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FIVE FIELDS FOR A SOCIOLOGY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Suggestions for a United Nations Programme *

by

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Chapter I

SOCIOLOGY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. This paper does not intend to deal with the "social" aspects of regional development. It does, however, intend to deal with the "sociological" aspects. The difference between these two terms is not a minor question of semantics which can easily be glossed over, but a difference in scope and content between two concepts. The concept "social" is very wide and, secondly, a great and often changing variety of criteria is used to decide whether or not to include a subject under this concept. The United Nations reports on the world social situation indicate the wide and nearly indefinite range of subjects which can be labelled "social". In contrast, there is general agreement on a much more specific use of the word "sociological", at least among its practitioners.

This paper intends to deal with sociological aspects of regional development as distinct from the social aspects. This choice does not imply, however, any prejudgement concerning priorities for the United Programme on Regional Development. It only implies a belief that progress in our thinking will be faster once we are able to identify more specific problem areas within the wide "social" concerns in relation to regional development. The area chosen for this paper is the sociology of regional development. Perhaps future meetings will be able to discuss other "social" aspects.

Sociologists like other scientists are selective in choosing the special aspects of the concrete world which they wish to study. Let us consider the chair on which we are sitting. A specialist in mechanics would see it as a combination of weights and balances; a biologist specializing in anatomy would see it as a receptacle for the human form; an economist might see it as a unit of cost and price; a psychologist might see it as a part of the perceptual frame of our partners around the table; and the sociologist might see the chair as a symbol of status.

/Sociology explores

Sociology explores the varieties of group structure and the main forces that keep group together or that weaken or transform them. As a discipline, it is complementary to other social sciences.(1)

Contemporary sociologists widely distinguish between "cultural" and "structural"elements in society.(2) Attitudes, norms, values, aspirations and goals are included under their concept of "culture". By the "structure" of society they mean the network of social relations. Important elements of the social structure are: caste, power distribution, familism and nepotism, social stratification on the basis of prestige, income, education or birth, and woman's position in society.(3)

2. As yet sociologists have paid little attention to problems of "regional development" as such. Thus for our discussion of Sociology of regional development we lack the easy reference of categories already established by sociologists for older clusters of policy problems such as for problems of cities studied by a branch called "urban sociology" or for those outside cities studied by rural sociology. It is now our task in relation to regional development to identify those aspects which would be of interest to sociologists and to indicate the policy perspective in which these aspects should be studied.

The term regional development is used throughout this paper to denote processes and activities which aim at arranging population and human activities in space and which: (a) have as their main aim the improvement of living conditions (economic, social, spiritual) of the population at large; (b) reflect a multi-dimensional approach towards development, and (c) take a region as the essential unit in organizing these activities.(4) The term "development" here is meant to be distinct from the term "planning" because development of regions has been observed also where no planning has taken place, while on the other hand little development has been observed in some regions for which elaborate plans had been prepared. In principle, however, planning can be considered a major tool for fostering regional development.

For easy communication with sociologists it may prove useful to formulate our questions to the greatest extent possible in their terminology. If we can come at least half way in using their concepts

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and their terminology, we have certainly a bigger chance to be understood by those whose assistance we want to enlist for our world wide programme of research and training in regional development.

3. To some extent the problems faced in developing certain geographical regions within nations are conceptually not different from what we may call "general" problems of development. Studying and tackling these problems at a scale samller than the nation presents to that same extent the advantage of more scope for concrete thinking and action. This advantage, however, is significant enough to justify a regional approach, for instance, for collection and analysis of sociological (and anthropological) data. For example a sociologist might find it difficult to make any general statement concerning sociological characteristics applicable to all inhabitants of Tanzania or of Nigeria and yet sufficiently specific to be of practical use to policy makers and planners.(5) If it is correct that sociological problems in regional development do not require new concepts for their analysis (though perhaps more precise "regionalized" data), then it is mainly for the purpose of a practical division of labour among sociologists that a sociology of regional development may evolve. Such an evolution would be a modern parallel to the earlier development of "Rural Sociology" for which at that time there was not much theoretical justification, but certainly there was an urgent need.

