

The Politics of Class Elitism 1953-1966

Alterations in the Resource Structure

ON JANUARY 9, 1953, the council, pressured by the farmers, converted to rice cultivation 195 acres of Jib Land on which cattle were then being agisted.¹ A petition against the resolution was immediately circulated and signed by 136 proprietors.² Six days later a counterpetition was signed by 100 villagers.³ Those against the conversion claimed that they needed the area for their ploughing oxen⁴ while those who favoured conversion maintained that people needed rice land and that it was unobtainable from any other source. Those in favour also insisted that the upkeep of the agistment area cost more than revenues and that cattle were damaging rice fields.⁵ The issue reached the District Commissioner through these petitions. He insisted that a proprietors' meeting be called to ascertain villagers' opinions.⁶ On February 14th, villagers decided that the conversion should not take place. The District Commissioner strongly suggested to the council that the motion be rescinded;⁷ the council complied.

This event has major implications. First, it reveals that the economic expansion had come to a virtual end for the majority; applications to council for land were being refused throughout 1953 since none was available in the New Empolder.⁸ It was because of this pressure for land that the council decided to convert the Jib. Second, there was now manifested a conflict of interests between mechanized cultivators as opposed to farmers who employed oxen. The former not only required more land for the efficient use of their machinery, but they were able to cultivate more acreage and were demanding it from council. On the other hand, the small farmer, with his traditional technology, allied with the cattle owners. Both needed pasturage, one for oxen, the other for cattle. This situation was further complicated by the fact that the small farmers were themselves divided. Some had sufficient land

1 Letter from Dagleish, Chairman, to the District Commissioner, January 13, 1953.

2 Petition to the Chairman and Members, Local Government Board, January 20, 1953.

3 Petition to the Chairman and Members, Local Government Board, January 26, 1953.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Petition, January 13, 1953.

6 Letter from the District Commissioner to the Chairman, Rajgahr Village, February 2, 1953.

7 Letter from the District Commissioner to the Chairman, Rajgahr Village, February 17, 1953.

8 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, 1953.

and were concerned with maintaining an agistment area for oxen; others were landless or had insufficient land.

These diverse occupational interests, a product of the expansion, were complicated by an additional cleavage, that of class interests based on differential economic success. Machine ownership, type of land holdings, and the nature of household expansion brought into sharp focus the fact that families had been differentially successful in exploiting available resources during the expansion.

More specifically, economic decisions during the expansion now affected relative success in much the same way as the decision for Abary expansion in the 1920's had affected the type of expansion in which a family could engage during the late forties. Those who had chosen Abary expansion, still retained, in 1953, access to extensive acreage. They could combine large-scale cattle-rearing with rice cultivation—the sale of ten or twelve cows could buy another tractor and the tractor would enable further expansion of rice cultivation. On the other hand, families who had limited their rice land to the Rajgahr area now faced a shortage. Moreover, oxen, their means of cultivation, were being challenged by tractor owners and by small farmers who wanted pasturage converted to rice. If they extended their land, they lost their means of production; if they did not expand, there was insufficient land for growing families and children. These pressures were complicated by new policies being introduced by the sugar estates: in 1954, the "application of scientific discoveries and the investment of capital in field and factory [resulted in]... a contraction of over twenty percent in the average weekly number employed" (Reubens, 1963: 18-20). Further, policies of labour stabilization drastically reduced casual labour opportunities (Ibid.: 32-38).

The land squeeze and the decrease in estate labour opportunities required many villagers to find alternate sources of income. As Table 7.1 indicates, the number of

Table 7.1: Applications to Build Shops, 1941-1960

Years	Number of Applications
1939-1940 (2 years)	1
1941-1944 (4 years)	4
1945-1948 (4 years)	5
1949-1952 (4 years)	13
1953-1956 (4 years)	22
1957-1960 (4 years)	13

local shops proliferated after 1949 and peaked immediately following the end of expansion. Since each enterprise was carried out with varying degrees of success (Chapter II), this contributed to the differentiation which had been occurring on the basis of both occupation and income.

The economic expansion had thus generated a new pattern of resource allocation; a new distribution of wealth; and a more complex economic sphere. Most important, the elite was not only larger, but was no longer based on traditional associations. Rather, the elite now was comprised of economically successful families. In addition, there was a further mode of elite designation based on the successful advent of the PPP within the village. Membership in the core group, regardless of wealth, was associated with the status of "important person". Both Samuel Dookhun and Drepaul Bharat had little material wealth and little opportunity for economic upward mobility as small farmers dependent on wage labour. Despite this, their early association with the PPP, now viewed as the people's party in opposition to the colonial government, gave them elite status. Table 7.2 presents the old and new stratification patterns.

Table 7.2: Village Stratification: pre-1953 and post-1953

1. Pre-1953:

Elite	Traditional Christian Families Economic Control Familial Association
Mass	Village Mass Cattle..... Rice..... Wage

2. Post-1953:

Elite	Large Owners	Large Abary Farms	Machine Owner	Large Shops	PPP Core
Mass	Small Owners	Small Rajgahr Farmers	Traditional Type 1 and Type 2	Small Shops	
	Cattle.....	Rice.....	Wage.....	Shops.....	

The Jib Land dispute not only indicated this new allocation and structure of resources, it also had important implications for the village council. Previously, the council's structure had permitted conciliation due to members' crosscutting interests in an open resource situation. By 1953, however, the village had become too complex and the council could no longer represent all the competing segments. The majority of councillors were mechanized farmers who wanted more land. With the exception of Dagleish, a disinterested party from a personal economic perspective, only Hussein Amin, a large cattle owner who had missed the council meeting when

the conversion motion was passed, later pointed out that the cattle industry would suffer. Further, the complexity of the village precluded even a long-term payoff to those who needed an agistment area. Not only was this unlikely since these people were not represented on council, but with the new land scarcity, a later trade-off was impossible; the decision permanently affected the economic base of too many villagers. The Jib Land dispute was public recognition of these facts. An outsider, the District Commissioner, forced a decision which was contrary to the original motion; the council was unable to deal with crisis situations; unable to satisfy the various pressure groups; unable to continue the conciliatory pattern; and unable to deal with an economy characterized by scarce resources.

Coterminous with these events, the PPP was making major inroads into the village both ideologically and organizationally. There was massive campaigning for the 1953 election throughout the country. The major opposition to the PPP was the National Democratic Party (NDP) which "aggregated the forces of conservatism in Guianese society... [and whose members] shared but one thing in common: All of them were militant anti-Communists" (Despres, 1967: 201-202). The leader was Lionel Luckhoo, president of MPCA, who bought a

supplement to the Sunday newspapers published a week before the elections, enlarging on the dangers of communism, the horrors of slave camps... Since it was widely believed that this supplement must have been paid for by the sugar producers, the general reaction was - 'if they are so much against the PPP it must be good for us'. ...There was enormous public interest... [and] anyone who was in touch with the ordinary people ... in April 1953 knows that they had accepted the PPP as the instrument of a new deal for the country (Smith, R., 1962: 170-171).

The PPP won fifty-one percent of the votes and eighteen of the twenty-four seats (*ibid.*: 171) and the NDP thirteen percent of the vote and two seats (Despres, 1967: 202). As the majority party and legally constituted government, the PPP introduced a Labour Relations Bill to enable the GIWU to supplant the MPCA and to give the Minister of Labour control over the labour movement. They called a strike on the estates to demonstrate the need for the Bill; the industry came to a standstill. Two weeks later, the GIWU ended the strike and the Labour Relations Bill was introduced in the Assembly. The next day, the British government suspended the constitution and removed the PPP from office on the grounds that the government was controlled by a communist clique. The major leaders of the party were imprisoned or placed under house arrest (*ibid.*: 208). Among them were Dr. J. P. Lachmansingh, a close confidant of Cheddi Jagan, and Dabi Maraj, Lachmansingh's first cousin.

According to Reverend Preamsingh, Dabi had been sent by the PPP to Bath Estate to organize the workers as part of the general sugar strike. Preamsingh explained that after going to Bath to observe the events, he went to Georgetown to inform the British officials of what had transpired. In the general roundup of

"communists" several weeks later, Dabi was one of those arrested on the partial basis of Preamsingh's evidence. Preamsingh also made it known publicly that he had joined the NDP and all villagers knew of his role in the Bath strike.⁹

The British government had meanwhile suspended the Assembly and, after three months' imprisonment, Dabi Maraj returned to Rajgahr in time for village council elections. He mobilized the PPP activists and his extended family, and contested the election against the old and nonaligned councillors.¹⁰

The leadership role was attainable because of a local power vacuum: Gerald Panchar had died at the end of 1952¹¹ while A. B. Ramprashad had sold his mill several months later afraid that the PPP would confiscate his holdings.¹² As local disputes developed into crises and as the council remained unable to adapt to the new resource structure, Maraj provided a political alternative for villagers. The factional peace of the previous period had ended.

The Village Council

The politics which emerged in Rajgahr Village, however, was not a new kind of factional competition based on competing national parties. Although one political party was attempting to infiltrate the local government, party activists were opposing an entrenched local political elite which insisted that party politics was a "Georgetown story". Most members of the entrenched elite were not members of political parties which opposed the PPP in the national arena.¹³ Therefore, the issue was whether a national party could control the local government. For the PPP, this was regarded as a practical and ideological necessity, and local members saw themselves as part of a nationalist movement. The old elite viewed themselves as defenders of local autonomy. Most important, PPP control of the local level would have eliminated the old political elite from effective power. Underlying the ideological statements of both sides, were vested interests which protagonists had to protect.

The character of the resulting factional competition was a familiar one. The major arena was the village council and competition took place over which leader was to control. With this encounter over, competition began within the council itself. It is of interest to note that until 1959, each leader alternately gained decisive control of the council. In 1953, Maraj won six of the nine seats while in 1955 Preamsingh captured seven of the nine, only to lose all his representation in the 1957 elec-

9 Interview with P. T. Preamsingh, September, 1969.

10 *Ibid.*

11 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, September 22, 1952.

12 Interview with A. B. Ramprashad, March, 1970.

13 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

tions. In the 1959 election, the two leaders split the seats. It was only at that point that intra-council competition emerged in sharp relief.¹⁴ Previously, during the initial period, alternating control diminished such competition. For the purposes of analysis below, the council arena is discussed in terms of these two periods.

The "competition of alternating succession" began as an outgrowth of incidents similar to the Jib Land dispute which had highlighted the council's inability to solve problems arising from the economic expansion. For example, in 1953 there was a major dispute among council members. Chairman Dagleish had ordered the rice fields in the New Empolder remeasured because of conflicts between farmers over the boundaries of their allocations. The cost was over \$200 because, as Dagleish explained, paals had been used to mark the boundaries. Several councillors maintained, however, that the high cost was because Dagleish had given out the work to a villager in contract form rather than hiring men himself and supervising the work. The council, therefore, was being robbed by the contractor and Dagleish, who had not been authorized by council to give out a contract, was to blame. Dagleish stated that the rangers were too busy and the councillors unwilling to oversee the works directly. The suggestion was made that perhaps "a certain councillor" was making money on the deal. Recriminations continued throughout two council meetings.¹⁵ Finally, the District Commissioner was invited "to act as an arbitrator in the matter".¹⁶ At this meeting, the invective continued until the District Commissioner stated: "Dagleish had exceeded the amount in the measurement and the council has to pay \$211. This is the issue and what is the council going to do?" At this point, the Commissioner of Local Government, also attending, pointed out two alternatives: the council could pay the amount and censure the chairman or could attempt to lower the cost by negotiating with the contractor. This latter suggestion was accepted immediately and a compromise was effected.¹⁷

In the situation just described, the councillors were unable to raise the issue beyond rhetoric so as to find answers to a practical problem. Mediators were required to introduce alternatives and to propose a solution. When this incident is seen in conjunction with the previously discussed Jib Land dispute, two points are apparent. First, the council was incapable of decision-making despite the fact that the need for decisive action had become crucial with the changing resource situation. Second, council members were so divided by crosscutting interests, that deliberations turned into individual disputes. Public recognition of this resulted in Maraj winning six of nine seats in the 1953 elections¹⁸ after a campaign emphasized a two "party"

14 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, 1953, 1955, 1957 and 1959.

