ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION AND THE IMAGE OF LIMITED GOOD IN THE FRENCH ALPS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper tests the applicability of Foster's (1965, 1967, 1972) Image of Limited Good to the traditional peasantry of the French Alps, using the memory culture of informants in the Valley of Barcelonnette and documentation covering the region as a whole from the twelfth through the nineteenth centuries.

Foster takes the defensive Image of Limited Good as a model for the cognitive orientation of traditional peasants everywhere, contrasting it with the aggressive orientation of Western industrial society, as modeled by McClelland's (1963) n Achievement. I will show that both the Image of Limited Good and n Achievement were present in the cognitive orientation of the traditional peasants of the French Alps, the first as a defensive summer strategy for subsistence agriculture on submarginal mountain holdings, and the second as an aggressive winter strategy for the exploitation of cash markets in the plains. In conclusion, I will suggest that, if the Image of Limited Good is to be made to apply to the French Alps as a model of traditional peasant cognitive orientation, then it must be reinterpreted to embrace not only the defensive interpretation given it by Foster, but an aggressive interpretation entailing n Achievement as well.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURE

In the French Alps nine-tenths of the land is unfit for cultivation. The good soil is scattered about in sloping, alluvial pockets filled with rocks and subject to the floods, slides, and avalanches which the extreme and variable climate makes frequent and damaging. Cultivating such sloping, rocky ground takes more energy than cultivating good soil in the plains. Cultivation also increases the tendency of the surface to slide downward under gravity, so that periodically more energy must be spent bringing the soil back up again. Additional energy, unnecessary in lowland cultivation, must be expended in simply climbing from plot to plot.

The high relief, with its quick changes of level and the depth of its erosion features, breaks every peasant holding into tiny, isolated parcels whose integration into an efficient enterprise is difficult. It also fragments the land by differentially affecting its relationship to the sun, whose heat is most intense on the southern slopes, where its rays strike normal to the ground, and least on the northern slopes, where they lie parallel. The exposition pattern is like a crazy quilt, torn and patched still further by the shadows that cliffs and peaks make, shadows which in some cases rob the surface of sunlight for months at a time. The resulting mosaic of microclimates does not yield the scale benefits associated with agriculture in the plains.

To these difficulties from broken relief must be added others stemming from the climate. In their study of rural problems in the Alps Cépède and Abensour (1961) write:

> The long winter reduces the growing and active working season very considerably. It means that land at high altitudes has to be left lying fallow. The fact that the sowings for the coming year have to be done before the crops for the current year have been harvested makes it impossible to cultivate the same piece of land for two successive years. Consequently, this halves the usable arable land. It also means that livestock must be kept in sheds for many long months and obliges the mountain farmers to gather in great quantities of hay during a very short summer. The endless winter without work was, not so very long ago, one of the main causes of winter emigration, which had instilled in the mountain people the habit of migrating.

Acknowledgement: In 1964-65, as Foster's student at Berkeley and predoctoral fellow of the NIH, I studied social cohesion in the Valley of Barcelonnette. I returned to the same area in 1970-1971 while teaching at the University of Provence and with some financial aid from a small NIH grant.

Winter is no colder in the French Alps than in Minnesota, but crop agriculture is confined to summer, which is as short and cool as the summers of northern Norway. Summer is therefore a season "during which the mountain people are overloaded with all sorts of conflicting tasks: tilling the soil, harvesting the hay, driving their livestock to the mountain pastures. Their work day is endless, and they get practically no rest, especially when the weather is bad" (Cépède and Abensour, 1961).

Sometimes an early rain will fall on late snow, bringing the snowpack down the river in a few hours, or a cloudburst will drive a torrent of mud through dozens of dams, wiping out fields, roads, canals, bridges, and buildings, or a frost will settle on the land in the middle of summer, killing the crops. As one of my informants pointed out, such prospects make cropping for cash highly problematical:

> The damage done by frost limits what you can grow. Take fruit, for example. Of course, there's some for the cultivator himself—a little just for the fun of it—but you don't dare speculate on fruit. Why? Because you can count on damage one year in three. And you don't dare truck garden. Even the potatoes suffer from the frost. On the 10th of July, 1954, the potatoes were completely destroyed. That's not every year, certainly, but it's frequent. The cereals also suffer. Usually the earliest to flower is the rye. If there's a frost, it loses its kernels, and you either have to cut it for forage or accept a dead loss. Even the grass sometimes gets damaged. You have years where the grass is rotten at the first mowing. But we suffer just as much from drought. In the dry years you have a fifty percent reduction in hay. There isn't enough water in the smaller streams to irrigate with, and there are few reservoirs here for handling such variations. During the last war there was a period of great dryness, with a catastrophic drop in the forage. The livestock were reduced to two-thirds or a half of what they had been.

