

## COMMENTARIES

By Victor Goldkind, Department of Anthropology, San Diego State College

In his inclusive and detailed classification of rural settlement types in Latin America, Marshall Wolfe admirably succeeds in his intention "to describe patterns and relationships that are widely important in the region." His discussion touches upon important realities of rural social life and its place in the national society which too often are ignored. Despite the modesty of his claims, the author's synthesis of data from many sources provides the basis of a conceptualization which should prove extremely useful as a frame of reference for many practical and scholarly interests. The generalizations he offers about the characteristics of the distinct settlement types, and the nature of their relations to each other and to national institutions, constitute a series of hypotheses worthy of being investigated by research projects designed primarily for that purpose.

Any such inclusive typology sufficiently detailed to be useful inevitably stimulates disagreements over its details. But discussion and research on these very disagreements are among the most important contributions to scholarship deriving from such a conceptualization. In this spirit I would like to express some disagreement on two topics.

Because less specialization in economic function occurs in the large hamlet (*villorio*), its social stratification is implied to be necessarily less important than that to be found in the more urban village (*aldea*) and town (*pueblo*). In my experience stratification differences between wealthier peasants and minifundistas and/or landless laborers in the hamlet may be quite comparable, and just as important to the people involved, as those occurring among the distinct classes or occupational groupings of the village or town. Much of the literature on such hamlets does not give enough emphasis to the kind of stratification which may occur even when practically all economic activity is agricultural. The greater economic diversity in the village and town actually may provide the landless laborer greater opportunity to earn income so that his economic position is better than that of his counterpart in the hamlet and closer to that of his community's upper strata. And there is likely to be greater similarity among the residents of village or town in their participation in various urban institutions and services, e.g., schooling, medical care, organized political activity, commercialized recreation. The common assumption that, except for hacienda and plantation, greater urbanization of a settlement necessarily involves greater stratification seems to be incorrect in a substantial number of cases, and as a general proposition it is problematical and requires systematic investigation.

I may have incorrectly inferred a viewpoint unintended by Wolfe, but parts of his discussion seem to imply that the squatter is especially prone to have certain characteristics evaluated as undesirable. For example, there are references to squatters who are inefficient and destructive users of land, "contributing more to the waste of forest resources and the spread of erosion than to the permanent incorporation of new lands into the cultivable area . . . a rootless and disorganized rural population, unable to form more than the most rudimentary neighborhood ties . . ." There seems to be disapproval of the squatter with "little interest in land ownership" and who, despite the owner of the land where he squats perhaps wanting him to remain, at "any difficulty . . . is quite ready to abandon his temporary home and drift to another locality." But also: "Increasingly, they are also a source of violence; the squatters are no longer willing to move or have nowhere to go." Without denying that much variety of circumstance may occur, it seems to me that more emphasis should be given to the type of squatter I have known: the relatively enterprising minifundista willing to risk trying to obtain enough land for subsistence in an unfamiliar region, who desires a better life for his family in a new community at least as "organized," stable, and peaceful as his long-settled rural community of origin, and whose methods of cultivation are no more destructive of natural resources than those of other minifundistas (unless clearing new land is considered more "destructive" than over-cultivating land already cleared of forest).

Wolfe suggests the concentration of the more scattered squatter and minifundio sectors of the rural population into larger municipios where they can benefit from closer contact with urban services, together with programs by the national government to provide an "expansion of employment opportunities in the small and medium-sized urban-centres." His lack of optimism about how much of such a plan might actually be realized seems well justified.

Although national and foreign efforts to improve services in smaller urban centres may well be increased, and these do offer some attraction for rural people, poor agriculturalists are apt to be more concerned with employment opportunities. But economists and governmental officials concerned with this problem tend to think in terms of increasing the rate of growth in the entire economy by the increased investment and allocation of credit to those sectors of the economy likely to produce the greatest return and stimulus to the entire economy. From this perspective, small remote urban centers and the poor agricultural regions with depleted soils where so many of the rural poor live are unlikely to make worthwhile the large investment of scarce resources necessary to increase employment opportunities significantly more rapidly than population. Even in the United States, where billions of dollars have been spent in governmental aid to agriculture, relatively little has been done for the poorest

agricultural areas, nor for the several millions of impoverished families still earning income from small farms or from work as agricultural laborers.

