1

CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE

THÈSES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

National Library of Canada
Collections Development Branch

Canadian Theses on
Microfiche Service

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction du développement des collections

Service des thèses canadiennes
sur microfiche

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

**THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED**

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE**

0-315-19933-4

National Library
of CanadaBibliothèque nationale
du Canada Canadian Theses
on Microfiche ServiceServices des thèses canadiennes
sur microfichesOttawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

67840

PERMISSION TO MICROFILM — AUTORISATION DE MICROFILMER

• Please print or type — Écrire en lettres moulées ou dactylographier

Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

DEMARSH, PETER GRANT

Date of Birth — Date de naissance

SEPT. 28, 1949

Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance

CANADA

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

TAYMOUTH, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA, E0H 1V0

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

ESTEVA'S THEORY OF A PEASANT-LED
RURAL DEVELOPMENT. STRATEGY FOR
MEXICO: A CRITIQUE

University — Université

CARLETON

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

M.A.

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade

1985

Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse

PROF. JACQUES CHEVALIER

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF
CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of
the film.The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the
thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or other-
wise reproduced without the author's written permission.L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈ-
QUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de
prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse
ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou
autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

Date

Jan. 28, 1985

Signature

Peter de Marne

ESTEVA'S THEORY OF A PEASANT-LED
RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
FOR MEXICO: A CRITIQUE

by

Peter Grant deMarsh, B.A.

© 1985 by Peter G. deMarsh

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in International Affairs

The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada

January 11, 1985

LICENCE TO CARLETON UNIVERSITY

In the interests of facilitating research by others at this institution and elsewhere, I hereby grant a licence to:

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

to make copies of my thesis:

E STEVA'S THEORY OF A PEASANT-LED RURAL DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY FOR MEXICO : A CRITIQUE

or substantial parts thereof, the copyright which is invested in me, provided that the licence is subject to the following conditions:

Only singled copies shall be made or authorized to be made at any one time, and only in response to a written request from the library of any university or similar institution on its own behalf or on behalf of one of its users.

This licence shall continue for the full term of the copyright, or for so long as may be legally permitted.

The Universal Copyright Notice shall appear on the title page of all copies made under the authority of this licence.

This licence does not permit the sale of authorized copies at a profit, but does permit the collection by the institution or institutions concerned of charges covering actual costs.

All copies under the authority of this licence shall bear a statement to the effect that the copy in question "is being made available in this form by the authority of the copyright owner solely for the purpose of private study and research and may not be copied or reproduced except as permitted by the copyright laws without written authority from the copyright owner."

The foregoing shall in no way preclude the granting by the author of a licence to the National Library of Canada to reproduce the thesis and to lend or to sell copies of the same. For this purpose it shall also be permissible for Carleton University to submit the abovementioned thesis to the National Library of Canada.

Lia Delaunay
Signature of Witness

Peter de Maere
Signature of Student

JAN 30, 1985
Date

M. A.
Degree

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
Department of Student

The undersigned hereby recommend to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of this thesis, submitted
by Peter deMarsh, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts.

Maureen Appel Molot

Maureen Appel Molot, Director (Acting)
The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs

J. Chevalier

J. Chevalier
Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Esteva's proposals for a peasant-led rural development strategy for Mexico and the theoretical model of peasant economy and community on which they are based are examined in this thesis. While Esteva's conclusions about the political importance of recent peasant movements in Mexico appear to be sound, his theoretical model may contribute to a miscalculation of the ability of Mexican peasants to take the initiative in rural transformation. Esteva's treatment of peasant production logic is found to be ambiguous. He appears to considerably overestimate the strength of co-operative institutions in peasant communities and to underestimate the degree of social differentiation present in rural Mexican society. In the absence of major political change in Mexico, Esteva's policy proposals are likely to be only partially realized. Chevalier's "maximization in-the-concrete" model of peasant economic logic is found to contribute to a resolution of the theoretical difficulties which contribute to Esteva's possible miscalculations.

Acknowledgements

Professor Jacques Chevalier, my supervisor, and Professor D.R.F. Taylor, my advisor, contributed much encouragement and many helpful suggestions to this thesis. Professors Frans Schryer and Pierre Beaucage were also generous with their assistance. Professor John O'Manique kindly arranged my visit to the Centro de Estudios Economicos y Sociales del Tercer Mundo (CEESTEM) in Mexico City in October, 1982. Raúl Fernandez, Gladys Faba, Clarisa Hardy and Carlos Montañez of CEESTEM all offered much academic and material assistance. Special thanks are due to Ernest Feder, Francisco Lerda, and Beatriz Canabal who were generous both with their suggestions and their hospitality. Gustavo Esteva and Luisa Paré were also very helpful. Financial contributions from the Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies and the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs made my research trip to Mexico possible. The Carleton University Faculty of Arts and Science and Graduate Students Association also supported my trip. My friend, David Mora, and his family made my visit to Mexico City a vastly more pleasant and rewarding experience than it would otherwise have been. Professors Francisco Gómez and Gustavo Arguez of the University of New Brunswick kindly reviewed my translations from Spanish in the text.

My deepest gratitude goes to my family. My mother, Edna DeMarsh typed all of the drafts of the thesis, and together with my wife, Jean Burgess, and my father, Roy DeMarsh assumed the protracted day-to-day task of encouraging my efforts. Their moral and logistical support were vital to the completion of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE.....	11
Dualist Models	15
The Orthodox Marxist Approach.....	17
Neo-Marxist Theories of an Articulation of Modes of Production	20
"Peasant Economy" Approaches to the Analysis of Peasantries.....	25
Chevalier's Formulation of an Alternative Treatment of Peasant Economic Logic.....	32
Discussion and Summary.....	38
CHAPTER II ESTEVA'S PROPOSALS.....	44
The Argument.....	44
The Context: Mexico's Rural Crisis	
The Untried Option	
Conditions Required for Success of the "Peasant Option"	
Political Organization of the Peasantry	
At the National Level	
At the Local Level	

Peasant Economic Organization	
Agricultural Production	
Collective Bargaining in Agricultural Marketing	
Agricultural Processing Industries	
Government Policy	
Political Support for the Program	
Theoretical and Empirical Bases for Esteva's Argument...	61
Political Developments in Mexico, 1970-1982	
Theoretical Arguments	
Esteva's "Peasant Economy"	
The "Peasant Community"	
Persistence of the Peasantry	
The Basis for the Peasants' Ability to Lead	
Development: A Summary	
CHAPTER III THE MEXICAN DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF THE	
PEASANTRY.....	76
Comments on the Peasant-led Strategy.....	78
The Debate on the Agrarian Transition	81
General Arguments	
Theoretical Models	
Definitions of the Peasantry	
Peasants as a Class	
Peasants as a Mode of Production with a	
Distinct Production Logic	
Distinguishing Peasants and the	
Petite Bourgeoisie	
Distinguishing Peasants and Proletarians	
Peasant Capacity for Political Organization	99
Summary.....	101

CHAPTER IV CRITIQUE	105
Subsistence Orientation.....	109
Community Solidarity.....	115
Social Differentiation.....	119
CONCLUSION	129
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	133

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Rural Classes in Mexico: Comparative Treatments.....	84
--	----

INTRODUCTION

Barrington Moore Jr.'s Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy leaves the distinct impression that there is an unvarying iron law of social and economic development: modernization inevitably involves the exploitation and eventual destruction of the peasantry, either as a prelude to (and quite possibly a necessary condition for) the establishment of parliamentary democracy, or as both a base of mass support for communist revolutions and the principal victims of the subsequent regimes (Moore, 1967: 30, 422, 428). Hyden reflects this outlook: "Economic history is largely the story of how to capture the peasants" (Hyden, 1980: 9). In the spirit of this alleged historical necessity, Western-oriented modernizers and traditional Marxists alike have tended to view Third World peasants as obstacles to development (when they have considered them at all). The only real questions for them have been how most efficiently to eradicate peasant backwardness, and what degree of coercion is acceptable in this endeavour. As described by Lipton, the initial stage in the evolution of policy towards agriculture and the rural masses in developing countries has been first of all to ignore them, to tax them as heavily as is feasible, and to obtain as cheaply as possible those outputs necessary to support industrialization, based on the argument (which meshes

smoothly with the "anti-peasant" bias) that agricultural development is assured by technological change, and that the sector does not need or is unable to absorb investment (Lipton, 1977: 20).

Does progress for the peasantry in fact require liquidation of the peasant economy and society, and assimilation of peasants into other classes (Esteva, 1977: 27)? Must what Watts calls "the cannon-fodder view of peasant history, that small producers are always and indeed have to be victims" (1983: 81) be accepted as unpleasant necessity? Concerns of both equity and economic efficiency suggest that the iron law does not provide a sufficient basis for development strategy. The array of policies that comprise Lipton's "urban bias" coincide clearly with the short term interests of urban industrialists and large commercial farmers (Lipton, 1977: 17, 19). Use by these groups of the argument that the disruption of peasant communities is justified by the promise of long-term benefits for society as a whole is rather clearly self-serving. The equity concern is further strengthened by the distinct possibility that the conditions under which such a strategy might in fact deliver the promised benefits do not exist in many countries due to any or all of: the nature of peripheral capitalism, the fact of "being late" (Johnson and Kilby, 1975: xvi), cultural differences, and high rates of population growth.

The disastrous results of policies based on "anti-peasant" bias have substantiated these concerns, and have led to a gradual evolution in development theory over the past two decades. Two central aspects of this have been a major upgrading of the importance accorded to agriculture in overall development strategies, and the "discovery" of peasant rationality, at least in matters concerning the efficient allocation of available land and labour. Translated into policy terms, these approaches have led to proposals, among others for "peasant-based" strategies for rural development (Pearse, 1980: 238; Griffin, 1974).

Drawing on the experience of countries such as Taiwan, China, Korea and Japan, it is argued that a coherent package of radical land reform and supportive services in the areas of input cost and availability (including credit), pricing policy, marketing institutions and technical extension and research, all in a form appropriate to the requirements of small peasants, is the most effective means of transforming traditional agriculture. With appropriate support, peasants are able to "move from a defensive to an offensive position [in terms of innovation], and thereby achieve a breakthrough to higher levels of productivity, income and accumulation" (Griffin, 1974: 183). If resources are directed to peasants in a manner which liberates their energy and initiative, as the economic actors directly responsible for production, they can quickly become a powerful force for development.

A further issue is the political role to be played by the peasants both in initiating such a set of policies, and in taking direct charge of its implementation. A "peasant-led strategy" thus adds an additional element to the "peasant-based" approach: through effective political organization, peasants play a critical role in creating the political feasibility for such a strategy and negotiating its terms, and are the leading actor, at a political and social, as well as economic level, in carrying it out. Such a strategy has been outlined for Mexico by Gustavo Esteva. He has also developed a detailed theoretical model of the Mexican peasant economy and society which is intended to demonstrate the strategy's feasibility.

Mexico is a particularly interesting setting for the discussion of proposals for a peasant-led strategy. During the past half-century, its rural areas have been exposed to a wide range of development policy experiments. These have included a major land reform, attempts to establish both peasant- and State-run collective farms, organization of a national peasant organization and its incorporation into the ruling party, and the first large scale program in the world to develop and promote modern agricultural technology packages supported by massive public investment in agricultural infrastructure.¹ These experiments have not been performed on a fully passive population, and in fact have involved complex interactions among peasants (organized at various levels), other social groups and the State. This

process continues to be flavoured with the legacy of the Revolution of 1910, in which peasants played a significant role, and at least at the level of official rhetoric, the powerful symbols of that period continue to be vividly present in Mexican politics.²

There is a fairly broad consensus within Mexico that insofar as one objective of these efforts has been a decent standard of living for the country's rural masses and a reduction in the sharp polarization of income distribution, results have been less than successful.³ In addition to persistent rural poverty, the period since 1965 has seen a growing tendency to stagnation in the production of basic food crops. When combined with this underlying feature, the severe droughts of the period 1977-80 produced serious short-falls in food supplies for domestic requirements requiring large purchases on the international market. A further development during this period has been a proliferation of peasant land-invasions and other forms of protest that have in some areas at times have reached near-insurrectionary levels.⁴ The combination of a clear need for improved rural living standards and a long tradition, recently revived, of peasant activism, suggests that Mexico offers promising conditions for testing the viability of a peasant-led rural development strategy.

The Mexican experience and setting are made even more interesting by the presence of a vigorous debate among social science theorists and researchers promoted in particular by the large, and since the 1930's, unprecedented

peasant mobilization which began in 1972. Those who have contributed to the debate found, or as the case may be, failed to find in these actions a challenge to previously held assumptions about the political importance of the peasantry, and the nature and extent of social and economic change in the countryside. In Esteva's case, confirmation of the existence of a reawakened and dynamic peasantry has led to a further conclusion: a new option, a "peasant option", or "vía campesina" for rural development, has been opened. This peasant dynamism has a very specific character in Esteva's view. It is rooted in existing institutions of solidarity and co-operation in the peasant community, and sustained by a fundamental commitment to production for subsistence needs as opposed to profit.

The importance of the debate in Mexico is indicated by Lucas' assertion that participation in it by researchers of agrarian problems "is not by choice: it is mandatory" (1982a: 75). Furthermore, Hewitt de Alcántara suggests that theoretical development in Mexico on issues covered by the debate have had a noticeable impact on government policy since 1970 (1982: 292-5). According to Redclift, Esteva's position in particular has had support within some government agencies under the López Portillo government and among those preparing to assume power in 1982 (1980: 492). Esteva himself worked for a number of years with CONASUPO (Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares), the national agency responsible for regulating

the market for basic foodstuffs, and is associated with the left-wing of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Mexico's governing political party. He also founded and directs the private rural development research center COPIDER (Comité Promotor de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo Rural; Hewitt de Alcántara, 1982: 263).

The purpose of this study is to examine Esteva's proposals for a peasant-led rural development strategy for Mexico and the theoretical model of Mexico's rural society and economy on which these proposals are based. Central to Esteva's model are assumptions about the nature of peasant economic logic, community relations, and political action. He proposes that Mexican peasants base their production decisions on a distinct logic governed by their fundamental orientation to basic needs. He argues that special institutions of co-operation and solidarity are present in many rural communities in Mexico, and that their presence explains much of the increasing effectiveness of peasant political organizations in recent years. He believes that these characteristics have buffered Mexican peasants from the disintegrating effect of an expanding capitalist market and concludes that they offer the basis for a new approach to rural development. Assumptions related to these issues have a critical bearing on development strategy. It is assumed that theory can assist in defining the practical limits to strategy success. An attempt is made here to assess the feasibility of Esteva's proposed strategy and

to identify links between possible miscalculations of its limits and his theoretical assumptions.

This study is almost exclusively restricted to a discussion of theoretical issues and policy proposals. Esteva rarely refers to supporting empirical evidence in his work, and in general, relevant, published empirical studies based in Mexico are uncommon. In a brief interview⁵ during my visit to Mexico City for the purpose of gathering documents however, Esteva indicated to me that a large amount of case study data has been gathered by researchers associated with COFIDER, some of which has been reviewed by Lucas (1982a).⁶

My critique of Esteva's work is undertaken from a point of view that is in broad sympathy with much of his proposed strategy. In particular, I have a practical interest in the area of collective bargaining in agricultural product marketing, an important component of his "peasant option". I will argue, however, that several problem areas can be identified in Esteva's theoretical model. His treatment of peasant production logic involves ambiguities that leave unanswered some crucial questions as to whether peasants will significantly increase their agricultural production. His assessment of peasant community solidarity may lead him to miscalculate the strength of the tendency to social differentiation of the peasantry. Both difficulties may lead to a variety of practical political difficulties that may weaken the strategy's possibilities of success.

It will be suggested that a substitution of Chevalier's formulation of a "maximization 'in-the-concrete'"/"accumulation 'in-the-abstract'" distinction (1982: 115) for the subsistence-mindedness/profit orientation dichotomy used by Esteva may contribute to overcoming some of these difficulties.

In Chapter I, I review several important theoretical approaches to the problems of defining the nature of peasant production logic and community institutions, and the ways in which these characteristics influence the effectiveness of peasant action and ability to resist social differentiation. Esteva's strategy proposals and supporting theoretical model are described in Chapter II. His position is further clarified in a brief review of the debate between those sympathetic to and critical of a peasant-led rural development strategy for Mexico in Chapter III. My own assessment of Esteva's proposals follows in Chapter IV.

Introduction Footnotes

- 1 For a summary of these developments, see C. Hewitt de Alcántara (1976: 1-88); Goodman and Redclift (1981: 187-193); Ewell and Poleman (1980: 12-31).
- 2 "It is our national obligation to refresh the clear spring of agrarianism. Agrarian reform is Mexico, and it will continue to nourish the country and satisfy its thirst for justice" (López Portillo, 1977: 16).
- 3 Statistical descriptions of rural poverty and income distribution are included in C. Hewitt de Alcántara, (1977) and Ewell and Poleman (1980: 28).
- 4 For a description of all aspects of the crisis, see Rello (1979b), Castell and Rello (1977), and A. Bartra (1979d).
- 5 October 8, 1982
- 6 Lucas' work is discussed in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

Some of the issues which are central to attempts to understand peasant economic and political life in Mexico and elsewhere can be summarized as follows. How are peasants to be characterized in terms of categories such as class and mode of production? In what ways can they be distinguished from commercial farmers and from urban and rural wage-workers? How are peasants who combine wage labour and food production for their own consumption properly characterized? What are the processes and directions of change in the rural social and economic structures of which peasants are a part? What role in these processes is played by peasant political consciousness and capacity for organized action? How do the ways in which peasants make decisions as households and communities in matters of production and employment influence social and economic change? These interrelated issues are central to the problematic with which Esteva attempts to deal, and to the larger debate in Mexico on the future of the peasantry to which much of his work is directed.

As indicated in the Introduction, my concerns focus in particular on the question of the nature of peasant economic logic, community institutions, and politics.

The purpose of this chapter is to develop an approach to these issues which will form the basis for my assessment of Esteva's proposal for a peasant-led development strategy in Mexico. Some of the major theoretical approaches to these issues and criticisms of them will be considered as a means of clarifying my own position. Problems associated with the frequent tendency to seek definitions of universal applicability to peasants based on assumptions of "backwardness" to some extent underlie several of these major theories and will be addressed in a preliminary way before I proceed with an examination of the theoretical approaches themselves.

Peasantries in "under" or "less-developed" countries pose serious problems for theorists. They tend to be part of highly complex agricultural sectors containing a variety of types of production units whose production systems exhibit various combinations of "modern" and "backward" features. Large scale commercial operations, "family farms" on the North American model, and impoverished minifundias may all be present in relatively limited geographic areas.

One theme common to many approaches to peasant studies is the treatment of third world agricultural systems, as appearances suggest, simply as a combination of the old and the new, moving from the present diversity towards greater uniformity as "backwardness" is transformed by "modern" economic and social practices. Peasants are of

course identified with the "backward" component of this equation. Identifying "backwardness" has involved emphasis not only on simple technology and production organization but also on the "sharp cultural distinctions" between peasants and other social groups reflecting a "little world" of narrowly circumscribed community relations and geographic perspective (Moore, 1967: 111; Hobsbawm, 1973: 7).¹ Within this basic orientation, narrower disputes arise. For example, are the internal social relationships of this "little world" fundamentally harmonious and co-operative as proposed by Redfield (1960a: 133-6) or are they characterized primarily by competition and conflict (Lewis, 1960: 87; Foster, 1965)?

A second frequently encountered theme related to that of a distinct and "backward" peasant culture involves a preoccupation with the features common to all peasantries, obvious historical and geographic diversity notwithstanding. Shanin perceives "startling similarities between peasant societies" (1973: 67) and Redfield believes that "peasant society and culture has something generic about it. It is a kind of arrangement of humanity with some similarities all over the world" (1960b: 17). A similar belief in the existence of some common societal thread also appears in Hobsbawm's proposal that all peasantries can be located, in terms of their social institutions, "on a continuum between two extreme ideal types", the mid-19th century communal peasantry of Central Russia and the French small-holding

peasantry of the same period (1973: 4).

Attempts to construct a universal model for peasantries based on assumptions of backwardness and cultural distinctness have been criticized as evolutionist and ahistoric.² Some critics of the practice of applying broad labels to large groups of peasantries suggest that all generalizations about peasants should be avoided (Richards, 1983: 24). These concerns apply particularly well to the dualist and orthodox Marxist approaches to the analysis of peasantries which will be considered below. As a logical extension of assumptions of "backwardness" and the existence of universal "essences", such models tend to deny peasants a role in history as self-directed actors. Peasants have very often been, in a sense, "persons whom other people call peasants". The term itself is problematic, and as Bernstein argues, general definitions of peasants have at most descriptive value with limited usefulness in efforts to account for stability and change (1979: 421). Landsberger and Hewitt propose an adequate definition for strictly descriptive purposes: "any rural cultivator who is low in economic and political status" (1970: 560).

