CITY AND SOCIETY
STUDIES IN URBAN ETHNICITY, LIFE-STYLE AND CLASS

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SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS IN BULGARIA

SOCIALIST PLANNING FOR THE INTEGRATION OF RURAL AND URBAN LIFE

by

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INTRODUCTION

There are many Bulgarians alive today who remember their grandparents's tales of life "under the yoke" of the Ottoman Empire. It is little more than 100 years since the Bulgarians, with their cherry-wood cannons and the help of Russian armies, put an end to the Ottoman-feudal era.

From that time until World War II was a mere 60 years, during which Bulgaria existed as an economic and political hinterland of capitalist Europe. In 1944, when the antifascist forces in Bulgaria overthrew the Nazi-allied government, the Bulgarians were still primarily a nation of peasants. The population of the urban classes was still very small.

In the forty years of socialist development since 1944, Bulgaria has been completely transformed into an urban industrial nation. Today, its exports of industrial machinery and equipment, such as electric trucks and hoists, are triple the value of its exports of agricultural products. Even the agricultural sector itself is industrialized, being now composed of huge, mechanized cooperative farms ("Agro-Industrial Complexes"). Bulgarians have experienced the

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   1981 2.8% unprocessed agricultural products
   21.9% highly processed farm products
   75.3% industrial products (non-agricultural)

   1939 33% unprocessed farm products
   66% primary processed farm products
   1% other items
burgeoning of cities and towns, and the urbanization of the life-style of the old, formerly peasant villages. For the people, socialist development has meant enormous gains in all aspects of their quality of life - in material conditions, in security and diversity of employment, in health and education, in development of their appreciation for and access to the arts, in participation in planning for their future, and in - as they say - "the collective spirit".

Bulgaria has come a long way towards fulfilling one of the important goals of socialism - reducing, and eventually eliminating, the negative aspects of the ancient distinction between urban and rural life. Yet, during the process of rapid transformation, the Bulgarians have emerged somewhat uneasily as an urban people, with one foot still in the village, and a great longing for their rural roots. This problem was described succinctly by Todor Zhivkov, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, in his report to the XIth Party Congress in 1976, where he said:

The rapid pace at which we have reorganized our agriculture and industrialized our country has shifted around the population. The old villages and small provincial towns in which all the people knew one another exist no more. The old patriarchal way of life was too poor, too narrow for us to feel sorry about its passing. But the new life style has not yet properly taken shape so that we may feel satisfied and untroubled (Zhivkov 1976:77-78).

This transitional situation presents a great challenge to the planners in Bulgaria's Communist Party and government: the challenge of integrating the major transformations of socialist development, for which the people are working with great commitment, with the feelings of the people about the details of how they wish to live - feelings derived from their specific culture history.

As in any developing socialist society, the overall goals of socialist development have provided leaders with no precise blueprint for working out these everyday details in the process of culture change. Taking into account the wishes of the population that derive from its culture history is a complicated process in that the very culture concerned is undergoing profound transformation in such a period, and the people's needs are changing and developing. Many
new contradictions arise as people reach towards a life-style they aspire to in the future, while continuing their attachment to some aspects of their past.

To cope with the resulting problems, Party leaders must bring the various culturally derived inclinations, assumptions, and styles of behavior into conscious awareness - a difficult task, as any anthropologist knows, since the leadership itself is of the same cultural origins and shares the same culturally derived given as the population as a whole.

Looking at Bulgaria's socialist development, I will focus on one aspect only in this fascinating question of the "fit" between socialist development and people's culturally derived needs, one that is deeply felt by the population. It has to do with the interrelations between urban and rural life-styles, and the attachment of the people to village life.

**URBANIZATION AND THE BULGARIAN LONGING FOR THE VILLAGE**

Many of the issues and problems that arise in the course of Bulgaria's socialist development flow from the desire of Bulgarians to have the best of both rural and urban life-styles. In the city, there is challenge, opportunity, stimulation. But the village remains, in their view, the place of peace and rest, of hills and fresh air, of good food and good health.

