Continuity and Change in the Development of a Preliterate State

by NIELS WINTHER BRAROE

RÉSUMÉ

Depuis quelques dizaines d'années, les anthropologues parlent beaucoup de *processus* et d'*équilibrium*. Ces notions sont étudiées ici par rapport aux analyses de Max Gluckman. On soutient que Gluckman a une vision quelque peu erronée des conflits et des tensions lorsqu'il les envisage comme facteurs d'intégration.

I

The notions "equilibrium" and "process" have had wide currency in anthropology in recent decades: it is these I wish to consider in the following pages.[1] Specifically, the historical development of the Zulu conquest state will be considered, and critical attention will be given to Max Gluckman's analysis of it. We shall be concerned for the most part with his thoughts about conflict as it relates to continuity and change. A central place in Gluckman's treatment is given to the discussion of rebellion, revolution, and rituals of rebellion as they effect stability in sociopolitical systems. It will be maintained that his preoccupation with the integrative consequences of these phenomena leads to a misunderstanding of their role in Zulu history, and reflects a static quality in his general approach to change.

In addition to this, an alternative interpretation of the Zulu case will be offered, with the claim that certain changes may be seen to have had endogenous causes; that is, they may be deduced from the structure of the Zulu state itself and need not be sought outside the system. Preceding this, a brief account of some events in Zulu history is provided, as groundwork for the argument to follow.

[1] This paper has benefited from the critical comment offered by numerous readers of previous versions, including E. M. Bruner, J. R. Gusfield, G. L. Hicks, P. Puritt, L. Schneider, J. H. Steward, and G. P. Stone. Naturally, the author alone is responsible for factual and logical defects.

II

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the migrations of Nguni-speaking Bantu people from the north had left what is now Zululand and Natal dotted with numerous small tribes. In Zululand there were about fifty of these exogamous "clans," as Bryant calls them (1929:82), varying in size from a few hundred to seven or eight thousand persons. The corporate, patrilineal kraal was the basic structural unit. Each of these was a separate, self-sustaining establishment (Kay 1834:109-10). At the death of the head, the kraal split, the inheriting son and sons of "secondary wives" establishing new homesteads (Krige 1936:41). At this time, tribal and sub-tribal divisions were still kinship units, over which senior male members of major lineages presided.

These tribes were not, apparently, very stable (Kridge 1936:217; Bryant 1964:125-41). Fission occurred as a result of disputed succession between brothers, quarrels between sub-tribes, or through a breach of the rule of exogamy, when the wife's lineage would then be regarded separate from her husband's. Sub-tribal and tribal divisions were continuously proliferated by these stresses. Before the early nineteenth century, each of these tribal groups was relatively autonomous — loosely linked by ties of affinal kinship. Chiefs of separate tribes organized "love dances" at which young persons were given the opportunity to mingle and seek out prospective spouses (Bryant 1929:190-91). Such occasions seem to have been the nearest to any sort of supra-tribal integration. Conflict between chiefdoms — over some breach of bride-payment or cattle raiding — resulted in fighting between the two groups. Such hostilities were neither very destructive nor decisive. Rival armies met at a prearranged time and place, drew up in lines facing one another and took up an elaborate exchange of formalized insults (Gibson 1911:7-9). Following a duel between two champions, each group hurled spears at the other. Casualties were never high, and there was not the slaughter that attended battles in later days (Bryant 1929:48). In fact, following such a "battle," a young man might retire with the enemy tribe to resume his courtship of one of its girls.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century this pattern was disrupted. Some of the larger and more powerful tribes, perhaps in the

interest of protection of their territories from cattle raids, undertook to subdue the smaller, and make them tributaries. One of these, the Metwa under its chief Dingiswayo, with an army of about 500 men, expanded its hegemony rapidly. Still, apart from payments of cattle and military aid, the surrounding tribes retained a great deal of autonomy; the original chiefs were left in control of their people, subject to Dingiswayo's protective authority (Bulpin 1959:9; Gibson 1911:17-18). Many submitted voluntarily to Metwa domination. The small Zulu tribe was one of these.

Shaka, chief of the Zulu, had been installed in office with the assistance of his patron Dingiswayo by the loan of the regiment to which Shaka belonged (Bird 1881, I:65). Shaka reorganized the small tribe's warriors along lines he had learned from his paramount. More than this, he introduced novel fighting techniques which put warfare on an entirely new plane (Ferguson 1918:219-21). The javelin was substituted by a short stabbing-spear, and in the interest of rapid mobility he forbade his men to wear sandals. To this he added a new and soldierly discipline: warriors who returned from battle without their spears or who fled were put to death as cowards.

Along with these innovations in the technology and the tactics of warfare, Shaka adopted an entirely new policy toward his enemies. The objective of his aggression was the conquest of his immediate neighbors, and the annihilation of those more remote (Grout 1864: 72).

> Whatever was to fear in the tribe must be eternally removed; whatever was good and serviceable must be appropriated by the victor as a reward of triumph and applied as a further strengthening of his position . . . Shaka's army, therefore, would charge the enemy, and, when it fled in panic, as inevitably it would, they would follow it vigorously home, kill its chief, and return with its cattle and women as booty. Then reduced, without a head, without women, without cattle, a vanquished clan had no resource but to avail itself of the "clemency" offered it with incorporation with the victor's own people (Bryant 1929:132).

Shaka built *ekandas* (or military kraals) in the territory of his new subjects and drafted their young men into his army. In some cases, his favorites were appointed chiefs *(induna)* of these districts as a reward for loyalty and military achievement. Other small

groups, attracted by the glory of his military success and the rich loot his armies brought home, joined him voluntarily (Bulpin 1952: 17).