Attempts to rectify the short-comings of the dualist and orthodox Marxist models will also be discussed. Some of these weaknesses are partially avoided in the neo-Marxist and articulationist and "peasant economy" approaches but other difficulties persist. Chevalier's recent contribution towards a solution to these remaining

problems will be considered. His work will form a significant part of the position from which Esteva's peasant-led rural development strategy will be assessed.

Dualist Models

The division of societies into traditional and modern sectors has already been noted as a popular solution to the problem of describing and explaining the social and economic diversity of "underdeveloped" countries with large peasantries. Early contributors to dualist theories include Boeke and Lewis (cf. Frank, 1969: 61; de Janvry, 1981: 246). As expressed by Wharton in his definition of "subsistence agriculture", the traditional sector is characterised by low ratios of marketed to total production, hired to total labour, and purchased to total inputs, together with low levels of technology, living standards, and motivation, and limited freedom in economic decision-making due to kinship and religious obligations (1969: 15-17). Rogers (1969) adds a psychological dimension with his proposed "peasant sub-culture" which is characterized by such attributes as lack of ambition, fatalism, local orientation, and unwillingness to save. The traditional sector is generally portrayed in dualist models as a distinct system composed of what are considered to be non-Western attributes: primitive technology, a limited division of labour, production oriented towards family subsistence, strong community and kinship ties, and in general, a pre-urban, pre-industrial value

system which represents a major obstacle to change (cf. Chevalier, 1982: 4, 81-82; Stavenhagen, 1969b: 102-3; 1978: 27).

The "traditional" sector in every respect finds its opposite characteristic in the "modern" sector. Until recently, at least, according to the dualist perspective, the two sectors were without significant integration. The implication for development policy is that emphasis must be placed on establishing or strengthening integration through the diffusion of modern technology and manufactured goods (de Janvry, 1981: 8; Stavenhagen, 1969b: 107). In some versions (such as the Alliance for Progress land reform programs in Latin America in the early 1960's) a dismantling of archaic landholding institutions is a further condition for the liberation of potential entrepreneurship (Goodman and Redclift, 1981: 112). The fundamental assumption in these approaches is that Western capitalism has demonstrated the "normal" course of development and that less-favoured societies find themselves in an earlier stage of the same process.

To summarize, peasants are, according to this view, the remnants of an earlier stage of social evolution whose inevitable integration into the modern world is encouraged by political leadership from the modern sector and assured by the benefits of modern production methods and consumer goods.

Dualist models have been widely criticized for

their preoccupation with appearances of diversity and their failure to consider the long process of interaction between small agricultural communities and capitalist institutions of European origin. This interaction has produced what are, in fact, single, integrated systems based on "hierarchical interdependence" (Chevalier, 1982: 83, 104-7). It argued that it is precisely this long history of interaction, centering on flows of cheap labour, raw materials, and capital, which largely accounts for the observed differences (Stavenhagen, 1969b: 104). It follows from this that definitions of peasant cultural and economic distinctness and the associated evolutionary models of pre-ordained stages should be treated with suspicion and that the historical relationship of interdependence is a more appropriate focus for analysis.

The Orthodox Marxist Approach

A good deal of common ground exists between the dual society and orthodox Marxist solutions to the problem of defining peasants and predicting their future. The traditional approach taken by Marxists is to view peasants as the remnants of a nearly completed world-wide process of transition from feudalism to capitalism. The inevitability of this process dooms the peasantry to universal disappearance and at a rapid rate, given the extraordinary dynamism of capitalism as it transforms productivity, rapidly accelerates economic growth, and quickly brings about the collapse of traditional structures which bar its path. Peasants are

defenceless in the face of large-scale mechanized agriculture with its highly efficient use of capital and consequent high rates of profit. With the pressure of a market in which they are unable to compete, due to their low productivity, peasants very quickly differentiate into a mass of landless proletarians, many of whom leave the countryside, and the small number of capitalist farmers who have managed to survive at the expense of their neighbours.

In addition to the economic disadvantages of small-scale production, peasants are further limited by an inability to act politically in an organized way, due to the isolated nature of their labour. While they give the appearance of being in a state of "perpetual ferment", their efforts to give organized expression to their discontent are limited to "inchoate strivings", and their spontaneous revolts, when these do occur, rarely amount to more than "a routine police problem" due to their local nature (Hobsbawm, 1959: 10, quoting Gramsci, and 91).

The consciousness or mentality which corresponds to peasants' economic and political circumstances is dominated by the condition of property-ownership and self-employment. While the inherent though usually negligible possibility of enrichment and accumulation supports the constant dream of a better future, peasants may occasionally develop a limited appreciation of the exploitation to which they are subjected. Their usual state, however, is one of confusion, reflecting the ambiguous position they occupy as both an

employer who controls a quantity of output and the labourer who produced it. This notion that peasants occupy a contradictory class position which is both and neither petit bourgeois and proletarian leads to one characterization of them as "Janus-faced" (Shanin, 1973: 78). In the orthodox Marxist view, however, the property-owning, petit bourgeois side normally dominates their political outlook which is often in support of reactionary movements or governments, and at best, permits limited reformist strategies aimed at gaining (or regaining) land. When successful, such strategies serve only to delay the inevitable transition to capitalist agriculture and the development among peasants-turned-proletarians of a truly revolutionary consciousness.

One set of criticisms of the orthodox Marxist position (which applies equally well to the dual society model) takes issue with the basically teleological assumption that there exists a unilinear path of transition based on the historical experience of Western Europe which is universally applicable. Even in Western Europe, it is argued, the case for a full transition to purely capitalist relations of production in agriculture cannot be clearly made (Goodman and Redclift, 1981: 19-23; Brenner, 1977: 73-79) and the archetypal English model of agrarian transformation should really be considered as an historical oddity.

A second focus of criticism concerns the blanket dismissal of peasants as reactionary petit bourgeois who

lack the capacity for effective political organization. It is suggested that fully self-sufficient, atomized peasants who form the basis of the "potatoes-in-a-sack" model have existed rarely, if at all. Emphasis on property-ownership is misleading since it implies full control over productive assets and processes when in fact, actual control is narrowly circumscribed by poverty, exploitative markets, the constant menace of natural disaster, expanding commercial agriculture, and the pressures of the State. Proponents of the peasant as petit bourgeois view are "blinded by the wage-category" and apply it too mechanically (Lucas, 1982: 37, 57).

Neo-Marxist Theories of an Articulation of Modes of Production

A third type of criticism of the orthodox Marxist view is that its time-frame is wrong. This error, neo-Marxist "articulationists" suggest, is the result of an overly optimistic assessment of the strength of capitalism's dynamism when imposed on a non-capitalist society from outside coupled with a failure to appreciate the resulting process as a two- or many-sided interaction. What is proposed to correct these miscalculations is a prolonged period of transition involving the articulation of capitalism with the existing mode of production.

"Articulation" in this context is most often used to mean a combination of two or more parts in the sense not only of "co-existence" but also of a "causal-functional" arrangement

adopted by both capitalist and non-capitalist modes in order to meet their respective requirements for continuity, and in the case of capitalism, expansion (Taylor, 1979: 287). As explained by Rey, one of the early exponents of the articulation approach, in situations where capitalism cannot immediately eliminate the "pre-capitalist" mode (resistance by it being a principal factor), pre-capitalist relations of exploitation are reinforced as an alternative means of acquiring labour and raw materials. The process is conflictual, however, involving simultaneous maintenance and destruction of the pre-capitalist mode, the latter being the ultimate outcome (1973: 15; Foster-Carter, 1978: 56, 59).

The articulationist approach clearly conforms more adequately than does the orthodox Marxist position with the historical reality of a failure of many third world countries to experience rapid rates of growth. It has the further advantage of treating pre-contact societies as more than the passive, formless tabulae rasae of earlier Marxist studies (Chevalier, 1982: 110; Foster-Carter, 1978: 66). This introduction of resistance as an important factor moderating the rate of transition is a particularly useful contribution. Much of what is classed as resistance occurs at the level of the individual family: refusal to co-operate with state efforts to promote new crops and cultivation practices in order to limit market involvement; attempts to find alternate sources of cash

income such as labour migration; individual acts of sabotage and violence (Bernstein, 1979: 432-3). (All efforts to maximize output from resources controlled, in a form suitable for self-consumption, and to limit that consumption can be included in this list.) However, human agency is at least admitted to the model as an important factor. Some versions go further and include various types and levels of group action. Rey in particular cautions against underestimating the importance of such action because of its normally sporadic nature (as compared with the ongoing character of industrial workers' struggles; 1973: 178-9, 192-4). He considers the Chinese revolution of special significance since it demonstrates that the extension of the capitalist mode to all areas of production is not necessarily a precondition for radical change. Furthermore, peasants were an essential ally of the industrial working class in the Chinese experience (although he suggests their status was one of "junior partners", the leadership of the industrial working class being a necessary condition for success; 1973:203).

Other articulationists place much less emphasis on resistance as a significant factor in change than does Rey. De Janvry, for instance, barely gives it passing mention. Instead, he emphasizes the self-destructive nature of individual forms of resistance (which lead to soil erosion and over-population); a conservative political outlook due to a petit bourgeois identification with the interests of large farmers, and severe levels of repression (1981: 85, 105, 254).

In deJanvry's treatment, much greater weight is given to the functional arrangement between capitalism and the pre-capitalist mode as a complementary means of explaining the prolonged nature of the transition. Within functional dualism, as he refers to it, the subsistence sector provides a weak capitalist sector with cheap food which permits lower wages and therefore higher profits in industry than would otherwise be the case. It also serves as a direct source of cheap labour to meet the seasonal requirements of commercial agriculture (1981: 51, 81-87). This regime is a deliberate creation of the capitalist mode with land reform and rural development policies designed to maintain it (1981: 229-30).

Several criticisms of formulations which stress the functionality of the articulation of modes have been raised. Baraclough and Lehman both argue that de Janvry confuses cause and effect, purpose and result (1982: 13; 1980: 71-2). Similarly, Martínez-Alier suggests insufficient attention is paid in such formulations to the difference between function and cause (1977: 30). Taylor argues in his critique of Parsonian structural-functionalism that explanations of social stability and change based on functionality amount to no more than tautology: a system's functioning is taken as proof of the functionality of its internal arrangements. One consequence is that attempts to explain change become merely ex post facto descriptions empty of predictive usefulness (1979: 17, 21, 28). These limitations are further aggravated by a tendency to treat systems not only as

embodying an unfolding purpose but as wilfully "overseeing" this process independent of conscious human agency (Foster-Carter, 1978: 55). Capitalism is presented as somehow "choosing" functional dualism as the most convenient and desirable arrangement to meet the "objective needs" of its maintenance and expansion (Martinez-Alier, 1977: 14).³

What is being proposed in articulationist approaches which emphasize functionality is not a great deal more than an extended and more complex version of the rapid transition to capitalism predicted by traditional Marxist theories. Peasants are still a pre-capitalist remnant doomed to eventual disappearance in what remains an evolutionary model of pre-ordained stages.

One alternative explanation of the appearance of functionality is that capitalism is forced to accept these arrangements as a compromise with partially successful peasant resistance. Other suggestions include "the greater efficiency of peasant farming based upon a lower valuation of self-employed rather than of hired labour" (Martínez-Alier, 1977: 14). The maintenance of subsistence agricultural sectors can also be seen as a reflection of the imperfect functioning of capitalism at an international level. Inter-regional conflict and imbalance, and the weakness of local capital in poor regions act as constraints on capitalism's growth in these areas (Chevalier, 1982: 168).

"Peasant Economy" Approaches to the
Analysis of Peasantries

Theories of a "peasant economy" propose that an economic logic and relations of production distinct from those of capitalism exist in peasant, subsistence-oriented sectors. In combination with co-operative institutions at the community level, this special logic acts to slow the incorporation of the peasant sector into the dominant mode.

Before proceeding with a more detailed description of several examples of "peasant economy" theories, a preliminary clarification is necessary. In some cases, theorists develop an analysis of what they refer to as a "peasant mode of production". This elicits the objection that peasants cannot belong to such a specific structure because they are classes or part classes within other modes such as feudalism or capitalism (de Janvry, 1981: 96). The peasant enterprise, to be understood, must be situated within the social relations of production of the larger system of which it is a part as must the specific form taken by the family and communal relations, neither of which can be universally defined (Ennew, Hirst, Tribe, 1977: 307-8).

Such objections relate at least in part to differences in usage of "mode of production". Some theorists who refer to a "peasant mode" frequently appear to intend a descriptive "manner of producing" or "mode of existence" (Wolf, 1982: 401; 1966: 43) rather than a strictly defined analytical category such as that proposed by Laclau:

"a totality defined by its mutual interconnections" among

1. a determinate type of ownership of the means of production;
2. a determinate form of appropriation of the economic surplus;
3. a determinate degree of development of the division of labour;
4. a determinate level of development of the productive forces. (1971: 33)

As Ennew, Hirst, and Tribe point out, unless it can be shown that a peasantry is entirely free of relationships with an external exploiting class, the concept of mode in this full sense is being misused. Production of a commodity for sale on an external market indicates that household survival depends in part on relations which extend beyond the family and the village (1977: 307-9; Bernstein, 1979: 422). In the interest of clarity, "peasant economy" will be substituted for "peasant mode" in cases where the latter appears in the literature discussed below.

Hyden stresses an almost exclusive preoccupation with the meeting of basic needs through family labour in his description of the "peasant economy". Interest in market involvement is absent except for consumption purposes (unless coercion is present). Peasants will resist integration with the larger society and may succeed where land is freely available. (Hyden's analysis is limited in geographic scope to those parts of East Africa not yet experiencing land-scarcity and labour surpluses and where he believes market involvement by peasants is still largely voluntary.) The special "logic" of those who are part of the "peasant economy" centers on kinship and residence. Economic action is

determined not by opportunities for profit but by a range of social considerations centering on subsistence rights and a law of subsistence (as proposed by Chayanov) according to which family size has a determining affect on area of land under cultivation, reflecting a tendency to "limit production to the requirements of subsistence and social obligations" (Hyden, 1980: 9-28).

Shanin likewise stresses the subsistence preoccupation of peasants in his formulation of a "peasant economy". "The consumption, rather than accumulation, aims of family farms find expression in the fact that use-value repeatedly takes precedence over exchange-value in the peasants' consideration" as demonstrated, for instance, by risk-reducing but unprofitable strategies of crop diversification (1973: 70). Shanin is less categorical than Hyden in his interpretation of peasants' distinct logic, emphasizing lack of opportunity (due to appropriation of surpluses by the larger economy) and risk-avoidance rather than inherent preference as the explanation of peasants' lack of saving and profit-seeking investment (1973: 70-71). Wolf presents a position which is closer to Hyden. His "ceremonial" and "rent funds" in peasant budgets are the minimum possible additions to the "replacement [or subsistence] fund" (1966: 6-17).

As is the case with Hyden, co-operation at the community level is an important component of Shanin's theory. He considers community arrangements concerning production, welfare, and rights to land as the relations of production

next in importance for peasants to those within the family unit (1973: 73). Wolf also includes such relations in their various forms as a distinguishing feature of peasant societies (1966: 78-90).

Proponents of a "peasant economy" generally see its eventual incorporation into the dominant capitalist mode. As with the articulationist approach, however, emphasis is on the prolonged nature of this process. The "peasant economy" has a remarkable ability to persist. Tendencies to social differentiation are slowed by the special strengths of its community institutions and its subsistence logic (including an ability to intensify family labour). In addition to deliberate levelling mechanisms, selective emigration, drain of economic surplus, and demographic differentiation (fluctuations in family wealth with changes in family size) also retard social differentiation (Shanin, 1973: 71, 186, 192-4). Lehman emphasizes the value of the community both as a supportive "base of operations" for the individual peasant, and as a crucial support base for peasant political movements (1980: 73, 82). "Peasant economy" theorists tend to view the various forms of peasant resistance to incorporation into the capitalist mode as essentially defensive in nature, as efforts to prevent the corrosive power of market forces from upsetting a subsistence-providing but fragile status quo (Wolf, 1969: xv, 282).

It is important to note that "peasant economy" theories have a long history. Kitching considers them part

of "a continuing tradition" of populist theories developed by various European theorists in the nineteenth century (1982: 22, 98). Russian populism in particular developed a detailed theoretical position prior to World War One, emphasizing the non-differentiation of the Russian peasantry, its non-capitalist relations of production, and the potential of the peasant commune to serve as the basis for a future non-capitalist society (Ennew, Hirst, and Tribe, 1977: 298, 302). In their debate with the Marxists of the period, the Russian populists insisted that capitalism was not an inevitable stage. The differences in wealth within the peasantry believed by the Marxists to provide proof of the inexorable expansion of capitalism were better explained as differences among households due to family size, and/or to differences among entire communities, the populists argued (Shanin, 1972: 59-60). Following World War One, Russian populist ideas were further developed particularly in the work of Chayanov. His "neo-populism" stressed the peasants' special production logic and the advantages of small-scale production. Chayanov's ideas became popular in the 1960's and had considerable influence on the thinking of a number of the theorists, including those noted at the beginning of this section, due to the apparent failure of post-World War Two development strategies (Kitching, 1982: 41-2, 47, 60).

While it is often suggested that Chayanov sought to develop a theory of the "peasant economy", it can be argued that his intentions were more limited and that he did

not attempt to theorize relationships that extended beyond the individual peasant household. Kitching stresses that he developed a theory "of the peasant farm" (1982: 52).

Martínez-Alier believes that Chayanov's work, far from providing the basis for a theory of a distinct peasant economic logic, really amounts to nothing more than the proposal that small-scale farming persists because of the "cheaper supply price of self-employed than of hired labour". Self-employed peasants work harder and make better use of available labour because their opportunity-costs tend to be lower in circumstances of limited employment. This, and not a "non-market rationality" explains their persistence (1977: 9, 10, 37, 103).⁹ De Janvry agrees that Chayanov's intentions were limited (1981: 100). Chayanov's work might be described as an analysis of family farm budgeting practices under circumstances of free land, highly restricted commodity production and the unlikelihood of "windfalls", all operating within a culturally defined standard of subsistence, rather than as an attempt to describe a distinct mentality or economic logic (Chayanov, 1966: 7, 12, 48, 119, 124-5, and in particular, 44 and 220).

Proposals of the existence of such a distinct logic or "subsistence mentality" are an important focus of criticism of "peasant economy" theories. One critique of these arguments is provided by Chevalier whose argument shall be examined shortly.

A second set of criticisms focuses on the alleged strength and co-operative nature of peasant community institutions. Paige considers the co-operative peasant community to be largely a myth, competitive individualism becoming increasingly dominant as those forms of co-operative labour which may have existed are destroyed through exposure to the market (1975: 30, 35). Pearse agrees that peasant communities are increasingly conflictual and atomized as a result of market penetration (1975: 256). Frank describes them as "conflict-ridden" (1969: 251). Moore describes the range of forces that lead to a decline in and the corruption of co-operative labour including population growth, technical progress, monetization, and the increasing availability of wage-labour (1975: 282-7).

Popkin provides a detailed elaboration of these views, arguing that the idyllic traditional peasant village organized around the principles of solidarity, reciprocity and egalitarianism is largely an invention. The historical reality of such communities was one of division, self-seeking and inequality. Forms of collective welfare such as communal land, collective investment projects, and redistribution were highly unstable, the focus of ongoing conflict, and a source of personal gain for corrupt leaders. When such institutions were, in fact, able to function, their role was much more limited in scope than is often suggested, with redistributive functions largely absent and the prevalent insurance functions only undertaken on those types of

projects where "free-riders" were easily excluded (1979: 29, 31, 35-62). Popkin bases his conclusions on documentary evidence from colonial VietNam and the basis for his characterization is largely deductive and circumstantial. He argues, for instance, that the enthusiastic response of peasants to new religious and political movements and to the opening of market opportunities is proof of the oppressive nature of village social relations. As Herring comments, Popkin shows the plausibility, but not the accuracy or universality of his explanations (1980: 566). However, Popkin offers a strong challenge to those he accuses of holding a romantic view of the peasant village to present contrary evidence. He believes that "exaggerating the virtues of the precapitalist village...results in erroneous diagnoses of the ailments of contemporary peasant society" and that "to make the peasant village an ideal for emulation is to impose a heavier burden on peasants than they can bear " (1979: ix, x).

Chevalier's Formulation of an Alternative
Treatment of Peasant Economic Logic

Chevalier is critical of what he believes is an insufficiently discriminating use of the concept of a "subsistence mentality" or "logic" by many of those who use an articulationist or "peasant economy" approach in explaining the persistence of "non-capitalist" features in peasant agriculture. He argues that while pre-capitalist, transitional relations of production and an associated "subsistence

mentality" may in fact be shown to exist in some isolated areas, production for home consumption cannot be taken as infallible evidence of their presence or of the articulation of capitalism with an older or different mode or type of economy based on a distinct economic logic (1982: 176). This conclusion has been erroneously drawn by those who consider full-time wage-labour, the separation of producers from their land, and the related loss of control over production as necessary indicators of full incorporation into the capitalist mode (1982: 151).