The roads, buildings, and other structures essential to agriculture are as vulnerable as the crops, and they are more expensive to build and maintain than equivalent structures in the plains. In his *memoire* on Alpine transport and communication, Neuville (1955) writes that:

> in general one can estimate the construction cost of a mountain road at twenty or thirty times that of a road on flat terrain running in a straight line between two points. Indeed, the length of the bed is often four or five times the straight distance, while the price per kilometer has to be multiplied by four or five, taking into account the associated structures. . . . Maintenance is fifty or a hundred times more difficult. . . . As to transport, . . . , one can evaluate the cost, still with respect to an ideally straight passage, at more than a hundredfold. Even calculating by kilometer actually travelled, which does not really face the problem, the cost of travelling on an average mountain road proves to be three or four times greater than on an average road in the plains.

It should be clear from this array of facts that the French Alpine cultivator had little chance of competing on an equal footing with lowland cultivators. As Cépède and Abensour (1961) conclude, "FAO's study on economic and social conditions of the population in the Alps has shown that this may be considered a relatively underdeveloped region and that *as a result of technological and economic evolution this fact will become more and more pronounced*" (my italics).

I have italicized the last clause because it gets to the heart of the problem: the French Alpine difficulties were *not* due to peasant backwardness, but to an inescapable principle of the free market economy according to which ingenuity and enterprise tend *not to reduce, but to increase* the inequalities between regions, for what works well under disadvantage works even better under advantage.

INTERREGIONAL COMPETITION AND RESISTANCE TO EMIGRATION

The Swedish economist Myrdal (1957) discusses this principle, pointing out that, contrary to the

presuppositions of traditional economics, there are no countervailing forces called into play by the free market itself to undo, or compensate for, regional inequalities:

> The main idea I want to convey is that the play of the forces of the market normally tends to increase, rather than decrease, the inequalities between regions. If things were left to market forces unhampered by any policy interferences, industrial production, commerce, banking, insurance, shipping, and, indeed, almost all those economic activities which in a developing economy tend to give bigger than average . . . would cluster in certain localities and regions, leaving the rest of the country more or less in a backwater.

Mydral then brings his argument to bear upon agriculture itself. In the poorer regions, " . . . not only manufacturing industries and other nonagricultural pursuits but agriculture itself show a much lower level of productivity than in the richer regions."

In the French Alps, it cost more to produce agricultural goods in the mountains than in the plains, and the disparity increased as technology improved. In the lowland market place, therefore, the highlander had to accept a smaller return, perhaps even a loss. By Myrdal's argument, this fact should have led to voluntary highland emigration; however, for hundreds of years the French Alpine peasants resisted emigration. Then, in the twentieth century, they began leaving in such numbers that, had the vacation trade not intervened, the mountains would have been depopulated. Why did Myrdal's argument concerning emigration hold for the twentieth century, but not before? Why, for that matter, had the mountains been so heavily populated in the first place?

In the early Middle Ages, before the rise of the modern market economy, the French Alps were at least as densely populated as the adjacent lowlands, because they served as a refuge from the military turmoil of the plains. In those days, political conflict was the important factor, not economic competition. It was political consolidation, bringing peace and restoring trade, that stimulated the lowland competitive advantage to assert itself. The population of the plains thereupon expanded. But why did not the mountain population then decline? Leaving aside the demographic collapse of the fourteenth century, it remained almost stationary, even rising somewhat, although only a little, because, writes Baratier (1961), while

> the Alps probably retained a high birth rate and a mild death rate, their resources did not permit them to support an enlarged population, for we note, from as early as the Middle Ages, the phenomenon of the seasonal migration, foretelling definitive departures. Once peace had been reestablished and its economy restored, Basse Provence naturally attracted the overflow from the mountains . . . After the drainage and irrigation works of the sixteenth century, the plains of the West, the Rhone Valley, and the coastal zone, where economic life was more and more flourshing, offered expanding resources to an always more numerous population. Right up until the eighteenth century, the population density kept rising in Basse Provence, while it remained almost stationary or increased but little in the high country. In our days, the mountains have been almost completely depopulated at the expense of the great coastal cities.

