EVALUATION OF OPERATION LAND TRANSFER

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This paper focuses on a systematic study of the operation and social impact of Operation Land Transfer within the framework of process and impact evaluation in an effort to develop national social policy. The data show that agrarian tenure is not associated with production and income, and that land reform transforms the traditional socio-economic system of a peasant's life. Thus, the paper stresses the need to evaluate the unanticipated side-effects of the program in the light of the total socio-cultural and ecological system and to perceive land reform as an essential transitory step to production and service cooperatives.

I am glad, in many respects, that the Philippine Sociological Society has taken interest in the current assessment of social programs and evaluation research. Such interest is timely since it brings into focus not only the strengths and weaknesses of current studies thereby serving to improve methodologies, but also the nature and function of evaluation research. This paper is an attempt to make available to policy makers, social planners, and the public, the consequences of the efforts of Operation Land Transfer at planned social change. It is also intended to provide information on how evaluation of Operation Land Transfer was conducted. The nature of evaluation research, the type of evaluation used, and the rationale for evaluation are described in the introductory section, while the greater part of the paper is devoted to descriptions of the design of the study, techniques of data collection and analysis used, and the effects and implications of the Operation Land Transfer.

What is evaluation research? In simplistic

terms, evaluation is a process by which the worth of something is determined. Evaluation research is a means or tool by which one can determine the worth of that something. In real qualitative terms, evaluation research consists of a systematic study of the operation and social impact of social action, treatment, or intervention programs (Bernstein and Freeman. 1975:1). As a systematic study, it requires a research design, specification of methods of data collection and analysis and identification of measurement procedures and of the sample and thence the definitive report of the investigation. As a valuation of social action programs for the pragmatic purpose of continuing or dissolving the program, evaluation research seeks to provide decision-making inputs. This is important insofar as it gauges the extent to which a program is able to effect changes in a desired direction. Whatever function evaluation research may purport to do for specific users, it has as its main concern the utilization of social science in social action efforts. How the social science methodologies demonstrate the effects of a social action program remains however a continuing concern. It is perhaps easier to tackle this issue by narrating our own expe-

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rience in the evaluation of Operation Land Transfer of the land reform program.

When we were approached by the funding agency to evaluate the Operation Land Transfer (OLT), we were just as convinced as the agency that OLT was in need of an evaluation. But what were we to evaluate? It would have been presumptuous, if not naive, on our part to consider that both parties wanted to evaluate the same concern. Did the agency want us to evaluate whether or not the OLT was implemented according to stated guidelines? Did it want to know whether the program operated in conformity to its design? Or was it concerned with measuring the extent to which OLT effected a change in the desired direction? Did it want us to identify these changes and demonstrate that they were a function of OLT? In the course of our discussions, it became clear that the agency wanted us to gauge the extent to which the program including the Samahang Nayon effected a change. Obviously, it was more concerned with impact evaluation than with process evaluation. But even the former goal seemed vague. If we were to identify the effects of Operation Land Transfer, along what terms? In terms of its operationally defined goals or of people's needs and expectations? In approaching this problem, we realized that the issues were not really contradictories but complementarities.

Studying the effects of Operation Land Transfer along both perspectives would yield an insight into the very character of the relationship between Operation Land Transfer and social change. Even the choice between process evaluation and impact evaluation was deemed superfluous. For in the true sense of the word, an impact evaluation without knowledge of whether or not a program was implemented as planned could fault a vital program and lead to inadequate policy decisions. Hence, a comprehensive evaluation combining both process and impact was imperative for the purpose of relevance and meaning.

In planning the study, we had first to identify the design or guidelines of the Operation Land Transfer by collecting written and illustrative materials about it from the Department of Agrarian Reform's Public Information Division and other OLT-related agencies. The design is important because it reveals the stated goals against which program success is evaluated. Some goals of the program are: to provide lands to tenant-farmers in order to improve their quality of life, to provide social justice, to assist small farmers increase their income, and improve their standard of living free from permicious institutional restraints and practices (Public Information Division, Department of Agrarian Reform, 1976). The design of the Operation Land Transfer therefore would allow us to know whether or not the program operated according to plan and whether the program resulted in changes consistent with the intended results.

