the outside world on local communities as a conflict between values associated with the 'traditional political system' and those of the 'independent state'. He uses the term 'African kingdoms' for the 'primitive states' and reserves the use of the term 'state' to refer to the nation state; a usage which helps to avoid ambiguity and confusion. Referring to the 'complexity' of African kingdoms, he writes: 'In the colonial territory and the modern independent state
it is often the rituals and ceremonies which have survived, while the traditional decision-making processes have been irrevocably changed' [Lloyd, 1965: 63].

That recognition is a decisive break from the conception of functionally integrated communities of structural-functionalist analyses, both those which conceptualise societies as 'harmoniously integrated' and those which conceptualise integration with conflict. The nature of conflict which Lloyd recognises is different in kind from the conflict built into Gluckman's model, for the latter is conceived within the framework of a single and coherent set of traditional values. But the implications of Lloyd's statement are not pursued much further. Lloyd limits his analysis to the problem which is central to Gluckman's work, namely competition for high office. The substance of his analysis is the distinction between three modes of 'recruitment to the political élite', the distinctions being derived mainly from differences in degrees of upward mobility and in the channels of mobility, for social climbers who seek admission into the ruling élite. That does not take us very far towards analyses of relationships of power between different strata in differentiated peasant (or 'peasantised'? societies and problems of and prospects for structural change.

A recognition of the problem of encapsulation is not new in social anthropology; we have referred to statements of Radcliffe-Brown and Redfield. Wolf, writing in 1956, optimistically expressed the view that 'anthropologists have grown increasingly sophisticated about the relationship of nation and community' [Wolf 1956: 1065]. He quotes Steward's statement that it is 'methodologically incorrect to treat each part as though it were an independent whole in itself'. Wolf, with the perspective of a methodological individualist approach, did not proceed to consider the way in which encapsulation affects the structure of the local community as a whole; instead, he set about to identify groups which mediate relations between the local community and the nation state, respectively, each being conceived as a separate and independent entity rather than an aspect of an integrated whole. He conceives of the local communities as 'the local termini of a web of group relations' and proceeds to identify 'community oriented groups' and 'nation oriented groups'; they include not only groups located within local communities but also groups located outside the local communities but whose activities impinge on them. The focus on 'groups' establishes a false dichotomy, insofar as the fact of encapsulation of local communities affects all groups in them and affects the overall structures and processes in such communities. The mediating roles of individuals and groups, through whom linkages are established between the local community and the nation state, should therefore be evaluated in the context of that relationship within the integrated overall social order.

More recently, there has been a clearer focus on the roles of
intermediaries between the nation state and local communities. Shanin identifies four categories of 'outsiders' to the peasant commune in Russia; employees of the state administration, members of the Bolshevik Party, ex-servicemen and, of particular importance, those whom he characterises as 'the plenipotentiary outsiders'. He shows that 'The power structure of Russian rural society was, therefore, characterised by a profound dualism. Real power was held, on the one hand, by the peasant commune gatherings and on the other hand, by the plenipotentiaries of the state administration, embodied in the V.I.K.s and party branches' [Shanin, 1972: 197]. Shanin's treatment of the problem brings into focus the structure of power in the local community as a whole, in its relationship to the national power structure, rather than being limited to transactions between the two levels. Recent work in political anthropology has been limited to the latter mode of specification of the problem; it has produced useful studies of the 'political middleman' who is 'poised between diverse political cultures and communities . . . the product — even the unwilling product — of a local situation or of a structure that he hardly comprehends . . . (or, alternatively), . . . a highly self-conscious manipulator of diverse resources' [Swartz, 1968:201]. Such studies are valuable insofar as they help to bring to the surface issues arising out of the encapsulation and penetration of the local community by the larger social entity. Studies tend to focus mainly on particular transactions which take place between the levels, primarily in the political field. They do not go far enough towards a recognition of the fact that differentiation within the local community is itself an aspect of a class structure which is enforced by the national polity; they do not recognise the manner in which the power of privileged classes in the local community derives from and contributes towards the national economic and political system. This weakness in the analysis derives primarily from a fragmented approach underlying the conceptual framework of methodological individualism, which focuses on social transactions out of their context of the over-all social matrix. Furthermore, within the framework of a capitalist economic system, with its national and international ramifications, peasant societies are enveloped by a network of trading, financial and fiscal agencies. The dependence of the peasant economy on the larger economy and the pattern of its links with the larger economic system raise far-reaching questions about the alignment of political power in peasant societies which we are unable to pursue here but which are nonetheless crucial.

Methodological Individualism

A transition in social anthropology to methodological individualism, which is the polar opposite of structural-functionalist holism, has come about with a shift in the focus of interest from 'simple', 'primitive' societies to 'complex' societies such as peasant societies or urban situations. That has brought about a methodological crisis
whose implications are little discussed. By and large, those who were dissatisfied with structural-functionalism have merely abandoned it and turned to alternative approaches. In a survey of the anthropology of complex societies, Kushner wrote that 'conceptualisation is directed not at the primitive isolate — for so many years the primary unit of study for anthropology — but rather at a kind of socio-cultural entity that seems to be quite different. This entity . . . a "complex society" . . . involve(s) dimensions that are qualitatively and/or quantitatively different from those of the primitive isolate' [Kushner, 1969:80].

