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### Article abstract

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# Life Cycle and Career Cycle in Socialist Bulgaria<sup>1</sup>

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*L'auteur porte son attention sur les changements de l'interaction entre les schèmes de cycle de vie et les schèmes de carrière qui se sont manifestés durant la période de l'évolution socialiste en Bulgarie. Elle en examine les conséquences sur la façon dont les jeunes et les personnes d'un certain âge envisagent leurs rôles problématiques et étroitement liés de «producteurs» et de «reproducteurs» dans la société. En dix-huit ans, l'auteure a fait huit voyages en Bulgarie à des fins de recherche. Afin de situer son analyse, elle résume les divers changements survenus au sein de la société bulgare jusqu'à l'été 1989, notamment ceux qui eurent lieu pendant la période socialiste de 1944.*

The author examines changes in the interaction between life cycle patterns and career patterns during the period of socialist development in Bulgaria. She explores the implications for the interconnected problems of young people and middle-aged people regarding their roles - productive and reproductive - in the society. The author has made eight research trips to Bulgaria, over an eighteen year period. As background to the analysis, the author reviews the changes in Bulgarian society up to summer, 1989, particularly developments during the socialist period from 1944.

In the course of forty five years of socialist development, Bulgaria has been transformed from a society made up largely of poor peasants to an urbanized, industrial nation with a high standard of material and cultural life. The contemporary life cycle in Bulgaria has been affected by the consequent expansion and diversification of occupational opportunities, and by the new social programs introduced during the socialist period. The latter include pre-school kindergarten (day care) attendance for three years, universal secondary education (recently introduced), full incorporation of women into the work force, long maternity leaves, and universal old age security with early pensions.

Socialist development brought gains, and - as does all change - created its own new problems. Some of these derived from changes in career patterns and in how these career patterns interact with the personal and family life cycle. Analysis of how this interaction proceeds reveals periods of high potential stress, particularly at the beginning and end of the career cycle. The stress arises partly from some discordance of the new circumstances of socialism with certain assumptions about the life cycle carried over from the past. It is still assumed, for instance, that young adults "naturally" begin their working life and their roles as parents at about the same time. This as-

sumption derives from past times when the content and rhythm of women's work lives were very different from those of men's, allowing for readier coordination of the productive and reproductive aspects of a family's activities. And it is still assumed that, as in peasant days, older adults will willingly withdraw from the work force, allowing the younger generation to fill their places in productive work, while they - the grandparents - look after the chores and the children.

Perhaps the most demanding periods of people's lives today are thus during their 20's, when couples marry, establish households and begin to have children, while at the same time *both* spouses are launching their careers, and then during the first few pension years, when middle aged women (from 55) and men (from 60) must often adjust to retirement. Many still decide to devote their energies to helping their young adult children, perhaps shortening their own careers to do so.

During the present stage of development in Bulgaria, the social, emotional, material and occupational problems and tasks of such young adults and middle aged people are profoundly interrelated. This is true within any particular family as well as for the entire work force. Consequently, a search for solutions to the stresses of these life periods must begin by examining their interconnections.

After a few words about my research in Bulgaria, I will explore some of the problems of these two age groups - raising questions about the place of each in the work force, and indicating some implications regarding the care of children. One of the unanswered questions this exploration will lead to is this: Who will be responsible for caring for the next generation of children? Another has to do with how to best use the talents and experience of middle-aged people who wish to continue working.

Since so little is known here about Bulgaria, outside specialist circles, I will first of all provide a slightly longer than usual social-historical background sketch.

### *A BIT OF HISTORY*

Rapid and continual change in social system and, consequently, in everyday life has been the constant in the Bulgarian experience for a century. Just over a hundred years ago, Bulgarians - after a long underground struggle - ended their five centuries of serfdom "under the yoke" of the feudal Ottoman Empire. Armed with their cherry wood cannons, inspired and organized by leaders with the most progressive ideas of the Europe of the day, and aided finally by the army of the Russian Tsar, they

achieved the freedom to live as poor peasants in a parliamentary democracy with imported monarchs.

Political parties were quickly established representing various class interests. These included one of the world's earliest Communist parties, speaking for the small class of Bulgarian urban and rural workers, an Agrarian (peasant) party, and several parties espousing business connections with one or another of the western European powers.

During the sixty years that followed, Bulgaria, as an economic and political hinterland of capitalist Europe, had its brief experience of capitalism. Historically always the "gardener" of Europe, Bulgaria was now being "developed" as a source of agricultural products and raw materials for western Europe. What little industry came into being in this process served mainly as infrastructure for such exports. After much shifting and maneuver, the competition among Western European capitalist powers for political and economic control of Bulgaria was eventually - by the mid-1930's - won by Germany.

The peasantry, meanwhile - following the expulsion of the foreign, feudal-landlord class to Turkey - had the opportunity to discover that owning one's own few bits of land did not keep poverty away. Working a fraction of a hectare of grain here (plowed with a wooden plow), some fruit trees there, grapevines in yet another place, some vegetables and household livestock, they were able to eke out only the most meager of livelihoods. There were, of course, also the grain dealer and his agents to feed, and the tax collector. And the men were constantly being drafted to fight on the losing side of one war after another - in the Balkan Wars, World War I and World War II - while the women and children and old people were left to fill the state food requisitions for the armies and to try to feed themselves as well.

In this environment, the cooperative movement took early and deep root in the Bulgarian countryside. From the beginning of the century, a scattering of credit, marketing, and consumer cooperatives were established in the villages. Between 1906 and 1926, there were even some agricultural producers' cooperatives set up, bringing together for cultivation lands that were already being fragmented by inheritance (Zhelev and Todev, 1988: 13). The cooperative movement was given a strong boost by a short-lived Agrarian Party government in the early 1920's. Following the overthrow of that government (in a coup aided by White Russian émigré soldiers), many of the cooperatives kept themselves alive throughout a series of right wing regimes. Most of the original agricultural producers' cooperatives failed, but new

ones established in the late 1930's were more successful. These new cooperative farms were inspired by the collectivization of farming in the Soviet Union, closely studied by Bulgarian rural people. But they differed organizationally in that the Bulgarian cooperative farmers retained individual title to the lands they worked together. Of 66 such farms, 29 still existed at the time of the socialist revolution (beginning 1944) (Zhelev and Todev, 1988: 16). These served as models and sources of experience to the socialist cooperative farms later established.

From the mid-1930's to 1944, Bulgarians found themselves under a Nazi-allied government. For most of that period, political parties and even trade unions were driven underground. A strong anti-fascist underground movement - with long-range socialist goals - grew up in the country, led by an alliance of the Communist Party and the left wing of the Agrarian Party. It was supported and given cover by a variety of democratically oriented organizations, ranging from the trade unions and the cooperative movement to drama clubs and temperance societies.

