

Spatial Organization and Normative Schemes in Jaffna, Northern Sri Lanka*

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Introducing Jaffna Peninsula of Northern Sri Lanka

The Jaffna Peninsula is vaguely oval with an area of 964½ square miles. At the time of the last census in 1963 it was inhabited by 612,000 Tamil-speaking Hindus.¹ Although exact datings may be debated, let us say that steady settlement by merchants and traders was established by the 7th century A.D.; thereafter this area became heavily colonized by the dominant landowners of Jaffna, the Vellāla caste and their serving castes (*kuṭimākkal*) during the period of the Pandyan empire in South India (particularly during the 13th and 14th centuries A.D.). Due to limestone subsoil (the cement factory at Kankesanturai is the heaviest industry in Jaffna) and relatively low rainfall, the area is less suited to paddy agriculture than the south of Sri Lanka. Most land is devoted to cash crops (tobacco, chillies, onions, arecanut, and tomatoes). The sandy beach which surrounds the peninsula varies from several yards to one half of a mile. Progressing inland, the next ring of the oval has good agricultural land—black alluvial soil. The inner oval, the central region of the peninsula, has reddish, fertile soil. Due to population increases over the last three centuries this area has become progressively more intensively cultivated with, mainly, cash crops. This isolated peninsula provides a natural laboratory for demarcating variations in spatial, social and cultural organization.

There are five parts to this paper. In Part I, I contrast the spatial organization in agricultural villages, fishing villages, and artisan towns in the Jaffna Peninsula. This comparison raises the possibility that agricultural, fisher, and artisan castes are involved in different types of intercaste relations and of their commitment to contrary normative schemes. In Part II, I outline two extreme types of intercaste exchanges. Each extreme type, or *mode*, is defined in terms of seven pattern variables: recruit, time, space, clientele, pricing mechanism, context, and vector of relationships. Actors orient their action to the two modes of intercaste relations by means of two contrary *normative schemes*. Each scheme is a logically connected set of symbols and meanings. These schemes are described in Part III. Value-orientation means translating norms into action. Value-orientation to the contrary normative schemes is not limited to intercaste conduct, that is, involvement in different modes of relations; in Part IV, I summarize the spatial organization data from the three villages to show the differentials in value-orientation to the normative schemes: different norms are

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1. *Census of Ceylon*, Colombo: Government Press, 1963.

incorporated into village structure in the agricultural village, the fishing village, and the artisan town.² In Part V, I comment on several methodological issues raised by explanations of spatial structure variation in Sri Lanka and South India, comparing my findings with those of Joan Mencher on Kerala and Brenda Beck on the Koñku region of Tamiḷnad.

Note that different descriptive terms are used for different parts of the analysis. *Mode* is used to describe patterns of behaviour. *Scheme* is used to describe ideas and norms about behaviour.

PART I: Three Villages

In part I, I describe first, a Vellāḷar (Landowner caste) dominated agricultural village; second, a Karaiyār (Fisherman caste) dominated fishing village; and third, rural towns inhabited but not necessarily dominated by various artisan castes. Subsections on spatial organization are: general village structure (nucleation of wards/nucleation of village); relation of ward structure to kin structure and to status-grade structure; location of pure and impure serving castes; and spatial symbolism of serving castes re purity and honour.

Myliḍḍy North, A Vellāḷa dominated Agricultural Village: General Village Structure

Myliḍḍy North, a Landowner dominated agricultural village, is not nucleated as are villages in the Tamiḷ region of South India. Myliḍḍy North is composed of wards (*kuricci*; literally, sections). The ward is nucleated; the ward's farmlands surround a cluster of compounds, each including house and garden land, and, usually, a ward temple. Since wards and villages lack the distinct boundaries and boundary protection ceremonies frequently reported in South India, an observer cannot visibly distinguish two wards of the same village from two wards of adjacent villages. This spatial perception is not gratuitous as each ward and not the entire village is the locus of political, economic, and ritual exchanges between a section of the Landowner caste and sections of serving castes (who serve only ward residents and their close kinsmen who live in designated wards of nearby villages). Intralocal orientation and (purity) seclusion is spatially represented by the traditional narrow twisting lanes in the village: a Landowner's house is almost inaccessible to a stranger.

Wards, Kinship, and Status Grades

The Jaffna ward is not a corporate unit in a strict sense—as in Tengalapatti, a village near Madurai in Tamiḷnad, where land ownership can be correlated fairly closely with peasant caste (Pramalai Kallar) unilineal lineage structure.³ Landowner caste residents of each ward in a Jaffna agricultural village are from three to five

2. Elsewhere I test the wider value-orientations of agricultural, fishing, and artisan castes with two other classes of data; incorporation of norms into caste origin myths and behavioural strategies of stratifying or nonstratifying intercaste ranking transactions. See Kenneth David, "Hierarchy and Equivalence in Ceylon: Normative Code as Mediator," In Kenneth David (ed.), *The New Wind: Changing Identities in South Asia, Proceedings of the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences*, The Hague: Mouton, 1974 and "And Never the Twain Shall Meet? Mediating the Structural Approaches to Caste Ranking," In Harry Buck (ed.), *Structural Approaches to South Indian Studies*, Chambersburg, Pa.: Wilson College Press, 1974.
3. Louis Dumont, *Une Sous-caste de l'Inde du Sud*, Paris: Mouton, 1957.

patrilineal descent categories (*cantati*⁴). Land in each ward is controlled by members of several of these affinally-linked units. Since land is transmitted mainly through dowry from mother to daughter but also as inheritance from father to children, more couples live at the wife's house than at the husband's house immediately after marriage. But when the wife's land is given in dowry and the husband inherits from his father they may relocate. Endless variations all result in dispersed (*cantati*) units: there are no localized unilineal descent groups corporately owning distinct wards in Jaffna.

Yet there is a culturally shared fiction:⁵ the identification of each ward with one particular unit (*cantati*) and its founding ancestor (*vari*). Each of the four wards in Myliddy North has both a place name and also a *vari* name. An aristocratic original settler of the ward is identified as the founder of the lineage supposedly residing there, but no present inhabitant can trace the genealogy back to the founder. In fact, only some of the male and female descendants of the original settler live in the ward. And only some of these people were born there: others were born and raised in another village and married (cross-cousin marriage) back into their "ancestral village." This fictional identification of wards with kin units and with a founding ancestor is the Landowner Who's Who:

"Oh. He only lives in Cunnakam. He is from Tayoli,* from the Vadikkārar* line (*vari*). How could my daughter marry him", sniffed a Landowner lady. (*pseudonyms)

Given dispersed kin units, this fiction facilitates tracing distantly connected members of one's unit and judging potential marriage allies' purity and honour.

There is another shared fiction, the closed circle of marriage alliances. Each unit is allied with, i.e. has continuing marriage connections with, several other units. Each unit thus has a set of allied units. In native theory, the alliance sets of all one's allies should coincide and yield a closed status circle of close kinsmen (*kiṭṭiya con-*

4. A more accurate, but wordy, translation of *cantati* would be "sharers of natural bodily substance." The term *unit*, used hereafter, must suffice. A *cantati* closely resembles Schneider's requirements of a descent category as a cultural construct: "The descent category contains persons or statuses linked in three different kinds of ways. They are first linked as kinsmen, or by consanguinity, or however the kin universe is culturally defined as against non-kin. Second, these statuses are linked by the kinds of differentiated links out of which the genealogy or kin universe itself is constructed. Third, they are linked by the kind of connection which defines them as a descent category." David Schneider, "Kinship and Culture: Descent and Filiation as Cultural Constructs," *Southwest Journal of Anthropology*, 1967, XXIII: 68. The third 'kind of connection' is, as I have stated, "sharers of natural bodily substance"; native theory of natural substance states that all kinsmen, *contakkārar*, share natural substance (blood) but only the *cantati* are *cakōtarar*, sharers of natural substance (body). Certainly, Jaffna *cantati-s* are not corporate unilineal descent groups. Dumont's surveys South Indian castes and finds both harmonic (patrilineal + patrilocal or matrilineal + matrilocal) and disharmonic (patrilineal + matrilocal or matrilineal + patrilocal) arrangements. Louis Dumont, *Hierarchy and Marriage Alliance in South Indian Kinship*, Occasional Papers of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London, 1957. I submit that only the harmonic arrangement permits a descent category to function as a local descent group. The Jaffna *cantati*, being patrilineal + matri/patrilocal, is disharmonic; the unit is dispersed over several villages and controls no unified, corporate landholding. See Kenneth David, "Until Marriage do us Part; a Cultural Account of Dravidian Categories for Kinsmen," *Man*, 1973, VIII (4).
5. Landowners refer to a tradition (*paramparai*). My use of *fiction* implies the 'as-if' nature of a culture's traditions.

takkarar), each circle having an unique shared bodily substance and thus an unique level of blood purity and aristocratic honour: a grade with the caste. In fact, units resident in different wards of a village do not intermarry. Members of several affinally-linked units reside in each ward. Each unit is mainly allied with other units in the ward or from designated wards in other villages. So far, native theory fits native fact. But genealogies prove that the alliance sets of the various units overlap but do not coincide. For example, unit A is allied with units B, C, and D; unit B is allied with units A, C, and E; unit C is allied with units A, B, D, and F. Frequently, the affines of close kinsmen, for example, B's ally E and C's ally F, are distant kinsmen (*tūratte contakkārar*) to each other; they have no continuing marriage alliance and their women do not dine together as do close kinswomen. Villagers definitely conceive of such a "closed" alliance set as a distinct though unnamed grade within the caste.⁶

The Landowner caste distinguishes two generic divisions. All the traditions mentioned so far are most developed among the aristocratic Landowners, *Periya* (big) *Veļļālar*, powerful grades of the caste who had many servants, titles, offices, and an undoubted reputation for being *Veļļāla*. The term *Cinna* (Little) *Veļļālar* labels a miscellaneous collection of castes who have become landowners and then become lower grades of the Landowner caste. There is a Tamil proverb: "Kallār, Maravar, and Akampatiyar (castes) slowly, slowly become *Veļļāla*." In fact, the commoners in this village were formerly Akampatiyars.⁷

Village sociologists of the Landowner caste recognize that certain fictions, the identification of a ward with a particular unit whose ancestor founded the ward, and the closed circle of kin yield a coherent native theory of the homology between three structural principles: territory, kinship, and caste. Segmentation of territorial units (*kuricci*-wards) coincides with segmentation of the caste into kin units (*cantati*). Continuing alliance of kin units yields closed circles of kinsmen (*kittiya contakkārar*), grades of the caste defined as equivalent in purity and honour with reference to the founding ancestors of each of the units. Foreshadowing conclusions, this homology implies that the hierarchic priestly and aristocratic ideas are incorporated into spatial arrangement.

Location of Pure/Impure Serving Castes and Pure Non-Serving Castes within the Village

The distinction between aristocratic and commoner *Veļļāla* is firmly based in differential amounts of land owned per family. Although household surveys show that an aristocratic *Veļļāla* family owns something over seven acres and a commoner *Veļļāla* family owns about three quarters of an acre, I am dubious about these figures because every landowner fears land seizure and distribution (under 1974 government policy) and thus underestimates his or her holdings. I was not able to obtain land records.

