The Production of Space and the House of Xidi Sukur

Adam Smith; Nicholas David

Current Anthropology, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Jun., 1995), 441-471.

Stable URL:
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0011-3204%28199506%2936%3A3%3C441%3ATPOSAT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-3

CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY Volume 36, Number 3, June 1995

The Production of Space and the House of Xidi Sukur[1]

by Adam Smith and Nicholas David

Landscapes represent social differentiation: they are the site and the stake of struggles over power. A critical approach to spatial analysis has as its central task exploration of the ways in which particular spaces are committed to ensuring social reproduction. That such a perspective can inform on the nature of political power beyond the West is demonstrated here by a case study of Sukur, a small polity in the Mandara highlands of northeastern Nigeria and northern Cameroon. It is shown that, rather than being politically neutral in origin, the power and privileges of the *xidi* (chief) had constantly to be negotiated and reinforced. The paper concludes with reflections on the contrasting natures of chieftaincy in Sukur and in another Mandara grouping, the Mofu-Diamaré, and on the intersections of space and power.

ADAM SMITH is a graduate student in the anthropology department at the University of Arizona (Tucson, Ariz. 85705, U.S.A.). Born in 1968, he received a B.A. (1990) from Brown University, an M. Phil. (1991) in social and political theory from the University of Cambridge, and an M.A. (1993) in anthropology from the University of Arizona. His dissertation research is an archaeological examination of the importance of spatial organization in the extension of the Urartian state into Transcaucasia during the early 1st millennium B.C. His fieldwork has most recently been focused on southern Transcaucasia and the Caucasus. He has published "Fictions of Emergence: Foucault/Genealogy/Nietsche" (*Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 24:41–54).

NICHOLAS DAVID is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Calgary (Calgary, AB, Canada T2N 1N4). Born in 1937, he was educated at the universities of Cambridge (B.A., 1960) and Harvard (Ph.D., 1966). His research interests are in ethnoarchaeology, style theory, African later prehistory and culture history, and the European Upper Palaeolithic. He directs the Mandara Archaeological Project in Cameroon, Nigeria, and now Ghana and has conducted fieldwork in the southern Sudan and the Central African Republic. His publications include (with Hilke Hennig) *The Ethnography of Pottery: A Fulani Case Seen in Archaeological Perspective* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1972), a monograph on the Upper Palaeolithic Noaillian culture of Western Europe (American School of Prehistoric Research Bulletin 37, 1985), (with Steve Daniels and with Jon Driver) two *Archaeology Workbooks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1982 and 1989), videos on African iron making and ceramics, and "Integrating Ethnoarchaeology: A Subtle Realist Perspective" (*Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 11:330–59).

The present paper was submitted in final form 27 VIII 94.

To describe space as "produced" is to define it as the material inscription of social relations. The *construction* of spaces assembles forms with bricks and mortar or wattle and daub; the *production* of space assigns meanings through negotiation and struggle, reifying and legitimating inequalities in access to economic, political, and sacred resources. Thus landscapes come to represent social differentiation—of class, of gender, of hierarchy, and, ultimately, of power. Both the site and the stake of struggles over power, landscapes reflexively alter the social and physical space in which negotiation continues. Harvey (1989:239) enunciates the central tenet of a critical approach to spatial analysis as follows: "Spatial and temporal practices are never neutral in social affairs. They always express some kind of class or other social content, and are more often than not the focus of intense social struggle." The task of critique is to explore the ways in which particular spaces are committed to ensuring social reproduction. While a number of geographers have developed critiques of the landscape of capitalism (Soja 1988, Harvey 1989, Zukin 1991), few have applied such a perspective to non-Western spaces (Lansing 1991 is a notable exception).

One strategy of spatial practice defined both by Harvey and by Lefebvre (1991) is appropriation. Through the establishment of particular relations in physical space, meanings and resources are appropriated. Physical space is thus interpreted as social space. This is often achieved by management of proximity and distance. Foucault (1979, 1984) described the modern penal system as a "carceral archipelago" dispersed in physical space yet coherent in social space and panopticism—the use of state apparatus for direct observation of the populace—as requiring physical proximity. However, he never addressed the elision of meanings that accompanies proximity. The close association of temple and palace in sites such as Copan in Guatemala and Mari in Syria is not constructed from an *a priori* principle of domination that forges ties between ruler and deity. The specific spatial relations are instead an integral part of the production of king/god as a socially meaningful association. Therefore the appropriation of space through proximity is a strategy of power.

A second strategy of spatial practice is exclusion. The construction of physical borders, from the walls of Uruk to the Maginot line, is the production of social exclusion (Markus 1993). Defining boundaries in physical space

1. Adam Smith is primarily responsible for the theoretical approach applied in this paper to ethnographic materials collected by Nicholas David in Sukur (Adamawa State, Nigeria) between August 1992 and February 1993 as part of the work of the Mandara Archaeological Project. We thank Judith Sterner, another project member, for her contribution to the ethnography, Robert Netting, in whose seminar a version of the paper was first presented, Richard Fardon, Roy Larick, and Steven Nelson for advice and comments, and Carol Kramer, who brought us together. Fieldwork was supported by a grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada and authorized by the National Commission for Museums and Monuments of Nigeria, Adamawa State and local government authorities, to whom, together with Xidi Gezik Kanakakaw, assistants John T. Habga and Philip E. Sukur, and the people of Sukur, Nicholas David expresses his deep appreciation and gratitude.

demarcates boundaries in social space, and establishing rigorous control over circulation turns spatial control into social domination. This is often related to the seclusion of knowledge through the regulation of access, a principle echoed at smaller scales where circulation defines boundaries within structures and only the few are privileged to enter the holy of holies. On both scales of analysis, boundaries regulating circulation restrict knowledge of the created environment and thus create asymmetries of power.

What Lefebvre (1991) has characterized as "representations of space" redescribe social relations; they create distance between what Marx and Engels (1939) called the "real reality" of experience and the "phenomenal forms" of perception. Representations of space are ideologically constructed to affect the perception of space. Certain built forms thus become resources for legitimating social relations. Bourdieu's (1973) analysis of the Kabyle house, while focusing on the replication of mental structures in physical space, points out that the house is produced in social space largely from outside the household; the principles of hierarchy defined in the "public" sphere structure the arrangement of domestic space. As a result, ideology must also be visible within the household. Another perspective is that of Sabean (1990), who has described an "ideology of the house" in a southern German village during the 18th and 19th centuries. The physical space of the house, although not constitutive of the household, is metonymically used to represent the same relations within the "public" sphere: "We have already suggested that the house was a central idiom for expressing values, making claims, allocating blame, and struggling over resources. . . . its use was always strategic and continually touched on issues of hierarchy, exchange, reciprocity, right, and obligation" (Sabean 1990:101). The house is useful as a symbolic resource precisely because it alludes to the household. Bachelard (1969) describes the house as the paramount space of imagination, the power of the form springing from its integration of the thoughts, memories, and dreams of the protected beginnings of life. The house, as a representation of the household, is a potent symbolic resource for representing, legitimating, and reproducing inequality. Thus Donley-Reid (1990) has shown, in her analysis of Swahili residences, how, through the representation of inequalities in physical space, Swahili hierarchies of class and gender were reified and naturalized.

We will here employ a critical approach to spatial analysis as a contribution to the debate on the nature of power in the small-scale societies of the Mandara highlands of northeastern Nigeria and northern Cameroon.

Political Authority in the Mandara Highlands and in Sukur

Frequently described as "egalitarian" (see Pontié 1984: 218), the social formations of the Mandara highlands are better regarded, following Kopytoff (1987:35–37), as ones in which inegalitarianism and the potential for hierarchy exist but are for the most part little expressed. Complex societies do indeed occur in the Mandara; in the precolonial period some bordering the plains had developed chiefdoms, probably in response to predatory pressures exerted by the states that from the 16th century onward were coming to dominate the lowlands. Vincent (1991) has recently devoted a major monograph to the interdependencies of political power and the sacred and to the symbolics of political discourse among the Mofu-Diamaré of Cameroon, particularly in three southern "princedoms," Duvangar, Durum, and Wazang. The power of these montagnard "princes" was founded upon their leadership of the numerically dominant clan and intimately associated with privileged access to God and the ancestors and magical control over natural forces and especially rain (Vincent 1975, 1991). In some other parts of Africa (cf. Donham 1990) such control, whether exercised directly or indirectly, also constituted a basis for relations of inequality.

On the Nigerian side of the border, Sukur (fig. 1), with cultural roots that are largely shared, is another hierarchized polity that has been described as a "divine kingdom" (Kirk-Greene 1960). The former power of Sukur is inscribed on the landscape in the form of substantial building projects. These include the paved ways that lead up the mountain from the north and east, the Patla, a ceremonial area with a megalithic "throne room," and the adjacent residence of the *xidi* (chief), a large walled enclosure containing buildings, terraced fields, and other features. We shall argue that the chiefly residence is a defining element in the landscape of power produced through negotiation over control of social practices. We put forward a critical interpretation of two spatial practices evident in the xidi house: the manipulation of proximal relations established between it and adjacent enclosures and spaces and the control of circulation through and around the house. In addition, we expose the use of the generalized form of a Sukur dwelling within the xidi house to obscure relations of inequality and secure assent to the power of the xidi within Sukur society at large.

The polity of Sukur entered the ethnographic record in the 1850s, when Heinrich Barth passed through the plains to the west of the Mandara chain on his way to Yola. He did not visit Sukur but was informed that this mountain plateau was the "natural stronghold of a pagan king whom my Kanúri companion constantly called 'Mai Sugúr'" (Barth 1857:117n). Barth continues: "Sugúr is said to be fortified by nature, there being only four entrances between the rocky ridges which surround it. The Prince of Sugúr overawes all the petty neighboring chiefs; and he is said to possess a great many idols, small round stones, to which the people sacrifice fowls of red, black, and white color, and sheep with a red line on the back."

In the century and a half since Barth's travels, occasional reports on Sukur have resulted from the visits of colonial officials (e.g., Strümpell 1922–23, Kirk-Greene 1960), a missionary (Kulp 1935), an archaeologist (Sassoon 1964), and historians (Barkindo 1985, Pongri 1988).

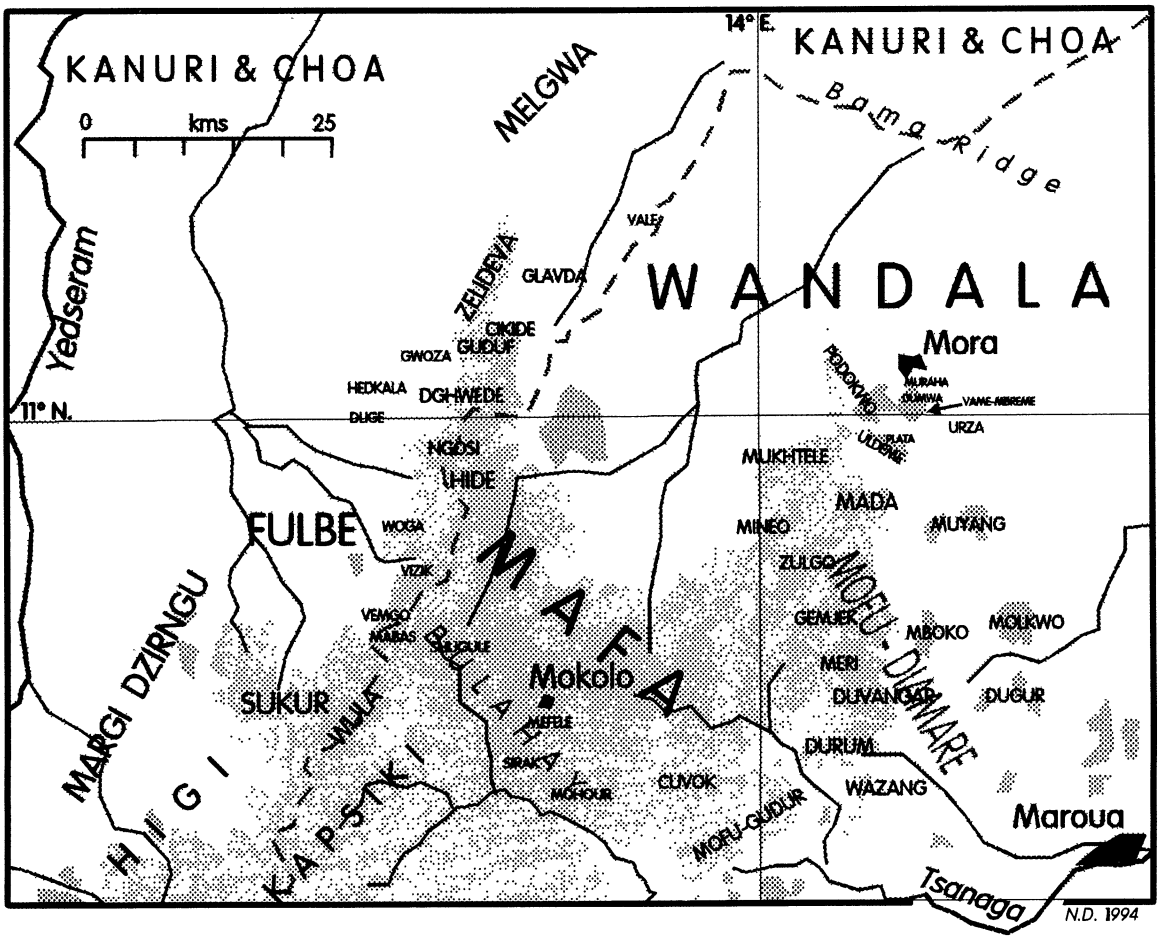

FIG. 1. *Ethnolinguistic groupings in the northern Mandara region.* Shading, *the Mandara highlands.*

The brevity of their stays, measured in hours or days rather than weeks, is one of several factors (David n.d.*a*) that account for the limited and garbled information that was available on Sukur society and culture at the start of the six-month Mandara Archaeological Project field season of 1992–93. While our aims were primarily ethnoarchaeological, the lack of ethnographic background required Nicholas David and Judith Sterner to devote a major portion of their efforts to ethnohistory and ethnography respectively.[2]

It is with independent Sukur and the house of the xidi in the late 19th and earliest 20th centuries that this paper is primarily concerned. About 1900, the polity consisted of a concentrated settlement with smaller outliers, its authority extending over most of a 31-km^2 plateau and into the surrounding valleys and plains (fig. 2).[3] Its population at that time can be estimated as 4,000 to 6,000. Sukur had emerged as a chiefdom at least by the beginning of the 18th century (Barkindo 1985:52), as a 1993 test excavation tends to confirm. The Sukur plateau possesses rich soils and adequate supplies of water and—a significant aspect of Sukur's natural environment for its political history remarked upon by Barth—natural defensibility. The plateau, rising precipitously some 500 m above plains that grade gently to a tributary of the Yedseram River, provided the peoples of the plateau with a strategic position from which Sukur could repel attacks until overcome by the guns and rifles of Hamman Yaji, the Fulbe (Fulani) lord of Madagali about 1920 (Reed n.d.).

Thus ended Sukur's independence. But the house of the xidi was built long before May 12, 1913, when Hamman Yaji boasted in his diary that his soldiers had "destroyed" it. (They probably set the roofs on fire.) Oral traditions and material evidence of flaking plaster, empty rooms and granaries, and traces of structures testify to a prosperity that was never subsequently regained. Even Matlay, the most powerful later xidi (1934–ca. 1959), could not restore it to its former state. Sukur's collective memory goes back to the defeat at the hands of the Fulbe, but the trauma inflicted by Hamman

2. Unattributed statements about Sukur are taken from their fieldnotes.

3. At the northern end of the plateau is the long-established Sukur (*sakun*)-speaking settlement of Damay, while to the southeast is the mixed Kapsiki and Sukur settlement of Kurang. Both were politically independent of Sukur.

