Village Council and Factionalism: Definitional and Contextual Issues[1] **4**

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This paper examines the relationship between factionalism and council decision-making patterns. First I describe the village context to indicate the intimate relationship between village council organization and local factional politics. The second section presents an operational definition of factionalism, followed by a synthesis of the features thus far identified as relevant to council decision-making patterns, which are then discussed specifically in part four. Section five investigates the precise nature of factionalism in the council context and the implications for the definitional issue. Finally, both the decision-making process and factionalism are located within the wider political-economic context of village and state.

I. THE SETTING: VILLAGE COUNCIL AND LOCAL POLITICS

(a) *The Village*

Rajgahr Village District, located in West Berbice County in Guyana, South America is an Indo-Guyanese community within a "plural society." Located approximately sixty miles from the capital city, Georgetown, a journey of about two hours by hire-car, the population totals approximately 3,100 in slightly under 500 households.

The village was founded in 1902 as a land settlement scheme for former indentured labourers. Today, it is regionally renowned because of population size and extensive acreage, and spoken of as a "prosperous rice farming village with a tractor to every house." This popular characterization is incorrect on two counts: first, most people are not rich, and secondly, rice cultivation is not the sole occupation of the village. Rather, the local economic division of labour is complex and belongs to the "dual occupational pattern" typical of the West Indies (Comitas, 1964). In this case almost all households plant some rice (at least two acres for home consumption) but branch into numerous other occupations including estate labour, wage labour for government and village projects, shopkeeping, huckstering, smithing, white collar jobs (teachers, clerks), cattle herding, and businesses transcending village boundaries such as transport and construction. Such vertical occupational groups are additionally cross-cut by 'class.' As a result of differential access to land[2] and differential success in private enterprise, incomes of villagers range from under $900 per annum to over $15,000.

This economic complexity is a product of cumulative growth over the past seven decades, stemming from external inputs as well as from the decisions of family groups made as early as 1919. At that time, the crown made available, for sale or lease, Abary land located seven miles behind village farm lands.[3] Lessees of the first depth, the most accessible sub-area, were also given prior access to subsequent depths. Despite exceptionally harsh physical conditions, some farmers gave their descendants access to almost unlimited acreage and expansionary possibilities. For example, access to Abary land gradually increased a family's capital savings because of high returns in both rice and cattle. This enabled investment in larger land holdings, the education of children for white collar employment, investment in more cattle, and investment in other businesses. On the other hand, some families chose a more traditional economic strategy: combining small-scale village cultivation with estate labour. By 1969, all village lands were in use and wage labour opportunities were limited largely because of underemployment in the society in general. The only possibilities for expansion lay in Abary land, with access limited by tenure regulations, and in economic enterprises requiring a supra-village capital investment in education or business. Rajgahr Village is thus characterized by scarce resources in which the rich have the competitive advantage.

(b) *The Village Council*

The formal political structure of the village, according to the Local Government Ordinances of 1907 and 1945, consists of a village council of twelve members elected every two years to act as a local authority "entrusted with the management of the administrative and financial business of the district and with its government generally" (The Laws of British Guiana, Chapter 150, Section 28 [1]). In other words the council is invested with legal power, the control of physical and human resources, and as a result of these, with a great deal of informal influence which can be, and is, wielded. For example, the council is responsible for local taxation, public works (maintenance of drainage, dams, and trenches), leasing village and crown lands within its jurisdiction, and similar tasks. In monetary terms, the budget for 1970 involved the collection/expenditure of almost $80,000. The council is thus a major employer of casual labour for its public works projects and is also responsible for hiring a permanent administrative staff consisting of an overseer, an assistant overseer, three village rangers, and several watchmen. With both land and appointments at its disposal, the council is an instrument of a great deal of potential patronage.

As a body, the council is formally accountable to both the government hierarchy and the public it represents, and it provides the communication link between the two. For example, if a villager wishes to complain to a high authority, his communication must pass to, in ascending order, the council,

the chairman of the council,[4] the District Commissioner, the Local Government Board, and finally to the Chairman of the Local Government Board located within the Ministry of Local Government. In addition to finance and land, the council thus controls the communication nexus with the formal national hierarchy.

However, public accountability has been delimited since 1959 when the Suspensions of Election Bill, passed during a constitutional crisis, eliminated local elections and substituted Board appointments for vacancies caused by death or resignation. Knowledge that the Bill can be rescinded at any time and elections called does mean, however, that councillors are aware of public support, if only for the future.

(c) *Local-Level Politics: Historical Dimensions*

It is an anthropological truism that government and politics are not coterminous, that the formal structures provide, simply stated, the resources and constraints within which 'politiking' occurs. In Rajgahr Village, the legal structure of the council has provided the major parameters for actual political organization since the 1920's at which time political relations became characterized by factionalism.

A local elite group composed of two extended families, each owning a village rice mill, gained control of the marketing of produce and the allocation of credit to farmers in a situation of crop uncertainty. Since each mill was associated with the respective head of each family, the economic competition for *padi* and mill clients became phrased as factional politics in which the village council became both an arena of competition and a resource for politically enhancing each family head's/factional leader's economic position. This organization continued for two decades ending ultimately in a 'fight' because of changes in external circumstances: economic change released the majority of villagers from debt, and a newly introduced electoral system enabled the masses to support second generation elites aspiring to council seats, and political power. These events coincided with massive economic expansion and the emergence of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), representing Guyanese nationalism, which siphoned off certain members of the Rajgahr elite for competition in the national arena. Since every family was busy consolidating its expansionary economy, village council politics were aimed at conciliation of disputes with minimum competition for resources. The political sphere was characterized by a 'factional peace.'

In 1953, economic expansion, minimum competition, and political conciliation came to an abrupt end. The village, as a result of the expansion, was now cross-cut by complex and opposing vertical occupational groups, and additionally, by groups of families who had been differentially successful in the scramble for resources. This coincided with the suspension of the constitution by the British in 1953. Local activists who had been engaged in national politics returned to Rajgahr as members of a nationalist party aiming for grass-roots organization. They ran in local council elections and came into direct confrontation with other elite members who saw nationalist politics as 'a Georgetown story.' Factionalism again became the means of organizing political relations and continued until 1970 with only one major alteration.

In the mid-'50s, the nationalist PPP split into two factions, each associated with a different ethnic group: the PPP became the East Indian party; the new People's National Congress (PNC) became the African party. In 1967, with the PNC in control of the national arena, and with its support mainly among the Afro-Guyanese, a Muslim wing was formed with the purpose of subverting East Indian Muslim support from the PPP. The strategy of this encapsulation policy of 'incorporation'[5] has been noted elsewhere (Silverman, forthcoming). It resulted in a faction leader being designated local PNC activist, and therefore middleman, so as to enable the exploitation of the factional game for PNC subversion goals.

(d) *Local-Level Politics: 1969–1970*

Ebrahim Sultan, designated PNC activist, is priest of the Muslim mosque and has been involved in factional politics since the early '60s through PPP affiliation. A member of the village council, he has often been chairman when his supporters had a majority of seats. His major opponent, P. T. Premsingh, entered factional politics and the village council in the late '30s as a supporter of one of the millers. He too has often been chairman, and received a Member of the British Empire award for his work in local government; in addition, he is a priest in the Christian Catholic Church and a Justice of the Peace.

The council supporters of these two factional leaders (see Table 3) also had a lengthy history of involvement in factional politics. As a group, the councillors represent the elite segment of the village. All are modern, upwardly mobile entrepreneurs with a solid economic base in rice, cattle, and business, except for two long-term factional competitiors whose economic activity, although not extensive, is certainly sufficient to make them financially secure.

Like Sultan and Premsingh, many of the councillors had additional formal roles which were important sources for tapping support. For example, Amin was president of the mosque and until 1970, president of one of the two competing race clubs. He was also a PNC activist within the village and, although not as vociferous as Sultan he was a source of national patronage.