I once heard Carl C. Taylor tell of his unsuccessful attempt in the 1930's to convince farm organizations in the United States to support the following suggestion which may well be appropriate to consider for contemporary Latin America: Since we know that many rural young persons are going to migrate to urban areas, why not teach in rural schools the vocational skills that could allow them to get urban employment at something more useful and profitable than unskilled labor?

With reference to the "wretchedness" of a great deal of rural housing which "derives as much from low standards as from lack of resources," it is important to distinguish between rural and urban values regarding housing standards. Sometimes the horror expressed by urban people at rural housing is nothing more than ethnocentric bias with little relevance for standards of health or efficiency. Obviously, the availability of construction materials and the type of climate are important considerations, but I have seen (and lived in) rural housing which seemed quite satisfactory but was considered intolerable by urban persons. (They seem to be disturbed especially by the thatched roof!)

*By Frank W. Young, Department of Rural Sociology, Cornell University*

This paper may be seen as a contribution to the natural history base of sociological studies in Latin America. It is one of several to appear in the last few years with a focus on settlement patterns and structural types. Like all studies in the natural history genre, it has a number of definite strengths. When done well, as this one is, such reports contain important facts. The widespread occurrence of shifting, rootless and poverty-stricken workers all over Latin America emerges with painful clarity. Similarly, the widespread, continuous and intensive litigation over land boundaries appears as an area worthy of further study. But there are many lesser items that may be of importance to both research and applied people in this field. The preference of poor workers for their own huts rather than the newly constructed housing available to them in some places is one such point. The natural history approach also turns up descriptions of patterns and trends. The association, and perhaps symbiotic relationship, of *mini-fundia* and *latifundia* has been noted before, but the *tolerado* pattern reported for Bolivia whereby settlers clear and farm virgin lands for a number of years until the owner takes the lands over, may turn out to be much more frequent now that we know to look for it. Still another pattern of interest is the transformation of the *ejidos* from nearly complete communal communities to farmers' associations.

However, the general goal of naturalistic studies would seem to be classification. Accordingly, we find in this report a classification of settlement patterns that takes population range as a starting point, but moves on to a number of supposedly crucial characteristics such as administrative status, economic functions of the organization level, and land tenure patterns. As with nearly all such classifications, there are some loose ends, such as the migrant workers and marginal small land holders that live on the edges of these communities, as well as the plantations, haciendas, and comunidades, etc., all of which do not quite fit the five basic settlement types given in the classification.

Finally, it is possible to develop a certain level of practical advice on the basis of such generalized descriptions. If the survey is well done, and if the classification and review of significant patterns is valid in the sense that they adequately summarize the features of the social landscape, then policy-makers are provided with a kind of cognitive map by which they may review and refine their operations. They may be prompted to take account in their planning of different levels of community structure, and they may decide to rethink their policies of building brand new settlements that are costly, frequently unworkable and almost hypocritical in the face of the vast need for housing and social organization in Latin America.

But the recitation of the strengths of the natural history approach, as they appear in this paper, lays bare its fundamental weaknesses. There are no rules for deciding which facts are important. Such surveys emphasize quite different trends and experts frequently disagree. Thus, Wolfe's account of the alternative patterns of municipio administration may seem like trivia to a sociologist who has learned to look for more basic structural patterns, but unfortunately that is still another untested opinion. It is true that after several reports have emphasized the same trends and facts, we are inclined to have more confidence in them, but even so the authors are likely to give different interpretations.

A basic reason why the "facts" are open to question is because they are facts. The real world is infinitely varied and quite uneven, even with representative samples, so a close description gives us only that. Comparability and reliability are achieved by formulating analytic variables and then sorting the facts into patterns that are construed as indicators of the presence of these imaginary constructs. Moreover, the formulation of analytic dimensions helps to lay bare what is essential in the processes and patterns that may emerge from a descriptive report. They help us to rise above the appeal to "history," or to dubious "generalizations" such as "rural needs cannot be met by uniform national recipes or plans drawn up at a distance."

Analytic constructs, when used in combination, allow one to rise above the inherent difficulties of classification with its arbitrary cutting points, its disregard of continuities and the inevitable loose ends. Thus, the classification of

community levels that Wolfe gives seem to me to imply quite clearly the presence of a basic dimension of differentiation or complexity, and the many characteristics that he lists for each level are simply aspects of this basic dimension. It is quite probable that the formulation of one other dimension, along the lines of a degree of communality, would take care of a number of the settlement types that do not now fit the classification.