6. This data does not support Yalman's thesis of microcastes as closed corporate kindreds (See Nur Yalman, *Under the Bo Tree, Studies in Caste, Kinship and Marriage in the Interior of Ceylon*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) any more than it supports a thesis of corporate unilineal descent groups. Also, given the distinction between allied affines/nonallied affines that is, close/distant kinsmen (*kittiya/turatte contakkārar*), Bank's description of a set of allied units as a "sondakara caste" is questionable: *contakkārar* refers to all kinsmen, whether close or distant, allied or nonallied. See Michael Banks, "Caste in Jaffna," In E. R. Leach (ed.), *Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon, and North-west Pakistan*, Cambridge: C.U.P., 1960.
7. Koviar *Veļļāla*, like Akampatiyar-*Veļļāla*, call themselves *Veļļāla* and are insulted when referred to as Koviar or Akampatiyar.

Relative difference in landholdings between these two categories can be estimated from the location of serving castes within the village. For serving castes occupy lands given them by aristocratic Vellāḷa in return for their services. Priests—whether *Brahmins* or *Saiva Kurukkals*—subsist partially from the produce of (*māṇiyam*) lands donated to them or to the local temple by the temple manager (*māṇiyam*). Each family of *Koviar* domestics was given usufructory rights on house lands (*valavu*) and cash-crop garden lands (*toḷḷam*) whose produce provides the subsistence requirements for the family. The term for a sufficient amount of land to provide subsistence is *aṇiyam*; the extent of land varies with the locality: before recent inflation, the necessary amount of land in this area was *āyiram kaṇḍu tarai*, the area necessary to plant 1000 tobacco plants (i.e. 3 3/4 lachams or just under 1/2 acre). In return, the *Koviar* must cultivate other of the master's lands, care for cattle, do household chores, and perform many ritual duties. While the *Koviar*, a clean caste, is settled on garden land, the unclean *Nalavar* (or, elsewhere, *Pallar*) caste are given palmyrah land for their subsistence requirements (*aṇiyam*). Palmyrah leaves are essential for agriculture—i.e. green manure—and for fences, roofing, and mats; these products indicate some of the *Nalavar's* productive activities. In addition, sale of fermented palmyrah sap, toddy, forms part of their income. Unlike *Koviar*s and *Nalavar*s, who serve mainly one family and who are given productive land, barbers and washermen, who serve many families, are given only houseland by the aristocratic Vellāḷa. These four kinds of settlements are still reasonably distinct in 1974, although many parcels have now been rented or bought from the aristocratic Vellāḷa. Then serving caste settlements indicate the previous extent of aristocratic Vellāḷa landholdings. In contrast, commoner Vellāḷa possess just their own house and agricultural land but do not have sufficient land to distribute to serving castes. Ability or lack of ability to allocate land to serving castes results in another distinction between aristocratic and commoner Vellāḷa. Aristocrats have hereditary serving castes (*kudimākkal*) while commoner Vellāḷa must hire members of these serving castes for productive and ritual labour. Once again, the distinction between aristocratic and commoner Vellāḷa is reflected in land use and spatial arrangements of pure and impure serving castes.

Location of serving castes also reflects the notions of purity and impurity. Although the pattern is not as clear as in Tamilnadu, South India, where villages contain caste specific streets and untouchables are segregated into a distinct settlement, there is a general correlation between relative caste status and residential proximity to the aristocratic Vellāḷa areas. Commoner Vellāḷa and *Koviar* areas are adjacent to aristocratic Vellāḷa areas; barbers and washermen live further away; and *Nalavar* untouchables live still further away.

It must be noted that this spatial symbolism (proximate garden land given to pure serving castes vs. distant palmyrah land given to impure serving castes) is irrelevant in the case of pure non-serving castes also resident in Myliddy North. Houses of Carpenters, Blacksmiths, and landowning Karaiyar fishermen adjoin untouchable areas. Carpenters live in palmyrah lands.⁸

8. This spatial separatism is reminiscent of the conundrum reported by David Pocock in "Notes on Jajmani Relationships," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* VI, 1963: "Artisans are considered to be higher than Brahmins or lower than Untouchables." For in Tamilnad, some villages have separate *ceris* for artisans—just as there are separate *ceris* for Untouchables.

Myliiddy Coast, A fishing Village: General Village Structure

Although Jaffna fishing village spatial organization resembles that of the Jaffna agricultural village, spatial symbolism in the two villages reflects important differences in the value orientations of Kariyār Fishermen and Vellālar Landowners.

Myliiddy Coast is one of the near continuous chain of fishing villages along the Jaffna peninsula northern coast.⁹ The eight wards of Myliiddy Coast lie (mainly) seaside of the coastal road. The main settlement—five wards—extends east from a dried creek bed. West of the creek bed are three new wards—colonies from Tirupūr ward. On the other side of the road is another recent settlement, a strip of houses 50-100 feet wide i.e., one to three house compounds wide. South of the landside section is Myliiddy North. Broad lanes run north from the road to the beach.

The area between the lanes is a named ward. Each ward, then, is bounded by the sea, the coastal road, and two lanes. Lanes are about 150 feet apart; the distance from sea to road varies from 500-600 feet. From 50 to 60 families of Kariyār Fishermen live in each ward. One family of Brahmins, two families of Barbers, two families of Washermen, and ten families of Nalavar (untouchable) Labourers also reside in the village. The residential area differs from agricultural villages where compounds (*valavu*) are large, often including garden land (*toṭṭam*) as well as house land (*nilam*) within the cadjan wall, and farmlands (*vial*) surround the house clusters; here, most compounds have just house land within the wall and village area is almost fully settled. There are both ecological and economic reasons for these differences. No crops can grow in the sandy soil seaside of the coastal road. (Several of the richer Fishermen, living landside of the road, have large gardens in their compounds). The economic factor is demand for space in a fishing village. Space within a compound must be left free for salting fish, drying nets, etc.

These wards are loci of kinship, economic, political and religious activities. Intraward marriage is about 65%. Marriages outside the ward but within the village add another 25% and nonlocal marriages the final 10%. As usual in peasant societies, the kinship relation is multi-stranded; kinsmen form economic partnerships with other kinsmen and fight together to protect their interests. Of total number of partnerships (co-owners of boats, contributors of pieces of net to the huge gill-net used with launches), 80% were from the same ward. Fishing boats of the same ward are moored together, distinctly separate from boats of the next ward. Finally, each ward has a shrine within its borders cared for by one of its members. Large temples are also identified with wards.¹⁰ As in the agricultural village, temple support is the only corporate function of the ward; but the ward is the center of kinship, economic, factional, and religious networks.

9. Myliiddy Coast lies between Kankasanturai, on the west, and Palāli, on the east. Both Kankasanturai and Palāli are the termini of direct paved roads to Jaffna town (14 miles south). The network of roads has facilitated the shift to an all-Ceylon market for the daily catch of fishermen. Ice-trucks leaving Myliiddy at dusk arrive in Colombo before the next day's market opens.
10. Turai people hire the *pusari* and contribute to the annual festival of the Kannaki Amman Kovil. The giver of a daily festival during the ten days of the festival is called *upayakkārar*. The *upayakkārar* of the Kannaki festival are almost all people from Turai. By these indices (hiring of *pusari*; contributions to pujas and to annual festival, list of *upayakkārar*), the Murukan (Skanda, Subramaniya) Kovil is identified with Panivu. And the Pilliyar Kovil is identified with the people of Tirupur (mainly the Tevars of Tirupur) and of Palantarai.

In addition to ward nucleation, there is a village nucleus: the village fish market/harbour which is located on a strip of beach between the house compounds and the sea.¹¹ On the day of a good catch, of the three hundred people engaged in the marketing, over half of the buyers are not local residents. The various kinds of fish vendors or middle-men (women carrying head baskets, cycle vendors with an ice-box on the back of the cycle, a few automobile vendors) have no difficulty in passing through the residential area via the broad lanes to reach the harbour. The structure of village lanes facilitates interlocal trade relations; purity seclusion is preserved but not as strictly as in an agricultural village.

The coastal road, the main street of Myliddy, is lined with houses but also vegetableshops, tea boutiques, general stores (groceries, cloth, kerosene, thread, canned food, etc.), toddy booths, an ice factory, and a salt-grinding factory. Unlike Myliddy North, non-locals stop frequently at Myliddy Coast.

Wards, Kinship, and Status Grades

The three principles of caste, kin, and territory do not coincide in the fishing village as they did in the agricultural village. There are two grades of the Fisherman caste: the wealthier Tēvar Karaiyār and the poorer, ordinary (*catāranara*) Karaiyār. Only the Tēvars are identified with founding ancestors (*vari*), Periyamadūtēvan and Verimanikatēvan, reputedly commanders of an invading Cōḷa army. Commoner Karaiyār, said to be descendants of the army's soldiers and workers, have no ancestral name. Here, unlike the agricultural village, several wards are identified with each ancestral name. (Tēvars of Turai and Panivu wards descend from Verimanikatevan; Tēvars of Tirupūr, Palanturai and Kalavai wards descend from Periyamadūtēvan; and ordinary Karaiyār of Tirupūr, Sanitorium, Velveti, and Ampattai wards descend from the soldiers/workers). Note that aristocrats and commoners are not always segregated into separate wards: Tirupūr has both. Further, although grades of the castes (Tēvars and commoners) do not marry, marriage patterns do not neatly follow the system of territorial units. Interward marriage is not forbidden as in the agricultural village. Since all Tēvars are equivalent in blood purity and honour they intermarry irrespective of ward residence. Similarly for commoner Karaiyār. Finally, traditional serving castes, Barbers, Washermen, and untouchable labourers, serve Tēvar ward clusters and not individual wards; commoner Karaiyār hire servants for their rituals.

In short, territorial units in the fishing village do not mirror distinctions of kinship and of grades of caste. Ideas of command, honour, and purity are imperfectly mirrored in spatial arrangement. On the other hand, the Fishermen's mercantile

11. The beach has many uses. Nets are dried and mended along the shore. In the past insufficient area for netcare caused internecine quarrels in Myliddy Coast. Cadjan, thatch sheds (*vāti*) store nets, floats and materials for the salting, icing, and packing of fish. Most Tēvars (see below) fish from seventeen foot inboard launches (*vallam*); the majority of their catch, eleven species of fish, is packed in ice and trucked to Colombo for sale. The fifteen species not marketable in Colombo are separated and sold at the local market. Ordinary Karaiyār (see below) used to be seagoing labourers for the Tevar until 1940 when low-cost nylon nets became available; now, some of them have launches or large catamarans with outboard motors and a good assortment of nets. Since catamaran owners rarely catch enough of any one species to fill an ice-box, they thriftily sell their entire catch at the market.

emphasis (and the lesser valuation of the purity/pollution orientations of seclusion and inaccessibility) is reflected in the market as the focal point of the village and in the broad village lanes which permit easy access to the market and interlocal communication.