The tension between these conflicting desires goes back to pre-socialist times, as is evident in Bulgarian literature. Stoyan Daskalov's story, "The Yard", for instance, is a pre-revolutionary story about an elderly village woman, a sharecropper, whose children have all moved away to the city, and whose son brings her to Sofia to live with his family. The young couple hold her in high esteem, and show her every possible kindness and concern for her comfort. Yet, she feels as confined as the animals in the zoo. The window fails to reveal a sunrise, there are no kitchen gardens, no sounds of animals to mark the time of day, no hens clucking as they lay their eggs.
Although the pull between urban and rural life is old, as late as 1939 only 22% of the population was, in fact, urban. The 1950s and 1960s saw the industrialization of the country and, with it, the intensive growth of towns and cities. Agriculture had been completely cooperatized by the mid-1950s. Its successful reorganization and increasing mechanization freed large numbers of rural youth to undertake education, training, and new occupations in the towns. By 1980, the urban population had grown to 62% of Bulgarians, or five and a half million out of nine million. Nearly half of these live in cities of over 100,000 people. Because of the overall growth of the Bulgarian population, this percentage growth actually represents a four-fold increase in the number of urban residents since the 1930s.²

Studies of the present urban population show that, as of 1977, 44% of the urban residents were direct migrants from villages (Zlatanova and Molhov 1981:98). What this means is that the great majority of urban Bulgarians are either first generation migrants or their children, children who may be young adults or just reaching maturity, but who likely still have grandparents in the village. True urbanites, going back many generations, are few. And even they usually have some relatives-in-law, to whose village they can repair for the relaxation that Bulgarians tend to seek in a rural retreat. A weekend, a summer vacation in the village answers a deep yearning in the Bulgarian soul. And yes, there is something about the manner in which urban Bulgarians describe their longing for the village that tempts the foreigner to use the word "soul". It expresses a desire for those features of village life that even Bulgarian cities, with their safe streets and beautiful parks, cannot reproduce.

In conversations and interviews with older people who have lived and worked in the city for many years - in Sofia, in Stara Zagora -

it emerges clearly that they often still view their natal village as "home". The city remains work site and place of temporary sojourn, and this irrespective of how satisfied they might be with both their career and their urban life-style. Looking forward to retiring to the village is, for them, a satisfying, and usually fulfillable dream. Years ahead, they begin to restore an old family house, or to build a new one in their village to use as a vacation villa and as an eventual retirement home.

It is interesting that this inclination to view the natal village as permanent "home" is reflected also in the handling of biography in Bulgarian journalism. In mass media descriptions of the lives of well known contemporary Bulgarians, who are famous in politics, in production, in the arts or sciences, much attention is given as a matter of course to describing the person's home village. Whole magazine articles focus on this village of origin, even though the individual has not lived in the village for twenty or even thirty years.

Bulgarian nostalgia for the village continues to appear in the arts. Sometimes it takes the form of negative stereotypes of city people. In these self-caricatures - for the authors and filmmakers producing them are themselves often recently urbanized like the characters in their stories - the young, urban generation is shown as cold and unfeeling. They are excessively materialistic, "soulless" beings, who show egocentric neglect of the old folks back in the village. One example out of many is, again, in a Stoyan Dascalov story, "A New Attitude Towards Life".3 Here, the successful urban son of the 1950s delays coming to the village to see his dying father because his car isn't broken in yet, and the eventual visit itself focuses exclusively on the glorification of the new car.

A cynical view of purportedly cold, efficient city people appears

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3. Daskalov, n.d. It is interesting to notice that Daskalov does not reserve his satire for city people while sentimentalizing villagers. In the same story, he deftly sketches the more envious, grasping and back-biting aspects of old, peasant village character.
in films as well, as in "Tree Without Roots", a film that appeared in 1974, directed by Christo Christov. Here, an elderly village man, brought to live with his married child in the city, suffers at the hands of the overly busy young couple. Unaware of his feelings and desires, they try to be kind to him by not allowing him to do anything, not even those things that pertain to his expected role, such as helping with his grandson. The young couple has good intentions, but city life has robbed them of the capacity for empathy.

