

**THE MACMILLAN**

*Student  
Encyclopedia  
of Sociology*

**MICHAEL MANN**

**Macmillan Reference Books**

**THE MACMILLAN**  
***STUDENT ENCYCLOPEDIA***  
***OF SOCIOLOGY***

Edited by  
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MACMILLAN PRESS  
LONDON

**Macmillan Reference Books**

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First published 1983 by  
THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD  
London and Basingstoke  
Associated Companies throughout the world

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

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The Macmillan student encyclopedia of sociology.

1. Sociology — Dictionaries

I. Mann, Michael

301'.3'21

HM17

ISBN 0-333-28193-4

ISBN 0-333-28194-2 Pbk

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Typeset by Leaper & Gard Ltd, Bristol, England  
Printed in Hong Kong

# Introduction

Sociology presents especial difficulties for constructing the orthodoxy of style, format and content necessary for an encyclopedia or dictionary. Society does not lend itself to clean dissection and neat sub-division: not quite a seamless web, more a slightly ragged, amateurishly stitched patchwork quilt, from which some bits keep falling off, and to which new bits are added. Sociology should, and does, reflect this messiness. It offers relatively little unchanging orthodoxy, either in content or in the way the discipline divides up its internal specialisms. Sociology can only be a society's understanding of itself and this is constantly in flux and contested.

In dictionary terms the word 'sociology' itself is a hybrid, a mixture of Latin (*socius*, originally ally, then society) and Greek (*logos*, knowledge, perhaps science), hence 'knowledge (or 'the science') of society'. Sociologists argue that such knowledge is distinct from that of other disciplines. It refers to what they call the 'emergent' properties of society. Indeed, the best short definition of sociology contained in this encyclopedia is to be found under the entry *emergence*. But there divergencies will become apparent between sociologists as to whether they regard emergence as 'structure' or a 'process'. This is one of the many sociological controversies which are to be found here, but they are not decisively resolved in these pages because no orthodoxy exists. It is for the reader to decide whether to favour 'structure' or 'process', or whether to combine the two. This is the challenge, the excitement, and the subversiveness of sociology: it calls always for an independence of mind, a critical spirit, as much from the student beginner as from the established scholar.

A second aspect of the unorthodoxy of sociology is that its parts move at different speeds. The social problems of each decade differ. Some settle down and we establish quasi-orthodoxies about them. But, just as we are doing so, other problems, hitherto unsuspected, rear up and hit us in the face — usually accompanied by the polemics of contending interest groups. For the editor of an encyclopedia this creates a dilemma: to mirror this situation, so that entries in one field will reflect an established orthodoxy while those in another will reveal bafflement or polemic; or to impose a common orthodoxy of 'on the one hand, and on the other hand' type? As general editor I resolved this by inaction, allowing the specialist in each field to choose. The entries are, in varying combinations, balanced, authoritative, indecisive and polemic. On occasion I have entered the foray to add a dissenting note to an entry. I hope that these varying stylistic qualities convey the varied flavours of sociology.

Most of the contributors have covered their subject area by writing a number of short entries, which is the general style of this Encyclopedia. But a few took the opposite approach, writing only a handful of long entries. Where the information forms a coherent continuous whole, this is perfectly appropriate — as, for example, in JB's excellent account of *Psychoanalysis*, where various concepts and theories ultimately cohere into a single world-view. I confess to having let contributors have their head in another respect too. They sometimes wrote at greater length than I had originally indicated, but the value of their contribution justified extended treatment. For example, MPB's and LS's entry on *Slavery* is far longer than the institution's importance within sociology would appear to warrant — but it is extraordinarily interesting!

Finally, the entries on individual writers are obviously uneven. The length of these entries bears no direct relationship to that person's importance within sociology, and for a good reason. Anyone who has been truly seminal within sociology has developed theories and concepts which will be the subject of separate entries in the Encyclopedia. Marx, Weber and Durkheim all have entries of their own, but their pre-eminence is only truly encompassed by counting also the dozens of other entries, from *Action Theory* to *World System* which bear

their imprint. Of the two Meads, Margaret rather than George Herbert has the longer entry. Yet George Herbert has been of far greater significance for sociology, and this is revealed in the content of about ten other entries from *The Act* onwards.