In 1818, Dingiswayo's Metwa tribe was defeated by another powerful chief in a battle in which the Zulus had not participated. In the following year, Shaka himself crushed this tribe, and soon after incorporated them, along with his former rulers, the Metwa, into the budding state. Every year, he engaged in more extensive and violent campaigns. By 1823, he had crossed the Tugela river and invaded northern Natal (Gibson 1911:232-40). As a result of his ferocity, most of Natal was depopulated — either by the Zulu armies, or indirectly in the slaughter of lesser tribes fleeing before them (Fynn 1839:69). Shepstone estimated the total number of people thus dispersed at nearly a million (Gibson 1911:8-9).

In 1824, when the English trader Henry Fynn arrived in Natal, he found Shaka at the apogee of his career, installed in a capital two miles in circumference, with a standing army of 12,000 men (Bird 1888, I:76). Shaka dominated the witchfinders, and was able to use them to punish recalcitrant chiefs and members of his own council (Abrousset and Daumas 1842:274-75). "Proving" a rebellious *induna* to be an unconscious witch, Shaka had him executed, his kraal burned, and his cattle added to the royal herds (Bird 1888, I:109). Personal loyalty of the *indunas,* rewards of war booty, ritual and magical power, great wealth — all these factors gave Shaka tight rein over his council and the nation (Issacs 1939: 170). He ordered those of his brothers who seemed in the least capable of displacing him killed. Moreover, he never legally married so that there would be no sons to plot against him (Abrousset and Daumas 1842:279). He was able to delegate much more authority to his *indunas* than later kings; by Mpande's days, the right of life and death powers over their subjects was no longer legitimately part of chiefly office (Gluckman 1940:38).

Shaka's reign is usually described as tyrannous and cruel. He put many people to death for no apparent cause and demanded unquestioning obedience. He forbade trade with the British establishment at Port Natal (now Durban), since the king owned all ivory in the nation (Bird 1888, I:262). Annually, his wars added to the immense herds — in 1826, for example, he took 60,000 cattle from

the Ndwande tribe, and massacred nearly 40,000 of its people (Gibson 1911:28).

In 1828, while his army was engaged in a raid on the Swazi to the north, Shaka's brother, Dingane, murdered him. Dingane took the precaution of killing all of those who might challenge his succession, including brothers of Shaka. Then, he dispatched his fellow conspirators to remove all obstacles to his claims (Grout 1864: 76).

The campaign in the north had been a fiasco: the army, weakened by hunger and fever, never managed to corner their elusive quarry. Had Shaka been alive, many of the soldiers would surely have been executed for their failure. Thus, when the army returned and was met with Dingane's assurances that his rule would be more peaceful and merciful, it was disposed to support his succession (Bulpin 1952:50-51). He sought to win over the warriors by allowing the youngest regiment to marry (Ferguson 1918:203).

Initially, Shaka had clearly regarded Fynn and the other traders at Port Natal as another tribe (Grout 1864:70). The English adventurers were called upon to participate in his battles, and they began to attract to their district more and more retainers who fled from the more oppressive authority of their chieftainships. Under Dingane, relations between Zululand and the British were considerably more strained; in 1831 a Zulu force attacked and looted Port Natal. When it was reoccupied, a treaty in 1835 bound the British to turn back any refugees from Zululand. In addition, Dingane ordered all Zulu subjects living in Natal to relocate across the Tugela (Eybers 1918:149). His relations with the immigrant Boers were even less amicable. In 1837, a group of 70 trekkers petitioned Dingane for permission to settle in the vacant areas of Natal (Colenso 1855:xvi). He agreed, but required them first to demonstrate their good intentions by recapturing some cattle which had been taken by a northern tribe. When the party returned with the cattle, Dingane signed a treaty granting them all of Natal, including Port Natal (Eybers 1918:148). But the Boers never quit the royal kraal: Dingane ordered them all killed. Having observed the success of a small number of men armed with guns, the king responded in characteristic Zulu fashion to a potential threat of deposition (Holden 1963:57-63). He then mobilized the army and sent them to destroy

those Boers who had already begun to spread over Natal. By February 16, the Zulus had killed nearly 300 Boers and captured a large number of cattle (Gibson 1911:65-66).

For the next several years, the Zulu warriors and Europeans, both British and Dutch, struggled for the control of Natal; in 1839, 400 Boers defeated an enormous force of Zulus, killing 3,000, in the famous Battle of Blood River (Bird 1888, I:247). Dingane, now completely blocked on his southern and eastern frontiers, resolved that he must extend his territories, and initiated devastating raids on the northern tribes (Gibson 1911:79).

Dingane was rapidly losing command of the situation. In October 1839, his brother Mpande, accompanied by 17,000 followers, fled Zululand to the safety of white-occupied Natal (Colenso 1855: xxii). There the Boers proclaimed him "prince" of all Zulu refugees; Mpande's part of the bargain was to end witch-hunting and to appoint a successor on approval of the Boers (Holden 1963:93-95). Mpande received no direct military assistance from the Boers, but under their protection he was able to group his forces and successfully invade his brother's kingdom. On February 9, 1838, the Boers declared Mpande king, and the remainder of Dingane's army transferred their allegiance to the new ruler (Shepstone 1873:5). As payment for their services, the Boers claimed all the land between the Tugela and Black Umfolzi rivers, leaving Mpande only a small portion of the original Zulu territory (Bird 1888, I:595).

Mpande assiduously played the British against the Boers throughout his reign, and in 1842 a treaty was signed which returned most of Zululand to him (Bird 1888, II:65). Now, for the first time since before Shaka's days, there was relative tranquillity. Mpande staged no aggressive campaigns of any importance, and gave free entry to itinerant European traders, allowing them to deal directly with the commoners (Gibson 1911:100). He also granted game rights to professional ivory hunters, and allowed the missionaries who had fled in 1839 to re-enter Zululand (Bulpin 1952:101-19). Mpande was the first Zulu king to take wives legally, who bore him many sons in his 32 year reign.