Like so many of the new problems arising in the process of socialist development, Bulgarian ambivalence regarding urban and rural life is examined and dealt with consciously and purposefully, both in the political and in the artistic realm. Its pervasiveness as a major theme of reflection is no accident. It is, rather, a part of the ongoing effort by Party and state to develop the population's active engagement in sorting out the quandaries of the particular stage of development their society is passing through.

This consciousness of focus was reflected, for instance, in an interview with Hristo Kirkov, speaking as First Deputy Director of Bulgarian Cinematography, in which he described the development of the Bulgarian feature film industry of the 1970s. He said, in part:

Its field of vision included phenomena and problems of a topical, but not momentary nature. For example - the problems emerging in connection with the dynamic restructuring of the old social patterns in our country, and with migration processes to the city. Against the background of these problems the silhouette of a person is gradually outlined, a person with drastically changing emotionality, a person with two profiles - the one still looking with uncertainty at the sunrise above the urban landscape, the other - nostalgically turned to the setting of the old but long familiar rural nest (Kirkov 1982:4).
ONGOING AND NEWLY DEVELOPING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN BULGARIANS

During the decades of urbanization, Bulgarians have maintained many familiar forms of rural-urban reciprocity, and have developed new ones that flow from increased material and cultural well-being. Peppers and herbs from the village still dry out on the balconies of city apartments, next to the summer stove. In pre-socialist times, young people studying in town depended on food supplies brought from the village by cart. Now, young people, in numbers, are settled in town, working there, and they themselves bring fresh food home in their cars when they have been to the village to visit. Village parents and grandparents still send along pork and chicken and eggs; fruit and nuts and vegetables; wine; and special things like lavender oil.

Grandparents, now at leisure on their cooperative farmers's pensions, continue to take urban grandchildren into their village homes in summer, and sometimes go for a time to care for them in their city homes while the parents are at work.

City people come to join their relatives in the village for ceremonial occasions, like the Koleda feast (formerly at Christmas time), which now goes on during several winter weekends; various families kill their pig on different weekends according to when their urban kin are free to come.

Whenever they can, city people also come on weekends - to relax, to help in the family garden or vineyard, sometimes to use their technical skills to help install some new appliance in the village home. Sometimes they come to work in their own village or another as part of a youth voluntary work brigade, or a workers's harvesting brigade.

The ties of kinship and the ties to the "home village" remain profoundly felt, in short, and along their network flow goods and services, and many other more symbolic and emotional satisfactions.

The picture of rural-urban reciprocity, as I've sketched it so far, resembles one that could be drawn of many other recently urbanized societies. Andrei Simić has described it beautifully, for
instance, in "The Peasant Urbanites" (1973), dealing with Serbians in Belgrade. However, because of the success of socio-economic and cultural development in the socialist period in Bulgaria, there are differences.

Kinfolk are now commonly in a position to give each other especially substantial assistance. Grandparents on pension often have much more cash than they need, and their gifts are no longer mainly eggs and apples. They save up for cars for their children, and furnishings for their children’s apartments, in which they take great pride. Grandfather, who may be a carpenter or a mason, will perhaps come to build in shelves in a city apartment, or a terrace onto a city house. Grandparents are quite often even saving money for a car for a grandchild.

The flow of movement between village and city is a constant one, and goes in both directions. As the level of education and culture of villagers and the activity patterns of their working days have grown increasingly similar to those of the urban population, and as transport and communication facilities have been significantly improved, villagers’s connections to urban communities have become more and more varied and wide-ranging. True, they used the city before 1944 as well. I know villagers who used to walk ten miles to the city in those days to see films about Soviet collective farms. But obviously access in that fashion couldn’t be casual. Nor could villagers feel comfortable in the city at that time. Today, villagers are no longer in the position of the old peasant-come-to-market in an alien milieu. All but the very elderly can blend into the urban population. They commonly stay in the city with their urban relatives - perhaps for a night, perhaps for a period of months - to partake of the arts, to shop, or to follow a course of study that isn’t available to them at home.

Commuting to work is also an option for Bulgarians now, and has already started to occur, again with movement going in both directions.