Despite all this liberality on my part, the Encyclopedia should still have a disciplined, uniform core. I hope that you will find interesting, informative sociology wherever you look, and that your questions are answered in our entries.

I believe my contributing editors have done a magnificent job. I would like to thank them all most warmly. Shaie Selzer and Māra Vilcinskā for Macmillan, and Margot Levy, have been invaluable; and my secretary, Yvonne Brown has coped marvellously with the peculiar typing requirements of an encyclopedia.

London School of Economics  
April 1983

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# How to use this Encyclopedia

No Encyclopedia or Dictionary can wholly live up to the pretensions of its apparent format. There is no principle of verbal organization which can ensure that every word you wish to look up will appear as a separate entry. Obviously I hope that this is often, even usually, the case. But in the cases where it isn't, please do not turn away in annoyance. If you are recommended under *doctor-patient relationship* to see *sick role*, please try it. If you do not find a term at all, think for a moment of cognate terms, or of other terms with which it is usually associated, and consult the list of entries which appears on pages vii-xi. Thus an explanation of 'Despotism' will be found under *Absolutism* and *Oriental Despotism*; 'American Legal Realism' will be found under *Law, Trends in Legal Theory*. And if, having read the entry, you want more, follow up the cross-references which are given either at the end of the entry or are picked out within the entry — always in SMALL CAPITALS. Both practices are used sparingly, so that you will find directly relevant information there. Bibliographic references to relevant books and articles have also been kept to a minimum. There are no long reading-lists but references given are considered by the writer to be important.

My contributing editors and I have worked to a similar general style and format whose details will become readily apparent. One consistency might appear at first sight to the reader as inconsistency. We have used what is generally called 'non-sexist language' (e.g. 'he/she' instead of just 'he' where the gender of the person referred to is not relevant) except where paraphrasing a writer who does not do this. It is relevant information that most writers in the classic tradition, from Comte to Parsons, did not use non-sexist language.

MM

# A

**absolutism.** Usually applied to the regimes of some formally despotic European monarchs of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, claiming the Divine Right of Kings and backed by centralized STATES. In most cases, these states represented a balance between the powers of the landowning ARISTOCRACY and the rising BOURGEOISIE, and their monarchs for a short but crucial period were able to take advantage of this. They were also aided by the 'military revolution' of the 16th and 17th centuries in which artillery and more complex and expensive systems of supply and drilling encouraged the growth of centralized command structures backed by the fiscal resources of large states. Absolute monarchs introduced codified law, standing armies, permanent bureaucracies, and national systems of taxation to pay for them. It is sometimes argued that absolutism paved the way for CAPITALISM, but the pioneers of commercial capitalism, Holland and England, were constitutional rather than absolute monarchies.

Loosely, absolutism can refer to any regime in which the rulers are not bound by the rule of law and in which the state has some ability to enforce its near-arbitrary powers.

LS, MM

**accommodation.** See PARK, R.E.

**acephalous.** Literally 'without a head', referring to social groups that exist without centralized authority, leaders or chiefs and yet exhibit political organization. Occasionally these are referred to by the more general

term 'stateless societies', which can also include groups that have chiefs or acknowledged rulers, or by the more correct and descriptive term 'segmentary societies'. Study of such groups has been particularly associated with EVANS-PRITCHARD and with societies like the Nuer in areas surrounding the southern and central Nile Valley. Such groups usually live in spatially well-defined areas and exhibit consciousness of their identity and exclusivity. Political organization means that part of the social organization which is concerned with the control and regulation of the use of force. A central component of acephalous organization is KINSHIP OF LINEAGE affiliation, although AGE SETS can provide additional points of political focus. Political organization is achieved through a balance of power, both sacred and secular, between separate but associated descent groups, which are visualized as being in structural opposition (or fission) in a short-range perspective, yet associated in a complex network of relationships (or fusion) within the larger perspective that binds segments together. Adherence to a particular group, be it large or small, is claimed or achieved according to situational circumstances. Political balance can be achieved through ritual mediators, but authority is not attributed to individuals. Such systems are in perpetual flux, and are called segmentary because of the emphasis placed, at particular moments of political tension, on adherence to one or more segments of the relevant lineage.

