

ELITES AND MOBILIZATION IN ROMANIAN VILLAGES

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INTRODUCTION

The socialist societies of Eastern Europe are characterized by ambitious development plans and by complex bureaucratic organs designed to achieve them. At the village level, realizing development goals also entails the active participation of the local population, a task assigned to the rural elite cadres. This paper examines the styles of socialist mobilization with a particular focus on rural elites in the Socialist Republic of Romania¹.

In all developing societies, the formal institutions of the state, of social control and of the economy – the state bureaucracy, the Party apparatus, planning organs, mass organizations and productive enterprises – must function quite differently within the rural community compared with their operation at the national level or within urban centres. Formal organizations are affected and sometimes transformed by village-level social structures of an informal nature: relations of kinship, friendship, neighbourhood, patronage, association and ethnicity. Local elites are the pivot around which revolve both formal institutions and informal structures. Rural cadres must meet the demands of their superiors and their social obligations to fellow villagers. They must allocate bureaucratic resources and “redeem” the moral claims of others.

While such middleman dilemmas face rural leaders in all developing societies (Fallers, 1955; Schwartz, 1968), this paper attempts to set forth those factors which particularly affect the mobilization style of Romania's elite cadres. Romania's elites operate under a variety of constraints from above: the country's highly ambitious development goals, the inadequacy of organizational means, the requirements for active citizen participation, the Party's mono-organizational control over society (Rigby, 1977), and a general village preference for informal

over formal channels of social action. The first half of this paper discusses the matrix of these constraints and their implications for the ability of elites to mobilize local populations. The second half of the paper deals specifically with the recruitment, activities and dilemmas of rural-level leaders, and shows how the style of mobilization and instances of good or poor leadership reflect the tensions between formal structures and informal social relations in Romania's rural communities.

The analysis should help us understand why Romania's development plans are executed so diversely from village to village; why plans formulated in the capital appear so different when they are implemented in rural communities. It is not enough to describe these problems in terms of “pangs of development”, “weak organization” or “poor leadership”. They must be examined in terms of structural attributes of a Romania which is a developing society, a socialist state, and a culturally-specific Balkan society with a complex rural milieu.

SOCIAL CONSTRAINT ON ELITE BEHAVIOUR

The structure of Romania's bureaucracy

As a developing country, still one of Europe's poorest, Romania has inherited inequities between rich and poor regions, inequalities between town and countryside, social and ethnic tensions, an overwhelmingly agrarian base and a state administration which was both fragile and overburdened. Overcoming these difficulties has been the prime concern of Romania's Communist Party apparatus and State administration. Despite rapid rates of urban and industrial growth and social and economic mobility among the population, many social problems persist, and wholly new ones have emerged. The bureaucracy is both overburdened by new regulations and ineffective at resolving or implementing state demands. These problems are most acute for the rural Party cadres.

As a socialist society, Romania is characterized by a central planning apparatus, collectivized agriculture, State ownership of land, capital and productive enterprises, and State management of education, health, and retail services. Coordinating these organizations is the Communist Party. All State organizations and individuals are required to work for the goals decided by the Party. Hence, much of the Party's role consists of cultivating an active commitment to these goals among the population. The local elite cadres, regardless of their level of party commitment, are duty-bound to motivate the population to achieve the Party's goals.

More than other East European countries, Romania's development strategy is both economic and political. Romania seeks freedom from Western economic dependence and autonomy from its Soviet "protector". This goal entails a high level of central co-ordination, iron discipline, active participation of all sectors of the population, total commitment to the Party program, consumer belt-tightening and sacrifice for the future. Romania is a society under continuous mobilization. Lack of requisite organizational resources (or organizational inefficiency) makes citizen participation not only desirable but imperative. Romanians are thus participants in an unending number of "campaigns" and "mobilizations" to irrigate the fields, bring in the harvest, surpass industrial plans, rationalize land use, conserve energy, reduce waste and combat "mysticism" or anti-social elements.

The mobilization campaigns reflect recurring crises in various branches of the economy and a gap between State and Society. The Party-State apparatus is riven with a "storming" mentality in which resources are overcommitted to a single goal without regard to costs, immediate side-effects or long-term negative consequences. ("Storming" in the USSR is discussed by Bauer, Inkeles and Kluckhohn (1956)). New organizations and commissions are frequently formed while others are dissolved. New regulations, reorganizations, recentralizations and decentralizations continually occur and are publicized as all-purpose panaceas. Hastily formed policies are enacted without consideration to the details of implementation; this leads to predictable overreaction from the authorities and tensions and uncertainty among the population. Rationing of food, for instance, leads to hoarding and a black market; an energy-saving campaign leads to cuts in public transport, which then give rise to illegal taxi chauffeurs. The regime's inability to implement its programs according to the initial promises leads to reduced public confidence, making it more difficult to mobilize the population for the next campaign. The rural elites, who live in communities where citizen mobilization is imperative, resources scarce and household commitments have highest priority, must bear the brunt of the public's skepticism.

In a country historically exploited by both foreign powers and a parasitic bureaucracy, many Romanians have developed a distrust of formal institutions in general. Romania is a classic example of Spittler's (1983) "peasant state", in which "defensive strategies" rather than open rebellions were the typical means of coping with State demands. Even today, Romanians seem to prefer using informal, personal ties before they try to go through the bureaucracy. The "real system" attains not only utilitarian value but normative value as well (Galt, 1974, Sampson, 1984a). Romania's Party and State apparatus, including rural elites,

organizations to solve problems. President Ceausescu, Party officials and local functionaries exhort people to put the "general interest" over their own "narrow interest". The State insists, for example, that there would be enough food supplies for everybody were it not for the hoarders; that labour productivity could be increased if the workers would work in a more disciplined fashion.

