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INTERROGATING THE IDEA OF TRADITION IN THE HUMAN USE MANAGEMENT OF MOUNTAIN AREAS.

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Introduction

A few years ago, I was standing in the fields of a Karakoram mountain village in northern Pakistan talking to a climber who had just finished an expedition to one of the high peaks up-valley. He was bemoaning the impact that a planned jeep track to the village would have on local life. He knew that the road was being constructed to serve the interests of the military and the adventure tourism industry and was clearly opposed to its construction. “It’s just going to bring more people to this place”, he said, “and all the trappings of modernization.” This last word loaded with a tone of contempt. “And these people” he went on, pointing to the village, “they have no idea what’s coming. It’s going to destroy their traditional way of life.” As he uttered these words, he conveyed a sincere desire to want to protect “these people” from what he had seen happen elsewhere, including in his native United States, and a disappointment that he was unable to do anything about it. The disappointment here is, of course, one that stems from a nostalgic desire for something that can be identified as ‘traditional’. He was clearly uttering a nostalgic desire that was grounded in his own experience and desires, whatever their source, rather than recounting anything that would have been heard from villagers.

Late one afternoon, two weeks after this encounter, I was again standing in the fields, looking down valley in the direction of the roadhead. A friend from the village was with me. “This village is no good”, he said. “We don’t have a road. We don’t have electricity, we don’t have a threshing machine, we have to walk three days to get to the bazaar.” His tone was one that was desirous of the road and all that it will bring. Far from being ignorant of the potential impacts, he had a good sense of changes in communities that were linked to larger centers by roads and was able to describe the changes that he had seen in those villages. Although he mentioned the alteration of certain practices, nowhere in his vocabulary did the word “tradition” or the loss of “tradition” find a place.

These two encounters raise issues directly related to the title of this session: Human Use Management to Diminish the Impact of Visitation on Traditional Lifestyles. They are issues that challenge assumptions that I believe are implicit in the title itself, for they point us toward the importance of considering what I will call the cultural politics of tradition. By that, I mean the ways in which “tradition” arises from a context in which social actors shaped by or embodying different cultural meanings and practices interact with each other. At some point, someone or some group must define what constitutes ‘tradition’. And they must define it in opposition to something that is not
traditional. In other words, “tradition” is brought into being through political actions for political reasons. That said, it is important that when we speak of tradition, especially when we speak of impacts on tradition, that we pay attention to the contestation involved in the definition of tradition, the identification of impact and decisions regarding how impacts should be addressed. The point here is that we cannot engage questions of tradition without understanding power relations and their role in the assignation of meaning.

In this paper I move beyond a concept and language of tradition that paints a community as a static entity. In doing so I want to reach a point where an impact on “traditional lifestyles” can be identified as such because an event or set of events affects the economic viability, social vitality, political validity and ecological integrity of a community. An impact can be considered negative if it diminishes these features and threatens the social reproduction – or sustainability - of community. A negative impact might also diminish the autonomy to define the goals or objectives of what constitutes social reproduction. It positive impact, conversely would enhance any of these characteristics. This is obviously a challenge to the very idea of tradition, but if we are to deal effectively with issues raised by ‘visitation’, particularly from the perspective of a managerial framework implied by the title, I believe that we need to understand the historical roots of the idea of tradition as it exists with the logic of modernity. There is a need to address this question of tradition because of its association with modernity, the way in which tradition has been used to temporalize geographical and cultural difference.

Let me expand on this last point. Through a history of colonialism and modernization, traditional societies or lifestyles are typically those that are represented as different from dominant ‘modern’ societies’ or practices. Modern, however, connotes an existence in the here and now, whereas tradition connotes a connection with the past, indeed an existence with the past. Despite the fact that societies, practices, or lifestyles identified as primitive exist in the here and now, from a modernist perspective, they are represented as belonging to and emblematic of the past. This connotation also expresses itself in the assertion that ‘tradition’ exists as a condition of stasis or the absence of change. Indeed, if we recognize tradition as substance (traditum) rather than process (tradtio), the danger in ‘protecting tradition’, or ‘minimizing impacts on tradition’ is that we threaten to impose the strictures of a cultural zoo on people and places that recognize themselves as undergoing continual change. This is by no means a new argument and is one that has been made by indigenous peoples and others who have been identified, or self-identify, as traditional. What they are challenging in these statements is the idea of tradition as stasis. This danger, however, arises when a managerial logic that utilizes conventional ideas of tradition overlooks or is ignorant of local interests and is applied to practices that are contextually dynamic. Such conflicts between indigenous groups and the state over what constitutes tradition are an example of what I mean by the cultural politics of tradition. This is not an incidental concern. For the consequences of such conflicts – who ‘wins’ as it were - has significant material effects for people’s lives.

