

Cooperation and culture

On forms of cooperation in the Gorale society

MELCHER EKSTRÖMER, Lund

Far down in southern Poland, in the district of Pdhale, a borderland next to Czechoslovakia, the people call themselves Gorale, the mountain people. The mountains are the Tatras, a part of the Carpathians, with snow-covered peaks and wooded slopes going down to the valleys, which stretch out from the north to the south. In the valleys are the villages, consisting mostly of long rows of houses on both sides of a river or a brook. The landscape is overwhelmingly beautiful, the air is high and clear, and for a long time artists, nature-lovers, and tourists have gathered in these surroundings to enjoy the scenery. A result of this fact is the uprise of the tourist resort Zakopane.

The origin of the Gorale is not quite clear: They are maybe the remains of a Valachian (i.e. Rumanian) pastoralist people which sometime during their migration moved from their homelands near the Black Sea and settled in the Tatras. Through the centuries they have been living rather isolated in their villages, herding being their main occupation. The herding was of the transhumant type, i.e. they used their home-villages in the valleys as their base, but in the summer they would follow the cattle to the chalets in the mountains. This pattern of living has been maintained up till the present. The isolation has also had the implication that the Gorale, both to themselves and to others, have come to emerge as a distinct group of people, one might even call them an ethnic group. Their social system, as it is expressed in kinship ties, patterns of inheritance and marriage, hierarchical organization etc., both ties them together and separates them from the surrounding system. Also their traditional economic system – mode of cultivation, transhumans, forms of cooperation etc – can be said to have had the result that there has emerged a cultural Gorale – “Gemeinschaft”. Within this Gemeinschaft the more spectacular parts of Gorale-culture such as e.g. houseconstruction, costumes, songs, dances etc. have been preserved and have also been further developed.

Of special interest in this context is to look upon how, in a rather traditional society of this kind, different forms of cooperation have developed and also to

investigate if there are tendencies towards more formalized cooperation, and whether this can be considered a reflexion of the existing culture. I use the term "cooperation" in a very broad sense: relations that emerge to satisfy a need for mutual help between small producers. The degree of formalization can vary from more or less spontaneously organized to relatively institutionalized forms of cooperation. Common ownership of the means of production might occur, but is not necessary.

The question can also be put in a more general way: what are the conditions that influence different forms of cooperation to emerge or not to emerge in more or less traditional societies (peasants, pastoralists), where there exists a cultural tradition for cooperation? Anthropologists are interested in this kind of question also in other fields: to what degree are social phenomenon attached to culture with regards to economic and political organization, different types of network – relations, medical systems etc. The concept of "culture" is here to be understood as an organized system of significant symbols, a kind of archived program for human behavior (Geertz 1973).

Returning to Gorale: the natural cooperative relations seem to exist within the pastoral system. In what way have they developed respectively not developed? In order to try to answer this question it will be necessary to add more information, both concerning changes in Gorale's economic system, and also about the official attitude in the Peoples Republic of Poland towards cooperation, and to consider the ecological prerequisites for changes in Gorale's economic system.

Changes

The most revolutionary change in Gorale's way of life in modern times occurred in the beginning of the 1950's, when the larger part of the Tatra Mountains was nationalized and turned into a National Park. The herding was then forbidden or severely restricted. The former pastoral system had been quite demanding concerning Gorale's ability to organize and to cooperate. The herding of the sheep had been a business where the different villages had appointed a number of chief-shepherds ("baca"), which with the help from different specialists (younger shepherds, milkers, cheesmakers etc.) took care of the sheep at special chalets during the summer. The villages "owned" the land in the mountains, and the chief-shepherd was paid with the milk that the sheep produced, with which he in turn paid off his collaborators. Herding the sheep was exclusively a male occupation: female presence was considered "polluting" for the making of cheese, the main income of the sheepherding. The herding of other animals – mainly cows – was carried out at other chalets by the people from the home-farms. This meant that between sowing in the springtime and

harvesting in the autumn the villages were quite empty; at home stayed mostly old people to take care of the houses etc.