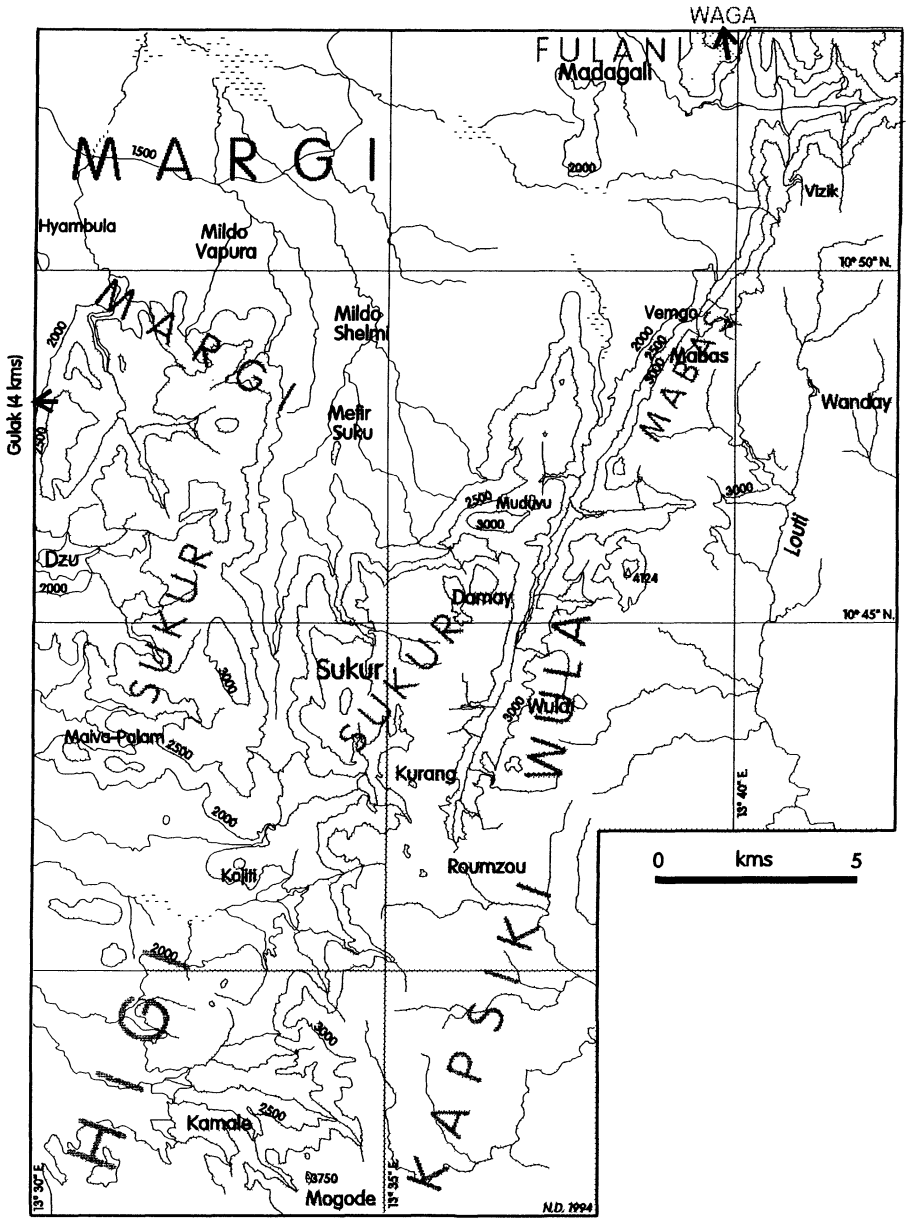

FIG. 2. *Sukur and its neighbours.* Shading, *land over 2,000'.*

Yaji is such that there is no coherent picture of the society that preceded it—only fragments that must be pieced together in the light of oral traditions, historical evidence, archaeology, and comparative information from other Mandara chiefdoms and, in particular, those of the Mofu-Diamaré. Vincent's (1991) detailed account is of special value in that the overall cultural context is so similar, and yet when we hold up our pieces of the Sukur jigsaw against the picture she has painted of the Duvangar, Wazang, and Durum princedoms we see that our scene was different. Although at Sukur the chiefly clan Dur has long been the largest, it constitutes only about one-fifth of the population. While the evidence for precolonial challenges to Dur hegemony is limited and problematic, competition between Dur factions was expressed in coup attempts that appear to have been frequent and often successful. Few 19th-century xidis are remembered today; presumably few ruled for long. The rank distinction between chiefly and commoner clans still marked in Mofu-Diamaré princedoms is scarcely apparent at Sukur today and seems to have been emphasized in the past only at the Yawal ceremony (David and Sterner n.d.*a*).

Xidis had certain rights: among others, to fields worked for them by their subjects, to a leg of each bull sacrificed at major feasts, to *gwaram* acacias (good smelting charcoal), and to an iron tax. The xidi's access to corvée labour had decreased by 1927 but is said to have been substantial. For example, the entire population put in a day's work on his estates four times a year,

at planting, weeding, harvesting, and threshing. The class of male initiates no doubt did considerably more. These rights decreased further during the colonial period but persist in attenuated form, and indeed repairs to the xidi house are carried out in this way. Despite a gruesome report by Kirk-Greene (1960:86–87) of Sukur expertise in the practice of castration, we found no evidence that xidis ever owned more than a very few slaves, most of them obtained from the neighbouring Wula. A small and unlikely enclosure near the xidi house is pointed out as a holding pen for those he intended to sell. Slaves' exceptional status is also indicated by the tradition that they ate only meat. Xidis could on occasion behave arbitrarily, for example appropriating all the mahogany trees on a hillside, but they are more remembered for their delivery of justice. As to centralization of power, it is noteworthy that, in contrast to the situation among the Mofu-Diamaré, the many title-holding counselors are drawn from all but 2 of the 20 clans now resident. Perhaps the best evidence for a formerly greater concentration of power in the hands of xidis is the changing kin relationship between the chief and his deputy, the *row-xidi* (literally "child of xidi"). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries this position was held by a brother or a son, in the mid-20th century by a nephew (FBS), and most recently by a third cousin (FFFBSSS).

Xidi Sukur neither was nor is a divine king (David and Sterner n.d.), having no direct control over natural forces but merely the prerogative of negotiating for rain with a Wula rainmaker. Other arcane knowledge and responsibilities contribute to the sacredness that, here as elsewhere in the Mandara, is inextricably associated with secular authority. Nonetheless, the xidi's religious authority appears to have been significantly less than that of Mofu-Diamaré princes. A cult of past xidis exists but, not surprisingly given their rapid succession, is not emphasized. It is equally difficult to describe the xidi as a military ruler. Sukur, although always able to deploy some coercive force, was never a formidable military power or even a petty state (*pace* MacBride 1937*a*; Kirk-Greene 1960:68; Mohammadou 1988). MacBride's suggestion that "the great paved causeway . . . [was] built by the labour of thousands of slaves or tributaries in order to provide an easy passage for the Sukur cavalry when it went down to harry the plains" is fanciful in the extreme and the pony cavalry a figment of observers' imaginations. The only reported "long-distance" raid made by Sukur on a Mafa settlement some 25 km east ended in defeat. Now forgotten, this encounter was recorded by Strümpell (1922–23), in 1906 the first westerner to visit Sukur.

In one area, however, the xidi's authority did exceed that of his Mofu-Diamaré counterparts. Iron production was fundamental to Sukur's political economy (Sassoon 1964. Barkindo 1985, David and Sterner n.d.*a*), and smelting was practised on an industrial scale.[4] Our estimates suggest that in times of peace and plenty the settlement was capable of annual exports of iron sufficient for the manufacture of over 50,000 hoes. Such was Sukur's preeminence in iron production that certain of its Higi neighbours preferred to trade food and craft items for Sukur iron rather than to smelt themselves, even though they had easy access to raw materials and technology. Sassoon's (1964) description of Sukur smelting in 1962 is of a temporary, limited revival of an industry that, unable to compete against cheap Western stock and scrap, had collapsed during the 1950s. Prior to this time, xidis had played major roles both in the production and in the commercialization of iron. The chief was himself a furnace master. Well-placed informants claim that even in precolonial times his people paid him a tax of iron currency bars and hoes.[5] His representatives arranged with neighbouring chiefs for access to Higi and Margi territories for Sukur men to burn charcoal and women to collect and clean ore. The xidi was also patron of the Sukur weekly market, which attracted long-distance traders to the plateau from Borno to exchange a range of luxury and subsistence products for iron currency bars.

The antiquity of the Sukur iron trade remains uncertain. In January 1993, a test excavation of a large midden immediately west of the xidi house (though upslope!) revealed over 3.5 m of stratified deposits.[6] The rich finds included quantities of potsherds, iron slag, animal bone and charcoal, and smaller numbers of glass beads, cowries, and iron, copper, bone, and ivory artifacts. Villagers identified the ceramics, bone lip pins, and iron objects as Sukur types, many identical or closely similar to those in use today or in the recent past. We were told that the carnelian beads recovered were proof of the midden's association with the xidi; sumptuary regulations restricted their use to his household. A series of four radiocarbon dates (table 1) is of little value for precise dating but indicates that the midden, unused in living memory, built up rapidly and began to form no earlier than the 16th century. It is clearly associated with the

4. In Sukur as elsewhere in the Mandara highlands, iron was produced using furnaces with vertical tuyeres down which air was blown. These furnaces were well suited to the smelting of the magnetite ore produced as sand-sized particles by weathering of the local granites. Furnaces varied in size and form, usually employing a batch process capable of producing several blooms a day. Besides low-carbon iron and steel, cast iron was, it seems, often produced in small quantities (David et al. 1989).

5. While it appears certain that by the 1930s the xidi was exacting both a poll tax on behalf of the colonial government and a tax paid in iron to himself, the existence of the latter practice in earlier times has not as yet been fully documented.

6. The excavation was carried out by the National Commission for Museums and Monuments in association with the Mandara Archaeological Project. While it is surprising that a midden associated with the xidi house should be upslope of it and some distance from its western and northern entrances, no other middens were detected except for a small modern midden located next to the inner house (see fig. 8). There is a considerable scatter of ceramics on the slope below the eastern entrance to the northern enclosure, and it seems likely that this area, convenient to the occupants of sector C, was used for rubbish disposal at some probably quite recent time in the history of the complex.

TABLE 1
Radiocarbon Dates on Charcoal from the Midden Associated with the House of Xidi Sukur

Lab No.	Depth below Surface (cm)	Date B.P.[a]	Date cal. A.D.[b]
Beta-64952	100–120	30 ± 60	1686–1955
Beta-64953	230–250	Modern	—
Beta-64954	300–330	50 ± 60	1678–1955
Beta-64955	330–355	220 ± 60	1520–1955

[a]Corrected for fractionation.
[b]Calibrated using the Radiocarbon Calibration Program Rev. 3.0 (Stuiver and Pearson 1993) and presented as the maximum and minimum of the two-sigma range.

period of the iron trade, which continued after its use (except for ritual purposes) had ceased.[7]

Despite the xidi's role in the iron industry, his power was by no means rooted in industrial production. The xidis of the years before the Fulbe wars were, as we have shown, neither secular industrialists nor divine regents. The ambiguity and multiple sources of their power render futile any attempts to encapsulate it in a single principle of political authority. On the contrary, the xidi's authority must have been, as it continues to be today, actively produced within the domain of daily relations out of privileged claims to a variety of political, economic, and symbolic resources. It must thus have been constantly negotiated, and we will attempt to show that it is as part of this process that the space of the xidi house has been produced as a landscape of power.

Negotiation of claims is circumscribed by culturally sanctioned asymmetries of power. In particular, the seniority of men over women, of age over youth, and of first comers over subsequent arrivals is a voiced and spatially relevant axis of inequality, although here as among the Mofu-Diamaré latecomers have been known to gain power by force or threat of force or by trickery, followed by reconciliation and the reintegration of society (David and Sterner n.d.*a*). These principles of hierarchy are elaborated in the production of Sukur's built environment and, within the spaces of the xidi house, manipulated in specific ways to forward the xidi's claims to power.

The Xidi House

Over much of sub-Saharan Africa the term most commonly used to describe the cluster of buildings that make up the family dwelling is "compound," in French *concession*. Those of rulers are often called "palaces." In Sukur the chief's residence is known by the same word, *ghi*, used to refer to ordinary dwellings, and this is locally rendered into English as "house." Domestic buildings are similarly called "rooms," and we will employ this terminology.

The northern paved way up to Sukur, engineered (we contend) to ease the passage of traders' donkeys and other quadrupeds and simultaneously to impress traders and other visitors, climbs the escarpment and proceeds past the site of the former market, serviced by a short spur, and through a now largely deserted part of the settlement to end at the Patla and the house of Xidi Sukur. This is located on a steep slope above a small seasonal stream (figs. 3 and 4).[8] In contrast to the houses of Mofu-Diamaré chiefs, on summits and the highest in their domains (Vincent 1991:249, 514), the xidi house is overlooked by others. Terraced millet fields extend outside its walls on the south and east. Its western entrance opens onto the Patla, on which several important ceremonies and dances take place. North of this is the large midden discussed above and the reputed site of an earlier xidi house. Dazha, the cemetery in which xidis (and some others) are buried, lies a short distance to the northwest. (Cardinal directions are of no great symbolic importance in Sukur; we have been unable to elicit terms for "north" and "south.")

There is no absolute date for the construction of the xidi house. The people consider it very ancient and attribute its construction to superhuman agency. The great monoliths which form gate 12 (figs. 4, *c*, and 5) are called Fula and Dəvə after legendary giants who, aided by shamanic seers pressed into service from neighbouring communities, are said to have built the enclosure's great terraces, paved passages, and walls in a single night. Berger (1973) has shown that the "cosmologization" of places and objects removes them from the domain of human labour and thus lends their organization or form significant symbolic force. That Xidi Sukur's house was constructed not by men under human coercive authority but rather by supernatural beings gives sacred sanction to the social relations implied by its built environment. Occupation of sacralized space endorses the position of the xidi at the apex of the Sukur hierarchy.

The infrastructure of the xidi house complex—the terrace facings, walls, and paved pathways—is almost entirely built out of granite. While some granite uprights and slabs of other local rocks were brought to the site from distances that are unknown but not likely to exceed a few hundred metres, the majority of the granite used was found on site. It falls into two categories. One is distinguished by an overall greyish cast, fresh-appearing fractures, conchoidal scarring, and sharp, angular edges. The fractures exhibit the structure of the rock, pink feldspar and white quartz crystals standing out against a black biotite matrix. These blocks must

7. During Zoku, when Sukur is cleansed and evil driven away, the xidi's wife throws ashes and other garbage symbolic of the past year onto this midden.

8. David made the plane-table survey of the house of the chief and adjoining public buildings and spaces. He lacked a transit, and therefore the section is only approximately to scale. The plans of several other houses were sketched (see fig. 9).

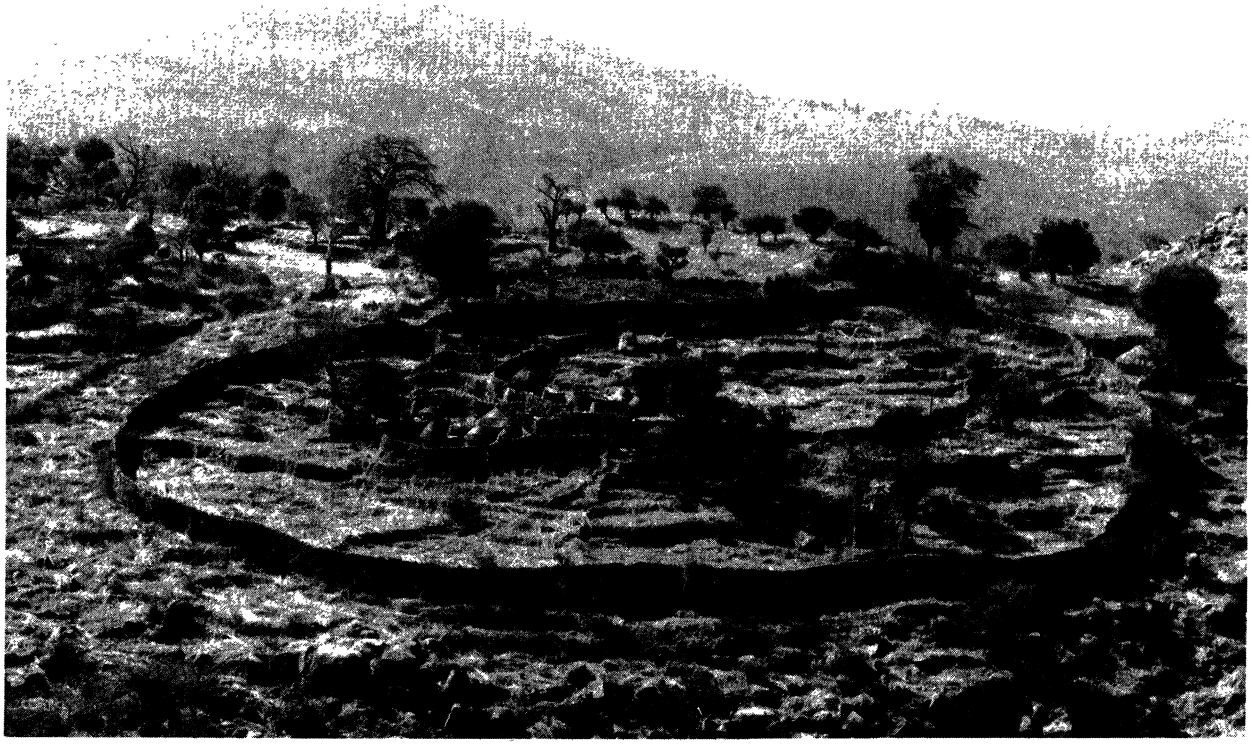

FIG. 3. *The xidi house seen from a hill to the east. The midden tested in 1993 lies on the near skyline directly west of the centre of the complex.*

have been quarried from the granite boulders that formerly littered the slope but are now conspicuous for their rarity. We refer to this construction material as "quarried stone." In contrast, rocks in the second category have worn and rounded edges and are yellow or brown, evidences of natural fracture and long weathering. Much of this "field stone," generally used in Sukur to build terraces and walls, would have been dug up in the course of construction.

While, as noted above, we cannot date the construction of the xidi house directly, the relative recency of the nearby and, according to oral tradition, associated midden and the freshness of fracture of the quarried stone argue for a date that is unlikely either to be earlier than the 16th century or, since all memories of its human builders are erased, much later than the early 18th. The development of a relative construction chronology proceeds by observations of the conjunctions of walls and terraces and the differential use of field and quarried stone. Wall abutments indicate that sectors H, I, and J (fig. 4, *b*) were constructed after the main wall that encloses sectors A through G, an area of 0.65 ha (1.6 acres). (The sectors, although not named by the Sukur, correspond to different traditional functions.) Within the main enclosure, all of the terrace facings and all but one of the interior walls are made of field stone, while the circuit of the main wall is built almost entirely of quarried stone. Interior terraces do not align with those beyond the walls.

