Chapter 1

# Introduction

## Postsocialism as a topic of anthropological investigation

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### Farewell to the socialist 'other'[1]

*Chris Hann*

The struggle between capitalism and socialism was a long drawn out contest that decisively framed the political consciousness of most of the world's population while it lasted and continues to exercise pervasive effects a decade after it was apparently won by 'the free world'. Massive changes have taken place in the former socialist countries. Many academic disciplines have addressed these changes and in some cases, notably that of economics, disciplinary paradigms have been utilized not merely to explain what is unfolding but to make changes happen in a particular way. Yet, after more than a decade, many deficits remain in social science understandings of the 'transition'. I shall argue that anthropology provides the necessary corrective to the deficits of 'transitology', and that the anthropological study of other parts of the world can also profit from attention to the emerging studies of postsocialism.[2]

For readers unfamiliar with modern anthropology, its basic aim is the documentation and analysis of human social arrangements in all their historical and geographical diversity. From its beginnings in the nineteenth century, when the prime focus was on the study of small-scale communities of 'savages', the socalled *Naturvölker,* in the course of the twentieth century anthropologists expanded their range considerably. They first extended their enquiries to include 'peasant' communities, including those of vast countries with long histories of 'civilization' such as China, India and Mexico. Following the dismantling of European colonial empires, they eventually brought their discipline to bear on European societies themselves (where the relationship between anthropologists and local specialists was sometimes problematic). They increasingly rejected the constraints of the isolated rural community and

turned their attention to urban contexts, not only to 'ordinary people' and migrants, but also to the middle classes and to elites. By the end of the century, earlier disciplinary boundaries had partially broken down. The basic principle of respect for different ways of organizing society, for beliefs and practices at variance with one's own, has been retained, but the hallmark of modern anthropology tends nowadays to lie in its method, in the 'close-up' view acquired through fieldwork (ethnography). 'Qualitative' data are the main currency of this anthropological knowledge, and they sometimes lead the researcher to challenge the statistical generalizations and abstract models of other disciplines. On this basis, all human activities and institutions are equally suitable subjects for anthropological investigation, though some anthropologists continue to address distinctive themes and to work in places little frequented by their colleagues in sociology or 'cultural studies'.

Despite their obvious importance in terms of numbers and the variety of social forms they contained, anthropologists were not prominent in the study of socialist societies in Eurasia. Some of the reasons for this neglect derived from the discipline's origins and its overriding concern with 'exotic' tribal societies in regions colonized by European powers. Russia was also an imperial power and ethnographers began to document the marginal people of their peripheries in Tsarist times. Their successors after the revolution were obliged to operate within the straitjacket of Marxism-Leninism, and both Soviet and Chinese minorities policies were decisively shaped by Stalin. In some ways, however, this anthropology adhered to the paradigm that was being gradually abandoned in Western countries: the primary concern was with remote, disappearing social worlds, the antithesis of the dominant aggressive modernism of socialist ideology.

Western anthropologists were barely allowed a look-in. This began to change with the softening of socialism in a number of Eastern European countries in the 1970s. The first cohorts allowed to carry out fieldwork in socialist countries still devoted disproportionate attention to remote villages and marginal groups. These studies added valuable correctives to common social science models of socialism, by showing how it was experienced and routinized by 'ordinary people'.[3]

The dramatic events of 1989–91 created new opportunities both for established scholars and for a new generation of fieldworkers. No single scholar can possibly keep pace with the burgeoning literature and, without claiming to offer a balanced survey, the following thumbnail sketch is intended primarily to help readers to follow up topics of interest to them.[4] It goes without saying that research questions and methods necessarily reflect not only the altered nature of the research terrain but also changing concerns in the discipline, including heightened awareness of philosophical and ethical dilemmas (De Soto and Dudwick 2000). Younger anthropologists of postsocialism have paid attention to the emerging diversity of lifestyles in modern urban contexts, including capital cities; after all, this is where large sections of the population now live

(Berdahl *et al.* 2000). Some of those nowadays undertaking 'classical' fieldwork in a village community address themes quite different from those addressed by previous village researchers: for example, Berdahl's (1999) study of an East German community concentrates on questions of memory, consumption and identity, while themes related to agriculture and other forms of work recede into the background.

On the other hand, there have also been significant strands of continuity in the topics and locations of anthropological research into postsocialism. Several scholars have seized the opportunity to work in remote places, notably the vast regions of Siberia and Central Asia that had previously been off limits (Anderson 2000; Grant 1995; Kandiyoti and Mandel 1998; Sneath 2000). Just as many monographs of the socialist period focused on the establishment and functioning of cooperatives and collective farms, so the single most prominent theme in rural studies of the postsocialist period has been the break-up of these 'total social institutions' (for wide-ranging compilations see Abrahams 1996; Anderson and Pine 1995; Kideckel 1995). The process began earlier in China and is well documented there (Chan *et al.* 1992; Hann 1999; Jing 1996; Liu 2000; Nie 2001; Potter and Potter 1990; Ruf 1998; Siu 1989a; Vermeer *et al.* 1998). Some researchers have been able to address the balance of change and continuity by publishing updated studies of communities they first studied in the communist period. For the former Soviet Union, Caroline Humphrey has reissued her pioneering study in Buryatia (1998). In Eastern Europe, Creed's study of Bulgaria (1998) and Lampland's of Hungary (1995) present villagers' experiences of collectivization somewhat more positively than does Kideckel (1993) for the Romanian case. Postsocialist developments also vary considerably, but there seems to be a high degree of consensus that rural populations have suffered disproportionately (including, despite initial improvements, the Chinese case). Hann (1993b; 1996) found that Hungarian villagers had a sense that their 'citizenship' rights were being diminished and Hivon (1995) has described 'resistance' to widening inequalities in rural Russia. Kaneff (1996) has shown how Bulgarian villagers struggled against the odds to hold on to at least some of their collective institutions.

Processes of land privatization have been fundamental to the reconstruction of postsocialist rural society, but they are of such variety and complexity that we may have to wait for a full generation before we can specify their outcomes more adequately.[5] In Romania Katherine Verdery has documented the 'elasticity' of land that has several rival claimants, and highlighted the need to complement a focus on property rights with attention to the duties and obligations that such rights incur (1996, 1999b, 2001; cf. Cartwright 2001; Hirschhausen 1997). It is not simply that the objectives of moral justice (which might mean restoring property to former owners) and economic rationality (leaving the land in the units in which it can be farmed most efficiently) often prove incompatible. Sometimes the pursuit of private property appears conducive to neither goal, but to be the product of a new dominant ideology imposed upon the

postsocialist world. The adequacy of the Western liberal distinction between public (collective) and private (individual) forms of property is called into question by the extreme fuzziness of property relations in China (Oi and Walder 1999).

