In a Pig's Eye: Daily Life and Political Economy in Southeastern Europe

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Introduction

I would like to offer some thoughts about how to understand the conditions of everyday life in the countries of Southeastern Europe and about why this is worth doing. Since I am an anthropologist, it will not come as any surprise that I am enamored of research into small-scale social units: the stock in trade of anthropologists is to examine social, political and economic phenomena from the bottom up. One of my colleagues likes to call this the pig's eye view of the world: that is, the view that researchers get when they leave office or archive and spend some time in the village mud. What I hope to illustrate is that this view can produce more than a collection of charming monographs about life in isolated villages and urban ghettos, or about the organization of particular factories or collective farms. The study of any country not informed by the pig's eye view is likely to be wide of the mark. This is not merely to say that it is a good idea to know what goes on in the village as well as in the politburo, although I do think that is true, too. Rather, it is to say that forces generated from below regularly influence what is happening at the top. If one would really understand what is going on in the capital, then one had best understand the kinds of interests in the provinces that leaders in the capital are responding to.

I will say at the outset that I have reservations about much of mainstream Western scholarship on Southeastern Europe. These reservations grow out of what I see as the frequent use of ill-conceived comparisons and ethnocentrism and gratuitous moralizing in place of analytic conclusions. There are alternative ways to intellectualize about Southeastern Europe, and these are beginning to provide interesting and useful alternatives to some of the conventional wisdom about the area. For example, I question the validity of comparisons between the conditions of life in Southeastern Europe and those in Western Europe or the United States. The past experiences of these areas are so different that comparison between them is spurious and often ethnocentric. More valid comparisons are to be made with other agrarian areas, even when these are located on other continents.

About Corporate Structures and Aggregate Data

The main focus of Western research about contemporary and modern Southeastern Europe lies in studies of the actions of leaders and of the nature of the party and state organization, and in the compilation and analysis of aggregate economic, social and political data. This research is about how policies are made and implemented and about the effect of these policies on
the population at large. It also includes an evaluation or assessment of how things are going over there, mostly done by comparing policy goals with results and by comparing economic and social indicators with those in the countries of Western Europe and the United States.

At the most abstract level, these studies view society as an outcome of policy. Lying behind this view, sometimes referred to as the "idealist" approach, is an assumption that these are centralized totalitarian states where all of the important decisions are made by a small clique of ruling communists who impose their will on the institutions and people of the country. In one of the two main variants of this approach, policies, and hence the characteristics of society, are derived from Marxist-Leninist thought. Such studies stress the contrasts between East and West, making invidious comparisons with the way in which society is determined in the decentralized, pluralistic Western democracies.1

The second variant deems ideology irrelevant and instead finds policy determined by both the nature of the country's techno-economic character and the imperatives of economic development. Differences between East and West are attributed to different degrees of development, which are in turn a consequence of variations in the extent of industrialization. These studies postulate a convergence in social and political forms, regardless of ideology, as the countries of Southeastern Europe "catch up with" the West in industrial capacity.2

In the main, the economy and society of Southeastern European countries are represented in Western literature by statistical trends. While some attention is paid to regional variation within particular countries, data are characteristically aggregated for whole countries. Central to analysis of such data is the establishment of trends based on a comparison of figures for a series of years. Correlations can then be made between different sectors of the economy, economic development and social or demographic trends correlated, the effects of policy in one realm or another assessed, and the direction of future trends predicted.3