During the Second World War, the anti-fascist struggle grew into a mass movement, unified under the name of the Fatherland Front. A quarter of a million people (including large numbers of soldiers as well as civilians) actively provided support for the Bulgarian partisans; many suffered beatings, internment, or death as a result. The partisans kept the army tied up at home so that it could not be sent to fight on the Eastern Front. In defiance of demands made upon the Bulgarian government by the Nazis, the Bulgarian people refused to allow the deportation of their Jewish citizens. In the villages, the peasantry kept the partisans supplied and hid them when necessary; women's sewing circles listened to Soviet radio broadcasts while making clothes for partisan bands. In the cities, strikes, protests and sabotage defied the regime. Preparations were made for a general uprising.

On the Ninth of September, 1944, supported by the Soviet army which had entered from Romania, the forces of the Fatherland Front in Bulgaria overthrew the regime. A Fatherland Front government, led by the Communist Party, and including Communists, Agrarians and others, was established. It turned the Bulgarian army around to fight on the anti-fascist side for the remainder of the war.

When Bulgarians who lived through this period tell me their life stories, they divide their life experiences into two eras: "Before the Ninth", and "After the Ninth".

#### AFTER THE NINTH

After the war, a period of considerable political struggle throughout the country culminated in a series of crucial decisions. A referendum in 1946 abolished the monarchy and established a People's Republic. In 1947, the National Assembly, elected in 1946 with 70.1 percent of the vote, (Ognyanov, 1984: 16) passed a new constitution which set the country on the path of transformation towards a socialist society.

Legislation passed in 1945 established the policy of encouraging the cooperatization of agriculture, and the ground rules - through local village referenda - for doing so. It was this policy that soon made Bulgarian agriculture sufficiently productive to feed the industrialization of the country. This in turn - given socialist social programmes - led to a much improved standard of living for the country as a whole.

Existing industry was nationalized in 1947, and the beginning stages of the development of an industrial infrastructure were undertaken. Many of the initial large-scale tasks - building roads and railroads, dams, industrial enterprises and housing for workers - were carried out with the aid of youth brigades. These were groups of young people - most from villages - who, during several months' work in such a brigade, learned collective work practices, and were taught politics and economics. They also acquired technical knowledge that later enabled them to encourage and contribute to the mechanization of agriculture. In telling their life stories, Bulgarians often describe this youth brigade experience as a high point in their lives.

Building on their pre-war base of experience with cooperatives and on a widespread political commitment to socialism, Bulgarians were able to cooperatize most of their agriculture during the dozen years following 1945. During the following thirty years, they carried out mechanization and concentration of their cooperative farming, freeing much of the work force for intensive industrial development and for service and professional work. The agricultural sector itself has been industrialized, with almost all work mechanized. From the 1970's to the late 1980's, agricultural production was organized in multi-village Agro-Industrial Complexes; later, farming reverted to small scale cooperatives. As a result of all these developments, work in agriculture now occupies only twenty percent of working people. [For a detailed description and analysis of the development of cooperative farming in Bulgaria, see Smollett, 1984].

TABLE 1 shows the shift in the distribution of the workforce between 1956 and 1988, from agricultural work to industrial and culture & services occupations.<sup>2</sup>

TABLE 1.  
THE BULGARIAN WORKFORCE BY SECTOR  
WAGE WORKERS AND SALARIED EMPLOYEES

YEAR	1956	1970	1975	1980	1985	1988
TOTAL WORKFORCE (in thousands)	3786	3749	3677	4025	4095	4103
Percent Agricultural	70.7	34.5	22.1	24.2	21.9	20.0
Percent Industrial*	22.1	51.5	60.2	58.8	60.1	61.2
Percent Culture & Services**	7.2	14.0	17.7	17.0	18.1	18.8

\* includes industry, construction, transport, communication, trade  
 \*\* includes science, education, arts, health, social services, sports, tourism, finance, public administration, miscellaneous services

SOURCES:  
 Dossev, 1986: 11  
 People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1987: 44  
 People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1989: 58

Today, the Bulgarians have become exporters of high technology. Bulgaria continues to produce and export fruits and vegetables, wine, and valuable agricultural products like attar of roses - most of these products coming from large scale agricultural enterprises. However, by 1980, two thirds of Bulgaria's exports were industrial goods of non-agricultural origin. In the same year, exports of industrial ma-

TABLE 2.  
TOTAL POPULATION AND URBAN/  
RURAL DISTRIBUTION  
*numbers in thousands*

YEAR	1946	1956	1965	1975	1985	1988
TOTAL POPULATION	7029	7614	8228	8728	8960	8981
Urban Population	1735	2556	3823	5061	5872	5989
Percent Urban	24.7	33.6	46.5	58.0	65.5	66.7
Rural Population	5294	5058	4405	3667	3088	2992
Percent Rural	75.3	66.4	53.5	42.0	34.5	33.3

SOURCES:  
 People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1989: 22,24

chinery and equipment (such as electric trucks and hoists, and industrial robotry) were almost double the value of exports of agricultural products (Ognyanov, 1984: 45-46). The children of the peasants of the 1940's are now producing computers and electronic components.

The mechanization of Bulgarian agriculture and the building of industries in the towns and cities led to a process of rapid urbanization. This was particularly intensive from the 1950's until about 1980, during which time more than 2 million people migrated from the villages to the towns and cities. The result has been a reversal of the population structure, from two thirds rural and one third urban in 1956, to two thirds urban and one third rural today (Dossev, 1989: 5).

TABLE 2 shows total population figures for Bulgaria from 1946 to 1988, and the change in the urban/rural distribution of the population through time. TABLE 3 indicates the numbers of migrants and rates of migration for several periods between 1946 and 1988.

TABLE 3.  
RURAL TO URBAN MIGRATION  
*numbers in thousands*

YEAR	1946	1956	1965	1975	1985	1988
TOTAL POPULATION	7029	7614	8228	8728	8960	8981
Hypothetical population based on natural increase or decrease only, without migration	urb. n/a	1991	2891	4223	5428	5954
	rur. n/a	5623	5337	4505	3532	3027
Actual Population	urb. 1735	2556	3823	5061	5872	5989
	rur. 5294	5058	4405	3667	3088	2992
Estimated migration per year for						
previous period #	n/a	56.5	103.6	83.8	44.4	11.7
% gain - urb.	n/a	3.3	4.1	2.2	.9	.2
% loss - rur.	n/a	-1.1	-2.0	-1.9	-1.2	-.4

n/a = not applicable

SOURCES:  
 People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1987: 190  
 People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1989: 22,24,26

The policies of the 1970's - 1980's included attempts to at least somewhat reverse this trend. Plans were made to decentralize industry in order to relieve problems of rural depopulation, urban congestion, and shortages of urban housing. According to these plans, some industries were to be located in newly conceived types of communities ("settlement systems"). Each settlement system was to bring together a group of rural and urban settlements into a new unified municipality. The settlement systems were to serve as centres both for production and for the provision of urban-level amenities and cultural life, in the hope that they would attract highly educated young people to remain in them or even to move to them. As of the late 1980's, it is difficult to assess the results of these plans. [For discussion of the urbanization experience and urban-rural relations in Bulgaria, see Smollett, 1985; also, Smollett, 1989 for the role of the kin network in rural-urban mutual assistance, and in adaptation to urban, working class life].