Bailey recognised difficulties that might be involved in only a partial modification of the structural-functionalist approach, by attempting to account for variables which arise outside its closed theoretical model by treating them as exogenous and given. He concluded that: 'The effect of this procedure is to erode the area of village behaviour covered by structural explanation. In essence we set up an ideal . . . in which ritual, political and economic behaviour are shown to be consistent with one another. . . . We then say that accidents . . . of (e.g.) Government policy or of economic change . . . (etc.) . . . have caused . . . [a state of affairs in which] . . . there is no longer a summation of roles. Our analysis then does not stop at a demonstration of structural coherence, but goes on to show that this structure exists as an idea . . . but is not a comprehensive explanation of social life in the village today. . . . Clearly the more the villagers are involved in the outside world, the less comprehensive and therefore the less satisfactory will become a structural explanation, in terms of coherence and equilibrium, of village life' [Bailey, 1962:261]. In the context of an awareness amongst anthropologists that the simple 'primitive' societies, which were pre-eminently the subject matter of their discipline, were fast disappearing, and in their search for new involvements in complex societies, the methodological shift has been gathering momentum. That shift prompts Kushner's question: 'Must "holism", perhaps an ephemeral idea at best, be utterly neglected in favour of segmental analyses of institutions, networks, or social categories? I suggest that these problems in theory and method reflect our involvement in as yet poorly charted conceptual domains' [Kushner, 1969:81].

In comparison with the approach of structural-functionalism, methodological individualism falls into the opposite trap, in focusing on individual action outside the matrix of the social whole. Instead of defining social roles, attention is directed to the actual behaviour of individuals in society. The methodological tradition of Durkheim yields to that of Weber and Spencer [Brodbeck, 1968; Lukes, 1968]. Methodological individualism predicates that the individual, given his disposition in society, engages in social action appropriate to the attainment of his goals. He, rather than a governing set of rules, determines the social action. He is conceived as a manipulator who may exploit 'social norms' but whose behaviour is not wholly
governed by them. The existence of 'social facts', which are postulated \textit{a priori} by the holist, are believed to be reducible to 'individual facts'. They are conceived as the outcome of transactions between individuals in the social market place, analogous to processes of the market economy. The social goals and purposes of individuals are the basic premises of such analyses. For example, James Mill wrote, as a contemporary methodological individualist might, that 'In social phenomena the elementary facts are feelings and actions, and laws of these are the laws of human nature, social facts being the results of human acts and human situations. Social facts are recognised as aggregations and consequences of the actions of a multitude of separate individuals. There is a fallacy which inheres in such a conception of social relationships because individual action, even in the 'free' market place, is not free. It is constrained by the social situation which an individual inherits, which constitutes the necessary preconditions of his participation in the social 'market place' and his weight in determining the outcome. Moreover, the individual who enters the social market place, whether endowed with a plenitude of material resources and power or bereft of them, must needs operate within the framework of a given set of hegemonic norms and rules, whether 'informal' in their existence and enforcement or embodied in a legal system enforced by the apparatus of the state. By ignoring those preconditions of social action the conceptual basis of methodological individualism establishes the empiricist approach of a scientistic social study—an untheoretical 'hyper-factualism' or, in the terms used by Wright Mills, 'abstracted empiricism'.

A fragmentation in conceptualisation of social relationships, which is characteristic of methodological individualism, is reflected in a plurality of approaches not easily categorised into a few types. A great deal of work in this tradition fastens on specific types of social relationships subjected to analysis \textit{per se}, independently of the totality of social relationships to which they relate. For example, Wolf [1966b] considers relationships such as patron-client relationships, friendships and cliques, individual centred coalitions, and so on, as separate issues, in a specification of the project of social anthropology of complex societies. Looked at outside their total contexts, such analyses offer, at best, descriptions which do not penetrate beneath the surface of the phenomena being examined to uncover the underlying structural factors. The same criticism may apply to Mitchell's proposal for a 'situational approach', which recognises that particular social relationships being examined operate within a framework which might be specified but, nevertheless, need not be part of the study [Mitchell, 1966:48]. Such an approach has obvious pitfalls, for no criteria are specified by which the 'situational factors' may be defined or their significance, vis-a-vis the relationship being examined, may be assessed. Mitchell classifies relationships observed in complex societies (in his case African
towns) into three categories. They comprise, firstly, 'structural relationships' which are enduring patterns of social interaction based on defined norms. Secondly, there are 'categorical relationships', such as those based on ethnicity, which 'arise in situations where, by the nature of things, contacts must be superficial and perfunctory.' Thirdly, there are 'personal networks', namely 'networks of personal links which individuals have built up around themselves' [Ibid: 51-6].

In his survey of the anthropology of complex societies, Kushner finds that 'The most important single contribution of the Africanist studies under review is their focus on ego-centred social networks and fields. . . . The implication is that whereas in "simple" society much social interaction takes place within enduring units that are bounded in space and time, and tend to be based on such considerations as kinship, residence, or ritual activities, the bulk of interpersonal relations in "complex" society takes place within another sort of social unit, which is transitory and free-floating. It is through networks and fields, then, that patterning and structure may be discerned in the otherwise confusing urban world' [Kushner, 1969: 95]. There is a confusion, in this statement, between two quite different propositions. One is, narrowly, a question of research techniques. At an initial stage of field inquiry, the tracing of ego-centred networks may well help the investigator to produce a map of relationships in his field from which he might obtain clues to the underlying structural framework or identify questions relevant for further analysis, in the context of the social structure and process as a whole. For that purpose such an exercise would be useful. But an argument that the 'bulk of interpersonal relations', or even the most significant of them, in 'complex' (peasant) societies, take place within a social unit 'which is transitory and free floating' is indefensible. Such a methodological proposition would have the effect of focusing on ephemeral aspects of social relationships and trivialities of interaction ritual, and abandon the most significant questions about social relations which merit analysis.