We have learned a great deal about Southeastern Europe as a result of research of this type. What it fails to provide, however, is any sense of the social dynamics which produce the trends that it purports to describe. It does not take into account the many different social groupings and their social, political and economic characteristics. While national leaders are carefully studied, they are not the only individuals in the society who have goals to pursue, and the formal or corporate organizations of state and party are not the only framework within which individuals work toward their goals. The interests of all social segments obviously do not always correspond with those of the national leadership, and it is not safe to assume that one can ignore these segments as being of minor significance. The workings of Southeastern European societies result from the interplay of their different social segments, and not just from a population responding to the dictates of the leadership.
Unfortunately, data collected and published in national statistics, and analyses based on them, provide few clues about the nature or expressions of the interests of these social segments. One cannot discern whether an aggregate figure represents a series of data which are mutually reinforcing, or whether it is an averaging of divergent trends. For example, if a statistic is published which shows a national increase in the production of grain, has this resulted from small increases throughout the country, or has production gone up substantially in some areas and down in others? If the birth rate rises, does this reflect a society-wide phenomenon, or is it a result of an increase among only certain social segments of the population? There is no way to answer questions such as these on the basis of aggregate data alone, and projections based upon statistically determined trends using aggregate data are notoriously inaccurate. In ignoring the dynamics of society, such projections miss the growing power of trends masked for a time by temporarily prevalent, but waning, forces.

If one is to know what a country is like, one must know the social processes behind the aggregate data. The problem, then, is to identify the range of interests within each country and the nature of the social relations through which they are expressed. Access to the data from which published statistics were derived can sometimes provide useful clues, but one cannot count on it. After all, the census taker had his own priorities and conceptual framework, and it would be remarkable if they overlapped very much with those of the researcher. In the end there is only one solution to the problem of uncovering the dynamics of society: one must get out into the field and gather one's own data.

A Few Pig's Eye Observations

Several examples of the problems that can arise from aggregate analysis, and how these can be illuminated by research into small scale social units, illustrate this point. Marxist and positivist thought are in agreement that modernization results in the transformation of complex extended families into nuclear ones, in a reduction in family size, and in the general erosion of ties of kith and kin outside the family. The personalistic ties represented by these social relations are said to be characteristic of agrarian societies where the household is the unit of production and activities of more than one household scope are organized through alliances between households. With industrialization, the household is no longer the unit of production, and each nuclear family becomes self-sufficient through wages earned by its adult members. With urbanization, related families become dispersed and, lacking compelling economic reasons to interrelate, ties between them are reduced to sporadic sociable occasions before withering away altogether. Such assistance as the family requires beyond its own means is to be found in the bureaucratic ministerings of the welfare state. Relations between members of individual households are now forged in the productive, political, educational and other institutions of modern society. With the transformation of peasants into agricultural workers, the process of nuclearization is expected to
penetrate the countryside as well. Any vestiges of extended families or of personalistic social networks between families are interpreted as an expression of traditional conservatism. Such phenomena are expected to disappear with the passage of time.\(^4\)

The countries of Southeastern Europe in general, and Romania in particular, are all clearly undergoing industrialization and urbanization. In Romania the percentage of the population employed in urban occupations and the percentage of individuals living in cities have increased substantially since the end of World War II. At the same time, the population has increased from under 16 million (1948) to over 21 million (1977). Moreover, over 90 percent of Romanian agriculture is carried out on either state or cooperative farms. Romania can therefore be expected to show the social trends that are presumed to accompany modernization; and, indeed, national statistics and scholarly analysis based on them show the expected nuclearization and reduced family size. As predicted, urban areas exhibit significantly lower percentages of extended families and smaller family sizes than do rural areas. However, both family size and the number of extended families are being reduced in the countryside as well. The few areas where private agriculture remains show the highest percentages of extended families.\(^5\)

In spite of this information, detailed research in Brașov County, one of the most industrialized in the country, and subsequent examination of statistical data from other parts of the country "from the bottom up," suggest that something rather different is going on. First, we found that a three-generation strategy dominates communities of worker villages in the hinterlands of industrial cities and that it is also strongly represented in the cities themselves. Second, we found that these extended family strategies were not merely a survival of a traditional social form among conservative ex-peasants, but that they are being constantly recreated out of the conditions of modern life in Romania. Third, the areas where the extended family is under the most threat are those which are most remote from urban centers. Our conclusion is that the apparent nuclearization trend in Romania is more an artifact of the nature of the census than of the realities of social life.\(^6\)

