

TRADITION IN THE FACE OF MODERNIZATION: CULTURAL CONTINUITY AND 'DEAGRARIZATION' IN THE VILLAGE OF UKVE

Robert G. Minnich*

Introduction

The term deagrarization is commonly understood as a phase of modernization comprising the transition from agrarian to industrial society; and statistical evidence from Ukve¹ clearly indicates an overall decline in the agrarian activity of its population during the course of this century. Nonetheless, many indigenous Ukljani² continue to pursue subsistence strategies which demonstrate continuity with local practices of the past even though their households have in recent decades either reduced or relinquished various agrarian activities. Tradition persists in the face of modernization.

In order to resolve this apparent contradiction, the following investigation of cultural continuity in Ukve assumes that the conservatism which is commonly associated with so-called traditional societies is in fact dynamic. It is argued that a realistic understanding of cultural continuity in situations of apparent "modernization" can be obstructed when analysis is rigidly confined to the quantitative analysis of indicators which are selected according to a pre-determined model of "deagrarization". The material presented here thus raises the question as to whether or not "deagrarization" is the most appropriate term for designating the kind of change which during recent decades has occurred in Ukve.

This portrait of Ukve is organized with reference to the concept of "culture core" as it has been developed in the sub-discipline of anthropology known as cultural ecology.³ Culture core refers to "the constellation of features which are most closely related to subsistence activities and economic arrangements" in a given society (Steward 1955: 37); it points to adaptive processes whereby individuals and groups shape their environment and the environment shapes them (Geertz 1963: 8). This systemic interplay between man and environment is effectively conceptualized with the term "adaptation" which can be seen to designate the reproduction and eventual transformation over time of a specific regimen of productive activity (i.e., the cultural core). As a dynamic concept, adaptation draws attention to the perspective of the actors involved in the system, that is, to their understanding of the environment of which they are a part and their strategic response to changes in that environment.⁴

By focussing on adaptive processes in terms of strategic action it is my objective here to describe the social and cultural continuities manifest in Ukve's historical regimen of subsistence. First, however, it is necessary to outline that greater environment⁵ which has historically been a part of the local adaptation.

Ukve and the Ukljani in the Evolution of a Region

Ukve is situated in Val Canale in Northeastern Italy, a valley which has represented since at least the time of the Roman Empire a significant thoroughfare connecting the northern Adriatic plain with the upper Drava and Sava river basins (Steinicke 1984: 26). Furthermore, the surrounding region, at the juncture of the Carnian Alps, the Julian Alps and the Karavanke range, is a historical zone of contact between Europe's three major language families.

As bearers of a distinct linguistic heritage Ukve's indigenous inhabitants, who are socialized in Slovene vernacular, represent the longest documented continuous history of settlement in this region. Their Slavic-speaking antecedents initially entered the region toward the end of the sixth century (Grafenauer 1975: 113). By the beginning of this millennium, however, Germanic-speaking Bavarian colonists were establishing market towns and artisan/mining centers in these Alpine valleys, as well as appropriating the region's best agricultural land (Fräss-Ehrfeld 1984: 123-32); and during the Middle Ages Friulian-speakers migrated into Val Canale as artisans and miners, taking up residence primarily in its non-agrarian settlements.

For nearly a millennium this polyglot *Hinterland* was under the domination of German-speaking élites (Steinicke 1984: 27). Upon the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, however, the region was partitioned in 1919 among Austria, Italy and Yugoslavia; and it is only since this partition that Italian-speakers have populated any part of the so-called "three-country region" in significant numbers (Grafenauer 1975: 112). Nonetheless this language group has since then come to dominate all but the purely agro-pastoral sector of Val Canale's economy.

The Slovene-speaking agro-pastoral population of the valley has been subordinated, through much of its history, to the political and commercial control of élites socialized in other "mother tongues" (vernaculars). Because of their dependence on members of these other groups, many of the indigenous peasant-farmers have for generations commanded, in addition to their Slovene vernacular, at least the rudiments of German, Friulian and—more recently—also Italian verbal codes.

Nearly 80% of Ukve's population traces its village origins to the period before 1920. If however the population of Val Canale is considered as a whole this proportion is reversed in favor of the group represented by the post-1920 Italian immigration into the valley (Steinicke 1984: 26-28). Thus, in terms of its demographic structure and linguistic heritage Ukve represents a distinctly "indigenous" enclave in what has become a largely Italianized periphery of the greater Italian state.

