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OPENING SESSION

DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

by

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This Congress meets at a time when there is little reason for an optimistic view of agriculture and rural life in the world as a whole. Though it is always arbitrary to draw dividing-lines between historical periods, one can say that the period of World War II and its direct aftermath, which had such a profound influence on the life of almost all nations in the world, has come to an end. Most of the former colonies are now accustomed to an independent national life and they have found some solution for the political and administrative problems inherent in this new situation. Though there is no question of a political equilibrium or stability, and parts of the world are suffering horribly from the existing conflicts, the blueprint of the power structure which will dominate the near future has become visible. The lines along which economic life in the coming decades will develop have gradually become clear.

As for agriculture, farmers and food, talking about what we wanted to do for the future and what we hoped to achieve, as we did and we had to do in the first few years after the War (when no one could predict what the results of the changes by this War would be), has for an important part lost its sense. The experience of more than 20 years of post-war conditions has confronted us with a number of hard facts which cannot be neglected and which leave little scope for illusions and for wishful thinking in our planning.

When we consider 'freedom from hunger' as the most important and basic target we set after the War for a world wide agricultural policy, we have to acknowledge that we have failed. Though the situation from year to year may differ somewhat because of climatic and other accidental influences, the conclusion of the former Director General of FAO, that never have there been so many hungry people in the world as at this moment, remains valid and no one really knows how conditions in this respect could be really improved in the next few decades.

This failure to solve the most basic human problem and even to find a possible solution, also means to a certain degree a failure for rural sociology. Probably some of the rural sociologists here will protest. Perhaps they will point out that rural sociology is just a science and not a remedy for all the problems facing agriculture and food production, or that rural sociologists are only a minority amongst all the scientists who have some relation with agriculture and its development. Perhaps they will remark, that policy makers did not want to listen to the advice of the rural sociologists. I am willing to admit that there is some truth in these and other possible arguments which can be used to safeguard rural sociology against blame concerning its responsibility for the present unhappy state of agriculture and food production. I know that the voice of rural sociology often has been that of one crying in the wilderness, and I expect that you will believe that I do not underestimate the pure scientific aspects and the pure scientific value of rural sociology.

But on the other hand no one will deny, I suppose, that rural sociology is – and has to be – a strongly problem-oriented science, and that therefore one of the criteria by which it has to be judged is the relevance of the questions it poses and of the answers it gives for the society in which it works. This does not only mean that rural sociological research should have some relation to practical problems, but also that a rural sociologist should always ask himself what problems are the most important for society at a certain time and at a certain place.

I doubt whether rural sociologists especially after World War II (when their activities, which before the War for the greater part were confined to a part of the western world, became world-wide) have always been able to discern clearly what was the right line they had to follow in this respect. Existing traditions in the social sciences and the biases of rural sociologists in particular have often hampered us, I believe, in our endeavour to concentrate our activities on the most urgent questions. Therefore, the effect of rural sociology often has been less than could have been possible, taking into account the number and the qualities of the rural sociologists.

I suppose, that you want me to become more concrete and I hope to do so. But let me say first that, because of lack of time, I shall often have to over-generalize and therefore to exaggerate in what follows. I am conscious of that, and I apologize beforehand. I know that things are never simple and uniform, certainly not in scientific activities.

To understand the present position and the present activities of

rural sociology one has to realize that this science, as it now works in the greater part of the world, has a clear American stamp. Let me remind you of the facts known to most of you.

Though the first endeavours to start rural sociology as a science in America originated at the beginning of this century, it was only during the thirties, during World War II and during the period afterwards that rural sociology developed into an important and recognized part of American sociology. That means that before World War II sociologists outside America hardly had the opportunity to get acquainted with rural sociology as a part of modern sociology as it was developing in that country. For many non-American social scientists the only association they had with the term 'rural sociology' arose from Sorokin and Zimmerman's 'Rural-Urban Sociology'. There was no parallel in Europe or in any other part of the world to this development of rural sociology in America. After the War scientists and also policy makers outside America 'discovered' rural sociology and its scientific and practical value. It was 'exported' first to Europe¹, but it also spread over other continents. Simply because the study of rural life, in the way it took shape in American rural sociology, had no real roots in the social sciences elsewhere, it was for the greater part taken over just as it was, body and bones. But science, no more than any other human activity, does not exist in the air. It is a product of social life in the society in which it works, and that holds true in particular for the social sciences. This means that rural sociology, as it has developed in America, has typical American features. It fits into American society and American social philosophy as these existed during the period of its development.