## RESEARCH

So far, my research in Bulgaria has spanned a period of 18 years. By 1988, I had made eight visits to the country. My field work was partly concentrated in a sabbatical year in 1974-75, and partly spread out over shorter preparatory and return visits in 1971, 1973, 1980, 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1988. It included work in a cooperative farm village, Kirilovo - tracing its development and transformations during recent decades by interviewing, participant observation, study of records and local histories, and life history collection. It also included exploring urbanization and urban-rural relations, partly through following the networks of the migrants from Kirilovo to the nearby city of Stara Zagora and to the capital, Sofia. In recent visits, I have also studied urban life in Sofia, and have followed the connections of some Sofia people back to the villages and towns they came from in several regions. I have travelled widely in the country. Over the years, I have had extensive discussions with Bulgarian social scientists, learning from them and comparing their findings in various parts of the country and among various social groupings with my own.

This particular article did not derive from a specific research project. It was developed from a paper I was invited to give in 1987 at an international conference on contemporary changes in the life cycle, organized by the SIEF, International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (the European ethnological association). To write the paper and to develop it further into this article, I mined my observations

over the years and rethought my field notes on related topics, and made use of relevant Bulgarian publications. In 1986, 1987, and 1988, I interviewed people in my already existing networks in Bulgaria on the subject, and obtained comparative observations through discussions with Bulgarian social scientists. I have supported my analysis with exact information wherever possible. When I have had to rely on impressions, they should be taken as the informed impressions of an ethnographer with many years experience in the country.

## YOUNG ADULTS

### PAST GENERATIONS

Two generations ago - in the pre-revolutionary period - most of the young people were born to peasant parents. It was taken for granted that they would gradually take on agricultural responsibilities as they matured, even while they were still in school. Usually, they acquired some primary education. In agriculturally marginal areas, this was often followed by learning a craft (masonry, seamstressing, and the like) to tide them over through the off-seasons. Most of the young women worked in the fields and shouldered heavy housework responsibilities as well. When they married and had babies, they sometimes took them to the fields with them. Most of the time, however, parents left their children at home with co-resident grandparents while they were at work. The arrival of the first grandchildren was a signal for the grandparents - especially the grandmother, who did most of the child care - to gradually begin spending much of the working day close to home. The older generation looked after the livestock, the house yard, the housework, and the grandchildren, together with what field work they could.

One generation ago, from the mid-1950's into the mid-1970's, many of Bulgaria's young couples were new urban migrants. In fact, by 1977, after the period of most intense migration (see TABLE 3), forty four percent of the entire urban population were first generation migrants from villages (Zlatanova and Malhov, 1981: 98). Ordinarily, the young adults of the 1950's to 1960's still had only a primary education. This was the case, for example, with respect to 76 percent of the fathers and 80 percent of the mothers of young adults surveyed a generation later, in 1978. (Kiuranov [Kyuranov], 1985: 510).

As industrialization and new social and administrative needs created jobs, the first generation migrants of the 1950's - 1960's filled positions wherever their work was needed. They studied, little by little, when they could. Usually they had left their

parents behind in the villages. The rapid urban industrial development of that period was feasible in considerable measure because of the mutual assistance of these households. The older people in the villages provided help in kind, such as food, to their urban, young adult, children, while the young people in the city supplied cash, manufactured goods, and new skills, ideas, and information to their village parents (Kiuranov [Kyuranov], 1985: 511; Smollett, 1985: 263-265). Frequently, the young working couples brought their little children to the villages, where they were raised by the grandparents.

#### THE PRESENT PERIOD

What has been new during the entire socialist period in Bulgaria is that no generation repeated the life cycle pattern of its parents. But, in the present historical period, this circumstance is descriptive of many societies. What was *both new and peculiar* to socialism was the cushioning of this process of rapid transition by the new comforts and security provided by socialist conditions. The youth in Bulgaria have reached maturity supported by full access to publicly provided free education (including tuition-free post-secondary education) and health care. They have grown up in families in which both parents were steadily employed. They have never lacked necessities, nor have they experienced or even seen hunger. And they have grown up assured of employment. Often they don't care for their enterprise or their supervisor; frequently they are dissatisfied because they feel their job doesn't make best use of all their qualifications. Nonetheless, they do have employment, and it is usually in some way related to the occupation they trained for.

#### THE ERA OF CAREERS

The young people entering adult life at present generally have at least a secondary education. By 1978, this was true of 77 percent of the 18-28 age group. (Kiuranov [Kyuranov], 1985: 510). Compulsory secondary education was introduced in 1980, and its implementation was undertaken during the 1980's.

It is difficult to describe the educational system in Bulgaria concisely, because there has been a series of changes in recent years, following upon each other's heels in rapid succession. Briefly, secondary education has been changing in the direction of a unified (academic/technical) "polytechnical" secondary school. At present, however, there are still basically three types of secondary schools. One is a general academic high school. Another type provides a "secondary special" education - a longer

program that combines the academic curriculum with specialized training in a highly skilled occupation (biotechnology, computers, electronic technology, construction technology, etc.). A third type of high school, with a vocational program, leads to less skilled trades (and has the lowest enrollment). Either of the first two types of secondary school can lead to admission to post-secondary education at the college/institute level or university/institute level. Post-secondary options include "semi-higher" education at colleges/institutes offering programs of about two years that lead to certification in a highly skilled occupation, and "higher education" at a university or university-level institute. People who have completed a "secondary special" education, a "semi-higher" education, or a "higher education" are considered to be "specialists" in occupational classifications. I should add that both "specialists" and workers who have learned skills on the job frequently increase their accredited qualifications by attending short courses (often during paid working hours) in their field of work or in a related one.

In a contemporary young married couple, both spouses work and/or study. They have chosen their occupations from a wide range of possibilities. The growing trend towards specific occupational training - either at the secondary or post-secondary level - has meant that many (increasingly many each year) of the young people starting work in the 1970's-1980's have not been merely starting a job. They have been starting a *career* - that is, employment that assumes a developmental path along which they expect to reach further levels of skill qualification, further levels of education and responsibility.

This is particularly so for "specialists" - now a quarter of the working people, half of whom are now women (Dinkova, 1982: 276; 282-288). (According to Dinkova, in 1960, when women made up about 40 percent of the workforce, only seven percent of working women were specialists. By 1975, when women made up about 50 percent of the workforce, the percentage of working women who were specialists had grown to 26.4 percent). See TABLE 4 for the increases in specialists in the workforce through time, and for women specialists.