Mpande's subjects came to feel that his rule was ineffectual, and that Zululand was drifting towards European dominance.

Eventually, competition between his sons for succession led to civil war. In 1856, the issue was settled on the battlefield. Thousands were killed, including six of Mpande's sons and there was a great exodus of refugees from the kingdom (Shepstone 1873:5). The king's son, Cetshwayo, was placed in control of the nation, though Mpande continued as titular sovereign. But he was substantially powerless to regulate internal disputes — in 1860, for example, Cetshwayo ordered the execution of one of his father's favorite sons and his mother, to insure his own succession to the throne (Bulpin 1952:125). When, in 1872, Mpande died of natural causes, his council requested British Secretary of Native Affairs, Sir T. Shepstone, to preside over Cetshwayo's coronation. Shepstone secured a promise of civil reform in Zululand, including the king's public oath that no citizen would be executed for a crime by any other authority than the king and, only then, after due process through a public trial (Shepstone 1873:15). Shepstone's interference in Zulu internal affairs was but an isolated example of many more that were soon to follow. By 1880, the Zulus and the English had fought a violent and bloody war, and Zulu independence was completely lost.

This short review of Zulu history illustrates several significant trends. The original, pre-Shakan, consolidations of tribal groups produced loosely integrated "federations" in which the component tribes retained a large measure of autonomy. Cattle-raiding was one of the most important motives for attacks on neighboring tribes, and success in these ventures made it possible for the Zulus to develop their military strength further, since the king used the spoils to support an increasingly larger standing army. The military kraals protected the king's wealth, allowed him to expand it, and provided a means of control over the defeated tribes. Those tribes too distant from the seat of central authority to be managed effectively, were dispersed or utterly destroyed, so that the borders of his kingdom were uninhabited. Under Shaka, kinship lost importance as a determinant of full political status. The districts were occupied by fragments of defeated tribes, and new ones were created. Shaka led his army personally and, through a network of spies, through loans of cattle to retainers, and other techniques indicated above, managed to keep tribal autonomy at a minimum.

But the system itself brought about its own disintegration: cruelty and harsh discipline made his brother's *coup d'état* possible. Indeed, Dingane was obliged to re-conquer much of Zululand after his succession:

> The Zulu nation, however, being composed of a multitude of tribes, that had been combined into one of Shaka, and which he alone had the ability to control, became insubordinate under Dingane, who was regarded by the tribes that had been annexed as having no claim on their allegiance (Fynn, quoted in Bird 1888, I:100).

Starting with Dingane, there was a process of gradual increase of tribal autonomy at the expense of central authority. This was a result of two factors, one "internal," another "external." First, Dingane found it expedient to relax the rules on marriage for his regiment. This was because the returns of looting were fewer in the depopulated Natal, and it had the consequence of diminishing his standing army. Instead of allowing these men to reside at the military kraals where he would have to feed them, they returned to their home districts where their local loyalties could wax more intense, proportionately enhancing the independence of district chiefs. While the Zulu state was expanding, new regiments were formed yearly, and very few were allowed to marry and pass into reserve. But,

> Under Dingane, the situation changed. The opportunities for profitable boy, girl, and cattle raids were much reduced . . . the king was tempted by the desire of saving his cattle to allow his regiment to marry, and therewith, to pass over into the reserves which he did not have to feed (Ferguson 1918:203).

Similarly, Shepstone observed that Dingane carried out Shaka's policies with less success and ability and that, when Mpande took over "...Zulu power was gone, never again to revive to its former dimensions" (Shepstone 1873:4). Mpande's "weakness" was clearly a consequence of decreasing material resources :

> The captains and chief men of the regiments on service are expected to spend their time mainly at the king's residence, or principal kraal, where they have huts; their food being forewarded to them from their own people. The custom of the land is that these chiefs in attendance should receive gratuities of cattle from the king, in recognition of their services. In the time of Shaka and Dingane, the payment was easily made. There was then constant war, and there was always abundance of spoil to be divided. Pande

> (Um-Pande), however, came into power in the interests of peace. As soon as he was firmly seated on his throne, he found himself closely hemmed in by his Dutch and English neighbors, and had to depend entirely upon his own internal resources for carrying on his government. The consequence has been, that the chief men assembled at the king's palace have often been in a starving state; and when they have gone home to their kraals, at the expiration of their court-attendance, they have often been forced to do so empty-handed. Now and then, an excuse has been found to get rid of a wealthy subject, in consequence of a snake having made its appearance at some particular spot: and to constitute the royal person his heir. Pande's soldiers have, nevertheless, had but small pickings since his accession, and upon more than one occasion have had to disperse in search of food for themselves. This state of matters has furnished grounds for a growing dissatisfaction with the king (Grout 1864: 346-347).

In these straits, Mpande was led to relieve the pressure on his resources by allowing his eldest sons to establish their own kraals. Immediately, the most dissatisfied of the king's followers attached themselves to one or the other of these new chiefs, and Mpande was unable to restrain the rivalry that developed between them. At the time of Mpande's death, of his negotiations with Cetshwayo, Shepstone wrote:

> My proposals were unpalatable to the nobles, but were warmly supported by him (Cetshwayo). He evidently felt that the heads of the people had become possessed of a power which it was in his interest to curtail. I held the balance between the two, and, as it seemed to be my duty, I took advantage of the position I occupied (Shepstone 1873:19).

Indeed, Vijn's account of Cetshwayo's administration demonstrates vividly his incapacity to maintain internal order (Vijn 1880). His chiefs disobeyed him, the people poached from the royal herds, and in the end, overruled by his councilors, he went to war with the British against his will.

