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# THE SOUTHERN ITALIAN PEASANT: WORLD VIEW AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR<sup>1</sup>

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Despite the considerable attention that has been given to the family and community organization of the southern Italian peasant in the past few years<sup>2</sup> the sum of the available literature is as yet inadequate for accurate appraisal of many aspects of the peasant's culture. One of the fullest and most sharply focused of the reports that have appeared is Edward C. Banfield's *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (1958). Although the book contains much valuable information for the student of peasant society and culture, a major part of the analysis is open to serious question. In the light of the present lack of information on southern Italy, it seems particularly important to put certain additional facts and alternative interpretations on record.

In his study of a village which he calls Montegrano, Banfield is specifically concerned with "what accounts for the political incapacity of the village" (1958:31). By "political incapacity" he means the apparent lack of ability to form voluntary economic and political associations devoted to the benefit of the community as a whole or a part of it larger than the nuclear family. But the analysis of political behavior is not Banfield's sole concern. One of the principal organizing features of the book is the distinction between the political behavior itself and the "ethos" on which it is "based." By "ethos" Banfield means "sentiments, values, beliefs, and ideas" (1958:107). His primary goal is to discover the manner in which ethos influences the political behavior.

I prefer the term "world view" to "ethos" and will use it in

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<sup>1</sup> My wife, Francesca, has been of great help at all stages in the preparation of this paper. Invaluable suggestions were offered by Edward C. Banfield, Dell H. Hymes, Leonard W. Moss, Anne Parsons, Donald S. Pitkin, Volney Steffre and Evon Z. Vogt. Field work in southern Italy was done from January to July, 1957, on a Fulbright Grant.

<sup>2</sup> Recent articles have focused on ritual kinship relations studied through informants in this country (Anderson 1957); the family in terms of its structure, values and the roles of participants (Moss and Thomson 1959); kinship, ritual kinship and community organization (Moss and Cappannari 1960); the peasant-city relationship (Pitkin 1959); the constitution of the dowry as an avenue of change (Pitkin 1960a); and the relation of land tenure and family organization (Pitkin 1960b).

paraphrasing Banfield as well as in presentation of my own material. In quoting Banfield I have placed "world view" in parentheses after "ethos."

This paper will review the political behavior which Banfield and others have described, outline and criticize Banfield's picture of the world view, present an alternative picture of the world view based on my own field work in southern Italy and on sources in the literature, and briefly discuss explanations of the peasant's political behavior which emphasize factors other than world view.

### POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

The typical southern Italian peasant raises wheat on hilly or mountainous land in a relatively arid climate. Dairy products, olives, and a variety of fruits are important in some areas. Usually residence is in a compactly settled town, and work entails a daily walk to land which is often scattered in small parcels. Small owners, share croppers, and peasants who rent land tend to be a little better off than the simple *bracciante* or laborer who depends on day wages whenever he can find work helping others. Banfield's observation for the village he studied applies generally to the entire region: "Montegrano is as poor as any place in the western world" (1958:43). The peasant is definitely a peasant, as opposed to a farmer. That is, his aim is subsistence, not accumulation (Wolf 1955:454). He sells his surplus for cash with which to buy the products he cannot produce, but the wheat and vegetables from his plot are a major part of his food supply.<sup>3</sup>

Banfield's description of political behavior in Montegrano is an important contribution to Italian studies. In a short, simple statement he gives a "rule" from which the political and community behavior of the peasant can be predicted. From this single "rule" he derives seventeen specific descriptive hypotheses about the political behavior which are supported by his observations and those of others.

<sup>3</sup>Leonard Moss has reminded me (personal communication) that Professor Tullio Tentori, director of the Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions in Rome, has often pointed out that there are many South Italys, that each village represents a cosmos and a culture by itself. On the basis of limited experience in several parts of southern Italy I would agree that Professor Tentori's caution is an important one. For the purposes of this paper, however, I think that Banfield's community (Montegrano) and the community in which I worked can be taken as representative of the mountain peasant community.

The hypothesis is that the Montegraneesi act as if they were following this rule: *Maximize the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family; assume that all others will do likewise.*

One whose behavior is consistent with this rule will be called an "amoral familist" (1958:85).