Of course, the dilemmas of privatization and moral justice are not confined to the countryside. Urban settings are more complex insofar as it is usually impossible to divide up industrial means of production to create family units in the way that one can—at least theoretically—attempt to create family farmers. A comprehensive analysis of a community of workers is more daunting. The fieldworker is more likely to aim at detailed descriptions of partial networks or specific types of social interaction, or to explore more diffuse worlds of discourse (e.g. Ries 1997). However, several anthropologists have provided ethnographic studies of factory workers, including those whose workplaces were closed or radically restructured following foreign intervention (Czegledy 1999; Dunn 1999; Müller 1993, 1996, 1999). The distress is sometimes greater than that experienced in the countryside, because an entire way of life comes to an end and one is powerless to do anything about it; some redundant workers have attempted to move back to the countryside, where at least they can generate the greater part of their own food supply (see Kideckel, this volume). Social inequalities and poverty have increased in virtually all regions and economic sectors of the postsocialist countries, but only careful micro-level research can provide important information about how different groups are responding, e.g. in adjusting budgets and domestic divisions of labour and responsibility (Bridger and Pine 1998; Kandiyoti 1998). The negative implications of economic liberalization for most women have been examined in rural China by Croll (1994), Davin (1998); Jacka (1997) and Judd (1994); and in Eastern Europe by Gal and Kligman (2000a, b) and Pine (1996a, 1996b, 1998, this volume).

Other areas of economic life to attract attention from anthropologists include markets and consumption, where the explanatory models of mainstream economists are often found to be inadequate (Lampland, this volume). Whereas the latter usually assume that 'tastes' are given, anthropologists explore the social factors that shape changing consumption patterns, as Humphrey has done for postsocialist Moscow. Her wide-ranging analyses of postsocialist dynamics (2000, 2002) emphasize the 'disorderly' character of exchanges throughout the post-Soviet economy. Hann (1992b), Holy (1992), and Konstantinov (1997) have considered the impact of the 'market principle' in Eastern Europe, including the proliferation of petty-trading across state borders. Yan (1997) has described the impact of McDonald's on Beijing, where the meanings associated with American fast food are quite different from those it has in its country of origin. This global business makes a conscious effort to adapt to local conditions, because it is in its economic interests to do so. Unfortunately this point has not been grasped in many of the non-commercial interventions, notably socalled 'aid' and 'development' processes. Anthropologists have therefore contributed perceptive critiques of

the practical implementation of these programmes (Bruno 1998; Mandel, this volume; Sampson 1996, this volume; Wedel 1998; Wedel and Creed 1997).

Most anthropologists have been critical of policies based on the transfer of Western models, which overlook institutional contexts and the strong threads of continuity that mark even the most dramatic of social ruptures. Most economists have tended to dismiss such points. There are, however, encouraging signs that, instead of shrill cynical comments from the sidelines, it might be possible to develop a fruitful dialogue with even the 'hardest' of the social sciences. Seabright (2000) shows how the approaches of anthropologists and sociologists can be integrated with perspectives from economics to illuminate disintegration and the prominence of barter in the post-Soviet economies. Schrader (2000) shows how a single scholar can fruitfully apply a variety of techniques, in this case to explore the changing significance of pawnshops in the strategies of poor households and new businessmen in St Petersburg.

There is scope for complementarities in many other areas. In law, for example, it is clear that at least some of the Western constitutional lawyers called upon to assist in the development of new legal codes have not considered it necessary to pay much attention to local context. An emphasis upon the legal strengthening of private property rights may be seriously misplaced if people continue to look to the state to resolve their collective action problems. In another highly contentious area of law, John Borneman (1998) has contributed an analysis of retributive justice, with a particular focus on the special case of East Germany (special because here the former socialist state disappeared). It is not necessary to accept Borneman's provocative general theory of postsocialist justice in order to welcome empirical studies that bring out further layers of socio-legal norms, which always leave their mark on the imported blueprints.

Similar points apply in the development of local administrative and political institutions, where China has been the subject of the most sustained body of research (Feuchtwang and Wang 2001; Oi 1989; Siu 1989a; Vermeer *et al.* 1998), Elsewhere, relatively few researchers have followed up Verdery's (1995:230) call to investigate the 'mechanisms and arenas of state transformation'. One study that does so is that of Humphrey and Sneath (1999), whose comparative study of pastoral adaptations highlighted problems of widening income differentiation and environmental degradation in several countries of Inner Asia. In Chapter 13 of this volume, Humphrey calls for a more radical rethinking of anthropological approaches to the field of politics, since no standardized model of 'the state' can be applied to the unstable field of post-Soviet Russia.

For obvious reasons, the field of ethnicity, nationalism and 'minority rights' has attracted attention across many disciplines. The problems faced by Roma people have been well documented in the postsocialist years but, as Michael S te wart has shown (1997), they go back a long way and in some ways they were intensified under socialism. Stewart argues in this volume for the importance of

detailed knowledge of the people concerned and against solutions based on the American model of a racialized 'underclass'. A more general problem with the models put forward by political scientists and 'human rights experts' is that they often fail to recognize the flexibility of collective identities over time, the possibility that persons may belong to different minorities at the same time or privilege some over others depending on context. Yet unless the context is understood and 'ethnicity' treated as contingent, rather than as primordial essence, the legislation of specific rights according to this criterion may lead to the opposite of the benign results intended. Khazanov (1995) and Tishkov (1997) have provided comprehensive accounts of developments in the former USSR. In Eastern Europe attention has concentrated primarily on the Balkans (though Kürti and Langman 1997 includes studies from other regions). Numerous scholars have shown the importance of understanding the local factors that made 'ethnic cleansing' possible in ex-Yugoslavia and continue to destabilize the wider region (Bax 2000, forthcoming; Bringa 1995; Cowan 2001; Duijzings 2000; Halpern and Kideckel 2000). A long history of 'clan' organization and vigilantism in the context of ineffective state power are certainly among the key common factors. From an appreciation of the factors on the ground, the anthropologist may move to address fundamental principles of constitutional democracy whose pertinence is by no means confined to the postsocialist countries (Hayden 1999, this volume).

