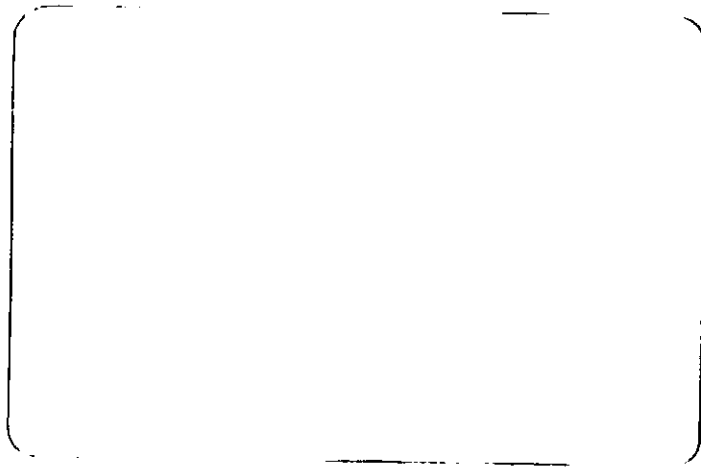


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EMERGENT ISSUES IN THEORIES
OF
AGRARIAN DEVELOPMENT

by
Howard Newby

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APPRAISAL OF THE FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE THE EVOLUTION
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CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFICIENCY OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL
(STRUCTURAL) POLICY AT THE REGIONAL AND FARM LEVEL

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PREFACE

Professor Howard Newby is the author of a number of seminal works on rural change in Britain including **The Deferential Worker** (Allen Lane, 1977), **Property, Paternalism and Power** (Hutchinson, 1979), **Green and Pleasant Land?** (Hutchinson, 1979). He has also made important contributions on social theory and the 'agrarian question', and in the field of rural sociology in general. He is responsible for the work being undertaken in the U.K. as part of the Trust's European research programme on farm structures and pluriactivity, and sits on both the Steering Committee and the Working Group for that programme.

The programme itself arose from the 1983 Arkleton seminar which attracted a number of research workers and policy makers from different European countries to examine part-time farming in the rural development of industrialised countries. As a result of this seminar a research group was formed to promote the idea of a longitudinal study into structural change and multiple job-holding amongst Europe's farm households. In September 1986, the Commission of the European Communities decided to provide major funding support for that part of this research which was to be undertaken in twenty study areas in 9 EEC countries.

The Steering Group for the research programme invited Howard Newby to prepare a paper which would give at least some of the background to the theoretical issues which could be addressed by the research. The paper highlights the 'theoretical black box' of the household which has constrained our analysis and understanding of the ways in which farm households adopt internal work strategies which determine the many and various ways in which family farms survive as a persistent social form. The examination of pluriactivity, Newby argues, draws attention to these strategies as a **central** focus of research, and therefore 'offers a much more holistic approach to an understanding of a persistence of the family farm'.

This paper was presented to the group in September 1986 at the same time as one on the policy background from Michael Tracy. The latter was published in March 1987 as the first in a series of occasional publications by The Arkleton Trust (Research) Ltd., which is responsible for managing and coordinating the European research programme.

These occasional papers are intended to bring to a much wider audience the various working papers which will be prepared during the research programme. The third, which is currently under preparation, will be a European bibliography on Multiple Job Holding, Part-time Farming and Household Work Strategies.

John Bryden,
Programme Director
March, 1987.

EMERGENT ISSUES IN THEORIES OF AGRARIAN DEVELOPMENT

This paper has two purposes. The first is to review classical theories of agrarian development as they emerged in nineteenth century political economy. Particular attention is given to the work of Marx, Weber and Kautsky and following this a brief consideration is given to how twentieth century writers have taken up the insights which these nineteenth century commentators made. The second purpose of this paper is to utilise this nineteenth century tradition of writing in order to understand the character of some recent emergent features in the structure of agriculture in Europe. In particular, attention will be paid to the character of multiple job holding, or 'pluri-activity', as a feature of agrarian development which has recently captured the imagination of a number of investigators of agrarian development in Europe. The paper concludes by offering an approach to the study of pluri-activity in agriculture and assesses the significance of this emergent feature for our understanding of theories of change in the sociology of agriculture more generally.