4. Once we accept the criterion of practical need as the basis for developing a new focus for sociological inquiry, the question arises: in what fields of regional development is sociological insight most needed by policymakers and practitioners?

I wish to answer this question tentatively on the basis of a decade of personal experience with a dozen regional and district development projects in different continents, (Chrysopoulos district in Greece, Enfida and Medjerda projects in Tunisia, Liberation province of United Arab Republic, Ghab and Euphrates projects in Syria, Eastern and Western Regions of Saudi-Arabia, Warsaw district in Poland, Slovakia in Czechoslovakia, Kosmet region in Yugoslavia, Karamoja district in Uganda, Cankuzo and Mosso areas in Burundi), and by analysing the main objectives

/for each

for each of these projects. Such analysis shows: for all but one project economic development of the region was the prime objective. In five projects improvement of existing settlement patterns or introduction of entirely new settlement patterns was included in the programme (Enfida in Tunisia, Ghab and Euphrates in Syria, Karamoja in Uganda, Canzuko and Mosso in Burundi). In eight projects transformation of the entire social structure was aimed at directly or indirectly and in three of these projects this objective was certainly essential (Kosmet in Yugoslavia, Ghab in Syria, Karamoja in Uganda). Integration of a region into the nation was of primary government con ern in two cases. (Karamoja in Uganda, Slovakia in Czechoslovakia.) In summary: according to the objectives of regional development four main fields for sociological inquiry emerge. In so far as all projects depended on guidance by Government, regional policy making and planning would constitute a fifth main field for a possible "regional sociology" as follows:

(a) Sociology of economic development

(b) Sociology of patterns of settlement

(c) Sociology of social transformation

(d) Sociology of regional and national integration

(e) Sociology of policy making and planning for regional development.

The broad fields identified in this manner roughly coincide with the fields distinguished by Perloff in relation to objectives of regional development.(6)

5. In the following pages illustrations will be given of topics sociologists might investigate. These illustrations show the wide scope and variety of potential sociological study in relation to regional development. However, each discipline and every profession has the tendency to over-estimate its "indispensable" contribution to development policy and development efforts. A few remarks on the limitations of sociology are therefore in place.

(a) On the scope of sociology as a social science:
Sociology is only one among some ten disciplines which traditionally deal with aspects of the "human and social" side of development.

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Therefore we should not address primarily to sociologists' questions which can more competently be studied by others, for instance by economists, demographers, human geographers, psychologists, political scientists, by public administration specialists, students of law, of religion or by social philosophers.

Outsiders can easily confuse the true nature of sociology because of the fact that some sociologists have acquired "second professions" as community organisers, townplanners, etc. However the fact, for example, that some individual sociologists are capable of designing a functional hierarchy of schools and hospitals in a region does not mean that sociology as a discipline (i.e. as a body of knowledge and as a method of investigation) deals with such questions.

A second source of confusion of sociology with other "social" disciplines lies in the "synthetic" aspirations of certain older schools in sociology. This leads outsiders to believe a sociologist is a jack-of-all-trades. This again may be true of individual sociologists, but not of the discipline as such.

(b) On the role of sociology in planning:

Sociology has not (yet) developed a body of knowledge called "sociological policy" in the same way as economics has gradually developed a branch of "economic policy". Nor is there much chance that sociology will develop a similar branch of "sociological policy" in the near future for at least two reasons:

i) Economics has many central axioms on which to develop a conistent set of verifiable statements.
Sociology has no such central axioms.

ii) The central axioms of economics are acceptable to everybody.
Sociology has no central axioms of universal acceptance.

Important to note however is the fact that even though economics has developed a branch called "economic policy", it is not the economists but the politicians who decide on <u>which</u> economic policy will be adopted. In that sense economic policy as a discipline presents only <u>alternative solutions</u> to political policy makers. A similar limited role should be developed for sociologists.