The policy relevance of anthropological research and links into expanding interdisciplinary literatures on cultural and human rights are self-evident in the fields I have considered so far. Valuable work is also being undertaken in other fields where the immediate applied payoff is less obvious, such as ritual and religion. Closer inspection reveals that, here too, there are usually significant links to ongoing political and economic processes. Michat Buchowski (2001), following Zygmunt Bauman, has considered how for the current systemic transformations can be viewed as the liminal phase of a *rite de passage*. Katherine Verdery (1999a) has demonstrated the importance of rituals focused on the dead in expressing values and mobilizing people to support particular interests (cf. Kubik 1994 on late socialist Poland). Catherine Wanner (1998) has explored the new nationalist symbolism of independent Ukraine, and Bulag (1998) has explored the 'hybridities' of the new Mongolian national identity. The symbolic dimension is also prominent in Cahalen's (forthcoming) analysis of the persistence of a strong *regional* identity in Poland, despite the increased exposure of the local economy to global forces. As Creed shows (this volume), rituals also play an important role in the maintenance of highly *local*, community boundaries. They have been a prominent theme in the anthropology of post-Maoist China, where some have seen long-term continuities with presocialist customs (Potter and Potter 1990) while others have cautioned that here as in other domains the socialist past itself has also left its mark (Brandtstädter 2000; Feuchtwang 2000, this volume; Siu 1989b). Both the resurgence of traditional religious practices and the efflorescence of new

sects and cults need to be understood in the context of the general loss of faith in socialism as an 'ideological system'. Increasing social instability was manifested in a variety of religious phenomena in the socialist period, an extreme example being the Marian cults at Medjugorje (Bax 1995). The demise of socialist restrictions has contributed to revivals of shamanism in large parts of the former Soviet Union, urban as well as rural (Balzer, 1996; Bellér-Hann 2001; Humphrey 2001; Vitebsky, this volume). External insistence on pluralism, on the 'open society', implies a marketplace for religions analogous to economic marketplaces, but anthropological work may caution against such a recipe—especially in countries with a dominant church, such as Poland.[6]

Many postsocialist studies have included an explicit engagement with history. This is not in itself new: Verdery's first monograph (1983) was primarily a historical study of group dynamics over several centuries of Transylvanian history. What is new is not only that anthropologists, like other scholars, have benefited from the opportunity to work in archives previously closed to them. Following the collapse of the socialist orientation to the future, they have also documented an increased concern with the past in the present. They have been at the forefront in exploring traumatic memories and recovering 'secret histories' (Jing 1996; Vitebsky, this volume; Watson 1994), in studies of postsocialist historiography and iconography (Anagnost 1997; Niedermüller 1998), and in showing how local constructions of the past establish group connections to changing national ideologies (Kaneff 2002; Lemon 2000; Schnirelman 1996). Again we see the potential for fruitful collaboration between anthropologists and other specialists, in this case oral historians as well as those working with documents. Sometimes the same scholars employ methods from all of these fields (Lehmann 2001; Skultans 1998). It is now generally accepted that ethnographic analysis can be greatly enhanced by the integration of longer time frames (Giordano and Kostova, this volume).

Non-anthropologists may still question whether such work can illuminate the macro-societal problems of postsocialism. The answer is that the insights of close-up fieldwork observation are especially valuable in periods of uncertainty and institutional instability, a point that seems to be gaining increased acceptance in neighbouring disciplines as well (Bridger and Pine 1998; Burawoy and Verdery 1999). The case studies in these two volumes reveal a high degree of overlap between the work of anthropologists and sociologists, at any rate those sociologists who, through fieldwork, come into contact with real people and their social practices. Of course, it is not easy in the space of a brief book chapter to convey a full sense of the social context, a difficulty that also applies to some of the ethnographic materials in this book. Readers inclined to dismiss such materials as unrepresentative or anecdotal are encouraged to look at more detailed work by the author in question, or indeed by any other anthropologist. We hope that the fragments presented in these brief accounts will stimulate readers to go away and seek out fuller versions.

Thus, although most anthropological work focuses on specific practices at the

micro level, it invariably carries wider implications. But how does one make this explanatory leap and what are the larger units? A great deal of anthropological work has tended to extrapolate from the community study to an entity 7 called a 'society' or a 'culture'. Often this unit is considered to approximate to a state, though large multi-ethnic states pose an immediate problem. At this point the term 'culture', widely perceived as the indispensable 'master concept' of the discipline, often slips in imperceptibly; it is prominent in this volume and in postsocialist anthropology generally (Wolfe 2000). Most of the work I have cited above could be said to be concerned with how specific cultural understandings shape people's behaviour. If one had to sum up in a single phrase the essence of the anthropologist's critique of other social science approaches to 'the transition', the charge could be 'neglect of the cultural dimension'.

For me, however, the concept of culture raises major problems in the postsocialist context, for at least two reasons. First, the 'cultural racism'[7] that has been documented in many other parts of the world has been exceptionally transparent in a number of postsocialist contexts, notably where formerly federal, multi-ethnic states have disintegrated. Many postsocialist elites have drawn, implicitly or explicitly, on ideas of culture as an integrated whole to create boundaries of exclusion and, in the worst cases, to legitimize violence against those alleged to possess a different culture. Anthropologists may contest such usages and insist that their own concept of culture carries quite different implications, but I am doubtful that we can succeed in correcting this popular usage—especially since some anthropologists themselves emphasize the bounded coherence of the 'cultures' they study.

A second, often related sense in which the culture concept is regularly abused comes when ideas such as 'Balkan mentality', 'Gypsy nature' or 'the fatalistic Orthodox soul' are invoked to explain why policies that succeed in some contexts fail entirely when transplanted to others. In these accounts, culture is a mysterious residual variable, the ultimate cause of why an entire region or 'people' may diverge from the path of development prescribed by persisting versions of 'modernization theory'. This 'black box', mystical approach to culture was fostered in many parts of the world in the twentieth century by the modern anthropologist's tendency to focus on particular units and to neglect similarities at higher regional and even continental levels. It can be corrected in this case by paying closer attention to the many features that Marxist-Leninist regimes in Eurasia shared. This opens up intriguing conceptual problems, for it is equally clear that, in the usual sense of cultural history, socialist Eurasia was extraordinarily diverse. From Lutheran Protestants in Germany to Buddhist Lamas and Islamic Mollahs in Central Asia, from Roman Catholicism and Jewish traditions in Poland to Confucianism in China and Shamanism in Siberia, religious traditions varied enormously, often within countries as well as between them. Yet the similarities of socialist institutions imposed a layer of uniformity on top of all this diversity. This layer has been incisively analysed by Katherine Verdery (1991, 1996; cf. Hann 1994) in a

general model of socialist 'allocative power' that complements her many more specialized studies of Romanian case materials. She does not speak of a culture of socialism but emphasizes instead institutions and the logic of bureaucratic centralism. She has argued powerfully against the teleology of 'transition', the assumption that the future condition of the former socialist countries can be read off from the development path followed by Western capitalism (1996).