The Ukve Adaptation: A Functional Perspective

Ukve is a clustered settlement located at the foot of the precipitous lower slope of the Eastern Carnian Alps. Census material from 1986 indicates a population of 437 living in the village's approximately 140 households.⁶ Historically, the vast majority of these households have engaged in transhumance agro-pastoralism, and exploited the largely coniferous forests covering much of the ridge above the village. This local regimen of production is correctly perceived by Ukljani as the continuation of a way of life which can be traced to the arrival of their Slavic-speaking ancestors (Venosi 1977: 3). Of all Val Canale settlements, Ukve remains yet today the most explicitly agrarian in its composition (Rupel 1987: 36). In contrast to other settlements in the valley the village has failed to accommodate tourism and its infrastructure remains devoid of many of the commercial, administrative and service institutions which have been established elsewhere (JOK 1975).

The climate and topography of this narrow Alpine valley and its adjoining mountain ridges strongly encourage transhumance animal husbandry, and severely impede the pursuit of a more complex agricultural regimen which might more fully facilitate self-sufficiency. Little arable land is available to villagers in adjoining sections of the valley floor; and, although Ukljani have experimented in the past with various root crops and grains in this lowland terrain (ca. 800 m above sea level), it has been used primarily as a source of fodder during this century (Kándut 1981a). On the other hand, the much more open and

extensive flats of the south-facing intermediate and upper highlands above the village (1100-1900 m above sea level) are extremely well-suited as grazing lands and as a source of fodder. The intermediate highland terrain includes numerous private plots and summer dwellings currently distributed among approximately 40 of Ukve's households, and there are also several pastures and forests held in common by the village, to which all of the remaining 110 original estates have access. These commons are managed by the local community through the institution of the *Nachbarschaft/soosedstvo*⁷ (neighbourhood association). One of these highland commons extends over the rounded peaks of the Carnian range into Austrian territory.⁸

No other settlement along the base of the Carnian Alps, either in Austria or Italy, has been as dependent as has Ukve upon highland resources. Its unique resource base has historically required the presence of a large labor force in the highlands throughout the growing season. As a result, transhumancy has been more fully developed in Ukve than elsewhere in Val Canale; historically it involved the massive migration of a significant segment of the village's population, lock-stock-and-barrel, to summer residences in the intermediate highlands.⁹ Until just a few decades ago the village became a ghost town of sorts from late spring until early fall, visited on Sundays for attendance at Mass and, otherwise, for shorter periods of haying on limited valley fields. The introduction of labor-saving technology, increasing opportunities for wage employment within Val Canale, a better roadway and improved means of transportation are among the more important factors which led to the dramatic reduction of this summer migration in the 1960s. In 1985 approximately 25 of Ukve's agrarian households were still utilizing their highland pastures and meadows,¹⁰ and many of these families no longer reside continuously in the highlands throughout the summer.

A very large proportion of Val Canale's agrarian families have historically benefited from their respective household's access to local resources through servitude rights (*Servitütsrechte/služnostne pravice*¹¹) in local land—both forest and pasture—which is the property of the *fondo per il culto/verski sklad*, a property-holding corporation which is jointly controlled by the Vatican and the Italian State Ministry of the Interior, and which is locally administered by the *forestale* (Department of Forestry). While local servitude forests represent nearly the entire timber resource controlled by Ukljani, a few households privately own small forest plots, usually in connection with their holdings in the intermediate highlands above the village. Although exploited primarily for household consumption (fuel and lumber), these combined timber resources have also been an important source of cash income for most Ukljani, particularly in crisis situations when failures in other productive activities have threatened the economic viability of local households.¹²

The harsh natural conditions and meager resource-base available to most of Ukve's agro-pastoral households have forced the Ukljani to seek additional income through seasonal employment away from their household estates. Already a century ago, and most likely much earlier, its skilled lumberjacks were traveling as far away as Germany and Bosnia to earn seasonal income (Boegl 1885: 9). While their skills as "men of the forest" are still in considerable local demand, it has become much easier in recent decades for the men and women of Ukve to find seasonal employment as skilled and unskilled workers within Val Canale.

It is thus clearly misleading to assume that the Ukve agro-pastoral adaptation has at any time during recent generations represented a regimen of family household self-sufficiency. On the contrary, the viability of these family households has depended upon participation in economic networks which have at times extended far beyond the confines of the valley

and the region.

On the other hand the ecological constraints impeding the self-sufficiency of family households have in no significant way led to their loss of control over those means of production essential for their material reproduction. In fact, the severe conditions represented by the local terrain and climate have given the valley the status of a peripheral region in the eyes of commercial and political élites who have been in a position to take more rigid control over the valley in order to exploit its resources. For example, Ukljani were never directly subjugated by feudal estates through institutions such as *corvée*, whereas similar settlements located on the more productive agricultural terrain of adjacent valleys did experience feudal obligations of this kind. This relative local autonomy from external political and commercial control is further substantiated by the post-feudal absence of large-scale absentee ownership of local arable land (other than that held jointly by the Vatican and the Italian State, as described above).