Viewed broadly, Zulu political development can therefore be characterized in terms of the autonomy of its tribal components: in its phase of most accelerating expansion, these system parts had low autonomy; and, as the economic resources of the state necessarily shrank, tribal autonomy was reasserted.

The "outside" factor which contributed to decentralization was the arrival of Europeans. At first, these traders were an insignificant

threat to the king's authority, but this state of affairs did not last long. The first real evidence of a European threat is Dingane's treaty of 1835 in which Port Natal agreed to turn back renegade Zulu subjects (Colenso 1855:xi-xii). In effect, the small colony was no longer a Zulu tribe. By 1838, natives from Port Natal were raiding into Zululand proper and skipping back to the settlement where they were secure from Dingane (Bird 1888, I:354). By Mpande's time, the king was compelled to request permission of whites for raids, and this was always refused.

The Zulu State: Stability and Pluralist Politics

In *African Political Systems* Gluckman describes the Zulu nation during the reign of king Mpande in the last quarter of the nineteenth century (1940:25-55). Outside of the royal capital, the nation was divided into numerous tribal districts, each subject to the authority of a chief, which were further subdivided into what Gluckman calls "wards," each under the control of a subchief or *induna*. According to Gluckman, "It was this military orientation of Zulu culture under the king which largely unified his people" (1940:31). The regiment of soldiers belonged to the king, and lived in barracks surrounding the capital. Only the king could mobilize the army, and only he could organize national hunts or command the men to labor in the fields. Chiefs, who comprised the king's council, had no military authority attached to their office — the regimental system, in fact, intersected territorial divisions, so that any regiment included residents of many districts. The commanders of regiments were princes of the royal lineage, and, in some cases, important district chiefs. Gluckman observes that the loyalty soldiers owed to them deprived the king of personal followers.

Gluckman portrays the Zulu state as a collectivity of tribes, whose separate identities were symbolized by their chiefs, who were sometimes supported by loyal followers in dispute with the king or over the kingship. There was bitter hostility and rivalry between districts, and between chiefs in competition for royal favor. Similarly, there was opposition between wards within a district. But this common territorial loyalty was disjoined by membership in regiments: soldiers from many districts might join together in support of their prince-commander in, say, disputes over succession, thus aligning themselves with men from otherwise hostile chieftain-

ships and against fellow district residents who belonged to other regimental groups. Segmentation of descent groups was associated with political and economic mobility — war booty, rewards from the king, and increase in the herds multiplied territorial units and created new officials who represented kinsmen and retainers.

For every level in the administrative hierarchy, Gluckman describes checks on the abuse of political power. Kings, and chiefs as well, were wise to rule justly lest their subjects revolt against them or desert them. The Zulu, furthermore,

> had no idea of any political organization other than hereditary chieftainship and their stage of social development did not conduce to the establishment of new types of regime . . . the king . . . had to meet rivals, not revolutionaries (1940:42).
>
> The tension between the king and his brothers was a check on the king's rule . . . In addition, because the Zulu were strongly attached to their immediate political heads, the chiefs, and would even support them against the king, the chiefs had power to control the actions of the king (1940:43).

Still, chiefs were dependent on the king; he could increase the power of a favorite, plot with the rivals of a troublesome chief, or even accuse them of sorcery. Chiefs ruled under analogous conditions within their districts, except that they were liable to additional sanctions, since their subjects could appeal over their heads to higher authority — the king.

Gluckman views the maintenance of this system as dependent on the juxtaposition of structurally equivalent groups, and (potentially) conflicting loyalties to different authorities. Ultimate sovereignty belonged to the people, among whom ". . . the main opposition was between similar groups, co-operating as parts of a larger group" (1940:54). In Zululand,

> . . . under the conditions of communication prevailing over the vast Zulu territory, the nation was stable as its component tribes were hostile. A tyrannous king would unite the tribes against him, but they combined under him to prevent any tribe from becoming too powerful (Gluckman 1958:33).

Consequently, the nature of kingship produces competition for the office, and the opposition between tribes prevents any one tribe from dominating the others :

> ...social life breeds conflict, and societies by their customary arrangements (which I accept as given) accentuate conflicts (Gluckman 1959 a:46).

And :

> ...I do feel that the principle that, in some circumstances civil war can keep a nation united, might be applied more fully than it is (Gluckman 1959 a:47-48).

This brief account of Gluckman's analysis shows his discovery of the persistence of political structures in the balanced opposition of "interest groups." In this respect, he shares concern with numerous writers in the pluralist theory of politics. Indeed, Gluckman finds this analysis appropriate in many other contexts. He applies it to Nuer, the Swazi, and Great Britain (1959 a); and elsewhere to Plains Indians, the Northern Bushman, the Tikopia, and factory workers of the "bank wiring room" (1959 b:76-77). In short, he views pluralist opposition as a necessary feature of every integrated social system.

In effect, Gluckman speaks of two types of pluralism among the Zulu :

1. *Linked pluralism,* in which a balance is struck by the cross-cutting of alliances and interests. This was observed in the overlapping of military and territorial status.
2. *Superimposed pluralism,* in which balance is reached between exclusive conflict groups, in this case the tribes, in which no one group is able to dominate the other. [2]

Now, Gusfield (1962) has argued that pluralist opposition, especially of the second type, promotes conflict in any society, and that there is nothing in pluralist politics *per se* which guarantees the existence of substantive consensus in a society. That is, groups whose interests are threatened, or who lose out in the game of politics, must have some commitment to the society as a whole, to its goals and constituted authority. Otherwise, they will withdraw from the game, or attempt extremist alterations of the system.

[2] Readers will note the difference in the usage of this term "pluralism" in the anthropological and sociological literature: with exceptions, it refers to superimposition of divergent interests in the former, and their intersection in the latter.