But we must not privilege the common distinctive features of the socialist countries to the extent that we lose sight of the many features shared all along with other parts of the world, including the most developed industrial societies of the West. There was a tendency in much of the social-science literature on socialism to construct an 'other', corresponding to the 'savage other' of colonial anthropology. Anthropological work began to subvert simple models of 'totalitarianism' while the Cold War was still very much under way; the anthropology of postsocialism can perhaps go a step further. The central concepts used here are no less applicable in other parts of the world. The clearest example is the concept of 'civil society', which was rediscovered in the last years of socialism, in opposition to the 'totalitarian' state (Gellner 1994; Hall 1995; Hann 1990). Because of its normative attractions, civil society has been invoked in many programmes of Western aid (Kalb, this volume; Mandel, this volume; Sampson 1996, this volume; Wedel 1999); but often it, too, has remained an elusive, black-box category. Some scholars in other disciplines have tried to operationalize it by counting the number of 'non-governmental organizations' and treating this as an index of the health of the society (Cellarius and Staddon 2002). Anthropologists studying postsocialism are likely to be sceptical of such approaches, since a proliferation of 'autonomous' associations is likely to be small consolation to people suddenly deprived of jobs and public goods. Pursuing a simplistic Western definition of civil society can in some postsocialist conditions lead directly to heightened incivility (Hann 1998). The concept therefore needs to be broadened, relativized and adapted to local conditions (Brook and Frolic 1997; De Soto and Anderson 1993; Hann 1992a, 1995; Hann and Dunn 1996; Kligman 1990). If this is done, 'civil society' can remain a useful general term to designate a broad flow of social activity, the study of which has always been central to anthropology, between the domestic sphere on the one hand and the state on the other, but not sharply separable from either of these.

Another concept that the postsocialist settings invite us to reconsider is 'embeddedness', the metaphor adapted by Karl Polanyi from Richard Thurnwald to convey what the early substantivist economic anthropologists felt to be the unique way in which modern capitalist economies had ruptured the traditional integration of economic activities into other sectors of life. Are the postsocialist market economies more 'disembedded' than their predecessors, and if so how? What other terms might better capture the current character of economic relationships in postsocialist countries? Anthropologists have pioneered investigations of the economy variously described as 'informal',

'second' or 'underground', showing that these activities are always tightly connected to the 'official' economy, and that allegedly impersonal spheres of market and contractual relations are always mediated by personal contacts. Socialist central planning spawned rich varieties of economic sociality, some of which have collapsed completely, while others have experienced efflorescence in postsocialist conditions (Wedel 1992). The nexus of gifts, 'connections' and trust is especially well documented for China (Kipnis 1997; Yan 1996; Yang 1994). Contributors to this volume (see especially Part I) take up these and related concepts that have been prominent in postsocialist studies, but which are no less pertinent elsewhere.

Terms like 'civil society' and 'trust' immediately betray their normative loading. So too does the concept of *legitimacy*, which is broached by several contributors to this volume (see especially Giordano, who follows Weber, and Latham, whose approach derives more from Foucault). Communist systems collapsed because they had evidently lost political and moral legitimacy. Much fine writing at the time, both by local intellectuals and by Westerners connected to such 'dissidents', was premised on the assumption that an intellectual author could speak up for a whole society or a people, oppressed by an authoritarian regime. A decade later Vaclav Havel used the occasion of a World Bank meeting in Prague to call for a 'restructuring of the entire system of values which forms the basis of our civilization today'. At the same time he urged the Bank to pay more attention to the views of the people—as if this were the easiest thing in the world to do.[8] Many Eastern European social scientists and the few Western anthropologists who worked in the region knew of complicating circumstances when Havel and others formulated their critiques of communism 'in the people's name'; but few objected to simplifying intellectual discourses about a 'return to Europe' or the 'rediscovery of civil society'. Now, a decade after the Cold War ended, anthropologists are well positioned to move the moral debates to another level by showing how terms like 'private property' and 'market economy' connect to social realities for the citizens of today's democracies. Are these still lofty ideals, or are they merely key slogans in the new ideologies? Have Western elites, supported by the dominant disciplines of transitology, systematically promoted models for the postsocialist countries that bear little connection to the social realities of their own countries?

I suggest that postsocialist anthropology necessarily engages with both a political and an ethical dimension. Unlike other analysts who deploy terms like 'civil society', our close-up scrutiny of practices allows us to assess a changing moral climate where it matters most, in everyday life. From this perspective it is striking that the dissidents' diagnoses of a 'moral vacuum' are turning up again in characterizations of postsocialism. Neither the new ideological slogans nor the efflorescence of religious phenomena seem able to fill this new social void. The *everyday moral communities* of socialism have been undermined but not replaced. Nor does lacing capitalist consumerism with increased doses of

national sentiment seem to produce the desired results. In socialist times, many citizens were uncomfortable with their rulers; some tuned in to Radio Free Europe whenever they could. Some lived in a climate of fear at the workplace and suspicion in the neighbourhood; but this has perhaps been exaggerated in the Western literature. Some of those who grumbled most in the old days now share the nostalgia of the less articulate, for an age when they had fewer and less secure rights in a legal sense, yet their needs were more adequately fulfilled than is the case a decade later. And they often bring a moral dimension into their comments, regretting the shrinking of the public sector and articulating a strongly held sense that the new regimes do not respect entitlements to which they had become accustomed under socialism (Pine, Kandiyoti, this volume).

For some of us, who knew these places when they were more isolated but safe, cheap and somehow unspoiled, the new inequalities make painful viewing. The influx of multinational businesses, property developers and advertising agencies is painful to behold. The consumer consolations are inadequate and not available to all, while the sordid aspects of the new market economy (e.g. prostitution) go uncontrolled. Of course, the distress experienced by some outside observers may exceed that felt by local people, among whom traces of nostalgia are usually dissipated when they reflect on the squalid and sordid aspects of their daily lives under socialism. Even so, there were plenty who *believed* in that system to some degree. Among those who rejected it, many did so on well thought out moral grounds. As for the majorities in the middle, those who simply took their social system for granted as most people do, all were exposed to an ideology that, even when it was patently collapsing, never abandoned its claim to ethical superiority. Whatever one thinks about this claim, my point is that the market and pluralist democracy have not, at the level of everyday practices, ushered in new moral forces comparable to those that have been displaced. Postsocialist corruption, criminality and social disintegration are constant topics of moral commentary. When all the evils and iniquities of socialism have been recognized (and many are documented in this volume), it remains important to note this register. At any rate, anthropologists are professionally obliged to recognize the moral complexities, to respect as well as critique the world that has now (almost everywhere) disappeared; those socialist ideals shaped the lives of the millions who lived in that world and, indirectly, of all the rest of us as well. We need shed no tears as we bid farewell to the 'socialist other' but, as Don Kalb points out in his 'Afterword' to this volume, it would be arrogant and myopic to imagine that global capitalism offers a universal panacea or moral yardstick.