The inadequacies of higher-level formal organs often incapacitate rural elites. As State and Party cadres, they must accept with compliance any cutbacks which affect their communities. They are under extraordinary demands from above to supplement the State's limited resources by mobilizing their constituents. To do this, elites must rely on the village's informal structures.

Informal organization

For all its formal institutions, Romania is not a "bureaucratized society". Rather, it is a "society with a bureaucracy", i.e. a society in which formal and informal structures interact with each other in systematic fashion. All bureaucratic organizations are in fact cross-cut by what could be called "parallel" and "outer-directed" forms of non-corporate organization. The parallel structures comprise networks of friendship, patronage, cliques, factions, and coalitions which overlap the formal organizational hierarchy and re-allocate its resources within it. Parallel structures contain alternative hierarchies of patrons, brokers and clients as well as horizontal networks of cliques and factions.

The outer-directed informal networks are those which connect members of the organizations to the world outside. Even the lowest ranking member of an organization can become a broker or a patron for outsiders wishing to gain access to organizational resources.

Informal organization has tended to be seen as either detrimental or dysfunctional to the operation of formal bureaucratic institutions. Studies of East European societies consistently emphasize instances of nepotism in the Party apparatus, corruption in the bureaucracy, and underground economies parasitic of the official economy (cf. Jowitt 1978, pp. 78-87; Chirot 1980; Simis 1982; Grossman 1977; Kenedi 1981; Sampson 1983).

In fact, informal organization in Eastern Europe can have beneficial consequences (Sampson 1984a). In Romanian villages, local elites can use kinship ties to get relatives to work for them well beyond their normal citizen obligations. On collective farms, family-based labour units can be more productive than randomly organized brigades (Cernea, 1975). The moral claims of interpersonal relations can often withstand the lack of immediate material rewards. It is especially in villages that these moral rewards may have to substitute for the lack of

Social organization of Romanian villages

All Romanian villages are pervaded by various formal organizations of a political, economic, social and cultural nature. Yet it is informal social structures which provide the framework for everyday life and serve to link individuals, households and neighbourhood groups to each other, and to their relatives who have migrated to the cities (for studies of Romanian community life see Cole (1976-1981); Beck (1979); Kideckel (1976-1982); Sampson (1976-1984b) and Verdery (1983)).

At the local level, there are often multi-stranded ties between elites and citizens, since many of the former are members of local families. Hence, the elites can use moral claims of kinship or friendship to supplement administrative resources. Because Romania's formal organizations lack the requisite legitimacy among the rural population, this type of mobilization is more effective than administrative orders that rely on bureaucratic authority or legal sanctions.

The problem is that informal ties sometimes overstep their benign function and begin to overshadow the elite's formal obligations. This may lead to instances of factionalism, favoritism, bribery and corruption. When a mayor asks his brother-in-law to help organize a Sunday work brigade, he may begin with an effective assistant, but end up with someone peddling the mayor's influence. Not only will the Sunday work plan not be achieved, but villagers will become suspicious of the mayor's motives when the next campaign comes.

Still another possibility is where a mayor allows informal organization to "run wild" to retain his own legitimacy. This is the case of the "soft leader": throughout Romania, many elite cadres turn a blind eye to the peasants' illicit selling of livestock, knowing that villagers get higher prices on the private market than from the State. The local acquisition plan may have to be correspondingly reduced, superiors may get upset, but the "soft leader" remains tolerated by the community because he does not directly challenge the economic viability of local households. In the meantime, the soft leader builds up moral claims which can be "cashed" when another unpleasant task is required.

The possibilities for informal organization mean that the mere presence of bureaucratic organization is not a priori evidence that things actually work bureaucratically at the local level. This is the nature of a "society with a bureaucracy." Rural dwellers, even in societies which appear highly controlled, have the ability to deal with formal institutions in ways which urban dwellers and enterprise workers cannot. At the individual and household level there are various "defensive strategies" (Spittler, 1983) which include passivity, apathy and misrepresentation. At the community level there is a "local power"

(Leeds, 1983) which enables villages to avoid, neutralize, subvert or transform superlocal institutions and their representatives. The foundation of such locality power lies in the great degree of household autonomy and the highly sophisticated local exchange networks. These factors result in incorrect or misleading information for the State and enable villagers to avoid even the most draconian bureaucratic measures. In the Soviet Union, for example, Fainsod (1958) and Simis (1982) have furnished us with numerous examples of how rural communities, provincial enterprises and ethnic pariah groups are able to subvert the efforts of socialist control organs.

Locality power in Romania is reinforced by the villages' social and physical distance from organs of State power. Most communities have few large enterprises, their mass organizations may be passive, resources limited, roads and utilities inadequate and the Party organization may have only a small core of active members. Moreover, the visible symbols that foster confidence in State power – bright lights, asphalted roads, well-stocked shops, frequent public transport – are often lacking.

The distance between village and State is political as well as physical and economic. Historically and recently, villagers have subsidized urban industrialization and consumption. Quota deliveries and forced collectivization have now given way to delays in rural services, restrictions on urban migration, cuts in transport and energy consumption, and State directives that rural communities should be more self-sufficient rather than wait for State funds. There remains a wide gap between the expectations of rural households and the realities which the Romanian Party-State can deliver. Local level institutions – Party, government, collective, workplace, trade union, mass organization – do not fill this gap. To use a phrase first applied to Poland, Romania remains a "federation of families" (Experience and Future Discussion Group-DiP 1981, p. 57). As representative and overseer of the formal institutions, the local elites thus face many obstacles when trying to mobilize villagers to execute institutional goals. This applies especially to the most central of formal institutions, the rural Party organization.

