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SUMMARIES IN ENGLISH

Peasant Societies: Sociological Exoticism?

R. Hettlage

This article demonstrates that the central theme of this special issue on peasant societies should not be appreciated only by those interested in far-flung worlds unless they are prepared to integrate their own world environment into the possible domain of exotic interest. Contrary to the research tradition which has prevailed until now, the "immortal peasant" is currently an important issue. This is not only because we are beginning to realise that peasants constitute the majority of the world population but also because, gradually, we realise that their behaviour, however strange it may appear to us, is a long way from being qualified as unreasonable (1). When it is possible to disentangle oneself from the traditional prejudices, new and enriching perspectives appear for sociological research centred so far on the industrial system. It has been attempted here to show the possible relationship between conceptualisation and research orientation of traditional agrarian sociology on the one hand and the centres of interest and study of industrial sociology on the other. This approach is especially marked in the relationship between the question of modernity and of neorurality often made today (2). Part of these aspects are developed in the different articles of this special issue, putting into evidence the close thematic links between them (3). (*page 5*)

PART I

PEASANT SOCIETIES AND PERSISTENCE

Cultural and Structural Continuities in Situations of Change and Development

S.N. Eisenstadt & L. Roniger

The "classical" studies of modernization which conflated the distinctions between traditional and modern societies have accordingly assumed a total anti-nomy between tradition and development.

The criticisms of the "classical" studies emphasized the inadequacy of these assumptions by showing first that many of these societies and states did not develop in the direction of certain modern nation-states; second that these regimes did not necessarily constitute a temporary "transitional" phase along an inevitable path to this type of modernity; third, by indicating that there was yet some internal "logic" in their development; and, last, by emphasizing that part at least of this logic or pattern could be understood in relation to some aspects of the traditions of these societies.

All these developments have, however, posed some new crucial problems — the most important among which was: how are such continuities related to obvious changes in social mobilization and differentiation attendant on development and modernization? Second, what are the mechanisms through which they are maintained?

This paper shows how the study of patron-client relations provides a very good ground for the exploration of all these problems.

The importance of these studies became clear with the growing awareness that patron-client relations are not destined to remain in the margins of society or to disappear with the development and establishment of democratic or authoritarian regimes or with economic development and modernization or with the development of class consciousness among the lower strata; and that while any single type of patronage, as for instance the personal semi-institutionalized kinship-like personal dyadic patron-client relationship, may disappear under such conditions, new types of such relations may appear, and that they can be found, in a great variety of forms, in many different societies, cutting across different levels of economic development and types of political regimes, and performing important functions within such more developed modern frameworks.

This growing importance of these studies was connected with the fact that they became closely related to some of the major theoretical developments and controversies in the social sciences — a connection which made the study of patron-client relations an important focus.

This paper analyzes the great variety of patron-client relations; their common core; that social conditions under which they develop — and which cut across different levels of economic development and political modernization.

Among these social conditions the continuous interaction between structure of the major elites and their coalitions as well as the cultural orientations they carry and the modes of control they exercise have been singled out; it is shown that it is the continuous feedback between cultural orientations, structure of elites and coalitions and modes of control exercised by them over the flow of resources that constitutes a crucial element of continuity across processes of technological and structural development as well as of political modernization. (*page 29*)

Sociology of Complex Societies

W.E. Mühlmann

Without pretending to be exhaustive, this article develops a genetic phenomenology of social structures in peasant societies. In this context the problem of “super-status”, that is the question of the perpetual changes in foreign domination, is particularly considered. The principle of “super-status” is, consequently, considered as the cause of the construction of very marked systems of stratification which are continually reproduced in peasant societies. Another consequence of hundreds of years of foreign domination is the appearance and then the tendency to persist, of a sceptical “super-status mentality” defined as the consciousness that, even though it is constantly changing, the elite has always been considered as the oppressor. (*page 53*)

Super-status in Mediterranean Peasant Societies

Ch. Giordano

The principal lines of collective thoughts in the “Little Traditions” of Mediterranean peasant societies are developed in the first part of this article, i.e. hierarchic ontology, the vision of a world of limited resources, “la miseria” and, finally, the anti-state mentality. In the second half on the article these models of

thought structures are examined from a comparative intercultural viewpoint as distinct from the usual attempts at interpretation. The models are examined here as coherent and rational responses to the problem of "the inevitability of super-status" that these societies have in common, that is, the incessant changes of foreign domination and its consequences, such as political tutelage, social marginalisation and economic dependence. (page 63)