Continuing anthropological explorations of the interplay between diverse histories, belief systems and practices may eventually render the concept 'postsocialist' redundant; but it seems to me that the experience of Marxist-Leninist socialism, the reproduction of a common layer of socialist institutions,

ideology and moral purpose over two generations or more, will continue to have decisive effects on this interplay everywhere in Eurasia for many years to come.

## Does the category 'postsocialist' still make sense?

*Caroline Humphrey*

The category 'postsocialist' rests on what seem to me a number of reasonable assumptions. First, there never can be a sudden and total emptying out of all social phenomena and their replacement by other ways of life. Second, what Rudolf Bahro called 'actually existing socialism' was a deeply pervasive phenomenon, existing not only as practices but also as public and covert ideologies and contestations. A third assumption, more disputed perhaps, is that 'actually existing socialism' had a certain foundational unity, derived in its public ideology from Marx and in its dominant political practice from Lenin. Even if the shared features of actually existing socialism were very unevenly distributed and moulded in diverging ways in different countries, those structures still had more in common than actually existing capitalisms—and 'capitalism' is a category that people go on using profitably, without qualms. So while 'postsocialism' is certainly a construct of the academy, it is not ours alone, and it does correspond to certain historical conditions 'out there'.

This is not to argue that 'postsocialist studies' should constitute a subdiscipline in the sense outlined by Strathern (1981). Strathern argued against an 'anthropology of women' precisely on the grounds that it was beginning to look like the manufacture of a closed subdiscipline, defined by specific values and interests. The study of formerly socialist societies must remain open, with possibilities of privileged insight from various different positions, both from inside and outside. It should not be separated off from other analytical concerns in anthropology, such as comparative studies of imperialism and colonialism, postimperialism or political anthropology more generally.

Having asserted the basic unity of the field of investigation, it is very obvious, if we scan across from Eastern Europe to Vladivostok, that divergences between the former socialist countries have been accentuated over the last decade. In particular, there seems to be a growing gap between Central and Eastern Europe (including the Baltic states) on the one hand, and the Russian Federation and the Central Asian countries on the other, not to speak of the Caucasus and China. Differences in crucial matters such as the way 'democracy' is operated, attitudes to private property in land, the relation of the individual to the state, and the role of law, seem to be widening as each year goes by. Yet it makes sense, at least for the time being, to keep the category of 'postsocialism' in order to maintain the broadest field for comparison. I have three main reasons for saying this.

The first is that we still have not worked out what the heritage of actually

existing socialism is. To give an example, in the recent presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan the incumbent, Akayev, was returned to power with 75 per cent of the vote, and journalists rushed to pronounce this a sad day for democracy and a return of communist political habits. In other parts of Inner Asia, with which I am more familiar, there have been even more overwhelming electoral victories, such as the 88 per cent of the vote won by the singer and mafia-boss Kobzon in the Aga Buryat district in Russia. Kobzon's victory too was attributed by Russian journalists to 'Soviet mentality' among local Buryats. But what grounds do we have for concluding that these electoral results have anything to do with the previous conduct of politics under socialism? Other explanations might start from an examination of local patronage systems or vote-rigging—we cannot know until we make on-the-spot historically informed studies and also look comparatively at why regions with more or less the same formation of 'actually existing socialism' have followed diverging paths in recent years.

This brings me to my second point: how can we most profitably conduct comparison? It's not much good describing two different situations and then totting up, 'There is X here, but not there; there's Y here, but not there' and so on. Rather, by investigating broadly while we are in the process of trying to understand any one situation, this can inform our analysis of that very situation. In other words, comparison should inform description, not the other way around. One needs a relevant field for comparison, and for us this will very often be the wide field of 'postsocialisms'.

Third, it is important to recognize that changes in postsocialist countries are not simple and unidirectional (Burawoy and Verdery 1999). There have been twists and unexpected reversals. In many countries there is a rather unpredictable propensity to 'turn back', or at least a resolute refusal to abandon values and expectations associated with socialism among sectors of the population. We do not see this everywhere to the same degree, but in one form or another it seems very common. For example, in Mongolia the previous revolutionary (i.e. 'communist') party has just been re-elected by a staggering majority (only three among over seventy seats in the parliament are held by other parties). This party has been very much transformed, and indeed advocates a 'Third Way' with echoes of Britain's Tony Blair. Nevertheless, what Mongolians say is that its appeal really rests on its previously established legitimacy of having provided for substantive 'needs', such as regular wages, health and free education, during the socialist period. The resurgence of communist parties in this way is temporal evidence that we are in a period of postsocialism. It would be perverse not to recognize the fact that people from East Germany to Mongolia are making political judgments over a time span that includes the socialist past as their prime reference point, rather than thinking just about the present trajectory to the future.

This point cannot, however, retain its force indefinitely. Sooner or later, as the generations brought up under socialist regimes disappear from the political scene, the category of postsocialism is likely to break apart and disappear. I have

the impression that many younger people across a wide swathe of the region are already beginning to reject the term, which can be seen as a constricting, even insulting, label, something imposed from outside that seems to imply constraints on the freedom of people in these countries to determine their own futures. If people themselves reject the category, we as anthropologists should not cling to it, but pay attention to whatever other frameworks of analysis arise from within these countries themselves. In any case, another aspect of the generational problem is that the anthropologists who knew those societies under socialism, the 'old-timers' like me, are being replaced by younger scholars with their own agendas and interests. They are likely to focus on new issues, like the integration of Europe, globalization, or new communications technologies, that have little to do with the socialist past.

Finally, let us reflect further on some of the salient 'objective' processes and events ongoing in the vast space of 'postsocialism'. In the western regions we have the spread of NATO, and preparations for entry into the European Union are well advanced in a number of countries. Less well known is what is happening further east. For some years now, many writers and politicians in Russia have been debating what a non-Western-oriented, even an 'antiAtlanticist', future would look like. They have been debating the historical identity of Russia and the nature of the Federation in relation to the imperial and Soviet heritage. Central to this have been discussions about 'Eurasianism', in which the political traditions of Asian cultures within the Federation are held to make a creative synergy with that of the Slavs. Some of the Asian peoples concerned have rejected Eurasianism, seeing it as a mask for domination by Moscow. Others have welcomed it because it seems to give value to their own cultures. Now as far as I can see, these 'Asian values' are something new and not resurrections of pre-Soviet forms, often concern religion, reinterpretations of history or the overturning of past humiliations, and in many cases they also respond to current global alignments. At the same time, they are indigenous, by which I mean that they are positioned, and come out of regional experience.