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Seen in this perspective the future assistance of sociologists to policy making in the context of regional development projects can be outlined as follows:

1. Analysis of prevailing social systems with focus on fields outlined throughout this paper. Emphasis on comparison between the proclaimed higher values of the society concerned (freedom, democracy, social justice, etc.) and the actual social structure and culture in individual regions and localities.

2. Diagnosis of main discrepancies; e.g. indication of categories of people who are presently restricted in their human potential; indication of rifts and splits in the local and regional social systems, in particular as they affect regional economic development, and the integration of the region into the nation.

3. Prognosis of future spontaneous developments if no action to correct the situation is taken. In sociology this prognosis means most often: estimating the probability that something will, or will not happen, for instance: the chance that a certain region will or will not become more fully integrated in the nation in the near future.

4. Outlining alternative courses of action to deal with incidental or structural problems. Examples will be given below for all five fields of sociology of regional development.

Political authorities in whose service the sociologist has made his study will have the final decision on the courses of action that will be taken.

/CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

FIVE FIELDS FOR SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING IN RELATION TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT; CONTENT AND APPROACH

1. Sociology of economic development

Perloff describes regional development efforts as attempts at transformation of the socio-economic system mainly through the development of new activity clusters with strong complementarity linkages.(7)

For purpose of sociological analysis it is important to note that economic development and in particular industrial development depends most directly on four categories of people: entrepreneurs; labourers, investors, and civil servants.(8)

The sociologist is interested in analysing the values, attitudes and social relations of each of these four categories and in indicating to what extent and under what conditions these elements are impediments or assets for economic growth in the context of a regional development project. Subjects for sociological research in specific regional projects aiming at industrial development should be for example:

	Their prevailing attitudes, etc.	Their prevailing social structure
(a) entrepreneurs	motivation mentality: e.g. protectionist knowledge: e.g. not specialised interest in co-operating	size of firms type of management organization and efficiency
(b) investors	preferred investment attitude toward risk-taking	place in the social structure
(c) labourers	aspirations frame of reference achievement principle individualism	labour unions "each one for himself"
(d) civil servants	motivation frame of reference	place in the social structure

The importance of attitudes for economic development has been stressed again by Prof. Tinbergen. According to him the most important basic attitudes involved are: (1) an interest in material well-being; (2) a willingness to look ahead; (3) a willingness to take risks; (4) an

(4) an interest in technology; (5) a willingness to co-operate; (6) an ability to persist and (7) a willingness to accept "the rule of the game". He stresses also that these attitudes (or their absence) are inter-dependent with the environment in which a population lives.(9)

Though industrialization is the main path chosen for development of regions, not less important in number, size or potential economic impact are regional projects which heavily rely on progress in agriculture. In rural development projects several main categories of "contributors to economic progress" can be distinguished, (e.g. the farmers, civil servants, outside investors) and an approach similar to the one described above might be followed for sociological analysis. Yet a different approach seems preferable. Rural regional projects are often vast in sheer size and population; and the population categories which the sociologist wishes to study are usually more geographically dispersed in small clusters and less neatly "registered" in official files and census reports than in the case of an industrial regional project. For this reason it may prove advisable to proceed in rural projects with collection of data and with their analysis according to practical problem clusters. Some problem clusters are: landtenure systems, the sociological aspects of the economic structure of rural communities, the impact of poverty on attitudes and on social relations, local and regional social stratification and its impact on change, family organization and wider kinship groupings, informal groupings and the potential role of formal associations, exchange labour systems and wage labour systems, the impact of religion, of tradition, of illiteracy and the potential impact of improved communications on changing old values, attitudes and aspirations.(10) For each of these problem clusters the purpose of analysis would be to determine the positive and negative impact on economic change and to indicate alternative solutions or improvements over the prevailing situation.