The main characteristic of American rural sociology – as well as of American sociology in general – I believe, is that it was, and for the greater part still is, an adjustment sociology. During the period wherein American sociology developed to the mighty, integrated and consolidated piece of science it is now – let us say between 1925 and 1955 – the Americans lived under a social (including economic and cultural) order which they in general accepted wholeheartedly, and which many of them even considered as the best possible in the world. In contradistinction to the European sociology which grew up in the 19th and 20th century in the sphere of social tensions, radical and conflicting ideologies and revolutions, American sociology acquired its real characteristics in a period when the social order in that country was hardly in discussion and Roosevelt's New Deal was the nearest thing to a revolution. Thus, it is quite natural that American sociology

concentrated on problems arising within this existing social order. The problem near at hand was adjustment, adjustment of individuals and of groups, so that they could live happily and work efficiently within this social order. There were several reasons why adjustment could become the basic social background of American sociology. The presence of millions of recent or fairly recent immigrants in American society was one of them. Perhaps even more important was that America, earlier than any other nation, had become a real progressive society which required people to adjust themselves almost permanently to changing conditions. Whatever the reasons may be, there is no doubt in my opinion that consciously or unconsciously the main, deeper social concern of American sociologists was adjustment, be it adjustment of immigrants to the American society, of newcomers to their new community, of students to their schools, of delinquents to normal social life, of soldiers to the army, etc., etc. A striking example exists in rural sociology. Its overwhelming interest was in extension, that is, in the adjustment of the farmer to the existing technical and economic possibilities. This deep concern with the problems of the adjustment of citizens to the existing social order, so that they could use the opportunities it offered to them was, I believe, of primary importance for the development of American sociology in the last few decades. This holds true for theory, as well as for research methodology. As to methodology, it explains for an important part the predominant function in research of the formal interview of individuals on the basis of a questionnaire, and of the sophisticated mathematical processing of the data obtained. If you want to investigate whether an individual is well adjusted to the society and the community in which he is living, individual information about his attitudes and his behaviour are indispensable and the formal interview is the right instrument to obtain this information. The development of numerous types of scales and of the mathematical processing of data was a logical consequence of the acceptance of questionnaires as the main instrument of sociological research. For the younger sociologists present here this predominance of the use of questionnaires and formal interviews may be more or less self-evident. Therefore it may be useful to remind them of the fact that in Europe sociology existed for about 100 years without, in fact, any use of this technique at all.

As to theory, for an important part American theorists are hovering on the borderline between sociology and social psychology, in the sense that they often seem to be more interested in the individual

reaction to society and individual actions in general than in groups and in society as such. Let me quote here Wilbert E. Moore in his editorial introduction to Charles & Zona Loomis's 'Modern Social Theories' in which they analyse the theories of the seven most prominent American sociological theorists. Moore writes: "..., the theorists seem to depict society as a kind of by-product of mindless functional necessities plus mindful and motivated individual action almost solely at the impersonal level" (1961, p. xxiv).

There can be no doubt, however, that this development of sociological research in the last few decades – the 'new sociology' as the Americans not without reason call it – together with the theoretical approach which supported it, has been of enormous importance for sociology as a science and also for the practical applicability of sociology. Since World War II the American type of sociological research has spread all over the world, but the Americans themselves are still the unsurpassed masters in this respect. As an example in the field of rural sociology may I remind you of the coherent endeavours during more than two decades to solve by means of sociological research the problem of the acceptance of new farm practices. It resulted in bringing agricultural extension on to a real scientific footing and gave an extremely important contribution to the sociology of communication in general.