It must be made clear that this "rule" is intended only to cover political behavior and, as will be seen later, limited areas of other interpersonal behavior. Quite clearly it does not tell us, for example, whether or not a child will bow to the priest; and it is not intended to do so.

The paucity of civic and charitable organizations, and the expressed lack of inclination to take political sides at personal risk is used to support the first descriptive hypothesis.

1. In a society of amoral familists, no one will further the interest of the group or community except as it is to his private advantage to do so (1958:85).

Others of the hypotheses which more directly indicate the behavior they cover are:

2. . . . only officials will concern themselves with public affairs, for only they are paid to do so. For a private citizen to take a serious interest in a public problem will be regarded as abnormal and even improper.

3. . . . there will be few checks on officials, for checking on officials will be the business of other officials only.

4. . . . organization (i.e., deliberately concerted action) will be very difficult to achieve and maintain. . .

5. . . . office-holders, feeling no identification with the purposes of the organization, will not work harder than is necessary to keep their places or . . . to earn promotion. . .

6. . . . the law will be disregarded when there is no reason to fear punishment. . .

7. . . . an office-holder will take bribes when he can get away with it. But whether he takes bribes or not, it will be assumed that he does.

8. . . . the weak will favor a regime which will maintain order with a strong hand.

9. . . . the claim of any person or institution to be inspired by zeal for public rather than private advantage will be regarded as fraud.

10. . . . there will be no connection between abstract political principle (i.e., ideology) and concrete behavior in the ordinary relationships of everyday life.

11. . . . there will be no leaders and no followers. . .

12. The amoral familist will use his ballot to secure the greatest material gain in the short run. . .

13. The amoral familist will value gains accruing to the community only insofar as he and his are likely to share them. . .

14. . . . the voter will place little confidence in the promises of the parties. . .

15. . . . it will be assumed that whatever group is in power is self-serving and corrupt. . .

16. Despite the willingness of voters to sell their votes, there will be no strong or stable political machines. . .

17. . . . party workers will sell their services to the highest bidders. . . (1958:87-103).

Banfield describes other behavior which fits under his "rule" in other parts of his book, but derivative hypotheses are worked out only for political behavior as quoted above. These statements form a basically accurate picture of political behavior in southern Italy's small communities. Moss says, "Strong support for the hypotheses is found in the data presented in the works of such independent researchers at Pitkin, McDonald, and Cappannari and Moss" (1958:760).

#### BANFIELD'S PICTURE OF THE WORLD VIEW

What is behind the political incapacity of Montegrano? Banfield says that it is the family-centered world view. He notes that "poverty, ignorance, and a status system which leaves the peasant almost outside the larger society" are important; but they are not "the strategic, or limiting, factor." Rather, "That the Montegranesi are prisoners of their family-centered ethos (world view)—that because of it they cannot act concertedly or in the common good—is a fundamental impediment to their economic and other progress" (1958:163).

This family-centered *world view* is not the family-centered

behavior which has been discussed above. Banfield clearly distinguishes between the two. He says of the "rule" of behavior, "For the descriptive hypothesis to be useful, it need only be shown that they act *as if* they follow the rule." The world view is the "sentiments, values, beliefs, and ideas" themselves (1958:107).

In his chapter "Ethos in Practice" (1958:107-127), Banfield gives evidence for two central elements of Montegrano world view which he sees as important in influencing political behavior. Using evidence from thematic apperception tests (TAT) as regular interview protocols, Banfield shows: that intrafamilial relations and especially the role of parent, are the most important element in the Montegrane's conception of himself; and that apprehensiveness about natural disaster and a feeling of inability to control one's own destiny is a central element in the Montegrane's view of his relation to the environment. The importance of these elements is shown by comparing his TAT material with similar tests from rural northern Italy and rural Kansas. Banfield expands his second point, showing that the Montegrane thinks "The conditions and means of success are all beyond his control" (1958:112). Students of southern Italy generally agree that these elements are important in the peasant's world view (see especially Friedmann 1953; Moss and Thomson 1959).

