

A
SYSTEMATIC SOURCE BOOK
IN RURAL SOCIOLOGY

EDITED BY

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PREFACE

IN VOLUME I the ecological and morphological aspects of rural social organization were considered. This second volume deals with the rural social world from the point of view of its institutional, functional, and cultural characteristics.

To arrive at a full understanding of these several aspects of rural society the investigator must study not only the external features of its institutions but their inner nature as well. The external forms are but the shells of the living organisms, and a study of them alone fails to reveal the content, *Gestalt*, and true significance of many rural institutions. An investigation of their nature and *Gestalt* without the check of external and objective data, on the other hand, is likely to result in many fallacies and inadequate characterizations.

During recent years most American rural sociologists have used the quantitative method almost exclusively in describing social phenomena—the *Gestalt* and true meaning of which they have often neglected in their eagerness to be objective. The mere computation of the number of churches, schools, or clubs established, of books read, of contacts made, of dollars spent, is dead and meaningless and has little value when unaccompanied by any further interpretation.

The attempt has been made here to combine the two approaches and to regard them as of equal importance. Where the external traits of rural culture lend themselves to quantitative analysis, statistical data are presented to describe them. Where the figures either do not exist or do not adequately describe the situation—as is the case when the real significance of the phenomena is under discussion—the interpretation takes the form of a qualitative, nonstatistical description.

It is time that the real significance of social phenomena in general and of rural social phenomena in particular be given at least as much attention as is given to the quantitative analysis of them.

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PART THREE
RURAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN ITS
INSTITUTIONAL, FUNCTIONAL,
AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

CHAPTER X

THE FAMILY AS THE BASIC INSTITUTION AND FAMILISM AS THE FUNDAMENTAL RELATION- SHIP OF RURAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

A. CONCEPT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

Part II dealt with rural social organization in its ecological and morphological aspects. This part deals with it in its institutional, functional, and cultural aspects. The purpose of it is, first, to analyze the constituent elements—the fundamental institutions as a crystalized set of relationships—of which the rural social world is composed; second, to study the functions performed by these institutions—separately and as a whole—in satisfying the fundamental needs of the rural population; third, to grasp the cultural *Gestalt* of the rural world as it is revealed in the totality of its institutions and their combination. These three aspects are mutually inter-related. A social interrelation leads to, and incarnates itself in, an institution; a study of an institution requires a knowledge of its structure and functions; a study of these leads to a comprehension of the cultural *Gestalt* of an aggregate, as it is expressed in the organization, functions, and “psycho-social content” of the institutions and their interrelationship. For an understanding of any complex social phenomenon it must be resolved into its elements, but in order to understand the phenomenon as a living whole, these elements must be interrelated and interpreted as a living unity. Otherwise they will remain dead, artificially abstracted from the living unity and incapable of showing the real *Gestalt* or the real meaning of this unity.

The study of the inner and intimate aspects of rural social organization, as it is manifest in its institutions, their functions and their psycho-social *Gestalt*, must naturally begin with that of the family and familism. The family has been the central institution of the rural world, and familism the basic form among all the relationships that in their totality compose rural social organization. The family and familism are, so to speak, the beginning

and the end of rural social organization; they stamp its whole structure; they permeate it from the bottom to the top; they condition the nature of other rural social institutions and relationships; and a knowledge of them is absolutely indispensable for an adequate understanding of the world studied.

Sociology of the rural family; familism the central relationship of rural social organization.—In chapter vi of this work we mentioned that possibly the family has been the most strongly integrated cumulative social unity. It represents a socially sanctioned union of (1) husband and wife; (2) parents and their children, born within a socially sanctioned union or adopted according to the sanctions of the group; and (3) the relatives of both husband and wife. It is the cumulative group whose members have been bound into one social unity by a series of the most important ties—community of blood and biological or social kinship; dependence of the new-born on the parents and of the aged parents on the children; a series of socially and legally binding sanctions; the most intimate community of co-living, co-acting, and co-believing; community of language, mores, patterns of behavior, and moral and juridical customs; collective responsibility; the most intensive community of economic interests; and many other ties. It is difficult to name any other class of social groups so strongly integrated and bound together into one bio-psycho-social organism. For thousands of years in almost all societies the family has functioned practically as a person, so closely and tightly have its members been bound together.

The fundamental bio-social functions of the family have been (1) the production of human beings; (2) the procuring of the means of subsistence; (3) the education, training, and preparation—through religious, moral, mental, physical, and occupational training—of the children for life in society as its adult socii; (4) the protection of its members from enemies and dangers; (5) the mitigation of their psycho-social isolation; and (6) the facilitation of their happiness and comfort. While performing these functions, the family at the same time has carried on important activities necessary to the welfare and existence of any superfamily group—tribe, nation, state, church, and so forth.