Nineteenth Century Approaches to Agrarian Development

As I have written elsewhere (Newby, 1980, 1983) those classical writers who were interested in developing a theory of agrarian development did so as part of their broader project to develop a theory of industrial capitalism. In other words attention was paid to agriculture only as a background feature - a kind of historical backdrop from which the new industrial system developed - or in order to understand some of the general features of the new commercial, capitalist system. There was therefore an assumption that, generally speaking, agriculture follows the same path of development as other sectors of the economy, particularly manufacturing industry. This tendency is most current in the work of Marx. Thus in Capital (especially volumes I and III) Marx writes at considerable length on the growth of capitalist agriculture in Britain, but for wholly ulterior purposes. Marx was only concerned with agrarian capitalism in so far as it accounts for the rise of industrial capitalism and in so far as it illustrates the transition from feudalism to the rise of a distinctive capitalist class structure and a set of capitalist social relations. (For more details see

Newby 1983). These happened, as a matter of historical fact, to occur first in British agriculture and as a matter of empirical necessity Marx is therefore forced to investigate this phenomenon. But Marx's theory of capitalist development does not rest upon this empirical analysis; nor could it, for even if Marx were to adopt such an empiricist strategy, it would lead to severe flaws in the theory of industrial capitalism which was his principal goal. As will become clear below, precepts gained for an analysis of agrarian capitalism cannot be applied to industrial capitalism nor vice versa: the peculiarities of the conditions of production in agriculture require a wholly distinctive analysis. As we shall see, the dangers of adopting a too-literal application of Marx's theories were to lead to much controversy towards the end of the nineteenth century over how to interpret the apparent 'anomaly' of the continuing persistence of the peasantry in European agriculture. This at least suggests that it is necessary to construct an analysis of capitalist agriculture which is, if not sui generis, then at least takes the conditions of agrarian production as a starting point rather than trying to squeeze a distorted analysis into an overriding schema which is inappropriate to begin with.

The dangers of a literal application of Marx are further exemplified when some of the assumptions which he made concerning capitalist agriculture in Britain are considered further. Not only is Marx's analysis a kind of historical prologue to his theory of industrial capitalism, but British, and particularly English, agriculture is taken as prototypical. The development of agrarian capitalism in England would, Marx assumed, eventually be followed elsewhere and the characteristic tripartite class structure of English landowners, tenant farmers and landless farm labourers was believed to be the shape of things to come as agrarian capitalism was ushered in across Europe. With benefit of hindsight it is possible to recognise the falsity of this assumption. The English situation, far from being prototypical, has turned out to be virtually unique. It is unique in that only in England was the peasantry abolished before the rise of industrialism. Elsewhere the peasantry survived the onslaught of subsequent industrialisation. The value of the 'English model' of agrarian development is therefore limited in the extreme. It is the persistence, not the disappearance, of the peasantry which has turned out to be the most distinctive feature of agricultural capitalism. By various mechanisms, which subsequent writers sought to explore, agrarian development failed to follow the classic neo-classical model (big capital driving out small capital). The peasantry, far from being, in Marx's notorious phrase 'non-existent historically speaking', has shown a remarkable ability to adapt and survive.

In the light of these difficulties it is not surprising that Marx's theoretical writings on agrarian development have proved

to be far more robust concerning the issues of landed property and rent than on the issue of how the capitalist mode of production develops within agricultural production per se. The detailed discussion of the Marxist theory of rent lies beyond the purview of this paper, but it is perhaps worth making two points in passing here. The first is that there is still no readily available theory which unifies a theory of property with a theory of agrarian production. Sociologists have been rather remiss in developing sociological theories of property ownership and despite a few scattered empirical analyses of landownership, etc. this whole area remains vastly undertheorised. Marx, of course, was interested in rent as part of his exploration of the 'laws of motion' of the capitalist mode of production. This in turn remained part of Marx's residual utilitarian theory of social action, namely his belief that if one understood the precise way in which the capitalist mode of production operates then social action could, so to speak, be 'read off' from this. As we shall see such utilitarian assumptions have provided a persistent problem for all theorists seeking to come to terms with the role of peasantry in agrarian development.

