



*National Perceptions
and Political Significance
of Rural Areas*

PENNSSTATE



College of Agriculture

**NATIONAL PERCEPTIONS AND
POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF RURAL AREAS**

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Preface

by Susan Sechler

The 1980s was a decade of growing rural problems and shrinking federal commitment to rural development. For most of the decade, rural people lost comparative ground in income and job opportunities. Many, if not most, rural communities lost people.

While a farm crisis garnered public sympathy and a multi-billion dollar increase in federal spending for commercial farm operators was passed, the budget stalemate left other rural programs in decay. The programs that benefit the non-farm majority, including the poor, shrank in both nominal and real terms. These things happened despite strongly expressed concerns and commitments voiced by many national officials, including a president, two secretaries of agriculture, and the chairmen of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees.

Was the apparent anomaly the result of budget constraints? A mismatch in the political power and acumen of various interests? Or an inability of the policy-making process to reasonably define rural problems, select goals, and formulate a rational policy?

One purpose of the Aspen Institute's Rural Economic Policy Program is to help lay the foundation for a coherent and viable rural policy at the national and state levels. It seeks to do so, partly by bringing social science insight to bear on the very complex problem of rural policy.

As part of that effort, the Policy Program supported the symposium out of which this volume grew. The topic of the symposium, the ways rural areas are perceived and policy issues formulated in several of the most developed countries, is an exploratory approach. The symposium sought to provide basic information on "other cases," so that American social scientists and policy makers could look at some of the fundamental issues of rural development with fresh eyes.

Such a fresh look is called for after a long period during which national policy toward rural areas was inconsistent and state government responses were uneven.

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Introduction

This book is a record of the International Symposium on National Perceptions and Political Significance of Rural Areas held at the Aspen Institute's Wye Woods Conference Center in Maryland on November 18-20, 1988. The symposium was sponsored by the Ford Foundation, the Aspen Institute, and Penn State University, in cooperation with the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

It focused on one facet of rural development: national attitudes toward rural areas and their political salience in several economically developed countries. The topic arose because in the United States and other countries there is a significant gap between the concern expressed about rural problems and what is done about them. Whether this is a temporary phenomenon induced by budget problems, the result of uncertainty about what to do, or the outcome of a rational political calculation that the public is unwilling to pay the price of remedying rural problems is an important question. The answer to this question has implications for rural people, public agencies, interest groups, and those who devote their careers to rural concerns.

Regardless of the conditions in some of the rural areas in these countries—economic stagnation, social dislocation, concentrations of poverty, and sprawling urbanization—each country's rural development programs and policies ultimately will depend on how much its people value rural areas and the well-being of rural people. If political support is firmly rooted in national values, the long-term prognosis for national rural development policies is good. Without a base of concern and potential support, the response of government will be mostly symbolic.

The question is complicated, as rural development issues always are, because people with so many disparate goals are assembled under that banner. Does rural development mean preserving an attractive countryside? Does it mean preserving the cultural heritage and way of life in rural communities? Does it mean finding alternative employment for rural people as jobs in the resource sectors disappear? Does it mean helping as many of the people who wish to farm, even part-time, continue to do so for as long as possible? If there is support for the well-being of the countryside in national values, what fundamental factors are at the core of such support?

This symposium was designed to elicit discussion and insights regarding the underlying strength and political significance of these and other values and beliefs as important factors shaping policies and programs for rural areas in industrialized countries. Before discussing the symposium agenda, we briefly outline below some of the general conditions and circumstances common to rural areas, especially those areas in the industrialized world.

Rural Areas Lag

The modern age has been unkind to rural people and attractive rural land throughout the world. There is a close correlation between wealth and urbanization among countries. And within the richest countries—the United States, Canada, Japan, and those in western Europe—wages and measurable living standards are higher in cities than in rural areas. Furthermore, in the United States (and probably in the other rich countries), this differential has recently resumed a long-term pattern of growth.

In the developing countries and the third world, differences in quality of life between the cities and rural areas are even more extreme. The infamous slums on the fringes of their mushrooming capitals are filled with people moving from the countryside to improve their lot. Two facts suggest that they have done exactly that: no matter how bad the urban slums, rural refugees stay and are joined by more of their cousins every year. The modern history of famine offers further evidence of the comparative attractiveness of city and country life in the third world. For the last quarter of a century, episodes of mass starvation have centered in the countryside, largely because rural famine is less visible and less dangerous to incumbent political regimes.

Urban sprawl and haphazard development increasingly separate the bulk of the population from the aesthetics and amenities of rural areas, pushing unspoiled or picturesque countryside further from the cities. The encroachment of development on green areas has been a political issue in western Europe and portions of the United States since World War II, largely among the more prosperous urban public. But opinion polls in the United States and political currents in Europe suggest that environmental quality is a serious concern spreading to the larger public.

Virtually all national governments express worries about the countryside and well-being of rural people. But, with the same single exception of agriculture programs, government spending for rural programs rarely matches the rhetoric and, in fact, is diminishing. Rural programs have been a victim of the recent slowing of economic growth in most countries and increasing international awareness of global competitiveness. Rural economies have been inadvertent casualties of economic deregulation, especially in the transportation and communication sectors. They have suffered as a result of privatization and the declining real value of some individual income transfer programs, because government employment and transfer payments have come to be so important in the smaller economies of rural areas. Rural areas have also been the explicit victims of the declining real value or, as in the case of the United States, complete abolition of regional assistance programs.

Purpose

Striking similarities in the very recent economic and political history of rural areas in many developed nations, on the surface at least, suggest that Americans can learn from foreign experiences. Since there are reasonably accessible sources of information, it is possible for Americans to observe and track rural economic conditions and public policies in those countries. We were not interested in exploring those similarities in this symposium. Rather than recapitulating the similarities, the symposium provided an opportunity to step back from the details and seek a broader perspective.

Government action or inaction speaks louder than political words. In the United States, the inescapable inference is that rural areas lack sufficient political clout even to preserve their recent share of federal budget dollars. Looking deeper than recent political history, the symposium was intended to stimulate thinking about underlying attitudes toward rural areas and how those attitudes are reflected in public support and political action on their behalf. Is there genuine, as opposed to thin and ephemeral, public commitment to protecting the countryside and enhancing the well-being of rural people? If so, under what circumstances and at what cost is the public likely to support government policy and program intervention to achieve these ends? What is the public's real (that for which they are willing to pay) interest in rural people, rural communities, and the rural environment? Is it limited, as it sometimes seems, to an indulgent nostalgia, reflected in a willingness to spend generously to preserve the by-now mythical family farm?

The primary purpose of the symposium was to provide participants an opportunity to learn about national values, beliefs, and perceptions regarding rural areas in other countries, and how these and other significant aspects of the social and political systems in these countries affect thinking and policy on rural matters. The focus was on rural territory and people, not just on farmers or the agricultural sector. The invited presentations and discussions addressed the following, as well as other, important subjects: accepted national values and beliefs about the nature and significance of rural areas and rural people; public perceptions of the nature of long-term trends in the rural economy and rural problems; the significance of environmental, recreational, cultural, historical, and other issues that may have significant rural implications; and the political significance of rural-related questions, including the importance of political groups and issues associated especially with rural areas.

Format

A group of 25 American participants listened to knowledgeable people from Denmark, the Council of Europe, France, Japan, and the United Kingdom discuss national perceptions and the political salience of rural areas from their particular perspectives. Participants questioned the speakers and discussed the issues with them in order to refine their understanding. One Canadian scholar also participated, not as an invited speaker, but by sharing observations about Canada and by participating in the discussions that followed the country presentations. The symposium participants are listed in the appendix.

This was not the customary exchange between American and foreign guests. Primarily, it was designed to help the American participants. Discussion of the American situation was very limited, so there was little opportunity for foreign participants to learn much about the United States.

The value of concentrating on other nations was two-fold. It caused us to examine an assumption we are prone to make when we take too quick a look at rural issues in other countries: that people there perceive rural areas and rural problems just as we do, and therefore should measure the appropriateness of their governments' responses just as we do. If that fundamental assumption is incorrect, we need to reconsider our conclusions about what is going on elsewhere in the light of a different understanding. Second, listening to people who are different than those we normally deal with, even if the differences ultimately prove to lie only in syntax, is a good way for us to understand our own country better and perhaps re-examine some of our own assumptions.

This symposium was not conducted under the auspices of any government. Presenters and other participants, including the American participants, participated in a private capacity. The views expressed were those of the participants, not necessarily those of their respective governments.

—*The Editors*

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Numerous people were instrumental in organizing the symposium and publishing this proceedings. Lucy Klakring from the Aspen Institute attended to the many details associated with holding the symposium at Aspen's Wye Woods Conference Center. At Penn State, Tere Shelly-Moody and Elizabeth Specht provided invaluable assistance in organizing the symposium material for publication. Elizabeth, along with Peg Cingle and Ruth Shearer, spent many hours typing the proceedings manuscript. We also wish to thank Evelyn Buckalew and Rita Ciresi of Penn State's Agricultural Information Services staff for their help in editing and publishing this volume.

Some Recent Changes in the Underlying Political Basis of Europe's Rural Policies

by John Bryden

"O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint, Agricolas! Quibus ipsa procul discordibus armis Fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus."

"Ah, blest beyond all bliss the husbandmen, did they but know their happiness! On whom, far from the clash of arms, the most just Earth showers from her bosom a toilless sustenance."

Virgil, *Georgics*, ii 458. 70-19 B.C. Tr. ODQ

"Labourage et Paturage sont les deux mamelles de la France."

Maximilian de Bethune, Duc de Sully, *Memoirs*, c. 1630, cited in *Les mamelles de la France: Agriculture et territoire*, Marie-Elizabeth Chassagne. Editions Galilee, 1979.

"Our fundamental attachment to personal-responsibility farming is marked by the conviction that this kind of farming is irreplaceable, and also by the age-old feeling that the farmer's quasi-carnal relationship with the land must continue."

Francois Guillaume, French Minister of Agriculture, Speech at Brest, 1986. (Author's emphasis)

"On March 30th 1984, when the Council of Ministers of the EEC decided to introduce production quotas for milk, a whole section of the French farmers' world image collapsed."

Hervieu, M. B. (tr. Greavers, R.) *Farming in France, the Paradoxes of a Crisis*. 1988.

"Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God . . . Corruption of morals in the mass of the cultivated is a phenomenon which no age nor nation has furnished an example."

Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, 1781. Cited in Winters (1987)

"In saving agriculture . . . we are saving a way of life in which the features are kindness, freedom and, above all, wisdom. These are the qualities of the countryman and countrywoman."

R. A. Butler, Speech at the British Conservative Party Conference at Llandudno, Wales, 1948. Cited in Self, P. and Storing, H., *The State and Farmer*. Allen and Unwin, 1962.

"We need the farmer as the blood source of the German people; we need him too as the source of our food supply . . . The farmer must always see his activity as a duty towards his race and his people, never as a mere economic, money-spinning operation."

Walther Darre, *Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nordischen Rasse 1926*, cited in Tracy, M., 1982, p. 202. Darre was Hitler's choice to lead a new agrarian cadre within the National Socialist Party in 1930.

"Policy (in 1947 to 1949) was strongly conditioned by the circumstances of the time—world-wide shortage of food, continuation of physical controls and rationing, programming of imports, and a fixed determination to avoid at all costs the postwar slump that so many thought was inevitable and imminent . . . The dominant thought was the need for increased production of food of all kinds almost regardless of cost."

E.M.H. Lloyd, CB CMG, "Some Thoughts on Agricultural Policy," *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. XII, No. 2, February 1957. Lloyd was a former senior civil servant in the British Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food. (Author's emphasis)

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"Postwar Labour party agricultural policy was conditioned by these factors . . . Labour's campaign to win rural seats . . . the crisis in agriculture in the interwar years and resultant rural poverty . . . thirdly, the imposition of agricultural controls and guarantees in both World Wars highlighted the benefits of planned agricultural production."

Andrew Flynn, "Agricultural policy and party politics in postwar Britain," in Cox, G., Lowe, P., and Winter, M. (eds) **Agriculture, People, and Policies**. Allen and Unwin, 1986.

"Agriculture has benefited from significant public support to maintain the incomes of the agricultural population. This type of support is justified by social policy considerations and by concern for the environment, for agriculture can play an important role in the safeguard and maintenance of the countryside."

European Economic Community: **Green Paper on Agriculture**, Summary. July 1985.

"The CAP is therefore at a turning point, particularly as regards the achievement of its social objectives. The old formula of trying to increase incomes by pushing up output is no longer reconcilable with today's economic and financial realities. It is essential to adopt another approach, more oriented to the market, in order to come to terms with the constraints of the present day."

European Economic Community: **Green Paper**, op cit.

"There are two complementary modes of approach (to agriculture and the environment), one concerned with passive protection of the environment . . . the other involving measures to promote cultural practices which actively conserve the rural environment and protect specific sites . . . The first could involve measures to restrict agricultural practices too prejudicial to the environment, and procedures to monitor their enforcement. The second . . . could involve measures to introduce or encourage farming practices compatible with nature conservation."

European Economic Community: **Green Paper**, Summary, op cit.

"In the countryside of the future, agriculture's role will have been much reduced . . . The number of farmers who will earn their living exclusively from the production of food will be much smaller . . . Some will be funded to maintain the populations of remote rural areas; others will be paid to maintain rural landscape through 'staged farming', with farmers acting as resident scene shifters for visitors and tourists; still others will manage the land to bring the visitors in for leisure and recreation—or to keep them out in favour of the preservation of wildlife habitats and the protection of rare species . . ."

Newby, H., "Economic Restructuring and Rural Labour Markets," in Summers, G., Bryden, J., Deavers, K., Newby H., and Sechler, S. **Agriculture and Beyond: Rural Economic Development**. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1987.

"The Commission's approach to rural development is guided by three fundamental considerations: economic and social cohesion, in Community of very pronounced regional diversity; the unavoidable adjustment of farming in Europe to actual circumstances on the markets and the implications of this adjustment not only for farmers and farmworkers but also for the rural economy in general; the protection of the environment and the conservation of the Community's natural assets.

European Economic Community: **The Future of Rural Society**. COM (88) 501 final. September 1988.

Introduction

This paper addresses the changing values underlying public policy towards rural areas in Europe. First, I examine the **rhetoric** of public policy—the words used by politicians to justify or defend public policy in rural areas. Second, I identify the **beliefs and values** which underlie that rhetoric, sometimes reflected in literature, music and art. Third, I address the **economic forces and interests** which may play a special role in policy formation, perhaps even in contradiction with the rhetoric. Fourth, I consider some **current policy changes** in the light of the foregoing. Finally, I examine some areas of **conflict** in current policy formulation and link these conflicts back to the question of values and beliefs.

The method I followed in approaching this subject is that of casual empiricism. I have not grounded the discussion in what Keynes might have regarded as the defunct theories of earlier social scientists, mainly because I do accept Keynes' arguments that time, place and purpose are crucial to the utility or otherwise of social theory, that our task is not so much as to invent new ideas as to escape the old ones which "ramify into every corner of our minds," and that we gain nothing by reducing discourse to some primary lead of abstraction. As Hart says, "Eclecticism pays. We can be serious in our arguments without aping natural science." It is social movements, and their everyday rhetoric, which provide the clues to the restructuring of political values, and ultimately, policies. We build theory for particular circumstances and needs by examining these social changes and their underlying causes, and speculating, first, about the inter-relationships between them. But we recognize that by the time we have worked them out, the ground will have shifted.

The paper, then, is rather more descriptive than analytical. It is speculative rather than definitive. For the sake of argument, let us try to approach the subject in this way, as a discourse, and see what happens.

The basic conclusion of the paper may be very briefly stated. It is that the political and economic basis for rural policy in Europe has changed in a number of important respects in ways which can be explained by the different values that attach to social groups which are of rising political significance on the one hand, and of falling political significance on the other. A major factor has been the very success of the second agrarian revolution—the industrialization of agriculture—which at one and the same time has "solved" the food supply problem, created major shifts in the rural labor market, and led to serious environmental problems [Hart and Bryden, in ms.]. Rhetoric is adapted accordingly. In consequence, shifts are occurring which give greater emphasis, at the level of European Economic Community (EEC) policy-making, to integration of environmental and development objectives, including "stewardship" of natural resources; to solving regional inequalities by addressing structural inadequacies; and to the building of a "single Europe." Most of the tensions which arise are the consequence of the shifting sources of political support for active policies in rural areas. On the one hand, we have the "new rurals" and the urban middle class—dominant consumers and taxpayers—with strong interest in environmental matters, residue-free food and water and the like. On the other we have the farmers and industries upstream and downstream. Somewhere in the middle are the non-agricultural working rural population—a mixture of the old and new—who have been largely neglected by policy in the past. New alliances are being forged between these different interests. On the one hand, this provides positive political and policy opportunities for change, and a challenge to rural interests to build new alliances. On the other hand, there is a considerable danger of yet another round of centrally devised policies which simply reflect an urban middle class "consumption" view of what rural areas ought to be, and provide.

Rhetoric, Beliefs, and Values

The selected quotations given at the start of this paper illustrate some of the main bases of agri-cultural and rural policy in Europe, and the recent changes which have taken place in the rhetoric of policy. In particular, we can identify an ongoing concern with the noble cultivator, translated into the "family farm," or, especially on continental Europe, the "family-worked farm" or "personal responsibility farming." This idea of the noble cultivator is a consistent theme in the history of Western Philosophy, reflected in religious teachings, songs, poetry and literature as well as in political rhetoric. It is the persistence of this idea in political rhetoric which seems to underlie Hervieu's claim, with which I would not wholly concur, that "it is strikingly obvious that policy statements on farming have remained virtually unchanged . . . despite the evolution of the policy context" [Hervieu, 1988].

Mother Earth

The idea of earth as a fundamental element in the structure of being is as old as agriculture. Both paganism and Christianity reflect and use this idea. It is reflected in religious teaching and music, and in literature through the ages. While man's relationship with the "land" or "earth" has particular significance in French literature and rhetoric, the "forest" has perhaps an equivalent role in Germany. It is difficult to escape the view that man's relationship with the landscape is of special concern to the English—shades of Capability Brown, the great landscape gardener.