A survey of local family holdings reveals that most are of five or fewer hectares, and very few exceed ten hectares;¹³ and the author's field investigations among contemporary Ukljani indicate that no particular family or group of families has succeeded, over the past century, in controlling for more than one or two generations an exceptionally large segment of local fixed assets such as privately-held fields or forests. It is thus reasonable to conclude that Ukve as a local community has historically comprised family farm households which can be characterized as small-scale autonomous economic enterprises of modest yet varying size. Each of these household estates has commanded a similar repertoire of resources. These "family enterprises" have seldom been self-sufficient economic entities; rather, they have depended upon income from external sources, and their relative equality in terms of the fixed assets which they control is promoted by their relatively great dependence upon village commons and "state"-held forests, to which their access is controlled by an unchanging historical quota allotted to each of the village's original estates.

Ukve's Integrity as a Local Community

Many Ukljani are employed, at least seasonally, outside the village, which lacks many of the institutions upon which its agrarian households regularly depend, such as a bank, a livestock market, and retailers of agricultural supplies and machinery. It is therefore appropriate to ask how the local adaptation serves to integrate the daily life of this settlement into that of a community. An initial answer can be found by examining the kinds of issues around which the local population can be effectively mobilized.

Ukljani demonstrate a very passive attitude toward the formal political institutions of Italian society. Italy's major political parties have no formal organization within the village; during one year's presence there the author did not in fact record a single instance of embroiled discussion about Italian party politics.¹⁴ The conservative Italian Farmers' Union (*Federazione Coltivatori Diretti*) provides very little unsolicited service to Ukljani, though most local households are members. These political institutions are pragmatically, rather than ideologically, evaluated by Ukljani in terms of their potential as a means of "political" support in situations where they feel that their adaptation—their regimen of productive activity—is in some way threatened.

The history of political initiatives originating within the village over the past century reflects the Ukljani's explicit preoccupation with the preservation of their inherited agrarian adaptation. In a rather continuous historical struggle to preserve their servitude rights to local forests and pastures, the heads of Ukve households have on several occasions taken

the initiative of hiring lawyers; and, in one case, they even represented themselves directly at the Italian Supreme Court (*Corte di Cassazione*) in Rome.¹⁵ The annexation of this valley by Italy from Austria placed the ancient system of servitude rights in considerable jeopardy. Significantly, it has been the heads of Ukve households who have taken the initiative to represent their counterparts throughout the valley in various successful campaigns to preserve these rights.

In 1949 Ukve's agro-pastoral households completed work on a local cooperative dairy, which in recent decades has also served milk producers throughout the valley. More recently, in the late 1970s, the Ukljani succeeded in obtaining support from the Farmers' Union in their vigorous and partly successful campaign against the planned location of a major highway (*autostrada*) through the village. With the assistance of various institutions and middlemen they succeeded in having this thirty-meter-wide ribbon of concrete diverted to a water course and bog along the southern perimeter of the valley floor, thus eliminating the prospect of having the village residences physically severed from their arable fields in the lower valley.

The integrity of Ukve as a local community is also reflected in political initiatives which are not directly related to local everyday existential concerns. For example, in 1974 more than a hundred Ukve households successfully petitioned the Archbishop of Udine for the installation of a Slovene-speaking priest in the local parish church (Venosi 1977: 8).

This sketch of political initiatives in Ukve during the course of this century demonstrates the vitality of the village's culture core as a source of "common issues" which effectively, albeit sporadically, mobilize the Ukljani. It is however equally important to consider the ways in which they are regularly mobilized with reference to local institutions. For example, the management of the village's commons requires regular participation by local household representatives in the village's *sosedstvo*, as do the regular meetings of holders of servitude rights.

Burns (1963: 144-49) has noted that the persistence throughout the mountainous zones of Europe of the institution of common lands—both pastures and forests—which are under the exclusive collective control of the constituent households of territorially-distinct historical settlements, has contributed to the functional integration and very strong sense of autonomy of what have been termed "closed corporate communities" or "republics in microcosm." While Ukve's explicit quality as a community of this kind is unusual in the context of Val Canale, it is not exceptional in the "cultural area"—the greater Alpine zone—of which it is a part.

Further, if we are to remain true to Steward's intentions with the concept of "culture core," it is important to consider mobilization around those local institutions which are not directly involved in production but which nonetheless integrate the socio-economic units essential for the local subsistence regimen, namely family households. The village's parish church is of special importance in this respect.¹⁶ Ukljani enthusiastically support and participate in various religious festivals associated with the village, such as the parish Patron Saint's Day (*žegnanje*); they are easily and effectively mobilized by nearly all ceremonial occasions which demarcate the integrity of their native village vis-à-vis encompassing society. Local organizations such as the Voluntary Fire Brigade and village choirs are important instruments for organizing such ceremonies of village identity.¹⁷

Tradition in the Face of Modernization

This necessarily brief and incomplete sketch of Ukve's culture core has emphasized the dynamic interplay of a specific settlement with its greater environment, and a functional

description of local subsistence strategies and patterns of mobilization has substantiated the importance of family households and various village institutions for integrating the local regimen of subsistence.