The people who live in Brașov County have worked out a way to take advantage of a combination of rural location and proximity to cities in order to have the best of both urban and rural worlds. Their optimum strategy is to have at least one individual employed in town, while one works for the local cooperative farm and yet another remains at home to care for their own animals and private garden plots. This is most effective where there are at least three adult members of the household, and the extended family is an obvious way to do this. By deploying its workforce in this way a household is able to provide for subsistence needs from the agricultural products its members raise at home and receive from the cooperative farm as pay. Almost all of the money earned by the urban worker can then be devoted to consumer goods which improve the household's
standard of living. Clothing, home furnishings, seaside and foreign
vacations, and even automobiles are high on their list of preferences.

These household are usually made up of a married couple, their
children, and one or more of their parents; more than one-half of the
adults in these villages lived in such extended family households.
However, we learned that this is not the only three-generation strategy.
Although many of the younger generation take apartments in town and both
husband and wife work in the city, they nevertheless retain close ties with
their parents back in the village. Consumer goods purchased in the city
constantly flow out to the parents in the village and agricultural produce
flows to the children in the city. Visiting back and forth between town
and country is incessant, and in a small but significant number of cases
the children of urban dwelling couples live in the village with their
grandparents. The resulting level of economic and social interdependence
is so great that it differs little from that of the three-generational
household.

While the most intensive social and economic ties are most often
between parents and their offspring, there are also important links among
village households and between them and the households of former villagers
living in nearby towns. Siblings, cousins, neighbors, ritual kin, classmates
and other combinations of individuals cooperate in an endless variety
of ritual, social and economic endeavors. These range from attending
weddings, where cash gifts enable the newlyweds to buy furnishings for
their home, to helping a neighbor rebuild a barn, to finding a job in a
factory for a godson. These are not just occasional peripheral phenomena,
but rather a constant element of life; everyone is constantly involved in
giving and receiving such support.

Similar kinds of relations exist among families who have "always" been
city residents. Within cities a variant of the three-generational strategy
is well established. Retired grandparents are the most reliable baby-
sitters. They also have the time to keep active in networks over which
flows information about where scarce and desirable consumer items can be
found, and to stand in the queues which characterize everyday shopping and
become especially long when word spreads that some scarce item has suddenly
become available. In return for these efforts, older individuals can
expect to share some of the comforts provided by their offsprings' wages
that they would not be able to enjoy on a pensioner's income alone. In the
cities, this cooperation is transformed into a three-generational house-
hold much less often than in rural areas or villages, in the main because
of the small size of apartments, constructed with nuclear families in mind.
No matter how close the cooperation, a desire to maximize the total amount
of living space available to the group as a whole leads them to retain
their separate households.

The strength of these ties in urbanized counties is in rather marked
contrast to social developments in counties which do not have urban
centers. In these remote areas villagers do not have the option of working
in town while living in the village, and individuals have few vocations other than agriculture to choose from. If they wish to pursue some other career, they have little choice but to leave the village and move to a distant city. With higher pay and more cultural attractions to be found in the cities, that is exactly what most young people are doing. Since a three-generational strategy is much harder to work at a distance, young people who migrate more often live as nuclear family units. Moreover, as older couples are left behind to fend for themselves, migration also creates nuclear family households in rural areas. Thus, the process of nuclearization is actually more characteristic of remote areas of the country than it is of those close to town. While agriculture-based extended families continue to exist, their numbers are being reduced as a result of an uneven development that draws migrants away to other parts of the country.

In summary, we found that both in cities and in villages in urbanized regions there is very intense domestic cooperation across generational lines, cooperation which in the villages is associated with three-generational households. However, both in cities and in town-and-country combinations, the cooperation takes place between closely related couples who live in different households. In contrast, migration from villages in remote parts of the country tends to leave nuclear families behind in the village at the same time that it creates new ones in the city. The aggregate data for the country at large, based on a census of households, cannot include information on the quality of social relations between members of different households. It therefore misses those three-generational strategies which are not based on residence, as well as the generally high level of ritual, social and economic interaction found in modern Romanian worker villages. Nor can it differentiate between the social processes going on in villages proximate to urban centers and those that are more distant from cities. As a result, it presents a false image of the realities of social relations in modern Romania.