Food Security

A more pragmatic stance, based on national economic self-interest, emerged strongly in the period immediately following World War II. This emphasized food security, but even then, and after the deprivations of wartime rationing, appeal was made to the image of the noble cultivator and the family farm as foundations of moral and cultural values. Britain had abandoned protection of agriculture in the second half of the 19th century, with the abolition of the Corn Laws. Most of continental Europe, however, had retained protectionist policies. Given the dominant postwar mood of self-sufficiency, and the history of protection in France and Germany in particular, it was not surprising that it was enshrined in the agricultural policies which emerged in the 1960s following the Treaty of Rome. These essentially productionist policies were the backcloth to the Mansholt Plan and the 1972 Directives on European Structural Policy. Also enshrined in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was a particular view about the nature of Commonality required in European policy-making—a view which almost led to the collapse of Europe in the early 1980s due to the inequalities which resulted.

Interpersonal Equity

In parallel with the general social and political concerns of the postwar period, ideas of income parity for farmers, both in relation to other farmers and in relation to other sections of society, were influential. The 1972 structural directives had income parity as one of their objectives. For a time in the 1970s, and in some parts of some EEC member states, this objective seemed feasible. However, since the 1970s, real incomes for agriculture have been declining, the enlargement of the Community has brought many more farmers with low incomes within its fold, and the objective has been gradually watered down. This also reflects changing social values about the feasibility, and even desirability, of attaining equity, in the sense of income equality, by transfer payments from the state.

Regionalization and Geographical Equity

In 1975, the Directive on Mountain and Less Favoured Areas was the first attempt to provide for special regional measures within the CAP. This directive arose from the accession of Britain and Ireland in 1973, and the mountain policies already extant in France and to a lesser extent, Germany. Britain, for instance,

was able to continue payments to hill farmers based on their breeding cattle and sheep numbers which were started in the 1950s, a point which was negotiated during the Treaty of Accession. Mansholt himself came to Scotland in 1971 and gave assurances about EEC support for hill farmers.

Building Europe

This regionalization was further enhanced by the creation of a Regional Fund, also in 1975, and by the so-called Mediterranean package from 1978 on. Further impetus for regionally specific measures arose from the accession of Greece in 1981 and of Spain and Portugal in 1985. More recently, the Single European Act, and the significant shift in emphasis and approach under the leadership of Jacques Delors, has emphasized the need for Europe to pay attention to poorer areas and regions, and to work with local authorities and agencies to develop appropriate policies for rural and regional development as part of the process of "building Europe," a process which most Europeans outside Britain and perhaps Denmark are once again anxious to see progressed. The idea of Europe building, and the values underlying it, is now an important one underlying the emergent rural and regional policies.

The theoretical basis for the Delors position, which reflects a general theory of regional development and underdevelopment which emerged in the postwar period, derives from Myrdal's idea of circular cumulative causation on the one hand and core-periphery and dependency theory on the other. Fundamentally a structuralist position, it lies starkly opposed to the neoclassical position within which regional balance is achieved through resource flows and consequent factor price adjustments. In today's Europe, both theoretical positions are evident, the latter most clearly expressed by Mrs. Thatcher and the monetarist school.

Environment

Environmental questions have also emerged as a vital policy issue. Until 1975, agricultural policy in Europe barely mentioned the environment. Reference was made to it in the Mountain and Less Favoured Areas Directive 75/688, but mainly in relation to the need to keep farming in alpine areas to prevent avalanches and soil erosion. It did not link payments to specific environmental practices. Its limits on stocking rates were global and too crude to control over-grazing in specific environments. Monitoring, and more especially evaluation, as with other EEC policies, has been weak or non-existent. Even in the important alpine case, it is not always too clear if the rules were adequate to achieve the desired result.

The growing environmental problems linked with some modern farming practices, and associated public concern, initially especially in northern Europe, led politicians to take environmental issues more seriously. This was reflected in the 1985 Green Paper. However, it was not until 1987-88 that official documents actually admitted that some farming practices were damaging to the environment and would have to be controlled. Currently there is tension between the "stewardship" view of farming and farmers, assiduously cultivated in recent years by the farming lobby as a rationale for agricultural support, and the view that many farming practices, far from protecting and stewarding the environment, are leading to permanent damage not only to the soil, but human health and the oceans. Both views are reflected in the recent EEC papers on Agriculture and the Environment and the Future of Rural Society. The idea of "stewardship" is not new, and it is the case that particular combinations of social reproduction and long time horizons in agrarian communities do exist—but not always—which give rise to good "stewardship." In this sense the concept of "stewardship" seems to come very close to some of the ideas of "sustainable" agriculture of land use, which are of increasing interest on both sides of the Atlantic.

On the one hand, cultivators have a moral duty not to destroy that which they cultivate, a policy which in most cases is in their economic interest. On the other hand, there is a duty on the state not to give, through policy, incorrect "signals" which influence cultivation or grazing practices in environmentally undesirable directions. Finally, there is the point that non-agrarian interests have an interest in land use and food

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production, and rights to some say in what public "goods" or "bads" should or should not be produced or encouraged by policy measures.

Economic Values

Economic values do not nowadays surface much in the rhetoric, with the possible exception of Britain where economic individualism and the values of individual self-interest and entrepreneurship have been so much a part of the philosophy of the new political right under Mrs. Thatcher. However, in the past, the economic contribution of rural areas through agriculture and primary production to the balance of payments, to economic self-sufficiency, and to growth have been highlighted.

To sum up, it seems to me that the rhetoric does reflect less and less the role of the farmer and rural areas, as food producers, and more and more their role in preserving environmental and landscape "public goods" for consumption by the urban middle classes. Finally, the search for equality between farmers, reflected in the income parity questions enshrined in the first structural directives, has been dropped in favor of an emphasis on solving regional inequalities which reflect much more than agricultural incomes, and which require solutions which do not increase food production. This latter point has been much emphasized in the past three years with the emphasis of the Delors Commission on the Single European Act and Europe-building.

Economic and Social Changes and Rural Policy

Let me now consider some of the economic changes which lie behind both the changing rhetoric and the emerging policy framework in Europe.

Agriculture

I shall start with the awkward and contradictory problem of agricultural policy in Europe. Two key points seem clear. First of all, priority can no longer be on increasing agricultural output. On the contrary, emphasis is being placed on the release of land from agricultural production ("set-aside") and on the "extensification" of land-use. In the past year we have seen agreement on mandatory schemes for both set-aside and extensification within the EEC. Secondly, there is a clear recognition that agricultural prices can no longer be considered as the 'garters' of farm incomes. We have seen agreement on stabilizers for major commodities, which imply that price reductions will occur if standard quantities of production are exceeded. However, the "decoupling" of income support from the commodity price question is also now recognized as being impractical within the European political and financial context. The Commissions's proposals for income support, originally closely tied to their proposals for prices, stabilizers, and early retirement, may have been revised, but the chances of agreement on anything like an effective scheme are minimal, and the original link to the proposals for prices and stabilizers has been broken. The agreements of the GATT Uruguay Round and the Toronto Summit and recent negotiations with the Cairns group of free-traders mean that, in addition to the internal pressure to control agricultural spending and divert resources to tackle economic and social problems in the poorest areas, international pressure to reduce support levels (i.e., prices) for agricultural commodities will continue. These seem to be the more visible "objective facts," rather widely accepted, which underlie the current concerns of policymakers in Brussels.

It follows that, to the extent that European agricultural policy is about giving farm families some reasonable parity of income and living standards with the rest of the population, pluriactivity and the diversification of rural areas have to be pushed as far and as fast as they can.

Having said that, it is also clear that the introduction of environmental constraints to agricultural production will affect relative competitiveness in international markets. This argues that the reduction

of protection will be constrained (both internally within a trade bloc such as EEC Europe or Canada and the U.S. under the proposed trade agreement) unless such environmental measures are somehow conceived and implemented in parallel.

Rural Labor Markets

The second contextual change concerns labor market shifts which affect both the real cost to society of labor used in farming and the wider opportunities for farm families and rural people. Relatively high levels of unemployment in Europe (more than 16 million in the Community of 12), which seem generally persistent, mean that the opportunity cost of labor used on farms is consistently low, that parity of incomes is no longer a feasible scenario, and that innovations which lead to the loss of labor on farms can no longer be socially justified (i.e., justify social support).¹ As an adjunct, the rising social cost of unemployment, and unemployment and low incomes in urban areas does mean that there is political interest in "keeping people" in rural areas. Whatever the moral and political justifications for this, it does mean that political support for job creation and maintenance in rural areas, particularly if it can be held not to be environmentally damaging, is likely to grow.

On the other hand, while it is clear that much labor has been lost from European farms over the past two decades, non-agricultural rural labor markets have, at least in some cases, been fairly buoyant. In the 1970s, many rural areas in Europe experienced a growth in jobs in manufacturing and craft industries. Northeastern Italy is perhaps best documented, but it also happened in Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, and elsewhere. In the 1980s this has, in some parts, persisted, but to a much smaller extent. Nevertheless, certain service sectors have grown in many rural areas during the 1980s, and it is to the service sectors that most rural people now look for employment and livelihood and will continue to look in the future. In many cases, this growth of new employment has gone hand in hand with inward migration to rural areas, which stands in stark contrast with the rhetoric surrounding depopulation and desertification which underpinned much thinking about rural policy in the 1960s and 1970s. That is not, of course, to say that depopulation and imbalanced age structures are not still a problem in some areas. They are. But these tend now to be exceptions rather than the rule. The economic forces here have to do with the high real costs of urban living, choices of entrepreneurs, levels of prosperity and the income elasticities for services and leisure, the nature of rural labor forces, opportunities for indigenous development, improved infrastructure, increasingly rootless manufacturing processes and, in some cases, services, and relatively high levels of urban unemployment.

Environment

The third, related, contextual change is the increasing public concern over the loss of environmental and landscape "value," and the recognition that rural people are, for better or worse, the guardians for these "public goods." The twin principles of "polluter pays" and "payment for production of public goods" are increasingly considered as legitimate principles to apply in the agricultural and rural world. By and large, environmental interest groups are strongest amongst the urban and suburban middle class, articulate and relatively prosperous. They serve to draw the attention of urban people, the media, and politicians to rural areas; but, on the other hand, they are not always sensitive to the needs and constraints of rural people on whom, in the last analysis, they must mainly rely for implementation on the ground.²

Industries Upstream and Downstream From Agriculture

The degree of concentration in the supply and marketing industries associated with agriculture has increased, and supply and marketing is increasingly integrated and linked to services such as advice, record keeping, and analysis. The interests of this sector seem to remain with relatively intense production on relatively large units. Naturally enough, they are not very interested in low-input production, or direct

marketing. These interests often conflict with environmental and rural development interests, although they may coincide over the need to erode support prices and systems which keep the costs of their primary product inputs high.

Economic Interests

It is important to recognize the nature and extent of economic interests with respect to rural issues, and their key role in determining the development of policy. We can examine the economic interests of three core groups—producers, consumers, and taxpayers. Producers divide into agricultural producers, those upstream and downstream from agriculture, and those whose main connection with agriculture lies in its impact on the real cost of wages (the “Classical” wages function). Agricultural producers are interested in maintaining protection of agricultural commodities, but represent a small and diminishing proportion of the electorate. The power of their “lobby” tends to be exaggerated in the 1980s—to work it requires other allies, and these are increasingly hard to locate outside parts of the agri-industrial complex, which, however, sometimes have contradictory stances. At the same time, the significance of wages in costs of production of other goods and services has diminished steadily, as has the proportion of food in total consumer expenditure. So, the “Classical” relationship between food costs and industrial competitiveness is much weakened. Nevertheless, consumers demand new things of rural areas—rest and recreation, better “quality” food, clean air, and so on. Taken overall, then, the total influence of “rural” consumption expenditure on the real cost of wages may still be significant. Taking new rural manufacturing and service industries, a significant part of their decision to invest seems to relate to the physical environment, the nature of social and economic infrastructure, and the characteristics of the labor force. Their economic interests seem to coincide, on the whole, with the “new rurals.”

Consumer and taxpayer interests seem to coincide in wanting less costly food, and a less costly agricultural support system. These interests are vocal, middle class, urban based, and in general accord with environmental values. For example, the recent National Consumer Council (UK) survey in the 12 EEC member states indicated broad consumer agreement that “once the Common Agricultural Policy takes into account the protection of the environment and the balance of nature, it can be supported.” This alliance of interests is of growing significance in Europe, and represents a “consumption” view of rural areas which reflects real shifts in personal expenditure patterns and lifestyles as well as the realities of the costs of agricultural support.

Other Social Changes

Finally, there are one or two broader social changes which are having noticeable effects on agriculture, farm families, and rural areas. These include women and family members desiring to work beyond the confines of the farm and household, changing inheritance practices, and changing lifestyles and expectations. Our understanding of the role and function of farm household pluriactivity, rural diversification and the like must take these important changes into account. We think, for instance, that pluriactivity is an economic form which facilitates new patterns in each of these dimensions [see especially Bryden and Fuller, 1988].

Political and Policy Outcomes

The new pattern of economic interests means that rural support and rural programs must draw upon wider interest groups. Farmers’ increasingly recognize the need for allies in other social groups, which means that their policy demands must be appropriately adapted. The demands of these other groups are diverse and not necessarily, or even commonly, consistent or agreed upon. But there does seem to be a new search for such agreement and consistency. They include demands for

- a. non-agricultural jobs—and increasingly for better jobs—in rural areas
- b. more equal infrastructure of an economic and social character
- c. genuine opportunities to stay in their home area and not be penalized for it
- d. environmental protection and enhancement
- e. recreational and educational opportunities
- f. participation

These demands suggest that as political support for agricultural measures, which can be held to reduce employment, increase production, or damage the environment, is likely to continue to diminish rapidly, political support for other aspects of rural development and environmental measures could be creatively tapped to provide alternative and perhaps even better sources of income and employment.

A number of writers have argued that at least some of these demands are expressed through coherent new social movements in Europe [see, for instance, discussions by Friedmann and Bryden, in Bassand, Brugger, Bryden, Friedmann and Stuckey, 1986; Bryden, 1985; Friberg, 1988; Kriesi, 1985; and Kriesi, 1988]. Kriesi in particular identifies values of autonomy, decentralization, grass-roots democracy, integration, and material modesty at the core of these new forms of potential mobilization [Kriesi, 1985].

The gradual formation of new alliances and the growth of new social movements has implications for territorial and functional organization of the state. The practice of leaving agricultural policy-making to agricultural interests in collusion with agricultural ministries has been challenged, even if not entirely replaced by anything more coherent. Consumer interests, environmental interests, and the interests of the majority of the rural population—now largely unconnected to agriculture—are fighting for legitimization and participation in the policy-making process. The functional organization of policy-making within sectors reflected a particular era which is now rapidly passing. This type of organization favored centralized negotiating structures and a lack of intrasectorial coordination and cooperation at local levels. But the highly local character of new development opportunities, environmental problems and constraints, and the need for agricultural interests to recognize the rights and desires of non-agricultural members of the rural population, on the contrary, highlights the need for local action and local formulation of policy demands. This suggests a growing role for local and regional organization in the actual articulation and implementation of environmental and development programs, and a diminishing role in this regard for the central state and centralized “representative” organizations. Similarly, it surely implies the need for considerable flexibility in new structural measures to accommodate the wide range of rural reality across Europe today and in the future.

It would, nevertheless, be foolish to deny that most important material interests are “located” in urban areas. Middle-class consumers and taxpayers, and environmental and recreational interest groups, are predominately urban based, and represent a powerful, articulate, and increasingly cohesive group. Their interests do not favor decentralization and local democracy, and represent a “tension” in policy-making which must be reckoned with.

At the European level, one must be aware of the significance of potential developments towards political union for all of these issues, as Spinelli foresaw. There is wide agreement in Europe that 1992 will bring an inevitable shift in power from national governments to the European level. There is also wide agreement that such a shift needs to be accompanied by greater democratic control of central powers at the European level. Finally, there is a growing recognition that this growth in central powers needs to be counterbalanced by an increase in local and regional democracy, in order to preserve the cultural diversity of Europe, to involve people in responsibility for their own future within the European frame, and to maintain the integrity of Europe. These two forces, in turn, could reduce the significance of national governments, a process which is, on reflection, quite logical and consistent with the European ideals. Once again, however, it is not entirely clear how economic interests will “vote” on the central issue of local democracy.

In fact, the whole issue of economic and political integration and its reinvigoration by the Delors

Commission represents a further important contextual change. The next four years, a period which happily coincides with our research program on rural change in Europe, will see great progress towards economic integration, including, as part of that process, implementation of the reforms of CAP and the Regional and Social Funds referred to earlier. These are but part of the measures to be undertaken under the Delors proposals to implement the Single European Act by 1992, by which point it is hoped to have substantially removed the remaining tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods and services and movements of capital and labor within the EEC. This is a momentous prospect with considerable economic and political consequences for both Europe and the world at large.

It is accepted that this further process of European integration will lead to further structural imbalances. The obvious danger is that countries, regions, and individuals which are already economically and socially advantaged will receive further economic impetus, at the expense of weaker regions, countries, and individuals, through effective access to larger markets. To counter this, Delors argues, Europe needs to reform its structural and social policies and act collectively, in the period to 1992, to strengthen weaker regions. This had led to the recent agreements to double the size of the "Structural Funds" (the Agricultural Structures Fund, the Regional Fund and the Social Fund) and to focus the efforts of these funds on structurally disadvantaged areas and declining industrial regions.

Let me now briefly examine this policy response to the changing economic, social, and political context.³ In the present context, the reform of the structural funds means that relatively more resources will be put into poorer rural areas and, within these areas, into integrated programs. These poor areas are particularly concentrated in Southern Europe. In so far as programs remain which are directed at farmers, these will encourage such things as early retirement; the set-aside of agricultural land; the extensification of production; the undertaking of environmental measures; and diversification into tourism, crafts, forestry, and other activities. There will be little left of the "old" structural measures encouraging enlargement, amalgamation, reorganization, and the like, except possibly within the context of the integrated regional programmes where such actions can be justified at a local level.

The sum and substance of these changes in structural policy as they affect rural areas (and one must remember that although the budget for structural measures within the EEC is increasing, it still remains very small in relative terms) is precisely that there will be more support for diversification of the rural economy and of farm household income sources and for environmental and conservation measures, and less support for measures that could be regarded as directly agricultural, or likely to increase or stimulate production of agricultural commodities.

