Capitalism and the peasant mode of production: A Chayanovian analysis

F. Uleri

Francesca Uleri, PhD Researcher, Agrisystem Doctoral School, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Piacenza (Italy). E-mail: francesca.uleri@unicatt.it.

Although the disappearance of the peasantry under capitalism was repeatedly announced, peasants are still here, and the peasant mode of production still serves as a livelihood basis for millions of rural households. Based on Chayanov's ideas, the article identifies some reasons for this resistance to capitalism by describing the internal functional logic of the peasant economy and the difference of the peasant mode of production from the capitalist one. The complexity and spatial-temporal variability of agricultural production and social-economic formations of the mature capitalism are replacing agriculture in the process of changes that consist of multiple transformations (Geels, 2002; van der Ploeg, 2008). One of the most debated agrarian changes is the persistence or dissolution of the peasant mode of production in the course of modernization that characterizes the evolution and consolidation of capitalist societies. The fate of the peasantry, or the "peasant question", is the core part of the larger debate on the "agrarian question", which the Marxist political economy considers as a set of agrarian transformations leading to the penetration of capitalist relations into agriculture and to the inexorable shift from pre-capitalist, feudal or semi-feudal modes of production to capitalism (McMichael, 2006; Akram-Lodhi, Kay, 2010a; 2010b; Lerche, 2014). However today the empirical scenario is contrary to the Marxist perspective for the peasant mode of production expands and reappears in the *repeasantization* as a viable alternative to the capitalist agriculture (Domínguez, 2012; Corrado, 2013; Carrosio, 2014; van der Berg et al., 2018)[1]. The author presents an overview of the classical conceptualizations of the fate of the peasantry and considers the question "why are peasants still here?" by analyzing the peasant logic through the lens of the Theory of Peasant Economy (TPE) proposed by Chayanov (1966) in the early 20th century.

Key words: peasantry, capitalism, Chayanov, capital, labor.

DOI: 10.22394/2500-1809-2019-4-3-43-60

The disappearance perspective

According to Byres, "one of the most fascinating problems in the field of social and economic history is the delineation of the complex and varied means, whereby capitalism became the dominant mode of production in agriculture: growing out of simple commodity production,

1. Repeasantization is an agrarian movement that aims at increasing the number of peasant production units and autonomy from input and output markets.

here via a landlord class and there via a peasantry which gradually became differentiated (so providing, at the extremes, a stratum of rich peasants who ultimately became capitalist farmers and a stratum of poor peasants who were transformed into agricultural laborers or who joined the urban proletariat); slowly penetrating the countryside; developing the forces of production in manifold ways and raising agriculture's productiveness; eroding feudal and semi-feudal relations of production and replacing them with the stark opposition of class of capitalist farmers and one of wage laborers" (Byres, 1977: 258). Here agriculture is defined by the patterns of unequal accumulation, dominated by the rise of proletariat, placed in the pathway of transformations eroding other pre-capitalist ways to organize social relations and forces of production such as the peasant mode of production with its orientation to subsistence, a basis of non-capital-labor relations centered in the household and direct ownership of the means of subsistence, mainly land and labor (Bhaduri, 1981; Araghi, 1995; 2009; Kelly, 2011).

For Marx, it was the ownership of the means of subsistence that at the first stage of capitalism distinguished peasants from proletariat (Archetti, Aass, 1978). However, for Marx the way this direct ownership on land was managed in peasant societies was a symbol of backwardness that locked peasants in the past and condemned them to the dissolution in new capitalist formations: "their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse [...] a small-holding, a peasant and his family; alongside them another small-holding, another peasant and another family. A few score of these make up a village, and a score of villages make up a department. In this way, the great mass of the French nation is formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a *sack of potatoes* [...] what is now causing the ruin of the French peasant is his small-holding itself, the division of the land, the form of property which Napoleon consolidated in France (Marx, 1976: 230-233).