As a historical community Ukve thus represents a distinct setting¹⁸ for the maintenance and transmission of knowledge and values essential to the reproduction not only of the local adaptation but also of local society, especially as it manifests itself in the context of village life. Furthermore, the unique historical course of development and environmental conditions shaping the Ukve adaptation imply the perpetuation of distinctly local skills, practical knowledge, and values. An indigenous body of knowledge is thus passed from one generation to the next primarily through socialization (learning) within the family and within the social networks which integrate local society.¹⁹ Task-oriented situations of empirical learning involving individuals who stand in a complex relationship with one another characterize this process of transmission (*Weitergabe/Überlieferung*) which has been conceptualized by various European ethnographers as *Tradierung*. In other words, the sum total of locally-transmitted knowledge and values imperative to the reproduction of the Ukve adaptation can be classified as "traditional." But such an understanding of tradition is hopelessly general; it is the consequence of theoretical considerations that are primarily concerned with defining a general type of socialization process which accommodates change but is nonetheless seen as inherent to social contexts characterized by *Gemeinschaft*, rather than *Gesellschaft* (see below).²⁰

It is more useful to assume that distinct historical features and/or components of the local adaptation as well as of other institutions which integrate local society have the potential to become objects of evaluation in what we might call a native theory of Ukve. This understanding of traditional knowledge emphasizes its potential for Ukljani as a source of referents which guide social action and facilitate their articulation of collective self-images vis-à-vis encompassing society (Bausinger 1978; Shils 1971: 137). Emphasis upon the role of tradition as a referent for social action diverges, however, from more conventional understandings of the term.

Shanklin (1981) notes that tradition has been viewed, especially by early social scientists such as Marx and Tönnies, as an impediment to social and economic change. As a result, analytic concepts have been developed which portray "tradition" as an opposite to "modernity." These polar terms have thus been identified on the one hand with irrationality and conservatism and on the other with progress and rationality; they are seen as reflecting supposedly fundamental differences between the social and cultural reality of a static agrarian society (e.g., *Gemeinschaft*) and that of its rapidly-changing urban-industrial counterpart (e.g., *Gesellschaft*). As a result of these assumptions, both "tradition" and "modernity" have been attributed causal significance in the analysis of social evolution and "development." She notes further that, among others, anthropologists and ethnologists have attempted to account for the internal logic of so-called conservative social formations by carefully investigating the ideas and beliefs of the members of groups of this kind. They have become increasingly aware of tradition's indigenous role as an active process, whereby "as a storage device, [it] serves not merely to store antique behavior; it also serves to align past and present and to set new precedents for behavior. . . . In addition to promoting internal solidarity, tradition is used as a divisive tool to further individual and group ambitions," (1981: 77). This analytical understanding of tradition as a referent for social action makes it a potential vehicle for innovations which in certain instances may qualify as "modernization."

It should thus be obvious that the investigation of Ukve's adaptation undertaken here

rejects any categorical assumption as to whether Ukve society is either "traditional" or "modern." Rather, attention is focussed on the possibilities for local native theory to influence, in terms of locally-perceived traditions, the way in which Ukljani cope with their greater environment.

In the case of the Ukljani's petition for a Slovene-speaking priest it is suggested here that "tradition" has inhibited innovation. The continuous use for countless centuries of Slovene verbal codes in the context of church activities and religious rites represents for Ukljani a norm for language use, i.e., a distinctly local tradition. In the face of the valley's formidable Italianization, Ukljani have thus self-consciously sought to conserve rather than change a pattern in their use of verbal codes which has been transmitted within the context of village life.²¹ Similarly, the Ukljani's initiatives to reestablish the legitimacy of their servitude rights under the fundamentally new circumstances in which they found themselves following incorporation into the Italian state represent the strategic use of locally-perceived "tradition" in order to impede change.

But Ukljani have also taken initiatives to innovate with reference to what they consider traditional practices essential to their adaptation. They founded a dairy cooperative and promoted the relocation of a super-highway. Here mobilization around "tradition" can be seen as preserving the integrity of Ukve's adaptation through group strategies which accommodate technological and political-economic changes over which the Ukljani themselves have little or no control. From the Ukljani's perspective such exceptional initiatives are acts of conservation, of preserving their adaptation. Nonetheless, because the introduction of a cooperative dairy, super-highway or numerous other local technological innovations of recent decades increases productive efficiency (i.e., appears to confirm a "modern" economic rationality), these same innovations can be viewed as acts of modernization by outsiders to the social reality of Ukve.