The fact that environment, diversification, and pluriactivity have been raised to the political agenda surely reflects the changing values underlying rural policy and the real economic forces of rural restructuring as well. The fact that these are clear inter-relationships between economic and political forces is very important because it underpins a kind of explanation of change which can be framed in some kind of Political Economy rather than in wishful thinking or in the admonitions of economists. Nevertheless, the apparent coincidence of some key economic and social forces should not mislead us. There remain important areas of conflict and disagreement. These may become clearer as the new policies take effect.

Areas of Conflict in Rural Policy-Making

One should not forget that in an imperfectly democratic world, lobbies representing interest groups flourish, often beyond the real economic and social forces which gave them their strength have disappeared or altered beyond recognition. Strong lobbies still exist with vested interests in the traditional patterns of agrarian and rural support. The German Farmer's Union, the French Farmer's Union, and the British Farmers Unions seek to maintain a united front on issues which are in fact increasingly divisive. They take advantage of the fact that the existing policies and their impacts are known and certain, whereas

those of new policies are not. A support price is one thing; an aid for diversification into uncertain products and markets quite another. By and large, the unions representing larger farmers defend the status quo, relying on supply (no longer too certain) from agricultural industries, landowners, and sections of the scientific and administrative establishment. The values they espouse are "family farming" (while avoiding "family-worked farms"), "professionalism," "full-time farming," and "technical efficiency."

Increasingly, however, European farmers' representation is split rather than unified. In Germany there is a "Part-time Farmers Union," in France the "Paysanne-Ouvriers," in Britain the Scottish Crofters Union and the Small Farmers Association. In Italy the split is ostensibly on political lines. Quite different attitudes emerge from these groups on proposals for differentiation of price and structural policies, encouragement of diversification and pluriactivity, environmental measures, and afforestation. These differences will lead to conflicts as real shifts in resources from one kind of policy to another occur.

Most farmers are worried about the tendency to regard them as "scene shifters," to use Howard Newby's classic phrase, or landscape gardeners, rather than food producers. Their attitudes have sometimes been hardened by a generation of conservationists who adopted a somewhat arrogant and patronizing stance. The division of "conservation" from "development" has not been a productive one. The tendency to designate areas for special attention, measures and, increasingly, income supports is now being questioned. Ideas of "sustainable rural development" offer some hope that questions of ecological balance and self-sustaining rural development somehow can be married to produce more constructive and holistic approaches. Meantime conflicts will remain and may even intensify as resources are shifted into this area.

The role of "outsiders" and "insiders" is another area of conflict. Especially in highly centralized societies like Britain and France, urban people have substantial influence on rural policy. The nature of environmental interest groups reinforces this phenomenon. This fact rests uneasily alongside aspirations for greater democratic control and participation on the part of rural people. On the face of it, the reorientation of the EEC's rural policies gives greater room for local people to influence their content and implementation. However, those who pay the piper, or who have better access to the piper, will still wish to exert considerable influence.

Social change in rural areas has brought new divisions within rural society, sometimes referred to in England as the "new" and the "old" village. The two poles of rural society have different perceptions of rural life and rural development. They are in different positions to benefit from new opportunities or to suffer from new constraints. Their political stances may be quite different on many issues like new house building, subsidized transport, education, and training. Newby has referred to the potential dangers of control of local politics by the new rural bourgeoisie, especially a drawing up of rural drawbridges against change and development [Newby, 1984].

The emphasis on diversification, especially into non-agricultural ventures on farms, will have regional and inter-farm impacts that will differ from those which arose when emphasis was on food production. Tenant farmers will be less well placed than owner occupiers. Tourist regions, and regions within urban catchments may be better placed to take advantage. New inequalities will emerge which will result in new divisions and conflicts—not necessarily better or worse than previous ones, but different nevertheless.

At the European scale, we have to grapple with the problem that deprivation is, as Runciman pointed out, a relative concept. People in rural Bavaria feel deprived in relation to their urban peers; people from Greece and Southern Italy view them as highly privileged. Allocation of resources on the basis of gross domestic product per capita ignores this point.

We also have to grapple with the fact that the rhetoric and values underlying policy have a different strength in different European countries and even regions. Since most European policy measures demand regional and/or national counterpart funding, this difference can create problems. For example, environmental questions are most important in Northern Europe, where there is relatively greater political support for environmental measures. This explains why Germany, Holland, Denmark, and the United Kingdom in particular are somewhat advanced in developing positive financial inducements for

environmental measures on farms. They are thus better placed to take advantage of EEC budgetary allocations for such purposes. It is not yet clear whether such aids might have, in some cases, significant effects on the conditions of competition, but the fear must be there.

Increasingly, measures are aimed at environmental enhancement and regeneration. Again the common practice of designating areas means that the advantages of such programs tend to be greatest within designated areas, although there is a growing body of opinion that holds that such designation is not in the best interests either of good environmental practice or of sustainable rural development. Inequalities of treatment will arise. The designation approach relies heavily on the emphasis on "landscape" and other criteria which have little to do either with the needs of rural people or with the degree of environmental damage. It creates additional market distortions in the prices of land and property. It ignores the need for good environmental practice everywhere, and not just in selected places. In this context, ideas of sustainable agriculture and rural development are important.

The scope for non-agricultural activities in rural areas also will vary enormously. Areas with advanced communications infrastructure and high levels of education and training may be the best places to take advantage of prospective labor market shifts.

For whatever reasons, it is clear that there will be an uneven distribution of policy benefits. Some farm households in some rural areas will be better placed than others to take advantage of environmental, pluriactivity, and diversification policies. On the other hand, some geographical areas will have more favorable conditions for non-agricultural development. This unevenness may partly have a deliberate component, as for example in "designated areas" for environmental policies, but it will also have an unintended component, partly because it is difficult at any level to make policy to fit every individual and local or regional circumstance. These problems would be sharply aggravated if rigid and centrally devised programs were to be adopted as the policy response. Fortunately it does not look as if this will be the case, and we are seeing the willingness to encourage local participation in the development of local programs under the Delors Proposals.

Before closing this discussion of emerging conflicts, I would like to emphasize the following points at the European level:

- The coincidence of important economic and political interests give a new impetus and a new slant to European rural policies. New problems will undoubtedly emerge on the top of old conflicts. Some key areas concern environment, pluriactivity, and rural diversification.
- As with most policies, measures to stimulate positive environmental practice, pluriactivity, and diversification will affect different people, and different regions, differently. Some will be better placed to gain than others.
- A sound European policy is likely to build upon those elements which can be generalized, while at the same time providing flexibility and sensitivity to deal with highly specific and localized constraints and opportunities. Our research program on structural change and farm household pluriactivity, conceived and implemented on a pan-European collaborative basis, will contribute to these new generalizations, but undoubtedly also suggest their limitations and highlight the range of policies and approaches needed in different circumstances. The articulation between pan-European policies and regional and local policies and actions is thus likely to become a crucial issue which highlights not just administrative and constitutional problems, but also potential conflicts over the "rules of competition."
- Some countries have been more successful than others in creating such a bipolar policy framework. Political circumstances in Europe—especially the need to build solidarity and tackle regional problems as they emerge as a result of closer economic integration—favor more sensitivity to local and regional needs and circumstances. The paper on "The Future of Rural Society" (Commission of the European Communities) reflects this notion. Europe needs to be very successful if the political hopes for 1992 and beyond are not to be damaged by uneven and unequal development and agrarian crisis.

In Britain the interests behind any revival of political interest in rural issues are not only urban, but also currently based on a strong political philosophy of economic individualism and minimal government intervention. One could not hold that Europe-building is popular in Mrs. Thatcher's Britain; access to markets, yes, but solidarity on social issues such as coping with the consequences of free markets, certainly not! The basic insularity and "little Englandism" which reared its ugly head after Mrs. Thatcher's speech in Bruges on September 20, 1988, is compounded by a massive ignorance of European issues in Britain. Although it must be said that there are advantages in rural policy from the demolition, yet one cannot be overly optimistic about the outcome for British rural policy of the current mix of political values in that country. Withdrawal of government all too often means the centralization of essential infrastructure and services; economic individualism means backing financial success and too much stress on the individual entrepreneur in his market activities; environmentalism means satisfying an essentially urban demand for "unspoilt" rural environments for recreation and relaxation, and a concentration of "environmental" effort in highly selected or targeted geographical areas ("designated areas" of one kind and another) where the impact on large-scale commercial agriculture and on votes will be minimal. The British interest in the new European rural policies will be minimal, and its stance generally negative.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this paper can be briefly stated. In the first place, the view of rural life, and specifically the farming life, as innately superior to urban life has been expressed throughout the ages in various ways by Western, and especially Northwestern, literature and philosophy. At times, this view has been promoted by political forces at the extreme right of the spectrum, as for example in the Nazi "Blut and Boden" (Blood and Soil) slogan. In the second place, ideas of food security have depended upon both access to overseas food supplies—availability or reliable sea transport, access to dominions and colonies—and the recency of war. In the third place, environmental values have followed the second agrarian revolution which, through the application of artificial fertilizers, chemical weed control, and machines, both "solved" the food problem and created new environmental and rural labor market problems and the growing urban middle class with leisure time and interests in new lifestyles. In the fourth place, in Europe today there is a phase of Europe-building, a resurgence of the belief in a Single Europe. This is less important in Britain. Finally, material values must remain as a key determinant of policy, although these are sometimes cloaked in other values. In Britain today, material values relating to economic individualism are more overt and pervasive than in other European countries.

What happens to the rural population, through policy or the lack of it, is the result of the coincidence or otherwise of some or all of these forces. The economic interests of European farmers today are less and less significant in political terms. The notion that farmers' lobbies have been the most successful is somewhat overplayed in the 1980s. We should remember that even in late 19th century Britain, when democracy was even less developed, when the agricultural population was some six times as significant numerically as it is today, when the power of the landed class was certainly more obvious, "a large part of British agriculture was virtually ruined and little was done to help it" (Tracy 1982). More significant are the industries upstream and downstream from agriculture, and the extent to which their interests are seen to be consistent with those of the farming lobbies. In Europe these lobbies are not as transparent as they seem to be in North America, but we know that they exist and roughly where their interests lie. The economic interests of consumers, on the other hand, have been growing, and their demand is for both cheaper and better "quality" food and access to other rural "products" including leisure and recreation. Taxpayers also have been vocal: agriculture must cost less in fiscal terms, and rural areas would be better helped in other ways which would cost less, produce more public "goods," and less public "bads."

In fact there is a growing coincidence of interests between consumers, taxpayers, and environmentalists,

which are predominately reflecting the view of a growing, articulate urban middle class which does not necessarily coincide with traditional divisions in political parties and which, therefore, must be courted by all. This alliance is far more significant politically today than ever before. It is nevertheless frequently rather ignorant of real conditions in rural areas and of processes of rural development. The challenge is to capture the positive political and policy opportunities for change which it opens up without stepping into another round of centrally devised policies that simply reflect an urban "consumption" view of what rural areas ought to be: essentially selfish, essentially romantic, essentially backward—rather than forward-looking. Rural people often do have values which appear to differ from urban people, especially those of the urban middle class. Especially in poorer rural areas, solidarity and neighbourliness, helping those in need, taking people as they are rather than judging them by how much they possess, and other collective human values are often noted. Rural policies which rely on individualism and a narrow view of entrepreneurship as their only foundation miss the essential point that it is collective and human values, and their contradiction to economic individualism, that have kept many rural areas alive in adversity. Rural policies that rely on a narrow view of environmental or landscape conservation run the danger also of turning the countryside into a permanent museum, a place of the past rather than the future, a place for urban recreation rather than a rural society. The only safeguard lies in a further development of democratic practice. Rural people must participate more in the determination of their own future. However, it is not easy to see the alignment of economic interests on this point.

Whether or not this occurs, we must explore the areas of potential alliance between different emergent social groups and movements—between rural and urban, between new rural and old rural, between consumer and taxpayer, between farmer and environmentalist—and analyze those "values" which can be negotiated as part of such alliances, and those which cannot. The kind of framework which we might use for this is crudely outlined in Table 1, from which we might conclude that potential for policy-building, with possible support from existing and new economic interest groups in modern industrial society, is most likely to exist in the following fields: stewardship/sustainable land use practices; regional equality in public and private services and social provision (social and economic infrastructure); and new employment and income sources outside agriculture.⁴

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Endnotes

1. This does sometimes seem a difficult message for policymakers to receive.
2. Albeit, of course, with the help of policy.
3. For more detail on the Delors Proposals within the context of the Single European Act, see Bryden, 1987; Bryden and Fuller, 1988; Bryden 1988 (a) and 1988 (b).
4. As a result of a helpful and erudite summing up by Jim Bonnen at the Wye seminar, I have added a few "values" to this table.

TABLE 1

**The Relative Importance of Values Underlying Rural Policy
in Groups of Rising and Falling Political Significance
in "Advanced" Industrialized Societies.**

VALUES	SOCIAL GROUPS/ECONOMIC INTERESTS	
	Of Falling Political Significance	Of Rising Political Significance
Agrarian Fundamentalism	****	
Cheap Food	***	
Free Trade	***	
Inter-personal Equality	***	
Community	*	
Progress/Growth	*	
Food Security	**	
Power/Democracy	*	**
Stability	*	
Pastoralism/Rural life	*	*****
Stewardship	*	*****
Environment		*****
Healthy Living		***
Inter-regional Equity	*	***
Economic Individualism	**	**

The above table is not intended either to be comprehensive or definitive. It is rather a tentative assessment of which values seem to be more, or less, important to different groups, these groups being divided into those which appear to be, politically speaking, ascendant or descendant. Groups in descent I have taken as farmers, agri-industry, manufacturing industry, and labor unions; those in ascent I have taken as new rurals, urban middle class, those connected with financial and other service industries. By examining which values, expressed in these very rough and ready terms, are present in both groups we can see where the greatest scope for alliances in building new rural policies exists.

“Pillage et Gaspillage sont les deux mamelles de la Société de Consommation” Chinese Proverb, cited in Marie-Elizabeth Chassagne, *op cit*.

“The miracle to be wrought is the creation of a rural civilization . . . I believe that those who live on the land have a deeper life than those who live in the towns . . . The rural reformer who starts his work with the idea that those who labour on the land are, by nature of their avocation, less capable than city folk of moulding life nobly and greatly, are unjust to them and will achieve little. Indeed it is with the people who live on the land, who are bathed continually in sunlight and pure air, who are close to Mother Nature, that the future and hope of humanity lies.” George William Russell (AE), *Co-operation and Nationality*, pp. 7 and 102. 1912. Cited by Tracy, M. *People and Policies in Rural Development*. The Arkleton Trust, 1982.

“We in Europe have already started on the path of reform. The problem is to make these reforms in a way and at a pace which will not destroy the fabric of our rural society. High unemployment means that we have no alternative jobs for our farmers and farm workers to go to. In Europe the small and medium-sized family farm . . . must be protected for social and environmental reasons.” Frans Andriesson, EC Commissioner for Agriculture and presently Deputy-President, in an article for *The London Times*, March 18, 1986.

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The Sacred Cows of Agriculture

by Ulrich Bohner

Introduction

May I tell you how pleased I was to read in the paper about the Aspen Institute and Wye Woods Conference Center. In some way these facilities go back to Goethe's ideas about the search for better harmony between man and nature. This fact establishes a close link with Strasbourg, the city where the Council of Europe was established 40 years ago, and where I work, as this favorite German poet and writer who lived about 200 years ago used to study in this town, and to ride across the countryside. I am all the more pleased to find his ideas here again, as they correspond to the present-day objectives of the Council of Europe, in particular in the fields of the development of the countryside and the protection and management of the environment.

I am also pleased to have been invited to the United States. We had very close relations with the United States during my youth and childhood, because of the many American soldiers living in the area of West Germany where I come from. Indeed, at that time, many of us felt that we were, in some way, a part of the "American dream."

But let me say a few words about the Council of Europe, which is the 21-member country organization¹ based in Strasbourg, and which covers nearly all Western European democracies, and includes about 410 million people. After having organized various campaigns, about nature protection in 1970, architectural heritage in 1975, and urban renaissance in 1980-82, the Council of Europe became aware that one of the major assets at the end of our century will be the future of rural areas or rural societies, and that is why this intergovernmental organization decided to run during 1987 and 1988 the European Campaign for the Countryside, that has now come to an end.

The main objective of the European Campaign for the Countryside was to foster the development of rural areas through a determination to guarantee the continuity and preservation of the qualities of these areas for future generations. The work, done by the International Organizing and Steering Committee for the Campaign, and the National Committees, has prepared the ground for a strategy intended to strengthen the economic and social tissue of European rural areas. Conferences, colloquies, and seminars, as well as the different studies and demonstration projects, have revealed that the problems of rural areas present multiple aspects that are turned into societal problems which concern all citizens, whether they live in the countryside or in towns. To take into account the various aspects of rural areas, a global view and a pluri-disciplinary approach are indispensable.

With a view to a new rurality, in accordance with the image of the 21st century civilization, the conclusions of the Campaign have been centered around six main aspects:

1. integrated development of the countryside
2. balanced development of agriculture
3. diversification of activities and creation of jobs in the countryside
4. infrastructures and services in the rural environment
5. changes in social and family structures and consequences for the rural environment
6. increasing awareness of the problems of the countryside, particularly through the extension of the town-country dialogue

Ideologies in Agriculture

I don't think it would be useful to list for you the conclusions of this campaign. I have rather tried to bring together a few basic ideas which I have called the "sacred cows" of agriculture, because it seems to me they were in a way underlying most of the agricultural and, as it were, rural policy during the last decades, if not the last century. I have tried to put a few of these on paper. I must, of course, make it clear that this is a rather personal approach, sometimes a bit provocative, and that it does not necessarily reflect the views of the Council of Europe as such, nor those of the International Organizing Committee of the Campaign. I have the impression, however, that it is necessary to get rid of these ideologies, or "sacred cows," in order to be able to carry through or to develop further most of the ideas or solutions that have been elaborated and widely circulated through the European Campaign for the Countryside.