Max Weber, like Marx, was also concerned to develop a theory of industrial capitalism, despite the fact that, as is well known, his model of industrial capitalism departed from that of his predecessor in several significant respects. Weber's earlier investigations dealt with the commercialisation of the Junker estates and elsewhere he offered an 'agricultural sociology' of ancient empires (Gerth and Mills, 1948, chapters 14, 15; Weber 1976). But as so often in Weber's writings his treatment of agrarian capitalism was piecemeal and diffuse, demanding much inference and post hoc reconstruction. Nevertheless Weber's examination of the peculiarities of German capitalist development does lead him to an awareness of the distinctive qualities of continental European, as opposed to British, agrarian capitalism. Thus we find in Weber's writings an abandonment of the 'English model' of agrarian development favoured by Marx and an embryonic discussion of the fate of the peasantry which was later to dominate German social democratic politics. There is in this sense a substantive, though not a theoretical, continuity present in the work of Weber and the subsequent writings of Kautsky.

According to Weber the impact of capitalism on the European peasantry was not to displace it, but to transform it;

'The former peasant is thus transformed into a labourer who earns his own means of production He maintains his independence because of the intensity and high quality of his work, which is increased by his private interest in it and his adaptability of it to the demands of the local market. These factors give him an

economic superiority, which continues, even where agriculture on a large scale could technically predominate...

This, again, is only possible because of the great importance of the natural conditions of production in agriculture - it being bound to place, time and organic means of work....

Wherever the conditions of a specific economic superiority of small farming do not exist, because the qualitative importance of self-responsible work is replaced by the importance of capital, there the old peasant struggles for his existence as a higher link of capital'. (Gerth and Mills, 1948, pp. 367-368).

In such writings Weber was groping towards a distinctive sociology of agriculture, but, as is also clear, most of his comments are ad hoc and descriptive. There are few signs here of a theoretical understanding of the political economy of agricultural development. Instead Weber, characteristically, emphasises the clash between the aggressive economism of capitalist forces and the traditionalism and inertia of the peasantry. What fascinates Weber is the clash of cultures that this involves. He is far more interested in the cultural transformation of rural society than results from capitalist penetration than he is with developing a political economy of agrarian capitalism itself. This, of course, is not surprising, since Weber's whole conception of sociology involves the denial of discernible 'laws' of capitalist development. His political economy always remains implicit rather than explicit, although it is certainly feasible to suggest that he share many of the assumptions of classical and neo-classical economics. Thus Weber tends to accept the neo-classical argument that capitalist farms have a higher technical efficiency, a more rational form of organisation and are more attuned to the exigencies of the market than the peasant sector. He is also impressed by the technical superiority of capitalist agriculture which, he believes, will ultimately enable it to triumph in the countryside. Small farms will therefore become marginalised and the peasantry are on their way to becoming a group of ex-farmers. Therefore for Weber the peasant remains an anomaly whose persistence needs to be explained by reference to exceptional or even irrational factors. Their continuing persistence is regarded by him as a case of arrested marginalisation.

These factors link up with a theme which runs throughout the whole of Weber's work on the theory of social action, namely that the process of 'rationalisation' progressively restricts the realm of independent behaviour. Individuals are increasingly forced to adopt 'rational' action, trapped in an 'iron cage'

where action other than that which is formally rational is no longer feasible. It is here that Weber's affinity with classical economics is most apparent, even though Weber accepts the growth of formal rationality with resigned inevitability rather than personal identification. Indeed the triumph of formal rationality is reflected in what Weber calls the 'economisation' of life: the rational calculation of means and ends. Weber accepts the economist's views that these ends are best measured in monetary terms. He also accepts their belief that technical efficiency can be equated with formal rationality and thus that the capitalist enterprise is technically superior to peasant and other pre-capitalist types of farm organisation. Weber therefore begins to develop a model of a dual farming economy - a technically superior and rapacious capitalist sector squeezing out the production of small peasant farms whose only protection against marginalisation is their ability to adapt to areas of production where there are few economies of scale and where agriculture is less capital-intensive. While Weber identifies the sources of peasant resistance to the rationalisation of agriculture, however, he is in no doubt that this constitutes merely the postponement of the inevitable. The technical superiority of capitalist agriculture will ensure its ultimate victory over the forces traditionalism in the countryside.