The rural Party organization

The Communist Party dominates all corporate organizations, enterprises and communities throughout Romania. Yet the rural Party organization is not simply a replica of a city or factory Party Committee. It lacks large numbers, significant funds and information to formulate or even articulate policy. The rural Party organization is essentially a mobilizing unit. It contains "Party members" rather than "communists". The Party members help assure that the local harvest is completed quickly, the acquisition plan pursued, that local work

campaigns succeed or that a propaganda meeting is well attended. The rural Party members are not revolutionaries but an arm of the establishment. They endeavour to convince other villagers (by word or act), that the Party's program, the "general interest" and the villagers' needs are one and the same.

The principal advantage of the rural Party organization is that it can unite all local leaders into a single umbrella organization, comprising the heads of enterprises or institutions, all professional cadres, village deputies and influential villagers (except the priest). This is quite important, because many local problems cannot be solved with the resources of a single institution. For example, building a local culture house may require a contribution of skilled labour from the construction unit. A collective farm needing extra labour during harvest time can appeal to the Party and procure a brigade of schoolchildren, personnel from the shops, and even get the mayor to go door to door and recruit idle youth and housewives. The Party, then, serves as a framework for elite socialization and interaction. Moreover, it serves as the organizational forum in which the elite itself is mobilized.

RURAL ELITES IN ROMANIAN VILLAGES

Who are rural elites?

Rural elites include all individuals whose formal office, high status or informal authority give them potential or official responsibilities for implementing State and Party policy. This definition is broad enough to include: (1) individuals holding formal leadership positions (*cadre de conducere*); (2) the village professionals (*intelectuali*) whose occupational status gives them special duties toward the community and toward other elites (e.g., doctor, teachers, technicians and at times the priest); and (3) traditional elites who derive their legitimacy from the local value system, i.e. those whose name, wealth, prior position or prestige enables them to command a local following. Elites could be further categorized according to their point of orientation (regional or local), type of authority (formal or informal) and rank in the elite hierarchy (primary or secondary).

Regional elites are normally based outside the village but have special responsibilities over its political, economic and cultural life. Particularly important is the Party *instructor*, who oversees several communes within a county (the *comuna* is the lowest administrative unit, normally comprising up to five villages). Instructors mobilize local leaders, preside at meetings, recruit promising elites to higher party schools and act as brokers between "their" villages and the county administration.

Regional elites may also dispense information, clear up rumors and

neutralize local challenges to higher authorities. It is the regional elite's job to assure that:

"no one will ever ask for school reform, only for a new school in a certain community; [that] no one asks for a change in transportation policy, only that a station on a branch line not be closed" (Konrad and Szelenyi 1979, p. 164).

In the village, the leaders occupying *formal* positions include the mayor (who is also the Party First Secretary for the commune), vice-mayor, Party adjunct-secretary and heads of major village institutions: the collective farm, the state farm, the consumer co-operative, the school, the clinic and industrial enterprises. Lower ranking officials, the *secondary elites* would include the village deputies and professional cadres. All these formal elites have the obligation to help fulfill State and Party plans even if they may not have the mobilizing talents or organizational resources to do so.

In contrast, *the informal elites* can command a following but may also have the power to impede the plan as well. Because of this, the authorities attempt to replace, neutralize or co-opt informal elites into the ranks of the formal cadres. Former wealthy peasants former anti-communists, even some who once spent time in jail, may now be invited to become village deputies or join the Party.

Every Romanian village has a unique configuration of local leaders. An uncollectivized mountain village, for example, may be dominated by a core of influential peasants (an informal elite) that outnumbers the formal elite, which may comprise just the local mayor and schoolteacher. Alternatively, large villages close to major cities tend to have more social and economic institutions and thus more officials and professional cadres. The authority of the informal elite may also be diminished in villages undergoing rapid change, such as immigration, commuting or ethnic reconstitution. Here the common value system which determines who are informal leaders may be absent. The elite configuration of any community will thus influence the demands made on rural leaders, the degree of elite cohesion, the linkages between leaders and citizens and the style of mobilization employed.

Elite recruitment

Whereas local elites were once installed by a far-off urban Party apparatus, there is now an increasing amount of local participation and consultation in the placement of rural cadres throughout Romania. Nomination processes may include consultations with informal leaders and local schoolteachers. Election procedures now involve at least two candidates for local offices. University graduates are given the option of

returning to their home communes instead of being randomly scattered about the country. Sensitivity to social or ethnic origins is taken more seriously. In the multi-ethnic villages of Brasov and Covasna counties, for example, one finds Party adjunct-secretaries who are of either mixed parentage or of a third ethnic group altogether. The number of female cadres has also been increased, despite occasional protests from husbands who feel neglected.

With the increase in social linkages between citizens and elites, the latter become more subject to village moral sanctions. Even in those villages where elites come from outside, the citizens are prepared to use bureaucratic sanctions as well: open protests, complaints to regional elites, letters to newspapers and anonymous letters to Party organs. Leaders who perform poorly or trample on local sentiment will find it difficult to mobilize their constituents to achieve key projects. Lacking moral claims, they will be forced to use formal sanctions, though these are of limited value in the long term.