15 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, May 8, 1953 and June 15, 1953.

16 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, July 6, 1953.

17 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, August 8, 1953.

18 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, January, 1954.

division, public meetings, and house to house canvassing.¹⁹ Overtly competing teams again had been deployed in the council arena.

For the 1955 election, the same type of campaign was used.²⁰ However, no great changes had been wrought by the PPP control, and not only had the council continued in the same way, but major disputes had erupted in other arenas.²¹ This was attributed to the PPP, and Preamsingh gained the majority of seats.²² Between 1955 and 1957, conflicts did not abate. Moreover, Maraj gained access to extensive outside resources. The Jagan government, again in control and in keeping with their policy of expanding rice production, converted Onverwagt to a land development scheme for local residents. The committee appointed to distribute the ten- and twenty-acre plots consisted of Dabi Maraj, Drepaul Bharat, and several PPP activists from Bath Settlement. In the 1957 election, it is alleged that votes were publicly exchanged for the opportunity to obtain Onverwagt land.²³ Dabi and his PPP supporters swept the election.

These years of alternating succession directed competition mainly towards council control while the usual competition within the council, such as attempts to control administrative personnel, only emerged in less intense form. For example, in early 1955, with Preamsingh controlling only three councillors, a policy was needed on the 1953 rent arrears. The two leaders, aware of the political credibility at stake, unanimously decided to let the issue lapse.²⁴ The District Commissioner, however, ordered legal proceedings against defaulters and threatened to bring in the Local Government Board for an inquiry.²⁵ The council countered by unanimously passing a motion to reduce 1955 rents.²⁶ The Local Government Board refused to allow this motion while the District Commissioner insisted the council terminate the tenancy of any renter in arrears for 1953.²⁷

Given a competitive political arena, both leaders courted public opinion. The motions to ignore and reduce rents were therefore unanimous. In fact, the issues only became issues because it was a useful strategy for gaining popular support. Further, the District Commissioner was no longer a mediator; rather, he ultimately was used to enable councillors to display popular policies and forceful decision-making.

19 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Ibid.*

Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, January, 1950.

22 To be described in the next section.

23 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969; Dagleish, October, 1969; Amin Mohamed, January, 1970; and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

24 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, September 8, 1954.

25 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 6, 1954.

26 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 22, 1954.

27 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, February 7, 1955.

Another way in which factionalism exhibited traditional features was in the council's relations with local authority officials, the assumption being that their support was crucial. For example, while Preamsingh had majority control in 1956, ranger Jawahir was to be confirmed in the position.²⁸ During the discussion, Preamsingh's brother reported that Jawahir had not reported to council that Mahatma Deeroop, a PPP member, had broken a village by-law. Another villager volunteered the information that the ranger had allowed two persons to pass their boats through a trench without authorization.²⁹ Predictably, Maraj as head of the opposition, and his support, voted for confirmation; the remainder of the council voted against.³⁰

At the end of 1956, the council was discussing how to obtain a refund on monies spent in clearing the silted Armadale channel.³¹ With Preamsingh the majority leader, the council decided to ask Lionel Luckhoo, a Legislative Council Member and former leader of the NDP, to lead a delegation of councillors to government. Dabi strongly objected.³² Since Luckhoo was out of the country, the idea was dropped.³³ Eight months later, however, the same council decided to ask Luckhoo to lead a deputation to the Minister of Agriculture to discuss a water shortage in the rice area. Dabi maintained that the council should follow proper procedures and have the District Commissioner make an appointment with the Minister.³⁴ Preamsingh, however, was courting popular support by showing that he not only had effective lines into the national arena, but that dealings with Luckhoo were more effective than with the PPP. He also wanted to show that he could get things done. Dabi attempted to counter Preamsingh's aims. Dabi saw that even if the PPP could not be used as the national arena contact because of his minority position, he could at least prevent another political party from gaining political credit. Party politics had not only entered the village, but local actors were very willing to take advantage of the benefits and resources that could accrue from the situation.

Another traditional feature, the disruption of meetings as the only available tactic for registering political credit, was accentuated by the pattern of representation. In 1956, Preamsingh, with a majority, decided to form an agreement with Armadale residents on the tolls to be paid for their use of the Rajgahr sideline dam. Maraj reminded the council that it had previously closed the dam to prevent Armadale use. Preamsingh countered that the council could rescind a previous motion and that it was time to end the enmity between the two villages on this issue. Maraj insisted

- 28 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, March 23, 1956.
 29 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, June 4, 1956.
 30 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, June 14, 1956.
 31 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, October 9, 1956.
 32 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, October 15, 1956.
 33 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 7, 1956.
 34 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, July 15, 1957.

that the matter be discussed further; Preamsingh disagreed; an argument ensued; Dabi left the meeting.³⁵

In general, then, competition within the council arena was limited in degree although typical strategies were present: the controlling of village officials; the exhibiting of decisiveness; the raising of issues to appeal to popular support; and the disagreements during council deliberations which ended not in compromise but in the withdrawal of one leader. Alternating succession, however, totally eliminated other traditional strategies. The chairman and deputy elections no longer were characterized by the intensity of competitive strategy as had been the case. For example, in 1953, as a continuation of the factional peace, a compromise was reached and Preamsingh was elected chairman while the deputy chairmanship was given to Hansa Sayed, Maraj's supporter.³⁶ However, for 1955, Sayed was elected chairman unopposed and Taharally was elected deputy unopposed;³⁷ compromise had ended and the elections reflected the distribution of seats between the supporters of the two leaders. With a new council for 1956 and 1957, Preamsingh was elected chairman unopposed for both years with the deputy positions filled unopposed from his support. In 1957, however, Dabi attempted to divide Preamsingh's team by nominating Sultan for deputy although Preamsingh had decided on Singh. Sultan declined Dabi's nomination.³⁸ With a majority on council in 1958 and 1959, Dabi was elected chairman unopposed both years, as were the deputy chairmen.³⁹

Alternating succession ended abruptly in 1959 as a direct result of a decision by the PPP council to finally resolve the continuing conflict of interests between cattle owners, traditional farmers who wanted land, farmers who needed oxen, and large machine owners. Despite the extensive ramifications of 1953, the issue remained: cattle still destroyed farmers' crops and still used potential farmland. On the other hand, many villagers were still dependent on oxen for cultivation and on cattle as a milk source for domestic use and sale. The land shortage, however, and the demand for rice land were becoming more acute each year.⁴⁰ Maraj finally took a decision in

- 35 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, October 1, 1956.
 36 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.
 37 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 13, 1954.
 38 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 17, 1955, and December 7, 1956.
 39 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 16, 1957 and December 18, 1958.
 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.
 40 For example, throughout 1957, there was much discussion as to the possibility of tenants planting a spring crop and whether or not to plant the New and Jib Lands as well as the New Empolder. The issue was raised, continually, as to what would happen to oxen and cattle if this were done. (Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, July 15, 1957; August 6, 7, 10, 17, 21, 24 and 27, 1957; September 21, 1957; October 2 and 25, 1957). A proprietors' meeting was subsequently called and it was decided to plant the New and Jib Lands. Cattle owners complained and Preamsingh attempted to have some of the Jib Land area left for agistment. (Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, October 30, 1957). In January, the council decided to leave a portion of the Creek block section for cattle and oxen although the agistment fee was raised. (Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, January 8, 1958.)

accordance with the national PPP's commitment to rice expansion. In 1958, the council redistributed for rice cultivation lands in all areas: the Jib, the New Empolder, and the New Lands.⁴¹ This had several important results: first, all available land was put under rice; second, renters were displaced from their old allocations and given new lands; and third, only proprietors were permitted land and each was limited to two acres, although individual allotments could be in one block.⁴² Each of these had major implications.

First, since all land was now in rice, the small cattle owners were eliminated. Cattle-rearing became the prerogative of large Abary landholders. In addition, the use of oxen for ploughing was no longer possible since the agistment area was eradicated. The village became wholly committed to mechanized production and small farmers who could not invest in machinery now had to pay equipment owners to plough, harrow, and reap their crops. The self-subsistence of many families was wiped out. At that point many small farmers who had some capital saved, invested in machinery to avoid the high costs of ploughing and reaping. The result was a proliferation of machinery which could not be efficiently used given the limited and scattered landholdings of the small farmer. Thus, with the elimination of oxen, the village not only became committed to mechanization, but also became over-mechanized.⁴³ This had the additional effect of altering the occupational cleavages. There were now large, productive machine owners, small farmers who had over-invested in machinery, and small farmers who were dependent on the machinery of others. Insofar as some of the second group were able to obtain Onverwagt land or rent out their equipment to add to its efficiency, there emerged a fourth category of farmer, the medium-sized cultivator. The complexity of the stratification pattern was heightened and this contributed to the extensive lobbying patterns of village politics.

Second, the reallocation of all land meant that many farmers lost land in which they had invested capital for drainage, irrigation, and levees. The new allocations were often without these improvements, sometimes were swampy, and often were less productive than the old lands. As a result, considerable potential for resentment and conflict was introduced.⁴⁴

Third, by allocating only two acres per proprietor, the council created several problems. First, those villagers who merely rented their house and cultivation lots from the local authority were left without rice land. Second, many persons had been

41 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, February 8, 1958.

42 *Ibid.*

Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, February 14, 1958. Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and Dagleish, October, 1969.

43 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969; Dagleish, October, 1969; Amin Mohamed, January, 1970; and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

44 *Ibid.*

cultivating lands which they had "inherited" from parents, that is, lands that had remained in the parents' names and for which the surviving children paid the rents. Families had held several extra acres through this informal inheritance pattern. When the council reclaimed and redistributed land according to two acres per proprietor, there was no recognition of this pattern and families' extra acreage was lost.⁴⁵ Finally, the number of proprietors within a family group, either extended or nuclear, varied, although in general, it depended on wealth and the extent to which the household head had invested in lots to bequeath to his children. Since a family could demand two acres for every house lot owned and since this could be allocated in a block, large wealthy families obtained extensive sections which were suitable to efficient mechanized cultivation.⁴⁶ The allocation thus benefited the wealthier families while taking entire holdings away from some renters and from many who had "inherited" it. Several villagers made efforts to sue the local authority in the Land Assessment Court on the grounds that the council had ended their tenancies without just cause. Such action never reached the Court. The complainants attribute this to the formidable costs of fighting "the entire Jagan government which was planning to prevent any decision against its own party".⁴⁷

The 1959 council elections therefore involved an electorate which was extremely divided in its opinions of PPP actions. Preamsingh captured nine seats (Table 7.3),

Table 7.3: Factional Deployment on Council, 1959 and 1960⁴⁸

	December, 1959	February, 1960
Preamsingh	+	+
Dagleish	+	+
Petamber Singh	+	+
Chunillal Nagassar	+	+
Pritam Brijiall	+	+
G. R. Taharally	+	+
Hussein Amin	+(-)	+(-)
Ebrahim Sultan	+	-
Loknauth	+	-
Dabi Maraj	-	-
Drepaul Bharat	-	-
Mahatma Deeroop	-	-

45 *Ibid.*

Interview with Joseph Bhagwandin, January, 1970.

46 *Ibid.*

47 *Ibid.*

48 The Local Government Board had increased the number of councillors to twelve elected representatives.

Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, January, 1960.

but within two months, Dabi had mobilized two members⁴⁹ while Hussein Amin's support remained variable. In the chairman and deputy chairman elections in December 1959, Preamsingh won easily and gave Amin the deputy position in an attempt to hold his support.⁵⁰ This tactic was moderately successful, but if Amin voted with Dabi on an issue, a tie resulted which the chairman could break. If, however, one of Preamsingh's supporters was absent, the decision would go to Dabi. By February, the council was in fact evenly split. Competition escalated accordingly and emerged in sharp relief. This was aggravated by the 1961 Suspension of Elections Bill which ruled that all local elections were indefinitely cancelled; that all members were to retain their seats until the Bill was revoked; and that any vacancies were to be filled by Local Government Board appointments. Since no one knew when the Bill would be rescinded and local elections held, councillors had to maintain their popular support. However, the continuance of the same council members gave rise to intensive intra-council politicking.