Reviewing the Operation Land Transfer goals, it was immediately clear that we could not gauge the extent to which the program would effect a change in the desired direction. First, there was lack of operational definitions of such concepts as "quality of life" and "social justice" leading to the difficulty of devising approaches for eliciting and analyzing inputs. Next, there was time constraint. Rather than attempting to identify the effects of Operation Land Transfer in terms of all its objectives, we decided to focus on what we perceived as operationally defined goals such as increased income and improved standard of living. This focus is operational and therefore quantifiable to some extent. But even if it were possible to evaluate action programs of this sort with some degree of confidence, we were still in a theoretical dilemma. If the Operation Land Transfer is assumed to have effects on the economic life of the farmers, then it must have its effects as well on their social, political, and religious lives. In the true sense of the word, there is no economic life independent of the social, the political, and the religious. They all are structurally related to one another and in order for us to provide a holistic picture of the effects of the Operation Land Transfer, why not also investigate the non-economic aspects? Obviously, we cannot understand planned social change without taking into consideration its effects on the broader context of the farmer's life. Yet unlike rice production, income, and standard of living that are ordinarily altered after a few years by an action program, non-economic considerations are slower to change. They change by a process of internal readjustments to altered economic conditions of life.

In planning the research design, the first step was to identify the end-users of the Operation Land Transfer. Who were they and where were they located? Although we had an idea of who the end-users of the Operation Land Transfer would be, we had to tap the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) for the materials we needed among which was the list of all provinces, towns, and barrios covered by the program.

After going through the list, we decided to focus our evaluation research on a barrio in Bulacan. Bulacan was chosen because, first, it is one of the rice-producing areas in Central Luzon covered by the Operation Land Transfer. Second, it is relatively near the University of the Philippines and is accessible to transportation. Third, it is also one of the funding agency's areas of concern. But where in Bulacan? We first decided to choose a municipality from which we would later pick out a barrio. Our choice cannot be arbitrary on the following grounds. First, not all of the municipalities are covered by the Operation Land Transfer. Second, not all of them have the same number of OLT recipients. There are those with less than 50 recipients and others with over 200. Third, not all municipalities have the same land area. For example, San Miguel is around eleven times more than many of Bulacan's municipalities. Fourth, based on informants' judgment, there are security-risk municipalities, which are therefore not advisable as research sites. And fifth, studies have been conducted in some towns in the pre-OLT era. For purposes of research ethics and to provide data on a place previously uninvestigated, the need to conduct evaluation research elsewhere was deemed appropriate. It was only after considering all these various factors that we chose Calumpit as our sample municipality.

Identifying Calumpit as our area of concern does not mean the same thing as having identified a research site. Only one barrio could be studied given the constraints of time and funding. Our research site was identified, like Calumpit, only after it had gone through the process of elimination. Barrio X was eventually chosen because of its "typicalness" as to the number of OLT recipients, the size of its land area planted to rice, its proximity to Angat River and its accessibility. The barrio like many OLT-covered barrios in this municipality can be reached from the town proper by tricycles and private vehicles by way of its asphalted and feeder roads and by banca along the Angat River.

Once Barrio X was chosen, we had to identify our respondents. Who among the 2,395 inhabitants were OLT recipients? At first glance, the target population could be easily ascertained by securing a list of all recipients from the DAR Malolos branch office. However, the list, secured with considerable help from the Department of Agrarian Reform branch office, did not tally with that secured from the field technician assigned in the barrio, nor with the list of barangay captains and the Samahang Nayon officials, For whatever reasons, national and local-level records were not entirely similar. Thus, again using the process of elimination, OLT recipients whose names appeared thrice in different lists were tentatively considered respondents and those whose names did not appear consistently were interviewed. In the end, we conducted a census including those whose names appeared consistently. The census did not only provide us a means to crosscheck data obtained from various agencies and to obtain rapport with potential respondents but also to help us determine the sampling size. In our initial sampling design, it was decided that since there were 230 OLT recipients based on the DAR's record, then some form of random sampling could be the most appropriate sampling technique. But the crosschecking of the actual number of OLT recipients which the census afforded resulted in a much decreased number (113), and a complete count was then deemed to be most appropriate. With 16 field workers to collect data and sufficient funds to undertake a micro-study, we

decided to examine all the recipients that were targets of the action program.