According to Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985: 156), capitalism is a "generalized commodity production founded upon the contradictory relation between capital and wage-labor. Capital and wage labor are two sides of the same social contradiction and, among other things, individually represent functions, class places or class bases indispensable to capitalism". For Marx, who focused on the transition to capitalism in Britain, the evolution of agriculture developed mainly through the displacement or dispossession of the peasant economy ("backward" and marginal) by capitalist system in a sort of "enclosure model or effect" (Bernstein, 2003: 5). Although Marx and Engels wrote relatively little about agriculture — if we exclude the extensive argumentation about land tenure in the third volume of *Capital*, there are only few more mentions of the topic (such as *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, *Critique of Gotha Program* and *The Peas-*

ant Question in France and Germany), the Marxist agrarian political economy started a still ongoing discussion on the peasant disappearance and class subordination (Goodman, Redclift, 1985). This transition is marked and fueled by the separation of the producer from his means of subsistence which turns him into the wage worker that produces commodities not in the family-based organization but in the industrial manufacturing or at the service of landowners.

This perspective was described by Lenin in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, in which he forecasted a trajectory of class differentiation with an unavoidable disintegration of the peasant form of production resulting in the polarized class structure based on the agrarian bourgeoisie (mostly landowners) and the rural proletariat (Long et al., 1986). Lenin (1960) identified three "ranks" among the peasantry — poor, middle and rich peasants, and the positioning in each group depended on the land property, agricultural machinery and the power to determine the labor organization (Saka, 2014: 98). Lenin's intent was to highlight that capitalism was developing in the countryside and pushing the peasantry to find a way to socially reproduce itself as differentiated and differentiating class (Araghi, 1995). "The old peasantry was not only "differentiating", it was being completely dissolved, it was ceasing to exist, it was being ousted by absolutely new types of rural inhabitants [...] a class of commodity producers in agriculture and a class of agricultural wage-workers" (Lenin, 1960: 174). Bernstein illustrates this differentiation tendency by specifying that "poor peasants are subject to a simple reproduction "squeeze" as capital or labor, or both. Their poverty and depressed levels of consumption (reproduction as labor) commonly express intense struggles to maintain their means of production (reproduction as capital), loss of which entails proletarianisation. Middle peasants are those able to meet the demands of simple reproduction; while rich peasants are able to engage in expanded reproduction: to increase the land and/or other means of production at their disposal beyond the capacity of family/household labor, hence hiring wage labor" (2001: 30).

For Lenin, inequality in the concentration of the ownership and control of means of production among (Russian) peasants was evidence of capitalist class formation, in which social differentiation was forcing direct producers into selling their labor so that the minority was able to capitalize the production process and absorb them as wage labor (Deere, de Janvry, 1981). This process was — and still is for (neo)Marxists — what determined the erosion and disappearance of the peasantry together with its societal transformation into other social groups (Byres, 1991; 1996; Akram-Lodhi, Kay, 2010; 2010b; Bernstein, 2010; Moyo et al., 2013). For instance, in Latin America in the 1970s, the theory of disappearance and class differentiation found a fertile ground in the *decampesinista* debate defining peasants as participants of proletarianisation due to the increasing dependence on

external inputs such as remittances, NGOs aid and government welfare programs but mainly on (wage) labor (Kay, 2006; 2015; Murray, 2006; Rocha, 2011). Thus, "peasants become petty commodity producers [...] when they are unable to reproduce themselves outside the relations and processes of capitalist commodity production, when the latter become the conditions of existence of peasant farming and are internalized in its organization and activity" (Bernstein, 2001: 29).

Hobsbawm in his *Age of Extremes* proves that the disappearance of the peasant form of production was "the most dramatic change of the second half of this century [the 1990s], and the one which cuts us forever from the world of the past" (Bernstein, 2001: 25). Seen as a stage of social-economic development that puts a boundary between past and present, the death of the peasantry — even on other theoretical assumptions that the Marxist ones — since the 1950s was announced by the modernization theorists as an inevitable step of modernity. Many small and low-input agricultural realities from the 1950s to the 1980s were in the pathway of transformation that affected both developed and developing countries to guarantee economic growth and efficiency. This result was to be achieved by intensification of production, sectorial specialization, market orientation, industrialization and vertical control, replicability and standardization (Zanfrini, 2001; Meloni, 2013). According to Hoogvelt (2001), modernization turned the abstract and general history of Northern countries into a necessary logic of development for all countries. Development became a matter of social order and economic stability that entailed the removal of dysfunctional elements. This strategy also included the change of the peasant family production units into specialized market activities (Long 1990; Hilmi, 2013). This pathway corresponded to the concept of depeasantization as "the erosion of an agrarian way of life that combines subsistence and commodity agricultural production with an internal social organization based on family labor and village community settlement" (Bryceson, 1999: 175), i.e. depeasantization is a product of modernity determined mainly by the acceleration of urbanization, i.e. deruralization. Araghi also consideres global depeasantization as an expression of "deruralization (depopulation and decline of the rural areas) and overurbanization (massive concentration of peoples and activities in growing urban centers of the world), both of which are in turn reflective of a pattern of differentiation of geographical space particular to the post-WWII development of world capitalism" (1995: 338).

