
TOPICAL REVIEW

RURAL SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN LATIN AMERICA*

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INTRODUCTION

This article with commentaries is presented experimentally in response to suggestions made to the editor by representatives of the LARR Board at the Ithaca meetings that topical articles of the type developed in *Current Anthropology* be solicited for the Review. The *Current Anthropology* (*) treatment consists of commissioning a specific article on a theme of moment, then circulating it prior to publication among a group of experts for commentary and publishing both together with a rebuttal by the author. Time did not permit a complete imitation of the process, but with the kind cooperation of the author and his sponsoring organization we have obtained permission to circulate in advance an article of interdisciplinary import which has appeared only recently in Spanish and printed the reactions of a selected group of experts in distinct disciplines. Neither did time allow the author his rebuttal in this issue, but we shall reserve space in Number 3 should he care to make use of it.

THE PRESENT PAPER EXPLORES ONE OF THE PATHS ENTERED UPON IN THE ECLA Secretariat's recent study of "Geographic Distribution of the Population of Latin America and Regional Development Priorities" (*Boletín Económico de América Latina*, VIII, 1 marzo de 1963).¹ Its starting point is the well-known

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present situation of rapid population growth, combined with apparent incapacity of the rural areas to absorb more than a fraction of their own contribution to this growth, to narrow the very wide gap between their levels of living and those of the cities, to respond adequately to rising urban demands for their products, or to participate effectively in national decision-making. As the earlier study indicated, static or declining employment opportunities in the countryside and the small towns combined with insufficiently rapid growth in urban employment openings to condemn a high proportion of the population increment to a marginal position—drifting from rural to urban underemployment, increasingly finding its way to the peripheral shantytowns of the great cities, multiply handicapped in education, motivations, even physical health, for any effort to escape from its marginality.

The rural lag can be traced to a number of mutually reinforcing causes, some of them deeply rooted in the history of the region, and is now being attacked—or at least probed—by many instruments of policy, including agrarian reform, community development, and education. It may be that the effectiveness of these instruments and of development planning in general will be enhanced if they are able to take into account more systematically than hitherto the ways the rural population is distributed upon the land and the relationships between rural people and the local centres of administration, marketing and services.

In attempting a composite picture of rural settlement patterns and the influences that are changing them, the following pages trespass upon several fields of research and policy. According to an axiom more often proclaimed than acted upon, rural life is indivisible; all programmes designed to influence it will gain in effectiveness the more they are integrated with each other and with the formal and informal institutions actually functioning in the countryside, which in turn are closely related to the physical groupings of population and the lines of communication among them.

The intent is to describe patterns and relationships that are widely important in the region. The extreme diversity in local situations that in fact exists would justify a study many times the length of the present; such a study, however, could hardly be made without the prior carrying out of a large number of local monographic investigations. It is to be hoped that the present exploratory work will encourage local institutions to proceed with such investigations, and in particular to give more attention to settlement patterns and related questions in rural studies with other primary interests.

Many of the documentary sources that have yielded information, in fact, have been only secondarily concerned with the themes of this study. Such sources have proved unexpectedly rich on some points, but have provided nothing on others of equal importance. The most systematic information on the rural habitat in Latin America may be found in a series of national surveys

made by rural sociologists and anthropologists ten to twenty years ago. More recently, a few valuable surveys of major regions within countries have been made, but most of the recent information is strictly local and of doubtful representativeness. While the study of geographical distribution of population mentioned above was primarily demographic in character, the present work has not been able to draw extensively on demographic statistics; only in a very few countries do these statistics distinguish between types of settlement within the population classified as "rural."

Our main sources of information picture the rural scene on the eve of changes that both influence and are influenced by settlement patterns and community organization: land tenure reforms; the appearance of rural mass organizations, new forms of leadership and allegiance to national political movements; the disintegration of traditional local ties through migration. We do not really know how widely these forces have affected the rural population, or precisely what their consequences are. It is possible, by selection from the fragmentary evidence, to construct a picture of the rural scene as predominantly static and tradition-bound, or as seething with revolutionary forces. This paper assumes the risk of faulty selection and misplaced emphasis inseparable from the building up of a composite picture from such evidence. It may also be justifiably accused of abstracting certain problems of the rural population from the national and international economic, social, and political currents that are now the main determinants of the future of this population. The present focus on the situation in rural localities and on action at the local level, however, does not imply that the major rural problems can be solved by localized remedies outside the context of national structural changes. It does imply that the local environment places manifold obstacles in the way of incorporation of the rural areas into a dynamic process of growth and that these obstacles are likely to frustrate investment plans formulated at the national level and treating human beings as uniform "resources." The present paper leaves for later discussion the very important question of prerequisites for better functioning links and transmission belts between the national and the local—in other words, for the "regionalization" and "localization" of development planning.

TOWARD A CLASSIFICATION OF RURAL SETTLEMENT TYPES

The groupings of people in rural Latin America can be classified according to size, according to physical patterns of settlement, according to administrative status, according to social ties and degree of social stratification, or according to economic functions and relationships to the land. Classifications according to these different criteria can be expected to coincide in large part, although never neatly or consistently. The task of classification is complicated

to some extent by terminological confusion. The word "community" has been particularly over-worked to cover almost any kind of rural grouping. The terms used nationally and locally are very numerous, and their usage differs from place to place. Within a single country one may find that a term has several alternative meanings, while a given settlement type has alternative names, even in official administrative practice. A number of studies, however, have provided definitions for the terms nationally used, and some of them have proposed uniform terminologies, adapted to Latin American conditions from the terminologies used by geographers and rural sociologists in other regions.²

The largest population nuclei with which the present study is concerned are the town (*pueblo*) and the village (*aldea*). No satisfactory population limits for these two settlement types applicable to the whole region can be fixed. The *pueblo* will normally have more than 2,500 inhabitants and the *aldea* more than 1,000, but many nuclei meeting other criteria fall below these minimum sizes.³ Both *pueblo* and *aldea* are normally administrative centres (*cabeceras*) for *municipios* (*comunas, cantones, distritos*, etc.), the basic local territorial units of administration. The *pueblo* and usually the *aldea* have urbanized settlement patterns, with central *plazas* and at least a part of the houses arranged along regular streets; in most of the region these patterns derive from foundations during the colonial period. (In much of Argentina, Brazil and southern Chile the *pueblos* derive from frontier settlement in the 19th or early 20th century, often originating in a railroad station or a road-river junction; here physical patterns are less standardized). The *pueblo* as often as not and the *aldea* sometimes has a piped water system and public electrical power. Both types have at least three distinguishable social strata:⁴ a local upper stratum of officials, merchants and medium landowners (the larger landowners rarely live in a *pueblo* or *aldea*); a middle stratum of small shopkeepers, artisans and small landowners; and a lower stratum of landless workers and *minifundio* holders. Both the *pueblo* and the *aldea* depend for their livelihood mainly on agriculture (leaving aside the relatively small numbers of settlements that depend on fishing, mining, forestry, or specialized artisan activities). The most important distinction between the *pueblo* and *aldea*, as ideal types, lies not in their relative sizes but in the ways they are related to the land. The *pueblo* is *primarily* a marketing, transport, administrative and servicing centre for a rural hinterland and a place of residence for proprietors who do not work their own land. The *aldea* is *primarily* a compact living area of cultivators who travel daily to and from their fields, but still large and closely knit enough to support a certain range of specialized institutions and services. The *aldea*, in fact, by itself can be considered a "community," although it may also provide services for smaller rural nuclei. The *pueblo*, ideally, functions as the specialized centre of a larger community. In this sense, many *municipio* capitals with only a

few hundred inhabitants are closer to the pueblo type than to the aldea; however lethargically or parasitically they may conduct themselves as community centres their existence depends on these functions more than on direct cultivation of the land.⁵

The next type of nucleus to be distinguished is the large hamlet or *villorrio*. The villorrio is usually smaller than the aldea, but the important distinction is not so much in the size as in the relative unimportance of specialized administrative and economic functions and the more rudimentary class stratification.⁶ The population of the typical villorrio consists almost entirely of small cultivators or agricultural wage workers, some of whom are likely to be part-time shopkeepers or artisans. Its physical appearance is also different; it is a sprawling agglomeration of houses without a centre or regular streets. Community relationships are more limited and informal than in the aldea; for most specialized services the villorrio must depend on a nearby pueblo or do without. Piped water and electrical power are usually lacking.⁷

The next broad type, descending in the scales of population size and degree of organization, is the hamlet (*caserío*), a loosely nucleated cluster of not more than 200 people.⁸ At this point both the terminology and the patterns themselves become confused or ambiguous. The physical closeness of settlement is likely to depend on geography or land tenure. Houses may be huddled together because of dependence on a single source of water or because of need for protection against prevailing winds or because the only land on which they are tolerated is along a roadside. Where such considerations are not decisive and the families are small holders, they are likely to live more widely scattered, so that caserío settlement merges into dispersed settlement. Very often a small nucleus with school and one or two tiny shops or drinking-places together with widely scattered single families constitutes both a natural area of social interaction and an officially recognized sub-division of the municipio, the boundaries of the two not necessarily coinciding. In many instances, the caserío represents a quite recent and transitional stage in rural spontaneous resettlement or in the disintegration of larger nuclei. The building of a new road attracts families to group themselves along it, and a local airfield, military post, construction project, etc., usually acquires a tiny satellite cluster of families.

Sociologically the caserío constitutes a neighbourhood, or area of primary contacts; it is too small and undifferentiated to deserve the name of community; the extent to which a wider community exists depends on the relationships between the caserío and the pueblo with which it is linked administratively and economically. The actual maintenance of primary neighbourhood ties probably depends more on local cultural traditions and on topographical barriers than it does on the degree of clustering or dispersal.

The last ideal type fitting into the sequence, dispersed settlement, thus cannot be clearly distinguished from caserío settlement in most of Latin

America; usually the two are found in combination. Settlement that is dispersed socially as well as physically is also found, however, in which neither neighbourhood ties or links to a larger pueblo-centred community are well-defined. This seems to be the case in many areas of tropical pioneer settlement, among the remoter minifundio cultivators in the highlands, and under quite different circumstances among commercial renter-farmers.⁹

The major difficulties in a classification of rural settlement patterns remain to be faced: first, the traditional rural groupings must be divided into two broad classes according to land tenure: those owning at least the land on which they are located, and those located on large estates; and second, reforms in land tenure, or measures intended to protect certain forms of tenure, are creating new groupings that in some respects stand apart, in others overlap with the types already described.

In every country of the region except for Bolivia, Cuba, Haiti, and Mexico, an important part of the rural population lives and works on large privately-owned estates. Most attempts at classification of rural settlement have distinguished the *hacienda* as a separate type; in terms of economic and social organization this is entirely justified. The hacienda constitutes a kind of "community" confined in a paternalistic mold, with its own social hierarchy, its own provision for internal supply of goods and services, and to a large extent its own administrative system assuming the normal tasks of local government. In physical patterns and in population size, however, the haciendas differ widely among themselves, and may resemble any of the settlement types already described, except the pueblo.¹⁰ There is usually a central nucleus with a mansion, administrative buildings, storerooms, often a chapel and a school, and the majority of resident families are likely to be grouped around it in a villorio or caserio. The larger haciendas, however, may contain several caserios together with dispersed houses; families of seminomadic herdsmen or tolerated squatters may be scattered about the remoter parts of the holding. In other instances, particularly where the original hacienda has undergone sub-division or where the holding stems from recent encroachment on small holders, there may be no central nucleus; the scattered families of workers depend for neighbourhood ties on a caserio outside the hacienda boundaries. The custom of remunerating the resident worker partly by a plot of land for his own use may also contribute to a dispersal of families on the more marginal lands of the hacienda, rather similar to the irregular distribution of minifundio cultivators outside; the dispersal of families on hillside lands at some distance from the nucleus is particularly characteristic of Andean haciendas. At the same time, the hacienda depends in part, at least in peak seasons of activity, on workers from outside, who may come from local caserios or from a distance, who do not form part of the hacienda "community," if it exists, but whose ability to maintain other neighbourhood (or even family) ties is restricted by their marginal relation to the hacienda.

Modern plantations and pastoral enterprises introduce other variations. Here one is likely to find a tightly organized central settlement entirely built and maintained by the management, with trade union organization beginning to replace neighbourhood ties, but with a high proportion of the transient workers living in barracks, without families, and with no attachment to the locality. The size and character of the plantation settlements differ according to the labour requirements of the crop (bananas, sugar, etc.) in ways that have been little studied. Throughout the region the cattle or sheep ranch is the type of enterprise associated both with the lowest density of settlement and with the smallest proportion of workers living on the estate in family units.

The newer rural groupings that result from deliberate national policies and programmes may point the way to an eventual planned reform of rural settlement and administration, but at present they are extremely heterogeneous and cannot be fitted neatly into a classification. They have in common special regimes of land tenure, protecting the cultivator but restricting his right to dispose of his holding, and special organs of self-government, answering to public agencies outside the normal administrative hierarchy.