French Alpine population did not decline, save as a result of the fourteenth century, because there was a noneconomic factor at work leading the peasants to resist emigration. They resisted, because descending to the plains without property meant losing their status as *independent* owner-cultivators. It meant becoming *proletaires*, living at the beck and call of others, losing one's self-respect. Life in the plains was not then what it would become in the twentieth century with industrial expansion and the personal security brought by the welfare state, when the peasants would at last emigrate without fear and almost in a body. Jobs were few, job seekers many, and more often than not, *proletaires* went begging.

But as population rose in the Alps and the peasant householders were pushed beyond the break-even point, they made a compromise, descending willingly into the plains each winter as *proletaires* in order to avoid having to do so permanently. The French economist Briot (1896) tells us that in 1823 a Briançon statistician

> calculated the budget of a rural family in each of the five cantons of the arrondissement. Basing his estimates only on local resources, he found an excess of expenditures over

> receipts variable from 310 to 54 francs per household, except in the canton of Briançon itself, where there was a balance. He deduced from this the impossibility of living without the proceeds of the winter emigration.

That the winter migration was indeed a response to overpopulation is suggested by Baratier (1961), who calls attention to its apparent disappearance during the demographic collapse of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, its reappearance during the population expansion of the sixteenth century, and its culmination during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when population had recovered, or even surpassed, its thirteenth century values.

The vestiges of peasant resistance to emigration are still visible at Barcelonnette, where, a thousand feet above the town, a line of abandoned hamlets runs around the valley at the high water mark of permanent settlement. In earlier times these hamlets were temporary abodes for work in the summer pastures. Then, as population rose, they became the permanent homes of peasants who tried to grow grain even above the timberline, right up, as one observer put it, to the limits of common sense. In the twentieth century these highest and least viable holdings were the first to be abandoned, and it is not surprising to learn that the largest contingent of seasonal migrants came from the higher settlements. It is as though the valley were circled, somewhere between its floor and the surrounding peaks, by a kind of break-even line, above which costs always exceeded revenues in crop raising.

REDUCTION IN THE SIZE OF HOLDINGS

The winter migration and the upward extension of cultivation were not the only effects of the peasants' reluctance to emigrate. Even at the lower altitudes, holdings tended to become marginal, because family lands were divided at inheritance, or because pieces of property had to be detached and sold in order not to lose everything.

In his investigation of the nineteenth-century distribution of real property in the French Alps, Vigier (1963) found that the cantons and communes of the Valley of Barcelonnette closely approached either the commune-type of *Aiguilles* in Hautes-Alpes or that of *Saint-Julien-en-Quint* in the Drôme:

Aiguilles covered 3,846 hectares, of which 1,890 were pastures and moors, 1,071 woods, 559 meadows, and only 307 cultivable land. The woods, pastures, and some of the meadows belonged to the commune, while the remaining 801 hectares were divided among 336 individual proprietors. Sixty-four of the individual properties were from 2 to 4 hectares, only ten larger than 10, and none larger than 15. Vigier notes the "great importance of communal property," the "total absence of large holdings," and the "overwhelming preponderance of small holdings." Then he goes on to sketch the commune:

> Aiguilles is the very type of the high mountain commune with its principal settlement in the valley, where the cultivable land is also found, easily watered thanks to a network of well-maintained canals; here we find agricultural enterprises of very modest dimensions . . . and fragmented into a great number of microscopic parcels; also the value of land here is very, even too high. On the other hand, the great slopes which dominate the valley, rising to 3,000 meters and forming the larger part of the communal territory, comprise the domain of meadows, woods, and pastures, belonging in large part to the commune itself. Certainly these little owner-cultivators cannot live entirely on the produce of their holdings. Not only is the revenue they have always drawn from the communal property indispensable to them, but the largest number must look to the winter migration for a needed supplement to their resources; and, indeed, the Inquest of 1848 emphasizes the precarious situation of the inhabitants of the canton. It is therefore the *small property and the small enterprise, not sufficient to the owner-cultivator's own need* that dominates at Aiguilles. Only a dozen or so "middle cultivators," with holdings of 10 to 15 hectares, are able–thanks essentially to the products of their flocks (raised in part on the communal lands)–to meet their own needs, or to furnish temporary employment to the few agricultural workers in the commune.

At Saint-Julien-en-Quint, the second commune-type, the woods and high pastures were privately, rather than communally, owned, giving the average holding a larger size and carrying a few into the category of larger properties. But, Vigier cautions, "these larger holdings–larger by area–are properties laid out on sterile

ground. So much so that, even in these last communes, it is above all the small property that characterizes the arrondissement–and with it, the necessity for the largest part of the mountaineers to find other sources of income, particularly through migration to distant places."