From these two elements of world view Banfield moves directly to the conclusion:

*In the Montegrano view, the conditions of life—the brutal and senseless conditions of life—determine how men will behave. In so fearful a world, a parent must do all he can to protect his family. He must preoccupy himself with its interesse. The interesse of the family is its material, short-run advantage. The tireless and cunning pursuit of advantage cannot be depended upon to secure the welfare of the family: the threat of calamity hangs over all, even the un-sleeping. But, little as it may count against the overwhelming uncertainties of the universe, the pursuit of interesse is at least something—perhaps the only thing—the individual can do to give a measure of protection to his family (1958:115, italics added).*

This is Banfield's most direct answer to the question: What is behind the political incapacity of Montegrano? He has answered

that the people believe that they must act for the *interesse*, the material, short-run advantage, of the family. This summary statement of the world view, of course, very nicely "explains" the behavior discussed in the previous section. In fact, the statements of world view and of behavior are isomorphic.<sup>4</sup> If this were a relatively complete and accurate statement of the world view of the peasant, this paper could add very little to the understanding of his political behavior.

There are, however, two major difficulties which cast serious doubt on the acceptability of Banfield's conclusions. The first involves the logic which he used in reaching the statement quoted above. Implicitly he is saying, if you were a man who believed thus and so (in the importance of your family and the insecurity of the world) you would also believe the following (that you should act for *interesse*). That is, Banfield takes two major elements of the world view that he obtained from his data and attempts to *infer* a third. As Linton has pointed out, "logically inconsistent" beliefs often exist together without disturbing the believer (1936:362ff). In the same manner that it would be impossible to determine the felt consistency of beliefs by *a priori* principles, it should be impossible to know the cultural logic of inference of any group without empirical evidence. In making the inference that he does, Banfield seems to assume that the logic of the peasant is essentially the same as that which would be considered normal for some people in the United States. While he may be quite correct, his assumption is not supported by empirical evidence and therefore his conclusions are subject to question.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>This isomorphism adds coherence to Banfield's description. Unfortunately, however, it has also made it easier for other writers to ignore the distinction between the world view and the behavior rule. Strodbeck (1958:150) and Sills (1959:19) both mention Banfield's study of the world view and then immediately quote the behavior rule. Since the behavior rule is fairly well established and the isomorphic picture of world view is open to serious question, it is important that they be distinguished at all times.

<sup>5</sup>Banfield gives abundant evidence to show that much interpersonal behavior can be described in terms of the concept of *interesse* (1958:115-124), but he gives no evidence that the peasant himself actually integrates his major concerns in this way. His evidence is of the same type that supports his seventeen hypotheses about behavior. Thus, it is strong additional support for his rule of behavior, for it shows that it applies to an area other than political activity; but it is evidence for family-centered behavior, not for family-centered world view, and as such does not constitute a new insight into the world view.

The second major difficulty is that there is considerable evidence for alternative elements of world view which explain the peasant's political behavior just as well as Banfield's questionable combination of two generally accepted elements.<sup>6</sup>

### WORLD VIEW AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

The elements of world view which shape the political behavior of the peasant are complex and interrelated. Today especially, with the new influences of mass media and government reforms on the peasant, it is difficult to clearly separate them. For the purposes of this analysis the material will be divided into three parts.

1. The peasant's lack of confidence in his own ability to change his environment. This is one of the two major elements of world view which Banfield discusses.

2. The peasant's view that the world of people is stratified and responsibilities divided; and the expectations which follow from this view. This is the major element of world view which Banfield missed. My disagreement with him centers on this point.

3. The peasant's lack of conceptual apparatus for understanding community enterprise.

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<sup>6</sup>A third difficulty with Banfield's general conclusion is of a different type. It is clear from the title of the book (*The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*) that Banfield is interested in the "moral basis" of the society studied. In accord with this interest he finds that the "amoral familist" is one who is "without morality only in relation to persons outside the family—in relation to family members he applies standards of right and wrong" (1958:85). Moral standards, says Banfield, are standards that are associated with the sacred and felt to be obligatory. "Because they are sacred, their violation is felt as guilt. For most of the people of Montegrano, nothing is sacred. This being so, they feel neither obligation nor guilt" (1958:142). Despite this lack of standards, he says, the "war of all against all" does not break out. Shame sanctions have a small part in maintaining order. Rather, two things limit the outbreak of a rash of violent, illegal or unfair incidents. One is the fact that the criminal law is sternly enforced by pairs of rifle-bearing *carabinieri* (national police). The other is the fear of reprisals from injured parties (1958:141-144).