The next problem was the techniques of data collection. A decision was made to structure the interview in such a way that interview sheets would have to be filled up by the field worker. Because we did not believe that this technique of eliciting data was exhaustive, other techniques such as in-depth interview, extended case method or situational analysis, direct contact with service personnel and other community members including former landowners, participant-observation, and use of records and reports, were utilized. The scope of the interview design included 16 major areas.* Independent of the structured interview, data on the barrio's topography, geography, and meteorology, distance from market centers, inventory and description of institutional facilities and infrastructure were also collected.

After designing the structured interview, a pretest was undertaken among some farmers outside Barrio X which resulted in deleting and modifying ambiguous items. As anticipated, the difficulty of eliciting data on income and expenditures based on recall was immediately

*They were: (1) characteristics of the Operation Land Transfer recipients, e.g., name, age, sex, marital status, religion, school standard (the last received formal education), length of farming in the barrio, length of stay in the barrio, main occupation, other occupation; (2) characteristics of the household members related to the recipient, e.g., name of each member of the household (i.e., eating from the same cooking pot), relationship to the target respondent, sex, marital status, age, school standard, main occupation, other occupation, place of birth; (3) information on status of Operation Land Transfer-covered land, e.g., size of land covered by Operation Land Transfer, location of land, current status of land (i.e., certificate received, certificate returned, certificate withheld, others), years being farmed, main products, etc.; (4) information on status of same land farmed in pre-Operation Land Transfer era, e.g., size of land farmed, location of land, status, years being farmed, main product, other products, name of landowner, etc.; (5) information on farm income from 1972-1976, e.g., derived from rice, vegetable crop, root crops, poultry, livestocks, etc.; (6) information on non-farm income from 1972-1976, e.g., derived from encountered. The field workers were all apprehensive that they would not gain access to accurate data of this kind. The data were eventually obtained nevertheless.

Information on income derived from rice did not present as much difficulty as other non-staple crops. Yield per hectare or the number of cavans of rice per hectare can be recalled and counterchecked by such means as records of yield of former landowners, of the rice miller, of those who provided labor in harvesting and threshing, and of the hauler. However, income derived from say, a vegetable crop, cannot be easily obtained because of the instability of produce and of the fact that because it was a supplementary crop, the quantity of yield cannot always be ascertained. However, by directly observing those activities relating to vegetable gardening and by survey of the land area planted to vegetables whether in the backyard or elsewhere, one can calculate with some degree of reliability income derived from vegetable crops. We noted in particular the type and quantity of seeds planted, the frequency of planting and harvesting, the application of inputs, the cash equivalent of produce, and compared these findings with

loans and borrowings, salaries and wages, interests, wins, fishing, etc.; (7) information on household expenditures from 1972-1976, e.g., clothing and footwear, household equipment and furniture, housing improvement, fuel and power, food, etc.; (8) information on social activities and services, e.g., baptism, wedding, funeral, etc.; (9) information on taxes from 1972-1976; e.g., land tax, income tax, residential land tax; (10) information on fertilizer inputs from 1972-1976, e.g, kind quantity and cost; (11) information on seed type, quantity and cost from 1972-1976; (12) information of weed control input, e.g., mechanical, hand, herbicide, quantity and cost from 1972-1976; (13) irrigation cost and frequency from 1972-1976; (14) information on labor input from operator, 1972-1976, e.g., family household. exchange, hired in land preparation, seedbed preparation, repairing and clearing of dikes, pulling and transplanting seedlings, transplanting, harvesting, cost, number of workers, age and sex; (15) information on yield per hectare from 1972-1976; and (16) information on Samahang Nayon and other organizational participation from 1972-1976, e.g., size of membership, attendance and participation, payment of dues.

those in 1972 to help the farmers recall the past events.

A direct observation of an economic activity or in broad terms, any social phenomenon in terms of categories of data that are meaningful for the purposes the observer has in mind would help the respondent reconstruct past activities, particularly if a present activity is contrasted against the same activity in the past. For example, while the respondent is spraying his growing legumes, the observer may note the growth of the crop and may ask if the same legume type was raised and the same growth prevalent in the past years particularly in 1972. Did the respondent have to spray the legumes in 1972 and even years before? Did spraying help increase production? When was it that there was a legume "boom," a poor yield, an average yield? How much legume was harvested when there was a boom, a poor vield, etc.? Answers to these questions among others provided the basis for a calculation of the income derived from legumes over a period of time. We used practically the same procedure in eliciting data on rootcrops, livestock, and so on, i.e., on basis of units of cultivated land or units of space covered, type or quality and quantity of crop raised, frequency of planting and harvesting, application of inputs, and cash equivalent of produce over a period of time.