By 1960, Sultan and Loknauth supported Maraj although Preamsingh retained control over the chairman and deputy positions until 1963.⁵¹ After 1962, however, the composition of the council changed as did leaders' support. First, Loknauth left the district and his seat was declared vacant.⁵² About the same time, Dabi Maraj rented his dragline to the village council to dig the middle walk trench since unusually heavy rainfall was threatening to flood the village.⁵³ A councillor's financial involvement with his local authority was a breach of Local Government Ordinances. Preamsingh reported the matter to the Local Government Board which had no choice but to declare Dabi's seat vacant.⁵⁴

It is important to note here that despite Dabi's opposition to Preamsingh, all council members, except Preamsingh, held him in high esteem. Dabi's followers were of course furious over his dismissal but even Preamsingh's supporters felt the council was losing an extremely exalted and important person. As well, because of Dabi's personal popularity, they saw the unseating as poor strategy which would reflect badly on Preamsingh.⁵⁵

49 In the case of Loknauth, Dabi mobilized the kinship tie. He then promised Sultan success within the PPP and Sultan joined the party. Dabi had previously attempted to win Sultan's support by nominating him for deputy chairman in 1957. He failed at that time. Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

50 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

51 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, 1961 and 1962.

52 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, July 2, 1962.

53 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, June 4, 1962.

Interview with Joseph Bhagwandin, November, 1969.

54 Interview with P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, November 19, 1962.

55 *Ibid.*

Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and Dagleish, October, 1969.

The new appointments overturned Preamsingh's majority. Jairam Mangal was a Preamsingh supporter; Zubeda Mohamed was Hussein Amin's niece; and Isaac Jaikarran⁵⁶ was a member of the Armadale family and closely related to Deeroop (cf.: Appendix VII). Although, superficially, Preamsingh's total support seemed unchanged while Maraj seemed to have a net loss of one, Mohamed's commitment was mainly to her uncle Amin who was uncommitted to either leader.⁵⁷ However, Amin's reaction to Dabi's unseating was to give his support, and his niece's, to Dabi, whose remaining support on council⁵⁸ was being mobilized by Sultan, the new leader.⁵⁹ Because of these alignments, Preamsingh did not nominate any supporters⁶⁰ in the 1963 chairman and deputy elections. Sultan, however, failed to give Amin an executive position; instead, Sultan became chairman and Bharat became deputy. Amin realigned his support, and that of his niece, with Preamsingh.⁶¹

The following year, Preamsingh astutely offered Amin the deputy position. Amin accepted and nominated Preamsingh for chairman.⁶² Meanwhile, Preamsingh's relationship with Brijlall and Taharally was becoming tenuous. Brijlall supported Amin for deputy but supported Sultan for chairman. Taharally also supported Sultan hoping that Sultan would support him⁶³ in his bid for the deputy chairmanship.⁶⁴ The result was that Sultan defeated Preamsingh for the chairmanship while the former's supporters split in their vote for deputy between Taharally and Bharat. Amin, supported by the entire Preamsingh team, again won the position of deputy.⁶⁵

This pattern of defection and subversion after 1960 continued until 1970 largely as a product of the suspended elections which increased the importance placed on the positions of chairman and deputy. By 1966—the end of the period under discussion—the composition of the council was as follows: Sultan's support consisted of Bharat, Jaikarran, Deeroop, Taharally, Brijlall, and Amin, who had finally joined both the PPP and Sultan after the latter had made him chairman in 1966.⁶⁶ His niece, Zubeda, had left for England and was replaced on council by Hassan Rasool,

56 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and Zubeda Mohamed, September, 1969.

Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, January 7, 1963.

57 Interview with Zubeda Mohamed, September, 1969.

58 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, 1963.

Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

59 *Ibid.*

60 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 28, 1963.

61 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

62 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 18, 1964.

Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

63 *Ibid.*

64 *Ibid.*

65 *Ibid.*

66 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

Sultan's cousin and a PPP member.⁶⁷ Preamsingh's support was reduced to a core consisting of Chunilall Nagassar, Mangal, and Dagleish.

Within this pattern of shifting alliances, intense competition characterized factional interaction. The slightest provocation over minor issues or the vague possibility that one leader was "putting something over on the other" resulted in complex strategies.

For example, Phulmatie Lall had been employed by council since 1948 to clean the village office once a month. In 1960, Preamsingh decided that the "contract" should be given to a different woman annually.⁶⁸ Maraj's supporters—Deoroo, Bharat, Loknauth and Sultan—stated that since there was no cause for dismissal, the council could not terminate Lall's services.⁶⁹ Underlying the issue was the fact that, although of minor importance, the job was a form of patronage. (Phulmatie Lall was the mother of three sons who opposed Petamber Singh and Preamsingh because of the "boards incident" in 1948.⁷⁰) Petitions for both sides were subsequently circulated. Preamsingh then passed another motion claiming that the office had never been satisfactorily cleaned and that, therefore, local authority officials would do the cleaning in the same manner as the police department.⁷¹ Although the Local Government Board had ruled invalid the original motion because the council had no cause to dismiss Lall,⁷² the Board had to concur with the second motion but ordered the council to pay Phulmatie for an entire year.⁷³ As a final note: "no councillor was prepared to certify the paysheet" and the District Commis-

67 *Ibid.*

Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, 1966.

Interview with Hassan Rasool, August, 1969.

68 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, February 1, 1960.

Letter from P. T. Preamsingh, Chairman, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, February 10, 1960.

69 Letter from D. Bharat and M. Deoroo to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, February 3, 1960 and February 10, 1960.

70 A wood plank was stolen from the village office compound. Villagers told Councillor Petamber Singh that they saw the plank in the yard of Sukhu Lall. Singh apparently reported this to the chairman, Gerald Panchar, who, instead of taking back the plank, informed Lall who proceeded to hide the plank which he had built into the foundation of his house. Again Singh approached the chairman and told him that the police should have been brought in. The matter was raised at the next council meeting—a move which irritated Panchar as the council censured him for his actions. The results were "bad feeling" between Singh and Panchar. In addition, when Dabi Maraj returned to Rajgahr to contest the council elections against the old, non-aligned councillors of which Singh had become part, the Lall family became staunch PPP and Maraj supporters. Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

71 Letter from P. T. Preamsingh to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, October, 1960.

72 Letter from the Commissioner of Local Government to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, July 26, 1960.

73 Letter from the Secretary, Local Government Board, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, November 12, 1960.

sioner had to pay Lall directly.⁷⁴ The new factionalism thus exhibited traditional features.

However, one of the disputes, which began in 1961, became the pivot of local politics for the next decade. This was the dispute over the appointment of Petamber Singh as village overseer. Singh, as already noted, had been associated with Gerald Panchar in the 1940's and with Preamsingh in later years. Such intimate involvement in local politics necessarily made his appointment as overseer a politically critical one given the way in which village officials were perceived as crucial resources in political competition.

In October 1961, both the overseer and assistant overseer of the village resigned their positions. The resignation of the former was the result of the political climate during the 1950's while the latter had obtained work elsewhere.⁷⁵ The retiring overseer, Lala Etwaroo, was politically active in the United Force Party,⁷⁶ founded in 1960 with a "leadership consisting of businessmen with a long history of colonial ties" (Despres, 1967: 7). With this commitment, Etwaroo had alienated both factional leaders and public opinion. In fact, the council, on receiving his letter of resignation, did not wish him to have the prerogative of resigning, and took the opportunity to unanimously dismiss him from office.⁷⁷ Preamsingh and his supporters then advertised in newspapers for "qualified personnel between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five years". Petamber Singh, aged forty-four years and ten months, applied for the position.⁷⁸

At a subsequent council meeting, Maraj's supporters, in the absence of several Preamsingh supporters, passed a motion to cancel the advertisement and to substitute one which changed the age range to "between twenty-five to thirty-five years".⁷⁹ Maraj's supporters were attempting to exclude Singh. Preamsingh immediately informed the District Commissioner that the new advertisement would delay the appointment and hence the rate collection. He asked that the Local Government Board either appoint an overseer or allow the chairman to do so. If the Local Government Board acted, he strongly suggested "one Petamber Singh" as being eminently qualified.⁸⁰ The District Commissioner responded by advising the council

74 Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Secretary, Local Government Board, December 21, 1960.

75 Letter from the Assistant Overseer, to the Rajgahr Village Council, October 10, 1961.

76 Interview with Lala Etwaroo, August, 1969 and Petamber Singh, October, 1969.

77 Letter from P. T. Preamsingh, Chairman, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, November 22, 1961.

Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Commissioner of Local Government, November 22, 1961.

78 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, November 11, 1961.

79 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, November 28, 1961.

80 Letter from P. T. Preamsingh, Chairman, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, November 29, 1961.

against readvertising the post. He suggested that if age were an important criterion, the council could take this into consideration when making the appointment.⁸¹ On receiving this letter, Maraj made an appointment with the Minister of Home Affairs who delegated the Commissioner of Local Government to meet Maraj. The Commissioner agreed that the position should be readvertised⁸² but later discovered that the original council motion had not been properly rescinded. Hence it had to stand.⁸³ Two days later Preamsingh wrote the District Commissioner that the council would meet that evening to elect an overseer and that he (Preamsingh) "presumes that it may be a very hostile meeting". Accordingly, he asked the District Commissioner "to [have] the non-commissioned officer in charge send two peace officers to preserve the order if necessary".⁸⁴ At the meeting, Preamsingh carefully pointed out that he had been told by the Local Government Board to proceed. Dabi stated that Singh could not be nominated because he was a council member. Preamsingh countered that Singh would resign from council if elected. Given Preamsingh's council control, Singh was elected.⁸⁵ A month later, a petition was circulated pointing out that the election was unconstitutional since Singh was a council member and that Singh couldn't do the job because he was too busy with secretariat duties in the Rajgahr Thrift and Credit Society. It was signed by predictable individuals: Bhagwandin, Panchar, Lall, Deeroop, etc.⁸⁶ In forwarding the petition to the District Commissioner, as required, chairman Amin pointed out that most of the signatures were of persons indebted to the local authority and afraid of Singh's record in prosecuting defaulters in the Thrift and Credit Society. Further, many were former members of the Rice Growers' Co-operative⁸⁷ whose arrears rents had to be paid out of their own pockets despite Maraj's attempts to get these rents waived. These members resented Preamsingh.⁸⁸ The Local Government Board upheld the appointment;⁸⁹ Maraj could do no more while in a minority position.

81 Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Chairman, Rajgahr Village, November 30, 1961.

82 Notes of a meeting between a deputation from Rajgahr Village and the Commissioner of Local Government, held at the Ministry of Home Affairs, December 8, 1961. Present were the Commissioner of Local Government; Secretary, Local Government Board; Dabi Maraj; Mahatma Deeroop; and ten Rajgahr proprietors.

83 Letter from the Commissioner of Local Government to Dabi Maraj, December 9, 1961.

84 Letter from P. T. Preamsingh to the District Commissioner, December 11, 1961.

85 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 11, 1961.

Letter from Hussein Amin, Deputy Chairman, to the District Commissioner, December 12, 1961.

86 Petition from 148 proprietors to the Chairman, Local Government Board, January 8, 1962.

87 The break-up of this co-operative is discussed in a later section.

88 Letter from H. Amin, Deputy Chairman, to the Chairman, Local Government Board, February 12, 1962.

89 Letter from the Secretary, Local Government Board, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, May 18, 1962.