Finally, when one realizes that the natural history approach provides the policy-maker with guidance that is tantamount to telling a doctor that he should pay attention to a person's heart, lungs, musculature and be sure to note his pulse—because somehow a weak pulse is important—we are confronted with the weakness of natural history for solving applied problems. While it is true that reports like this often include suggestions for policy changes, such suggestions do not usually follow from the descriptive material. They are the thoughts that a person with much general experience in public affairs and with specific experience from surveying a given body of material might be expected to make, and while they should be taken seriously, they have a status no different from that of the suggestions of the policy-makers themselves. Thus, the various proposals that appear in the report regarding the optimum number of people for particular kinds of services seem to me to be reasonable, but I am not persuaded that they rest on an understanding of how social organization actually works. And lacking this, I am sure that they will be the basis for interminable arguments by people whose experience is somewhat different.

Without denying that general descriptions are necessary starting points in the research process, and while admitting that underdeveloped countries may not be able to afford a research style that uses samples, analytic variables, and which explores fundamental processes, it must still be said that modern sociology has gone beyond the approach taken in this survey. A recent study of Chinese market towns by G. W. Skinner, "Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China," *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXIV (November, 1964, February, 1965, May, 1965, pp. 3–43, 195–228, 363–399), suggests what might be done for Latin America, although as a matter of fact there is considerable analytic work going on right now that is focused on Latin America. However, my view that modern sociologists would go about this kind of work differently should be taken as only a statement of contrast. It is not to be expected that investigators trained in one way can change over to another one very easily, and even if they did, their research would probably not be acceptable to policy-makers, who themselves are not trained in interpreting and making use of the compressed and abstracted kind of knowledge that modern sociology is now generating. All that is possible is a slow transformation, following the lead of other disciplines. Nonetheless, it seems incumbent upon the sociological commentator to note that part of the ball game has moved to another park.

By Richard N. Adams, Department of Anthropology, University of Texas

Mr. Wolfe's general review and analysis of our knowledge of rural settlement patterns in Latin America is certainly to be commended for having covered many of the aspects of the topic. The comments which follow are not to be taken as a criticism in general of the paper but should be construed as *ad-enda* and possibly modifications.

The major topic of concern to me here is one which Mr. Wolfe has intentionally put to one side. At the outset in the paper he mentioned that he could be "justifiably accused of abstracting certain problems of the rural population from the national, international, economic, social, and political currents that are now the main determinants of the future of this population." The particular aspect of the situations which is put to one side is that which concerns the role played by the general power structure. Later in the paper he says "it should be obvious that really effective reforms in rural institutions demand equally far reaching changes in the national economic, social and political structures that fall outside of the scope of the present discussion." Then follows a fairly extensive series of suggestions concerning better ways of looking at, and trying to develop settlement patterns. It seems to me that by expressly eliminating from consideration these political and power factors the whole discussion on the applied side is thoroughly weakened. To talk about optimum size of communities, for example, without including consideration of an authority that can sanction developments that may go grossly against the optimum, is somewhat futile.

Of all the many facets of human society that are subject to systematic study, settlement pattern, it seems to me, may more generally be seen as a dependent variable than most. As Wolfe indicates in his paper, there are so many factors, physical and cultural, that effect it that one can scarcely approach the topic without becoming involved in essentially an ecological exercise. One central feature of this apparent complexity, however, is that one lives in a certain place because it provides him, under his prevailing set of values, with the best access to the things he needs in life. One way of identifying characteristics of settlement pattern, then, is to distinguish those things which are generally sought in a society, and then to delineate the obstacles, physical, social, and cultural, that may channel action into a certain form.

By way of example, two sets of Mayan Indians occupy the southern portion of the Municipio of San Luis, El Peten, Guatemala. The Mopan-speakers occupy the town of San Luis itself, and immigrant Kekchi-speakers occupy the countryside. When a Kekchi-speaker takes a Mopan wife, she goes to the scattered *caserio* with him; when a Mopan takes Kekchi woman, she comes to town to live with him. Agriculturally, these two populations are essentially the same, and their "level of development" and general culture are alike in most respects.



However, among the other differences is that one set prefers to live out "in the milpa" whereas the other traditionally likes to live in the town. This is a matter of values. The environment is open as is the land for either group to live in the town or the country; there are neither physical nor economic restrictions.