Since the family produces the human beings, the family supplies the members for any superfamily group and determines

their hereditary qualities. Since the family procures the means of subsistence for its members, it creates the economic bases and wealth of any superfamily group. In educating its children to be social, moral, and religious beings, it has bridled the most anti-social aptitudes of the man-animal and has stimulated the development of at least the minimum of sociality, and often the highest altruism, towards the fellow members of a superfamily group. A superfamily group could not exist without at least this minimum of sociality. Giving its members the elements of necessary knowledge and experience and passing them on from one generation to another, the family has been one of the most powerful agencies for the intellectual training of any superfamily group. In brief, the family has predetermined to a considerable extent the psycho-social and biological personality of the members of any superfamily society and consequently the character of the society and its historical destiny. What the family is, such will the society be. Even now, when the family is weaker, studies show that it is still the most powerful force in shaping the psycho-social personality of the younger generation, even in our larger cities. For instance, the coefficient of resemblance between the moral ideas of city children and their parents is .545; between children and their friends, .353; between children and club leaders, .137; between children and public school teachers, .028; and between children and Sunday school teachers, .002.¹

B. SPECIFIC TRAITS OF THE RURAL FAMILY

I. MORPHOLOGICAL (EXTERNAL) CHARACTERISTICS

1. As compared with urban families, *the agricultural family, viewed as a union of husband and wife, is more stable and integrated.* The union is more durable and less often discontinued by divorce, desertion, or separation. This is evidenced by a series of historical data that show that the phenomena of divorce, desertion, and separation are either relatively unknown or at least very rare within the typically agricultural countries of both the past and the present. This is true even of such countries as China, where legal divorce is easy to obtain. Statistical data for many countries show that the rate of divorce, separation, and desertion

¹ Hugh Hartshorne and Mark A. May, "Testing the Knowledge of Right and Wrong," *Religious Education*, XXI, 545 (February, 1926).

among the rural population generally has been lower than that of the urban population and one of the lowest of all large occupational groups. The same statistical data for a series of decades show that there is a tendency for the progress of urbanization and industrialization to be paralleled by an increase of divorce, desertion, and separation.

For the sake of economy of space we shall not reproduce here the statistical data for various countries that show that the urban population in the United States, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Rumania, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and some other countries regularly have a conspicuously higher rate of divorce than the rural population and that the rate of divorce tends to increase with the increase of the size of the cities. A summary of these data are given in Sorokin and Zimmerman's *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology* (pp. 334 ff.).² Their validity is reinforced by the data concerning the comparative rate of divorce among various occupational classes:

RATE OF DIVORCE AMONG OCCUPATIONAL CLASSES OF EUROPE
Italy, 1896
(After Bosco)

OCCUPATION	RATE PER 1,000 MARRIED MEN
Agricultural pursuits	0.7
Industrial laborers and servants.....	4.5
Merchants and industrial entrepreneurs.....	9.4
Professions and arts.....	14.7
State officials and high employees.....	17.5
Army officers	17.2
Landlords, <i>pensionnaires</i> , and <i>rentiers</i>	11.6

² Other works that give the data are as follows: United States Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports: Marriage and Divorce, 1867-1906*, 1909, Part I, pp. 438 ff.; *Annuaire statistique de la Belgique et du Congo Belge*, Brussels, 1926-1927, pp. xxxvii-xix; Camille Jacquart, "Le divorce et la séparation de corps," *Essais de statistique moral*, Brussels, 1909; Émile P. Levasseur, *La population française*, Vol. II, Paris, 1891, pp. 91-93; Georg von Mayr, *Statistik und Gesellschaftslehre*, Tübingen, 1917, III, 201 ff.; *Annuaire statistique* (of France), 1910, Paris, p. 24; *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich*, 1927, Berlin, pp. 44-49; *Statistisk Årsbok för Sverige*, 1927, Stockholm, p. 56; *Annuaire statistique du royaume de Bulgarie*, 1927, Sofia, p. 41; Walter F. Wilcox, *The Divorce Problem*, Columbia University Studies, New York, 1897, I, 33; *Annuaire statistique des Pays-Bas*, 1927, The Hague, pp. 5-21; *Annuaire statistique de*

RATE OF DIVORCE AMONG OCCUPATIONAL CLASSES OF EUROPE—*Continued*

France, 1886-1890

OCCUPATION	RATE PER 10,000 POPULATION
All agricultural pursuits.....	0.8
Agricultural laborers	3.0
Industrial laborers	7.6
Artisans	3.1
Merchants and shopkeepers.....	7.4
Employes in trade and industry.....	12.2
State officials	7.5
Professions	7.4
Landowners (<i>Grundeigentümer</i>) and capitalists (renters)	5.8 ³

Switzerland, 1881-1885

OCCUPATION	RATE PER 1,000 MARRIED MEN
Agriculture	37.7
Industry	59.14
Trade	85.9
Transportation	48.5
Officials, professionals, artists, and players.....	45.9

England, 1896-1899

OCCUPATION	RATE PER 10,000 POPULATION
Agriculture	0.2
Industry and small trade.....	0.7
Bankers, brokers, and dealers.....	4.4
Officers	7.0
Professions	5.4

la Roumanie, 1925, Bucharest, pp. 15, 27; and *Statistisk Aarbog* (for Denmark), 1927, pp. 5, 28.

³ See other statistics about this point in Augusto Bosco, *Divorzi e separazioni personali di coniugi*, Rome, 1908; Jacques Bertillon, *Étude démographique du divorce, etc.*, Paris, 1883; R. Bock, *Statistik der Ehescheidungen in der Stadt Berlin in den Jahren 1885 bis 1894*; *Bulletin de l'Institut international de statistique*, St. Petersburg, 1899, XI, 251-281; Maurice Yvernes, "Les divorces et les séparations de corps en France depuis 1884," *Journal de la société de statistique de Paris*, 1908, p. 101; Alexander K. von Oettingen, *Die Moralstatistik in ihrer Bedeutung für eine Sozialethik*, Erlangen, 1882, p. 182; the sources cited in the preceding note; Paul M. Meuriot, *Des agglomérations urbaines dans l'Europe contemporaine*, Paris, Belin Frères, 1898.