**Factions**

The concept of faction and, in particular, the analytical framework developed by Nicholas and Bailey around that concept, are rather more useful in identifying certain facets of peasant political action and in making some of the underlying issues more explicit. 'Faction' aptly describes the most pervasive form of peasant political interaction as it is observed in peasant societies; accounts of peasant societies are replete with examples of 'factionalism'. Beals and Siegel [1960] focus on faction as conflict, and speculate about types of conflict, the conditions in which it occurs, and 'strains' and 'stresses' which bring it about. A discussion of social conflict in such terms obscures rather than illuminates its causes and consequences and the social goals of the people who are involved in the
conflict. Furthermore, as a description of factional conflict in peasant societies, that treatment of the subject misses the central fact about that mode of politics, namely that factional alignments cut across class alignments.

Factional conflict, therefore, has a significance which cannot be understood without an examination of the manner in which factions are recruited and led. Nicholas [1963; 1965; 1966; 1968] and Bailey [1969], rather more usefully, focus on factions as political groups and explore the resources of leaders who recruit them and the manner in which they organise political activity.

The analytical questions raised in the latter perspective express the fact that political cleavages in peasant societies are often vertical cleavages, which run across class lines, rather than horizontal cleavages of class conflict. Faction leaders are conceived either as local power-holders or as manipulating political entrepreneurs, who organise political groups with their retinues of labourers, sharecroppers and other economic dependents—if they have them—and alliances with other influential individuals or groups. An important aspect of factional conflict is that rival factions are, in general, structurally similar, namely that they represent similar configurations of social groups, although that is by no means always the case. Where that is so, the faction model describes a segmental rather than class conflict. Such conflicts, therefore, do not have an ideological expression, because rival factions, or faction leaders, fight for control over resources, power, and status as available within the existing framework of society rather than for changes in the social structure. Shanin describes the phenomenon, in rural Russia, as ‘Vertical segmentation (which) may be used to define social groupings, usually local, which cut across the major socio-economic stratification of modern society, indicating division into qualitatively similar, highly self-sufficient, hierarchical segments with relatively little interaction between them. . . . The segments show hierarchical structures of authority centred around a patriarchal leader or a traditional oligarchic leadership’ [Shanin, 1972: 177]. We may add that the concept of faction has also been applied to analysis of political activity at levels other than that of the local peasant community; but that will not concern us here.

Wolf [1966a : 81ff] uses the concept of peasant ‘coalition’ instead of faction, and suggests an ingenious classification of coalitions, based on three dichotomies: (i) the number of persons involved, namely dyadic and polyadic, (ii) the number of ties that bind them in the coalition, namely ‘single-stranded’ and ‘many-stranded’ and (iii) the relative statuses of parties to the coalition, namely ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’. The system of classification is useful heuristically; but its limitations becomes apparent when it is applied to factions. For example, patron-client relationships, which Wolf classifies as ‘many-stranded dyadic vertical’ coalitions, are included in factional alignments but as only one of several modes of recruit-
ment. Analyses of factions particularly emphasise ‘transactional’ relationships between leaders and followers, which Wolf classifies as ‘single-stranded dyadic’ coalitions, by which he refers, however, only to certain types of ‘evanescent coalitions’. Factional recruitment makes use of single-stranded as well as many-stranded ties, ‘vertical’ as well as horizontal relationships. Furthermore, the term faction refers to the group as a whole and not to separate individual ‘coalitions’ between leaders and followers. The term ‘dyadic’ would therefore be inappropriate to describe the resultant set of relationships. Nor would it seem appropriate to describe them as ‘polyadic’, because the ties of followers all converge on the faction leader and do not imply direct ties amongst themselves, independent of their respective relationships to the leader. The concept of faction is therefore more complex than that of coalition; it leaves open the question of mode of recruitment and admits a multiplicity and complexity of ties. It seems to be a preferable concept. It is more flexible, analytically, than Wolf’s classification of coalitions which imposes a set of rigid dichotomies on the analytic model.

Nicholas describes and defines the concept of faction by a set of five propositions, which he seeks to establish and illustrate. He states that: (i) factions are groups which emerge during conflict; (ii) that they are political groups engaged in organised conflict about the uses of public power; (iii) that they are not corporate groups: they are basically impermanent although they may persist for long periods of time (unlike, e.g. lineages, which exist by ascription and are permanent); (iv) they are recruited by a leader; members can belong to a faction only through the activity of a leader, since the unit has no corporate existence or clear single principle of recruitment. The leader, being responsible for organizing the personnel of a faction, is ordinarily a man with more political power than any of his followers; (v) that ‘the faction members are recruited on diverse principles’, or ties, with the faction leader [Nicholas, 1965: 27-9].

Bailey offers one further distinction, that of ‘core’ and ‘followers’. It is useful for analyses of recruitment of factions, although his own definition (or an elaboration) of the concept of faction would appear to exclude that application. Bailey uses the metaphor of ‘team’ (faction is a particular kind of team) in his elaboration of a model for political analysis, and he distinguishes between a ‘core’ and a ‘following’ of a team. He writes: ‘The core are those who are tied to the leader through multiplex relationships: the bond with a follower is transactional and single interest’ [Bailey, 1969: 49]. He conceives of the ‘core’ as ‘an inner circle of retainers’, whereas those whose ties with the leader are single interest and transactional constitute ‘an outer circle of followers’. But with reference to factions Bailey emphasises two characteristics: ‘Firstly, the members (of a faction) do not co-operate because they have a common ideology which
their co-operation will serve; secondly, they are recruited by a leader with whom they have a transactional relationship’ [Ibid.: 52]. The second condition, if accepted, would exclude ‘core’ from the definition of faction, whereas factions ordinarily are built around a core.