Insofar, then, as Weber accepts the conventional economist's account of the superior technical efficiency of large scale agriculture and that such efficiency can be costed in terms of market prices, then he is vulnerable to equally conventional sociological critiques of classical economics - many of which, ironically, Weber would acknowledge. For example, the fact that what constitutes 'rational' economic behaviour is itself dependent upon a set of antecedent social conditions is recognised by Weber in his writings on the origins of capitalism. Similarly Weber does not recognise that peasants and small farmers might be equally 'rational' in their behaviour - in the sense that they are equally calculative in the face of the market conditions that confront them - rather than a traditionalistic residue. It is possible to discern here in Weber's unflattering assumptions concerning peasant rationality the same misapprehensions which afflicted Marx. For Weber, too, the peasant was 'non-existent, historically speaking'. The crucial question which therefore has to be asked about Weber's sociology of agriculture is how far the process of arrested marginalisation can be said to be empirically observable when, not only has the small farming sector managed to persist within agrarian capitalism, but it has also demonstrated its ability to reproduce itself over several generations. The small farm sector has failed to be not only proletarianised, but also rationalised, out of existence.

When, in 1899, Karl Kautsky published his important revisionist

thesis of Marx, The Agrarian Question, he acknowledged that the peasantry, far from disappearing, were persisting as a relative permanent feature of rural society and that a revision of Marx's assumptions was therefore overdue. Kautsky's fundamental argument was that Marx had correctly identified the general tendencies inherent in a capitalist mode of production, but that there were counterveiling factors which prevented these tendencies from being realised in particular circumstances (Hussein and Tribe, 1981a, pp.104-106). Agriculture contained a number of features which favoured the presence of these counterveiling factors. The agrarian question was thus Kautsky's attempt to substantiate and elaborate the claim that agriculture possessed its own laws of capitalist development which were different from those of industry, although he also notes some of the similarities with the development of capitalism in industry. There is, he argues, a steady extension of capitalist production, proletarianisation and even an increasing concentration of property in the means of production. But their form is different in agriculture. The extension of capitalism involves not so much an extension of the area occupied by capitalist farms, but vertical and horizontal integration by capitalist farmers into food processing and agribusiness. Similarly proletarianisation takes a specific form in agriculture: not so much the dispossession of producers from their means of production but the differentiation of the peasant household. Where a peasant family finds that it did not have enough land to sustain itself under existing market conditions, it sells labour rather than agricultural commodities, with the latter becoming a household activity for the purpose of supplementing the family income. In other words, the process of proletarianisation is marked by the emergence of the worker-peasant, peasant-worker or part-time farmer (the modern nomenclature varies). Thus, Kautsky points out, the proletarianisation of the peasant is not necessarily accompanied, as Marx assumed, by the disappearance of units of production organised along non-capitalist lines.

Therefore the peasant is not regarded by Kautsky as an anomaly under modern economic conditions. Furthermore Kautsky argues that the relationship between capitalist and peasant farms is not contradictory but complementary. The latter sell labour to the former during certain stages of the life-cycle, specialising only in the production of labour-intensive commodities. This complementarity is of great significance for it implies the absence of the mechanism - market competition - whereby both Marx and Weber assumed that large-scale capitalist agriculture would become dominant. In this context proletarianisation does not take a form which implies the disappearance of pre-capitalist forms of production. This opens the way for the co-existence of large-scale capitalist farms on the one hand and simple commodity producers on the other in a manner which does not threaten the existence of the latter (see also Friedmann, 1978, 1980). Whereas

Marx had assumed that the process of proletarianisation would accompany the destruction of pre-capitalist organisations in agriculture, Kautsky separates these two processes. This was a significant departure from what had hitherto been taken for granted in Marxist analysis, but it also represented a considerable break-through in the understanding of the processes at work in agrarian capitalist development. However, as Hussein and Tribe have pointed out (1981a, pp. 108-109), the next obvious question - what is the mechanism by which pre-capitalist organisations of production are destroyed in agriculture? - was never answered by Kautsky. One further point is worth noting: since the differentiated peasant household both sells labour and land, its proletarianisation is unlikely to have the same consequences as those which Marx predicted for the individual proletariat. Once again the distinctive features of capitalist development in agriculture engender social effects which cannot be equated with those of industrial capitalism.