In contrast with this, compare the line villages to which Wolfe refers, in which residents must live along the sides of the road because property restrictions provide them with no other possible living place; or the hacienda *cascos*, where the pattern of residence is set by the hacienda owner, and where the values of the immigrant laborer are especially restricted and his access to a living place is severely controlled. One reason that the hacienda communities seem to present an anomaly in the general scheme described by Wolfe is that they can only be explained in terms of the control over the access and potential restrictions that are available to a single power, i.e., the owner. In most villages, however, access is more complicated, for there are complicated property patterns, and the environment may offer one alternative if another is closed off.

The power distribution pattern in a given locale essentially is one of the factors that forces a limitation on the alternative ways of settling. Within these restrictions, the individual may seek out that which appeals to him the most . . . or which appears to be the least disadvantageous. This is seemingly of little importance in scattered peasant communities; it is clearly paramount in hacienda and plantation communities. It does not require much effort, however, to recognize that it is equally true in the former, and it is simply that the nature of the power system is more complex because there is no obvious concentration. It becomes acutely clear, however, when population growth leads to a man-land ratio that cannot be supported on the technology known to the community. Then each property owner, in a sense, presses the power of his rights to certain land, thereby forcing certain individuals to leave the community entirely. When a person is forced to leave a community, no matter how he rationalizes it (whether he says he "wants to see the world" or that his brother stole his land), he is being channeled into a new residence, and therefore is definitely affecting the settlement pattern.

The issue of power is so important that, left essentially untended as it is in Wolfe's discussion, it serves to weaken much of his later discussion. Why, for example, go to great lengths to discuss appropriate forms of community organization and municipal government, if it may be argued that the very reason that these are generally weak is that the real power lies in the central government, some economic figure or some combination of the two? Then no amount of discussion on the benefits of local organizational strength makes much sense.

The issue becomes evident when Wolfe discusses the relative roles of the different classes of settlement patterns, but mentions only in passing other kinds of organizations that may in fact provide the only alternative for development

### *Latin American Research Review*

on the local level. Let us grant that settlement patterns are always in some part the product of the particular set of local power arrangements, and that these arrangements provide the controls that limit the access of individuals to things they want. If this is so, then in many instances it follows that power structure change must precede settlement pattern change. Power structure is little affected by the optimum size of villages, or even the public policies that may be expressed about planned and ideal settlement patterns. Rather, one looks to the way to change the power structure. And while there may be more revolutionary ways, one way is to strengthen organizations such as rural political party organization. The interesting thing about all of these kinds of organizations is that none of them is primarily determined by a territorial base; i.e., they are not first territorially defined. The basis of their organization is some set of common interests concerned with getting access to something that they want. Now it may well be pointed out that the existing settlement pattern will play a role in the ease with which such organizations may come into being. But the issue here is that it is the establishment of another kind of organization that will lead to the challenging of the power structure that will, in turn, provide the opening of channels of access to things that people want; that it is this which will ultimately produce a situation in which a quite new kind of settlement pattern may emerge.

I go through all the above with the sure feeling that Wolfe recognizes much, if not all of it, implicitly in his paper, and that he well knows that such is the case. It seems worthwhile spelling out, however, because he has intentionally chosen not to deal with it, and because to me it appears to be so very important that its absence severely weakens much of his paper.

*By Wilbur Zelinsky, Department of Geography,  
The Pennsylvania State University*

There is only one possible way to begin this commentary—with a hearty burst of applause for a highly stimulating pioneering attempt at a coherent statement on the nature of rural settlement forms throughout Latin America. Not only has Marshall Wolfe drawn together a wide variety of disparate material from over an enormous territory, but he has managed to impart genuine form and substance to a rather intractable phenomenon and to provide us with some truly rich insights. It is not being hypercritical, however, to note that what does most clearly emerge is the enormity and urgency of what is still to be learned about Latin American rural settlement as against the small fund of verified fact and theory presently at our command.