For leisure activities, ties to one's family's "home village" remain strong, as I have said. At the same time, a new generation of urban Bulgarians has been maturing, some of whom prefer to spend their
leisure travelling about the countryside (or abroad) in their cars. Or they retreat to a villa they have built near their allotment garden, or near a favorite fishing spot that is nowhere near their family's village of origin. In a sense, the success of socialized production is supporting a certain amount of privatization of leisure activities. 4

Meanwhile, since the development of highly mechanized, large-scale agricultural production on the Agro-Industrial Complexes, some of those who hark back with nostalgia to "village life" as they knew it in their youth are villagers. They would never go back. They recall well their past poverty, and would never give up the health, material security, and access to a choice of paths for personal development that collective production has given them. Yet, in 1980, I found myself listening to village friends — an agricultural team leader and her husband, a worker in the local wood-working plant — happily dreaming of their pension years to come. She would look after the house and the grandchildren, feed the chickens, tend the kitchen garden. He would, as they said, do "what grandfathers have always done", work around the yard and tend the sheep. Their dream will likely be fulfilled, as will the retirement dreams of so many urban Bulgarians.

Ironically, it was the very elimination of economic dependence upon private peasant production, with its poverty, that had to come first. Replacing private production with collective production, in socialism, has made possible the enjoyment of the fulfilling aspects of keeping in touch with the soil. This continues through small scale, personal cultivation during leisure time and retirement years. Finding satisfaction in this activity remains one of the ongoing

4. A villa may consist of a small shack, sufficient to hold a cot and some tools, near one's allotment garden, or it may be an elaborate house. There is considerable discussion in Bulgaria today about the villa question: whether going to a villa is really a desirable way to spend one's free time; or whether it just ties one down to repairs and cooking, by contrast with travel, which can provide the refreshment of new experiences.
similarities between rural and urban Bulgarians.\textsuperscript{5}

THE SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS

Over the past forty years, Bulgarians have become accustomed to profound social change as a regularity in their way of life. They are currently undertaking a complete reorganization of community structure, under a plan proposed in 1977, and in process of implementation since 1979. All communities in the country are being

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5. Cooperative farmers have, of course, always worked personal plots, aside from their participation in collective production. These plots form an integral part of socialist agriculture, and are incorporated in national planning. The land remains social property, and is allocated to members by the cooperative for use in gardening, fodder production for livestock, raising livestock, and for maintaining personal orchards and vineyards. The necessary input of seeds and seedlings, chemicals, breeding and fattening stock, transport, and even mechanized preparation of the plots is also provided by the cooperative. Surplus beyond what is consumed by the family is marketed cooperatively. The plots thus contribute to satisfaction of both the material and emotional needs of the cooperative farmers and their families. At the same time, they free large amounts of collectively produced food for urban needs and for export.

In the past five years or so, there has been a stepped-up drive to harness more of the available spare-time and pensioners's labour to ancillary production of fresh food, with the goal of increasing local self-sufficiency in such foods. A large quantity of additional land, in small plots - land unsuitable for machine cultivation - has been made available to the population, urban as well as rural. As a result, most industries now maintain gardens and/or livestock to supply their own workers's dining rooms. Urban workers themselves now have allotment gardens. Workers in a large industrial plant I visited in 1980 describe work on these plots as one of their favorite pastimes - so much so, a few of them quipped, that they sometimes arrived at the plant for their shift exhausted!

With the material and technical support of the state and the Agro-Industrial Complexes, both urban workers and cooperative farmers thus contribute to a national goal, while gaining the personal satisfaction of keeping a hand to the soil in the process.

People's pleasure in working the land is clearly recognized at the planning level in the self-sufficiency program. For instance, in a recent article called, "The Food Problem: search for new solutions", 

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grouped into constellations called Settlement Systems. Each of these constellations is composed of a central community - a town, developing village, or city - and a surrounding group of smaller settlements. The potential resolution of the tension between the desire for urban and for rural life may lie in these settlement systems.