Briefly summarising Kautsky's argument we may note that he was concerned firstly to separate the process of proletarianisation from the destruction of pre-capitalist forms of organisation in agriculture and that secondly he wishes to separate tendencies in landownership from those in commodity production. Moreover according to Kautsky the peasant is guaranteed a modicum of survival by transforming its internal household organisation by withdrawing from direct competition with larger farms. Kautsky therefore implicitly suggests that agriculture proceeds by different laws of capitalist development from industry, for example by developing a reproducible dual-farming structure or by integrating itself with agribusiness whilst retaining the nominal independence of the agrarian producer. In other words the small farmer is reduced by capitalist penetration to an outworker of monopoly capitalist agribusiness.

What lessons can be drawn from this brief excursion into nineteenth century European social theory? The first, and most general, point to make is that the theories of Marx, Weber and Kautsky were developed in a particular historical context and were part of an ongoing political debate which shaped their presentation and their 'value orientation'. Their theories are not entirely polemical, but neither are they abstract or timeless. These writers deserve attention for the example they set, for their methods, and for their insights. They are less exemplary as predictors of empirical reality. Nevertheless these writers do point to the kind of questions which the sociology of agriculture should be concerned with, even if they do not adequately furnish the answers. At the very least they suggest an extensive and fruitful research agenda.

The Peasant Question in the Twentieth Century

During the twentieth century sociology, as an institutionalised discipline very much reflected the assumptions concerning the growth of industrial capitalism which lay behind the writings of Marx, Weber and Kautsky. That is sociology has been concerned with rural and agricultural matters only as a background factor - and by extension 'the rural' has been viewed as pre-industrial, pre-capitalist and frequently as backward and residual. Rural sociology in the twentieth century undoubtedly suffered from this. The comparative neglect of agricultural and rural matters by the nineteenth century founding fathers provided an excuse for subsequent rural sociologists to ignore the contributions of the classical theorists and in particular to ignore the example they set in combining theory and method in the analysis of problems that are both socially and sociologically relevant. With very few exceptions, therefore, rural sociology did not inform the overall development of the discipline. Indeed, rural sociology as an institutionalised sub-discipline was very much regarded as a backwater of the subject. Its hallmark was a highly empirical and descriptive approach to subject matter which chose to ignore the contributions of the classical theorists; (See Newby, 1980). Indeed the issues addressed by Kautsky were to virtually drop out of the purview of rural sociology in its institutionalised form - particularly as it became established in the United States. The 'peasant question' became, instead, much more a matter of practical politics, most obviously so in the case of Lenin's contribution to the subject (Hussein and Tribe, 1981b) and in the debates which existed between Lenin and Chayanov which had clear political implications for the development of the Soviet Union during the inter-war years. It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that academic sociologists in the West came once more to address the questions raised at the turn of the century. Initially this was in the context of studies of the Third World peasantry, but this soon spread into a reassessment of the position of the peasantry in Europe and thence to a reconsideration of the role of the peasant in the development of capitalist agriculture.