The administrative staff was highly partisan, particularly overseer Singh. Involved in factional politics since the '40s, a member of the elite

and highly antipathetic to Sultan, he was also president of both the Sanatan Hindu temple and the local chapter of a national Hindu cultural organization, the Maha Sabha.

The council and councillors thus controlled and had access to political resources from the national arena, from local arenas, from the control of the council, and ultimately from their own positions of personal economic strength. All this was directly related to a factional political game of oscillating encounters in a situation of scarce economic resources.

(e) *Conclusion*

Village council and village factionalism have had and continue to have a close relationship. The council provides the context for factional struggle and a resource that enables the manipulation of other support. Additionally, factional competition appears to have been associated with the village elite since its inception, and in fact, may be viewed as a product of competition among the elite for scarce economic resources, which ultimately provide them with the means for consolidating their position and a means for furthering their competitive advantages. Finally, throughout village history, this pattern is not only predominant, but it is also relevant by virtue of the personnel alignments which have continued since the early years of political competition. Factional politics, the council, and elite personnel have a shared continuity.

II. THE NATURE OF FACTIONALISM

It will be argued that factions comprise the structural aspect of a more inclusive competitive process of political strategizing which can be defined as the initiation of 'ego-centered' political action-sets. Phrased another way, the definition should be concerned with the nature of factionalism as opposed to factions, with the former viewed as a process or means of competitive political strategizing. The emphasis is to be placed on action, and the set seen as a derived structure, via an arbitrary stoppage of an ongoing process of strategizing. How is the above logically derived?

Historically, factions have assumed theoretical and empirical importance as a result of studies emphasizing their proliferation in the majority of ethnographic areas and their persistence over lengthy periods of time. The major problem has been to "distinguish them from other kinds of political groupings" (Nicholas, 1965:23) and the literature demonstrates the search for the definition.

Three studies appear to have a degree of acceptability. Nicholas has suggested five attributes as a definitional base: factions are political groups, conflict groups, non-corporate groups, which are recruited by a leader, and which are recruited according to diverse principles (1965:27–9). Boisse-

vain defines factions as "an exclusive coalition of persons recruited personally according to structurally diverse principles by or on behalf of a person in conflict with another person or persons within the same social unit over honour and/or control of resources" (1968:551). Also, Mayer has suggested that factions are "quasi-groups" (1966:116), but agreement is limited as to what, in fact, a quasi-group is (Boissevain, 1971; Yadava, 1968; Lantz, 1971), or how a faction specifically fits into this general notion.

In addition to definitions, it is assumed that factions can be placed on a continuum at a point between public opinion and parties (Boissevain, 1964) or that factions can be opposed to the notion of party (Bujra, 1973) by virtue of the presence or absence of certain specified characteristics.

Factions can of course be fitted into any of the above frameworks or definitions. Doing so, however, avoids the major goal of definitional exercises – that of giving a concept precise and analytic meaning to render it useful both theoretically and empirically (Gulliver, 1971). As the definitions stand now, they make assumptions as to the origins of factions, their persistence, their socio-cultural context and their political significance. The present section attempts to circumvent the problem by offering a precise definition which may gain some acceptance.

There appear to be two contexts out of which the varying definitions have emerged: first, the context of network analysis; secondly, the context of political anthropology. An assumption which both have, however, is a distinction between the intra-factional as opposed to the inter-factional sphere. In fact, analysis has taken two directions: investigation of the internal organization of factions (the network approach) as opposed to the analysis of conflict between factions (the political approach) (Yadava, 1968:898). Underlying this distinction is, of course, the more basic one between structure and process and the view that this is relevant to the analysis of factional behaviour.

For the moment, ignoring definitional problems, let us assume that there is a factional political sphere with the implication that there are factions and factionalism. One of the leaders (there must be at least two) recruits a follower. This action is typically regarded as being a step in building a factional structure, team, and so on; that is, it concerns the intra-factional realm. However, this act of recruitment implies that something was gained – a resource, a supporter. There are at least three possible implications. First, if the game is zero-sum, the other faction leader lost in direct proportion. Secondly, in a non-zero-sum game, the other faction leader must now alter his strategy, at least minimally, if he wishes the support of the recruitee who is now engaged in a relationship with the other leader. Phrased another way, the second leader's strategy is subversion in contradistinction to the first leader whose strategy was recruitment. Thirdly, regardless of whether the game is or is not zero-sum, both leaders' interfac-

tional strategies, that is, their strategies on confrontations and encounters, must now take into account the new fact of leader A's additional support/resource. Simple recruitment to a faction is in fact an act of competition. A distinction between factions and factionalism is, therefore, only a low level of abstraction, and factions, when viewed diachronically, are merely a structural representation of an on-going dynamic.

From this initial position, an advance in definition can be made by meshing the political with the network approach. Let us assume the social network is the basic unit for social analysis. After Barnes (1968) and Gulliver (1971), we accept the view that the basic unit, the network, is what has been labelled the "total network" which is viewed as socio-centric, unbounded, and infinite. Composed of nodes and linkages, the latter of which may be multiplex or uniplex, the total network may be analytically delimited into a "partial network" on two non-mutually exclusive bases: by delimiting "activity fields" or "institutional fields" (Jay, 1964; Mitchell, 1969), or by introducing the element of ego-centricity (Barnes, 1968).

Utilizing the former method, the total network is composed of overlapping statuses and dyadic ties which can be grouped into particular institutional complexes, one of them being the political. At this point, there is a potential *cul-de-sac* in defining 'political.' If we accept as basic, "competition associated with the attaining and exercise of power in the public domain" (Swartz, 1968), a political domain can be defined as those roles and resources (nodes and links; human and physical) which are socially defined as being available for inclusion in political competition. As Bailey notes, many social roles are explicitly excluded from this categorization since politics can be a parasitic activity from which the overall social organization must be protected (1969:11). Every society has definitions of what constitutes 'fair play'; that is, what constitutes political resources, physical and human. Phrased another way, analogous to the "kin-set" which Gulliver (1971) distinguished, every society can be assumed to define a 'political set,' a set of relationships – both physical and human – which can be utilized in political competition.

This notion of partial network or set, is similar to notions of "social categories" (Boissevain, 1971), classificatory "quasi-groups" (Mayer, 1966), and the "class of potential allies" (Boissevain, 1971). Regardless of label, a partial network/set can be abstracted from the total network, and this partial network can be political.

An individual, enmeshed in a total and partial network in general, may initiate interaction. If it is goal-oriented and includes more than one person, namely, more than one dyadic tie (Mayer, 1966; and others), the individual has initiated an action-set. If this action-set is derived from the political set and has been initiated for action in a potentially competitive, or actually competitive, political arena, then that action-set can be labelled a faction.

A faction is thus an ego-centred action-set recruited from within the parameters provided by the political set or partial network. An action-set within a political arena is a faction.

With this definition, there remain several conceptual issues which must still be clarified. First, the definition does not distinguish between the intra- and inter-factional spheres. The activation of a political action-set, simply put, is factional: it is concerned with both building a team (structure) and with competition (process). Further, however, it is suggested that the term action-set, itself, logically implies that action precedes the existence of a set – in this case, a set of political supporters.

Despite this logic, much theorizing has been concerned with trying to delineate the nature of the set. Three approaches seem to be paramount: first, an attempt has been made to deal with the set by defining the arena within which the set is found. Notable here is the concept of "segmentary factional systems" in which the system/arena is factional when membership is totally "exclusive" and "exhaustive" as in lineage systems (Nicholas, 1966). Additionally, there are notions of "bifactional" and "trifactional" systems (Graham, 1968). These ignore the oft-cited character of a faction as being ephemeral and loosely-structured. Except in the case of sociological micro-seconds, a factional sphere can never be exclusive. Not only does such a view not allow for the existence of neutrals and the alienated, it assumes that all actors have a commitment to a faction. In contradistinction, if a 'photograph' of an arena were taken, one would see a lot of people moving in between, in the interstitial areas. Phrased another way, people are constantly negotiating, being subverted, and realigning. This is precisely what accounts for the loose structure and what prevents factions or factionalism from being defined in terms of arenas or systems. 'Exclusive' and 'segmentary' imply a solidarity that must be empirically shown, and an ideological commitment which is seldom found (Bailey, 1969; Bujra, 1973; Spiro, 1968). The crucial point is that the definition put forward here does not zero in on arenas, fields, or on any *a priori* bounded units; instead, by focusing on action-sets, it focuses on actions and interactions of persons composing that arena/field. That is, it emphasizes process and ego-centricity; the set is simply a product of these two facts.