The need to continually upgrade skills applies as well to other skilled workers, who - like specialists - must constantly keep up with technological change. Since women are now full participants in social production, employed in most types of occupations, it is increasingly common in the young married couples of the present period that *both* young spouses are launching a *career* in the above sense of the word.

**TABLE 4.**  
**CHANGING PROPORTIONS OF EDUCATED**  
**SPECIALISTS AND EDUCATED WOMEN**  
**SPECIALISTS IN THE WORKFORCE**  
*Specialists as percent of the total workforce*  
*- broken down by level of education -*  
*and the proportion of these specialists who are*  
*women.*

YEAR	1946	1960	1975	1986
Total Workforce (thousands)	3290	3763	3677	4004
All specialists as percent of workforce .....	2.8	6.9	26.3	25.3
Percent of these who are women .....	30.4	40.7	47.6	NA
Specialists with higher education as percent of workforce .....	1.1	2.5	7.8	8.1
Percent of these who are women .....	20.0	25.8	37.5	46.3
Specialists with semi- higher or secondary special education .....	1.7	4.4	18.6	17.3
as percent of workforce Percent of these who are women .....	36.8	49.1	51.8	NA
<i>NA = not available</i>				
<b>SOURCES:</b>				
People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1980: 25, 34				
People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1984: 18				
People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1987: 49				
People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1989: 63, 67				
Ganev, 1988: 12, 16				
Dinkova, 1982: 278, 280, 284, 285				

**PROBLEMS AND STRESSES:**

From the fact that both young spouses are beginning their employment and, increasingly, launching their *careers* flow many of the stresses of the early part of their married life. True, full employment protects them from fear of being deprived of basic material necessities. But it doesn't protect them from the need to compete for the particular job they want at the particular place they prefer, and for advancement in it once they have begun (just as it didn't protect them from the intense competition many of them experienced during their teens, during the entrance exams for specialized secondary or post-secondary educational institutions).

At the start of their careers, a period of high concentration on their work, the young couple are also starting a family and establishing a household, or seeking housing while sharing a home with parents - still a stress-laden situation in urban Bulgaria. They are working out what will be their respective roles in household responsibilities, as old assumptions regarding those roles are no longer workable. They are also managing on the lowest income of their careers, since in a socialist economy one's pay is based on both skill *and* experience. To partially balance out the needs of young families with their incomes, there are generous public supports in the form of child-birth payments and monthly child support allowances. Nevertheless, as of 1977, 70 percent of the young couples who were in the first five years of their marriage still relied to some degree on the parents of one or both spouses for material aid (Kyuranov, 1982: 270).<sup>3</sup>

Many also relied on parental aid for shopping, errands and housework, as they still do today. This assistance is provided in large part by the mothers/mothers-in-law of the young couple. Women in Bulgaria do considerably more housework than men. This means that, in the case of middle-aged women, they frequently do their own housework and some of the housework and errands for the households of their children as well.

I might add that the sharing of housework and child care between men and women is increasing somewhat in the present generation, but the problem is far from being entirely solved. By the 1970's, working women were spending an average of four hours a day on household chores, twice as much time as working men (Gocheva, 1981: 76).<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting, however, that examining the **average** amount of time spent by men and women fails to reveal that work sharing may have its own "life cycle" within a marriage. I haven't made a formal study of this question, but my impression, based on many detailed conversations, is that the couples currently in their 30's-40's frequently began their marriages with both spouses having a strong ideological commitment to equal sharing of housework and child care, and that it existed to a considerable degree in practice early in the marriage. However, as children came along and the wife was, after all, home all day during her long maternity leaves, the husband began to succumb to pressures to spend more of his time and energy at work and less at home. He began, that is, to concentrate on career advancement - it still being so in Bulgaria, despite women's careers, that a man is under social pressure to earn more than his wife and to advance further.



## THE PROBLEM OF CHILD CARE

The most complex problem the young two-career couple must face is how indeed to fit child bearing and child care into their career development paths. The woman bears her children while trying to carry on her studies or her work. The maternity leave available to her includes two years paid leave (six, seven, or eight months at full pay for the first, second, or third child respectively; the balance of the two years at minimum wage). A third year of leave is available without pay. The woman's job is held for her return for the full three years. This maternity leave - one of the best in the world in length and benefits - gives her substantial support. But, at the same time, it sometimes leaves her feeling lonely and bored at home, and experiencing a loss of confidence and of competence in relation to her career.

The Bulgarian sociologist, M. Dinkova, has studied women specialists (more than a quarter of working women) She points out that they rarely take all the maternity leave available to them, almost always returning to work within a year, while women in other occupational categories tend to take longer leaves (Dinkova, 1982: 289). Implied in this fact is the possibility that, as more and more female workers become skilled and consequently need to "keep up" with a career (and feel a commitment to it), less and less will desire extremely long maternity leaves. (Most of the world's women would give a great deal for the right to suffer from this particular difficulty!).

Sooner or later, the maternity leave comes to an end. Then arrives the problem of who will care for pre-school babies and children after the mother returns to work. Bulgarians are very reluctant to make use of nurseries (day care centres for children younger than three). They remain convinced that children this age are best cared for, as in previous generations, in a home environment, either in the home of their own parents or in that of grandparents or other relatives (Spasovska, 1985: 38). This view has recently been reinforced by arguments adduced by Bulgarian psychologists, as well as by some real shortcomings in the level of staffing and quality of care available in the existing nurseries. Consequently, emphasis has shifted during the past few years from the building of nurseries to the building of kindergartens (day care centres for age three - six), with the goal of making the latter universally available. Eighty three percent of Bulgarian children between age three and six were in kindergartens by 1988 (People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1989: 47). Yet only 13.7 percent of Bulgarian children under three

were in nurseries in 1988, down from 18.3 percent in 1980 (People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1989: 47).

Who cares for those children under age three who are not at nurseries after the mother returns to her employment? And who cares for the kindergarten children before and after school, and during weekends, holidays and vacations? A *very substantial* number are cared for by relatives. According to a survey of Bulgarian women<sup>5</sup> discussed in a study of generation and family in Bulgaria by the Bulgarian sociologist, L. Spasovska, more than half of children under seven were "entrusted to the care of relatives" (Spasovska, 1985: 38), but it should be noted that this figure is based on 1969 data. Basing herself on 1976-77 studies of the "time budget" of the population, Spasovska also indicates that caring for grandchildren was then a widespread activity for both pension age and pre-pension age grandparents, and for both grandmothers and grandfathers although with grandmothers contributing more time (Spasovska, 1985: 40). For the 1980's, I can only say that the number of relatives caring for children continues to be very large. The care givers are most often grandparents (on either side or both), some of them pensioners and some below pension age. Sometimes several grandparents participate, but the main care giver is usually a grandmother, and it is therefore her life that is most affected by this role.