We might distinguish between the faction model as an organising concept, enabling us to identify actual political alignments in peasant societies for analysis, and theoretical propositions and generalisations about the factional mode of politics in peasant societies. Our interest lies primarily in the former aspect. It allows us to identify actual alignments, whatever they may be, as a necessary preliminary step, so that we may then proceed to the next step of analysis by exploring reasons for observed alignments, identifying structural factors (in the Marxist sense of class alignments derived from the mode of production) which underly them and the immanence of change which inheres in structural contradictions. It provides us with a map of the pattern of social interaction and a statement of our initial problem. It takes us further than generalised statements about the power, say, of landowners as a class, by providing a framework in which we can identify the precise locus and operation of relationships of power and see how the power of individual landowners is articulated into the power of a class. It eschews a priori statements about class power or about horizontal solidarity of kinship or caste or class, as alternative bases of political action. These are put before us in a problematic form, which then constitutes our project for analysis.

Two theoretical propositions which are made about factions call for some comment. One is a suggestion that the factional mode of politics, manifested in vertical cleavages excludes class solidarity and class conflict, and that the factional mode is specific to certain societies, being inherent in their culture or social structure. One such widely debated view is put forward by Geertz, who uses the Indonesian word aliran (stream) to denote factions. He defines the term, however, as ‘an ideologically defined political faction . . . a political party surrounded by a set of sodalities (i.e. a cluster of organisations through which factional conflict is manifested at certain levels)’ [Geertz, 1965: 127]. He adds: ‘An aliran is more than a mere political party, and it is more than a mere ideology: it is a set of interconnected social forms which act to group large masses of people into a generalised category’ [Ibid.: 128]. Geertz’s perception of the phenomenon of faction which embraces ideology and political party affiliation is, it should be pointed out, derived from observation of factional politics at a variety of levels of political competition and is not confined to the village level. We have not discussed the manner in which factional cleavages at the village level are reproduced at higher levels, by alliances between rival faction leaders, and are institutionalised into political parties in electoral contest. The essential element in Geertz’s exposition is his understanding of that mode of politics as a culturally determined one.
Nicholas emphasises the constructive and necessary political functions of faction in societies which have been subject to 'disruption' by social change. He writes: 'A factional system is not the political 'state of nature' of any of the societies which I have examined. The fact that factions are so often found in rapidly changed or changing societies and institutions has no doubt drawn the attention of Siegel and Beals as well as other observers to the disruptive features of factional politics. If we distinguish between the social disruption brought about by social change and the social order brought about by almost any kind of political system, our attention will be drawn to the functions' [Nicholas, 1965:57] (italics added). It is a common fallacy to suggest that a political system 'brings about' order in society. A political system is an aspect and expression of a given social order; the one cannot be conceived without the existence of the other. By the same token Siegel and Beals are no less in error in attributing a disruptive role to factional politics. In making the above statement Nicholas refers specifically to changes in the tribal political organisation of some North American Indian communities, originally based on a segmentary lineage system, as a consequence of a breakdown of the lineage structure. But, typically, factional politics are found in peasant societies, such as those of South Asia, which have not been subject to rapid social change. On the other hand, rapid social change, associated with the 'Green Revolution' in those societies, has tended to replace the factional mode of politics by class conflict.

However, Nicholas takes up a position not very different from that of Geertz, but in rather more qualified terms, and argues that: 'There are two factors, found repeatedly in Indian villages, which are conducive to the development of vertical political cleavages.' From an examination of a number of case studies, he concludes that: 'The dominant mode of conflict in Indian villages is between factions' [Nicholas, 1968:278–9].

A suggestion that a factional mode of politics is necessarily the only mode of politics that may occur in societies which have certain, given, characteristics would imply a static view of social process and social structure. Nicholas does not take quite such a deterministic view. The pivotal question on which the issue must turn is that of defining conditions which produce vertical cleavages and those in which such cleavages yield to new patterns of political conflict characterised by horizontal cleavages, and class solidarity of poor peasants. The Geertz thesis has been discussed by Wertheim [1973] who points out the crucial factor of patron-client relationships in bringing about vertical structuring of alignments, expressed in the form of alirans, at the village level. Wertheim's analysis focuses on a class domination of poor peasantry, and conditions in which such a domination is challenged. We find that, in the wake of the 'Green Revolution' in countries of Asia, such challenges have indeed been manifested in new forms of peasant militancy. The
profound economic changes which are currently taking place have had the effect of disrupting patron–client relationships and the vertical alignments of factions dominated by wealthy landowners.

Writing about the effects of the 'Green Revolution' in India, Sharma points out that: 'What emerged in the later sixties was both qualitatively and quantitatively different. Unlike the traditional village-based conflicts between factions within the dominant landowning groups, which involved localised symbols of power and prestige, the new conflicts emerged along class dimensions. . . . So pervasive has been the change in the political climate in India that only the most naive would ignore it. Violent confrontations have become so commonplace that daily newspapers now report them in a most matter-of-fact and perfunctory fashion, often as small items in obscure columns. Yet hardly a week goes by in which some such incident is not reported [Sharma, 1973]9. The issue therefore is not whether politics in peasant societies must run along factional lines of vertical cleavages or horizontal cleavages of class conflict. It is rather that of the conditions in which factional conflict gives way to cleavages of class.

The second theoretical proposition about the factional mode of politics which calls for consideration is the 'principle of diversity of factional recruitment'. That is an attribute of factions, by definition. It takes the form of a theoretical statement, however, when it is emphasised that the critical factor in factional recruitment is only that there should be a tie between leader and follower; but that the nature of the tie is, in itself, inconsequential. This emphasis in exposition derives from Nicholas's attempt to show that factions are not recruited on the basis of a single structural principle. But his proposition about diversity of factional recruitment obscures some of the most critical questions about structural factors underlying factional recruitment by suggesting that followers are recruited at random.