The first of these basic ideologies is that agriculture and rural areas and countryside are all the same thing. That may have been so one or two centuries ago, but not today. Therefore, the idea that rural policies are different from agricultural policies finds its way now into European agricultural policies, as well at the national level, especially in the European Economic Community (EEC) countries and West Germany. Inside the EEC there is not much room left for autonomous agricultural policy at the national level. When these countries want to act, they have to act inside the agricultural framework set by the EEC, but then try to develop other forms of policy in which they have some possibilities for autonomous action. That is why, in the brochure that was edited last year by the federal government, which is called "Facts About Germany," it is said about national agricultural policy: "With most of the powers now delegated to the EEC, few areas of responsibility remain for national agricultural policy."² They include agricultural structure and social security policy—but regional, tax, and environmental policy are also important focal areas. The top priority aim is to preserve the greatest possible number of efficient family farms. Well, of course, the greatest possible number of farms may be a very low number, if we look at the few statistical data which are appended. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the number of farms is now 680,000; in 1950 it was still 1,650,000, and the diminution in 1987 was 3.8 percent. There is no reason why this development should not continue. It is a very difficult situation.

In "Facts About Germany," it is said furthermore that "the mixture of full- and part-time farming is to be retained. In this way an important contribution can be made to promoting living conditions and development of rural regions and preserving the agricultural and recreational landscape, reducing environmental burdens, and improving protection of the right of natural resources." Again, let's turn back to the figures. Although part-time farming has not been one of the official goals of at least the EEC agricultural policy, and very often not of national policies, in the Federal Republic of Germany, 50 percent of the farms are part-time farms, part-time farming being defined as families that draw less than 50 percent of their income out of agriculture. If we took into consideration families that draw 60 or 65 percent of their income out of agriculture also, these figures would rise much higher. But even so, in some regions which we had the occasion to visit, there is much more part-time farming in the present situation, up to 70-80 percent in certain regions.

But the official policies also are intended to stop the trend towards farming operations on an industrial scale. It is quite clear that the official agricultural policy in Germany is opposed to big industrial farms and promotes the idea of the family farm. It is stated that the "government support gives priority to the family farm. It includes subsidies to the social security of farmers and their families, income support in underprivileged areas, and support for young farmers. The main thrust of support beyond the individual farm is in village renovation, land consolidation, and water management." We also must take into consideration that land consolidation and water management have often been opposed, at least in the past, to environmental interests because land consolidation or, as it is called in Germany, the "land cleaning process" (*Flurbereinigung*), very often leads to bigger farms, and also to important losses in the

environment. So did water management programs, to the extent that now many German Laender have introduced new costly programs to try to bring back the water courses more or less to their former natural state. There has been a lot of concrete put into even very small water courses before, and an enormous amount of money is spent to bring them back into the natural state.

But the main idea was that there is growing consciousness that rural areas are much more than just agriculture. This is one of the basic ideas underlying the European Campaign for the Countryside. It has also been reflected at the EEC level by the report "on the future of rural society"³ of the Commission of the Community, which follows a pluri-disciplinary approach, as suggested in the Council of Europe for the European Campaign for the Countryside.

The second element, the second sacred cow, is that agriculture is the dominating factor in rural economy. This, of course, is less and less true because there are other economic factors, even in the rural areas, which have to replace agriculture because of the diminishing labor force: e.g., the employment diminution in the Federal Republic of Germany from 1970 to 1985 in agriculture was at 41 percent. The facts are quite clear, and **therefore one cannot pretend anymore that agriculture is the main employer in rural areas [sacred cow 3]. Furthermore, farmers were convinced and helped to disseminate the idea that they were the majority in rural areas and villages [sacred cow 4].** This isn't the case anymore, in most of the German villages at least. This may still be the case in some Southern European countries, but it certainly isn't the case in Germany. In a country like Luxembourg, I have even seen many villages without many farmers at all. That means that we have a difficult adaptation process, because the farmers that used to dominate local policies in rural areas have to undergo a difficult adaptation process: they have to find new allies in the villages. This is not only the case in the rural areas that are very close to big conurbations; this is also the case in remote and peripheral rural areas, and also in the intermediate areas, where many people do live in the countryside.

Although today, 80 to 85 percent of the land is still in the hands of the farmers, this situation does not, in a democracy, give them a key role in local politics. This situation is also subject to many threats like agricultural debt and the increasing mortgage; off-soil agricultural production; increasing leisure demand of city dwellers, especially in densely populated areas like Germany; and including the request for second homes, the enormous land area consumed by transportation infrastructures, the difficulties facing young farmers in establishing their farming operations, the "set-aside," and others.

Many farmers, brought up in the traditions of the beginning of the century—where they were members of the wealthy part of the population and dominated local politics in the villages, a tradition confirmed by food difficulties in war time and in the years after the war—are not prepared for an economic and political situation where they find themselves at the margin of society.

However, the situation cannot be seen as entirely negative. On the one hand, many farmers made profit selling land for housing or secondary homes in villages. On the other hand, many villages start a positive development linked to the economic and intellectual input coming from new, well-trained country-dwellers, when it has been possible to overcome initial integration problems.

Sacred cow 5 is the idea that agricultural production is mainly food production. This in fact, was never entirely true, because even in the past agricultural activity also involved the building up of manmade cultural landscape, and it also permitted a lot of energy production. For example, the whole of the energy that was needed for the agricultural work itself was produced on the farms, whereas today the farm machinery is generally working with energy that is coming from other sources. It is quite interesting to see in a recent publication⁴ that the German authorities state quite clearly: "apart from food production, agriculture has tasks which are growing in importance in modern industrial society: preservation of nature; securing and cultivating varied landscape for people to live, relax, and recuperate in; and supplying agricultural raw materials for individual purposes." And then, of course, it comes back to the family farm ideology saying, "the family farm is especially suited to adapting to overall economic changes and will be best able to continue to fulfill these various functions."

Sacred cow 6: The more food we produce, the better the rural economy. Now the difficulties created not only in Europe, but even at world level, by overproduction—for which Europe, of course, is not responsible alone—are becoming obvious. In the early 1950s, it was a very valuable goal of European agricultural policy to produce more and more in order to prevent any new starvation periods, as people had experienced them during and after World War II. This process has now come to an end. Even the official lobbies of European agriculture are slowly getting used to the idea that overproduction must not continue and that we must stop it by all means. Whether all means are always appropriate is another question. One of the means we actually apply is price reduction, which is certainly efficient, but on the other hand creates lots of income problems, mainly in peripheral rural areas, but also for farmers in prosperous areas, because they have, relying on guaranteed prices, made enormous investments in modernizing farms and buying computers, buying machinery, and so on. When the prices do go down they have difficulty meeting the annuities they have to pay for these investments. Another means is the quota system, which we applied particularly to milk. The new means is now the “set aside,” although one may have many doubts about its outcome in the form in which it is practiced in Europe, especially as there is no specific link with environmental goals, and there are no provisions preventing the farmers to produce more on the space they keep in production. Therefore, one may have some doubts about the results of this policy in terms of the reduction of agricultural production.

Sacred cow 7: Farming is opposed to wildlife protection or to environment. This idea was to a certain extent encouraged by some attitudes of nature protectors, which were very hostile to farmers; but, on the other hand, it now appears more and more that those that are informed about environmental protection see farmers as potential allies, and that they need their help and collaboration. But that means, of course, that nature protection must also help farmers or people in the countryside to earn a living. There are many programs now, especially in the Federal Republic of Germany and also in countries like Switzerland, Austria, and the Netherlands, where on a case by case basis, public authorities, which are not always national agencies, but Laender governments or local authorities at a lower level, establish contracts with farmers in order to pay them for certain services they will be asked to deliver in favor of the maintaining of the landscape or of nature.

This is now part of the official policy. When new nature reserves or nature protection areas are created, there is also much more concern that nature protection should not be the only goal, but that these areas should also provide employment and that they should also have educational effects on the population at large. They must, therefore, at least to a certain extent, be open to the public which, of course, creates employment. When the public is invited to visit such nature protection areas as tourists, you have to offer the public some possibilities to learn about these areas, with their landscape, their nature, and their traditions. This creates employment. Indeed, some of the demonstration projects identified by European Campaign for the Countryside, especially some of those located in Germany, lay emphasis on these new developments in nature protection.

Closely linked to the last issue is the question of pesticides and fertilizers. **Sacred cow 8: The more pesticides and fertilizers you use, the more you earn because you produce more.** The situation of overproduction and the cost it involves for the community have led to a situation where the production increase as such is no longer considered as a value in itself. Furthermore, farmers have also become more conscious of the fact that if they use too much fertilizer, be it chemical or natural, and too many pesticides, they may well endanger the fertility of their soil for the future. An increasing number of farmers therefore are looking for alternative production methods. Indeed, there is serious progress in Germany, but also in other European countries, toward alternative agriculture where the farmer renounces employing or agrees on using less fertilizers and pesticides. There are basically two approaches to this matter. One consists in considering that this way of production is dangerous for the biological equilibrium of our earth and therefore damageable to future generations, if not to our own. Furthermore, many farmers have noted themselves that the prices are so high for fertilizers and pesticides that if they don't use them, they may

end up getting higher prices for the biological pure products even if they produce less, and their income may be more or less the same. The other approach is based on scientific progress. It has been proved that many of these fertilizers and pesticides are lost when they are used by the farmer, because they use too large quantities, and at the wrong time of the year, which the soil cannot hold and which then goes into the ground water. By better scientific analysis of many factors like soil qualities and climatic conditions, one can better determine what can be used, how much can be used, and at what periods it has to be used. Then only this quantity will be used, and at that period of the year.

Sacred cow 9: Soil, water, and atmospheric pollution are mainly perverse effects of the population and industrial concentration in big conurbations. It is true, of course, that in our industrialized society, industry and big urban concentrations are making an important contribution to the general air and water pollution, and, directly or indirectly, to soil pollution as such, even outside their own areas. However, there is growing awareness among farmers of the fact that some of this pollution is produced by themselves. This, of course, is a very strong incentive to change production methods. A specific campaign has been organized in the Council of Europe on "agriculture in harmony with the environment." Much support also has been given by farmer's organizations themselves, like the European Confederation of Agriculture. The Commission of the European Communities itself issued last year a report on "agriculture and the environment."⁵ However, these are still only incentives for changing agricultural methods and turning farms toward extensive, biological production methods. Even the Community's "set aside" program has placed no particular emphasis on this aspect. Many people fear, therefore, that it may lead to even more intensive agricultural production in the areas that are maintained for production. This might well lead not only to a limited economic impact on the problem of overproduction; it could also be a source of increased damage to soil quality and fertility.

Sacred cow 10: Farming is a traditional activity, and no special training is needed. Farmers and people living in rural areas are becoming more and more conscious that farming is a very complex activity, and that farming alone is not sufficient—you must have diverse sources of income which all require training. It is therefore very important to put the accent on having good training for farmers, but more generally also for people living in rural areas. It may also be necessary to combat, at least in certain European areas, illiteracy. Looking at the constant tendency of diminution of the number of jobs in agriculture, it will also be necessary to prepare young people in the countryside for the fact that they may have to choose jobs other than farming, now or after a certain time. This shift also requires good education and training facilities. In many rural areas, education and training have been rather poorly supported as compared to the situation in towns. Compensation for this situation, especially in the fields of adult education and training is necessary. It appears from all this that education, training, and adult education are key issues in many rural areas.

Sacred cow 11: The farmer is a free entrepreneur and does not depend on public subsidies. This phrase is used very often, meaning, "We don't ever want to be landscape gardeners, because we want to be free people; we want to remain free people." It does not take into account the fact that a very large part of farming income today, especially in Europe, but I think also in the United States, does come more or less directly from public subsidies. However, this fact does not appear so clearly to farmers, as they are price subsidies, leaving him with the illusion that his income comes simply from the selling of the goods produced.

Furthermore, the investments in agricultural technology are mostly made in the framework of a given national or European agricultural policy. These investments therefore establish a close link between existing policies and the farmers' activities. They are, in fact, bound to pursue their activities in the same framework and cannot change freely the orientation of their farm policy, for example, by adopting biological agriculture. Any change in the official policies can and does have dramatic consequences for many farms. The investments made also push farmers to invest more time in farming, in order to be able to make it profitable on often highly technological and therefore very costly machinery. Farmers can no

longer allow themselves to follow their own rhythm or the rhythm of the seasons, as they did in past centuries.

Sacred cow 12: The farmer owns his own production means. This may still be true to a certain extent, although in most of the cases, farmers are very dependent on credits and bank institutions. To a very large extent, if studies were available on the agricultural debt in our countries, you would find in fact that the production means are more and more owned by agricultural banks, agricultural suppliers, agricultural machinery, industry, and town dwellers.

Sacred cow 13: The only good farmer is the one who is nothing but a farmer. This view is not corroborated by reality, at least in the Federal Republic of Germany. In this country, 50 percent of the farmers are part-time farmers, and in practice even much more, because the definition of these 50 percent is that the part-time farmers are only those that earn less than 50 percent of their income from farming. Those who earn 60 or 70 percent of their income from farming in a way are also part-time farmers. There has been a shift now at least in the official German policy, if not yet in the official EEC policy, in the sense that the German policy is in favor of maintaining and developing part-time farming.

Sacred cow 14: Quality of life in rural areas will be improved by adopting urban lifestyles. This is a philosophy that now tends to be abandoned. But since the 1950s and, to a certain degree, in the 1960s and 1970s, much of urban lifestyle has been imported into the villages. Now, an important effort is made, in many parts of the Federal Republic of Germany, in favor of rural or village renewal policies. The Federal Republic of Germany and the Laender are very active in this field and are trying to bring back into the rural landscape and village scenery lost aspects of rural life, and thus to improve the quality of life rather than to eliminate all the urban life patterns that have been imported into the villages. This does not mean, of course, getting away from modern comfort in rural housing.

This tendency is helped by several factors. In particular, urban renewal takes more and more into account specific aspects of the urban fabric, rather than following general development tendencies that can be found throughout the whole country or whole of Europe. Respect for local and regional differences tends more and more to become a decisive factor in quality of life. Another factor is increased mobility for job creation. There is no important job creation in agriculture or industry to be expected. Statistics show that most jobs are created in services and information and research. These jobs can be located easily in rural areas and re-use rural architecture, provided there are efficient transport and communication facilities.

There is also a new tendency to take a more positive attitude towards traditional solidarity, communication, and cultural problems of rural society, provided strong social control of individuals does not exist. It is not my intention to make a plea in favor of an isolated rural society living exclusively on its own values. But compared to the aimless anonymity, the lack of communication and identity of many urban structures, favoring social diseases and crime, some aspects of the traditional countryside lifestyle, the neighbourhood communication, solidarity, identity, and closeness to nature are values that favor the emergence of a new, positive style of life in the countryside, a "new rurality."

Sacred cow 15: Modern developments such as women's participation endanger the tradition of solidarities in rural areas. In the framework of the European Campaign for the Countryside, a specific European symposium has been organized in the southwest of the Federal Republic of Germany on "women in rural areas," with participants not only from Germany, but also from other European countries, from Turkey to Portugal to Sweden. It is very important that rural women should get their own income, their own say for the future of farms, their own social security scheme, their own adult education facilities, and so on. Otherwise, they will leave the countryside; they will leave rural areas. Many small villages have already experienced the fact that in case women leave, no continuity of life will be possible in the countryside. The villages then will be left to an aging population.

Sacred cow 16: The farmer is living all year round in a healthy and natural environment, and he needs no holiday. This argument is similar to the problem of women's participation in rural areas

because, as you see from the statistics appended, many farm wives do indeed work twelve hours per day. Working conditions in rural areas, and especially in farm households, therefore need careful consideration. This is of crucial importance for women and young people who wish to benefit from cultural and leisure facilities that seem quite crucial in an urban context. Family help in farm households therefore needs better organization in order to offer the farmers more free time. If not, the profession of farming may well be abandoned by more and more people.

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Endnotes

1. Member States: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and United Kingdom. From May 5, 1989, its 40th anniversary, the Council of Europe will have 23 member states. Finland and San Marino have joined the organization.
2. Bertelsmann Lexikon Vorlag GmbH, Guetersloh, 1888, page 142.
3. Doc. Com (88) 501 final.
4. "Facts About Germany," page 181.
5. COM (88) 338 final.

Appendix

Agricultural Statistics for the Federal Republic of Germany

Territory	248,708 km²
Agriculture and forests	84%
Rural areas	75%
Population Density	
1987	245 inhabitants/km ²
1886	85 inhabitants/km ²
Number of Farms	
1987	681,000
1950	1,647,000
Diminution in Number of Farms	
1987	3.8 percent

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Diminution in Agricultural Employment

1970-1985: 41 percent

Average Farm Size

1987 15.26 hectare
95 percent of farms are less than 50 hectare
50 percent of farms are part-time farming operations

1950 8.06 hectare

Land Use

1985 12.5 percent of territory is used for settlement, (But, in the RUHR area, more than 40 percent of the territory is used for settlement.)

1981-85 0.7 percent loss of rural and agricultural land, or 1.2 km²/day

In 1987, one farm produced food for 70 people. In 1950, one farm produced food for 10 people.

In agricultural products, the Federal Republic of Germany is 80 percent self-sufficient.

The average daily working hours per day for farm wives is 12 hours.

Land Use Trends in Austria

In 185 years: all settlement areas will be used up.

In 367 years: the whole territory will be used up.

Rural Areas: The Danish Experience

by Peter Baumann

Introduction

In most European countries, discussion on the future of rural areas is of importance. During 1988, the Council of Europe ran a campaign for the countryside. Denmark only took little interest in the campaign.

Over the last few years, the European Economic Commission (EEC) has taken a number of initiatives which will have an impact on the rural areas:

- Adjustments to the Common Agricultural Program (CAP), e.g., quotas, stabilizers, and modifications to the intervention system;
- Special programs for agricultural structural policies;
- Development programs for particular, less favoured regions, e.g., the Integrated Mediterranean Programs; and
- The reform of the structural funds, i.e., the social fund, the regional fund, and the guidance section of the agricultural fund.

Recently the Commission has presented the Council with a comprehensive strategy for the rural areas and with proposals for a number of measures in the forestry sector.

We may all have different concepts of "rural areas." I prefer that term to "the countryside," which in my mind leaves a picture of non-committal picnics on sunny banks of lazy rivers!

In some European contexts, rural areas are defined as towns and municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants. Should we apply this definition in Denmark, only 20 out of approximately 210–220 municipalities (outside the capital) would not be rural. In the Danish context, we would rather define districts outside towns and villages with more than 1,000 inhabitants as rural areas. In some connections, we even set the limit at 200 inhabitants. The (rural) villages are set between 200 and 1,000 inhabitants. Below 200 inhabitants there is not really a basis for local service facilities, like shops, and above 1,000 inhabitants, the village will normally lose its social and physical unity.