*Artisan Towns in the Inland Region*¹²

The mercantile emphasis is even stronger with certain artisan castes: the Acari temple carver, the Taṭṭar goldsmith, the Kaikular Silk Weaver, the Ceniār cotton weaver and the Cantar Oil presser (see Table 2: non-bound mode castes). From the observer's point of view, certain other artisan castes, the Tachar carpenter, the Koḷḷar blacksmith, and the Kusavar potter, were traditionally more involved in the Landowner network of relationships than the Temple Carver, Goldsmith, Silk Weaver, Cotton Weaver, and Oil Presser: I shall refer to the former as local artisans, and to the latter as a-local artisans i.e., local vs. local-plus-wider distribution of products. The local artisans are found in many Landowner and Fisherman dominated villages and in rural towns and Jaffna City. The a-local artisans are found in several unicast villages, rural towns and in Jaffna City. It is, in fact the artisans (local and a-local) plus shopkeepers (from various castes and Muslims) and priests (Brahmins and Saiva Kurukkals of several castes) who inhabit the rural inner town (cf. the usage of *inner city* in the United States.)

The inner town is easy to locate in the Jaffna Peninsula rural areas. Most Jaffna roads, paved only within the past thirty years, followed cart routes connecting market/temple towns. Artisan castes live within an imaginary circle, perhaps a half mile in diameter, the center of which is the market/temple complex at the intersection of two paved roads. Beyond this circle are the Landowner villages.

While fishing village lanes facilitate interlocal trade, the inner town maximizes it, providing a status free, neutral meeting place for buyers and sellers of different castes. In the inner town there is always a vegetable and fish bazaar, and dozens of

12. This Inland Region did not receive an intensive study as the coastal region (where Myliddy North and Myliddy Coast are located). Myliddy Coast was the base of my empirical research for eighteen months. While I did a complete census of three wards of the fishing village, Myliddy Coast, and a partially informant-aided census of the agricultural village, Myliddy North, I did no systematic census of the inland region. I interviewed at least five members of each caste of artisans. In the Inland Region, I know what caste lives where, but not exactly how many members in each caste, data desirable mainly in regard to the artisan caste, the Kaikular weavers, who are locally dominant in Kalviankadu.

I will give a very rough estimate of the number of households of various artisan castes in the Inland Region villages of:

	Nallūr	Ōtamataṁ	Kalviankatu
Acari			
Icon Carver	3	—	—
Tattar			
Goldsmith	20	6	—
Tachar/Koḷḷar			
Carpenter/Blacksmith	30	15	10
Kaikular			
Silk Weaver	—	—	70
Cantar			
Oilpressor	—	20	—
Kusavar			
Potter			

shops: hardware stores, bookstores, cloth stores, oil stores, tea cafes, barber shops, laundries, buttermilk and curd shops. The Temple Carver works at home. The Goldsmith generally deals from his home except in Jaffna City where there is a whole row of jewelry shops on one street. Blacksmiths and carpenters sometimes have their workshops within their house compound. Within the last twenty years, large lumberyard (carpenter) establishments and car repair (blacksmith) establishments have appeared. 'Petrol sheds' have also appeared. Every major rural market town except Cunnakam supports a major temple; but Cunnakam has a number of medium size temples. By major temple I mean a large, revered, antique, well-endowed temple built according to *Akamic* scriptures with an annual festival lasting at least ten days. The temple, located at or very near the crossroads, is an inter-regional trade center during the festival; distant traders profit by the huge crowds assembled there.

Wards, Kinship, and Status Grades; Serving Castes

First, there is nothing of the Landowner style (status oriented) ward arrangement within this vague circle of artisan residence. There is no tradition of auspicious, founding ancestors identified with wards as in Landowner villages. Several wealthy Silk Weavers told me, separately, that four different ancestors founded their ward. This non-consensual imitation of an attribute of status was also attempted by the lower grades of Landowners in Myliddy North; anyone can learn the names of recognized founding settlers in two widely circulated publications, the *Yalpāna Vaipava Malai*, and the *Yalpāna Kaumuti*.

In which, the Landowner spatial pattern of master and servants, the clean serving caste living in the master's ward and untouchable serving castes living between the wards is not found in the artisan areas. There are no bounded wards; residents use the word *kuricci* as 'my neighbourhood' is used in the United States: an ego-centered designation for the vicinity around one's house. Certainly there are clusters of houses of one caste of artisans. But houses of another caste are side by side. Purity seclusion is not spatially represented. There may or may not be resident barbers, washermen, Nalavai labourers and Paraiyar drummers. There certainly never were resident Koviār domestics. Artisans *hire* serving castes for secular or ritual jobs; they do not have hereditary relationships with serving castes.

Third, unlike the Landowner pattern of ward temples, in the artisan areas temples are mainly associated with one artisan caste. But other castes pay for some ceremonies of the temple's annual festival. For example, the Oil Presse caste owns a *Pilliyar* (*Ganēsha*, *Ganapati*: the elephant God) temple in Ōiamatam. But the list of *upayak-kārar* (givers of festivals) includes a Goldsmith, the Potters (as a whole), and a wealthy Blacksmith.

In summary, artisan spatial organization is an even stronger expression of a mercantile normative order than that found in Fisherman villages. Caste categories do not dictate the arrangement of houses and shops. Rather, the impersonal, instrumental market/temple area, located at a crossroads, maximizes outsiders' access to the market. Arrangement of space in terms of kinship and intra-or intercaste status is perhaps not minimal but is not very important.

PART II: Modes of Intercaste Relations: Bound and Nonbound Mode Relations

In part I, I described one kind of social action, the organization of village space. In Part II, I shall outline two distinct modes of intercaste conduct, bound and non-bound relationships, which correspond to differences in spatial organization in the three villages.

Present views on South Asian rural social structure are synecdochic, the part standing for the whole, in that most studies are of multi-caste, agricultural villages dominated by landowning castes.¹³ A stereotype of rural social and cultural structure has emerged from this inexhaustive sample: the locus of organization in agricultural villages is typically a dominant landowning caste of fairly high religious status. The dominant caste in an agricultural village has diffuse or multicontextual relationships with each of its traditional serving castes: roles of hierarchical reciprocity are played in the contexts (which analysts label) economic exchanges, ritual exchanges, and political exchanges.

These economic relations were, however, only one aspect of the multiple relations which linked the different caste households in the Indian village. For instance, the hereditary relationship between a Peasant master and his Untouchable labourers operated not only in the economic but also in the political and ritual spheres. If an Untouchable was involved in a dispute with another, whether Untouchable or not, his Peasant master had to come to his support. Similarly, the Untouchable allied himself with his Peasant master in disputes. He was expected to fight for the latter, even against Untouchables aligned with other Peasants in conflict with his own master. Perhaps even more important, the Untouchable had to perform a number of ritual services for his Peasant master, such as carrying a torch ahead of a funeral procession from his master's household. These different types of relations—political, economic, and ritual—reinforced each other and in turn helped to insure the stability of the Indian peasant economies.¹⁴

This type of intercaste relationship, which has been reported from many regions in South Asia, is often called the *jajmāni* relationship.

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13. Bernard S. Cohn, "The Changing Status of a Depressed Caste," In McKim Marriott (ed.), *Village India*, Chicago, 1955; McKim Marriott, *Caste Ranking and Community Structure in Five Regions of India and Pakistan*, Deccan College Monograph Series No. 23, Poona, 1960.
M. E. Opler and R. D. Singh, "Two Villages in Eastern Uttar Pradesh (U. P.) India," *American Anthropologist*, 1952, LIV.
Frederick G. Bailey, *Tribe, Caste and Nation*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1960.
Adrian C. Mayer, *Caste and Kinship in Central India*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.
 - K. S. Mathur, *Caste and Ritual in a Malwa Village*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1964.
E. Kathleen Gough, "Caste in a Tanjore Village," In E. R. Leach (ed.), *Aspects of Caste in India, Ceylon, and Northwest Pakistan*, Cambridge: C.U.P., 1960.
 - D. N. Majumdar, *Caste and Communication in an Indian Village*, Bombay, 1958.
 14. T. Scarlett Epstein, "Efficiency and Systems of Reward in Rural South India," In R. Firth (ed.), *Themes in Economic Anthropology*, A.S.A. Monograph No. 6, Tavistock, second impression, 1970, pp. 232-233.

In addition to the *jajmāni* relationship, authors have called attention to the more particularistic, contractual relations between artisan and fishing castes and all other castes. Epstein classifies two types of inter-caste relationships in terms of mode of reward, duration of service, and regularity of demand.¹⁵

Thus in Mysore in South India I found two types of hereditary link in the villages: one between Peasant masters and their Untouchable labourers, the other between Peasants and certain functionary castes, such as washerman, barber and blacksmith, whose services were continually required. Village craftsmen, such as the goldsmith and potter, whose services were not in regular demand, had no hereditary relationship with Peasant caste households; they were not rewarded annually, but rather on the occasions when their services were required.¹⁶

Wiser distinguishes intercaste relationships in terms of recruitment: "those who serve some" and "those who serve all" (in the former the religious status of the other caste is relevant to recruitment to the relationship, and in the latter the religious status of the other caste is irrelevant).¹⁷ Pocock elaborates on Wiser's distinction in terms of the purity/impurity dichotomy. Some occupations, "those who provide a service", such as barber and washerman, are a direct reflection of the underlying value purity/impurity. Other occupations, "those who provide a commodity", are but an extension of the same value.¹⁸

Certainly, it is an empirical question to determine the variations in the structural positions of the various castes in a region, the variations even within one village locality. In this section I report two polar modalities of intercaste relationships and mixed modes, that is, deviations from the two modes. Each mode comprises a set of options from seven pattern variables. A mixed mode is an ordered transformation in that the set of pattern variables includes some options from the opposite mode.¹⁹ That is, the Landowner, the Priest, the Barber, and the Untouchable all have intercaste relationships of the status mode; the a-local artisans such as Goldsmith, Temple Carver, Weaver, and Oil Presser, and fishing castes such as Mukkiyar and Timilar have intercaste relationships of the opposite polar mode, the contractual mode. Local artisans such as Blacksmith, Carpenter, and Potter, and the dominant fishing caste, the Karaiyār, have relationships which combine options from both modes.

Structure of Relations between Castes in an Agricultural Village: the Bound Mode

In Jaffna agricultural villages there is a highly uniform structure of intercaste

15. *Ibid*, p. 233, 234.

16. *Ibid*, p. 232.

17. William H. Wiser, *The Hindu Jajmani System*, Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House, 1936.

18. David Pocock, "Notes on Jajmani Relationships," *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 1962, VI. "Those who provide a service" is similar to Wiser's "Those who serve some." "Those who provide a commodity" is similar to Wiser's "Those who serve all."

19. Let pattern variables A, B, and C each have options 1 and 2. Then one mode is defined as A₁, B₁, and C₁ while the opposite mode is defined as A₂, B₂, and C₂. A mixed mode might be defined as A₁, B₁, and C₂.

relations between the dominant²⁰ Landowner caste and the serving castes. I follow the local category and call this mode of relations the bound mode (*kaṭṭupāṭu*: from *kaṭṭu* meaning "to tie, to bind") The Jaffna equivalent of the North Indian *jajmāni/kumin* distinction is *nainar/kuṭimākkal*. *Nainar* is a Telugu word adopted for master or lord. *Kuṭimākkal* means people (*mākkal*) of the house (*kuṭi*). Individuals are referred to as son/daughter of the house (*kuṭimakan/kuṭimakal*); they are addressed as younger brother/younger sister (*tampi/taṅkacci*). Note that a man often addresses his real son/daughter as *tampit/taṅkacci*. This usage is telling: a master is engaged in bound mode relations with both his children and with his people of the house.