It would be a mistake to view these domestic relations as a temporary, transient phenomenon associated with an early stage in modernization. In fact, they are consistent with long-range Romanian economic and social planning. Instead of trying to build urban apartments for the entire industrial work force, the Romanians have developed an elaborate economic infrastructure connecting village to town and are depending on commuting labor. In Brasov County, 40 percent of the urban work force resides in the countryside. Moreover, through an aspect of planning called systematization, the Romanians intend to strengthen this pattern and to increase the cultural and social services available to villagers so as to reduce discrepancies between rural and urban life styles. At the same time, another aspect of their planning, carried out under the rubric of multilateral development, is to expand industrial development in the more remote areas of the country. To the extent that this is successful, it will reduce migration and increase the opportunities for villagers in remote areas to elect urban employment while living at home in the village. One
can reasonably expect that this will establish the same domestic patterns in these areas as now exist in Brașov and other urban counties.

Corporate and Noncorporate Interrelations

Three-generation domestic strategies and networks of social relations among people in town and country are no epiphenomena or mere curiosities. They are elements in a noncorporate social structure which pervades all aspects of Romanian life and influences the way in which political, economic and social change is taking place. Indeed, even the operation of the Romanian corporate world of party and state organization cannot be properly understood without reference to it.* Let me illustrate this by an example.

A Romanian acquaintance was the director of a distribution center for bottled gas used in cooking stoves. Bottled gas is available only through such centers and can only be obtained by turning in an empty bottle and paying for the gas in the full bottle. Since there was a slightly higher demand for gas than could be filled out of available inventory, a list was established. One's place on the list was determined by how long it had been since one had last received a full bottle. Since supplies of full bottles were received at frequent intervals, there was rarely a delay of more than a few days for anyone who used his gas at a reasonable rate. The formal system of operation for the center was thus quite simple and orderly.

However, there was always a danger that the ability of the center to meet demand might deteriorate, requiring some people to wait even longer to receive their gas. Against this eventuality, people did what they could to make sure that they would not be among those who waited. My acquaintance was the recipient of an endless stream of small favors: neighbors and relatives stopped by his house to leave off a few eggs or some home-baked goods; urban acquaintances would stand him a glass of țuică whenever he ventured into a local bar; when shopping, he would often be waved to the front of the line; party officials stopped by his office from time to time personally to let him know about the implications of a new regulation, and so on. He had many good, generous friends and admiring relatives, and

*By corporate and noncorporate I mean the same thing that some writers mean by formal and informal. While not entirely satisfied with my choice of terms, formal and informal leave me uneasy because of the implication that informal relations, in contrast to formal ones, lack structure, decidedly not the case. Noncorporate (informal) relations lack a charter, constitution or table of organization. For a discussion of the patterns which noncorporate relationships can take, see Jeremy Boissevain, Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions (Oxford, 1974: Blackwell).
life went along smoothly as long as his supply of bottled gas was great enough to fill everyone's request with a minimum of delay. Although he was actually distributing the gas in accordance with prescribed bureaucratic procedures, his friends and relatives were content to think that he was giving them special treatment.

Unfortunately, in 1974 a sudden and severe crisis in the bottled gas industry left my acquaintance in the untenable position of having a lot of people in need of gas looking for him to remind him of their special relationship at the same time that he had few bottles of gas to distribute. He managed to weather the storm, but during the crisis he lived like a hunted man. He stayed home "sick" as much as he dared, completely avoided public places like buses and bars, and at work managed to keep busy in the most remote warehouses, when he could not come up with a reason to be away from the distribution center altogether.