In sum, the winter migration of the French Alpine peasants was more than a way of conserving household resources and using excess labor. It was a vigorous defense of the status of land ownership, threatened by agricultural submarginality and competitive economic disadvantage. As such, it formed part of an integrated economic strategy also embracing mountain subsistence agriculture. It remains to show that these two substrategies–subsistence agriculture and the winter migration–were diametrically opposed, the first defensively constrained by the Image of Limited Good, the second aggressively oriented towards achievement.

THE DUAL ECONOMY

Had both population density and the price of land been low enough, the fields of the Alps might have been used for forage, turning the mountain peasant into a specialist in "grass farming and stock raising," as agricultural experts like Cépède and Abensour (1961) have consistently recommended. There had to be some stock raising, anyway, since the animals were needed for their manure. Much of the wool, hide, milk, and meat used or sold was simply a by-product of the manure-generating process, but a by-product which also made good trade items, easy to move over the trails, relatively durable (milk as cheese, meat on the hoof), of high value by weight, and amenable to the adding of value through cottage industry. Moreover, stock could be raised on the otherwise useless moors and the grasslands too high for cultivation. Great numbers of animals were placed on these grasslands every summer, then stabled for the winter at lower elevations, where they were fed on hay taken from the grasslands by limiting summer grazing or from cultivable land by restricting subsistence crops.

A small population specializing in the raising of stock might have been able to trade highland animals for lowland subsistence goods at no competitive disadvantage, pitting the cheapness and abundance of mountain land against lowland productivity. But population was never that low and land never that abundant or cheap. A unit of land cultivated for cash must always have been less productive in subsistence terms than the same unit cultivated for subsistence directly, and so the French Alpine peasant, whether poor or well-to-do, practiced a *dual economy*, with one segment for cash and another for subsistence. Moreover, since the caloric yield of livestock per hectare is lower than grain, his subsistence economy was focused on crops, and he made an effort to confine the animals he needed to the uncultivable communal grasslands.

True, he did have to commit some of his crop land to hay for the winter stable, but to deliberately extend the growing of forage for the cash economy into subsistence land was counterproductive, because purchase of the displaced subsistence goods cost more cash than was gained. If he could not confine his animals to the communal lands, therefore, he would give up stock raising for the market and turn for cash to the export of his excess winter labor.

Should even the proceeds and economies of the winter migration prove insufficient, he would be forced to borrow from the well-to-do peasants at rates of interest understandably high in this land where, in line with Myrdal's argument, capital investment yielded almost nothing. Such borrowing, looked on with a kind of horror in the Alpine valleys, often meant the beginning of a downward slip, first into local dependency, and then into the lowland proletariat.

STOCK RAISING AND TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURE

Exclusion of most of the peasants from the livestock trade was inevitable in the long run, because, with population rising, less and less communal land was available for nonsubsistence purposes. But this eventually was forestalled by the passage of control of the communal lands into the hands of a few well-to-do peasants. Thérèse Sclafert (1959) has noted the beginning of this change in the mountain valleys, when, after the demographic collapse of the fourteenth century,

> a new conception of stockraising appeared: they began to admit foreign flocks to their territories, and even to call for them, whereas during the course of earlier centuries the rural population had shown the most violent hostility to livestock coming from the outside. Thus, in 1386, the men of Barles . . . got Queen Marie to grant them full liberty to rent, sell and lease their mountain pastures to foreign flocks. A few years later (1391), the inhabitants of Colmars asked the Count to authorize the renting of their pastures to outside stockmen.

This admission of foreign flocks would limit the capacity of the peasants to expand their own flocks by depriving them of pasture not only in the mountains, but also in the plains, where they had been accustomed to take their animals during the winter months. Dealing in livestock was to become highly competitive, demanding not only wealth in stables and hay, or in lowland winter pasture, but sophistication in affairs. In a metaphor on Myrdal's argument, control of the trade would pass into the hands of already favored few.