Contrasting realities

Despite the above predictions, today, after radical changes in the capitalist world economy such as intensification of rural-urban migration, deregulation of financial markets, implementation of liberalization

measures, consolidation of agribusiness corporations etc., the reality presents a contrasting empirical evidence with 560 million peasant farms, i.e. there are "more peasants in the world than ever before in human history" (van der Ploeg, 2018: 1). Even if there is a significant decrease in the rural population and a growing number of farms engaged in commodity production, peasants are unlikely to disappear. One of the key explanations of this trend is the form and logic of peasant production. It is the peasants' definition that gives us the key to explain the limitations of the disappearance perspective. In the agrarian studies of the last four decades, peasants are basically defined as people engaged in agricultural production, with a direct access to and control of their means of production and subsistence (mainly land and labor); this may or may not comprise a direct ownership, although in the Marxist perspective the ownership distinguishes peasantry from proletariat: they can access the land they work on as tenants, smallholders or common users; by their production activities they can satisfy their family needs (subsistence) beyond the mere realization of profit (Archetti, Aass, 1978; Bernstein, 1979; Araghi, 1995; Hilmi, 2013; van der Ploeg, 2013; Vanhaute, Cottyn, 2017). Thus, instead of disappearance and differentiation as envisaged by the Marxist political economy and modernization paradigm, peasants maintain their own logic of production despite the capitalist encroachment (Long et al., 1986).

This idea is supported by the "neo-populist tradition" that emerged in Russia in the late 19th century emphasizing the viability of the peasant production given its ability to survive and prosper under any adverse circumstances (Harrison, 1975; 1977). In peasant studies, the theoretical core of neo-populism consists of "the idea of an economically undifferentiated, virtually homogenous peasantry, which shows extreme stability and viability vis-a-vis the competition of capitalist production" (Patnaik, 1979: 375). By the 1920s, the agrarian economist Chayanov had become the most influential representative of this tradition, and his school, despite the dispersion during the years of Stalinism, has a significant influence in the contemporary research of the evolution and "fate" of the peasantry (Harrison, 1975; Bernstein, 2009; Shanin, 2009; van der Ploeg, 2013; Kerblay 2018). In his main works — *Peasant Farm Organization* and *On the Theory of Non-Capitalist Economic Systems* — and minor contributions such as *The Current State of Agriculture and Agricultural Statistics in Russia*, Chayanov (1966; 2018) defined the peasant family farm as an economic form that differs from the capitalist mode of production and capitalist farming even under the dominance of capitalism (Shanin, 1986). Chayanov was the first to recognize in the peasant organization a mode of production not categorizable within the feudal or semi-feudal mode of production (as the Marxists did), and considered it as an alternative that survives, develops and prospers (even under capitalism), i.e. the peasant mode

must not be necessarily destroyed in the transition to capitalism. "The peasant farm is drawn into commodity production and is a petty commodity producer, selling and buying at prices laid down by commodity capitalism, and its circulating capital might be based on bank loans [...] Through these connections, every small peasant undertaking becomes an organic part of the world economy, experiences the effects of the world's general economic life, is powerfully directed in its organization by the capitalist world's economic demands, and, in turn, together with millions like it, affects the whole system of the world economy" (Chayanov, 1966: 222-258). In the basis of the peasant economy functioning, there is a need to provide livelihoods to satisfy family needs; the production activities are carried out by family labor; therefore, labor is not dominated by commoditized capital-labor relations and the labour market does not control its allocation or remuneration (van der Ploeg, 2013). Long (2001) and van der Ploeg (2016) referred to Chayanov to describe the peasant economy as a labour-intensive organization where inputs are generated and replicated through the work of the household or — if the resources are not available internally — through the exchange of labor within the peasant community. According to Chayanov, the peasant economy can survive even if there are no longer necessary conditions for capitalist activities: peasant farms can "continue to produce where capitalist farms stop" due to the nature of the peasant production unit — the main objective of the peasant economy is to ensure through agricultural activities family needs and livelihoods. Thus, the economic success is measured in terms of goods produced rather than profit (Kula, 1976; Kochanowicz, 1983; Galasso, 1986).