That Banfield quite intended this severe picture to be a central part of his book is clearly indicated by his quotation on the opening page of Hobbes' famous statement describing the conditions of life in the state of war of all against all. Reviewers were reluctant to mention this startling conclusion, which, if correct, would provide a most important example of social disorganization. McCorkle (1959:133f) and Moss (1958:759ff) made no mention of it. Sanders (1959:522) indirectly questions it in the closing sentence of his review. In any case, like the linguist who returns from the field and declares that the language studied has no phonemes, the social scientist who finds no norms, except one based on a crude model of the economic man, must be sent back for another long look before his conclusions are accepted.

First, there is considerable agreement that the peasant believes he can do little to change his environment. Banfield, who uses this element of the world view mostly as a stepping stone to his concept of *interesse*, says, "Where everything depends upon luck or Divine intervention, there is no point in community action. The community, like the individual, may hope or pray, but it is not likely to take its destiny into its own hands" (1958:114). It should be noted that Banfield, and not the Montegraneesi, introduces the concept of community action. The TAT evidence he uses to back up his generalization includes no specific reference to community action or lack of it.

Friedmann, in his article, "The World of 'La Miseria'" (1953), however, does not make the implicit assumption that the peasant himself feels incapable of "community" action. Rather, he says, "With the peasants of Calabria and Lucania the possibility of constructing and directing their own social, political, and economic life does not exist" (1953:221). He also notes that "Peasants see themselves as subject to the working of history but scarcely as makers of it" (1953:218).

My own field notes contain further support for the importance of this element of the world view. The evidence is in the form of examples of behavior expressing attitudes about agriculture. All the examples indicate denial of the hope of progress in agriculture and alienation from the land. On the most general level this lack of hope and alienation is expressed by the almost absolute taboo on talking about work. Men spend entire days during the winter season standing in the square talking in small groups, but competitive discussion of farming techniques and yields, and expression of hopes or plans for the coming season are almost entirely absent. Pitkin (n.d.) has suggested that perhaps the "reluctance to talk about techniques and yields and plans for the future stems from a fear of what other people, even friends, might do with that information." While this does seem to represent part of the truth, it does not explain the following: My attempt, in private, to praise a peasant friend for his large farm and able system of farming brought a prompt and vigorous denial that he did anything special. He said, "There is no system, you just plant." This attitude was expressed by others in forced discussions of farming techniques. Of this "denial of system" Moss (n.d.) says, "Indeed, it seems at times the peasant goes out of his way to demon-

strate the lack of system by refusing to utilize more adequate planting techniques known to him."

Thus, it is not that the peasant lacks knowledge of modern techniques. For example, it is universally known in the town which I studied that the human and animal feces which are carried from the town each day and deposited on its outskirts would make good manure if left to weather for some time. The peasant usually argues that it would tire his mule too much to carry it to his land. Only one large, non-working landowner makes consistent use of this source of fertilizer. Similarly, when the government agricultural agent in the town arranged a course in pruning olive trees for the idle days of late February, he managed to get about 24 men to sign up for it by arguing that a few olive trees planted in the corner of one's land would help to diversify the cash crops raised in the area and forestall the effect of sinking wheat prices. Despite the very light work load at that time of year, only three men attended the classes and practice sessions often enough to be certified as competent, and two of these were already relatively prosperous agriculturalists. They soon supplemented their incomes with pruning jobs on nearby farms. Many of those who did not attend said they could spare neither the land on which to plant the trees nor the time to attend the classes. In most cases, both of these contentions were unlikely. Many also expressed the attitude, some while leaving a class in mid-session, that the land was poor, and that nothing could be done about it anyway.

It is crucial to note that the peasant does not see the whole world as similarly hopeless. In fact, he applies this idea of incapacity only to himself in his present environment. Most other classes of people are able to better themselves, even if somewhat limited by environment; and the peasant himself feels that he could do better if he could get a job in a northern factory or somehow get to America. These are, of course, realistic views, and they are noted only to emphasize how the peasant distinguishes himself and his situation from other people and other situations. This tendency to distinguish people, their duties, and their fate by whether they are peasant or not-peasant is the next topic of discussion.

Second, the peasant believes that the world of people is stratified and responsibility for various types of action divided; and,

with specific reference to "public" action, he believes that there is a special class of people whose business such action is, that these people, not peasants, are inevitably in power, and that he has no place but to hope for and vote for a government that will help him.