Rural leaders with good records or effective regional networks may be selected for training at higher party schools. Those lacking higher education, technical skills or ambitions, however, will most likely live out their lives in their own commune and thus will remain locally accountable for their activities.

Elites' tasks and work habits

The tasks and work habits of rural leaders are intimately linked with the nature of multi-stranded social relations in the village. Weberian features of bureaucracy – rank order, task specificity, universalistic recruiting criteria, automatic advancement, written guidelines and official secrets – apply only sporadically at the community level. Ranks tend to become confused or overlooked, tasks may overlap, advancement may be delayed, careers may be rotated, switched or halted, written guidelines may turn out to be useless and official secrets difficult to maintain under the scrutiny of local gossip networks. With the constraints from above and the intense ties within their communities, local leaders are invariably forced to work in a distinctly non-bureaucratic fashion.

Romanian sociological studies (unpublished) show that commune mayors have at least 10 hour work days, generally six days per week, in addition to extra meetings, cultural events, Sunday work brigades and intense harvest campaigns. Though required to feed a great deal of information back up to county organs and to receive visiting officials, leaders may spend as much as two-thirds of their working hours outside the office: among the citizens, visiting institutions, overseeing building projects, consulting with doctors who have requested more space for

their clinic, monitoring the collective farm's harvest plan, organizing a door-to-door recycling plan or arranging transport for the local football club. Most leaders whom I interviewed preferred the outside work because "this is the only way you can know the people's problems", as one stated. For example, one mayor spends the early morning hours standing in the village square to "resolve citizens' problems on the spot", as well as to gather the latest gossip.

The significance of outdoor activities should not be underestimated. Away from the office, local officials can gather more information and cultivate multistranded relations with villagers and other elites. They can combine specific tasks and generalized network maintenance. After monitoring the collective farm's plan, the mayor can sit down and have a cognac with the workers; on the way back he can stop in and chat with an old shepherd, etc.

Regardless of their formal duties, local leaders may also provide additional social services. They may be seen counselling unmarried mothers, finding jobs for wayward youth, resolving inheritance disputes and breaking up neighbourhood quarrels or bar room brawls. They have the duty (*datorie*) to involve themselves in all phases of community life. Hence, they may be criticized by their superiors for being negligent (*lasi*) while the villagers may complain that they interfere (*amestec*) too much in personal matters. A mayor lauded by superiors as aggressive (*energie*) may be steadily alienating local residents.

Some officials try to cultivate personal relations with villagers even when they are only exercising their normal duties. Constituents are made to believe they have received special favours when they have in fact received only what is rightfully theirs (Cole 1980). Elites can also use their regional networks to help citizens bypass bureaucratic obstacles or send citizens to their special friend in the county office, hospital or pension bureau. In this way, local elites utilize traditional Romanian sentiments about the value of the personal connection over the anonymous encounter with a faceless bureaucrat. The advantage for the elites is that it builds for them future moral claims on citizens which can later be "cashed in" as citizen mobilization.

Good and poor leadership

In official rhetoric, the good leader is totally involved in his work, enthusiastic about all Party and State projects and constantly on call. The typical newspaper "raid" on a village will underline the fact that the locally responsible leaders could or could not be found "on the spot" at a particular event or project. Officials who describe how they work from early morning to late at night, seven days a week, are hailed as model leaders.

Problems of poor leadership are discussed in terms of "shortcomings" (*lipsuri, neajunsuri*) or as "abuses" (*abuzuri*) of socialist discipline or legality. In these anecdotal accounts, the poor leader may be guilty of "bureaucratism", "excessive centralism", "indiscipline", "formalism", "careerism", "egotism", "localism", "favouritism", or "nepotism" (respectively, *burocratism, centralism excesiv, indisciplina, formalism, carierism, egoism, localism, favoritism, nepotism*).

Bureaucratism is the elevation of means over ends. The official ignores the need for innovative solutions and is isolated from constituents. Excessive centralism exists when elites or local political organs take on functions beyond their competence, stifling citizen initiative. Indiscipline is the opposite of excessive centralism. Indisciplined leaders pursue goals in a haphazard, unauthorized, unethical or illegal fashion. They are not vigilant. They tolerate sloth, pilferage and corruption. Formalism occurs when officials think they can get things done by a simple decree. Formalists rely on neither bureaucratic red tape nor the corruption of the indisciplined leader. They are simply lazy, failing to take concrete measures to attack problems. Careerism and egotism exist when leaders place their "personal interest" above the "general interest" of their organization. Careerists may prevent the promotion of promising cadres. Egotists may blame others for their own mistakes. Localism occurs when communities agitate for State allocations instead of providing for themselves. Localism is an expression of the "narrow interest" in opposition to the "general interest" represented by the State, the Party, and the planners. Finally, favoritism and nepotism allocate resources by particularistic criteria. These "deviations" are frequently related to charges of "indiscipline".

Elite behaviour in any Romanian village, no matter how exemplary, will at some time reveal instances of all these deviations. The pages of Romanian newspapers, Party journals and the speeches of President Ceausescu are replete with condemnations of such shortcomings and abuses. In fact, the boundary between good and bad leadership is quite fluid. Both are adjustments to the tension between administrative duties and moral claims, between resources which are allocated administratively and resources procured by virtue of informal social relations. Depending on how this conflict is resolved, some leaders will be able to "get things done" while the efforts of others will degenerate into indiscipline, favoritism, inertia or corruption.