In circumstances in which the prevailing standard of living is so low and precarious that mere survival involves an ongoing struggle, peasants must consider the opportunity costs of all resources at their disposal in planning production and employment strategies so that maximum possible value from these resources can be obtained, Chevalier argues (1982: 123-4). Such a maximizing strategy applies as much to labour, food and other goods produced and consumed within the household as it does to the quantities of any of these which are sold on the market. It is the market, however, which determines the value assigned to these various items of home consumption; they must be considered to embody a certain exchange value by virtue of their exchangeability.

The basic pursuit of workers (wage-labourers and simple commodity producers) is to secure their access to those use-values they need to achieve or maintain 'acceptable' living conditions. Yet they cannot pursue this goal without treating such use-values as objects of market transactions and therefore as objects that contain value in definite amounts. (1982: 124).

Dual-economy modernizationists, orthodox Marxists, articulationists, and those who use a "peasant economy" model tend to apply a "subsistence-mindedness"/profit maximization dichotomy to differentiate the logics applied in production decisions by "subsistence-oriented" peasants and commercial farmers. The necessity of calculations based on market values is the basis for Chevalier's proposal that this misleading dichotomy be replaced with two distinct strategies he calls "maximization in-the-concrete" (which describes the motivation of workers, including self-employed peasants, in a commodified economy as they seek "tangible increases in levels of consumption", or, in general, "the optimum solution that is made available to them by their economic conditions") and "accumulation in-the-abstract", that is, "the pursuit of profit for its own sake" (1982: 115, 128, 145). In the case of impoverished part-time "subsistence" peasants in the context of third-world agriculture the strategy of maximization is "highly constricted" since their main goal is to avoid falling below an acceptable minimum living standard (1982: 124). Their concern with survival does not preclude taking advantage of the infrequent opportunity to improve living standards when this can be accomplished without threatening long-term security. Even more unusual are the circumstances in which it is feasible to consider undertaking a process of capital accumulation (1982: 123, 128). To conclude on the basis of their poverty and possibly substantial degree of self-provisioning

that such peasants orient their productive efforts toward a pre-established level of minimum subsistence "is thoroughly inappropriate" (1982: 126). The struggle against poverty in the context of predatory market forces, and the necessity to consider all objects of consumption in terms of exchange-value means that these peasants do not enjoy the luxury of suspending, at some pre-ordained point, their obligation to maximize. They are not free, by some miraculous process, to become suddenly indifferent to the commodified, market-dominated economy in which they live, and to "revert" to non-maximizing behaviour based on a "Chayanovian" preference for leisure as soon as basic needs are met.

A [self-employed] worker's quest for material 'survival' in a capitalist economy can never be detached from his active involvement in the production and circulation of exchange-values, from the initial quantification of wealth (and needs) that goes with it, and from his constant pursuit of optimum wealth and tangible improvements in his level of economic consumption. (1982: 175)

In addition to being maximizers, not by choice but by necessity, self-employed peasants are exploited workers in the circumstances discussed by Chevalier. The exchange-value of the various "subsistence commodities" they consume at home is realized and their surplus labour is extracted through the market-determined pricing of those products which they buy or sell, including labour, even though the subsistence commodities do not themselves appear to be the object of any actual exchange. In the context discussed, market forces are determinant, and necessitate the maximization described above in which the exchange-values of all

resources at the disposal of a household production unit are the basis for decisions as to optimal production strategies. What simple appearances conceal is that the labour involved in self-employed production is, in fact, purchased by capital

as soon as it becomes a 'calculable' ingredient that enters into the products that are purchased by capital either directly, as part of its own costs of production, or indirectly, as part of the necessary consumption of its own wage-labourers (1982: 159),

that is, "surplus", part-time labour and raw materials, or "surplus" food (1982: 9, 121-2, 156-9).

An important implication of Chevalier's analysis concerns the nature of capitalism. The forms of simple commodity production he discusses are fully integrated into the capitalist mode of production. Appearances aside, there are no grounds for concluding that these are transitional remnants of an earlier mode, thus demonstrating the need for a definition of capitalism with scope for considerably more variability in forms of labour than that allowed by strict adherence to the wage-labour criterion (1982: 111-12, 145). The identification of classes within this broader conception of capitalism rests on an analysis of relations with capital and not on the mere existence of property ownership or wage labour, both of which emerge as superficial indicators in the context of much third world agriculture. As indicated above, the simple commodity producers' labour in its various forms is subject to the extraction of surplus value. On this basis, while not reducing them to the status of proletarians, Chevalier considers them to be "self-employed workers

dominated by capital" (1982: 174), each of whom, quoting Paige (1975: 14) "happens to control a small piece of land from which he extracts his wages" (1982: 159) or a portion of them. Chevalier's broadened interpretation of simple commodity production also encompasses those for whom sale of commodities and even production for home consumption is of lesser importance than wage labour in the family budget, as long as it can be shown that the non-wage component is a necessary contribution to the total budget. Simple commodity producers occupy a position in the over-all economy similar to that of full-time wage workers, when defined in these terms: both groups are dominated by merchant and industrial capital (1982: 129-30).

The variability of forms of production accounted for by Chevalier's framework also alters the sharp distinction often drawn between "subsistence-minded" peasants and profit-oriented farmers. This distinction breaks down insofar as it can be shown in concrete cases that most farmers are motivated by maintenance and when possible, improvements in their living standards, not by profit for its own sake. Labour purchased from others, for instance, cannot be treated as a basis for capital accumulation in situations where it represents, for the employer, a use-value which is indispensable for securing a livelihood (as, for instance, may be the case due to demographic variation among households; 1982: 125, 128).

Discussion and Summary

A range of positions has been identified on the issue of proper characterization of the type of motivation or logic which guides peasant consumption and production decisions. The orthodox Marxist position emphasizes a petit bourgeois preoccupation with increased wealth, frustrated in most cases by inefficient production methods. The position of articulationists who emphasize functionality such as de Janvry is similar. "Peasant economy" proponents work with a number of overlapping rationales:

(i) peasants cease production when basic needs are met to avoid drudgery, and ignore feasible opportunities to raise output and accumulate;

(ii) peasants cease production when basic needs are met to avoid exploitation in the market place;

(iii) basic needs are simply a priority with them;

(iv) they must focus on basic needs because they have no choice but to do so; they will work as hard as is necessary until they have met those needs and will avoid any investments which involve risks to security. Hyden and Wolf emphasize rationale (i); Shanin places more importance on rationales (iii) and (iv) but does not clearly rule out (i) and (ii). Chevalier effectively demonstrates the untenability of rationales (i) and (ii) in circumstances of generalized commodification. Rationale (iii) is clearly tautological. Rationale (iv) is compatible with Chevalier's formulation and to a certain extent, is merely a "common

sense" expression of his position. It is not clear to me on what basis such an obvious response to material necessity can be construed as involving a method of calculation which is foreign to the workings of the capitalist mode. Chevalier clearly demonstrates that the logic used by poor peasants as they attempt to survive in a commodified economy is fully integrated with capitalism, and offers a helpful analysis of the operation of that logic in the decision-making of the individual household.

Popkin warns that suggestions of the existence of deeply-rooted traditions of co-operation and solidarity at the community level should be regarded with suspicion. The presence of such qualities under favourable conditions cannot be ruled out. Furthermore, the range of possibilities for political and economic change is obviously widened in crucial ways when these social resources are present. Popkin's warning, however, indicates the need for considerable skepticism in response to suggestions that such resources are abundant and widespread.

Peasant capacity to effectively organize political movements which operate beyond the local level is virtually ruled out by orthodox Marxists. Articulationists indicate a range of positions, the most generous assessments granting substantial possibilities for organized political action by peasants, although at some point stipulating the need for urban, working class leadership. The position of "peasant economy" theorists such as Shanin (1971b) appears close to

that of an articulationist such as Rey: peasant political capacity should be neither dismissed nor exaggerated. It is highly variable and often requires outside leadership. Such positions are an important improvement on orthodox Marxist treatments in which a nearly absolute incapacity for effective action seems to be coloured by a judgment that peasant claims "against" capitalism are less "legitimate" than those of wage-workers because of the ambiguous position of peasant labour. Added to this judgment is the belief that peasant production is in any case transitory and that political expressions of the petit bourgeois aspirations which dominate peasant mentality can at most delay the necessary progression of history. The implicit comparison with the political capacity and the legitimacy of claims of wage-workers in the orthodox Marxist position is paralleled in dualist theories by a similar implicit comparison between subsistence-oriented peasants and profit-oriented farmers.

Chevalier's position offers the basis for a corrective to orthodox Marxist and dualist views that extends beyond that already provided by some articulationists and "peasant economy" theorists. In terms of their relations with capital, no fundamental distinction is suggested between self-employed and wage-earning workers. Both are subject to exploitation although under a range of varying circumstances. The ability of self-employed workers to maintain that position represents only in part a limited form of resistance made possible by local weaknesses and limitations of capital. It is at the

same time a response made necessary by the strength of capital in the market relations to which they are subjected.

Martínez-Alier's arguments are useful here. He contends that distinctions between peasantries and proletarians as to political potential have been considerably overdrawn. Peasants generally face the same obstacles to political organization as industrial workers (such as the general problems of co-ordination, establishing alliances, and repression) and if peasants tend very often to be powerless, the explanation can be found in the practical limitations imposed by their poverty rather than in the structural peculiarities of their social position (1977: 16, 17, 33-4).

Martínez-Alier's comments further indicate the importance of rejecting generalizations about peasants' limited political capabilities. At the same time they coincide with Chevalier's emphasis on the great variability in the situations of self-employed workers and the implications which that has for the practical political problems of building organizations around what are perceived to be common interests. Care must also be taken, therefore, to avoid overestimating peasant political capabilities.

Assumptions about peasant production logic, co-operative community resources and general political capacity are all crucial variables in efforts, such as Esteva's, described in the next chapter, to design development strategies which will improve rural living standards. On the matter of production logic, for instance, assuming a

preference for leisure on the part of peasants clearly lends support to suggestions that coercion is required if output is to be increased. If resistance to exploitation is believed to limit peasant production, changes in political and economic structures can be considered as an alternative approach.

Emphasis on risk-avoidance similarly points to insurance schemes as a necessary strategy component. In Esteva's work, as will be shown, assumptions about peasant political strength and especially its community basis are also given special importance, with consequences, it will be argued, for the viability of his proposals.

Chapter One Footnotes

- 1 Also see Shanin, 1971a: 15 and 1971b: 254.
- 2 See Ennew, Hirst, and Tribe, 1977: 315-16;
Bernstein, 1979: 421-2; Leeds, 1977: 228-31.
- 3 As expressed by Berdichewsky, capitalism created simple
commodity production in order to raise the level of
exploitation (1979: 23).

CHAPTER II

ESTEVA'S THEORY OF A "PEASANT OPTION" IN MEXICAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Argument

The Context: Mexico's Rural Crisis

Mexico's rural crisis of the 1970's and early 1980's is the constant backdrop to Esteva's proposals for a peasant-led rural development strategy for Mexico. Serious malnutrition, growing unemployment, accelerating polarization of income distribution, and increasingly generalized violence are among the main features of rural areas in Mexico during this period. At the national level, these developments were reflected in and aggravated by loss of self-sufficiency in basic food production and an increasingly systematic dependence on food imports, all of this at a time when officials of Mexico's major supplier, the U.S., began to speak of "food power" as a means of reducing the freedom of manoeuvre of foreign governments (1976: 7-10).¹ Social and economic conflict were at the heart of this situation in Esteva's view and continuation of trends then current appeared to create a real possibility of general social collapse (1978f: 712; 1981a: 38-39).

Esteva believes that the problems he describes are the inevitable outcome of the model chosen for Mexican

agricultural development since 1945, and in particular, the emphasis given in that model to international comparative advantage as its guiding principle (1978b: 94-98; 1980 : 49). He acknowledges the importance of the fundamental issue of the role given to agriculture within national development priorities as a source of cheap food and raw materials, profits, savings and foreign exchange, and a partially self-supporting pool of labour, all in the service of urban industrialization. Most of his attention is devoted, however, to the direction taken within agriculture itself (1976: 6-7; 1978e: 23; 1980 : 81-2). He identifies three dominant features in agricultural development during the period from 1945 to 1970. A long tradition of export crop production destined for and attuned to the supply and demand signals of the international, and especially the U.S., market has both diversified and increasingly dominated Mexican agriculture. Multinational corporations have played an increasingly important role in this process since the 1960's, both in familiar positions as buyers and processors, but more recently, as suppliers of inputs and complementary agricultural products (that is, basic foodstuffs). Finally, the Mexican state has consistently worked to assure an environment suitable for an agriculture dependent on international markets and institutions. Its systematic protection of capital intensive commercial agriculture has taken the form of provision of infrastructure (especially irrigation facilities), heavy subsidization of inputs

(including credit), appropriate research, and marketing supports (1976: 4-6; 1980 : 97-108).

Twenty-five years of "transnationalization" of Mexican agriculture, the apparently spectacular results of the period 1950-1965 notwithstanding, has meant an unrelenting and inevitable displacement of basic food crops. Prominent in this crowding out of maize and beans have been fruit and vegetable production for the U.S. market based on climatic, and labour and other production cost advantages, and beef production, much of which is destined for feedlots or the lean-meat, fast-food market in the U.S. (1978b: 96-7).² While the effect of these developments at the national level is most immediately visible in the statistics for food grain imports, their local manifestation is the constant struggle between commercial producers and ranchers on the one hand, and peasants on the other for available productive resources. Fruit and vegetable production is a heavy user of high quality irrigated land, and inputs, credit and government subsidies. Cattle ranching is even more directly at the center of rural violence with its insatiable demand for peasant land (especially given the extensive nature of most Mexican ranching). Esteva believes the crisis as a whole is closely linked with what he and others call the "ganaderización" of the Mexican countryside (1982: 16).³ According to Esteva, one half of all Mexican land in agricultural production is now devoted to beef production and related hay and feedgrain (1982: 16-17). Most of the

violence that has attended the crisis, he argues, results from invasions of ejidal or communal land by ranchers and has rarely been initiated by peasants themselves. The expansion of beef production has also contributed to the gradual creation of "an unmanageable mass of the 'marginalized'",⁴ while simultaneously increasing the extent of underutilized agricultural land (1978f: 712). In some areas it has resulted in serious ecological degradation (1978b: 97). Esteva considers this pattern of agricultural development to be distorted and irrational (1976: 3). While it persists, the problems of re-establishing national food self-sufficiency, creating rural employment and reducing inequalities of wealth and income in rural areas increase in magnitude.

The Untried Option

Esteva calls into question the entire policy of the period since 1945, not just one or another of its specific aspects such as, for instance, a too slow pace of land redistribution to peasants. Furthermore, he believes that an alternative to this model of development exists. There are three levels to the problem of agriculture development: the extent of agriculture's contribution to national development, the type of agricultural development chosen, and finally, the political question of the degree of influence over content and implementation of policy accorded to various groups of producers. All three levels need to be addressed,

Esteva believes. More resources need to be devoted to agricultural development (1979e: 222; 1980 a: 201) and such development must focus primarily on peasant agriculture and peasant subsistence crops. What distinguishes his proposals from arguments which favor a better balance between agriculture and industry or which identify peasant agriculture as the principal object for efforts of transformation is his conviction that a further condition must be met if Mexico's rural crisis is to be successfully overcome: peasants must themselves be the leading actor in the process (1980: 203-4). If peasants themselves direct this process and set its pace, and if they are provided with the resources they need, the peasant sector (the "peasant economy") offers Mexico the greatest potential for increased agricultural production (1978e: 35). The vehicle needed by peasants to undertake this process of transformation already exists: they are already organized in their communities. It is the peasant community which is the key to their capacity to engage in a process of rapid modernization adjusted to their own needs and priorities (1978f: 709-10).

Clearly, much more is involved in Esteva's proposal than simply a shift in emphasis from one set of crops to another. For the peasant community to play its potential role, profound changes are required in Mexican rural power structures. Esteva acknowledges the immensity of social and economic change required for the realization of his project, but "at the present cross-roads, only the utopias...appear

possible. The only impossibility is to maintain the present course" (1980: 185). If the peasants are allowed to make concrete this "utopia", if conditions are created which permit the liberation of their collective energy, they will be able to assure the nation of self-sufficiency in basic food stuffs, absorb the labour released from a modernizing agriculture, and both raise and more equitably distribute rural incomes. Only a strategy based on peasant institutions and initiative can achieve these goals simultaneously (1978d: 35).

Conditions Required for Success of the "Peasant Option"

Esteva believes that the transformation of Mexican peasant agriculture involves not a question of technology transfer but rather one of economic, political and social change. On the peasant side, he sees a fundamental need for continued development of regional and national political organizations, and a transformation of local traditional power structures. He has specific proposals in the areas of peasant economic organization for organized marketing of agricultural products and more general ideas for direct peasant involvement in processing industries. His comments on the re-organization of agricultural production are limited but indicate in broad terms the changes he favours. Government policy changes are not discussed in detail, but certain minimum conditions are suggested. Finally there is recognition throughout his work of a politically organized peasantry's need for allies, particularly among industrial

workers, as a further requirement for the political feasibility of his "peasant option". His proposals on each of these points are described below.

Political Organization of the Peasantry

At the National Level

At an early stage in his work, Esteva suggested that defense of peasant political interests could be achieved through regional coalitions of local production organizations such as revitalized ejidos (1976: 14). His emphasis later shifts to organizations operating at the national level as these in fact begin to emerge, such as the Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala (C.N.P.A.) in 1979. The C.N.P.A. and similar organizations, however, are structured according to similar principles, as coalitions of regional coalitions (1980: 89). There is emphasis throughout Esteva's work on the importance of political strength and structure in order to create the possibility for alliances with other social groups and for influence over national policy, and his enthusiasm for new initiatives in this direction such as the formation of the C.N.P.A. is apparent.

This enthusiasm stems in part from Esteva's apparent conviction that the official national peasant organization, the Confederacion Nacional Campesina (C.N.C.), is largely unredeemable. The C.N.C. was established in 1935 during the Cárdenas government, to some extent through government initiative, and was incorporated into the ruling

Partido Revolucionario Institucional (P.R.I.), the party which continues to dominate Mexican politics. While some historians see the creation of the C.N.C. as a self-interested attempt by Cárdenas to orchestrate greater peasant support for the central administration while at the same time pre-empting the establishment of too close peasant ties with industrial workers (Montes de Oca, 1977), most believe that he genuinely sought to increase peasant influence over matters of national policy relevant to their development (Hellman, 1978: 43-44). The C.N.C. largely lost the ability it initially had to mobilize peasants and significantly influence policy in the 1940's with the major shift in national development policy following Cárdenas. The C.N.C. increasingly assumed the function of buffering government from peasant protest through systematic channeling of discontent into benign administrative procedures, particularly those relating to the modest ongoing agrarian reform program (Esteve, 1980: 88). Ronfeldt describes its policies as "designed for controlling and co-opting peasants" (1973: 128). Hellman points out that this is not surprising since the organization's middle and upper leadership is appointed more or less by government decree, and much of the organization's funding is supplied by the P.R.I. (1978: 45-46).

Political Organization at the Local Level

Transformation of local power structures involves

first and foremost elimination of the cacique as the economic and political intermediary between peasant producers and both capitalist enterprises and government. As a local or regional political "boss", the cacique's power may have originated in his success in obtaining local land redistribution as an agrarian leader during the Revolution or the period of the Cárdenas government. Alternatively, he may have accumulated power as a local merchant, government agent, or even as a former hacendado. Often, he holds official political positions such as ejido or P.R.I. local committee chairmanships, positions which give him control over the distribution of government credit and other programs such as employment in public works (Esteva, 1980:117-122).

Among the undesirable effects of this type of local power structure is the tendency for public resources such as credit, which are intended for peasants, to end up in other hands (Esteva, 1976: 14). The economic functions exercised by the individual cacique may range from involvement strictly in exchange as merchant or usurer to indirect or even direct control over the agricultural production process. An example of a position which allows direct control is that of agent of a large agricultural processing company who supervises production contracts among small producers. (Contract agriculture is growing in Mexico and often involves provision by the buyer of a range of inputs and close supervision of actual production; 1978b: 92; 1979b: 236). Less direct control is exercised through assistance to commercial farmers and

others who seek to circumvent the legal impediment to capitalist expansion presented by the ejidal land tenure system. Arranging illegal rental of ejidal land obtained through corruption and frequently violent coercion is the usual means of accomplishing this.