The best known are the *ejidos* of Mexico. The *ejidos* consist of organized groups of families (by law a minimum of 20) that have petitioned for and received grants of land under special tenure restrictions. The *ejido* has its own institutions of self-government with functions specified in the laws—a general assembly of members and elected committees. Its population may range from less than one hundred to several thousands; such a population may be nearly identical with that of an *aldea*, *villorrio*, or *caserio*, but is usually not entirely so, since some families will not be eligible to receive land (shopkeepers, officials, existing landowners, etc.) and thus will not be members, while the land available for distribution may not suffice for all the eligible families. In the *pueblos* and larger *aldeas* there may be two or more *ejidos*, or the membership of the local *ejido* may be only a fraction of the settlement population. The *ejido* thus represents a grouping that is not integrated either with physical patterns of settlement or with the national system of local administration; a comparison of official statistics from different sources indicates that some *ejidos* are considered settlements, others not.¹¹

In the Andean countries an important part of the Indian population belongs to *comunidades* managing their internal affairs and in particular the tenure of their land according to varying local traditions. To a certain extent these *comunidades* coincide with administrative sub-divisions of *municipios* and also with the *villorios* and *caserios* in which most of the Indian population is grouped. The very existence of these *comunidades* depends on historical rights to land, usually going back several centuries to colonial measures for the grouping of the Indians in concentrated settlements. Population growth and redistribution over this long period, as well as continual encroachments by the *haciendas*

on *comunidad* lands, means that present membership corresponds only in a very loose and erratic way to present settlement patterns. Beginning in the 1920's a long period of government opposition to communal landholdings was replaced by legislation offering the *comunidades* a degree of protection on condition of registration of their holdings and creation of specified organs of self-administration. The general result was probably closer to the stimulation of new forms of rural organization than to preservation of the old. As in the case of the *ejidos*, the "recognized" *comunidades* may or may not be real communities or settlement nuclei, and their relationships with the national system of local administration are not well defined. Some of them are very large, reflecting a long process of population growth and sub-division of the land.¹²

The *ejido* and *comunidad* policies, while they involved the creation of new administrative forms, and while some attention was paid to the services needed by the beneficiaries, did not lead to any systematic planning of rural resettlement in conjunction with the creation of nuclei of services. Several of the more recent colonization and agrarian reform programmes, however, do call for the creation of compact planned settlements, the sponsoring agency sometimes assuming the responsibility for construction of houses and a nucleus of buildings for administration and services. These planned settlements as yet include only a minute fraction of the rural population, but can be expected to grow in importance; their problems and prospects are discussed in a later section of this paper. If successful, such settlements should evolve into something closer to the "village" community than the groupings now typical of the region.

The classification discussed above can be presented in the adjoining table—although the apparent order should not tempt anyone to assume that the rural groupings can be fitted into it.

INFLUENCES OF HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND LAND TENURE UPON SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND LOCAL ORGANIZATION

In the parts of Latin America that acquired a settled agricultural population prior to the 19th century, the distribution of this population and its opportunities for community organization were shaped by two powerful forces, sometimes working together, sometimes in conflict: On the one hand, State and Church policy called for the grouping of the rural population (in most of the Spanish colonies nearly identical with the Indian population) in sizeable compact settlements with their own landholdings and their own institutions of self-government, but with the latter under close paternalistic control by the authorities; a system of "indirect rule" simplifying the giving of religious instruction, the collection of taxes, and the recruiting of labour for mines and public works. On

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TABLE I

Name	Approximate population limits	Physical pattern	Administrative status	Social characteristics	Economic functions	Land tenure
<i>Pueblo</i> (town)	2,500 to 10,000	Urbanized (plaza, streets, piped water, electricity at least as strongly felt needs).	Centre of a municipio or higher administrative unit.	Local upper, middle and lower strata; specialized functions as centre for a larger rural community. Formal leaders.	Marketing of produce, supply of goods, technical and professional services for hinterland. Residence for some land-owners.	Small and medium land-owners are distributed among all the types of settlements; "free" (landless) workers among all the types except for dispersed settlement; resident workers of haciendas and plantations, members of ejidos, comunidades, colonies, and agrarian reform projects are usually found in villorios or caserios, but there are many exceptions.
<i>Aldea</i> (village)	1,000 to 2,500	More limited "urban" features.	Usually centre of a municipio.	Three strata; a relatively self-contained "community."	More limited marketing and specialized services; primarily place of residence for cultivators. Limited commercial and artisanal services; place of residence for cultivators.	
<i>Villorio</i> (large hamlet)	200 to 1,000	Sprawling, few urban features (often in form of a line settlement).	Usually centre of a sub-division of a municipio with very limited administrative functions.	More rudimentary social stratification; midway between "community" and "neighbourhood."		
<i>Caserio</i> (hamlet)	20 to 200	Loosely nucleated, few or no urban traits.	May or may not be centre of a municipio sub-division.	No clearcut class distinctions; informal leadership; a "neighbourhood" offering only primary contacts. Most contacts limited to the family, but usually some loose neighbourhood ties centering in a caserio.	Rudimentary services (shop, school, etc.).	
<i>Dispersed settlement</i>	Under 20 (not more than 2 or 3 families living close together).	Houses scattered on individual land holdings.	May or may not belong to a municipio sub-division centering in a caserio or villorio.			

the other hand, influential individuals sought ownership of the land and with it control over the population working on the land; these interests also favoured compact settlement, but under the absolute dominion of the landowner and his appointees. There emerged the rival systems of the hacienda and the Indian community, the former continually encroaching on the latter and, while producing for the market, building up a high degree of economic self-sufficiency, the latter retreating as far as able into isolation, but dependent on the central authorities for a degree of protection against the hacienda.¹³ The two main exceptions to this dual pattern appeared in certain coastal areas suited to sugar production, and in the less accessible lands along the fringes of the settled areas. In the former instead of the serf-like hacienda population, retaining some community forms along with a localized attachment to the land, slave labour housed in barracks and practically without family, let alone community life, was to be found. In the latter, dispersed settlement dependent on shifting slash-and-burn cultivation began to spread. All of these forms have direct descendents today.

In the early 19th century, with political independence followed by unrestrained domination of national and local governments by the hacienda owners, and by laws expressing a new faith in the doctrines of economic liberalism, the official protection enjoyed by the Indian communities came to an end. Measures purporting to replace communal by individual land ownership and to place the Indians on an equal footing with the rest of the population only assisted the encroachments of the haciendas. When the communities were not swallowed up altogether they were often physically split or dispersed by the loss of their more centrally-located valley lands. At the same time, official policy ceased to exert any consistent pressure toward compact settlement. The proportion of the rural population living in haciendas, and the proportion living in tiny caserios or dispersed neighbourhoods of minifundio cultivators probably increased together. To a large extent the compact villages founded during the colonial period survived as local administrative and trading centres rather than as settlements of cultivators.

The previous policies of concentration of settlement had in many parts of the highlands—which included most of the thickly settled areas—struggled against geographical conditions. The area of cultivable land accessible from a single centre was likely to be small and divided from other cultivable land by mountain ridges, ravines, plateaux too high for crops, or deserts. As population increased and more of the easily accessible valley land passed into hacienda possession the geographical reasons for dispersal of settlement became more pressing. The haciendas themselves often included land in several climatic zones and had to distribute their families from tiny clusters of herdsmen on the high plateaux to nuclei of cultivators of sugar cane and fruits several thousand feet below.

The pattern of concentrated settlement in aldeas and villorrios seems to have kept its predominance in Mexico, through the long history of upheavals in political organization and land tenure, to a much greater extent than in the other older settled areas, including the adjacent parts of Central America. The reasons are not at all clear. Presumably a need for mutual support and protection during periods of rural unrest combined with an unusually strong local community tradition to keep rural nuclei relatively large and compact, but this supposition does not take us very far.

In the areas of early settlement other than Mexico, while the patterns are quite varied, the commonest shows an irregular combination of caserios and dispersed families, maintaining some community ties with the nearest small town. Settlements meeting our criteria for an "aldea" can be found here and there, but are not common. The following description of minifundio settlement in the Andean highlands of Venezuela could apply to many areas from Central America to Chile: "In spite of the Spanish tradition of furthering the establishment of very compact neighbourhoods, the tendency of the peasant families in the high Andean zones to disperse their homes along the mountain slopes has persisted since pre-Columbian times. The tiny houses with thatched roofs, which sometimes can hardly be distinguished from the terrain, are scattered without any apparent system in their distribution. But this is only apparent. The ecological factors determining their distribution are often multiple. Thus, the houses are probably to be found on the slope more favoured by the sun. In what appears at first glance a hardly rational dispersal of houses, a more careful examination reveals their more or less systematic distribution along a current of water that meets their daily needs."¹⁴ The results of a 1952 questionnaire answered by 57 percent of the *alcaldes* of the municipios of Guatemala, while verifying the predominance of caserios and dispersed neighbourhoods, indicates the heterogeneity of the groupings likely to be found in one of the long-settled areas. The *alcaldes* distinguished 2,501 "settlements" other than the cabeceras of their municipios. Of these, 173 were stated to be "clustered and aligned with streets," 333 "clustered with no alignment of streets," 1,407 with houses "scattered but mutually visible," and 588 with houses "isolated and not mutually visible."¹⁵

In Colombia, this standard term for a rural locality is *vereda*. A number of local studies indicate that the vereda is usually a true neighbourhood, with ties reinforced by endogamy and allegiance to one or other of the two national political parties. In size they seem to range from 20 to 120 families, averaging about 70 families or 300–400 people. Such veredas may consist of a single nucleus, approaching the characteristics of what in this article has been labeled an "aldea," or two or three caserios plus scattered houses.¹⁶

In recent times, the extension of highway systems has had the unintended side effect in several countries of inducing many rural families to regroup them-

selves in irregularly spaced line settlements of *caserio* or *villorrio* dimensions by the roadside. Other *caserios* seem to have resulted simply from the growth of one or two original families of small cultivators over a long period; in such *caserios* the land is sometimes subdivided to a point at which the residents have hardly more than house sites, and except for security of tenure and opportunities for petty commerce are indistinguishable from the landless workers.

The settlements discussed up to this point are, in general, of people attached to a locality, with neighbourhood ties that may retain considerable strength even if the families live dispersed. During the past century, however, overcrowding of many of the older areas, shifts in hacienda land use and labour demands with expansion or contraction of the market for various commercial crops, and the opening up of new areas of settlement have combined to foster the growth of categories of rural population that are almost entirely lacking in local ties. For present purposes, two broad groups deserve emphasis: the squatters and pioneer cultivators and the migratory landless labourers.

The extent to which these groups constitute distinct types presumably varies in different parts of the region. In much of Brazil, where ties to specific neighbourhoods or pieces of land are generally weak, recent studies indicate a remarkable degree of fluidity both in labour systems used on the large estates and in the status of rural workers; the same man may be successively or simultaneously a minifundio owner, squatter, renter, share-cropper, seasonal wage-worker, etc.¹⁷ A similarly amorphous situation, in which the rural worker cannot be fitted into any of the traditional statistical categories, has been described in Honduras.¹⁸

Even in some of the long-settled parts of the region scattered shifting cultivators can be found in the remoter parts of large haciendas and in marginal lands that are publicly owned or without clearly defined tenure rights.¹⁹ In the thinly-occupied tropical lowlands east of the Andes, in Central America, and throughout the interior of Brazil this type of settler has a history going back to the colonial period.²⁰ In the Santa Cruz area of Bolivia they are known as *tolerados*: "They are the true pioneers of settlement, always living at the fringes of civilization, clearing the land, pushing back hostile bands of Indians and moving on again as settlement approaches. These families are not only 'tolerated' but generally welcomed by the large landowners. Their contribution is largely in the land that they clear and which the owner can appropriate and plant to his own crops whenever he chooses. . . . When the lands they have cleared are taken over by the landlord they become *jornaleros* on the hacienda or more commonly move farther into the interior."²¹

In the past, such squatters consisted mainly of families with a tradition of shifting, cultivation in a mutually understood relationship with the landowners

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or the State, and these patterns continue to predominate in some parts of the region. In Paraguay, for example, the typical peasant has been described as having little interest in land ownership. It is to the interest of the owner of the land on which he squats to keep him, mainly so as to have a reserve of labour for sowing and harvest time. If there is any difficulty the squatter is quite ready to abandon his temporary home and drift to another locality.²² In Panama, more than half the land under cultivation is publicly owned, and is used by shifting cultivators under short-term permits issued by the *municipios*; an important part of the privately owned land is similarly cultivated under short-term rental arrangement.²³ In sparsely populated districts without roads and with only very limited markets for produce, such arrangements can continue for generations without evolving into stable or concentrated settlement. In the true pioneer zones now being penetrated by road, with rising land values, the position of the squatter changes. Whether by agreement or against his will he becomes a cheap means of clearing lands for eventual exploitation by large holdings. At the same time, instead of the hereditary shifting cultivator one finds migrants squeezed out of the long-settled districts and anxious to achieve permanent tenure of a piece of land. In the pioneer zones of several countries formal agreements, by which the settler clears land in exchange for full rights to the crops of the first few years, then moves on, are common. This system is used in clearing coffee land in Paraná, Brazil, for example, and in clearing land for cattle ranches in the low country adjacent to the Andean highlands of Venezuela.²⁴ In the latter instance, the settlers evicted after two or three years of cultivation either become nomadic workers or retreat to *minifundio* cultivation on the quickly-eroded lower slopes of the mountains. Elsewhere, the original settlers may be forced by economic weakness to sell their holdings,²⁵ or driven out by influential persons living in the town, who obtain title to the land after settlement has begun.²⁶

The kinds of squatter and pioneer settlement last described are obviously inefficient and destructive in terms of land use, contributing more to the waste of forest resources and the spread of erosion than to the permanent incorporation of new lands into the cultivable area. Their influence in perpetuating a rootless and disorganized rural population, unable to form more than the most rudimentary neighbourhood ties and almost unreachable by public services, is just as unfortunate. Increasingly, they are also a source of violence; the squatters are no longer willing to move on or have nowhere to go. To some extent, new forms of local organization are arising among them, even clandestine settlement nuclei; they band together for mutual defense against landowners and authorities, sometimes with the guidance of outside political movements. The shifting cultivators and migrant pioneers represent a rather small proportion of the rural population of the region, but if the huge empty spaces are ever to be filled and a

healthier distribution of population attained, their experiences and their relationships to the ways in which more powerful groups secure control over land resources need to be better understood as a basis for planned resettlement.