Nicholas [1965 : 30–46] supports his proposition about diversity of factional recruitment by an example of a Panchayat (village council) election in Govindapur village in West Bengal in India. The elections were contested by Congress and Communist candidates. Nicholas's procedure is to show the bases of support, on which individual votes were cast for each candidate, namely kinship, economic dependence and so on. He also shows total votes cast in respect of each basis of support, for all candidates, Congress and Communist, taken together. Nicholas points out that no clear principle of voting stands out from the data, for the various voters chose different reasons for their political alignment. But a closer examination of the data suggests that underlying structural factors did have an effect on the way in which alignments were brought about. Nicholas's data showing separate totals for Congress and Communist candidates, on the basis of data provided by him for individual candidates, is summarised in Table 1.
A glance at the data, showing the bases on which Congress and Communist candidates received their votes, shows a clear structural pattern. In the case of the Congress, factors of power indicating ‘vertical alignments’, namely those of ‘economic dependence’ and the ‘headman status’ of the candidate, predominate. By contrast, in the case of Communists, ‘horizontal alignment’ of kinship is the predominant factor. The data suggest a strong possibility of Congress support derived largely from big landholders, the patrons, and, through them, their respective clients, the economic dependents. The factor of kinship, in the case of Communist support, may well be the idiom by which groups of small independent peasant proprietors express their solidarity. There is therefore a strong suggestion of an underlying structural pattern. The principle of diversity of factional recruitment, looked at from the point of view of the faction leader, may well justify indifference about who votes for him, so long as he gets support. But, looked at from the point of view of the followers, the basis of support is by no means a matter of indifference. It is a matter of great consequence for, say, a sharecropper (or any kind of economic dependent) whether he will go with the faction to which his master belongs rather than support a kinsman or, alternatively, to support the latter and defy his master. That is a very difficult choice; a dilemma which he must resolve. The transition from the factional mode of politics to politics of class is rooted in the conditions which affect the manner in which that dilemma is resolved.

**A Framework for Analysis**

In discussing the method of structural-functionalism, in which social structure is defined by cultural norms and jural rules which govern individual behaviour, attention was drawn to the fact that the structural-functionalist approach obscures the creative role of the individual in processes leading to social change, and also the contradictions within established social structures between interests of
members of different classes that orient individual action and influence the social outcome. The methodological individualist, on the other hand, in focusing on the goal-orientated behaviour of individuals, does not resolve satisfactorily the problems of the pre-existing social structure which is the context of individual social action and determines its orientation, and the implications of the intended and unintended consequences which follow from it; individual social actions and the directions of social change are not random, but are embedded in historical configurations of social structures and contradictions which underlie them. There are differences in the degree to which methodological individualists do try to take cognisance of social structure, and the terms in which they do so. Lloyd, who is among the more perceptive of them, writes: 'Structural change is created through the actions of individuals. . . . The individual continually seizes the opportunities thus presented to him, exploits them in his own interest, and in so doing possibly changes the structure of society, inasmuch as he redefines some norm of behaviour or creates a new status' [Lloyd, 1971: 73].

A conceptual problem underlies both approaches. Both in structural-functionalism as well as in methodological individualism, 'individual' and 'society' are, each, conceptualised as independent entities, set apart from, though influencing, each other. The methodological individualist proceeds with analysis of a pragmatic, manipulating, individual who pursues goals vis-a-vis society. The individual's actions are oriented towards society. The implications of such a procedure is an abstract conception of 'individual' man; or one which is, at best, limited to that of a biological and psychic entity endowed with certain intrinsic needs, capabilities and drives—although it is questionable whether even such a limited definition of individual man can be sustained without reference to his social situation. The individual must be defined as a social being.

The human signification of being implicates a whole system of social relationships which envelop and define the individual person. At the very moment when he comes into existence, the individual person is inserted into a pre-existing social matrix which determines his social being, independently of his will; the conditions which define his social being are the initial premises of his goals and capacities in social action in the ongoing social structure which is, in turn, transformed by his active intervention on his own behalf. On the other hand, such intervention is itself related to the fact that in stratified societies relations between classes are determined by the social structure and to the fact that the individual does not experience social reality in isolation but in community with other men. These aspects of man in society are lost from view in both the approaches which we have considered; each of them objectifies society and externalises it from the individual. Our problem is, therefore, to search for a framework of analysis which might transcend that dichotomy and the associated mechanistic conceptions of
relationship between man and society, so that we might conceptualise man in society as a dialectical unity, neither being prior to the other.

The dialectical unity of man in society is expressed in social structure. Social structure, however, is not a simple accretion of social forms, and accumulation of random changes in social relationships. It is not an arithmetic sum of diverse interaction of a multiplicity of men. Underlying motives, actions and effectuality of men in society, is the structure which defines their social being. In Marxism the underlying structure is the mode of production; it is defined and analysed by the Labour Theory of Value and the analytical framework based on it. The structure invests social action with an underlying logic that is manifested in the constituted empirical reality of observed social relationships; the thrust and direction of social change inhere in structural contradictions. That conception of an underlying structure may be contrasted with another conception, which denotes a different level of analysis. That second conception is that of overt social structure, categorising empirically observed social relationships constituted by man in society. We include in that definition also cultural norms, jural rules and dispositions of material resources and power in society. But we do not define overt structures by cultural norms and jural rules, as social anthropologists do. Rather we recognise that such norms and rules legitimise or reinforce certain sets of social relationships; they do not constitute them.

In Marxism, the underlying structure is found in the mode of production; Godelier [1967] expounds the concept. There are important issues about the mode of production in post-colonial societies, in which peasant societies are situated, which we cannot pursue here. Our present analysis is focused, rather, on the overt social structure. The concept of the underlying structure is a unitary one. The overt structure may, however, be differentiated into distinct sets of relationships, conceived as sub-structures, such as the economic structure, political structure, kinship structure, religious structure and so on.