Throughout his range of functions, the cacique facilitates the draining of economic surplus from the peasant sector. It is through the cacique that the neolatifundias and commercial agribusiness exercise their expanding control. In general the combined political and economic role of the cacique is the vehicle which integrates the peasant sector with the larger capitalist society. Esteva considers caciquismo to be the major obstacle to future rural development. Its suppression by peasants organized locally to replace the necessary functions exercised by the cacique thus becomes the key social change needed at the local level (1976: 4, 9).⁵

Peasant Economic Organization

Agricultural Production

Esteva insists that while the old structure of exploitation must be abolished, this must be done in a way which avoids dislocation of the peasant production system now in place (1976: 11). There are apparently two reasons for his caution. All of his work has in part a practical dimension: to influence national policy in the short run. Building political support for his proposals on the part of

the urban working class and the State is already a monumental task. To suggest that increases in production would not be a relatively immediate result of the implementation of these proposals but can only be promised as an eventual outcome following a disruptive transition period during which production might temporarily decline would clearly make that task even more difficult. There is no question either as to the critical need for immediate increases in production and income from the peasants' point of view; such increases are a basic condition for social and economic progress in rural areas (1981a: 41).

The second reason for caution in efforts to transform the organization of production is the importance placed by Esteva on using existing peasant social and economic organization as the starting point for such change, and on ensuring that it is the peasants themselves who determine the pace of this change. Collectivization of production is an unquestioned goal for Esteva: production by individuals on small plots is "economically inefficient, socially backward, and politically conservative" (1981a: 44; 1979f: 314). Collectivization imposed by the state costs a great deal and is usually ineffective, as peasants resist their direct subordination by the state to needs and priorities which are not their own, through a process imposed from above and outside (1980 : 50-51; 1981b: 249-50; 1982: 25).⁶ As a long term project under their own control, based on existing peasant organizations, however, collectivization will

gradually evolve, opening for them "a road of liberation" (1980 : 204). Self-managed and authentically democratic production organizations at the local level will transform not only the production process: They will generally serve the purpose of regulating all peasant relations with outside society, in this sense replacing the cacique (1980 : 205-7). Insistence on peasant control does not mean that Esteva rules out all outside encouragement of collectivization. However, such encouragement must come from very carefully trained promoters whose methods of work are strictly non-authoritarian. They must also clearly recognize the long-term nature of the process. Emphasis must be on a gradual development of intermediate structures such as limited service co-operatives in areas of consumption, credit, and equipment purchase and use as a necessary basis for eventual collective labour (1976: 11).

Collective Bargaining in Agricultural Marketing

A specific relationship with the larger society in which the peasant organization can play a crucial role is in the sale of agricultural products. Esteva considers the prevalence of unequal relations of exchange a strategic factor in rural underdevelopment. Peasants' failure to accumulate, he believes is due not to an inability to produce a surplus, but rather to retain it. Transfer of surplus is systematic and accumulation is impossible (1978d: 21). So that peasants can deal with external buyers of their agricultural products

and in particular with commercial agribusiness on a more equal basis, Esteva proposes the development of "collective commodity contracts" (1979c: 13). A collective bargaining approach is essential when dealing with capital and its intermediaries to offset the imbalance inherent in individual dealings with large commercial companies (1981a: 42-43). The contracts he envisages would be negotiated in a conventional collective bargaining manner, and would cover the value contributed by all inputs, land, credit, tools, and chemicals as well as labour (1980: 206). Esteva suggests that the State would play a key role in the successful development of organized marketing through legal regulation of negotiations and contracts as in the field of labour relations and through fixing minimum standards (1979c: 15; 1981a: 43). He acknowledges that such a strategy has practical limits within present society, even with State support, given his ultimate goal of fully autonomous production organizations which are not subject to exploitation. However, in existing circumstances, such organized marketing is a basic means of modifying relations of exchange. It would contribute to agricultural development in both production and processing as some economic surplus is retained, opening the way for collective investment. In general, collective contracts would reduce the impact of external economic forces and would provide peasants with a greater margin of control over productive resources. They would also have a valuable political impact, providing a new

opportunity for collective responsibility that would be open to all levels of peasants, regardless of stratification. This contribution to greater political independence on the part of peasant organizations would also increase their value as allies from the point of view of other groups of workers (1979b: 245-246; 1979c: 16).

Agricultural Processing Industries

The evolution of existing peasant organizations will ultimately culminate in what Esteva calls "integrated peasant industry" in which production of raw materials, processing, and marketing of finished consumer goods are all controlled by peasant organizations (1979c: 16-17). His discussion of this aspect of his strategy is limited. In some cases, these operations might be local in nature, but Esteva seems to believe that they would operate most effectively at the regional level, through coalitions of local organizations. Such industries would be ideal components of local development strategies with their preference for local inputs and priority on serving local and regional markets. They would also enjoy other advantages of small scale production units: low transportation costs in obtaining raw materials and distributing finished goods; use of relatively inexpensive equipment of local or national origin; relative stability of input supplies; an ability to adjust quickly to fluctuations in demand (1979c: 23).

Government Policy

The importance of State support has been noted in Esteva's description of collective commodity agreements and implied in his insistence that local power structures must change. In general, Esteva views the problem of government policy as a question of transferring its bias from commercial to peasant agriculture. In the area of agricultural research, for example, it is necessary to give much higher priority to the research needs of peasant agriculture, much of which is restricted to rainfed areas. The bulk of research funding has in the past gone to "Green Revolution" plant varieties designed to produce high yields when combined with a package of expensive inputs, particularly chemical fertilizer and irrigation. These inputs have been largely monopolized by the commercial sector due to their high cost (1976: 6, 10). The kind of agricultural transformation Esteva proposes will require not only more public resources, but a sustained effort to ensure that the credit, price and input subsidies, and infrastructure actually reach the peasants, and in a suitable form. Present price supports are a good example of inappropriate policy (if the goal is to support peasant agriculture). All categories of producers are treated alike, and Esteva considers that such "equal treatment [of] unequal producers is inequitable" (1976:9). Smaller producers require stronger support in the form of additional credit and other inputs, and special marketing services (1976: 5, 9, 11; 1979e: 239-40; 1980 : 201). In general, Esteva favours

less emphasis on global programs and the bureaucratic control they tend to promote, and more emphasis on peasant-biased regulatory intervention (as in the case of commodity contracts; 1982: 25). He also suggests that a nationalized food industry would contribute to a more favourable climate for development of peasant agriculture, if the action represents "its social reintegration to the producers and not...the bureaucratization of capital" (1979c: 30).

A crucial issue is the fate of Mexico's agrarian reform program. Esteva believes a much more intensive program (given substance with the support services mentioned above) is needed to regularize an enormous backlog of unexecuted grants and unsecured titles. Between 1940 and 1976, 52.7 million hectares were redistributed "on paper". Of these decisions, less than one half (affecting 25.6 million hectares) were actually implemented. "Land" remains a fundamental peasant demand which must be met (1980 : 212-216). A related issue of similar priority is the level of rural violence nearly all of which revolves around questions of tenancy. Invasion of peasant land by ranchers and its attendant violence, together with State repression which may support such actions must end. (1980 : 210, 216).

Political Support for the Program

Achieving the implementation of peasant-biased rural development policies outlined above and the transfer

of power from caciques to peasant organizations at the local level will require more political strength than even a fully organized peasantry will be able to develop without allies. The place to look for allies is among groups faced with similar types of conflict with the same economic institutions against which peasants are mobilizing and for Esteva, that means rural and urban wage-workers (1978d: 32). Such an alliance developed during the Cárdenas presidency and in fact was an important source of pressure and support for the agrarian reforms of that period. Those relationships are symbolized for Esteva in the Emiliano Zapata sugar mill in the State of Morelos whose operation was taken over jointly by its employees and the peasants who supplied it with sugar cane in 1938 (1980 : 69; 1981a: 29). Efforts to maintain the peasant-worker alliance of the 1930's were resisted by the State with increasing success after 1940 though a combination of co-optation of both peasant and labour organizations, and repression of any initiatives that developed independently of the official organizations (1982: 4). In rebuilding the alliance, care must be taken to ensure that it is a true partnership without any hierarchy of interests:

The worker-peasant alliance must be rethought, so that it is truly a relation between allies, not a deal between travelling companions in which some are the demolition materials by which the others transform society (1979a: 119).

Theoretical and Empirical Bases
for Esteva's Argument

It is one thing to put forward policy proposals rooted in a desire to correct past and present injustice. It is quite another matter to insist on the feasibility of the proposals in immediate, practical terms, as Esteva does throughout his work. While his enthusiasm may to some extent be calculated to increase the appeal of his argument, he brings forward a detailed and consistent set of theoretical arguments and supporting empirical evidence on which he bases his optimism. These will be summarized under two headings. A range of encouraging political developments in Mexico since 1970 increase the feasibility of his proposals, Esteva believes. Included in this first section are his references to successful rural development experiments. A second section reviews his more theoretical material, and in particular, his concepts of "peasant economy" and "peasant community".

Political Developments in Mexico,
1970-1982

Esteva's most important source of optimism is what he considers the outstanding phenomenon of the period since 1970: the emergence of the peasantry as an actor of national significance (1976: 8). Throughout the 1970's there has been a constant growth of peasant movements, both in numbers and quality, with a clear tendency for local struggles to coalesce into larger ones (1978f: 708). As the economic crisis

has grown, so has the mobilization of peasants, and a great diversity of organizations have emerged in all parts of the country. These organizations have tended to originate in struggles for land, which remains the principle objective of peasant mobilization (1978d: 27; 1978f: 708; 1980 : 18, 59). A growing recognition by peasants of the insufficiency of land alone as a solution has led to a gradual shift of focus to relations of exchange, and to attempts to displace caciques, some of which have succeeded (1976: 9; 1978d: 33).

Esteva considers that the extent and depth of peasant mobilization and organization during this period has been sufficient to permit him to describe Mexican peasants as a class-in-form, a class both in- and for-itself (1979b: 238; 1981a: 24). An important indicator of the qualitative evolution of peasant mobilizations is the emergence of serious efforts to build national peasant organizations such as the C.N.P.A. through a slow coalescing of relations of mutual support among a great diversity of independent local and regional organizations (1980 : 59, 89-90; 1982: 6-7).

An impressive example of the type of integrated rural development based on local peasant production organizations which Esteva favours emerged after 1976. He considers the Coalición de Ejidos Colectivos de los Valles del Yaqui y Mayo to be a working model of peasant self-management (1980 : 181; 1982: 6).⁷ In general, he reports a strengthening of community institutions throughout the country in

an effort to achieve greater self-reliance, in response to the economic crisis (1978f: 708).

Proclamation by the Mexican Government in 1980 of the Sistema Alimentario Mexicano (S.A.M.) provides Esteva with further confirmation that his proposals can be realized. Stagnant agricultural production had been finally recognized by the State as an insurmountable obstacle to overall economic recovery and growth (1982: 13). The basic goal of the S.A.M. was defined as national self-sufficiency in maize and beans by 1982, together with large-scale employment creation in rural areas through promotion of the food processing industry and improved distribution systems. Massive funding has been directed to ejidatarios and other small producers in the form of upgraded services, new subsidies on credit and other inputs, price increases, and a crop insurance scheme. Esteva considers the S.A.M.'s results in 1980 and 1981 in terms of increased production to be "spectacular", and believes that the peasants can take the credit (1982: 14, 19; 1981a: 19-20). He characterizes the program as "a profound turnaround" in Mexican agricultural policy because he believes it represents a recognition by the State that food self-sufficiency can only be assured if the peasants are given the main responsibility for achieving it together with the resources necessary to do so (1981a: 23, 32). The key difference between this program and earlier attempts to reverse agricultural stagnation with the commitment of more public

funds (as in 1970-76) is the recognition that it is not enough to make more resources available to the agricultural sector: which groups receive those resources is what really counts (1980 : 201). Together with the S.A.M.'s designation of the poor peasants in rain-fed agriculture as the central actors in rural Mexico's future comes a firm commitment by the State to increase peasant incomes and fundamentally change the rural social structure through a redirection of public resources (1981a: 20; 1982, 11-12, 31).

Finally, Esteva notes indications that the peasant-worker alliance is being taken more seriously by the Mexican labour movement, as it has become increasingly concerned with the need to achieve food self-sufficiency. He cites a national conference on rural development organized in 1979 by the national labour confederation, in which discussion of the alliance was a priority, and offers a general observation that urban workers are beginning to understand that such an alliance must be a partnership of equals (1980 : 209-10; 1982: 7).

Theoretical Arguments

Beyond an assessment of whether or not the current conjuncture of political and economic trends in Mexico increases the immediate feasibility of Esteva's proposals lies a more fundamental question: what is it about Mexican peasants, as peasants, that has convinced him of their ability to take the lead in transforming Mexico's agriculture, and

more broadly, its rural economy and society. Esteva's conclusions about the peasants' potential for self-directed development are based in the particular meaning he attaches to the notions of "peasant economy" and "peasant community", and his general conclusions concerning the nature of peasant persistence in Mexican society. Brief descriptions of his views on each follow.

Esteva's "Peasant Economy"

Since Esteva argues that peasant agriculture can perform more successfully than commercial agriculture in meeting a series of both peasant and national needs, it is important to consider his analysis of the basic differences between the two. Throughout his work, he refers to "the peasant economy" whose defining characteristic setting it apart from other forms of production is that it "functions to satisfy directly and immediately the producers' needs of survival and development and not those of the general economy, be it a market economy or a socialist society" (1978c: 5). He consistently contrasts the peasant production motive (for basic needs) with that of profit maximization (1976: 13; 1978e: 28; 1981b: 250). The possibility that Esteva is theorizing a full "subsistence mentality" (preference for leisure after basic needs are met) as part of this basic needs/profits dichotomy is not consistent with his argument noted above that the chief impediment to peasant accumulation is not unwillingness, but inability due

to the structure of the markets in which surplus production is sold.⁸

The subsistence orientation peasants exhibit may not be a matter of choice or preference in Esteva's view. However, their production and marketing decisions employ an economic logic which is distinct from that of a capitalist enterprise in other ways. First of all, production levels are the chief concern of the peasant producer, not product price level and resulting revenues. Unfortunately (for a more complete understanding of his argument), Esteva's only elaboration of this point is a reference to peasants' preference for high crop yields and low prices as compared with the commercial agricultural enterprise which benefits in profit terms from the higher prices often associated with lower production levels (1978e: 28-9).

Thus far, it is difficult to assess the analytical power of Esteva's proposed definition of peasant subsistence orientation. At most, it can be suggested at this point that he may agree with Warman's somewhat more detailed model. Warman believes that the peasant economy's internal functioning is ordered by a system of valuation of goods and services that is distinct from the rules of valuation of commodities within the larger economy. For the peasant, a commodity "is valued in a different fashion as part of a complex whole". Given that the basic objective of each family unit is its subsistence needs, the exchange of goods and services between units (and communities) is ordered not by monetary

value but by "similar equivalencies in terms of the resources that the units that establish the relationship have or lack" based on shared evaluation of the importance of the resource being negotiated. Warman goes on to say that peasants do indeed cease production when subsistence requirements are met due to diminishing returns and in order to avoid increased loss of surplus through the market (1980b: 295, 299).

The "Peasant Community"

A second way in which Esteva defines the distinctness of peasant economic logic is through his argument that peasant needs are determined socially, within the rural community. Where these needs do not include a profit, monetary calculations are not applicable to the decisions about how to meet those needs, and the community may seek to control forms of accumulation which are contrary to its interests. These socially-imposed obligations contrast with those under which the commercial enterprise operates: in the latter case, accumulation is a necessity (1978e: 29). The fundamental characteristic of Mexican peasants is this "collective form of social existence" (1978f: 707). Conditions and organization of work, and individual accumulation are determined from within the community. The integration of the individual with the community structure may appear to be very casual yet these social links are in fact the expression of "an economic base of organized functioning" (1978g: 267; 1980 : 142). Esteva does not provide a detailed description of the social

mechanisms which order the organization of work and limit individual accumulation. There is, however, good reason to conclude that Warman's description of these mechanisms is what Esteva has in mind.⁹ Work organization tends to center on the sharing of resources whose distribution is uneven, especially land. Arrangements include various types of share-cropping (medianía: "going halves"), land rental, servitude, paying of wages for occasional work, and the loaning of ox teams (for ploughing) and money (Warman, 1980b: 183, 216-220). Redistribution of wealth to limit individual accumulation is served by these same means. (Esteva and Warman do not believe that the traditional cargo system¹⁰ where it is still present continues to fulfill a redistributive function; Esteva, 1982 : 155-6; Warman, 1980b: 290-294).

Esteva uses the concept of "community" in a number of ways. First of all he notes its territorial aspect, observing that the number of rural communities (those with fewer than 2500 inhabitants) "has remained surprisingly stable" in recent decades (1980 : 146). A key distinction in his own discussion of the heterogeneity in Mexican forms of rural community is that between "organic" and "mechanical" solidarity. Organic solidarity is characterized by relations which are enduring, deep, and all-pervasive, and involve a fundamental interdependence among community members. It relates closely with the quality of corporateness associated with the traditional community. Mechanical solidarity is

shallow, temporary, and limited to single issues around which independent inhabitants of a physical settlement from time to time feel a common interest strong enough to warrant collective action. On this basis, Esteva distinguishes between the "formal community" which exhibits mechanical solidarity and an internal class structure, and the "real community" with its organic solidarity and absence of class differentiation (1979b: 243). The crucial difference between the two lies in the presence or absence of "relations of exploitation" among community members. A great variety of combinations of these two types of community, defined in social, political, and economic terms are apparently present in actual physical communities in Mexico. One extreme is found in central and southern Mexico where the internal institutions of some indigenous communities can be traced directly to pre-conquest forms, and in which the community continues to be the "form of social existence" in the full sense. In the north, with the exception of some indigenous "enclaves" such as that of the Yaqui and Mayo, peasants are more individualized and unite around common interests only occasionally (1980: 33, 146-156).

In addition to geographic variation, forms of land tenure also influence community structure. The ejido and indigenous comunidad as legal forms may correspond with and provide the political structure for "real" communities (the economic expression of which would often be a high degree of collectivization of production and services), but

can also be characterized by total parcellization (which would tend to be associated with mechanical solidarity). Many physical settlements contain elements of "real community" within the larger "formal" one (1980 : 151-3).

A further aspect of Esteva's use of "community" is its role in peasant resistance to external pressure. The community is in general the "permanent condition of survival" for peasants (1980 : 146). Not only does the community provide the peasant with ongoing access to land but it is a means of resistance to outside economic and political pressure (1978f: 707, 711). During periods of economic recession at the national level when external supplements to community income are less available (especially in the form of wage labour by community members) community institutions are strengthened as the community is forced to rely on its own resources. This tendency is reinforced with the halt in social differentiation which is encouraged by the external supplements (1978f: 708). "Community" in these contexts does not appear to necessarily refer to "real community" in the full sense.

A final use made by Esteva of the concept of community is that of the social and political bond which may result from collective political action. The strong links between individual and group as a result of a successful struggle for land are the basis of community (presumably tending to community in the "real" sense; 1981a: 24).

Persistence of the Peasantry

An important strength of Esteva's varied treatments of "community" is his insistence on locating it within an on-going historical process. At one point, he states that the Mexican peasant community has been recreated one thousand times since the conquest in its evolving relationship with a developing capitalism (1978f: 707). The process is one of constant transformation and adjustment, and the community continues to be created and to recreate itself today under new conditions as it interacts with the larger economy. On the one hand, capitalist strategies for deriving profit from peasant agriculture continue to evolve. The latest innovation, in its most advanced form as embodied in multinational agribusiness, is to shift attention from control of land to control of the production process as it assumes a new role as supplier of inputs, as well as buyer and processor of raw materials (1979b: 236). This shift of strategy takes the form of contract agriculture in suitable types of production such as fruit and vegetables, and its presence in Mexico as noted earlier is growing.

Although Esteva does not discuss the adaptation of community structures to contract agriculture, community resistance to encroachment by commercial agriculture in general is the second constant element in the historical process. While the transformation of peasant agriculture in Europe tended to involve the appropriation of individual family units, in Latin America, the development of commercial

agriculture involved an attempted domination of peasant communities (1978f: 702). The relative weakness of capitalism in these latter struggles has meant that the community has had a margin of manoeuvre in resisting dissolution. This margin has been only so large as to permit peasant survival, through constant adaptation, but not large enough to allow peasants to develop on their own terms through retention of a significant portion of their economic surplus (1980 : 149). The result of this process is not a survival or remnant of an earlier period. As peasants rebuild their communities during the current crisis, past traditions provide a basis for that rebuilding but the result is a new form, not a return to earlier structures (1980: 58, 89).