The more extreme Russian nationalist forms of Eurasianism will present a challenge to anthropology similar in some ways to that posed by irredentist movements in Western Europe. One difference is that the political structure of Russia, with its eighty-nine federated polities, may provide locales where such ideologies could become dominant, in combination with regional vested interests. We may be witnessing in parts of Russia and Central Asia the emergence of the legitimation of a style of authoritarian government that could have no comparable purchase in East-Central Europe. Furthermore, it seems to me probable that the way this is experienced internally is very different from the face put on it externally, for the benefit of international relations—and hence the need for anthropological studies. There is a most complex relationship between the pragmatic attempt by Moscow to verticalize power all the way down to the level of the district, the pacts between local resource-holders, and

the attempts by people of different cultures to register publicly their own ways of conceiving political relations. With the growing popularity of an overarching Eurasianism, the potential is there for a new kind of rhetorically anti-rational authoritarianism, validated by mystical ideological notions which coexist uneasily with the hard facts of who controls and monopolizes resources and who is reduced to economic destitution. The challenge will be two-fold: first, how to understand and interpret such situations without prejudging them from a Euro-American set of values, and here it seems to me that collaboration between regional and outsider anthropologists must be essential. Second, as Verdery argues below, the vision of Western societies from Eurasian perspectives will inform our own self-nderstanding.

I examine this new ideology of Eurasianism in more detail in Chapter 13. The current situation in the provinces that promote such and idea may have certain significant links to aspects of Sovietism as a style of government, but even so privatization and the new electoral politics have made a decisive break with the past structures. These new formations seem set on trajectories that will take them ever further from socialism, and in a quite different way from the processes under way in East-Central Europe. If we see a growing gulf between two broad paths, if socialist values come to be rejected in several entirely different ways in different regions of the former socialist zone, and if 'actually existing socialism' comes to be relegated into a largely forgotten past of yellowing newsprint, then it will be time to lay the category 'postsocialist' finally to rest.

## Whither postsocialism?

*Katherine Verdery*

If the two preceding contributions show us the variety of ethnographic work being done since 1989 and inquire how long the term 'postsocialist' will remain meaningful for research in the region, this final essay turns away from the ethnographically concrete to speculate about the future.[9] Whether under the rubric postsocialist or not, where should scholarship on the former socialist bloc be heading? Chris Hann's essay has shown some of the first steps, which include efforts to understand the transformation process and 'legacies' of socialism, practices and dilemmas of 'daily life', and problems that had not arisen in the earlier literature (such as tourism, nostalgia, and prostitution).[10] Becoming historians and continuing to study socialism through newly opened archives has been another option.[11] But from a decade of such writing, no clear direction for postsocialism and the study of 'transition' has emerged. To orient our research, it seems time to seek a new angle of vision on processes of the socialist and postsocialist periods.

One possibility is to create a parallel with postcolonial studies, inviting that body of work to open itself to insights from a rather different quarter while also

turning postsocialist studies in new directions.[12] The parallel makes a certain sense: not only were Eastern Europe and much of the former Soviet Union under a form of colonial domination, but numerous other countries—Cuba, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Yemen, Laos, etc.—entered into the Soviet orbit, often as part of establishing their independence from one or another Western colonial power. In this essay I will point to what I see as some of the more productive moves in postcolonial studies so as to explore their analogues for work on postsocialism.

Just as postcolonial studies examines the colonial pasts that shaped societies in present-day Africa, Latin America and Asia, so we might now explore these same processes for Soviet imperialism. Such an exercise would enable several things, among them analyses of kinds of empire. The Soviet empire was not organized like those of Great Britain, France and other capitalist countries. Although both involved complex combinations of conquest, infiltration and annexation to the projects of the imperial centre, those projects differed: 'Moscow Centre' aimed to integrate its dependencies into a process of accumulating not capital but, as I have argued elsewhere, allocative power through accumulating means of production (see Verdery 1991). Integral to this goal was building a wall that would *insulate* it and its dependencies from processes of capital accumulation. Thus, security was an obsession, and part of the point of expanding the empire westward was to create a safety zone (Eastern Europe) so that imperial territory would not be contiguous with that of the European capitalist centres. The Soviet empire was more self-consciously invasive and ambitious than West European empires: its instruments were generally more blunt, and its plans for ideological transformation emphasized different routes to that end.

One objective of postsocialist studies, then, might be to examine more fully through newly accessible archives how the Soviet empire functioned. How did the colonial connections work, as compared with those of Western Europe's empires?[13] What was the difference among the 'inner tier' of Soviet Republics, the 'second tier' of East European satellites, and the 'outer tier' of client states in Africa, Asia and the New World? How might explorations of this kind modify postcolonial theory? And might both bodies of work be enhanced by comparing the routes out of empire—the differential insertions of colonies or satellites into global capital flows, the effects of varying the speed of decolonization?

A second possible analogue for postsocialism from postcolonial studies is the latter's questions about how the interactive field uniting colony and métropole helped to constitute and transform the imperial centre. Thus, how did the Soviet Union's relations with its various satellites constitute and transform 'Moscow Centre' itself? One could argue that these relations helped to bring the system down altogether, as debts in the satellites caused a drain on the centre (Bunce 1985) or as Soviet concern about the implications of Poland's Solidarity movement fuelled the emergence of a reformist faction in the Soviet leadership; by supporting reformists in Eastern Europe, this faction

brought about the 'revolutions' of 1989. But aside from these kinds of economic and political relations, postcolonial studies might encourage us to ask further how the very mechanisms of domination rebounded against the imperial centre. One obvious way was through the party's instrumentalization of national identities; a second might be reactions against its technologies of intimacy;[14] we should look for others.

Yet another parallel would be with postcolonial studies' emphasis upon the role of knowledge and representation in colonial rule. These were also fundamental, though in a different way, in the world of the Cold War. In fact, that war was nothing if not an organization both of the world and of images and knowledge about it (Verdery 1996:4). The Cold War organized the world around a dichotomy different from that of postcoloniality—not colonies and métropole, 'the West' and 'the Rest', but East and West, communism and capitalism. And it organized knowledge both by underscoring other aspects of capitalism than colonial relations and by grouping places and states differently from the centre-colony groupings of European imperialism. Such a perspective indicates that we are talking about a scholarly orientation much broader than simply 'postsocialism', and one that incorporates study of the Cold War as well. Perhaps we should speak, then, not of *postsocialist* but of *post-Cold War studies*. Let me elaborate on the above thoughts.