The Cultural Politics of Tradition

Before we can talk about diminishing the impact of visitation on traditional lifestyles, then, we need to know something of the cultural politics of tradition. Tradition is a term that has undergone a marked change in meaning over the few decades. Not long ago things traditional were taken to imply a condition of stasis in relation to a body of knowledge, or a set of practices and relations between the two. More recently, tradition has taken on positive connotation, still
assigned an attachment to the past and still a relation between knowledge and practice. But rather than something to be denigrated and represented as an obstacle to change, tradition is more often represented as something to be valued as an element of cultural diversity (and all of the associations to ecological theory that this contains). To understand the former connotation of tradition, we need to understand the concept of tradition as emerging from a European intellectual history which, as an outcome of the Enlightenment gave rise to the concept (and instrumental practices of) modernity. Modernity, conceived as the social expression of the lived values of freedom and self-realization, however, does not stand apart from that which it is defined against. In Europe, this was the Ancien Régime, a social order of aristocratic rule that embodied the ‘traditions’ that the Enlightenment and its revolutionary movements were aligned against. In the context of a ‘progressive’ ‘modernizing’ Europe, then, tradition was what stood in the way of achieving values of freedom and self-realization. Modernity and tradition do not exist outside of their opposition to each other.

That said, there has recently emerged within a number of social spheres – academia, state institutions, non-governmental organizations, among others - a respect for the idea of tradition. Doubtless there are different understandings of tradition at play in each of these spheres, but it is important to understand just why this respect for ‘tradition’ has emerged. Partially it is a rhetorical reaction to observed changes in ‘modern’ society that expresses itself as nostalgia for a time that never was. More importantly, however, it can be seen to stem from a general recognition of the cultural damage inflicted through practices of modernity that targeted traditional practices and knowledge as obstacles to ‘progress’ and ‘development’. Such practices included a disavowal of non-Western knowledge systems by colonial and state agencies; educational practices designed to supplant those knowledge systems; and the general denigration of practices and lifestyle choices not aligned with dominant modes of socio-economic organization.

If we accept my point that tradition and modernity are not in fact absolutes, are not opposites, and are not clearly defined or delimited spaces or forms of practice; if we see them as existing in relation to a specific history that legitimized the existence of modernity and set anything that did not resemble or subscribe to the rationalist logic of modernity under the burdensome label of tradition, then we need to recognize that there is not really such a thing as a ‘traditional lifestyle’, or at least one that exists apart from the capacity or the power to define it. This suggests that ‘tradition’ is an instrumental concept. What I mean by this is that first and foremost, aside from the practices it describes, tradition is always an idea deployed against something that is attempting to challenge the capacity to define and sanction a normative lifestyle. I do not mean to suggest by this that we can simply dispense with the concept of tradition, for, because it is instrumental, it serves the interests of particular peoples who have historically occupied subordinate positions in relation to dominant social groups. Ironically, these groups have been subordinated precisely because dominant social groups have seen them as traditional. However, given a recognition of the legitimacy of tradition (that is usually accorded to indigenous groups) through a combination of the institutionalization of a liberal humanist conception of human rights following WWII, a rise in liberal social and ecological scholarship following 1968, and the emergence of new social movements aimed at legitimizing knowledge systems that had been marginalized by institutions of modernity, tradition has become an effective rhetorical tool in attempts by marginalized groups to address and challenge historical injustices. To say that an act of the state, a private corporation, or a dominant community, impinges on traditional use or practice or lifestyle today is to lob a hefty stone of opposition that now lands with a heavy noise on ears that would have been deaf to these concerns just a little over 20 years ago.
The Constitution of Traditional Lifestyles