By 1964, with the new council appointments, the reaction against Dabi's unseating, the variable loyalty of Amin, Taharally and Brijlall, and with Sultan elected chairman, Singh began to complain about the council's functioning:

when a certain section of the people are working with the local authority—whether they work satisfactorily or not—the chairman has nothing to say but will express his satisfaction. But as soon as other sections are seen working, he gets red hot and will even make row with the people.

Singh was intimating that the chairman was trying to use local works as patronage. He also maintained that "there were certain plans to hinder his office work" and added that he intended to send the District Commissioner a detailed statement to be sent to the Local Government Board.⁹⁰

Such conflicts kept occurring. In 1965, Sultan tried to delete Singh's annual increment from the village estimate. Singh said it was because he had taken "drastic action against defaulting renters and proprietors" including Deeroop and several of Sultan's relatives. These persons also interfered with arrangements Singh had made for a bailiff levying on defaulters' property.⁹¹

In contradistinction, Preamsingh strongly supported the actions of the overseer. In 1965, Singh took an extra seven days' leave after his vacation although the Local Government Board had previously ruled against this. The District Commissioner withheld part of his salary; Singh objected, and sent a lawyer's letter.⁹² He also sent a round-robin motion to all councillors to vote on whether he should be paid for the seven days. This method ensured that all councillors would be polled and eliminated the possibility that sympathetic members might miss the relevant council meeting. The majority said that the overseer be paid.⁹³ The District Commissioner maintained that local authority members "were intending to cover up for him"⁹⁴ and that "certain elements on the council were behind the overseer's action despite the Board's ruling".⁹⁵ Singh had the unequivocal support of Preamsingh and the increasing enmity of Sultan.

The entire issue reached a climax in 1966 in a series of interrelated events. It began when Sultan's council suspended the overseer for certain alleged irregularities

90 Letter from Petamber Singh to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, May 15, 1964.

91 Letter from Petamber Singh to the Chairman and Members of the Local Government Board, June 1, 1965.

92 Letter from Petamber Singh to the District Commissioner, July 2, 1965.

Letter from Fung-a-Fat, Barrister, to the Chairman, Rajgahr Local Authority, October 9, 1965.

93 Letter from Ebrahim Sultan to the District Commissioner, September 24, 1965 and October 13, 1965.

94 Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Commissioner of Local Government, October 18, 1965.

95 Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Commissioner of Local Government, November 18, 1965.

in carrying out his duties.⁹⁶ Singh ostensibly put up for execution sale, a house lot belonging to Jacob Panchar's widow without informing her of the intended sale and had given money to his friend Mandlall, the village dragline operator, to buy the lot for later transfer to himself.⁹⁷ The Local Government Board refused to allow the suspension because an investigation had not taken place and because the Board had not approved the action.⁹⁸ Sultan ignored this and appointed the assistant overseer as acting overseer with a salary increase.⁹⁹ The council then recommended to the Local Government Board that the overseer be dismissed on the basis of specific charges which they proceeded to draw up.¹⁰⁰ The council also decided to report the "irregularities" involving money transactions to the police.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, Singh tried to act in accord with the Board's decision that he was on duty and attempted to enter the village office. Sultan barred the door and informed him that the council would not pay him regardless of pressure from the Board.¹⁰² The District Commissioner summarized the situation:

The overseer is prevented by threats from entering the village office despite my directions... I am informed that the council will not have him back at any cost ... and the council is prepared for a showdown on this issue if the overseer resumes his normal duty... The council has [also] refused to certify the overseer's paysheet.¹⁰³

- 96 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, February 14, 1966.
Letter from G. R. Taharally, Deputy Chairman, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, February 14, 1966.
- 97 Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Commissioner of Local Government, February 15, 1966.
- 98 Letter from the Commissioner of Local Government to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, February 25, 1966.
Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Chairman, Rajgahr Village, March 7, 1966.
- 99 Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Rajgahr Village District, February 16, 1966.
Letter from G. R. Taharally, Deputy Chairman, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, March 10, 1966.
- 100 These included the issue of the Panchar house lot; the fact that Singh hadn't issued receipts for money collected from proprietors withdrawing their lots from execution sale; the fact that he did not deposit this money into local authority accounts until the evening before the issue was to be raised at a council meeting; that Singh had not returned the change he had received from the purchase of dragline parts to village funds; that Singh allowed the dragline to do work for a Lovely Lass woman and received payment of several fowl which were not turned over to the council; and finally, that the overseer did not record that this work was done or that payment was received.
Letter from G. R. Taharally, Deputy Chairman, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, March 16, 1966.
- 101 Letter from G. R. Taharally, Deputy Chairman, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, March 23, 1966.
- 102 Letter from Petamber Singh to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, undated.
- 103 Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Commissioner of Local Government, March 28, 1966.

Further, the assistant overseer refused to make out the paysheet "for fear of victimization from some members of the council".¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the council received legal advice that it did not have to pay the overseer until the charges were cleared—a contradiction of the Board's ruling.¹⁰⁵ In the interim, Singh answered in writing the charges which had been laid against him, a usual preliminary in an investigation. He claimed to be innocent of the charges;¹⁰⁶ the council maintained his explanations "were weak and unfounded and decided to recommend to the Board that he be dismissed forthwith".¹⁰⁷ The council also passed a resolution to return Panchar's property to the family.¹⁰⁸ By this time, petitions were circulating in the village. The one supporting Singh claimed that his actions against defaulting renters who were relatives and friends of council members had resulted in "this clique making frivolous charges".¹⁰⁹ Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Local Government had concluded that there was "not sufficient evidence of dishonesty or negligence to warrant Singh's dismissal".¹¹⁰

During the suspension issue, two other issues arose related to the conflict between Singh and Sultan. First, at a proprietors' meeting on February 14, 1966, Sultan publicly accused Singh of engaging in the irregularities of which the council had accused him. Sultan claimed that in making these statements he was acting in his capacity as chairman and merely informing villagers of the facts. Singh disagreed with this interpretation and retained a lawyer who had been the Attorney General of Guyana under Jagan. Slander charges were filed against Sultan¹¹¹ and the slander suit ran in parallel with the suspension issue.

Second, and in the midst of both disputes, the council brought a further charge against the overseer claiming that his son Gunraj was illegally cultivating a strip of land without paying rents. Gunraj wrote the District Commissioner that his father was not involved and that in any case, it was in the local authority's interest that he cultivate this abandoned strip since it harboured rats and birds which destroyed surrounding crops. He claimed he was prepared to pay rent if the council so decided,

- 104 Letter from Petamber Singh to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, April 6, 1966.
- 105 Letter from the Acting District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Commissioner of Local Government, undated.
- 106 Letter from Petamber Singh, to H. Amin, Chairman, April 7, 1966.
- 107 Letter from G. R. Taharally, Deputy Chairman, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, April 14, 1966.
- 108 Letter from G. R. Taharally, Deputy Chairman, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, April 15, 1966.
- 109 Petition from twenty-four proprietors to the Chairman and Members of the Local Government Board, April 17, 1966.
- 110 Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Commissioner of Local Government, April 18, 1966.
- 111 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969; P. T. Premsingh, March, 1970; and Dr. Fenton Ramsahoye, October, 1969.

pointing out that Deeroop and several other Sultan supporters were all illegally cultivating up to six acres of local authority land without paying rents.¹¹²

Meanwhile, Sultan's supporters were collecting affidavits as evidence in the upcoming investigation of Singh's activities, the date for which had been set by the Board. Nalini and Bacchus said that Mandlall had told them that Singh had given him the money to buy the Panchar lot. Preamsingh's supporters countered by obtaining statements¹¹³ to show that these witnesses disliked the overseer because he had levied against them in the Thrift and Credit Society; how Nalini and Bacchus had originally petitioned against his appointment in 1961; and how their evidence was prejudiced. The Local Government Board attempted to meet with the council to reach a compromise,¹¹⁴ but all of the councillors refused to attend. The petitions for both sides grew longer and more intense.¹¹⁵ Finally, the Board held its inquiry and concluded,

that with the exception of the charge concerning the delay of five weeks by the overseer in paying over to the office revenue, there is insufficient evidence to sustain the other charges and it is therefore decided that the overseer be censured by the council for negligence in not accounting for the amount in question [but that] he should resume duty forthwith.¹¹⁶

Sultan passed a motion that since the Board had found the overseer guilty of withholding funds, his services were to be terminated.¹¹⁷ The Board restated that the one charge which was upheld was insufficient cause for dismissal. Singh returned to his post.¹¹⁸ Jacob Panchar's widow had meanwhile decided to sue the local authority in the case of her houselot.¹¹⁹ Preamsingh maintained that Sultan had encouraged this to further embarrass the overseer.¹²⁰ Simultaneously, the slander suit was pending, and a lengthy dispute ensued as to whether the council should pay Sultan's legal fees since he was allegedly acting in his capacity as chairman. In 1966, with Sultan in control, Sultan was allotted \$500 for his defense. Preamsingh immediately reversed the decision at the first opportunity and allocated the money to Singh.¹²¹

112 Letter from Gunraj Singh to the Chairman and Members of the Rajgahr Local Authority, May 7, 1966.

113 For example: Letter from Doodnauth, June 13, 1966 and Dinally, June 15, 1966.

114 Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Rajgahr Local Authority, June 25, 1966.

115 Petition, July 1, 1966 and July 4, 1966, each signed by more than 100 proprietors.

116 Letter from the Secretary, Local Government Board, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, July 7, 1966.

117 Letter from H. Amin, Chairman, to the District Commissioner, August 31, 1966.

118 Letter from the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, to the Commissioner of Local Government, September 5, 1966.

119 Letter from H. Amin, Chairman, to the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington, April 29, 1966.

120 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969 and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

121 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, February 26, 1968.

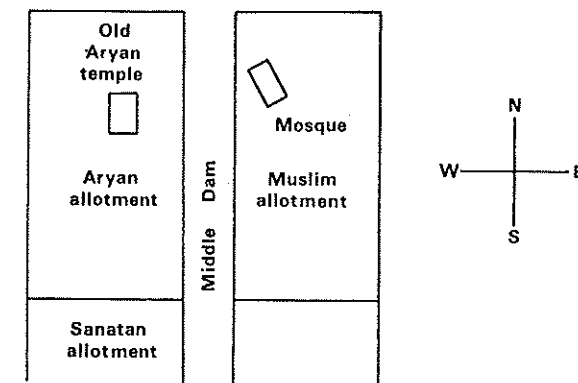
Then the son of Sukhu Lall, a supporter of Maraj and Sultan, sued Singh's son, claiming that he was the renter of the one acre which Gunraj had planted illegally and that Gunraj therefore had reaped his crop. This too reached the courts after lengthy legal procedures.¹²²

New Arenas of Competition

The politics of alternating succession was largely a product of competition in other village arenas, competition which caused the fall of the conciliatory council in 1953 and Maraj's loss of the 1955 council election. In the former case, the council's indecisiveness was aggravated by these other competitions while in 1955, with the competitions continuing, the electorate again supported Preamsingh. An important point is that these developed directly out of changes caused by the economic expansion, that is, competition emerged along latent lines of fission which became important because of the emerging scarcity of resources, the new resource allocation, and the new class-based elite. The religious arena, the co-operative arena, and the horse racing arena, provide examples.

A competitive religious arena first arose in the 1930's when the Aryan temple, located opposite the Muslim mosque (Diagram 7.4),¹²³ was being repaired. This disturbed the Muslim prayer meetings and the District Commissioner ordered the Aryans to move their temple back eight feet. This was done. The conflict eased

Diagram 7.4: Locations of Aryan and Muslim Allotments



122 Interview with Dr. Fenton Ramsahoye, September, 1969; Petamber Singh, October, 1969; and P. T. Preamsingh, March, 1970.

