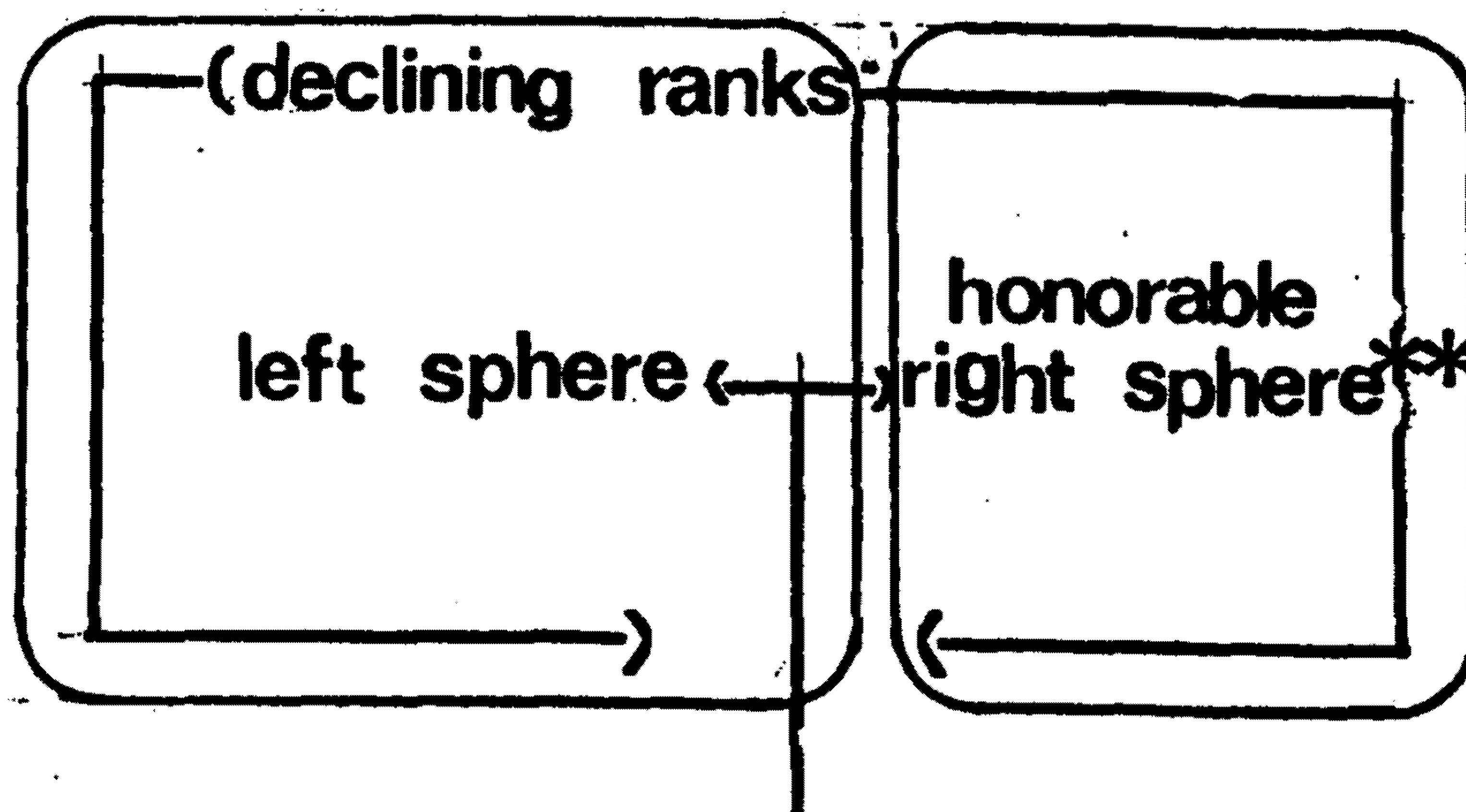


status, the invisible boundaries were many. They were similar to those non-visible curtains which kept women and children away from the male dominated arena.

By examining the seating arrangements and other behavioural patterns in the guest-house, one can find a clear and strong hierarchical ordering. This hierarchy was strictly maintained, both among the members of the village themselves, as well as between them and their visitors. Even though the guest-house was physically one space, practically it was divided into two, each of which was valued differently. From the descriptions given to me by some villagers in Deir Ghassaneh (Abu Hani and Abu Adnan; Interviews: 1984), one realizes the presence of "spaces within spaces". The area to the left of the door, as one enters (Fig. 5.7) was of lower status, while the area to the right of the door was considered honourific, or of a higher status. The presence of a step between the two areas is a witness to such divisions. Thus it was on the right section that



** The sheikh's seat Ent.

Fig. 5.7: Hierarchical seating arrangement in the madafah.

the village sheikh always sat. Places next to him were designated for individuals of social and political distinction, whether elderly men from the village or outside notable visitors. The location where one could sit depended on who else was present. In the case of the visitors, the seating arrangement created a host/guest relationship, which signified a boundary between visitors and hosts. Visitors were always invited to sit on the right side. The arrangement was in a descending order of rank,