In the agricultural village the landowner caste is *nainar*. The *kuṭimākkal* are the Brahmin (priest), Koviār (domestic servants, factotum), Ampaṭṭar (barber), Vaṅṅar (washerman), Paḷḷar and Nalavar (agricultural labourer), and Pariyar (drummer, remover of excrement).

I shall now give a brief account of the empirical characteristics of the bound mode of relationships observed between the dominant landowning caste and the serving caste with the following seven pattern variables.

(a) *Recruitment*. Recruitment to a bound relationship is perhaps a misnomer. The relationship exists due to the relative social categories identified with individuals at birth. One man is born to Landowner parents; another man is born to Barber parents: the relationship exists between them without voluntary contract.

(b) *Time*. The relationship is long-lasting, frequently hereditary.

(c) *Space*. The relationship is restricted in locality. Most relations take place in one's ward and in designated wards of adjacent villages. Spatial definition implies both proximity and categorical restriction, that is, wards within a village.

(d) *Clientele*. The relationship is restricted to certain categories of people, that is, landowners of a specific status grade who occupy a specific ward. The specifications are honour-cum-dominance and purity/impurity.

(e) *Pricing mechanism: traditional price—mode or media of exchange*. The relationship is compensated by a traditional pricing mechanism. Harper wishes to distinguish between payment in produce and payment in cash.²¹ I would argue that the price-fixing mechanism is more relevant than the media of exchange. There is no bargaining between the dominant caste and the serving castes. The major payments, whether in produce or in kind, are observably related to the agricultural cycle, payments occurring with some small ceremony between employer and employee. Unit jobs with unit compensations also can occur without ceremonial. In my view, price-

20. 'Dominance' is a descriptive, not analytic, term. Srinivas' various definitions include factors of numbers, economic and political power, relatively high religious status, and landownership. (See "Social System in a Mysore Village," In McKim Marriott (ed.), *Village India*, Chicago, 1955 and *Social Change in Modern India*, Berkeley, 1966, p. 10). Dumont and Pocock emphasize the dominant caste's influence in regulating, life-styles of other castes. ("Village Studies," *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 1957, I) By excluding the landownership requirement, this descriptive term aptly covers cases of locally dominant fisher and artisan castes.

21. Edward B. Harper, "Two Systems of Economic Exchange in Village India," *American Anthropologist*, 1969, 61.

fixing for service by fiat (lack of bargaining), redistribution, and cyclical, ceremonialized compensation are the important indices of "traditional price mechanism" rather than payment in produce versus payment in cash.

(f) *Context of relationship.* The relationship, although localized in the village, is *multicontextual*. Although actors would not necessarily make the distinction—they tend to think of roles played in economic, political, and ritual contexts as part of one, undifferentiated relationship—the observer notes roles played in analytically separable *contexts*.

(g) *Vector of relationship.* The exchange between two castes in a bound relationship is asymmetrical within each context of the multicontextual relationship. A Landowner will *require* the Brahmin and Barber to support his faction; the Brahmin and Barber *petition* the Landowner to intervene for them in time of trouble. The Brahmin gives cooked food to the Landowner and Barber; the Brahmin will not accept cooked food from either. Similarly, the Landowner gives cooked food to the Barber but will not accept cooked food from him. The Landowner receives and pays for the services of the Brahmin and Barber, but he will neither work for nor accept pay from either caste. Thus, there is asymmetry in each context of exchange.

F. Barth uses the term *status summation* to characterize the involute structure of relationships in a caste system.²² In most cases there is a constant direction of asymmetry of exchanges between Landowner and his serving castes. The Landowner is superior to the Barber in ritual, economic, and political exchanges. This situation may be termed *status summation*. But between the Landowner and Brahmin Priest, the direction of asymmetry is not constant: the Landowner is inferior to the Brahmin in ritual exchanges although superior in other respects. Since the two pattern variables cover more cases, I thus use two terms (bound relationship as multicontextual and bound relationship as asymmetrical within each context) in preference to the previously used single term "status summation."

Nonbound Relationships: Empirical Generalizations

The data that I collected in an agricultural village in northern Ceylon agrees well with the above empirical model. Northern Ceylon—like the rest of rural South Asia—is not composed only of agricultural villages, but also of fishing villages and artisan villages (and rural towns). A strongly contrasting mode of traditional intercaste relationships obtains between artisans and fishermen on the one hand, and other castes: nonbound relationships (*ishtamāna totarpu*). Using the same pattern variables as above the empirical characteristics of the *non-bound relationship* are as follows:

(a) *Recruitment.* Recruitment to a nonbound relationship is voluntary between individuals.

(b) *Time.* The nonbound relationship is of no set duration. Each transaction (for example, buying fish or cloth) lasts but a few minutes. A man may trade with many fishsellers or become friendly with a particular fishseller and buy only from him. He is not bound to buy from any of them.

22. Fredrik Barth, "The System of Social Stratification in Swat, North Pakistan," In E. R. Leach (ed.), *Aspects of Caste in India, Ceylon, and Northwest Pakistan*, Cambridge: C.U.P., 1960.

(c) *Space*. A nonbound relationship is *not restricted or defined* in terms of locality. Market centres may be within a man's village of residence, but many items are available only beyond the village. Availability of items and their relative price, rather than any categorical restriction, determine the locality in which they will be bought.

(d) *Clientele*. The nonbound relationship is *not restricted to certain categories of people*. W. H. Wiser distinguishes between castes which serve only some other castes (in my terminology, bound relationships, such as the Barber who will not cut the hair of an Untouchable) and those who serve all (my nonbound relationships, such as the Potter who sells pots to all customers).²³ I accept Wiser's formula except I would not say that the Potter serves all but rather trades with all. Service and work have a particular demeaning connotation not current to the same degree in the West. In any case, one index of the non-bound relationship is that the client's ability to pay is the relevant criterion for the occurrence or non-occurrence of the transaction, not any hierarchical value.

(e) *Pricing mechanism*. Commodity transaction is governed by a *contingent* (supply-and-demand) pricing mechanism rather than by any *fixed* (traditional) compensation. Prices may fluctuate irrespective of the medium. Barter was rare in 1968, but some people still exchanged rice for fish. When fish are scarce, more rice is given for the same amount of fish. Further, payments are made at the time of the exchange; there is no periodic large-scale payment as occurs in bound mode relationships. Finally, payment is not the occasion for any ceremonial.

(f) *Context of relationship*. The nonbound relationship is *mainly unincontextual*. Buyer and seller meet only in the economic context.²⁴ This economic transaction does not imply interaction in ritual or political contexts. There is some ambiguity on this point concerning service of an artisan to a temple and in life cycle rituals. Note, however, that in the limiting case, the nonbound relationship is zero-contextual as in the case where goods are sold through a middleman: producer and consumer have no contact at all.

(g) *Vector of relationship*. With nonbound relationships, each exchange is symmetrical. Normally, buyer and seller meet on neutral ground, the market. A buyer of higher rank than the seller cannot command the seller, nor can the buyer of rank lower than the seller be commanded by the seller in the marketplace. Bargaining is antithetical to hierarchy.

Summary: Modes of intercaste relations and transformation of modes.

The differences between bound and nonbound relationships are summarized in Table 1.

23. William H. Wiser, *The Hindu Jajmani System*, Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House, 1936.
24. Differences in the modes of relationships are illustrated by the attendance at a Landowner caste wedding. The Barber is a bound servant of the Landowner. The Barber must attend and perform various duties such as carrying a torch in the wedding procession. Indeed, the Landowner is *declassé* if he does not have this hereditary servant at the wedding. By contrast, a Goldsmith cannot be commanded to attend the wedding, even the Goldsmith man who performed the prewedding ritual of melting the gold to be used in the wedding necklace (*tāli*). Similarly, a man of the Oil Monger caste, i.e. another artisan caste, was not commanded to attend but rather invited to attend for purely personal reasons: his shop was adjacent to that of the Landowner's brother.

Table 1
Summary of Characteristics of Bound
and Non Bound Relationships

Pattern	<i>Variables Modes Bound Relationships</i>	<i>Nonbound Relationships</i>
Time	Long-lasting, often hereditary	No set duration
Space	Restricted or defined in terms of locality	Not restricted or defined in terms of locality
Clientele	Restricted to certain categories of people	Client's ability to pay for the commodity is the only criterion
Pricing Mechanism	'Traditional' (fixed) pricing; periodic payments with ceremony	Supply-and-demand (contingent) pricing; payment on delivery of commodity; no ceremony
Context	Multicontextual: roles played between a given dyad in economic, ritual and political contexts	Mainly unicontextual: only economic transactions between a given dyad
Vector	Asymmetrical exchanges; hierarchical reciprocity	Symmetrical exchanges: non-hierarchical reciprocity

Although castes primarily engaged in bound mode relations are sometimes called bound castes (*Kaṭṭupātu cāti*) and castes primarily engaged in nonbound mode relations are sometimes called free-willing castes (*ishtamāna cāti*), there is no neat classification of bound mode castes versus nonbound mode castes. That is, artisans always are engaged (allocating their time and resources) in nonbound (*ishtamāna*) relationships. Agriculturists and their serving castes only predominantly are engaged in bound (*kaṭṭupātu*) relationships since they must interact frequently with artisans and fishermen in nonbound relationships.

In sum, bound and nonbound relationships are variations in social structure occurring within one society, rural Jaffna. I speak of the variations as polar modalities. Each mode is a cluster of interrelated empirical characteristics.

In the agricultural sphere there are deviations from the bound mode: the relationships *between* serving castes are not as systematically asymmetrical nor multicontextual as those between the dominant landowner and each of the serving castes. In the mercantile sphere, some artisan castes²⁵ have relationships more conditioned by locality, expectation of duration, and tendency towards a fixed clientele than other artisans. Note that the deviations from the bound mode are in the direction of the options of the nonbound mode; deviations from the nonbound mode are in the direction of the bound mode.