The terms in which differentiation of social structure into distinct economic, political, kinship, religious and other structures is conceptualised, have far reaching implications for our framework of analysis of politics in peasant societies. The accepted criterion for such differentiation, in social anthropology, is that of 'function'; differentiation implies a specialisation of specific structures for particular types of activities. Such a criterion yields a segmentary conception of social structure, inasmuch as various activities are allocated to specialised structures, functioning independently. Social processes are segregated into separate compartments. Godelier, a Marxist, also puts forward a similar criterion, by suggesting that 'their differentiation should be explained by the transformation and evolution of their function' [Godelier, 1967: 112]. In his
view, in archaic society kinship structures have 'multiple functions' whereas in highly differentiated capitalist society 'relations of production . . . seem largely independent of religious, political or even familial ties. . . . Each social structure seems broadly 'autonomous' [Ibid.: III]. In the stereotype of an acephalous 'primitive' society virtually all activities in society are subsumed under kinship organisation. However, if we recall Terray's demonstration that in such societies 'production units' are coterminous with corresponding units of kinship organisation, we may acknowledge that the relations of production are expressed in the idiom of kinship; we need not go so far as to suggest that they are contained in the structure of kinship, for they can be identified as such and have an integrity of their own. They are not therefore a 'function' of the structure of kinship.

In peasant societies, the various structures are differentiated. But we find that social processes in peasant societies cannot each be fully understood by a reference solely to a single specialised structure. It is not possible to analyse political processes, for example, with reference solely to the 'political structure'; relationships between men that are established in the economic structure, the kinship structure and so on, also have a bearing on the political process. By token of the interdependence of social processes, the concept of 'function' and that of 'autonomy' of specialised structures have methodological implications which lead into a partial and inadequate framework for analyses; politics in peasant societies must be examined in the context of the overall social structure and not with reference to a single 'specialised' segment of the total social structure.

In rejecting the concept of function as a criterion for structural differentiation, it is perhaps sufficient for our purposes that we recognise the association of the process of structural differentiation with the creation of specialised institutions which embrace particular types of activities and social relationships. In acephalous 'primitive' societies, kinship structures are virtually the sole focus of institutionalisation. In peasant societies, which are stratified into economic classes and are encapsulated in larger societal entities, a variety of specialised institutions come to exist, in the economic and political spheres as well as in the sphere of kinship. Around the central institutions in each sphere, there are clusters of associated non-institutionalised social relationships. Specialised structures can therefore be identified as clusters of specialised institutions and associated non-institutionalised social relationships, in the respective spheres, without recourse to assumptions about their 'function', 'autonomy' or the mode of operation of activities to which they relate. These latter questions are therefore left open, in problematic form, rather than resolved a priori by definition.

This broader perspective enables us to discern a complex web of social relationships that are established in peasant societies, by
virtue of a variety of ties between persons created in the respective structures. These diverse relationships affect different modes of access to material resources and means of livelihood, the regulation of access to (and appropriation of) the procreative services of women, and modalities of cohesion of solidary groups which serve a variety of purposes; the different ties affect different needs, different values and motives. They pull men in different directions in arenas of political alignments. The central issues in analysis of the political processes in peasant societies relate precisely to the inconsistency of the diverse pulls and conditions which affect their resolution. Some ties are based on relationships of equality and reciprocity. These we shall refer to as 'horizontal alignments'. Other ties denote unequal relationships between men and constitute 'vertical alignments'. Either kind of tie arises in the context of the various structures of social relationships, economic, kinship etc. as well as directly in the political sphere. Analysis of politics in peasant societies requires identification of patterns of horizontal and vertical alignments, the contradictions which underlie them and of the conditions which affect their resolution into changing political alignments in confrontations.

Our framework of analysis, and the issues which it brings to the surface, can best be elaborated by a reference to a model based on politics in villages of the Punjab in Pakistan. The economic structure and the pattern of alignments within it, are determined primarily by the distribution of ownership of land and the mode of its utilisation. Land is a saleable commodity and its ownership is sanctioned by the laws of the state of Pakistan; its laws also affect relationships between landlords and sharecroppers. The internal economic structure of the peasant society of the Punjab therefore depends upon its relationship to the larger entity of the state of Pakistan, which legitimises and enforces that structure.

About 70 percent of the land is owned by about 5 percent of the rural households owning more than 25 acres each [Alavi, forthcoming]. Much of it is cultivated by sharecroppers; some of it is 'self-cultivated', by landlords who own tractors and employ wage labour. The two modes of production are sometimes distinguished as the 'feudal' (or 'semi-feudal' or 'feudalistic') mode of production — there is an evident semantic difficulty in the use of that concept — and the 'capitalist' mode of production. As I have shown elsewhere, in Pakistan such a dichotomy does not accord with the actual picture, because on about 90 per cent of the land affected by farm mechanisation, the owners have also retained sharecroppers, taking away only a part of their land for mechanised cultivation. They keep the sharecroppers because they need them, as a source of seasonal labour. The two 'sectors' of the agrarian economy are not, therefore, separate and autonomous but are closely entwined; the one is not viable without the other. In this case we might speak of a 'multiplex' mode of production, which combines two types of relations of pro-
duction, namely the 'feudal' and the 'capitalist'. What is common to both the sharecroppers and labourers, however, is their exploitation by and economic dependence on the landlord for access to their means of livelihood, which is the aspect of the relations of production that is most relevant in the present context. There are also various categories of 'village servants' such as the barber, carpenter, blacksmith, potter, etc., whose domination by a single master arises only in the few cases where a single family owns a whole village or group of villages. In general, because the 'village servants' work for several employers at the same time, they enjoy a relative autonomy which sharecroppers and labourers do not have. They are overshadowed by the power of big landlords of their village but are not in quite the same situation as the other two classes.