The crops that were cultivated were hay, oats and rye, potatoes, beetroot and flax. After the herding period the preparation of flax into linen occupied a great part of the people's – mostly the women's – time. The high work-intensity required to produce linen made the women organize themselves into work – teams. The linen not used at home was sold, and together with the sale of wool and dairy-products this constituted the main inflow of capital to the farms. The sale of the products was mostly carried out by the women.

This kind of economic organization had important implications for the social structure of the Gorale society, one might describe it which Göran Hydén's expression "economy of affection", i.e. an economy that denotes a network of support, communications and interaction among structurally defined groups connected by blood, kin, community or other affinities (Hydén 1983:8). One might look upon this type of socio-economic structure as being something positive on the social level, in the sense that it promotes contacts and cooperation between individuals, but it also has negative effects, particularly as concerns economic organizations. Hereby I am merely referring to the rather rigorous rules within society as ideal for its members' behaviour, e.g. what concerns marriage and inheritance. The rules mainly aim at keeping ownership of the land within the group. In practice this means that the Gorale prefer to choose partners for marriage from within their own local group. There exists what one might call endogamous tendencies in the villages. Concerning rules of inheritance, the principle says that all children inherit equal parts of the land. These rules in many cases lead to almost absurd conditions: the disposable area of land in a village is constant, but it is divided into more and more plots. The division of the plots is next to unbelievable in some cases. A private farm in Poland is statistically a rather small unit, in the Gorale-villages the average size is less than 12,5 acres, and when this area is split into fifty, a hundred or even up to two hundred parts, one can easily understand the difficulties in managing profitable farmig.

One might imagine that these cultural rules were economically stable within a mode of production based on transhuman cattleherding ("the pastoral system"), but when the chalets were nationalized and the Gorale were forced into a peasant economy, they tend to be followed by decidedly negative effects. All provisions had to be extracted from the home-villages. Instead of letting the cattle graze in the mountain areas nearly five months a year, the peasants were forced to keep them at the home-farm all year round. This also meant that the Gorale had to change the organization of production, they had to cultivate all forage for cattle – particularly cows, pigs, and horses – needed during the whole year at the home-farm. To-day the land is cultivated almost exclusively for the

need of the animals: on approximately 80 % of the land hay is grown, on the rest oats for forage, and potatoes, which except for what is used for food in the household is eaten by the pigs. The cultivation of flax is all given in. These changes in the way of production also cause great changes in the social network-system. One is not only losing the possibilities to make contacts and to cooperate that were provided at the chalets, the women's teamwork around the preparation of the linen disappears as well. The concentration on pasture and forage crops has the consequence that the income from the sale of linen falls out one of the means to correct the poor economic situation disappears. It should also be observed that today only a minor part of the animals is bred for sale, the larger part is consumed at home.

Facing the threat of being ruined and thereby having to leave their land, the Gorale now choose to look for paid labour, but they still continue to live in their villages and go on with their farming. As it was traditionally the women that contributed with their sale of linen, wool and dairy-products to the incomes of the households, it is also now the women that migrate to the nearby towns where they, work in shifts – two days on, two days off – mostly in tourist services, and mostly with so-called unqualified jobs like e.g. waitresses, cleaning-women at the hotels etc. The days when they are at home at the farm, they – of course! – perform their usual duties. Another type of migration that is common among the Gorale is going abroad, mainly to the USA. This means that somebody in the family – it might as well be the wife as the husband – goes to live with a relative that has emigrated earlier, works for one or two years and then returns with enough money to be able to carry on the peasant life for still some time.