25. Local artisans: Blacksmiths, Carpenters, and Potters. See Table 2.

Table 2

Castes of Jaffna: traditional designations, tradition occupation, and mode
(bound/nonbound) of intercaste relationship

I Caste Name	II Other designation		III Traditional Occupation
	Aryan	Dravidian	
Bound Mode castes: priests and castes of the agricultural sector			
Brahmin ^a	Brahmin	Pārpar, Antanar	Temple Priest
Saiva Kurukkal ^a		Pārpar, Antanar	Temple Priest
Vellālar ^a	Sudra	Marutam	Landowner
Koviar ^a		Idaiyar, Mullai	Herder, Domestic Servant
Vannar ^c		Kattati (exercist: sergeant-at-arms)	Washerman
Ampattar ^c		Parikarid (surgeon)	Barber
Pallar ^c			Agricultural Labourer
Nallavar ^c			Agricultural and Fishing Labourer; Toddy Tapper
Paraiyar ^c		Muppar, Valluvan	Funeral Drummer; Weaver; sanitation
Tirumpar ^c			Washerman for Pallar and Nallavar
Nonbound mode castes: merchants and alocal artisans			
Saiva Chetty ^a	Vaisya		Merchant
Acari ^b		Visvabrahman	Temple Carver
Taṭṭar		Visvabrahman	Goldsmith
Kaikular ^b	Vaisya	Cenkuntar Mutaliyar	Silk Weaver
Ceniar ^b	Vaisya	Vanikar	Cotton Weaver
Cantar ^b	Vaisya	Vanikar	Oil Presser
Mukkiyar ^b		Neytal	Fisherman
Tamilar ^b		Neytal	Fisherman
Mixed mode castes: primarily bound mode			
Pantaram ^b	Lingayat		Temple Cook and Assistant to Priest
Nattuvar ^b		Isai (music) Vellalar	Auspicious Musician
Mixed mode castes: primarily nonbound mode: fishermen and local artisans			
Karaiyar ^b	Kshatriya	Neytal	Traders, Fishermen, Landowner
Tachar ^b		Visvabrahman	Carpenter
Kollar ^b		Visvabrahman	Blacksmith
Kusavar ^b	Brahma		Potter

Notes: (a) *uyirnda cati*—high caste (b) *nalla cati*—good caste;
(c) *korenja cati*—low caste

This social structural analysis relates to the spatial data in Part I in that bound relationships occur in agricultural villages and nonbound relationships occur in fishing villages and artisan towns. The variant modes of intercaste relations are complemented by variants in normative structure, to which I now turn.

Part III: Normative Analysis

Every cultural symbol is an indigenous theory of reality for members of that society: regularities in phenomena are codified by symbols, and orientations for action are provided by the symbol. For actors, a cultural symbol is a descriptive theory (code of conduct) and a prescriptive theory (code for conduct) of the *phenomena* it is arbitrarily identified with by the culture. Bound and nonbound mode relationships are two contrary modes of *behavioural phenomena*. Previous sociological descriptions of types of intercaste behaviour by Epstein, Wiser, and Pocock, among others, did not explore the possibility that the modes of intercaste relations might be prescribed by distinct, contrary codes for intercaste conduct. That is, the two modes of relations might result from different value orientations, the implementation of different norms into action.

After months of interviews and observations of disputes concerning actors engaged in the two modes of relationship, I elicited two separate indigenous theories, two contrary normative schemes by means of which actors oriented themselves to the action of others (code of conduct) and with which they guided their own conduct (code for conduct). Each scheme is composed of a discrete set of indigenous symbols. The meanings of the symbols in each set are integrated: the code prescribed by each symbol in the set is compatible with the codes prescribed by the other symbols in the set; each set yields an internally consistent orientation to action. However, the meanings of symbols in one set are not compatible with the meanings of symbols in the other set: the meanings are contrary. An actor cannot follow both scheme in the same transaction.

Space does not permit me to relate anecdotes of disputes which illustrate that actors follow the code for conduct prescribed by the aristocratic scheme when engaged in the bound mode of relationship and that actors follow the code of conduct prescribed by the mercantile scheme when engaged in the nonbound mode of relationship, nor to describe ranking data which show that a third normative scheme, the priestly scheme, is a code for conduct both for actors engaged in bound mode and for actors engaged in nonbound mode relationships.

Normative Schema

The aristocratic scheme enjoins a code for conduct of enduring, diffuse, hierarchical, solidary relationships between units (castes).²⁶ The set of symbols comprising the *aristocratic scheme* are *paṭṭam* (titles); *urimai* (non-negotiable right of master and servant to service and remuneration); *kauravam* (honour); *maraiyātai* (respect and limitation, that is, preserving honour); *vāram* (command in the specific sense of the giving of a power to a subordinate); *aṇumati* (command in the sense of giving permission for action to take place); *āṭarm* (mutual support); and *varicai* (mutual

26. This description builds from David Schneider's notion of the code for conduct between kinsmen in American culture: enduring, diffuse, solidarity. David Schneider, *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1968.

definition of status). The *mercantile scheme* enjoins a code for conduct of temporary, specific, equivalent, mutually manipulative relationships between units (individuals). The set of symbols comprising the mercantile scheme are *ulaippu* (profit and manipulation); *cantōcam* (mutual satisfaction); *nītam* (fair-dealing); *keṭṭikkārar* (individual skill, cleverness, and achievement); and *upakāram* (specific aid). The *priestly scheme* enjoins a code for conduct of hierarchical separation between units (castes). Separation should be hierarchically ordered in terms of the religious principles pure/impure: a place for everyone and everyone in his place. The symbols of this set are *ācaram* (purity) and *tiṭṭu* (pollution).

Intercaste relationship (*totarpu*) in the aristocratic scheme is strongly conditioned by the category of birth of the actors. The category of birth (*cāti*: caste) provides the limits (*maraiyātaikul*) for potential interaction, the general rules (*murai*) for the interaction. The hierarchical aspect of relationships in the aristocratic scheme is described by villagers as respect (*mariyātai*), the deference shown the superior by the inferior. In many gestures of etiquette between the superior and the inferior, the superior always gives (food, money, and so forth), while the inferior always receives and serves. The superior is held always to command and to give permission for action to take place (*aṇumati*). In fact, the inferior is not without some influence since he may feign to withdraw from stratifying interaction, but the inferior never directly commands activity to take place.

The mutual, or solidary, aspect of relationships in the aristocratic scheme is further exemplified by the norms of *varicai* (symbol of status) and *ātaram* (mutual support). The term *varicai* is a cognitive shorthand to a social phenomenon: intracaste ranks of bound mode castes, are, in part, defined by the existence of relationships between master and servant and by the intracaste rank and behaviour of the other party.²⁷ The term *ātaram* refers to the right to expect aid from the other in happy times and support from the other in troubled times. In sum, the aristocratic scheme is used by villagers to describe conduct of and prescribe conduct for bound relationships.

The norms emphasized in the mercantile scheme are the code of conduct and the code for conduct of nonbound relationships. In this scheme, the relationship is not strongly conditioned by the category of birth of the actors. With the customary symbolic value of many commodities, every Tamil buys gold, cloth, and oil at some time during his life. Trading of these commodities is guided by non-hierarchical norms, *nītam* (fair play) and *cantōcam* (mutual satisfaction). Non-hierarchy does not exactly mean equality, but rather balance, equilibrium, lack of inequality or partiality: these latter meanings are connotations of the terms *nītam* and *cantōcam*. These notions have no place in the aristocratic scheme, where the superior rules by fiat and the inferior's satisfaction is obligatory. Furthermore, in place of the absolute, ascriptive, categorical value of respect (*maraiyātai*), the mercantile scheme stresses the prestige of cleverness (*keṭṭikkārar*). A *keṭṭikkārar* is a man who is clever and able to prove that fact experimentally, for example, that he is a skillful craftsman, an adroit fisherman. This aspect of individual achievement is also seen in the emphasis

27. In eighteenth-century English comedies of manners, the butler of a highly placed lord scorns the butler of a lord of lower state. In Jaffna, the Barber of titled Landowner will neither dine nor marry with a Barber of an untitled, albeit wealthy, Landowner.

on effort and industry (*ulaippu*). Finally, in place of the aristocratic norm of diffuse, mutual aid (*ataram*), this mercantile normative scheme enjoins specific, unit acts of help (*upakāram*).

Put another way, the code for conduct embodied in the *aristocratic* scheme is that of *hierarchical amity*: diffuse, enduring, hierarchical solidarity. The *mercantile* code for conduct is exactly the opposite, *hierarchical instrumentality*: non-diffuse, non-enduring, non-hierarchical, non-solidarity. Since relations between castes usually are characterized in terms of ritual distance, the notion of castes behaving toward each other with hierarchical amity gives a different focus to the relationship. True, relative purity of different castes is a feature of the system, but this difference in terms of ritual purity does not prevent an intense (diffuse, enduring, solidary) relationship. Hierarchical amity is a foreign notion in Western class society, where ranked classes are seen (in Marxist theory) as being in antagonistic relation. In Jaffna caste society, the antagonistic, or, at least, manipulative relation—which is euphemized as *can-tōcam*, mutual satisfaction—is associated with the non-hierarchical relation in the mercantile scheme. Specific, temporary, manipulative dealing is associated with equivalent position between the transacting parties.

Actors' Choice of Appropriate Normative Scheme

By means of terms for classifying social relations, the villagers do know when to follow the code for conduct prescribed by the aristocratic scheme and when to follow the code for conduct prescribed by the mercantile scheme. Castes engaged in bound mode relations, *kaṭṭupāṭu totarpu*, are either high caste (*uytrnda cāti*) or low caste (*korenjā cāti*); castes engaged in nonbound mode relations, *ishtamāna totarpu*, are good caste (*nalla cāti*). (See Table 2). When the aristocratic scheme is in effect, actors say that they are connected, that there is *koṇṭāṭṭam* between the units: my description of the bound relation details what they mean by *koṇṭāṭṭam*. When the mercantile scheme is in effect, actors say that there is no connection, (*koṇṭāṭṭam illai*) between the units: my description of the nonbound relation details what they mean by *koṇṭāṭṭam illai*. These indigenous classification of units (castes) and modes of relations between units permit consistent *value orientations* to the different normative scheme, that is, *translation of norms into action*.

Part IV : Value-Orientation Analysis

Having dealt with spatial organization, social structural analysis, and normative analysis in the preceding Parts, I now recapitulate the three studies. In Part IV, spatial data from the three villages demonstrates the value-orientations of bound mode and nonbound mode castes. Differences in commitment to the priestly, aristocratic, and mercantile normative schemes is represented spatially in the three villages.

General Village Structure

Named, nucleated wards permit separate loci for economic, ritual and political activity i.e. for (aristocratic scheme) command of serving castes and separate areas for different status grades (priestly scheme): intralocal orientations. A village nucleus (market) permits an interlocal, trade orientation (mercantile scheme). Narrow, twisting village lanes emphasize purity seclusion (priestly scheme). Wide, straight lanes or crossroads permit impersonal market transaction (mercantile scheme).

Figure 1: General Village Structure Variations

<i>Features</i>	<i>Agricultural village</i>	<i>Fishing village</i>	<i>Artisan town</i>
(a) named, nucleated, noncorporate wards	+	+	—
(b) wards a locus for economic, ritual, and political activity	+	+	—
(c) lanes or roads arranged to emphasize seclusion/permit trade	+	—	—
(d) nonnucleated village/market nucleus	+	—	—

Key: + means feature is present; — means feature is absent (a & b)

+ means first feature is present; — means second feature is present (c & d).