Despite the qualifications regarding the instrumentality of 'tradition' that I have outlined above, it is clear that there are certain modes of living that are commonly described as traditional. How best to describe these is an open question and there are certainly different approaches. Some might have us accept that any practice or belief that extends unaltered through a given number of generations can be classified as traditional. Aside from the difficulty of addressing whether a practice has changed in material form or meaning, the criteria of time here is quite arbitrary. Others see all tradition as invented within certain political contexts. From this perspective, the durability of what comes to be defined as tradition, at least from an external perspective, has more to do with ideological needs than material function through time. While I tend to side more with this latter assertion that certain practices come to qualify as tradition for ideological reasons, it is hard to deny that certain practices, informed by knowledge, beliefs, values (themselves all ideological products) do facilitate the biological and social continuity of community. What is important to recognize, however, is that it is impossible for these social formations to remain static over time. There is a disturbing and dangerous tendency among governmental and non-governmental agencies to treat the idea of community as homogenous and the idea of tradition as static. What become labeled as traditional communities are often treated as non-stratified entities. They are not. Like all communities, they are bounded locations composed of social relations of power. 'The community', for example, is commonly treated as a monolithic body of subjects with uniform interests, rather than as a network of micro-power relations (and their effects) contextualized and bounded by transformations introduced by regional, national and international relations of production, and differentiated along lines of gender, age, wealth, status, race, ethnicity, clan allegiance.

This means that, just as we need to understand the reality of power relations between communities and external interests that result in struggles over the definition of tradition, it is important to remember that communities and lifestyles are not homogeneous things. Different people have different interests within these relations and alliances form on the basis of those interests. In some cases, these will be rooted in gender. The interests of men and women, for example, are often not the same and women are often left in subordinate positions that they express a desire to challenge. In other cases, it is the young against the elderly - in some cases it is the interests of those who have established alliances with capital or the state against those who have not.

In other words, 'community' even in so-called 'traditional societies' connotes a diversity of mutable interests. Just as a community is an expression of relations of power, which bind individuals together in relationships that are not necessarily equally beneficial to all, it is also composed of social institutions (particularly those sanctioned and imposed by the state) that allow certain empowered individuals to capture the benefits of development and management plans. These same internal institutions can appropriate the capacity to define just what constitutes tradition in any given context and represent it to external interests (state institutions, bureaucrats, academics, consultants etc.) who express a desire to respect local authority. An understanding of power in community, then, is important in understanding tradition because it emphasizes the ways in which the capacity to assign meaning to practice can operate to serve particular interests. To have the power to define a practice or a body of knowledge as 'traditional' in a political context within which a dominant group is seen to be amenable to historic preservation or
indigenous ‘rights’, for example, is to be aware of the political currency of ‘tradition’ and to have the capacity to assign meaning in ways that can channel the benefits deriving from the political currency of ‘tradition’ disproportionately. The inequitable effects of power have always been present in local scale politics, but in an age in which the governance structures of communities have been influenced by mechanisms of the state and increasingly by non-governmental organizations, there is little guarantee that the checks on power that actually facilitated social reproduction of community in the past continue to function effectively today.

The point here is that ‘traditional practices’, and the lifestyles they constitute, are not static through time but change within bounds set by dominant norms and values which are themselves continually challenged, contested and in a state of flux. It is this iterative relation, through which knowledge, beliefs, values, and ultimately practice change, that denies the possibility of stasis and directs the ways in which communities change. That said, ‘lifestyles’ – or what we can define as practices, grounded in norms and values that allow the satisfaction and display of socially defined goals – are, at any point in time, a reflection of the outcome of historically contingent relations of power that differentially ‘shade’ what people do as well as when, where and how they do it. In many cases these lifestyles are ‘managed’ by regulatory institutions (themselves subject to change) that emerge over time and rely on authority to enforce the practices that constitute a ‘traditional lifestyle’ and attempt to ensure the continuity of community. These institutions require legitimacy in order to maintain the support of those people they regulate and people tend to obey them when those who hold positions of authority adhere to community norms (again, themselves subject to change). Why does this matter? Why is this discussion of the cultural politics of tradition important? Because it points to the need to identify ‘tradition’ as residing in the existence of legitimate authority through which all members of a social group who claim to live a traditional lifestyle can be seen to agree on just what it is that constitutes such a lifestyle.