In eliciting production inputs data, those on type of seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, and irrigation were not difficult to collect even if it meant recalling those inputs applied four years back. What was considered inconsistent was cross-checked by reports and records from service personnel. Frequently, however, data on labor input was vague and less informative. Because of our own special interest in labor in rice production, we sought some degree of accuracy by means of observation and participation, and collected materials on how the respondents and his household members spend their time in the different phases of rice production. Labor performed by non-household members whether by exchange or cash wages was noted, including the system of payment in operation as well as non-monetary rewards, such as meals, quantities of rice crop, etc.

Like data on labor and non-staple farm income, expenditure accounts of the household were not easily elicited. As anticipated, many respondents could not remember details of their expenditures and others were tempted to exaggerate or underestimate their consumption. To avoid this pitfall for certain expenditures like clothing and footwear, we collected data by first asking what occasions were considered important to them and what expenditures were anticipated to celebrate the occasion. For 1976, which occasions were celebrated? Who among the household members got a new dress, a pair of shoes, etc., for every occasion and who had gotten more than one? A cost inventory of each item followed. Besides the traditional occasions for celebration, were there expenditures on clothing and footwear associated with school openings, graduation rites, and so on? For 1972, what were the occasions that necessitated expenditures on clothing and footwear? For whom, how often, and how much were new clothes and footwear bought? It was important to average out expenditures over a period of a whole year instead of a certain month or period when data collection might coincide with a once-a-year celebration. For example, if new clothes were regularly bought only twice a year during June for fiesta and July for school opening, and if data collection took place in July, the expenditures on clothes would be exaggerated rendering data output inaccurate.

As indicated earlier, data on food consumption had to be collected as part of the household expenditure. Ideally, a direct observation of the food consumed within the year would yield accurate data. Obviously, this was an extremely time-consuming research technique, hence we undertook a 24-hour recall and/or direct observation each month at a day or week randomly chosen during which data on the total food consumption of the household was checked. Then one can calculate the average annual food consumption of the household.

As part of the interview design, data on the Samahang Nayon had to be collected initially

to comply with the funding agency's request and secondly, in response to our academic curiosity as to its viability as an action-program association. Hence, as an externallyimposed farmers' association, the Samahang Nayon was investigated in terms of: its objectives and implementation; tenure status of farmers involved in this association; farmers' participation, e.g., increase or decrease in membership from 1973 to 1976, attendance in meetings, payment of dues; status of leadership in relation to supporting members and traditional farmers' associations or the way by which members are grouped in alliances, oppositions, partnerships; and groups with decisionmaking capacity. As part of this interest, we traced out the chain of leadership and political candidates in 1973 to 1976 in order to understand the basis of their political power. An inventory of other organizations in which the farmer participates based on the above categories of data was also collected.

Apart from the interview design, data were collected on the total land area of the barrio and land area planted to rice, other grains, vegetables and fruits. Those uncultivated that served as residential lots and grasslands were likewise indicated. Geographical, meteorological, and topographical data such as flood vulnerability, seasonal variation, precipitation, and character of the Angat River were collected. Data on the flora and especially the fauna of the Angat River which provided one of the secondary sources of food and income were collected.

An inventory and description of the barrio's infrastructure such as feeder roads, bridges, irrigation canals, the health center, the chapel, and the basketball court, including the date of construction were imperative in ascertaining the changes that might have had occurred simultaneously with the implementation of the OLT. How many sari-sari stores have been put up, pedicabs acquired, and rice mills constructed since the program implementation? In an evaluative inquiry it is also essential to include an investigation of all income-earning activities of the community. This is important in so far as we can gauge the availability

of off-farm jobs as support or countercheck data that the target respondents had yielded. Further, it can provide a richer, more indepth picture of the community.