Sclafert uses the minutes of a sixteenth century notary at Barcelonnette to show the bias in favor of the well-to-do in the way the communal pastures were leased: "Each year they were put up for auction by the consuls. Those who acquired them were inhabitants of Barcelonnette or its hamlets: merchants, notaries, stockmen rich enough to pay in Italian gold crowns of four florins each." In short, it was the notables who controlled the local cash economy, those with know-how and connections. For the most part, they were ambitious and successful peasants, Vigier's "middle cultivators" turned manipulators and money lenders. In the seventeenth century, for example, there were from 40 to 70 notaries in the Valley of Barcelonnette. Wrote Françios Arnaud (1897), himself a notary of the town: "It seems impossible that sixteen notaries could have lived at Revel and Méolans, where in our days one alone has great trouble making ends meet. Most of these notaries were well-to-do inhabitants who had bought the title in order to enjoy the substantial privileges associated with it, but who acted little or not at all." That is, they acted little in the "technical" sense associated with the notariat, but they were experts in negotiation. Certain lucrative public offices were limited to notaries, who acted also as the financial representatives of private citizens, managing affairs, negotiating contracts, and lending money. These were the people who monopolized what little industry was present in the mountains. They were achievement oriented, and their presence among the peasants of the Alps raises in itself a question about Foster's model.

The well-to-do were not, however, like the poorer peasants, compelled to embrace the Image of Limited Good in subsistence agriculture. With more cultivable land than needed, they could, if they wished, convert the excess to still more stock raising, increase their cash, and buy more land. But, as Vigier (1963) observes, "the relatively high cost of land compared to the income one can derive from it has always dissuaded the owners of capital from acquiring real property in the mountain ranges." This must have been especially true in the case of men whose negotiative know-how and lowland business contacts offered them far more lucrative investment opportunities in the plains. Which may in part explain the scarcity of large holdings in the Alps noted by Vigier, for sooner or later, the well-to-do emigrated to the lowland regions at an acceptable, landowning level of status.

The poorer peasants had to behave differently. With too little subsistence land, they could not gain cash from stock raising. The winter emigration was an attempt to compensate, but their dual economy could fail *either* if they were insufficiently aggressive in the plains or caught off guard in the mountains. Since the two economic segments were linked, maximizing gains in the one was no more critical than minimizing losses in the other. The poorer mountain peasants therefore practiced "traditional agriculture," the kind of agriculture Foster associates with the Image of Limited Good.

In the French Alps, traditional agriculture was (a) a *refuge* economy, geared to avoid the consumer pitfalls of the plains; (b) a *deficit* economy, whose losses had to be paid for in hard-earned cash, and whose goal was less to make a profit than to minimize losses; and (c) a *zero-sum* economy, in which the success of some peasants entailed the failure of other.

With too few subsistence resources and too little cash, the poorer French Alpine peasants had to use every factor to the break-even point and cut consumption to the bone. Since there was no margin for error, taking risks was suicidal. The best strategy was to cleave to the tried and true, eschew innovation, and dodge

the kind of social relationships that might give others a lien on one's property. Occasional modifications of the system—irrigation, fertilizers, and so on—failed to solve the problem of regional disadvantage, for the same improvements worked even better in the lowlands. Traditional agriculture was a hopeless affair. At best it delayed the inevitable. But the delay was worthwhile, because it gave the peasants time to put down roots elswhere through the winter migration.

In sum, economic disadvantage led the mountain peasant to stock raising for cash and crop raising for subsistence, but control of the communal lands by the well-to-do and continuing overpopulation forced the poorer peasants to abandon stock raising and turn to the winter migration for cash. Their subsistence economies, now operating at a deficit, had to be managed so as to minimize losses.

THE WINTER MIGRATION

In his preliminary view of the European highlands as a culture area, Burns (1963) notes the dualism of the Alpine economy, finding its rationale in the winter dead season and in "the relatively precarious, marginal nature of Alpine mixed farming. Thus, for centuries—alternating with the subsistence focus for summer—the activities of the winter season have effectively constituted a second, supplemental economy, oriented wholly to the external market."

He then describes two distinct but related aspects of winter economy, "cottage industries and migration," observing that:

> against this background, past and present, of artisan skills, urban contacts, marketing and small shopkeeping, the Alpine peasant emerges as a quasi-bourgeois. Other upland patterns in sociopolitical organization and education . . . lend further support to the characterization. . . . The peasant's complete overt conversion to the urban mode of life is a very real potentiality as has been borne out by the pattern of emigration from the uplands over the past century and a half. Armed with a certain cultural flexibility, he even tends to sidestep the urban wage labor force (or to disengage himself from it rather quickly) and to enter directly into entrepreneurial acitivities more easily than emigrant peasants from other areas. As an illustration as well as a confirmation of his tendency in this regard, the Alpine uplander has a national reputation, in both France and Italy, for unusual success in both business and politics.