It is noteworthy that Ukljani are not very preoccupied with "objectifying" their overall adaptation—i.e., their "way of life"—or its components as an explicit tradition or set of traditions. For example, they seldom publicly celebrate their transhumancy and forestry activities in the mountains as a significant independent point of reference for their collective self-image. Just across the Carnian Alps, in neighboring Austrian villages where transhumance pastoral practices have not involved such a massive seasonal migration of village populations, and where village viability has not so extensively depended upon mountain resources (especially pastures and meadows), the summer migration of people and livestock to the highlands has been revived as an explicit tradition; the highlands (*Almplanina*) have been made into a public attraction through which local villagers present themselves to encompassing society. In this way indigenous perceptions of the local adaptation as a discrete "local" tradition have facilitated modernization through the development of so-called "peasant tourism." In contrast, Ukljani have generally rejected both local and outside initiatives to promote local tourism, especially in the highlands above the village; and they have only sporadically rented vacant valley residences to tourists during the summer months.

By considering some of the issues which have effectively mobilized Ukljani with reference to their adaptation it has been possible to elucidate native theory and native perceptions of tradition with regard to changes occurring in their midst. This has been done without relating these changes to some *a priori* concept of overall social evolution or development which an outside observer could easily impose upon data gathered from the unique circumstances in which Ukljani live their lives.

Deagrarianization in a Wider Perspective

The decline of agrarian activity in Ukve can be summarized as follows. Of its approximately 140 households, 33 still retain livestock, while since 1945 between 35 and 40 have relinquished their livestock holdings. In the course of the decade from 1966 to 1976 the total herd of livestock declined by 20%.²² Furthermore, a survey of the active population in 1976 indicates that 31% were farmers, 38% were unskilled workers, 16% skilled workers, and 15% white-collar employees (Gariup 1977: 13; Steinicke 1984: 88).

The important role of timber resources in the overall subsistence strategies of Ukve's agrarian households should also be treated quantitatively. While less than 25% of the households keep livestock, approximately 80% retain their servitude rights in local forests and pastures administered by the state. This latter proportion is the maximum because of the legal stipulations governing these rights.²³ Servitude rights can however be sold back to the state for a remuneration which equals roughly 20 times the current estimated value of one annual quota of timber; but they cannot be transferred among private parties. In other Val Canale villages where the agrarian adaptation has been important, e.g., Žabnice/Camporosso, numerous original estates have sold these rights since World War II; no such sales have been made by Ukve estate holders.

In order to retain their servitude rights Ukve households must more or less regularly fell, strip and transport to the nearest motor road their annual quota of timber; or they must engage someone else to do this for them. In the very rugged and highly inaccessible terrain of much of the state forest this task remains relatively labor-intensive and requires considerable skill which is not taught in local schools but rather through local patterns of socialization. The various types of intermediate technology (mechanization) which have been adopted by local lumberjacks during recent decades are necessarily limited by the difficult working conditions on these rugged slopes. The skills and labor required for exploiting Ukve's forests are maintained and represented in numerous households which no longer retain livestock; and households without this labor resource hire lumberjacks in the village. While all Ukljani who are designated as "farmers" in the survey given above are lumberjacks, many of those designated as "skilled" or "unskilled workers," and even several "white-collar workers" (including the village priest) possess this skill and participate in the annual logging operations.

The retention of this sizeable group of lumberjacks in Ukve, as well as household servitude rights in the state forest, indicates a certain flagrant disregard for the sort of economic rationality which is commonly associated with modernization. Today there are numerous opportunities for employment which are far less physically demanding than work in the forest, and which pay equally well. Nonetheless Ukve continues to produce an adequate number of lumberjacks. Furthermore the sale of one's servitude rights would of course represent a very attractive sum of money which could likely finance the purchase of a car or some other large investment. While Ukljani are fully aware of these possibilities, they insist on retaining access to a resource which can ameliorate any unforeseen crisis situation; they retain a perspective on personal well-being which emphasizes the maintenance of their household's economic viability. As they might express it: "We are not going to cut off one of the legs on which we stand."

Conclusions

Attention is thus drawn to the significance of the family household as an economic enterprise in Ukve. Nearly all of the 110 remaining original estates currently house families—in some cases retired couples or single persons—who continue to own arable

land in the valley or mountains and who retain rights of use in the village's commons and in state-owned land. As a consequence of their membership in these "original" households individual Ukljani maintain control over a number of resources upon which they base their subsistence: timber, land, dwellings, and labor. As individuals however these household members control only the disposition of their labor. The particular interests of individuals are clearly subordinated to the overall goal of preserving the household unit as a viable 'family' enterprise.