The landless workers who do not engage in subsistence cultivation, unlike the squatters, are to be found in the zones already fully occupied for agricultural or pastoral purposes. They are recruited in part from groups dismissed from the haciendas (sometimes because the hacienda cannot employ the natural increase in its resident population, sometimes because changes in crops or production techniques make part of the labour forces superfluous, sometimes because the owner wishes to guard against future claims to his land from resident families) and in part from the surplus sons of minifundio cultivators, but some of them are descended from several generations of workers in the same plight. They rarely live dispersed, but can be found in all the other types of settlement from the *caserio* to the *pueblo*. It is generally assumed that they are now contributing to the peripheral shantytowns of the great cities, but the relative importance of their contribution to cityward migration has not been satisfactorily demonstrated. There is some evidence that youth from the minifundio settlements and the small towns show more initiative in migrating, while the landless workers cling to the livelihood they know, however wretched its prospects. Furthermore, seasonal agricultural migrants do not necessarily belong to the landless marginal category. Many who travel hundreds of miles, even across international boundaries, as in the cases of the Mexican *braceros* in the United States or the Bolivians in the sugar zones of Argentina, come from and return to minifundio settlements. It can be assumed, however, that an important proportion of such migrants lose their local ties and eventually join the more rootless group.

Descriptions of landless workers from widely separated parts of the region, with quite different types of settlement and land tenure, show remarkable similarities. In Chile, the *afuerino* (outsider) who travels from estate to estate to work in the harvests of different crops is "a man completely uprooted from the soil, a nomad of Chilean agriculture."²⁷ In Argentina, where the landless workers make up a particularly high proportion of the rural population, they "have no social institutions or facilities and, if seasonal laborers, live in a no man's land as far as neighbourhood and community life is concerned."²⁸ "Apparently alien to all the economic and juridical transformations carried out in the country in the past ten years, their life seems to have remained unchangeable. Transient workers, they labour for a time on one estate, then begin to drift. Their greatest aspiration is for seasonal work One is never seen driving a tractor or making a garden in the waste land adjoining his house."²⁹ In the state of Paraná, Brazil, the *volantes*, or transient workers, "are victims of suspicion both from the *colonos* (workers settled on the estates) and from

the owners, who see in them, respectively, dangerous competitors threatening their economic security and persons of unknown origin against whom one must be watchful.”³⁰ In the settlements of small farmers in Costa Rica, the landless workers are described as a marginal group almost entirely excluded from community life.³¹ Recent movements for organization of the lower strata of the rural population have naturally had little effect on landless workers of this type. The *Ligas Camponesas* of Brazil, for example, have attracted mainly the workers enjoying some kind of tenancy arrangement or partial compensation in land, and fearful of falling to the status of the landless workers, who have been described by Francisco Julião as culturally so poor and economically so poor and dependent that they are not even organizable.³²

In parts of the region, particularly in Argentina and Uruguay, the most characteristic form of settlement of the landless workers is a variation on the *caserio*, the *rancherío*, a small nucleus of shacks along a roadside, without any tenure rights or legal status; such settlements may be inhabited partly by the families of workers, who themselves spend most of their time in barracks on the estates, or by irregular families headed by women. Increasingly, however, the landless workers settle on the fringes of the *pueblos* where life offers a little more variety and there is some chance of part-time work in the agricultural off-season. In Peru, this tendency has been characterized as a “ruralization” of the *pueblos*, as the local upper and middle strata leave for the larger centres and are replaced by migrants from the countryside in the beginning of the process of losing their localistic Indian traits.³³ This type of movement presumably contributes to a transition from dependence on agricultural work to a disposition to try anything, the emergence of what a Chilean study characterizes as “multiple men,” turning alternately to farm work, artisan activities, peddling, construction or road work, and even small-scale mining.³⁴ Once the landless worker has reached this point, however, the small towns have little to offer him, and he is ready for the next move to the marginal labour force of the cities.

Among the countries of the region, El Salvador undoubtedly has the highest proportion of landless agricultural workers in its population, and recent surveys indicate that this group has become largely a town population. In the coffee zones, “the farms are nearly deserted except at harvest time. . . . Only the manager and a few overseers live there permanently, and their dwellings are scattered to make vigilance easier. . . . Almost all the workers live in the villages and towns that are capitals of communes.”³⁵ According to another source, landless workers dependent on seasonal farm work constitute 40 to 80 percent of the population of most towns.³⁶ The geographical mobility and urban residence of Salvadoran rural workers coincide with notoriously high percentages of families headed by women and of illegitimate births—demographic indicators of family instability.

The residential patterns of landless workers in Cuba up to 1959 seem to have been rather similar, particularly in the zones devoted to cattle-raising. These patterns were incompatible with the subsequent shift to more intensive agriculture requiring a year-round labour force, and the new policy was accompanied by a programme of construction of nuclei of housing and services for families of workers on the new People's Farms. This effort, however, does not appear to have been sufficient as yet to obviate continuing difficulties of absenteeism, transport, etc. associated with the distance from the farms of the homes of many workers.³⁷

ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND RURAL SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The countries of the region are divided into either two or three tiers of administrative units, commonly called *departamento*, *provincia*, and *municipio*.³⁸ In most instances, the municipio is the only administrative level with which the rural population is at all familiar. The municipio is a territorial unit, usually comprising an "urban" centre and a rural hinterland, which may be of considerable extent. Some municipios, however, are entirely urban, and a number of the larger cities and metropolitan areas are composed of several municipios whose urban populations have fused. At the other extreme, municipios may be found in which the administrative centre is no more than a rural *caserio*. Although some of the countries have standards set by law for minimum population, tax resources, etc. of municipios, these tend to vary widely both in area and in number of inhabitants.

At the level of the municipio several alternative patterns of administration can be found. The municipio may have a mayor and council elected from the population of its whole territory (Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama) or it may have an authority (*gobernador*, *intendente*, etc.) appointed from above together with an elected council (Colombia, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Venezuela), or an appointed official may govern alone (Nicaragua). In some countries the local regime differs according to the federal unit or according to the status of the municipio (based on population size, tax revenues, whether the municipio centre is also centre for a higher administrative unit, etc.). In still others (Bolivia, Peru) the municipio administrative centre (*cabecera*) has its own elected municipal authorities whose functions are confined to the urban areas, while both the urban and rural parts of the municipio are under the direct jurisdiction of an official appointed by the higher authorities.

In every country, the territory of the municipio outside the *cabecera* is subdivided for some limited administrative purposes. The commonest pattern is for each sub-division (called *distrito*, *vereda*, *canton*, *section rurale*, *caserio*,

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comarca, corregimiento, parcialidad, etc. in different areas, with terminology often varying within a single country) to have one or more unpaid local residents charged by the *municipio* authorities to keep the peace, report on local problems, collect taxes, and in some areas recruit labour for public works in lieu of taxes. No country has a national system for election of authorities within the rural sub-divisions of *municipios*, although these authorities may in practice be chosen by their neighbours; and no country provides for direct representation of the rural sub-divisions on the *municipio* councils. If the rural people participate at all in *municipio*-wide elections, it is for lists of candidates who almost invariably live in the *cabecera*.

The *municipio* system has a historical tradition going much farther back than the independence of the countries of the region. In principle, the *municipio* would seem to provide a workable pattern for community organization, with a specialized centre serving the more limited rural neighbourhoods, and local studies indicate that a certain number of *municipios* fill this role adequately enough. Generally, however, they do not, and discussions of the system from different parts of the region are remarkably uniform in describing their shortcomings.

Almost everywhere the revenues under the direct control of the *municipio* authorities are very limited, deriving from licenses, market dues, fines, etc. In most countries they have no power to tax land. Consequently, the provision by them of more than rudimentary services requires aid from the higher levels of government, and the municipal authorities concentrate all their attention on the securing of such aid. ". . . they live on hope from the departmental or national treasury and base their whole future on the aid annually promised them in the departmental government or in Congress to silence their complaints. This aid never comes, or if it does is insufficient."³⁹

Many of the *municipios* do not have the population or wealth to support modern services, even if they could draw on local resources more freely. One authority considers, for example, that the 54 percent of the *municipios* of Mexico with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants cannot provide a sufficient tax base to support modern institutions, that only those with 20,000 or more can do so adequately, and that only the small number with 50,000 or more (almost entirely urban) do so in practice.⁴⁰ In Guatemala, according to law, a new *municipio* should have a population of at least 5,000 and "sufficient resources to meet the necessary expenses of self-government"; in 1950, however, 127 out of 315 *municipios* had fewer than 5,000 people.⁴¹ In many parts of the region sparseness of population or topographical barriers would make it impossible to organize *municipios* of ideal population size in which the rural parts could have any contact with the *cabecera*. As it is, some Brazilian *municipios* extend over more than 100,000 sq.km.

Since the wealthier and more influential part of the municipio population lives in the cabecera, and since the rural neighbourhoods have no effective way of making their demands heard, public services are concentrated in the cabecera, and any financial aid received from the higher authorities is spent there, largely on projects that will constitute lasting monuments to the administration of the time—public buildings and parks. “The local government is self-conscious city-building corporation strongly determined not to let the country’s poverty interfere with the prevailing notion of what a city ought to contain in the way of public works.”⁴²

The political dominance of the cabecera and the superiority felt by its residents over the more strictly rural neighbourhoods is evident even where the cabecera itself is really an aldea of cultivators, only a little larger than other compact settlements within the municipio boundaries.⁴³ More often, however, the population outside the cabecera is divided between haciendas, and caserios and dispersed neighborhoods of small cultivators. The hacienda management usually intervenes in municipio affairs but keeps its resident workers isolated from them. The hacienda does not need to ask for many services from the municipio authorities and wants no interference from them. The rest of the rural population receives more demands than services from the municipio centre. In the highland parts of Middle America and the Andean countries, in particular, where the rural population is mainly Indian and the population of the cabeceras mainly non-Indian, traditional relations between them are such as to make the former avoid contacts rather than seek them. Even today, the post of municipal representative in the rural sub-division is commonly burdensome and shunned by the local people. In many Indian areas the traditional system of calling on the rural people for unpaid labour to repair roads, or even undertake improvements within the cabecera, has lingered in practice long after losing its legal backing; in view of the scantiness of municipio funds this may be the only way of getting the work done at all. The local representative of the municipio then has the distasteful job of rounding up a quota among his neighbours for labour service. Situations in which a scapegoat has to be forced to take the post of representative under threat of fine or imprisonment have been described. In large parts of the region, also, the effective authority in the rural neighbourhoods is the local agent of a national police or military force, whether or not the kind of municipio representative just described is also present; such an agent is in a position to direct local affairs in a highly authoritarian way, particularly in the many zones in which rural trade unions or peasant organizations are illegal, or are repressed by the authorities without legal sanction.

A common consequence of past relationships is a rural distrust of all outsiders, a suspicion that any official activity is a subterfuge for some new exploi-

tation. In some Indian areas in recent times, this spirit has led to violent attacks on harmless outsiders, such as census takers; in others, it has produced a deliberate rejection of traditional local organization: "the group preferring to maintain a bare minimum of social organization based on the family and neighbourhood, or making deliberate attempts to link itself to the national political structure. . . . Various parcialidades have preferred to remain without any authorities, stating that they did not want to be agents of the abuses of the (district) governors."⁴⁴ Some programmes working among rural Indians have concluded that readiness to accept innovations increases the farther the Indians in question are removed from previous contact with and exploitation by a town administrative centre.