At a very early stage the line of the main enclosing wall, where this runs along the slope, was delineated by terracing that combines field and quarried stone. Subsequently two tasks had to be carried out in parallel; it is as if teams had worked side by side, one clearing the slope by quarrying the boulders strewn over it and the other using the blocks for the dry-stone construction of the main enclosing wall.[9] Clearing these boulders was critical for the differentiation of the house's internal space, achieved by landscaping the slope and using field stone to face terraces and buttress platforms and to define the outer walls of the inner house (sector E). Landscaping of the area and construction of the terraces would have required excavation and relocation of large amounts of earth, most notably in the construction of the terrace on the east edge of sector C, which rises over 3 m above the paved way (see section, fig. 4). The main structural features of the xidi house thus appear to have been built according to a unified, integrated architec-

9. For good reason: dry-stone walling is much easier to construct using angular blocks.

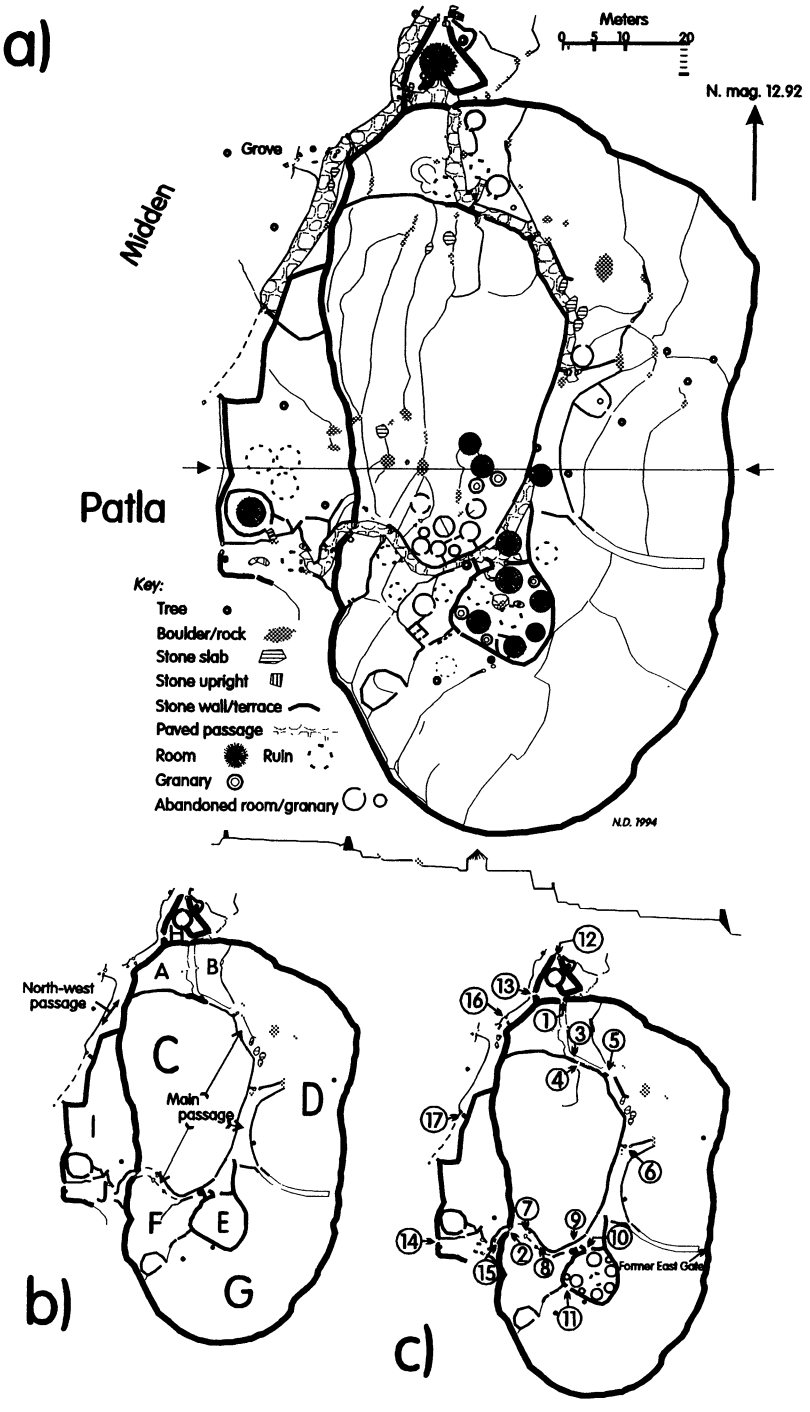

FIG. 4. a, *Plan and east-west section of the xidi house (vertical scale of section approximate);* b, *sectors of the xidi house complex:* A, *now in ruins, the quarters of the xidi's sons between leaving their mothers' rooms and marriage;* B, *now in ruins, a gate-keeper's room, bull and goat pens, stabling for the xidi's horse, and the place where the xidi is dressed before certain public appearances;* C, *terraced fields adjacent to the western wall and a large flat area, the latter (created by the construction of the tallest terrace revetment in the complex) being where the majority of former xidis' wives and small children were housed (most structures now much decayed);* D, *mainly fields but with some structural remains, said to be the rooms of old women taken in by the xidi;* E, *the inner house, where the xidi lives with the wife who cooks for him;* F, *ruined buildings and terraces;* G, *mainly fields but with some structural remains that included housing for wives;* H, *northern courtyard and Mbuk;* I, *guest accommodation;* J, *west entrance features;* c, *main gateways of the xidi house complex.*

FIG. 5. *The xidi enters the northern enclosure through gateway 12 between the Fula and Dəvə monoliths, Yama pə Patla ceremony, November 28, 1993. (Photo Judy Sterner.)*

tural plan executed in a single phase of construction almost certainly extending over several years.

Subsequent modifications to the stone-built infrastructure seem to have been minor. The wall forming the southern side of gate 9 (fig. 4, *c*) is built largely of quarried stone, and since it abuts the wall surrounding the inner house it may well be a later addition. The inclusion of some quarried stone in upper courses of the wall around the inner house more probably represents the use of material still available at late stages in construction and minor refurbishing and repair.

Because the closest suitable rocks were used in their construction, each short stretch of the paved ways of Sukur tends to be characterized by its own variety and size of rock slab. In the xidi house, somewhat more care seems to have been taken to select the large slabs used to pave sloping parts of the primary route of circulation, the passage that leads from the northern and western gates (1 and 2) to the inner house (fig. 4, *c*). The slabs are for the most part of a similar color and texture, suggesting that they were found in the vicinity (fig. 6). The passage is integral to the original plan.

Sector infrastructure continues to structure spatial practice, and there is evidence of continuity of spatial function. However, sectors H, I, and J, though built using identical techniques, are not demonstrably part of the original plan. Study of these sectors can lend depth to our understanding of the construction of the xidi house and its production as a landscape of power.

PROXIMAL RELATIONS

The pattern of wall abutments and joinings indicates that the northern enclosure (sector H) and sectors I and J were built after the xidi house proper, though we cannot determine how much time, if any, intervened between phases of construction. These additions are built primarily of field stone, although the wall to the north of gate 14 contains some quarried stone. The northern enclosure is accessible from the north (gate 12), from the external paved passage coming from the Patla (gate 13), from the xidi house proper (gate 1), and by a path leading up the steep slope from the east. Its main features are a large round room called Mbuk and the courtyard (fig. 7). A huge pottery beer vat, now broken, set in a prominent position against the southern wall of the room testifies to the enclosure's formal and public nature, while many stone basins, some lying next to the beer vat and others built into the gates, confer sanctity. Such basins (*tson*), which may be recycled grindstones, are used as altars in many Sukur ceremonies.

The northern enclosure is used for a critical phase of

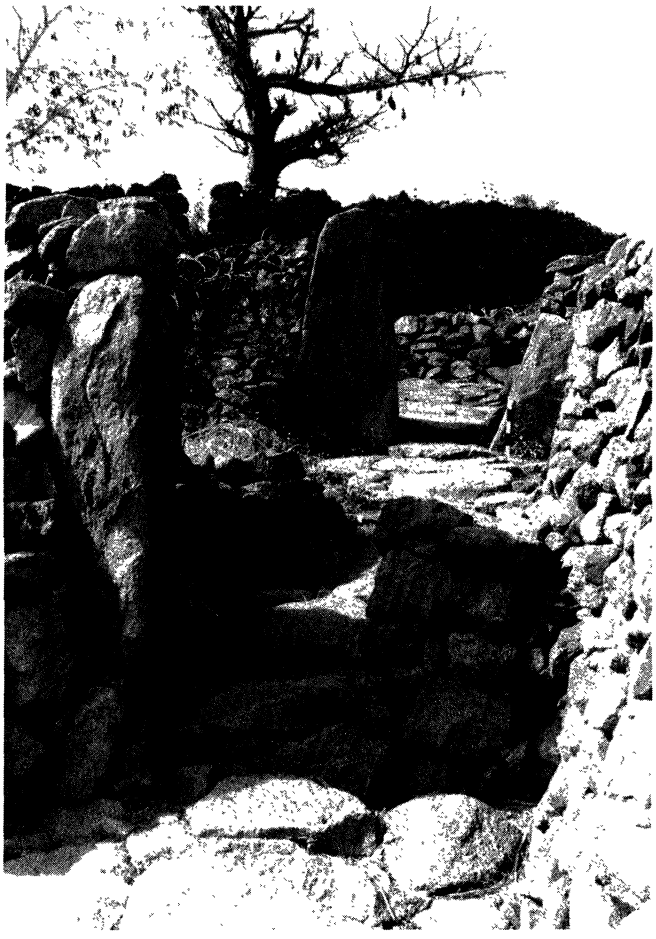

FIG. 6. *View up the paved passage through gates 8 and 7, with the western gate (2) into the main enclosure partly visible behind.*

the biennial initiation ceremony,[10] and in October 1992 Mbuk was the scene of a formal meeting of Sukur title-holders and other notables associated with the annual Zoku ceremony, during which the land of Sukur is purified and evil driven southeast towards the Kapsiki. Initiates from Təka, the more northerly and generally lower-lying wards of Sukur, enter the enclosure through gate 12, passing between the monoliths of the giants. The young men of Jira, the upper wards, enter through gate 13. After competitive and aggressive posturing that develops into a fight kept more or less under control by their mentors and by elders, the initiates enter the xidi house and, lined up in pairs along the northern part of the main passage, are blessed by the *tlisuku*, the xidi's "chaplain," the xidi himself presiding on a boulder. The integration of an element of the initiation ceremony into the space of the xidi house establishes a degree of chiefly control over Sukur's most vital *rite de passage*. Attaching this phase of initiation to the northern enclosure and the main house creates a spatial illusion and a political allusion implying that the initiates become members of Sukur society within the confines of the xidi's space, under the xidi's gaze, and thus at the xidi's pleasure. This is reinforced a few days later when the initiates, seated on steps just to the north, drink beer while the xidi looks down from a low wall above them and again by dances on the Patla performed by the initiates' mothers and fathers on successive evenings. The xidi dignifies the occasion by his presence and by dancing on a terrace above the main floor.

Another function of Mbuk is as council chamber and courtroom.[11] Niches in the walls were formerly used by the xidi and certain other title-holders to conceal hand and leg irons used to restrain criminals. Immediately southeast of the courtroom, connected to it by a door now blocked, was a room in which prisoners were kept. The interior of Mbuk is divided in half; on the western side of the building are stone benches reserved for the title-holders, elders of Sukur's clans, who are the xidi's main counselors. The xidi and his "chamberlain," the junior *tlufu*, have seats on the east side. It is on the east side also that younger men sit during meetings. Since this is the lower side in terms of the slope and lower is equated with junior/inferior/female, the xidi's positioning makes a statement that we will find reechoed in the disposition of his inner house (sector E). In contrast to his public face on the Patla, where during certain ceremonies the xidi sits, hidden by a cloth, in his throne room above the assembled people, in Mbuk he represents himself rather as speaker of the house than as sovereign.

Nonetheless, by establishing proximal relations between the main enclosure and Mbuk and by offering beer in its precincts, the xidi plays host to title-holders and others, asserting a privileged position in their proceedings. Now in a state of some disrepair—like those of much of the public area of the xidi house and Patla, its walls were once plastered—and largely preempted in its judicial capacity by institutions of the Nigerian state, Mbuk evidences both power gained in part through spatial domination and power lost to colonial forces and later those of the nation-state.

Sector I represents the extension of the xidi's power into other realms of Sukur society—its economy and, from the 1920s on, its political relations with representatives of Nigerian government. The structures within sector I (fig. 8) were used to accommodate guests, origi-

10. While youths of both sexes are said to undergo initiation, it is only the young men who actively and publicly participate in the scenes to be described.

11. The term "council chamber" may mislead the reader into thinking of a formally constituted council meeting for business. Today there are many counselors but very few formal meetings—between August 1992 and February 1993 only the one during Zoku. The courtroom function scarcely exists today but was much more important when Sukur was an independent polity and in colonial times. In 1992, when the police were called to Sukur after a fight, the xidi met them by Mbuk. Other cases of petty theft and the like were dealt with on the Patla and in the inner house.

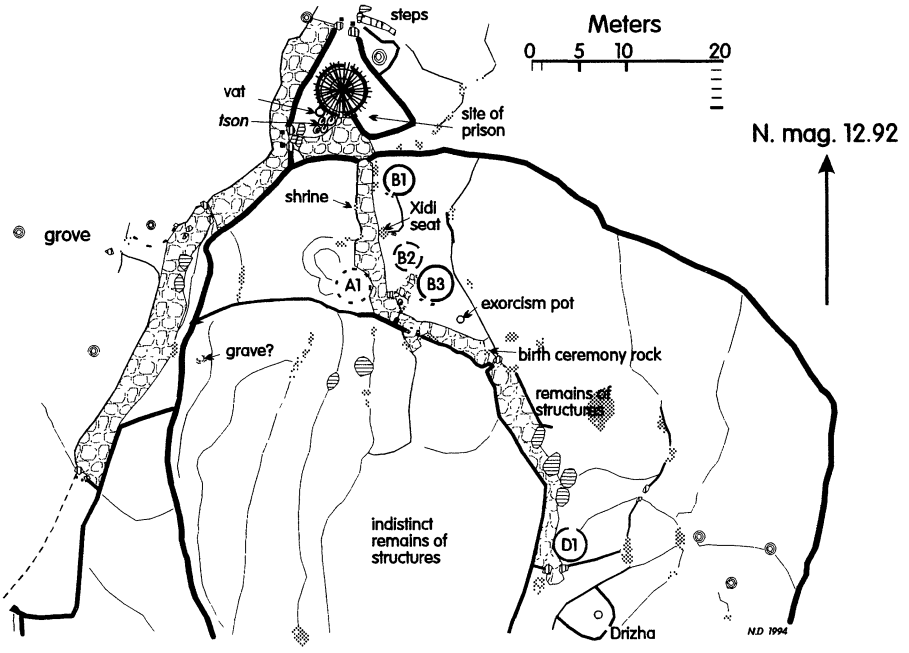

FIG. 7. *The northern part of the xidi house. Rooms, all in ruins or decay, assigned as follows:* A1, *xidi's adolescent sons;* B1, *bull pen;* B2, *gate-keeper,* B3, *bull pen;* D1, *stable.*

nally it seems mainly the long-distance traders who came to trade at the iron market held under the xidi's patronage. Later the Fulbe district head and his entourage were housed here on the occasions of their visits. At the same time as sector I was completed, sector J, an elaboration of the entryway into the main enclosure, was either built or extended, effectively displacing the original western gateway into the xidi house (gate 2) by the addition of gates 14 and 15.[12] The guest quarters of sector I are thus within the compass of the xidi house but not of it. While details are lacking regarding the precise nature of the guest status of the Kanuri and other northern traders who came to the Sukur market to purchase iron, they were certainly under the protection of the xidi and beholden to him. The proximal relations between his house and the guest quarters were one of the means utilized by the xidi to exercise a degree of control over exports and imports.

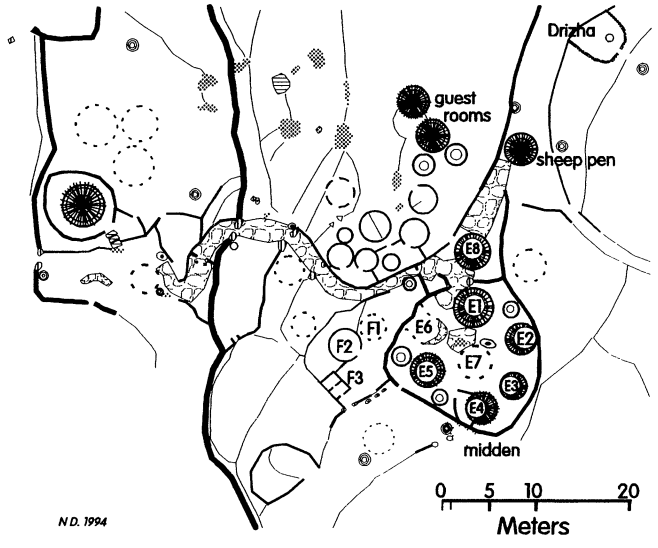

FIG. 8. *The southern part of the xidi house. Rooms, all except those in inner house* (E) *in ruins or decay, assigned as follows:* E1, *entry room;* E2, *storage;* E3, *and* E4, *wife;* E5, *brewery;* E6, *ruin;* E7, *granary base;* E8, *entry room and brewery;* F1, *meat storage;* F2, *children;* F3, *cloth storage.*

In short, by establishing the close proximity of their house and spaces occupied by initiation, justice, "foreign" politics, and external trade, the xidis of the past reified their political power, which was most forcefully expressed in public on the adjacent Patla. Thus we can speak of sectors H, I, and J as constituents of a landscape of power produced by the social negotiation of the xidi's space. Positive feedback would have ensured that these spaces reflexively reproduced specific relations of power which privileged the xidi's control over justice, initiation, and the export of iron to distant groups. In 1993 a room in sector I was again refurbished as a lodge for the district head, casting the xidi as mediator between the Sukur community and the Nigerian state.

12. Sector J does not appear to have any particularly marked function. It is, however, by the site of a former room (J1) that the *midala,* the war leader, comes with his entourage to report to the xidi that evil and impurity have been driven from Sukur during Zoku.

EXCLUSION AND CIRCULATION

The movement of people through space is tied to power. An astonishing proportion of the infrastructure of the xidi house is dedicated to controlling circulation into and within the complex (fig. 4, *c*).

The main wall of the xidi house is 1 m or more thick at the base and at some points (near gates 1 and 2) stands almost 3 m high. However, the exterior height of much of its western portion is less than 2 m (and as low as 80 cm in places). Even on the eastern, downslope side, where the top of the wall is 3 m or more above its exterior base, its batter and the crevices between the blocks make clambering up easy. The function of the main wall is clearly not defensive but, as in the ordinary Sukur house, to demarcate divisions in social space. A third entrance to the main enclosure used to be located on its eastern side. Traces of the path that led down to it are still evident. This entrance appears to have had a more private character than the others and is also said to have been used as an escape route. It was dismantled in the 1970s by Xidi Zirangkwadə, who removed some of its main structural elements to his private residence.