Banfield, though he has an extensive discussion of class structure, fails to note that this feature of the society is part of the world view, as well as part of the pattern of behavioral relationships.

Friedman (1953:220) says,

The delicate sense of the hierarchy of things, natural and human, is well expressed in the remark of a landless peasant who, in attempting to describe his daily routine, had started by saying: "We hoe the earth"—then had interrupted himself with the apology to me (the gentleman)—"if you will forgive the expression, like beasts." Someone who wants to explain a difficult question to a visitor often starts by saying: "I am only a peasant" or "I am only a carpenter—but this is what I think about it." This matter-of-fact recognition of one's proper place in the general scheme of things has no taint of submissiveness of the poor to the rich. First of all, the criterion of social order, in the minds of the peasants, is not primarily an economic one, as it is for the baron or great proprietor, who for this reason does not participate in the dignity of the peasant and is not treated with the same kind of simple human regard that peasants are accustomed to show each other. It is as if each position, or function, has the same basic value within the general propriety of things.

As Friedmann notes, the society in which the peasant lives is "a society in which education and intelligence are the only possible achievements" (1953:221). In this society people with education are people of special privilege.

The town where the present writer spent several months, though it is isolated in the mountains of Campania, has an institute for the training of elementary school teachers (training from the ninth to the thirteenth year of schooling). Peasants who are able send their sons through the school. Because of the overabundance of teachers and the furious competition on nationwide examinations for posts (4,000 candidates may take examinations

for 100 or fewer posts), most of the graduates go unemployed for a number of years. During this time they must wait each day in the town's square. As *professori* they are not allowed to help work the family's land. The peasant's concern with relative position in a hierarchy of specialization and responsibility is also indicated by the multitude of words he constantly uses for different kinds of people. People may be *braccianti*, *studenti*, *professori*, *signori*, *proprietari*, *artigiani*, etc. Each word indicates many things about the person, but their most consistent use in conversation is to indicate rank with respect to each other and the peasant (*contadino*).

The peasant's view of the relation of peasant to government is another instance of the hierarchical conceptualization of things. The government is at another place in the hierarchy, specifically the place from which public works must originate. My field notes include numerous references to conversations about the town's problems: the critically low water supply during the summer dry season, the deteriorating road, unemployment and its many manifestations in the lives of individuals and families. In such conversations the problem is outlined and the conclusion is almost invariably: "The government ought to do something about it." This is always followed by the recognition that there is little or no hope for government action. The peasant has two expressions that are frequently used in these discussions. One is a cynical *Che vuoi fa?* (What do you want to do (about it)?); the other a resigned *Non c'è da fa.* (There is nothing to be done.)

History has certainly never given the peasant the feeling that his voice is important in government, and it has given him many reasons to mistrust government promises (see, for example, Mack Smith 1959). The peasant recognizes that the powers that be, the people with *autorità*, cannot be changed (Moss and Cappannari 1959:5). The centralization of government in Italy puts this *autorità* out of reach and creates further distrust for its failure to provide. Moss and Cappannari say,

A feeling of distrust pervades the attitude of the peasant. He distrusts and fears the distant government in Rome and dislikes the local representatives of civil power. *Governo ladro* (thieving government, F. C.) bespeaks the basic attitude of the peasant towards authority (1959:6).

Friedmann (quoting Padua) sums up both the conception of the government as a distant power with the responsibility to provide and the distrust of this alien authority: "(the peasant) has been educated to consider the government his worst enemy, while expecting it to do everything for him" (1953:225).

Despite this distrust of government, the peasant participates within the limits of his world view. He votes. If voting statistics for all Italy for the local elections of May 17, 1956, are any indication of peasant participation, the peasant takes the responsibility to vote very seriously. "A total of 30,786,790 votes were polled, meaning that 98.3% of the entire electorate voted" (Ten Years of Italian Democracy 1956:84). Though I have no statistics for the town in which I worked, peasants indicated that the turnout was heavy. Banfield gives elaborate statistics on elections, but does not offer the percentage of voters who come to the polls (1958:27, 28, 40).