Gluckman's analysis does not adequately provide for such consensus among the Zulu. He merely asserts the common belief in cultural values — takes them "as given" — and does not show how such commitment is maintained. Moreover, he accounts for stability *in spite of* the central authority, in the automatic balancing of conflicts. We have seen, in reviewing Zulu history, that the nation was in fact least stable and most subject to change at just those periods when intranational hostility was the greatest. The hostility which he sees as integrative was in fact quite disintegrative when it was not controlled by a resourceful authority.[3]

We must then agree with Shapera (1956:175-176) that the evidence does not fully support Gluckman's conclusions. Political alienation, expressed for example, by mass movement out of Zululand, was most intense when tribal autonomy was at its highest. So, equilibrium was not a function simply of the extent of intergroup hostility.

Gluckman, as I indicated, finds stability flowing from both linked and superimposed pluralism. He does not, however, discuss the relationship between these two types of segmentation : whether they are complementary or opposing tendencies, or whether one of them or the other is more indispensable for political integration. Later, in discussing endogenous and exogenous change, we shall return to this problem; I suggest here that, to maintain a given degree of stability, strong commitment to central authority is required more when superimposed rather than linked opposition is greatest.

Rebellion and Revolution

Gluckman asserts that the incumbents of political office were replaced by rebellion, but that the political structures persisted intact (1940:42; 1958:32-33; 1959 b:1-26). Thus, Zulus did not *revolt*, he maintains, because they conceived of no other system, and because their rebellions served to reassert the moral value of their political beliefs. The data do not confirm this interpretation. As we have seen, when Shaka, the first great Zulu king, was murdered by his

[3] Note in this context Kaberry's statement regarding the Soga: "Clearly, a state which is continually riven by civil war in which kinsman is set against kinsman and villager against villager, is more unstable than one in which civil wars do not occur and in which basic social alignments tend to persist" (1957:229).

brother, the new king agreed to relax the rule that warriors in the standing army might not marry. This, and other changes which he introduced indicate that, while the principle of hereditary kingship was not abandoned, the nature of public duty for citizens was discernibly recast. Similarly, when king Mpande deposed his brother with the support of Boer trekkers, he agreed to numerous constitutional changes, including the abolition of "smelling-outs" or witch-hunts (Bird 1888, I:1509).

These were instances of obvious constitutional or structural change, suggesting that the distinction between revolution and rebellion is not a simple qualitative one. Attempts at governmental change, violent or not, may be directed at only part of the total structure. As Ralf Dahrendorf has proposed, the intensity, violence, and radicalness of political change are profitably treated as *variables* (1959:206-40). Rebellion and revolution, in the sense which Gluckman employs the terms are not absolutely different in kind, because both may be accompanied by political change. Perhaps the terms may be more appropriately used in this context to designate the amount of the total structure which a movement seeks to replace. The two modes of change are extremes on a scale of radicalness of structural change.

Finally, Gluckman fails to appreciate that armed resistance was not the sole response to an oppressive king. The component tribes were not always united in their struggle *against* a tyrant, for on many occasions large portions of the nation fled to safety. As I have suggested, the tendency to adopt this alternative seems to depend on the degree of political alienation of groups and, the extent of the resources of the kingship.

Rituals of Rebellion

Each year, the entire nation gathered at the capital for the most important phase of the agricultural cycle, the First Fruits ceremonies (Krige 1936:249-60). This was also an occasion for review of the army, and the king's prime minister proclaimed new laws to those assembled. Another outstanding ceremony of this event was a period of "free speech" when Zulus, commoners and nobles alike, approached the king and attacked his behavior in a most abusive fashion. At any other time, one would have suffered

immediate death for such action. Gluckman (1959a; 1963) believes that such rituals of rebellion can take place only in an established and unchallenged social order. Then, they function as a means of catharsis (1963:126), and serve to demonstrate national cohesion. They express the society's ultimate values — some of them contradictory — on a "mystical plans," and the moral order is reaffirmed (1959a:136). Ritual rebellions support divine kingship just as real ones do.

> When a kingdom becomes integrated by a complex economy and rapid communication system, palace intrigues may continue, but the comparatively simple process of segmentation and rebellion are complicated by class-struggles and tendencies to revolution (Gluckman 1963:131).

Norbeck (1963) has challenged Gluckman's interpretation on both empirical and theoretical grounds. First, he argues that ritual acts may not always have moral significance. Secondly, Norbeck claims the data do not indicate that real conflict attended all such ceremonies. Finally, he maintains that antagonism and hostility are not necessarily equivalents of rebellion. To these points I would add that Gluckman neglects the *instrumental* consequences of these occasions, and their potential contribution to political change.

Ritter's account of this ceremony indicates that it was something more than an opportunity to "work off steam"; people were free to make quite reasoned requests, and to debate the wisdom or legitimacy of the king's policies (1955:161-63). An observer of the ritual relates,

> . . . the king could be insulted with impunity . . . and there are free interrogations to which the king is bound to reply. Sometimes they denounce him in the presence of all, blame his acts, stigmatise them as infamous and cowardly, oblige him to explain, destroy the reasoning in his answer, then dissecting them and unmasking their falsehood . . . (Delegorgue, quoted in Krige 1936:260).

In addition to their cathartic effects, Gluckman's rituals of rebellion appear to have had the important consequence of allowing direct participation by the people in the governmental process. Their wants and complaints could be expressed so that the king might consider them in his decisions. These rituals can be seen as sources of change as well as stability — a means of participation in legislation at the same time as they provided the king with a measure of popular support for established national policy.