But it cannot be denied either that this development of American sociology and its influence on sociology in the rest of the world has also had its clear disadvantages. The preoccupation with the attitudes, the values and the behaviour of the individual often caused modern sociologists to lose sight of the real subjects of sociology, social groups and society. It would not be difficult to show that hundreds of research projects were carried out without at all considering the question whether the individuals, from whom the researchers took their samples, formed real social groups in the sense of people characterized by certain specific mutual relations². As to the categories in which they divide their samples, according to certain individual characteristics, they almost never asked themselves whether these categories were real sub-groups or just isolated individuals accidentally sharing the same social traits. This neglect of groups and sub-groups can lead to serious mistakes with regard to the social processes which cause the phenomena to be explained.

More important with regard to the following is that concentration on the problems of adjustment and the predominance of the formal interview as an instrument for gathering sociological data lead to an

overwhelming interest in the investigation of small entities. Villages, rural counties, small towns, school classes, etc. are favourite units for sociological research. Sociological problems of a nation-wide character, large groups, national societies as a whole, hardly attract professional sociologists. Real macro-sociology seems to be unattractive. For this type of research, for which the formal interview is only of limited importance, research techniques are almost as underdeveloped as thirty years ago.

This lack of interest in macro-sociological problems in sociological research, together with the emphasis on adjustment within an existing and accepted social order, resulted in an insufficient attention to fundamental and large-scale social change. In essence, accepting the existing social order leads easily to a neglect of this type of problem, and the interest in adjustment problems means focussing on the problems of petty change. In his recent publication Joel Halpern quotes Everett C. Hughes as saying that American sociologists have tended not to focus on "drastic and massive social change and extreme forms of social action" (1967, p.23). As to rural sociology in particular, James H. Copp writes: "Rural sociology has attempted to discharge its responsibility for the study of social change through the analysis of farm practice adoption and mechanization. Thus far the rural sociologist's approach to social change has been microscopic and simplistic" (1964, p. 346).

By devoting their attention primarily to small entities and to the adjustment problems of individuals, and by neglecting to a high degree the broad aspects of social change, rural sociologists, in my opinion, have partly missed the bus in the period after World War II. That holds true for the scientific value of rural sociological research as a whole as well as for the social relevance of their work. In particular, research in the developing countries has suffered from this more or less one-sided approach of rural sociology. To prevent my American friends misunderstanding me I want to point out that if there is anyone to blame, the non-American rural sociologists are perhaps the first ones to acknowledge that they have failed. Even if they have learned rural sociology from the Americans, because of the situations in which they worked, they should have known that they had to consider whether, under their conditions, a rural sociology after the American model only could solve the problems.

Let me take the position of the peasant in society as an example to explain what I mean more clearly. One of the greatest obstacles to the development of agriculture, and, therefore, to an equilibrium

between the need for food and agricultural production, in the greater part of the world is the fact that almost everywhere the peasant is the underdog in society. Almost always when in the history of mankind a certain agricultural society passed the tribal stage and developed some functional differentiation between the peasant class and other classes (like a governing class, a military class, a class of priests and intellectuals and a beginning of an urban class of merchants and artisans), it was the peasants who were the losing party. Whether they were serfs or nominally free, as a rule they constituted the lowest class. Mostly, in one way or another, they were the victims of the other classes, economically and socially. Peasants as such almost never had access to the higher positions in society, and they were mostly more heavily burdened by duties and taxation than any other class. Their social prestige was low and in many languages 'peasant', or an equivalent, is a term of abuse. The existing norms mostly demanded the peasant to be obedient and humble, and to accept his position without complaints and with resignation. Religion was often used as a help to force these norms upon the peasants. Though they revolted occasionally, when their burden became too heavy, the other classes made the peasant accept his lot as self-evident and almost as a law of nature.