The point of this story is that a knowledge of the formal organization of an enterprise or bureau is not necessarily sufficient to understand how it actually works. Had my acquaintance merely been performing his bureaucratic function, he could have remained in the open during the crisis, blaming "the system" for the shortage of gas. But since he had allowed the impression to develop that he was providing gas as a personal favor, his failure to deliver even during a general crisis was interpreted as a breach in social relations. If we went on to pursue this episode further, we would discover that the attempts to influence the distribution center director were not random, but were in fact determined by pre-existing relationships. Ties of kith and kin, relations which are a part of the noncorporate organization of social relations in the county, enmeshed the director even before he obtained his administrative post. But some of the claims also came from fellow bureaucrats, and developed out of a recognition that individuals who hold formal positions within the corporate structure can establish personal relationships among themselves to obtain favors and to facilitate the performance of office. Gifts and favors given in appreciation for, or in anticipation of, other favors, and the use of influence based on corporate and noncorporate relationships are an integral part of Romanian society.

The implementation of policy in Romania is always affected by the way in which the noncorporate structure is mobilized in relation to it. Marxist theory says nothing about what noncorporate relationships should be like under socialism, beyond the expectation that they will become less significant through economic development. Therefore, the noncorporate structure is dealt with on a tactical, ad hoc basis. When it is used to circumvent or subvert the goals of the party and state, it can be severely repressed. At other times, national policy can be designed to placate it as in the reorganization of agricultural brigades and work teams in the early seventies. Social relations in Romanian villages had originally been ignored in determining the groupings of people into work units. When this proved unpopular in the villages and, as a consequence, undermined production, work units were restructured to take into account these noncorporate
relationships. This reorganization was relatively well-received and resulted in more enthusiastic labor and better production. The changes in remunerations policies for cooperative farms, increasing payments in kind and reducing the number of tasks recompensed in cash, were a similar acquiescence to "popular demand."  

If at times the formation of policy is a compromise between the goals of party and those of local populations, on other occasions the party itself initiates the mobilization of noncorporate networks in order to achieve its ends. A particularly dramatic instance was the formation of the agricultural production collectives which took place in stages over more than a decade. At a crucial juncture in 1961-1963, the process was brought to completion, and all villages which had been passed over earlier were to be collectivized (except for a few in the mountains). Professor David Kideckel has detailed exactly how this was accomplished in one village, Hirseni, in County Bragov. Although the population in Hirseni was for the most part skeptical about the advantages of collectives and reluctant to join, in the end the farm was established. While the impetus for the establishment of the farm certainly came "from above," its formation was not the result of the naked application of state power. Local and visiting county officials incessantly visited village households, but the decisive factor in formation of the collective was the mobilization of the noncorporate networks of kith and kin.

Former villagers who held party and administrative posts in other places, and even factory workers and students, were sent home to convince their friends and relatives to become members of the farm. Virtually everyone who had both a tie to the village and a stake in a state or party position was mobilized in this effort at suasion. Especially intensive efforts were made to induce prominent village households to join the farm. As each household enrolled in the farm, its members were then also recruited to add their voices to the others. In the end, virtually every household became a member of the Hirseni cooperative. While the goal of forming the farm had come from outside of the village, the method of mobilizing the village behind the farm was consistent with the way in which a village-wide consensus had been reached on issues of importance in the past.

The development of a separation of interests between the corporate and noncorporate sectors presents a danger for socialist states in Southeastern Europe. One hears people refer to the officials as "them," and there have been incidents, such as the protest in the Jiu valley, where a segment of the population has mobilized to express its dissatisfaction with state policy. On a more mundane level, the success or failure of local level officials is in large measure determined by their success or failure in establishing a working relationship with local networks. Certainly the national leadership understands that this is a problem and also that on occasion the interests of party and of particular communities or population segments may be at odds. It insists, however, that there is identity of interest over the long run, and that such differences are only over short-
term goals. Since such differences could result in overt antagonisms and open conflict, it is important to the leadership that they be identified early and that appropriate measures be taken. Appropriate measures can include an effort to explain the policy more effectively in cases where the communities have a false understanding, modification of the policy where the problem results from the failing of policy-makers, or the re-education or even removal of officials who have misapplied policy (the solution in the Jiu valley case). In Romania the potential seriousness of the problem is indicated by the ongoing efforts of the party to merge socialist and folk symbolism to create an identity between being Romanian and being socialist. Also, the first secretary of the Communist Party, Nicolae Ceausescu, periodically takes to the airwaves, or has an item published in the daily newspaper Scintea, exhorting party and state officials to leave their desks and travel to their home communities to explain and promote new or modified policies.