Conflict, Change, and Equilibrium

Gluckman's examination of change within his model of the social system begins with a discussion of conflict. He considers discord a universal social process which operates in all types of equilibria. "All social relationships have two aspects, one, of fission, in which divergent interests tend to rupture the relationship, the other of fusion, by which the common ties in a system of social cohesion reconcile these divergent interests" (Gluckman 1958:47). Social groups, then, are defined in terms of their opposition to other groups. Up to this point, we are substantially in agreement. However, his subsequent analysis of the relation between change and conflicts reflects the misplaced emphasis of an integrationalist position. Insofar as Gluckman is tied to a model of dynamic equilibrium, he is absorbed in demonstrating how systems maintain themselves intact in the presence of conflict.[4] What is more, his position leads him to seek causes of extensive change "outside" of the system.

Gluckman contrasts repetitive with changing social systems. In the former, "... conflicts can be *wholly resolved* and co-operation wholly achieved within the pattern of the system" (1959a:54, italics added). Only partial resolution of conflict is possible in changing systems, and a "dominant cleavage" develops which represents unresolvable inequalities that color or shape all other subsidiary social conflicts.[5] Gluckman is never clear about just *how*, or through what mechanisms, conflict gives change, but he asserts that "... every change heightens the disturbance, accelerates, and the ultimate alteration of pattern is violent and rapid" (1958:47). The process, then, is one of cyclical periods of stability and change. Numerous difficulties in such an analysis would be avoided with the incorpora-

[4] Cohen (1965) points out that, in Gluckman's and others' work, there are logically other outcomes to the tensions in social systems than the balancing of opposing forces; and the equilibrium theorists have in fact chosen the least probable one. Concerning Gluckman's analysis of Bemba succession, Cohen notes that, "He simply assumes that the system will not change over time, even though unconstitutional means for gaining the throne have been and will continue to be used" (1965:955).

[5] The distinction between repetitive and changing systems is, of course, akin to that of Marx between changes *of* and changes *within* systems. Coser (1957:201), in a discussion of equilibrium and continuity, recognizes that the distinction is, moreover, a relative one.

tion of considerations such as those of Dahrendorf (1959), who sees conflict as an inescapable result of dichotomously distributed authority in "imperatively coordinated associations." The existence of conflict is not merely asserted, but deduced from the necessary divergence of certain social roles. For this reason, conflict can never be resolved, but only regulated. It must generate structure change, however imperceptibly, because its existence implies, for at least one party to social transactions, dissatisfaction with the *status quo*. Conflict does not exhibit these properties in Gluckman's work, as is demonstrated by his qualitative distinction between stationary and changing systems.

Dahrendorf takes the heuristic posture of Marx in which conflict and change are deduced from structures themselves. Accordingly, replacing a bad king with a good one, would not remove the necessary opposition in king-subject power relations. Nor would it insure against change in the structure of these relations. The problem consequently becomes one of determining empirically the *variables* of change. Systems may change violently or not, rapidly or slowly; the parties to conflict may be more or less intensively involved in the struggle, but change itself procedes. Change is *endogenous* — built into the structure of society. Gluckman, on the other hand, looks "outside" of the system for the sources of change. The explanation for the instability of early Nguni intertribal relations lies in the limits of productiveness of the natural habitat (1940:16), and not in the structure of the groups who exploited it. The decline of the Zulu empire, similarly, was ultimately brought about by events of European commercial history which deposited whites in Africa. In both cases, the integration of the parts of the system — its equilibrium — is disturbed by some change in its environment. He thus describes Zulu history in three successive stages of equilibrium (1958:47). The first is represented as pre-Shakan tribal juxtaposition; second, the period of Zulu national sovereignty; and finally, the native-white Zululander community. Initial consolidation was the outcome of population pressure on available resources that made further segmentation impossible. Social equilibrium was upset, and smaller tribal groups began to lose their independence.

The data presented above seem to me to admit of other conclusions. The development of centralized authority was the result

of the structural and economic "program" of Nguni society. Since wealth in the form of cattle was a motive for inter-tribal raiding, and since any differential increment in these resources or the ability to exploit them (i.e. technological) would give one group an edge over others, rapid and violent conquest might have been predicted. But what produced *centralized* authority was, among other things, the existence of age-grading and the support of military personnel at *ekandas*. The concentration of force was necessary to protect the chief's resource, and this in turn made extension of his wealth possible, which demanded still more security. Had any of numerous factors been absent, say, dispersal or war spoils among individuals rather than their concentration in the hands of the chief, then a centralized political state would probably not have emerged.

For Gluckman, "The problem is, why Nguni development did not continue to produce an increasing number of small tribes whose relations with one another were alternately friendly and hostile, but instead led to the establishment of a centralized authority" (1958: 30-31). What I am suggesting is that conflict between rival groups that were structurally equivalent and different in size was to be expected. Furthermore, the structural "solution" to this antagonism existed in the system just as did the forces which produced it. Gluckman points to segmentation of the tribal units, but fails to appreciate that the principles of hereditary political leadership, delegated authority and military organization also existed before consolidation, and provided a blueprint for that consolidation.

This argument is borne out by the facts of ensuing Zulu history. Marx saw the seeds of destruction of bourgeois society in those very structural features that made capitalist enterprise so successful. Success itself generated tensions which ultimately destroyed the system. I contend that analogous processes were at work in Zulu political development. The extraordinary success of Shaka's military expansion and the organization on which it rested imposed limits to the extent and duration of effective central control over previously more autonomous tribes. In this light, Shaka's policy of annihilating the Natal tribes was eminently sound. Given the importance of force as one means of control, the nature of his military organization, and the limits of his reach (Zulu companies were capable of marching about 50 miles per day), it was necessary that the territory surrounding

his own should be vacant. A structurally similar buffer state would not have been acceptable, because it would have been competitive, and would have provided a source of convenient asylum for dissidents among his subjects.