The intent is to create a kind of supra-community, both rural and urban in character, which will fulfill current and future social-organizational, cultural, productive and administrative needs. This amalgamation of pre-existing communities of varying size and historic function will create even closer everyday contact between rural and urban people than exists presently.\(^6\)

Even if one takes into account the recent rural roots of the urban population, it would be hard to imagine the workability of this proposed integration of rural and urban people without awareness of the degree to which their lives have already become similar. In fact, the preconditions for the social feasibility of the settlement systems have already been developed through the evolution of the class structure of Bulgarian society during socialist construction. This is

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Todor Bozhinov, speaking as a Politbureau member and First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, said: "... on account of the five-day work week, practically all people have considerable spare time, which they want to use in personal husbandries. Many regard such occupation as active recreation, a life out of doors, and an excellent means of restoring strength" (Bozhinov 1982:39).

6. The settlement systems constitute one instance in a series of bold experiments undertaken by Bulgarians to deal with problems of scale that emerge during socialist development, problems of finding the optimum size of living or working units for this particular socialist society.

An earlier instance occurred in the development of the Agro-Industrial Complexes during the 1970s. These AICs (organized to carry out both farm and rural-industrial functions) were at one time built up to almost twice their present average size. At maximum, they included an average of 25,000 hectares of productive land, and covered the territory of several dozen villages. This was a suitable scale in terms of efficiency in the use of material forces of production and in terms of at least some aspects of administration.
why the transformation of class structure must first be discussed, with particular attention to the countryside. Afterwards, I will come back to the settlement systems themselves.

Change in class structure in the countryside as a precondition for the settlement systems

In the countryside, changes in class structure developed along with the cooperative farms. The original village-level cooperative farms formed in the 1940s and 1950s have passed through two stages of merger. By the 1970s, they had become huge, multicomunity Agro-Industrial Complexes (AICs). There are now about 300 of these AICs, which cultivate altogether over 85% of the arable land. An AIC comprises an average of 14,000 hectares, and is farmed by specialized production teams, utilizing highly mechanized, large scale production methods. AIC activities also include research, processing industries, and a variety of subsidiary industrial enterprises, intended to create rural employment for skilled workers.

However, the Bulgarians found that even if technical conditions were ripe for this scale of production, it wasn't the most suitable for the AIC workers. Their collective spirit, the sense of identification with collective property and production as being their own, declined. In the earlier cooperative farms, members had ardently discussed problems late into the night. Now they began referring to this super-sized cooperative farm, the AIC, as "they" rather than "we".

The reorganization of the countryside to form the settlement systems created a convenient opportunity to reduce the size of the AICs, as the settlement systems and the AICs are to have the same boundaries. This opportunity was recognized, and the AICs were reduced in size to about half their previous maximum territory.

7. The total industrial output of the AICs (in areas such as mechanical engineering, textile, leather and chemical enterprises, as well as consumer goods and food products) already makes up a tenth of the nation's total industrial output. One in every four rural working people is now an industrial worker, in a local or nearby enterprise. See: "Is a return possible?" Bulgaria Today 422, 1983:3.
In the original, village-level, cooperative farms, former peasants had developed a collective orientation. Starting with minimal resources, they had built up collective productive property, and had experienced the benefits of its use in collective production. During the development of the AICs socialization of work advanced to a much higher level than in the early cooperative farms. The same is true of the specialization, concentration, and mechanization of agricultural production, and its scientific planning and management. All these developments made agriculture more similar to industrial work. They also created a need for a growing number of new occupations in the agricultural sector. At the same time, considerable rural labor was freed for non-agricultural occupations.

The result is that a Bulgarian village is no longer a community of cooperative farmers (much less one of peasants!). It is composed of a complex mixture of occupations. Besides cooperative farmers, there are skilled technical, professional and administrative workers, employed by the AIC on a wage or salary basis. There are workers in industries run by the AIC, workers in other local village industries (sometimes small enterprises, sometimes branches of urban industries), cooperatively organized artisans, and salaried service and professional workers serving the community. In addition, there are commuters employed in nearby villages, towns and cities, as well as commuters coming into the village to work.