The rural cooperatives

I have mentioned these phenomena in order to show how radical changes in the social and economic structure become a threat to the existence of the Gorale culture. One reason for this is that the basis of what I have called the natural relations of cooperation, i.e. the pastoral system, is torn away. The Gorale either socially or economically are motivated to continue cooperating, each particular farm is changed into a closed unit where production and consumption takes place within the borders of the unit and additional capital is taken in from outside the society. A conceivable alternative might perhaps be to develop cooperatives, but the official policy concerning the promotion of cooperation does not seem attractive enough. The constitution of Poland says:

“The Peoples Republic of Poland supports the development of different forms of cooperation, in the towns and in the countryside, and also supports the cooperations comprehensively in the realization of its tasks, at the same time

guaran – teeing cooperative property, as well as public property, special support and protection“

(Quoted from Laidlaw 1981:176, my translation)

but the reality lying behind this statement corresponds badly with its ideological spirit.

Theoretically the official attitude towards the cooperatives is positive. Practically this also has had the effect that several types of rural cooperatives have emerged in Poland. There are those which have a more “institutionalized“ character. Here one can refer e.g. the large estates which after World War II were taken over by the formerly employed farm workers. These have much in common with the state-farms, which are also nationalized large estates. In both cases the original patterns of production are unchanged. Yet another type of cooperatives are the production-cooperatives, based on the cooperation between privately owned family-farms in some special form of production. This might be some kind of entrepreneurial activity, e.g. specialized production of vegetables or animals, where the members of the cooperative get cash compensation related to the return and to the work done, or production of crops, mainly forage, to be used at the members' own farms.

The number of the first mentioned type of cooperatives, the “state-farms“ is about 8,000, employing 370,000 workers on about 7,5 million acres. The production-cooperatives are only about 1,000, engaging c. 32,000 persons. These numbers must be considered in relation to the total amount of farms in Poland, which is around three million (Galeski 1972).

In the rural sector there exists also a great number of consumption- and distribution-cooperatives, I will, however, not discuss them in this context.

One might perhaps maintain that the more “institutionalized“, “planned“ the cooperatives are, the more they are accepted on the eyes of the Polish state. I have already pointed at the vague difference between the state-farms and the nationalized large estates. The latter are well fit into the official ambitions towards collectivization, they turn into a part of the planned economy, which is centrally controlled and motivated by a socialistic ideology. The production-cooperatives are also in themselves desirable. What is more dubious about them from an ideological point of view is the production benefiting the private farms, it has a taste of capitalist mode of production. If one as an antipode to the “planned“ cooperatives should put “spontaneous“, the Polish state and Communist party are unanimously inimically disposed to the latter. The spontaneous initiatives are seen as emerging from different populist movements or from political trade – unions like Solidarity, and is in not in the the interest of the state – neither for ideological nor political reasons – to support these.

The rural population, to the great part small farmholders, are negatively disposed to the planned cooperatives, the low number of participants referred

above reveals this fact. There exists, however, an interest in spontaneously organized cooperatives, i.e. for those which can be practised within a cultural context that is actual for the participant cooperators. I will now look at some different forms of cooperation that today exist in Gorale-society and try to relate them to the socio-economical development, i.e. the change from an independent pastoral society to a dependent peasant society.

Cooperatives in the Gorale society

One might argue that the ecological prerequisites for creating rural cooperatives are absent in the Gorale area, perhaps even it is not an exaggeration to say that such prerequisites are missing for profitable farming at all. The climate is harsh with long cold winters and short periods of growth, the soil is meagre and the land is very hilly. Agriculturally the area is best suited for the cultivation of hay, and maybe for flax, which is a rather hardy crop. Other crops, potatoes etc. get too short a period of growth.

In addition to that comes the above mentioned division of the land, which makes it impossible to cultivate the land in a rational way. On the one hand the plots are so small that the use of bigger machines is a practical impossibility, on the other the division has brought with it that in many cases the owners are uncertain about who owns the land, and to avoid strifes one rather leaves the land uncultivated! The authorities have made attempts at solving this problem by initiating consolidation into larger units, but with very little success. This can partly be blamed on the farmers' lack of understanding what a landreform actually would mean, partly on an inherent distrust to accept anything suggested by the authorities. Planned cooperatives. The Machine-Station.