Today, after years of marginalization, the TPE seems to be more relevant than ever for peasants — despite the Marxist and Leninist predictions and the modernization paradigm — still play a fundamental role beyond the boundaries of their production units. The recent United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas recognizes the peasants' contribution "to development and to conserving and improving biodiversity, which constitute the basis of food and agricultural production throughout the world, and their contribution in ensuring the right to adequate food and food security, which are fundamental to attaining the internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Pérez-Vitoria (2007) states that the ability of the peasantry to go beyond the production of commodity goods is the key to understand the re-emersion of the peasant mode production units and explain the persistence of the peasant class. Polanyi (1944) also emphasized that "the relationships sustained between a class with the rest of the society mark its evolution, consequently, the success and the reproduction of this class is determined by the breadth and variety of interests that the class is able to serve beyond its specific needs" (Uleri, 2018: 131).

Functioning of the peasant economy

This section presents an analysis of the peasant economy starting from the micro-level — describing the peasant (family) production unit as the center and engine of this system. The micro-level analysis does not reject the macro-level analysis; it serves as a lens to understand the variability of the impact of macro-operations on the small-scale units. According to Mitchell (2002), van der Ploeg (2013; 2017) and Shulga (2017), many of the social-economic contradictions and network strategies that make up the trajectory of macro-phenomena are reflected and expressed at the micro-level, at which they are often more perceptible and distinguishable. According to van der Ploeg, in the contemporary agrarian studies, one of the main barriers in detecting and understanding the effects or outcomes of macro-operations at the micro-level is determined by the fact that there is a frequent tendency to use a linear perspective from macro-causes to macro-effects, which transcends and ignores the micro-dimension. This is the terrain where any macro-causes such as the implementation of agrarian reforms, reduction of trade barriers or deregulation of national economies affect the agrarian system, and where local agrarian structures contribute to the new course of action. In the local agrarian structure, peasants play an active role, even when they are "squeezed" or "crushed" by macro-movements that place them in the pathway of disappearance: peasants' reaction and interaction with the broader social structure determines real and entire effects of the macro-processes. Thus, macro causes "are actively interpreted and translated by farmers (and other actors) into a course of action, creating the macro-effects that actually occur"; therefore "stimuli (prices, policies, etc.) from the macro-level are always [...] mediated by and through the actors operating at the micro-level" (van der Ploeg, 2013: 23).

Such a methodological approach allowed Chayanov to avoid too deterministic understandings of the agrarian realities. It was Chayanov who stressed the analytical relevance of this approach: "undoubtedly, beyond the general national economy analysis we cannot fully understand the nature of a single private economic undertaking. However, [...] to make clear the general economic processes [...] we must fully elucidate to ourselves the work mechanisms of the economic machines (i.e. the peasant family production unit) which is subject to the pressure of national economic factors, organizes a productive process within itself and, in its turn, with others like it, influence the national economy as a whole" (Chayanov, 1966: 120). Chayanov refers to the *national* economy because he considered the Russian agrarian situation of the early 20th century, in which the macro-phenomena that influenced the micro-level of the peasant family production developed within the national political-economic borders. Today, especially after the WWII, the agrarian situation has been affected by

the forces of global and/or inter-national nature (market liberalization, intensification of the global commodities flows, dependence on the international input and output markets, financialization of agriculture, etc.) that go beyond the limits of any single nation (McMichael, 1997; von Braun, Diaz Bonilla, 2008; Friedmann, 2009; Clapp, 2014). Therefore, contemporary peasants interpret and mediate a variety of macro-causes of different nature and extension, thus, contributing to changing them into a new course of action.

Labor, peasant family and capital

According to Chayanov, the starting point for the analysis of not only the peasant economy but also different household economies is the origin of labor. The peasant family production unit (PFPU)[2] is the center of labor provision; the Chayanovian peasant family farm is "pure" in the sense that the members of the household depend solely on their labor at the farm (Thorner, 1986: 13). Thus, this labor is on-farm labor without market conjectures. Van de Ploeg (2013) by analyzing the basis of the PFPU highlights that the fact that labor is mobilized — with a few exceptions — by the family farm may seem self-evident and non-significant; however, its consequences create the logical limit that distinguishes peasant agriculture and peasant organization of the farm from the capitalist ones. This differentiation is due to the absence of salaries in agricultural activities; if no wages are paid, then, according to the Marx's theory of value, profits cannot be calculated. It is this absence of a labor market that allows to analyze the peasant economy at the micro-level (Harrison, 1975).