Just as the class composition of the village is now complex, so it is even within individual families. One can no longer readily say that this one is a family of cooperative farmers, while that one is a rural working class family. Commonly, the mixture of occupations within a household defies such classification.

The occupations of members of two village households, from the village of Kirilovo (Stara Zagora district) where I did research, may serve to illustrate this point. The first is a four generation household; the second has three generations.

8. For more detail on the process of development of cooperative farming in Bulgaria, from the original village-level cooperatives to the AICs, see Smollett (1980).
Two Kirilovo Village Families - Class Composition - 1980

Family 1: 6 adults/ 2 children

2 children in school
2 pensioners

4 Working Age - All Are Wage or Salaried Workers

2 work for the AIC ("white collar")
Accountant in agricultural machinery repair and dispatch enterprise Tonka (wife - older generation)
Storehouse chief for same enterprise Iovka (daughter of Tonka and Petko)

2 Factory Workers
Painter in village factory\(^9\) Petko (husband - older generation)
Mechanic - radio-isotope apparatus plant in Stara Zogora Toshu (daughter's husband)
(nearby city)

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\(^9\) This factory is a branch of an urban one. It manufactures wood products, ranging from picture frames to truck bodies.
Family II: 4 adults/ 2 children

4 Working Age - 2 Cooperative Farmers/ 1 Wage Worker/ 1 Salaried Worker

(All 4 are with AIC)

2 Cooperative Farmers
Fruit Brigade Worker

Donka (wife - older generation)

Fruit Brigade Deputy Brigadier

Christo (daughter's husband)

1 Wage Worker
Tractor Driver for AIC

Dimo (husband - older generation)

1 Salaried Worker
Payroll Cashier for AIC

Stanka (daughter of Donka and Dimo)

It is often difficult to place even the remaining cooperative farmers, mainly older villagers, firmly within a particular class. This is because one of the objectives of industrialization of the villages has been partially accomplished - opportunities for employment in them during the off-seasons have been created. Therefore, many cooperative farmers are now also workers for at least part of the year. Of course, seasonal worker-peasants or craftsmen-peasants have long existed in peasant communities as well - but in a chaotic, make-ends-meet way, not in the systematic, planned way currently developing in Bulgaria.

For example, look at a village in AIC Dolna Banya (Sofia district). In this village, there are 1333 cooperative farmers. Of these, 890 also work in village industries, whose production is organized in such a way that the farmers can be employed whenever
there is no agricultural work for them. They manufacture metal products, curtain rods, toys, knitwear, buttons, rubber articles, as well as wines produced from the AIC's mass plantings of berries and fruits (Ilieva and Kostadinov 1982:9).

Note that Bulgarian cooperative farmers are now paid for farm work in regular installments during the year, in advance of harvests. Their shares of the proceeds of cooperative production are adjusted to plan-fulfillment, much as are the wages of workers. There remains little difference between them and comparable workers other than their continued legal ownership of the AIC's productive property. The AIC is now on such a large scale, however, that it operates, in practice, much like a large state enterprise.

The fact is that Bulgaria, in little over one generation, has already become overwhelmingly a working class society. By 1977 (the latest figures available to me), 85% of the working people in the nation were wage and salary workers, while only 12% remained cooperative farmers (Dimitrov and Petkov 1982:213).

We can see this reflected in the village of Kirilovo (referred to above), where (as of 1980) there are only 166 cooperative farmers out of a working population of 738. The remainder are workers: 108 in the village factory, 246 agricultural wage and salary workers (employed as technicians, 10 members of mechanized production teams, administrators and leaders). There are also 123 commuters to outside (mostly industrial) employment. The rest occupy various service, professional, and other jobs.

The overall class composition of the countryside looks something like this: In a rural population of roughly three and a half million (out of nine million Bulgarians), only about one million are cooperative farmers. About 800,000 are wage and salary workers in agriculture (Dimitrov and Petkov 1982:213), and another 875,000 are rural or commuting industrial workers (Bulgaria Today 422, 1983:3).