This picture of the position of the peasant in the past, and to a large extent in the present, will be familiar to all of you. But what people in general and even rural sociologists do not realize, or at least do not realize sufficiently, is that the bad social position in which the peasant lived for ages and ages almost everywhere in the world is of crucial importance for agricultural production. You cannot make an efficient farmer, trying to improve his farm and to enlarge his production, from a peasant who feels that he is the underdog and will be the underdog for ever.

Consciously or unconsciously the peasant knew that increasing his production would mostly lead to heavier taxation and more plundering by the government, the landlords or other groups against whom he was powerless. He knew too that every endeavour to improve his position in society would be answered by mockery and perhaps by stronger suppression. Mostly the peasant lived in fear and distrust with regard to the government and all other people and powers outside his village. His natural reaction was to remain subdued and not to change anything, so that he would not attract the unfavourable attention of anyone.

It is only when the peasants are freed from this age-long suppression that a new era for agriculture and rural life can develop. It is well

known that the first beginning in history of a real modernization of agriculture and rural life can be perceived in northwestern Europe. It is hardly possible to say exactly when it started. Often it is difficult to differentiate between technical innovations which were just experiments by gentlemen farmers and real changes in peasant farming. Great differences existed between adjacent regions as to the time when modernization started. One may say, however, that the first signs of modernization as a mass phenomenon can be perceived at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, even if its roots lay deeper in history (Slicher van Bath, 1963). The fact that the period in which modernization in agriculture and rural life took on momentum coincides more or less with the first industrial revolution should not lead us to the conclusion that this modernization was simply a consequence or after-effect of this revolution. Often, the modernization of agriculture took place in regions far from the new industrial centres, while on the other hand early industrialization sometimes was combined with a late modernization of rural life. The relation between the two, as far as it existed, was for the greater part indirect.

The real background of modernization in agriculture is not a technical and economic one, but it is to be found primarily in the mental and political sphere. In his very valuable little book 'The Changing Village Community', which happily came my way when I was preparing this paper, Joel Halpern writes about this change in rural life in western Europe: "These developments have also involved new political conceptions of society, which made the wide sharing of potential benefits a desired objective. Specifically this included the ideas, that economic progress was a worthwhile goal and that the benefits of such a progress should be widely distributed and ultimately that the hierarchical and economical distinctions between rural and urban areas should cease to exist" (1967, p. 24). It is often argued that the equality which together with liberty and fraternity was proclaimed by the French revolution was purely legal equality, and that the ideas of this revolution facilitated economic suppression instead of stopping it. This may be true in certain respects. But certainly these ideas can also be seen as the expression of the will to create a basis for development for the agricultural population and other underprivileged classes, to become groups of really free citizens who had in principle the same access to economic development, social prestige and political rights as other social groups.

It is not the place here to dwell upon the background of this mental

and political liberation of the peasant class in north western Europe. As Halpern points out also, the main reason lies in the early and strong development of an urban middle class of craftsmen and merchants who fostered a spirit of freedom, and of resistance against the absolute monarchy and other power structures which curtailed the freedom of the common man.

It is not necessary either to give here a historical account of the gradual realization of the freedom of the peasant in western Europe during the 19th century. I mention only that the migrants from Europe to America took this spirit of freedom for the common man to the New World, so that from the beginning the farmer in the United States felt himself as a man who had the same social and political rights as anyone else in that country. At the moment, north western Europe and northern America are the parts of the world where agriculture is most developed and where agricultural production per head of the agricultural population is higher than anywhere else. It would not be right to attribute this only to the changing position of the peasants since the end of the 18th century. But on the other hand there is no doubt that without this change productivity in agriculture in these parts of the world never would have reached the present level.

In his book, Halpern portrays how in the last few decades a rural revolution has spread around the world. Even if the ways of action may differ strongly from country to country and from region to region, this revolution everywhere, in fact, contains the same aims, the liberation of the peasant from his social and political shackles. There is no doubt that clear indications of a development in this direction can be perceived in many parts of the world.