See also STATE.

JE

## 2 achievement

**achievement.** Performance in social positions may be measured by various criteria which differ across cultures, such as achievement in education through formal examinations, marks of physical prowess like exceeding a given height or weight or winning a fight, or improvement of social status through upward SOCIAL MOBILITY. Such social success is referred to as achievement. This concept is used particularly in the context of attitudes towards achievement, such as achievement motivation (see MIGRATION). Some social positions, however, cannot be achieved; actors are ascribed to them and movement in or out of them is almost impossible. Positions to which actors are ascribed in most societies are sex, colour and social class at birth. The last example demonstrates one of the problems arising from an over-rigid use of the concepts of achievement and ascription: though social class is ascribed at birth, movement to another class is possible through upward or downward mobility. PARSONS saw these two related concepts as so central to sociological theory that he included achievement/ascription as one of the five pairs of PATTERN VARIABLES around which he believed all societies are structured. PWM

**act, the.** A basic unit of SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM developed especially by G.H. MEAD and BLUMER, stressing that people act, rather than simply react. Human life is composed of an ongoing stream of interpretive 'doings' both covert (e.g. 'thinking') and overt (e.g. arguing), the former often being a deliberate rehearsal of the latter. For Mead, an act is built up through four stages: (1) impulse — the generalized disposition to act; (2) perception — the organizing, selecting and defining of a situation; (3) consummation — the completion of the act with an achieved goal. Such 'acts' may be of various classes: automatic, blocked, incomplete and retrospective.

See M. Natanson *The Social Dynamics of George H. Mead* (1956; 2/1973).

KP

**action approach.** In Industrial Studies, denotes an explanation of patterns of behaviour at work by reference to variably distributed 'orientations to work', these

orientations being socially generated. It contrasts with approaches that seek sources of industrial behaviour in supposedly universal, individualistic economic motivations (SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT), or in universal psychological wants or needs (SELF-ACTUALIZATION THEORY), or in the technological environment of work (SOCIO-TECHNICAL SYSTEM).

'Actionalists' maintain that individual economic rationality is mediated — on occasion neutralized — by a socially transmitted and sustained set of goals and perspectives. It was long ago established, for example, that in the USA country-born Protestants were more likely to respond to incentive payments than city-born Catholics. Actionalists thus insist that economically 'irrational' behaviour usually reflects the operation of some social rationality. This insistence should be distinguished from the preoccupation of HUMAN RELATIONS theory with 'social' explanations of work behaviour, since actionalists challenge that work behaviour is mainly determined by some 'non-logical' inborn drive towards face-to-face sociability. But exactly what distinguishes any given 'orientation to work'? How, exactly, is it socially created, transmitted and sustained? To what extent is it modified by experience in work itself? And is there not a danger, in attempting to grasp the subjective rationality of typical social actors, of slipping into a concern with socially disembodied 'definitions' of their (work) situation held by separate individuals, thus neglecting the manner in which 'definition' must be constrained by structured features — social and economic — of the total work situation? These aspects have generated lively debate.

See ACTOR; DEFINITION OF THE SITUATION.

MR

**action research.** Research in which the knowledge and techniques of social science are combined with practical policy initiatives to plan and achieve social change. Whereas the traditional role of the researcher is diagnosis and interpretation of past events, the action researcher is actively involved in new planned policy initiatives, monitoring the base-line situation, observing the

changes initiated by the plan, and attempting to monitor the plan's effects.

Examples of action research are Operation Headstart in the USA and the Educational Priority Area in the UK. Both sought to stimulate educational innovation in selected areas to reduce social and educational disadvantage among disadvantaged families (in the USA, ethnic disadvantage especially). In both countries, community development programmes also intervene in selected local areas to identify problems, participate in suitable development programmes, and evaluate their success or failure. Research activities have been a major component of all these programmes.

See also EVALUATION RESEARCH.

See C.H. Weiss (ed.), *Evaluating Action Programs* (1972).

MB

**action theory.** Approaches to sociology which emphasize how actors perceive a social situation, the ends they choose to pursue in it, and the means they adopt in pursuing them. In its emphasis on conscious orientation and purposive action, action theory stands in opposition to BEHAVIOURISM.