Under other circumstances, the dissatisfaction with cabecera monopolization of power and resources provokes a continuing struggle by the larger satellite nuclei to break away and become cabeceras of new municipios—a trend that is partly to blame for the large numbers of municipios that are too small to function effectively.

Within the cabecera of a predominantly rural municipio, political power more often than not is exercised by a clique or rival cliques of *principales* or *vecinos notables*, who derive their influence from a combination of landholdings, trade, and clientele relationships with persons holding office at the national or departmental level. If the municipio has elected organs the local notables govern directly; if it is administered by an appointed official he is likely to become one of their circle. In either case, support from above, from outside the community, is politically essential; local public opinion is much less important; the public is usually passively dependent on the ruling clique or cliques. If there are rival cliques their struggles often take on an intensity leading to chronic violence, sometimes spilling over into the rural areas, in which any community consensus becomes impossible, and all local public offices and professional positions—teacher, judge, physician, etc.—are regarded solely as factional spoils. Alternatively, the cliques may be replaced by a single *cacique*, who dominates the formal administrative apparatus, reduces the local notables to puppets, and is in a position to exploit almost any municipio activity for personal gain. The local officers of national social services and programmes, even if administratively responsible to a central agency, as is most often the case, cannot remain detached from the local power structure. Their ability to maintain good relations with a locally dominant clique or cacique with connexions in the capital may determine their chances of promotion, or even their chances of avoiding dismissal. This circumstance naturally helps to confirm the concentration of services in the cabecera, and makes it likely that their local meaning will be quite different from the policies promulgated at the national level.

The studies of southern Peru already referred to contain searching appraisals of the prevailing system of local government and attitudes toward it that could be paralleled from other parts of the region. "In the middle and upper classes, attitudes of dependency are manifested in an almost total expectation that local administrative affairs will be resolved by the Government and its functionaries, combined with a lack of confidence in the capacity of these functionaries and a lack of interest and initiative in solving collective local problems. . . . One consequence is formalism or ritualism in public activity, which respects legal forms while believing that to reach individual ends what is needed is *vara* (influence), or patrons in a strategic part of the relevant hierarchy." While co-operation is formally given a high value by these classes, this overt attitude is contradicted by "attitudes of conformism and fatalism accompanied by passivity in action and skepticism as to the possibility of reaching social and economic ends through co-operation." A kind of self-fulfilling prophecy leads to the failure of attempts at local organization.⁴⁵

The widespread desertion of the small *cabeceras* by the local upper class, already mentioned, and their invasion by rural families, presumably imply far-reaching changes in the often-described static local politics of conformism, influence-manipulation, clique rivalry and *caciquismo*. The observers in southern Peru saw some evidence of a more dynamic and innovating spirit in the *cholo* lower class coming to dominate the small towns. Presumably the dividing lines between such towns and the rural areas will become increasingly blurred and the former will lose part of their political monopoly. In many areas, it is likely that a rural leadership springing from peasant unions, agrarian reform settlements, or Indian *comunidades* will be able to face the *cabeceras* on even terms or even dominate them, as has occurred in Bolivia.⁴⁶ The circumstances under which this shift in political power takes place, however, and the very limited political experience of the rural masses, introduce a danger that the product can be new alignments in political feuds and new types of *caciquismo* rather than a healthier community structure.

The *ejidos*, *comunidades*, colonies and agrarian reform settlements already mentioned are partial exceptions to the generalization that there are no strictly rural and local organs of self-government within the *municipios*, but their relations to the national administrative structure need clearer definition, and their elective institutions seem to work rather irregularly. The relevant programmes, by giving rural groups an incentive to organize and by providing for regular election of representatives charged with the defense of their primary interest in the land, have undoubtedly contributed to the appearance of new and more dynamic types of rural leadership. The council of elders or the unhappy go-between transmitting orders from the *municipio* authorities to his neighbours is likely to be replaced by a young man with some formal education

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and some experience of the outside world.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the local groups recognized by such programmes are under some degree of paternalistic supervision and protection from a national agency, setting them apart from the rest of the population and limiting their initiative. This difficulty has been particularly serious in government-managed agricultural colonies, many of which, according to official sources, have fallen into a chronic state of dependency.⁴⁸ At the same time, the new groupings are not exempt from the evils of caciquismo and disruption by battling political cliques—the latter a particularly serious danger once rival national political forces come to see in the beneficiaries of agrarian reforms a valuable source of organized political support. The successive reforms of the Mexican ejido system intended to make the democratic institutions of the ejido work more effectively suggest the difficulties that must be faced throughout the region.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE RURAL NUCLEI

A significant shift in emphasis can be traced in discussions of rural life in Latin America over the past ten or twenty years. Earlier studies commonly gave a great deal of attention to the survival of traditional forms of co-operation and local solidarity. Social theorists in several countries of the region dreamed of a new social order arising from a revitalization of existing rural community forms. This has not come to pass, however, even where such hopes were reflected in public policies for the support of ejidos and comunidades. The weight of more recent evidence points to an unexpected prominence of individualism and internal conflict even within the apparently tightly-knit local groups found mainly among the Indians, and confirms that local cohesion is weak or lacking in much of the region. Meanwhile, the growth, increasing geographical mobility and increasing involvement with national life of the rural population have produced new strains on the traditional forms, and altogether detached an important part of the rural population from their influence.

Even the survival of communal control over landholdings and of systems of collective labour or exchange labour do not necessarily carry the implications that were formerly attached to them.⁴⁹ One of the most widely reported traits of small-holding peasants in the region is a passion for litigation over land. This is unexpectedly prominent among Andean Indians, even where a local community retains some control over land distribution, as in the form of a prohibition on sale to outsiders. This passion runs counter both to community solidarity and to the general reluctance to have anything to do with official institutions. The role of the *tinterillo* (small-town notary-scribe) who encourages the peasant in endless litigation and often ends up in possession of the land under dispute is well known. (The larger landowners in the Andean zone are also

accused of using litigation as a tactic to intimidate or punish unsubmitive small cultivators.) Struggles over the land have a long history, but are inevitably exacerbated by population increase and successive divisions of the land among heirs. The peasant is likely to have a dozen tiny plots, whose boundaries depend on collective memory concerning landmarks, usually without precise legal records of original ownership and transfers; almost inevitably, feuds arise with neighbours over some of them. At the same time, the peasant in many parts of the region is in continual fear of crop or animal thefts—a fear leading either to conflicts with immediate neighbours or to collective hostilities between neighbourhoods.

Such divisive influences are at work even within *caserios* and dispersed neighbourhoods in which there are no clearcut distinctions of class or wealth. Usually, no doubt, bickering and neighbourliness alternate and combine in the contradictory way found in most local groups of human beings. Local descriptions can be found of peaceful and well-integrated neighbourhoods, of localities torn by bloody feuds, and of localities in which the small cultivators live in nearly complete isolation from one another, with each family a self-contained social and economic unit.⁵⁰ The social ties that do exist in the *caserios* and dispersed neighbourhoods are mainly limited to the men, who assemble to drink and talk at a crossroads store. The women have no comparable place of assembly, except where the newer educational and community development programmes have brought them together, and are likely to be prevented both by continual work and by local traditions from visiting neighbouring families.

Two important modern influences that are widening the rural horizon and relieving the drabness of *caserio* life are football and the radio. Football, in fact, deserves more attention than it has received from social investigators as a force both for local solidarity and for integration of the rural neighbourhood with national life. The effort to clear a patch of land for a field (particularly in areas in which level land is very scarce) and to equip a neighbourhood team, is often the first and only organized activity to appear spontaneously. According to some accounts, the need to keep fit for football has had a significant effect in reducing drinking (sometimes the only previous form of recreation) among rural youth. At the same time, football and the news of football brought by the radio provide a common frame of reference for people of all classes and localities, a means of identifying with the national society. (In several of the circum-Caribbean countries baseball or bicycle-racing rather than football exert the same kind of influence for rural integration.)

At the same time, it must be remembered that in many areas of heavy out-migration the rural neighbourhoods have an aging population; most of the young adults have left to look for opportunities elsewhere, and not much

initiative in new forms of social relationships can be expected of the middle-aged cultivators who have remained.

As the rural nucleus becomes larger in the villorrio and aldea, distinctions of class and wealth become more prominent, and the kind of mutual distrust described in a study of central Chile appears: ". . . small landowners were consulted regarding the possibility of their participating in a local programme of soil conservation. Their answer was 'let the patrones (or *los grandes*) do it first; if it works, we'll follow.' On the other hand the members of the landed elite dismissed any idea of collaboration with the small landholders on the ground that the latter are a totally uncooperative group."⁵¹

Finally, at the level of the pueblo, the population is likely to be deeply divided both horizontally and vertically. Minor indicators of superior status are insisted upon all the more rigidly because of the general poverty of the environment and the scarcity of opportunities for mobility. At the same time, as already mentioned, struggles for political power and perquisites between cliques of the local elite with their clients or dependents may divide the pueblo into feuding factions.⁵² Status distinctions and political factionalism together are reflected in the membership requirements for "social clubs," of which the pueblo often has several. Moreover, if recent migration of families from the rural hinterland into the pueblo has occurred on an important scale, this group may constitute a new "lowest" stratum, only weakly attached to the locality, and despised or feared by the longer-settled residents.

ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS OF THE RURAL NUCLEI

In the caserios the only widely typical specialized economic activities are the keeping of petty shops, one or two to the caserio, selling beverages, staple foods, a few necessities such as kerosene, matches and salt, and possibly some articles of clothing. Such shops, which spring up here and there even in the more dispersed neighbourhoods, represent part-time activities of cultivators or their wives, and do not satisfy even the limited purchasing requirements of the rural people. Their social function as meeting places for the men is often more important than the economic. Here and there the decreasing ability of the small holdings to support their cultivators forces more of the latter to try to eke out their incomes by petty trade and, in particular, by clandestine liquor sales; the caserio may then become something of a gathering place for hacienda workers, and a source of annoyance to the management of the hacienda—a trend reported from parts of central Chile. The villorrio is likely to have a larger number of petty shops and a few specialized artisans, but does not have a much more complex economic life than the caserio. The villorrio-caserio-neighbour-

hood also serves as a framework for the system of formal or informal exchange labour found in much of the region, particularly in the construction of houses or in harvest work, but these systems appear to be generally on the decline.

Most of the cultivators, even if close to the subsistence level, depend to some extent on the nearest pueblo or aldea as a source of purchases and a market for produce. The towns serve these functions partly through the holding of markets, usually weekly, and partly through permanent shops. In practically all Indian-populated zones and in some of the older settled areas elsewhere, the more important institution to the rural people is the market, which also serves as a social gathering and an occasion for the performing of religious duties. The market also supports the specialization of different localities in certain handicraft products for exchange.

Even in the Indian zones, the population of the market towns is mainly non-Indian and almost all permanent shops are kept by non-Indians. In the greater part of Latin America, moreover, the public market is of minor importance or missing. The small town shops fall into two main types: first, petty establishments similar to those found in the caserios, run by women as supplementary sources of income and often quite numerous in relation to the population of the town; these can really be considered symptoms of under-employment and economic stagnation. Second, one finds a small number of larger "general stores" with which the peasant has most of his dealings. The merchant commonly both sells to the peasant and buys his produce, extending to him a more or less permanent line of credit. In this relationship, the typical dominance of the moneylender in peasant societies appears; the peasant remains permanently in debt and sells his produce to the shopkeeper whom he knows, without considering whether he can get a better price elsewhere, and often without asking the price. In these transactions very little money changes hands. In fact, in the pueblos cash is hard to obtain, even for the better-off strata, and is used mainly in transactions with the exterior. According to studies from several parts of the region, even where public credit institutions intended to help the small farmer are now open in the towns, only a minority of the more prosperous small holders make use of them. The rest continue to depend on the shopkeeper-moneylenders, either because they cannot meet the requirements of the formal credit institutions, or because they prefer the traditional relationship, without bureaucratic complications or supervision of their uses of the credit.⁵³

The merchants often combine political with economic dominance, as the most dynamic element in the local elite. One study describes their multiple roles in the following terms: Seven general stores "dictate the price of cash crops and all locally manufactured goods, as well as tastes and fashions in fabrics, cosmetics, combs, kerchiefs. . . . The store-owner is a banker, pharmacist, family counselor, accountant, public scribe and a news service. . . . Disliked and dis-

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trusted as they are because of imposing ever-new necessities and status requirements, they fulfill an important role in the change toward Creole values, and even if their main motivation is more often than not material gain, they frequently show a sincere concern for the 'progress' of the community, often more than do the official authorities or other leading families." In this instance, as a number of shopkeepers occupy official positions in the local administration, many members of the local lower class "believe that the stores are somehow connected with the government, and that the merchants are really government agents trying to 'exploit the poor' . . . 'We are all slaves of the government's stores' is an expression often heard when people discuss their debts. There is, of course, no connection whatsoever between the authorities and the stores, which are all private enterprises, but many people tend to identify the two."⁵⁴

This quotation suggests questions that cannot be answered from the present limited evidence. To what extent are the pueblo merchants agents of change, and necessary intermediaries linking the rural people with national markets? To what extent do their typical systems of trade and credit, avoiding cash transactions, and their typical combination of local economic and political power, tend to perpetuate a static situation, and inhibit the rural people from fuller participation in the national market, with the stimuli to agricultural innovation that might be expected from such participation? Can participation in the national market along lines beneficial to the small farmers be envisaged without far-reaching changes in the systems of local marketing? The local merchants have had to adapt themselves to quite restricted opportunities, and the typical adaptation may have helped to keep the opportunities restricted. The haciendas sometimes depend on them to supply their workers—again through credits offset against the workers' wages—but more often do this through their own commissaries, and try to keep the wages at home. (Nowadays, the hacienda commissary sometimes becomes a "fringe benefit" through sale of goods below market prices but such a change leaves the worker even less occasion to deal with the town merchant.) Increasingly, the hacienda does not use the town for marketing of its produce; this is often sold directly to wholesalers in the large cities or to export firms. The town merchant then depends on trade with cultivators who have only a small surplus to sell and too little land to increase this surplus very much, for whom the credit system means at least a degree of security in meeting minimum needs for goods they cannot produce themselves. The merchants cannot be blamed for not introducing marketing techniques suited to medium farmers, except where such farmers have actually been present.