The second approach concerning itself with factionalism as sets is in the literature which deals with distinctions between core membership as opposed to support (Bailey, 1968), notions of direct as opposed to indirect structure (Graham, 1968), and the view that a faction can be recruited on behalf of another person (Boissevain, 1968). Such variations are not incorrect, either empirically or theoretically. If one deals with factions, there *is* variation in structure. However, they are merely variations which are the results of strategic decisions by the leader, the results of strategies of particular supporters, or the product of particular environmental cir-

cumstance. Each of these is empirically specific and affect factional competition. They are, however, unnecessary when dealing with a minimal definition of factionalism. It should be noted that this minimal definition of ego-centred, political action-sets does clarify a problem faced by those dealing with structural variation by providing the means for its analysis. Attempts thus far to do this have been characterized by vague dealings with the "degree of solidarity" factions can have (Spiro, 1968) before becoming "parties" (Bujra, 1973). This has resulted in the placing of factions along a continuum of social forms, between "public opinion and *partit*" (Boissevain, 1964), or in the designation of descriptional features such as transience, non-corporateness, and quasi-group.

Basically, these are negative definitional categories and in analysing a factional structure at a given point in time, reference should not be made to other structures or entities. Instead, one should ask which social relationships constitute factional membership at a given point in time and what is the character of the relationships. In network parlance, these questions deal with the morphological and interactional characteristics of an ego-centred network as discussed by Mitchell (1969; 1973). The definition, in short, not only permits the analysis of structural variation, it provides the tools with which this can be done.

Related to the above is the third approach which deals with set/faction. It is characterized by submerging the notion of ego-centricity and by refining instead variations of the quasi-group concept. Beginning with Mayer (1966), Boissevain ultimately concludes that an "interactive quasi-group," one of Mayer's two types, was merely a classification and therefore a social category (1971). This view has been accepted here and incorporated into the definition as being the means of delineating the partial network. However, Boissevain suggests the alternative concept of "coalition" defined as "a temporary alliance of distinct parties for a limited purpose" (1974:171). The aim is to deal with those non-groups, such as cliques and gangs, which are not ego-focused and in which leadership may develop at a later time, spontaneously.

Two points can be made in this connection. First, there are definite problems in dealing with non-leader-centred "non-groups," and Boissevain and others (Van Velzen, 1973a; Blok, 1973) therefore re-define action-set as "a set of persons who have co-ordinated their actions to achieve a particular goal" (Boissevain, 1974:186). The contention here, however, is that it is precisely the characteristic of ego-centricity which enables the analysis of factionalism. Further, methodologically, the action-set as an ego-centred entity is a rather elegant tool with its network implications and its individual focus which allows for the anchorage needed in the analysis of patterns of strategizing. It would be a great loss if this perspective were forgotten. In any case even socio-centred non-groups do not preclude the use of network analysis. On the assumption that all individuals are enmeshed in social relationships, by implication, coalitions, cliques, and gangs are composed of both individuals and networks of relationships. Although a more definitive explanation is beyond the scope of the present paper, social relationships and the networks can still be the basic unit of analysis. The individual must not be submerged into a variation of an institutional framework – the non-group or coalition; rather, the nature of these non-groups could be better elucidated if individuals, with their ability to act, are not forgotten. This is not to argue for the so-called Robinson Crusoe maximizing paradigm (Van Velzen, 1973b); it is merely to accept the fact that people may maximize, and that in any case, they do not simply react.

This investigation has made several interrelated points. First, it is possible to zero in on factional structures or factions, but these should be viewed as a low-level abstraction, a product of action such that the real problem is the nature of this action, and not simply its results. Secondly, the argument is put forward that it is the ego that should be the focus of attention, and not arenas or systems. The latter may be more usefully viewed as the context in which competition takes place and which competition may alter. They are part of the environment, and not the focus.

The diacritical foci of factional politics are thus taken to be ego-centricity and action; that is, the ego-centred political action-set satisfies the minimal definition, with factional 'structures' arising from competition. *The critical issue is not what are factions, but rather, what is factionalism.* It is suggested that factionalism may be defined as a strategy for engaging in political competition.

At this point the issue is, in fact, that of context and the various attempts to deal with the so-called interfactional sphere. How is factionalism related to social change? How does factionalism emerge, develop, and persist? Here we enter the realm of political anthropology and the general problem of how political process is to be perceived. The two major approaches are political process in terms of phase development (Swartz, 1968), and political process as the interaction between political structures and their environment (Bailey, 1968). The former has the tendency to implicitly assume that a system returns to equilibrium; the latter has too narrow a view of process. At this point, the reader is referred to Bujra's analysis of stratification patterns and types of conflict with the attempted specification of the varying directions of factional processes (1973). I suggest that this is the direction which future analyses should take. As such, factionalism is a process which is a rational strategy for engaging in competition for power and resources. It is further suggested that regardless of whether it is associated with social change or transition, or viewed as a system of conflict or of goal attainment, it remains a competitive political strategy

which may have variations resulting from differences in the immediate context or environmental structure.

This environment, however, is not the wider sociological context, for this wider context is not to be found within the local arena, village level, and so on. Such a context results only in teleological description, as for example, when the local arena is viewed as conflict-ridden/orderly, so that factionalism becomes viewed as a cause, as an effect, and as a measure of degree, all simultaneously. Our initial description predefines the nature of factionalism; context/factionalism cannot be explained in terms of itself. Rather, the wider social context *is* the nature of social relations and the allocation of power in the wider society, beyond the boundaries of our 'little communities' and 'little contexts.'

III. THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF COUNCIL DECISION-MAKING

The major theoretical work upon which later studies have been based is Bailey's model of two ideal types of decision-making:

A. Councils lean toward *consensus* when they have one of the following characteristics:
  1. An administrative function, especially when they lack sanctions; or
  2. An elite position in opposition to their public; or
  3. Concern with external relationships.
B. Councils proceed readily to *majority voting* when they are:
  1. Policy-making; or
  2. Arena councils; or
  3. Concerned with internal relationships. (Bailey, 1965:13).

Richards' and Kuper's collection of essays, *Councils in Action* (1971) did not modify this statement in any systematic way although each contributor introduced additional variables which had to be taken into account in particular situations. That a new synthesis was never attempted can be attributed to the complexity of the problem, a fact which Bailey recognized (1965:14). The present section summarizes variables and problems in the literature to date, the aim being to provide an outline of those aspects relevant to decision-making for the Rajgahr Council.

Beginning with Bailey's distinction between policy and administrative decisions, there are immediate theoretical difficulties in applying it to a multi-purpose, as opposed to a specialized, council/committee. First, the Rajgahr Council is ostensibly an administrative organ, labelled a "local authority" in legal parlance. However, both its legally-defined tasks and structure give it power *vis-à-vis* the population and it therefore, by definition, makes policy decisions. This is true of all the hierarchical levels of local government. The ministry, the board, and the district commissioner are each legally administrative in relation to the next higher level. In relation to the next lower level, however, the decisions of each involve policy. The entire 'administrative hierarchy' embodies both policy and administration. Secondly, in strict Weberian terms, administration is not decision-making and from this perspective, Bailey's distinction is untenable. Finally, in actual empirical situations, the distinction is difficult to apply since decisions made by multi-purpose councils embody both elements.