In the Marxist perspective, labor of the Chayanovian PFPU is unproductive for it does not produce capital in the capitalist way: while the capitalist mode of production is centered on the capital accumulation and self-expansion of value through the generation of surplus value and its conversion into capital, the peasant mode does not produce surplus value and capital in the Marxist sense. The aim of the accumulation in capitalist economies is not only the maintenance of the "previously produced value" but also the "productive reinvestment of surplus value" (Savran, Tonak, 1999: 116). For the self-expansion, capital needs to be exchanged with productive labor that can produce surplus value. Therefore, the distinction between productive and unproductive labor is a fundamental basis for the analysis of different modes of production and understanding the principles of the PFPU: "only the exchange for productive labor can satisfy one of the conditions for the reconversion of surplus value into capital" (Marx, 1976: 1048). Marx specifies that "the difference between productive

2. The term "peasant family production unit" is used as a synonym of the Chaynovian term "peasant economic unit".

and unproductive labor consists merely in whether labor is exchanged for money as money or for money as capital. Where I buy the commodity, as e.g. in the case of the self-employed laborer, artisan, etc., the category does not come into consideration at all, because there is no direct exchange between money and labor of any kind at all, but rather between money and a commodity" (Marx, 1864: 485).

In the PFPU, labor does not pursue maximization of profit or cost reduction (often through the limitation of labor input), and it is the size and composition of the household that completely determines the amount, intensity and division of labor needed to satisfy family needs. It is the family composition that defines the maximum and minimum levels of labor to support the economic activity; therefore, the limit of labor depends on the amount of labor that the family members can use with a maximum intensity.

Although the Marxist theory is useful to define the nature of labor in the PFPU, Chayanov argued that neither Marxism nor the neoclassical theories of Smith and Ricardo could be applied to the Russian PFPUs. Chayanov mainly criticized the distinction between capital and labor and between production and reproduction which did not exist in the PFPU but were assumed by both Marxism and neoclassical economics (Roberts, Muttersbaugh, 1996). In the neoclassical perspective, the economic rationality of the capitalist production unit is achieved by maximization of the net profit (NP) resulting from the difference between the gross product (GP) (through the market sales), outlays on materials (OM) (to carry out the production activities), and wages, i.e. GP — OM — W = NP. If no wages are paid, profits are absent and the labor product is the only category of income for the PFPU, there is no sense in "decomposing it analytically and objectively" (Chayanov, 1966: 5). "The difference between the gross product [...] and material expenditure [...] is referred to as the labor product (or sometimes the family labor product). This is identical to what today's studies refer to as "labor income". It is the income that results from the work done" (Van der Ploeg, 2013: 24). In the peasant economy, economic rationality is not measured by net income or profit but by goods produced for the PFPU livelihoods (Kula, 1976; Kochanowicz, 1983; Galasso, 1986). Therefore, peasant labor is not "productive" in the Marxist sense but it is productive in the peasant rationality where the "engine" or the "machine" that generates labor is fueled by the product of labor itself, and this "peasant labor productivity" is essential for the survival and reproduction of the PFPU.

In the TPE the most palpable and immediate evidence is the differentiation of the PFPU from the capitalist unit of production; however, the analysis of the origin of labor is not sufficient to discern without any doubt the two different units of production and their logic of functioning. Thus, it is necessary to highlight that in the PFPU capital is subject to the circulation rules that do not respond to the capitalist unlimited cycle in which money (M) are transformed into commodities

(C), and this conversion returns to money (M) of altered value (Hean et al., 2003). It is classical Marxist formula of circulation of capital: M — C — M'. For Marx, capital is primarily an accumulation of money, but it is not just money, it is a relation. The distinction between money and capital derives from the difference in their circulation: money is acquired and used to buy things as an instrument to facilitate the exchange of commodities (C — M — C), while capital is reintroduced in the economic cycle to produce surplus value. "The simple circulation of commodities — selling in order to buy — is a means of carrying out a purpose unconnected with circulation, namely, the appropriation of use-values, the satisfaction of wants. The circulation of money as capital is, on the contrary, an end in itself, for the expansion of value takes place only within this constantly renewed movement. The circulation of capital has therefore no limit" (Marx, 1906: 169).