The Danish Scene

Denmark is a small country of approximately 43,000 square kilometers (roughly 16,000 square miles) and 5 million inhabitants, or 115–120 inhabitants per square kilometer or 300 inhabitants per square mile. You can drive from the east to the west in 4 hours, ferryboat included.

If you fly over Denmark, you will note that

- towns are scattered over the landscape at around 20-mile intervals;
- nearly all land in between is cultivated;
- within a square of 7 x 7 miles there normally are 300–400 farms and a number of other houses and tiny villages; none will have more than 10–15 miles to the nearest regional subcenter;
- a closely-knit network of good asphalt or concrete roads exists, which in winter is kept clear of snow;
- rural areas to a large extent are hinterlands or surrounding areas to the towns; and
- Denmark is not a country of vast open and empty spaces.

Denmark's Rural Areas

"Rural life" are positive words in Danish. A personal advertisement might read:

"Attractive tall woman seeks partner. Loves music, literature, and nature," or

"Well kept 50 year/180 cm. male seeks good-looking companion. Interests: theater, art, and weekends in the countryside."

Such advertisements should be taken with a grain of salt. In fact, our attractive lady would most likely not dare to walk 50 yards into any forest, nor would our good-looking male even think of settling within smelling distance of a pigsty. And with regard to his weekends in the countryside, he probably means at the coast.

Rural areas are often part of political debates. We agree that life in our rural areas is important. We speak nicely of the qualities of rural life and of the landscape, we analyse our rural areas, we spend a little money on pilot schemes, and we have regional development schemes. But development of rural areas is certainly not our number one concern.

There are reasons for the place of rural areas in the minds of the Danes and their politicians, and there are reasons why they play a relatively modest role, when political priorities are set. Let me take the latter first.

Our rural districts and rural problems are not those of poor regions with low standards of living. Our rural districts are not based on unproductive farming. They are not large areas with population or with limited public services. In the European Community, you have the concept of less-favored regions. More than 50 percent of the Community is classified as less-favored regions. The less-favored regions of Denmark amounts to zero percent of the country.

The standard of living in rural areas does not really differ from the rest of the country. Public services are the same all over the country. If the school is more than a few miles from home, children are brought by bus or taxi. Public help is available to ill or old people, the public food distribution for elderly is available, the postman passes every day, roads are good, distances to towns are short, and public transport and telecommunications are available. In brief, there is equal treatment with regard to public services and infrastructure.

In this context, it should be noted that a large amount of social services is financed by the state or the region (county). As far as the municipalities are concerned, a system of equalization between rich and poor municipalities is in place.

Compared to rural districts in most other countries, we do not really have a rural problem. However, we are faced with developments, which in our context are perceived as problems. It seems increasingly difficult to maintain local services, and environmental, nature conservation, and recreational policies play an increasingly important role in rural policies. These developments and possible answers to them could be discussed under three headings: agriculture, other economic sectors in certain regions, and environmental policies.

Agriculture and Rural Areas

Denmark has very few raw materials. You can dig sand, gravel, clay, and chalk. We have not had the problems of heavy industry's rise and decline. We have fish in the sea, some oil and gas from the North Sea fields, and the wind. And then we have the soil for agriculture.

To understand the rural areas issues in Denmark, you must start with agriculture. To a very large extent, the perception of rural areas and their problems go through agriculture, culturally, politically, and economically.

Culture. Culturally, Denmark is marked by the important role of agriculture over the centuries. Most

Danes have rural ascendants two to three generations back. The agricultural population were bearers of the folk high schools. They created the cooperative movement. They organized more than a hundred years ago. The soil, the hard work, and the qualities of agriculture play an important role in beloved songs. The agricultural world had foresight, but it also impregnated us with the inbred society's suspiciousness and envy. Don't stick out your neck, don't believe that you are more than the others.

In the war against Germany in 1864, Denmark lost Schleswig-Holstein and the southern part of Jutland. This led to the reclamation of Jutland's extensive moors, our last open spaces. The reclamation of this land, mostly coarse sand soil, was hard work. The pride of those who did it is still present in today's farmers in the region. This explains some of the farmer's reluctance towards environmental policy and towards policies concerning the "renaturalization" of marginal land.

Politics. Politically, rural areas are, as I have already mentioned, largely perceived through agriculture. Farmers organized at the end of last century. At that time you had farmers owning land and day-laborers owning a pair of trousers. The conditions of the latter were poor, to put it in diplomatic terms, and the government established various schemes to enable them to settle on small holdings: big enough to keep them attached to the land, small enough to assure that they would have to supplement their income working for the farmer.

Two organizations were created, the farmers' organization and the smallholders' organization (The Family Farmer's Organization). They still exist, and nearly all farmers and smallholders are members of one or the other—or both. These two organizations still pursue different policies on a number of key issues, policies which can be explained by their different origins. They have strong ties to different political parties and still exercise strong influence in policy formulation. In this connection, it should be mentioned, that the smallholders' organization with roughly one-third of the members of the farmers' organization has been attached to a small party, the Radical Left, close to the center in Danish politics. For many years, this party has been in position to decide which political block should carry the majority, and smallholders' views have therefore had weight.

By their views on agriculture, these organizations have—for good and worse—left their footprint on today's Denmark. They have worked under the maxim that what is good for agriculture is good for Denmark. They played an important role in the campaign for our entry into the EEC. By their views on the agricultural holdings legislation, they have marked the present structure of agricultural and rural areas. This legislation lays down restrictions with regard to farm size, tenancy, parcelling out of farms, and acquisition and ownership of farms.

The rural districts have been borne by agriculture, and the farmers' and smallholders' organizations are the heavyweights. Other organizations based on rural interests exist, but with very limited influence, e.g., the Rural Village Association and the Small Island's Organization.

Economics. Economically, the importance of agriculture to Denmark cannot, I think, be overestimated. This sector has paid a very large part of the welfare society. Agriculture accounts for about 30 percent of Danish exports, which for a country with a balance of payments deficit is important.

In earlier days agriculture was intimately connected with the local economy. The local crafts, the mill, the cooperative slaughterhouse and dairy, and the local grocer were all dependent upon the local farms. Today these close links no longer exist. The supply and transformation (processing) sectors have become regional, national, or multinational.

These changes, as well as the application of modern technology, have given us fewer units. From 1960 until today, the number of farms has dropped by 60 percent (from nearly 200,000 to less than 90,000). Estimates for 1998, ten years from today, are that the number will drop by another 35 percent to 55–60,000. These figures, of course, have a direct bearing on the rural districts.

Simultaneously, the traditional farm has changed. Mixed farming has been replaced by specialized

National Perceptions and Political Significance of Rural Areas

farms, structures have changed, and we have more intensive agricultural practices, which in turn create a number of environmental problems, as well as isolation of the individual farmer.

These developments, of course, have had a bearing on the general importance of agriculture for employment. The total employment effect of agriculture is estimated at 200,000 persons, half of whom are in supply and transformation (processing), the other half in primary production. The total corresponds to 7–8 percent of the total workforce and to 27–28 percent of the workforce in producing sectors (fisheries, quarrying, manufacturing, etc.) According to some analyses, the agri-industrial and food complex even accounts for nearly 50 percent of these sectors.

Expectations are that the workforce in agriculture will drop by a further 30 percent over the next ten years. The main thrust of this drop may well come in the regions that depend mostly on agriculture. This is partly due to the fact that economic difficulties in agriculture, environmentally motivated restrictions, as well as the adjustments to the EEC common agricultural policy, are expected to bring about a certain abandonment or marginalization of farmland. The amount of land, which will be marginalised or abandoned, is difficult to predict. Figures between a few percent and as much as 20 percent of farmland have been put forward. For evident reasons, the question of abandonment or marginalization of agricultural land has placed itself in the cross fire of agricultural, environmental, local and regional interests, as well as of EEC policies.

Industry and Rural Areas

The developments in agricultural employment have largely been offset by industry and services. Industrial development and location policies have mainly been dictated by access to raw materials and/or transportation (e.g., harbors), and more recently by environmental considerations or by the good idea (e.g., innovative local development initiatives).

The main target of our localization policies has been the balanced development of all regions. This policy has been based on regional development schemes. In regional development areas (defined on the basis of a number of objective criteria), special credit facilities and grants are available to municipalities and private enterprises.

This industrial development policy has to a certain extent been a success. In some areas, this growth sector's contribution to employment levels has been significant. Without going into details, not only dairy cows but also growth industries have gone to the west over the last decades. An increasing number of internationally operating companies are situated in Jutland. However, unemployment is still relatively high in certain areas of Jutland.

Services and Rural Areas

Services, and not the least public services, should be mentioned to complete the picture. The loss of employment in the agricultural sector has largely been offset by the upswing in public administration and services. The county and municipal reform twenty years ago transferred a number of tasks to county and municipal councils and administrations. Their development since then has created further jobs. Roughly, the number employed in public administration has doubled over the last twenty years.

At the same time, a policy of creation of regional and subregional centers has been pursued. This policy has created jobs in the centers but has, of course, taken away jobs or job possibilities in the countryside. It also has meant that a number of measures have been reserved for the centers, e.g., social housing. Still, distances are short in Denmark.

It should be noted that the growth in public employment is not likely to continue. The level of taxation and public expenditure has come under increasing pressure, and the present government is attempting to create the basis for a reduction in both.

Environment and Rural Areas

Lastly the new "growth sector" in rural policies, "environment," should be mentioned. For some years, the issue has been a major political one, and it has led to clashes between agricultural organizations and government, as well as to difficult discussions within the government.

A number of restrictions have been introduced, some of which will necessarily bring about changes in agricultural practices in certain regions (e.g., drainage restrictions). The effects of such restrictions as well as of a series of EEC measures to curb agricultural production will lead to marginalization or abandonment of farmland. This development may be speeded up by economic difficulties in Danish agriculture and is likely to hit certain regions that are heavily dependent on agriculture.

On the other hand, this situation offers an opportunity to combine agricultural, environmental, and recreational interests. A series of measures are in preparation. Aids for set-aside (not quite the United States model), aids for extensification and for reconversion, aids for planting of forests, public acquisition of land, and reestablishment of reclaimed land are parts of the panoply. Combined with other measures for agriculture, industry, and public services, they may help us to solve some of our environmental problems.

The Planning Controls System

Agriculture, industry, services, housing, and environment are often conflicting. We saw a number of problems arise in the rural areas in the 1960s. Enterprises were started in the countryside and grew up; people built their residence outside towns and villages, often in attractive places; farmland was taken in for urban, recreational, and other nonfarming purposes; and the coastline was plastered with summer cottages. This development caused a number of problems: problems for public services (telephone, garbage, schools, water supply, social security services, and transport), problems with regard to nature conservation, problems for the general public's access to the coast, and others.

These problems in turn led to the urban and country zone act, which in principle forbids anything but agriculture in the open land that is outside the urban areas. Any building, industrial activity, service center, camping area, and other such activities needed special permission.

During the 1970s a planning controls system was established as a basis for coordinated administration in the open land as well as in urban areas. The idea behind the planning controls system is that central controls based on individual decisions should be replaced by general controls based on plans. Decisions should be taken in the fullest possible knowledge of their consequences, e.g., new housing has implications for kindergartens and schools, new industry has implications for infrastructures and environment. The development of industry, housing, recreational and other infrastructure should take place in accordance with a land use plan and after a balanced assessment of all interests involved, e.g., economic, agricultural, and environmental.

The Minister for the Environment is responsible for carrying out the comprehensive physical national planning and for having the necessary investigations undertaken in this connection. A certain number of national planning directives, which establish authoritative guidelines for regional planning, have been issued. The coordinating element in the system is the regional plan produced by the county councils. These plans shall deal with:

- distribution of future urban growth;
- extent and location of major centres and major traffic facilities;
- location of certain plants and establishments;
- size and location of areas reserved for agricultural purposes;
- utilization of land for the exploitation of stone, gravel, and other natural resources;
- protection of nature preservation interests, including the designation and protection of nature

reserves especially worthy of preservation;

- size and location of summerhouse districts and other areas for recreational purposes; and
- quality of water courses, lakes, and the territorial scenery on the coasts.

The location of new forests soon will be added to this list.

Within the framework laid down by the approved regional plan, the municipalities in the region must establish municipal structure plans, which lay down the general structure of the whole municipality. The municipal structure plans deal with the same subjects as the regional plans, but must lay down the guidelines concerning land use in more detail. When these dispositions are carried out, the municipality must establish a further plan, the local plan, which establishes the land use in detail, and which is legally binding.

The regional plans and the municipal structure plans have a twelve-year horizon. They are adjusted at four-year intervals, and the plan horizon is prolonged by four years at every adjustment.

The regional and municipal structure plans are coordinated plans which lay down guidelines for the use of the land after having analysed, evaluated, balanced and eventually made a choice among conflicting interests. The coordinated plans legislation on sector planning calls for merging various interests such as agriculture, resources in the ground, nature preservation, and the quality of water in the rivers and lakes. A common characteristic of this sector planning is the mapping of the various interests. Sector planning thus forms an input to the coordinated plans.

The Present Situation in Rural Areas

Rural areas, understood as countryside and small villages, are in a continued decline as far as population, local services, manufacturing, and crafts are concerned. They have become surrounding areas to towns. Job creation by industry, crafts, services, and public administration mainly takes part in towns and not in the true rural areas. On the other hand, a pursued policy of balanced development has spread development in non-agricultural sectors. However, the population in rural areas is dependent either upon agriculture or upon work in neighbouring towns. The rural areas including villages are thus turned into dormitory zones.

Developments in the agricultural sector, including supply and transformation (processing); the emergence of environmental policies; and the development in other sectors have a number of consequences for rural districts. Local shops and crafts, local schools, local old people's homes, and other rural services disappear. Local economic life, which had agriculture as a central element, has been disintegrated. These consequences, which I have tried to describe, differ from region to region. Certain regions, like small-islands agriculture and regions where industrial growth has been brought to a stop without replacement, have specific problems.

Possible Lines of Action

If you ask any politician, he would say that you should maintain life in the rural areas; that you should maintain public and private services; and that you should maintain the landscape, nature, and the environment in general. He would further say something about the near society, the close human relationship, and the quality of life outside the hectic urban centers.

In my view, the developments that we have seen in the rural districts over the last decades have the character of a one-way lane. You may introduce certain codes of conduct, you may lower average driving-through time, you may lead part of the traffic into the slow traffic lane, but you cannot hold up traffic forever.

What happens in rural areas is but the reflection of what happens in other parts of the country. The traditional main economic sector in the rural areas was agriculture. Like other production and manufacturing

sectors, it is a sector of depopulation. Moreover, you will have to accept that rural people will not be basically different from other people, from other Danes. You will always be able to detect the Danes in an international airport; they are well dressed, well fed, and they look dissatisfied.

This observation leads to a number of other observations. One is that the Danes have a high standard of living. It is not likely that they will accept a significantly lower standard of living because they live in a rural area. Second, it appears that they are always looking for something else, something better, hence the dissatisfaction. They are marked by an increasingly complicated society. At the same time, economic operators and public administrations generate a need for units which are capable of dealing with the complexities. They consequently bid farewell to the local, rural villages and municipalities. Third, they expect their airplane ticket to be in order, the plane to leave on time, and if not, they expect "somebody" to take care of it. If anything happens to their neighbour, they expect "somebody" to be there. They have professionalized human relations. And if that is so, they have taken away one of the traditional qualities of rural life.

It is not possible to help rural areas by maintaining that obsolete structures shall be upheld as some do, nor by imagining that people in rural areas are willing to accept standards that are very different from those of the urban population. On the contrary, actions should be defined in the light of what happens elsewhere.

In my view, we have two rural issues:

- One is linked to the general development in the rural areas connected with agriculture.
- The other is linked to rural areas with specific problems: for example, areas where agricultural development has been paralleled by industrial decline, or small islands' agriculture. Also areas which will be hit by agricultural abandonment or marginalization could be mentioned in this group.

With regard to the first type of area, there is not much to be done, except—strangely enough—to develop agriculture, to free it from the actual restrictions with regard to the structural development, and thus maintain a sector, which can still be economically present in the rural areas.

You might of course change development by fundamentally changing agricultural practices from high technological intensive farming to work-intensive organic farming. There probably is some room for this change, because there is an increasing—from a very low level—market for organic products. We do pursue these possibilities, as we pursue other possibilities of increasing the output value of farming and the spin-off effect in other sectors (e.g., energy). However, there are serious problems of competitiveness, and there are limits to the growth of organic farming, unless you also change the rest of modern society!

It should be added, that estimates of the effects of such a "green alternative" indicate, that even though the expected fall in agriculture's employment effect will be slowed down a little, there will still be a considerable fall over the next decade. This being the case, the approach could be one of adopting structures of public and private services to the situation, and thus making the maintenance of the country's standard service level possible in the rural areas.

As a matter of fact, our structures in a number of fields like schools, kindergarten, nurseries, shops, and transports are scaled to fit urban areas. Combinations of two or more service facilities in the same body, new ways of housing, and other such initiatives call for the breaking down of walls between various authorities. In public administration, you are more and more often faced with cases to which you cannot give an appropriate solution by following the book.

In general you would need to assure, as a minimum, that rules and restrictions do not hamper the changes you would wish. In this connection, I have already mentioned the agricultural holdings restrictions. Unions and other interest organizations must accept and cooperate in the change of certain structures.

With regard to the other types of area, there has been a tendency to consider all areas alike and consequently to point at common strategies. It is evident that one strategy, which could solve a number

of problems for rural areas, is a substantial economic growth. This might bring new economic activities in rural districts, and it might reduce the marginalization of land. Due to the small size of Denmark, economic growth in one part of the country will normally—to a less greater extent—quickly spin off in the rest of the country.

This being said, the future of the rural areas cannot be considered wholesale. It would be no good to offer, for example, a general scheme to establish centers for innovators or starters in all rural municipalities. In the first place, I do not think that you will find that many innovators. Second, the center must be based in the right environment. Solutions must be tailored to the problem and to the local populations ability to handle changes. In this context, it is interesting to note that the mentality seems to differ between regions even in a small country. Thus, some areas of Jutland are characterized by the spirit of innovators and starters, while some regions in the islands are marked by wage-earner traditions.