2. Sociology of settlement patterns

There is hardly a subject where the word "social" is more easily and wrongly confused with the term "sociological" then in duscussions about desirable "patterns" of settlement. This is partly because the whole subject is permeated with feelings of social justice for all as regards for instance, educational opportunities, medical care or social services and partly because individual sociologists themselves have tended to write more about the social

/than about

than about the truly sociological aspects of this problems. Yet, the task, for instance, of designing for a given region an optimal medical network (large hospitals, small hospitals, clinics, and mobile medical units) or a functional hierarchy of units in the educational system, is more a job for hospital planners or educational planners than for a sociologist, even though sociologists can contribute their socilogical insights on the matter from their specific vantage point.

In principle sociologists are primarly concerned with selected elements of the social system and with the nature of the total social system likely to emerge in population concentrations of certain sizes and densities. This basic question is being explored for example in studies in "urban sociology" and in "rural sociology". In rural sociology there has been in addition some attention to the desired pattern of settlement at the scale of the individual farm (involving questions of farm size, labour pattern, etc.) as well as to the desired shape of villages.

Thus, within the context of a sociology of regional development questions of settlement patterns should be formulated in terms of the potential impact of: (a) the geographical location, (b) the number and (c) the density of population upon local and regional social relations and upon locally and regionally prevailing values, attitudes, aspirations, etc.

It seems advisable to focus analysis on different "scales" of settlement, such as: individual farms, the layout of individual villages, networks of villages, individual towns and cities in the region; the region as a whole.1/

1/ A warning may be in place against over-emphasis of the assumed impact of sheer territorial and physical and numerical aspectos of people "living together" in certain concentrations and settlement patterns. Two famous examples of the wrong idea that "the stage sets the play" are the now outdated assumption in some western European countries that building large cities according to "neighbourhoods" would "sociologically" foster territorial cohesion and the assumption in some literature on developing countries that small local communities are (therefore) "harmonious" communities.

/3. Sociology

3. Sociology of social transformation

Several regional development projects have explicitly the wider aim not only of increasing production or changing settlement patterns but of completely transforming the whole social structure of the area concernes. Thus the Syrian Government considers the Ghab area as the model area for implantation of her land reform measures and for the introduction of a new socialist society. In the Kosmet in Yugoslavia similar wide aims have been pursued since the second world war. In Uganda the Gorvernment wishes to arrive at a radical change in the way of life of the pastoral people of Karamoja, a remote district which is the size of Belgium.

Social change is a key area of interest to the sociologist. In the context of specific regional projects sociologists should be asked: (a) to investigate why greater change had not occurred before, and on the basis of this inquiry, (b) to indicate core areas in the social system where a breakthrough might be tried. Both questions entail research of elements of the social system of the particular region.

On the first major subject:

(a) reasons for stagnation, research should focus first on the prevailing attitudes and aspirations in particular in the field of economic and education and on the predominant habits, usages, norms and traditions. However equal (perhaps more) attention should be given to the social structure of the region, in particular to the existing social hierarchies based on the distribution of wealth, power and prestige. Here core topics for research should be: the position of the elite, the "clientele" or "patronage" system, size and aspirations of both the old and new middle classes, the extent to which the lower class is exercising its civil rights and is able to participate in the life of the country; and ways and means of upward social mobility.

It seems important not to limit sociological analysis to the 50 per cent of the population of male sex. Women are "the other 50 per cent" and mostly do the hard work. Their position is crucial for the success or failure of any real social transformation at local or regional level.

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On the basis of experience in the field, associated with either community development or regional development projects; I am inclined to stress the aspect of power in any analysis concerning social transformation for policy-making. By power is meant: "the possibility, on the part of a person or group, to restrict other persons or groups in the choice of their behaviour in pursuance of his or its purpose".(11) For example the stress in the theory and practice of Community Development on "changing attitudes" should be complemented with efforts to widen the choices of behaviour for those who have meanwhile changed their attitudes. Personal observation of field projects has taught me about the use of power to restrict the aspirations of competent youth, of competent farmers, of competent women.

Some elements of power which need precise analysis in order to arrive at suggestions for change are: the base of existing power (economic, physical force, prestige, intelligence, etc.); the forms of power exercise (force, domination through symbols, manipulation, etc.); the goals of power exercise (to gain control over information, over economic goods, etc.); and above all the institutionalization of the power process which is sociologically the focus for any study of power.(12)

(b) These questions suggested for analysis of power structures lead to the second major question to be addressed to sociologists, namely to present ideas on how to arrive at change in the social system of the region concerned.