Entry into the xidi house used to be regulated by gatekeepers, one of whom held the now defunct title "Dala" and had use of a room (B2) within the northern gate. Since by far the larger number of visitors come into the house by the western entrance, it can scarcely be coincidental that the Dala's room is close to the gateway into sector C, where many of the wives of former xidis were housed. No adult male besides the xidi might then sleep within the main enclosure, and even today the privilege seems to be granted only to the occasional anthropologist.

Circulation in and around the house is formally regulated by gateways that, though never closed by substantial gates, serve to demarcate areas and order circulation. Visitors enter the house from the Patla and take the western passage to the inner house. The northern paved passage and gate are used casually by the xidi and his family (though he may not take the northern exit and reeenter through the western gate) but mainly by others on ceremonial occasions. Visitors do not stray away from the main passage.

The gateways are constructed of granite monoliths, uprights, and blocks (many of which are *tson* basins or grindstones), no one being identical to any other. The sizes of the gateways show patterned differences (table 2).

The use of height to mark entryways to political and religious spaces is well documented in the Near East, Egypt, West Africa, and elsewhere. As markers of inclusion and exclusion, the gateways define the xidi house not only as a differentiated social space but also as re-

TABLE 2
Xidi House Gateways and Their Dimensions

Gateway	Maximum Height (cm)	Minimum Width (cm)	Description
Gates into main enclosure			
1	298	40	Northern entrance[a]
2	285	50	Western entrance
Passage choke points			
3	186	63	Choke point in north part of main passage
4	214	34	Northern entrance to sector C from passage[b]
5	207	39	Choke point in main passage east of sector C
6	160	64	Choke point in main passage east of sector C
7	206	80	Choke point in western part of main passage
8	162	66	Choke point in western part of main passage
9	215	50	Choke point in western part of main passage
Inner house (sector E)			
10	218	99	Main entrance
11	235	88	Southwestern entrance
Northern enclosure (sector H)			
12	306	60	Northern entrance (Fula and Dəvə monoliths)
13	258	51	Western entrance
Guest area and western entranceway (sectors I–J)			
14	255	70	Entrance from Patla into sector J
15	164	49	Choke point in passage from western entrance to main enclosure
Northwest passage			
16	195	72	Choke point
17	225	77	Choke point

[a]The adjoining wall is in part fallen on the western, upslope side and may in the past have been higher than the downslope side.
[b]Its southern entrance is down a staircase of daub and stone that abuts room E8 (see fig. 8).

stricted space shaped by the working of power. The tallest gateways, ranging between 255 and 306 cm, are those that control entry into the complex. They also incorporate the largest megalithic granite blocks, the gate of the giants (12) that affords entry into the northern enclosure being the most massive. Gates 10 and 11, which allow entry into the inner house (sector G), are, at 218 and 235 cm, only a little smaller. The choke points along the main passage are lower (160–215 cm).

As in ordinary Sukur houses, persons move through the complex in single file. The gateway minimum-width statistic is less useful than it might be, as some gates are very narrow at the base, widening above. All allow a person carrying a large pot or basket on the head to pass through without undue difficulty. The main entry points range between 40 and 70 cm in minimum width; the choke points show wider variation. The widest gateways are those admitting persons into the inner house.

The most startling aspect of the gateways is not the patterning in their dimensions but rather their sheer number. No fewer than 17 serve to regulate movement into, through, and around the xidi house. Since we know that the complex was not constructed for defense, what is the purpose of this prodigious number of gateways? The proper domain in which to search for interpretation is perhaps indicated by accessory features and treatments (table 3).

Gateways, as Eliade (1959) suggested, often have a sacred quality, marking the transition between socially constructed categories—the sacred and the profane, the public and the private. The exterior wall of the ordinary Sukur house is breached by a single entrance (*maparam*), a narrow gateway set in a wall of granite blocks. The upslope, male-associated side of the gateway is taller, and the blocks in the adjoining wall, which may be quarried from boulders, are carefully set to present a smooth facade. On the downslope, female side the surface is noticeably rougher. In ordinary households the *maparam* is a major focus of ritual. Only three of the gateways to the xidi house are *maparam*—gate 14 into sector J from the Patla and the two entrances (1 and 2) into the main enclosure. The northern enclosure, a public structure less intimately associated with the xidi, lacks *maparam* setting of blocks, while the absence of this feature at the main entrance to the inner house (gate 10) perhaps serves to emphasize the xidi's dominion over the complex as a whole.

TABLE 3
Accessory Features and Treatment of Xidi House Gateways

Gateway	*Maparam*	Offerings	Door Stones
Gates into main enclosure			
1	Yes	Yes	No
2	Yes	Yes	No
Passage choke points			
3	No	Yes	Yes
4	No	Yes	Yes
5	No	Yes	No
6	No	Yes	No
7	No	Yes	No
8	No	Yes	No
9	No	Yes	Yes
Inner house (sector E)			
10	No	Yes	No
11	No	No	No
Northern enclosure (Mbuk) (sector H)			
12	No	Yes (pots)	Yes
13	No	No	Yes
Guest area and western entranceway (sectors I–J)			
14	Yes	Yes	No
15	No	No	Yes
Northwest passage			
16	No	No	No
17	No	No	No

Most of the gateways show traces of *poa*, millet flour, usually mixed with water, which is blown or poured in blessing over people and places. Small ritual pots beneath the western monolith of the northern gateway into Mbuk (12) indicate that offerings are made here also. Offerings provide strong evidence that a special sacral status is accorded to the thresholds structuring circulation within the xidi house and indicate that one interpretation of that circulation lies within the domain of ritual practice and sacred knowledge. It may also be noted that immediately southwest of gate 16 in the northwest passage the path divides on either side of two low uprights; only the xidi may pass on the western side. (There are three comparable diversions on the northern paved way, the middle one of which makes use of the spur that used to lead to the iron market.)

Doorways, especially of stock pens, and gateways are sometimes closed by hurdles or stout mats. In order to brace these in place (so that goats and sheep cannot squeeze by or beneath them), low upright stones are sometimes set on either side of the outer side of entrances. A stick tied near the top of the mat or hurdle by a short cord is passed through the gateway and braced across it. Such door stones were identified at both entrances to the northern enclosure and four passage choke points as well as at the two unused stock pens in sector B. The three internal gates with stones may well have been located to restrict the movement of small stock rather than persons, but this is less likely in the case of those blocking entry to the northern enclosure and that just outside the western entrance into the main enclosure. We suggest that gate stones were set not only to prevent movement of small stock but also to demarcate areas off-limits to outsiders, especially at night.

A large number of the spaces within the house dedicated to sacred rituals or shrines are located along the main paved passage. Some 5 m inside gate 1 is an inconspicuous shrine where the tlisuku prays for the initiates while the xidi sits on a boulder "throne," itself showing traces of *poa*, on the other side of the passage. Beside the passage between gates 4 and 5 is a pot used in exorcisms of the madness-causing *gekəli* spirits. By gate 5 is

a rock used in ceremonies following the birth of children within the xidi house. Under the western wall a low pile of rocks is reported to mark the grave of an unnamed xidi. Farther along the passage between gates 5 and 6 are four large granite slabs. Beneath the southern two we noted two small offering pots spattered with *poa*. Between these slabs and a small gate to the east that gives access to lower fields, bulls were (and may still on occasion be) slaughtered before the Zoku ceremony. Farther south again, on a lower terrace east of the passage, is Drizha, a walled area, perhaps once roofed, where the xidi's cooking wife[13] brews beer for the Yawal ceremony. It is said to be used only on this occasion. Just inside gate 2 there is a small upright next to a deep *tson*, presumably also a shrine. Small ritual pots occur under the rock on which the xidi sits in the inner house when receiving visitors. Another particularly important shrine, the *tson vwad*, consisting of a *tson* in which are a number of elongated stones which may be Neolithic upper grindstones, is also located beside the passage. Each of its stones represents one of the chiefdoms in the region to which, at chiefly installations, the xidi sends (or used to send) the *tlagama* title-holder to braid into the new chief's hair a lock (*vwad*) of his predecessor's. There are at least four other shrines within the main enclosure, the whole of which can be said to be charged with the sacred. The concentration of shrines along the main paved passage emphasizes the xidi's control of circulation through ritualized space.

Both the installation of a xidi and the death of a xidi or one of his wives are occasions for specific movements through space. A new xidi enters the complex by the western entrance to the northern enclosure (gate 13), through which he will pass again only on the occasion of his funeral. As the wife of a xidi should not die within the complex, when one appeared mortally sick she was carried to the house of a relative. If this had not been done in time, the corpse was removed through the smaller, more private eastern gateway.

Gates 16 and 17 on the northwest passage outside the main enclosure relate to the reputed site of a former xidi house, the central courtyard of which is now a grove of acacias in which the altars—small, nondescript beer jars—of former xidis are kept.

There is no central sacred place in Sukur—no "cathedral" to fix the sacred at a specific point. On the contrary, the landscape is charged with the sacred, and movement through it is a constant encounter with the unseen world. By restricting movement, particularly in relation to places of importance to ritual practice, the xidi claims a privileged encounter with and thus knowledge of the sacred. By controlling circulation through the complex, he maintains privileged access to sacred places and thus to the knowledge in which he is instructed by the tlisuku, a hereditary title-holder of a commoner clan, at the time of his accession. Within the xidi house, claims to place are claims to knowledge and hence to power through connections with the spirit world.

THE XIDI HOUSE AS DWELLING

The xidi house complex is also a residence, but its residential features are themselves made political in the way in which the generalized form of the house is deployed within the complex. However, before we can discuss the complex as a dwelling we must become acquainted with the ordinary Sukur house. This consists of a number of rooms enclosed within a stone perimeter wall. While buildings may be located outside the wall, these are in almost all cases either storage areas or the rooms of widowed mothers who have come to live close to their sons. Otherwise the physical space of the house and the household social unit are coterminous. Household composition can be described, following Hammel and Laslett's (1974) typology, as an "extended family" (the direction of the extension varying over the course of the household's developmental cycle). Inheritance is patrilineal; a deceased father's moveable property is equally divided among sons together with use rights to land that has either been handed down within the patriline and clan or, as has become much more common in the past 60 years, been cleared by an individual. The house site and its immediately adjacent fields are the prime inheritance of the eldest son, provided that he has been initiated.[14] If he has previously moved out, he may return to his father's house. Younger sons, if they have not already done so, will usually move out in these circumstances, often to nearby abandoned house sites associated with their patriline or clan. In order to demonstrate the relationship between the house, the household, and Sukur social space, we describe below one that is typical for its stage in the developmental cycle of the household and which is structured by principles easily recognizable in all dwellings.

The house represented in figure 9 is occupied by eight persons whose relations are described on the kinship chart accompanying the sketch plan—the household head (A), his two wives (b and c), and five children including one adult son (D). The mother of A used to live in outbuildings (rooms 14 and 15) but is now deceased. Within the walls of the house, the principles of hierarchy that structure Sukur social inequality—male over female, age over youth, first arrivals over later ones—organize space. The household head's room (3) and the room of his adult son (4) are higher on the slope than those of the resident women (8, 9, 10, and 11). The son's room is located farther from the entrance than his father's, which is adjacent to the entry rooms (1, 2) and the central courtyard, indicating a privileged command over circulation between the public and private spheres.

13. Only one wife, who had to have passed the menopause, cooked for the xidi and slept in the inner house. She was not necessarily his first wife.

14. If there is no adult son, the house and its fields are inherited by a brother or clansman who takes on responsibility for the children and often the wife of the dead man.

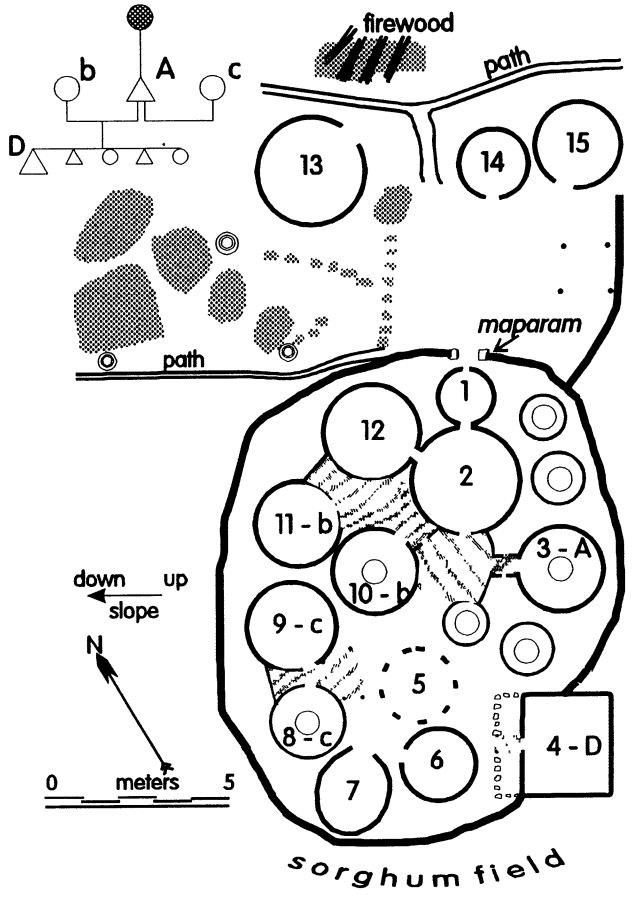

FIG. 9. *Plan of a Sukur house occupied by a man in early middle age (A) and his family, as indicated in the kinship diagram* (top left). *Rooms (numbered) with loft granaries and granaries (unnumbered) are indicated by concentric circles. Goats are penned beneath most of the granaries.* 1, *small entry room;* 2, *large entry for resting and socializing;* 3, *room of the head of the household;* 4, *adult son's room;* 5, *ruin, former bedroom of A's younger brother's wife, who is no longer resident in the house;* 6, *sheep pen, formerly the room of A's younger brother;* 7, *brewery (atypically asymmetrical);* 8, *wife c's room, formerly her bedroom but now damaged;* 9, *wife c's room, combining (perhaps temporarily) kitchen and bedroom;* 10, *senior wife's (a's) kitchen, which formerly connected directly to* 11; 11, *senior wife's bedroom (which contains a grinding stand);* 12, *stall for bull (at a lower level than room* 2, *an exit ramp will be dug down on its northwestern side to release the bull);* 13, ndillə *(room, always unroofed, for unthreshed millet);* 14, *storage, formerly A's mother's kitchen;* 15, *formerly A's mother's bedroom, since used as a stall for a bull and for storage.*

A degree of spatial privilege is also accorded to the senior (first) wife. She occupies a kitchen (10) and bedroom (11) towards the front of the house that are linked by a covered courtyard and integrated by means of walls which delimit and enclose her private space. The junior wife occupies quarters in the rear of the house (8, damaged but usable for storage, and 9, kitchen and bedroom). Food preparation is done by the wives in their individual kitchens and adjacent courtyards, although beer is brewed in room 7. (Not all houses have separate breweries.) Grain and other crops are stored in four granaries (not numbered on the figure) according to a code of practice that echoes that of spatial distinctions. Goats are kept in pens set beneath certain of the granaries, while a bull is stalled and fattened in room 12, where it can in a sense participate in the social activities and men's gossip taking place in room 2. Atypically, since the head of household is relatively well-off, room 15 has on occasion been used as a supplementary bull pen. Also outside the walls is the *ndillə* (16), an unroofed room built and maintained to store millet before threshing.

It should be emphasized that, whereas in Sukur houses vary in their orientation relative to the cardinal directions, all show the same relationship to slope. While the number of rooms and granaries varies, depending largely on the number of adults present, their arrangement is standardized to the extent that terrain allows. In addition to storage, preparation, and consumption, food production is based on the coresident household. Households tend fields whose produce is transferred to storage facilities within the house. Similarly, the products of animals kept within the house and maintained by the labour of its residents are disposed of by them. The primary unit of production in Sukur is the coresident family marked off in social space by the walls of the typical house. The distinctive spatial organization of the Sukur house is produced, in part, by the activities which define the Sukur household—spatial practice. But this does not exhaust the meaning of the house. As we have seen, principles of hierarchy encourage but do not themselves determine specific spatial relations—representations of space. Thus the space of the Sukur house echoes the axes which structure Sukur society in a manner similar to the Kabyle house described by Bourdieu (1973).

The main enclosing wall of the xidi house also circumscribes a household but one that does not repeat the representations of space of the ordinary house. Sons nearing adulthood lived in room A1 in sector A; the (surviving) bull pen or pens (B1 and B3) are in sector B. Both these sectors and that in which most wives were housed (C) are *above* the inner house. In the main passage there is a former stable (D1), a sheep pen, and a partly abandoned entry-room-cum-brewery (E8). In sector F and out of the way of visitors are ruins of rooms, one for children (F2) and two that two generations ago stored much of the xidi's wealth: F1 for meat and F2 for cloth.

The built environment that mimics the ordinary Sukur household is instead concentrated within the walls

of sector E (fig. 8), though use of the inner house for interviews and informal meetings, held in a covered area between E1, E5, E6, and E7, influences the use of space. The inner house is physically centred on E7, a circular platform that once formed the base of a 4-m-high stone-built granary attributed to the semilegendary Xidi Watsə (Strümpell 1922–23:59). Around it are disposed the other rooms, an entry room (E1), its exterior door blocked off and used mainly for storage, being the only room especially attributed to the head of the household. E2 is used for storage while E5 serves mainly as a brewery. E6 is a ruin the edge of which has been furbished with slabs to seat visitors who come to consult, advise, or report to the xidi, who sits on a boulder with his back to E7. E3 and E4 are those of his cooking wife (and any resident children). The xidi's entry room and his boulder throne are appropriately upslope of those of the single wife who cooks for him and has the right to live in the inner house where all the xidi's food had in the past to be prepared and consumed. Produce from the xidi's fields is also stored within the inner house.[15] But while sector E represents a household, in reality production, storage, and consumption extend throughout the complex. Why, then, was the traditional form retained for the inner house—even to the repetition of an enclosing wall—if it did not demarcate a real division in social or physical space?