In assessing this long period of coexistence between peasant and capitalist agriculture, Esteva concludes that a peasant economy based in community structures, and embarked upon a process of development will be able to coexist for a prolonged period with a fully developed commercial agriculture (1978f: 712). He does not deny the general historical trend towards dissolution of the peasantry. That trend is not far advanced in Mexico, however, and in fact appears to be reversible during periods of economic crisis (such as the current one) when those who seek permanent wage employment cannot find it, and return to their community of origin and "repeasantize". The growing limits on and reversibility of proletarianization of the Mexican economy have created a new situation in which the disappearance of the peasantry

cannot be considered inevitable, at least in the foreseeable future (1979b: 233, 235-6; 1979c: 10).

A further feature of the peasant economy that helps account for its persistence is the "incredible efficiency" of the production methods peasants develop in their efforts to survive (1978c: 5). Citing a number of Mexican studies, Esteva argues that peasant agriculture makes more efficient use of all of the resources at its disposal: not only is productivity of land higher than in commercial agricultural enterprises but the same is true for use of energy and public resources (1978e: 34-5).

The Basis for the Peasants' Ability to Lead
Rural Development: a Summary

That the peasant economy has persisted is the clearest possible evidence for Esteva that it possesses significant potential for development. As the social structure which has permitted this persistence, peasant organizations within the rural community should be the point of departure for projects of rural modernization in Mexico (1979b: 245). The vigorous solidarity which exists within "a good number" of communities is the key factor that permits serious consideration of a new rural development option (1980 : 149). The strengthening of peasant organization, not only within communities, but as regional and national movements, together with the evolving dimensions of the nation's economic problems contribute to the feasibility of the peasant option, Esteva believes (1978f: 711-12).

Not all of those who believe that Mexico's rural problems require a non-capitalist solution agree with Esteva's proposals. As will be seen in Chapter Three, both his proposals and the theoretical assumptions on which they are based have been subject to considerable debate in Mexico during the past decade. The brief review of the arguments and counter-arguments which form that debate will serve both to further clarify Esteva's position, through his responses to criticisms of it, and will contribute to identifying some of the weaknesses in it as well.

Chapter Two Footnotes

- 1 Also see Esteva, 1978b: 90, 97; 1978e: 23; 1980: 17-22, 49-52.
- 2 Also see Esteva, 1978f: 712; 1980: 27, 60-62, 107-8; 1982: 16-17.
- 3 See also Rama and Rello (1979: 106-110), and Feder, 1982.
- 4 All direct quotations from Esteva's work are my translation with the exception of those from Esteva (1976). Quotations from A. Bartra, R. Bartra, Warman, and Coello in Chapter III are also my translation.
- 5 Also see Esteva, 1978e: 26; 1978f: 704, 707; 1980: 46, 50.
- 6 A well known example of imposed collectivization from the late 1960's is the Chontalpa project described by Barkin (1977) and A. Bartra (1976). Ewell and Poleman (1980) describe a similar project from the early 1970's.
- 7 For descriptions of the programs and achievements of the Coalición see Lucas (1982: 237-248), Quintero (1982), and Hugo et al. (1982).
- 8 Esteva does not identify Chayanov as a source of inspiration in his efforts to theorize the specificity of peasant productive activity. In his single reference to Chayanov he seeks to establish distance between his own development proposals, and Chayanov's "romantic agrarianism" which, by idealizing rural life and seeking to preserve the peasant economy "places the peasant at the margin of history" (1978d: 24-5).
- 9 Esteva describes one of Warman's papers as a "brilliant refutation" of the orthodox Marxist argument that rural classes can be defined according to formal property ownership (1978f: 709). In that paper, one of Warman's central arguments is the widespread presence of land sharing arrangements (1980a: 176-7).
- 10 Cargo systems are a means of limiting the accumulation of wealth in traditional indigenous communities in some parts of Latin America. The vehicle for obtaining this effect is a hierarchy of religious and civil offices which are regularly reallocated. The principle function of the offices is the sponsoring of community feasts paid for by the office holders. Money that might otherwise support individual accumulation is thus dissipated. (Stavenhagen, 1969a: 314-319).

CHAPTER III

THE MEXICAN DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF THE PEASANTRY

Within the context of the growing rural crisis of the 1970's, a vigorous theoretical debate arose between and among those who broadly speaking share Esteva's position described in Chapter II (labelled in Mexico the "campesinistas"), and orthodox (as well as not-so-orthodox) Marxists, who, within the context of the debate are known as "descampesinistas". In contrast with the campesinista view that peasant persistence due to effective economic and political resistance has created the basis for a new approach to rural development, the descampesinistas believe they are witnessing an already advanced degree of decomposition within the Mexican peasantry as a rapidly increasing proportion of the rural population loses access to land and becomes dependent on wages or other marginal economic activities. As an about-to-disappear social group (which in any case has traditionally been bereft of any substantial capacity to defend itself politically), peasants, as peasants, are politically insignificant in the descampesinista view and proposals for a peasant-led approach to rural development are therefore, at best, irrelevant, and at worst, conceal a reactionary strategy to confuse the rural masses and use them to offset the growing power of the urban proletariat.

As might be expected, a wide range of intermediate positions are present on these issues.¹

In an initial section, direct and indirect references to Esteva's policy proposals will be noted. Positions on the issues of peasant persistence and political capacity, and the associated theoretical models on which these positions are based will then be considered as these help to explain the dispute over policy.

The descampesinista/campesinista distinction does not do full justice to the complexity of issues dealt with and the range of positions present in contributions to the debate. The descampesinista position generally corresponds to the orthodox Marxist approach outlined in Chapter I. Neo-Marxists who emphasize functionality and downplay the importance of resistance can also be included under this label. The campesinista position broadly speaking corresponds with some versions of the "peasant economy" approach. What will be referred to here as intermediate positions cover those whose arguments have significant similarities with the neo-Marxist approach which stresses resistance. Pare's views are placed in this category although they are close to those of the descampesinistas.² Stavenhagen, commonly identified as a campesinista,³ is close to that position but his consideration of social differentiation within the peasantry and his lesser emphasis on the peasant community distances him somewhat from it.

Comments on the Peasant-led Strategy

Descampesinistas tend to be suspicious of the political motives behind the campesinista proposals. R. Bartra believes the reforms proposed by the "populist romantics" will do more to protect the exploiters than the exploited (1976b: 333). The goal of "bourgeois agrarianism", he believes, is to stabilize population movements, hide unemployment, and calm rural impatience with the populist myth of an agrarian solution (1975: 524). Foladori argues that past reforms such as the ejido system have not presented a barrier to the development of capitalism. In his insistence that his peasant alternative can coexist with and does not require the dissolution of commercial agriculture Esteva reveals the compatibility of his policy proposals with continued capitalist social relations of production and capitalist exploitation (1981: 78). Feder believes that programs of support to minifundistas and ejidos in their present form will not save the peasantry and considers the campesinista position to be little different from the small-farmer policies of the World Bank and the "Ford-Rockefeller-CIMMYT conglomerate" (1979: 313; 1977a: 1442-3). (The basis for these positions and attitudes will become clear in the following two sections.)

Esteva responds directly to the last argument.

Feder, he argues, assumes that "peasant" is synonymous with small-holder (as was the case in Europe) and therefore interprets the campesinista proposals as an effort to defend and

preserve the minifundistas. He shares Feder's disapproval of small-farmer policies. Feder's confusion about the campesinista position, Esteva argues, is due to his "European...ideological preconceptions" which prevent him from perceiving the fact that Mexican peasants are community-based (1979f: 314; 1978f: 710).

Those who take an intermediate position include Rello, who expresses agreement with the aims of the peasant-led strategy. In order to dynamize subsistence agriculture, which must be the priority in efforts to overcome Mexico's agricultural production problem, a comprehensive medium-term approach is needed which will modify political and social relations in terms of political control and surplus extraction. The key problem however is the political viability of such a program about which he is doubtful. He is less enthusiastic than is Esteva about the merits of the S.A.M., pointing out that while it does provide peasants with greater tactical "space", both economically and politically, within which to operate, it was drawn up without any consultation of peasants and can hardly be seen as evidence of a complete change of attitude toward peasants on the part of the State. He also suggests that more consideration needs to be given to the needs and potential support of landless peasants and labourers in the peasant-led strategy. Emphasis on control of surplus rather than land ignores their concerns (1981: 13-18).⁴

Paré, in an analysis of field work in three communities in which the Plan Puebla⁵ was promoted, concludes that such programs are a response to political unrest through which the State attempts to modernize and pacify while leaving the existing rural class structure intact. The program proceeds on the pretense that communities are socially homogeneous. Uneven distribution of inputs and credit, and therefore of participation in the program reflect the unacknowledged local stratification. Limited results are also due to the exclusively top-down methods of the promoting agencies which completely ignore the potential for development of local resources based on community initiative (1975a:17-19, 73-7, 95). The error of the "official optimistic populists", in apparent reference to the campesinistas, is their failure to question the character of the Mexican state, a state whose record in the field of rural development includes such programs as the Plan Puebla, and their illusion that peasants can really be represented in it (1979a: 15).

Stavenhagen distinguishes between moderate and radical rural development programs. Moderate reforms in the areas of appropriate technology and research, promotion of intensive cultivation methods, improvements to credit and marketing structures, and an expanded land reform will make a small contribution to production and employment and will improve the standard of living for about 15% of the rural population in Mexico. Present trends of polarized development and marginalization will not be reversed. Such a

reversal would require a much more radical land reform, greatly reducing current maximum limits of land holdings, supported by programs to encourage collectivization and diversification of economic activities, and nationalization of all rural commerce and agricultural marketing, all within the context of comprehensive regional development planning (1982: 181-6).

It is not clear how closely Esteva's proposals conform with Stavenhagen's standards for a radical reform program. All of the elements identified by Stavenhagen are present in Esteva's descriptions of the peasant-led strategy to some degree but whether or not to the full extent Stavenhagen believes necessary is difficult to assess. Esteva does not make it clear, for instance, how far his accelerated land reform would go. His response to suggestions that he misjudges the nature of the State is that insofar as that nature is the ongoing expression of the relative strength of social forces, it can be changed (1980: 186-8).

The Debate on the Agrarian Transition

General Arguments

Esteva's views on the survival of the peasantry and its tendency to grow during periods of economic recession have been noted.

Descampesinistas are in total disagreement.

Foladori (1981) describes the process of decomposition of the peasantry as inevitable and imminent. R. Bartra considers

decomposition to be advanced, and the process of proletarianization to be intense and inexorable. The functional value of the peasantry as a source of cheap labour and a means of maintaining political stability no longer counter-balances the growing gap in economic efficiency between modern capitalist agriculture and the "atomized" peasant operation (1976a: 26-31, 45, 77, 145; 1982: 45-6). Feder agrees that the small-holders are doomed (except for a successful few) and considers that the increasing concentration of land and mechanization of production with increasing penetration of multinational companies will bring this about in a relatively few decades. However, he does not foresee a passage from peasant to proletarian status since employment is being drastically reduced in agriculture and industrial job-creation will not fill the gap. Marginalization and widespread death of peasants is the more probable outcome of the process (1976; 1978a; 1978b).

Those with an intermediate position are more cautious in their predictions. Rello does not embrace the campesinista view that the future of capitalist agriculture is limited and sees the growing importance of wage labour, monopolization of land and production, and increasing market integration of peasants as signs that the descampesinista prognosis should not be dismissed (1979a). Paré is even more cautious. She considers the disintegration of the peasantry to be an underlying, long-term trend. It is a very slow process however, which is reversible during economic crises

and only advances during periods of rapid economic growth. In the short-term, simple commodity production must be seen as the form taken by capitalism in agriculture, and it is far from clear that those who combine wage labour and direct production are a transitional group (1981: 50-55).

A. Bartra also accepts decomposition as the long-term trend, but believes it is slowed by effective peasant struggles for land (1979a: 45-9; 1979b: 116-118, 149-50).

Theoretical Models.

The basis for the widely differing predictions as to the fate of the peasantry lies primarily in the theoretical models used. While descampesinistas support their arguments with analyses of census data, it is widely acknowledged that such data are of limited quality, and at best, provide an indication of very broad trends.⁶ Even where a steady decline in the proportion of peasants to wage labourers in the economy as a whole can be shown (as in Foladori's analysis; 1981: 45-6), an act of considerable faith is required in order to conclude that the peasantry's demise is imminent. That "faith" is supported chiefly by the theoretical models used.

Definitions of the Peasantry

In Table One, the categories used by a number of debate participants are compared. The descampesinista position is represented by the first four examples. Within this position a range of interpretations as to the extent

TABLE ONE

RURAL CLASSES IN MEXICO: COMPARATIVE TRENDS

		agricultural proletariat	peasants, petite bourgeoisie & others
De la Peña			
	1960	81%	17%
	1972	74%	26%
Palacios			
	1960	48%	32%
	1972	56%	44%
	1975	59%	41%
		1) proletarians with land, small direct producers	rural bourgeoisie
	1977	75%	21%
R. Bartra			
	1960	1) proletariat	poor peasants & semi-proletariat
		50%	36%
		11) proletariat	peasantry
	1960	57%	42%
	1972	59%	36%
Loria			
	1972	workers with plots	poor peasants
		49%	18%
		proletariat (narrowly defined)	middle peasants
	1972	72%	3%
		permanent agricultural workers ^d	rich peasants
		10%	1%
		landless peasants ^e	big bourgeoisie
	1960	55%	1%
Bartra			
	1960	ejidatarios	petite bourgeoisie
		25%	10%
		minifundistas	larger farms
		15%	3%
Bartra			
	1960	de la Peña, 1979: 55; Foladori, 1981: 45-6, 54; Loria, 1981: 20; R. Bartra, 1976a: 171-2; Paré, 1981: 49-51, 95; Esteva, 1983: 29; Skarvengen, 1982: 46-9.	
		all calculations are based on census data.	
Notes			
a	De la Peña (1979) says he believes this figure was overestimated but unfortunately does not elaborate.		
b	1960s only.		
c	Those working under contract to large public or private companies either individually or as part of collective ejidos under conditions which preclude accumulation (whom Paré labels "proletarians disguised as peasants") are added to landless laborers and semi-proletarians most of whose income comes from wages (1981: 49-51).		
d	Esteva believes that many in this group belong to peasant family units (1983: 141-2).		
e	Peasants engaged in activities in addition to farming their own land (Esteva, 1983: 23).		
f	Only part of this class is an authentic agricultural proletariat with secure employment (Skarvengen, 1982: 49).		

of social polarization is evident, from de la Peña's and Foladori's grouping together of all non-proletarians to Lerda's more detailed categories. The important comparison, however, is between these first four examples and Esteva's quite different categories. Most of those considered by the descampesinistas as wage earners and semi-proletarians appear as Esteva's "peasants with supplementary activities", the group around which differences are clearly centered. Fundamental differences in the way in which these categories are used is apparent as a basic problem even though interpretations of the census data are not straightforward (as indicated for instance in the differences between de la Peña's and Foladori's (i) results).

The descampesinistas tend to strictly limit use of the "peasant" category to those small independent producers whose family labour on family-owned land provides for full economic self-sufficiency (Foladori, 1981: 89; R. Bartra, 1976a: 72, 74). Emphasis on the importance of a marketed surplus of agricultural production varies, R. Bartra including only those who consume one half or less of their production, while de la Peña stresses an orientation towards self-consumption (1979: 51, 125). Some theorists permit wider scope for employment of wage labour than others. Lerda considers there to be considerable variation on this point within his "middle peasant" strata (1981: 18), while de la Peña emphasizes its limited and occasional nature.

The campesinistas, in complete contrast consider the present Mexican peasantry by definition to be a group characterized by the heterogeneity of its productive activities, although with the diversity of types of labour in which its members engage organized around agricultural production on family-controlled land (Warman, 1980a: 204; Esteva, 1980: 142).

Among those with an intermediate position, approaches to the question of a basic definition tend to reflect one or other of the polar positions. A. Bartra is close to the campesinista position, defining the peasantry as a class with a complex material base whose particularity rests in the combination by most of its members of self-employed agricultural production and wage labour (1982: 8). Paré is closer to the independent producer position of the descampesinistas as is evident in Table 1.

Peasants as a Class

Positions on the question of whether or not peasants comprise a social class are closely aligned with the two basic definitions of the peasantry noted above.

Descampesinistas tend to recognize that peasants are an economically exploited group when they sell agricultural commodities or buy consumption or capital goods, their exploitation by definition being limited to such exchange activities. They reject the idea that they form a class, however, arguing that the non-collective form of peasant

2 2
OF / DE

production limits formation of a community of interest beyond the local level (R. Bartra, 1975: 222-3). The campesinistas on the other hand insist that all features necessary to designate the peasantry as a class are present (Warman, 1980a:204-9, 212-13). Esteva in particular emphasizes that Mexican peasants fulfill both structural and political requirements: not only do they occupy a unique relation of production with capital (based on the form of their land-related production which gives them the status of a non-proletarian working class), but their recent history of land-related and other struggles (as noted in Chapter II) strongly suggests to him that they are a class-in-formation (1979b: 223-4, 234; 1980: 143-4).

Peasants as a Mode of Production
with a Distinct Production Logic

A further issue present in the differences on the definitional boundaries of the peasantry is whether or not it constitutes a distinct mode of production. Treatment of this question does not coincide with the basic models. On the descampesinista side, R. Bartra argues for the existence of a "petty commodity mode of production" associated exclusively with those he defines as peasants. This mode is distinguished by the non-capitalist circumstances of the producer in which profits and wages cannot be differentiated. The peasant unit of production typically exhibits a negative rent, that is, the peasant's income is less than the sum of

the value of his labour and an average rate of return on the market value of his land. As the owner of the land on which he labours, the peasant is the agent of his own exploitation, Bartra believes, with the perversity that implies. Yet he does not suggest in his Estructura Agraria y Clases Sociales (1976a) that a non-maximizing mentality on the part of the peasant is involved. Rather, the full integration of the simple commodity mode with the dominant capitalist mode explains this dual "personality" and the uneconomic nature of peasant production (1976a: 40-45, 74-78).

Bartra's position on the issue of peasant mentality is modified somewhat in a later article in which he indicates approval of Chayanov's basic concept that peasant production ceases when an equilibrium is reached between family needs and the drudgery associated with production (1975: 522). Empirical evidence of this orientation can be seen in peasants' unusual response to price signals: their production of a commodity drops or remains the same with rising prices for that commodity. This conclusion is similar to the non-communitarian component of Esteva's discussion of a distinct subsistence mentality (described in Chapter II). The main value of Chayanov's discovery of peasants' non-capitalist production logic, Bartra argues, is its usefulness in explaining the persistence of their unique mode of production.

Bartra's apparent inconsistency may be due in part to a shift of focus between the two works. Emphasis in the earlier study is on the association between peasants' significant marketing involvement and their tendency to disappear. That emphasis shifts to their preoccupation with home consumption as an explanation of their persistence in the 1975 article. The divergent positions do not alter his broad conclusions, however. The relationship of his "simple commodity mode" with the capitalist mode is that of a very tight articulation in a single structure together with a third element, the remnants of an earlier natural economy of self-subsistence. Bartra's simple commodity mode is not a remnant of a pre-capitalist period although it has a pre-capitalist character and originated in "the natural economy" but is rather the creation of a particular stage in the process of capitalist development. The articulation embodies a transition not in the conventional sense of an overlap as one historical period merges with its successor, but only insofar as this particular form of production in Bartra's view has, from the point of view of the capitalist system, begun to outlive its usefulness (1976a: 92-6).

De la Peña's view is somewhat closer to the notion of articulation as a transition period between successive historical stages: peasant production is a pre-capitalist form which has been re-functionalized under capitalism during an extended transition period (1979: 52).

Consideration of the peasantry as a distinct mode of production is entirely absent from Foladori's analysis. In particular, he rejects Bartra's position that simple commodity production has a distinct internal logic and is not fully subject to capitalist laws. The basic relations of commodity production in his view derive from the commodity character of that production (1981: 12, 18; 133-41).

Those whose position is intermediate generally avoid categorizing the peasantry as a distinct mode of production. Paré in her early work shared R. Bartra's formulation (1975b: 32-33) but has since modified that view, arguing that an articulation of capitalist and non-capitalist (including peasant) forms of production, all of which are fully incorporated in the capitalist mode is a more useful approach, and avoids any implication of a necessary transition (1981: 33-5). This formulation is also used by Rello (1976: 101) and A. Bartra (1979a: 69-72). In conjunction with this position is the absence, in Paré's later work, of any notion of a distinct peasant production logic. Peasant "rationality" in her view appears to consist of nothing more than making the best use of all available resources (1981: 159). She notes the presence, in one of her case studies, of a tendency to rely on superstition to explain otherwise incomprehensible social and political phenomena, but makes no suggestion that this is in any sense a uniquely "peasant" characteristic (1975a: 49-50).