In general terms, pure administration is not decision-making, and administrative organs make policy decisions. Others have found difficulty with the administration-policy distinction: Richards and Kuper (1971) note that the dichotomy does not allow for a major council function – dispute settlement – and the subsequent case studies in their book ignore the policy-administration distinction but distinguish the general type from dispute settlement. The Rajgahr data support this methodological alteration.

Another problem relates to sanctions and administrative staff. According to Bailey, compromise ensues when a council has to take action, especially if there is no separate executive machinery of sanctions to enforce the decision. Three inclusive levels of variability are thereby introduced: the fact that action is required, the presence/non-presence of executive machinery, and the presence/absence of sanctions. However, it becomes clear that each level introduces considerable complexity. For example, sanctions are dependent on their source(s) and on the manipulability of these. Additionally, the administrative staff involves personnel with network involvements, a particular pattern of accountability (Spencer, 1971), and the independent power to turn administrative actions into policy formulations. The issue cannot then revolve solely around sanctions and administrative staff, but more importantly around their particular characteristics.

In the Rajgahr context, sanctions derive ultimately from the council's legal status. The council has access to the courts and higher governmental levels to enforce its decisions. The existence of enforcement sources does not mean, however, that they will be used or that their use will even be contemplated. They exist as a broad parameter, but at high cost (financial and political), and their relevance is situationally rather than absolutely specific.

Similarly, the administrative staff of the Rajgahr Council, particularly the overseer, is theoretically accountable to the council and engaged solely in administration and the execution of predetermined tasks. However, like the council (an administrative organ), the staff takes decisions and therefore, policy formulation is involved. This not only alters the administration of an actual decision, but it also affects the council's perception of what can be administered and hence, the decision-making process. This interpretation/extrapolation as to the behaviour of the administrative staff is also, by

implication, situationally specific. Thus, the existence of sanctions and staff does alter decision-making patterns; the direction of alteration, however, is extremely problematic, and the context/character of sanctions and staff must be investigated, not simply noted.

It is proposed that the nature of sanctions and staff also affect the decision-making process *vis-à-vis* the other variables, council structure and internal-external relationships. In the case of council structure, there are additional difficulties. Kuper takes issue with the polar distinction between arena and elite on the grounds that a decision-making elite may develop within a council as a structural attribute affecting the decision-making process. Further, Bailey's distinction rests on two assumptions: that the public is a uniform mass and that the council is accountable to its support from one direction only, above or below, at any given time. In fact, the public is seldom undifferentiated internally, but rather, is more often cross-cut by vertical interest groups and horizontal classes. Contradictory and cross-cutting supports render both the pure elite/pure arena council ideal, a situation further complicated by demands/responsibilities to higher-order entities which may conflict with the support relations to lower-order entities. Bailey does note that the arena/elite distinction is ideal: "We need to ask of actual councils not which of the two types they are, but rather, to what extent or on what occasions they are one rather than the other and whether there is any sustained move from one pole towards the other" (1965:12). Unfortunately, criteria for dealing with this issue are not given; rather one must look at particular situations with the additional implication that the elite/arena distinction is a *post facto* derivation and therefore, not predictive.

The final determinant of decision-making is again the nature of the issue as it concerns internal or external relations. There are, however, levels of 'externality': external to the council elite, the council, the village elite, the village geographically, the village administratively, and to the village as an arena of political competition. All these can in turn be cross-cut by externalities relating to different interest groups which may or may not cross-cut class lines.

A final difficulty is the dichotomy between consensus and voting. Kuper suggests that some decisions depend simply on whether an outside body is available to make the decision. Furthermore, there are three types of decision: the ceremonial, the ambiguous, and no decision. In a similar vein, one can add the consensual decision to defer a decision. Kuper also raises a distinction between repetitive and crucial situations which affect the decision-making pattern. Again one must return to the situation: "To understand the decision-making process, we must fasten on the immediate situational determinants, and these I believe [Bailey] identified correctly –

the structure of the council, the nature of its tasks and resources, and the relationship of the council to its political environment [the lines of support and demand]" (Kuper, 1971a:20).

IV. DECISION-MAKING ON RAJGAHR VILLAGE COUNCIL

(a) *The Decision-making Process*
The aim of the present section is to show the pattern of decision-making utilized by the Rajgahr council, to specify the situational factors, and to derive regularities in council behaviour. During the period June 2, 1969 to February 16, 1970, seventy-six decisions were reached in council.[6] Nineteen were reached by a motion and the remainder seemingly were decisions by consensus. What, however, is the meaning of a motion and consensus in the Rajgahr context?

The Local Government Ordinances stipulate that all council motions must be reported to the Board via the District Commissioner. The Board then rules on the motion's legality in terms of two criteria: the laws of the country and the precedents which the council itself has established through previous motions. A motion passed cannot be rescinded formally, nor ignored informally, until six months have passed and the motion is rephrased or withdrawn via another motion.[7] A motion thus binds future action and brings in outsiders. In contradistinction, a consensual decision, although theoretically binding, can be reversed, ignored, manipulated, and differentially interpreted. Councillors argue that the minutes are incorrect or assume that a decision can be "remitted."

Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the vast majority of decisions are non-motion decisions. Does this therefore imply that they are consensual? The data indicate that some decisions are genuinely consensual; that is, all parties agree and discussion is limited. Some decisions are consensual only after a lengthy discussion, a presentation of opposing views, and perhaps ultimately, the lack of desire to phrase or force the decision as a motion. In other cases, the issue may be consensually deferred either to a special meeting or to obtain the advice of the District Commissioner. Another variation is for consensus to be reached only after an explicit compromise has been made.

Six variations appear: (1) consensus; (2) consensus to defer; (3) consensus after compromise; (4) a motion in which split voting occurs; (5) a motion to merely legalize a decision with consensus having been reached beforehand; and (6) a motion to defer. To investigate the conditions under which each type occurs, it is necessary first to associate kinds of decision with corresponding issues. The latter were coded as follows:

(a) Dispute settlement between:
  i. the council and an elite villager
  ii. a councillor and an elite villager
  iii. a councillor and the council
  iv. the council and contracted labour
  v. the council and a villager (non-elite)
(b) Policy/administrative decisions relating to:
  i. procedures within the council itself
  ii. the village elite
  iii. the village public (non-elite)
  iv. the administrative staff of the council
  v. land allocations within the village
  vi. rates/rents/tolls
  vii. common lands within the village
  viii. disposition of the village dragline services
  ix. public works in general
  x. external, non-political agencies (University, Association of Local Authorities)
  xi. public relations with the Prime Minister
  xii. relations with other villages
  xiii. the Race Club 'arena'
  xiv. the Sanatan Hindu 'arena'

The distinction between dispute settlement and policy/administration has been noted elsewhere (Richards, 1971; Kuper, 1971a). The sub-categories can be grouped according to the arenas to which the decisions refer: there is the intra-council arena (b. 1); the village arena in terms of popular support lines (b. ii–iv); the village arena in terms of physical resources (b. v–ix); the arena outside the village, that is, the council's relations with external entities (b. x–xii); and finally there is the council's relations with other competitive arenas within the village (b. xii–xiv). The results of associating these categories with types and number of decision-making procedure are found in Table 1, below.

Clearly, the majority of decisions were consensual, although a large proportion involved consensus to defer, that is, non-decisions. Almost one-third were based on formal motions. Also apparent is that when the council was dealing with external agencies and viewing itself as the representative of the village, it exhibited a definite emphasis on consensus. The unanimous motion, an objection to an adjacent village's trespassing on Rajgahr's dams, was a definitive statement of unanimity and a strategy to have the decision noted by outside authorities. All further decisions in the category of 'external entities' were by consensus, and concerned the council's and village's public image in the national arena. Another observation was the trend toward consensus when dealing with both human and physical resources within the village. Thirdly, dispute settlement was characterized by consensus, but a consensus in which decisions were not being made. Further, internal issues within the council were subject to an inordinate amount of split motions as compared with other categories.