The improvement of communications throughout the region has revitalized some towns and enabled new ones to appear, but seems more often to have helped to drain the local centres of the little economic life they possessed. Itinerant truckdrivers penetrate the rural hinterland to buy produce. (Indeed,

some local studies indicate that ambitious rural young men, instead of saving to buy land, save to buy trucks and become intermediaries between their neighbours and the urban market.) Cultivators can travel by bus to the city to make purchases. The local town is bypassed, and often, where it has constituted a non-Indian island in an Indian countryside, a long history of unprogressive exploitation has made it deserve its fate. This, at least, seems to be the meaning of the economic decay of many small towns where the rural population now has access to a larger centre. Elsewhere, some observers argue that the decline of the small town means that its satellite rural population has even fewer ties than before to the outside world—they fall back on the hacienda commissary or the petty caserio shop for necessities, or do without. This is particularly likely to be the case where unfavorable price and wage trends have shrunk rural purchasing power. (In practice, both trends may be present in the same locality; the better-off and more enterprising small cultivators broaden their ties with the outside world, while those of the more impoverished and marginal groups shrink.)

PUBLIC POLICY AND RURAL SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The preceding pages add up to a dark picture of rural institutions that function badly or are ceasing to function at all, with only scattered and ambiguous evidence that institutions better adapted to the needs of today are beginning to replace them. This should be no surprise; the defects of the rural social structure and the rural economic organization have been described often and from many points of view. The next question is, what can be done? The need for integrated provision of many kinds of services to raise the productivity and the levels of living of rural people, and the indispensability of their own deliberate and organized participation in such efforts are prominent among the commonplaces of international and national reports. What conclusions helpful toward the attainment of these ends can be derived from a combined examination of the way rural people are grouped on the land, the way in which they are governed or govern themselves, and the web of economic and social relationships in which they are involved?

An exploratory study such as the present cannot avoid falling back repeatedly on an unsatisfying answer that is also a commonplace of international reports; much more representative and reliable local information is needed, permitting sociologists, economists, human geographers and political scientists to advance toward better-founded general conclusions. The case for more extensive local information, however, does not rest primarily on the prerequisites for broad analysis and generalization. One generalization that can already be made with complete confidence is that rural needs cannot be met by uniform

national recipes or plans drawn up at a distance. The widely differing types of rural settlement demand differing and flexible strategies that will depend upon an intimate acquaintance with local situations.

At the same time, it should be obvious that really effective reforms in rural institutions demand equally far-reaching changes in national economic, social and political structures that fall outside the scope of the present discussion.⁵⁵ If this requirement is not met, the best-intentioned programmes are likely to transform themselves in the course of their application to the rural environment, so as to serve purposes quite different from those envisioned by the programmer, or no purpose at all. As long as national patterns support the kind of clientele relationships between influential groups in the capital cities and ruling cliques in the small towns already mentioned, for example, democratic local initiative can hardly be expected to prevail in the latter; a policy offering the *municipios* more aid or more autonomy may then only strengthen the existing system. As long as *haciendas* retain their traditional dominance over *minifundio* settlements within rural localities, the promotion of "community" self-help in the latter can have only limited and precarious achievements; such a programme may even serve as a device to excuse evasion of the central issue of land tenure.

Under such circumstances, the prerequisites for effective local and wider organization of the rural people deserve primary consideration. Up to the present, the laws of many countries in the region have placed restrictions on the unionization of rural workers in striking contrast to legislative encouragement of unionization of urban workers. The extra-legal sanctions deriving from the local power structures have been even more important than the laws in hindering such organization. The situation is now changing but the extent and meaning of the changes are far from clear. Except in Bolivia, Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela, and in zones of modern plantation agriculture in some other countries, legally recognized and registered rural unions remain very small. In Colombia, according to a recent study, the only recognized agricultural union, *Federacion Agricola Nacional (FANAL)*, had only about 5,000 experienced militants, able to influence about 20,000 less active supporters, in a rural population between 8 and 9 million. At the same time, rural movements without legal status, in which spontaneous local protests are intermingled with organizational forms of a frankly revolutionary character, have appeared rather widely. The scanty available evidence suggests that such movements are supported more actively by *minifundio* holders and various kinds of tenants than by resident *hacienda* workers or landless wage workers, and that their demands are centered on changes in land tenure and local power relationships rather than on wages and working conditions. The new rural movements are forming links between the rural population and the national political structures, and this can

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only be considered a healthy trend, in spite of the dangers of their use by national factions for purposes unrelated to local needs, or their incorporation into the existing patterns of national-local clientele relationships. The future effectiveness and responsibility of rural unions, political clubs, etc. will in large part determine the practicability of reforms in local administration and in the provision of public services. Such rural organization can be furthered by changes in legislation, and to some extent by technical aid to inexperienced rural groups, but it can be secured and guarded against distortion only by the initiative of the rural people themselves.

One other preliminary general proposition deserves mention: Rural reforms cannot be envisaged as a transition from unsatisfactory static patterns to satisfactory but also static patterns. Self-sufficient rural communities cannot be created or long preserved in the region, even if this were desirable. The task is to help the rural people acquire institutions that will help them cope better with continuing change, and the high rates of natural increase that are inevitable for some time to come ensure that for many of them such change will involve shifts both in place of residence and in occupation.

Subject to the above reservations, one may conclude that rural development programmes in Latin America need to take into account the groupings of the rural population at two or three levels. First comes the strictly local level of the *neighbourhood*, the level of primary face-to-face contacts, which may contain fewer than ten or as many as 200 families, depending on density and local distribution of population. Second comes the level of the wider *community* composed of several neighbourhoods and a specialized "urban" centre. The community in this sense might contain from 5,000 to 50,000 people; in the larger population sizes it would normally be mainly urban, with most of the population living in the centre. If the primary neighbourhoods are very small and isolated from any nucleus large enough to function as a community centre, an intermediate level may have to be envisaged, either as a natural grouping of neighbourhoods or as an artificial grouping for administration and provision of services.

Ideally, the two levels should be equivalent to the two levels proposed for rural local authority areas by a United Nations Working Group on Administrative Aspects of Decentralization for National Development in 1961: "At the lower level, the authority should cover the largest area at which a sense of community exists and direct citizen participation in local services is possible; at the higher level, the authority should cover the largest area from which most technical services can be provided efficiently, but the area should not be so large that councillors cannot meet frequently. The latter authority should include rural and urban populations and, if practicable, have a town or city centrally located and serving as local authority headquarters."⁵⁶ Unfortunately, as has

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been seen, in much of the region the largest area at which a sense of community exists is very small, and at the higher administrative level councillors are able to meet frequently, if they do meet, partly because they do not represent the rural areas at all.

AT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL: PROMOTION OF CLUSTERED SETTLEMENT, SERVICE NUCLEI, ORGANS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

Rural sociologists have long agreed on the social advantages of clustered over dispersed rural settlement—advantages admittedly offset as the cluster grows in size by losses in agricultural efficiency according to the time the cultivator must spend daily traveling to and from his fields. As already seen, the preference for planned compact settlement was previously held by the Spanish colonial administration. At present, for almost the first time since the colonial period, agrarian reform and colonization projects are beginning to take into account the physical patterns of the new rural nuclei.⁵⁷

The typical new policy calls for a nucleus of buildings housing certain basic services—a school, a neighbourhood meeting hall and recreation centre, a repair shop for agricultural machinery, a sports field, a chapel, possibly the office of a project manager or agricultural extension worker—with houses grouped around it. The houses are usually built by their occupants with technical assistance from the project management, which also sees to the provision of piped water and electrical power. In a certain number of projects, the houses themselves are built by a public agency, usually with the aid of funds from abroad.

The numbers of families in the limited number of settlements of this type that have been completed bring them closer to the *caserio* or the *villorio* than to the *aldea*, in the sense in which these terms have been used in the present paper. In Venezuela, where the new agrarian reform settlements are in areas without formidable topographical barriers, they average one hundred families each.⁵⁸ In Colombia, where the first nuclei under the agrarian reform programmes are in broken mountainous country, they average only 16 families.⁵⁹ In Chile, the first 27 “*aldeas campesinas*” built by the Instituto de la Vivienda Rural average 40 families each.⁶⁰

Programmes of this kind are too new and too little studied to permit any general conclusions as to their effectiveness. As agrarian reform progresses, experimentation with different types and sizes of nuclei will be justified.⁶¹ Some authorities on rural life are already arguing, however, that compact settlements, aside from their heavy initial costs do not meet the real needs or wishes of the rural families. “Line settlements” in which houses are aligned on both sides of a road with individual holdings stretching back in narrow strips are often recommended as a compromise combining a reasonable share of the advantages of

compact settlement and accessibility to landholdings. There is in fact a spontaneous trend toward irregular line settlement in various parts of the region that might well be studied and adapted to present needs; often the building of a rural road is sufficient to start a regrouping of the local population along the roadside.⁶² It would also be adaptable to certain recent recommendations for colonization policy which point to the disappointing experiences of paternally managed nucleated colonies, and emphasize instead the building of access roads and provision of opportunities for cultivators to settle along them.⁶³

Instances have been reported in which beneficiaries of agrarian reform have refused to occupy houses built for them or inherited from a previous hacienda nucleus, preferring to build huts on their own land. In at least a few other instances rural workers already living on an estate undergoing subdivision but adjudged unqualified for farm management have been settled in nuclei of houses with small garden plots, without adequate consideration of local employment opportunities, leaving a group unable to support itself and resented by the recipients of larger holdings as a source of crop and animal thefts.

It is significant that a high proportion of the new rural nuclei providing houses and community centres that have been created in the older settled areas have been financed through special aid from abroad. The high initial costs would make this kind of planned resettlement out of the question, at least in the short run, for the great majority of the families now subsisting in caserios or dispersed neighbourhoods. The Cuban example previously cited differs from other projects of this type in that the sudden change from pastoral activities to intensive agriculture, in estates that were to be retained as large productive units, demanded a rapid increase in the number of workers living close to their jobs, but even here the cost of the new settlements seems to have prevented their construction on a scale matching the changing labour requirements.

Whatever conclusions may be reached as to the practicability under differing circumstances of the types of nuclei just described, a greater degree of clustering of the rural population than now exists in the region is desirable for many reasons. The more scattered minifundio cultivators and squatters cannot be reached by roads or educational services without prohibitive costs, and much of their land should be withdrawn from cultivation altogether; if not, erosion and soil exhaustion will eventually force them to leave it. In these as well as in less extreme cases, the most hopeful approach may be a combination of incentives to clustering and improvement of communications, flexibly adapted to local situations and cultural traditions.

The location of nuclei of services at points accessible to the greatest possible number of rural families may by itself exert an influence toward clustering of settlement. This is said to be happening at present among the extremely dispersed population of the Bolivian *altiplano*. An appreciable number of such

nuclei now exist in different countries, as a result of "community development" or "nuclear school" programmes as well as agrarian reform or colonization, but criteria for the location of the nuclei or the range of services offered by them are rarely formulated in precise terms or in relation to the pre-existing groupings of the rural population.