In my opinion the focus of thinking and action in United Nations circles has been on changing values and aspirations, mainly through the use of education in its broadest sense and to a lesser extent through improved communications with the outside world. These two problems clusters (education and communication) remain valid foci for both sociological research and action under a regional development program. But more strongly than before attention should now focus on developing functional formal organizations of all kinds, which in themselves can constitute new elements of power, new avenues for action, an new channels of education and communication.(13) To some extent these new organizations can appeal to feelings of solidarity already existing but never expressed among different categories of the population: farmers, factory labourers,

/women, youth.

women, youth. In a rural regional project for example the following functional formal organizations might be developed: cooperatives, farm development committees, credit organizations, general farmer's associations (such as a regional agricultural society), general development associations, commodity organizations (e.g. of cotton growers; citrus growers), agricultural boards (e.g. a wheat board), special purpose commodity organizations (e.g. a cotton insurance board; citrus loan board), youth organizations, women's associations, regional and local branches and cells of the national party, of the farmers union, of labour unions, etc.

The study of the transition from informal to functional and formal organizations is a central area of interest to sociologists.

In summary: a sociology of social transformation, in the context of regional development, should comprise these core fields:

Analysis of Status quo:

1. a. attitudes, values, etc.

   b. social stratification, position of women, power structure

Analysis of Means of change:

2. a. education and communication

   b. functional formal organizations.

Starting from these core fields, other related subjects and concepts can be gradually incorporated and integrated into the research perspective.

4. Sociology of regional identity and national integration

This field of regional sociology should deal with social integration and feelings of identity within individual regions and with its complementary aspect: the integration of individual regions into the life of the nation.

1. Internal integration of individual regions:

Here politicians and other policy makers are faced with at least three major questions:

To what extent does a "regional community" exist in a given region?

Secondly: for what developmental purposes does this regional cohesion provide an advantage?

/Thirdly: if

Thirdly: if no "regional cohesion" is found in a project, but its emergence is considered desirable, how can such cohesion be prometed?

(a) The degree of social integration within a given geographical area can be identified by research of the geographical distribution of prevailing patterns of social relations, such as trade relations; informal exchange of labour; inter-marriage; extended family bonds; visiting, etc. Maps can be prepared reflecting the sociological data collected about the frequency, regularity, extent and harmony of each of these social interactions.(14) In addition data can be collected and mapped concerning values, aspirations and expectations shared by persons living in a certain territory. Together these maps can provide an insight into the social integration of an area.

In many cases a geographical area which on such maps is marked by high degree of social integration will coincide with a "region" in the sense of a regional identity. Yet, the questions of identity is not logically the same as the question of social integration and has to be investigated separately. This, for instance, by questions probing into the degree of awareness of a shared territory among the inhabitants and with questions concerning names and symbols indicating the territory and its boundaries to its inhabitants. Similar research has been done in American rural sociology for decades.(15)

(b) Assuming that a region's inhabitants show a high degree of social interaction and of sharing of values and moreover an awareness of the region as "their" territory, the question arises: for which developmental purposes does this constitute an asset? This question is of pivotal importance for the current assumptions underlying the United Nations effort to promote programmes of regional development in member States.

Some illustrations of items to be looked into are:

(i) Economic development

Does the feeling of regional identity and pride facilitate the acceptance of innovations by the inhabitants, e.g. of new industries of the idea of women working in factories; etc. Does the regional network of informal social relations among farmers facilitate the dissemination of technical new items in agriculture?

(ii) Physical

(ii) Physical planning in relation to services

Does the higher degree of social interaction within the region lead to a more intense use by the population of available services such as: repair shops for agricultural tools and machines; credit banks; schools; hospitals?

(iii) Social transformation

Does greater regional cohesion facilitate the processes of change mentioned in paragraph 3? Also: Does a high degree of regional integration attenuate the socially undesirable side effects of rural-urban migration in case this migration is directed to towns within the region?