TABLE 1

Distribution of Decisions According to Type of Issue and Process

	Consensus Types			Motion Types		
	Consensus	Consensus to defer	Consensus with compromise	Split Motion	Unanimous motion	Motion to defer
Issues						
Dispute Settlement	1	8	3	2		1
Intra-council		1	1	4		1
Village Support	13	5		3		
Physical Resources	13	3		4		
External Entities	6				1	
Other Arenas		3		2		1
Total Decisions	33	20	4	15	1	3

Finally, decision-making on issues which concerned other competitive arenas within the village seemed to be characterized by consensual deferrals and motions.

In general, the council moves toward consensus. However, the large proportion of deferrals, albeit by consensus, raise the following questions: Do the deferrals represent genuine consensus, or a desire of the council not to be involved, or simply a decision not to consume extensive meeting time on a difficult decision? Furthermore, many decisions are reached by motion. Except for the general associations noted above and the one explicit relationship with external non-political agencies, an analysis of issues according to general/gross categories is insufficient to explain the decision-making patterns of the council. One must therefore ask: dispute settlement between whom? Whose support within the village? Which physical resources? Which competitive arenas?

Table 2 uses the original categorization of issues and associates these with decision types. Dealing first with dispute settlement, the decision involving council versus labour (a. iv) was the case of a contractor suing the council for underpayment on works done. The council agreed to hand the matter to a lawyer for settlement. The three decisions relating to disputes between councillors and elites (a. ii) involved two distinct disputes. All three decisions, and hence the settlement of the disputes, were deferred.

Related to these were six *disputes between the council and elite villa-*

TABLE 2
Decision-making Patterns, Types of Issues, and the Distribution of Decisions

	Types of Decisions						
	Motion Types			No Decision Deferral to		Consensus Types	
Issue	Split	Unan.	To defer	D.C.*	Another meeting	Consensus	Compromise (Consensus)
(a) Dispute settlement, between:							
i. council vs. elite villager	2	–	–	1	2	–	1
ii. councillor vs. elite villager	–	–	–	–	3	–	–
iii. councillor vs. council	–	–	1	1	–	1	1
iv. council vs. labour	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
v. council vs. non-elite villager	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
(b) Policy/administration re:							
i. intra-council	4	–	1	1	–	–	1
ii. village elite	1	–	–	–	2	–	–
iii. village public (non-elite)	–	–	–	–	–	9	1
iv. administrative staff	2	–	–	1	2	4	1
v. land allocations	–	–	–	1	–	3	1
vi. rates/rents/tolls	2	–	–	–	1	4	1
vii. common lands	2	–	–	–	1	–	1
viii. dragline services	–	–	–	–	–	4	1
ix. public works	–	–	–	–	–	2	1
x. external, non-political agencies	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
xi. relations with the P.M.	–	1	–	–	–	4	1
xii. relations with other villagers	–	1	1	–	3	2	1
xiii. Race Club "arena"	2	–	–	–	–	–	1
xiv. Sanatan Hindu "arena"	–	–	1	–	–	1	1

* District Commissioner.

gers (a. i) *characterized by three decision-making processes. Three of the disputes involved elite villagers committing three similar public delicts although two different methods for censure were utilized.* Two were held for prosecution, with the decisions phrased as motions. The third offender was called to the next meeting to explain his actions. This was a consensual deferral.

Before commenting further on the above, it is instructive to look at those policy/administrative decisions which concerned the village elite (b. ii). There was one motion and two deferrals on three different issues. In contradistinction, the council reached easy unanimity on policy/administrative decisions in relation to the public (b. iii and b. ix). These involved individuals, general policy decisions, and public works projects. There were no motions taken on public issues. *There was, in short, an elite council in relation to the public and an arena council in relation to the elite.*

This pattern is further borne out by the decision patterns on policy/administration within the council (b. i). Important issues such as declaring councillor Rasool's seat vacant were phrased as motions. The deferral involved a procedural point, and the compromise was related to the circulation of minutes. *There was a definite trend towards decision by motion, a clear characteristic of arena councils and of councils concerned with internal relationships* (see Bailey, 1965).

These trends are further borne out by inspection of the sub-categories within the type labelled 'administration of physical resources' (b. v–ix). It has already been noted that dispute settlement and policy/administration in relation to the general public (a. v; b. iii; and b. ix) were all based on unanimity and/or compromise, as compared with dispute settlement and policy/administration *vis-à-vis* elite villagers (a. i and b. ii) which were characterized mainly by motions. Does this pattern follow through with the allocation of physical resources?

The consensual approach to decision-making has already been noted in relation to public works (b. ix). What of the categories involving land allocations (b. v), rates/rents/tolls (b. vi), the use of the common lands (b. vii), and the hiring of the dragline (b. viii)? Although these issues are scattered throughout the types of patterns, detailed inspection of particular issues indicates regularity.

Both land allocations (b. v) and rates/rents/tolls (b. vi) are characterized by concensus and consensual deferral. The one deferral was made to the Local Government Board and ensured that the council removed itself from legal responsibility. In the case of rates/rents/tolls (b. vi), five decisions were taken, four of them by consensus. The one deferral was made to a special council meeting, a common procedure after harvest for rent reduction applications.

The disposition of dragline services (b. viii) and decisions on village common lands (b. vii) exhibit more complex processes. In the case of the former, four consensual decisions concerned hiring out the dragline to a lone applicant and allocating watchmen to the dragline. The two motions again show the pattern of elite competition which has been associated with decisions by motion. One was associated with the fact that councillor Amin had applied for the dragline services, while the second was associated with several elite families requesting the services at the same time. *When allocation* of the dragline *is a mere 'administrative' decision, consensus is easily reached. When, however, it is a resource for elites, the council moves toward decision-making by motion.*

The nature of decisions in relation to policy/administration of the common lands (b. vii) should predictably be toward consensus, given the assumption that these lands lie in the public domain over which the council takes on the attributes of an elite council. The decision process, however, is more complex as a result of a thirty-year dispute between council and government over the legal status of these lands. The village claimed they were part of the original land allocation to East Indian settlers; the government claimed they were crown lands. For the most part, *the jurisdictional issue remained latent, emerging only when its allocation for particular purposes or to particular groups became relevant.*

All common lands in the centre of the village had been allocated to the various village churches. The lands to the north of the village, however, had been left vacant mainly because it could never be decided how they should be distributed. In 1969, five parties were especially interested in the land: first, there was councillor Premsingh, priest of the Christian Catholic Church which required land for a building, having never been allotted land in the central area. Secondly, councillor Deoroop, chairman of the regional Rice Marketing Board since his defection to the PNC, decided that he needed an office and that the common lands would be the ideal place. Thirdly, the Maha Sabha Sanatan Hindu Organization wanted land for a school. The Gandhi Youth Organization, also Sanatan and claiming to represent the Hindu community, also wanted land for a school and office. Finally, because all available house lots were held in freehold ownership, villagers wanted the common lands surveyed and made available for this purpose.

The land issue first arose during the present period when the Maha Sabha made its request to council for three acres at the same time as the Gandhi Youth asked the government for land. Competition in another arena raised the wider issue of the right of disposal. The issue kept arising throughout the next few months. First, in response to the Gandhi Youth tactic, a motion was passed to apply to government to have the area surveyed for house lots. Only Rasool dissented. His reasons became clear at a special

meeting several weeks later when the District Commissioner pointed out that to apply for government intervention meant the council was abandoning its jurisdictional claim. Partially to ensure legality, a motion was put to send a delegation to the Prime Minister. Sultan, Rasool, and Deoroop voted against. At that point, the Public Health Inspector's report indicated that Deoroop had illegally erected his RPA office on the common land. Rasool asked the District Commissioner why his protest against Deoroop had not been forwarded to the Board and the Commissioner several weeks before. Insulted, the District Commissioner left the meeting. Dagleish moved that the matter be deferred; four of the seven councillors abstained. At the regular meeting the next month, the council consensually agreed on the amount of rent Deoroop should pay for his office, while applications from two villagers to rent house lots on the common land were deferred.