This does not mean, however, that everywhere in the world social, cultural and political equality for the peasant has been realized, or is near. Strong social and political powers still resist the social freedom of the peasant. The inferiority of the peasant class is still part and parcel of the culture of many countries, as can be shown by many examples. I mention only a few. It is well known that in many parts of Africa children who have finished an elementary school constitute the problem of the school leavers. They believe that after finishing school they are too good to be peasants and that they should have administrative positions. This means an overestimation of the value of some elementary education, but far more important is the fact that it indicates, that the peasant is still in an inferior social position.

In other developing countries, where the general level of education is higher, it seems very difficult to convince university graduates that working with the peasants on the village level, in an endeavour to improve their position, is an honourable job. They seem to believe that a man with a university education should live in the capital city and have a position with a ministry or a government bureau. This again is a symptom of the low social position of the peasant and not of an abnormal mentality on the part of the university graduate. The complaint that it is very difficult, in developing countries, to find people with a secondary agricultural education who are willing to devote their daily work to a collaboration with the peasants in their struggle for life, points in the same direction.

Sometimes the remark is made that this bad position of the peasants, and the lack of personal interest of government officials in the developing countries for the daily needs of the peasants, belong to the aftermath of colonialism. It seems to me that this excuse is too easy. It can hardly be denied that often colonial governments did little to improve the position of the peasant, and intentionally or unintentionally increased the burden under which he was suffering. What we know of the history of the countries in question does not indicate, however, that the peasant was in general in a favourable position before the colonial powers entered on to the scene. More important, of course, is how conditions have developed since the former colonies became independent states. One has to acknowledge that generalizations are in this case difficult and dangerous. But one cannot avoid the conclusion that in many cases the cleavage between the authorities and the common man, which existed in the colonial period, has not gradually disappeared, but that the development of a new ruling class has once more barred the way of the peasant to a complete citizenship and real social freedom. As long as this is the case, agriculture and rural life will remain on a low level.

I have the impression that in several socialist countries, where in general the position of the peasant was bad when the socialist regime came into power, real equality of the farming population, collectivized or not collectivized, is seriously hampered by an overestimation of industry and a depreciation of agriculture. Sometime ago I visited a village of truck-gardeners near a big city in one of the socialist countries. The truck-gardening in the village was not socialized and the gardeners, who did an excellent job in providing the city with fresh vegetables, had a very good income. Nevertheless, almost all their sons went to a technical vocational school in the nearby city, because

they and their parents, influenced by the general mentality in the country as a whole, believed that working as a skilled worker in industry would give them a much higher status than they would have as truck-gardeners. It is well known, that since the War an enormous number of peasants in the socialist countries have migrated to the cities, even to the extent that in some countries measures have had to be taken to slow down this migration. This migration may have been useful on the one hand because it diminished the overpopulation of the countryside, even if in many cases it was directly detrimental to agricultural production. But I am convinced that much more than by this direct damage, arising from a too rapid migration as such, agricultural production suffered from the overestimation of industry and urban activities in general of which this propensity to migrate is an expression. This overestimation of industry means in fact a disqualification of the work of the peasantry and a lack of real social equality for the peasant. This certainly had a very unfavourable influence on agricultural production which in many socialist countries still forms the bottleneck to economic development.

Though I am convinced that the mental and political freedom, and the fundamental social equality of the agricultural population which developed gradually in the western countries since the 18th century, was of essential importance for the favourable changes in agriculture and rural life in that part of the world, this does not mean, in my opinion, that the western pattern of development should be the example for all countries in the world. First of all, a social development which took place in a certain part of the world can never be really imitated elsewhere. On the other hand, a social, political and cultural elevation of the peasant population certainly can take place in another social order than that prevailing in the western world during the last two centuries. That the social order as it developed in the western countries cannot guarantee, under all circumstances, a satisfactory position for the farming population is shown by the present situation. It seems that social and economic conditions in the post-industrial era, into which the western countries are gradually entering, are causing deep feelings of dissatisfaction among an important part, probably among the majority, of the agricultural population. There is no ideal social order, and one can imagine that in quite different societies the rural problems can be solved in a fairly satisfactory way. But a basic prerequisite will always be a farming population which feels itself free, equal and self-confident.