WEBER's discussion of social action in the first chapter of *Economy and Society* (1924) is usually taken as the starting point of action theory. Weber argued that to explain an action we must interpret it in terms of its subjectively intended meaning. A person's action is to be explained in terms of the consequences he or she intended — purpose — rather than in terms of its actual effects; the two are often at variance. A 'subjectively intended meaning' is also a causal explanation of the action, in that the end in view is a cause of present actions.

Weber outlines a four-fold typology of rational and non-rational patterns of action. *Zweckrationalität* ('goal-rationality') is the highest form of rational action. The actor weighs against each other the means available for attaining a given end, the costs and benefits of using those means for one end or another, and finally various ends themselves. Weber has in mind the models of rational economic action developed in classical economics, involving concepts such as

marginal utility, marginal revenue and opportunity cost. The other patterns of action are in effect treated as deviations from this pattern. *Wertrationalität* ('value-rationality') involves weighing the means towards an end rationally against each other, but the end itself is not questioned: it is accepted as a binding and absolute goal. Such action is often governed by religious belief — salvation is an example of an unquestioned and absolute end. Finally, Weber speaks of affectual action, governed by strong emotion, and traditional action, which he sees as governed by habit; the definitions of these last two categories in particular are open to many criticisms.

Another landmark in 'action theory' was PARSONS's *Structure of Social Action* (1937), a study of Weber, DURKHEIM, PARETO and the economist Alfred Marshall. Parsons claimed these authors had been converging towards a 'voluntaristic theory of action', which he proceeded to advocate and develop in numerous later works. Parsons grafted on to Weber's means/ends schema Durkheim's preoccupation with common values or CONSENSUS; shared values influenced the choice of means and ends, and helped ensure that individuals' pursuit of their own ends did not lead to a war of all against all.

Points of similarity with Weber's and Parsons's discussions are in the work of American pragmatist thinkers like William James, G.H. MEAD, and especially in W.I. THOMAS's notion of the DEFINITION OF THE SITUATION. There is also an affinity with POPPER's idea of 'the logic of the situation', which he sees as a key element in historical explanation.

Despite its merits, action theory is not a comprehensive and self-sufficient theoretical orientation for sociologists. It is irremediably individualistic, and though individuals may perceive, orientate themselves and pursue purposes, social institutions cannot — no one now believes in the reality of a 'group-mind' (see TELEOLOGY). Social processes can rarely be explained entirely in terms of the intentions, goals or purposes of individual people. Actions of individuals usually need to be explained as much in terms of the compelling social processes in which they are caught up as

#### 4 activism

those processes need to be explained in terms of intentions (see ETHNOMETHODOLOGY; PHENOMENOLOGY; SOCIAL STRUCTURE; SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM; UNANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES).

This lack of theoretical self-sufficiency is evident even in the 'action theory' of Weber and Parsons. The discussion of action in the abstract is only a small aspect of Weber's work. His broader concern is with how typical patterns of action became embodied in the West in institutions such as markets, rational-legal BUREAUCRACY and rational law, or why they failed to become so in China, India and elsewhere. Similarly, much of Parsons's career was taken up with trying to effect a marriage between action theory and FUNCTIONALISM, using the inadequate apparatus of the latter to deal with the structural processes which the former was unable to explain.

SJM

**activism.** As with any other voluntary activity, political activity engages only a minority of people, the activists. Most people's maximum involvement in politics is voting at elections, whereas activists engage in the day-to-day work of persuasion, attending meetings, soliciting funds, canvassing etc. Although the term is conventionally used of people in political parties, there is little to distinguish them from active members of other voluntary associations such as TRADE UNIONS and PRESSURE GROUPS.

Compared to populations, activists tend to be younger, better educated, better paid, more liberal (with conspicuous exceptions), feel more politically effective, and are better informed.

Theories of why people become activists are legion. Psychological and psychoanalytic theories generally emphasize some aspect of childhood, such as early loss of parents, parental arbitrariness, feelings of weakness, hate etc engendered in the family and displaced into politics, and political activity as a learned behaviour. Others stress political activism as an outcome of social background, such as education, income and occupation. The higher a person on these scales, the higher the probability of activism. Political activity is positively associated with higher than average levels of general communal involvement.