Just as postcolonial studies examines the representations of 'self and 'other' in the colonial encounter, we might further explore the history of such representations in the socialist and capitalist worlds—each holding up the other as its nemesis, the image of all that can be evil. This imagery has some postcolonial parallels in Western Europe's 'Orientalist' constructs and images of the 'savage'. We need to understand better how reciprocal images of 'the West' were made and propagated in both the communist and the colonial environments (one agenda of the subaltern school of postcolonial studies, for example). Literature has been an important site for that, in the colonies but not in socialist contexts; there, it might be that the image of the Western other was constructed mainly through negations of how socialist officialdom presented its own virtues.

Concerning the organization of knowledge, postcolonial studies generally contrasts colonial areas with the imperial centres—what we have come loosely and problematically to call the First World, with the Third. Studies of socialism and postsocialism, on the other hand, have emphasized the First and Second Worlds, aligning parts of the Third as clients of these. The knowledge sought in each body of scholarship has differed as well. Most area-studies work on the socialist bloc during the Cold War focused on excessive political control ('totalitarianism') and the absence of consumption and markets—features opposite to basic features of our own Western identity, just as much scholarly effort since 1989 has gone to studying the rectification of these 'lacks'.[15] Postcolonial studies emphasizes, rather, *practices of domination*, such as techniques of evangelizing,

manipulations of time and space, modes of inscribing the colonial system on the bodies of its subjects, etc. To adopt this broader rubric, along with some of its insights, would give an alternative kind of coherence to postsocialist studies.

So far it appears that I am merely calling for the application to the formerly socialist bloc of lessons learned from a postcolonial tutor. I have in mind, however, something rather more ambitious. I want to suggest that postsocialist or post-Cold War studies, whatever broader term we might adopt for it, should both amplify and incorporate postcolonial studies—or, less imperialistically, we should integrate these separate areas of inquiry into a single field. If the Third World gave us postcoloniality, then the Second World should be giving us something even more comprehensive, for the very concept of a Third, nonaligned World itself emerged from the Cold War. The presence of the Soviet system gave a very particular shape to global politics, with proxy wars, battles for client states, and clients playing the two superpowers off against one another—Yugoslavia is a prime, and sobering, example. That is, the global order that gave rise not only to neocolonialism but to *postcolonial studies itself* was an order structured by the Cold War, whose very existence compelled Western states to struggle for pieces of countries and regions that were not directly part of the Soviet bloc.

We should go further than merely integrating the 'worlds' to ask why studies of colonialism and socialism have been so separated from one another. What has that separation been accomplishing? There are fascinating insights to be gained from refusing that separation, insights such as Frank Costigliola's findings about the numbers of ex-colonial officers who moved into Cold War posts in the 1950s, bringing with them ideas about 'otherness' they saw no problem in transferring to their new socialist contexts.[16] What might this finding imply for the failures of Western intelligence to understand what was actually going on in those countries?

The more comprehensive frame I am proposing would lead to research that deals with colonialism in all its many forms: not only the European empires of previous centuries, not only the Soviet colonies in Eastern Europe and the numerous client-states in the Third World, but also the full incorporation of both the former colonies *and* the former socialist bloc into a global capitalist economy. To organize research in this way is to position the Third World differently from the way postcolonial studies does. Moreover, it affords us a rather different view of questions concerning Western identity by asking how not just the colonies but the *existence of socialism itself* affected the constitution and becoming of 'the West', often simultaneously with processes involving the colonies, postcolonies and neocolonies. The larger aim of this way of organizing knowledge would be to revise our understanding of twentieth-century capitalism, to which the socialist system posed a fundamental challenge. What were the effects of that challenge, and how can we find those effects historically or ethnographically?

To begin with, it seems likely that increased state intervention in Western European economies was a response to the danger that was perceived in the socialist alternative—as well, of course, as a response to working-class selforganization and social democracy. It is possible, in addition, that the organization of socialist political economies made them powerful competitors in a way that Western propaganda about the 'inefficiencies' of socialism served to obscure. For example, party-states regularly did what democratic ones rarely did until the 1970s: they bailed out failing enterprises—and they did it with 'taxpayers' money but without the political fall-out occasioned, for instance, by the US government's bail-out of the savings and loan industry. Party-states began early to protect firms against risk, through their practice of soft budget constraints; it was only later that their Western counterparts would begin to serve explicitly as cushions against risk (cf. Maurer 1999). Moreover, organizing property in a system of devolving use-rights rather than ownership rights, these states showed how enterprises might successfully shuck costs and liabilities precisely because they did not own. We increasingly see this insight at work both among property-rights theorists and in contemporary practices involving intellectual property, in which not owning but *leasing* and other temporary arrangements sustain profits.[17] It begins to seem that socialism was perhaps less outmoded than we were told.

We might go further. Is it also possible that the 'flexible specialization' so much analysed in the past two decades is in part a result of the challenge posed by socialism? Capitalist growth depends on consumption, in order to absorb the products it creates and generate the profits upon which accumulation depends. With the expansion of socialism not just in Europe but elsewhere as well, a staggering proportion of the world's people was hindered from consuming Western goods. Although the 1970s saw a gradual seepage of such products into socialist economies, they never flowed in at a rate that might have prevented the crisis into which global capitalism entered during the late 1960s and to which flexible specialization emerged as a solution. The crisis began when consumer markets for the output of mass production became saturated—that is, when *available* markets were saturated, those not embedded in the socialist sphere of exchange. The solution was to develop new techniques for expanding demand and consumption. Without socialist autarky, would this solution have arisen precisely when it did? Would 'niche markets', just-in-time manufacturing, and the tremendous speed-up of contemporary capitalism have been precluded—at least for a time? Post-Cold War studies would encourage us to ask this kind of question.

What I have said so far indicates some of the ways in which a new post-Cold War studies might illuminate the very constitution of colonial studies. It might also, more modestly, illuminate some of the problems that latter body of work addresses. For example, a common theme in writings on postsocialism is transferring Western institutions (markets, democracy, etc.) to non-Western settings. This work offers fascinating grounds, then, for comparison with those

interested in how colonialism involved something similar.[18] Putting the two together, we could ask comparatively about the timing of this 'transfer' process (during/after colonialism versus primarily after it); the participation of NGOs and other international organizations in it; the significance of attempting it in the heart of Europe as opposed to at a far remove; and the continuing question of how such transfers of Western outcomes (forms of economy and polity, nation and state)—common to all these situations—are expected to 'take' without the usual origins and supports these forms had in their Western development. For this problem it actually *makes sense to* divide the world into the 'West' and the 'Rest' and to subdivide the Rest further into different kinds of colonial/neo-colonial expert ence. The comparison could be highly instructive.