Chayanov sketches the capital circulation in the capitalist unit by highlighting that capital is invested in factors of production (labor, machineries, land, etc.): when they pass through their production cycle, they are sold for money to ensure gross income. The advanced capital is first renewed from the gross income and consequently the rest is the farm's net profit. Profit is the target of the production unit, and "the elements of production are compounded in a way that, at the particular price levels, is optimal and gives the greater excess of gross income over capital advanced" (Chayanov, 1986: 197). On the contrary, in the PFPU, the circulation of capital follows a different logic since capital has a different nature and the family provides its own labor in the production cycle. The capital of the PFPU is composed of such elements as house, land, "the many improvement made to it (roads, canals, terraces, [...] increased soil fertility) the cattle, but also the specific knowledge to perform agricultural activities, namely what Mendras (1970) calls *art de la localité* — concept retaken years later by Lacroix (1981) in his definition of *savoir faire paysan* — that refers to the set of stratified knowledge, know-how, craft skills consolidated over time in a territory and more specifically in a PFPU, that determines the way in which a product is produced, consumed or exchanged" (Wiskerke and van der Ploeg, 2004; Milone, 2009; van der Ploeg 2013: 24). Chayanov notes that labor and capital provided by the family constitute the main production factors used in the production process to generate gross income. A part of this gross income is "devoted to renewal of capital advanced to its former level in order to keep activity at the former volume, and part to expanded reproduction if the family is expanding its economic activity. All the remainder is [...] to satisfy usual family demands, or for the reproduction of the work force" (1986: 197). The peasant capital has primarily a value related to the functioning of the PFPU: it allows the family farm to produce and have a livelihoods base; moreover, even if a hypothetical rate of return is negative the peasant farm continues to produce because its first aim is not making profit but ensuring a living (van der Ploeg, 2013).

Labor-consumer and utility-drudgery balances

The basis of the peasant rationality is a simple but essential relation that links family consumption needs to labor provision; Chayanov assumes that labor and consumption are balanced under a conscious, rational and voluntary strategy of the household that makes them stay at the point of equilibrium. He stresses that the family is the "primary initial quantity in constructing the farm unit, the customer whose demands it must meet and the work machine by whose strength it is built" (1966: 128). In this logic, the balance of labor and needs of consumption results from the equalization of labor provided by family members (the hands available and able to work in the PFPU) with the number of mouths.

According to van der Ploeg (2013), today, as in the past (though to a lesser degree), it is impossible for the PFPU to survive and reproduce without entering the market and by being isolated from the commodity circuits; thus, the balance is composed of the total production (the part for the market and the part for self-consumption) and the consumption satisfying the family needs, many of which are satisfied by entering the market as a seller and a buyer (the family members paid for various needs with the money earned by selling the part of the produce). Labor and consumption are different elements but the fact that they are generated by the same entity implies that they need to converge to a balanced point, because in the PFPU one cannot survive without another being a cause and effect of the same cycle. "Without consumption there would be no labor. And labor would be pointless if there was no consumption" (van der Ploeg 2013: 33).

Despite the "vital" correlation between the two elements, the balance of labor and consumptions is neither constant nor linear or easily predictable in the long run. The most obvious relations that compose this equilibrium is the determination of the farm size by the family size: the peasant farm changes its volume, following the phases of family development. Nonetheless, it can be influences by other factors such as the extent to which labor (hands available) can be used, intensity of labor, technical means of production, influence of natural conditions on the productivity of labor, etc. All these elements are elaborated by the family in a broad and holistic strategy of production and survival. The understanding and elaboration of these elements constitute what Chayanov calls the organizational plan of the peasant farm (OPPF) in which every element or factor is not intended by the family as a disarticulated cell; on the contrary, the OPPF is an interdependent whole in which every single part is not "free"; therefore, the elements interact and determine one another's size or process of development (Chayanov, 1966: 203).