Instead of the traditional remote-control arsenal in regional development policies, the individual area must increasingly assume responsibility and mobilize potential resources with a view to establishing the robustness necessary to compete with global influences. This aim will not be achieved by the simple implementation of the subsidiary of a non-local company. On the contrary, endeavors should be undertaken to establish local networks as a basis for local economic development over the broadest possible field.

This strategy, which involves public authorities and private enterprises, seems to be breaking through in some regions and to offer a broad spectrum of initiatives. Important elements are the establishment of institutional and organizational networks covering technological centers, technical schools, universities, data banks and other similar developments. In many cases, the agricultural and environmental link is present: biotechnology, reestablishment of the role of agriculture in the local or regional economy, technologies for recirculation of agricultural waste, and other initiatives.

Initiatives of this nature are increasingly important. The 1992 internal European market is likely to bring about further concentrations, bigger units, and more local disintegration. However, in the shadow of this development, there could be room for new activities and new niches, which satisfy specific demands.

Conclusions

This brings me to an attempt to bring out some main points. First I have tried to look at and explain the nature of Danish rural areas issues. Second, it should have been illustrated that rural areas are not just a matter of coincidence. On the contrary, through complex legislation, including the planning controls system, they are maintained and the countryside protected. Third, environmental considerations are given a very high priority. Thus, instead of counteracting the marginalization or abandonment of farm land with traditional means (e.g., investment grants, temporary income aids or the like), we have chosen an environmental approach, and, in agreement with the farmers, we try to turn an agricultural problem into an environmental advantage.

Denmark has not had heavy industries. The Danish economy has been based on agriculture, trade, and manufacturing of imported goods. Denmark is surrounded by seas. The weather is not always good, but our coasts and countryside are close to the European industrial centers.

A comprehensive environmental front-runner policy may, applied in such a way that existing economic activities are given the necessary possibilities of adoption, entail three consequences, all of which will be important for the rural areas: creation of the basis for "green agricultural products," growth of an industry in clean technologies, and tourism.

This policy approach is not likely to solve all the relatively modest problems of the Danish rural areas.

But it could be an important element in what seems to be a move from the farmers' to the "consumers' " rural areas.

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Perspectives From France

by Vincent Derkenne

It is my great pleasure to be here with you to discuss the significance of rural areas. I am not really a specialist on this subject, so I shall not give you too many figures and graphics. My former jobs and my present professional occupation allow me to share with you my personal knowledge of perceptions regarding rural areas. I want to thank Christine Kovacshazy for the opportunity she gives me to be with you. I also want to thank Mr. Richard Long and Mr. Theodore R. Alter for inviting me to this symposium.

To introduce myself, I am presently special adviser to the President of the county-council of Savoie in the landscape and environment fields. Our county is the first one in France that decided to implement a special and global policy in these fields. My job is to help our elected officials to build this policy and to manage it throughout our county, working with local communities, firms, national park officials, civil servant staffs, societies, and associations.

Our county is organizing the next winter Olympic games in February 1992. This will be a good opportunity for us to show how we are able to manage winter sports and cultural concerns within an improved landscape and environment.

These activities are not far from the subject of our symposium because Savoie is mostly a rural area. So beside my general presentation, I am ready to answer to questions aimed mostly at Savoie and its rural life.

Historical Points of View

Let's start with some historical points of view. France was a very rural country. When I say rural, I mean population living in rural areas, with different jobs: agriculture primarily, but also services, schools, and small businesses. In past times, the rural areas used to feed France; they were useful in providing goods and men for wars and, later, craftsmen for industries.

After the last world war, rural areas suffered some neglect because of new policies: wide industrialization, growth of towns, new ways of managing territory, and quick development of the third or service sector of the new economy. Rural became old-fashioned; everything seemed to be difficult there compared with the "modern and easy life" in towns. The feeling of gratitude towards agriculture disappeared at the same time as obtaining food became less important for anyone.

Rural exodus became frequent, and people gathered in small or big towns. Rural people felt underdeveloped, far from modernism, and began to get complexes, even in their way of furnishing their home. Regional and country styles of furniture were thrown away to be replaced by plastics and cheap "white, clean and modern" tables and chairs! To look like town people, rural people began to leave old rural and uncomfortable farm houses, and they bought no-style pre-built "home sweet homes." In those times, rural areas were still feeding the country; welfare arrived also in medium-sized and small towns.

In these times and until quite recently, rural development policy had the following main objectives:

- land use planning to facilitate the modernization of farms,
- stopping the migration from the land by improving living conditions, and
- making up for natural handicaps.

The aims were essentially to build up facilities in the rural areas whose development, with a few exceptions, was assisted by the general growth of the economy. During this period, there was a great improvement in public infrastructure investment.

Around 1968, owing to a better quality of life, general feeling for rural areas began to change. In towns,

people found it difficult to live in low-quality urbanism and looked towards the countryside where everything seemed then to be nicer. Nature, rural landscapes, local cooking, typical local furniture and heritage, and unknown wines like Beaujolais, for example, became the new fashionable way of well-being.

Developments in the economy increased this new phenomenon. As people find the same modern facilities in the rural areas as in towns, such as roads and motorways, telephones, informatics and later telematics, good electricity and TV networks, and modern trains (high speed ones for the Southeast of France and soon in the West, later in the North and East), they can decide to live in rural areas, still have a good job, perhaps a low salary, but a pleasant way of life. Between 1975 and 1982, 52 percent of small and medium-sized businesses were placed in rural areas because of the disappearance of former communication difficulties, less trade union power, lower salaries, and cheaper land cost. It is important to note that businesses that wanted to settle in Paris and its region had to pay a special tax. This tax was imposed in order to encourage them to settle elsewhere.

Since 1982, decentralization has helped to raise local chauvinism and regional pride. This phenomenon helped to communicate the pleasure of living out of big towns, remove the complexes of rural people, and increase the feeling of belonging to an up-to-date community. Young people do not leave rural areas anymore to become unemployed in towns; they stay and get married in the village. That is why rural population began to increase again during the last ten years (plus 7 percent between 1975 and 1982).

Some people now live in the countryside and drive their car each day to go to work in towns. This is true for a lot of important towns in France. This trend helps raise the intellectual level in rural areas and therefore the need for new services and cultural amenities in rural towns.

Nowadays the rural world has changed. Rural areas make up 85 percent of the French territory and include 20 percent of the population. Only one-quarter of this population is concerned with agriculture, but 32,000 of the 36,000 communes in France are still rural (less than 2,000 inhabitants).

To end this quick historical and partly subjective overview, I should point out that French people are strongly rural people. Every person living in town feels, or tries to feel, part of some rural place.

The Diversity of Rural France

France is very well-known for its different types of landscapes: seashores, dunes, forests, agricultural landscapes (vineyards, meadows, groves, cornfields), and mountainous areas. To this natural diversity, we add a very rich cultural diversity with our vast historical heritage: castles, rural churches, cathedrals, and rural architecture.

Presently half of all medicines are made of plants, and 93 percent of food comes from plants. At the present time, we can observe a standardization of nature through increasingly less diverse animal or agricultural production. This uniformity in production makes provision of natural supplies very vulnerable to any changing of climate or to any unforeseeable new disease. In the past, every rural country used to grow some local fruit or vegetable varieties. A lot of these varieties are now out of use as soon as orchards are cut down to plant standard fruit trees. Some botanic conservatories try to collect these rustic varieties to maintain our genetic richness.

It has not been a long time since we began to become aware of our large and rich rural heritage in these natural, biological, and cultural fields. Improving this diversity is certainly the best way to conserve these different and typical heritages of France for the future and for their economic implications in rural areas.

Saving Diversity and Improving the Rural Economy

We have always tried to preserve and open to public visits the castles and great old monuments we have in every part of our country. Being today in a "new country," the United States of America, I know what

your old places, towns, villages, and history represent. We are fond of it, too. This heritage has always represented an important economic support for rural towns and villages.

In the same way, our landscapes and different aspects of the environment (for example, fauna for hunting and flora for medicines) were also supports for economic local activities. The increase in free time, leisure, holidays, and protected natural places (to preserve lands not transformed by humans) became more and more attractive to various and numerous people, creating tourism jobs.

It is also the case that new industries try mostly to settle in nice places where their managers and workers will live in pleasant surroundings. Beside the production of large quantities of agricultural crops, our rural areas produce local cooking and products (like cheeses) that many visitors appreciate. Our rural areas are the kitchen of our well-known gastronomy, which is in very good economic supply!

In our country, local history, landscapes, culture, environment, tourism, well-being, quality of life, and other aspects of our natural and cultural diversity in rural areas are many good reasons to create jobs as part of a competitive economy. France is "the country of local countries," and well-known for this diversity. As we shall see later on, however, this is not a sufficient reason to maintain rural population and to preserve the young and dynamic life in these "countries."

To protect and preserve this diversity and these resources, we use several approaches. We have national parks to protect fauna and flora. Human beings are allowed to come and visit these parks but not to live in them—except for one park, where 100 farmers are allowed to carry out their activities under certain controls. We also have 25 regional natural parks that cover 8 percent of the territory and affect 2 million inhabitants (out of 55 million). The purpose of these regional parks is to preserve those territories whose landscapes, ecological natural places, and cultural heritage are of high quality but in very short supply. Their purposes also are to improve economic activities compatible with environmental protection, to welcome the public, and to provide information as well as to offer educational and cultural activities.

We use other approaches, but this latter one is certainly the most efficient, and the best example for the purpose of our symposium. We started to create them twenty years ago in 1967. They work based upon a charter signed by the State, the Region committee, and all local participants. They address territorial planning, and recently they have been allowed to work in economic development.

Maintaining and Looking After the Well-Being of a Rural Population

To best promote the well-being of rural populations, we must provide similar quality of services and educational conditions for children, as people can find in towns. Even if rural people are used to dealing with naturally more difficult conditions, even if they can afford to drive longer distances from home to services, and even if they can wake up early to be on time at school, it is still important to offer them quality services and schools that are accessible to support their well-being. That is why all local communities fight to keep their multi-level schools and invite town kids to live in the countryside in order to reach the critical number of ten children to keep a primary school.

Note a recent proposition of the federation of rural mayors. It offers a free place to live, a garden, and some small local jobs to a large family with parents who are unemployed and living poorly in town, and whose kids will go to the local school.

Regional committees and county councils also support the well-being of rural people. Regional committees invest in main roads, airports, and regional railway connections. Most county councils spend a lot of money repairing rural roads and improving local infrastructure investments: town halls, festival halls, sports facilities, schools, waste disposal units, purification plants, and other facilities. Their help is modulated according to the wealth of the local commune.

I shall give a special example coming from Savoie. We wanted to offer work to women in order to

let them live in villages and work near their home. We helped to create what we call "small rural factories" in the computer components field. Three of them have been created, with around 20 to 25 jobs each. It is an experience!

Local associations also are helped financially. Sometimes local authorities help services to stay. For example, they may build market halls or rent shops at low prices in order to keep a baker or a butcher. Local authorities now are allowed to help in enterprises location, and at the same time they prepare allotments in order to receive new populations when they have new local jobs to offer.

When they can, rural people improve some touristic aspect of their commune: a lake, a castle, an old part of the village, or a natural place. They also often transform old houses into what we call rural lodgings, or bed-and-breakfast rooms. Financial aid can be given for this latter purpose as systems are organized to manage centralized accommodations.

I do not mean to convey that all rural places are so dynamic. I just want to outline the large array of solutions used to keep people living in rural areas and to provide employment.

In certain parts of France, especially in mountainous regions, most of the working population have several jobs at a time. They may be craftsmen in daytime and farmers before and after going to work, for example. Sometimes, people hold one job after the other during the year: skiing instructor, then wood-cutter, then alpine guide, then farmer helper to parents, for example. It is a new form of an old practice when men used to be farmers during the good season and peddlers during winter, leaving wife and children at home alone. The result is that rural mountain areas were still kept in good order when agriculture and tourism were working well, while other mountainous regions have quite returned into human deserts and fallow lands. I say "were kept" because things may change soon.

Decentralization and the Rise of Regional Pride

Since 1982 it is the Regional Committee that looks after improving large-scale infrastructure plans and economic development within regional plans detailed in the quinquennial national plan. The Regional Committee is also in charge of creating and renting high schools, regional libraries, and museums. The Department—the County Council—looks after the secondary road network, rural facilities grants, business locations, social services, education, archives, local libraries and museums, walking circuits, and cultural development.

All these new powers must be understood as economic and political decision-making powers, but not necessarily all as legislative powers. Making laws and regulations remain the right of the state and its administrative staffs. You may certainly find it difficult to understand these partitions of powers between our many communities: one state, 22 regions, 96 departments (counties), and 36,500 communes (local governments).

Six years after the beginning of decentralization, we can say that it works quite efficiently. We have perhaps too many levels of power and too many communes, but decentralization provides a chance for rural areas. Upper levels want to satisfy every one of the lower levels, and each one of the local communities wants to exist and fight to give its inhabitants services and enhance their welfare as well. A sort of competition can be observed between local communities as well as between departments. Even if we can observe very large differences from one place to another one, I am sure that our great number of local powers has enhanced life in a great many of our rural areas.

Decentralization has given more power to local communities and a chance to be more dynamic if they want to improve the richness of their human, economic, cultural, historical and natural resources. One can wonder if they have enough human and financial means to afford such policies! We can observe on TV advertising spots concerning such or such region or county. It's new; they want to show their differences!

The diversity of French culture, landscapes, and natural resources can be observed more and more as

a result of the rise of regional and local pride. On the other hand, local pride sometimes prevents communes from working together and drives them to expensive decisions with no chance of success.

A List of Real Problems

Diversity exists on the human and economic levels between communities and between regions, and we may find great differences in their survival capacity. Improvements brought by our decentralization system depend on the dynamism of local human resources, and it may be too late in some places where the population is too old and youth has gone away. European Economic Community (EEC) agriculture policy (milk quotas, for example) raises very serious problems in such regions which have no other economic riches than agriculture and its surroundings. Large areas will be abandoned, with serious consequences to the natural ecology.

To increase agricultural production and keep a decent financial income, farmers tend to destroy natural ecological balances and to generate pollution. They attack the diversity of natural resources while they think they are protecting the environment. We can observe conflicts between farmers who use lands and other people living in rural areas who want nice, traditional and tidy landscapes, but no visual or chemical pollution. Also, we observe more and more farmers losing power in commune councils, and they may be reproached for improving their lands only on the basis of economic considerations.

It is more and more expensive to maintain public services in every part of rural France, and we may observe some new public service problems in the future.

We shall need to create new jobs to improve fallowing lands where it is necessary to preserve ecological diversity and security and resources. Will farmers be candidates for these jobs? Will other people be ready to pay for this new service?

Conclusion

To make it short, I think that we can be optimistic. French rural areas will still be places of well-being in the future, with great diversity from one region to another, and with an increase of forests and fallowing lands. We always say that French people are stuck to their wooden shoes, unable to forget their roots.

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Perspectives from Japan

by Ryohei Kada

Introduction

Japan may be the country which has experienced the most dramatic socioeconomic changes in the past century. In the late nineteenth century, it was totally a feudal society, where the majority of the people were simply peasants living in rural areas. A long string of social and political reforms, along with technological progress, have enabled the country to change very dramatically in a relatively short period. Rural areas were no exception to this pattern.

Especially in the last three decades, when Japan has undergone rapid economic progress, Japanese rural areas have received enormous impacts from urban areas. Physically, most of the rural houses have been renewed and remodeled to modern ones as the people's economic standard of living has risen. Economically, the rural population today enjoys higher income levels than urban families, due mainly to part-time farming, where the majority of the labor force engages in off-farm employment. However, when we look at the social and institutional aspects of rural areas, there are many elements which have remained relatively unchanged.

In this paper, I will try to highlight the essential characteristics of the rural areas of Japan and their economic and political significance in the rapidly changing Japanese society.

Changes in Agricultural Structure

An overview of the general trend in the farm population and in the number of farms in Japan is necessary to the purposes of this section. Before World War II, the Japanese farm population was stable at around 35 million. Since the war, the number has declined from 37 million in 1950 to 23 million in 1975. The share of the farm population in the total population has gradually decreased from around 45 percent just after the war to 20.5 percent in 1975. The rate of decline is, however, rather slow compared with that in the United States. The decline in the number of farms was even slower than the decline of the farm population.

Like the farm population, the number of farms in prewar days was stable at around 5.3 to 5.5 million. But in the postwar period, the number of farms declined gradually, from 6.2 million in 1950 to 4.9 million in 1975. Since the total area of cultivated land in Japan has not changed very much throughout these periods, the average size of holding has been very stable at around 1.0 hectare, although the present trend shows a slight increase in average size. It should be noted, however, that the composition of the working population has changed significantly. Also changed is the inner structure of farm families, a change due especially to off-farm employment and income. In other words, the increase of part-time farm families is the most noticeable postwar change in Japanese agricultural and rural structure.

Part-time farming per se is not a recent phenomenon in rural Japan. Almost 30 percent of farm households were classified as part-time farm households even in prewar days. Opportunities for rural people in those days were to work as craftsmen or local merchants, or to run small cottage industries. After World War II, however, the number of full-time farm households decreased quite drastically from about 3 million in 1950 to only 0.6 million in 1975. At the same time, the absolute number and ratio of Type II part-time farm households (where off-farm income is greater than farm income) increased from 1.3 million in 1950 to 3.1 million in 1975. The ratio of off-farm income to total family income has steadily increased from 12.2 percent in 1921 to 67.8 percent in 1975, with an especially remarkable increase after 1960. The share of off-farm income exceeded that of farm income in 1963 for the first time. Moreover, it should be

noted that per capita disposable income of the farm population exceeded that of the nonfarm population in 1972 for the first time in Japanese history. The trend thereafter has been a further widening of the gap between the two.

The variety of off-farm jobs, in the postwar period especially, has widened from rural or agriculture-related employment to include urban manufacturing or service-related jobs. This widening of job opportunities was made possible through decentralization of industry and concomitant development of transportation methods. Now off-farm jobs are available not only for youngsters, but also for middle-aged and elderly members of the farm family. In addition, the nature of off-farm jobs has changed from casual, part-time to permanent (or at least long-term) employment.