In the modern socialist states of Southeastern Europe, while both corporate and noncorporate organizations exist as partially autonomous social processes, they are also intertwined. One cannot fully understand how the one works without understanding the other. Those of us who study small-scale phenomena have learned that we cannot understand life in village or town without taking into account the workings of party, state and national economy. We have also learned that explanations of party and state are equally incomplete without an understanding of the workings of noncorporate processes. This can best be accomplished through the detailed field study of small-scale units.9

Agrarian States in the Modern World

When governments dominated by Communist parties were established in Southeastern Europe in the aftermath of World War II, it was not surprising that these should be seen in the West as small-scale replicas of the Soviet Union. The existence of communist governments there seemed simple to explain: except in Yugoslavia and Albania, they had been installed by Russian commissars following in the wake of the Red Army. As Western scholars saw it, the advent of communism brought several centuries of indigenous political development to an end. As Soviet "satellites" these countries were presumed to have no politics or economics, but to be under the domination and direction of the Soviet Union, with everything of significance decided in Moscow. In those days it was easy for a student of the Soviet Union to also become an expert on Eastern Europe: one simply added the phrase "and in Eastern Europe as well" to any statement about the Soviet Union. One measure of the progress that has been made in the study of Eastern Europe over the past two decades is that we have almost cured our colleagues in Soviet studies of this sort of intellectual imperialism.10

In these twenty years we have learned that Eastern Europe is not merely a replica of the Soviet Union, and also that it is itself not all of a
Prior to the advent of communist rule, these countries had a variety of political and economic experiences. Poland had its long period of partition, with different regions governed by Prussia, Russia and Austria. The Czech lands, especially Bohemia, had served as an industrial and urban heartland of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while Hungary had developed as that empire's granary. The areas which make up present-day Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, and Yugoslavia had all been part of the Ottoman Empire, although each area had experienced Ottoman domination in a somewhat different way. Once they became independent of Ottoman rule, each of these Southeastern European countries developed strong political and economic ties with Western Europe and with Czarist Russia. After World War I, ties with the West became stronger than ever and throughout Eastern Europe, in the 1930s and 40s, German influence expanded into outright economic and political domination. The fall of the Third Reich marked the beginning of the transition to socialism.

The varied experiences of these countries prior to the advent of socialism, combined with their equally varied geographical circumstances and natural resources, has led each to shape its own distinctive brand of socialism. As Western scholars have gathered ever more detailed information about the past and present of these countries, they have become increasingly cautious in making generalizations about the area as a whole. My decision to limit my remarks to Southeastern Europe was intended as a modest dramatization of this point.

As the study of the countries of Southeastern Europe has gained its place in Western scholarship, three observations have shaped conventional understanding of the way in which modern conditions of life have developed there. First, they are socialist states ideologically dominated by Marxist-Leninist thought and under varying degrees of Soviet influence. Second, they are making determined efforts to become modern, developed countries. Third, however distinctive their histories may be, they are nevertheless European countries. While these observations appear to be self-evident, I contend that dwelling upon them has tended to inhibit a realistic understanding of Southeastern Europe.