The 1961 Working Group on Administrative Aspects of Decentralization, referred to above, sought criteria for "optimum minimum" populations to be served by different rural "technical services," defined as services requiring, at the same time, "substantial co-ordination at the local level, popular participation, adaptation to local circumstances and technical support from higher levels." Specialists in the different services reported to the Working Group that the optimum minimum area for primary education would supply 120 children (ages 6–12) for a 3-teacher primary school; that one agricultural extension worker could effectively serve 600 to 1,000 farmers; and that minimum standards for health personnel would include one nurse to 1,000–1,500 people and one general practitioner to 4,000–5,000. No numerical ratio was ventured for social welfare services.⁶⁴

These non-comparable standards do not take us very far, but do suggest that an efficient nucleus of "technical services" should serve a larger population than that found in most rural settlements or neighbourhoods at present, including the newer planned settlements—say a minimum of 200 families or 1,000 people.⁶⁵ The relevant population for such a nucleus, however, would include not only the families in its immediate vicinity but also those able to reach it in a reasonable amount of time—whether on foot, by horse or mule, or by motorized transport. The effective radius would depend as much on local habits as on the actual travel time; peasants in some areas are quite willing to walk for several days to a market, while others rarely stir outside their immediate neighbourhood; in a good many localities, factionalism might inhibit the peasants of one settlement from using services placed in another. The nucleus for technical services should normally be also a nucleus for some commercial and artisanal services, including an establishment for repair of tools and machinery. Up to the present, criteria for the location and character of such services in the rural areas have received even less attention than criteria for educational and health services. This last question is only one aspect of the larger problem of bringing the rural population into more effective contact with national markets; the promotion of local co-operatives in conjunction with the extension of local "technical services" offers the most promising answer. The experiences of the *tiendas del pueblo*, hundreds of which have been established in the countryside by the Cuban Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria, also deserve study.

As a minimum, effective planning of the location of rural technical and other services will require accurate information on the physical and human

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geography of the rural localities—including size and location of settlement clusters, distribution of dispersed families, roads and trails, actual patterns of movement within the locality and functions of present gathering places. Up to the present, systematic information of this kind is remarkably scanty, except for the occasional localities that have been the subject of special sociological or geographical surveys. Large-scale mapping of the countries through aerial photography is only now in progress.⁶⁶ Maps of the municipios, if they exist at all, are often inaccurate, and few censuses have distinguished the strictly rural nuclei in their tabulations.

The areas to be served by the lowest units of the different technical services should presumably coincide with one another as far as practical⁶⁷ and also should try to coincide with recognized sub-divisions of the municipio—although the latter would in many cases benefit from reorganization either to bring them into closer correspondence with true neighbourhoods or to standardize their sizes. These administrative-unit-neighbourhoods, centering in a caserio or villorrio, would be the natural units for local organization cooperating with the technical services. Whether such local organizations should receive formal status as units of local government with their own sources of revenue and powers of coercion can hardly be given a general answer. There are strong arguments against the multiplication of small weak local authorities, and in much of the region the criteria set forth by the Working Group for lower-level local authorities could hardly be met. Once again, solutions should depend on study of what is happening locally. In some countries it may be feasible and desirable to make the sub-divisions the basis for representation in the municipio council, so that a local person with a mandate from his neighbours both handles relations between them and the technical services and represents them before the larger local authority. In other instances, a variety of special-interest local rural bodies may be more effective—organizations of beneficiaries of agrarian reform, trade unions in hacienda and plantation settlements, co-operatives, school boards or parent-teacher associations.

For some purposes very small and entirely local nuclei will be needed. Not many rural schools in the region can boast three teachers or 120 pupils. For a foreseeable future, the most widely distributed “technical service” will continue to be the tiny one-teacher school. For at least four decades, rural programmes in some countries of the region have hoped to make such schools serve purposes wider than the elementary instruction of children. The more ambitious programmes along these lines have been frustrated both by the limitations of the caserio environment and the limitations of the untrained and underpaid teachers. Nevertheless, such schools constitute natural meeting places and focuses for neighbourhood effort. Better training and incentives for their teachers, sup-

port from larger nuclei of technical services, as in the nuclear school system, in combination with measures giving real hope to the rural people themselves could make them effective instruments of progress.

The problem of rural housing, with the attendant needs for potable water, sanitation, and electrical power requires separate discussion. While compactness of settlement may not be of decisive importance in relation to rural access to the technical services already mentioned, it is of obvious importance in relation to the costs of construction by other than traditional methods, and the costs of water supply and power lines.

Rural housing policy in the region has struggled for several years with its initial dilemma; on the one hand, rural housing almost everywhere, by any objective standards, is intolerably poor; on the other, no country can afford to subsidize better rural housing on a scale having any relation to the needs, and the rural people themselves, unlike the urban, do not make any insistent demands on the authorities for housing aid. Most peasant families continue to provide their own shelter by traditional techniques with assistance only from their neighbours, and the wretchedness of the housing derives as much from low standards as from lack of resources. The rural population is increasing only slowly, so that there is no reason to expect a general deterioration in housing conditions such as the cities have seen in the past decade, although general impoverishment of minifundio cultivators, increase in the numbers of landless labourers, or exhaustion of local supplies of timber or other building materials, have no doubt brought about a deterioration in some localities. At the same time, several observers have concluded that increased rural incomes do not generally result in better homes: "Modern standards of housing are simply not recognized by the vast majority of the rural inhabitants as being important. Such standards rank low on the scale of cultural values."⁶⁸ Some rural groups, particularly among Indians, prefer to avoid any show of prosperity that might lead to higher taxes. The migratory workers, resident hacienda workers, and shifting cultivators are all lacking in real incentives for building more than a minimum of shelter.

Aside from the limited number of agricultural colonies and nuclei constructed with aid from abroad, rural housing measures have followed two main lines: First, hacienda and plantation owners have been required by law or stimulated by tax incentives to provide housing meeting minimum standards. Such measures have brought visible improvements in the hacienda settlements of some areas, but in others may have encouraged the tendency toward reduction of the number of resident families and greater dependence on labour from outside. Second, community development and related programmes have experimented with techniques of motivating and aiding the families of small

cultivators to build better houses for themselves. A considerable body of information on such techniques has by now been assembled, but the impact on rural housing levels has remained limited and local.⁶⁹

A higher degree of clustering of rural settlement, with secure tenure and a strengthening of neighbourhood ties, is undoubtedly a prerequisite for faster progress in housing improvement through self-help. Such clustering would facilitate co-operative labour and more efficient local production of building material, as well as the provision of minimum public services. It would also promote—though not guarantee, to judge from past experience with “model houses”—a spirit of emulation in the adoption of housing improvements. In any case more systematic evaluation is needed of the experiences of rural housing projects in the region, including their relationships to settlement patterns, neighbourhood and community organization, and other services affecting levels of living.

AT THE LEVEL OF THE WIDER COMMUNITY: STRENGTHENING OF
THE PUEBLO AND THE MUNICIPIO

The preceding pages have contrasted the potential importance and the actual shortcomings of the small semi-urban centres, the pueblos or cabeceras of municipios, in a region in which most of the rural-agricultural population is not grouped into villages large and varied enough to function as communities. Ideally the small towns should provide for the rural people a wide range of services that cannot be provided efficiently at the neighbourhood level—secondary schools, hospitals, markets, credit institutions, courts, registries, cinemas, newspapers and radio stations featuring local news, etc. Rural development, except in the zones close to large cities, will depend in large part on a strengthening of the pueblos that have been assessed in such unflattering terms.

Present population and employment trends in the region, moreover, imply that another kind of very important rural-urban liaison function must be demanded of the towns. The population of the strictly rural-agricultural localities can be expected to increase slowly in absolute terms during the foreseeable future, but to continue its present decline as a percentage of total regional population. The rate of “natural” increase in the rural population of the region is probably above three percent annually, while the net increase is no higher than 1.5 percent. The remainder of the natural increase is moving from the rural localities to urban centres of one kind or another.⁷⁰ In spite of the potentialities for agricultural employment of agrarian reform and the opening of new lands, a still lower rate of rural net increase and a higher rate of urbanization might be economically desirable—if only non-agricultural jobs could be created fast enough and if migrants from the countryside could be qualified to fill them.

These conditions are not being met even at the present rate of urbanization, and the consequent ominous accumulation of huge numbers of underemployed marginal workers and their families on the periphery of the larger cities is directing public attention to the possibility of securing a healthier geographical distribution of the increment to the rural population. If this increment cannot be kept on the land except at the price of perpetuating the disastrous minifundio system and ensuring the eventual resumption of rural exodus on a still larger scale, and if the cities can absorb productively only a part of it, where is the remainder to go?

The only constructive answer seems to lie in the expansion of employment opportunities in the small and medium-sized urban centres. The towns should be able to absorb part of the surplus rural labour force permanently and for another part act as a half-way house, providing vocational training and initiation into urban ways of life prior to migration to larger centres.

The fragmentary evidence now available leaves one with the impression that the towns are at present very weak links in the urban-rural network—if such a network can be said to exist—and that the majority are in serious danger of losing their present economic capacities and local industries, if any, deteriorating into mere nuclei of local public-office holders or agglomerations of marginal rural workers who have nowhere else to go.

The prerequisites for their strengthening as community centres and sources of productive employment are far from simple, even if the national authorities are prepared to grant wider local self-government, technical aid and more adequate sources of revenues. Some countries in the region have alternated historically between the delegation of extensive responsibilities to the *municipios* and systems of extreme centralization. The *municipios* in many instances have been deprived of educational, public health, policing and other functions with which they were previously entrusted, as national standards for these services rose, and municipal ineffectiveness became more notorious. At present, it does not appear that municipal affairs in the countries in which the *municipios* retain a degree of autonomy and wide legal responsibilities are in a healthier state than in the countries with more centralized systems.⁷¹

It has already been stated that the local social structures are likely to transform specific reforms and aid programmes into something quite different from what was intended, unless measures are accompanied by the appearance of a real local public opinion in which the rural population as well as the lower strata of the towns can make themselves heard. Such a public opinion in turn depends on agrarian reforms, educational reforms, and the growth of mass organizations really responsible to their members. This prerequisite is particularly important if public policy is directed toward the systematic use of underemployed local labour in roads and other public works. This resource can be of

very great value, but past experience shows that unless its use is controlled by the rural people themselves, it can be a source of intolerable abuses and exploitation.

It must be expected that if a reasonable degree of community solidarity and popular participation in local government is attained, demands on the central authorities for aid will become more insistent and more effective. In spite of the real likelihood that the tapping of local initiative and the use of under-employed local labour can make important contributions to infrastructural investment, neither the small towns nor the rural neighbourhoods can be expected to provide for themselves, with only inspiration and technical advice from outside, the kind of services the national authorities normally provide for the wealthier cities. National policy makers and planners must be prepared for a continuing struggle to rationalize local demands, approximate them to national developmental priorities, and overcome the two deeply-rooted political traditions of concentrating resources on highly visible prestige projects and of scattering token aid among all claimants.

One indispensable step will be a systematic assessment of the present resources and functions of the town considered as community centres.⁷² The broad questions to be considered include the following:

1) Standards for optimum size of the municipio and its cabecera. In general, these units should probably be fewer and larger; the universal tendency for the cabecera to monopolize municipal services has stimulated a contrary pressure toward sub-division. Once the national Governments face the need for more effective aid to the municipios, the burden of an excessive number of small units requiring permanent subsidies if they are to maintain minimum services can become very heavy. A satisfactory population range for predominantly rural municipios might be between 20,000 and 50,000. This would coincide in general with the population standards for the second tier of technical services (secondary school, hospital, etc.) proposed by the United Nations Working Group previously cited.⁷³ In practice, however, the sparseness of rural population, geographical barriers, lack of roads, etc. in much of the region may require the maintenance of local units well below a satisfactory minimum in regard to population.

2) Standards for division of responsibilities between local authorities and national or regional agencies, for coordination of the two, and for municipio financial resources. The present typical relationship has been called a "dual system" in which "central ministries administer technical services directly, with local authorities having autonomy legally to perform local services and to do what they can to foster local development, but actually performing few if any technical services," a system characterized by "separateness and conflict" between the two.⁷⁴ In practice, the municipio authorities often confine themselves

to a few residual functions, such as licensing, that also constitute their only dependable sources of funds.

3) Standards for local infrastructural investments and services, related to assessments of the facilities now present. Uniform criteria for investment priorities might do something to discourage the misapplication of funds now typical of the authorities in the cabeceras. The important points to be considered are the functioning of the services and their real availability to all the people of the municipio. It is not enough to know that a hospital, school, or rural credit agency exists in the form of a building and a staff. The desideratum of wider availability for services located in the cabecera generally implies a need for more investment in local roads connecting the rural nuclei with the cabecera and in busses and trucks to use the roads.

4) Assessment of potentialities for local industries and other sources of employment. Presumably many of the existing towns have no real future as industrial, commercial, transport, or administrative centres; others should specialize in one or more of these functions. A national programme for aid to the municipios will be under continual pressure to spread its resources thinly, in accord with political pressures rather than local potential. Systematic knowledge of the local potential and placement of the localities in a framework of planning for regional and national development will not, of course, do away with such pressures, but are indispensable if the pressures are to be effectively resisted or channeled.