Increased off-farm employment by farm family members means a reduction in the working population engaged in the family's agricultural work. The number of the working population in agriculture almost halved during the period 1950-1975, decreasing from 16 million to 8 million persons. In addition, the composition of the working population has changed to include a heavier representation of aged and female members of the family year by year. In 1960, the age group of 16-29 years old occupied about a quarter of the total agricultural working population, but in 1975 it occupied only 13 percent. The decrease of young workers in agriculture was quite drastic between 1960-1965, when the Japanese economy expanded more than 10 percent per annum. Thus, combined with the changes in the number of farm households mentioned above, the working population per farm household decreased from 2.6 persons in 1950 to 1.6 persons in 1975.

Technological change has been a remarkable feature in postwar Japanese agriculture. Just after the war the pressing need to increase the food supply was achieved mainly by the development and diffusion of yield-increasing techniques like a new rice bedding system, breeding of more high-yielding varieties, and the rationalization of fertilizer inputs. After the last 1950s, however, as Japan entered a labor scarce economy, labor was substituted for machinery in the work of land tillage, and later, in late 1960s to 1970s, the substitution was further intensified by machines doing the work of harvesting and rice transplanting. Farm mechanization has increased even among part-time farm families, where the labor shortage in the family is keenly felt. In other words, the pattern of part-time farming has been sustained by the development of labor-saving technologies. Historically, Japanese agricultural development has been achieved by means of land-saving or labor-intensive technology. Now, however, more machinery is used instead of labor, and land intensity is dropping.

In terms of land intensity, winter crops have been abandoned as the trend toward part-time farming has increased. Part-time farm families have specialized in a single cropping of rice, which, combined with decreasing per capita consumption of rice, brought about serious rice surplus problems in the late 1960s.

Changes in Rural Areas During the Last Three Decades

Starting in the early 1960s, the high economic growth of Japan has changed not only urban-metropolitan areas, but also rural areas, under the wave of continuous industrialization and modernization. Technological progress within the agriculture sector is characterized by modern farm mechanization and other heavier capital investments in farming systems. They have certainly lessened the burden of human labor inputs; in the process, more and more young people have left rural areas, and the majority of agricultural labor has been taken over by elderly people and women.

This exodus of the rural labor force has, on the one hand, endangered the maintenance and management of rural community functions. There are basically two categories of rural areas in this process. In the relatively flat rural areas close to urban centers, the majority of farm households has become more dependent upon non-agricultural incomes and employment. Furthermore, more and more non-agricultural city people have entered the rural areas to live. The mixture of agricultural and non-agricultural households in the boundaries of rural areas is very common in this flat zone. On the other hand, in more remote and

mountainous areas, such rural exodus has caused what may be called "depopulation" problems, where many communities have been deserted and have lost major social and economic functions, especially during the 1960s and early 1970s.

However, when we look at the essential nature and function of rural community villages, most of the rural communities still maintain their institutional and cultural functions to maintain their agricultural land, farm production, and rural life. It is a surprising fact that the last three decades' high economic growth has certainly changed the physical and material life of rural areas, but has not changed the institutional systems and social relationships within the village. Probably, to explore the reasons why in Japan this was the case is one of the most important tasks for us to understand the present rural Japan in a comparative sense.

Government Perceptions of Rural Areas

In the past century, since the beginning of Meiji Restoration in 1868, the central government appears to have continued to neglect the issues of rural areas as a target area of government policy. Under the Japanese bureaucratic system, where each ministry is separate, rural areas have for a long time been considered as very conservative and backward societies. In terms of administration, they are also considered to have very inefficient organizational structure. Very often rural areas were considered incomprehensible; economically speaking, they were perceived to be traditional, backward, and therefore unreasonable in terms of behavior. Probably for these reasons, academics and researchers have seldom focused on rural village communities in relation to agricultural policies, except for the works done by some rural sociologists. Today, however, many academics, including economists, are choosing rural areas as their targets for research. This is probably because many scientists feel that rural areas and farmers are endangered by various factors surrounding critical agricultural situations.

The Changing Nature of Farmers

In the past, most of the farmers were dependent upon solely small-scale, paddy-based agriculture. But in the long-term process of Japanese industrialization and modernization, such homogeneous structure of farms has changed to have a more heterogeneous structure. In brief, we may be able to say that there exist three basic types of farm households in contemporary rural Japan.

The first of these is full-time farmers, who believe agriculture is the only important family business to be continued over generations. Although the number of these farms is very small and still shrinking in the overall agricultural population, they are "real farmers," undertaking modern, capital-intensive types of agriculture, and thus they are important in the overall scheme of Japanese agricultural production. The problem is, however, that they do not possess much political power in decision-making processes because of their small numbers.

The second group is part-time farming households, which comprise the majority of rural households. Their heavy dependence upon outside incomes and time allocation to non-agricultural activity has tended to shift their concerns toward things urban and modern. But the important point is that when it comes to the issues of agricultural land use and rural community problems, their attitudes are still very conservative and they try to maintain the traditional functions of the community. This is largely due to their way of thinking about the possession and succession of assets and status-holding within rural communities.

The third group is farm households where only elderly people are living, maintaining more or less subsistence agriculture. Statistically speaking, about 10 percent of the total of farm households is classified in this category, but the category is not important in agricultural production or political power in rural areas. However, as the age structure of rural areas shifts to a structure where the elderly are increasing, this category of farmers will increase as well in the future. Another point which must not be forgotten is that

there are more and more middle-aged and retiring persons who are returning to the rural areas taking up again the farm households which they had left in their younger days.

One of the difficulties facing rural communities today is this heterogeneity of farming populations, particularly when it comes to land consolidation projects and land-use planning in general. Rationalization of land use by means of farm size expansion has been constrained by the difficulty of creating a consensus among villagers.

Unanimous, Group Decision Making by All Villagers

Interestingly enough, decision making in rural communities in Japan is not by majority vote, nor by election. Rather, their rule has been unanimous decision making after protracted discussion among all rural community members. It may appear that this is old-fashioned, but it was actually quite wise of villagers to have such a well defined and sustainable community function. It has been their biggest concern not to split the communities among villagers, which in the past meant disastrous situations in their lives in poorly resourced and overpopulated rural Japan.

Another reason for this unanimous decision-making process is that resource conservation, including farmland, water, community roads, etc., is only made possible by the participation of all the members. The unit of agriculture in Japan is not really farming by individual families. It is rather more a system of the "community farm," where the whole village is maintaining its territory and functions cooperatively; for example, cropping patterns are in effect decided as a group, according to unspoken social conventions.

Logic of Rural Areas

Probably the nature of Japanese rural areas can be identified by the following three key ideas: (1) continuity of rural community functions, (2) adjustability to outside changes, and (3) egalitarian principles and unanimous decision-making processes.

For hundreds of years, rural community people have cooperatively maintained their agricultural production and rural life. Egalitarian principle is the basis of their attitudes even in modern times. Illustrations of this can be easily found in such examples as the maintenance of water use and drainage systems, common rural roads they use in their daily life, and other communal activities such as agriculture-related festivals and religious activities. Irrespective of their farm size, economic well-being, or any other indicator of social class, each farm household has an equal opportunity and equal political rights. Another example of this is the method of setting aside paddy fields, where in Japan quotas were almost equally distributed by the same percentage of reduction in rice production. Certainly, by doing this, they have sacrificed to a great degree the efficiency of rice production from a narrowly defined economic point of view. But they have enjoyed a harmonious, long-standing community life instead.

Split Opinions About Agricultural and Rural Reforms

In the past, rural population was for a long time the basis of the leading conservative party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Farmers and their family members have been very dependable and reliable votes for this conservative party. Hence, their political power has been very strong in obtaining agricultural protection and support for high prices. Even in the process of the huge exodus of the agricultural labor force, the rural population and their relatives in urban areas were very much supportive of the conservative party.

The situation is now, however, rapidly changing in recent years, as the Japanese economy has become one of the superpowers in the world and has posed enormous trade friction with major trading partners. There seem to be split opinions about the treatment of agriculture and rural areas, and whether agricultural

protection is to be continued or not. Probably, one of the most acute examples of this is the case of the rice market opening, which is considered to have an enormous influence upon agricultural production, land use, and resource management.

Though obscure, a very strong uneasiness against the rice market opening is related to the deeply-rooted rice-based culture and traditions in Japan. Most of the thanksgiving festivals all over Japan and other cultural activities are even now connected with the people's desire for a good harvest of rice. The value of cultural heritage, based on rice, paddy field, and rural communities, is still alive and vital to contemporary Japan, in spite of visible modernization.

In summary, a discussion of the issue of rice import liberalization has revealed the following points to be clear: those who oppose rice import liberalization emphasize the significant values played, directly and indirectly, by rice and paddy fields, such as the importance to the regional economy, external benefits, food security, and other governmental and cultural reasons. Those who favor opening the rice market tend to emphasize the narrowly defined economic benefits, for reasons of solving trade friction problems and increasing consumer benefits. As time has passed, more and more people have been inclined to support the former position. Today, the discussion appears to relate more to socioeconomic and political elements than narrowly defined economic benefits.

Concluding Remarks

The future of rural Japan will be affected by the important values and realities and the coexistence of conservatism and progressiveness. Important values and realities include deep-rooted feelings about land, family, and village community; the principles of harmony and equality that affect the interrelationships of people and groups; and attitudes toward education and human capital investment. The coexistence of conservatism and progressiveness will be affected by the immobility of family and land, achievement of harmony in light of competition among villagers, and adjustments to new technology and emerging economic opportunities.

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SYNTHESIS

Editors' Note: James Bonnen, Glenn Nelson, and Ken Deavers were asked to reflect on their perspectives and thinking regarding the symposium presentations and discussion. Their charge was to suggest insights for better understanding what was said, to identify important perspectives and issues that were not adequately addressed, and to challenge our thinking about rural issues and rural policy. Their comments are detailed in this section.

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Let me comment on two broad themes: the value structures that sustain rural policy and, secondly, the effects on policy of different institutional contexts for policy-making in different countries.

Values, Beliefs, and Rural Policy

Running through much of our discussion and in the first two presentations was a substantial treatment of rhetoric, values, and beliefs. Decisions cannot be made without value judgments. And the value structures of society are complex; many are very deep (strong, durable) structures. Most social scientists understand and handle values poorly, especially the more positivistic among us. Even when agricultural economists, rural sociologists and others have appealed to values, they usually focus on agricultural fundamentalism in explaining policy outcomes. This is often misplaced in the sense that it is too narrow and misses an even more powerful underlying value structures. My comments are necessarily brief and "broad brush."

Embedded deep in man's cultural experience and memory is what anthropologists, intellectual and social historians, literary critics, and others have called the pastoral vision or dream. Many of the world's earliest myths, creation myths, begin with land, its formation and the people who live there. The myths of all ancient cultures have focused on an attachment to the land, a set of beliefs about nature. These myths sustain man's sense of identity and the culture and social structure of these societies. I use the term myth in its anthropological sense, i.e., a prevailing belief whose value-free content may be true or false. Myths also contain values that at any point in time may be judged right or wrong. Economists generally adopt the popular definition of myth, i.e., a belief that is by definition of the term false, and are unable to deal with the phenomena.

By the Renaissance, European culture and literature had evolved a dream of paradise in nature long ago, before "the fall of man." They were looking back to nature as a pristine entity that man had altered and disordered. The disorder (evil?) was manmade. By the time of the explorations of the new world and in the founding of this country, it took on a new meaning: not a dream of reclaiming innocence but of confronting nature to fill a void, to tame a wilderness with civilization and cultivation. Out of that process came most of the dominant characteristics of our national character. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, our national identity arose out of these images of the land. Except for anthropology, and to some extent psychology, one cannot find any systematic treatment of mythic images in the social sciences. One must go to anthropology, psychology, religious studies, and literature to discover the main scholarship on these deep value structures.

A significant change in American folk beliefs began to occur in the 19th century under the impact of industrialization and the growing popular belief in the idea of progress, an idea created and intellectually empowered in the 18th century. As a result, tension developed between the idealized pastoral vision of the state of nature inherited from our European ancestors and the effects of the industrial progress that we

were championing and achieving.

The pastoral vision is a deep or persistent value structure arising out of human experience that gives man a yearning for harmony between some idealized state of nature and the disturbing impacts of the works of man. This inherent, deep structure of values, held with respect to the land and nature, is shared by all mankind and acquires slightly different versions in different civilizations and as it is combined with various cultural values (Marx 1964).

The pastoral rhetoric is both retrospective and prophetic. Through it an audience is reminded of and asked to reach back toward a innocent world of golden harmony in nature, while some actor, poet, social scientist, or advocate prophesies a darker, altered future holding danger, conflict, and disharmony.

This is the broader context within which the agrarian fundamentalist values evolved. As cultural historian Leo Marx (1988) characterized it:

(In) the 1780s . . . Thomas Jefferson said that we should let our workshops remain in Europe and not bring the factory system to America, even if it meant lower productivity and a lower standard of living. It was better, he said, to let England manufacture our raw materials even if it meant economic subservience because we would end up with greater happiness and republican values. His opposition to industrialization had been called agrarianism but it really was pastoral.

Agrarianism is essentially an economic doctrine. It claims that the best societies are based on agriculture because agriculture is the key to the most stable and productive economy. Jefferson happened to agree with that but his primary interest in averting urbanization and industrialization derived from non-economic, qualitative values. And that kind of qualitative idealizing of a society aimed at harmony with the natural environment is . . . pastorism. Jefferson wanted to defend republican values, which he identified with the pastoral.

The pastoral image structures and gives meaning to a wide range of problems involving the relationship between nature and culture or technology.

Everyone who shares in the American culture inherits and holds the pastoral vision in some degree, and this interpretation comes into play when we encounter any tension between the highly industrialized, complex society and its technologies and our latent pastoral sense that a better, more harmonious world once existed. It has been repeatedly described as a very dangerous, destructive myth. It is strong yet subliminal, and its unmodified idealism permeates all society and conditions and drives political actions in very different, often inconsistent directions. It may or may not conform to the contextual facts.

The pastoral vision identifies an idealized state of nature: a belief that nature nurtures man, and projects an ideal of man in harmony with nature. This is poised against man's disruptive exploitation of nature, progress, technology, machines, and chemicals that intervenes in nature disturbing some natural harmony.

What current, more proximate beliefs derive from this? The pastoral vision sustains the modern belief in the agrarian stewardship of land. Farmers have always seen themselves, and have been seen, positively and in harmony with and supportive of nature. This is changing as environmentalists replace farmers as stewards of the land in the public's perception.

Current beliefs in the positive values of conservation of nature, environmental balance, sustainability, wildlife preservation, animal welfare, and wilderness preservation posit man in a state of grace and in harmony with nature. These are all beliefs that are compatible with and sustained by the pastoral vision.

On the other hand, this vision is counter-poised against such negative values as poisoning nature's food chain, abuse of the land, abuse of man's patrimony, high energy, unbalanced agriculture, destruction of biological diversity, and abuse of animals. Metaphorically anyone who engages in these activities has experienced the loss of grace and is in a state of sin.

This is part of the larger value set within which agricultural and rural policy is fought out. Today, it is a mistake to focus only on agrarian fundamentalism, particularly now that agriculture is only a small part of the total of rural economic activity. Look at our discussion in this symposium. After recognizing that agriculture was a small subset of rural society, we nevertheless spent most of our time talking about agriculture's role in rural development.

The agrarian fundamentalist vision drives us back to this mistaken focus even though intellectually we have already discounted it as counterfactual. Intellectually, almost all economists I know reject it, but still tend to act on it.

There are other values that condition and structure policy goals and decisions. We do not have enough time to go into them in any depth. There is equity and justice, of which there are many different concepts. Security, both physical and social, including food security, leads one toward protectionism in trade policy. There are beliefs about stability. It is alleged that unstable prices are characteristic of the farm sector, and something needs to be done about it. Belief in progress and growth drives American optimism. It also lies behind the technological and R&D drive in agriculture.

So some configuration of values is actualized in the context of factual beliefs, institutions, and political structures to reach policy prescriptions and actions. Almost without exception, the industrial nations protect their agriculture sectors. Why? What are the prescriptive and descriptive beliefs that underlie this? Typically these beliefs include: (1) the farm sector is inherently unstable; farm prices flex while the non-farm sector prices do not; (2) the farm sector is at a comparative disadvantage in trade with the non-farm sectors and therefore experiences chronic downward pressure on prices and income; (3) there is a lack of commutative justice in farming (the returns to the same set of resources invested in farming earn a lower return than in the non-farm sector), which is unfair; (4) there is a lack of distributive justice: that is, farmers are poorer than the non-farm population; and (5) national concern for food security, which often takes the form of the goal of self-sufficiency in food production driven by subsidy to overcome domestic comparative disadvantage.

In Europe all five of these beliefs in some degree sustain the special treatment and drive toward protection of agriculture. In the United States and Canada, food security has not been important. In Japan food security is important. I am not sure whether the perceptions of equity are the same in Japan.

Institutional Contents and Rural Policy-Making

Now, let me turn to a second broad theme involving another dimension to which we have paid relatively little attention. That is the effect of differences in the institutions of political and policy decision. These differences between countries over time affect policy outcomes very substantially, even when all of the other variables are the same. Such differences help explain why the domestic political power of agriculture is still relatively strong in the United States and Japan and apparently somewhat weaker in Europe.

Let me explore this. Japan has a parliamentary system in which the power is relatively concentrated. Farm organization power is also concentrated in Japan. There is one large dominant Japanese co-op through which the agricultural interests are expressed. Japanese systems of belief are still supportive of agriculture, and therefore a coalition of agriculture and government can block attacks on and sustain whatever agricultural sector policy the coalition desires.

In Europe each country has a parliamentary system in which power also tends to be concentrated. That is, the executive and the legislative branch are locked together, and whichever party wins the parliament controls the executive as well. This is in stark contrast to the United States. Also in Europe, the party system still has greater strength than in the United States, where the parties today are far weaker. European governments are more of a bureaucratic structure with limited choke points and forums in which decisions are made. The structure of the European Community government makes access even more complex.

Interest group power can gain access only at these few points where decisions can be made, and with greater concentration of power in the hands of a few in government, it is a little easier to deny access or say "no."

Agricultural producer power, it is alleged, is increasingly fragmented in the United States and Europe by the greater specialization of agricultural production. While the society's beliefs may still be supportive of the agricultural sector, they now come into major contest, especially with environmental beliefs. In Europe, however, when producers approach the government, the government can say "no" or at least balance off much of the pressure that the agricultural groups attempt to put on policymakers.