10. Technicians would include agronomists, zootechnicians, computer specialists, agricultural aviators, and the like.
In addition, there are rural service and professional workers, for whom I don't have a figure. Clearly, the class of rural workers already greatly outnumbers the cooperative farmers. The class transformation in the countryside is moving in the direction of the eventual disappearance of class differences.

The villages themselves became significantly urbanized quite early in the process of socialist development. Schools and libraries were improved. New urban amenities were built, including clinics, theatres, sports facilities, shops, restaurants, paved roads, running water, good transport and communications facilities.

The urbanization of village life-style, and the transformation of rural class structure have laid the foundation of the possibility for the meaningful establishment of the settlement systems.

Settlement systems

Now let us turn to the settlement systems themselves. Obviously, they are still in a very early stage of development. Nevertheless, some general things can be said about what they are intended to be and the process of their development.

Part of the purpose of this complex and difficult endeavor is to improve the organization of production, administration, and government. Todor Bozhinov, First Deputy Chairman of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers, summarizes this aspect of the goals as follows:

The boundaries of the constellations (settlement systems) and agro-industrial complexes coincide. Under the former administrative-territorial division some of the large complexes were spread over the territory of several communities and came within the administrative authority of several communal party committees and people's councils. Now there is unity of territorial, party, governmental and economic direction within the framework of one agro-industrial complex and one constellation of population centers. This enables them jointly to discuss and decide any problem related to the improvement of the patterns of production, investments, and the efficient use of labor resources (Bozhinov 1982:37).
The other principal objective of the settlement systems is social and cultural: to create a new type of community life in an integrated set of settlements, with patterns of close communication and interdependence among them. Together, these communities should have a sufficient population base to allow provision of all desirable urban social, cultural and educational activities, as well as material services. At the same time, they will allow village residents to live in their very comfortable village homes, surrounded by their gardens. At the present time, village housing is still, on the whole, better, roomier, and more plentiful than urban apartments.

Each settlement system is to have a large community at its center, with smaller communities connected to it and to each other by rapid public transportation. Which communities should be grouped together, and how large a particular settlement system should be, was decided on the basis of sociological research. Researchers investigated the current attitudes of the population, and the intensity of the existing interaction patterns among the communities. Grouping, and establishing boundaries has proven to be extremely difficult, however, and a number of changes have already been necessary to correct mistakes and settle ruffled feelings in various communities.

A large number of Bulgaria's social scientists - sociologists, social psychologists, ethnographers - has been involved in planning the settlement systems. They have worked not only in practical research about specific communities, but also in developing a theoretical basis for the functioning of the new type of community.

The social scientists's proposals include concentrating much effort on preserving the "historical memory" of each component settlement in a system - treasuring, preserving and enhancing (by updating, where appropriate) its particular character and traditions.

At the same time, new interaction patterns among the communities are to be established to build them into integrated units. Although each settlement system is to have a definite central community, important functions and centers of activity are to be distributed among the other localities - a school here, a service center there, a theatre somewhere else. This will help maintain and develop the
vitality of the component communities. It will also lead people to move about among them. Thus, the planners hope, there will eventually develop for all the residents "a larger-scale sense of native place". This new focus of community identification is to be enhanced by the deliberate creation of new "traditions" - social, political, cultural and ceremonial events and activities - that are for the settlement system as a whole.

An additional result of establishing the settlement systems might be the solution of certain difficulties, regarding where to live, that arose during the urbanization of the country. For instance, Bulgaria now has a very rational policy of preventing unlimited urban growth by restricting permanent migration to some of the larger cities and towns. Non-natives of these centers are not always permitted to establish permanent homes in them, unless married to a native resident or unless their particular skills are especially needed there. However, many Bulgarians are not content to live out their lives in small communities merely because they happened to be born in them. An intended consequence of building the settlement systems is a reduction in the pressure for migration to these large urban centers, and hopefully an increase in the reverse tendency. This should make the troublesome migration restrictions unnecessary.