Correlation of Territory with Kinship and Grades with the Caste

Both Landowners and Fishermen have a dual division: aristocrats/commoners: Big/Little Vellāḷa; Tēvar Karaiyār/Karaiyār. Artisans have no division. Maximal orientation to the aristocratic and priestly schemes occurs in the agricultural village where each territorial unit (ward) is identified with a founding ancestor name (*vari*) since this kinship designation implies gradation of aristocratic honour and blood purity: interward marriage is not permitted. Lesser orientation to the same schemes occurs in the fishing village where sets of wards are identified by the same founding ancestor name and interward marriage is permitted. That Periyānadu Tēvar and Verimanika Tēvar were brothers allows a reference for village togetherness and a status diacritical feature: Tēvars (titled lords) are distinguished from ordinary Karaiyar. But note the reduction of the hierarchical value. Instead of separate lords identified with wards (as in the agricultural village), the fishermen's original settler story uses a metaphor (older brother/young brother) connoting a far lessor degree of inequality: relative age instead of relative rank.²⁸ All aristocrats of same or different ward may marry and all commoners of same or different ward may marry. Aristocrats do not marry commoners. In short, grades of a caste are not homologous with territorial segmentation. In the artisan case, there are no recognizable wards. Homologies between segmentary systems of categories of land, natural subsistence, and purity imply orientation to aristocratic and priestly schemes; lack of homology implies orientation to the non-local norms of the mercantile scheme.²⁹

28. Relative age is a sub-set within relative rank: judgements made by relative rank are modified by the judgement of relative age. For example, a Landowner treats an elderly Untouchable less severely than an Untouchable youth.

29. The homology between divisions of territory, kinship, and rank status may be an important characteristic of peasant societies in general. Note that the central governments of both the Chinese Peoples Republic and of Taiwan secured their position by destroying the territorial units and the kin connections of the entrenched peasant elite. Bernard Gallin: personal communication.

Figure 2: Variations in Homologies

<i>Features</i>	<i>Agricultural village</i>	<i>Fishing village</i>	<i>Artisan town</i>
Dual division	+	+	—
Homology between principles of segmentation	+	—	—
Imperfect homology between principles of segmentation	—	+	—
No homology between principles of segmentation	—	—	+

Key: + means feature is present; — means feature is absent.

Spatial arrangements with regard to serving castes

Serving castes are either a birthright of aristocrats or hired help for commoners. Aristocrats are distinguished from commoners in that it is an "attribute of honour" (*kaurava varisai*) to have serving castes settled in your land. Priestly norms are stressed by the relative proximity of pure/impure serving castes from the houses of aristocrats and commoners: this is the residential separation of the pure from the impure. As with founding ancestor names, servants may be attached to specific wards or to sets of wards. Servants of masters residing in different wares may or may not intermarry.

Figure 3: Variations in Placement of Serving Castes

<i>Paired features</i>	<i>Agricultural village</i>	<i>Fishing village</i>	<i>Artisan town</i>
(a) resident, hereditary serving castes/hired serving castes	+	+	—
(b) ward specific clean serving castes/clean serving castes connected with sets of wards	+	—	ϕ
(c) no intermarriage/intermarriage between ward specific serving castes	+	—	ϕ

Key: + means presence of first feature
— means presence of second feature
ϕ means absence of both features

Part V : Conclusions

The Recognition of Ordered Diversity in Rural Social, Cultural, and Spatial Structures

Accounts of traditional structure by missionaries, British administrators (Thurston, Grooke, O'Malley, etc.) and of Anthropologists until, shall we say, the Second World War, present a picture of seemingly limitless diversity. Notwithstanding notable exceptions—figures such as Bougie, Hocart, Hutton, Ghurye, whose pioneering

work on systems of thought and action demands our attention—the literature is generally composed of discrete ethnographic accounts. The observations became more and more sophisticated and detailed as time went on.

After the Second World War, Anthropologists appear to have lost their tolerance for unstructured diversity. Dominant or encompassing features of traditional structure received relentless attention while subdominant features were understressed. A dominant feature of rural social structure is the *jajmāni* system, a redistributive system ruled by a dominant landowning caste. Another dominant feature—more so in South India and Sri Lanka than elsewhere—is an homology between the three principles of territory, kin, and caste in village social structure. That is, the segmentation of territorial units is homologous with segmentation of kin units and with the segmentation of hierarchically graded castes or grades of castes. In cases such as the Pramalai Kallar agriculturalists of Madurai district, Tamilnad, where rules of descent (patrilineal) and post-marital residence (patrilocal) are “harmonic,” the homology approaches empirical fact. With Jaffna agriculturalists, where rules of descent (patrilineal) and post-marital residence (bilocal) are “disharmonic,” kin units are dispersed and the homology is a culturally shared fiction. (see above, p. 20).

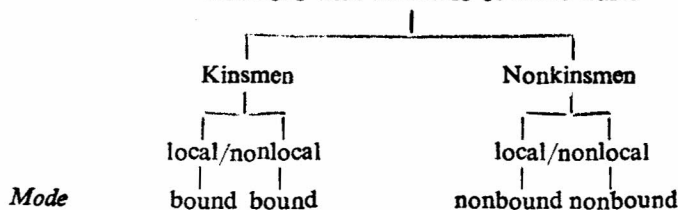
The problem with these characterizations is that diversity is sacrificed for the sake of order, for they derive from a collective methodological bias: traditional Hindu village India, as currently studied, is effectively village agricultural India. By studying fishing and artisan communities, an ordered diversity of spatial, social, and cultural structures appears. Transformations of spatial and social structure can be predicted from differential commitment to the priestly, aristocratic, and mercantile normative schemes by the castes of Jaffna.

As seen in Part IV, priestly, aristocratic, and mercantile ideas are represented spatially. For example, the relations between the principles of caste, kin and territory vary from village to village in Jaffna. Commitment to the aristocratic and priestly schemes in agricultural village structure results in an homology between these three principles. Commitment to the mercantile and priestly schemes in artisan towns destroys the homology. Commitment to all three schemes in fishing villages blurs the homology.

Similarly, differential commitment to the three normative schemes by the various castes of Jaffna yields a different distribution of the two modes of conduct, the bound and nonbound modes. These distributions can be charted with the same structural principles used to distinguish village structures: caste, kin, and territory.

Regarding relations with members of the same caste, distribution of bound/nonbound mode relations is the same for all castes. There is a partitioning of the semantic domain caste: kinsmen/others i.e. nonkin (*kontakkārar/paratiyār*). In every caste, one has relations (*kontāttam*: interdining, intermarriage, mutual participation in ritual) with kinsmen whether or not they reside in the same village; in every caste, one has no relation (*kontāttam illai*) with non-kinsmen whether or not they reside in the same village (see Figure 5).

Figure 5
Distribution of Modes of Intercaste Relationships
Relations with Members of Same Caste



Thus, commitment to normative schemes is irrelevant to the distribution of bound/nonbound mode relations with members of the same caste.

But, regarding relations with members of different castes than one's own, distribution of bound/nonbound mode relations varies with differential commitment to normative schemes.

The Landowner is involved in bound mode relationships with certain castes (the serving castes) whether they reside locally or not (e.g., one's own Barber and the Barber of one's affine who lives in the next village). They have bound mode relationships with all castes residing locally (except Blacksmiths and Carpenters). Whenever the Landowner deals with nonlocal artisan castes (Goldsmith, Weaver, etc.) he is involved in nonbound mode relationships.

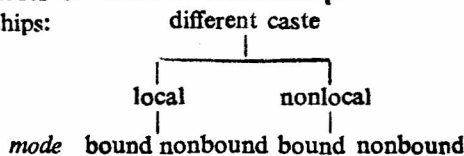
The Goldsmith is primarily involved in nonbound mode relationships. All of his intercaste relationships, whether local or nonlocal, are of nonbound mode. Even if he uses the services of serving castes for his festivals, they are hired servants, paid by the job.

The Fisherman's intercaste relationships are a mixture of the polar modes. In his own village, he has bound mode relationships with serving and nonbound relationships with Blacksmith and Carpenter, just like the Landowner. But all of his nonlocal relationships are of the nonbound mode.

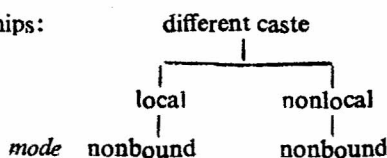
The three cases can be diagramed as follows:

Figure 6
Distribution of Modes of Intercaste Relationships

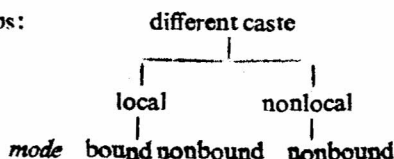
Landowner intercaste relationships:



Goldsmith intercaste relationships:



Fisherman intercaste relationships:



Differences in spatial structure and in the distribution of modes of intercaste relations is charted in terms of three intersecting structural principles, caste, kin, and territory. The ordered transformations in the relations between these structural principles represent differential commitments to normative schemes. Previous sociological descriptions of types of intercaste behaviour by Wisner and Pocock (see above p. 18) among others did not explore the possibility that the modes of intercaste relations might be prescribed by distinct, contrary codes for intercaste conduct; the possibility that the modes might result from different value—orientations, that is, the implementation of different ideas into action by means of selective allocation of resources. As in Geertz's study of Bali where different villages are organized according to various combinations of seven principles,³⁰ in Jaffna there is no standard or uniform spatial or socio-cultural structure but an ordered diversity of structures.

Methodological Issues raised by Explanations of Variations in Spatial Structure

I first want to consider the utility of Joan Mencher's hypothesis which she clarifies from the beginning as *not* meant to be

an argument for ecological or economic determinitism, but rather to specify some of the links in the chain of causation between environment and social structure, or, put another way, to indicate some of the ways in which ecological factors interdigitate with social ones.³¹

Her study of Kerala and Madras village structures in relation to ecology is a controlled comparison in that the areas "share certain common features and at the same time exhibit today and in the past both cultural and structural differences."³² A crucial similarity for her study is the fact that "as far back as historical and literacy records go, the same technology was known in both areas. Methods for constructing tanks and canals were known in Kerala as well as in Madras."³³ Her basic hypothesis is that differing ecological conditions and technological adaptations in Kerala and Madras correlate with "some aspects of social structure such as inter- and intra-village organization and inter- and intra-caste relations."³⁴

In the narrow alluvial coastland and the low lateritic plateaus of Kerala, paddy is the dominant crop, occupying 45-50 per cent of sown area. This is done without extensive communal irrigation systems due to abundant rainfall. Lack of cooperative irrigation activity permits non-nucleated settlement patterns. The typical Malayalee unit of settlement is a house compound which also includes garden land, a tank, and a small temple. "It is the house and not the village which is the unit of settlement in this region."³⁵ Definition of the Malayalee village is subject to much debate by administrators, lawyers, judges, legislators, and anthropologists. Authority and social control

30. The principles are: (1) shared obligation to worship at a given temple, (2) common residence, (3) ownership of rice lying within a single watershed, (4) commonality of ascribed social status or caste, (5) consanguineal and affinal kinship ties, (6) common membership in one or another "voluntary" organization, and (7) common legal subordination to a single government administrative official. Clifford Geertz, "Form and Variation in Balinese Village Structure," *American Anthropologist*, 1959, LXI(6): 992.
31. Joan Mencher, "Kerala and Madras: A Comparative Study of Ecology and Social Structure," *Ethnology*, 1966, V(2): 135-36.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

is primarily localized in the hands of an individual (the *jenmie*) or a family (*taravad* or *illam*).³⁶ In short, the village organization was loose, with the main function of the *Nayar desam* being to attend to military matters involving only *Nayar*, and of the *tara* organization to attend to social and administrative matters involving the *Nayar taravad*.