Still, I wonder whether the power of European producers has declined as much as is sometimes alleged. The United States went through a period in which we thought the agricultural interest groups were declining in influence and discovered *ex post* that they were still in effective control. We observed the fragmentation of economic interest in agriculture and thought that meant that power was being diffused. What accounts for this difference?

In the United States, the government structure was originally organized to diffuse power. The three branches of government—executive, legislative and judicial—were established as constitutionally separate. This prevents any concentration of governmental power, since no one branch can affect much change without cooperation of one or more of the other branches.

The party system as it existed before the 1970s was based on seniority. The committee structure and rules of Congress, as well as election rules, concentrated power. But since the mid-seventies, Congress has rewritten its rules resulting in a diffusion of power. The parties, once the glue of the system, have been in slow decline for decades, as voter loyalty has eroded and more recently as electoral rules have changed. Anyone with a limited amount of organization and power can now gain access to these institutions. Not just wheat and corn and cotton but walnut, mink, mint, and catfish power have come into their own. Why? Because power is now so diffused within government that it is no longer possible to deny access to anyone who is organized.

So, despite the decline or the fragmentation of power in agriculture, agricultural interests today have greater access to the policy process. They are able to stay organized well enough in coalitions, and they have become an integral part of the agricultural policy process of the government. In the United States as well as Japan, the private interests are effectively internal participants in the government policy-decision process. One cannot have more access than this.

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—Glenn Nelson is Visiting Scholar at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, while on leave from his post as Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul.

My intent is to identify subjects that were not addressed, or were addressed very little, and that warrant greater emphasis. I will suggest four such topics and then provide a brief conclusion.

Because the time of a conference is limited, I have an obligation to identify topics whose discussion could have been shortened to make room for expanded discussion of other topics. Farming, agriculture, and agricultural policy received too much emphasis relative to other issues. Many speakers noted in their introductory comments the limited role of agriculture in the rural economies of their countries. We should have taken more seriously our own comments on the relative importance of agriculture and proceeded with

a discussion consistent with its relative importance.

Regional Development Frameworks

The first topic that warranted more discussion was the frameworks that underlie our thinking about regional development. No one has made this explicit. Discussions of frameworks are very useful for quickly identifying differences in our assumptions about relationships between variables and about the relative importance of particular aspects of initial conditions. More attention to frameworks would have aided communication of differences and similarities in our views.

A discussion of frameworks would also have been useful because this topic is unsettled and exciting in an intellectual sense. People believe different things. This ferment reinforces the value of a discussion because no standard set of ideas dominates thinking, and thus we do not know what others think unless they tell us.

Based on my listening to the remarks at this conference, we in the United States are more attached than others to the ideas of Hicks as reflected in neoclassical economics. Within this framework, growth rates over space tend to become more equal over time, with labor flowing to places with high marginal rates of return for labor and capital flowing to places with high marginal rates of return for capital. Our thinking is probably heavily influenced by the experience of the South and the Northeast. In the late 1800s and 1900s, labor flowed from the low-wage South into the higher-wage Northeast. During the same period, capital, in the form of the machinery in plants such as for making shoes and textiles, flowed from the Northeast to the South. This framework of thinking tends to lead analysts to conclude that unfettered economic forces lead to desirable outcomes and that government has little or no constructive role to play with regard to explicit spatial policies.

Again based on my listening at this conference, our guests from Europe and Japan probably regard neoclassical economics as a rather naive framework for understanding spatial issues. Frameworks that hypothesize uneven development are probably more important in their thinking than such frameworks are in the thoughts of United States participants. Frameworks postulating uneven development include those of Myrdahl, who wrote about cumulative causation, and those of political economists drawing on the ideas of Marx.

However, I am not sure that I have correctly discerned differences in approach—and that is my point. More discussion of frameworks would have helped us to know quickly the assumptions of participants and to appreciate important differences.

Investment and Capital Markets

The institutions within which the scale, nature, and location of investment are determined are a key component of political economy, both as a field of study and in practice. To cite some examples of important questions, who saves and how much do they save? What is the relative importance of public institutions versus private actions in determining the nature and the location of investment? What are the relative investments in physical and human capital, in large-scale manufacturing facilities and disbursed plants, and in rural and urban locations?

Institutions in different countries differ greatly in how these investment decisions are made. Participants in this conference have addressed the location of investment in the context of land-use planning. But many other facets of investment have been ignored, especially those facets outside of agriculture. In the United States, measures dealing with capital markets are key components of spatial development policy. These conferences are important opportunities for us to learn from each other about, for example, how capital markets are organized in different countries, about the role of governments in influencing the cost of capital, and about the use of joint public-private ventures.

Information

The manner in which information or misinformation is created and disseminated is another key feature of political economy. For example, Anthony Downs in *An Economic Theory of Democracy* addresses the critical step of relaxing the assumption of perfect information that economists so often employ. For another example, the more radical theories of regional development place great emphasis on the content and source of the information that provides the basis for people's decisions. We have talked very little about these topics at this conference.

From conversations in other settings, I am told that Europeans are increasingly suspicious of their governments' statistical efforts as unwarranted intrusions of individual privacy. Germany cancelled its census. The resistance to the census reached such heights that the nonresponse rate was likely to be so high that the data would be seriously flawed. In addition, the costs to political leaders of supporting a census were becoming very high.

We in the United States are encountering similar resistance to our public efforts to learn about ourselves. Some of us wrongly attributed this resistance to our national political cycle; that is, we mistakenly believed that a new administration would bring a climate more conducive to gathering and disseminating statistical information. Increased understanding of developments in other countries has helped us to appreciate that events in this country are probably driven by concerns more basic than which party controls the White House. Citizens are very concerned about who creates information and who disseminates it.

In the United States, we have just completed a political campaign in which the use of television, especially of short ads and distorted views, became a central issue. My impression is that political dialogue is quite different in Europe and Japan and that you do not organize your political campaigns as we do in the United States.

I would have appreciated more discussion of how we create and provide access to information that people, and especially rural people, find useful in their private decisions and in their public decisions as citizens.

Political Institutions

We have not made adequate use of this time to learn about the consequences of different forms of political institutions. Japan, Europe, and the United States differ in important respects in their political institutions. The roles of local, state, and national governments differ significantly in the governmental systems represented here. The differences in relationships among these levels have important impacts on how services such as education are provided, how investment is allocated over space, and how investment is channeled into alternative directions.

Because the participants in this conference represent this institutional diversity and because citizen participation is a major concern, we potentially have much to learn from each others' experiences with different forms of government, including the differing relationships among local, state, and national governmental institutions. These issues are closely related to those of the creation and dissemination of information to citizens.

Conclusion

Greater attention to the topics noted above would have increased the degree to which our discussion focused on the primary factors determining the well-being of most rural people, and especially of the nonfarm population. These topics might have led to a change in emphasis, for example, from farmers to multinational firms, from the agricultural sector to nonagricultural sectors, from agricultural policy to

regional policy, and from political institutions as an implicit, rigid assumption to political institutions as a variable that we attempt to manipulate to attain specific goals.

Finally, and with recollection of Peter Baumann's presentation, maybe people of Norwegian ancestry at a conference are similar to Danes at an airport. I am well fed. I am learning a lot. The presentations were excellent and stimulated much thinking. I am having a great time. I am a little unhappy because the conference could have been even better.

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Let me describe for you what we thought about when we set out to organize this conference. We had three broad purposes in mind. It is in the context of those three broad purposes, it seems to me, that we will later evaluate whether we got what we thought we were going to get.

Alternative Formulations of Rural Issues

The first purpose was to learn something about alternative formulations of rural issues. What is clear in the United States, I think, is that the formulation of rural issues continues to be dominated by discussions of agriculture or farming. And we have, I think, learned some interesting things about new dimensions in the way the rural issues are being defined in Europe, and, to some extent, in Japan. One example is the rising importance of environmental values in defining the rural issue, although much of our discussion of those environmental values was in the context of farming.

My sense is that the environmental values that are developing have non-agricultural bases as well. One example of this phenomenon is the idea of the countryside as picturesque. Another example is the emphasis on historical and cultural preservation which you begin to see in places. There are different cuts at the issue of rural, which we just sort of wandered into at this conference by talking about concerns with the current chemical-based agricultural systems that many of our countries have, and the consequences those systems have for the environment. But the more you see rural territory as something to be consumed not simply by rural citizens but also by urban citizens, it seems to me the more other views of the environment become an important component of how national and local governments are going to define the environmental question.

So I think we, in fact, have gained some insights about how rural issues are formulated from the papers that were delivered here. With respect to the rising importance of environmental values, it is certainly a development that is worthwhile following to know how it evolves.

Political Coalitions

The second purpose we had was to try to understand the nature of coalitions that form around rural issues, both political coalitions and coalitions of interests, especially the way in which coalitions are forming around what I would call the "new" rural issues. We understand coalitions around agricultural issues. The questions were: Who are the players in defining the other rural issues? How do they organize among themselves? Do they in fact build constituencies that include or exclude the traditional agricultural coalition? What does that imply about their access to the political system and to political power?

We talked some (and both Jim Bonnen and Glenn Nelson referred to it) about the extent to which there is a fragmentation of the coalitions for traditional agriculture. My sense is that we might have overstated

the importance of that. It is true in the United States, for example, that if you look at the large membership farm organizations, that their power in the political system to influence agricultural policy for general farm gains seems to be declining. But the fragmentation and organization of farm interests that are quite narrow and have very specific commodity targets for policies seems to be growing.

One sense I get is that the only other significant coalition that seems to be developing is the one around environment. What is unanswered yet is whether that environmental coalition will turn out to be anti-agriculture or whether, in fact, it will be co-opted to some extent by the agricultural interests and therefore neutralized in terms of public policies toward agriculture.

There is, I think, another whole area to think about in terms of coalitions: what are the constituencies for the broader view of environment that I mentioned earlier? This is a theme likely to increase in importance, given the role that rural territory plays in the lives of urban people.

Content of Rural Policy

The third thing we wanted to do was to talk about the implications of alternative formulations and the nature of the coalitions for the content of rural policy. I do not think we did that. Maybe that is because as researchers, we always want to do more research and be professional meeting-goers, as Wendy said. I guess that I always want to go to another meeting (generally, that is not true). But I do think that it would be possible to organize another session that focuses on that third question and do it more explicitly and clearly than we did here.

Now, having laid that out, what I tried to think about last night is how and why it is that when we talk about rural and rural policy, we end up always talking about agriculture. Jim laid out one reason for that. Let me suggest another reason. This is not very well thought out; at midnight last night it made sense, and it may not make any sense this morning. But, let me lay it on the table anyhow.

It seems to me that there are a set of macro forces that have been affecting the economies of Western Europe and the United States over the last several years, which provide a kind of context within which some of the debate about rural policy is now taking place. There are clearly more of these forces than I can list. Important for our discussion, however, is the fact that virtually all of the Western democracies have been mired in a long period of relatively slow growth.

In the United States, we have now been through more than a decade of stable or declining real wages. And it has also been a period of rapid economic restructuring, a period of declining manufacturing employment (goods producing employment), and growing service sector employment. Those macro factors in the United States have contributed to rising income inequality and poverty.

But that has not happened in Europe, at least not to the extent that I think it has happened in the United States. And as I think about it, I ask myself, why is that? Well, there are a number of reasons, I think. One is that the underlying social contract between citizens and government about the role of government in redressing inequity is different. That social contract seems to be a lot stronger in most of the Western European democracies than it is in the United States. You see it not only in terms of solidarity within countries, but among countries in some of the programs that are run out of the EEC.

There was a recent survey published in the Washington Post which provides some insight. It was a survey in which citizens of a number of countries were asked a question which was essentially, "Do you believe government has a role in redressing inequity (inequality)?" Less than a third of the U.S. citizens who responded said "yes." There was not a European country that had less than 75 percent of the people who said "yes." And I think that is a fundamental difference in the policy perspective around rural issues.

There is a firmer contract in Europe, not only at the individual level, but also at the collective level. At the regional level, for example, the role of regional equalization schemes are part of the basic social contract. Tax equalization, the revenue transfers that are built into the system, is illustrative of policies

that are designed to change the set of options available to poor regions and poor countries.

In the United States, we tend to define as unacceptable or unfair U.S. spending patterns that do not return to every state exactly the amount of money each contributes to the federal treasury. That means for states like Mississippi that are poor and have serious human resource and other developmental problems, the options that they have available to them are seriously less than they would in a situation where as part of the basic social contract there was in fact some revenue equalization among states. You are beginning to see some revenue equalization going on within states, for example, in school districts. Very little of it is in the prospects at the national level. Now it turns out that in the European context, regional policy, not rural policy, is the principle instrument that Europeans talk about when they are asked about spatial policy. And I worry a little bit about that because it seems to me regional policy is about space, but rural policy then turns out to be about agriculture. I think this is a construction that is bound to lead us to talk past each other to avoid some of the important issues about what you do for territories and what the meaning of "place" is.

This concern led me to think about one of the fundamental things that has been happening in the United States economy, particularly to rural areas. The question is, why is it that the economic transformation of rural areas is not at the core of our thinking and discussions about future rural policy? In part, I think, it is because economic transformation is about changes in the sectoral composition and occupational structures in rural places. Most of our countries, certainly the United States, do not typically have significant national policy or defined policy interest in economic sectors or occupations, with the exception of agriculture. Consequently, as rural areas become less agricultural, as they begin to look more like urban areas, as their occupational structures change and there are fewer farmers, there is less rationale for our intellectual caring and involvement in rural policy.

Fundamentally, it seems to me that, except for occasional interventions, we do not have a commitment to maintaining any particular sectoral employment pattern or any specific occupational pattern in either rural or urban places because we do not attach very high values to those things. In urban places, the economies are sufficiently dynamic and resilient, so it may be fine to simply say "market forces will solve the problem." But in rural places, the decline in a single sector, the disappearance of a set of occupations may in fact threaten the real future of that place as a viable entity in the economic and social system. And it seems to me that part of what is happening in rural places is as they become less populated with farmers our interest in policy to deal with them lessens as well.

Concluding Observations

by Theodore Alter and Richard Long

We did not expect to find the definitive answers to the questions around which this symposium was organized. Participants differed in the degree to which they were willing to reach even tentative conclusions. Yet the presentations and ensuing discussion did yield several interesting observations that warrant further consideration and pondering. Some of those observations follow:

- Commitment to rural areas seems to be deeply rooted in the basic value system of all of the countries represented. In Western Europe, the commitment to the countryside takes the form of a sense of responsibility to the national heritage. The commitment is cultural—rooted in literature and aesthetics. The wealthiest countries appear willing to use some government resources to redeem the commitment. In Japan rural life is not so romanticized, but rural land is a scarce resource, and holding wealth in the form of rural land is prestigious.
- Rural policy in Western Europe is grounded in a broader, more diverse set of values than in the United States. The cultural, environmental, and social attributes of rural areas are as important in determining policy as are economic considerations, if not more so. In the United States, narrowly defined economic individualism is the paramount value driving the formulation of policy for agricultural and rural areas.
- Viewed from the U.S. perspective, Western Europeans seem to treat economic development in rural places as secondary to other values, notably preservation of the manmade environment and the welfare of the farm sector. They seem less convinced than most Americans that changes in the uses of the rural landscape and new means of income earning are the inescapable price of improving the well-being of rural people. Whether that attitude is merely romantic (as it might seem to Americans), or realistic in light of the greater willingness of Europeans to pay for their preferences through various social programs, is unclear. One participant observed of his country that when preservation of the countryside, which is very popular and thought to be politically important, interferes with a concrete opportunity for economic development, preservation always gives way.

On the other hand, another European participant offered convincing evidence that his country is willing to subsidize (indefinitely?) projects that help rural people remain in their locations when the projects also benefit urban people, by providing recreation opportunities, for example. If his perception of his country is correct, there is evidently little need to justify such subsidies on grounds of market failure. They are viewed as simply paying for things that many people want.

- Even though Japanese economic development has had a significant impact on rural areas, the social and institutional characteristics of rural areas have changed little over time. This cultural heritage is important in influencing attitudes towards the governance and use of rural resources. Japanese attitudes toward their limited arable rural land are perhaps better understood as historically conditioned respect for the conservation of a unique resource than a calculated economic choice.
- European participants in the symposium were persuaded that the disproportionate political power of the agriculture sector in both the European Community and individual countries is diminishing rapidly. The same could be said about Japan (at least before the setback for the ruling party in the spring 1989 elections). Some Americans who often have watched the confounding of similar predictions of the decline in the power of United States commodity lobbies—based on the same powerful logic—were skeptical.

National Perceptions and Political Significance of Rural Areas

- Europeans seem more conscious than Americans of the need to reconcile environmental and economic considerations in efforts to promote economic development. They show more faith in environmentally sensitive development that conforms to the comparative advantage of rural areas as the long-run source of economic well-being. They are more consciously reluctant to "kill the goose that can lay golden eggs" for rural areas.
- Understanding of rural issues and policy in the United States could benefit from comparative analysis and discussion of topics such as 1) the impact of different institutions for political and policy decision making on the formulation of rural policies and their outcomes; 2) alternative regional development paradigms grounded in a broader set of factors than just economic consideration; 3) how information is generated and disseminated for use by people in their private and public decision making on rural issues; and 4) how differences in the structure and functioning of capital markets affects public and private investment in rural areas.
- In the United States, why is it that agricultural policy is, in effect, our rural policy? Why is it that economic transformation in the nonfarm sector is not also central to our thinking and discussions about rural policy? Is it because national economic policy tends not to be oriented, with the exception of agriculture, toward sectoral or occupational change, thus lessening the rationale for rural policy as agriculture declines? Is it because of broadly shared values that give precedence to economic as opposed to cultural, environmental, or other considerations? Is it because of the structure of our governmental and political institutions and the relative distribution of power among the multiple publics with interests in rural areas in our society?

We also have an observation about the usefulness of cross-national approaches as a means of enriching thinking about rural development and options for promoting it. It is that the modern American definition of rural development (or at least ours) includes a large component of what in other countries is regarded as social policy and regional development. To understand what other countries are doing to deal with what we think of as rural development issues, we need to look at social policy—especially regional policy—for further insights.

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An International Symposium
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