The two decisions involving Deoroop were coded under council versus councillor dispute (a. iii), and what is again obvious is *the council's difficulty in dealing with elites/councillors. Its solution was simultaneously to close ranks* (setting the rent, thereby accepting Deoroop's encroachment) *vis-à-vis outside authorities and the public* (the deferred house lot applications). Further, the split motion on the deputation to the Prime Minister indicates that councillors compete for the political credit which can be obtained by publicly showing direct access to the national arena. In brief, the common lands issue points out *the different roles of the council even when a series of decisions occurs on the same basic issue.*

In policy/administration *vis-à-vis* staff (b. iv), a total of nine decisions were taken using three types of decision-making. Why the variation? Four consensual decisions concerned straightforward issues; for example, increasing the assistant overseer's salary to the level set by the Board. Three decisions involved the dragline watchman, Mattai, who was accused by Sultan of having left his watch. The matter was deferred until a witness was brought forward at the next meeting who confirmed Mattai's explanation; the council consensually agreed to pay him. Several months later, Sultan claimed he saw Mattai working on a combine instead of operating the creek gate. He insisted, and the council agreed, that Mattai be suspended until the "matter is clarified."

Another decision had to be made concerning the appointment of an additional ranger. Two motions were put – one for Madramootoo, the other for Mattai. Madramootoo won and Premsingh declared he would protest to the Board. This election occurred after the two decisions were taken on Mattai and one week before the final accusation by Sultan. This on-going process revealed that *the council reaches unanimity when decisions have to be made in situations where the lines of support and demand are not viewed as critical nor the objects of the decisions (human and/or physical resources) regarded as important.* In the case of staff support, partisanship

is ensured prior to and on the occasion of appointments being made. The council becomes an arena council in such situations.

The final issues concern decision-making patterns in relation to competitions in other village arenas. During the present period, two are relevant: the race club arena in which two clubs competed for resources (b. xiii) and the aforementioned split in the Hindu community (b. xiv). In the case of the former, the first motion centred on whether the council should contribute one hundred dollars to improve the race track. Amin, president of one of the two clubs, abstained. It was then consensually decided to call both clubs to a meeting to effect a merger. This did occur, and at another council meeting, the united club applied for control of the common lands during the race meet, a usual procedure. The decision, necessarily phrased as a motion, was voted against by Amin, Rasool, and Taharally. Before unification, Amin had been ousted as president of his club and at the merger meeting he agreed to unification to undercut his former club. He then refused a nomination for the vice-presidency of the united club. His negative vote on the meet also reflected his recalcitrance. Rasool disagreed in principle with any allocation of the lands, while Taharally's vote was, at the moment, inexplicable. In the end, it was consensually decided to defer the issue to a special meeting, a common procedure. In sum, *the council performed as an elite council in relation to this arena, except in the case of councillors whose immediate vested interests were involved.* This view is borne out by Mangal's statement at the special meeting: "Ratepayer's money was spent on the track, and the council, as village fathers, should demand that the two clubs be united so that better racing would be promoted in the village."

A similar situation was apparent in the Hindu split. The council decided to see a solicitor (and thus deferred) on the legality of the Gandhi Youth's application to government. Only Rasool dissented. At the meeting, however, all councillors spoke on the issue and the general feeling was that the two associations should unite. The council had in fact attempted to call in representatives of both groups, but they did not appear. *In failing in the role of conciliator as an elite council, the council then proceeded to defend its own jurisdiction.*

(b) *Regularities in Decision-Making on Rajgahr Village Council*
From the above description, several patterns may be summarized. These include both methodological and theoretical deductions on decision-making in councils with specific reference to Rajgahr Village, and perhaps, more generally.

Methodologically, analysis in the previous section involved categorizing council's tasks/issues according to the arena of reference and then associating these with a typology of decision-making processes. It was found that the initial categories of tasks yielded only general trends, with the exception of those decisions relating to 'external non-political arenas' which were, predictably, consensual.

Subsequent categorization of tasks into smaller units and their association with decision-making still left anomalies. This lead to an investigation of certain individual issues and decisions which enabled the linking of particular decisions into a logically related 'series' based on common personnel or content; at this point particular patterns emerged.

In methodological terms, an investigation of council decision-making must examine the following:

(1) the meaning of a motion and consensus in particular contexts, and the legal and non-legal implications, the formal and informal constraints/sanctions in each type of decision.

(2) Types of decision-making processes are more complex than a simple dichotomy between consensus and voting. It is important to note that a vote may be split or unanimous. Further, the processes may include a "no-decision" category (Kuper, 1971a and b). In the Rajgahr context, this is phrased as a "deferral" which may in turn be a product of a motion or consensus. Additionally, consensus can sometimes be reached only after explicit compromise.

(3) There is a definite methodological problem in developing a categorization of tasks. For example, the council decides on the tolls to be charged outsiders' *padi* brought in to an elite villager's mill. In terms of the arena to which the decision will refer, one is dealing simultaneously with *padi* in general (the public), the mill owners (elite), non-villagers (outsiders), and both physical and human resources. Categorization thus has to be made *via* an intuitive awareness of the major issues within a particular context. In the Rajgahr case, this issue was typed as 'relations with elite' because of Rajgahr history and the role which the milling family played, and is playing, in village political affairs. The point is, however, that micro-investigation of each issue, individually, and of the series of issues is a critical methodological step.

The theoretical findings are also relevant. When councillors are enmeshed in relationships with constituents through their roles as both councillors and villagers, the general trend will be toward consensus under the following conditions: when the council acts as a body and views itself as representing the village interests *vis-à-vis* outsiders, and when such outside interests do not themselves contain, in the particular context, resources for which councillors are competing as individuals or as a group. This situation also occurs under the same conditions *vis-à-vis* other competition occurring within the village and finally, in the council's relationship to the general public. In short, *when distance is possible, regardless of task* – be it administration/policy or dispute settlement – *the council*

achieves consensus. Conversely, in situations containing vested interests for the council or councillors, the decision-making process becomes more complex than a vote or consensus. *In relation to elite villagers*, that is, to councillors' peers, *and in relation to scarce resources, motions and deferrals characterize decision-making.* In Bailey's terms, the council is an elite council in relation to the public, outsiders, and other competitors – in other words, in relation to 'apolitical contexts'; the council is an arena council in relation to scarce resources, whether human or physical.

Task is therefore not predictive of council behaviour, as for example, when dispute settlement becomes part of the competitive political process. This is clearly demonstrated when a series of decisions, ostensibly on the same issue, involve different decision patterns. What is critical is whether the council can distance itself from the issues. *The basic determinant of council decision-making is the council's actual relationship to physical resources and human support.*

V. THE COUNCIL AS AN ARENA: THE ISSUE OF FACTIONALISM

(a) *The Nature of Factionalism on Council*

Factional politics have been the mainstay of the local political organization for decades. It is therefore suggested that when the council exhibits 'arena-council' features which render councillors unable to distance themselves from the resources embodied in issues, the resulting internal organization will be a product of the factional politics which characterize the village.

The data for this analysis are the voting patterns of those issues in which decisions were reached by motion. The following questions are relevant: do voting patterns exhibit factional alignments? Does the definition of factionalism presented in Section II fit Rajgahr council politics?

Nineteen motions were raised during the period under discussion. With the exception of the voting on five motions, there were no direct confrontations between any two factions in terms of one faction membership consistently opposing the members of the other. However, an association can be shown between the five explicit factional alignments and the contents of the motions. Four motions were so phrased because of legal requirements: the election of the chairman and deputy chairman and the appointment of two rangers. The final motion set up a delegation to the Prime Minister on the issue of the common lands jurisdiction. It is suggested that when a decision involves explicit access to resources for councillors, factional alignments emerge in sharp relief and are reflected in the voting pattern. Under these conditions, factionalism becomes the idiom through which competition is expressed. Why can these five issues be phrased as involving 'explicit access'?