Value orientations in mobilization

Elites mobilize villagers by appealing to specific value orientations. The most common of these are "work", "self-reliance", "discipline", "duty" and "social obligations".

The ideology of "work" (*munca*) is used frequently by Romania's leadership, but it is also paralleled by a genuine work ethic among Romanian villagers. Leaders can employ the work ethic not only in support of the Party's calls for hard work and material sacrifice, but to impress upon citizens how their efforts will benefit the general interest. For example, villagers are asked to take on sharecropping arrangements for the collective farm. Those who fail to do so are told that they are shirking their work responsibility and making life harder for the collective farm and local elites.

Closely tied to the "work" values are the invocations toward "self-reliance", "self-management", "self-financing" and local or household "self-sufficiency" (respectively, *auto-raspunderea, auto-conducerea, auto-finantarea* and *auto-aprovizionarea*). Not to be confused with "self-determination", these campaigns are aimed at reducing State expenses and responsibilities. This is particularly the case in rural localities, where villagers are expected to build their own cultural facilities instead of waiting for State funds, and grow all their own food instead of pleading for State retain outlets or bread deliveries.

The theme of "discipline" (*disciplina*) is frequently used by State and Party cadres to impress upon citizens their responsibility to formal institutions. Calls for increased discipline and firmness in following Party policies are part of nearly every major speech by President Ceausescu. The villagers, however, respond to the discipline of personal obligations, household needs and the local community rather than that of the factory, Party or bureaucratic organization. Hence, they tend to find these exhortations either irrelevant or offensive.

By achieving plans through self-reliance, hard work and strict discipline, Romanians fulfill their "duty" (*datorie*) to society. Local elites, of course, have special duties, but all Romanians have duties toward their associated formal institutions: workers to their factory, peasants to their collective farm, Party members to the Party, villagers to their community, mothers to the state (i.e. to bear many children) and citizens to the fatherland. Anyone shirking his or her duties suffers from *egoismul*, placing "personal interests" over the State's *interes general*. Yet villagers exist not only in corporate groups but in non-corporate social networks. They have informal social "obligations" which may conflict with duties toward corporate institutions.

These *obligatii* entail a "social ethic" based on kinship, friendship, godparenthood, neighbourliness and collegiality. The social ethic is essential to the social reproduction of each household. While *obligatii* are an integral part of community life, this does not mean that villages are devoid of inter-personal conflicts. Indeed, these conflicts, which can be frequent and deep, are usually caused by the perceived failure to observe the social ethic. The culprits may be children who neglect aging

parents, kinsmen who do not divide the inheritance equally, neighbours who do not reciprocate, god parents or patrons who do not help their clients, or elites who fail to keep secrets about their friends. The social ethic is the value orientation from which most social activities and moral claims emanate. It is effective because it can stimulate additional mobilization beyond "duty" or "material incentives". It is dangerous because it can subordinate societal goals to those of individual households or networks.

Depending on how leaders employ these five value orientations, their individual "mobilization style" can be distinguished.

Styles of mobilization

Here I will describe two ideal types of mobilization. The first is called "bureaucratic-administrative", the second "egalitarian". A bureaucratic style relies on legal directives, negative sanctions or threats such as fine for non-compliance. The elite will tend to instruct citizens what they must do, invoking themes of "duty", "work", "discipline" and the need for community "self-reliance".

The egalitarian style demands that fellow villagers give mutual aid in accomplishing what is put forth as a common task. A leader who mobilizes using an egalitarian appeal relies largely on the social obligations brought about by moral ties to other villagers.

What distinguishes *rural* elites from other types of Romanian administrative personnel is their potential ability to employ either style. The village setting, with its strong informal organization and its normative value of employing inter-personal ties, creates a combination of administrative and personal authority. No rural leader can be considered either fully "bureaucratic-administrative" or fully "egalitarian". However, particular tasks – usually linked with particular posts – usually lead to a tendency toward one or another end of this continuum. Informal leaders, of course, tend to mobilize on a fully egalitarian basis. While they may have access to administrative resources they do not control them. The same is true of local professional cadres (the *intelectuali*) who can rely on personal relations with villagers plus their occupational prestige. Similarly vice-mayors and collective farm chairmen deal more with household members and peasants. These individuals have reduced social mobility and will tend toward an egalitarian style. In contrast, Party secretaries, enterprise managers and regional leaders tend to be more organizationally oriented and have greater possibilities for upward mobility. They will tend to "apply the law with firmness", using a more bureaucratic appeal.

Despite the seeming advantage of the egalitarian style, some leaders may be unable to employ it; others may choose not to. Recently

transferred and career-oriented officials will rely more on the administrative style. They will stress discipline, self-reliance and duty. Native-born elites, those selected for their personal prestige, and those expecting to remain in the community will tend to create more informal networks. They will be compelled to operate with more egalitarian appeals. Egalitarian styles are especially prevalent in mountain villages. In one community, for example, officials must call citizens to meetings via personal invitations or orally communicated messages. The villagers simply refuse to acknowledge a written invitation.

The elites' dilemmas

The egalitarian leaders have the advantage in that they can revert back to a bureaucratic appeal if necessary. For example, if not enough kin or friends contribute to the voluntary work brigade, the egalitarian leader can invoke regulations which require villagers to contribute 4-6 days per year, and can cite his or her "duty" toward higher organs. The advantage for egalitarian leaders lies in their ability to utilize resources based on their social networks *and* those based on administrative power. They can create social obligations using either personal resources or resources attached to their bureaucratic position. They can return a favour either by *personally* helping a neighbour or by giving him a ride in the *commune's* car. Here is the linkage between informal relations and organizational resources. For all their anti-bureaucratic style, egalitarian leaders operate by carefully manipulating bureaucratic resources. However, too much reciprocity could lead to the misuse of official resources, provoking jealousy among the villagers, suspicion by superiors and eventual legal sanctions. The egalitarian elite's dilemma is that fellow citizens may demand too much in return. This may upset the fine balance of social obligations. The egalitarian leader may end up exploiting his own network, or the network may end up exploiting him.