To begin with, there is an a priori assumption that communism is inherently bad or evil. A whole vocabulary of perjorative terms is applied to communist countries in both journalistic and scholarly writings. Words and phrases such as "totalitarian," "repression," "censorship," "drab," "police state," and "godless" are freely used, reflecting value judgments and springing from the writer's preference for his own political and economic system. As such, they are a form of ethnocentrism which can influence the nature of scholarship. These attitudes virtually ensure that no matter how "objective" a scholar intends to be, his or her conclusions will ultimately be cast in a negative vein. When the scholar is dealing with a communist country in Southeastern Europe, the problem can be compounded for the very terms "Byzantine" and "Balkan" have come to have negative connotations in the English language.
In evaluating the performance of these countries, one inevitably compares them with the United States and with the countries of Western Europe because they share the same continental setting and grand cultural heritage and because the general theory of modernization provides the framework for comparative analysis. All of the versions of modernization theory have in common a model of developed based on the growth of urban industrial society in the West. To compare Southeastern Europe with the Western democracies, various economic, demographic and social statistics are used to serve as indicators of development. Inevitably, the countries of Southeastern Europe suffer in the comparison. They are less modern, and, whatever their progress, they continue to lag well behind the West. Conclusions of this sort reinforce preconceived assumptions about the "evils" of communism by demonstrating its economic and social failings. Qualitative research by political analysts which promotes invidious comparisons between West and East of qualities of freedom, human rights and political participation further substantiates these "evils."

While research fitting roughly into the above mold has dominated Western scholarship about Southeastern Europe, there have been studies which take a somewhat different tack. This research begins with the observation that the countries of Southeastern Europe have followed a path into the modern world fundamentally different from that of the countries of Northwestern Europe. In the 19th century, when the peoples of the Balkans were emerging from Ottoman rule, the countries of Northwestern Europe were already well established as capitalist industrial nation-states. The combination of national movements and international interests which destroyed Ottoman power in Europe also paved the way for Western influence in the former Ottoman lands, and in the course of the 19th century Southeastern Europe became firmly integrated into the Western economic sphere. This penetration tied agricultural production in Southeastern Europe to the requirements of the West, inhibited industrial development, and served to create and perpetuate agrarian society there. While the nature of these societies was rooted in their past, the form that they took late in the 19th century and early in the 20th century was in large measure a product of their attempts to meet the demands and opportunities growing out of their ties with the West. In the process they became countries with severe "peasant problems." The political parties which vied with one another in the period between the world wars made little progress toward solving this problem, and it was, if anything, intensified by Nazi German domination and the trauma of World War II.

The experience of Southeastern Europe in becoming an agrarian hinterland of industrial Europe parallels that of other world areas. Similar processes creating agrarian societies geared to production for industrial Europe and the United States took place in much of Mediterranean Europe, North and West Africa, South, East and Southeast Asia, and Latin America. While differing radically in cultural traditions and climatic and geographic circumstances, these areas came to share many political, economic, and social forms as a result of these common experiences.
Since the end of World War II, economic and social development in these agrarian states has been approached in various ways, associated with many forms of political organization. When examined in the context of these agrarian countries, rather than compared with advanced industrial nations, the experiences of Southeastern Europe look rather different: their accomplishments appear in a much more favorable light. In general, they have achieved more industrialization and are sustaining a higher rate of economic growth; their urbanization has been carried out in a far more balanced and controlled fashion with concomitantly fewer urban problems; unemployment and underemployment are insignificant; basic education is virtually universal and "upward mobility" through access to higher education is widely available; a variety of social programs promote the well-being of the general population. Moreover, they are more successful than other agrarian states in retaining the capital they generate for reinvestment and they suffer fewer problems resulting from the emigration of the most skilled and educated of their population.\(^{13}\)

Conclusions

Detailed field research conducted within the countries of Southeastern Europe is contributing to a more accurate and sophisticated understanding of their internal dynamics. Additionally, an analytic framework which examines this area in relationship to others with similar agrarian histories is providing an alternative to conventional ways of interpreting their problems, accomplishments, and future potential. At the very least, the scholarship I have been discussing represents an expansion of information and modes of analysis available to individuals who are interested in Southeastern Europe. It may also have significance for the kinds of policies that Western states develop with respect to both the nations of Southeastern Europe and to agrarian nations in other parts of the world.