These relationships are characterised as 'patron-client' relationships, and it is often alleged that they signify a relationship of reciprocity from which each party gains some benefit. Powell, not untypically, describes it as 'a relationship involving an interchange of noncomparable goods and services between actors of unequal socio-economic rank' and he considers the exchange to be reciprocal [Powell, 1970:412]. In opposition to that paternalistic value judgment, another value judgment would consider the relationship to be based on the exploitation of the actual cultivator, the sharecropper and labourer, by a parasitical class. The implications of the opposition of the two views are too obvious to call for any elaboration. The issue, however, is not purely one of subjective value judgments. A whole corpus of Marxist literature is concerned with the mystification that underlies such a conception of 'reciprocity'.

Attention might, however, be drawn to the reinforcement of the master–subject relationship in South Asia by ritual ties and a set of 'rights' and 'obligations' known as the 'jajmani' system. It confers 'rights' on the subject who has a privileged access to certain favours from his masters, and imposes 'obligations' on the latter [cf. Lewis, 1958; Beidelman, 1959]. The jajmani system legitimates and reinforces the secular ties of the subject to his master by 'sacred', ideological, ties. These ties were of some importance when there was a relative shortage of sharecroppers and labourers. But in recent years, they have been progressively eroded against the background of an acute shortage of land available for sharecropping. The ritual 'obligations' are disregarded by landlords and cannot be enforced by their weak clients. In the final analysis the relationship proves to be an unequal one. But the increasing shortage of land has made the dependence of the sharecropper on the landlord for access to land more acute. The ties of economic dependence and political domination are now stronger despite the erosion of the ritual relationships of the jajmani system.

In contrast to the domination and dependence which binds sharecroppers and labourers to landowners there are independent peasant proprietors, sometimes referred to as the 'middle peasants' who
cultivate their own land. As an 'ideal type' they neither employ labour nor are they themselves employed as labourers or sharecroppers by others. In practice, those who own much less than five acres must supplement their income by working for others and those who have much larger holdings tend to employ some labour, probably seasonal and casual labour, to assist with the harvest. We find that the relationships of dependence in the one case and those of autonomy in the other, as determined by relationships in the economic structure, have an important bearing on political alignments, and factors tending to bring about changes in the alignments.

The second differentiated, and institutionalised, structure is that of kinship. The kinship structure in Punjab is based on endogamous patrilineages, known as biraderis which have a genealogical depth of about four or five generations. The kinship system of the Punjab has been analysed elsewhere [Alavi, 1972] and it is only necessary here to underline those aspects of it which reflect on the constitution of corporate groups and political alignments. What is of particular interest in this context are differences between different classes of the peasantry in the degree of kinship solidarity and organisation of kin groups. Biraderi solidarity is strongest in the case of independent peasant proprietors; in their case the rules of endogamy and the rituals of biraderi are practised most rigorously and the biraderis are constituted into corporate groups, with biraderi panchayats (councils) which govern internal affairs of the biraderis and represent the biraderis as a whole to the outside world, not least in the political arena. On the other hand, biraderi organisation is the weakest in the case of biraderis of sharecroppers and labourers; they are subject to the authority of the landlord, even in their private domestic affairs and disputes, and they are unable to establish an authority of their own in opposition to that of the landlord over them. Biraderi organisation is also rather weak in the case of landlords, who are often in competition with each other for power and status in local political arenas. They do not always have duly constituted panchayats (councils) to give authoritative decisions binding on them; instead they meet in informal private gatherings to consult with each other either to act in concert or to part in disagreement.

The third structure through which ties are established between members of the peasant community is the 'political structure', primarily the administrative structure of government. Influential landlords set themselves up as political middlemen and mediate between members of the village, individually as well as collectively, and the government. They establish a wide network of links with government officials which enables them to extend their mediating rôles. The government, on the other hand, has traditionally relied on influential landlords to establish links with the local level power structure. Its interest in strengthening the links is no less than that of the landlords. That structure includes links with political parties and urban political movements. Factional alliances above the level of
the village are institutionalised as political parties; or the latter induct faction leaders, the local power-holders, to establish their local bases. Revolutionary political parties, on the other hand, seek to change existing alignments and break the domination of the power-holders.

In Punjab villages there is also another element of the 'political structure'; although illegal, it is widely acknowledged as a local 'institution'. That is a kind of 'mafia', operated by rich and powerful landlords who have links, especially, with the police. They set themselves up in business as patrons (rassagirs) of local bandits (goondas), through whom they terrorise the peasants, particularly by stealing their cattle or abducting women. They offer 'protection' to small peasants in return for political support. For the independent peasant proprietors, the value of biraderi solidarity and tightly knit biraderi organisation lies partly in the fact that such organisation provides them a measure of security vis-à-vis the power of big landlords; by themselves they are too vulnerable. (That at least suggests that the 'function' of kinship cannot be sought purely in the sphere of 'kinship'.) A fuller account of these modes of 'political mobilisation' is given in another article [Alavi, 1971]. The inclusion of the system of robbery, terrorisation and 'protection' by rassagirs and goondas as a part of the 'political structure', underscores the fallacy and invalidity of definition of structure by cultural norms and jural rules, for that violates both; it is recognised by the people only as an unpleasant 'fact of life'. It is lawlessness; but, by that token, it is not 'anomie' in the Durkheimian sense. What establishes it as structure is its regular, systematic and predictable mode of operation.

To consider interrelationships and implications of 'horizontal' and 'vertical' ties in the arena of political action in peasant societies (in the Punjab) it is convenient to represent them in diagrammatic form (see Figure 1).

In the diagram we have depicted three biraderis of landlords (A, B, and C) of whom two (B and C) are joined in a factional alliance against the third (A). The factional conflict is indicated by the symbol X and the factional alliance by the = symbol. Horizontal ties of kinship are indicated by the + symbol. The model depicted in the diagram assumes that the biraderis of landlords are united by + ties, although that is not always the case. A and B could easily be two segments of a divided biraderi ranged against each other in factional conflict. Kinship ties between members of biraderis of independent peasant proprietors (F, G, and H) are also indicated by + symbols. Such biraderis are generally organised as corporate groups governed by a biraderi penchayet (council) which is indicated by $\delta$. The horizontal ties of kinship among landlords and among independent peasant proprietors play an important part in the formation of political alignments.