For historical documentation, Burns turned to the geographer Blanchard, whose study of Aiguilles (1922) had led him to investigate the winter migration generally, tracing it, as did Baratier, back to the Middle Ages. By the early nineteenth century, the winter migration pattern was so well established that Villeneuve De Bargemont (1815) found at Fours that "no one remains except the elders, the sick, the women, and the very young children," the men traveling north through Burgundy to Belgium, Holland, and even Scandinavia (Provence, 1931). In the course of its development, the seasonal trek everywhere changed its nature from begging and labor to such ambulatory trades as umbrella-fixing or knife-sharpening, and finally to commerce and shopkeeping.

In his later work Blanchard (1956) concluded, as I did also after listening to my Barcelonnette informants, that throughout Alpine history the seasonal migration had often served as a springboard for permanent emigration:

> The emigrant who finds himself each year once again in the milder climate of the lowlands, who lives there in a more open economy, where money is more plentiful and easier to come by, makes comparisons unfavorable to his native country. 'Used to the more fertile lowlands,' the Queyrassins are already telling the fifteenth century commissioner, 'and having compared their wealth to the poverty awaiting them on high, they no longer want to tear themselves away.' Moreover, from their constant voyaging, such people have acquired the habits of uprootedness. The foreign no longer frightens them. They are familiar with the low countries they visit each year, have established relations there, and are already acclimated, so that a light jolt is enough to fix them in place. What can one say of those who have opened a prosperous shop and accustomed themselves to

> prolonged absences but that one day or another the bond holding them to the village will be broken. Reinforced by such observations, we repeat without hesitation that the seasonal displacement prepares the way for emigration.

Of course, in order to avoid becoming an emigrant permanently, the Alpine peasant had to accept becoming one temporarily. In this context, Chatelanin (1970) has distinguished the temporary from the permanent *proletaire.* How, he asks, can we classify as uprooted those

> who temporarily migrate for the purpose of avoiding the abandonment of their homes and villages? It is precisely this phenomenon of regular displacements which forestalls definitive departures. The fact that lots of rural migrants are found in the 'slums' does not at all imply that they are poor and that they belong to the lowest levels of the social hierarchy. Among them are landowners with property in the sun of the Alps, the Massif Central, or the plains of Lorraine, and who own flocks. If they migrate it is so as not to remain unoccupied during the long bad season; it is to secure some cash (because they sell very little of their agricultural production); it is to economize their funds so as better to 'hold' during the periods of difficulty. If they go into the 'slums,' it is to spend as little as possible and to bring home the greatest gain at season's end.

François Arnaud (1891) has documented the winter migration from the Valley of Barcelonnette, where he found it associated in the seventeenth century with the expansion of the local textile industries, whose production in excess of valley needs laid the basis for winter cloth peddling, first in the adjacent lowlands of the Dauphiné, Provence, and Piedmont, and then all the way from Burgundy to the Baltic. Villeneuve de Bargemont (1815) found that it was "the poorer class that always left the country," and he was told by one returning party that the winter migration permitted them "to pay their taxes and enlarge their tiny capital," while Frémont-Garnier (1822) observed that the cash brought back in spring "forms the larger part of the money to be found in the valley." The natives told him that roughly a fifth of the migrants either died en route or settled down permanently in some lowland country, and Arnaud (1891) estimated that three-fourths of the Barcelonnette heads of household were emigrating during this period: "Some remained a long time on the road, settling down and sinking roots. Take the annuaries of Bruges, Breda, Amsterdam, Dijon and you will find there, in the highest ranks of commerce, the Ricauds, the Arnauds, the Goins, the Jauffreds, the Manuels of Fours; at Lyon the biggest house of silks . . . came from Sauze d'Enchastrayes."

During the early nineteenth century, several Barcelonnettes found their way to Mexico, where they set up a number of retail stores in cloth goods, calling out others from the valley to help them. Family, village, and valley networks underlay the rapid expansion of the venture, which by mid-century had branched into the wholesale trade and by century's end had founded 110 houses of commerce in Mexico and would eventually go on to textile manufacturing and banking. By the turn of the century, half the young men of the valley were going to Mexico, and overpopulation was no longer a problem.

EDUCATION AS A STRATEGY

Obviously, the French Alpine peasants' winter orientation was not of the defensive and conservative sort detailed by Foster, but rather an achievement orientation based on belief in hard work, thrift, and the quest of opportunity. Their focus on achievement is perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in the stress they laid on education. This is one of the ten Alpine traits outlined by Burns (1963), who writes of "the longstanding emphasis placed by much of the upland society on literacy, formal schooling, and municipally financed systems of public education. The pattern is one which is extremely well-documented over a period of more than five hundred years in some sectors."