The xidi's household is embedded within a much larger complex of social relations. Most intriguing of the spatial relations within the house is that between the rooms of the majority of the xidi's wives on the broad platform in sector C and the inner house, located below them. When the present xidi's one and only wife, Koji, was questioned regarding this inversion of accepted spatial practice, she replied that the xidi is the wife of the people of Sukur. While the specific engendered relations between xidi as woman and society as man should not be taken too far, the use of a metaphor drawn from the domain of household relations warrants further exploration.

The xidi house is not an elaboration of the standard Sukur house. Rather, the space occupied by the inner house within the larger complex represents a particular social relationship between the xidi and the community that is described in terms borrowed from the household. As the "wife" of Sukur, the xidi is portrayed as nurturing and accessible to his "children," his people. This phenomenal form, however, departs from the reality defined in space. Much of the complex's infrastructure is dedicated to marking his separation from society—demarcating his space as inviolate or at least highly differentiated from the space of the typical house. The use of the inner house as a built form within the complex obscures the exclusions which are an important basis for the xidi's power. The inner house is thus a representation of social space; it is ideology and perception rather than a neutral reflection of experience. The same effect is achieved in language by application of the word *ghi* both to ordinary houses and to the xidi's extraordinary residence, in Vincent's (1991) terminology his "château."

The spatial symbolism of the inner house's relation to the larger complex transforms the space of the house into a political instrument. Political legitimacy is predicated upon representing inequality as an extension of the "natural" social order. Representing the xidi as a "wife" in physical space redescribes the accumulated wealth of the xidiship in evidence throughout the complex and extracted through corvée labour, taxes on iron, claims to parts of sacrifices, patronage of the market—in short, the exploitation of a populace to whom only a small portion appears to have been redistributed—as the accumulation of Sukur society in general. Although circulation through the complex is rigorously controlled by infrastructure and the supernatural, the space of the house itself is represented as not of or for the xidi but rather for the people. The xidi is related to this space as one who serves it rather than as one who commands it—just as he sits in Mbuk.

Conclusions

The power of Xidi Sukur flowed from many sources which he had constantly to negotiate and reinforce, including privileged positions of power in ritual (both initiation and other rituals for which the space of the xidi house complex was crucial sacred ground), economy (estates and external trade), justice, and politics. This ongoing historical process produced a landscape of power. By establishing proximal relations and controlling circulation through the house, xidis dominated and appropriated specific social practices. The privileges established were legitimated in reference to the social relations of the household. The built environment enforced a metaphorical representation of the xidi as "wife" of the community.

It is in the divergence of the space of perception from the space of experience that critical theory locates ideology. In its heydey the lived reality of the xidi house displayed great wealth in wives, livestock, produce, and goods amassed through demands the xidi was able to make on the production of the settlement. The xidi house, surely constructed by corvée labour, is clearly not public space; it projects social distance and stringently regulates movement. The phenomenal form of the complex, however, portrays it as public and ordinary through the tropological use of the generalized form of the Sukur house. The physical space of the house and the social space of the household thus become spaces of politics and ideology, reflexively ensuring the reproduction of the physical and social space of the traditional house. Rather than emerging from politically neutral origins that claim to transcend specific political contexts

15. Some of the present xidi's produce is stored in his private residence, now occupied by a son. We suspect that the crops from the fields, both inside and outside the xidi house, associated with the xidiship are those stored within its walls, but we have not sought confirmation of this point.

through their universal validity (e.g., ecology, relations of production, or the Word of God), the household is enveloped in broader social relations characterized by asymmetries of power. The house simultaneously reifies real relations of inequality in spatial practice and obscures exploitation through ideological representations of space. Thus it both structures cultural production and ensures cultural reproduction.

Only 50 km away on the other side of the mountains, the Mofu-Diamaré prince, symbolically ever young, *is* the land, the rain, and also the fearsome leopard (Vincent 1991:511, 365, 657, 677–82). His position is seen as politically neutral, beyond direct human control, derived from God and the natural forces that he both incarnates and magically manipulates. In contrast to the pre- and early colonial xidis of Sukur, Mofu-Diamaré princes going back to the early 18th century and before generally enjoyed long reigns and are remembered.[16] Even when the rains failed and the people marched on the château, they would not touch the prince, limiting themselves to vandalism and in extreme cases drawing blood not from him but from one of his family. Meanwhile, of the nine past late-19th- and 20th-century xidis who can be firmly established as datable historical personages, two were killed in coups and one by the soldiers of Hamman Yaji, three were deposed, one abdicated under threat of deposition by the colonial power, and two died in office (one after deposition and reinstatement). Unfortunately, despite elegant plans of the châteaux of the princes of Durum and of Wazang by Christian Seignobos (Vincent 1991:756; Seignobos 1982:71) and Vincent's (1991:249–55) photos and description of Mofu princes' residences, we lack the detail and contextual information required for comparison with the xidi house. It is also beyond the scope of this paper to explain how and why two such very different concepts of chieftaincy should have developed from a common cultural substrate and in not dissimilar historical circumstances. Although we may note the realist implications of such a finding—that prediction of political trajectories is an impossibility and recreation of generalized paths of political evolution an exercise in myth making—our immediate aim here has been to demonstrate the political production of spatial relations in Sukur and the negotiated nature of the xidi's power.

The completed analysis raises several points central to the theorization of links between space and power. First, the specific form of landscape and built space is shaped by historical development of social relations. This is not meant in a programmatic sense but rather to emphasize the socio-historical process that underlies the created environment. The production of space as a material inscription of political inequality underlies its formal construction. However, it is in part because space is all around one, present and apparently ahistorical, that it is such a potent medium. The relation between space and power must therefore be understood in both synchronic and diachronic terms, as production across space *and* time.

Second, space is not only defined by the exercise of power but also constrains and directs its use. Instrumental in the definition of social inequality, space recursively conditions power's further exercise. This is a crucial point for a critical anthropology. The organization of space is more than an artifact of the conditions of production; it continues to be actively engaged in social reproduction. Critical spatial inquiries must therefore account for the role of spatial organization in preserving specific relations of inequality.

Third, while some general principles, for example, exclusion and proximity, can be used to create openings for critical analysis of the recursive relationship between space and power, these principles remain devoid of significance outside of particular cases. They derive neither from a structuralist universal grammar nor from a logic of social evolution. Each principle applied to the analysis of the built environment must be redemonstrated as valid for each case; they have no independent existence. Spatial organization need not find a determinant of the last instance outside of the socio-historical conditions that produced it. Just as political trajectories follow no universal principles, spatial relations cannot be reduced to a few formulae. The articulation of power and space is far too rich and complex for such an endeavour. This is not to preclude cross-cultural comparisons of space nor to advocate a spatial particularism but merely to insist upon an awareness of the local sources of spatial form, where "local" is defined as the arena of political struggle.

Fourth, the study of spatial practices is not simply tied to the architectural details that define spatial experience. Instead, spatial practice must be understood more broadly to encompass how spaces are perceived, for this is crucial to an understanding of their production as social instruments. The use of physical space to establish metaphorical or other tropological connections within social space requires that we extend the object of spatial analysis beyond pure form into the social context of production.

In sum, spatial organization lies at the intersection of power and practice. Political authority is assembled by establishing control over diverse spheres of sociocultural activity in part through the production of space. The material form of the xidi house does not arise from an *a priori* principle associating the xidi with, for example, group rites of passage or from a universal spatial syntactics of authority. Instead, the manipulation of space is strategically employed to control practices. Lastly, while we have sought to articulate space with the creation of political authority, space may also be mobilized as a focal point of resistance. As anthropological studies of space accumulate, it will be important to document the nature of spatial resistance to domination.

16. Over the periods for which informants' accounts agree, at Duvangar the average reign of nine princes who ruled between 1740 and 1988 was 27.4 years; at Durum between 1800 and 1975 it was 29.2 years and at Wazang between 1750 and 1980 26.7 years (Vincent 1991:221–23).

Comments

BARBARA BENDER
Department of Anthropology, University College, Gower St., London WC1, England. 4 XII 94

Bourdieu's study of the Kabyle house has been hugely influential, and the authors of this article willingly acknowledge their debt. But Bourdieu's study has both the strengths and weaknesses of a relentlessly structural analysis. It emphasises the way in which the spatial reiteration of the social order serves to socialise individuals into acceptable ways of acting and thinking. It says nothing about change and ongoing negotiation and little about power except an acknowledgment of the asymmetry of gendered relations. Using the work of Lefebvre and Harvey, in which the focus is on the production of social space, Smith and David begin to explore the connection between the control of space and the maintenance and legitimation of social inequalities. The paper offers many interesting insights but is, I would suggest, limited by the retention of a structural framework, the conflation of "landscape" and "built environment," and an almost exclusive concentration on the elite xidi compound.

Both introduction and conclusion stress that landscape is "the site and the stake of struggles over power," and we are also told that the xidi's power was fragile and relatively contingent, but nothing in the study helps us to understand the spatial correlates of the power struggles or this endemic weakness. We have a fine description of the way in which the xidi compound serves to emphasise and naturalise chiefly power but nothing on the loci of resistance.

The problem is that, as in Bourdieu's study, the xidi compound floats free of any larger spatial geography. Although at one point an "ordinary" Sukur house is described, there is no attempt to link household to household and no sense of the comings and goings, the constraints and possibilities of movement between such households and the chiefly compound—and not just household to household but household to field, to sacred places, to nearby communities, to more distant communities, to iron production sites, to trade routes. The general résumé of Sukur political authority is not translated into spatial terms, nor is the idea of "a landscape charged with the sacred" explored. The authors state that they are addressing the question of "the political production of spatial relations in *Sukur* and the *negotiated* nature of the xidi's power" (my emphasis), but the xidi compound is not Sukur, and the xidi's manipulation of space tells us only one side of the story. It is a question both of working between different scales of landscape and of recognizing the landscape of other, differently placed persons within the society.

The xidi compound floats free not only spatially but also temporally. Again, while the authors stress the importance of historical specificity and note that the compound has been in use for several centuries, we get very little sense of changing social relations. Although there is some mention of the contemporary contraction of the xidi's authority and the much reduced nature and usage of the compound, this is not systematically explored. Equally, while the authors note that two of the areas of "proximal" control—the Mbuk and the traders' quarters—are later additions to the main compound, the significance of this in terms of changing social/political/economic conditions is apparently not recognized.

MARIE-CLAUDE DUPRÉ
Coussangettes, 63840 Viverols, France. 6 I 95

Archaeologists faced with the fragmentary remains of human techniques strive to reconstruct activity, systems, lifestyles, social structures, and even cognitive and symbolic behavior. Rapoport has recently compared scientific research to a glorious detective story, and Smith and David's paper might be read as one. Its leading character, the xidi, is presented as endlessly negotiating and reinforcing his power. Architectural devices are "read" as evidence of negotiated power. Whereas in the detective story, however, it is only necessary to explain how and why death became a (logical) necessity and there is no ambiguity about death, in this ethnoarchaeoarchitectural one the xidi's power is ambiguous. Smith and David go back and forth between the near past, when iron was being produced and traded in large quantities, to a present in which the xidi, deprived of his economic and judiciary powers, survives in a partially ruined house. They also compare the xidi's political activities with those observed in the neighboring chiefdoms of the Mandara highlands. It is not surprising that the picture is blurred. A paper is too short for fruitful treatment of so many and varied data; this one is something like the xidi's house, with some coherent sections and some crumbling walls.

The xidi is not a sacred king; he must ask his Wula neighbors to perform rain rituals. As producers of iron, past xidis were furnace masters but not industrialists. They drew on charcoal and ores from the neighboring Higi and Margi as well as on local resources. The weekly market was once important, and long paved roads went up the slope below the high walls of the house to the marketplace. Past xidis are best remembered for their delivery of justice. A special place (sector H) was built, presumably later than the main architectural complex, to house the judicial proceedings. The xidi faced his counselors, drawn from the some 22 subordinate clans, in the Mbuk enclosure, which also harbored the final initiation ceremonies. Although Smith and David admit that "we cannot determine how much time, if any, intervened between phases of construction," they make nothing of it: "Thus we can speak of sectors H, I, and J as constituents of a landscape of power produced by the social negotiation of the xidi's space."

Smith and David choose to see the xidi as constantly struggling for legitimacy, endeavoring to reify symbolic

attributes of power in the architecture of his house, endlessly negotiating with his numerous counselors, weakened by his lack of sacred power over rain. I would instead view past xidis, especially the one(s) who built the big "house" in a few years' time and then the paved roads and the architectural settings for their judicial, technical, and trade activities, as great innovators and competent manipulators of preexisting symbolic elements. In such settings, devoted to the enhancement of justice and trade and the control of the circulation of cattle, humans, and information, with no fewer than 17 doors and as many shrines, is the xidi always negotiating a perpetually challenged power?

Finally, despite their explicit intention of deciphering the social relations in material assemblages, Smith and David's interpretation sometimes resorts to plays on words. We learn, for example, that attaching the biennial initiation ceremonies to the northern enclosure and the main house "creates a spatial illusion and a political allusion" to the xidi's power. Is power just an illusionist performance? Elsewhere we are told that the xidi's claims to legitimacy were expressed through the tropological repetition in word and stone of the generalized space of the Sukur house. Indeed, the xidi's "house" has no special name, but it is now believed to have been built overnight by giants, and its "landscaping" is impressive. Tropological repetition and metonymic representation, though they are certainly tools, are not shortcuts for the interpretation of clues in a detective story.

SUSAN KENT
Anthropology Program, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va. 23529, U.S.A. 13 XI 94

Smith and David present a fascinating exploration of the built environment that demonstrates the extent to which the study of architecture and the use of space can provide important information on the sociopolitical organization of a society. Their article shows both that ethnographers miss crucial data by generally ignoring the use of space and architecture and that archaeologists must view the organization of space and architecture within its cultural context. It is perhaps paradoxical that while applauding their approach I reach a diametrically opposed conclusion. Whereas I agree with Smith and David's contention that their study shows that the built environment structures culture as culture structures the built environment within a culturally sensitive context, I disagree that this is in any way a demonstration of the absence of universal principles underlying the use of space and architecture. Smith and David speculate from a single society about the existence of cross-cultural principles. In order to determine whether universals occur and are influential in the organization of space, one must use cross-cultural data. It is impossible to speculate about underlying precepts from the study of just one society.

There is also a problem with mixing levels of analysis. Although Smith and David allege that they are not arguing for a spatial particularism, I cannot see how their discussion can be interpreted in any other way. I do not disagree that the particular symbolism embedded in the architecture of any given society is, in most cases, specific to that society's culture and is not generalizable to other societies' use of architecture, space, and symbols. In fact, I consider unique, culture-specific symbolic meaning to be, almost by definition, culture-context-sensitive, as is evidenced by the xidi's house among the Sukur or the hogan among the Navajo. However, the inability to generate cross-cultural or universal principles on this rich, culturally embedded level of particular symbolism does not negate the presence of universal principles. On the contrary, the particular and the universal represent two different scales of analysis; both are legitimate concerns of study which tell us different things. The ideal is to incorporate both in one's conclusions.

Smith and David's interpretation of the xidi data is valuable for the study of cross-cultural, universal principles. One such principle I have investigated is the relationship between segmentation or differentiation of the built environment and that of the sociopolitical organization of a given society. Extensive cross-cultural research indicates a very consistent interaction between how a society divides its culture in terms of stratification/compartmentalization and hierarchies and how it orders its use of space. A highly egalitarian society such as the Basarwa (Bushmen, San) does not have stratification or hierarchy in most facets of its culture. If it is not in its culture, then I suggest that it cannot be in its built environment; architecture and the use of space are directly dependent upon and determined by a society's sociopolitical organization. In a society with gender equality and a lack of hierarchies such as the Basarwa, individuals do not conceive of or partition the built environment into gender-specific loci. Such segmentation of space and architecture is primarily found in societies with greater gender differentiation (there is much variation in the amount of egalitarianism between different Basarwa groups).

It is ironic that many critics of the idea of universal principles claim that such principles are not culture-context-sensitive. The case is precisely the opposite, because space is a cultural construct based on universal principles that structure culture. Despite its cross-cultural diversity, architecture and the use of space are culturally construed, just as are politics, status, and power. I believe that my work indicates that each is socially manipulated in a different way, but all are interrelated and integrated in a manner structured by universal principles. As a consequence, the built environment is, in a sense, influenced by and a reflection of a society's sociopolitical system; both are integrated into a whole we call culture, which overlies universal principles that are a product of our common *Homo sapiens sapiens* brains. This means that without universals it would be difficult to identify a construction as a building because of the immense diversity that could be conceived in the absence of underlying principles. As Smith and David

note, the organization of the sociopolitical system and the built environment are mutually reinforcing (or, as Rapoport [1982] explains, the built environment is a mnemonic device to remind occupants of how their society is organized). The presence of stratification and hierarchies within Sukur culture is an excellent example of the interaction between the conception of culture and the conception of the built environment. The underlying universal principle of cultural segmentation or differentiation and the presence of social differentiation and political hierarchies account for the Sukur's particular use of space and architecture, a principle visible only when comparing cross-cultural data.

Smith and David have provided an invaluable example of how to analyze architecture and the use of space within a specific cultural framework. Examining the built environment on the culture-specific level contributes different information from study of it cross-culturally. These two different levels are not mutually exclusive; each contributes to our understanding of architecture and its use. I thank Smith and David for writing such an interesting article and look forward to more.