123 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, September 12, 1955.

until 1953¹²⁴ when Imdad Usman, secretary of the Muslim mosque, requested the council's permission to sacrifice a cow in the mosque compound.¹²⁵ Since this would offend the Hindus, the matter was deferred. At the next council meeting, councillor Narain, claiming to represent the members, executive, and pandit of the Sanatan temple, objected to the intended sacrifice. Councillor Dagleish pointed out that no permission had yet been given. Hussein Amin, a Muslim, then offered to persuade the Muslim community to carry out the sacrifice in another place.¹²⁶ This was done, but when another issue arose, the Muslims were quick to respond.

In September 1955, the Aryans asked the council's permission to erect a school and temple on a portion of unused common land opposite the mosque. Imdad Usman made strong objections to the location of the building,¹²⁷ referring to the old dispute over the location of the Aryan church. The District Commissioner was called in to effect a compromise, but none could be reached. Councillor Preamsingh suggested that the Aryans be permitted to build so long as their construction began at the extreme west end of their land allotment so that maximum distance from the mosque would be maintained. To complement his, he suggested that the Muslims discontinue the slaughter of animals in the mosque compound. The Aryan president agreed; the Muslims, including Hussein Amin, refused unless the new Aryan buildings were built west of the old ones. The Muslims wanted the temple as far away as possible while, in any case, Preamsingh's suggestion did not preclude the possibility that the Aryan complex might extend beyond the 1930's "boundary". With this, the issue was deferred¹²⁸ until January 1956, when the council called a special meeting in another attempt to find a compromise.¹²⁹ The Aryans found the meeting time inconvenient.¹³⁰ Eventually, the Aryans decided not to build their complex and the specific issue died down. Then, in 1958, the Muslims applied for permission to erect new buildings on their common land allotment.¹³¹ This time the Sanatans objected. Councillor Brijlall, secretary of the Sanatan temple, insisted that the buildings be placed on the extreme east end of the land and that no slaughter take place in the compound. With both factional leaders vying for Sultan's and Amin's support, the council maintained that they could not make such assurances nor could they ask the Muslims to abide by such a decision.¹³²

Underlying these disputes was the fact that the common land area was limited, and given the exclusiveness of many religious rites, this became a crucial problem.

124 Interview with Joseph Bhagwandin, September, 1969.

125 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, August 10, 1953.

126 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, August 17, 1953.

127 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, September 12, 1955.

128 *Ibid.*

129 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, January 9, 1956.

130 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, February 6, 1956.

131 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, January 6, 1958.

132 Interview with Joseph Bhagwandin, September, 1969.

The Canadian Mission Church had been given two houselots in 1954¹³³ on which to erect a church and school. Several years later there were no village houselots available. Even if there had been, the Muslim practice of sacrifice would have offended Hindu neighbours. As well, the Sanatan temple was too large for one lot. The churches had to be accommodated on the common land which was of finite size; the way was open for the religious groups to conflict.

The disputes, actually based on a land shortage in all parts of the village, were intensified by the class stratification pattern. In constructing new churches and buildings, the churches were responding to the demands of new wealthy families that religious facilities keep pace with their new prestige. The new stratification pattern, the competition for prestige, the accompanying decrease in available land, and the inevitable but improbable need to compromise with other religious practices made conflict inevitable.

The second major competitive arena occurred in connection with co-operative organization. The early success of the Rajgahr Rice Growers' Co-operative has been previously discussed. However, by 1953, the society was experiencing difficulty; village landholdings were not large enough and the Armadale expansion had failed due to poor water control. Moreover, members were refusing to invest time and effort in the society. Many had opened shops as income supplements and could not leave these untended. Others had seen the profits accruing to individual large-scale cultivation and preferred to invest in their own equipment and to expand their Abary landholdings in view of the scarcity of Rajgahr land and the hostility of the council.¹³⁴ The co-operative had provided members with large profits and there was no longer a purpose in confining economic activities on that basis. In January 1955, the co-operative had the council divide their 131 acres into individual allotments.¹³⁵

In the same year, another co-operative, the Rajgahr Thrift and Credit Society was founded.¹³⁶ It, too, illustrates the individualistic orientations and changing resource structure which comprised the disintegrative factors in the Rice Growers' Co-operative. Moreover, it exemplifies the extent to which class elitism had filtered into the general factional politics of the period. With legal licensing in February, a committee of management (a chairman, secretary and three committee members) was elected by the general membership. These retained their positions until April 1968, when the Chief Co-operative Officer of the Co-operative Department in Georgetown removed them from office and appointed a single manager.¹³⁷ This was the functional equivalent of liquidation. The reasons stem from the form the Thrift and

133 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 6, 1954.

134 Interview with Seeram Bhagwandin, January, 1971.

135 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, March 7, 1955.

136 Interview with Albert Kishoor, Co-operative Officer, West Coast Berbice, August, 1969.

137 Interview with Hassan Rasool, September, 1969.

Credit Society took, the villagers' expectations of its functions, and the intimate involvement of the village's political and economic elite in its affairs.

A Thrift and Credit Society requires members, upon entering, to buy a specified number of shares which, unlike a credit union, did not have to be increased over time. In Rajgahr, the credit facilities were emphasized but no concomitant pressure was placed on members to save money through the Society, hence few villagers increased their initial share capital. The money for loans, then, did not come from capital which the Society earned by investing the savings of members. Instead, Barclay's Bank gave overdrafts guaranteed by government to the Society. The management committee then allocated loans. When these were paid back, the Society paid the bank. With this arrangement, a Society had no independent resources in case of defaulted payments, in case the bank overdraft was not given, or when the overdraft was not large enough to cover demand.

The granting of loans to members depended on four factors. First, money had to be available from the bank. Second, a member had to apply for a loan a month before all loans were to be made. Third, the amount of the loan was governed by a member's "maximum credit limit" rating which had been arrived at by having members declare their assets on entering the Society. In fact, a member was supposed to submit a new listing of assets to enable adjustment every year. Since this was never done, credit limits were based on the initial declaration. However, the management committee could legally alter ratings which meant that the way was open for these changes to be carried out by unilateral committee decision. Fourth, a Society could not grant a loan if a previous one had not been repaid, nor could a Society receive an overdraft from Barclay's until its previous overdraft had been cleared. Barclay's followed their policy strictly. The Rajgahr Society, however, allowed for extenuating circumstances, such as poor rice crops, and gave defaulters another loan on the gamble that a new crop would enable payment of both loans. What constituted extenuating circumstances was left for the committee to decide.

With the emphasis on lending and a loose interpretation of rules governing credit limits and duplicate loans, the Society was extremely vulnerable to the manipulations of individuals.¹³⁸ This vulnerability was heightened by the nature of the general membership. All economic statuses were represented, as was an even distribution of religious and age groups. The executive committee, however, was drafted wholly from the new elite section of the population. Their retention of executive positions throughout the life of the Society enabled long-term strategies and manipulation.¹³⁹

Between the years 1955 and 1963, sixteen overdrafts were obtained from Barclay's and loaned to Society members.¹⁴⁰ Until 1961, members for the most part had paid

138 *Op. cit.*

139 *Op. cit.*

140 These were for planti, ngto cover such costs as ploughing, seed padi and fertilizer or for combine services.

back the Society and the Society in turn had fulfilled its obligations to Barclay's. In the spring of 1963, however, Barclay's advanced an overdraft of \$30,000 which had still not been repaid by 1970. It was therefore the last overdraft which the Society received.¹⁴¹ The reasons for the failure to repay were due to events in both the national arena and the village.

In 1962, race riots between the East Indian and African population segments seriously interfered with the rice crop. After order had been restored, the Jagan government decided to help increase rice production in response to a high export demand and in an effort to encourage East Indian support of the PPP. Since the Rajgahr Society had a good loan repayment record, Barclay's was willing to advance the \$30,000 overdraft.¹⁴²

At this point, village politics became crucial. A lending pattern had been emerging, peaking in 1963, in which there was a high association between kinship and political affiliation with the Society's executive and the amount of money loaned to members. From this final \$30,000, committee members and their families borrowed one-third, and together with their political allies, managed to acquire \$23,000 of the total. The management committee then divided the remainder among small farmers.¹⁴³ Although villagers knew, they made no complaints.¹⁴⁴ In 1967, three events upset this situation.

First, between 1963 and 1966, there was a belief that Jagan would waive the repayment of these loans. If the farmers "saw Cheddi, he would fix this thing for us". No one repaid loans. "They waited to see what would happen." This attitude was related to the role the PPP had played vis-à-vis the rice farmer. High prices for produce and the provision of duty-free gasoline for machinery had encouraged farmers' dependency on the PPP to get things done. In 1966, however, the PNC formed the government. Feeling it was more amenable to pressure, Barclay's demanded the \$350,000 which it had outstanding to co-operatives throughout the country. They pressured the government; the government pressured the Co-operative Department; the Department pressured the Societies.¹⁴⁵ When this pressure to repay reached the village level, small farmers began to articulate resentment: the rich had "taken all the money" and "a poor man couldn't pay because he couldn't get loans to plant his crop".¹⁴⁶

Second, until 1967, there was no one to substantiate claims of possible maladministration and to assess the accuracy of rumours and unorganized grumblings.

141 Records of the Rajgahr Thrift and Credit Society.

142 Interview with Albert Kishoor, August, 1969.

143 *Ibid.*

Records of the Rajgahr Thrift and Credit Society.

144 *Op. cit.*

145 *Ibid.*

146 *Ibid.*

The District Co-operative Officer was allegedly a close friend of the Society's secretary, Petamber Singh, and "he preferred not to see what was happening". In 1967 this officer was transferred and a new one assigned. On a routine inspection of the books, the new officer discovered the skewed lending pattern and began talking with villagers.¹⁴⁷

Third, local politics was critical. One vote separated the two teams on council and volatile issues associated with the Sultan-Singh confrontation had caused polarization. Sultan and his allies began to use the Society's problems as political fodder since four of the Society's executives were Prem Singh's council supporters.¹⁴⁸

Because of these pressures, the management committee tried to take action. They met with the Prime Minister in June 1967 to get the loans waived. They were told they had to pay.¹⁴⁹ They then tried to have the wealthier Society members join them in putting up security until the next crop. This was a response to pressure from the Chief Co-operative Officer¹⁵⁰ and to the fear of liquidation which might require them to pay off large debts in one installment. They therefore tried to retain their positions in order to exert some control over the pressures that were being brought. For the same reasons, however, few of their allies wanted to become involved either for old friends or for a Society which was necessary only for poorer farmers.¹⁵¹ On May 15, 1968, the committee sent a petition to the Co-operative Department guaranteeing the repayment of the \$23,000.¹⁵² On April 30, however, the management committee had been dissolved and a manager appointed with instructions to force repayment.¹⁵³ All committee members had assets—cattle, for example—with which to pay off their loans. The Co-operative Department, on the assumption that these assets would never be sold for repaying rice debts, simply and finally disbanded the committee.¹⁵⁴

The new manager was Hassan Rasool, councillor and Sultan supporter. He was appointed by the Chief Co-operative Officer whom he knew personally when the officer had been posted in the district.¹⁵⁵ As manager, he makes a commission of ten percent on all monies collected through legal procedures against defaulters. By 1969, all defaulters had writs taken out against them, and approximately thirty percent

147 *Ibid.*

148 *Ibid.*

Interview with H. Rasool, September, 1969.