5) National arrangements for technical assistance to municipios in rationalizing their administrative methods, in planning, and in execution of local projects; and for channeling of grants-in-aid to them. In the past, relations between the municipios and the national Government in a majority of countries have been handled through the provincial representatives of Ministries of Interior, have concentrated on enforcement of legislative restrictions on municipio activities and uses of funds, and have been countered by the kinds of political manoeuvres previously described. A change in emphasis from regulation to assistance within this system offers one alternative approach; but several countries are also initiating national agencies outside the traditional administrative system. Venezuela, for example, in January 1962 created an autonomous *Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Comunidad y Fomento Municipal*, supported by external funds, with multiple responsibilities for research, financing, and technical aid in relation to municipal public works, housing, and local economic projects (including cooperatives, savings and loan associations and small industries). Associations of municipios offer another alternative, and such associations now exist in several countries. The financial, administrative and political weaknesses of the municipios mean, however, that such associations require consistent and

extensive central support if they are to acquire any ability to offer technical services to their members.

SOME RESEARCH NEEDS

The preceding pages have pointed to a number of questions that cannot be answered satisfactorily from the present evidence, although tentative answers to some of them have been risked. An extensive listing of interesting topics for further research might serve no immediate purpose, in view of the scarcity of regional resources for rural studies and the present commitment of such resources to certain high-priority projects. The following summary limits itself to a few important lines of study that derive directly from the analysis made in this article, and that at the same time fall within the fields of interest of international bodies and private research organizations now active in Latin America:

Demography: How much further information on relative population sizes, population structures, rates of growth, and currents of migration in the different types of rural and semi-urban nucleus can be derived from past censuses and other demographic sources? What are the prerequisites, in terms of census definitions, questions, and tabulations, for the obtaining of more adequate information through future censuses?

Human geography: How are the different settlement types distributed over the region? How are they influenced by topography, crops and systems of cultivation, land tenure, cultural patterns, and deliberate government policies? What are the effects, under defined conditions, of the construction of service nuclei, main highways, local access roads?

Case studies of new settlements and of the economic and social consequences of new roads are particularly needed. Such studies should be made at the time of construction of the settlement or road and again three, five, or ten years later, and should permit the evaluation of alternative policies both in the older cultivated areas and in the zones of colonization.

Local administration and community organization: What services do the local centres provide in practice and how are these services controlled and distributed? How do political parties, trade unions and other organizations representing sectors of the public function at the level of the small town and the rural neighbourhood, and as channels for communications between these localities and the national political and social structures?

Agrarian structure, local economy, marketing: What are the implications of the types of agricultural enterprise locally dominant (plantation, hacienda,

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medium-sized commercial farm, small cultivator) for the economic and social functioning of small towns and rural neighbourhoods? What are the implications for agricultural productivity and for local initiative of alternative systems of remuneration of rural labour, marketing of produce and supply of credit? What are the possibilities and prerequisites of expansion of non-agricultural enterprises in the small towns?

Regional planning: Can the municipios be envisaged as a basis for the lowest level of units in a hierarchy of "regions" for planning purposes? If so, how should their optimum size and other characteristics be defined, and what changes in administrative patterns are needed? Can the municipios, provinces, etc. be envisaged as "building blocks" within flexible systems of regional planning? If so, how should relationships be defined between the regional planning institutions and (a) national planning bodies, (b) provincial and local administrative bodies. How do the semi-urban centres of municipios relate themselves at present to the larger urban centres, and what should be the criteria for such relationships within a system of regional planning?

NOTES

1. Published in the *Economic Bulletin for Latin America*, VIII, 1 (March 1963). The Economic Commission for Latin America at its tenth session in 1963 requested the Secretariat to "continue research on the geographical distribution of the population and on the causes, characteristics and effects of the various shifts and settlements of both urban and rural population . . ." Resolution 230(X), May 16, 1963.
2. See, in particular, Richard N. Adams, *Cultural Surveys—Panama-Nicaragua-Guatemala-El Salvador-Honduras*, (Pan American Sanitary Bureau Scientific Publications No. 33, Washington, D.C., December 1957); Orlando Fals-Borda, *Peasant Society in the Colombian Andes: A Sociological Study of Saucio*, (University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 1955); I. Silva Fuenzalida, "Rural Communities in Central Chile," *Report on the Ninth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Study*, (Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 1960); T. Lynn Smith, *Brazil, People and Institutions*, (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1946); Nathan L. Whetten, *Rural Mexico*, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948); Nathan L. Whetten, *Guatemala, the land and the People*, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1961); G. Hill, J. Silva and R. O. de Hill, *La Vida Rural en Venezuela*, (Caracas, 1958); Venezuela, Consejo de Bienestar Rural, *Problemas Economicos y Sociales de los Andes Venezolanos, Parte II*, (Caracas, no date); and Peru, Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Peru, *Los Recursos Humanos del Departamento de Puno*, (Informes Vol. V, PS/B/9, Lima, 1959). The last of these sources, together with a number of other reports in the same series, contains the most extensive information on settlement patterns, derived from field studies, to be found for any region within a Latin American country.
3. Studies made for the Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Peru set limits of 5,000–10,000 inhabitants for a *pueblo chico* and 1,000–5,000 for an *aldea*; in practice, however, the same studies treat settlements well below these population limits but meeting other criteria as pueblos and aldeas. Whetten, *op. cit.*, in discussing Mexico classifies nuclei of

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- 101–1,000 as “villages” and nuclei of 1,001–2,500 as “large villages,” but adds that “many communities reporting a population of about 10,000 inhabitants are little more than a collection of farm villages.”
4. For present purposes, it is not necessary to enter into the complicated question of whether these strata really constitute “classes” in the strict sense.
 5. Some studies touching upon rural settlement in Latin America distinguish between “pueblo” and “aldea” simply on the basis of size and administrative status; using the term “aldea” for the small administrative centres of predominantly rural municipios, and “pueblo” for the larger and more urban centres of the next tier of administration. The different distinction suggested here, however, has the advantage of drawing attention to the fact that “village settlement” of the types widespread in Europe and Asia and associated with the conception of compact, complexly organized rural communities is not widely characteristic of Latin America.
 6. The studies of southern Peru cited above set population limits of 200–1,000 for villorrios. Silva, *op. cit.*, sets a bottom limit of 100 families for villorrios in Chile. Presumably most of the settlements classified by Whetten in Mexico as “villages” (101–1,000) are closer to the villorio type than to the aldea.
 7. The “line settlements” found in many parts of Latin America along roads or rivers in general conform more closely to the sprawling unorganized villorrio (or the smaller caserío) than to the “line villages” known in Europe.
 8. The southern Peru studies limit the term caserío to nuclei of 10 to 50 families; Silva of 5 to 60 families; Whetten distinguishes “hamlets” of 11 to 100 people.
 9. In the cereal-mixed farming areas of Argentina, “local neighbourhoods can be identified only by the sporadic visiting within geographic vicinities and seldom or never as a mutual-aid group. Communities, even trade-center communities, do not exist in any sociological sense.” Carl C. Taylor, *Rural Life in Argentina*, (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1948).
 10. According to the studies of southern Peru previously cited, hacienda settlements in that area range from 50 to 500 in population; in some of them the population is grouped around the administrative-commercial center in self-sufficient communities; in others the population is scattered in small nuclei with social life oriented toward outside villages or hamlets.
 11. The Mexican population census of 1950, in a table distributing the population by settlement types, listed 5,582 ejidos with 1,615,334 inhabitants. The ejidal census of the same year distinguished 17,579 ejidos with 1,552,926 ejidatarios (heads of families, indicating a probable total population of about 7.5 million).
 12. A “comunidad” recently studied in southern Peru had 3,500 persons and 150 km² of land. Of its people, 1,500 form a minority in the population of a town outside the limits of the comunidad holdings; 1,200 live in a village on the other side of the holdings; the other 800 live dispersed within their boundaries. The three groups have no present feelings of community solidarity, but joined because their claim for legal recognition was based on a 17th century document defining the communal holdings of their ancestors. Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Peru, *Funciones y Medios de Gobierno Local* (Informe Vol. XXII, PS/F/52, Lima 1959).
 13. For an interesting description of the consolidation of the hacienda and the community in the 17th century see Eric Wolf, *Sons of the Shaking Earth* (The University of Chicago Press, 1959). This source, concerned with Mexico and Guatemala, stresses several factors in the survival of the Indian communities that are relevant to their present potentialities as instruments for rural development: first, the communities were, in the main, not spontaneous survivals of pre-Columbian forms of social organization but products of colonial policies

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for control of Indian labour; second, the maintenance of community solidarity came to depend on the rejection of innovations and individual initiative; mechanisms such as the obligation of periodic ceremonial expenditure served to prevent the individual from accumulating permanent wealth that would enable him to dominate the community; third, the limited size of community landholdings meant that they could survive only by continually exporting their surplus population, presumably including the elements least adaptable to the static community life. Rural out-migration thus has a long history, and from the beginning this usually led to the loss of distinctively Indian traits among the migrants.

14. Venezuela, Consejo de Bienestar Rural, *op. cit.*
15. Nathan L. Whetten, *Guatemala . . . op. cit.*, pp. 37–38.
16. See Orlando Fals-Borda, *op. cit.*, and a series of surveys of individual municipios carried out by Sección de Investigación Social, Facultad de Sociología, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, for the land tenure studies sponsored by the Comité Interamericano de Desarrollo Agrícola.
17. An unpublished study of Brazilian agriculture points out that the various kinds of "residual" or subsistence cultivation act as shock absorbers for commercial agriculture, expanding when markets for the latter are poor, and shrinking again when the commercial farms need more land and labour; this study asserts that there is no consistent trend toward the absorption of squatters, share-croppers, etc. into wage labour, but a fluctuation (Andrew Gunder Frank, "Brazilian Agriculture: Capitalism and the Myth of Feudalism").
18. This study asserts that real distinctions among the rural people who cultivate marginal plots of uncertain ownership and seek seasonal wage work "are entirely and exclusively determined by the degree of friendship maintained with the local *patron-latifundista*." (G. W. Hill, *Estudio Preliminar a una Reforma Agraria en Honduras*, Unión Panamericana, Washington, D.C., 1962).
19. A study of a locality in Central Chile, for example, describes the settlers occupying the poorer mountain lands of the haciendas as a type of pioneer, living partly by woodcutting and small mining, partly by shifting cultivation, sometimes on a sharecropping basis, sometimes receiving full right to the crop in exchange for clearing the land. (J. Borde and M. Gongora, *Evolución de la Propiedad Rural en el Valle del Puangue*, Instituto de Sociología, Universidad de Chile, Santiago 1956).
20. See, for example, Celso Furtado, *Formação Econômica do Brasil* (Editora Fundo de Cultura, Sao Paulo, 1959, pp. 141–142).
21. Olen E. Leonard, *Bolivia: Land, People and Institutions* (The Scarecrow Press, Washington, D.C., 1952).
22. E. Service and H. Service, *Tobatí: Paraguayan Town* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1954).
23. Richard N. Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
24. See Douglas Teixeira Monteiro, "Estrutura social e vida econômica em una área de pequena propriedade y de monocultura," *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Políticos*, 12 de octubre de 1961; and Jean Tricart, "El desarrollo de los Andes Venezolanos," *Cuadernos de la Sociedad Venezolana de Planificación*, I, 6 de enero de 1963.
25. The first report of the Instituto Colombiano de Reforma Agraria (INCORA) attributes to this factor a concentration of large holdings in zones opened to settlement in the present century. The large owners have profited from "the huge investments of the community in lines of communication and public services and the heroic sacrifice of the anonymous peasant," (*Informe de Actividades en 1962*, Bogotá, abril de 1963, p. 43).
26. For a discussion of this last problem and the conflicts to which it gives rise, see Fernando