SUSAN KUS
Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Rhodes College, 2000 N. Parkway, Memphis, Tenn. 38112, U.S.A. 28 XI 94

This article drew me into thinking in a number of directions (which of course is the sign of an interesting contribution), and consequently not all of the remarks that follow are truly criticisms. I realize that there is only so much one can do during any field season and only so much one can discuss in a short article. One point I particularly appreciate is the recognition of the level of particularity at which we need to approach the data from which we hope to gain any insight into cultural organization and social reproduction. I think that we archaeologists are at a very interesting stage of research in facing the challenge of negotiating between particularism and generalization. The attention to particulars not only fosters respect for those we study as they face and work their way through social, political, and historical contingencies but potentially allows us to resist the temptation to accept facile structuralist or other universal explanations—as the authors recognize, explanations often based on an impoverished conceptualization of what it means to be human. Here I would encourage them to adopt a more encompassing notion of *sensuous* human practice that goes beyond relative spatial positioning and ease or difficulty of movement around space and architectural features to include a robust appreciation of such things as gesture, sound, sight, touch, smell, commonplace activities and ritually highlighted acts, fields in which symbols and metaphors are not only crafted but "embodied," recalled, found convincing, placed in relation to each other, and put to use in the "science of the concrete."

With the appreciation of particulars comes the challenge of generalities. We need continually to be asking ourselves at what level we expect them be found. Smith and David mention, for instance, the "landscape of capitalism." Are there important generalities at the level of sociopolitical formation? Elsewhere they speak of such "dimensions of political space" as proximity/distance and exclusion. Here we have generalities more at the level of the physical body and of cognition. I would urge us to be a bit more theoretically audacious in thinking about what such generalities might look like rather than simply using them as heuristics in local analysis.

I applaud Smith and David's insistence on and appreciation of the fact that there is no "single principle of political authority"—that is, that there is cross-cultural complexity as well as a complexity internal to any given culture of the understanding, symbolization, legitimation, and loci of the exercise of power. One point concerning this complexity that I feel is not addressed directly enough is the role of agency in the "production of space" and in social and political affairs. If "representations of space are ideologically constructed to affect the perception of space," who is doing this manipulaton? The elite? Specialists employed by the elite? And if the generalized form of a Sukur dwelling is used within the xidi house "to obscure relations of inequality and secure assent to the power of the xidi in Sukur society at large," whose perception is being obscured and whose assent secured, and to what extent?

Smith and David argue that "as anthropological studies of space accumulate, it will be important to document the nature of spatial resistance to domination." I wonder if they may not have some such "documentation" in hand. While the xidi through his house may claim privileged access to the sacred and privilege with respect to iron production and trade relations with outsiders, it is interesting that, according to the authors, he is neither divine king, military leader, nor secular industrialist. But it is also interesting that he lives and sometimes sits "downslope," that he opens his residence to society and provides beer during certain important ceremonies, and that he is considered the "wife" of Sukur society (a metaphor I would interpret as not so much one of hierarchical relation as one of reciprocity and labor). I am reminded of some of Clastres's (1987) arguments about "societies against the state" in which leaders are generous givers and retainers of authority only insofar as they use it in the service of society and some of Terray's (1972) arguments on the limits of exploitation in societies organized around principles of gender, age, and kinship relations. How powerful are the metaphor of wife and the landscape of the Sukur house used as a model for the xidi house and toponym for society? Powerful enough to explain the rapid turnover and the loss to historical memory of individual xidis? Powerful enough to preclude the creation of industrial/trade monopoly as an independent and dominant "principle of political authority"? Powerful enough to keep the xidi a man who accepts being a wife to Sukur society rather than a divine king, a fearsome leopard, and an incarnation of the rain?

JÉRÔME MONNET
Groupe de Recherche sur l'Amérique Latine, Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 31058 Toulouse cedex, France. 7 XI 94

Analysis of the processes of the "production of space" suggests that the house of xidi Sukur is the "material inscription of social relations." In this demonstration, however, (1) there is no proof that these processes assign "meanings through negotiation and struggle" (these two modes of regulation are almost absent from the study), and (2) the "inequalities in the access to economic, political, and sacred resources" remain to be established, and no evaluation of resources and competitors is provided. Luckily, Smith and David do not limit themselves to this. In an original way, they bring to light structures of reification and legitimization of power through the management of space.

Implicitly, the article is based on an economicist paradigm (the problematic of access to resources) the explanatory relevance of which is not assumed for all orders of social reality. The idea of a scarce resource, implying a struggle for its control, presupposes that the resource's holder becomes the holder of a certain power. But it is often through metaphor that the notion of a material "resource" is extended to immaterial goods.

For example, "resources" such as energy or information have radically different physical characteristics and social meanings. Thus, in energy flow, distance is equivalent to a *loss,* while with regard to information it is essentially an *alteration.* This produces opposed social effects: economic rationality pushes to reduce distance (polarization, homogenization) in the first case, and social reasons can help to maintain and even to accentuate it (differentiation, marginalization) in the second. Can we, then, theoretically lump knowledge and iron among the Sukur under the category of "resources"?

The metaphorical transfer of the vocabulary of economics to the whole field of social analysis is employed by numerous thinkers, among them Pierre Bourdieu when he invokes the use of "symbolic capital" by elites to produce the internalization of domination by the dominated. But the use of this word, the product of a marxist scientific legacy, does not mean a relationship with the "process of accumulation" of economic capital (productive, financial, etc.). Likewise, the coexistence of strategies does not allow one to analyse those concerning access to the sacred as simple transpositions, in the register of the immaterial, of strategies for the control of land.

As a matter of fact, the struggle for the control of economic, political, or sacred resources does not seem to be essential to Smith and David's demonstration. On the contrary, they bring out principles of organization of space and society that depend on a fundamental distinction between the ideal and the material to guarantee their efficiency: *reification* (the embodiment in concrete space of an ideal power structure), *naturalization* (inscription of a system of domination in the "order of things"), and *mythification* (incorporation of places and objects into a cosmology). In connection with this, one will note that if space is used to materialize domination, it undergoes a "detemporalization," as if the geographical inscription of a power allowed one to deny its historicity and thus ground its legitimacy in eternity.

On this basis, it would be necessary to develop the analysis of conditions of action and distribution subtly associated with the use of power in space and by space as follows: (1) *manifestations of power:* (*a*) "sumptuary regulation" using all the channels of the magnification of authority (concretely, the monumentalization of public spaces, doors, roadways, walls); (*b*) the role of interface and mediator that makes the xidi a double symbol: both a symbol of encompassing powers (world system, Nigerian state, federated state, etc.) vis-à-vis the group and a symbol of the group (defined by the authority exercised there) vis-à-vis those encompassing powers (a role revealed by the space in which guests are received); (2) *negation of domination:* (*a*) the functional fragmentation of the use of power, allowing it to be diluted in space and minimized socially ("initiation, justice, foreign affairs, and foreign trade" are distributed in different places around the xidi house) and (*b*) the topographical inversion of gendered spaces in comparison with the social norm, which allows for the display of the submission of the dominator with regard to the dominated (it is a commonplace for civil servants to be said to be "at the service of the people" or for businesses to declare that the "customer is always right"; what is less common is to say these things while adopting a spatially subordinated position with regard to one's dependents).

Might the negation of power not be one of the *common* modes of its social acceptance, that is to say, of its exercise? Might we not find everywhere this "society against the state" that Pierre Clastres describes for primitive societies and that, with more or less success, forces authority to recognize itself as under the power of the group over which it wields its power? We have seen that the use of the landscape might here play an essential role. By jointly recognizing that space is an intrinsic dimension of social life and that there is no relation that is not a power relation, geographers, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, jurists, etc., open up fascinating perspectives. Smith and David give us a good example of this.[1]

GLENN DAVIS STONE
Department of Anthropology, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027, U.S.A. 14 XII 94

When Binford (1964:425) wrote that archaeological sites contained a "fossil record" of the operation of extinct societies, he assumed that the operation was principally one of ecological adaptation, and that is indeed what the New Archaeologists tended to find. When Smith and David define "produced" space as "the material inscription of social relations," they assume that material

1. Translated by Myriam Roy.

structures not only reflect but reify and legitimate inequalities, and that is what they have found. For readers already convinced that power relationships and their reproduction can and should explain most social phenomena worth explaining, this paper will be welcomed for the light it sheds on the sociopolitical context of nuances of domestic architecture. To those who continue to worry about the fit between models and data, the paper may come off as a more mitigated success. I am happy to consider spatial organization as heavily influenced by strategies for controlling power, but the analysis offered here leaves me with some doubts.

First there is the matter of the xidi's power: if he actually had little control over people's production and behavior, then it is contrived to attribute much of his architecture to the enhancement, legitimation, and reproduction of those slight powers. Frankly, he is not demonstrated to be especially privileged; for instance, if wives are a major form of wealth, why does he only have one (especially with this elaborate architectural apparatus to ensure his power)? The xidi "is said" (by whom?) to have once had access to substantial corvée for farm work, for instance, but without more background on the circulation of agricultural labor this is not good evidence of significant productive inequality. For instance, the chief of the village in Nigeria's Plateau State where I lived in 1984–85 also had several large, mandatory communal work parties, but other households also regularly arranged for communal work parties on their fields, some of which were also mandatory, and the members of the chief's household would contribute labor to these.

The xidi is depicted as a once-powerful, coercive figure whose "rights decreased further during the colonial period"; but it was more common for the chiefs of small societies like the Sukur to have had very little control over others' behavior and production (although some were *promoted* to positions of power by the colonial and subsequent regimes).

In many places, small-scale chiefs and ward or neighborhood heads have enlarged or unusual compounds which serve as meeting places, and they act as community representatives in various capacities. If you want to explain extraordinary architecture as legitimating something but the resident is relatively powerless, it may help legitimate the authority of decisions reached in the meeting facility. I can't say if this pertains to the Sukur case, but I am not entirely convinced that the xidi house is a private space pretending to be public; circulation through the compound may be controlled, but the functions taking place inside include initiation ceremonies, interviews, and meetings.

I am also unconvinced by the assertion that the xidi's house is portrayed as "ordinary" so that it might reify inequalities and obscure exploitation; the 400 meters of granite wall, approaching 3 meters high and with a "startling" number of ritually charged gateways, is patently extraordinary, whether or not it makes "tropological use of the generalized form of the Sukur house." It is an unusual choice for a chief seeking to obscure his power.

Smith and David may have more and better evidence that (1) the xidi did and does enjoy substantial control over the Sukur's behavior and production and that (2) this inequality is obscured and legitimated by his palace; but from this article it seems equally likely that (1) the xidi is neither especially powerful nor rich and that (2) he lives in a large and ostentatious compound which is both his family residence and a communal facility.

WALTER E. A. VAN BEEK
Institute for Cultural Anthropology, University of Utrecht, Heidelberglaan 2, Postbus 80.109, 3508 TC Utrecht, The Netherlands. 15 XII 94

The anthropology of space and the spatial analysis of social relations form one field of anthropology that is increasingly recognized as a productive one with regard to the more general problems of power and representation. Smith and David are to be commended for their analysis of the spatial patterns of the *ghi* of the chief of Sukur for two reasons: its contribution to regional ethnography and its implications for spatial theory.

Sukur is in itself in many ways a highly interesting case within the Mandara region, and any information supplementing the scanty data available before the work of David, Sterner, and associates is of prime importance. In a way, the article serves as a kind of debunking of Sukur. For anyone working in the area, Sukur has held a more or less mythical place as the "massif" where the "princes of iron" were lodged. Almost on a par with Mcakelè or Goudour (as it is more widely known), which houses the central chief and rainmaker of the region (in the area just north of Mofu-Diamaré), Sukur is renowned throughout the Mandara Mountains. Though some tales of its chief's cavalry do circulate south of the Sukur massif, most references are to iron, iron production (especially smelting), and specific iron products. It is often cited as origin of the blacksmiths (van Beek 1992). Smith and David reduce that power base of the Sukur chief to a more mundane and quite restricted level: a local chief relying on dynamics of local reproduction of power balances in which spatial arrangements and symbols are just one of many aspects of social relations—no sacred king, too bad and probably true.

The comparison with the Mofu princes does offer some insights into the specifics of the Sukur chieftaincy; however, if anywhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Mandara Mountains offer an almost full range of political centralisation, from the quite acephalous Daba villages of the south-east through the gentle gerontocracy of the Mafa and the restricted authority of the Kapsiki/Higi village chiefs all the way to the sacred kingship of Mofu and, especially, of Goudour. Of course, a fuller comparative analysis of the political systems and processes would be beyond the scope of this article, but the data presented do raise the question where the differences in political centralisation stem from. For one

thing, ecological situations within the mountains do vary, and though they do not seem to offer an obvious explanatory grid, they cannot be discounted. Iron, evidently, is one power base that distinguishes Sukur and in fact the only one recognized as such by their neighbours. Whence the dominance in iron production? Most Kapsiki/Higi villages to the south of the Sukur plateau are headed by village chiefs whose most important power symbol is an iron walking stick produced by Sukur and handed over to them by its chief. Village blacksmiths almost routinely trace their ancestry back to Sukur blacksmiths (even though the distinction between smelting and forging is marked: it is forging, not smelting, which is the central blacksmith's job [van Beek 1991]). If the power base of the Sukur chiefs does indeed stem from ambiguous and multiple sources as the authors indicate, the control and dominance of Sukur over the *discourses* of power in adjoining areas still remains astonishing. The role of iron in the symbolism of power and wealth remains to be explained (and explored) more fully on a comparative basis and then integrated with a cross-African analysis of the blacksmith's position in society (cf. van Beek 1992, 1994; McNaughton 1991).

The spatial analysis is interesting and convincing, following the structures of power in a small-scale society. The authors quickly, and rightly I think, do away with the wondrous tales of the "Sukur highways." First, the former military might of the Sukur chieftaincy is highly dubious indeed. I have never been able to understand why a "formidable power" should choose such a defensive location far from any major looting areas. Secondly, the chieftaincies well known from history never built anything like it. Hamman Yaji's choice of venue is revealing: open countryside with splendid access but no paved causeways. Thus the origin and rationale of the causeways remains an open question. The authors' contention that at least the northern one was built to enhance trade does not seem overly probable; so much trade is going on in Africa over so many steep and winding mountain trails that such a tremendous investment of labour is not warranted by it. Moreover, the main item of Sukur trade, iron *duburu*, is, though heavy, not very bulky, and can easily be done by donkey transport. So, though with the authors I prefer "everyday" explanations to more fanciful ones at any time, I am unconvinced on this point. Maybe we need look not so much at the total result of the effort (the causeway system) as at the processes by which such a causeway might emerge piecemeal. Also, considering the dominance of the colonially induced ravages of Hamman Yaji, the reverberations of colonial history in the making of these causeways and of the whole Sukur chieftaincy might be given more weight.

As for the analysis, the authors distance themselves somewhat from the more architecturally oriented anthropology, and one wonders why. The notion of convergence between space and power, between cultural production and cultural reproduction, is interesting but has been discussed convincingly in the literature on the use and interpretation of the built environment; the overview article of Lawrence and Low (1990), for example, is clear on that. Detailed analyses of spatial organisation, spatial behavior, and symbolism are available and would offer valid options for comparison. The analysis presented in a large part runs parallel with Giddens's (1984) approach. Comparison from within the region itself might also prove fruitful. In particular, the relation between the "house of power" and the patterning of the more standard compound could be elaborated upon. For instance, the dynamics of construction, occupation, and destruction of compounds, following the developmental cycle of families (van Beek 1986), can offer insights into similar processes in the "state house." For example, one factor not mentioned in the article is the politics of marriage in this area, with its curious combination of strict patrilineal ideology, marriage prestations, and high frequency of divorce (van Beek 1987).

Of course, one article could never do all this. With this description and analysis of the elusive Sukur, the ethnography of the Mandara range receives another important addition and the anthropology of space the attention it so richly deserves.

JAMES H. VAUGHAN
Department of Anthropology, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind. 47408, U.S.A. 13 XII 94

The study of Sukur, which once had symbolic primacy over the surrounding area, is a much-needed addition to Mandara ethnology. Smith and David convincingly demonstrate the contribution which attention to material artifact can lend to ethnographic analysis. I have no difficulty with their interpretation of symbol, though I would prefer that they indicated when meaning is deduced by the anthropologist and when it is offered by the informants (e.g., up = masculine and down = feminine).

I accept that they must have heard the initial sound of xidi (a voiced velar fricative) better than MacBride, Kulp, or I, each of whom heard it as a voiceless alveolar lateral. I am, however, puzzled that they list the clan of the xidi as Dur. Both MacBride and Kulp[1] list it as Gidim. More to the point, the ruling clan at Gulak, which came directly from Sukur, prides itself on that link, and shares named offices and ceremonies, is named Gidəm.

In general, I am struck that between MacBride's work (1933–37) and my visits there was very little change but between 1960 and now there has been a very great amount. I admit that the contrast between my first work among the Margi in 1959–60 and my last in 1987 is so great as to defy the oft-used phrase "continuity in

1. Neither was a mere traveler; MacBride, who unquestionably spent more than a few days at Sukur, had a first in anthropology (and classics) at Cambridge, and Kulp was working on a Ph.D. (which he never completed) at Hartford. I have checked MacBride on many ethnographic points and never found him in serious error, and Kulp's materials on the Margi Babal are invaluable.

change." At places Smith and David seem to hint at recent social disorganization and depopulation. Could this have caused such change at Sukur?

There are a few places where I may add to the completeness of this article. The two monoliths which form the gate to the xidi's compound are named after the second and third xidis (MacBride 1937*b*) and are alleged to have been brought from Kamale. Smith and David note that the deputy of xidi was traditionally a brother or son but by mid-20th century was a father's brother's son. If Sukur kinship terminology is like that of surrounding montagnards, this would not be a significant change, since father's brother's son is called by the same term as son. Among the Margi the office was also sometimes held by a father's brother's son; the critical point, however, was that the individual be the son of a former ruler, for only such a person could accede. Even the third cousin Smith and David note would still be called son, but I would agree that this would be very extraordinary unless that individual's father had been xidi.