I hope, that these few remarks on the position of the peasant

population and its influence on the level of agricultural production will have convinced you – if this was necessary – how important research with regard to this position, its background and the possibilities for change may be, and how it may help to overcome this barrier to the increase in agricultural production, which means to the fight against hunger.

This problem, however, cannot be studied adequately in the way in which rural sociologists tend to tackle their problems at present. Approaching individuals with questionnaires will be of relatively little use in this case. Studies of small groups, for example of the power structure at the village level, will not yield satisfactory results. The problem will have to be studied as a macro-sociological problem, and the rural sociologist will have to try to find the right methods and techniques. Perhaps he can borrow them partly from historians and anthropologists, but partly he will have to develop new techniques. I may remark in general that drawing sharp dividing lines between sociology and cultural anthropology is, in my opinion, only detrimental to sociology, certainly to rural sociology in the developing countries.

It will be clear that the necessity to step across the border lines of customary rural sociological research is not restricted to the problem of the social and political position of the rural population, in the sense in which it has been discussed above. In general, rural sociology – and this holds true also for rural sociology in the developed countries – should broaden its scope. It should not look to agriculture separately, and it should not only study its petty problems in their local setting. It should look at and study agriculture and rural life in their different aspects also, as they are imbedded in the national social structure, as an expression of national culture and as a part of the national social order.

This does not mean that rural sociologists should forget much that they have done during the last few decades. On the contrary, I want to underline again that what has been achieved in the recent past is in my opinion of lasting value, and has to be continued. But if we want to discharge our duties, scientifically and socially, we have to do more. We shall have to leave our villages and our counties, and we shall have to look at society as a whole to understand the conditions of agriculture and rural life. Agricultural production is only partly determined in the fields by the individual man who works the land. If we look at him only, we see only part of the picture.

Broadening the scope of rural sociology in this way makes the task

of the rural sociologists more difficult. I am not thinking only, or primarily, of the necessity for the reconstruction and the widening of the theoretical and methodological basis of our science even if that will require great efforts. I am thinking at the moment in particular of the acceptance of rural sociology and rural sociologists by all kinds of authorities, by the 'establishment' if you prefer that expression. Studying the acceptance of new farm practices – to take that example – at the village or county level is from the political point of view a rather harmless activity. But studies of the position of the agricultural population in the framework of the social structure (more particularly of the power structure of the society as a whole), critical analyses of the basic aspects of national culture and of the fundamental social change which takes place, to acquire a better understanding of the present conditions and the future development of agriculture and rural life, might not always please the existing power-elite.

It is certainly not the task of the social sciences to displease the authorities intentionally. The scientist has to try to convince people, not to irritate or to provoke them unnecessarily. But on the other hand it is certainly not the duty of the sociologists to please the authorities and to be conformists. It is their task in society to look forward, to enlighten the minds of the citizens in general, and those who are in power in particular, even if these people do not like that at a certain moment. In this time of unprecedented social change this means first of all studying the factors which cause this change, its consequences for society and the possibilities to influence the course of events, so that the future society may develop without too much suffering, violence and injustice.

To fulfil our task we have to try more than ever to fight our biases. A sociologist living and working in an exploding world like ours can take nothing for granted or as self-evident. In the western world, for example, the privately owned family farm, together with the existing system of agricultural education, still seem to be almost sacrosanct for many who are interested in agriculture. But even if these institutions helped western Europe and north America to reach the highest level of productivity in agriculture, it does not mean that they are the best guarantee for a favourable development of agriculture and rural life in the future, certainly not in all parts of the world.

In the foregoing I have tried to point out that rural sociology has to broaden its scope and that in many respects it has to remodel its theoretical and methodological basis. If we take into account that the majority of the world's population is still an agricultural population,

and that this population is in urgent need of sociological guidance to find its way to the future, our task is immense. Let us try to do what we can.

NOTES

¹ About the development of rural sociology in Europe after World War II see Hofstee (1963).