The hierarchical scheme of rural settlement forms that Wolfe proposes has much to commend it. In addition to the more or less “normal” progression from open-country dispersed settlement to the quasi-urban pueblo, proper



attention is given to the hacienda, ejidos, pioneer squatters, various types of floating population, and other aberrant forms of settlement. In addition, the historical, social, and economic concomitants of each settlement entity are suggested in quite commendable fashion. Further study will doubtless suggest further improvements in this scheme. For the moment, I have only two minor reservations to state: There is no explicit mention on rural settlement in the Antilles (aside from some Cuban material); and I cannot help but wonder whether settlement morphology in these small, but theoretically most provocative, territories may not deviate meaningfully from that on the mainland. In many other phases of its human geography the West Indian realm does depart notably from most of the rest of Latin America. Secondly, however, little practical importance the point may have, I am curious as to how much carryover there has been from pre-Columbian settlement patterns. May I also suggest that much more thought might be given to a point made only in passing by Wolfe—that the rural communities of Latin America have little in common with the compact, complexly organized villages prevalent in much of the Old World. In this respect, may there not be some basic kinship with the mixture of *isolated farmsteads and definitely nonfarm villages* that characterizes most of Anglo-America? It is just possible that some deep underlying commonality of New World rural settlement pattern crosses the great cultural disconformity between Anglo-America and Latin America.

Wolfe has quite rightly stressed the dynamic nature of the current settlement situation. The increasingly amorphous nature—both physically and socially—of the smaller aggregations and the emergence of an ever larger marginal or floating population carry with them some quite disturbing implications. He is the only writer I know of to call attention to the “decay of the small town” in Latin America, as smaller settlements are bypassed by newer modes of transportation connecting the countryside with the larger cities. Recent Central American population statistics that I have been analyzing reveal a curious phenomenon that may well be quite rare outside Latin America: smaller places, i.e., those of less than 5,000 inhabitants, have been growing much less rapidly than larger cities or than open-country population, and, in fact, many individual places have suffered absolute losses of population.

A program of accelerated research on the geographic dimensions of Latin America's rural settlement is clearly called for. Additional knowledge is urgently needed not only as a basis for rational planning and a program of social development but also to develop a deeper theoretical understanding of the spatial and temporal aspects of the rural settlement fabric. This compelling sense of urgency is bred by the obvious rapidity of current change. We need to trace and grasp the older picture before it is defaced too badly. We must understand the processes of change before they have galloped out of control if we are

### *Latin American Research Review*

to help make Latin America livable. The most immediate need is obviously an armful of maps depicting various aspects of settlement morphology, and at various scales from the hemispheric down to the individual unit. Where, precisely, are those haciendas we have read so much about—and the plantations—and the moving (or stagnating) frontiers of pioneer settlement? What is their precise anatomy and physiology? Where is rural settlement tight and clustered? Where is it loose and formless? What are the spatial ranges of the variety of ways by which man has arrayed himself across the Latin American earth? Next, we need to know much more about the interrelations between settlement types and various aspects of Latin America's physical geography, and with various forms of rural economy and cultural pattern, and how they are changing through time. This implies much painstaking fieldwork and scanning of such documentary materials as exist. We need also to add a great deal to the pitifully little we know about land tenure systems and how they relate to settlement forms and the general human geography of Latin America.

I also enthusiastically agree with Wolfe that we must have "much further information on relative population sizes, population structures, rates of growth, and currents of migrations," probably much more than can be harvested from existing or future censuses and other official demographic sources. But I wish to take mild issue with him concerning his belief that "the rural population is increasing only slowly." A current rate of rural increase approximately 1.5 per cent per annum may sound innocuous alongside the truly explosive growth rates in the larger cities; but it is certainly sufficient to generate major problems in a short time. And here again, in the changing numbers, distribution, and impact of man upon the land and social systems, is an exciting frontier for geographic investigation.

Finally, let me vigorously endorse Wolfe's suggestion that we must execute case studies of the economic, social—and geographic—consequences of the new highways that are now appearing so widely in Latin America. A series of "before-and-after" studies gauging the effects of these new roads would be extraordinarily useful not only to social planners but also to anyone concerned with the basic problems of transportation geography and the processes whereby innovations are being diffused into the once remote corners of the world.

*By John P. Augelli, Department of Geography,  
The University of Kansas*

It is obvious that CEPAL intended this effort to be timely but not timeless; to be disturbing but not definitive; and to place more stress on provoking questions than on providing answers. Perhaps without intent, the author of the

study also posted warnings of dangers and difficulties which he himself might have done well to heed: 1) the risk of generalizing about land-people patterns in habitats as varied as those of Latin America; 2) the threat of semantic and conceptual swamps that may engulf the unwary surveyor of the backlands to the south; 3) the pitfalls of incomplete reconnaissance.