One can understand the State's hesitation to try to collectivize in the Gorale district: to unite several unprofitable small units into one larger, and maybe that one unprofitable as well, does not seem very attractive. Official attempts to initiate some kind of cooperation have been made, though, especially in the form of supporting the purchase of certain kinds of agricultural machines. For example there was founded at the beginning of the 50's in one of the villages in the northern part of the Gorale-district an agricultural cooperative (PZW) with the purpose to supply its members with bigger farming implements such as mowers, fertilizers, sprayers etc. Either the machines were given directly to the members, who had to amortize them until they finally owned them, or they could be hired for each specific occasion. Evidently this was not very successful, the organization was changed in the mid 70's into a machine-station (SKR). Neither did this change turn into a success: in the beginning of the 80's only a bit more than 10 % of the village's in total 233 farms were members of the cooperative.

It is important to underline that the village is situated in the northern part of the district. This is where the northern part of the district. This is where the mountains become plains, the isolation of the villages is not so manifest, and the area earlier than in the mountains turned from the pastoral system to farming. This also means both that the division of the land has proceeded further and that the migration is more widespread. From a subjective ethnic point of view one might say that the people here identify themselves to a lesser extent as Gorale. The manifestations of material culture are also less striking. I will return to how these factors can be seen as influencing the forms of cooperation, but one might perhaps already assume that from the point of view of the authorities it has been regarded as more advantageous to try to introduce some kind of cooperation among this more assimilated part of the Gorale population. Among the reasons that deserve to be pointed out why the cooperative did not succeed can be mentioned that as the organizer and chairman of the operation the village headman, "soltys", was appointed. This man, one of the few members of the Communist Party in the village, was regarded with suspicion by the villagers, he was not an integrated part of the village community but looked upon as the state's henchman. One of his more important tasks was to collect taxes, which did not add to his popularity. In connection with the collecting of considerable sums of money the villagers also suspected a certain "loss" to soltys' advantage, which also cast a shadow over the thrustworthiness of the project.

Traditional cooperative. The Pastoral System.

There are some remains of the pastoral system described above in the southern villages. One of the biggest – and also most "genuine" – villages has within the collectively owned forest (more about that later) kept a piece of land for a chalet, but objectively judged this kind of organization will disappear, perhaps mainly because the present "baca" (chief shepherd) is about eighty years old and it is doubtful if anyone wants to take over his duties after him. The handling itself follows the traditional pattern: sometime in the month of May the sheep the shepherd will take care of are gathered in a ceremonial way delivered to the shepherd and his assistants. They are then driven through the woods a distance of about twenty miles to the chalet. There they graze during summer, looked after by a couple of shepherds ("juhasy"), who tend them in the woods aided by large, white dogs of the St. Bernhard-type. The sheep are milked daily, and from the milk cheese is made, which is smoked under the roof ridge in the hut where the shepherds live. Inside the hut, which is without chimney, there is a fire burning on the floor, it is the son of the chief shepherd who performs the cheese-making with traditional tools. When summer is over, around mid-September, the sheep are driven to the village and the "baca" delivers them back to their owners, this also in a ceremonial way.

One might of course discuss whether this type of pastoral system is to be regarded as a cooperative activity, or if it instead is an organizational form where the "baca" functions as a kind of entrepreneur who "hires" the sheep during summer and makes himself a profit out of their yield. Against the later interpretation stands the fact that the "baca" is a "man of the village": he is – like the "juhasy" – from the village, and appointed by the villagers to tend the animals on the collectively owned land.