From the 1970s onwards, therefore, 'The Agrarian Question' was resurrected. The work of Chayanov, for example, was rediscovered and considerable attention was paid to his observations that the peasant household was driven not merely by the exigencies of the market but by factors relating to household structure - for example the stage in the family cycle. This led to much speculation over whether a separate 'peasant mode of production'

was identifiable which was reducible to neither feudalism nor capitalism, a view which is now generally rejected (Ennew, et al. 1976). The burgeoning literature of what became known as 'peasant studies' allowed post-Chayanov investigations of the contemporary peasantry to be conjoined with insights gained principally from Marxist economic anthropology which emphasised the unity of production and consumption in a single peasant household. From this came the notion of petty or simple commodity production. The debate embedded in this literature contained many valuable insights, not least concerning issues of how to conceptualise 'the peasant'. As a result it became generally recognised that the category 'peasantry' disguised as much as it informed, and that however much there was a tendency to adhere to it at the descriptive level, it tended to cause greater confusion when employed theoretically. The internal transformation of the peasantry, recognised by Kautsky and Lenin, had created such a degree of differentiation that a new array of concepts was required (see Long 1977, Goodman and Redclift, 1981).

These debates still remained separated from the analysis of agriculture in advanced capitalist societies, however, and thus within the purview of 'the sociology of development' rather than 'rural sociology'. The individual who was, perhaps, primarily responsible for bridging this unfortunate divide was Harriet Friedmann, who in a series of articles during the late 1970s attempted to employ some of the concepts which had evolved from the peasant studies debate on an analysis of the persistence of the 'family farm' in the United States. The genesis of Friedmann's work was, however, rather more complicated than this. Her background had been in the study of 'world systems' as a student of Wallerstein. Originally, therefore, the work sought to link the international political economy of food production with the persistence of family farms through a case study (in her doctoral thesis) in an area of North Dakota. Friedmann placed particular emphasis on the role of the state, which had for a variety of political reasons sponsored the establishment and the continuation of a family farming structure in the area. In particular state intervention had been directed towards a social democratic concern with upholding family proprietorship as the principal unit of property ownership and agricultural production.

Friedmann's major conceptual contribution was to develop the notion of 'simple commodity production'. She regards simple commodity production as an analytically separate concept from that of capitalism - and therefore with quite separate 'laws of motion'. This is why she would accept that agriculture develops in quite different ways to capitalist industry. In effect Friedmann's work set a whole new research agenda for rural sociology in the 1980s, albeit one which, ironically, would have

been easily recognised by the classical theorists of the nineteenth century. It has therefore provoked a spirited debate at both the empirical and the conceptual level. For example the suggestion by Mann and Dickinson (1978) that the peculiarities of agrarian development are partly produced by the disjunction between labour time and production time in agriculture have subsequently been challenged on an empirical basis by Mooney (1983).

Theoretical critiques of Friedmann's work have centred on two issues. The first concerns the fact that, rather like the nineteenth century theorists, she still regards the small farm as an anomaly - a case of arrested marginalisation - whose existence somehow needs to be explained. This is partly because Friedmann works within a Marxist political economy and therefore shares some of the assumptions, especially the more utilitarian aspects of Marx's political economy, referred to above. This leads on to a second source of criticism of her work, namely that operating within a Marxist political economy leads her theorising to stop, as it were, at the farmhouse door. The farm household or family remains in her work a kind of theoretical black box which political economy cannot penetrate because of its assumptions about the sources of social action. This criticism has arisen not merely as a theoretical issue; it also has empirical implications. For example subsequent empirical work has shown that not all 'family farms' can be considered in the same way with reference to her conceptualisation of simple commodity production. Some family farms might, indeed, conform to her notion of petty commodity producers but it is clear that many do not. Many of them, indeed, turn out to be unambiguously capitalist. What one is observing in this case is the penetration of capitalist relations into agriculture which do not take the 'classic' form. That is, Friedmann mistakes a distinctive form of capitalist social relations for a peculiar, and analytically separable mode of production. This by no means undermines many of her insights, but it does suggest the need for certain modifications, particularly concerning her conception of simple commodity production. Once more, in an echo of nineteenth century writing on this subject, the recognition that agrarian capitalist development takes on a variety of social forms which do not conform to manufacturing industry is necessary in order to gain understanding of the direction of agrarian development. The persistence of peasants/family farms/petty commodity producers, and their ability to reproduce themselves over generations, need not lead to the assumption that they represent pre-capitalist, or non-capitalist, social forms.