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- Henrique Cardoso, "Tensoes sociais no campo e reforma agraria," *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Politicos*, 12 de octubre de 1961.
27. Rafael Baraona, Ximena Aranda, Roberto Santana, *Valle de Putaendo, Estudio de Estructura Agraria* (Instituto de Geografía, Universidad de Chile, 1961, p. 236).
28. Carl C. Taylor, *op. cit.*
29. Jose Luis de Imaz, "Estratificación social del sector primario en Ucacha," *Desarrollo Económico*, (Buenos Aires, 1, 4, enero-marzo de 1962).
30. Duglas Teixeira Monteiro, *op. cit.*
31. Victor Goldkind, "Sociocultural Contrasts in Rural and Urban Settlement Types in Costa Rica," *Rural Sociology*, 26, 4, December 1961.
32. Frank, *op. cit.*
33. See the studies previously cited of the Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Peru. This kind of ruralization can also affect the physical characteristics of the small towns. In the past, the typical small town was composed of substantial adobe houses, however lacking these might be in modern conveniences. For many of them, the growth of the marginal population means also the growth of improvised shantytowns. The problem of *callampas* and *villas miseria* is not limited to the big cities.
34. Rafael Baraona and others, *op. cit.*, p. 301. Other descriptions of landless labourers, however, as already indicated, suggest a general lack of initiative, a reluctance to try anything except the work they know.
35. Jean Tricart, "Un exemple du déséquilibre villes-campagnes dans une economie en voie de developpement: El Salvador," *Developpement et Civilisations*, IRFED, Paris, 11, July-September 1962.
36. Richard N. Adams, *op. cit.*
37. See Jacques Chonchol, "Análisis Crítico de la Reforma Agraria Cubana," *El trimestre económico*, 117, enero-marzo de 1963; and M. Gutelman, "L'agriculture cubaine: le reforme agrarie et les problèmes nouveaux," *Etudes Rurales*, 8, January-March 1963.
38. The departamento is usually the unit immediately below the national level and may be divided into provincias, but in Argentina and Chile this usage is reversed. In three federally organized countries (Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela) the larger unit is an *Estado*. Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Venezuela have no intermediate administrative level and in Mexico the intermediate unit has only vestigial functions. The meaning of the term municipio is closer to the "county" or "township" of the United States than to "municipality."
39. Colombia, Ministerio del Trabajo, División Técnica de la Seguridad Social Campesina, *Estudio Socio-Económico de Nariño* (Bogotá, 1959).
40. Gilberto Loyo, quoted by Nathan L. Whetten, *Rural Mexico*, *op. cit.*
41. Nathan L. Whetten, *Guatemala . . . op cit.*
42. Marvin Harris, *Town and Country in Brazil* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1956, p. 179). On the average, however, the advantages secured by the smaller municipio centres are pathetically limited and marginal to their real needs. Among the 2,468 municipios existing in Brazil in 1957 only 600 had in the centre (cidade) a water system "deserving the name"; in 1954 only 460 cidades had a sewerage system; 206 of them had no electric power. More than 600 municipios did not have a single physician, let alone one in public service. Diogo Lordello de Mello, "A decentralizacao administrativa e a realidade municipal brasileira," *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Politicos*, 11 Junho de 1961. In southern Peru in 1959, among 461 "urban" cabeceras only 6 had an adequate supply of drinking water and 2 had adequate sewerage; 66 and 26, respectively, had water and sewerage systems "needing improvement," while 390 had no water system and 433 no sewers (Plan Regional para el

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- Desarrollo del Sur del Perú, *El Desarrollo Urbano*, Informes Vol. XVIII, PS/E/42, Lima 1959). In Peru as a whole, according to a recent estimate, 725 out of 1,500 cabeceras lack an access road linking them with the national highway system (Fernando Belaunde Terry, "El Mestizaje de la Economía," *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, October 1963).
43. See Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Revisited*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1951, p. 49.
 44. Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Perú, *La Organización Social en el Departamento de Puno*, (Informes Vol. XXII, PS/F/49, Lima 1959).
 45. Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Perú, *La Cultura; Sistemas de Valores* (Informe Vol. XXII, PS/F/50, Lima 1959).
 46. A process of this kind also seems to have occurred since the 1920's under the combined stimulus of favourable access to produce markets, relatively vigorous and adaptable traditional community organizations, and the penetration of new national movements in parts of the Mantaro Valley in Peru. The cabeceras in this area, however, seem to have been from the beginning closer to the aldea of cultivators than to the pueblo, as they are distinguished in the present paper: See José R. Sabogal Wiesse, "La Comunidad Indígena de Pucara," *América Indígena*, XXI, 1, January 1961.
 47. See Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Perú, *La Organización Social en el Departamento de Puno* (Informes Vol. XXII, PS/F/49, Lima 1959, pp. 23–24).
 48. For a thorough analysis of the consequences of paternalistic administration in colonization programmes, see Venezuela, Ministerio de Agricultura y Cría, Dirección de Planificación Agropecuaria, División de Política Agrícola, *La Colonización Agraria en Venezuela 1830–1957. Estudio Efectuado por el MAC con la Colaboración del IAN* (Caracas 1959).
 49. Oscar Lewis, *op. cit.*, constitutes a particularly interesting examination of the situation within a large rural community in which many traditional forms survive, and in which an earlier study had emphasized the elements of solidarity: "Another aspect of the tendency to idealize the free village has been the assumption that collective forms of land tenure are accompanied by cooperativeness and a form of collectivism in the economic organization of agriculture. As a matter of fact, Tepoztecan, like most Mexican peasants, are a highly individualistic group of farmers, and there is a minimum of cooperativeness or collectivization in the system of agriculture. The existence of collective forms of land tenure, in the face of this individualism, has been responsible for much bickering between the villages." (p. 127) Lewis also states that the nearly extinct system of collective public works labour in the same village is considered "a coercive rather than a voluntary institution" and gave the local authorities "ample opportunity for favoritism and vengeance against political opponents or personal enemies." (p. 110) He cites other local studies that support his conclusion on the dominant individualism of the Mexican peasant. (p. 303).
 50. The latter situation is described as typical of minifundio cultivators in the department of Nariño (Colombia, Ministerio de Trabajo, *op. cit.*) and of Indian cultivators of Puno (Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Perú, Los Recursos Humanos del Departamento de Puno, *op. cit.*).
 51. I. Silva Fuenzalida, "Rural Communities in Central Chile," *op. cit.*
 52. It is interesting that several studies dealing with migrants coming from rural settlements as well as small towns to the cities found prominent among their memories and motives for migrating a fear of the hostility or "envy" of neighbours in their place of origin, particularly at any sign of prosperity or initiative. See, for example, Humberto Rotondo and others, *Personalidad Básica, Dilemas y Vida de Familia de un Grupo de Mestizos* (Lima, 1960); and Oscar Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 295. "There is a deeply ingrained fear in the Indians of Tilantongo; fear of extortion, political persecution, economic exploitation, banditry, and

- blood feuds. In addition to these 'social' fears, there is an ever-present fear of the natural elements, which in one fell swoop, can, and often do, wipe out a year's food supply. . . . In Mexico City, the migrants say that they have 'lost the fear' which they had in Tilantongo." (Douglas S. Butterworth, "A Study of the Urbanization Process among Mixtec Migrants from Tilantongo in Mexico City," *América Indígena*, XXII, 3, July 1962.).
53. For local descriptions of the relationships between shopkeepers and small cultivators, see Richard N. Adams, *op. cit.*; G. Hill and others, *op. cit.*; Andrew Pearse and Salomon Rivera, *La Tenencia de la Tierra y sus Implicaciones Socio-Económicas en Tenza, Colombia* (Sección de Investigaciones, Facultad de Sociología, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, May 1963); and I. Silva Fuenzalida, "Aspectos de la Organización Económica de las Comunidades Rurales de la Provincia de Ñuble, Chile," *Economía*, Santiago, 75–76, 1962). The last two of these sources point to the squeeze placed on the small cultivator by continuing inflation in recent years; the prices of the tools and other goods he needs to buy consistently rise faster than the prices of the produce he has to sell.
 54. Gerardo and Alicia Reichel-Dolmatoff, *The People of Aritama: the Cultural Personality of a Colombian Mestizo Village* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 239 and p. 459).
 55. For an assessment of the national social structures in relation to developmental requirements, see "The Postwar Social Development of Latin America" (E/CN.12/660).
 56. United Nations Technical Assistance Programme, *Decentralization for Local and National Development* (United Nations Publication: Sale No. 62. II.H. 2), p. 21.
 57. In the 19th and early 20th century, a good many colonies of European migrants in the countries in the southern half of South America were organized according to the patterns of large compact villages in the migrants' countries of origin, but these examples did not influence the rest of the rural population, and in many instances the emigrants eventually turned to more dispersed settlement. Whetten (*Rural Mexico, op. cit.*, p. 49) emphasizes that most of the new rural settlements deriving from the Mexican agrarian programme since 1930 received "little or no planning in regard to the location of the homes in relation to the farms or to the spacing of houses and lots with reference to one another."
 58. The Venezuelan agrarian reform policy calls for the organization of beneficiaries in groups of about 100 families with a nucleus of services, but in most of the earlier local projects the families have lived dispersed on their plots, with the nucleus located so as to have access to a road; while clustered settlement is now preferred only a few have been organized. One of the newer projects envisages *centros poblados* of about 140 families, with the size of nuclei determined by the criterion that landholdings of 10 hectares each should not be more than 3–3.5 kilometres from the centre, considered the maximum convenient distance for transport of crops, etc. by animal power. (Venezuela, Oficina Central de Coordinación y Planificación, *Proyecto de Desarrollo Integral de Bocono, Primer Curso de Planificación Integral de Asentamientos Campesinos*, agosto–noviembre 1963. The present approach in Venezuela is influenced by the experience of Israel in agricultural colonization.
 59. Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria, *op. cit.*
 60. *El Mercurio*, Santiago, 21 January 1964.
 61. One authority has recommended a hexagonal system of land division, with each hexagon divided into 24 triangular farms, with the 24 families grouped around the centre of the hexagon, each at the point of its triangle, and with a nucleus of services in the centre. (T. Lynn Smith, "Una sugestión para la planeación de las comunidades rurales en América Latina, *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, XXII, 2, 1960).
 62. "More than concentration in small towns, the peasant who works the land is interested in access to the main roads so as to be able to use the transport services that permit him to carry his products to more profitable markets. Furthermore, access to the main roads permits

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him to send his children to the better equipped schools. The Chilean peasant is accustomed to living by the roadside; in settlements it would be hard for him to guard his animals or care for them conveniently.

"This tendency to live on the land is combatted by the planners of rural housing programmes in Chile. To them the clustering of buildings is the only way of solving the problems presented by modern construction. The creation of "*villorrios agrícolas*" does not in any way solve the problem of a peasant.

"On the contrary, once he is at a distance from the land he will seek other forms of work, will use political pressure to enter the public administration or to obtain a license to sell alcohol or open a shop." (Oscar Domínguez, *El Condicionamiento de la Reforma Agraria: Estudio de los Factores Económicos, Demográficos y Sociales que Determinan la Promoción del Campesino Chileno*, Université Catholique de Louvain, Collection de l'Ecole des Sciences Politiques et Sociales No. 173, 1963, p. 182.)

63. See, for example, Alfonso Villa Rojas, "Notas sobre la Distribución y Estado Actual de la Población Indígena de la Península de Yucatán, Mexico," *América Indígena*, XXII, 3, July 1962; and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *The Economic Development of Venezuela* (The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1961). The latter report criticizes earlier colonization projects for, *inter alia*, "excessive expenditures on housing, community facilities, and land clearing with insufficient attention to the economic productivity of the farms created."
64. United Nations Technical Assistance Programme, *op. cit.*, p. 15–16. The Working Group distinguished *technical services* from *centralized field services* "such as postal services and telecommunications, which lend themselves to highly centralized forms of field administration"; and *local services*, "such as construction and maintenance of local roads and irrigation works, which can be performed effectively without technical support or supervision from higher levels."
65. One of the very few systematic discussions of standards for such nuclei, however, applying itself to Uruguayan conditions, proposes a 3-teacher school for 60–70 children and a clinic in charge of a first aid attendant, visited weekly by a physician, to serve a group of 400–500 people. Educational levels in most of the other countries would preclude a 3-teacher school for such a small number of children. (Centro Latinoamericano de Economía Humana, *Interpretación del Uruguay Rural*, Librería América Latina, Montevideo, 1963).
66. For a summary of mapping progress up to 1963, see "Los Recursos Naturales en América Latina, Su Conocimiento Actual e Investigaciones Necesarias en Este Campo" (E/CN.12/670).
67. The functions of administration and co-ordination of the services would in general be handled at higher levels.
68. Nathan L. Whetten, *Rural Mexico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 302–303.
69. The main stimulus for pilot projects and local research has been the Centro Interamericano de Vivienda y Planeamiento (CINVA). See, for example, its publications on *Experiencias sobre Vivienda Rural en el Brasil* (Bogotá 1961) and *La Vereda de Chambimbal: Estudio y Acción en Vivienda Rural* (Bogotá 1958).
70. See "Geographic Distribution of the Population of Latin America and Regional Development Priorities," *loc. cit.* Some of the smaller Caribbean and Central American countries show much higher rates of rural net increase and a few countries, including Argentina, Chile and Venezuela, show no increase at all.
71. See the discussion of local government and field services in Brazil by Diogo Lordello de Mello, in United Nations Technical Assistance Programme, *op. cit.*, pp. 133–148.
72. The studies made for the Plan Regional para el Desarrollo del Sur del Perú constitute almost

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the only attempt up to the present to make such an assessment for a major part of a country. One of these studies, *El Desarrollo Urbano*, (Informes Vol. XVIII, PS/E/43) offers a framework for assessment of urban facilities and needs in small centres. The Report of the Working Group on Decentralization for National and Local Development offers extensive advice on standards for local government areas and for their relationships with higher levels of authority.

73. United Nations Technical Assistance Programme, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

This article was sent for critical commentary to 15 scholars in fields ranging from urban planning to economics. Answers received in time to go to press came from the following scholars in the order in which they appear on pages 51–64. Further commentaries and rebuttal by the author will be included in future numbers of the *Review* if the interest of our readers warrants.

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