It should also be taken into consideration that the chalet described is only a remnant of a system previously much more developed. Before the National Park was established (1954) there existed a vast number of chalets in the mountains, an investigation made in 1952 shows that the Gorale village referred to tended thousands of sheep to seven different chalets (Kopczynska-Jaworska 1958). Many more people were in those days involved in the pastoral system, both as shepherds and other specialists at the chalets, and as owners of the animals tended there. The old "baca" described above can at his chalet take care of 200 sheep, for a larger number the pasture would not be sufficient. This does not, however, mean that the keeping of sheep has died out in Gorale villages. In connection with the establishment of the National Park the State offered the sheepowners new pasturages situated in Bieszczady, more than 120 miles east of Zakopane, near the Russian border. In this area there were large pasturages, and the State employed shepherds – herds that could take care of the animals. The milk was delivered to the dairies owned by the State, and the cheese was produced there, and thereafter sold in shops, also owned by the State. In order to make the transition from the old pastoral system easier, the State during the first years offered free transport by train or lorry to the new pasturages and also free care of the animals. This led to an increase of the amount of sheep: in 1953, 28,500 sheep were transported from Podhale to Bieszczady, in 1954 38,400, after that the numbers decrease again.

The peasants are not satisfied with the new system. They do not think that the shepherds can manage their work, partly because they lack the natural qualifications – they have to attend courses to learn how to handle the sheep –, and partly because they take on the responsibility of caring for too many sheep per capita: a "baca" employed by the State tends several thousands of sheep. The peasants also have a feeling of being cheated, they suspect that the accounts of the milk are manipulated and also that there are sheep that "disappear". As it is such a long way to the new pasturages, it is not possible to go there often to control what is going on. They have now cut down the amount of sheep, and there is a fight between the peasants to get their animals tended at the few remaining collectively owned chalets, most of them have to send their sheep to the pasturages managed by the State.

Spontaneous Cooperative. Forestry.

As I have mentioned above the villages have collectively owned forests in the mountains. The forests and the pasturages in Podhale were considered – as in many other pastoral societies – as communal property. Formally the land was owned by the State (“the king’s land”), but it was used by the shepherds for grazing. The wood was used for construction material and as firewood. For different reasons the inhabitants in a number of Gorale villages in the 1830’s got the idea to buy a certain area of the forest, and they started a fund-raising drive. After several turns – i.e. including a lengthy lawsuit at court in the capital, at that time Vienna – they finally were the owners of 3,000 hectares of forest in the mountains. The peasants continued to utilize the land as earlier, but in the time between the two World Wars a certain over-exploitation took place, and therefore the land was divided into a number of shares, which were then divided between the villages in portions of different size, depending on the engagement in the lawsuit mentioned above. In that way every farm or family got a certain quota which they could take advantage of for the wood, either for themselves or for sale. Gradually there developed an administrative apparatus with a director at the head to take care of the forest. Professional foresters were employed, and as an important part of the organization a representative from each participant village was included. Two main principles were followed at the consolidation of the collective: firstly it was stipulated that took part in the organization should originate from the Gorale villages, including the director, the foresters, the officials etc., and – of course – the village representative. Secondly the peasants whose ancestors had not taken part in the legal action in Vienna were excluded from the collective. This system seems to have functioned fairly well up to time after World War II, when the Polish government came up with a plan to nationalize the whole of the Tatra-mountains in order to create a national park. The Gorale forest should thereby also have been nationalized. All utilization would – perhaps – not disappear, but the administrative apparatus should be taken over by the State. Against these plans the members of the collective reacted strongly, of course. Something like a new lawsuit started: ministers, government, and the president were visited by the furious peasants. The arguments against the nationalization were two. Firstly, according to the verdict of the court in Vienna the forest was Gorale’s private property, and nobody was ever to take it away from them. Secondly, statutes approved by the inter-war government declared that the forest was to be run as a collective enterprise, where the administration was incumbent upon the members of the collective. The peasants also pointed out that the Polish government wanted to collectivize the land of the country: here there already existed a genuine collective, why change the situation? Confronted with these arguments the State had to give in:

now the forest is a part of the national park, but it is owned and administrated by the Gorale peasants.

