THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AND THE FORMULATION OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY*

M. L. WILSON
United States Department of Agriculture

IN THESE rapidly changing times there should be a close tie between sociologists and all workers in the field of education. There are many brands of sociological theory, of educational sociology, and of educational institutions. The fact that there are wide variations in ideas in both the theoretical and applied aspects of sociology is a good sign, and it is not to be wondered at that those people who are on the action front in both educational programs and social betterment programs, are sometimes confused by conflicting theoretical positions among the sociologists, and sometimes feel that aside from economic and political science, the social sciences have little to contribute towards their problems in action, administration, and policy formation. There are several signs in these changing times which lead me to feel that all of the social sciences are now in process of integration and developing a harmony among them which will give them much closer relationships than they have had hitherto to the active programs of Government and of group action in our present-day civilization.

A little more than three-quarters of a century ago Congress passed the Land Grant College Act which authorized the organization of a Land Grant College in each State. A study of the legislation and discussions in Congress regarding this Act of the Lincoln Administration clearly indicates that Congress wanted these colleges to be colleges of the common people, and to be closely related to the agricultural and industrial walks of life. A little more than 50 years ago Congress made provision for State Agricultural Experiment Stations. Last year there was celebrated the 75th anniversary of the passage of the Smith-Lever Act which brought into existence the agricultural Extension Service. The Extension Service was broadly conceived as an instrument primarily but not wholly of adult education through which, by means of the educational process, all rural people would be given the opportunity of learning the results of scientific research and scientific thinking as related to agriculture, and that out of this all would grow a rural civilization based upon scientific knowledge,—a civilization in which rural people would have a way of living which gave opportunity for individual and group realization of the best values inherent within them.

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This system of agricultural extension has had remarkable acceptance on the part of the general public and the farmers of the country. From small beginnings in 1914 it has reached the point now where its total budget is $32,000,000,—a considerable sum by comparison with expenditures for agricultural education of an older generation, but by no means out of proportion when considered in comparison with expenditures for public schools or college education, or when considered in relation to the 6,500,000 farm families throughout the country. As a matter of fact, the growth in the total budget of the Nation for agricultural extension work has not kept pace with the increased expenditures in the field of College and Public School education.

There are now employed nearly 9,000 extension workers, county agricultural agents, home demonstration agents, county club leaders, State Extension specialists, and Extension specialists of various types, both State and national. I believe that in the related field of Smith-Hughes vocational high school education there are also approximately 8,000 teachers of agriculture and home science.

The grand total budget for the current fiscal year in the Southern States, those including and lying east of Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, and south of Virginia and Kentucky, is $12,500,000. You see, therefore, that there has gradually evolved a very great and important system of adult education for rural people.

During the past seven or eight years Congress has passed a number of Acts which have set up Federal activities on behalf of rural people that in many respects greatly affect their lives and in so doing are giving a kind of conscious direction to rural life and rural society. I shall not attempt to enumerate all of these great Federal agencies. There is the Agricultural Adjustment Administration which is seeking to bring about a balance in our agricultural economy, to stabilize income, and give a fair relation between agriculture and the remainder of the industrial life of the Nation. There is the Farm Security Administration which is working primarily with the underprivileged, and through administration of the Bankhead-Jones Act is endeavoring to reverse the trend from increasing tenancy to increasing farm ownership. The Soil Conservation Service is working to reduce the destructive erosion of the soils of the Nation. The Rural Electrification Administration is endeavoring to make electricity available to farm homes. Likewise, several other Federal action agencies are seeking in their particular fields to improve the conditions of rural life.

Nearly all of these administrative agencies are endeavoring to develop some type of local and State responsibility, and some type of relationship, local and State. Nearly all of these action agencies of the Department of Agriculture have local and State committees which are assisting them in adjusting their programs to local needs.

One of the most important of the new activities is the development of land use planning on a county, State, and national level. Planning the use of land and relating the uses which natural and economic forces more or less determine to the needs of the people who live on the land seems to be a basic activity which lies underneath most of the educational and administrative programs in agriculture.