There are a variety of different arrangements made for this care. If the grandparents live in another town or in a village, the children (of either or both age groups) may be brought to them to stay in their home for months (sometimes years) at a time, perhaps having only vacation and/or weekend visits with their parents. Such children tend to be viewed by Bulgarians as dwelling with their parents (as part of their parents' nuclear family household), and as merely "staying" for some time with their grandparents. Even the Bulgarian census presumably counts them thus, since it is based on people's "permanent residence" (People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1989: 22). I have seen thriving kindergartens in villages where hardly any young adults live, the places occupied by city children staying with their grandparents. The parents and grandparents explain that it is better for the children to stay in the village, where "they can run about and play freely", where "the air is better", or "it isn't so hot", or "it isn't so cold and damp".

It is my impression (from observations and discussions; I know of no studies of this question) that parents visit their children as frequently as they can, where possible every weekend. This is feasible because car ownership is now widespread, 34 %

households by 1983 (Ganev, 1985: 81), train and bus service is good, and distances are small. Bulgaria occupies a small territory (110,900 square kilometres), and few families are separated by more than 5 or 6 hours travel by road. In fact, an hour or less is common, since the migration pattern has generally entailed movement from villages and small towns to the nearest larger town or city.

Alternatively (or additionally), a pair of grandparents may move for periods of time to the town where their children live, usually into the same dwelling, in order to care for the grandchildren. This sometimes requires temporary separations between the grandmother and grandfather. This circumstance arises particularly in the case of village grandparents, where the grandfather may have livestock or other responsibilities at home that he is reluctant to leave. Or he may feel out of his element and dissatisfied in town, where he doesn't feel himself to be as useful as the grandmother does. (The famous Bulgarian short story by Nikolai Haitov, "Tree Without Roots", from which a film was also made, characterizes such a grandfather). The grandmother does both more housework and more child care, especially such tasks as feeding, washing and dressing children. Grandfathers help out with tasks such as shopping. They also spend considerable time playing with children and taking them on outings, as any visitor to Bulgarian parks will notice. If the grandfather does not wish to stay for long periods in town, compromises are made: grandfather comes for periods of time to visit; grandmother takes the children for visits to the village; the other set of grandparents takes a turn.

If the grandparents live in the same town, there may in fact be a joint family household, perhaps established when the young couple married and couldn't obtain an independent dwelling. There are still shortages of apartments in urban centers, especially in the capital, Sofia. In fact, in the early 1980's, one third of young couples still lived in three generation joint family households, although Bulgarians today prefer to live in the same neighborhood but not the same dwelling with their parents/parents-in-law or adult children (Kyuranov, 1982: 269). If the young couple has a separate household, the grandparents (or grandmother) may come in for certain hours, or the children may be left with them in their home, either full time or for some hours or days at a time.

These complexities do not end when the children are in school. Even though many schools provide midday meals and some have after school programs, there are usually some hours that are not

covered by these arrangements. This is especially so in situations of two daily shifts per school, such as in Sofia, where children attend in the morning (starting very early) or in the afternoon (finishing very late). Besides this, of course, they must be looked after during school vacations. Arrangements with friends and neighbors are sometimes sufficient to solve some of these problems. But, more usually, relatives - especially grandparents - are again relied upon. However, by the time children are in school, parents tend to seek arrangements that allow the children to stay much of the time in their parents' home,<sup>6</sup> sending them off to the village during school vacations and the three month summer holiday. According to Spasovska (1985: 41), a 1977 study of Pleven district showed that more than a third of the children there spent such holiday periods living with grandparents, usually in the villages. My own observations, together with my comparative discussions with Bulgarian social scientists, suggest that this is still very common in the 1980's.

Brief examples of child care arrangements may be helpful here:<sup>7</sup>

1. **Kiro and Stanka** of the village of Kirilovo have two married children, a son and a daughter, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Both their children - highly skilled industrial workers now approaching middle age - live in Stara Zagora, a medium size industrial city the edge of which is now only a few minutes drive from Kirilovo. During the 1970's, Kiro and Stanka had retired from their work as cooperative farmers, but were still doing some part time work for the cooperative farm together with extensive gardening and livestock raising on their personal plots. During that period, they always had one or two of their grandchildren living with them (sometimes siblings, sometimes cousins). The children stayed with them for several years, from the time their mothers returned to work after maternity leave through the early school years. In mid-childhood, when they could look after themselves after school, they returned to Stara Zagora to live in their parents' households. While the children were staying in the village, their parents came on most weekends and often on some weekday evenings as well. These children, now young adults, remain very attached to the cousins they grew up with and to their grandparents, visiting the latter very frequently. Kiro's and Stanka's children still work full time, so Kiro and Stanka are helping with their great-grandchildren. In the mid 1980's, Kiro's and Stanka's daughter and son-in-law went to Libya to work for two years as foreign technicians. Their second child, then in high school in Stara Zagora,

moved in with his father's parents in Stara Zagora, where he remained while completing his schooling.

2. **Doncho and Penka**, also Kirilovo cooperative farmers, returned to their village home in the early 1980's after spending several years living in Stara Zagora, where they were employed in the administration of the Agro-Industrial Complex. They retired from their formal employment, devoting their working hours to producing various products for the cooperative marketing system. They have two married children. The daughter, a technician married to a civil servant, lives in Sofia, about 5 hours journey away. The son, a skilled industrial worker married to a kindergarten teacher, lives in Stara Zagora.

For six years, until 1987, the daughter's child lived the year round with Doncho and Penka. The parents were able to visit only once a month or so because of the distance. In 1987, this grandchild moved to Sofia to begin school there, a difficult parting for grandparents and grandchild because of the length of time the child had spent in the village. That same year, the grandparents expected the arrival of their Sofia daughter's second child, about a year old, whom they would similarly raise in the village. Meanwhile, in the previous year, the Stara Zagora son and daughter-in-law had a child. Penka spent several periods of weeks or months that year living with the Stara Zagora family to help with the baby and the housework. In 1987, the daughter-in-law planned to return to work, and Doncho and Penka expected to have this baby also in their household to look after.

3. **Nenyo and Ivanka** are Sofia intellectuals in their early 30's who have one five year old daughter, Milka. Since she was a year old, when Ivanka returned to work after maternity leave, the child has spent months at a time in her grandparents home in Plovdiv (a large city about two hours travel from Sofia), especially during seasons when the family considers Plovdiv's climate to be better. During these periods, Milka's parents have visited her almost every weekend, although the train fare is a strain on their budget. Sometimes Ivanka's mother, a retired physician, comes to Sofia for long periods to care for this grandchild, leaving her husband (also a physician) in Plovdiv. When Ivanka's mother is occupied with the care of Ivanka's brother's child (also in Sofia), Nenyo's parents (Sofia residents) take over care of Milka. Milka attends kindergarten regularly, either in Plovdiv or in Sofia, depending on where she is living.