Third, while it is not clear exactly what the *absence* of certain concepts in a language indicates about the thought patterns of the speakers, I would like to suggest that such absence is a sign that the concept does not exist in the world view of the speakers, and that the absence is an impediment to action of the type usually described with the concept. After noting that most people say that "no one in Montegrano is particularly public-spirited," Banfield reports that "some find the idea of public spiritedness unintelligible" (1958:18). Not being able to understand what public-spiritedness means is, of course, a great impediment to public-spirited action, but Banfield does not follow out this clue. Two other concepts are crucial to political action of the type that is apparently lacking in southern Italy.

The first is "leader." Italian-English dictionaries give such equivalents as *capo*, *commandante*, and *duce*. None of these is near a good translation of the English or American notion of leader insofar as it implies the voluntary and retractable support of followers and the mutuality of goals of leader and followers. They imply a person with *autorità*, a person with authority or power, one who by some reason or other is in a position of command. This is not to say, of course, that there are no leaders in the English or American sense in Italy. They are present, even in the South. However, they cannot be followed in a manner consistent with the demands of equalitarian community action, for a

leader of that type fits neither the conception of hierarchy, nor the remainder of the prevailing system. Where there is no leader, he is not missed. The peasant, lacking confidence to do for himself and lacking any expectation of leadership, awaits benevolent *autorità*, not leadership. Urban and northern people have developed means of expressing the idea of "leader," in some cases employing an Italianized version of the English.

More important is the lack of the concept "community." Italian has the word *comunità*, but it is used to refer specifically to a monastic community. In my own experience, many attempts to use the word in the American sense were always corrected. Any reference to a village as a whole is usually made with the word *comune* which refers to the administrative unit, and, in a second meaning, to the Italian equivalent of the town hall. Since "community" does not exist for the peasant, either conceptually or actually, the alternative of community action is difficult for him to imagine and correspondingly difficult to undertake.

In order to substantiate the claim that the alternative interpretation of world view presented above is as adequate as Banfield's explanation of the peasant's political behavior I will now try to show how Banfield's *behavior* "rule" can be "derived" from my analysis of the world view. It is not claimed that this derivation is a tight logical exercise, but only that it is possible to see how this alternative to Banfield's picture of the world view influences the behavior he and others have described.

The "rule" describing political behavior is: "Maximize the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family; assume that all others will do likewise" (1958:85). The fact that the actor is interested in *material* advantage is a result of the slender margin of existence on which the peasant lives. In a sense, both for Banfield's analysis and the present one, this part of the rule derives from external conditions rather than from the world view. The fact that the actor is interested in *short-run* advantage is derivable, both in Banfield's and the present analysis, from the peasant's distrust of the future and his lack of confidence in his ability to control the environment. In this situation he takes what he can most surely have—this is short-run gain.

It is, of course, on the reason for the family-centered behavior that the present writer differs most from Banfield. Banfield sees this as the result of *interesse* which in turn, he says, derived

from the peasant's attachment to family and fear of the environment. As pointed out above, the factors shaping this family-centered behavior and lack of political participation are much more complex. Important to the peasant's family orientation is the fact that his world view gives him no alternative. His view of society as stratified and specialized includes the idea that government action is not his business. If the peasant did conceive of political action it would not be in terms of community, for he does not have that concept, rather it would be in terms of himself in a non-peasant commanding role.

The behavior described by Banfield's specific hypothesis is also "derivable" from the alternative picture of world view put forth above (see footnote).<sup>7</sup>

#### OTHER INFLUENCES ON POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

World view is certainly not the only factor influencing the political behavior of the southern Italian peasant. I agree with Banfield's statement that it is the most important limiting factor (1958:163), but each of the factors sketched below contributes considerably to the situation in which the peasant acts.

Pitkin, in his discussion of the asymmetry of the peasant-city relationship (1959), has emphasized the manner in which the formal organization of government discourages the participation of the peasant. He notes that most of the important officials in the *autorità* of a village, both in various aspects of the government and in the church, are very seldom natives of the villages in which

