

Chapter 24. Application to Anthropology: Pathan Organization

- Imputation
- Domination
- Stable Sets

Who Are the Pathans?

- Also known as the Pashtun
- Land owned by a dominant male aristocracy
- Land itself not inherited, rather the parcels are rotated
- Inheritance ensures that land disputes are between relatives
- Area is known to researchers as bellicose and anarchic
- Situation mediated at the village council level
- A complex clan structure emerges

Alternative Social Circles

- Men's house: political relationships
- Neighborhood: relationships with equals and allies
- Mosque: moral community of weight, some protection against arbitrary injustice

Fredrik Barth

- Norwegian, born 1928
- Currently at Boston University
- Social anthropologist
- Favors formal methods as well as field work
- Political and microeconomic questions
- Famous studies of Pakistan (1959), Sudan

Research Questions

- Why doesn't the majority bloc grow more quickly than it does?
- Why is the weaker bloc not quickly bankrupted?
- Why is it that the bloc structure is relatively stable?

A Coalition Model of the Swat Valley Pashtun

- Suppose there are five players with different amounts of disposable wealth
- The wealth may be taken from them and distributed to others by majority vote
- Now suppose that there are two coalitions (A, B, C) and (D, e)

$$\left(\frac{d+e}{3}, \frac{d+e}{3}, \frac{d+e}{3}, -d, -e \right).$$

Formula from Game Theory and Strategy (Straffin 1993) p.162

Research Question 1: Exclusion

- Now suppose D decided to join the majority bloc
- That leaves e to be exploited, and his wealth would have to be split four ways

$$\left(\frac{e}{4}, \frac{e}{4}, \frac{e}{4}, \frac{e}{4}, -e\right).$$

- Sure, D would benefit, but A, B and C won't let him join

Formula from Game Theory and Strategy (Straffin 1993) p.162

Payoff Structure Based on Land and Leadership

- Return to two blocs of (A,B,C) and (D,E)
- Now add a second item of utility, based on leadership
- Payoffs are as follows

$$\left(\frac{d+e}{3} + 2l, \frac{d+e}{3}, \frac{d+e}{3}, -d+l, -e \right).$$

- Now suppose C could be tempted away

Formula from Game Theory and Strategy (Straffin 1993) p.163

Domination of Coalitions

$$\left(\frac{d+e}{3} + 2l, \frac{d+e}{3}, \frac{d+e}{3}, -d+l, -e \right).$$

- Successful temptation leads to a new set of payoffs
- Compare payoffs top and bottom
- When does one dominate?

$$\left(-a+l, -b, \frac{a+b}{3} + 2l, \frac{a+b}{3}, \frac{a+b}{3} \right).$$

Formulas from Game Theory and Strategy (Straffin 1993) p.163

Resultant Inequalities

$$\frac{a+b}{3} > -d+l, \quad \text{i.e.} \quad l < \frac{a+b}{3} + d.$$

$$\frac{a+b}{3} + 2l > \frac{d+e}{3}, \quad \text{i.e.} \quad l > \frac{(d+e) - (a+b)}{6}.$$

- These inequalities become constraints on coalition membership
- The top inequality is the binding inequality for the Pashtun

Formulas from Game Theory and Strategy (Straffin 1993) p.163

Minimum Winning Coalitions

- Riker's Size Principle
- In absence of uncertainty, the smallest winning coalitions are always selected

Critique of Barth

- Khan's eye view of society: What about the serfs?
- Reductionism: Representative of all Pashtun?
- Methodological individualism: Man in society instead of man above society
- Transactional / instrumental in character: Khan as maximizer and entrepreneur
- Ethnocentrism: External understanding of the Pashtun
- (But, note that Barth's model has been simplified here)

Alternative Logics of Democracy and Nationalism



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