149 Interview with Albert Kishoor, August, 1969 and Hassan Rasool, September, 1969.

150 In a letter dated January 17, 1968, the Chief Co-operative Officer threatened to appoint a manager or liquidator.

151 *Op. cit.*

152 *Ibid.*

153 Interview with Hassan Rasool, September, 1969.

154 *Ibid.*

155 *Ibid.*

Interview with Albert Kishoor, August, 1969.

of the debts, fines and interest had been collected.¹⁵⁶ A major effect has been that smaller farmers have been without credit facilities since 1963, thereby widening the economic separation of elite from mass. The disintegrative forces of individualism and elitism, the lack of trust between the elite and mass, and the competition between the factionalized elite have prevented other co-operatives from being formed.¹⁵⁷

The final major competition was in the race club arena. As previously noted, horse races are the major form of public recreation with meets organized bi-annually by prosperous villagers who own horses and have an interest in the sport. In 1938 one such meet, discussed in Chapter IV, became a major factional confrontation between Prem Singh and Panchar and formed a basic division for decades. In the interim, however, the racing arena itself had been uncompetitive: individuals simply held meets as they saw fit. After 1953, however, the arena exhibited the tendencies of the other arenas discussed in this chapter. Specifically, two competing groups each claimed the prerogative of organizing race meetings. For example, in 1955, Jori Jawahir and Deygoo Mahesh not only applied to hold meetings at the same time, but each had formed a club and taken a name.¹⁵⁸ The Rajgahr Sports and Race Club, headed by Mahesh, was associated mainly with the Mohamed family. The Rajgahr Race Club was led by several Deeroop brothers.¹⁵⁹ The latter were PPP supporters; the former were aligned with Prem Singh. Both families were new elite members; all had invested in machinery and were cultivators of extensive Abary tracts in addition to being large cattle owners. By 1969, fourteen years later, these two race clubs competed for permission every August and December, the months in which race meets traditionally were held. For example, in October, 1956, both Deeroop and Sultan, the latter a member of the Mahesh club, applied to hold meetings. Sultan was granted permission¹⁶⁰ since the council was controlled by Prem Singh whom Sultan then supported. Ostensibly a compromise was reached because Sultan agreed to allow the Deeroop club to hold the next meeting.¹⁶¹ However, both groups again applied. Prem Singh's supporters voted for Sultan's application; Maraj supported the Deeroop application.¹⁶²

The competition in this arena was a sign that the elite was involved in factional politics. Each club was composed of elites; each was associated with a particular stance on party politics; and each supported a particular factional leader. This

156 Interview with H. Rasool, September, 1969.

157 *Op. cit.*

158 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 30, 1954 and February 7, 1955.

159 Interview with Chetram Chand, November, 1969; Amin Mohamed, December, 1969; and Gopic Deeroop, December, 1969.

160 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, October 1, 1956.

161 *Ibid.*

162 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, December 17, 1956.

situation, as mentioned, continued for years even though there had been no competition since the 1930's. However, after 1954, the racing arena was a reflection of village divisions, and with prestige competition an important aspect of factional politics, competition inevitably emerged.

Resource Management and Social Networks

As in previous chapters, the politics of the period are analysed in terms of the regularities governing competitive eligibility; the resulting strategies of factional mobilization, maintenance and deployment; and the subsequent composition of factional sets viewed in networks terms. Table 7.5 presents a summary of the characteristics of the present period. The stratification pattern (Column B) shows the village divided into cumulatively inclusive sections. The political community and the political elite (Column C) correspond to the mass and elite configuration of Column B with the means of mobilization (Column D) to the political elite being electoral support. Similarly, the network definition (Column E) corresponds to the other columns with the total net being the village mass and the partial network derived on the basis of electoral support. The factional set, emerging on the next level, was the action-set mobilized by leaders through varying linkages with the political elite. A second action-set, only moderately based on leadership decision-making due to the suspension of elections, constituted teams for specific competitions, such as the village council. Because of the suspension, these were derived mainly by subversions from the other team rather than being constituted through direct mobilization from the factional level. The regularity introduced during the Displacement period of the political elite based on electoral support had become common for

Table 7.5: Stratification, Competitive Eligibility and Factional Category

(A) Level	(B) Stratification Pattern	(C) Levels/Eligibility for Mobilization	(D) Mobilization Strategies		(E) Network Definition	(F) Factional Category
			Economic Sphere	Social Sphere		
1	Mass	Political Community			Total Network	
2	Economic and Political Elite	Political Elite	Electoral Support		Partial Network	
3	Leadership		Transaction	Friendship History Kinship Party/Ideology Schism	Action-Set	Factional Support
4		Team			(Action-Set)	

both leaders. Further, the strategy of using two action-sets was similar to the Familial Elitism period although in attenuated form and due to different reasons.

More specifically, villagers decided which political stance was most relevant for their socio-political and economic welfare. The mass of public opinion was thereby formed as was the political elite which was eligible for more active involvement. Since the suspension of elections had eliminated leadership choices for team membership, most of the political elite's active involvement was at the factional level with such activities as petition signing and verbal support. Unlike the Displacement period, therefore, the present teams were not mobilized directly from the political elite/factional support (Panchar) or from the factional ranks (Ramprashad). Rather, patterning was more similar to early Familial Elitism when councillors were appointed by the Local Government Board. In that period, complete control of the factional game enabled the deployment of an additional level/action-set (Level 4: Column A) composed of more committed units of support for direct confrontations. In the present period, this additional level was a product of external constraints, and the so-called action-sets resulting in teams were almost totally restricted to subversion of prior team members.

In mobilizing factional support from the political elite, the strategies leaders used during this period included the traditional linkages of first-order kinship, second-order kinship, friendship, transaction and schism, all of which remained viable links constrained of course by obvious limitations such as whether such kin, for example, were available. Second, three new modes were introduced: there were those ties that enabled mobilization/deployment because an individual had been intimately involved in factional politics and was an a priori supporter of a particular leader. This has been labelled a "self-factional history" tie. More tenuous was the tie based on a history which involved an individual's family whose prior bipartisan political support affected present support. This has been labelled a "familial factional history" tie. The final new tie was a product of the PPP's intrusion into the local political arena: the PPP leader mobilized individuals who were committed to PPP ideology or PPP patronage resources. In contrast, Preamsingh recruited according to an anti-PPP sentiment; to the ideology that national politics was not relevant to village organization; and/or to the view that the patronage potential of other political parties was a more realistic assessment of the national arena. However defined, both ideology and an assessment of the political credibility of national parties played a role in the management of human resources during the present period. The distribution of the various relationships used by the leaders is presented in Table 7.6.

As in other periods, it is immediately apparent that leaders' strategies exhibited certain similarities as well as basic differences. Table 7.7 presents a ranking of the criteria used by each leader and a cumulative frequency distribution of links used in building support. Both leaders placed primary emphasis on political party support and/or political ideology, although Maraj placed greater emphasis on such links than

did Preamsingh. Further, Maraj's secondary emphasis on familial factional history was in fact the utilization of fourth- and fifth-order kinship ties through the mobilization of family groups which had been supporters of Maraj and Panchar for decades. Insofar as these also formed the central core of PPP support, the individuals involved overlap. In contradistinction, Preamsingh turned, after the new "ideological" tie, to those relationships which had generally characterized Ramprashad management strategies over the decades: friendship and the overlapping self-factional history tie. In short, both leaders used traditional strategies rationalized by ideology.

Similarities are also apparent in the use of transactional relationships. As compared with the past, transactions now were extremely important; both leaders were adapting to the individualization of the economic sphere. Preamsingh's next most important strategy was familial histories while Maraj mobilized the ties of friendship and self-factional histories. Both leaders thus used the historical dimensions of factionalism as relevant criteria but in a different way; both adapted to the economic individualism; and both maintained intact traditional mobilization patterns.

The lateral linkages among supporters exhibit both similarities and differences (Tables 7.8 and 7.9). One of the similarities is the presence of Ebrahim Sultan as a supporter of both leaders at different times. As the Muslim priest, he had independent support among Muslim council members. With his defection to Maraj, this support continued and his subsequent appropriation of the leadership role enhanced

Table 7.6: Mobilization Strategies

	First order Kinship	Friendship	Factional history -Self	Factional history -Familial	Second Order Kinship	Political Party/Ideology	Transaction	Schism
<i>Preamsingh's links with</i>								
Abel Preamsingh	×					×		
Dagleish		×	×			×		
Petamber Singh		×	×			×		
Bahadur		×	×			×		
Deygoo Mahesh		×	×			×		
Chunilall Nagassar		×		×		×		
Narain		×				×		
Jairam Mangal		×				×		
^b Hussein Amin			×				×	×
^c Ebrahim Sultan				×				
^c Zubeda Mohamed				×				
^c Loknauth							×	×
^c Pritam Brijlall							×	
^c C. R. Taharally							×	
<i>Total</i>	1	7	5	3	0	8	4	2

Table 7.6: Mobilization Strategies

	First order Kinship	Friendship	Factional history -Self	Factional history -Familial	Second Order Kinship	Political Party/Ideology	Transaction	Schism
<i>Maraj's links with</i>								
Sukhu Lall		×		×		×		
Poonai Etwaroo		×		×		×		
Gaffur Gobin			×		×	×		
Hassan Rasool				×		×		
Samuel Dookhun				×		×		
^c Ebrahim Sultan				×		×		×
Hansa Sayed				×		×		
Nalini				×		×		
Mahatma Deeroop				×		×		
Jori Jawahir				×		×		
George Bhagwan				×		×		
^c Loknauth					×	×		
Isaac Jaikarran					×	×		
M. Johns					×	×		
Bacchus						×		
Ramesh						×		
Drepaul Bharat						×		
Gopaul						×		
Matura						×		
^b Hussein Amin							×	×
^c Zubeda Mohamed							×	
^c C. R. Taharally							×	
^c Pritam Brijlall							×	
<i>Total</i>	0	2	1	10	4	19	5	1

Note

^a In the period under discussion, the link between leader and follower may have altered over time. In such cases, all ties are included.

^b Indicates that the person, at some point, defected from the leader to the other.

^c Indicates that the person, at some point, was mobilized by the leader from the other. In cases of subversion, the person is included in both lists.

his supporters' view of his political credibility. Sultan must be viewed, therefore, at least as a lieutenant within Maraj's team. Insofar as he first was a supporter of Preamsingh, his lateral linkages are largely duplicated in Preamsingh's net. This too was the case with Hussein Amin and his niece Zubeda Mohamed. He was in a similar, but less influential position as Sultan. Given as well Amin's continuous defection, both nets had the lateral linkage between Amin and Mohamed at different times.

Aside from these shared linkages, the two leaders' other lateral linkages varied, largely because leaders continued strategies from previous periods with their lateral

Table 7.7: Mobilization Strategies According to Rank Order and Cumulative Distribution

Rank	Criteria	Premsingh	Maraj
High	Cumulative frequency computed per link		
1	Political party/ Ideology	26.7	45.2
2	Friendship	50.0	69.0
3	Self-factional history	66.7	80.9
4	Transaction	80.0	90.4
5	Familial factional history	90.0	95.2
6	Schism	96.7	100.4
7	First-order kinship	100.0	—
8	Second-order kinship	—	—

ties thereby reflecting traditional differences. Thus Premsingh's net has a friendship tie between Dagleish and Petamber Singh. In turn, Maraj's factional set had exceptionally dense lateral linkages among extended kin, or, in the idiom of this period, those with a bipartisan familial history.

The problem of labelling content, however, is brought to the fore when dealing with this issue. Genealogically, Maraj's extended kin are easily traced (Appendix VII). Protagonists, however, did not necessarily see themselves as mobilized in this manner, and the labelling of content has been done on the basis of their perception. Petamber Singh saw his kinship tie to Maraj as absolved by later, more relevant political criteria. He is, therefore, not included in the kinship cluster. Similarly, William Jaikarran initially saw himself as aligned with Ramprashad and Premsingh through an economic tie; he phrased his subsequent alignment with Panchar not as kinship but as a transaction. His first cousin once removed, Isaac Jaikarran, however, viewed his own factional involvement during the present period as a consequence of the extended kinship link. The case of Deeroop is more complicated. He saw his relationship to the Jaikarran family in general as one based on kinship; however, he did not view kinship as the basis for his relationship to Maraj since he perceived the kinship tie as too diffuse. In labelling his support for Maraj, his definition is used. As well, he is included in the Maraj kinship cluster since he saw himself linked to other cluster members. All individual linkages to the leaders as well as lateral linkages are typed according to participants' perceptions.

The morphological implications of the two sets were similar: Maraj's density is 19.0; Premsingh's is 19.8. Despite the extensive clustering of his extended kin group, Maraj's density is delimited by his peripheral deployment strategy which used the political party tie and brought in a large number of unrelated individuals. In looking at the extent of multiplicity as an index of durability, 46.7 percent of the persons mobilized by Premsingh were linked via several linkages; 54.8 percent of Maraj's supporters were linked via multiple ties. Maraj's set was the more durable.