There is an unmistakable call to unfinished business here, and the challenge comes through loud and clear to all the social sciences. CEPAL has crossed disciplinary lines to tackle a problem that few independent scholars feel the confidence or competence to undertake for the whole of Latin America. Wolfe makes a bold attempt not only to present a "composite picture" of rural settlement, he also suggests criteria for identifying and classifying the various settlement types, and sets guidelines for future research. If the results sometimes fail to deliver all that the title of the monograph promises, they more than succeed in pointing up how discouragingly little is known about the settlement phenomena.

The specific questions addressed to geography include, "How are the different settlement types distributed over the region? How are they influenced by topography, crops and systems of cultivation, land tenure, cultural patterns, and deliberate government policies? What are the effects, under defined conditions, of the construction of service nuclei, main highways, local access roads?" Less directly, geographers are also invited to investigate the ways in which rural population is distributed upon the land, the importance of ecological conditions as an influence in both dispersed and agglomerated settlement, and the functional relationships and spatial interactions of hierarchies of settlements as a basis for delimiting planning regions.

Apropos of these guidelines, it may be useful to note that geography has a long-standing and special research concern for rural settlement and colonization in Latin America. As Parsons<sup>1</sup> points out, interest in these phenomena goes back to the work of Mark Jefferson in the 1920's; it continued with the contributions of Isaiah Bowman and George McBride in the 1930's;<sup>2</sup> and it has reached a peak in the last two decades with the publication of literally dozens of studies by U.S., French, German and other geographers.<sup>3</sup> Even now, rural settlement is probably receiving more attention from geographers than any other facet of the Latin American scene. Geography's concern with and contributions to the understanding of ecological problems (tropicality, drought, topography, vegetation) have been almost equally strong.<sup>4</sup>

Incidentally, if the author of the CEPAL piece on rural settlement is aware of this work, he gives virtually no evidence of it. So much so, in fact, that he is vulnerable to the charge of failing to make a reasonable reconnaissance of published materials. This is not to suggest that geography has

reached the millenium vis-à-vis research on rural settlement, but those who call for its contribution should have some familiarity with its existing literature, not to mention cartography.

A geographer's second broad reaction to the CEPAL study touches on the risk of generalization. The cloak of homogeneity in which we like to dress Latin America is not an easy fit for its infinite diversity of land-people patterns. The physical environment in which this area's rural settlement types have evolved runs virtually the entire gamut of possibilities. Deserts and rainforests; alpine meadows and coastal mangrove swamps; grasslands and selva; rich volcanic soils and sterile laterites; coastal accessibility and interior remoteness—you name it, and Latin America has it. The response of rural settlement, particularly as expressed by spatial arrangement and form, to such a checkerboard of natural conditions is frequently different.<sup>5</sup> If to this physical diversity is added that stemming from cultural differences (in land tenure and use, in the degree of Amerindian or Negro slave carry over, in proximity to transportation, etc.), generalizing about rural settlement patterns and types becomes an interesting academic exercise, but hardly a basis for "a strategy of rural development." Given development planning as the goal, there is doubt that the system for classifying rural settlement proposed by CEPAL will stand up even in a single country. Can we really apply the same criteria of classification in Brazil to Japanese or European rural settlements on the Paulista frontier and to *caboclo* groupings in the country's Northeast?

And now off to the semantic and conceptual swamps for a few *por ejemplos*. Except for implying that both are large holdings characterized by a manor house-worker village pattern of settlement, CEPAL makes virtually no distinction between the "hacienda" and the "plantation." Failure to differentiate between the two not only runs contrary to recent trends,<sup>6</sup> it also blurs some important differences in rural settlement history. For example, in areas once characterized by slave plantations (as opposed to haciendas), the large-scale exodus of Negroes from the lowland estates to squat on unused mountain lands gave rise to dispersed settlement or to "peasant villages" quite different from the former slave-quarter groupings.

In a recent publication,<sup>7</sup> Stone points out that geographers alone have at least eight different meanings for the term "settlement." How many do the other disciplines have? What is the Spanish equivalent of this term—"poblamento"? Do concepts such as "community," "neighborhood," and *vecindario* ring the same for an anthropologist as they do for a political scientist or an economist?

These observations are intended less as criticisms than as irritants to provoke a further exchange of views among those concerned with rural settlement in Latin America. The Social Affairs Division of CEPAL is to be congratulated for its bold effort to provide a springboard for this much needed dialogue.