It is important to recognize, moreover, that after the state crystallized — when its borders were more clearly defined — the pattern of Zulu raiding changed accordingly. No longer interested in campaigns of conquest, Shaka's annual forays were directed to replenishing his herds. Dingane, we recall, did not consider the *conquest* of Swaziland until his southern and eastern frontiers were threatened by Europeans.[6]

No less significant than the territorial limits to the extent of Zulu control, was another restriction of its structural persistence. First, since many of the northern tribes did not keep cattle, and because they developed techniques for evasion of Zulu war parties, expeditions against them became unprofitable. Secondly, thoroughness in the plunder of neighboring tribes made it necessary for Shaka to go farther and farther afield each year. For example, in 1828, Fynn managed to dissuade Shaka from his scheme of descending on Cape Frontier natives (Ludlow 1882:190-95).

The arrival of Europeans, it is true, inhibited the continuation of foreign raids. Nevertheless, the efficiency of Zulu political organization already had had the same effect. It was therefore to be expected that every year would see a diminution in the number of cattle added to the royal kraals. This was a consequence of the structure of the Zulu state, and must be seen to have produced instability and conflict within the state which engendered alteration of that structure. Since cattle were the substance of Zulu economy and since the size of the king's herds gave him the means of binding his chiefs to the support of his office, then the shrinking of these herds must have resulted in a proportionate loss of commitment *to the office* and change in the outcome of conflict between the ruler and his subordinates. Note, in this context, that Mpande

[6] Otterbein (1967) documents thoroughly the changes in Zulu warfare, showing the transitions from simple dueling battles to campaigns, with intermediate stages of battles of subjugation and of conquest. Note here, some differences in estimates of numbers of casualties, size of armies, etc. In spite of these differences and the difficulties in making such estimates, the "evolution" of warfare patterns is quite clear.

began to use the strategy of divining sorcery to confiscate the cattle of wealthy *indunas*. Foreign raids were no longer profitable and he had to look within the kingdom to maintain his herds. Again, Ferguson insightfully observed that Mpande's successor was able to revive the Zulu regimental system only because he placed it on a new political and economic basis (Ferguson 1918:216).

I do not, of course, deny the relevance of ecological variables in understanding the development of a centralized state.[7] I do, however, insist that the Zulu data are an instance of the persistent processes of change. Gluckman does acknowledge that conflict is inherent in social relationships, but does not sufficiently recognize that it causes social systems to change *continuously*. It may be methodologically useful to insist that repetitive change is comprehensible only insofar as it refers to regular processes within phenomena that have structure (e.g., role-allocation and socialization). But to distinguish change and conflict absolutely *within* and *of* the system discloses traces of the integration preoccupation in social analysis. Such analysis reflects a static conception of the social system, because if conflict is indeed ubiquitous, then "system" is no longer the point of reference.

Social continuity, then, does not contradict the actual absence of structural stability. As Dahrendorf notes, the very idea of structure is an "analytic expedient." The temporal borderlines between successive structures must be fictitious : "... at any given point of time they (structures) either are no longer, or not yet what they appear to be. Process and change are their very nature and indicate therefore superordinate categories of analysis" (1959:121).

Earlier, I pointed to an ambiguity in Gluckman's treatment of superimposed and linked pluralism, and also suggested that the distinction between revolution and rebellion is not a qualitative one, in the sense that their distinguishing characteristics, for example their respective consequences for change, are better understood as variables. There is a related ambiguity in his conception of the "boundaries" of the Zulu political system : he does not adequately portray that the relationship between the various component tribes

[7] Leach (1954) has argued against seeking the causes of social and political change entirely in ecological considerations, and has analyzed a case of cyclical change with its source in a "defect" of a social system.

of the nation was variable in the extent to which they were "in the system," i.e., to which their autonomy was low. Similarly, in the relationships between the Zulu and neighboring states such as the Swazi and Tonga (and the Europeans, for that matter), it is seldom possible to clearly draw a line of demarcation between them. In this case too, interdependence and autonomy were highly variable. Gouldner's suggestions concerning "functional autonomy" of system parts are illuminating in this matter. Criticizing Parsons, he writes :

> Here the point is stressed that social systems may be looked upon as composed of parts having varying degree of functional autonomy and interdependence; thus the difference between the external and the internal, the "inside" and the "outside" of the system, is not an absolute distinction, and the thickness or permeability of the system boundaries varies at different zones (1959:264).

This idea is indispensable in following Zulu history : I have spoken of the "tribes" that eventually comprised the state (in modified form) as undergoing a process of loss of autonomy to growing central authority. Similarly, districts of the nation were seen to have reasserted autonomy as economic and other means of control over them waned. In both phases, *interdependence* was high. The autonomy of districts with respect to the kingship was enhanced after 1880, but almost completely lost with respect to the British political hierarchy. The perspective of change expounded here agrees with Gouldner's in that he finds that the very striving of the system to satisfy its needs can generate tension insofar as it encroaches on the functional autonomy of its parts (remembering that the boundary between parts and non-parts is ambiguous). Tension or conflict between mutually interdependent parts is one source of "endogenous" change (Gouldner 1959:261).

This, however, means that an absolute distinction between endogenous and exogenous change can no longer be maintained. We are required to recognize a quantitative distinction between repetitive and changing processes. Thus, change arising from conflict between Zulu districts is merely different in degree from change which involved, say, the Zulu and the British. The poles of the continuum of endogenous and exogenous change correspond to a similar contrast in linked and superimposed pluralism, i.e.,

Pluralism :	Superimposed	←——→	Linked
Source of Change :	Exogenous		Endogenous

Consequently, since we may focus on variables such as violence, that are affected by the extent of superimposition or dissociation of conflicts, in considering the extent to which change originates inside or outside of the system, our attention is directed to the functional autonomy and degree of interdependence of the parts involved. Cases of "culture contact" are at one of the poles of the continuum. Less superimposed was the conflict between the seventeenth century Nguni tribes, since these were not culturally heterogeneous. [8]

Summary and Conclusions

That many anthropologists have seen qualitative differences between processes of change may have been a result of having studied relatively isolated societies, of stressing environmental influences on their structure and its modification, and of working with empirical situations of culture contact or acculturation. Students of acculturation, for instance, ought to consider it a phenomenon of change not absolutely unlike others "within" societies. Social mobility, socialization, and urbanization of rural populations are process of change which involve features similar to the acculturation of tribal peoples to Western values. Recognition of this should lead us to search for the *variables* that describe similarities and differences in structure and process.