Table 7.8: Network of Premsingh's Support

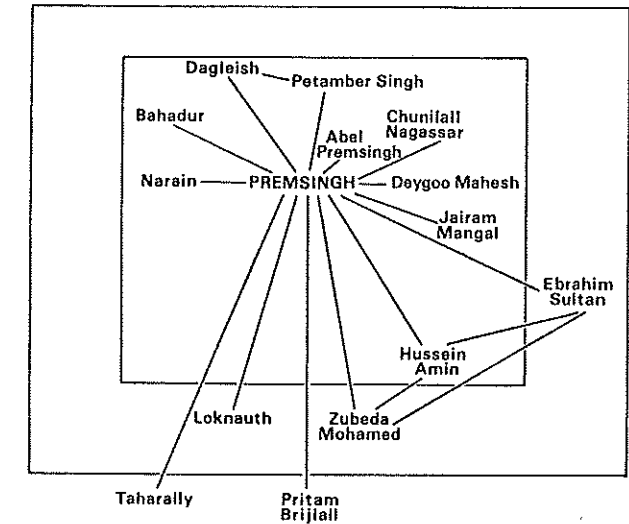
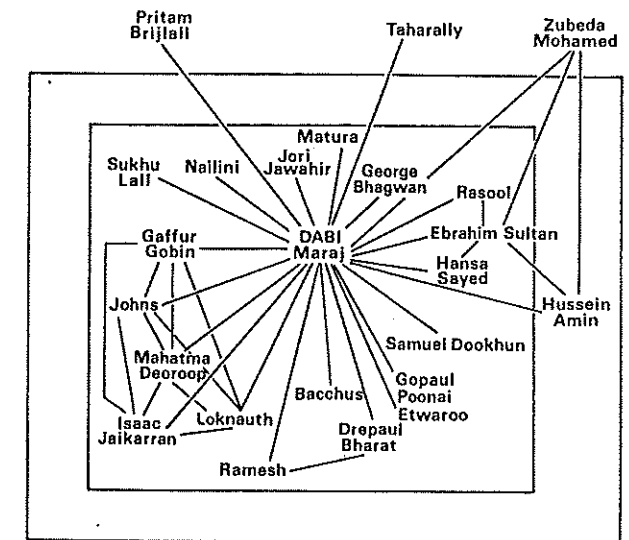


Table 7.9: Network of Maraj's Support



The interactional features of the nets can be analyzed through the subversions which took place (Table 7.10) as the means for defining intensity. Initially, however, it is apparent that multiple ties were more efficacious in subverting single ties. Further, the number of subversions by Maraj reinforces the conclusions as to the greater durability of Maraj's factional set. As for intensity, subversions have been assumed

Table 7.10: Subversion Strategies

Movement from/to:	Person	Subverted Link	New Link
Prem Singh/Maraj	Hussein Amin	Self-factional hist.	Transaction/Schism
Maraj/Prem Singh	Hussein Amin	Transaction/Schism	Transaction/Schism
Prem Singh/Maraj	Zubeda Mohamed	Familial factional history	Transaction*
Prem Singh/Maraj	Ebrahim Sultan	Familial factional history	Familial factional history/political party/transaction
Prem Singh/Maraj	Loknauth	Transaction/Schism	Second-order kin/Political party
Prem Singh/Maraj	Pritam Brijlall	Transaction	Transaction
Prem Singh/Maraj	C. R. Taharally	Transaction	Transaction

* This is the only "non-rational"/unequal exchange which occurs according to the intensity scale below. It is easily explained by virtue of Mohamed's more important linkage to her uncle rather than to any particular leader. When he defected, so did she.

to be rational exchanges on the part of actors, and a scaling technique for measuring intensity was derived from this exchange (Chapter IV). Accepting this premise again, links during the present period can also be scaled. Of the linkages in Chapter IV that are still relevant, on a scale of one to four:

First-order kinship was weighted as 4;
Friendship and *Second-order kinship* were weighted as 3;
 A relationship based on a *Schism* was weighted at 1;
 The *Transactional tie* was weighted at 1;
 On this basis, the link of *Familial factional history* can be weighted as two if viewed as the equivalent of a schismatic linkage;
 The link of *Self-factional history* implies by definition greater intensity than familial factional involvement. In turn, the tie empirically tends to fade into a friendship link or alternatively, it can be viewed as a logical combination of schism and transaction. It is therefore weighted at three.
 Finally, *Political party membership or ideology* is weighted at three given the empirical commitment of those involved in PPP politics or anti-PPP sentiment. Alternatively, it embodies the transaction and the schism.

When this scale is applied to leader-follower linkages and to multiple relationships, Prem Singh's set exhibits greater intensity (Table 7.11).

Table 7.11: Intensity of Leader-follower Ties

Application to	Leader	
	Prem Singh	Maraj
1. Total factional network		
Mean per supporter	5.6	4.6
Mean per link	2.6	2.5
2. Multiple links		
Mean per supporter	7.2	5.8
Mean per link	2.8	2.6

The nature of the derived factional sets can be summarized: mobilization strategies exhibited basic similarities as a result of the changed resource structure and personnel duplication although differences occurred due to traditional mobilization patterns still in use. The general effect was the emergence of factional structures that were equally dense. Maraj, however, had built a set that was more durable (multiple ties); Prem Singh had built a set of greater intensity.

Moving from the factional level of organization to the team level via the second action-set initiated by the leaders, Table 7.12 presents for both factional set and team, comparative data on the interactional and morphological features. Dealing first with the content utilized for team deployment, there is a decrease in the use of all ties with the exceptions of the schism in both teams; second-order kinship in Maraj's team; and the familial history tie in Prem Singh's team. The increased importance of the schism is predictable given the inbred council and the concomitant constraints on team deployment from general factional support: team deployment was based in large part on subverting support from the other team. Second, Maraj's increased emphasis on second-order kinship ties is related to his strategy of factional mobilization in which ideology and familial factional ties were similar in content because of overlapping personnel. With the exception of the schism, Maraj used traditional categories for team deployment. Concomitantly, the transaction decreased in importance as did the friendship and self-factional history tie. All these had been Maraj's additions to traditional criteria in mobilizing his factional set. Prem Singh, on the other hand, continued, at the team level, his combination of traditional and new criteria; friendship and ideology still remained the two most important criteria. Like Maraj, and for the same reasons, the schism increased, while the transaction decreased, again because of its limited utility in a situation where more committed linkages were an advantageous strategy. In addition, Prem Singh's decreased use of the self-factional history tie coupled with the increase in the familial factional history was a result of both the strategies of supporters themselves and the election constraints. The majority of personnel to whom Prem Singh was linked by the former tie could not be deployed as part of the team because of electoral constraints; those who were, proved to be the subvertible personnel as were the supporters linked

Table 7.12: *Factional Sets and Teams: A Comparison*

		Factional Set				Team					
		(Action Set #1)		(Action Set #2)		(Action Set #2)		(Action Set #2)			
		Prem Singh	Maraj	Prem Singh	Maraj	Prem Singh	Maraj	Prem Singh	Maraj		
Interactional Criteria	Content of linkages:	Person Link		Person Link		Person Link		Person Link			
		1st Order kinship	7.1	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
		Friendship	50.0	23.3	8.7	4.8	45.5	22.7	0.0	0.0	
		Self-Factional history	35.7	16.7	4.3	2.4	27.3	13.6	0.0	0.0	
		Familial Factional history	21.4	10.0	43.5	23.8	27.3	13.6	30.0	17.6	
		2nd Order kinship	0.0	0.0	17.4	9.5	0.0	0.0	20.0	11.8	
		Party/Ideology	57.1	26.7	82.6	45.2	45.5	22.7	60.0	35.3	
		Transaction	28.6	13.3	21.7	11.9	18.2	9.1	10.0	5.9	
		Schism	14.3	6.7	4.3	2.4	36.4	18.2	50.0	29.4	
		Intensity	5.6	2.6	4.6	2.5	4.7	2.4	3.6	2.1	
		Durability	Multiplicity % of persons Intensity	46.7%		54.8%		60%		60%	
				7.2	2.8	5.8	2.6	6.8	2.6	5.0	2.3
		Morphology	Zones of Recruitment								
				4	7.1%	0.0		0.0		0.0	
3	57.1			82.6		50.0		60.0			
Sub-total	64.2			82.6		50.0		60.0			
2	21.4			4.3		30.0		10.0			
1	14.3			13.0		20.0		30.0			
Morphology	Density	19.8		19.0		38.9		35.5			

through the latter tie. In short, the strategies of team deployment were severely constrained by the original mobilization tactics and the suspension of council elections. Within these limits, leaders did the best they could. Therefore, there is an increase in schismatic ties; a decrease in transactions; Maraj's reemphasis on traditional criteria; and Prem Singh's continued combination of new and traditional strategies.

Associated with the general constraints on leadership strategies, the intensity of both teams decreased as compared with the intensity of their factional sets. This was due to the proliferation of subversions and the resulting need to use links which were not necessarily intense. Prem Singh's team, as a carry-over from the factional level was the more intense. In terms of multiple ties indicating durability, the comparison showed that Maraj's factional set was more durable although Prem Singh's

multiple ties were more intense. Both sets were thus viewed as evenly matched. In fielding teams, the overall proportion of multiple ties increased. Although a logical interpretation is that leaders were fielding more durable units at this more exclusive level, the intensity of the multiple links declined. It appears that during the lengthy period under discussion, leaders' links with supporters compounded because of forced and continual interaction. However, these compound links were of low intensity, being mainly transactions and schisms. Multiplicity as an index of durability must be combined with the intensity measure for a valid profile of team deployment during this period. Therefore, although the multiplicity of both teams was the same, Prem Singh's intensity was greater and the equality of the factional set was eliminated at the team level. Prem Singh's team was stronger. The density measure indicates a similar situation. At the factional level both were the same. At the team level, Prem Singh was more dense even though density in general increased for both as a logical product of increased interaction.

Finally, factional support was mobilized from more intense zones than were the teams. Again this is logical given the constraints on team deployment. Further, although at the factional level Maraj mobilized from more intense zones, the difference between him and Prem Singh decreases at the team level. In terms of least intense zones, Maraj has a greater emphasis on Zone 1 in both factional and team mobilization. This, plus Prem Singh's increased upper zone strategy in relation to Maraj, indicates increasing overall strength in team deployment. In general, on the assumption the factional sets were evenly matched, Prem Singh's increasing strength at the team level in relation to Maraj implies that the teams were unbalanced.

Core Support and Followers

As in the Familial Elitism period, the presence of the same personnel over decades indicates that a core existed as part of factional structures over and above basic "following". This is further evidenced by the evolution of transactional relationships into multiple links. How can cores be distinguished and to what extent did they solidify?

It is obvious that cores cannot be derived directly from team membership given the artificial manner in which these were generated. Simultaneously, given the effort and costs that went into the subversion of a priori team members, team members who were not subverted probably formed part of the core. Cores thus appear to be partially associated with team membership, but are not coterminous with it. In addition, the counting of duplicate members through several action-sets is not possible in the absence of such sets. However, since informants could list political leanings for the majority of villagers, as in the Displacement period, any persons who emerged from the political elite to be included on the list of factional member-

ship (Table 7.6) were probably core support; they actively participated although they were prevented from team membership. Not only non-subvertible team members, but also non-subvertible factional support probably constituted leaders' cores. Using Bailey's (1968) notion of factional variation due to differing ratios between core and support, the proportion of Preamsingh's support which constituted core can be expressed as 8/14 or 57.1 percent; Maraj's core can be expressed as 17/23 or 73.9 percent. The difference reflects the greater durability of Maraj's set and illuminates Maraj's general strategy of mobilization. Did these solidify into cliques? Density measures (Barnes, 1968) indicate that cliques existed. Among Preamsingh's support, Dagleish, Petamber Singh and Preamsingh cluster at 100 percent. No other cliques, defined as clusters with a density above eighty percent (Barnes, 1968), are apparent. Preamsingh's set thus appears to have within it one clique although the Sultan-Amin-Mohamed cluster (density: 100 percent) requires explanation. Given the final subversion of Sultan, the constant defection of Amin, and the ultimate withdrawal of Mohamed, the conclusion is that not only were these non-core, but they were probably peripheral support. Preamsingh's set had a direct structure with a single central clique.