PART II

PEASANT SOCIETIES AND INTERCULTURAL CONTACTS

Tourism and Rurality : the Case of Tunisia

W.S. Freund

This article presents, first, the facts which assumedly have steered independent Tunisia in the direction of a large scale "touristic vocation". The reader will then find a rapid introduction to the structure of tourism in Tunisia, developed from the essentially agricultural Tunisian reality. The author demonstrates that tourism has become, for Tunisia, a dangerous "monoculture", to the extent that it has contributed, for the past 20 years, to the systematic destruction of the socio-economic equilibrium, which, although precarious, was nevertheless viable. If today Tunisia, an agricultural country with a secular tradition, faces serious difficulties at the level of agrarian production and the supply of food to its population, this is, in a large part, the consequence of a egotistic and inconsidered "touristic policy". (page 87)

African Peasants Experience School

P. Arnold

The objectives which are aimed at through school vary in function according to the social milieu. Peasants from Senegal (Diola, Casamance maritime) and from Ivory Coast (Baoule, sub-prefecture of Bocanda) studied here are distinguished by a specific behaviour: they send only some of their offspring to school, the others are reserved for agricultural work. The schoolchild who succeeds must then leave the country for the town. This attitude may be explained by the type of relations that an African rural population has with the encroaching urbanised world (an emanation of which is the school) which may be seen as one of partial submission and relative autonomy. The school is part of a precise intervention strategy; it serves as a management instrument for country-town relations as much at the cultural level as at the political and economic levels. Those who have been to school are at the same time both rural and urban and are the intermediaries for the peasants, being charged with re-establishing a menaced equilibrium. This strategy, however, rests on two conditions which materialise less and less: the possibility of maintaining restraint and selective school enrolment of young country dwellers, and the continuing capacity of the urban labour market to absorb these school leavers of village origin. (page 109)

PART III

PEASANT SOCIETIES WITHIN THE INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM

The Problem of Rural Underdevelopment in Germany

E. Grohs

A reconstruction of agriculture bringing with it a deep transformation of peasant life has occurred in the Federal Republic of Germany since World War II. Under the pressure of rationalisation peasants are expected to manage their farms efficiently according to the criteria of a profit-making company. However, their adaptation cannot be materialised in time as abandonment of the farm is already programmed. The situation is especially alarming in poorly endowed regions which do not offer the possibility of transfer of farmers into other economic sectors.

It is in such a doubly disadvantaged region as that of the Rheinland-Pfalz that this study was made. The central problem was to know how the peasants appreciate their growing marginalisation and how they evaluate the field of action still open to them. Based on the peasants' own declarations, this article reveals the various evaluations of the current situation and of future development. (page 137)

On the Margins of Peasant Societies: Part-Time Agriculture

R. Froehlicher

Part-time agriculture has become a reality that can now be considered as permanent throughout all industrial societies. The question which may be asked (and which is developed here) is to know whether this form of agriculture is a significant mode of the process of integration of agricultural activity into the dominant urban and industrial model, or whether it is a residual form of maintaining societies. The problem is illustrated by individual cases in France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Such an analysis only reinforces the idea of the complex and multiform character of part-time agriculture. It does nothing to detract from the hypothesis that in certain situations part-time agriculture can play a more than negligible role in the persistence of peasant society characteristics. (page 159)

Rural Exodus and Revitalisation of Villages

I.-M. Greverus

The introduction of this article analyses the causes and consequences of the rural exodus in the Federal Republic of Germany, using as background comparable data from other countries of the EEC. An examination is made in the second part of the strategies of post-war development which were derived from predictions and imperatives and subsumed under the political-economic notions of profitability, modernisation and centralisation. The third part of the article is an account of personal and empirical research (which is in the form of a model) undertaken within the framework of a renovation programme for villages in Hessen. This

research has particular regard for the importance the latter programme has in the recent attempts at revitalisation based on tendencies to apply conservation strategies to the rural areas. (*page 169*)

The Use of a Myth : Peasant Society

M. Bodiguel

It cannot be doubted that currently there are more discussions about, and references to, peasants and peasant society in France than ever before. Urbanists and publicists have made it a leitmotiv; for the town-dwellers peasant societies appear as a desirable haven, and for the rural world as a point of reference. This even though peasant societies in France have become, since the last world war, a thing of the past. Only nine percent of the active population are in agriculture, the rural areas are becoming deserted and are seen merely as desirable areas for renovation and as a decorative environment for town-dwellers desperate for a return to nature; the rural population, deprived of its solid agricultural base, is today diverse and mobile, with its activities at the micro-regional level where the community is seeking its place.

Is this interest in French peasant society a passing fashion, a palliative for an economic crisis or an affirmation of fundamental values considered as remedies for the ills suffered within an industrial society felt to be inhuman? (*page 201*)