Bureaucratic-style leaders, less enmeshed in local social networks, avoid *these* kinds of problems. Their dilemma arises with their reliance on negative sanctions, which, though they achieve short-term results, may alienate constituents. A bureaucratic leader must be "neutral": he or she must administer sanctions such that no villager feels prejudiced. However, the bureaucratic leader must also collaborate with other elites (formal and informal), to achieve institutional goals. This will normally entail the establishment of mutual social obligations. If fellow leaders operate on a more egalitarian basis, there arises the risk that the bureaucratic leader's administrative neutrality will be compromised by these social obligations. The bureaucratic leader will risk losing his administrative neutrality and will be without the protection of moral claims.

With these kinds of problems, it is little wonder that local officials in Romania frequently ask to resign or be transferred. Many suffer from the classic middle-management syndrome of "nerves", heart condition, ulcers or high blood pressure (the latter aptly called "*tensiune*"). These tensions can be readily observed through a case study of citizen mobilization.

A case study

The campaign for agricultural contracting is one of the most difficult tasks for local leaders. Villagers are supposed to sign yearly contracts to deliver a certain amount of agricultural produce to the State. Since prices on the private market are often more advantageous for the peasants, officials must persuade them using a variety of "moral incentives", reminding the peasant of his "duty" to help the village fulfill its aggregate plan, to feed urban workers, and to help Romania and the village become self-reliant in food production. The losses involved are especially high for suburban villagers, where easy profits can be made selling produce and meat direct to city dwellers.

Faced with the problems of mobilization, elites can resort to various strategies to achieve their quotas. One strategy is to maintain an artificially low quota which can guarantee plan fulfilment with a minimum of effort. In another community the burden of contracting animals to the State will be rotated in turn among the peasants. Other communities resort to more direct "administrative" procedures.

In village F., those peasants who refused to sign their yearly delivery plans were called into the town hall to explain themselves. One old peasant was confronted by the commune vice-mayor who happened to be his nephew. The vice-mayor listened patiently as the peasant complained of low state buying prices and lack of available fodder. Finally, the vice-mayor appealed to the old man in an overtly egalitarian style:

"Look, Uncle Ion, *everybody* has to take on some more contracting obligations. The county needs more production. We have our plan, and we know that you can provide us with calves and some piglets. We'll try to get you some more fodder. You know I'm just trying to do my job here. Now why don't you help me and sign a contract to deliver a calf and two pigs. I promise you on my word of honour that we won't bother you after that. Now how about it, Uncle Ion? Come on, how about it?"

The mobilization of the peasant was based on a clear-cut egalitarian ethic: a fellow villager, a kinsman was asking for a favour, a favour which happened to coincide with State interests. Administrative obligations were accomplished in a distinctly non-bureaucratic manner. As the vice-mayor finished his appeal, the mayor walked into the office.

Listening to the conversation, the mayor admonished the old peasant in typical "administrative" style:

"Stop griping. You know that everyone in the village has to take out contracts and that we have a plan to fulfill. Those are the rules and if you don't want to follow the rules you'll be fined and that's it. If you want more fodder don't come to us. Go out and cut some yourself" (on the collective farm's sharecropping arrangements).

The combination of the vice-mayor's egalitarian and the mayor's administrative appeals eventually led the man to sign a contract. That he signed drew no words of gratitude from the mayor, however; the old peasant was simply doing his duty toward the community. But for the vice-mayor, Ion's signing meant that he had new obligations: to arrange for cheaper and more available fodder, to grant a future favour when the peasant needed one and to "not bother him" when contracting time came around next year.

Here is both the strength and the weakness of the egalitarian mobilization strategy. It is effective for mobilization but tends to create new obligations. These subsequent obligations are tied to the social ethic and may conflict with the vice-mayor's duties to higher organs. For example, by "not bothering" Ion next year, other villagers who are compelled to contract may accuse the vice-mayor of "favouritism", while superiors may accuse him of "indiscipline" or "formalism".

Elite mobilization style involves structural factors as well as personal qualities. In short, it involves fulfilling the "duties" of village *elites* with the social obligations of elite *villagers*.

Elites' 'coping' strategies

The conflict between social obligations, mobilization values and elites' styles can also lead to "deviations", "shortcomings" and "abuses", i.e., "poor leadership". But these errors themselves reflect the type of style employed. Leaders using the bureaucratic-administrative style will tend to err on the side of bureaucratism, excessive centralism, careerism or egotism. They will abuse their constituents and may even "treat their localities like feudal domains", to quote President Ceausescu.

In contrast, egalitarian leaders tend to err on the weak side: they elevate social relations over organization requirements. They may exhibit provincialism or localism, look the other way (formalism) or stoop to nepotism and favouritism. Egalitarian leaders may fulfil moral claims of fellow citizens, but this may generate indiscipline or crude corruption. However, because egalitarian leaders remain under the protection of the local value system, their errors are more difficult for the State to identify. Often it is not villagers but career-oriented officials who will draw the authorities' attention to their abuses.