Gluckman's treatment of Zulu history has been found lacking in certain respects. Still, it is reasonable to expect, for example, that conflict and its expression can play a role in structural continuity. The position advanced here is that any comprehensive model must accommodate both possibilities simultaneously. Complete analysis of a case such as the Zulu empire is a prodigious undertaking, demanding both structural and dynamic approaches. Even on a smaller scale, we must be ready to see elements of "rituals of rebellion" that both insulate a system from change and, at the same time, promote change.

A final word. The stature of Gluckman as a theorist is clearly reflected in his willingness to consider new points of view, and to

---

[8] See Murphy (1964). This article came to my attention after the present argument was formulated. It agrees in principle with Murphy's insistence that acculturation is a process not qualitatively different from other types of culture processes. He maintains, rightly, that assumptions about the autonomy and isolation of primitive societies have not been warranted.

effect far-reaching alterations in his own thinking. A great many of the criticisms made of Gluckman's past work could not be said to hold today, as he seems less attached to a qualitative image of the social system. Witness, for example, a statement from his introduction to *Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa*: "I now abandon altogether the type of organic analogy . . . which led me to speak of civil war as being necessary to maintain the system" (1963:38).

University of Illinois

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABROUSSET, T., and H. DAUMAS
1842 Relation d'un voyage d'expédition au nord-est de la colonie du Cap Bonne-Espérance. Paris, Bertrand.

BIRD, J. *(ed.)*
1888 Annals of Natal, 2 vols. P. Davis and Sons, Longmarket Street.

BRYANT, A. T.
1929 Olden times in Zululand and Natal. London, Longmans.

BULPIN, T. V.
1952 Shaka's country: a book of the Zulu. Cape Town, Howard Timmins.

COHEN, R.
1965 Review article: Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa. American Anthropologist 67:950-57.

COLENSO, J.
1855 Ten weeks in Natal: a journal of a first tour of visitation among the colonists and Zulu Kaffirs of Natal. Cambridge, Macmillan and Co.

COSER, L. A.
1957 Social Conflict and the theory of social change. British Journal of Sociology 8:197-207.

DAHRENDORF, R.
1959 Class and class conflict in industrial society, rev. ed. Stanford, Stanford University Press.

EYBERS, G. W. *(ed.)*
1918 Select government documents illustrating South African History: 1795-1910. London.

FERGUSON, W. S.
1918 The Zulus and the Spartans: a comparison of their military systems. Harvard African Studies, vol. II, Varia Africana II.

FYNN, H. F.
1839 History of Dingizwayo. *In* Bird, ed., Annals of Natal, vol. 1, 1888.

GIBSON, J. Y.
1911 The story of the Zulus. London, Longmans, Green and Co.

GLUCKMAN, M.
1940 The kingdom of the Zulu of South Africa. *In* E. E. Evans-Pritchard and M. Fortes, eds., African Political Systems. London, Oxford University Press.

GLUCKMAN, M.
1958 Analysis of a social situation in modern Zululand. Manchester, The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, no. 28.

GLUCKMAN, M.
1959a Custom and conflict in Africa. Glencoe, The Free Press.

GLUCKMAN, M.
1959b Political institutions. *In* E. E. Evans-Pritchard, ed., The Institutions of Primitive Society. Glencoe, The Free Press.

GLUCKMAN, M.
1963 Order and rebellion in tribal Africa. London, Cohen and West.

GOULDNER, A. W.
1959 Reciprocity and autonomy in sociological theory. *In* L. Ross, ed., Symposium on Sociological Theory. Evanston, Row, Peterson.

GROUT, L.
1864 Zulu-Land. Philadelphia, Presbyterian Publication Committee.

GUSFIELD, J. R.
1962 Mass society and extremist politics. American Sociological Review 27:19-31.

HOLDEN, W. C.
1963 The past and future of the Kaffir races. Cape Town.

ISAACS, N.
1939 Travels and adventures in eastern Africa. Capetown, the van Riebeeck Society.

KABERRY, P.
1957 Primitive states. British Journal of Sociology 8:224-34.

KAY, S.
1834 Travels in Caffaria. New York, Harper and Brothers.

KRIGE, E. J.
1936 The social system of the Zulus. London.

LEACH, E. R.
1954 Political systems of highland Burma. London, Bell.

Ludlow, W. R.
1882 Zululand and Cetawayo. London, Simpkin, Marshall and Co.

Murphy, R. F.
1964 Social change and acculturation. Transaction of the New York Academy of Sciences, ser. II, 26:845-54.

Norbeck, E.
1963 African rituals of conflict. American Anthropologist 65:1254-79.

Otterbein, K. F.
1967 The evolution of Zulu warfare. *In* Law and Warfare, ed. by P. Bohannan. New York, The Natural History Press.

Ritter, E. A.
1955 Shaka Zulu : the rise of the Zulu empire. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Shapera, I.
1956 Government and politics in tribal society. London, Watts.

Shepstone, T.
1873 Report on an expedition to install Cetwayo king of the Zulus. Blue Book C1137.

Vijn, C.
1880 Cetshwayo's Dutchman: being a private journal of a white trader in Zululand during the British invasion. London, Longmans, Green and Co.