After data had been collected by multiple approaches, our next concern was to determine what analytic techniques were to be used in measuring the impact of Operation Land Transfer. For the descriptive part of the task, the analysis was mainly conducted by percentages and cross-tabular procedures. Percent change was used to analyze change through time. focusing on 1972 as baseline or controlled data, OLT having been implemented only in 1973. In the analysis of data, we had to utilize annual percent change particularly in rice production since it was this aspect of the OLTrecipient's life that the action program had most affected. When OLT was implemented in 1973, the program included not only the issuance of the land certificate but an entire package of directives in the utilization of inputs particularly pesticide, fertilizer, and seed type. The Samahang Nayon was organized in the main to expedite loan assistance from institutional credit sources (PNB and rural banks) serving to furnish capital and inputs for production and to serve as channel for essential services provided to farmers. A farmer is thus compelled to join the association, this being a part of the package deal of the OLT.

Has rice production increased since Operation Land Transfer was implemented? Based on annual percent change, one can show the yearly change of production until 1976. This is an important step in ascertaining yield since without it the evaluator can easily fault a vital program and ignore causal relationships. For example, if in 1972 the average yield of palay was 66.22 cavans and in 1976, 64.71, an evaluator may come up with a -2.28 change in production. This is not really an accurate way of handling it, since one has left out the intervening years in which records of increases and decreases may appear, and thus failed to identify the causal factor for such fluctuations.

What brought about increase and decrease in production at certain points in time? Initially, by means of percentages and cross-tabulation procedures one can show that where input increased, output also went up. A decline in input showed corresponding decline in output. This relationship seemed obvious and unmistakable. But, curiously enough, this fundamental relationship was overlooked in many of our local discussions of the impact of the land reform program. Rather a direct type of relationship has been assumed between land reform and production, thereby giving rise to misleading expectations about the land reform program. But which of the inputs has been of paramount importance in the fluctuations of rice production? Where possible, multivariate statistical procedures were used to provide a richer quantitative evidence. Results indicated the following: First, while other production inputs were considered important, labor appeared to be consistently associated with increasing rice productivity. Increases in other inputs did not necessarily produce an increase in rice production if labor was not sustained. Next, the nature of agrarian tenure turned out not to be a major constraint in increasing rice productivity and income in the past. Concomitantly, a change in tenure status cannot and will not at all alter directly rice production and income.

When analyzing data collected on other incomes, expenditures and taxes, we also made use of cost/benefit analysis. How much really does a farmer earn out of rice production, taking account of costs of input? If a farmer in 1976 spent P19.80 to produce a cavan of palay, which he sold at \$\P\$48.40, his net income would be ₱28.60 per cavan. In 1976, palay production was 64.71 cavans per hectare. Since he had 1.5 hectares cultivated, he then had a net income of P2,775.92 from 97.06 cavans of palay. But this was not a true picture of net income in real terms. Out of this, he had to pay Samahang Nayon and land fees which amounted to \$701.80 (or two and a half cavans of palay for the former and twelve cavans for the latter). How much did a farmer receive after deductions? \$2,074.12. Again, this income seemed rather artificial. Data show that a farmer must pay the Masagana loan and that depending upon the size of the land cultivated, yield per hectare before the Operation Land Transfer, and ability to pay previous loan, a farmer's loan may run to a high of P5,320.05 or to a low of P800.00. In the ultimate sense, what will be left to the farmer if payment of loan is diligently pursued? And what about household, health, education expenditures?

In the pre-OLT era, the average yield of 40 cavans was low because input application was low. Some tenant-farmers who availed of highinputs had high crop yields of 70 cavans per hectare. However, in the pre-OLT era, production expenditure was shared by the landowner and tenant. Under the Operation Land Transfer, he was responsible for himself and would even lose his rights to borrow on account of his co-selda member's unpaid loan. The Samahang Nayon, no doubt looked upon as a surrogate of the landlord, was incapable of solving problems on irrigation, obtaining a recalled land certificate, helping pay loans. The Samahang Nayon did not have the power nor could it ever hope to solve these problems given the limitations of its present set-up. For in spite of its attempts to merge farmers of different tenure statuses and in spite of temporary success in shifting alliances from 1973 to 1976, political mobility in terms of ascendancy of the OLT-recipient to a position of prime leadership is still absent. The Samahang Nayon lacks power inherent in a political structure; it lacks an economic base. At best, it is a service association which, given its past and present performances, is not really "serviceable" so to speak; hence, it has suffered a decline in membership. In 1973, when the Samahang Nayon was established, there were 143 members. In 1976, there were 57.