The socialist states of Southeastern Europe, although differing from one another in the particulars of policy and practice, have made economic and social advances which compare very favorably with non-socialist agrarian states in other areas. As these states have established their own individual brands of socialism and have experienced some success with modernization, they have become increasingly independent-minded in foreign economic and political relations. Yugoslavia is certainly a case in point, as are Romania and Poland. Policies of detente toward this part of the world seem to be a good idea.

Moreover, policies designed to frustrate the development of socialist states in other world areas are probably ill-advised. My hypothesis is that agrarian states which become socialist have better development prospects than do those that do not.\(^{15}\) If even members of the Warsaw Pact can begin to develop independent aspects to their foreign relations, it seems likely that socialist states in the Third World can be expected to maintain a relatively unaligned stance. Encouragement and assistance from the West rather than opposition should make this even more likely.
NOTES

1. Cyril Black discusses the genesis of the totalitarian model and how it came to be applied to the Soviet Union and Eastern European states in A Balance Sheet for East-West Exchanges, IREX Occasional Papers, Vol. 1, No. 1). It should be noted that not all authorities who use this model attribute totalitarianism to communist parties. Some see it as inherent in Russian culture or in the cultures of the various East European states, with roots deep in history.


4. An authoritative presentation of this perspective for Europe, both East and West, is S.H. Franklin, The European Peasant: The Final Phase (London, Methuen, 1969), especially pp. 1-20 and 218-234. It also dominates textbook social science and works in general theory. However, in the course of the past two decades a series of monographs on social organization in worker communities in the industrial West has appeared which contradicts the general expectation: cf. Michael Young and Peter Wilmott, Family and Kin in East London (Baltimore: Penguin, 1957); Mirra Komarovsky, Blue Collar Marriage (New York: Random House, 1967). Michael Anderson outlines the dilemma of the lack of fit between general theory and specific case studies in his Family Structure in 19th-Century Lancashire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971). Such works as these, demonstrating the ongoing strength of kith and kin relations in the heart of the industrial West make it difficult to accept the premise that such relations will wither away with modernization in Eastern Europe.


6. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of research in other parts of Southeastern Europe. The literature in English is richest for Yugoslavia, where research by American and British scholars has been


9. This is, of course, hardly unique to the study of Southeastern European societies. Two works which examine this as a general method are Abner Cohen, Two Dimensional Man: An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Society (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), and L.A. Fallers, The Social Anthropology of the Nation State (Chicago: Aldine, 1974).

10. However, the ongoing imperious attitude of our more numerous Soviet and Russian studies colleagues is indicated by the fact that those of us who study Albanians, Estonians, Finns, Gypsies, (East) Germans, Hungarians, Lapps, Lithuanians, Latvians, and Romanians are expected to join a professional association called the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. Dissatisfaction with this state of affairs is no doubt responsible for the recent formation of the American Association for Southeast European Studies.


14. It would take a second essay, longer and more involved than this one, to examine the assumptions made by Western scholars (Marxist and positivist alike) that the human costs of Eastern European achievements are excessive. Western comments on the human condition in Eastern Europe are made against either idealized versions of "freedom" in the industrialized West, or an abstract concept of human rights. They rarely take into account the specific problems faced by small nations attempting to modernize. Condemnation of East European states for severely restricting emigrants and foreign travel ignore the implications of open borders for small countries. In the European context, open borders in small modernizing states have meant a "brain drain" and an ongoing export of labor to industrial Northwestern Europe. Case studies, such as that by Jane and Peter Schneider on Sicily, Culture and Political Economy in Western Sicily (New York, 1976; Academic Press) and surveys such as S. Castles and G. Kosack, Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe (London, 1973: Oxford University Press) suggest that the human costs of open borders may be at least as severe as closed ones.

15. One of the few attempts to assess the quality of the human condition in societies which have undergone revolution and those which have not is Susan Ekstein, The Impact of Revolution on Social Welfare in Latin America (Theory and Society 11(1):43-94, 1982).