

to arable land, to problems of agrarian transition in the third world today (cf. especially Patnaik, 1979).

In his re-examination of the Russian material for the pre- and post-revolutionary period, Shanin (1972) utilized budget studies of Russian peasant households to show that the process of rural differentiation was much more complex and problematic than that suggested by the linear-structural paradigm (1972:45-62; 109-112). The study of mobility patterns among peasants, according to Shanin, required the delineation of several countervailing forms of household movements tending towards levelling of socio-economic differentiation in one direction (centripetal mobility), or increased differentiation (centrifugal mobility) in the other direction (ibid.:71-80). The mobility of peasant society is thus seen as 'a net balance of the oscillation of its component peasant households' (77). In some cases, centrifugal mobility may lead to structural changes of the type discussed by Lenin, i.e. proletarianization or market-oriented farmers (ibid.:119), but this is an exceptional case and cannot be generalized.

Differentiation of peasant households is seen by Shanin as being determined by, on the one hand, the persistence of centrifugal trends ('the cumulation of economic advantages and disadvantages') and the biological life cycle of the household (i.e. consumption needs prevailing over production capacities in the peasant household). On the other hand, it is determined by the continuation of centripetal tendencies. The reference here is to the modification of polarization trends resulting from communal re-division of the land, and to 'substantive changes' leading towards levelling of stratification. 'Substantive changes' include: migration of peasant households, partitioning of extended households, extinction, and merger of weak and non-viable units (ibid.:81ff., 101-106, 119). Finally, centripetal