It should not be assumed that all Romanian elite cadres are characterized by shortcomings and abuses. The vast majority are well-meaning, sincere individuals with a vision of improving community life. They do not live noticeably better than their fellow villagers. They have no special shops or hidden dachas. They are constantly "on display". Yet demands from above, the lack of material compensation, the difficulty of coping with fluctuating bureaucratic arrangements, the constant mobilization campaigns, and their own household needs and personal aspirations all create obvious pressures on local elites. To avoid these pressures, they adopt various strategies. One is avoidance of tension-filled situations: request a transfer, resign, retreat into a minimal level of activity (formalism). A second strategy is to make the most of the bureaucratic resources at one's disposal via bribery, favouritism, nepotism and "black-market bureaucracy" (Tillman 1968). Despite the obvious risks, the elite fulfils local social obligations and works for household goals to the utmost extent. A third strategy is for local elites to enmesh themselves with the regional Party organization, seeking the organization's support as a substitute for local village network.

However, villagers are neither as patient nor as intimidated as they were in the early years of "socialist construction" when (by party admission) serious abuses were committed by incompetent and opportunistic local cadres. Villagers can invoke moral claims and bureaucratic channels to re-assert the social ethic. They can resort to gossip and slander, open accusations at meetings, anonymous letters to newspapers or Party organs, or audiences with party officials. The following case, quoted from the Romanian Party daily *Scinteia* (November 6, 1980), illustrates this process. It concerns an errant Party activist, one Petre Enache, whose transition from local hero to regional official made him "dizzy with success":

"... In the course of the investigation, we discovered ... that Petre Enache had changed considerably, not being the same person of just a few years earlier. In his early years, he was a stimulus for the collective in their efforts to modernize production. Where there were difficulties he would appear - with good words, with his labour and with advice - and things would go forward. For this he was highly appreciated. From there he rose step-by-step, becoming a member of the County Party Committee, the City Party Committee and a Deputy in the County Peoples' Council. However, without realizing it, this ascent made Petre Enache dizzy. First he became somewhat distant, then arrogant, less understanding of the needs of those close to him while very understanding with regard to his own particular interests. He acquired a tone of command and began to shout at people. This is how he behaved in his home village of Vladesti, scolding the mayor when she transmitted an invitation for "Ilim", too, to attend the meeting of the County People's Council. "Get out of here and mind your own business", he yelled at her on the main street, within sight and hearing distance of the villagers, so that they would know just how important "He" had become.

People began to murmur, however. They said that Enache was doing things on the side. But he did not listen or did not want to listen to what he called "envious people". This spirit of disregard, the sicknesses of egotism and careerism, pushed Petre Enache toward his abuses. Misusing his posts as party secretary and president of the Council of Working People, he obtained advantages that others are not allowed to have.

... It became clear that part of the construction materials he procured came from the factory's inventories. Obtaining permission to buy these was made easier by the fact that the sales clerk is none other than Petre Enache's wife.

... Although the executive committee of the People's Council formally refused to grant him a building permit, Petre Enache obtained one anyway by pressuring the vice-mayor and secretary at the town hall. "I'm not just anybody", he told them arrogantly. "I'm a member of the County Party Committee".

... If Petre Enache has changed, considerable responsibility lies with his fellow comrades. When they saw the party secretary manifesting deviant tendencies, why didn't they criticize him? Neither the director nor the other leaders at the factory manifested the necessary firmness. In fact, they even approved certain acts whereby he obtained construction materials illegally. On the recommendation of the County Party Committee, the factory Party Committee decided to relieve Petre Enache of his post. His case will be discussed at the plenary session of the County and City Party Committees ...

Petre Enache not only browbeat the villagers but fellow elites as well. His arrogant comportment and use of his wife's position to get construction materials led him to commit several "deviations": indiscipline, favouritism, egotism and careerism. In fact, the anonymous letters, of the "envious people" became bureaucratic sanctioning mechanisms. Villagers used these mechanisms to get at someone who thought himself beyond both their moral claims and informal sanctions. Petre Enache tried to manipulate his elite position but eventually became the victim of it.

STATE MEASURES TO RE-INTEGRATE ELITES

The State and Party apparatus seek efficient and reliable leaders who will apply party directives firmly, i.e. individuals whose loyalties lie with the organization rather than to their locality, kin group or household. They seek elites able to use informal networks but only to attain formal goals. State policies thus mandate that cadres be assigned back to their home localities if at all possible. In addition, regional elites and county officials conduct strict supervision of village affairs on a periodic basis. Finally, State and Party regulations require local leaders to attend refresher courses at Party training schools where they study Party policy, State law, enterprise management, "leadership science" and even aspects of sociology.

Nevertheless, these measures cannot entirely alleviate the structural problems of rural leadership in Romania. Assigning cadres to their home areas may provide better information but may also lead to

localism, informal relations and a web of social obligations which may conflict with the "general interest". Supervision of rural cadres by the regional elites and county officials is laudable, but supervision to what end? Emphasizing hard work, duty, discipline and self-reliance may not be suited to elite-citizen interaction patterns. It may even be irrelevant to the genuine problems of hard-pressed rural communities who deserve additional State support. Courses at Party schools may impart abstract knowledge and help leaders get to know colleagues from other communities. Yet they do nothing to alter the structural constraints imposed upon local leaders from above and below. Cadres whom I interviewed at regional Party schools tended to emphasize social skills over bureaucratic knowledge in carrying out their jobs. "Knowing how to talk to people", "to come down to their level", was considered more important than "knowledge of Party policy" or "applying the law with firmness". The bias toward an egalitarian mobilization style reflects the informal working conditions and the rural emphasis on customary social relations. Yet it also reflects the anti-bureaucratic mind-set of these local-level bureaucrats. The continuous efforts at "improving cadre quality" are only a small part of creating good leadership. The principal problem lies not with the cadres but with the structure of their working and living environments: social integration with villagers can either expedite or impede the achievement of bureaucratic objectives. One must then ask whether these objectives themselves are realistic, whether the elites are in a structurally stable situation in which the objectives of the Party can be achieved.