According to our data, agrarian tenure is not associated with production and income. Does this mean that Operation Land Transfer or land reform is a failure and should be deemed ineffective as a tool for transforming rural communities?

It is time, I believe, that policy-makers, social planners, and the public rectify the old notion that land reform is an end in itself. I need scarcely say that this notion obfuscates the real potential of land reform. Land reform is essential in the institution of a postreform cooperative. Rather than seeing land reform as a production input which is full of fallacies, we should perceive it as a transitory step to production and service cooperatives. Moreover, it transforms the traditional and almost feudal socio-economic system of relationship of a peasant life. Without land reform, efforts to maximize production and human resource participation from the perspective of rural cooperatives would have no lasting effect. On the other hand, without the postreform cooperative to maximize opportunities present in a rural community, the multiple goals of growth, self-reliance, and justice cannot be achieved. Thus, land reform is necessary to the continuing post-reform endeavor.

Within the framework of process evaluation, it may be deduced from all the foregoing that the Operation Land Transfer is an effective tool in the restructuring of traditional tenant-landlord system, in reaching out to the target population, and in organizing the farmer's association. In terms of impact evaluation, however, the program has not been effective in increasing rice production nor in improving standard of living. The recorded

temporary rice yield increases in 1974 and 1975 can be attributed to high input application whereas the reported decrease in 1976 can be traced to low input.

As for the Samahang Nayon, our data indicate that it was ineffective in solving new problems that arose from program implementation and in fostering community leadership.

Along the same line, while we have examined the impact of the Operation Land Transfer and the Samahang Nayon in terms of their stated goals, there are unanticipated side effects that also need to be evaluated. One of these is the consequences of intensive application of commercial fertilizer and pesticide on the Angat River, the ecosystem, and the health of the farmers. Unintended outcomes can thus be identified through the evaluation research technique not because we want to seek loopholes or find fault in a program of extreme national importance. Rather, it is foolhardy to ignore the relevance of evaluation as a means of developing rational social policies. Because a social action program eventually affects the total socio-cultural and ecological systems, evaluation research would be invaluable.

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A CALL FOR PAPERS

The Fifth World Congress for Rural Sociology will meet in Mexico, August 7 to 12, 1980, under the sponsorship of the International Rural Sociological Association (IRSA) and the Latin American Rural Sociological Association (ALASRU).

The general Theme of the Congress will be Agrarian Problems, Peasants, and Development. The two sponsoring organizations invite the participation of rural sociologists, sociologists and other professionals of related disciplines from throughout the world.

Three types of activities have been planned for the Congress: (1) Paper Sessions; (2) Work Shops, each with an invited keynote speaker elaborating some aspect of the Theme; and (3) Round Tables for the discussion of practical problems related to rural development. At this time, the Program Committee is inviting authors to prepare papers to be included in the Paper Sessions. Interested persons are asked to submit abstracts of papers that would fall in one or another of the following broad subject-matter areas:

- AREA A Agrarian Problems and Development
 - B Political Dimension of Rural Development
 - C Technological Change in Rural Development
 - D Demographic Aspects of Rural Development
 - E Planning and Action in Rural

Development :

- F Employment and Provision of Services in Rural Areas
- G Environment, Quality of Life and Natural Resources
- H Poverty; and Stratification in Rural Areas
- I Family, Women and Rural Youth
- J Institutional Structures and Change

The number of different meetings or sessions allocated to an Area listed above will depend upon the number of papers accepted on that topic, and where possible individual meetings will be devoted to subareas, as, for example, rural women in development, the provision of health services, or rural-urban migration. By this arrangement, the Committee hopes to insure that each author will have a specific, though brief, time for presentation and/or discussion of his or her paper.

Spanish, English and French will be the official languages. Authors are invited to submit a one-page abstract in any of the official languages, no later than October 31, 1979, to Jose Pastora, Chairman, Program Committee, University of Sao Paulo, C.P. 11498, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

For information about other aspects of the Congress, and advanced registration, write: R. Stavenhagen, Chairman, Local Arrangement Committee EL COLEGIO DE MEXICO, Apdo. 20-671, Mexico 20, D.F.