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A great deal could be written, pro and con, about

the effects of these arrangements on the children themselves. I will merely mention a few thoughts here. The fact that the children spend a significant amount of time with grandparents gives them some access to knowledge about their society's recent past, including the revolutionary activities, experiences and thinking of many of these grandparents. For, at least in this generation, it was these very grandparents who led the society through its most profound transformation. On the other hand, some Bulgarians argue, these same grandparents often have "old-fashioned" ideas on matters of pedagogy, child nutrition and the like. As child raisers, they might, to some extent, delay the introduction of changes in child care practices.

One further point, by way of speculation: Bulgarians interact with other people, even strangers in the street, with an amount of open emotion that strikes a North American as remarkable - whether helping, arguing, or just conversing with them. They seem capable of having numerous relationships of deep feeling, both short and long term. Bulgarian children, often together with siblings and/or cousins, are cared for by a variety of adults - for hours or days, more often for months or years - and develop deep bonds with all these people. Their emotional ties are not limited to the tight confines of the nuclear family. Is it possible that there is a relationship between these circumstances of childhood and their emotional openness to others in adult life? Bulgarians often assert that the openness to emotional contact I have just described is much less present than it was a generation ago - a victim of urbanization. This may be so, but - to a foreigner - what remains of it is impressive.

## MIDDLE-AGED PEOPLE

### TWO GENERATIONS OF GRANDPARENTS

Now we come to the grandparents, mainly grandmothers, who have in such numbers been taking care of their grandchildren. What is their background? The grandparents of the 1960's and 1970's (and into the early 1980's) were the generation who had participated in the anti-fascist struggle and who, after Bulgaria's liberation, had been the young people who undertook the building of a new society. Some had remained in the villages as cooperative farmers; many had migrated to towns and cities. They had done whatever jobs needed to be done.

One such woman, whom I interviewed in Sofia some years ago, was Donka Iovchova Vuleva from the village of Kirilovo. As a girl, during the Second World War, she had risked her life guiding partisans through her region; she had been in a prison camp,

along with her mother; her father had been hung by the fascists. Her dream was to be a diplomat in the new free Bulgaria. But, after the liberation, engineers were needed urgently. Being a committed Communist, she agreed to the Party's request that she go to Czechoslovakia to study mining engineering. When I met her in the 1970's, she was a Party leader in a major metallurgical plant in Sofia. She told me that one of her greatest sources of pride in the accomplishments of the revolution was the fact that the next generation, *her* children, were able to choose their occupations according to their own inclinations.

In their middle-aged years, some of Donka Lovchova's generation left their jobs to care for their grandchildren, so that their adult children would have just such an opportunity to choose. Many grandmothers performed this task with great willingness, assumed that it was their responsibility to do so, (as it would have been in peasant life), even insisted upon it as their right.<sup>8</sup> Some of them were pensioners when they undertook care of their grandchildren. But, if we bear in mind that most Bulgarian couples had (and still have) their children in their 20's,<sup>9</sup> it seems likely (though I know of no studies to corroborate it) that many of these grandmothers left their jobs *well before* pension age (at 45 or 50) to help their children.<sup>10</sup>

What of the present generation, those who are becoming grandparents in the late 1980's and will be in the 1990's? They are of the generation *who had a choice of occupation*; many of them have been able to build *careers*, not simply fill jobs. Many of them, in middle age, are interested in *continuing* productive careers.

In this regard, it is interesting to note the information provided by Chavdar Kyuranov, a senior Bulgarian sociologist who specializes in labour studies. Kyuranov discusses a 1982 Bulgarian survey by the Institute for Youth, which investigated the attitudes to work of three generations. Earlier generations, he indicates, valued work (in and of itself) as the meaning of life. There is a change in the present generation, however: "The attitude of the contemporary generation, born around 1945-50, is different. This generation does not deny the utmost importance of work, it is definitely manifesting its positive attitude towards it, but has very important concerns as to the kind and type of work it is performing" (Kyuranov [Kyuranov], 1985: 510). Given satisfaction with the type of work they are doing, or the availability of new alternatives, there is a tendency for middle-aged people to wish to continue working. Current survey data in fact show, Kyuranov contin-

ues, that the majority of older Bulgarians, both in pre-pension and pension age, describe themselves as "ready to work". In the age groups 40-49, and 50-54, more than half the responses indicated a "high" or "very high" "readiness for work", with another 26 percent indicating "medium" readiness. In the age groups 55-59 and 60+, 47 percent and 44 percent, respectively, indicated a "high" or "very high" readiness, with about another third indicating "medium" readiness (Kyuranov [Kyuranov], 1985: 515).<sup>11</sup>

What then can we expect from the grandparents of the late 1980's and the 1990's? They may turn out to be much less willing than their predecessors to leave their employment before pension age or even at pension age to care for grandchildren. Who then will take care of *their* grandchildren? Obviously, Bulgarian society will soon have to face this question.

In policy formation, both questions - Who will care for children, and How to make best use of older people's potential contributions to the work force - will have to be dealt with together.

## ISSUES AND POLICIES: IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS

### WORK, SOCIAL SUPPORT, CHILDBEARING AND CHILD CARE

Over the years, a number of steps have been taken in Bulgaria to ameliorate the housekeeping and child care situation for working couples. These efforts have intensified during the 1980's, and have been directed particularly toward young married couples with the idea that easing their daily life tasks would increase the birth rate (and might also *indirectly* increase the birth rate by lowering the rate of divorce).<sup>12</sup>

Births per woman (completed families) in Bulgaria were 1.87 in 1975, and 1.81 in 1985 (People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1989: 27), a rate quite similar to other industrialized European countries. (TABLE 5 shows some comparisons with other European countries). As of the 1980's, Bulgarian planners considered this birth rate inadequate for replacing the work force in the country and overcoming the perceived condition of "labour shortage".<sup>13</sup> For some years, therefore, their research and public policy efforts have been directed toward attempting to increase it.