Visitation and Traditional Lifestyles

To this point, I have been laying the groundwork to suggest that despite the contestation over ‘tradition’, local communities have had little ability to control the impacts of those who have come in search of ‘tradition’. This is what I take visitation to mean. Several scenarios set up the possibility for visitation. All involve a community existing as an end or in-transit destination for some other, usually dominant, group. One such scenario is obviously the enclosure of space as a protected area, such as a National Park that includes fixed communities within its boundaries or along an approach to entrance points. Another exists when communities find themselves serving a function in relation to an activity such as mountaineering or adventure tourism. They may be communities along a route that serve as overnight rest stops, or they may be communities that supply the labour or resources that these activities rely upon. Of course, visitation also comes into being through the existence of a community as a destination for groups such as tourists, researchers, aid or development agencies, government bodies and so on.

In all cases visitation implies a captive population, and concerns over impact of visitation stem from historical attitudes toward indigenous or ‘local’ peoples. This is what I assume to be the operating assumptions of the mountaineer whose words opened this paper. Here was an individual holding this village in his mind as a static entity, a place unchanged for centuries that was now on the cusp of a dramatic change because of the visitation (of people, goods, practices, and ideas) that the road would bring. This is not an unusual stance. Rural communities are often held out as a reflection of a prior way of time. Villages in the Karakoram mountains, where I
have done most of my work, have consistently been represented in European and North American travel writing as places locked in time (i.e., as places that have not changed through time), and, therefore, as a living representation of a universal past. People who have been assigned, or have adopted, the label of traditional, at least from the perspective of dominant social groups stand apart as different, and as subject to efforts to protect the elements that constitute that difference. But it is not merely difference, but the insertion of difference into a value hierarchy that drives a concern with the impacts of visitation. It would seem odd, for example, to discuss concerns about the impacts of visitation on residents of Sussex Drive in Ottawa, for example, even though being on the receiving end of tourism is certainly an everyday part of their lives. Certainly part of the reason that we don’t think to discuss this is that they have the ability via property rights and police powers to restrict the spatial reach of tourists (i.e., to keep them from camping in their front yards, or from walking into their houses) – they have both an entitlement to use state mechanisms, and the power to access them, to keep impact at a minimum, as they define it. Another reason that we do not consider them in this context is that we do not consider them to live ‘traditional lifestyles’. This, of course, brings us back to the question of just what constitutes a ‘traditional’ lifestyle. Typically, we don’t think of ‘the rich’, ‘the west’, the ‘elite’, the ‘urbane’ as engaging in a traditional lifestyle. Rather, they inhabit something that we recognize as ‘modernity’, or the condition of being ‘modern’ to which ‘tradition’ is set in opposition. Indeed, the concern over the impacts of visitation is a concern that tradition will be infected by something called modernity, a condition that we tend to see as characterized by continual change, speed, flux, and uncertainty. Presumably, it is a desire to protect ‘other’ groups, groups not yet fully ‘modernized’ that prompts the desire to protect a traditional lifestyle.

The immediate assumption deriving from this construction is that something called visitation impacts something called traditional lifestyles in ways that can be diminished through management practices. However, just as a cultural political treatment of tradition raises questions over its definition, a similar consideration of the impacts of visitation raises questions regarding who is empowered to define specific impacts and who is entitled and empowered to engage in management practices to modify those impacts. Given an understanding of community as a collection of overlapping yet divergent interests, this question of management highlights the importance of identifying and comprehending the mechanisms that imbue political institutions with the legitimation that sanctions their authority. It also underlines the importance of incorporating (I would almost say turning over control to) internally legitimated institutions of authority in making management decisions regarding the management of human use. I use the phrase “internally legitimated” here to distinguish such mechanisms and institutions from those legitimated by the state, as in many cases, externally legitimated institutions (e.g., those that rely on the authority (and police powers) of the state for their authority) tend to be less effective and less efficient in generating compliance among their constituency. In the context of visitation, then, what is needed for the protection of lifestyles is not something that can be determined from outside of the context of how people define their lives, how tradition is defined and how people see themselves engaging in the process of visitation. There is no reason to expect that there will be coherent agreement on any of these questions within communities let alone between them, but that does not diminish the obligation to understand the basis for what constitutes tradition and traditional lifestyle in any cultural political context.
Experience from Northern Pakistan