In the farming regions of Madras state such as the Coromandal plain, paddy is the dominant crop, occupying 70-77 percent of cultivable area. Excepting Tanjore district, rainfall is extremely variable and extensive tank irrigation is the norm. Mencher states that "Even in areas where a smaller percentage of paddy is grown, because of dependence on tank irrigation and a perennial scarcity of water, the normal settlement is of the nucleated variety."³⁷ There are two levels of bounded units. Separate streets (*teru*) are occupied by Brahmins, Landowners, Artisans, serving castes; untouchables live in distinct settlements (*ceri*). The village is a bounded unit with ritually demarcated boundaries, a village temple, a roster of traditional officials, communal grazing lands, threshing grounds, etc. Village farmlands and irrigation tanks surround the village as a whole (rather than an individual house). Authority relations tend to be between caste units as wholes.

This study verifies a limited hypothesis: presence of absence or sufficient rainfall and thus absence or presence of communal irrigation works correlate with dispersed versus nucleated spatial organization, authority vested in individuals or families versus castes; there are concomitant variations of ecological, technological, and social structure in Kerala and Madras.

Although admirable in its controlled comparison, this study is open to several methodological queries in light of the study presented above. First, the study does not consider the variable of paddy cultivation versus dry, cash crop cultivation. In Jaffna, cash cropping occurs without extensive communal irrigation works. In Jaffna, agricultural wards, but not villages, are nucleated, bounded units with temples, authority structure between castes, etc. If that variable is introduced, a more complex comparison results. It appears that the variables of presence versus absence of plentiful rainfall, presence versus absence of communal irrigation works, predominant paddy versus cash crop cultivation, and dispersed versus nucleated settlements (of different scale) permute in the following manner:

	<i>Sparse/ plentiful rainfall</i>	<i>communal irrigation</i>	<i>paddy/cash crop cultivation</i>	<i>dispersed/ nucleated wards, streets</i>	<i>dispersed/ nucleated villages</i>
Kerala	—	—	+	—	—
Jaffna	+	—	+	+	—
Madras	+	+	+	+	+

36. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 148-49.

Harper has reported a variant form of intercaste relations in the cash-cropping Malnad region of Mysore; unfortunately, he does not include data on spatial organization.³⁸

A second variable is held constant in Mencher's study. The object of analysis and comparison is agricultural villages. The ecological and technological factors she considers are irrelevant in explaining the variations observed in Jaffna agricultural, fishing, and artisan villages (see Figures 1, 2, and 3 above).

The methodological precedent of generalizing South Asian rural social, cultural, spatial, etc. structure from consideration of the agricultural sector alone is general.³⁹ Further intensive fieldwork would be necessary to confirm the generality of the structural variations. I have reported here, variations coded with the dichotomy bound/nonbound (*kaṭṭupāṭu/iṣṭamāna*). There exist a number of indigenous dichotomies which resemble the dichotomy such as the Maharashtra distinction of those who have a share in the harvest (*balutadar*) versus those who do not so share (*aiutadar*),⁴⁰ the Kerala distinction of those castes who render specialized service by hereditary right and those who do not (*avakāsakkar/non-avakāsakkar* castes),⁴¹ and the distinction of right division and left division castes reported both in Tamilnad⁴² and in Andhra Pradesh.⁴³ Given the similarities between these indigenous dichotomies, it seems prudent to explore systematically the rural entrepreneurial sector as a counter-structure which co-exists with the rural establishment structure of the agricultural sector. This procedure avoids a synecdochic account of traditional structure in which one part represents the whole.

Beck goes far in overcoming this collective methodological bias with her account of the contrasting socio-cultural structures of the right and left-division castes in Koṅku region of Tamilnad. Using Purusa imagery, Beck describes the social order in Koṅku as a single head with a bifurcate body. Brahmins and KaruNikar PiLLa castes form the single head of the social order; they are neutral with respect to the right/left division.⁴⁴ Noting that the contrasts are more pronounced among higher ranked subcastes than among lower ranked ones, she lists sub-castes of the agricultural sector⁴⁵ as right hand castes, and rural merchants, artisans and their servants.⁴⁶

38. Edward B. Harper, "Two Systems of Economic Exchange in Village India," *American Anthropologist*, 1969, p. 61.

39. See above, pp. 17 and 34.

40. B. H. Baden-Powell, *The Land Systems of British India*, Oxford: O.U.P., 1892, 3 vols.

41. K. R. Unni, *Caste in South Malabar*, Ph.D. dissertation, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, quoted in Mencher, "Kerala and Madras: A Comparative Study of Ecology and Social Structure," *Ethnology*, 1966, V(2), pp. 135-36. Miller makes it clear that the Malayalee term *avakāsam* resembles the Jaffna Tamil term *urimai* (see above, p. 28): "...the right (and duty of a particular family to perform these services was called a *dēsam avakāsam*—a right of the *dēsam*. *Avakāsam* carries the meaning of 'right' or 'privilege' rather than obligation." Eric J. Miller, "Caste and Territory in Malabar," *American Anthropologist*, 1954, LVI, p. 413.

42. Brenda E. F. Beck, *Peasant Society in Koṅku: A Study of Right- and Left- subcastes in South India*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973.

43. N. Subha Reddi, "Community Conflict Among the Depressed Castes of Andhra Pradesh," *Man in India*, 1950, XXX(4), pp. 1-12.

44. Beck, 1973, pp. 7, 8.

45. KanuNTar landowners, OkaccāNTi PaNTāram templars, Koṅku Utaiyār potters, NāTār palm climbers, Koṅku VaNNār washermen, Koṅku Navitar barbers, and Paraiyar drummers.

46. Cōli Ācāri artisan, KōnuTTi CeTTiyār merchants, Koṅku Ācāri artisans, Kaikkolar Mutaliyar weavers, warriors, and merchants, VaTuka Nāyakkar well diggers, VaTuka VaNNār washermen, PaNTiya Navitar barbers, Kūtai Kuravar basket-makers, and Moracu Mātāri leatherworkers and labourers.

as left hand castes. As the Koṅku region is well inland, fisher castes—who would be classified as left hand castes—are not present. One contrast with my data is that there are in Jaffna no separate serving castes for nonbound mode castes. Sections of the Washerman and Barber castes, for example, are hereditary servants to fishermen; other sections are hired by artisans.

Beck reports extensive contrasts in socio-cultural organization which follow the right/left division. Right division castes imitate the KaVuntar landowner lifestyle, the Kshatriya-like ethnic of generosity, wealth, anger, etc. Left division castes imitate the Brahman lifestyle: modesty, aloofness, seclusion, self-control, etc.⁴⁷ Leadership positions among right division castes are inherited; the hierarchy of offices correlate with territorial and political divisions. Authority among left division castes is based neither on kinship, territory, nor politics but on learning.⁴⁸ In an earlier article, Beck contrasts variations in clan dieties as a continuum from right to left (Clan hero whose story is highly localized/caste hero whose story is localized/generalized local diety/generalized South Indian folk hero/general South Indian diety/All-India diety) variations in territoriality of origin myths, variations in strength of clan organization (marked/moderate/tenuous), and variations in terms used to designate clans (*kulam/nāTu/ kuTTam/kōtiram*).⁴⁹ Even though she designates Brahmins as neutral to the right/left division, in the construction of her graph contrasting right/left subcaste customs, nine of the ten items taken for comparison “bear some relation to the distinction between Brahman and Kshatriya in the classical texts,”⁵⁰ and “actual Brahman behavior in the region was taken as defining the end point of the ritualistic scale and actual KaVuntar behavior as defining the end point of the instrumental scale.”⁵¹

There are striking similarities and differences between Beck’s account of right/left and my account of bound/nonbound. One issue is the explanation of variations in territoriality. First, although the Koṅku region of South India is far greater in size and in population than the Jaffna Pāttinam (5000 square miles/ 964-1/2 square miles; 3,000,000 people/ 612,000 people), and despite a crucial difference in levels of kinship organization (clans are present in Koṅku but absent in Jaffna), there is a striking similarity in landowner social organization: an homology between segmentary systems of categories of territory, natural substance, purity, and power. A detailed comparison of Konku and Jaffna on this point exceeds the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that in both areas there are segmentary structures of territory (Konku: the Konku Natu region; *nātu* subdivisions, *kirāmam* revenue villages, *Ūr* hamlets, *ūr* settlements, *kutumpam* households; Jaffna: the Yālpaṇam paṭṭiṇam region, *pakuti* districts, *paṭṭu* divisions, *kirāmam* revenue villages, *kuricci* hamlets, *valavu* parcels, *kutumpam* households). In both areas there are segmentary structures of categories of humans (Koṅku: *Jāti* castes, *jāti* subcastes, *kōttiram* clans, *cantati* lineages, *kutumpam* families; Jaffna: *cāti* castes, *contakkārar* close kinsmen, *vari* or *cantati* descent units, and *kutumpam* families). In both areas there are segmentary structures of categories of dominant caste authority structure (Koṅku *KavuNTar: paTTakkārar, nāTTār, mup-*

47. Beck, 1973, pp. 10-12.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

49. Brenda E. F. Beck, “The Right-Left Division of South Indian Society,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 1970, xxxix(4), pp. 794-95.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 785.

51. Beck, 1973.

pāTTukkārār, Ūr KavūNTar; Jaffna: *āracan, maṇiyakar, utaiyar, vidane, talaiyar*). In both regions, there are progressively inclusive taxonomies of categories of land, natural substance (kinds of humans), purity ("grades of castes"), and power ("caste or sub-caste internal authority structure"). There are correspondences between these taxonomies at each level of segmentation and thus homologies between these systems of categories. In short, Beck's data on KavūNTar and my data on Veḷḷālar dominant caste organization are substantially in accord on this point: in this, there is a strong similarity between the right division and bound mode caste organization.

Second, our reports of the variation in spatial organization, that is, the left division and nonbound mode castes, differ. Beck's presentation of left division artisan and merchant spatial organization is basically a negative definition. The higher ranking left division castes have no significant descent group organization, no tradition of local temples, and no internal sub-caste authority structure corresponding to territorial divisions: no homologies.⁵² Further, "right division groups tend to be scattered relatively evenly through the countryside. They have representatives in nearly every touchable settlement. The higher-status left-division communities, on the other hand, cluster in only a few settlement areas of each kirāmam. They are usually found in the larger hamlets, near important temples, and along the transportation arteries that cross the countryside."⁵³ Although this description of higher-status left-division sub-castes fits my previous description of nonbound mode artisans and merchants, I have already shown that nonbound mode fisher castes, who are referred to as left division castes in South Indian literature (see Thurston), do indeed have a modified pattern of homologies between categories of territory, kinship, and authority structure in their villages. In addition, there is a certain degree of homology in wider regional units. Regional Karaiyār fisher caste leaders called *paṭṭankatti-s* are mentioned as leading the resistance against the Portuguese.⁵⁴ (It is for reasons such as this that Karaiyār reject the identity of fisher castes; they stress a Kshatriya and warrior identity with the use of their title, *Kurukulam*. For the sake of non-indigenous readers, I have called them Fishermen for quick identification). Though their authority had lapsed by the early fifties due to sweeping changes in fishing technology and economic organization, in 1969 there were still three *paṭṭankatti-s* identified with three broad stretches of the Jaffna peninsula northern coast. During a short visit to fishing villages south of Madras city, I found a more developed system of internal caste authority structure corresponding to territorial divisions. The leaders are called *periyapaṇakkārār-s*, *pakat periyapanakkārār-s* and *periyaya pakat periyapaṇakkārār-s*.