Stavenhagen refers to a "peasant economy" in his work but appears to do so with largely descriptive intent. He clearly rejects any suggestion that these refer to a pre-capitalist vestige. While it is inappropriate, he believes, to assume that peasants are profit-maximizers, the non-capitalist forms of production of which they are a part are fully integrated in a single structure, dominated by the capitalist mode (1978: 31). Peasants' main concern or purpose is to secure a regular income which guarantees subsistence. The fact that they do not capitalize is not a matter of preference but of an inability to do so (1977: 47, 54). Stavenhagen consistently refers to "purpose" or "concern", rather than "logic" or "mentality" and clearly views peasant motivation in terms of material constraints rather than a distinct method of economic valuation.

A more elaborate formulation of what is essentially a similar position is developed by A. Bartra who argues that peasants do indeed exhibit a distinct logic since their "immanent objective" of basic survival requires that all their production and exchange activity be governed by a "use-value" logic. Since the logic of the peasant production process is different from capitalist profit maximization, peasants are able to continue selling at prices which would require a capitalist enterprise to withdraw from the market (1979a: 83-6). There is no suggestion in this analysis that Bartra's "distinct logic" is based on anything other than material necessity. Lara's presentation

of a similar argument is less clear on this latter question. She argues that the different rationality which allows the peasant to sell products for less than full value is largely based on circumstances of exploitation and an absence of opportunity for the development of an orientation other than to basic needs. However, she does not rule out the possible presence of what she calls an "ideological characteristic", in explaining peasant basic needs orientation (1979: 121-2).

Esteve, for his part considers any notion of a transitional articulation of the peasant sector with capitalism as inappropriate since the present-day peasantry is a direct creation of modern capitalism. The transition period with persistent pre-capitalist modes has long since passed in the Mexican case, and those who believe it can still be identified are confused by the appearance of some present-day forms of production which resemble those of earlier periods (1980: 196).

Distinguishing the Peasantry and the Petite Bourgeoisie

I have looked at how theorists define the Mexican peasantry in terms of what it is. A second means of gaining a clearer understanding of how they view the peasantry is to consider how they establish what it is not. There is a tendency, somewhat evident in Table I, to view peasants as occupying an intermediate point on a spectrum between a rural proletariat on one side and an agricultural petite bourgeoisie (or a rich peasantry blending into the bourgeoisie)

on the other. While the labels used to describe this latter group vary, there is general agreement among debate participants concerning its proper characterization. It is composed of those who have been able to begin a process of accumulation or capitalization. Where positions vary is on the question of whether or not a clear distinction exists between the petite bourgeoisie and the peasantry.

Roger Bartra uses two categories. He refers to a rich peasant stratum which, unlike the middle peasants, has the ability to save and is "contiguous with a bourgeois condition" (1976a: 154). He also identifies a middle agrarian bourgeoisie (rancheros), former rich peasants who have achieved a clear bourgeois status but whose own direct labour is still important in their production (1976a: 165). The petit bourgeois designation is reserved by him for one of the two components in his formulation of a dual peasant character noted above. Lerda describes an agrarian petite bourgeoisie composed of those upper middle peasants who are able to capitalize, together with the rich peasant stratum. Its upper level is engaged in extensive hiring of wage labour and includes the caciques and those capitalist farmers who rent peasant land (1981: 18).

In contrast Warman generally neglects this apparently intermediate group, a neglect also evident in Esteva's categories in Table 1. Warman considers the peasantry to contain various strata and mentions "peasants with entrepreneurial tendencies", although when a peasant with such

tendencies ceases to be a peasant is not made clear. He considers individuals who may reach this intermediate position, in transit from the peasant class to the agrarian bourgeoisie, to be very exceptional cases: they represent "a handful among millions" (1980: 204).

Within the intermediate group, Paré uses an agrarian petite bourgeoisie category defined by an ability to accumulate, and a bourgeois political outlook. She prefers this designation to that of a rich peasantry which she considers to be a designation based exclusively on economic stratification, ignoring political attitudes (1981: 49). Finally Stavenhagen refers to "family farmers" as those able to capitalize (1977: 51).

It appears that both the campesinistas and the intermediate group see a fairly clear line of distinction while the descampesinistas see the upper stratum of peasants blending without interruption into those groups that have clear capitalist characteristics. While there is considerable room for further clarification of this issue it does not receive significant attention in the debate. Establishing the definitional boundary between peasants and proletarians is where the real controversy lies.

Distinguishing Peasants and Proletarians

Those whose status is undisputed form a very small group. A comparison of Esteva's and Lerda's breakdowns in Table 1 indicates that there is agreement on the designation

as proletarian of less than 10% of the rural population. All of Lerda's "semi-proletarians" and most of those he classifies as "workers" are part of Esteva's "peasants with supplementary activities". Three principal issues are present in this dispute over the proper identification of those who represent at least two-thirds of Mexico's rural people: can the presence of wage labour as the source of a significant proportion of family income be considered a sufficient indicator of proletarian status? Does an important part of the group recorded in census data as landless in fact have access to land through various social mechanisms? Does the direct agricultural production of those who also depend on wage labour for part of total family income occupy a central or merely complementary portion of family budgets?

The campesinistas adopt a very rigid position on the first issue: only those with permanent wage employment are genuine proletarians (Warman, 1980a: 170-1; Esteva, 1980: 140-1). Stavenhagen and A. Bartra appear to apply a similarly strict criterion (Stavenhagen, 1982: 49; A. Bartra, 1982: 5). The descampesinistas consider this position to be much too restrictive. Those without land clearly have a basically "proletarian character" even if regular employment is not available for most of them, and many of those who are able to maintain some production for direct consumption are really in the same category since most of their income is from off-plot wage employment (Lerda, 1981: 15;

R. Bartra, 1976a: 88-92, 171). As Coello describes it, the small plots or parcels of those who subsist mainly on wages merely give them "a peasant mask": they have "one foot firmly in the working class and the other, less firmly, and only in order to remain on their feet, in the petty commodity producing class" (1980: 19, 22). Paré's position is in some respects similar. She considers all those for whom wages provide more than 50% of total income to be proletarians, although she also insists that the great social diversity of rural Mexico requires a nuanced approach in which strict categories are of limited value (1980: 41; 1981: 10, 50, 52).

The campesinista response is in two parts. Concerning the large numbers of those recorded in census and other data as landless, they argue that most members of this group in fact have access to land for self-consumed production through various social mechanisms of co-operation and redistribution at the community level (as described in Chapter II). Formal ownership of property or its absence, therefore, is an inadequate and misleading basis for identifying class: the agricultural proletariat cannot be equated with those who do not own land (Warman; 1972: 118; 1980a: 173-177).

The second campesinista argument concerns the complementarity of wages to direct production (rather than the reverse). For the peasant family and community, Esteva argues, labour is just one commodity among others sold to

the external economy. Most labourers retain strong links with their communities of origin and there is a deep, integral interaction among wage-earning and non-wage-earning household members. Wages are not determinate in family and community production planning since they are not the sole means of survival. Wage-labourers are not "free" since they have not been fully separated from their means of production or collective social structure. Because wage labour is temporary, it is complementary to their direct production (Esteve, 1978f: 709; 1980: 142).

Warman's position on this issue is very similar. Wages do not organize subsistence, and while they represent a vital contribution, they are always subordinate to the basic framework of family and community relations. In addition, much of the wages received by peasants are received from other peasant families. When such exchange is between relative equals, the money paid is not a real wage but merely a "symbol" of the fact that an exchange has taken place (according to the non-capitalist system of valuation described in Chapter II) and that reciprocation is expected within what tends to be a highly symmetrical relationship (1980b: 226).

Foladori challenges the proposal that money wages can be purely symbolic. He argues that it is impossible that money values not regulate exchange in a situation of generalized commodification, and that the hiring peasant is not an exploiter. The appearance of reciprocity merely

hides the real process of differentiation. He suggests that Warman has taken it upon himself to judge when money-wages are a symbol and when they represent an exploitative relationship. Warman's error stems from his belief that capitalism is an alien force of European origin that was imposed on the peasantry. In fact, argues Foladori, the presence of widespread commodification ensures that the process of differentiation is internal to the peasantry. Peasants who sell labour are in fact proletarians with small plots of land, a common pattern in agricultural economies given the spatial organization of commercial agricultural production. The mere presence of wage labour is an irrefutable indicator for Foladori that all other activities are subject to it. He considers it ridiculous to see direct production in a commodified society as the defining element of family finances (1981: 29-30, 99-108).

R. Bartra considers the direct production of temporary wage-earners as no more than a specialized strategy for obtaining cheap food in circumstances of scarce employment. A careful calculation of the costs of that production (including the value of labour) shows that wages are needed to subsidize the direct production in these cases (1976a: 90-92).

Stavenhagen is much less categorical: direct production occupies a "strategic" position in family survival but its precise importance depends on local conditions. Wages, however, as an integral part of the strategy, play

more than just a complementary role (1977: 57). A. Bartra is even closer to the campesinista position, arguing that peasants will only sell labour that cannot be used at home, and that direct production is both quantitatively and qualitatively central to survival (1979a: 106).

Peasant Capacity for Political Organization

Conclusions on peasants' ability to effectively organize themselves politically flow directly from the basic models described in the preceding section.

The political action of Mexican peasants reflects their petit bourgeois side with its preoccupation with an agrarian solution, and the ease with which such an outlook can be manipulated, R. Bartra believes. Peasants resist in order to survive but their actions tend to be isolated and spontaneous, and they are unable to control power in the unlikely event that they do achieve some degree of organization. The only solution if they are to act to improve their lot is to set aside their "peasant" demands for more land and express their increasingly proletarian nature in the proper way, that is, form unions to seek better wages and working conditions (1976a: 156, 170-1). Foladori agrees that struggles for land are invariably manipulated by the bourgeoisie. In any case, he asks rhetorically, what happens to those whose land struggles succeed. Peasants should join with the agricultural proletariat to push for collectivization of land and other means of production (1981: 153-4). Feder

believes that it is inherent in the nature of rural class struggles that the peasants will lose. They now face a new enemy (the multinationals) and the old strategies used against landlords are no longer effective. If they are to have any influence at all over their fate, they must develop the means to act at the international level (1977c: 6; 1978a: 109).

Rello and A. Bartra agree that peasant political actions have tended to be dispersed and spontaneous in the past, although the conclusion does not follow that such actions are illegitimate. Peasants protest is neither reactionary nor a manipulation of the bourgeoisie. Based on extensive analysis of case studies, they conclude that an increasing maturity and effectiveness in peasant organization is observable through the 1970's (Gordillo and Rello, 1982; A. Bartra, 1979b: 118-119; 1979c: 58-85).

Paré agrees that peasants cannot be automatically dismissed as petit bourgeois in their political orientation, and that the obstacles to their organization (isolation, factionalism, corruption, caudillismo⁶, are political problems to be analyzed and overcome. She is not overly optimistic about the prospect that this will occur but notes that current peasant movements, while weak, are gaining in effectiveness (1973: 35-41; 1980: 37; 1981: 10; 157, 230-1; 1982b).

Summary

Descampesinista and intermediate positions on the merits of proposals for rural development strategies such as Esteva's "peasant option" have been noted. These critiques can be clearly traced to varying assessments of the strength of the tendency toward collapse of the peasantry as a clearly distinguishable social category. These assessments, in turn, rely heavily on assumptions derived from the theoretical models used, in the absence of a clear empirical basis for them.

Fundamental differences emerge when the descampesinista and campesinista models are compared. Descampesinistas define the peasantry proper in narrow terms and see it blending into the "adjoining" proletariat and bourgeois classes. The sense of vagueness about these boundaries that is conveyed reflects the dynamic process of dissolution believed to be taking place. The campesinistas position is in a certain sense the precise opposite: the social boundaries of the peasantry are clearly discernable and reflect a relatively stable condition which, however, does not preclude a high degree of internal diversity.

On these issues those with an intermediate position stress the inapplicability of strict categories in defining rural classes. Similarly, they avoid conclusions about clear trends in the area of social differentiation, and are inclined to be doubtful about suggestions that the peasants face either immediate extinction or relative permanence.

They also encourage a more nuanced view of recent peasant political mobilization: neither exaggerated enthusiasm over recent events nor the descampesinistas' dismissal of them as evidence of the peasantry's inherent vulnerability to manipulation are justified.

Reviewing the arguments presented on these issues has helped clarify Esteva's position in several respects. The integrity of his definition of the peasantry as a heterogeneous class clearly delineated from a narrowly defined proletariat and bourgeoisie relies heavily on the existence of land sharing arrangements at the community level, and on a rigid position with respect to the relevance of wage income to social status. Unless dependence on wage income is total, wages must be treated as merely complementary to income from self-employment. This position is in marked contrast with the descampesinista position that the presence of any wages as a component of total income suggests a fundamental change of position.

One important aspect of the campesinista position that the discussion here has left unresolved centers on Foladori's insistence on the "corrosive" effect of money-wage relations within the peasantry and the impossibility of maintaining a system of valuation in the exchange of goods and labour which is not based on market exchange values. The ability of peasant institutions and economic logic to provide a bulwark against the influences of the larger economy that would otherwise lead to rapid social

differentiation is a central variable in assessing the possibilities for success in Esteva's peasant-led development strategy. The importance of this issue is all the greater because in the absence of an abrupt change in Mexico's internal politics, it is unlikely that the State policies Esteva favours will be implemented "overnight". The transition period during which new peasant political and economic institutions would be established and consolidated, as policy reforms evolve, would not occur in a vacuum. There is a possible lack of clarity in Esteva's strategy (especially if he accepts Stavenhagen's arguments that radical reforms are needed) as to how much and what form of protection from the pressures of a capitalist market developing peasant community-based enterprises would require during this period. These concerns will be examined in more detail in the critique of Esteva's proposals in Chapter IV.

Chapter III Footnotes

- 1 Preparation of this chapter involved a review of a significant portion of the written work of those identified as the major contributors to the debate, based on attention received in reviews of the debate, and references to it in other studies. The only extensive reviews of the debate noted are in Lucas (1982b) and Hewitt de Alcantara (1982). Schejtman offers a general overview and elaborate classification of the positions in the debate (Comisión Económica para América Latina, 1982: 48-59). Partial reviews are included in Astori (1981), Redclift (1980), Harris (1978), and Goodman and Redclift (1981: 193-9), and the debate is briefly described in de Janvry (1981: 266-7). Those whose work was indicated for particular attention in addition to Esteva are: Armando Bartra, Roger Bartra, Ernest Feder, Luisa Paré, Fernando Rello, Rodolfo Stavenhagen and Arturo Warman.
- 2 Paré is considered to be a descampesinista by Lucas (1982b: 374), and, together with R. Bartra, as a Marxist of the "proletarista tendency" by Schejtman (Comisión Económica para América Latina, 1982: 55). These classifications place insufficient weight on Paré's ambivalence with respect to the rapidity of depeasantization, and the importance she places on peasant efforts to organize. Her insistence on the importance of a clear analysis of the obstacles to organization has perhaps been interpreted by Lucas and Schejtman as indifference toward or disapproval of these efforts.
- 3 He is so labelled by Lucas (1982b: 377) and Feder (1977a: 1444).
- 4 Also see Rello (1977; 1979a; Castell and Rello, 1977: 152).
- 5 The Plan Puebla was a government program begun in 1967 to promote fertilizer use and high-yield maize varieties among peasants in Puebla State (Paré, 1975a: 17-33).
- 6 See Esteva (1978a: 1389; 1980: 9); Foladori (1981: 155-7).

CHAPTER IV

CRITIQUE

The general conclusions I draw from the debate described in Chapter III are as follows. The breakdown of social classes in the Mexican countryside certainly does not seem to be as clearcut as either campesinistas or descampesinistas would have us believe. Much of the debate seems to center less on whether the rural masses are disappearing than on how they should be labelled. Both campesinistas and descampesinistas appear to me to be equally rigid and unrealistic in basing their respective judgments on the presence, in the first case, of even modest amounts of self-provisioning, and in the second, of the slightest amount of wage-labour. To use so formalistic a labelling procedure as a central tool in largely deductive conclusions about the nature of social change in rural Mexico is particularly unproductive. As noted in the previous chapter, however, the descampesinista conclusion that social differentiation in the Mexican countryside is extensive does not entirely depend on deduction. The figures used to calculate class proportions in Table 1 for Foladori (i) in particular show a consistent trend over twenty-five years (1950-1975) of not only a relative but also an absolute decline in the numbers of self-employed agricultural workers (1981: 45-46).

Accepting the critique of campesinistas and those with an intermediate position that the categories used to arrive at such figures are too rigid, the presence of so clear and consistent a trend nonetheless cannot be ignored. At the same time, since Mexico may be destined by circumstances of slow industrialization, and rapid population growth to continue for some time to have a large labour population in its rural areas, a significant proportion of them will continue at least in part to earn their income from land over which they have some control.

In the interests of maintaining some minimum level of political stability, it also seems likely that evolving government programs of economic support to rural Mexicans from the early 1970's through to the S.A.M. will continue in some form. Whether or not these programs move significantly in the direction of Esteva's "peasant option" will depend in part on the success of peasant political pressure. On this point, available accounts of the level and quality of peasant political protest since 1970, such as those of Gordillo and Rello, and A. Bartra cited in Chapter III seem to a considerable extent to contradict descampesinista claims of peasant political incompetence. Their assessments of the number of peasants involved in organized political action, the persistence of that action, the degree to which it has been present throughout the country, the diversity of issues around which it occurs (land, product prices, government services, local political reform), and the frequency of success all indicate

a level of political involvement that cannot be dismissed as transitory and insignificant (Gordillo and Rello, 1982; A. Bartra, 1979c).

Viewing the debate in broad terms, the degree to which the polar arguments in the debate are roughly symmetrical is striking. On the one hand, the descampesinistas claim, in essence that the peasants must disappear because of the nature of their "peasantness". The campesinista response is to seek to show that the quality of "peasantness" in fact accounts for their survival.¹ The structuring of the problem in this way leads Esteva into two types of difficulties that may lead to miscalculations of the social, political and economic limits which must be taken into account in planning a peasant-led rural development strategy. He downplays the extent of and pressure for social differentiation in the countryside, suggesting with Warman that "peasantness" provides a bulwark against the development of inequities. Secondly, "peasantness" tends to be reduced by campesinistas and descampesinistas alike to a type of subsistence orientation, set in a rigid and misleading dichotomy with the tendency to seek to accumulate. The campesinistas, of course, see this preoccupation with meeting basic needs as the aspect of "peasantness" that permits survival while the descampesinistas consider it anachronistic, and as a survival strategy, doomed to failure.

Esteva believes that his proposals can be correctly

criticized as romantic and voluntarist, only if the real limitations (to their achievement) are not acknowledged (1978f: 713). The path between romanticism and determinism, in Brody's words is a narrow one (1981: 247). The purpose of this chapter is to consider how realistic is Esteva's assessment of the limitations on the success of his "peasant-option", how well he manages to stay on Brody's path.

Three broad issues are discussed in the following sections. First of all, problems which may stem from Esteva's analysis of the nature and orientation of peasant production-related decisions are considered. In a second section, possible grounds for concluding that he overestimates the strength of peasant community institutions are examined. One of the crucial consequences of such an overestimation would be a failure to perceive the full strength of pressures which contribute to social differentiation. The implications of such a miscalculation for the success of his proposals, particularly in the area of peasant economic organization, are discussed in a final section. In each section, I will comment on possible problems of the "transition" period that Esteva's theoretical model fails to predict. Where relevant I will also explore the advantages of Chevalier's proposal of an alternative to subsistence-mindedness models of peasant production logic.

Subsistence Orientation

As indicated in Chapter II, Esteva's treatment of peasants' commitment to basic needs in terms of a distinct production logic is brief and ambiguous. Yet he consistently maintains a strict basic needs/profits dichotomy throughout his work. It is not clear whether he believes as does Warman that peasant production is suspended when basic needs are met in order to avoid market involvement and unnecessary drudgery. Warman's model can be interpreted to mean that peasants cannot be assumed to fully exploit all opportunities to produce. Esteva's suggestion, noted in Chapter II, that peasants prefer high crop yields and low prices could be taken as an indication that he supports such an interpretation, in the sense that peasants have no interest in producing for surplus income. If that is in fact the case, a very large question is raised as to how peasants will be induced to produce in amounts surplus to their own needs, once these are adequately met. No explanation is offered in his work as to how peasants would develop a willingness to produce a surplus, if such a willingness is in fact absent. Esteva's reference to strong peasant response in 1981 to the S.A.M. and his indication that peasant failure to accumulate is the result of a loss of surplus in the market place, both noted in Chapter II, suggest that he believes peasant aversion to market involvement in the past was largely, if not exclusively an attempt to avoid exploitation. No shift in production

logic would therefore be required once exploitative economic relationships are removed, or at least brought under some degree of control.