In the organization of the farm another balance also plays a fundamental role — between utility and drudgery. By drudgery Chayanov means the amount of extra effort (e.g. increase in the working-hours

per day) needed to increase the total production (and the total farm income), while by utility — the opposite of drudgery referring to an extra benefit or advantage resulting from the increase in production. Every member of the PFPU "stimulated to work by the demand of his family develops *grater energy* as the pressure of these demands become stronger; [...] this brings an increase in well-being" (van der Ploeg, 2013: 38). Thus, the energy developed by a member of the PFPU in the production process depends on the family consumer demands: if the number of consumers per worker increases, the worker's drudgery has to be increased too, and the output per worker will be higher (e.g., more land to work per single worker).

According to van der Ploeg (2013; 2017), although the balance of utility-drudgery seems to be the same balance that binds labor to consumption, it differs from the latter for it refers to a different level of correlation: the labor-consumer balance comprises the household level by relating number of consumers with number of workers, while the drudgery-utility balance takes into account the worker and his ability to increase and improve the family well-being with the given labor, by his personal effort, by engaging in more drudgery. This allows the PFPU to both satisfy immediate family consumer demand and (given the enlargement of utility as a consequence of the increase in drudgery) create capital (material and technical improvements of the farm). Thus, the farm is not in the situation of simple survival as a product of the labor-consumer balance, it is a dynamic whole that evolves contributing to the development of its single parts.

Conclusion

Chayanov provided us with essential analytical tools to understand in detail the operation of the peasant mode of production. Moreover, the recent contributions of authors such as van der Ploeg provide a more complete overview of the system of balances that Chayanov described. However, the micro-level analysis alone cannot explain the complexity of the evolution of the TPE in the contemporary capitalist societies. This is not because the TPE is incomplete or not valid, but because the Chayanovian focus was mainly on the peasant household resource allocation and on "the determination of the family labor product in households that were units of production as well as of consumption" (Deere, de Janvry, 1981: 338). Such a micro-lens allowed Chayanov to identify a mode of production that was not necessarily transitory, as argued by the Marxists of his time, especially by Lenin. Therefore, in the current analysis of the peasant economy within the mature capitalism, the ideas of Chayanov are not always univocal but certainly necessary and inevitable.

Quite often the studies of peasantry tend to rely in a univocal and unidirectional manner on the Marxist-Leninist or Chayanovi-

an theoretical frameworks to explain respectively the disappearance of the peasantry or its reproduction (Cortés, Cuellar, 1986; Deere, 1990; Bernstein, 2009). For instance, in Latin America this contraposition is reflected in the debate of *campesinitsas* and *decampesinistas*: the former are based on the neo-populist school and stress the impenetrability of the peasant mode of production by capitalism given its internal logic, thus, rejecting the proletarianization (or capitalization) drift (Kay, 1995; Cogua, 2003); while the latter, on the contrary, forecast a pathway of disappearance and social differentiation (Murray, 2006; Zajdband, 2008; Rocha, 2011). Chayanov was not primarily interested in investigating the fate of the peasant mode of production: "we are not concerned with the fate of the peasant farm, nor its historical and national economy conception, nor even the historical development of economic systems. Our task is incommensurably more modest. We simply aim at understanding what the peasant farm is from an organizational viewpoint: What is the morphology of the production machine called the peasant labor farm [...] how the organizational equilibrium is achieved, what are the mechanics of the circulation and replacement of capital in a *private economic sense*, what are the methods for determining the degree of satisfaction and profit [...]. We investigate only *organizational forms of the family farms in agriculture*" (Chayanov, 1966: 44-47).

Thus, if we consider the *campesinista* (persistence) and *decampesinista* (disappearance) views through the Chayanovian theorization, their debates lack theoretical rigor and accuracy, because Chayanov did not see the peasant mode of production as the one to be replaced by capitalism, he did not exclude the possibility for capitalism to "penetrate" peasant farming. Referring to the Russian situation of the early 20th century, Chayanov believed that the peasant "natural economy" was "quite true" for the countryside "was not homogenous" and, besides peasant labor farms (reproduction of the PFPU), it consisted of "numerous semi-proletarian and semi-capitalist farms" (erosion and disappearance tendency) (Chayanov, 1966: 47). Thus, based on the natural limits and functioning of the PFPU, in the chapter *The Family Farm as a Component of the National Economy and Its Possible Forms of Development*, Chayanov (1966) admitted that some forms of social differentiation can take place in the countryside under the commodity economy due to, for instance, "the concentration of production in the hands of large peasant farms that paved the way for the further purely capitalist concentration", but the complete social disintegration of the peasant mode of production (and of the peasant class), as the Marxists predicted, does not explain the realities of the countryside (Chayanov, 1966: 245; Cook, Binford, 1986). Moreover, "in history, various economic forms develop, start to decline, and sometimes completely disappear and become a thing of the past. It is quite possible that some forms of the

peasant labor farms we study will exist only in chronicles and folk songs" (Chayanov, 1966: 47).