Coste (1932) writes that the public schools of the Valley of Barcelonnette can be traced back to the beginning of the sixteenth century, when "each of the communities maintained—on its own budget, or by virtue of legacies—at least one permanent and absolutely free primary school. And from the fifteenth century it was the custom, even in the tiniest hamlets, to provide temporary winter schools from All Saints' Day to Easter."

In 1646 a collège was endowed for the use of the entire valley and located at Barcelonnette. Its meaning to the mountaineers was made clear by the people themselves, who, during the Revolution, after the collège had been seized and closed, and when it was heard that Paris was considering founding such schools itself, took quick action:

> The Municipal Council of Barcelonnette was immediately convened and insistently pleaded for the installation of a secondary school in the arrondissement of Barcelonnette as an establishment of absolute necessity: '1. because, until 1792, it had always had a college to compensate for the poverty which left nine-tenths of its people unable to send their children to be educated on the outside; 2. because the region, having, from the rigor of its climate, very narrow and infinitely uncertain territorial resources, public instruction opened avenues into private industry, as well as into the liberal professions; 3. *because this is the only means which gives to those who are forced to leave their homes the hope of living honorably in better countries*, and because it is the only thing that can save them from the capriciousness of fortune' (My italics; Arnaund, 1893).

Villeneuve de Bargemont (1815) reported that even in remote corners of the valley most of the peasants were literate, Frémont-Granier (1822) made a similar observation: "They almost all know the Civil Code. It is their favorite reading matter. And when necessary they can draught a few legal acts–something, it is true, which gives them a taste for chicanery. It is without a doubt for this reason that their neighbors call them the lawyers."

Bérgèse (1959) tells us that an 1848 commission found 90% of the natives, men and women, able to read and write. The valley was a veritable nest of priests and school teachers. By mid-century, with only 7% of the department's population, it was furnishing 63% of the teachers. As Burns indicates, the story was similar in the Queyras and throughout the high French Alps in general. Yet these were among the poorest, most remote, and most agriculturally backward regions of France, accessible only by mule pack well into the nineteenth century.

In sum, it is clear that both the poor and the well-to-do peasants of the French Alps were imbued with the spirit of Western capitalism, the first as promoters in the plains, the second as negotiators in the mountains themselves. Moreover, both types can be traced all the way back to the Middle Ages. To pay their taxes, the French Alpine peasants had to earn cash in lowland markets where the cost of mountain agriculture put them at a disadvantage. But since emigrating without property meant falling into the proletariat, they overpopulated the Alps, thereby reducing the quality of their holdings and increasing their disadavantage.

Population was too high to permit specialization in stock raising, the least disadvantaged form of highland agriculture, so the peasants raised stock for cash and for subsistence raised crops, which have a higher caloric yield per hectare. As population continued to rise, and as a few well-to-do peasants gained control of both the non-cultivable grasslands, the livestock trade, and negotiation in general, the subsistence lands of the poorer peasants became submarginal, forcing them to avoid further risks in mountain agriculture and to minimize losses, while turning from stock raising to the winter migration for cash.

In mountain agriculture the poorer peasant had something of value to lose through incaution and carelessness, but nothing at all in the seasonal migration to the plains, where he had no rights and could gain nothing without application and resourcefulness. The strategic demands on him in the two areas were therefore antithetical: above, he was an insider, warding off aggression, below, an outsider and himself the aggressor. In the plains he had to push, scheme, and finagle or go home half-starved and cashless. If he schemed well and pushed effectively, he would not only save his highland property, but also lay the groundwork for his own ultimate "status salvation" by acquiring the lowland connections and expertise that would one day make possible emigration on his own terms.

For hundreds of years, n Achievement in the lowlands and the Image of Limited Good in traditional highland agriculture made up the tried-and-true cognitive orientation of the French Alpine peasantry.

CONCLUSION

I have shown that the French Alpine peasantry both did and did not conform to Foster's model. This

paradox arises because Foster really presents two models, one of cognitive orientation—the Image of Limited Good—and the other of socioeconomic behavior, what Foster (1976:310ff) calls "peasant behavior as a function of the 'Image of Limited Good.'" The second model, he tells us, has two variants: "People who see themselves in 'threatened' circumstances, which the Image of Limited Good implies, react normally in one of two ways: maximum cooperation and sometimes communism, *burying individual differences and placing sanctions against individualism*; or extreme individualism" (My italics). He then adds that "peasant societies seem always to choose the second alternative," perhaps because they neither need to cooperate nor harbor the kind of leadership which cooperation requires. Foster adds that such individualism has antisocial consequences and then postulates three kinds of "self-correcting mechanisms that guard the community balance": an "individual and family action" mechanism based on discretion, and two kinds of *group* action, one informal and unorganized—entailing gossip, back-biting, witchcraft, and the charivari—and the other institutionalized in the form of social pressures leading to the redistribution of wealth through ritual extravagance. The last is a cooperative, rather an individualistic strategy, which involves "burying individual differences and placing sanctions against individualism." Thus, the individualistic and cooperative tendencies in Foster's "classic" peasant society are pitted against one another to generate a kind of developmental "stalemate" or equilibrium.