Many of the individuals designated in the statistical survey as non-agrarian, which includes members of many of the households no longer retaining livestock, in fact keep up a lively interest in the local historical adaptation. They rent (rather than sell) their land to families which still keep livestock; they hire local lumberjacks or sell their own labor as lumberjacks to those village estates which do not have this resource. Furthermore the members of these apparently "non-agrarian" households remain active participants in the neighborhood association, as well as in the local group of holders of servitude rights.

This survey of Ukve's occupational structure does not account for the integration of individual Ukljani into household economies. The survey's focus upon "occupations" obscures an important pattern in both the historical and contemporary disposition of labor resources among active Ukljani. Their subsistence strategies emphasize the individual's participation in distinctly different productive activities which cannot reasonably be ascribed to a single occupation.²⁴

Even though the Ukve adaptation has undergone significant change in recent decades the question remains as to whether this is adequately described by the term "deagrarianization." Does this change represent a fundamental restructuring of the local subsistence regimen? I suggest that it does not. What is in fact changing in Ukve is the relative emphasis given to each of the various historical aspects of the local subsistence regimen.

There has been an absolute increase in the Ukljani's standard of living; and this is based upon numerous new employment opportunities within the valley²⁵ as well as the availability of low-cost loans and state subsidies for agrarian production in marginal districts.²⁶ Increased access to investment capital has thus made it possible to mechanize local agriculture and logging routines. As a result, an increasing number of active Ukljani have been able to devote much more of their time to various forms of wage labor than in the past; their households have become less dependent upon productive agrarian activities limited to the confines of their family estates.²⁷ In spite of this increased emphasis upon employment and wage work, this activity remains just one of several sources of income organized within most Ukve households; timber and the use or rental of arable land are the others.

In light of these considerations it is quite understandable that the Ukljani themselves do not perceive any radical break with the past, any radical change in their way of life. They have experienced relative prosperity since World War II and have associated this with values and convictions stemming from their historical adaptation. They have promoted tradition in the face of modernization by using the former as a vehicle for expressing their common interests in situations which have threatened the continuity of both their historical adaptation and the local village institutions which integrate them as a community.

NOTES

- * **Acknowledgements:** Toussaint Hočevar indicated to me, after reading a paper that I presented in Celovec/Klagenfurt (Minnich 1982), that it provided him with "a new and very refreshing approach" for investigating the matters of "tradition," "modernization" and "deagrarianization" (Hočevar 1983). Toussaint's encouragement and insightful commentary on that original paper have thus led to this revision, which stresses the analytical concepts which he found of interest. I am also especially indebted to Dr. Jakob Kándut (of Ukve and Trst/Trieste) for his critical reading of the original paper, and to Professor Jan-Petter Blom (University of Bergen) for his comments on a recent draft of this revision. The field research on which this paper is based was conducted over a period of 16 months between 1981 and 1985, and was funded by the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (N.A.V.F. project no. 12.51.32.037).
1. Since the majority of Ukve's inhabitants speak Slovene dialect, their "native" term for the village, *Ukve*, is used here rather than the Italian form *Ugovizza* or its German precursor *Uggovitz*.
 2. I.e., "the people of Ukve" in local Slovene dialect.
 3. The concept of "culture core" and the establishment of cultural ecology as a sub-discipline of anthropology are attributed to Julian Steward 1955; a thoughtful summary of the approach is provided in Chapters 6-7 of Bennett 1976.
 4. Bennett points out that the emphasis upon the investigation of "strategic action" in the study of adaptation represents a more recent development in cultural ecology which he identifies as "adaptive dynamics" (1976: 165). He notes that while cultural ecology was at first environmentally or culturally deterministic, it has "evolved into a modified systems approach, in which all factors can be equally strong candidates as causes" (1976:167).
 5. Environment is here understood as *both* physical and man-made; it consists of natural surroundings as well as social, cultural and other contingencies with which any given individual or group must cope in the course of adaptation.
 6. Census data indicate the following historical variation in Ukve's population (Rupel 1987: 42):