Chayanov did not reject the advancement of capitalism in the countryside, he emphasized the fact that the PFPU can reproduce within a capitalism system but without being "automatically" transformed or assimilated by it: the PFPU can produce even if there are no more conditions for capitalist expansion and when capitalist farms fail, because the PFPU's functioning is driven by the necessity to satisfy basic family needs. In the theoretical perspective, the discrepancy between the two factions (Neo-populists and Leninists) was based on different interpretations of the transformations of the Russian countryside (Chayanov, 2018b; Chayanov, 2018c): the former explains social inequality by social-economic differentiation pathways that form a bourgeois class and proletariat; the latter emphasize levelling mechanisms that counteract such trends (Cook, Binford, 1986; Cogua, 2003).

However, when the Western peasant studies refer to Chayanov's works, they focus on the TPE and tend to underestimate and even ignore the macro-economic framework (Nikulin et al., 2018). Such Chayanov's works as *Few Studies of the Isolated State* (1923), *My Brother Alexey's Journey to the Land of Peasant Utopia* (1920), and *On the Possible Future of the Peasant Economy* (1928) expand the Chayanovian thinking to a vision of social development that transcended his time. In these works, Chayanov identifies pathways for the coexistence of capitalism and peasant-family economies, for the compromise of rural and urban development, industry and agriculture, and the dialogue of expert and lay knowledge, which marks Chayanov's "amazing fantasy and plastic ingenuity" but also his adaptability to the current agrarian question and his non-limitation to the micro-level (Nikulin, 2017: 6). Thus, the TPE is an essential analytical tool to understand why peasants are still here; however, the functioning of the peasant economy alone cannot explain all the nuances of the peasant conditions today: the Chayanovian perspective for the analysis of the TPE and the peasantry within the capitalistic system is the starting point but it does not need to be the only one.

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Капитализм и крестьянский способ производства: аналитический подход А.В. Чаянова

Улери Франческа, аспирант, Школа аграрных исследований, Католический университет Святого Сердца, Пьяченца (Италия). E-mail: francesca.uleri@unicatt.it

Несмотря на многократные заявления об исчезновении крестьянства при капитализме, крестьянский способ производства все еще обеспечивает средства существования для миллионов сельских домохозяйств. Опираясь на идеи Чаянова, автор обозначает причины сопротивления крестьянского способа производства капитализму, описывая внутреннюю логику функционирования крестьянского хозяйства и отличия крестьянского способа производства от капиталистического. Сложность и пространственно-временная вариативность сельскохозяйственного производства и социально-экономических укладов зрелого капитализма вытесняют прежний аграрный уклад посредством многочисленных трансформаций (Geels, 2002; van der Ploeg, 2008). Одно из наиболее дискутируемых изменений — траектории сельского развития как сводящиеся к сохранению или, напротив, растворению крестьянского способа производства в ходе модернизации, которая сопровождает эволюцию и консолидацию капиталистических систем. Судьба крестьянства, или «крестьянский вопрос», — основная проблема более широких споров по «аграрному вопросу», который марксистская политэкономия определяет как набор аграрных трансформаций, обеспечивающих проникновение капиталистических отношений в сельское хозяйство и его превращение из докапиталистического, феодального или полуфеодального в капиталистическое (McMichael, 2006; Akram-Lodhi, Kay, 2010a; 2010b; Lerche, 2014). Однако нынешние реалии противоречат марксистскому сценарию: крестьянский способ производства расширяет свои границы и порождает *реокрестьянивание* как жизнеспособную альтернативу капиталистическому сельскому хозяйству (Domínguez, 2012; Corrado, 2013; Carrosio, 2014; van der Berg et al., 2018). Автор предлагает обзор классических концептуализаций судеб крестьянства и объясняет, «почему крестьяне все еще здесь», опираясь на пространственно-временной анализ крестьянского хозяйства с микроэкономических позиций и теорию крестьянского хозяйства, предложенную Чаяновым в начале XX века.

Ключевые слова: крестьянство, капитализм, Чаянов, капитал, труд