Today the forest is something that the villagers talk about and show up with legitimated pride. Also to a non-professional it seems well tended. Big signs with maps describing its borders tell to whom the forest belongs, and what is allowed and what is not etc. (The Gorale opposed against the signs that were put up first, by the officials: they did not discern their wood from the National Park's. The signs were changes.) There is a well tended nursery for plants, barracks for the foresters etc.

The administration of the forest is today a large-scale enterprise employing around 60 persons. They are paid according to the official standard. The members of the collective use their yearly quotas, they pay for the wood prizes set according to the result. In a cooperative spirit is aimed at. As there is a scarcity of wood on the market in Poland, the products are, specially as construction material, in great demand. Those peasants who do not need the whole of their annual quota – and that probably goes for most of them – sell their share and get in that way a welcome addition of capital. The collective is only occupied with foresting, the wood is not processed. There are however, three private sawmills in the villages, where boards are made. For the rest each one makes what he needs out of the wood: logs, firewood, poles etc.

Theories of cooperation

From the examples above one might conclude that the interest in cooperation in the Gorale villages follows the same pattern as in the rest of Poland: the more the organizations are planned by the government, the less is the interest and the degree of participation. This is a rather trivial kind of knowledge, innumerable experiences from e.g. development actions in the Third World show that initiatives must come from “underneath” they must be deeply rooted in a broad base. What is less trivial, though, is show this “base” should be defined, this is where the opinions of the theoreticians differ.

Considering cooperation as part of the cultural context, one can see that the opinions differ from regarding the traditional patterns of activity as rather important to seeing them as quite irrelevant. A culture-bound interpretation is given e.g. by W.K.H. Campbell:

“The idea of Co-operation is latent in the minds of many people who have never heard of a legally registered society. There are plenty of places where people can be found who have been accustomed for ages to join together for the purpose of sowing, weeding or reaping crops, building houses, etc. Though their joint efforts are frequently followed by festivities of a more jovial and

bibulous nature than cold and gloomy political economists would approve they, nevertheless, contain the seed from which with skilful guidance and encouragement, most satisfactory results can be produced."

(Cambell 1951:181)

An investigation by the Swedish ethnographer Gunnar Alsmark on shepherds on Corsica represents another attitude. The author declares:

"Even though there exists a cognitive community of values, this does not mean that cooperation should start spontaneously when necessary... Only with the help of an ideological aim inspired from outside the group I think it would be possible to create motivation for new, modern forms of organization among the shepherds of Niolo."

(Alsmark 1979:208, my translation)

In immediate connection with this statement the author refers to a lengthy quotation from Neil Smelser, which maybe can explain Alsmark's argumentation. Smelser can – together with Wilbert Moore, Walter Rostow, G.M. Foster et al. – be counted into the so called "modernization school" of developmentalists, which has a neo-evolutionary attitude towards development. My purpose here is not to polemize against Alsmark about why cooperation between the shepherds of Corsica is disappearing, but that much can be said, that I do not share the view of the theoreticians from the modernization school when they regard "development" as something nature-bound, growing by stages. The "ideological aim inspired from outside" would in Smelser's model implicate that the shepherds of Niolo were convinced of the necessity of a structural process of change, e.g. the modernization of the technology leading to a commercialization of breeding etc., thus leading to the final goal: urbanization and the "mass consumption society (Rostow), and that this development also (maybe) necessitates "new, modern forms of organization".

The situation of the shepherds on Corsica is different from Gorale's. The farmer live in a society which has "developed" from a pastoral to a peasant society, maybe even to an industrial society, but not for reasons that are incomprehensible or irrelevant for the members of the society. The shepherds of Niolo have found out that it does not pay to tend sheep or goats, not even if one cooperates. They can also understand why the French government does not support the shepherd's organizations. To them it seems futile to create any strategy in order to maintain the old patterns of existence. To the Gorale, on the other hand, the creation of a national park, the counteraction of their forest collective is incomprehensible, it goes against their common sense, and they create a strategy in order to protect themselves. I will later return to the implication of this strategy.