1869	1880	1890	1900	1910	1931	1936	1951	1961	1971	1981	1986
655	682	682	610	573	548	637	575	537	469	432	437
 7. The German term is given first since it is the most commonly used by Ukljani when speaking their vernacular.
 8. This is just one example of how the strategic revision of state borders following World War I failed to accommodate the interests of settlements located near these frontiers. In this case the highland commons controlled by villages on both sides of the Carnian ridge, in Gailtal and in Val Canale, were arbitrarily separated by the Austro-Italian frontier. Certain of the local border disputes stemming from 1920 remain unresolved today (Kándut 1982).
 9. In contrast to other settlements in the Gailtal and the Val Canale, the rather complete residential facilities of the Ukve highlands have made this a very real refuge from the valley in times of crisis, such as World War I when the villagers wintered in the highlands while the front was located along the nearby southern perimeter of the valley. Furthermore, a school was established in the highlands in 1892 and discontinued in 1925; this allowed the prolonged residence of school-age children in the highlands (Kándut 1983).
 10. It has been estimated that in 1939 approximately 80 highland estates (residence with accompanying meadow, pastures and/or forest) were in use (Rupel 1987: 28).
 11. See note 7.
 12. The institution of *Servitütsrechte* in Val Canale dates from the Middle Ages and the political control of the region by the Bishops of Bamberg (Steinicke 1984: 92). In a series of seven lectures broadcast by Radiotelevisione Italiana-Trieste in its Slovene language program ("Glas iz Kanalske doline") between Oct. 7, 1981 and Jan. 26, 1982, Jakob Kándut discussed thoroughly both the history and the significance of servitude rights for the people of Ukve.
 13. Gariup 1977: 11. Steinicke 1974: 89 indicates that seven hectares is the average size of holdings in the commune (Malborghetto-Valbruna) of which Ukve is part.
 14. Although quite passive in their dealings with formal political organizations, Ukljani tend to vote in a block for the Christian Democrats because they are popularly convinced that the patronage of this party is essential if they wish to receive decent pensions (Kándut 1983).
 15. This and other campaigns by Ukljani to retain their servitude rights are described in the series of lectures mentioned in note 12.

16. It is significant that the parish church is the only public institution in Ukve which encourages the maintenance of the local Slovene vernacular and which historically has locally promoted the Slovene literary language and heritage, cf. Minnich 1988: 131-133. Kándut 1983 indicates that the Aquileia Bishopric has accommodated the use of Slovene within the Ukve church parish since the year 814.
17. The symbolic demarcation of "local" identities and the correlation of this process with the social (functional) organization of marginal or peripheral communities (like Ukve) are central themes of two recent collections of articles on the British Isles, see Cohen 1982, 1986.
18. The "community" designated by the Ukve population is demarcated not only with regard to the functional integration of the local adaptation. As noted above, the demographic composition of the village contrasts with the rest of the valley with respect to the proportion of residents who trace their local origins to the period before 1920. This fact is also reflected by the retention locally of "indigenous" vernaculars (cf. also note 19). All of these factors serve to demarcate Ukve as a distinct social and cultural entity within encompassing society.
19. The vitality of these processes of socialization is attested to by the perpetuation of the Slovene vernacular in a village where compulsory public education and the affairs of a state society have been conducted in Italian codes since 1920.
20. Bausinger 1978: 211-19 applies this understanding of *Tradierung* in a discussion of identity formation.
21. It is significant that Ukljani have been far less responsive to initiatives which have sought to mobilize them with regard to the Slovene language as a "national" or "ethnic" symbol. Within the setting of Ukve there are no institutions of long standing which have, continuously since the rise of nationalism in this part of Europe, made this association of the local Slovene vernacular with a literate code denoting "national" identity (see Minnich 1988).
22. A historical comparison of the total cattle holdings between 1880 and 1985 reveals 500 and 300 respectively. A century ago sheep and goat holdings were considerable, *circa* 1800 head, whereas today they total no more than 100.
23. Data from Kándut 1981b; see also note 12. It is impossible for any local household to attain servitude rights which is not a direct heir to one of the remaining 110 village estates which existed in 1891 when these rights were last regulated and codified.
24. Galeski 1971: 180-201 discusses in detail the problem of "classifying" the peasant-farmer's labor according to categories suggested by the industrial division of labor. In order to illustrate the problem he analyzes the functional integration of the family farm as a household enterprise.
25. The number of locally-available jobs increased dramatically during the first half of this decade as a result of the construction of the *autostrada* through the valley.
26. Following the disastrous 1976 earthquake Ukljani were offered financial support and cheap loans which enabled many of them to renovate their dwellings. Furthermore, the local school and fire station which were destroyed by the earthquake have been rebuilt on the basis of donations from outside the village. All of this construction activity conveys an impression of material well-being which belies the relatively modest economic wherewithal which in fact characterizes most Ukve households.
27. It is now apparent in Ukve that a relatively small number of households have chosen to emphasize a relatively intensive form of animal husbandry, while many of the others keeping livestock have adopted a much more extensive type of husbandry which can be pursued with a reduced input of family labor. The former group of households rents meadow lands throughout the valley in order to expand their herds.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bausinger, Hermann. 1978. "Identität," 204-63 in H. Bausinger, U. Jeggle, G. Korff & M. Scharfe, eds., *Grundzüge der Volkskunde*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Bennett, John W. 1976. *The Ecological Transition: Cultural Anthropology and Human Adaptation*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Boegl, P. 1885. *Generelle Beschreibung der Herrschaft Föderau-Tarvis*. Tarvis.
- Burns, Robert K., Jr. 1963. "The Circum-Alpine cultural area: A preliminary view," *Anthropological Quarterly* 36/3: 130-55.
- Cohen, Anthony P. ed. 1982. *Belonging—Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures*. Manchester: Manchester UP.