For the past 15 years, I have been working in the Karakoram Himalaya of northern Pakistan and over that time have focused on understanding the effects of adventure tourism on Karakoram communities. This background lets me use direct observation to address certain issues of the effect of visitation not so much on something that I would identify as traditional lifestyles, but on what appear to be long-standing practices, norms and values. Over the past 15 years, northern Pakistan, an area bounded by Afghanistan, China and India, has become increasingly popular as a mountaineering and tourist destination. As a consequence of this adventure tourism focus, it has also become the focus of a number of international conservation organizations including the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and IUCN – The World Conservation Union (IUCN). These activities have created the conditions under which visitation occurs in the mountains. Tourists visit specific villages to witness particular rituals turning them into spectacles in the process; mountaineers and trekkers pass through villages and use village resources including labour to support their activities; and increasingly people come to visit a variety of protected areas that have been set up in the region over the past 15 years. In doing so, they also pass through villages either inside or adjacent to protected area boundaries.

Witnessing the interactions that come with these forms of visitation make it possible to say something about their impact on lifestyles. It is important to note, however, that these impacts cannot be considered universal. Rather, an understanding of context – within which I include not simply social organization and structure, but political relations in place, the relative distribution of power within the communities being visited, and the relative difference in ability to control the encounter of those visiting and those being visited – is crucial to understanding the impacts of visitation in any given social or geographical locale. For example, a frequently heard critique of what some call ethnic or cultural tourism is the way in which it converts ritual practice into tourist spectacle. Much of this is grounded in a desire of visitors to experience ‘the authentic’ or ‘the traditional’. But, as I have noted, authenticity or tradition do not simply exist, they are produced, partially in relation to this demand. This production of authenticity, then, implies pressure for the reproduction of cultural practice as performance and raises ethical concerns related to the devaluation of meaning in such geographically and socially contextualized practices. Of course, there is the response that those performing the cultural practice, often rituals, recognize the manufactured context and engage in a particular form of performance for the travel market while reserving separate spaces for their own meaningful performances. This, however, can be counter-productive as these new sites become ‘the authentic spaces of cultural performance’ and, as such, are sought out by travelers seeking to differentiate themselves from the mainstream. Even in cases where a ‘community’ sanctions cultural performance for a travel market, that community is rarely inclusive or homogeneous and decisions can be made by a selective group that is not necessarily representative of the interests of all community members. A differential in power relations within communities often facilitates exploitation on the basis of gender, age, and social status, and can generate new sources of tension within communities as some members try to capture the benefits flowing from a travel market. The point here, however, is that this cannot be considered to be universal. The meaning of such cultural performance as well as the degree of exploitation, cultural erosion, or empowerment that it provides needs to be considered on a case by case basis. For example, it is not at all clear whether this participation in cultural performance effects people in First Nations Communities in North America the same way as indigenous communities that I am familiar with in Pakistan.

If we consider, then, an impact on ‘traditional lifestyle’ to be an impact on practices that contribute to the social reproduction of community (including elements of economic viability,
social vitality and political validity), we can examine any particular context only from a perspective of a long-term understanding of community and an institutional context that considers as legitimate, a diversity of affected voices. In my experience, this is rarely the case in practice. Let me provide a set of examples from the region of northern Pakistan in which I work. These examples are taken from a village that is at the head of a valley leading to major mountaineering peaks, on a popular trekking route and adjacent to an area that has been decreed as a Protected Area.