Tracing the origins of political activism encounters methodological difficulties. Except in situations like mass revolt, most people are politically passive (see ELECTIONS). Thus only a relatively small sample of likely activists can be obtained, even in a longitudinal study starting from pre-puberty.

RED

**adequacy.** WEBER distinguished CAUSAL and 'meaningful' adequacy. The correct solution of an arithmetical problem or a 'rational' course of action is meaningfully adequate: that is, it is correct in terms of the system of meaning within which it is embedded, without reference to its likelihood in the real world. The causal adequacy of an EXPLANATION depends on the probability that what is meaningfully adequate will actually occur in reality. According to Weber both are required by sociology, since this is concerned both with meaningful action and with a scientific investigation of causes.

SCHUTZ emphasizes meaningful adequacy. His 'postulate of adequacy', variously defined in his writings, demands that a social scientific explanation 'be understandable for the actor himself as well as for his fellow-men in terms of commonsense interpretations of everyday life'. This is still widely accepted within PHENOMENOLOGICAL sociology but many sociologists disagree, regarding the 'commonsense' explanations of social actors as often confused, incoherent and causally inadequate.

See M. Weber, *Economy and Society* (1921), chapter 1; A. Zijderveld, 'The Problem of Adequacy', *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 1972.

WO

**adolescence.** The LIFE CYCLE is divided into a number of sequential stages. These vary across cultures and through time. Since around the mid-18th century in European cultures growing importance has been attached to the stage between childhood and adult status, which is known as adolescence. During this stage a young person has to pass from dependence to independence of the family of origin. Much social experiment occurs during adolescence through which the maturing actor becomes an adult with a more or less structured identity; more particularly,

orientations towards the opposite sex are formed. Because of growing claims during adolescence by the young for independence in such socially central fields of action as sex, work and leisure activities, clashes, often defined by parents and other adults as rebellion, are likely between GENERATIONS and these can result in changes in social NORMS with respect to the family and in other areas. See DELINQUENCY.

PWM

**Adorno, Theodor Wiesengrund (1903-69).** German Marxist writer who contributed to a number of academic disciplines. Born in Frankfurt, the son of a Jewish wine-merchant and a singer (whose name he eventually adopted), Adorno studied in Frankfurt and Vienna, and was close to the Institute for Social Research, which he joined in 1931. He left Germany in 1934 for Oxford and, in 1938, New York, where the Frankfurt Institute had established itself in exile. He moved to California with other Institute members in 1941. He returned to Frankfurt in 1949 and was Director of the Institute from 1958 until his death.

Adorno was probably the most important thinker in what came to be called the Frankfurt School of CRITICAL THEORY. Main works: *Negative Dialectics* (1966); (with HORKHEIMER) *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947); and a vast range of work in philosophy, social psychology — especially *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) — and the sociology of culture, especially music. He was a leading protagonist in the debate about positivism in the early 1960s.

See AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY; POSITIVISM. WO

**aetiology.** The study or assignment of the causes of a phenomenon. In medicine the term is used to refer to the investigation and exposition of the causes of a disease, and often simply to refer to the causes, presumed or established, of the disease. In sociology the classic example is DURKHEIM's *Suicide* (1897). JB

**affect.** A term sometimes used generally to refer to feelings, dispositions or emotions, but more often and specifically to refer to the

complex pattern of physiological, environmental and cognitive elements of which emotion is the meaningful aspect. These elements may include a high or low level of physiological arousal, use of language, pleasure or displeasure, rage, anxiety, happiness, excitement and fear. A range of emotions may be manifested at the level of meaning, although sometimes affect is used in a more restricted way to refer to certain feelings only. K. Pribram (*Brain and Behaviour*, 1969) uses affect in another specialized sense to mean the state produced when a motivated action is prevented from occurring. JL

**affinal.** The type of relationship, such as brother-in-law, which is claimed through marriage rather than the direct blood ties of DESCENT. Affinal relations are sometimes contrasted with KINSHIP relations. JE