Yet another work dealing with a marginalized group of mountainpeople in Europe is John W. Cole's and Eric R. Wolf's "The Hidden Frontier", a study of

two villages in Italian Tyrol: St. Felix and Tret. Different forms of cooperation are discussed in their work, but the main goal has been to investigate the cultural differences that exist between the two villages, and why these differences have emerged. To Cole and Wolf what they call "cultural processes" emerge through a combination of local ecological forces and influences from the outside world. For that reason they concentrate their interest on ecological and economic problems, e.g. the put a stress on the genealogic material and the patterns of inheritance and possession. The historical background is also extensively deal with.

It turns out that there exist important differences regarding patterns of living in the two neighbouring villages. What most obviously separates them is that in St. Felix people speak German, while the Trettners speak Italian. Also in many other ways the villages are opposites, e.g. regarding inheritance patterns, economic organization, relations of authority etc. Cole and Wolf give an explanation:

"The terms of the dialogue between cultural heritage and local environment are complex. They are set by the interplay of local topography, flora and fauna, and climate with the cultural repertoire drawn on by the inhabitants of a particular area – the patterns of technology, organization, and ideology introduced by them. This cultural inventory is, in turn, the product of past ecological and cultural processes: the particular use to which the new environment will be put is in large part determined by a group's experiences in the past. The same environment could, for instance, present one set of opportunities and limitations to a group of pastoralists, and another to horticulturists. The modes of adaption worked out by a society are as much the outcome of its past as of its present circumstances. The cultural patterns of Nones (Romanspeaking) and Tyrolse (Germanspeaking) who came to inhabit the Upper Anaunia were distinct. While they have converged in response to a common environment, they have not come to be identical. Although the Nones of Tret and the Tyrolese of St. Felix face common ecological problems, the two villages have maintained their cultural integrity."

(Cole and Wolf 1974:120)

The details of the cultural pattern are, however, not given, absolute. Culture might – following Geertz' model – both be seen as a "model of" and a "model for" the social situations that the actors are involved in (Geertz 1973: 93). In the latter case the behavior is adjusted to agree with culture, while culture as a "model of" can be adapted to behavior. The patterns of action might thus in different ways be manipulated, culture can be "created". This phenonemon has been observed by different researches during the last years and has been given different names: "The Invention of Tradition" (Hobsbawn and Ranger 19XX); "The Invention of Culture" (Wagner 1981); "Reinventing Traditional Culture"

(Keesing and Tonkinson 1983) etc. I think it is important, however, to stress the fact that the significant symbols that constitute the organized system can not be manipulated at random. The framework, the basic symbols, are at a certain point of time given, but they can when "necessary" be underlined, or be held back, or eventually be transformed. This manipulation can in certain cases be part of strategy.

Gorale's cultural strategy

A strategy is a form of planned action, intended to lead to a desired goal. It would, however, as A. F. Robertson pointed out in his book "People and the State", be a mistake to regard planning as a phenomenon only taking place above the heads of the individuals, and only in "developed" societies (Robertson 1984: 182). All people in all societies make plans and have strategies. It also comes quite natural that culture, regarded as a pattern for activity, has a vital importance for the ways people model their strategies:

"Culture is certainly an inherently conservative force, providing people with assurances about how they and others ought to behave, but no culture is inert and passive, and no value system is so closed as to preclude completely normative innovation. If culture is a grand plan it is dynamic and creative, and it is this – not supposed quiescence – which makes it such a tough rival for development policies and programmes. Finally, in times of crisis can become a very explicit political force, a policy and programme for ethnic movements, or an ideological basis for different kinds of nationalism, nativism or traditionalism."