In contradistinction, Maraj's set exhibits a more complex structure. First, there is the clustering of Maraj's extended kinship group (100 percent). Persons in this cluster, quantitatively and empirically, form a distinct clique. Second, there is the clustering of Ramesh and Bharat with Maraj (100 percent) on the basis of political party affiliation. Since the first two depended on this affiliation for their political influence, their commitment was high and they therefore constituted an independent clique. Finally, there is within Maraj's structure those relationships which cluster around Sultan. Because of the subversions of several of these persons, they do not qualify definitionally for inclusion within Maraj's core. Their clustering, however, must be analyzed. Table 7.13 gives the variable densities of the persons involved. Only the Mohamed-Amin-Sultan cluster qualifies as a clique according to the

Table 7.13: Sultan's Cluster within Maraj's Core

Cluster	Possible Cluster Combinations				
	A	B	C	D	E
Maraj	×		×		
Mohamed		×	×		×
Amin		×	×		×
Sultan	×	×	×	×	×
Rasool	×	×	×	×	
Sayed	×	×	×	×	
Density	40.0	50.0	66.7	66.7	100.0

quantitative definition. Moreover, two of the densest clusters, D and E, do not require the presence of leader Maraj while cluster E included subverted/"non-core" personnel. Ultimately, all combinations with any degree of density require Sultan to be included. It is clear that Sultan had his own independent support; he was not only a lieutenant, as noted previously, he was a secondary leader. It also appears that this secondary leadership role developed over time. Sultan's access to the Muslim community as religious leader enhanced his political importance to Maraj and Preamsingh, both of whom competed for his support. The fact that Maraj ultimately won this support and designated him leader, enhanced Sultan's political credit within the Muslim community. Meanwhile, the concurrent competition in the religious arena increased Sultan's political importance for both Maraj and the Muslims. Sultan's eventual control of Maraj's supporters was the final step in an upwardly mobile political career. From being a follower after his defection, Sultan moved into the lieutenant's position and then, because of the resources he commanded, he became a secondary leader with independent support; ultimately he emerged as a leader in his own right. During this career development, Sultan and his supporters formed an independent clique within Maraj's set. Maraj's structure was thus far more complex than Preamsingh's; the internal organization was composed of two distinct cliques in addition to an indirect structure.

The Patterning of Factional Process

The political competition of the period was composed of two variations on a common factional process initially generated in the first year of the present period: "the politics of alternating succession" followed by "the politics of direct encounter". What were the characteristics of each process and why did variations occur? How was the resource structure related to these processes? How did the leaders' resource management strategies result in this particular patterning?

The main effect of the economic expansion (1948-1952) was a new resource structure and allocation pattern within the village. The council, using a conciliation strategy made possible by individualized interests and crosscutting ties which made factional mobilization too costly, was no longer able, by 1953, to perform its mediating role since interest groups had become too diverse and differentiated. The politics of an elite mediating conflict, not out of altruism, but to maintain its own position, was no longer tenable. It is possible to see the crises in council deliberations during 1953, notably the Jib Land and measurement disputes, as a failure of the control mechanisms which had kept the conciliatory pattern intact. A more precise interpretation, however, is that the mechanisms of crosscutting ties within council and of elite collusion failed as a direct result of increased socio-economic complexity. Additionally, other regularities governing the previous period of factional peace had

become inconsistent. For example, the Jib Land incident was public recognition that land had become a scarce commodity. Insofar as equal access underlay the peace, a major feature was undermined. Further, given its extreme importance in the village economy, trade-offs were not possible since land no longer had an equivalent. Accessibility to valued goods had altered, hence old methods of organization were precluded. Ultimately the control mechanisms based on conciliation, collusion, and exchange broke down.

A series of crises developed. The District Commissioner, the traditional mediator in factional competition, had to mediate between elite and mass and between individuals who formed the elite itself. This "lack of organization" was altered when a new resource was introduced into the village. The PPP as an ideology, as a group of activists, as a focal point for organizing discontent and—most important—with a hero as leader, precipitated a new political process. By gaining control of the council, the PPP leadership forced other elites to reconsolidate. The political field became reorganized by factionalism.

Additionally pertinent was the history of village factional politics which involved expectations and behaviour that were not new to villagers. The anti-PPP leadership was able to mobilize support quickly, a move aided by the PPP's ideological focus which emphasized the elimination of the old elite. The disorganization of the peace was followed by a consensual return to factional politics. What were its characteristics?

In "the politics of alternating succession" each leader gained alternate and decisive control of the source of legitimacy. As an arena, the council had features typical of other periods albeit attenuated due to council composition. For example, there were still efforts to win popular support and competition over administrative personnel. Also, disruption tactics became important as the minority leader tried to maintain political credit, to appeal to popular support, and to use the council as a resource by attacking the administrative capabilities of the other leader. There were two major strategical additions to this repertoire. For the first time competition centred on building political credit and getting things done by using national political resources. Second, leaders used resources derived from competition in other arenas. Religious competitions expressed through the issues of sacrifice and building location politicized the religious segments as did Sultan's active participation in local politics. Sultan controlled a large portion of Muslim support largely because of religious competition and he exploited this as a resource in his own political manoeuvring. On this account, the leader who could maintain Sultan's support gained access to twenty percent of the electorate. The resources and bases for transactional exchanges due to religious competition did not, as has been seen, go undetected by factional leaders.

A second competitive arena was the race club. Long a source of prestige competition, the arena was used by leaders for the political credit which prestige brought while council control was used to support the elites competing in this arena.

Finally, the co-operative arenas were used for political credit, economic gain, and patronage resources, all of which supported the factional competition. Preamsingh gained immense prestige and resources by controlling executive decisions in the Thrift and Credit Society through his supporters. In fact, it was Amin's chairmanship in the society which made Amin the object of subversion attempts as well as his preeminence in the Muslim community. Additionally, the Society increased the economic viability of the executive members, that is, Preamsingh's core, due to the loan distribution pattern. Most important, as the main credit source for villagers, Preamsingh could counter Maraj's resources from the PPP. In turn, the Rice Growers' Co-operative was a secondary resource for Maraj. The majority of its members supported him through extended kin relations, factional histories, and an active commitment to the PPP. The Co-operative's success underwrote the economic elite position of Maraj's support. Even after disintegration, the economic preeminence of former members continued to be political credit.

Alternating succession thus involved characteristics similar to other phases. Simultaneously, the two distinctive features discussed above contributed to a novel patterning of repetitive encounters in a cyclical pattern. Each council election, a major encounter, was won decisively by one of the leaders. But this win did not destroy the losing leader's support structure. The reasons can be viewed as control mechanisms. First, within the cycle of major encounters, were confrontations not necessarily lost by the minority council team. The losing leader could continue a public front and maintain a support base through the strategies of disrupting meetings and supporting popular causes such as rent waivers. Second, alternating succession enabled differential goal attainment (Schwartz, 1969): each leader represented, publicly, different interests. Support bases remained intact despite the loss of a major encounter/election. In turn, this created the alternating succession pattern since neither leader could solve local problems to the satisfaction of all village interest groups. Third, both leaders had equal access to patronage sources; Maraj had the PPP and Preamsingh had the Thrift and Credit Society as well as opportunities to tap other national parties to secure political credit.

Leaders' strategies generated an oscillating and balanced pattern with internal control mechanisms. This was possible despite the intrusion of national politics, for although village politics interlocked with the national arena, it is necessary to distinguish between variations in this process. During alternating succession, the PPP infiltration became translated into traditional factional politics. This was because the vast majority of villagers voted for the PPP in national elections and because this support was not the issue; rather, the issue was whether a national party should affect local government. Further, this was not an issue over the integration of the local arena (Bailey, 1969: Chapter 8). Instead, the competition was one in which an elite was protecting its interests; for despite the nationalist ideology of one leader, both were trying to maintain their traditional positions. Both were playing

"the factional game". This was the crucial control mechanism. How did this period evolve into the next and why?

The direct encounter period was precipitated by the reallocation of rice lands which polarized villagers on the basis of economic interests. After the 1959 election, there was, for the first time since 1953, an even distribution of council seats. As the title direct encounter implies, competitive factional politics became highly visible particularly within the council arena. One of the major characteristics was the massive leadership effort and resources invested in subversion, a strategy made necessary by the Suspension of Elections Bill which constrained mobilization from outside the council teams. Council subversion tactics became coterminous with mobilization and deployment. The knowledge that the Bill might be rescinded at any time and an election called, however, was sufficient reason for leaders to retain contact with the political community. This was the reasoning behind the support of minor causes such as the case of Phulmatie Lall which required a mediator and complex strategies; Maraj had to maintain the support of the Lall family.

However, it is also apparent that the intensity of competition seems unprecedented in village history. Further, each encounter led directly into the next with each outcome providing the resources and goals for the subsequent encounter. Additionally, the competition appears uniquely extensive. Encounters generated new arenas of competition. Briefly put, a cumulative process was operating. The critical case was that of Petamber Singh, whose involvement in factional politics made him totally unsuitable to Maraj for the overseer's post. There was much strategizing to block the appointment including the manipulation of national arena politics. Since the attempt failed, it was a major political win for Preamsingh, who turned his efforts towards unseating Maraj from the council. This, too, succeeded. Sultan's and Maraj's supporters then went after Singh with grim determination. Minor confrontations culminated in Singh's suspension and as a direct outcome came the slander suit between Singh and Sultan, the suing of Singh's son, and the Panchar family's lawsuit. The amount of petition-signing in support of these strategies indicates the extent to which the political community and public opinion were being brought into the process. The period of direct encounter was one in which a seemingly cyclical process was escalating.

This is a different situation from the "fight" during the Displacement period because the norms of competition were being reinforced despite the spiralling effect. For example, the reallocation of the \$500 slander defense fee was a statement by the two leaders that, regardless of who was allocating to whom, this was the way to do things. Strategies were still normatively acceptable to all participants. Despite this perception, cyclical oscillation was no longer the etic pattern as events took on, over time, a cumulatively more lineal character. In this progression, traditional means of mediation by outside sources, notably the District Commissioner and Local Government Board, failed to resolve what was an ongoing crisis. Enhancing

this pattern was the Suspension of Elections Bill which had the effect of disenfranchising a political community which might have altered the process. The population could only support the pattern in progress. The Bill, in effect, was a constraint on alternate patterns of political mobilization and it contributed to the cumulative pattern.

Probably related to this was the previously noted fact that although the factional sets were equally matched, Preamsingh's team was stronger. This contributed to the cumulative pattern because the extensiveness of Preamsingh's wins could only be countered by Sultan precipitating new crises out of prior encounters.

It is possible to view the escalating pattern as a type in itself or as a pattern evolving into another type. Put in another way, so-called control mechanisms may be viewed as maintaining intact an escalating process or, alternately, as contributing to the development of a new pattern. For example, the failure of outside mediation and the relationship of the political community to the process have already been noted. Additionally, the factional sets were structurally matched and with political polarization, one leader could not have eliminated the other. Ultimately, leaders were committed to traditional factional strategies since neither had alternate goals or rules which they were attempting to introduce and both had access to equal resources. Simply put, it appears that there was a movement towards "schismatic factionalism" (Siegel and Beals, 1960a). At this critical point, the introduction of a new resource altered the cumulative trend towards schism and polarization. The integration of this resource into the leaders' factional strategies forms the final period of Rajgahr political history until 1970.