Over the past 5 years adventure tourism firms have popularized a trekking and climbing route that leads visitors through high altitude pastures at which women have historically grazed livestock during the summer months. Given the constricted valley terrain of mountain environments, there are limited route options and trekkers, mountaineers, porters from other villages and down-country guides come in frequent contact with local women. This is an attraction to foreign visitors, some of whom tend to treat local women as an exotic object subject to visual consumption. They often attempt to photograph women despite dominant cultural objections to the practice and despite women’s own protests. Women have complained about this contact, suggesting that they feel unsafe, and have, along with male members of their households begun to pressure to be able graze livestock at alternate and more distant areas controlled by the village but not historically used as pasture. Aside from the ecological effects of this move, it extends the spatial separation of women and livestock from the village and potentially increases their vulnerability and the range of risks they are exposed to in traveling to pasture. While villages leaders recognize this problem, they say that, for a number of reasons, they are relatively powerless to alter the practices of trekkers and the adventure tourism agencies that bring them to the region. One, they recognize the partial dependency created within their own community on wages supplied by these expeditions and the ancillary services associated with them. Second, with the expansion of visitation over the past few years the demand for labour to service expeditions, primarily in the form of porterage, has increased. For local leaders to restrict access to land is, then, to possibly restrict the ability of a large number of men to earn an income, and, as a consequence, is seen as an act that would generate a great deal of inter-communal strife. Aside from this, local leaders recognize that the regional and national political connections enjoyed by many of the owners of adventure tourism firms would make any attempt to restrict access the subject of state hostility. In essence, visitation has interfered with the integrity of decision-making institutions and practices that are responsible for regulating practices that contribute to the social reproduction of community in accordance with internally defined goals – in other words, ‘traditional’ practices.

The increase in visitation associated with adventure tourism in the Karakoram has also affected the division of labour in local communities. Not only has the capacity to regulate the supply of labour to tourism activities been effectively removed from a local sphere of authority and taken up by both the state and adventure tourism companies, but the demand for an increased supply of labour has changed the way in which subsistence tasks are allocated between men and women and on the basis of age. As more and more young and middle-aged men are absent from the community, tasks that they would have historically performed are assumed by women or older or younger relatives. In some villages, this might mean that women go to tend animals at pasture and need to learn a new set of skills to do so. In others, it might mean that they assume tasks formerly done by men such as threshing wheat and all of the ancillary tasks that go with it. This is no small matter in terms of lifestyle, for not only does it imply the need to acquire the knowledge to perform a new set of tasks, and an increased burden of labour, but it also implies a change in identity. To change the nature of work in a locale where gendered identity is attached
to role performance is to change what it is to be a man or a woman in other words, to change ‘traditional’ identity.

Just as visitation has an impact at the level of the individual and the community, it also has an impact at the level of the household. In Karakoram villages, it is considered a mark of honor and a moral duty to provide hospitality to travelers and people in need. Historically a man could be traveling through a village and expect to be taken in, given shelter and fed. This has been the basis of many fictive kin relations and friendships that carry with them certain social obligations of reciprocity. Such normative standards of hospitality have become problematic in villages that have become subject to frequent visitation by adventure tourists, for with these tourists come porters, quite often at a ratio of 4 porters to every trekker. When these porters stop in a village overnight, they can put a great demand on village resources. More important, however, they can place a great strain on the capacity of village households to maintain a norm of hospitality. As the steady flow of expeditions through a village brings with them relatives and fictive kin, it becomes exceedingly difficult for households in visited communities to maintain their social obligations without taxing household resources to a dangerous extent. Yet refusing to honor social obligations also puts a household at risk by threatening its capacity to maintain social relations that contribute to its own capacity for social reproduction.

These are but a few examples of the impacts of visitation on practices that contribute to the social vitality, economic viability, political validity and ecological fitness of one Karakoram community. There are additional problems that I could cite. Social stratification and the entrenchment of individualism are commonly cited by villagers as directly related to the increasing importance of adventure tourism in the local economy. This has allowed some individuals with access to capital or with political connections to capture the benefits of visitation and to benefit at the expense of others. The outcome of this, according to some villagers, has been a decline in commitment to communal obligations and to expressions of commitment to the mutual interests of a village congregation.