How might this sort of orientation shape the anthropology of postsocialism? First, it offers a new mandate for research in historical anthropology, comparable to the work being done in postcolonial studies. Were it to choose the Foucauldian approach of much of that work, it would afford us a very broad field for asking about the multiple technologies, including especially those involving race and gender, through which modernity in its many guises—fascist, socialist and capitalist—was produced.[19] Students of postsocialism would thus have substantial room for theoretical development concerning varieties of modernity. Their efforts might, incidentally, include judicious revival of a materialist perspective, this time unencumbered by its ossified, institutionalized Marxist-Leninist forms.

Second, like postcolonial studies, the framework I propose would bring together scholars from many disciplines and countries—far beyond the 'core' socialist states—who might not otherwise communicate much with one another. Instead of carving up the world into students of politics and economics and literary studies, it would compel a multi-disciplinary effort, but not one beholden to the old 'area studies' paradigm. The effects of the Cold War were not confined to any single world area: they were wholly pervasive throughout most of the twentieth century. It is time to liberate the Cold War from the ghetto of Soviet area studies.

Third, like postcolonial studies, the orientation I am advocating would give voice to the 'natives' as analysts of their own condition. Although it is not yet clear who would be the Franz Fanon of this corpus, his or her forerunners surely include the East European dissidents and other scholars—people like Rudolph Bahro, Pavel Câmpeanu, György Konrád, János Kornai, István Rév, Jadwiga Staniszkis and Iván Szelényi[20]—whose writing spurred us to seek an understanding of socialism different from that offered by Cold War categories, even if we now perceive deficiencies in their view of it. Yet for both postsocialist and postcolonial studies, as anthropologists we ought to insist on broadening the category of 'native' to incorporate the understandings of people who have less privileged positions in their societies than do those I have just mentioned.[21] Intellectuals, after all, often hold to radically different ideals and ideologies from those of other sorts of people—as the history of Bolshevism itself confirms.

The Cold War is not over; its influence is felt even now. How else to understand the importance accorded by both scholars and policy-makers alike to 'privatization', 'marketization' and 'democratization'—that troika of Western self-identity so insistently being imposed on the ex-socialist 'other' as a sign that the Cold War is over? Is the emphasis on these features driven by the ideological goal of compelling 'them' to be like our outdated image of 'us'? Here is one task for postsocialist ethnography: to ferret out the self-representations that are emerging on both sides with the collapse of socialism. Others would be to discover and analyse the processes less driven by Cold War ideology (the sex trade, transformations of space and time) as well as those still governed by it (property relations, ideas about money, gender roles). This kind of research will provide a new body of work, built upon but not hostage to the analysis of socialism, that will cast new light upon the world of twentieth-century empires and their twenty-first-century successors.

## Notes

1 This is an expanded version of the notes prepared for the Halle meeting. My warm thanks to Caroline Humphrey, Katherine Verdery and my colleagues in the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology.

2 I prefer this term to 'postcommunism', though the latter is perhaps more commonly employed, both externally and internally. Most of the states concerned claimed to be socialist rather than communist, and the latter is coloured in many places by its frequent use as a term of political abuse.

3 For reviews of studies of Eastern Europe in the socialist period see Halpern and Kideckel 1983, Hann 1993a. The bias towards the rural sector could be justified on the grounds that not only this sector was less visible to other investigators, but in most socialist countries until comparatively recently the bulk of the population lived in the countryside.

In China the opening came roughly a decade earlier, but work on China is rarely cited by those studying postsocialism elsewhere, and vice versa. Despite improved conditions for fieldwork, Eurasian postsocialism as a whole attracts less attention from anthropologists than from other social scientists. It is not significantly harder to obtain funding and authorization for field research than in most other parts of the world, but linguistic and other barriers remain, inhibiting the rapid emergence of a new research community. Thus, both in Britain and in America, many more PhD students work in Western Europe and in the Mediterranean than embark on projects further east.

4 In addition to the items mentioned in the following very partial literature review, those wishing to explore a wider range of recent anthropological contributions should consult *The Anthropology of East Europe Review*—http://Las l.depaul.edu/Aeer/—and a number of journal special issues: *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* vol. 2, nos 1–2 (1993); *Etudes Rurales* nos 138–40 (1995); *Cambridge Anthropology* vol. 18, no. 2 (1995); *Central Asian Survey* vol. 17, no. 4 (1998); *Ethnologia Europaea* vol. 28, no. 2 (1998); *Focaal* no. 33 (1999).

5 This topic is the principal focus of the postsocialist research team at the Max Planck Institute in Halle in the period 2000–3.

6 The enormous expansion of religious activity in postsocialist conditions has

attracted relatively little attention from anthropologists to date and we therefore plan to make this a focus for projects at the Max Planck Institute in the years ahead. For sociological work see Borowik and Babiński 1997; see also Hann 2000.

7 See Stolcke 1995. Cultural racism is a continuation of the tradition of regarding certain categories of people as inherently inferior to others, but the cause is now said to lie in culture rather than the (pseudo)biological concept of race.

8 Address by Vaclav Havel at the Opening Ceremony of the Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group (Prague, 26 September 2000). Source: http://www.hrad.cz/president/Havel/speeches/index_uk.html.

9 I am deeply grateful for conversations with Elizabeth Dunn, who stimulated me to think about the issues raised in this essay, and to Valerie Bunce and Ann Stoler, who greatly improved an earlier version of it with their suggestions.

10 See, for example, papers in Berdahl *et al.* 2000; compare with Kideckel 1995, Burawoy and Verdery 1999.

11 For example, Martha Lampland is carrying out archival research on Stalinism and the economic history of forms of remuneration used in the socialist economy. Similarly, Gail Kligman and I are engaged in a project concerning the effects of collectivization upon the transformation of persons, *Transforming Property, Persons, and State: collectivization in Romania, 1948–1962*.

12 A similar proposal appears in Burawoy 2001; see also Deniz Kandiyoti's paper in this volume.

13 See Jowitt 1987. For an illuminating discussion of how we might think about the very notion of 'comparison', see Stoler 2001.

14 For one possible model see Kligman 1998. See also Stoler 2001.

15 Anthropologists, by contrast, investigated other kinds of topics earlier, such as rural life, ritual, and national identity. The papers in this volume offer excellent illustrations of what anthropologists of the region are up to now.

16 See, for example, Costigliola 2000. I am grateful to Ann Stoler for informing me about this body of work.

17 For example, agricultural economists raise questions about whether land privatization was actually such a good idea and whether leasing arrangements are not preferable (e.g. Hagedorn 2000). At the same time, intellectual property rights are sought less in ownership of *objects* than in capturing *revenue streams* from them.

18 The example comes from Valerie Bunce.

19 Thanks to Ann Stoler for this phrasing.

20 We also have several examples of fruitful collaborations involving 'outsiders' and 'natives' (e.g. Burawoy and Lukács 1992; Stark and Bruszt 1998).

21 Thanks to Chris Hann for rightly insisting on this point.

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