(iv) Planned development

Does a high degree of regional integration facilitate the process of national and regional planning, during the stages of plan formulation (requiring consultation of the population) and during the stage of plan implementation (requiring perhaps even physical labour by the population under "community" projects)?

(v) Development of political institutions in the region

The development of regional political institutions is usually seen as the symbol of regional identity and power. It should be noted that in case a strong regional cohesion exists, at least one important element for political institution building is available. However: two other elements required for building political institutions are leaders and urgent problems (on which the leaders can focus popular action).

(c) One it has been found by sociological research that in certain regions the existance of regional identity and cohesion is a positive factor in developing that region, the question arises: how can such regional cohesion and identity be promoted in regions which lack it as yet. This again is a valid question for sociological research which in this connexion can focus e.g. on regional values transmitted in the educational system and secondly on traditional festivities and new ceremonies which can strengthen feelings of regional cohesion, identity and belonging among the inhabitants.

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2. The problem of integrating individual regions into the life of the nation constitutes the second major theme for a "sociology of regional integration". This theme is of major concern to several Governments in the world today.

Sociologically the central question here is to determine the degree of autonomy which society can allow to one of its territorial "sub-systems" without endargering the cohesion of the total system. The complementary question for the individual region is: how much "external integration" of the region into wider society can be allowed, without endangering the desirable degree of internal integration and cohesion within the region.

It is obvious that research on these two complementary questions can usefully be done only on the concrete context of specific societies and specific regions. Secondly it is to be noted that these two complementary sociological questions can be asked about each specific sphere of life: economic, political, military, etc. Even though the sociologist may thus deal with economic or military data, he does not change into an economist or into a military specialist, but retains his own specific vantage point: exploring which alternative variety of group structure at the national and at regional level will produce the equilibrium which best promotes simultaneously the development of the individual region and of the nation as a whole.

5. Sociology of policy making and planning

Though it is difficult to determine at which point in policy making for regional development the term "planning" becomes appropriate, it is certain that in its fullest sense the term regional development planning implies:

1. That a model of the intended future regional situation has been or will be drawn up in respect to:

/(a) specific

(a) specific human activities (economic, administrative, etc.)

(b) their location in the region

(c) physical structures, installations, which are to provide the physical environment for these activities: and in addition:

2. That a program of action has been, or will be, formulated with a view to achieving the situation represented in the model.

In actual practice few countries have evolved such full planning in respect to regional development. In some cases elaborate regional blueprints have been prepared which were not adhered to, and planning offices were created which soon lost contact with actual developments in the region for which their planning was supposed to promote economic growth and social transformation and to improve patterns of human settlement. This discouraging experience in several developing countries should provide an inspiration for an empirical and down-to-earth approach in choosing a focus for a sociology of planning for regional development.

The efectiveness of planning depends not only on the number and competence of professional planners, but also on the convergence of ideas, feelings and aspirations of all involved in planning and affected by planning, and, on the other hand, on the kind of social relationships and interactions between all concerned. Sociologically regional planning can be viewed as a purpose-oriented "system".(16)

Assuming that the public interest can be defined and pursued through coherent regional policies, the sociologist, dealing with regional planning in developing countries, can usefully focus his research for individual projects on two major issues:

(1) An analysis of the extent to which the prevailing social relations and attitudes in the region allow regional planning to acquire a comprehensive and rational character. This analysis will help economists, physical planners and others to be realistic about the content, scope and process of their proposals.

Thus, as regards plan formulation the sociological analysis should identify the planning ideas, planning objectives, planning principles, and planning criteria on which there is some agreement among different population groups and categories, and those on which there is no agreement among

/different population

different population groups and categories, or even conflict of opinion. Practice shows that regional plans reflecting only the opinions of planning officials but which are opposed by major interest groups, will remain ineffective.