With regard to Matlay, "the most powerful later xidi (1934–ca. 1959)," the actual date of the end of his reign must be May 4, 1960, and thereby hangs a tale which ultimately relates to divine kingship, which Smith and David deny for Sukur, though MacBride and others would so classify it.

In April of 1960 I visited Sukur to check historical relations with the Margi of Gulak, whose political dynasty came directly from Sukur.[2] While at Sukur I admired a smoking pipe made of iron owned by Matlay, the xidi. He very kindly told me that he would have one made and that he would bring it to me, since he had to attend a meeting in Gulak the next Wednesday. After visiting me and leaving the pipe, Matlay continued to the District Office, where he was arrested on the charge of misuse of funds.

In Northern British Cameroons, where we were located, all of 1960 was marked by intense political campaigning relating to a United Nations plebiscite which would decide whether the area would join the Republic of Cameroon or Nigeria. Matlay was prominent in his support for joining Cameroon, and the Nigerian and British authorities who administered the area feared that his opinion would be too influential among the montagnards. That was his only "crime." At no other time in my long association with Madagali District have I interjected myself into local politics, but on this occasion, stung by my perception of the falseness of the charge and feeling uncomfortable because he had been arrested within minutes of visiting me, I posted his bail, knowing full well that he would flee to Cameroon. (One week to the day, a son slipped back into Nigeria and repaid me.)

Enter the topic of divine kinship: The following is recorded in my daily diary for May 23: "Went to Humbili [a plateau between Gulak and Sukur]. . . . Heard that the reason for the lack of rain has been [Xidi] Sukur, because he had been put in jail." This was a clear case of beliefs concerning the xidi's "control over natural forces." But I do not wish to overstate my evidence: the discussion was among Margi, not Sukur, and it is more important to stress that divine kingship when it has been investigated in reality (Evans-Pritchard 1948 and Vaughan 1980)—as opposed to mythology (Frazer 1911–15) or secondhand reports (Seligman 1934)—is a far more political and pragmatic institution in which the ideology of divine kingship is *used* to legitimize mundane political acts. In fact the rains in 1960 were no more unusual than they are in many years; it was the outrageous act of arresting the xidi which caused a minor perturbation in the rains to be viewed as an ominous event. In the past, such events might be used to justify opposition to an unpopular ruler or ignored during the reign of a popular one.

Smith and David's reference to the many depositions and coups in the 19th century is directly parallel to the situation at Gulak among Margi Ptil in the first half of the 20th century, when there were three coups, one regicide, one arrest, and one royal suicide. It is significant that the Margi have a word, *tlida*, for "regicide" and that these Margi say that their political traditions come from Sukur. I await David and Sterner (n.d.*b*).

JEANNE-FRANÇOISE VINCENT
34 place Notre-Dame de la Rivière, 63110 Beaumont, France. 10 I 95

How could the observer of one Mandara montagnard society, the Mofu-Diamaré, fail to be intrigued by the detailed description of the house of the xidi of Sukur, on the other side of the same mountain range? I would like to try briefly to underline similarities and differences between the residences of the chiefs of these two populations, limiting myself to the most immediate implications of their location in space.

For Smith and David—and I can only agree—space is the result of social production. The landscape is not neutral; it results from the existence of differentiations and inequalities that are visible through it. It is also the end result of the choice of a human group regarding its social organization. The way that space is planned and developed expresses the existence of a power, it is true, but field observations—at least among the Mofu—do not support the transformation of this linkage into a causal relationship. It seems to me that, in contrast to the premises put forward by Smith and David, while the control of space can become social domination, space makes up only one of the domains in which power is invested.

What strikes one at once regarding these two societies, which are located at the same latitude, is their similarities. They occupy identical montagnard environments, with the omnipresence of granite that both are

2. Incidental to my ethnohistorical research, I discovered that iron smelting was still being practiced. Sukur enjoyed *no* monopoly in the iron trade; I found many furnaces in the Gulak area, though smelting had stopped there around 1955. It was I who convinced Sassoon to visit Sukur, resulting in his 1964 article.

skilled in working into uprights, blocks, and slabs and building into terraces and walls of varying dimensions. "People of the rocks," as they call themselves, the Sukur and Mofu reveal themselves to be "masters of rock." The granite decays into magnetite that, concentrated by running water, formerly provided raw material for the numerous smelters of the two groups. However, despite the authors' presentation of the xidi as a master of iron, superior to the Mofu prince in that he is the ruler of a group that produces substantial amounts of metal, smelting as an activity is not symbolically inscribed in his dwelling space, at least according to the plans.

As montagnards, the Mofu and the Sukur have opted for almost identically conceived dispersed patterns of settlement. Each family occupies a cluster of circular buildings—linked one to another among the Mofu, surrounded by a wall among the Sukur—accessible by a single entrance. Among these houses, those of the Mofu prince (*bay or bi*) and of the Sukur xidi attract attention on account of their size and their special locations. They are manifestations of systems of authority at least two centuries old. The powers of the prince and the xidi are exercised over human groups of approximately the same size, 5,000 to 10,000, and some of their expressions are very similar. Both have the right to corvée labor—to cultivation done by adults and various tasks by youths. Then there is a special link between the ruler and the initiates who become adults in his house. Both chiefs share a responsibility for the delivery of justice and a lack of interest in wars of territorial conquest and in the possession of slaves. In both cases power is presented as the exclusive right of a second layer of population, with the Sukur having no explanation regarding the existence of the first inhabitants while for the Mofu their replacement lies at the roots of chiefly power.

There are, however, marked differences between the rulers of the two societies that when taken together can be decoded as distinct ideologies of power, with consequent differences in the shaping of space. The first of these is the differential placement of the rulers' residences. Among the Mofu what I have termed the prince's castle has to be built on the highest mountain in the chiefdom. Visible from all around, it is inscribed in the landscape, a symbolic demonstration of the dominance of the prince. There is nothing like this in the xidi's house. In addition, the Mofu castle is surrounded by the vast "prince's plantation"—unknown among the Sukur—consisting of fields each associated with a particular quarter in such a manner that the territory of the chiefdom is replicated at the top of the mountain.

The castle, moreover, is split into two spaces, one for the wives and one for the prince himself, who does not leave it. The vast dimensions of the wives' space testify to the scale of the polygamy—several tens of wives—that has been practiced by Mofu princes for centuries. Finally, the castle is a center—a place of coming together and of meetings involving the initiates, as we have seen, and also the prince's messengers, diviners, and those in charge of the cults of the mountain spirits. Access to the castle is not straightforward; one must first pass through, as at the xidi's residence, a surrounding wall and then a postern, sometimes a heavy door, before reaching the courtyard through a totally artificial underground passage designed to remind the visitor of the distance that separates him from the sovereign. Here space itself becomes symbol.

The principal difference between the Mofu castle and the xidi's house is on the religious plane, extending into the magical domain. This is expressed in contrasting orderings of space. In the xidi's house occasional rituals are indeed celebrated, but, as Smith and David point out, there is no central sacred place. Neither does the xidi himself play an essential religious role, leaving this to an intriguing "chaplain." On the contrary, each Mofu castle has its own sanctuary, the room of the granaries, the largest example of this type of structure and the place where the altars of three generations of ancestors are assembled. Furthermore, at the highest point in the chiefdom, a rocky scarp above the castle shelters the shrine of the most important mountain spirit. This is served by the prince himself, who thus plays an essential role in relation to all the supernatural powers of the chiefdom.

Lastly, the castle is the place of the inscription in space of an essential aspect of princely power. Within it, inside the prince's own bedroom, are kept the stones known as the "children of the rain," which he manipulates every year to bring to his realm the blessing of water. In contrast, the fearsome "rainbow" stones, which allow him to create drought, are kept buried some distance away.

Thus the way in which the Mofu castle invests its surroundings with power constitutes an original discourse on the workings of power in this society. Its religious and magical aspects are revealed as primary, while its economic aspects—so important for the understanding of Sukur society—are relegated to a position of secondary importance.[1]

SHARON ZUKIN
Department of Sociology, Brooklyn College and Graduate School, City University of New York, 33 W. 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10036, U.S.A.
16 XII 94

I am both gratified and surprised to find the house of a montagnard chief in the Mandara highlands described as a landscape of power. Several years ago (Zukin 1991) I borrowed the term "landscape" from art historians and used it as have some cultural geographers (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988) to refer to the production of space as a symbolic as well as a material construction. Although the French social philosopher Henri Lefebvre had written extensively (e.g., 1991) about spatial representations of social and ideological structures, including systems of power, neither urban sociologists nor political economists had used his extremely suggestive framework to

1. Translated by François Vigneault and Nicholas David.

analyze contemporary landscapes, notably those associated with market economies. Moreover, to the extent that they read Pierre Bourdieu, they read him as a quasi-marxist sociologist of contemporary, social-class-bound France (Bourdieu 1984) rather than as an anthropologist who studied nonurban Berbers. Thus critical urban scholars were often interested in symbolic aspects of landscape as "superstructure," expressing the signs of economic power rather than actively building representations of various kinds of power. Only a few writers (e.g., Daniels 1989) were influenced by the work of Raymond Williams and John Berger, who saw landscape as not only a reflection of history but history—carved into land, stone, and human minds—in its own right. Even those writers, however, were slow to let the concept of landscape shape their empirical research agenda.

When I wrote about the end of the industrial economy in the United States and the transition to a more "symbolic economy" based on finance, real estate, and consumption, I cast the empirical discussion in terms of specific places, which I called landscapes. These stories, or readings, of places played on the dual meaning of landscape in art history as both a "site" and a "view." So the structural changes from an industrial to a symbolic economy were really made by individual and institutional choices that remade the "rules of the game" across a broad spectrum of places and spheres of activity, from architecture to steel making and from Detroit to Disney World. Landscape to me was a good device for exploring three levels of action: (1) the interplay between structures and actors, including such observers as I, (2) the compromises between landscapes erected by and benefiting powerful people and institutions ("landscapes of power") and the vernacular forms of the powerless, and (3) the continual conflict between change and stability or the forces of market and place.

To move the term "landscape of power" into a preindustrial, nonurban society is daring. Is not the entire landscape of the Mandara highlands and of Sukur a landscape of power? Is there a vernacular form of social arrangement, made material in built forms, that can be counterposed to the projects and constructions of the chieftain? Certainly the quarried rocks speak to an extractive economy, one whose trade is coordinated and controlled by the chief. But can we call spaces that so clearly represent thoroughly ritualized and sacralized, noneconomic power—such as hierarchies of gender and authority—a landscape of power? Is there any alternative possible given the existing social institutions?

Smith and David's title refers directly to Lefebvre's idea of the production of space. The residence of Xidi Sukur is perhaps describable more as a space than as a landscape. Nor is it architecture. It is a built form, part of the built environment, but it is not architecture. While the house is not designed in the modern sense, with all its divisions of labor and expertise, it does represent a collective expression of basic social values and vision. It is, therefore, a space that represents a social and moral order—very much in Lefebvre's line. Apparently this society cannot conceive of space in any other way. Functionality and personality are not capable of expression in any paradigm of thought or material construction.

The cultural geographer James Duncan (1990) has written about a more complex preindustrial society in a similar way. He finds the landscape of the 19th-century city of Kandy, in Sri Lanka, to be a landscape of power because the king's building projects were resisted and altered by the nobility, making the underlying theme of the landscape political competition. In Kandy, too, the king had certain sacred prerogatives, including exclusive rights to specific places. In contrast to Sukur, however, there were alternatives to the landscape of power he proposed. Although these were not a vernacular in the sense of representing powerless people, the very presence of alternatives provides the sense of contest, of challenge, that I think must be implicit in the concept of landscape.

Reply

ADAM SMITH AND NICHOLAS DAVID
Calgary, Alberta, Canada. 20 I 95

We are encouraged that the general principle advanced in our analysis, that political power and spatial organization are reflexively linked, has not in itself provoked a strong critical response. That the comments upon our paper generally focus on how rather than whether power and space are articulated is testimony to the rapid convergence of approaches to space in anthropology, geography, and social theory. We thank all the colleagues who took the time to offer their perspectives on the intriguing problems presented by the articulation of space and political power in the xidi house. In replying, we will first address matters dealing with the ethnography and the nature of power in 19th-century Sukur and then comment on the interpretation of space.

Several commentators would like us to have far greater historical control over the Sukur past. So would we! Dupré's simile of the detective story is not inappropriate. As an ethnoarchaeologist, David approaches historical reality by working back and forth between material, oral, and archival clues. We have noted the traumatic effects on collective memory of the defeat of Sukur by Hamman Yaji. The records of the precolonial and colonial periods, and particularly eyewitness accounts, are precious, but very little (*pace* Vaughan) can be taken at face value. Our understanding of 19th-century Sukur is thus impoverished, especially since we refuse to rely on an often tempting but frequently misleading ethnographic present to fill the gaps. By the same token, while we would like to heed Kus's echo of Marx's call "to adopt a more encompassing notion of *sensuous* human practice," we are unable to do so, at least in regard to the 19th century.

We cannot supply a chronicle of xidis' negotiations of

their power but are fully aware of the potential significance of time intervening between the construction of the main enclosure and adjacent sectors. We cannot as yet determine the chronology of the house's construction, additions, and modifications. What we do know is that during the 19th century (and very likely before) the xidi house complex operated much as we have described it. Our paper is justified in attempting to infer the nature of the xidi's power in that period through its spatial expression. We wish that we could reconstruct the sequence and timing of construction; nothing else could so effectively demonstrate or, alternatively, deny our thesis that its development and use testify to xidis' need continually to negotiate and reinforce their power and privileges.

Neither can we be more explicit regarding the power of the xidi and its exercise. It is possible to regard Sukur's public works as evidence either of xidis' domination and exploitation of the populace or of the community's cooperative endeavor on behalf of itself and a beneficent ruler. The relationship between the xidi and his people certainly involved tensions that must have been resolved in different ways at different times and at any one time were no doubt perceived differently depending on the standpoint of the participant. The frequent replacement of xidis, especially in the period before the effective incorporation of Sukur into the colonial regime (see table 4), strongly suggests that xidis (failing perhaps to read the message of the inner house?) often miscalculated the extent of their hegemony. We prefer this explanation of the "endemic weakness," as Bender puts it, of the xidis of Sukur and their rapid turnover to those suggested by Vaughan and Kus but have no way of monitoring the historical development of the dialectic. Nor can we as yet develop the analysis in the manner prescribed by Monnet.

Stone's reading of our text confuses past and present. With regard to the privileges of the xidi, in 1992–93 he had, it is true, only one wife. Some former xidis had many more, and, though it is impossible to specify numbers with any accuracy, it is significant that in Xidi Matlay's time there was insufficient room to house all his wives in sector C. The figure of 30 wives for Kuraatc is sometimes suggested, though David has been unable to confirm such a figure genealogically or otherwise. No one in Sukur in 1992–93 had more than four wives. Concerning rights to goods and services, there is very general agreement among elder Sukur that the xidi and the xidi alone had substantial and repeated access to corvée labor, especially of the current class of initiates, for the cultivation of fields associated with the xidiship—far less extensive than Mofu-Diamaré princely estates—and some other tasks. We did not mention, since it is as yet unconfirmed, a report by a particularly thoughtful informant that four furnaces were also supplied with ore and charcoal and worked on the xidi's behalf by his people. Oral testimony and architectural features agree that xidis had opportunities to acquire great—by local standards—wealth and that some did so. How many were able to capitalize on their privileges and the extent to which they did so on behalf of themselves rather than their community remains, as discussed above, uncertain. Xidis have very definitely lost prestige, privileges, and power in colonial and independence times.

We agree with Stone, who is clearly tempted to assimilate the xidi to a Kofyar chief, that the xidi house complex is patently extraordinary and would be "an unusual choice for a chief seeking to obscure his power." That is not, however, what we said; our abbreviated comparative analysis shows the inner house to be quite ordinary.

We are indeed grateful to Vincent for her specification of some of the main similarities and contrasts between

TABLE 4
Recent Xidis of the Dur Dynasty: Reigns and Reasons for Departure from Office

Name of Xidi	Approximate Reign	Why Ceased to Rule
Watsc	? 19th century	?
Ngaaka	? 19th century	?
Mbakc	late 19th century	Killed by Hammado's supporters
Hammado	late 19th century	Killed by Kuraatc
Kuraatc	ca. 1900–ca. 1915	Died in office?
Ndushckcn	ca. 1915–ca. 1922	Killed by Hamman Yaji or Madagali's men
Tlagcma	ca. 1922	Deposed by Nzaani after nine-day rule
Nzaani	ca. 1922–34	Abdicated under threat of deposition by the British, who had taken effective control only in 1927
Matlay	1934–60	Abdicated under threat of deposition by the British[a]
Usaani	1960–ca. 1967	Deposed in old age[b]
Zcrangkwadc	1967–83, 1984–91	Deposed, reinstated, died in office
Gczik	1983–84, 1992–	Deposed, reappointed

[a] See Vaughan's comment.
[b] Said by some to have been deposed by the then-government at the instigation of his successor.

the residences of two culturally related but nonetheless very different kinds of rulers. The Mofu castle is a focus of the sacred, whereas at Sukur what we believe to be the most significant shrines are some distance away and served by title holders who represent a period before the establishment of the Dur chiefly line. This is but one example of information she provides that clearly supports our thesis. Van Beek and Vaughan also enrich our ethnographic material with their own observations. We will limit our reply to the rare significant disagreements. Vaughan is far more willing to accept oral statements as historical fact than David and Sterner (n.d.*b*), who take a pessimistic view as to the literal truth of most testimony collected during very brief visits by district officers representing colonial regimes.