The chairman and deputy positions involve a great deal of power with

TABLE 3

Factional Leadership and Support on Council

Leaders:	Sultan	Premsingh	Neutral
Supporters:	Amin (until December, 1969)	Dagleish	Bharat
	Jaikarran	Amin (after December, 1969)	
	Deoroop	Mangal	
	Taharally (until December, 1969)	Nagassar	
	Rasool	Taharally (after December, 1969)	
	Brijlall		

access to the informal prerogatives of power. Also, the chairman controls communication links with the formal hierarchy, and after the PNC infiltration, the chairman controlled the informal broker role with the PNC party also (providing he were able to establish and maintain credibility). On that basis, Premsingh and Sultan were both nominated for the chairmanship. Taharally and Brijlall ran against each other for the deputy chairmanship. Each leader had put forward its candidates and Taharally's defection to Premsingh was paid off by his nomination for deputy chairman (see Table 3).

With regard to the administrative staff, their support was critical for maintaining the everyday administrative functioning of the council. A recalcitrant officer meant not only negligent, but also subversive administration. Since officers were villagers with networks of alliances and supports, their partisanship was crucial.

Finally, the delegation to the Prime Minister would indicate to the PNC who were the 'big men' of the village. Ostensibly, the councillors selected for the delegation would be representing village interests. Simultaneously, however, they would be representing themselves, as the chosen few, to the national arena. When the village visits the Prime Minister, the political implications are not analogous to those of the Prime Minister visiting the village.

In short, *those decisions in which factional confrontations emerged in clear, explicit relief were also those situations in which the payoffs were high and, importantly, immediate.* It is further suggested, and discussed later, that in these critical situations, the idiom of factionalism becomes the best strategy. What of the other motions and the seemingly random pattern of voting behaviour?

To see if further regularities existed, correlation coefficients were ob-

tained for all possible two-person voting combinations and their rank ordered from high to low. Intra-factional voting appears to be the norm and cross-factional correlations occur only at a low point in the rank ordering – initially via the association of Sultan and Nagassar – with a correlation index of .057. However, Ramsaroop had associations with Sultan and Rasool that were greater than his associations with Mangal and Dagleish, two important supporters of Premsingh. This was a major anomaly further complicated by the actual numerical coefficient. The coefficient for Dagleish-Nagassar was – .009, a negative correlation.

In general, then, council voting patterns tend to follow factional alignments in terms of all possible intra-factional combinations. However, the anomalies indicate that either the association of factional membership with the voting pattern is not totally justified for the present data or that factions are not simply a "coalition of individual members with common interests," but that perhaps they cluster around a focal point, a leader. Assuming that the latter may be so, a rank ordering of correlations done solely in terms of the two leaders, Premsingh and Sultan, indicates *a perfect fit between voting patterns on council and factional alignment defined in terms of leadership*. The previous anomaly of a cross-factional correlation being higher than an intra-factional correlation disappears, as do any negative correlations within a particular faction. The Sultan-Nagassar association remains positive, but it becomes the lowest positive correlation (.057) since the next association in the ranking, Premsingh-Brijlall, is negative (– .032). Not only then is there a perfect fit between the leader-supporter relationship and the voting pattern, but also, with one exception (Sultan-Nagassar), each leader is negatively correlated in voting association with all those who are not followers.

Of interest, as well, is the fact that although the general trend is – the higher the association with one leader, the lower the correlation with the other – there is no perfect association between an individual's voting with one leader and, by implication, casting a vote against the other. The previous discussion indicates there were only five situations in which this perfect association occurred and these situations had exceptionally high spoils. Furthermore, anomalies in the ranked correlations on all-councillor voting combinations can be construed as another index of this general point.

In theoretical terms, the implication is that factional politics do not necessarily involve "segmentary arenas" (Nicholas, 1965). Nor does factional association have to be exclusive and absolute, and thereby, by implication, pre-defining all supporters' actions by virtue of so-called factional membership. This brings into sharp relief the importance of viewing factionalism as a process, rather than as a competition between two or more competing structures. Conclusive evidence of this point is the fact

that the two leaders themselves are not the lowest correlation of all combinations!

A possible explanation for the leaders' voting together – cross-factionally – lies in the hypothesis of collusion between the two leaders as a factional alliance (Nicholas, 1965), or as an elite within the council (Kuper, 1971a). However, because this hypothesis sees each faction as dependent on leaders rather than on supporters, it (the hypothesis) necessarily implies that each leader manipulates his factional structure as a single entity. Instead, given that these 'collusive' leaders vote together cross-factionally more often than supporters vote cross-factionally, and given that the pattern is not symmetrical (that a vote for one leader is not necessarily a vote against the other), the utility of a collusion or elite hypothesis is limited since each leader is manipulating, not a faction, but the various linkages in his partial network/political set for particular issues. The collusion and elite hypotheses would further obscure the possibility that supporters may not wish to be, and are not, manipulated at all times on all issues. Can leaders collude while support goes its own way? The answer is a qualified 'yes' – qualified by the fact that one is thereby accepting that followers manoeuvre. This necessarily involves the acceptance of an action-set notion of factions, and by implication, the limited scope of 'structure'/'faction' in the analysis of factionalism.

The next logical question is when do leaders collude? Why do supporters bolt? Phrased another way, what is the process called "factionalism," or what is its sociological context? In other words, factionalism is not a series of structures analysable through the mere tracing of changing alignments. It is a process, and in the Rajgahr context, the process of leaders' action-sets is occurring within a context which is providing constraints and resources. What are these?

An answer lies in the issues with which the council was dealing. When viewing how supporters vote on particular motions as compared with the leaders, an obvious hypothesis is that supporters tend to vote with leaders – including those instances when leaders themselves vote together. The data, however, indicate some anomalies – votes cast on particular motions which depart from the leaders' votes. There are thirteen such 'misvotes' out of a total of eighty-three and they occur on eight motions. What were these issues and why did this occur?

One motion, in which Nagassar and Amin 'misvoted,' concerned the prosecution of an elite villager, Taharally, for an illegal water connection. It was one of the three public delicts mentioned previously in which there appeared to be a differential treatment of elites. In this case, Taharally was the nephew of Councillor Taharally, who was absent from the particular meeting. Premsingh and Dagleish voted with Amin against the motion. Basically, Premsingh and follower Dagleish were indebting Taharally,

while Amin was becoming disillusioned with Sultan; as a prelude to his and Taharally's defection, he supported Taharally. Nagassar's motives in voting for the motion are unknown.

The second motion was a surprising situation in which Premsingh attempted, with Deoroop's support, to have Rasool's seat declared vacant on a technicality. The majority of councillors did not regard this as 'fair play.' Yet Premsingh chose to pursue the matter; Deoroop, for an unknown reason, disliked Rasool intensely and therefore supported the motion. Dagleish, Bharat, Sultan, and Amin, given Premsingh's valid legal point in relation to Rasool's seat, had no alternative but to abstain. Personal enmity accounts for Deoroop's vote; good conscience and/or elitism account for Dagleish's, the other 'misvote' on the issue.

On the third motion, to improve the race track, Amin departed from the rest of the council's unanimity. The recent coup deposing him as club president resulted in his refusal to countenance or take part in any further race meets. His abstention reflects the outcome of competition in another arena.

Two motions involved Rasool's departing from the council's consensus on the common land issue. Already noted was Rasool's disagreement over the council's handling of the issue. At the particular meetings, about twenty proprietors heard him denounce the council. As a councillor who could have lost his seat at any time on the technicality which Premsingh raised, that he was not a proprietor and hence not entitled to a council seat, the political credibility and popular support which Rasool received was great.

The seventh motion was to rent the dragline to councillor Amin. His misvote, an abstention, was formal recognition that the council did occasionally have to take into account the notion of 'interested parties.' Rasool's negative vote reflected his preference for having the dragline rented to an outsider and his dislike of Amin. However, with the two leaders jockeying for Amin's support just after the chairman elections in which Amin defected publicly by casting his vote for Premsingh, the council rented Amin the dragline.