Space does not permit my giving an elaborate description of the set-up, the structure, and the functioning of land-use planning on the county level, on the State level, and on the national level. Most of you understand that the county
committee is made up of farsighted farm men and women, of representatives of the local administrative agencies of the Department of Agriculture, such as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Farm Security Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, etc. The county agent acts as secretary of this committee. The State Extension Director is chairman of the State Committee. It, likewise, is composed of outstanding farm men and women who represent the different types of agriculture within the State, and representatives of the various action agencies of the Department of Agriculture. There is another committee in the Department of Agriculture which is quite similar to the committees which I have outlined, which functions in the national Department of Agriculture in a manner similar to that functioning on the State level, and on the local level. Every effort is being made, particularly on the State level and on the local level, to integrate and bring into democratic relationships the ideas and aspirations of the people on the land, and the technicians and research workers.

Now, this approach as it works out in the Southern States should be of tremendous interest to Southern sociologists. Here is what I believe to be the beginnings of a truly democratic and practical approach to the attack on the fundamental problems in agriculture: first, through a fact-finding process which is participated in by both farm people and technical and research people; and secondly, an attempt is being made to relate the findings and recommendations which come from this process to the administration of the national programs insofar as the legal structures of these organizations permit.

This approach is going to call upon the social sciences to give all that they are prepared to give. I think it is going to stimulate research in the social sciences tremendously, but is going to place on the social sciences responsibilities for concrete results which can be translated into action, and it will no doubt tend to stimulate a search for some common fundamental basis for attack. I think that the basis for this fundamental attack lies in what is coming to be called the "cultural approach." There is a basis for understanding here which I think can be most useful and most helpful. It is for this reason that I have great admiration for the kind of thing which is being done by those cultural anthropologists and social psychologists who are endeavoring concretely and objectively to study our own culture, using an adaptation of the methods which have been used in the study of primitive and foreign cultures. While some of the sociologists in recent years have laid much stress on the concept of culture, I don't think they have gotten this idea across, either to the other sociologists, or to the other workers in the social sciences. Why is it so difficult to get this cultural concept so it becomes a working principle? I think the difficulty lies in our inability to clearly see ourselves and to perceive the nonmaterial and intangible thing which is our culture. We get to know about culture, therefore, in a comparatively concrete way by seeing other cultures, and perceiving their structures and their processes. Through this comparative method—comparative anatomy, so to speak—we can derive the tools and techniques to arrive at some understandings relative to our own culture.

Early this spring I was driving through the south central part of Texas, and came very suddenly upon a farmstead at the roadside which had a very beautiful stone house. There was a fine large garden with a chicken-tight fence around it. At the side of the house there was a large
clump of fruit trees, and back of the house was a good-sized well-kept barn. This farmstead struck me as being very different from what I had been seeing as we drove along the road. The next three or four farmsteads were similar to the one I just described. I said to my traveling companion, a native Texan, "Why are these new stone houses, large gardens, and neat farmsteads?" "Well," he said, "this is the Fredericksburg Community. It is made up of Germans who settled here in the 1840's and 1850's. Most of them live in this kind of house. They raise good gardens when the rest of us don't seem to be able to raise gardens. They have been carrying on a satisfactory live-at-home program for nearly 100 years. "But," he said, "they are a peculiar people. They are not like the rest of the farm people in Texas."

Cultural islands like this one at Fredericksburg, Texas, are interesting because they serve to emphasize cultural contrasts. There are many others scattered through the South, such as the Germans in Warren County, North Carolina; or at Waldense, North Carolina; the Swiss at Helvetia, West Virginia; Bohemians in Southern Texas; the Germans and Swiss at Dutch Fork, South Carolina; the French in Louisiana; or the Quakers near Greensboro, North Carolina. An outsider who comes to one of these communities recognizes at once that the people are different from their neighbors or from himself. There is a sharp contrast, but I think I can say without fear of contradiction that your ideas and my ideas, and the way you and I live, look just as strange to them as their ideas and their way of life look to us. If you were to ask the people at Fredericksburg, Texas, they would probably tell you that they do not want to share what they might call the "shiftlessness" of their neighbors any more than these same neighbors want to share the unending toil and self-denial which are cardinal virtues in the Fredericksburg scheme of life, as the cultural anthropologists term it; the culture of this community of descendants of German immigrants of nearly a hundred years ago.

Now, cultural anthropologists and sociologists who have the cultural viewpoint should be the people to tell us why this community of farmers, three and four generations removed from Germany live as they do, although their neighbors on all sides have a different mode of life, a different culture. Why do they carry on a live-at-home program of a high order, when their American neighbors don't have such a program, even though the Extension Service has been preaching "live-at-home" ever since it first began over twenty-five years ago? Why do they have well kept homes and fields with little soil erosion, when all about them houses are in poor repair and fields are eroded and much less carefully tilled?