In the early 1970s, the development of the AICs had already set in motion, quite deliberately, a broadening of choices in the relation of place of residence and place of employment. This brought about incipient tendencies for skilled young people to stay in villages to fill new technical jobs, or to commute to villages for such jobs, or even to move to villages. In the 1970s, I saw villa construction going on in villages. In 1980, villas were, of course, still being built. But, by then, a new phenomenon was apparent. In villages that were being developed, older generation villagers were building fine new dwellings with all "urban" amenities - with modern kitchens, with bath and shower, even with garage - and with one story built as a self-contained apartment, to which they hoped that an educated son or daughter would come, with family, and settle down to live and work. Clearly, village people themselves were anticipating a shift in migration patterns.
This tendency is just beginning now to show up in migration statistics. Now, as in the past, there is a steady (though lessening) flow from villages to towns. But movement into the villages has doubled in the past few years, rising from 4% of overall migration to at least 8 or 9%. Some of this represents people retiring to their village of origin, or returning because of disappointment with city life or change of job or family obligations. But the increase in the figure includes some new people who are moving into the villages to work there.

Of course, despite the overwhelming Bulgarian attachment to the village, a new generation has been growing up in the cities, maturing there, and receiving their education there in the midst of urban hustle and bustle. Most of them have continued to choose the city as a place to live. The settlement systems are attempting to make actual re-settlement of the villages a practical and desirable possibility for this generation. It is an experiment that should be of world-wide interest.

Another problem related to migration and settlement pattern has been what to do about the small hamlets, where often only a small number of people, mainly elderly, still resides. Some hamlets have recently been developed as sites for vacation and retirement. But, up to now, it has been difficult to develop their productive possibilities or to provide services for them. Nonetheless, many Bulgarians consider them an important part of their national heritage.

Since the formation of the settlement systems, some movement to repopulate the hamlets with working age families has begun. As part of a larger community, life in hamlets has become more attractive. Young families with technical skills, who wish to live in the countryside, are being recruited. They are taking over production

11. Figures provided (in 1980) by Professor Dr. Minko Minkov, Vice Director of the Institute of Sociology (Sofia), an expert on migration patterns.
from elderly residents, re-opening schools, and renewing the life of some of the hamlets.

Solving problems that have arisen during development is not the only goal of the settlement systems. There is a larger goal as well. This is related to the aspiration, in socialist societies, to create a living environment that encourages the full development of the creative potential of the human being. Clearly there are deep satisfactions to be found in the beauty and peacefulness of the countryside. Yet, human creativity is stimulated by the exchange of ideas that occurs through close contact among a variety of different types of people. In an article on the settlement systems, the Bulgarian social psychologist, Mincho Draganov, expresses the view that there is a minimum population mass, in regular interaction, necessary for an urban-like creative and satisfying life. When industrial capitalism first developed, he says, this concentration of people could occur only in cities. We now have much improved transport and communications capabilities. Therefore, he explains, given the planning possibilities of a socialist society, the opportunity presents itself to assemble a sufficient number and variety of people in close contact, yet residing in a rural setting (Draganov 1979: 104-115).

Clearly, the implementation of this settlement system plan is possible only under socialist conditions. Such a plan requires that land and other productive property be in the public domain. Then, development of communities can be designed to include both their social and productive functions.

It is only when the direction that social development is to take is planned that social scientific research can make a meaningful contribution. Mincho Draganov comments on this as follows:

The establishment of the settlement systems is a telling example of how to combine science and practice in socialist society, of their interpenetration, of turning science into a productive force in the broadest meaning of the word, of placing social management on a scientific foundation (Draganov 1981:142-143).

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A recent issue of the Bulgarian magazine, Bulgaria Today, has on its cover the title: "Town? Country? Is a return possible?" Under this title, the cover photo shows the exterior of a large, urban apartment block, shown in drab shades of grey. Balconies with wash hanging out are shown monotonously repeated. No people are to be seen. Inserted in the middle of this photo is a smaller one, in beautiful colors, of part of a rural hamlet. People are shown walking down a peaceful road, surrounded by greenery and flowers.

Longing for the countryside remains a Bulgarian constant. At the same time, Bulgarian appreciation for the challenge and fulfillment of urban life continues to grow. The development of the settlement systems is, in part, a concrete response to these dual feelings of the people.

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