If one asks what could take place, given the individualistic response alone, one could well say it would be economic differentiation. The individualistic response to the Image of Limited Good vertically differentiates society in terms of wealth, particularly wealth in land, rewarding those who have the competence, drive, and will to brave disapproval in order to make "significant economic progress," even though they "do so at the expense of others." But this process is precisely what Foster (1967:320) associates with n Achievement when he speaks about peasant resistance to change and the prerequisites of development:

> The breaks on change are less psychological than social. Show the peasant that initiative is profitable, and that it will not be met by negative sanctions, and he acquires it in short order. This is, of course, what is happening in the world today. Those who have known peasant villagers over a period of years have seen how the old sanctions begin to lose their power. Local entrepreneurs arise in response to the increasing opportunities of expanding national economies, and emulative urges, with the city as the model, appear among these people. *The successful small entrepreneurs begin to see that the ideal of equality is inimical to their interests, and presently they neither seek to conceal their well being nor to distribute their wealth through traditional patterns of ritual extravagance. N Achievement bursts forth in full vitality in a few leaders, and others see the rewards and try to follow suit* (Italics mine).

Thus for Foster also, n Achievement leads to economic differentiation as the leveling mechanisms break down and the attitude of "each against all" is permitted to express itself aggressively. But this means that n Achievement and the Image of Limited Good are compatible. However, if n Achievement is compatible with the Image of Limited Good, how can its antithesis in traditional agriculture also be compatible?

The answer, I believe, is that achievement orientation is aggressive; traditional agriculture defensive. The winter migrant in the French Alps was a businessman driving to penetrate a new market, the mountain cultivator a businessman endeavoring to cut the losses of a bad venture. The rules of the game were the same in both cases, but the situations and the strategies were different. The "classic" peasant, tied to a free market economy, was constrained to follow strategies which, if variable, were nevertheless proper to such an economy. Therefore both peasant and bourgeois are guided by the Image of Limited Good in their mutually competitive quests after *scarce goods*. Indeed, Foster's description of the "classic" peasant's defensive reaction reads like the "businessman's" behavior in a tight market: "extreme caution and reserve, a reluctance to reveal true strength or position," "suspicion and mutual distrust, since things will not necessarily be what they seem to be," and so on. In fact, Foster's "classic" peasantry may be another aspect of the free market economy, like Lewis' (1966) *Culture of Poverty*, a dependent socioeconomic structure spawned by the kind of regional inequality Myrdal's argument considers. This would seem to have been the case in the French Alps, where the peasantry, though better educated, more "citified," and more enterprising than their lowland counterparts, were also poorer and more agriculturally backward. In any event, while the cognitive orientation of the French

Alpine peasantry included the Image of Limited Good, it did not, as Foster supposed, exclude n Achievement, but included them both.

In conclusion, I would make the following points:

1. The French Alpine peasantries were not "transitional," but constituted a well-defined and long-established "classic" type in Foster's sense, a type characterized by intense economic dichotomization into traditional agriculture for subsistence and the winter migration for cash, each of the two subeconomies being associated with its own strategy, defensive in the first case, aggressive and achievement oriented in the second.

2. Both strategies were variants of a single orientation, the Image of Limited Good, which is here taken as the point of view fundamental to the competition for scarce goods, which Foster himself links to the "classic" peasantries.

3. The dual economy of the French Alps, with its contrasting defensive and aggressive strategies, was the product of compulsory participation in regional market economies, within which the Alpine peasant's sub-economies were grossly disadvantaged. He accepted this lopsided competition only to stave off eventual proletarianization in the lowlands.

4. While pursuing Foster's Image of Limited Good, however, the French Alpine peasants did not behave in all the ways Foster's model (based primarily on his study of peasant communities in Mexico) predicted they should, for the cooperative strategy of redistribution was not effectively developed in the French Alps. Instead, the mountaineers were veritable adepts of achievement orientation.

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