Once the divine kings are debunked, as van Beek puts it, what comes into view is a unique kind of polity, committed to the industry of iron making, a net importer of food, capable for much of the 19th century (and very possibly back into the 17th) of exporting between 16 and 69 tonnes of iron per annum (David n.d.*b*). The smaller figure would represent about 60,000 small hoes. A portion of the iron supplied some Higi and Kapsiki; the Margi studied by Vaughan appear to have been largely self-sufficient; most Sukur metal went north with "Vuwa" (Bornoan) traders to the oreless plains south of Lake Chad. Sukur's economic specialization is indeed remarkable and can be interpreted as contributing to a form of rationalization of the regional economy in which historical and commercial relationships were ritualized and expressed in the language of ceremonial kinship. Several neighbor chiefs respect Xidi Sukur as their senior brother or "senior in matters of custom," and he plays or played a ceremonial role in their installation. But we would deny van Beek's assertion that Sukur dominates the discourses of power in surrounding areas; rather, it is others' idea of Sukur that does so. Similarly, we may note that in Vaughan's fascinating discussion of Xidi Matlay's fall from power and its consequences, it was others and not the Sukur themselves who attributed to the xidi some degree of control over rainfall.

Of lesser importance is the descent group of the Sukur chiefly line, which is indeed linked to that of Gulak. The name of the *sca*, which we gloss as clan, is Dur; the *fwal* or praisename is Gcdum and is shared by three other *sca*. (It is entirely typical of the region that the Margi word for clan is *fal* and that of the Bura *dur!*) We are glad also to dispel Vaughan's fear that Sukur has been depopulated; there was considerable movement down from the plateau onto the surrounding plains starting in the late 1950s, and this denucleation together with increased proximity to local government, police, schools, churches, and dispensaries has contributed to the modernization of Sukur, the deemphasis of traditional justice and government, and concomitant decrease in the xidi's power.

On a point raised by van Beek, the engineering of the northern paved way is clearly in part designed to ease the passage of quadrupeds such as donkeys up and down the mountain. (The paving is not continuous but limited to sloping sections where there is threat of erosion.) Human porters carrying even heavy loads on their heads prefer to take a shorter and steeper track. The northern way is the most impressive, and a spur leads off it to the site of the former iron market. We think the argument for its association with long-distance trade a strong one and speculate that it evidences the desire to represent Sukur to Bornoans as worthy commercial partners; as to its construction, our first thought is of the contributions of successive classes of initiates. They and the Young Farmers group still clear the way each year after the rains.

We now turn to theory. The most basic issue for spatial analysis raised by several of the comments (Bender, Kus, Zukin) is the problem of scale. Bender rightly points out that the xidi compound does not exist in isolation but rather is situated within a range of spatial relations involving houses, fields, sacred places, and trade routes. While we agree with her general point that structures cannot be disarticulated from their position within settlements and even regions, this doesn't mean abandoning the formal details of specific spaces. The context of a structure such as the compound of Xidi Sukur must (forgive the redundancy) be put in its proper context. In other words, we should not risk losing the significance of the structure itself in overplaying its surroundings.

A more pervasive problem in spatial analysis than decontextualization has been facile movement across scales of analysis without any acknowledgment of the different ways in which the social and the physical intersect at each level. To do so denies the analyst an understanding of how meaning articulates with form. As Kus makes clear, it is attention to the particulars that precludes simplistic interpretations and, we would add, provides grounds for evaluating alternative interpretations. While it would certainly be worthwhile to look at all of the spatial relationships which Bender suggests (although this would require a book not an article), we do not believe the concept of landscape requires that we abandon detailed analysis of the formal properties of individual structures or, in this case, groups of structures. Zukin makes a similar point in her discussion of the proper term to apply to the xidi house: space, landscape, built environment, or architecture. We suggest that it is all of these in different respects. It is clearly both space and built environment, but Zukin suggests that it is neither architecture nor landscape. We disagree. Her objection, based upon the house's supposed lack of design and its origins in ritualized and sacralized, noneconomic power, seems to arise rather from a romantic notion of the primitive than from anything in our description. Indeed, a point which we hoped to convey was just the opposite—that the house was planned and that it did not express a collective vision but must be seen as integral to expansion of the xidi's authority. To reject applying the label "architecture" to the xidi house is to suggest that certain societies are so limited by tradition

that agency does not intercede between social and physical spaces. The xidi house is a landscape of power specifically because it has been created out of the varied strategies of xidis for expanding their authority. These strategies may utilize social hierarchies but do not arise unmediated out of the hierarchies themselves.

The question of agency in the production of space is explicitly raised by Kus. Who is responsible for ideologically constructed representations of space designed to obscure or exploit? We believe that xidis were responsible for the expansion of their power through the use of space. But the problem Kus raises is important, for many analyses which draw on the poststructuralist tradition seem unable to move from an insubstantial will to power to personal agency. Foucault's accounts of spaces such as prisons and asylums, to which many postmodern geographers (e.g., Harvey, Soja) acknowledge their debt, are notoriously elusive on the question of agency, and this failure to point out clearly who is responsible for particular formal elements of landscapes of power has been echoed in many subsequent analyses (cf. Giddens 1984). This problem requires much greater attention than we can give it here, but we hope that we are clear in attributing the organization of the xidi house to the xidis themselves.

This leads us into the objections raised by Bender and others regarding our description of the xidi's power as negotiated. Bender claims that in looking only at an elite compound we can comment on only one side of the story. This problematic position results from incorrectly reading a structuralist approach into our analysis. As Kus points out, we explicitly break with structuralist approaches by describing the construction of the xidi compound as social process. The power of the xidi is not structurally given (in contrast to Bourdieu's approach) but rather created over time. Our position is that temporally distinct changes in and additions to the xidi compound were negotiated, that is, they occurred in a social milieu of agents empowered to affect social practice. To argue that the xidi's accumulation of authority over time, reflected and enabled by alterations and additions to the house, does not represent negotiation is to suggest that agency resides solely with those in positions of authority. As noted above, it would be very interesting to accomplish a much broader analysis of the Sukur landscape; however, the agency of the people of Sukur does not rest upon academic inquiry.

While Bender is correct that the xidi house gives little explicit information regarding rivals to the xidi's authority, this does not preclude employing an oppositional model of social power. Negotiation is not simply the sum of forces of domination and forces of resistance but rather emerges in opposition to social production by fiat. Both Monnet and Bender fail to do justice to the complexity of the idea of negotiation in regarding it as conceptually exhausted by the opposition of domination and resistance, a view that Giddens (1990) has gone to some lengths to discredit in his analyses of social movements. It is true that, as Monnet (who attributes to us an economicist rather than a structuralist paradigm) points out, negotiation and struggle are almost absent from our study; we contend that negotiation is evident in the construction of the complex. While we admittedly have only the crudest chronological control, the evidence militates against describing the compound as the production of a xidi who has ruled from time immemorial by simple fiat. To take this view would be profoundly ahistorical.

We agree with Kent's discussion of possible cross-cultural, universal principles underlying spatial organization in one respect. Cross-cultural spatial analysis can provide enlightening perspectives on the production of space. For this reason we do not embrace a spatial particularism as she charges. She is also correct, however, in identifying our general hostility toward universal principles of spatial organization (the search for commonalities indicative of universal principles not being the only motivation for cross-cultural comparison). We suggest that Kent's discussion confuses an epistemological question—the existence of cultural universals—with the practical problem of cross-cultural comparisons of spatial form. Because the existence of universal determinants of spatial form is an epistemological question, it cannot be resolved by sheer weight of comparative data. No amount of evidence linking social stratification and partitioning of the built environment can prove universality because (1) the categories of stratification (e.g., egalitarian, ranked, etc.) and partition are ultimately simply that—analytical categories—and may or may not reflect a reality beyond the field of analysis and (2) there need only be one society which does not fit the universal principle for it to be disproven, and it is beyond our analytical capacities to account for all known human societies past and present. As Kant demonstrated, the problem of universals is an epistemological one and must be addressed on that level.

In pursuing the implications of universalism to their ultimate end, Kent arrives at our common *Homo sapiens sapiens* brains. How similar our brains and our perception of spaces truly are is a question for another forum; however, we are skeptical that such reductionism can produce meaningful insights into the organization of space. Indeed, Kent's proposition appears to be just the kind of impoverished conceptualization of what it means to be human decried by Kus.

Monnet's comment that the principles used to articulate Sukur society with physical space depend upon a fundamental distinction between the ideal and the material is well taken on a practical level. We agree that the ideal and the material cannot be disarticulated within a coherent theory of the production of space—and on this level we plead not guilty to separating them. However, Monnet identifies a vital difference between the anthropology of space and the geography of space. Temporal and/or cultural distance is a fundamental aspect of anthropological practice. Thus the analyst is confronted with physical spaces for which we may only partially appreciate the full socio-historical context in which

they were produced. We agree with Monnet that the separation of the material and ideal must be repaired on a theoretical level, but we suggest that some degree of distance between the physical and social is inherent in anthropological analysis on a practical level.

To conclude, we hope to have avoided "the excesses both of a self-indulgent and ultimately nihilistic relativism . . . and of crudely ideological analyses that see mystification, false consciousness, and oppression in the deepest commitments and values of other peoples" (Keesing 1987:60–61). We have learned a great deal from the suggestions offered us by all of the commentators. While they certainly indicate a healthy pluralism in theories both of space and of political power in Africa, they also evidence a common appreciation of many of the questions and problems that archaeologists, cultural anthropologists, and geographers face. This bodes well for the further studies that will advance our insights and correct our errors.

References Cited

BACHELARD, GASTON. 1969. *The poetics of space.* Boston: Beacon Press.

BARKINDO, BAYERO. 1985. "Political centralization in the south of Borno: The case of Sukur in the 18th and 19th centuries," in *Evolution of political culture in Nigeria.* Edited by P. Ajayi and B. Ikara, pp. 50–66. Ibadan: University Press.

BARTH, HEINRICH. 1857. *Travels and discoveries in North and Central Africa 1849–1855.* New York: Harper.

BERGER, PETER. 1973. *The sacred canopy.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

BOURDIEU, PIERRE. 1973. "The Berber house," in *Rules and meanings.* Edited by M. Douglas, pp. 98–110. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

BOURDIEU, PIERRE. 1984. *Distinction.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [SZ]

CLASTRES, PIERRE. 1987. *Society against the state.* New York: Zone Books. [SKU]

COSGROVE, DENIS, AND STEPHEN DANIELS. Editors. 1988. *The iconography of landscape.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [SZ]

DANIELS, STEPHEN. 1989. "Marxism, culture, and the duplicity of landscape," in *New models in geography,* vol. 2. Edited by R. Peet and N. Thrift, pp. 196–220. London: Unwin Hyman. [SZ]

DAVID, NICHOLAS. n.d.*a.* Constructing a historical ethnography of Sukur: Demystification. MS.

———. n.d.*b.* The iron masters of Sukur, Nigeria. *Archaeology Magazine.* In press.

DAVID, NICHOLAS, ROBERT HEIMANN, DAVID KILLICK, AND MICHAEL WAYMAN. 1989. Between bloomery and blast furnace: Mafa iron-smelting technology in North Cameroon. *African Archaeological Review* 7:183–208.

DAVID, NICHOLAS, AND JUDITH STERNER. n.d.*a.* "The theft of the rainbow: Rain, water, iron, and power in the history of Sukur," in *Mensch und Wasser im Tschadseeraum (Proceedings of the Seminar des Internationalen Forschungsnetzes Mega-Tschad, Frankfurt am Main, May 1993).* Edited by D. Barreteau and U. Siebert. Frankfurt am Main: Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Afrikanische Sprachwissenschaften.

———. n.d.*b.* Constructing a historical ethnography of Sukur. Demystification. *Nigerian Heritage.* In press.

DONHAM, DONALD L. 1990. *History, power, ideology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

DONLEY-REID, LINDA W. 1990. "A structuring structure: The Swahili house," in *Domestic architecture and the use of space.* Edited by S. Kent, pp. 127–52. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

DUNCAN, JAMES S. 1990. *The city as text: The politics of landscape of interpretation in the Kandyan kingdom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [SZ]

ELIADE, MIRCEA. 1959. *The sacred and the profane.* New York: Harcourt, Brace.

EVANS-PRITCHARD, E. E. 1948. *The divine kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [JHV]

FOUCAULT, MICHEL. 1979. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison.* New York: Vintage Books.

———. 1984. "Space, knowledge, and power," in *The Foucault reader.* Edited by P. Rabinow, pp. 239–56. New York: Penguin Books.

FRAZER, JAMES GEORGE. 1911–13. 3d edition. *The golden bough.* London: Macmillan. [JV]

GIDDENS, ANTHONY. 1984. *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration.* Cambridge: Polity.

———. 1990. *The consequences of modernity.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

HAMMEL, E. A., AND PETER LASLETT. 1974. Comparing household structure over time and between cultures. *Comparative Studies of Society and History* 16:73–109.

HARVEY, DAVID. 1989. *The condition of postmodernity.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

KEESING, ROGER. 1987. "Ta' a geni: Women's perspectives on Kwaio society," in *Dealing with inequality: Analysing gender relations in Melanesia and beyond.* Edited by Marilyn Strathern, pp. 33–62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

KIRK-GREENE, ANTHONY. 1960. The kingdom of Sukur: A northern Nigerian Ichabod. *Nigerian Field* 25:67–96.

KOPYTOFF, IGOR. 1987. "The internal African frontier: The making of African political culture," in *The African frontier: The reproduction of traditional African societies.* Edited by I. Kopytoff, pp. 3–84. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

KULP. H. S. 1935. Notes taken on a tour in the Madagali District in company with the Touring Officer, Mr. W. R. Shirley, June 14–22. National Archives Kaduna, Nigeria, File Yolaprof J21.

LANSING, J. STEPHEN. 1991. *Priests and programmers: Technologies of power in the engineered landscape of Bali.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

LAWRENCE, DENISE L., AND SETHA M. LOW. 1990. The built environment and spatial form. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41:453–505.

LEFEBVRE, HENRI. 1991. *The production of space.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

MAC BRIDE, D. F. H. 1937*a.* Mandara district—village histories. National Archives Kaduna, Nigeria, File Yolaprof J21.

———. 1937*b.* Sukur. Madagali District Notebook MSS. [JHV]

MC NAUGHTON, P. 1991. *The Mande blacksmith.* Boulder: Westview Press. [WEAV]

MARKUS, THOMAS A. 1993. *Buildings and power: Freedom and control in the origins of modern building types.* London: Routledge.

MARX, KARL, AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS. 1939 [1846]. *The German ideology.* New York: International Publishers.

MOHAMMADOU, ELDRIDGE. 1988. *Les lamidats du Diamaré et du Mayo-Louti au XIXe siècle (Nord Cameroun).* Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.

PONGRI, JOHNSON H. 1988. Political development in Northern Adamawa 1809–1960: A study in the historical development of intergroup relations. Ph.D. diss., Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.

PONTIÉ, G. 1984. "Les sociétés païennes," in *Le Nord du Cameroun: Des hommes, une région.* Edited by J. Boutrais, pp. 203–32. Paris: Éditions ORSTOM.

RAPOPORT, AMOS. 1982. *The meaning of the built environment.* Beverly Hills: Sage. [SKE]

REED, W. L. n.d. Translation of diary of Hamman Yaji, D. A. Madagali 1912–1927. National Archives Kaduna, Nigeria, File Yolaprof ACC-14.

SABEAN, DAVID WARREN. 1990. *Property, production, and family in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SASSOON, HAMO. 1964. Iron-smelting in the hill village of Sukur, north-eastern Nigeria. *Man* 64:174–78.

SEIGNOBOS, CHRISTIAN. 1982. *Montagnes et hautes terres du Nord Cameroun.* Roquevaire: Éditions Parenthèses.

SELIGMAN, C. G. 1934. *Egypt and Negro Africa.* London: G. Routledge. [JHV]

SOJA, EDWARD W. 1988. *Postmodern geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory.* New York: Verso.

STRÜMPELL, KURT F. 1922–23. Worterverzeichnis der Heidensprachen des Mandara Gebirges (Adamaua). *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen* 13:47–74, 109–49.

STUIVER, M., AND G. W. PEARSON. 1993. High-precision bidecadal calibration of the radiocarbon time scale, 500–2500 B.C. *Radiocarbon* 35:1–23.

TERRAY, EMMANUEL. 1972. *Marxism and "primitive" societies.* New York: Monthly Review Press. [SKU]

VAN BEEK, W. E. A. 1986. "The ideology of building: The interpretation of compound pattern among the Kapsiki of North Cameroon," in *Op zoek naar mens en materiële cultuur: Festschrift J. D. van der Waals.* Edited by H. Fokkens, P. Banga, T. Constandse, and M. Bierma, pp. 147–62. Groningen. [WEAV]

———. 1987. *The Kapsiki and Higi of the Mandara Mountains.* Prospect Heights: Waveland Press. [WEAV]

———. 1991. "Iron, brass, and burial: The Kapsiki blacksmith and his many crafts," in *La forge et le forgeron.* Edited by Y. Monino, pp. 281–310. Paris: CNRS/ORSTOM. [WEAV]

———. 1992. The dirty smith: Smell as a social frontier among the Kapsiki/Higi of North Cameroon and north-eastern Nigeria. *Africa* 62:38–58. [WEAV]

———. 1994. "The innocent sorcerer: Coping with evil in two African societies, Kapsiki and Dogon," in *African religions: Experience and expression.* Edited by T. Blakely, W. E. A. van Beek, and D. H. Thompson, pp. 196–228. London: James Currey. [WEAV]

VAUGHAN, JAMES H. 1980. "A reconsideration of divine kingship," in *Explorations in African systems of thought.* Edited by Ivan Karp and Charles S. Bird, pp. 120–42. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. [JHV]

VINCENT, JEANNE-FRANÇOISE. 1975. Le chef et la pluie chez les Mofu. *Systèmes de Pensée en Afrique Noire* 1:137–64.

———. 1991. *Princes montagnards du Nord-Cameroun: Les Mofu-Diamaré et le pouvoir politique.* Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan.

ZUKIN, SHARON. 1991. *Landscapes of power: From Detroit to Disney World.* Berkeley: University of California Press.