It is difficult to imagine ways to ‘manage’ some of these impacts, particularly stratification without curtailing visitation altogether and very few villagers express a wish for that to happen. Rather, they derive significant benefit from the income derived through visitation. While recognizing the potential benefits of visitation, they also express a frustration with the ways in which external interests have increasingly eroded their capacity to capture those benefits. Despite this erosion, it is possible to imagine how the negative impacts could be addressed, largely through an enhancement of the capacity for local control over local resources and the way in which visitation occurs. But it is much more difficult to conceive of ways on which these responses can be put into practice without radical alterations in the concept of tradition and similar alterations in the empowerment of individuals to participate in the making of decisions that affect the material conditions under which they live their lives. Villagers I have spoken with in northern Pakistan, for example, have a number of ideas regarding the ways in which visitation could be managed to address the problems they encounter but there is not necessarily agreement among villagers as to the priority that should be assigned to dealing with particular impacts, nor is there agreement on what constitutes a significant impact. Some villagers have the political resources to benefit from visitation to a much greater extent than others and consequently oppose practices that, while possibly benefiting some (e.g., women who feel restricted by exposure to tourists), would impinge on their capacity to capture the proceeds of visitation. Just as villagers are not equally empowered to affect decisions regarding visitation within communities, village leaders are not necessarily sufficiently empowered to affect the external agents that facilitate visitation. In the case of
northern Pakistan, this is often the managers or owners of tour agencies who also occupy regional political positions of power.

Given that a relative lack of empowerment of legitimate local political institutions to participate in translocal affairs is a major stumbling block in generating effective means to deal with the impacts of visitation, I would suggest that local control and a consequent amelioration of the impacts of visitation (or at least a redirection so that they operate in the interests of the majority of the community) can be facilitated by a process of long-term ethnographic research. This should be geared toward understanding the impacts of visitation, the political context within which visitation occurs, and generating the capacity for effective community level control over the ways in which visitation occurs. Advocacy can also take the form of generating mechanisms for communication that bypass or effectively curtail the opposition of dominant interests who would attempt to interfere with attempts to enhance the development of means to achieve this empowerment.

Conclusion

What I am proposing in this paper is a re-evaluation of what is implied by the title of the session. I believe that it is dangerous to uncritically accept the existence of tradition without recognizing the cultural-political context within which tradition is produced. This means that tradition and the contestation over the constitution of tradition derive from the existence of power relations operating at a number of levels. Internal contestation - that which occurs within the communities concerned - must be taken into account given the divergent interests that actually exist within communities. There are also obviously contestations over control between local institutions that appear to be coherent at the level of community and statist institutions. I believe that it is potentially more productive, at least in terms of resolving these power struggles, to focus on understanding the impacts of visitation on the integrity of practices that contribute to community sustainability (defined as the reproduction of social vitality, economic viability, political validity and ecological capacity). Management issues, in this context, become concerns of how to facilitate local entitlement and empowerment in ways that define what it is that constitutes the integrity of practice and how that integrity can be maintained. This does not imply that practices pass through time unchanged, but that practices and knowledge systems continue to serve community goals sanctioned through valid political institutions that continue to derive internal legitimacy. It is through such a process that local communities can be provided with the access and ability to influence structures that have assumed control over local resources. Through the identification of local institutions that exercise legitimate authority, it becomes possible to begin to develop the mechanisms for self-determination or autonomy that will allow equal input to decision-making processes that determine how to regulate visitations so that the benefits of visitation can be allocated appropriately throughout the community and not impinge on how people choose to live a life. This also means that they must be free to operate without having the designation of a ‘traditional lifestyle’ imposed upon them by an institution of modernity that has taken upon itself to define tradition and to use tradition as an instrument of governance.

This has significant ramifications for management institutions. It means reconceptualizing management as a process meant to meet objectives not necessarily set from within the institutional structure of a management agency. It implies finding the means to overcome historical patterns of exclusionary, paternalistic, management practices and policies that have actually reduced the degree of control that local communities have over local resources. It also
implies the acceptance of a principle of self-determination, and a role for management within that principle, that empowers community institutions to define what actually constitute community goals. Within this view, management cannot be a process that identifies practices as ‘traditional’ and attempts to fix them as static, and manages human use of areas accordingly. Rather, management becomes a tool for providing the means for legitimate institutions of community authority to identify and act upon the impacts that impinge upon the integrity of practices designed to achieve community goals.