CONCLUSIONS

Rural elites are members of highly developed bureaucratic organizations working in an administrative environment of high expectations and limited resources. They dwell among people whose faith in these organizations is limited and whose experience and values emphasize use of informal channels. To achieve mobilization, elites must balance demands from above with moral claims from below. If not, the most skilled leaders can be transformed into the most inefficient, the most egalitarian into the most authoritarian. The problem of "good" versus "poor" leadership reflects the interaction of these demands and claims.

Social scientists, especially those who speak of corporatism in Eastern Europe, have often confused the existence of bureaucratic forms with the reality of social relations which are non- or anti-bureaucratic (cf. Jowitt 1978; Chirot 1980). Yet societies with bureaucracies are not necessarily bureaucratized societies. Rural elites are compelled to be firm administrators, but rural social organization tends to

debureaucratize them (Eisenstadt 1959). Understanding how these debureaucratization mechanisms work is the key to understanding how good leaders become poor ones, why some plans succeed and others fail. Accomplishing this task requires thorough analysis of how socialist bureaucracies work, the role of informal organization, the changing nature of Romanian village life, the way local elites conceptualize their own role and the way they utilize both bureaucratic and egalitarian mobilization styles.

I conclude this paper with two statements by commune mayors to show the variations in elite role/conceptualizations.

"We are a family. We should treat each other like family" (spoken at a local People's Council meeting, 1975)

"I'm the shepherd around here. And these people are my sheep" (spoken to a visiting anthropologist, 1977).

Both these individuals eventually lost their jobs. Unable to balance demands from above and claims from below, they committed "errors" and became poor leaders. This paper has tried to show that citizen mobilization in rural Romania is hardly a family affair. And it is a far cry from shepherding.

NOTE

1. Data for this paper is based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in a single Romanian community (18 months between 1974 and 1976) and a more recent study of rural Party cadres based on short visits to 6 villages and interviews and documentary research at 4 Party training schools (10 months between 1980 and 1982).

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses factors which influence citizen mobilization in rural Romania, with particular focus on rural elite cadres. Elites are discussed in terms of their place in the local hierarchy, form of authority, characteristics of recruitment, work activities, value orientations used in mobilizing citizens, and factors which make for "good" and "poor" leadership. Interaction between the elites' formal role duties and their informal social obligations to fellow villagers may result in a mobilization style which tends to be either "bureaucratic-administrative" or "egalitarian". Each style has its disadvantages. The problem of "good" and "poor" leadership in Romanian villages is more than a matter of assuring competent cadres. It is a symptom of the structural constraints operating on local elites, constraints which emanate from the nature of socialist Romania's bureaucracy and from the structure of rural community life in general.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article analyse les facteurs qui conditionnent la mobilisation populaire dans la Roumanie rurale, en s'attachant spécialement aux élites rurales. Celles-ci sont étudiées à partir de plusieurs variables: place dans la hiérarchie locale, formes d'autorité, type de recrutement, types de travail, valeurs invoquées dans leurs efforts de mobilisation, et finalement les facteurs qui déterminent un "bon" ou un "médiocre" leadership. La tension entre les devoirs liés aux tâches officielles et les obligations liées aux relations informelles avec les villageois fait osciller le style de mobilisation entre un type "bureaucratique-administratif" et un style "égalitaire". Chaque option comporte des inconvénients. La question de la qualité de l'encadrement des villages roumains ne peut se réduire à un problème de compétence des cadres; c'est un révélateur des contraintes structurales qui pèsent sur ces élites locales, contraintes qui tiennent autant à la nature de la bureaucratie socialiste roumaine qu'à la structure de la vie communautaire en général.

KURZFASSUNG

In dem Beitrag werden unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ländlicher Elite-gruppen Faktoren diskutiert, die die Mobilisierung der ländlichen Bevölkerung in Rumänien beeinflussen. Eliten werden unter dem Aspekt ihrer Stellung in der dörflichen Hierarchie, der Formen ihrer Autoritätsausübung, ihrer Rekrutierungsmerkmale, Arbeitsgebiete, Wertorientierungen, die bei der Mobilisierung der Bevölkerung eine Rolle spielen, und der Einflussfaktoren „guter“ und „schlechter“ Führung erörtert. Wechselbeziehungen zwischen den Anforderungen der formalen Rollen und den informellen sozialen Verpflichtungen der Eliten gegenüber ihrer Mitbürgern in den Dörfern können einen Mobilisierungsstil zur Folge haben, der entweder „bürokratisch-administrativ“ oder „egalitär“ ist. Jeder Stil hat seine Nachteile. Das Problem der „guten“ und „schlechten“ Führung in rumänischen Dörfern ist mehr als eine Sache der Herausbildung kompetenter Kader. Es ist ein Symptom für die strukturellen Hindernisse, denen die örtlichen Eliten unterliegen und die der Natur der sozialistischen Bürokratie und der Struktur des dörflichen Lebens im allgemeinen entspringen.