Cultural anthropologists and some sociologists have given much scientific study to these and similar problems in rural life, and have evolved some principles which meet the tests of science and which throw considerable light on them. They would insist, and I agree with them, that the explanation cannot lie in such biological factors as racial origin, or in geographic factors of soil and climate. They would ask, for example, why some rich agricultural lands are inhabited by healthy, happy, farm people living in security and enjoying the benefits of a rich community life and why some others are inhabited by ill-fed and ill-housed farm people with insecure tenure on the land and with the most meager community life. Nor would they accept as an answer, the statement, "They are that kind of people," which is another way of saying...
that they were born with these differences already determined, or, to put it in popular terms, that "blood will tell." Rather they would look to the cultural factors, to national origins, religious backgrounds, social conventions, economic habits, family organization; to the manner in which the people in each group are born, live, love, play, think, work, worship, and die; what they believe, what they consider right and wrong, what they value highly, what wins social approval and how this approval is expressed—in short, their culture.

Culture in this sense, as the term is used by the cultural anthropologist, and as sociologists know, refers not only to the aesthetic or the finer things in life, but covers the whole range of material things, and the habits, attitudes, and values in which these things are set and which condition their function in the life of the community, as well as the social arrangements which man has developed.

It might be said that culture includes the whole of man's social behavior as it can be observed in the group life of human beings. This includes (1) the machines and skills and methods by which men make a living, (2) the customs and habits and organizations by which people live together in a community (for if there were no rules and standards of behavior people simply could not live together, and (3) religious beliefs, values, and practices. As the English anthropologist Tylor put it in his classical definition, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." This definition seems to omit the material things. If they were included, this definition would be complete.

As one studies the many cultural systems that are to be found, one is impressed with the effort which man has made to keep his culture integrated—to preserve a balance among the various aspects in their relations to each other. All parts of a culture are related to all other parts and the effects of an important change in one element will eventually be reflected in the other parts. Elaborate theories have been built up to show how changes in the culture, as a whole, result from changes in the economic, the technological, or the religious spheres, and many are the arguments over whether changes in the ways of producing food are responsible for changes in ideas, or whether changes in ideas also produce changes in the ways of producing food. Illustrations of this latter type of change are not hard to find. Consumers become conscious of vitamins and many farmers shift their production; the length of skirts affects the demand for cotton, just as the vogue of slenderness in the human figure affects the demand for wheat. Many a farmer today is buying a tractor because that is the way to keep his prestige or to keep the boy on the farm, even though he may doubt that for him the tractor is economically justified. I don't subscribe to the doctrine that one or another element in culture is primary and all others follow in its wake. I do know that anyone who proposes to make any changes in one part of a culture, such as methods of techniques of farming or institutional changes in land use must be prepared for changes in other parts as well, for when the existing balance is disturbed every effort will be made to bring about a new balance.

The balance between the parts of a culture becomes especially important in relation to the central value system, the elements which constitute the something for which men live as contrasted to the things with which they live. To disturb the central values of any group, those for
which people live and are willing to sacrifice their lives, is to disrupt the entire culture and to threaten the physical survival of the group. The history of the contact of Europeans with the primitive peoples of all parts of the world is full of illustrations of this point. And it happens just as much within groups of highly civilized peoples as within any other. We need but look at some of the major trouble spots in American agriculture today to see the correctness of that observation.

Are our farmers and farm cultures today, as they are shifting from prescientific folkways to science, mechanical technology, and scientific folkways, in the same fundamentally confused state that the Navajos were when they tended flocks of sheep, but did not understand overgrazing?

The core of any culture is the value-system which is not nearly as subject to change as the technological or economic aspects of our life. It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of these value-systems. Here are bound together the ideas which give meaning to the activities, the stresses and strains of everyday life. Frequently they are difficult to detect, but anything that challenges them is likely to meet with resistance or open hostility. The fact that the value-systems, like other parts of the culture, are acquired almost as easily as the oxygen we breathe, makes it more difficult to be fully aware of them and always to take them into account. The mere fact that they are anchored so deeply below all the speech reactions and the rationalizations of everyday life, however, makes it very important that they be recognized and understood.