Emergent Processes: Agribusiness and Pluriactivity

It has become clear that the path of capitalist agrarian development is not a simple, nor even a unilinear, one. Although it may be an empirical oversimplification, there nevertheless is a good deal of evidence to suggest that theories of a dual farming economy are most appropriate in order to understand the separate and often divergent processes involved. Although the persistence of the family household as a unit of production in agriculture has, given the antecedents referred to above, continued to retain much of the attention of those interested in the sociology of agriculture, it should not be overlooked that, in the meantime, important structural changes have also been taking place in the large-scale, capital intensive, 'agribusiness' sector of the farming economy. The classical tendency towards the concentration of production in agriculture has proceeded in a way which would be familiar to many nineteenth century theorists, albeit more slowly and in a way which has not eliminated the family farm as a social and economic unit. Throughout Western Europe and North America farms have become bigger in size, and agricultural production has been progressively concentrated on a very small minority of very large holdings. Nevertheless when we refer to 'the changing structure of agriculture' it is vital to remind ourselves that we are not merely referring to this tendency, but also to the equally important tendency of agriculture (in the sense of farming) to become closely integrated into a food production chain, many stages of which now take place off the farm entirely. This was a development predicted by Kautsky and, although it is under-researched, the increasing integration of farming into the agro-engineering, agro-chemical and food processing, marketing, distribution and retailing industries is by now well understood. It is simply that for a variety of reasons, especially the importance of land as a factor of production, food producers have been content to allow farming to remain in the hands of formally free farmers.

On the other hand the capacity of the family farming sector to reproduce itself and to remain in being remains fertile ground for social investigation. Recently it has become apparent that some progress can be gained by taking the household, rather than the farmer, as the unit of analysis. In particular, in order to understand the driving forces which lie behind the action of the family farming unit, it is necessary to investigate all of the various component parts of that household's income and how the necessary labour is divided between its constituent members.

This has led to the development of the notion of 'pluriactivity' or multiple job holding. This is to be distinguished from the category of 'part time farming' which refers only to the individual farmer, but rather stresses that the key to the survival of the family farm as a persistent social form in agricultural production depends upon the internal 'household work strategies' (Pahl, 1984) which are adopted. The examination of pluriactivity offers a much more holistic approach to an understanding of the persistence of the family farm. For example, it recognises that market factors are important in establishing the parameters within which the family farm operates as far as its farming activities are concerned. However it also recognises that the family as a unit enters into a variety of relations with external capital in order to ensure its reproduction, some of which may be in agriculture and some of which may not. Moreover the examination of pluriactivity also recognises that, as a social unit, the farm household is partially driven by internal social relations (such as the division of labour within the family) and by household work strategies and is not merely the passive receptor of market forces.

What is probably required, therefore, is some kind of transactional model which examines the relationship between, on the one hand, the exigencies of the market (which may well include such familiar neo-classical matters as capital accumulation, cost efficiency and technological innovation) and on the other household work strategies (involving the internal division of labour and available sources of alternative income governed by the exigencies of the labour market). This transaction is, as Friedmann originally noted, mediated by the state which, through its agricultural policies, virtually governs the conditions of existence of the whole agricultural sector. Such a transactional model would seem to be able to accommodate both the utilitarian forms of economic rationality assumed by Marx, Weber and others which are often contained within the presumptions of agricultural policy and the 'hidden hand' of the market, while also allowing for the recognition that the household unit may well operate according to a very different rationality relating to its values and goals and its consequential assessment of risk.

The retention of such a dualistic approach to the study of agrarian development requires that a degree of flexibility be maintained. To be specific: it may be appropriate to treat certain branches of agriculture as if they were branches of industrial production, whereas in other branches such an analogy is wholly inappropriate. Therefore if analyses drawn from the political economy of industrial production are not automatically transferrable to agriculture, neither are they completely irrelevant. They will be modified more or less according to the

type of commodity production and by the necessity of accounting for the factors outlined above. Tracing the particular pathways of capitalist agrarian development is difficult and complex. Nevertheless it is hoped that this paper demonstrates how a certain degree of lateral thinking is required. This paper, therefore, demonstrates many of the limitations, but also the uses, of nineteenth century political economy and sociological theory for contemporary concerns with a new sociology of agriculture.

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