The eighth motion had three Premsingh supporters voting against him; or phrased another way, Premsingh voted with Sultan on a motion to defer the issue of Deoroop's office on the common land after the meeting in which Rasool insulted the District Commissioner. Premsingh, like Sultan, Deoroop, and Rasool, abstained. Premsingh did not want the matter deferred since the sooner it was settled, the sooner he could obtain land for his church. With the District Commissioner gone, however, discussion could not proceed, and Premsingh's abstention reflects this awareness without his sanctioning the deferral. At the same time, Premsingh followers Dag-

leish, Nagassar, and Amin saw no point in continuing and hence moved to defer. Meanwhile Sultan and Deoroop had to support publicly Rasool's recalcitrance toward the District Commissioner, but because the issue had to be deferred, they simply abstained.

On the final motion, the draft estimate for 1970, Rasool again attempted to make public points by insisting that the collectable percentage of rents in arrear be lowered.

To summarize, councillors' apparent 'misvotes' were motivated by a variety of factors directly related to their particular interests. Ali desired public support for a vulnerable legal position on council and became the watchdog of council ineptitude. Premsingh was motivated by personal dislike for Rasool's style, for his church, and his need to maintain the support of Amin and Taharally. Dagleish was motivated by a concept of fair play, Deoroop by personal enmity, and Amin by his vested interests and the outcome of competition in another arena.

(b) *Regularities of Factionalism in Rajgahr Village Council*

The previous section traces factional alignments as they affect council deliberations and decision-making in those situations in which the village council is defined as an arena council. Three levels of factional involvement on the council are delineated.

First, factionalism involves segmentary and exclusive alignments only in those situations in which the spoils are immediate, exceptionally high, or involve consolidating a position which would result in access to additional resources. Such is the reasoning behind efforts to control the executive positions of the council, its administrative personnel, and the informal nexus between village and national arena. Under such circumstances, factional alignments manifested through 'exhaustive structures' become apparent.

At a second and more inclusive level, alignments are not clear-cut, and the faction as a bounded entity is no longer perceivable. Indeed, factional structures no longer exist, in that voting patterns cannot be explained by reference to a faction, since relationships among followers are not necessarily predictive of voting patterns. Rather, in lieu of structures or factions, leader-focused action-sets provide a perfect fit between ranked coefficients on voting patterns and factional alignments on council. Factionalism exists only in relation to leadership; there are no factional structures. In Rajgahr, factions are thus factionalism – the activation of leader-centred action-sets.

At a third level, it has been noted that despite correlations in voting behaviour, there are individual departures from leaders' positions. Although these do not occur in sufficient numbers to affect the correlation matrix, they do require explanation and have been traced to other interests

which individual councillors have. Individuals can and do depart from their leaders in order to defend or maximize these interests. At this level of analysis, factionalism does not explain the council as an arena council.

In short, factionalism is best seen as a strategy in relation to particular resources; it is a political means for maximizing resources and access to resources carried out with reference to leadership as opposed to membership in a group *per se*. It is a mobilization of personnel which may or may not be used in particular situations according to particular issues. The leaders themselves recognize this fact, as evidenced by their own departure from their followers' positions on issues which concern their own personal vested interests.

With factionalism defined as a political strategy involving the deployment of leader-centred action-sets, there still remains the need to explain the wider sociological context. Why, in specific issues, were there departures from leaders' positions? The answer lies in the vested interests of individual supporters which were more important than was loyalty to the leader. Why should this occur? Why should supporters not support their leader, build credit which the leader would have to repay at a later time and in that way, defend their personal vested interests? In other words, why is factionalism not regarded as a sufficient strategy for all political manoeuvring?

It is suggested that a parallel exists between this question on the extensiveness of factionalism and the findings on council decision-making patterns. As will be recalled, "the basic determinant of council decision-making (consensus vs. voting) is the council's actual relationship to physical resources and human support." It is suggested that the same pattern characterizes the use of *factionalism as a political strategy*. That is, its use *is conditioned by the leaders and supporters' individual relationships to physical resources and human support*. Depending on the issue involved, "particular lines of support-demand" (Kuper, 1971a) become relevant. Decisions in relation to both the issue and to the relevance of the factional strategy become circumscribed by a 'cost analysis' of various strategies. A choice is then made. The fact that a choice is available necessarily leads back to the nature of Rajgahr village itself, the differential allocation of resources which exists, and the means of competition in this larger context.

VI. THE BASIC DETERMINANT OF COUNCIL DECISION-MAKING AND FACTIONALISM

Factionalism is a game played by elites. All Rajgahr councillors are elites in financial and/or prestige terms. As elites, they compete with each other and by implication, they compete with the majority of villagers when necessary. The situation of scarce resources in the Rajgahr context makes such

competition inevitable. As such, the context is clearly not one of the disorganizing effects of social change, but rather one of a constantly changing political and economic environment in which every new resource must be allocated and in which the possibility of old resources being re-distributed is not unlikely. Council decision-making occurs in such a context and factionalism provides a possible strategy for competition within it. Factionalism in turn is reflected, given particular conditions, on the council. Also reflected, however, is the councillors' elite position in the village in general. Their self-perception as 'village fathers' indicates the dual aspect – elitism and competition – of the processes of decision-making and factionalism. It is an elite prerogative; it is competition for resources within this larger pattern of stratification.

My conclusion is that whenever a village is stratified and whenever resources are selectively available:

    (a) local councils will reflect the stratification pattern by being composed of elites;
    (b) the decision-making process on council will oscillate between consensus *vis-à-vis* the public and voting *vis-à-vis* the elite;
    (c) the voting patterns will tend to be organized by strategies of factional politics;
But: (d) the wider explanation for both decision-making patterns and factionalism lies in the fact of stratification and scarce resources;
    (e) these in turn are a product of the resource allocation in the larger society. In the Rajgahr context, this is an encapsulation policy ('incorporation') which not only favours elites, but systematically seeks them out as part of a process of political and economic cooptation in the interests of maintaining intact the structure of the national arena.

NOTES

2   The distribution of acreage in 1969 was as follows:

Acreage cultivated	% of farming population
1–10 acres	55.4%
11–20 "	25.9
21–30 "	6.6
31–50 "	6.9
51+	5.2

3   In 1900, the village area was surveyed and divided into depths or sub-areas which were further subdivided into house and cultivation lots, the former clustering around the public road which runs the length of the Guyanese coast, and the latter lying behind the house-lot

area in plots of three-quarters of an acre. Each house-lot owner has a cultivation lot. Behind these are approximately 2,000 acres of crown land, leased by the local authorities (as represented by the village council) and rented to proprietors (house-lot owners) in 2–20-acre lots. The Abary crown land is located behind the village crown lands across the Abary River.

4   From the council membership, a chairman and deputy are elected each year by the members. They exercise 'executive control'; that is, they make decisions in between the monthly statutory meetings and have the prerogative of calling special meetings should the need arise.

5   A strategy which exploits the divisions caused by factional competitions, religious affiliation, and economic differentiation in order to infiltrate a village. The tactic is to designate local middlemen/activists through whom the patronage of the party for subversion efforts is selectively filtered and whose continued position becomes dependent on their success in the local arena.

6   Data on council deliberations come from formal minutes recorded by the assistant overseer, and from extensive notes taken at all meetings which I attended, from both of which were abstracted council decisions – their content, whether consensually decided, whether deferred or phrased into a motion, and if the latter, the voting patterns.

7   The best example of this process is in the formulations of the draft estimate, that is, the village's projected budget for the year prepared early in the new year. Its passing by the council, after being prepared by the overseer and interested councillors, is phrased in terms of a motion in which a vote must be taken. It is called a draft because the estimate must be passed onto the District Commissioner and ultimately the Local Government Board which accepts it or suggests changes, and then back to the District Commissioner, who in turn, sends it back to council with the recommended changes, which the council must then pass again as a motion. The 'draft estimate,' through this process, becomes the 'estimate.'

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