One big contribution which the student of cultures can make to the problems of agriculture is through the emphasis on the importance of the value-systems of different distinct communities and farm groups. These value-systems are probably the key to most of the differences in modes of living between various contrasting communities and distinct groups. A speculative and exploitive economy is unlike one in which security and conservation are major goals,—in fact they are so unlike each other that you can tell them apart simply by looking at such externals as the way the fields are cultivated, the condition of the buildings, the repair of the fences, the size and character of the gardens and fruit trees, etc. There have been and are in American agriculture large groups of farmers who consider ownership of the land as a primary value for which they will make almost any sacrifice. At the other end of the scale there are large groups to whom current consumption (food, clothing, automobiles, recreation, etc.) is more important than ownership of land or the ability to transmit a plot of it to the next generation. Some farm groups have considered the borrowing of money as a major calamity; others have looked upon borrowing as a normal aspect of the annual cycle of production.

When cultural anthropology as applied to agriculture—agricultural cultural anthropology, if you please—can get its place in agricultural research, then we will begin to understand something about the various basic differences in value systems in American agriculture. For example, there is the difference between those who view farming as a more or less self-contained "way of life" and those who see it simply as another way of making an income. Some farmers are concerned primarily with the opportunities which farm life offers for satisfactory living and the flowering of individual capacities and happiness and are only secondarily a part of the price and market economy, and
while other farmers are concerned chiefly with this price and market economy and go just as far as possible to turn the farm into an efficient factory for converting soil resources, water, air and sunlight into products which will have some exchange value in the market place. An agricultural program and a land use program designed for one of these groups may work very badly when applied to the other or even have an effect directly opposed to that which is desired.

The cultural approach to any problem not only seeks to understand the dominant value system but it looks on the ways of living in a society as a whole of interrelated parts. It sees every element as related to every other in the total organization of ways of behaving, and a change in one element as affecting other parts of the total. You cannot introduce into any given culture some new items without expecting effects in many parts of it. The introduction of the automobile, for example, has affected all aspects of rural life: buying and selling, participation in school, church, and club; visiting and use of leisure time; family relations, the attitude toward workstock and relatively simple machinery; the police power and functions of local and central government; attitudes toward government and law enforcement, conceptions of politeness and good manners, methods of securing social prestige, the geographical mobility of rural people, and many others. Obviously, some changes are more easily made than others. In modern America we are more receptive to new mechanical devices and in agriculture to changes in the techniques of production, than to changes in our value-systems, which are usually so charged with an emotional tone that merely to examine them arouses resistance. But I am convinced that if it were known how fundamental changes in the value-systems of different groups take place, then democratic educational processes would be able to bring about changes in agricultural practices, which we consider desirable, far more effectively than by any amount of tinkering with the separate parts of the economic, political, or technological systems which frequently seems to be considered as the best means to improvement. The criteria for value systems rest as much or more on philosophy and religion as they do on natural science.

Every agricultural extension worker is familiar with the story of the backwoods farmer whose answer to proffered advice on farm practices was simply, "Son, I don't need none of your learnin'; I ain't farming half as good as I know how right now." I think the story of this man is pertinent here. He didn't value knowledge for its own sake, nor did he prefer ignorance as such. But if he were to adopt any new practice, he would need to be shown how it fits into his scheme for living or his value system. The fact that some professor at the experiment station had given his blessing to the proposed practice was not important to this man. He would adopt it when he was convinced that it would better enable him to accomplish the major objectives which are part of his value-system: to make more money, to have better crops or cleaner fields or better equipment than his neighbors, to have more time to sit on the porch, to have the satisfaction of doing a better job, to enhance his feeling of his own importance, to increase his security, to give his children a better chance, to feed his family better, or whatever else they may include. To convince him of this, of course, requires a knowledge of the value system of the individual, or the group which he represents. To assume that
his values necessarily are the same as those of the worker who offers the advice, or that he is necessarily chiefly interested in increasing his income or comforts is to make as grave a mistake as to assume that they do not exist. Moreover, attempting to see the culture as a whole imposes on the worker a consideration of the implication of the changes which he is proposing. Is he willing to recommend the change in the value-systems of the group which may be implied by the proposed change in practices?

A recognition of this point of view about the importance of knowing the culture of the group, carries with it a recognition of the fact that agricultural extension work, like any other educational activity, cannot combat culture or cultural trends. Any educational program works best by sinking its roots deep into the culture and injecting its contribution in such a way that ultimately it permeates through the whole instead of imposing something from above or from the outside.