To conclude this comparison of Beck's and my data on territorial variations, the study of fishing and artisan spatial organization in addition to agricultural organization yields permutations in structure instead of strict dichotomies, whether right/left or bound/nonbound. But there is a difference in emphasis which deserves mention. Summarizing contrasts in economic and political rights of right and left division sub-castes at the level of the region as a whole, Beck states that

52. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

54. Father Fernao de Queros, *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, translated by Father S. G. Perera, Colombo: A. C. Richards, 1930.

The right division has an extensive territorial organization... Rights in land, and to the produce of the land, are enjoyed by this group of communities largely so the exclusion of the other division. The left-division subcastes, by contrast, live for the most part by their inherited skills and move about the area according to where their services are in the most demand.⁵⁵

It should be clear from my account above that exclusion from land by the dominant landowning establishment does not exhaustively explain the spatial organization of fishermen and artisans in Jaffna. They have distinctive counter-structures of spatial organization consciously motivated by the exigences of rural enterprise and by their commitment to the set of norms I have labelled the mercantile scheme. By omitting the influence of a conceptual order based on material power—which would probably resemble the mercantile scheme—her definition of the left division remains, at points such as these—as non-right rather than a distinctive counter-structure.

A similar critique bears on the differences between Beck's and my analyses of local intercaste ranking. Beck contrasts the ranking transactional strategies employed by right and left division sub-castes as follows:

At the level of the individual Ūr or hamlet areas, further right-left contrasts can be observed. Of particular interest here are the different strategies the two groupings use in the competition for local status. The right-division leaders have sought to establish a "ritual alliance" similar to that which Adrian Mayer has already described for Malwa in Central India. This alliance acknowledges the leadership of the KavunTar agricultural community. Several high-ranking left-division groups, however, attempt to withdraw from many of the situations involving interaction where ranking or status evaluation can occur. Instead, they take their cue from the Brahman's claim that exclusiveness and non-interaction are superior criteria in the assignment of prestige.⁵⁶

As a result of these strategies there is greater rank interminancy concerning the left division than the right; with this I agree, but for somewhat different reasons:

I have shown who translates which ideas into action by means of which kinds of allocations of resources and with which results regarding ranking. Bound mode castes show commitment to aristocratic and priestly codes by engaging in stratifying ranking transactions. To do so they either expend resources or profit in the transactions. The result is that they are distinctly ranked. On the contrary, nonbound mode castes express their orientation to mercantile and priestly codes by engaging in nonstratifying ranking transactions. Their allocation regime is self-sufficiency and the result is ambiguous ranks.⁵⁷

In this case, Beck is defining the left division strategy only in terms of Brahmanic, or priestly ideas. As with her treatment of territory, the relevance of mercantile ideas is not admitted. The point is that the mercantile ethic prescribes the neutralization of stratifying transactions in order to facilitate business practice. To artisans and to

55. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

57. Kenneth David, "And Never the Twain Shall Meet? Mediating the Structural Approaches to Caste Ranking," in Harry Buck (ed.), *Structural Approaches to South Indian Studies*, Chambersburg, Pa.: Wilson College Press, 1974.

fishermen, bargaining must not be influenced by differences in rank between buyer and seller. And there are different strategies to avoid denotations of relative rank. For example, using a transaction also studied by Beck, commensal transactions, Jaffna Kammalan artisans prefer neither to give nor receive food from other castes while non-Kammalan artisans (eg. Weavers) and fishermen often both give and receive food from other castes. It is only in the former case that the priestly notions of aloofness and separation are followed.

There is then an explanation for the differences between Beck's account and my own, "The conceptualization of the social order in terms of a single head and a bifurcate body is an outgrowth of the fundamental Hindu idea of power..."⁵⁸ Beck defines categories of humans, *varna*-s, in terms of different kinds of power. Brahmins influence cosmic events because of their ability to communicate with divinity. Kings (kshatriyas) have power over mortals due to control of physical force. Vaisya-s have material power since peasants control animals and merchants control goods. Sudra-s are powerless, lacking control over their own body and external things as seen in their propensity to anger, passion, and poor judgement.

Having defined categories of humans with three kinds of power, Beck proceeds with a discussion of status rivalry between right and left division castes.

The head in this scheme is represented by the Brahman caste. Both in theory and in practice, members of the Brahman community are generally given precedence in ritual matters. Once this group is granted first place, however, difficulties about the ranking of inferior groups immediately emerge. Typically, a landowning agricultural community is dominant in terms of local political power and controls much of the day-to-day labor and production activity. *The members of this group claim status on account of their kinglike position and back up their assertions by demonstrating their local, territorial hegemony.* Groups that are dependent on this dominant agricultural community for employment will support the claims of their patrons and ally themselves with them. On the other hand, subcastes that are less immediately dependent on the land and on agricultural production for a livelihood do not accept the landowners claims. *These subcastes try to acquire material wealth as a means of becoming independent economically of the local landowners.* This they attempt to combine with an emphasis on ritual purity and self-control. *In terms of the traditional hierarchy, they then claim that material and ritual power add up to some total prestige quotient which is greater than that of a group wielding political and territorial control alone.*⁵⁹ (emphasis mine)

Lifestyle choices and status rivalry claims are then explained in terms of three kinds of power both on the level of empirical facts and on the level of conceptual orders. One immediate difference between her account and my own is that she defines the right division orientation as solely to the kingly temporal power order whereas I define the bound mode castes' orientation as both temporal and spiritual (aristocratic and priestly schemes); in this statement, we appear to accord regarding the left division and nonbound mode castes' orientation to both merchantile material power and priestly spiritual power (mercantile and priestly schemes).

58. Beck, 1973, p. 7.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

For a more detailed discussion of the structural approach to South Indian caste and kinship, see my book (ed.) *Structural Approaches to South Indian Caste and Kinship*, Wilson College Press, 1974.

A further difference is explicable by the fact that she does not follow the program set out in the above statement. In her extensive writings on the right/left opposition (see the summary of contrasting lifestyles, hierarchies of internal sub-caste authority, clan deities, territorial organization, and ranking transactions on pp. 44, 45), she reduces the triad of conceptual orders based on different kinds of power to a dyad. She defines right and left in terms of the opposition of temporal power and spiritual power and thus dejetes material power as the basis of a conceptual order.

Others have joined this discussion. In his review article of Beck's *Peasant Society in Koṅku; a Study of Right-and Left-Subcastes in South India*, Obeyesekere supports my thesis that the right (or the bound mode) represents a conjunction of orthodox priestly and aristocratic orientations. On the other hand, he proposes that the left orientation be defined in terms of samnyasin heterodox ideas.⁶⁰ Marriott follows a similar line in his re-analysis of Koṅku ranking data, interpreting the left division's strategy in intercaste ranking transactions as an ascetic, samnyasin pose, that is, avoiding contact with other jati's natural substance.⁶¹ Such suggestions are not to be ignored, for they go far in making sense of the old conundrum that the five artisan castes sometimes called Visvakarma Brahmins are simultaneously considered higher than Brahmins and lower than untouchables.⁶² As overt behavior expressing equivalence between left division or nonbound mode castes in their interaction with other castes occurs in both secular economic contexts as well as in ritual contexts, it still seems preferable to explain such behavior with reference to mercantile ideas as well as *samnyasin* (and *bakti*) ideas.

In conclusion, this excursion from Jaffna to South India regarding explanations of spatial variations yields methodological hints concerning, first, the recognition of the structuring of diversity in the traditional socio-cultural order, and, second, the limitation of analyst's imposition onto the data. Mencher's study follows a pervasive tendency in the literature on rural South Asia in the last twenty years of stressing a dominant structure and underplaying or ignoring sub-dominant structures.⁶³ This procedure yields a partial, or synochdochic representation, in which the (dominant) part stands for the whole. Both Beck's study and my own attempt to correct this bias by highlighting subdominant rural counter-structures. Another tendency in the literature is to rely heavily on extrinsic analytic categories, a tendency criticized by various authors (Dumont, Marriott and Inden, Nicholas, Barnett, Wadley, David,

60. Gananath Obeyesekere, book review of Brenda Beck, *Peasant Society in Koṅku: a Study of Right- and Left- Subcastes in South India*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973, in *Man* (in press).
61. McKim Marriott, "Hindu Transactions: Rank without Dualisms," Paper read at the Symposium on "Transactional Analysis," Association of Social Anthropologists, Oxford, July 9 1973.
62. See above footnote 8.
63. For example, Mayer states in a footnote to his table presenting Ramkheri castes and population, that "The analysis will be simplified by omitting the Basket-maker and Grainparcher, absent for professional reasons for most of the fieldwork." Adrian C. Mayer, *Caste and Kinship in Central India*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970, p. 35.

Khare)⁶⁴ as imposing an alien ideology on, and thus distorting the data. The response has been to use indigenous ideology (Dumont) or cognitive structure (Marriott and Inden) as a guide to understand the society. This approach, as used by Dumont, has been criticized in its turn for imposing a partial indigenous ideology on the data: esoteric upper caste ideology stands for the whole of Hindu ideology.⁶⁵ Beck follows this latter approach in that, in writing up her data on Koṅku, she

became forced to admit that my local friends did not view their world in terms of anthropological topics. They spoke, rather of a hierarchy of social territories, and often spontaneously discussed local traditions and experiences in terms of what seemed to me a novel framework. For them, the units which made up the local hierarchy formed a series of real conceptual levels. Nonetheless, despite this education I received in the field, I persisted in using traditional anthropological categories in writing up my observations for the first time. As a result of this experience, and because of the discomfort I had felt in forcing my data into a "foreign" mold, I finally recognized the wisdom of utilizing my informants own units as a basic organizational principle in my account of Koṅku customs and ideas.⁶⁶

The final question is whether or not she has, like Dumont, taken a partial indigenous conceptual structure to stand for the whole? As the organization of the chapters indicate, her monograph on right and left subcastes is organized according to the conceptual structure of right division castes.

The relative utility of extrinsic analytic categories and indigenous categories is an intractable issue in Anthropology as witnessed by debates between proponents of the ethnosociology approach (e.g. Lounsbury) and culture theory (e.g. Schneider) regarding kinship and debates between formalists (e.g. Firth) and substantivists (e.g. Polanyi) about economics. As a number of anthropologists studying South Asia now seem committed to advance theory through an interplay between extrinsic analytic categories and indigenous categories, it now seems imperative to guard against imposing a selected variant of indigenous conceptual structure on the data.

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64. Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, Paris: Gallimard, 1966. McKim Marriott and Ronald Inden, "An Ethnosociology of South Asian Caste Systems," Kenneth David, "Hierarchy and Equivalence in Ceylon: Normative Codes as Mediator," Stephen Barnett, "Identity Choice and Caste Ideology in Contemporary South India", and Susan Wadley, "Power in Hindu Ideology and Practice," all appearing in Kenneth David (ed.) *The New Wind: Changing Identities in South Asia, Proceedings of the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences*, The Hague: Mouton, 1974.
65. Gerald D. Berreman, "The Brahmanical View of Caste," *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, N.S., 1971, V.
66. Beck, 1973, pp. xvi-xvii.