In the case of sharecroppers, however, horizontal ties of kinship do not constitute them into political groups because they are subject to the authority of landlords who exploit and dominate them; they
are bound by vertical ties of economic dependence. In the diagram we have shown *biraderi* D of sharecroppers divided in employment under landlords of rival factions. In that case, despite any affective ties that may exist between them and common participation in rituals and celebrations of kinship, they will go with their respective landlords in the political arena; I have recorded at least one such case in fieldwork in Punjab. Kinship in their case does not intrude into the field of political alignments for they are not free agents. In their case the relevant ties are not those which arise in the field of kinship but, rather, those which arise by virtue of the economic structure. That goes to show that there cannot be an *a priori* allocation of ‘functions’ to the respective structures. In the case of sharecroppers, horizontal solidarity is not ruled out. But that can arise only when they defy their masters, by an act of rebellion. In that event, their class solidarity may well be reinforced by their kinship solidarity. The essential feature of their situation is that the vertical alignments of economic dependence and horizontal alignments of kinship and class, stand in contradiction in their case. Forces of structural change inhere in that contradiction and in its resolution by the abolition of the landlord class, by elimination of the vertical alignment.

*Biraderis* of independent peasant proprietors, generally participate
in the political arena as organised corporate groups into which they are organised. Their alliance with particular faction leaders may be based on a variety of factors. It may be a relationship of protector and protégé, the 'protector' being a *rassagir* who terrorises them into submission. Or the faction leader may gain support by acting as an intermediary between the weak and uninfluential peasants and the bureaucracy. In our diagram we have indicated links between landlords and the bureaucracy. Strong links with the bureaucracy are of great importance to a faction leader.

*Biraderis* of independent peasant proprietors sometimes unite against landowners. It is not always easy for a peasant, from amongst themselves, to present himself as a leader. *Biraderis* are often brought together by organisers of radical political parties or peasant unions: sometimes by one of their own class whose leadership role is legitimised by his position in a political party or a peasant union. Radical or 'revolutionary' political parties and peasant unions tend to become established with support derived primarily from this class of the peasantry, despite the commitment of the parties or unions, ideologically, to organise the 'poor peasants' namely the sharecroppers and labourers. The example of bases of political alignment in Govindapur village, cited by Nicholas, appears to have been such a case. For this class of peasants, it might be said, their horizontal solidarity, as a kin group, is only a first stage in the manifestation of their class solidarity; the second stage is reached when they organise politically into peasant unions or in political parties.

In the case of landowners the problem of class solidarity does not arise in the village level political arena in which members of their own class appear as rival faction leaders and the interests of their class are not threatened. For them horizontal solidarity of kinship is not an idiom for class solidarity but, rather, a resource to be exploited to consolidate political support. That is particularly evident in cases in which rich landowners have a large number of poor relations. To mobilise sufficient support, landowners enter into alliance with their peers; the alliances are based on 'transactional' ties which are weaker, of course, than the institutionalised ties of kinship. The *biraderi* of the faction leader and their economic dependents constitute the core of the faction—both horizontal as well as vertical ties constitute the core. They 'mobilise' the support of peasant proprietors with whom their ties, although nominally 'transactional', based on equality, are often unequal, based upon political dependence of the protégé upon the 'protector' or on patronage through mediation with government or otherwise.

This picture of the structural conditions which determine political alignments at the village level, dominated by the economic and political power of big landlords, reinforced by their links with the bureaucracy and dominant political parties, calls into question the usual assumptions about the working (and the significance of the
results) of representative democracy and the electoral process, in predominantly peasant societies. It also reflects on the problems and the dilemmas of revolutionary political parties seeking mobilisation of the poor peasantry through parliamentary political contests, having little to offer to break the power of the landlords over them other than their rhetoric and exhortations to arouse class consciousness. Recent events referred to above show that the class consciousness of the poor peasants, the sharecroppers and labourers, is aroused in certain circumstances and vertical alignments of the factional mode of politics have yielded to the pressures of class conflict. But the conditions in which that arises require consideration and analysis [Alavi, 1965].

Finally, we find that the factional model of politics in peasant societies is not a repudiation of the model of class conflict; the two depict different modes of political alignments, in different conditions. Furthermore, primordial loyalties, such as those of kinship, which precede manifestations of class solidarity, do not rule out the latter; rather they mediate complex political processes through which the latter are crystallised. Moreover, primordial loyalties and structures of kinship do not exist by themselves in ‘functional’ isolation. They are moulded by class relationships; as we have found, by identifying differences in the manifestations of kinship solidarity or the absence of it in the cases of different strata of the peasantry and among landlords. The complex mediations of the processes by which class solidarity is established and manifested, escapes the attention of those Marxists who focus exclusively on dramatic demonstrations of class solidarity of peasants in revolutionary action. On the other hand, the idea of ‘functional’ separation of structures and analyses of primordial loyalties in themselves, outside the matrix of the class structure, vitiates the results of political sociology and social anthropology.

NOTES
1. The work was published in 1899 and nearly two-thirds of it is devoted to a well-documented study of the changing structure of the Russian agrarian economy in the second half of the nineteenth century.
4. Malinowski’s functionalism was fundamentally different and raises somewhat different issues. See Leach [1960].
5. In similar vein, more recently, Gluckman [1971: 13–14].
7. See also Mitchell [1969].
8. See also Utrecht [1972: 279].
9. The transformation in the pattern of rural conflict is also noted (from rather different political points of view) by Frankel [1971] and Berg [1971].
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