Current material assistance to young families includes measures such as increases in the wages of young specialists, a recent increase in the paid portion of maternity leave to two years, a sizeable

**TABLE 5.**  
**BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND NATURAL INCREASE:**  
**INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS (EUROPE)**  
*per thousand population*

COUNTRY	BIRTHS		DEATHS		NATURAL INCREASE	
	1970	1987	1970	1987	1970	1987
BULGARIA	16.3	13.0	9.1	12.0	7.2	1.0
Czechoslovakia	15.9	13.8	11.6	11.5	4.3	2.3
FRG	13.4	10.5	12.1	11.2	1.3	-7
Great Britain	16.3	13.6	11.8	11.2	4.5	2.4
Greece	16.5	10.6	8.4	9.5	8.1	1.1
Hungary	14.7	11.8	11.6	13.4	3.1	-1.6
Italy	16.8	9.6	9.7	9.3	7.1	3
Norway	16.6	13.0	10.0	10.7	6.6	2.3
Poland	16.6	16.1	8.1	10.1	8.5	6.0
Sweden	13.7	12.5	9.9	11.1	3.8	1.4
USSR	17.4	19.8	8.2	9.9	9.2	9.9

SOURCES:  
 People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1987: 258  
 People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1989: 260

monthly allowance for the extra expenses of those who choose to return to work before the end of allowed maternity leaves (in addition to the usual childbirth allowances and monthly child support payments), an increase in paid parental leave (for mothers or fathers to care for a sick child) to 60 days per year, long term loans (at two percent interest) for the cost of purchasing a dwelling and furnishings (with substantial parts of the loan forgivable at the birth of a second and third child), and special allowances for single mothers and low income families (Assyov, 1986: 43).

Regarding the provision of housing, G. Assyov points out that there is a common assumption in Bulgaria that lack of adequate apartments deters couples from having children. Consequently, a decision has been made that 25 percent of new apartments are to be allocated to young couples (Assyov, 1986: 42-43). However, as Assyov points out, a recent Sofia survey has shown that couples with more living space are not more fertile than others (Assyov, 1986: 40-41).

Bulgarian sociological research has shown that other factors besides income or housing affect the reproductive choices made by contemporary young people. In a recent survey in the town of Pernik, for instance, 21 percent of those polled wanted only one

child, no matter how large their home or income might be (Assyov, 1986: 42). Young couples need *time*; they want and need time for study (including for the many courses available to raise their occupational qualifications), and time for culture and recreation, as well as time to devote to the one or two children they *do* have.

In her 1982 article on women specialists, the sociologist Maria Dinkova describes some of the solutions that have been under discussion regarding the pull between the demands of employment and of child care, including suggestions such as "... reconstruction of the human life cycle by means of material and moral incentives with a view to encouraging parents to bear and rear children at a possibly younger age before the final stage of their professional training" (Dinkova, 1982: 290). She also mentions the idea of dividing "maternity" leave between the parents, thus removing each from the work force for only part of that period.

Measures allowing the division of "maternity" leave - have, in fact, since then been implemented, but with a significant modification. In 1985, a new Family Code was passed into law, revising the legal basis for the whole gamut of family relations - a Code that is, in some respects, ahead of (rather than reflective of) the social norms of the day. Legislation flowing from the new Family Code allows the division of the former maternity leave, if the mother agrees, between not only the parents but among both parents and all four grandparents. Any one of these (or any sequence of these), who is in the work force, can take leave *with pay* to care for the child. This satisfies the Bulgarian desire to care for small children in a home environment, but does so without necessarily shortening the careers of mothers. Whoever can take leave with the least career disruption may do so, and the leave time can be divided among several persons. The short and long term effects of this significant new provision remain to be seen. Much depends upon the rate of participation of young fathers, which in turn depends upon progress in the modification of gender role stereotypes. One of the possible outcomes, at least in the short term, might be that some pre-pension age grandmothers would continue to care for children, except that now they would be paid for it. Although the added income would of course be welcome, such an outcome would *not* solve the problem of the shortening of these middle-aged women's careers.

## WOMEN WORKERS

The above point leads to consideration of the life cycle/ career cycle interaction specifically as it relates to *women's* overall participation in social production and public life. In Bulgaria, women are very well represented in a wide range of occupations, and in leadership/management positions up to the middle levels. As Bulgarians themselves point out, they are not yet adequately represented at the very highest levels of leadership in political and productive life. There is a variety of problems that stand in the way: the housework question - housework draining a woman's energy and time, which she needs to raise her occupational qualifications and to take part in public life (Dinkova, 1982: 291), stereotypes of a leader as being a man (or "manly woman", as one female Bulgarian trade union leader described herself to me). But the relative length of men's and women's careers is undoubtedly also an important factor. If women are on maternity leaves for several years, go on pension five years earlier than men, and perhaps retire an additional few years before pension age to care for grandchildren, their careers can be ten years (or more) shorter than men's (and this despite the fact that they live six years longer). Small wonder that they have reached the highest positions less often than men!

## OLDER PEOPLE AS WORKERS

The related question that clearly must be faced is the future place of older people, near or above pension age, in the work force. How can those who so desire be enabled to continue to lead productive and fulfilling lives, and to make the maximum possible contribution to society?

The present generation of pensioners are in better health and live 20 years longer (to age 71) than did the pre-revolutionary population (Dossev, 1986: 46). Since the pension age stands, nonetheless, at 55 for women and 60 for men, there are now over two million pensioners in Bulgaria (Dossev, 1986: 45; Shamliiev, 1986: 5). People are generally expected to retire from their jobs at pension age, although they may seek new employment in areas of the economy where labour is needed. However, employers have a certain amount of discretion in decisions about retirement. They may request to keep on an employee whose knowledge, skills or experience are difficult to replace. Nevertheless, at present only fourteen percent of people of pension age are employed (Assyov, 1986: 21.), forming part of a work force that stands at about four million (People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1984: 18).

Reducing the working hours of both young parents would be one possible way to leave "more

room" for middle-aged people to continue at work - if indeed "the work force" is a limited pie (!) as is implied in the notion that one generation must move over to make room for another. Older workers (not only the young) have fresh new ideas to contribute, based on the creative use of what they have learned during years of experience. Long experience is also of great value in training the young, as is recognized in Bulgaria in the instances when workers of retirement age are invited to stay on for this purpose, or are invited to return in a training capacity after they have retired.

Perhaps solutions to problems of who can/ should do work of what kinds at what stages of life must await the reevaluation of our existing generational concepts. This question was sharply delineated in a recent thought-provoking paper by S. Katz (Katz, 1989). Katz traces present notions of "natural" generations, of "working age" people and "old people" to their roots in the English poor laws of the past and their sequels. Of course, demonstrating that these concepts arose out of the conditions of a particular stage of socio-economic development calls into question their immutability.

In Canada, the question of mandatory retirement is at this very moment before the courts. At issue is whether - in an era of longer health and vigor together with longer life for large numbers of people - it is appropriate to end people's careers (against their will) on the basis of the criterion of age. True, a secure retirement, free of want, after many years of work, has been long fought for by working people and should be the right of those who wish to leave their work to do other things. But need it be imposed on those who are at the height of their careers and are willing and able to continue, or who wish to apply their experience to a new career?