**age set.** See RITES OF PASSAGE.

**aggression.** Attacking behaviour directed towards other people, objects or oneself so as to hurt, overthrow or bring into disrepute, whether by direct physical means, by words, or by more indirect psychological means. The term is commonly used as an attribute of individuals; other terms, such as CONFLICT, violence or WAR, are generally used to refer to aggression between groups. Hence aggression in humans has largely been studied by psychologists, while group conflict is studied by sociologists and political scientists. FREUD initially viewed aggression as a natural response to frustration and this idea was further developed by other psychologists and became known as the frustration-aggression hypothesis. Freud later believed aggression to be a manifestation of Thanatos, the death drive (see PSYCHOANALYSIS). A portion of the innate self-destructiveness of individuals was diverted towards the external world and directed on to other people. It could, however, be sublimated, transformed into more productive creative energy. The idea of an instinct of aggression that must find outlet in some form, whether socially acceptable or not, has been developed by the ethologist Konrad Lorenz, who based much of his



theory of human aggression on empirical studies of animals. Others, particularly the BEHAVIOURISTS, have emphasized the importance of learning in the development of aggression, and have carried out studies that indicate that aggressive behaviour can be acquired by processes such as 'modelling' (the selective imitation of behaviour).

See also GENDER.

JB

**agrarianism.** A set of values which holds that agriculture is the most natural and desirable vocation and the farm the ideal place to live and raise children. It derives from Western European romanticism and stresses the Arcadian virtues of family as a way of life. Particularly influential in American political culture, having been codified by Thomas Jefferson and referred to as the 'Jeffersonian Bread', 'Agricultural Fundamentalism', 'the Agrarian Myth' or 'Pastoralism'.

See ENVIRONMENTALISM.

NH

**agribusiness.** A term coined by the Harvard economist John H. Davis (*Harvard Business Review*, 1956). Its meaning has expanded considerably to encompass: (1) Those economic activities which are ancillary to, and dependent upon, agriculture. These include the supply of agro-inputs (e.g. machinery, foodstuffs, chemicals) and the processing, marketing and distribution of agro-outputs. This was Davis's original meaning of the term. (2) Subsequently agribusiness has come to mean profit-maximizing, rationally organized agriculture. This emphasizes farms which have become rationally organized in the face of prevailing market conditions, enabling contrasts to be drawn between agriculture as an expressive activity ('farming as a way of life') and agriculture as an instrumental activity ('farming as a business'). (3) Agribusiness is also used as a collective noun to describe all the stages involved in modern food production ('from seedling to super-market') that are corporately controlled and rationally organized to obtain maximum profitability. This usage acknowledges that the rise of agribusiness as originally defined

has promoted changes in the overall AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURE.

HN

**agricultural structure.** How the component parts of agricultural production are organized and relate to each other. Changes in the structure of agriculture are recognized by those constructing a sociology of agriculture to have a profound effect upon rural society in general. Particular attention is paid to two important structural trends in modern agriculture: (1) agriculture is becoming increasingly concentrated in fewer, larger and more capital-intensive forms; (2) agriculture is becoming increasingly structurally differentiated according to a specialized DIVISION OF LABOUR and profit-maximizing AGRIBUSINESS principles. This involves the reorganization of food-production into a number of segmented processes of which farming is only one part. Farming has become the transformation of one set of industrially manufactured products (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, feedstuffs, machinery etc) into another (the raw materials of the food-processing sector). Both trends involve changes in the relation of agricultural production and in the structure of rural society.

See also AGRICULTURE, SOCIOLOGY OF.

**agriculture, sociology of.** A sociological approach to the study of social relations in agriculture which begins from an analysis of production systems, labour process and the impact of technological innovation on agriculture. The purpose is to elucidate the social organization of agriculture through a comparative analysis of crop industries in agricultural production.

The term has also a broader meaning, having come to summarize a more radical and critical approach to the conventional subject matter of rural sociology. The 'sociology of agriculture' has thus become a rallying cry for a 'new rural sociology' particularly in the USA since the late 1970s. Its principal research areas include the structure of agriculture (see AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURE) in advanced capitalism, state agricultural policy, agricultural labour, regional inequality and agricultural ecology.