A study of culture frequently seems to put a brake on any type of action, for cultural anthropologists, social psychologists, and sociologists are constantly pointing out how difficult it is to bring a new element into the culture, if the attempt is made in the wrong way. But appreciation of how culture really works can make of that knowledge a means for facilitating cultural change. The greatest need in agricultural research today is for scientific knowledge regarding the various farm cultures and the value system within them. The skillful political office seeker recognizes this cultural concept when he attempts to identify his own objectives with the accepted basic values of the group which he is attempting to influence. As Carl Taylor put it recently, "When the structural and functioning patterns of communities are violated by outside pressure, local resistance develops; when they are used or amplified, local assistance is guaranteed." The best way to modify a whole cultural system is for the educational processes to work within it, not to attack it broadside. The most effective way to work within any cultural setting is to show how a program developed cooperatively by the group and the experts contributes to the solution of the problems of the persons and groups involved.

In agricultural extension work we are concerned with developing the new out of the old, we recognize the very great significance of the culture, because we are convinced that this provides the surest way to progress. I am certain that if the agricultural practices of the South are to be remade, this will come about primarily through the leadership of Southern educational workers who fully appreciate the cultural setting out of which the present systems developed and who nonetheless keep before themselves a new set of objectives—a new set of value systems to grow out of the old.

This matter of working within the culture is exactly what we are trying to do through the Land Use Planning Program, in which extension workers, technical experts, and farmers are combining their efforts in order to bring about a clear realization of what it is that is desired by the farmers themselves and how these desires can be met. Such planning presupposes a sort of two column inventory with land in one column, described as to character, class, grade, and possible uses, and people in the other column with their several biological, economic, and cultural needs. Now county and State committees of farmers, their wives, and technical experts and administrative people in the land grant colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture, by means of
free and frank discussion and group thinking about problem stating and problem solving, move these two columns back and forth like a slide rule in order to get the highest standard of living for the people from the best use of the land. This is a program in which we do not diagnose a patient who hadn’t sent for the doctor, but the diagnosis is being made only as the people who are affected are aware of the problems and help describe the symptoms. It is a process whereby the scientific specialist tests his contributions in the light of common sense and in the light of the experience and needs of the people concerned—in short, in the light of the local culture. We are trying to avoid the difficulties which arise when the scientist or the expert comes down to the local area to tell the farmer what to do, often forgetting entirely that on the farm, life is lived as a whole and all parts of it must be meshed together in accordance with the value-systems which are in operation. Although we call it a Land Use Program, we are thinking of it as a program in which the people and their culture are of primary concern, for human welfare is the basic objective of most of our so-called action programs.

Above all, we are trying to keep in mind that the people themselves along with their habits, customs, traditions, and attitudes are the primary factors in the explanation of how maladjustments have come into existence and that they will be the controlling factors in making any adjustments. We have in the past talked a great deal about human and social effects of the maladjustments which are implied by soil erosion, improper land use, farm abandonment, rural poverty, etc., but we have tended to forget that human and social factors—the attitudes and habits of the people—are usually basic to these maladjustments.

The analysis of the psychological, sociological, and cultural factors seems more difficult because we have not yet learned readily to express them in quantitative terms and because the analysis of these factors demands more subtle processes than the analysis of purely physical factors. But, as the county and State committees, the land-grant colleges, and the United States Department of Agriculture are moving ahead with the Land Use Planning programs, it is being found more and more that experts and planners must sit down and talk over matters with the farmers. Recognition must be given to these factors and an integrated approach must be used which tries to see the culture as an indivisible whole.

This type of activity which agricultural extension workers have been developing for a long time helps them further to improve the outstanding work which they have been doing. This is somewhat different from extension work as it was originally thought of. In a few areas today, and in some areas in the past, county agents have rendered primarily special and individual services, being in a sense cafeteria workers who served up advice on sheep, diseases of cattle, spraying of fruit trees, laying out of terraces, and on many other special topics as this advice was needed. Gradually, under the impact of action programs, and changing agricultural situations, they found that their field of service could be much enlarged by working through groups with a somewhat broader set of problems. This program now leads them still further in the direction of considering not only isolated problems relating to farm income, farm practices, conservation, and the like, but requires that they become social engineers aware of and dealing constructively with the whole interrelationships in the cultural setting.
We no longer are willing to have the highly specialized specialist come to the farm with his own special program and apply it as a solution for all the problems of rural life, thereby neglecting all other considerations. The proposals of the specialist are desirable, in fact necessary, in themselves, as, for example, the eradication of liver fluke, the conservation of wild life, the planting of trees, the promotion of hybrid seed corn, the use of tractors or tractor equipment, promoting handicrafts, cash crops, etc.; but, if their net effect is to throw a culture out of balance, then their value may be zero. If the thing proposed involves debt and expenditures where there is no income, it may do more harm than good.