The ambiguities in Esteva's treatment of the issue of peasant production logic may have important consequences in another crucial area, however. Esteva has identified the support of the State and the urban working class as politically indispensable if his strategy proposals are to be implemented. His less than clear treatment of the issue of "subsistence orientation" may reduce the potential for support of the "peasant-option" among non-peasants. The prediction that if given an opportunity, peasants will produce a substantial surplus is crucial for such support. Any suggestion that peasants possess ambivalence about producing a surplus will invalidate the proposals for those who continue to be influenced by arguments that peasants are poor because they are lazy and that a combination of coercion and modern technology must be imposed in the interest of their own as well as society's welfare (Esteva, 1978a).

Chevalier's treatment of peasant production motivation removes any confusion on the issue: the appearance of a "subsistence mentality" on the part of peasants has nothing to do with a preference for leisure after minimum subsistence needs are met. In fact, that appearance masks an ongoing and often desperate struggle to maintain that subsistence level in the face of the predatory forces of the market. Central to that struggle is evaluation of all assets according

to their exchange-value in order to ensure maximum benefit from their deployment.

A further source of ambiguity in Esteva's position on the question of peasant production logic is his possible agreement with Warman's contention that peasants use a basis which differs from market exchange-values in evaluating exchanges of goods and services among community members of relatively equal status. Such an argument suggests the possibility of decisions that place more importance on the maintenance of community solidarity, and even, perhaps, on slowing the development of inequalities in wealth than on taking advantage of opportunities to improve family living standards. Such a phenomenon where it appears in fact to exist can be interpreted using Chevalier's maximization formulation in a way which does not require assumption of a different order of values. Transactions among maximizing peasants might well be shown to include complex estimates of the "insurance" or future "good-will" value of exchange among neighbours which on the surface appear to contradict established market prices.

Use of the maximization in-the-concrete model does not eliminate the problem of being able to demonstrate that peasants will produce the right kind of surplus, however. A major assertion on Esteva's part is that the liberated energies of the peasantry can solve the country's production shortages of basic foods. There is frequent mention of the peasants' deep commitment to these crops (maize and beans)

which compounds possible confusion concerning the strength of their desire to raise their living standards beyond assured minimum basic needs. If peasants are maximizers, however, there can be no assurance that they will not suspend production of these crops after their own requirements are met, following the example of the commercial farms, and shift their efforts to products which provide the highest possible financial returns, regardless of the contribution to food security for the nation as a whole. Such a response to market opportunities is described by Warman who documents the emergence of strictly external market-oriented small scale vegetable and fruit production in areas with access to urban markets (1980b: 201-206).

To the extent that the difficulty noted is a legitimate concern, it can be seen as part of a larger problem of the transition from current patterns to a new order. Opportunities for the realization of Esteva's proposals are most likely to occur gradually (as with the S.A.M.), as the growing strength of peasant organizations begins to influence policy. Opportunities to begin a process of accumulation may result, but as peasants take advantage of such opportunities important changes in their production orientation may occur, which may in turn make the promise of self-sufficiency in basic foods less easy to attain than Esteva suggests. External political support in turn may be withdrawn before the peasant-led strategy is fully realized. Redclift suggests that non-peasant support for the strategy will at best be

tentative, and will be very sensitive to changes in the markets for Mexico's exports such as petroleum: importing food with foreign exchange earned from other products may be seen by some groups to involve less social upheaval in the short-run, especially if they have reason to develop doubts that the peasant-led strategy will in fact produce the promised results (1980: 500-1).

An additional problem of the "transition period" concerns the importance given by peasants to struggles for land, a strategic component of their alleged subsistence orientation. Esteva argues that peasants are gradually placing more emphasis on other issues such as product and input prices, and government policies on credit and irrigation. However, he acknowledges that land remains a central concern (as indicated in the first C.N.P.A. program, for instance; Esteva, 1979d). Petras (1981) believes that proposals for continued land redistribution are now anachronistic because population levels in the countryside mean that increasing numbers will necessarily be excluded from future reforms and because in any case the fundamental issue of exploitation in agriculture has become the dependence of all forms of primary production on agro-industry for inputs and markets. (Esteva appears to agree with the latter point.) How do the physical limits of what is necessarily a partial, short-term strategy affect the longer-term potential of peasant movements? Griffin believes that in general, small and middle peasants will unite on the issue of land redistribution,

but that on other issues, their interests diverge (as for instance on food prices or wage levels in the case of net-buyers and net-sellers of food or labour) suggesting that land-oriented movements are inherently temporary (1974:253). Ronfeldt (1973) offers a graphic description of the tensions created between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of a government reform program in the region he studied in the State of Puebla. The government was consistently able for several decades to neutralize the ability of peasants to organize effective pressure through a variety of tactics. These included encouragement of factionalism (both within the ejido and between members and landless non-members), co-optation of the faction in control at any given period through minor concessions and an indulgent attitude towards corruption, demobilization of popular support for those who proved not to be co-optable, bureaucratization of the ejido administration through the requirement of elaborate, time-consuming procedures (such as repeated land surveys and census-taking, always found, after completion, to be technically deficient for one reason or another), and, in times of crisis, repression (1973: 235-236). Pressure for land would seem to allow the Mexican state a continuing opportunity to maintain its long tradition of controlling peasant organizations through selective response and manipulation, at least in the foreseeable future. Discussion of this danger and how it can be overcome is given insufficient attention by Esteva.

Community Solidarity

While Esteva's position on the issue of subsistence orientation is not entirely clear, there is no doubt as to his belief in the presence and strength of institutions of community solidarity and co-operation. Furthermore, it is on this special quality of the peasant community that Esteva bases his conviction that the "peasant-option" can work. As was described in Chapter II, Esteva treats the concept of community in a variety of ways. When he evokes the basic vitality these institutions lend his strategy, it is not always clear to what extent he is referring to a concrete reality rooted in past traditions and the base for present political struggles, on the one hand, and to a future political project on the other. No concrete points of reference are provided which would permit a clear identification of the community institutions which are said to exist, and of the special logic they embody. Warman's description of land-sharing mechanisms referred to in Chapter II does not seem to be of much assistance on this matter, and in any case appears almost exclusively to involve intra-family arrangements. It is difficult to find support in Warman's descriptions for the claims made of the strength of these institutions. Granting the possibility of considerable overlap between family and rural community membership the impression is nonetheless left that kinship rather than community is the more appropriate unit of analysis of the relationships which appear to be involved.

In accounts of successful peasant struggles, evidence of the community as the "basic unit of peasant organization" is equally difficult to identify. Lucas, whose explicit objective is to support Esteva's contention of peasant political capability rooted in community organizations provides a detailed description of three recent struggles (1982a: 236-273). While she convincingly demonstrates peasant capacity for successful and highly creative strategizing, in none of her accounts does community structure clearly emerge as the critical element in peasant success. The community is clearly present in all three cases as a basic unit of mobilization. The presence of a high degree of community solidarity might even be identified as a necessary condition for success. Yet there is no obvious basis for identifying "organic" solidarity in these accounts, and community solidarity regardless of its quality is not always apparent as even a secondary factor in accounting for success or failure.

Other researchers use more concrete categories in the analysis of peasant movements. The presence of capable and honest leadership, access to and effective use of mass media, and local traditions of successful struggles are alternative means for analyzing peasants' political successes and failures (Gordillo and Rello, 1982). The case studies analyzed by Lucas appear to confirm the value of these categories. Consideration of such factors as good leadership as a valuable and scarce resource appears to be a more

useful means of assessing peasants' capacity for collective action.

In addition to the limitations of Esteva's "organic solidarity" as an analytical tool is the problem of assessing its distribution. He frequently suggests that it is widely distributed. A "good number" of communities are equipped to take on the full political and economic role he is proposing, Esteva claims, but no basis is offered for estimating the quantitative or qualitative magnitude of their distribution (Esteva, 1980:149). Skeptics will of course doubt that "organic solidarity" is a generalized feature of Mexican rural society, or at least, that it is widespread enough to provide a viable base for a national development strategy. Clearly, a well organized local base is essential for effective political action, but to simultaneously identify its essence in highly abstract terms which defy measurement, and to elevate that essence to an absolute quality whose presence is critical to the success of the strategy will satisfy few of those skeptics. The Coalición de Ejidos Colectivos de los Valles del Yaqui y Mayo is identified by Esteva as providing an outstanding demonstration of peasant capacity for self-management. Other descriptions of the Coalición confirm his assessment (Quintero, 1982; Hugo et al., 1982). It is the single example of its kind provided, however.

A possible means of indirectly assessing Esteva's claim that institutions of community solidarity are widespread is to look for the presence of community-related issues

in the programs of peasant movements. If community institutions are so strategic a political resource, concern about ways in which they can be maintained or strengthened, such as demands for greater formal political autonomy at the local level, might be expected. It might also be expected that community needs and roles would be prominently mentioned in statements of government policy considered to be supportive of peasant needs. Neither the Co-ordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala's (C.N.P.A.) first statement of principles and objectives nor a later self-evaluation (C.N.P.A., 1982) mention such concerns (Esteva, 1979d). In Chapter II, Esteva's support for the Sistema Alimentario Mexicano (S.A.M.) was noted. The grounds for that support was the S.A.M.'s apparent intention of transforming rural power structures. Yet explicit reference to communities as the focus of or the vehicle for such change is not present in the statement describing the program (Oficina de Asesores del C. Presidente, 1981).

Chevalier's analysis of simple commodity production and his maximization in-the-concrete model may be relevant in two ways to an assessment of the strength and limitations of institutions of community co-operation. The goods and services contributed to and received from such institutions are unlikely to be excluded by maximizing peasants from their exchange-value based calculations. This suggests that support for these institutions will be limited to circumstances where advantages gained

are relatively concrete and contribute directly to meeting basic needs. Chevalier also stresses the variability of forms which can be taken by simple commodity production. Where this variability is extensive at the local level, it is likely to further add to the difficulty of achieving and maintaining community solidarity.

Social Differentiation

The campesinistas attempt to establish clear definitional boundaries for the peasantry as part of their argument that it is not a transitional group. Their emphasis on peasant distinctness from proletarians and commercial farmers is directly complemented by insistence on the lack of significant internal differentiation of the peasantry, as both a cause and effect of the strong community solidarity which is alleged to exist. The difficulties which may arise if the degree of social differentiation is underestimated can be seen in Esteva's consideration of all three aspects of his proposals for peasant economic organization.

The successful initiation of collectivization of agricultural production, even if undertaken with the great care which Esteva stresses, is likely to be enormously sensitive to existing inequalities of wealth and income. Maintaining collectivization will be equally difficult if inequalities which exist at the outset increase. While strategies of maximization in-the-concrete differ in intent and form from capital accumulation, competition (albeit of a

different sort) cannot be assumed to be absent from relations among peasant consumption units. As Kitching reminds us, peasants compete for land, labour, and other inputs, and can be expected to do so with some differences in ability and land quality, all of which is a possible source of increasing inequality of income if strategies of maximization are pursued (1982: 136). In circumstances of land scarcity the scope for such divergences is likely to be considerably enhanced as individuals respond to feasible opportunities to improve their living standards.

Collective commodity contracts as a means of retaining economic surplus within communities are a central component in Esteva's strategy. There is no reason to doubt that such contracts can contribute to preventing some loss of surplus. The successful organization and maintenance of the structures needed to undertake collective bargaining in agriculture product marketing are likely to be limited by the presence of inequalities among producers taking part, however. Such inequalities are clearly an important source of conflict in conventional marketing on an individual basis. Feder describes the divisive effect on ejidos of direct contracting to individuals by agro-industries and the tendency of such contracting to favour large, and eliminate small, producers (1977b: 63; 1977d: 142). While the administration of collective marketing agreements can be expected to significantly reduce the freedom of manoeuvre of agro-industry, it would be unrealistic to imagine that opportunities for

the manipulation of divisions among producers would be eliminated altogether.

Distribution of benefits according to production is the most likely basis on which co-operation among producers in the area of collective marketing will be established. It seems a reasonable assumption that collective marketing whose goal is redistribution of income will be difficult to initiate and maintain. The real challenge in practice is likely to be much more modest: preventing existing inequalities from growing and assuring that smaller producers maintain their share of total production. If differences among producers in control of land and other resources are present at the outset, and if producers follow strategies of maximization and do not cease production when subsistence needs are met, a successful strategy of improved commodity prices is likely to accentuate differences, as benefits are shared unequally among producers who control different amounts of output. An example of this phenomenon is provided in accounts of the history of the efforts of the Atencingo sugar producing ejidos to obtain fair prices (deGrammont 1979; Paré, 1979c; Ronfeldt, 1973). It was the success of these efforts, according to Paré, that accounts for the marked rise in social differentiation within the ejidos. The resulting increase in internal tension has been at the direct expense of organizational solidarity (1979b: 104).² As Ewell and Poleman remind us, Mexico is not Mao's China, and individual accumulation brings many rewards (1980:183).

Esteva is fully aware of the difficulty of unequal distribution of benefits due to differentiation in existing formal co-operatives and acknowledges that the benefits from commodity contracts will be unequally distributed as well (1978f: 711; 1980: 115). However, in the type of contract he proposes, unequal distribution of benefits will tend to correct itself if "in the contract are included pertinent stipulations which reflect the specific and general conditions of the correlation of social forces" (1979c: 16). Unfortunately, he does not indicate the type of contract provisions to which he is alluding. It would be useful to know if he has specific suggestions on concrete ways of approaching this crucial problem.

Collective bargaining in the area of agricultural product marketing involves an inherent dilemma. On the one hand, its success may broaden the economic differences among its participants. On the other hand, successful negotiations with large multinational- or State-owned processors require that two particular conditions be met (among others). Substantial political influence is needed in order to assure conditions in which meaningful negotiations will take place. In cases where a State-owned company is the buyer, the need for political influence is particularly clear. A second condition for success is control of a substantial proportion of the production of the product in question at a regional level. Both of these requirements indicate the need for a "common front" approach among producers of various sizes

(within a range of differences in which common benefits outweigh conflicting interests).

Maintaining a "common front" is a major undertaking.⁹ Fernández describes the difficulties created by social differentiation in a copra marketing organization in Guerrero (1980: 98-220). Internal conflict among rich and middle peasants was an ongoing brake on the effective functioning of the organization, and provided the State with a constant focus for manipulation and disruption that eventually succeeded in bringing about the collapse of the organization. Maintenance of the common front requires continual internal negotiation and compromise as interests conflict among those whose share of production differs. This requirement is probably most easy to meet if the differences which exist at the outset are clearly identified, and an explicit understanding of the ongoing need for internal negotiation is present.

It will not be easy to identify the presence of an inherent potential for conflict in collective marketing organizations and to place adequate priority on the importance of planning deliberate strategies to reduce the effect of such conflict, if the framework of analysis which is used is composed of an ambiguous treatment of subsistence orientation, an insistence on the existence of a special communitarian mentality, a tendency to stress uniformity of condition and interest, and the identification of community-level organizations as the key organizational structure in

peasant society. Chevalier's model for the analysis of peasant production logic which assumes that producers will take advantage of feasible opportunities to improve living standards, together with the recognition that distribution of resources among units of production is likely to be unequal, provide a stronger basis for reaching such conclusions.

Emphasis in the foregoing discussion has been on the barriers to success of collective marketing efforts. Paige describes organizations seeking commodity pricing improvements as normally conservative, with inherent weakness due to internal stratification and competition. The goals of such organizations tend to be limited to regulation of the market and rarely develop more radical demands for redistribution of property (1975: 45-48). The effect of success on Esteva's proposed collective bargaining for agricultural commodities may be to move peasant organizations closer to the pattern Paige outlines (assuming their initial goals are more broadly defined). Such a possible change in organizational orientation is a further phenomenon that may complicate the "transition period" discussed above, and among other effects, may make the major transition from organized marketing to control of processing less likely to occur. This transition is likely to be difficult where it is attempted. Administration of processing operations is likely to be more complex, and the potential for conflict over the distribution of employment

and other benefits will be even greater than in the case of organized marketing.

Prospects for the establishment of integrated peasant industries are likely to be related at least in part to the size of the surplus presently flowing from peasant communities, as well as to the political factors already noted. Esteva does not deal with the size of the surplus and may be overestimating it as a potential basis for local development. The total transfer of economic surplus from the Mexican agricultural sector as a whole to other sectors in the economy has been estimated to be substantial (Reyer Osorio et al., 1974: 143). R. Bartra argues, however, that the magnitude of the transfer from peasant agriculture to the rest of the economy is limited (1976a: 96). Griffin suggests that at least that portion of the surplus skimmed off by middlemen (who are likely to be the easiest targets of a collective commodity marketing strategy) tends to be much smaller than commonly thought (1974: 104). Success of the collective commodity marketing strategy in retaining economic surplus is likely to vary by product and region, as well as with organizational strength and ability. In areas where the principal commodity being sold on the market at the present time is temporary labour, the economic surplus available for immediate local retention will be limited. Where demand for marketed commodities is subject to fluctuation (as in the case of export crops) retained surplus will be irregular, and will tend to be absorbed by basic needs during periods of

market weakness. Such periods of limited benefits will also strain the unity of the "common front", in situations where marketable supplies exceed external demand and organizations are forced into the position of allocating market shares among member producers. Finally, there is the question of how much of the retained surplus will in fact be available for productive community investment. Hewitt de Alcántara describes the conspicuous consumerism and alcoholism of a wealthy ejido in the north-west, suggesting that pressure on the funds for investment may be very strong (1976: 228-33). The possibility of obtaining levels of income which are surplus to basic needs on the part of some members of a community does not necessarily mean that they will "shift" logics and begin to seek wealth in-the-abstract. Neither does it mean, however, that surpluses will be available for collective investment.

Problems associated with the "transition" period may have serious implications for organized marketing. The pressure of strategies of co-optation and/or repression on the part of the State, and large companies is likely to be an ongoing impediment. Government efforts to control the organization of sugar producing peasants as described by Pará are unlikely to be an isolated strategy (1977). The difficulties of the "transition" period are likely to be even more serious for peasant controlled industry. Stavenhagen has argued that

the ejido as a cooperative enterprise will generally be unable to break the framework of individualism, corruption, private profit-seeking, and exploitation which characterize the wider society. The ejido cannot become a sociological and economic "enclave" within the framework of a society that collectively rejects it...It can only function as an institutional alternative if it manages to cut the umbilical cord that links it to the society which generated it. But this is of course impossible unless that society itself becomes totally transformed (1975: 163).

Feder makes the same argument: proposed peasant agricultural industries will not be able to survive in a capitalist economy due principally to the pressure of competition from large private companies (1979: 313). In reply, Esteva argues that the real function of such industries is to provide for greater peasant self-sufficiency, to allow them "to say no to the market" (1979e: 314). In general, Esteva seems to underestimate the problems of co-existence between peasant and commercial enterprise and the importance of a supportive economic and political climate for the success of his "peasant option". The freedom "to say no to the market" and the strength to resist the market's "reply" probably belong to an ideal future rather than to the realities of the present.

CHAPTER IV FOOTNOTES

- 1 Hewitt de Alcántara reaches a similar conclusion in her assessment of the debate. (1982: 272).
- 2 Richards describes a process of costly mechanization with clear implications for social differentiation as a result of a successful collective commodity contract strategy in the quite different context of Prairie wheat producers in Canada (1981: 16-18).

CONCLUSIONS

As a theory of rural development, Esteva's proposals for a peasant-led strategy for Mexico appear to contain some serious flaws. His insistence on the subsistence orientation of peasants contributes to some uncertainty on the crucial issue of the extent to which peasants will increase production, even if they are provided with substantial support. Peasant commitment to basic needs does not necessarily mean that they will devote themselves to assuring national self-sufficiency in maize and beans. The ambiguity in Esteva's theoretical treatment of the question of peasant production logic may weaken non-peasant support for his proposals.

Esteva's arguments concerning the nature and strength of co-operative institutions within the peasant community are also problematic. His concept of "organic solidarity" does not emerge as a useful tool for analysis of peasant political capabilities. In general he appears to overestimate the strength of community institutions as a generalized feature of the Mexican countryside. His assertion that large numbers of communities are in a position to undertake a major role in local development is unconvincing.

Overestimation of the strength of community solidarity also leads Esteva to miscalculate the vulnerability of

the Mexican peasantry to social differentiation. This miscalculation, combined with his inadequate treatment of peasant production logic leads to insufficient attention on his part to the effects on social differentiation of successful strategies of collective bargaining for agricultural product pricing. The practical political difficulties involved in building and maintaining even this limited form of group action are likely to be greater than Esteva appears to think. Moving on to more complex projects will prove to be an even greater challenge to peasant organizations.

Esteva seems to give insufficient attention to the possibility that persistence of the peasantry and the development of a degree of differentiation within it sufficient to make collective action difficult are not mutually exclusive phenomena. His argument that present-day persistence of the peasantry demonstrates the ability of peasant industry to coexist with capitalist enterprise in the future is questionable. Persistence at poverty levels in circumstances of limited employment opportunity is a weak basis on which to conclude that future projects will be able to withstand the pressures of market forces. This further miscalculation leads Esteva to underestimate the amount of economic and political protection peasant-controlled industry will probably require.