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Parsons, "The Contribution of Geography to Latin American Studies," in C. Wagley (ed.), *Social Science Research on Latin America*, New York, 1964, pp. 53–58.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, M. Jefferson, *Recent Colonization in Chile* (1921) and *The Peopling of the Argentine Pampa* (1926); I. Bowman, *The Pioneer Fringe* (1931); and G. M. McBride, *Chile: Land and Society* (1936).

<sup>3</sup> For a selected bibliography, see Parsons, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–85.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Compare, for example, the spatial distributions and forms of rural settlements as described in each of the following: P. Monbeig, *Pionniers et Planteurs de São Paulo*, Paris, 1952; R. Nunley, *The Distribution of Population in Costa Rica*, Washington, 1960; J. P. Augelli, "Rural Settlement Types of Interior Puerto Rico," *Journal of Geography*, Vol. 51, 1952; R. Eidt, "Pioneer Settlement in Eastern Peru," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 49, 1959, pp. 255–78.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Pan American Union, *Plantation Systems of the New World*, Washington, D.C., 1959; E. R. Wolf and S. Mintz, "Haciendas and Plantations in Middle America," *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 6, 1957; J. P. Augelli, "The Rimland-Mainland Concept of Culture Areas in Middle America," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 52, 1962.

<sup>7</sup> K. Stone, "The Development of a Focus for the Geography of Settlement," *Economic Geography*, Vol. 41, 1965, p. 348.

By L. C. Faron, *Department of Anthropology, State University of New York, Stony Brook*

The very ambitiousness of this paper commands attention, and Wolfe's lucidly arranged synthesis of his materials merits respect. I shall not dwell on its values, which are obvious to anyone who has attempted to make general statements about Latin America, but point out what I consider shortcomings which are perhaps not so obvious.

While any intelligent synthesis is of value, it must be noted that this one rests overwhelmingly on rural sociological surveys, with a few notable exceptions which include the studies in depth by Oscar Lewis, Eric Wolf, and the Reichel-Dolmatoffs. Like the materials on which it is essentially based, therefore, Wolfe's study tends to skim the surface of the problems it sets out to identify and possibly solve.

The paper seems to have a double goal. One of these is achieved within the limitations of the source materials. The paper does indeed take into account more systematically than hitherto (as far as I know) the ways the rural populations are distributed upon the land and of the relationships (or some of them) *between rural people and the local centers of administration, marketing, and services.*

The other major goal, outlining a sort of action program by the discussion of its basic problems, while approached in what appear to be firm steps, is not achieved. But Wolfe makes clear that his work is preliminary and tentative.

Still, the paper suggests an attitude which leaves me wondering. On page 30, for example, we read: "An exploratory study such as the present cannot avoid falling back repeatedly on an unsatisfactory answer that is also a commonplace of international reports: much more representative and reliable local information is needed, permitting sociologists, economists, human geographers, and political scientists to advance toward better founded general conclusions." This seems to bother Wolfe.

I would be content to let the statement of problem rest as on page 30, provided the phrase "more representative" were replaced by "more detailed," which hopefully would deemphasize the survey interests and get us squarely into studies in depth, *without which* surveys are of dubious instructional value. Just think what we would know of Peru if we had 20-odd studies such as Moche and Hualcan (not even cited in Wolfe's footnotes, along with other omissions such as Ford's *Man and Land in Peru*, and McBride's two classic studies of Mexico and Chile!).

Since we are interested in uplifting rural life in the best possible way, how can we omit a detailed consideration of the complex and relatively unknown systems of values and traditional institutional networks, especially those of kinship and marriage? Instead of dismissing the need for a technical appraisal of Latin American "classes," as Wolfe does, we should focus attention on this very problem, and also try to understand the entrenched bioethnic differences in these populations and all the problems these entail. Wolfe has the answer about how to meet such problems—by working with more extensive local information—but he seems impatient with it.

A final note. Wolfe goes into some detail about the kinds of economic and educational advances which might be made in the interest of rural development. While I found this an interesting section of the paper, I have doubts about some of the explicit proposals, such as the ideal size of communities, kinds of administrative networks, services, etc. In the absence of detailed knowledge, little more than common sense may be applied to these problems. Broad surveys do not provide answers, often not even suitable guidelines, however flexible, to action programs.