- . ed. 1982. *Symbolising Boundaries—Identity and Diversity in British Cultures*. Manchester: Manchester UP.
- Fräss-Ehrfeld, Claudia. 1984. *Geschichte Kärntens. I. Das Mittelalter*. Klagenfurt: Heyn.
- Galeski, Boguslaw. 1971. "Sociological problems of the occupation of farmers," 180-201 in T. Shanin, ed., *Peasants and Peasant Societies*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Gariup, Mario. 1977. "Slovenci v okviru etnične, socialne in ekonomske strukture prebivalstva Kanalske doline na primeru Ukve, Ovčje vasi in Žabnic," 10-18 in *Venosi & Gariup 1977*.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1963. *Agricultural Involvement—The Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia*. Berkeley CA: U California P.
- Grafenauer, Bogo. 1975. "Kanalska dolina (ekonomski razvoj)," 110-18 in J. Jeri, ed., *Slovenci v Italiji po drugi svetovni vojni*. Ljubljana: ČGP Delo.
- Hočevar, Toussaint. 1983 [March 14]. Correspondence with the author.
- JOK. 1975. "Ukljani so bili vedno gospodarji," in *Ukve - Župnijski vestnik*, October 1975.
- Kándut, Jakob. 1981a. "Kanalska dolina - Ukve," ms.
- . 1981b. "Procesi za služnostne pravice," ms. from radio program presented on *Glas iz Kanalske doline*. Radiotelevisione Italiana, Oct. 21. 1981.
- . 1982. "Ku'adje," ms. from two radio programs presented on *Glas iz Kanalske doline*. Radiotelevisione Italiana, Jan. 14 & Jan 26, 1982.
- . 1983. Correspondence with the author, Jan. 20, 1983.
- Minnich, Robert G. 1982. "Adaptation and social identity in Ugovizza" [= "Prilagoditev in družbena identiteta v Ukvah," paper read at the 14th Conference *Koroški kulturni dnevi*, Klagenfurt/Celovec].
- . 1988. "Speaking Slovene—Being Slovene. Verbal codes and collective self-images: some correlations between Kanalska dolina and Ziljska dolina," *Slovene Studies* 10/2: 125-147.
- Rupel, Aldo. ed. 1987. *Tabor "Kanalska dolina 86"* [= 6. Mladinski raziskovalni tabor]. Trst/Trieste: SLORI & NŠK.
- Shanklin, Eugenia. 1981. "Two meanings and uses of tradition," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 37/1: 71-89.
- Shils, Edward. 1971. "Tradition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13: 122-59.
- Steinicke, Ernst. 1984. *Das Kanaltal - Sozialgeographie einer alpinen Minderheitenregion*. Innsbruck: Institut für Geographie der U Innsbruck.
- Steward, Julian. 1955. *Theory of Culture Change*. Urbana IL: U Illinois P.
- Venosi, Salvatore. 1977. "Slovenci v Kanalski dolini v luči poselitve od 7. stoletja dalje ter njihovega boja za obstoj," 2-9 in *Venosi & Gariup 1977*.
- & Mario Gariup. 1977. *Slovenci v Kanalski dolini* [= stencilled ms. from proceedings, Konferenca o etničnih in jezikovnih skupinah v Videmski pokrajini]. Trieste: Slovenski Raziskovalni Inštitut - Ukve/Ugovizza: Kulturno Društvo Lepi Vrh.

POVZETEK

TRADICIJE PROTI MODERNIZACIJI: KULTURNA KONTINUITETA IN 'DEAGRARIZACIJA' V UKVAH

Splošno upadanje kmetijstva med domačim prebivalstvom v vasi Ukve v Kanalski dolini v tem stoletju daje misliti, da se je vas "deagrarizirala", kar pomeni, da se njena "tradicionalna skupnost" naglo umika "modernizaciji". V članku avtor skuša kritično pretehtati primernost teh treh izrazov za oznako te vrste sprememb v vasi. V svoji analizi kulturne kontinuitete v Ukvah uporablja koncepta "kulturne baze" (culture core) in "prilagoditve" (adaptation), kot ju poznamo iz strokovnega besedišča kulturne ekologije. V analizi kot taki pa se avtor ustavlja ob orisu in primerjavi adaptivnih strategij, ki se jih poslužujejo Ukljani v soočanju s stalno se spreminjajočim fizičnim in družbenim okoljem, od katerega so materialno odvisni. Samo tako avtorju uspe izluščiti dinamični vidik tega, kar nam navadno velja za "konservativnost" ali "tradicionalnost" marginalnih agrarnih skupnosti, kot jo imamo v Ukvah.