It seems clear that this issue is also beginning to arise in *socialist* societies, such as Bulgaria. Bulgarian demographers nonetheless continue to count "people of working age" and "people above working age". And there are references in Bulgarian social science writing and Bulgarian mass media to a "work force of four million", which is "supporting two million pensioners", a type of characterization that Katz criticizes as "alarmist demography" and argues against in his paper. Bulgarian pensioners, after all, raise meat and fruits and vegetables for their families, do housework and errands and many other tasks, and care for children. Aside from that, there are many vigorous middle-aged people in Bulgaria today who are deeply involved in their careers and who wish to continue them rather than retire.

It will be fascinating in the years to come to see whether the concepts of "people of working age"

and "people above working age" yield to the pressures of longer life and health, and to see whether assumptions about "natural" generational boundaries will change along with changes in the nature of work and of the work force.

## CONCLUSION

Entering the late 1980's and the 1990's, Bulgarian society finds itself in a situation that is both enviable and problematic. A generation is approaching middle age that is accustomed to employment for both men and women in chosen occupations, in which both are increasingly committed to specialized careers. A young generation with similar expectations is maturing. From these circumstances arise certain new problems that Bulgarians will have to face in the very near future. It is likely that neither of these generations will find it convenient to be available to take care of small children. Yet social solutions have not yet been fully institutionalized. To be satisfactory, such solutions must allow the young people to begin their careers without excessive anxiety and time/energy drains due to household responsibilities. At the same time, the older generation must be allowed to continue their careers and their social contribution, without being cut off by the need to solve the household problems of their children or to "make room" for the young people to move up in the work force. In my view, as I have suggested above, a workable solution would ultimately have to address the needs of *both* the young adult and the middle-aged generations, as these needs relate to each other. And a solution would take maximum advantage of the best contribution each of these generations can make to the productive, as well as to the reproductive, life of the society.

## NOTES

1. I ask the reader to note that this article was written in 1987, revised for CULTURE in 1988 and edited in summer 1989 - i.e. *before* the major upheavals that took place in Eastern Europe beginning in the fall of 1989. By the time the article appears in print, some of the circumstances described will surely have changed. I hope the article will nevertheless serve as useful background for understanding a much changed situation!

2. The figures in all the TABLES have been drawn from and/or, in a few cases, extrapolated from Bulgarian statistical sources. The TABLES were prepared by Peter Smollett.

3. Kyuranov's data are based on a major 1977 sociological survey on the state and problems of the contemporary Bulgarian family. The survey was commissioned by

the Council on the Reproduction of Human Resources at the Bulgarian State Council, and carried out by the research team of the Central Statistical Office and its Committee of the Unified Social Information System. It sampled married couples with not yet married children, in which the wife was under age 60; women, men, and some of the children in 5,993 families were interviewed (Kyuranov, 1982: 258).

4. Gocheva's data are based on a study of "The Time Budget of the Population in the People's Republic of Bulgaria in 1970-1977". This study was carried out by the Bulgarian Central Board of Statistics. 12,613 persons were interviewed (Dinkova, 1982: 290).

5. This was a survey on Women in Economic, Public and Cultural Life and in the Family, carried out in 1969 by the Bulgarian Central Board of Statistics, the Central Trade Union Council, the Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement, and the Institute of Labour. It was "representative of all working women in the country". 16,060 women were interviewed (Dinkova, 1982: 290).

6. Figures quoted by Spasovska (1985: 38), based on the survey described in Note 5 above, indicate that the percentages of school age children cared for by relatives were then 16.6 percent of wage workers' children, 19.6 percent of salaried employees' children, 28.9 percent of cooperative farmers' children. (Children began school at age seven until the mid-1980's, when the starting age was lowered to age six).

7. The names of the individuals described have been changed to protect privacy.

8. Regarding questions such as the number of couples who entrust their children to the care of grandparents, or the willingness of grandparents to undertake such care, there are Bulgarian data available. There is, however, a methodological problem that arises in making use of these data (a problem that is not peculiar to Bulgarian data), and a digression to discuss this problem might be useful here. Most research in Bulgaria on such subjects is done by sociologists, relying on extensive, questionnaire-based surveys. It is generally not done by cultural anthropologists, who would rely more on in-depth observations, informal conversation and interviewing, participant observation, network analysis, and case studies. The sociological surveys and the analysis of their results are time-consuming and expensive, and cannot be repeated often. They therefore lead to a tendency to build a picture of social reality based on data of different vintages, a procedure which can obscure the process of change. For example, the sociologist L. Spasovska, in her very thoughtful and excellent 1985 book, *GENERATION AND FAMILY*, explains that the majority of Bulgarians are of the opinion that very young children should be cared for in a home environment. In discussing actual practices and telling us that more than half of Bulgarian women entrust their children under age seven to the care of relatives, she was obliged to base her information on 1969 data - data that was collected almost a generation earlier in the major survey described in Note 5 above (Spasovska, 1985: 38). Similarly, in telling us that the majority of grandparents undertake this task with willingness/desire, she had to rely on data from 1977, from a study carried out at that time in Pleven district (Spasovska, 1985: 39). Granted that these data were only eight years old when Spasovska's book was published, on this particular question that is long enough

to make a difference. The grandparents of 1977 were much more likely to be still living in villages or to be first generation urban migrants than are the grandparents of the late 1980's. The latter, as I have suggested, have a different occupational history and may have a different attitude toward leaving their employment at an early age. Even Spasovska's 1977 data already indicate that the more highly educated the grandparents are (and the higher their income), the more likely they are to help their children with child care through monetary assistance rather than direct aid - due to their desire for continued participation in social production (Spasovska, 1985: 40).

9. As of 1977, the average age of mothers at first birth was 22, and at second birth 25. Over 70 percent of women married between the ages of 18 and 25. The average age of marriage was 23 for women and 26 for men (People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1980: 10). By the mid 1980's, the average age of brides was still 23, and 73 percent of women of marriageable age were married (Ganev, 1988: 10-11). I don't yet have exact figures regarding the average age of the mother at first birth for the late 1980's.

10. "At present 84 women out of a hundred of the active female population work or study" (Ganev, 1988: 11). Perhaps the missing 16 percent is partly accounted for by early-retired grandmothers, who are caring for grandchildren.

11. Kyuranov quotes these data from: V. Topalova, *WORK IN THE VALUE SYSTEM*, p 73, 1985 (in Bulgarian).

12. Although the Bulgarian divorce rate, about 1 divorce per 5 marriages per year in the 1980's, (Assyov, 1986: 14) is still lower than in a number of European countries, it is increasing among the young.

13. I say "perceived" because, as has been recognized in Bulgaria for years, an increase in labour productivity would significantly relieve this "shortage". More part time employment of pensioners would also help. However, the latter could not likely contribute much to easing the greatest shortages, those in construction work and unskilled manual labour.

14. Life expectancy in 1984-86 was 68.17 for men and 74.39 for women (People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1989: 29).

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