² I may point out the fact that numerous rural sociological studies take a county as a unit for research though in the majority of the cases the population of a county does not constitute a group in the sociological sense.

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SUMMARY

DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The experiences during more than 20 years of fundamental change in the world after the Second World War have shown that agriculture and rural life remain a serious problem. Notwithstanding many efforts to improve conditions for the production of food, there are more hungry people in the world than ever before. The work of rural sociologists has contributed too little to solving this problem. One reason for this failure may be that rural sociology, in its present form originating from the USA gives too much attention to adjustment problems within the existing social order, too often studies the individual instead of the group, and takes development in the Western world too easily as a model for all development. Rather than study the adjustment problems of individual farmers or small communities, it would be better to undertake studies of the position of the peasant class in the larger society by means of a macro-sociological approach, and by integrating cultural anthropology and history with rural sociology. Rural sociology should look at agriculture and rural life

as they are imbedded in the national social structure, thus broadening its scope, and so become more able to understand the rural revolution.

RÉSUMÉ

STRUCTURE SOCIALE EN MILIEU RURAL ET DÉVELOPPEMENT

Les enseignements du changement fondamental qui se déroule dans le monde depuis quelque vingt années, à la suite de la IIe guerre mondiale, nous ont montré que l'agriculture et la vie rurale demeurent un problème important. En dépit des nombreux efforts faits pour améliorer les conditions de la production alimentaire, il y a à l'heure actuelle, plus de gens sous-alimentés que jamais auparavant. Le travail des sociologues ruraux n'a que peu contribué à la solution de ce problème. Une des raisons de cet échec est, peut-être, que la sociologie rurale, sous sa forme actuelle, et en raison de son origine essentiellement américaine, accorde trop d'attention aux problèmes d'insertion dans le milieu social existant, se consacre trop exclusivement à l'individu et non au groupe, présente trop aisément le développement du monde occidental comme le modèle valable pour tous. Plutôt que d'étudier le problème de l'insertion des paysans, des communautés restreintes prises isolément, mieux vaudrait analyser la situation de l'ensemble agricole dans la société globale, par l'intermédiaire d'une approche macro-sociologique, grâce à l'intégration de l'anthropologie culturelle et de l'histoire à la sociologie rurale. La sociologie rurale devrait considérer l'agriculture et la vie rurale comme partie intégrante de la structure sociale globale, élargissant ainsi son objectif, étant, de ce fait, à même de mieux comprendre la révolution rurale.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

ENTWICKLUNG UND LÄNDLICHE SOZIALSTRUKTUREN

Die Erfahrungen über den grundlegenden Wandel in der Welt während der vergangenen 20 Jahre haben gelehrt, dass die Landwirtschaft und das Leben auf dem Lande weiter ein ernstes Problem darstellen. Trotz vieler Anstrengungen, die Grundlagen der Nahrungsproduktion zu verbessern, gibt es mehr Hunger in der Welt als je zuvor. Die Arbeit der Landsoziologen hat ziemlich wenig dazu beigetragen, diese Schwierigkeiten zu überwinden. Ein Grund für das Versagen besteht darin, dass die ländliche Soziologie, die in der gegenwärtigen Form ihren Ursprung in den USA hat, zuviel Bedeutung

den Anpassungsproblemen innerhalb der bestehenden Sozialordnung beimisst, dass sie zu sehr das Individuum anstatt die Gruppe sieht und dass sie die Entwicklung der westlichen Welt zu einfach als ein Modell für jeden Entwicklungsprozess nimmt. Besser als die Arbeiten über Anpassung einzelner Landwirte und kleiner Gemeinden wäre, Untersuchungen über den Standort der Landwirtschaft in der grösseren Gesellschaft mittels makro-soziologischer Methode und durch Integration der Kulturanthropologie und Kulturgeschichte mit der ländlichen Soziologie durchzuführen. Diese sollte die Landwirtschaft und das Leben auf dem Lande als Bestandteil der nationalen Sozialstruktur sehen, um so ihren Gesichtskreis zu erweitern und die ländliche Revolution besser erfassen zu können.