(Ibid: 186)

Culture might thus be seen as a latent resource, in some cases as a potential for development. The Gorale can be seen as developing significant symbols within a strategy for survival, in which cooperation is included. They do not act as "economic men", but take advantage of appropriate parts of their traditional culture in their efforts not to become further marginalized in their relation to the surrounding society. Forms of cooperation that are not rooted in tradition may fail because they are not part of the strategy.

What might support this view of the forms of cooperation among the Gorale is i.a. the way the accepted cooperation is culturally elaborated. It is important for the Gorale to stress the traditional elements of herding, e.g. the ceremonial way in which the animals are handed over and taken back in spring and autumn, the traditional ways the work is done in the chalets etc. When it comes to the forest collective the legitimacy of possessing the forest, supported by historical facts, is stressed. These facts must, according to the historian Edward Spicer, be seen as: "...history as people believe it to have taken place, not as an objective outsider

sees it. It is history with a special meaning for the particular people who believe it“

(*Spicer 1971: 796*).

It can be seen that I make these conclusions on rather flimsy ground. I would actually not have stressed the importance of culture for the modeling of forms of cooperation if the strategy I have tried to outline had not been possible to trace also in relation to other phenomena. So I have pointed at the culture-bound way in which Gorale organize their patterns of marriage and inheritance and how these i.a. aim at keeping the land within the own group and in that way prevent the members of the group from being absorbed by the surrounding society. The patterns also contribute to the cementation of a hierarchical family structure and facilitate in that way the cultural tradition: foreign elements are excluded from the system. Migration and emigration, too, can be seen as parts of the strategy in the way that the outside capital is invested in what might be called a reinforcement of the culture: at least it makes it possible to go on living according to the old patterns.

Conclusions

The cooperatives in what I have chosen to call, “institutionalized“ forms are often burdened with ideology, whether they are planned in a socialistic or in a capitalistic context. The socialistic model often implies a nationalization of the means of production, the capitalistic rather aims at e.g. maximization of profit – maybe not explicitly ideologically, but in practice. It is, however, far from granted that there exists consensus between ideology of the one kind or the other and the apprehension among the members of the cooperatives about how cooperation is to be realized. One way to try to analyze this lack of correspondence might be to regard how the cultural patterns at hand influence the apprehension of cooperation. On the other hand one must of course consider situations where there exist forms of cooperation that are supported by cultural patterns, i.e. where there exists consensus between ideology and practice.

I have tried to illustrate this with examples from the Gorale society in southern Poland. I have described some characteristics of the traditional socio-economical organization, and showed how these, due to external circumstances, have changed. Different forms of cooperation have also changed: some have disappeared (the preparation of linen), some tend to fade away (the herding at the chalets), while some live on and develop (the forest cooperative). Initiatives to cooperate coming from the outside (the machine station) have not been accepted and are not included in the system.

I would like to propose that one way to explain this is that the forms of cooperation that have the greatest chance of surviving are those that are most

firmly rooted in Gorale's cultural tradition. Other explanations may of course be more materialistic: e.g. there is no practical solution to how to combine the cultivation of flax with cattle-raising now that the pasturages in the mountains have "disappeared"; forestry provides a good yield for the individual member of the cooperative and is therefore interesting etc. In this context, however, I merely intend to demonstrate how cooperation may emerge than to describe the practical realization.

Finally I would like to suggest that this is a fruitful way of analysing cooperative movements in a more general sense, e.g. also in development situations in the Third World. To maintain, as does the theoreticians of the "modernization school", that development must pass stages towards a higher degree of complexity etc., or as does Göran Hyden, that a structural change – the creation of a bourgeoisie, the development of capitalism etc. – is necessary for the African economy to develop and for production-cooperatives to emerge (Hydén 1983), are in my opinion mistakes, based of specific apprehensions of the concept "development". I think that the study of different forms of cooperation among the Gorale might demonstrate that the cultural aspects must be included in regarding potentials for developing fruitful cooperation.

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