We have seen too much of proposals which overlook the fact that the farmer, like the average citizen, lives life as a whole—not as 10 percent chemist, 10 percent economist, 10 percent conservationist, 10 percent agronomist, 10 percent veterinarian, 10 percent accountant, etc. Moreover, we have learned through experience that again and again programs which in themselves appeared to be desirable have overlooked this matter of the culture of the people and have, therefore, failed to be of much service to the people whose problems they intended to solve. We have also seen how quickly a program superimposed from outside builds up resistance unless it meets a real need of the people and fits into their culture patterns.

If extension workers are to function effectively in diagnosing and working with a culture as a whole, they need the help of those social scientists who are willing and able to make careful studies of the nature and characteristics of culture and cultural processes. We have studied physical, chemical, and biological aspects of farm problems at great length and know a great deal about soils, fertility, capillary actions, animal breeding, plant diseases, and the like, and new discoveries are coming constantly. Later we turned to marketing, for there seemed little point in expanding the production of goods which were increasingly difficult to sell. Again we found that we were dealing with a special field and were not taking into account the whole range of problems which are so closely interrelated that we could not expect or promote changes in one phase of the whole without recognizing the interrelationships to others.

In much of the planning work that has been done, it has been a foregone conclusion that every area or region is different because of dissimilar physical and economic conditions and opportunities. There are cultural areas, as well as physiographic, land use, and type of farming areas. These cultural areas are distinct, in that they have customs, traditions, standards of living, folk lore, and values which they cherish and which should not be interfered with lightly. In some cases, modern scientific planning and action programs based upon value systems foreign to the culture may not only fail to promote the culture of the region, but actually serve to destroy it. This need not be so, but it will be if cultural and social factors are not given equal consideration with physical and economic factors.

But how can due consideration be given to the customs, traditions, and attitudes of the people if they are not known directly? How can we know what they are any more than we can know facts about physical conditions without detailed study? Many persons who would be unwilling to give quick judgments concerning characteristics of the soil or the influence of certain physical factors upon each other are none the less willing to make or to accept horseback impressions when it comes to cultural factors.
I think it is safe to say that you could ride along the road and form sounder judgments concerning the elements that go to make up some of the physical situations than you could those which go to make up the more subtle psychological and cultural situations.

We agricultural extension workers need a great deal of the help which sociologists, social psychologists, and cultural anthropologists can give us. What are the individual attitudes which are favorable or resistant to change, and how can they be most effectively modified? What motivations can and should agricultural education use and how? How fast can cultural change proceed without disrupting the stability of the culture itself? What can educational processes in agriculture do to bridge the apparent gap between the changes in the technological and economic spheres and in the non-material spheres of life? What are the value-systems of the groups with which we deal? What are the values which would be affected by the attempt to turn farming more completely into a rationalized efficient enterprise? What are the folkways of our economic and governmental process and how do they operate in the life of the farmer? These are only some of the questions on which we need some light, and I have great hopes that we are going to develop a new integrated science of man which will be concerned with such matters.

The development of such a science of man is still one of the needs of the future, for social scientists generally have narrowed their view to such an extent that they have not seen the culture as a living dynamic whole. If the social scientist are to make their contributions to this whole large-scale attempt to work with farm problems upon which we are now engaged, they must recognize the wholeness of farm problems. Specialization is a matter of convenience and makes for greater precision; but, when it puts blinders on the social scientist and makes him forget the social matrix from which a problem comes, it defeats its purpose. When we have a farm problem that seems on the surface to be wholly an economic matter, we may safely conclude that it is shot through and through with aspects that are political, sociological, cultural, psychological, philosophical, and even religious.

I have a definite conviction that the most fruitful research into the problems of rural life will have little regard for the traditional limits of present-day social science disciplines, but that it will rather go ahead with the cultural approach, attempting to get at an integrated view of life as it flows along. It will seek to define and understand cultural patterns which have developed and the techniques by which the cultures can be modified to make more desirable adjustments. Above all, it will concentrate upon the mainsprings of a culture of any area or group of people, namely, the system of values with which they operate. The social scientists must forget their jurisdictional disputes and overcome the tendency to shy away from problems at the margin of their fields, and they must strive more and more to look upon life as a whole and seek to understand the whole of the culture. If they will do that, they will be sure to make a major and urgently needed contribution to the solution of our farm problems.