In general, Esteva promises more than peasants are likely to be able to deliver. Chevalier's "maximization-in-the-concrete" model of peasant economic logic contributes to

what may be a more realistic assessment of some of the limits that need to be respected in planning for future rural development. In particular, it discourages hasty assumptions about the harmony that will prevail if collective action begins to result in concrete improvements in living standards.

A major objection can be raised in response to the possible weaknesses in Esteva's proposals which have been identified: many of the concerns raised involve practical political problems and peasant organizations, as they gain in experience, will learn how to deal with them (if they have not done so already). It is Esteva's appeal for greater recognition of Mexican peasant political capabilities that is his most important contribution. He advances a convincing case that Mexican peasants have become, once again, a critical force for political change in Mexico (even if he may misjudge somewhat the extent and direction of the change to which they will contribute). His insistence that future political alliances between peasants and other workers be established as a relationship between equals is of special importance, in my view.

The foregoing discussion is at a level of abstraction that allows only a limited assessment of Esteva's proposals. Consideration of the diversity of social and economic conditions in Mexico is a major omission as is the role played by gender in Mexican social, political, and economic change (Neither receive substantive treatment by Esteva.)

My conclusion that Esteva's proposals are likely to be only partially realized, at least under circumstances which have prevailed until recently in Mexico, clearly must be very tentative. It would be unwise to dismiss entirely proposals such as Esteva's for a more decentralized style of development: conditions may develop, such as a persisting global recession in which their feasibility increases.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Astori, D. (1981) "Campesinado y expansión capitalista en la agricultura latinoamericana" Comercio Exterior de México 31: 1357-1368.
- Barracclough, S. (1982) "Review of de Janvry, The Agrarian Question and Reformism in Latin America" (mimeo).
- Barkin, D. (1977) "Desarrollo regional y reorganización campesina. La Chontalpa como reflejo del gran problema agropecuario mexicano." Comercio Exterior de México 27: 1408-1417.
- Bartra, A. (1982) "Perspectivas del movimiento campesino." paper presented to the Segundo Congreso Nacional Sobre Problemas Agrarios, Chilpancingo, Mexico (mimeo).
- _____ (1979a) La Explotación del Trabajo Campesino por el Capital, México, D.F.: Macehual.
- _____ (1979b) "Intervenciones," in L. Paré (ed.) Polémica sobre las classes sociales en el campo mexicano. México, D.F.: Macehual.
- _____ (1979c) Notas Sobre la Cuestión Campesina (México 1970-1976) México, D.F.: Macehual.
- _____ (1979d) "El panorama agrario en los 70." Investigación Económica 38 (No. 150): 179-235.
- _____ (1976) "Colectivización o proletarización: el caso del Plan Chontalpa." Cuadernos Agrarios 1: 56-110.
- Bartra, R. (1982) "Capitalism and the Peasantry in Mexico." Latin American Perspectives 9: 36-47.
- _____ (1976a) Estructura agraria y clases sociales en México. (Second Edition) Mexico D.F.: Era (first published, 1974).
- _____ (1976b) "Y si los campesinos se extinguen..." Revista Mexicana de Sociología 38: 323-337.
- _____ (1975) "La teoría del valor y la economía campesina: invitación a la lectura de Chayanov." Comercio Exterior de México 25: 517-524.

- Berdichewsky, B. (1979) "Anthropology and the Peasant Mode of Production," in B. Berdichewsky (ed.) Anthropology and Social Change in Rural Areas. The Hague: Mouton.
- Bernstein, H. (1979) "African Peasantries: A Theoretical Framework." Journal of Peasant Studies 6: 421-443.
- Brenner, R. (1977) "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism." New Left Review 104: 25-92.
- Brody, H. (1981) Maps and Dreams. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Castell, C., and F. Rello (1977) "Las desventuras de un proyecto agrario: 1970-1976." Investigación Económica 35 (No.3): 131-155.
- Chayanov, A. (1966) The Theory of Peasant Economy. (Edited by D. Thorner, B. Kerblay, and R.E.F. Smith). Homewood, Illinois: Irwin.
- Chevalier, J. (1982) Civilization and the Stolen Gift: Capital, Kin, and Cult in Eastern Peru. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Coello, M. (1980) "Recampesinización en la descampesinización?", México, D.F.: mimeo.
- Comisión Económica para América Latina (1982) Economía Campesina y Agricultura Empresarial. Mexico D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.
- Coordinador Nacional Plan de Ayala (1982) Paper presented to the Segundo Congreso Nacional Sobre Problemas Agrarios, Chilpancingo, México.
- de Grammont, H. (1979) "Historia de las luchas sociales en la zona canera de Atencingo" in L. Paré, co-ord, Ensayos sobre el problema canero. México., U.N.A.M.
- de Janvry, A. (1981). The Agrarian Question and Reformism in Latin America. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- de la Peña, S. (1979) "De como desaparecen las clases campesina y rentistas en el Capitalismo," and "intervenciones," in L. Paré (ed.) Polémica Sobre las Clases Sociales en el Campo Mexicano. México, D.F.: Macehual.
- Durand, P. (1975) Nanacatlan: Société Paysanne et Lutte des Classes en Mexique. Montréal: Les Presses de l'U. de Montréal.

- Ennew, J., P. Hirst, and K. Tribe (1977) "'Peasantry' as an Economic Category." Journal of Peasant Studies 4: 295-322.
- Esteve, G. (1982) "La Vía Campesina: Revaluación del País." mimeo. (Comité Promotor de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo Rural, México D.F.).
- (1981a) "El SAM y la geometría." Nueva Antropología 17: 19-50.
- (1981b) "Transnacionalización, colectivización y campesinización: tres opciones estratégicas excluyentes para el desarrollo agroindustrial." in Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos, El Desarrollo Agroindustrial: Problemas y Perspectivas en América Latina. (Documento de Trabajo para el Desarrollo Agroindustrial No. 6) México, D.F.
- (1980) La Batalla en el México Rural. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno.
- (1979a) "Intervenciones," in L. Paré (ed.) Polémica sobre las clases sociales en el campo mexicano. México, D.F.: Macehual.
- (1979b) "La economía campesina actual como opción de desarrollo (una noción, un proyecto de investigación, y un programa de acción)" Investigación Económica 38 No. 147): 223-246.
- (1979c) "Los campesinos: sujetos del desarrollo agroindustrial", in Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos, El Desarrollo Agroindustrial y la Economía Campesina. (Documento de Trabajo para el Desarrollo Agroindustrial No. 2) México, D.F.
- (1979d) "Zapata Hoy: una Primera Cronología." Siempre 1382: 3-6.
- (1979e) "La experiencia de la intervención estatal reguladora en la comercialización agropecuaria de 1970 a 1976," in U. Oswald (ed.) Mercado y dependencia, México, D.F.: Editorial Nueva Imagen.
- (1979f) "Annexo," in U. Oswald (ed.) Mercado y dependencia. México, D.F.: Editorial Nueva Imagen.
- (1978a) "En pos de una historia que nunca existo..." Comercio Exterior de México 28: 1387-1391.

- (1978b) "Las transnacionales y el taco." in Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidraulicos, El Desarrollo Agroindustrial y la Economía Internacional. (Documento de Trabajo para el Desarrollo Agroindustrial No. 1) México, D.F.
- (1978c) "Los campesinos y la crisis agrícola." Narxhi-Nandha. Revista de Economía Campesina 8/9/10: 4-6.
- (1978d) "Movimientos campesinos y política nacional." Cuadernos de Discusión 2: 5-47 (Programa de Investigación de Recursos Humanos en el Sector Rural, Centro Nacional de Productividad de México).
- (1978e) "Optimización y estrategia agropecuaria: las peras del olmo." El Economista Mexicano 7: 23-40.
- (1978f) "Y si los campesinos existen?" Comercio Exterior de México 28: 699-713.
- (1978g) "Lo indígena y lo campesino: supervivencia del pasado o simiente de proyecto futuro," in México indígena: I.N.I. 30 años después. México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional Indígena.
- (1977) "Camino de desarrollo o callejón sin salida?" Narxhi-Nandha, Revista de Economía Campesina 4-5: 27-34.
- (1976) "Agriculture in Mexico from 1950 to 1975: the failure of a false analogy," Comercio Exterior de México (English edition) 22: 3-14.
- Ewell, P., and T. Poleman (1980) Uxpanapa: Agricultural Development in the Mexican Tropics. New York: Pergamon.
- Feder, E. (1982) "Vacas flacas, ganaderos gordos: las ramificaciones internacionales de la industria del ganado vacuno en México." in El Desarrollo Agroindustrial y la Ganadería en México. (Documento de Trabajo para el Desarrollo Agroindustrial No. 8) México, D.F.
- (1979) "Annexo," in U. Oswald (ed.) Mercedo y dependencia. México, D.F.: Editorial Nueva Imagen.
- (1978a) "Agronegocios y la eliminación del proletariado rural de América Latina," in Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidraulicos, El Desarrollo Agroindustrial y la Economía Internacional (Documentos de Trabajo para el Desarrollo Agroindustrial No.1) México, D.F.

Feder, E. (1978b) "The Peasant." Latin American Research Review 13: 193-204.

----- (1977a) Campesinistas y descampesinistas: Tres enfoques divergentes (no incompatibles) sobre la destrucción del campesinado" Comercio Exterior de México 27: 1439-1446; 28: 42-51.

----- (1977b) "Capitalism's last-ditch Effort to Save Underdeveloped Agriculture" Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 7, 1: 56-78.

----- (1977c) "Empresas transnacionales y campesinado del tercer mundo." Narxí-Nandhá, Revista de Economía Campesina 2: 3-6.

----- (1977d) Strawberry Imperialism: An Enquiry into the Mechanisms of Dependency in Mexican Agriculture. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.

----- (1976) "La nueva penetración en la agricultura de los países subdesarrollados por los países industriales y sus empresas multinacionales." El Trimestre Económico 43: 57-86.

Fernández Gómez, R. (1980) "Jeu politique et guerilla rurale au Mexique." Thèse de Doctorat de Troisième Cycle, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris.

Foladori, G. (1981) Polémica en torno a las teorías del campesinado. México D.F.: Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

Foster, G. (1965) "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good." American Anthropologist 67: 293-315.

Foster-Carter, A. (1978) "The Modes of Production Controversy." New Left Review 107: 47-77.

Frank, A. (1969) Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Goodman, D., and M. Redclift (1981) From Peasant to Proletarian: Capitalist Development and Agrarian Transitions. Oxford: Basil Blackwood.

Gordillo, G., and F. Rello (1982) "El movimiento campesino: Situación actual y perspectivas." Paper presented to the Segundo Congreso Nacional Sobre Problemas Agrarios, Chilpancingo, Mexico.

- Goulet, D. (1983) Mexico: Development Strategies for the Future. Notre Dame, Indiana: U. of Notre Dame.
- Griffin, K. (1974) The Political Economy of Agrarian Change. London: MacMillan.
- Harris, R. (1978) "Marxism & the Agrarian Question in Latin America." Latin American Perspectives 5: 2-26.
- Hellman, J. (1978) Mexico in Crisis. New York: Holmes & Meier.
- Herring, R. (1980) "Review of S. Popkin, The Rational Peasant." The American Political Science Review 74: 565-566.
- Hewitt de Alcántara, C. (1982) Boundaries and Paradigms: the Anthropological Study of Rural Life in Post-revolutionary Mexico. Leiden: Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, University of Leiden.
- (1977) "Mexico: A Commentary on the satisfaction of basic needs," in M. Nerfin (ed.) Another Development: Approaches and Strategies Uppsala: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.
- (1976) Modernizing Mexican Agriculture: Socio-economic Implications of Technological Change, 1940-1970. Geneva: U.N. Research Institute for Social Development.
- Hobsbawm, E. (1973) "Peasants and Politics." Journal of Peasant Studies 1: 3-22.
- (1959) Primitive Rebels. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hugo, V., M. Espinoza, L. Grobet, and E. Ladron (1982) "La Coalición de Ejidos Colectivos de los Valles del Yaqui y Mayo. Una experiencia de autogestión campesina." mimeo (Centro de Estudios Económicos y Sociales del Tercer Mundo, México, D.F.).
- Hyden, G. (1980) Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania (Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry). Berkley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Johnson, B. and P. Kilby (1975) Agriculture and Structural Transformation. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kitching, G. (1982) Development and Underdevelopment in Historical Perspective. London: Methuen.

- Laclau, E. (1971) "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America." New Left Review 67: 19-38.
- Landsberger, H., and C. Hewitt (1970) "Ten Sources of Weakness and Cleavage in Latin American Peasant Movements," in R. Stavenhagen (ed.) Agrarian Problems and Peasant Movements in Latin America. Garden City: Doubleday.
- Lanfranco, S. (1981) "Mexican Oil, Export-led Development and Agricultural Neglect." Toronto: Center for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean, York University.
- Lara, S., (1979) "La importancia de la comunidad campesina y las formas de conciencia social de los jornaleros de Atencingo," in L. Paré (ed.) Ensayos sobre el problema canero. Mexico, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Leeds, A. (1977) "Mythos and Pathos: Some Unpleasantries on Peasantries," in R. Halperin and J. Dow (eds.) Peasant Livelihood: Studies in Economic Anthropology and Cultural Ecology. New York: St. Martins.
- Lehmann, D. (1980) "Proletarización campesina: de las teorías de ayer a las practicas de mañana." Neuva Antropología 13-14: 65-86.
- Lerda, F. (1981) "La diferenciación social en los ejidos y comunidades agrarias." Cuestiones Agrarias 1: 1-24 (Seminario de la Cuestión Agraria, Facultad de Economía, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- (1982) "México: la política económica agraria y agropecuaria en el periodo reciente." mimeo. (Seminario de la Cuestión Agraria, Facultad de Economía, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Lewis, O. (1960) Tepoztlan, Village in México. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Lipton, M. (1977) Why Poor People Stay Poor. London: Temple Smith.
- López Portillo, J. (1977) "Inaugural Address." Comercio Exterior de México (English edition) 23: 1.
- Lucas, A. (1982a) "The Contemporary Peasantry in Mexico: a Class Analysis." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin.
- (1982b) "El debate sobre los campesinos y el capitalismo en México." Comercio Exterior de México 32: 371-383.

- Martínez-Alier, J. (1977) Haciendas, Plantations and Collective Farms. London: Frank Cass.
- Moguel, J. (1976) "Notas sobre el problema campesino. Lucha económica y lucha política en el campo." Cuadernos Agrarios 3: 5-44.
- Moore, B. (1967) Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Boston: Beacon.
- Moore, M. (1975) "Co-operative Labour in Peasant Agriculture." Journal of Peasant Studies 2: 270-291.
- Montes de Oca, R. (1977) "The State and the Peasants," in J. Reyna and R. Weinert (eds.) Authoritarianism in Mexico. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- Oficina de Asesores del C. Presidente (1981) "Sistema alimentario mexicano." Nueva Antropología 17: 177-210.
- Paré, L. (1982) "Algunas consideraciones en torno al Movimiento campesino en México." El Planeador 203: 34-35. (Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos).
- (1981) El Proletariado Agrícola en México. (Fourth Edition) Mexico D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno Editores (First published, 1977).
- (1980) "Le Développement du Capitalisme dans l'Agriculture Méxicaine et le Processus de Proletarianisation des Paysans." Labour, Capital and Society 13: 35-52.
- (1979a) "Virajes en la política agraria actual." Textual 1: 9-15 (Universidad Autónoma Chapingo).
- (1979b) "El Analysis económico de las clases sociales en Atencingo." Ensayos sobre el problema canero. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- (1977) "El congreso de unificación de los caneros: 'un compromiso' de hombres." Cuadernos Agrarios 2: 114-119.
- (1975a) El Plan Puebla: una revolución verde que esta muy verde Chapingo: Ediciones de Sociología Rural.

- Paré, L. (1975b) "Caciquismo y estructura de poder en la Sierra norte de Puebla," in R. Bartra et al. Caciquismo y Poder político en el México rural. México, D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno.
- (1973) "Caciquisme et Structure du pouvoir dans le Mexique rural." Rev. Canad. Soc. et Anth. 10: 20-43.
- Pearse, A. (1980) Seeds of Plenty, Seeds of Want: Social and Economic Implications of the Green Revolution. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (1975) The Latin American Peasant. London: Frank Cass.
- Petras, J. (1981) "The Latin American Agro-Transformation from Above and Outside: The Social and Political Implications," in L. Alschuler (ed.) Dependent Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform in Latin America. Ottawa: U. of Ottawa Press.
- Popkin, S. (1979) The Rational Peasant. Berkley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Quintero, A. (1982) "La Coalición de Ejidos Colectivos de los Valles del Yaqui y Mayo." Paper presented to the Segundo Congreso Nacional sobre Problemas Agrarias, Chilpancingo, México.
- Rama, R., and Rello, F. (1979) "La agroindustria mexicana: su articulación con el mercado mundial," Investigacion Economica 147: 99-125.
- Redclift, M. (1980) "Agrarian Populism in México - the 'Via Campesina'." Journal of Peasant Studies 7: 492-502.
- Redfield, R. (1960a) The Little Community. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- (1960b) Peasant Society and Culture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rello, F. (1981) "Política agrícola y lucha de clases." Nueva Antropologia 17: 5-18.
- (1979a) "Diagnostico y viabilidad política de la opción campesina" Narxhi-Nandhá Revista de Economía Campesina 8/9/10: 63-65.
- (1979b) "Sistemas agroindustriales, transnacionales, y estado en México." Investigación Económica 150: 153-172.

- Rello, F. (1977) "La naturaleza de la crisis" Narxhi-Nandhá, Revista de Economía Campesina 2: 14-15.
- (1976) "Modo de producción y Clases sociales." Cuadernos Políticos 8: 100-105.
- Rey, P.-P. (1973) Les alliances de classes. Paris: Francois Maspero.
- Reyes Osorio, S., R. Stavenhagen, S. Eckstein, and J. Ballesteros (1974) Estructura Agraria y Desarrollo Agrícola en México México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Richards, P. (1983) "Ecological Change and the Politics of African Land Use." African Studies Review 26: 1-72.
- Richards, J. (1981) "Populism: A Qualified Defence" Studies in Political Economy 5: 5-27.
- Rogers, E. (1969) "Motivations, Values, and Attitudes of Subsistence Farmers: Toward a Subculture of Peasantry," in C. Wharton (ed.) Subsistence Agriculture & Economic Development. Chicago: Aldine.
- Ronfeldt, D. (1973) Atencingo: The Politics of Agrarian Struggle in a Mexican Ejido. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Shanin, T. (1973) "The Nature and Logic of the Peasant Economy" Journal of Peasant Studies 1: 63-80; 186-206.
- (1972) The Awkward Class. London: Oxford University Press.
- (1971a) "Introduction," in T. Shanin (ed.) Peasants and Peasant Societies. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- (1971b) "Peasantry as a Political Factor," in T. Shanin (ed.) Peasants and Peasant Societies. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Stavenhagen, R. (1982) "Aspectos Sociales de la Estructura Agraria en México," in R. Stavenhagen et al. (eds.) Neoplatifundismo y Explotación: de Emiliano Zapata a Anderson Clayton & Co. (8th edition) México, D.F.: Neustro Tiempo (first published, 1968).
- (1979) "México: Minorías étnicas y política cultural." Nexos 19: 13-25.

- Stavenhagen, R (1978) "Capitalism and the Peasantry in México." Latin American Perspectives 5: 27-37.
- (1977) "Basic Needs, Peasants, and the Strategy for Rural Development," in M. Nerfin (ed.) Another Development: Approaches and Strategies Uppsala: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. (pp. 40-65).
- (1975) "Collective Agriculture and Capitalism in México: A Way Out or a Dead End?" Latin American Perspectives 11: 146-163.
- (1969a) Les Classes Sociales dans les Sociétés Agraires. Paris: Editions Anthropos.
- (1969b) "Seven Erroneous Theses About Latin America," in I. Horowitz et al. (eds.) Latin American Radicalism. New York: Random House.
- Taylor, J. (1979) From Modernization to Modes of Production. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press.
- Warman, A. (1980a) Ensayos sobre el campesinado en México. México, D.F.: Nueva Imagen.
- (1980b) "We Come to Object": The Peasants of Morelos and the National State. Translated by S. Ault. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- (1972) Los campesinos, hijos predilectos del régimen. México, D.F.: Nuestro Tiempo.
- Watts, M. (1983) "Good Try, Mr. Paul: Populism & the Politics of African Land-Use." African Studies Review 26: 73-83.
- Wharton, C. (1969) "Subsistence Agriculture: Concepts and Scope," in C. Wharton (ed.) Subsistence Agriculture and Economic Development. Chicago: Aldine.
- Wolf, E. (1982) Europe and the People without History. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- (1969) Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century. New York: Harper and Row.
- (1966) Peasants. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

END

2 5 0 2 8 6

FIN