<sup>7</sup>Numbers 2, 3, and 8 clearly follow from the peasant's view that responsibility for action is divided. Numbers 4 and 11 follow from his lack of conceptual equipment for "community" action. Numbers 1 and 13, which are very similar, are also classifiable under the lack of conceptual equipment for community action. Number 9 follows from both the absence of the idea of public spiritedness and the historically based distrust of such claims. Numbers 5, 7, and 15 follow from both the privileged position of power in the hierarchical scheme and the tradition of suspicion. Numbers 12, 14, 16, and 17 concern political parties and voting behavior. They must be seen in terms of the peasant's high expectations from a distant and paternal government and in terms of his new freedom of choice of governments. While placing little confidence in any government, he tries to find one which will satisfy his expectations. Since he is not a power himself, he can do little else but juggle the powers for what they will give him. On number 6 I indicated disagreement with Banfield in note 6. That is, the hypothesis follows from his rule operating in a situation where it is the only norm, and Banfield's picture of lack of other norms was rejected. The fact that behavior does not reflect expressed party affiliations (number 10) is not relevant to either Banfield's or the present analysis.

they serve, and, almost without exception, are appointed from Rome or some equally remote district headquarters.

Local political authority then is well contained by the central government so that even if the villager does commit himself to fulfilling communal political responsibility he finds that the local governmental structure as created by the central government is quite impotent (1959:166).

Pitkin adds that the police and school system represent similar distant appointments about which the peasant has no community decisions to make. In his discussion of the ways in which the behavior of the peasant might be changed, Banfield also makes note of the limiting effect of centralized government, but he gives this factor little weight (1958:171).

Moss, writing with Cappannari (1960) and with Thomson (1959), has emphasized the importance of the structure of the family. Moss and Cappannari conclude that "because of its cohesiveness, the family has limited external contacts for its members and has actually stifled the development of voluntary associations" (1960:31; see also Moss and Thomson 1959:40). Moss and Cappannari's argument for the importance of family ties in influencing political participation is strongest, I think, when they assert that,

The family serves not only as a status-giving unit but also tends to provide the individual with most of his psychological satisfactions. While intimate associations may take place outside the family setting, for the most part, the family tends towards self-sufficiency in the socio-psychological realm (1960:29).

I interpret this statement to mean that the family fills so well the psychological needs of the individual that relationships in outside voluntary associations are needed less than in some other societies. As such, it suggests an approach that might be developed into a satisfactory psychological argument for the importance of family ties in influencing the political behavior of the peasant.

Moss and Cappannari also point out that the economic factor cannot be overlooked in the analysis of patterns of community participation, but note that "this explanation is insufficient in itself to account for the almost complete lack of voluntary associ-

ations at the community level" (1960:28f). Banfield more strongly asserts that the economic explanation is inadequate to explain the political behavior of the peasant. He notes that, despite the heavy under-employment and consequent idleness during many times of the year, the peasants are not inclined to contribute labor to community improvement projects (1958:35f). Indeed, neither the absolute level of existence, nor the strain of physical labor can be taken by itself as an important block to the peasant's participation. The economic poverty (and the social poverty) operate in a broader context. The social and economic deprivation suffered by the peasant in comparison with non-agricultural people (Banfield 1958:66f); the peasant's consequent alienation from his social role and his work (Pitkin 1959:164), and the limited potential of the land for improvement must be seen as interrelated factors which together discourage attempts at organized efforts. They are conditions which support the peasant's general feeling of inability to change the environment, rather than direct blocks to participation.

#### CONCLUSION

This paper offered an alternative to Edward C. Banfield's interpretation of the world view which influences the political behavior of the southern Italian peasant. Banfield's description of the political *behavior* was presented and support given it by other students of the area was noted. His picture of the *world view* was outlined and criticized for two reasons. First, the logic he used to reach his central element of world view is questionable. Second, it was possible to show how an alternative picture of the world view explains the peasant's political behavior equally well. The influence on the peasant's political behavior of the formal organization of Italian government, the structure of the southern Italian family and the social and economic position of the peasant was sketched briefly. This paper has been an attempt to correct certain inadequacies in Banfield's analysis of the factors behind the peasant's political behavior. More thorough studies are needed before this behavior can be fully understood.

The presentation of two substantially different interpretations of the peasant's world view in this paper raises important questions about criteria for evaluating statements of world view and

about the methodology of world view studies. Banfield's interpretation falls on a crucial but idiosyncratic point of logic. Excluding that, the remainder of his interpretation as well as my own and those of the other students of southern Italy that I have quoted are based on traditional but vaguely codified methods for arriving at statements of world view. A careful inventory and appraisal of theoretical assets must be made before work on world view can progress beyond this level.

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