In this connexio the sociologist has also to make explicit the often implicit planning ideas of certain groups, e.g. the desire to prevent social upheaval; lack of belief in social progress; a possibly "anti-urban" attitudes town planning, etc.(17)

As regards the social relationships relevant to the planning process the sociologist should identify the existing distribution of power between different groups and categories in order to help find a degree and form of planning which has a fair chance of becoming operational.

On the basis of his analysis of the social system of the region (and of the nation) the sociologist can give advice on:

(a) the realistic scope of the regional plan. Should it be a modest start with planning in selected sectors, but not yet integrated; is integrated multi-sectoral planning feasible; or are sociological conditions really ripe for comprehensive regional planning now?

(b) the advisable function of plans in relation to regional development. Should they be merely advisory; or are restrictive types of plans easier to implement, or is a plan co-ordinating already accepted policies more realistic as a start?

(c) the devices for plan implementation. Which devices are now aceptable to the population and to specific groups? Persuation, inducement, compulsion, direct government operations, joint public-private ventures, special legislation, taxation?

(d) the administrative arrangements (organizational structure and processes) for plan preparation and execution, involving among others an assessment of the operational efficiency of the bureaucratic structures (in particular as regards the interference of social stratification and of the "patronage" system) and of the extent to which institutions have been created to allow persons outside government to become involved in regional plan formulation and implementation, e.g. particular interest groups and the population at large.

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(2) The second major field sociological research in connexion with planning for a regional development is complementary to the field just outlined. Once the sociologist has identified the extent to which rational and comprehensive regional planning is possible in a given country and region at a certain period, (and thus also the extent to which planning is not possible at present) major attention should focus on ways and means to improve the sociological conditions for a more effective use of planning as a tool for regional development. Here the conceptual categories of sociological investigation are very similiar to the ones outlined in paragraph 3 of this chapter, dealing with Social Transformation. With those conceptual categories (e.g. such as power-structure; communication) pivotal areas in the resistance against more rational or more comprehensive regional planning can be identified, and ways and means for change can be suggested.

/Chapter III

Chapter III

CLOSING REMARKS ON THE NEED FOR SPECIFICITY

In the preceding pages five fields of sociological investigation have been distinguished for possible use under a United Nations Program.

In order to become specific enough to be of any use to policy makers, United Nations sponsored sociological research under any of the five headings presented in this paper should avoid world-wide generalization but instead identify countries and regions at similar levels of socio-economic development and with similar social structures. It makes for platitudes to discuss the socio-economic aspects of agricultural development in Karamoja, the Ghab and Slovakia in statements covering them all. This applies even more to discussions of sheer sociological aspects.

"Identical" economic stages or situations may cover radically different social structures. For example among regions with "mediterranean agriculture" we may find regions with an oligarchic social structure but others with a more democratic social structures and each with different possibilities for change.(18) This need to avoid equating sociological traits with economic structure becomes even more conspicuous in the realm of values, aspirations, and attitudes. It makes a fundamental difference for policy making whether, for example, cattle breeders consider cattle as a status symbols (Karamoja) or as units of cash value (Slovakia) or whether people in a backward agricultural region are permeated with aspirations of power, or with aspirations of individual liberty.

Also National States have different ideologies which in turn influence the whole development concept for specific regions. Off-hand one may expect that free enterprise societies will rely heavily in their regional projects on private enterprise and on specific interest groups (e.g. Southern Italy). On the other hand we may expect that societies adhering to socialist principles will promote feelings of group solidarity among the masses of farmers and labourers and that in their regional development policies they will rely heavily on the forces thus released (e.g. Cuba). Thus it may prove rather meaningless to make generalizations

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on popular participation in regional development which cut across motivations and situations in Southern Italy, Cuba, Israel, UAR Egypt, Thailand, and Ghana. Some categorizations according to social philosophies, ideologies or major national aspirations may be necessary in order to arrive at relevant sociological research and teaching in the context of the wider UN program.

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The ultimate aim of all this sociological research and teaching under the aegis of the United Nations is to come out with ideas, suggestions and recommendations which are specific enough to be of use to interested Governments in their efforts to promote regional development.

Lage Vuursche, September 1968

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