

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WASHINGTON, D. C. 20523 BIBLIOGRAPHIC INPUT SHEET	FOR AID USE ONLY Batch #20
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1. SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION	A. PRIMARY	Agriculture	AC00-0000-0000
	C. SECONDARY	Education, extension, and advisory work	

2. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
 Research focus of the Land Tenure Center

3. AUTHOR(S)
 (101) Wis. Univ. Land Tenure Center

4. DOCUMENT DATE 1972	5. NUMBER OF PAGES 3p.	6. ARC NUMBER ARC
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7. REFERENCE ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS
 Wis.

8. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (*Sponsoring Organization, Publishers, Availability*)

9. ABSTRACT

10. CONTROL NUMBER PN-RAB-236	11. PRICE OF DOCUMENT
12. DESCRIPTORS Land tenure Organizations Research	13. PROJECT NUMBER
	14. CONTRACT NUMBER CSD-2263 211(d)
	15. TYPE OF DOCUMENT

August 1972

RESEARCH FOCUS OF THE
LAND TENURE CENTER

This statement on the research focus of the Land Tenure Center (LTC) is intended to indicate in a general way three areas which will receive major research attention during the next several years.

Although the more specific research areas indicated in this statement will be reviewed and modified periodically, the overall research concern of the Land Tenure Center continues to be with rural and agrarian institutional problems to be investigated within an interdisciplinary framework. The three research areas outlined in this statement are closely interrelated and overlap at some points.

The Land Tenure Center allocates its research, training and information resources to programs concerned with Latin America, Africa and Asia. It is willing to collaborate at any time, however, in studies and projects which address the three main topical areas, regardless of world region.

Area I

Tenure arrangements, systems of property and their broad effects

This area includes issues related to private farms, communal properties, collectives and mixed systems, and their social, economic and political effects. Studies are encouraged which examine innovative tenure arrangements (like group farming or production cooperatives) in areas of major agrarian reforms as well as tenure conditions in areas of colonization and new land settlement. Related problems which interact with tenure systems such as land titling, title registration and taxation are included. Studies are needed in many Asian and African countries on the effects of present land tenure systems and associated institutions in furthering or hindering agricultural development. Much of this information is already available on Latin America. In addition, this area includes building a comprehensive body of knowledge dealing with land

and water tenure, agrarian structures, and the formal and informal rules, sanctions and enforcement institutions related to agricultural production.

Also encompassed by this area are studies of the legal framework which regulates economic and social activities in the rural sector. This includes describing and evaluating the legal and administrative machinery for planning and carrying through agrarian reform, land settlement, and development schemes. Evaluations of implementation strategies and mechanisms used by existing projects are of special interest.

Area II

Community organization, services, supplies and local controls

This area includes investigation of the nature and extent of change in local organizations, voluntary associations and public service activities to effectively draw more people into the mainstream of development.

As a result of new technology, further attention needs to be given to the organization and operation of agricultural supply systems for making inputs available to small producers. This includes rules and incentives of service organizations or the role of peasant organizations in reorganizing agriculture in the developing nations.

Of particular interest are studies which indicate how local people have been able to organize effectively to plan, finance, build and maintain local infrastructure. Comparative studies which illustrate how agricultural service agencies, local governments, and community enterprises have been created or organized would be helpful.

Additional work is needed in most developing countries to analyze the problems of agricultural research, extension and information programs, marketing organizations, credit institutions, transportation, and local planning and administration. The types of services available to large and small scale producers is not well documented or understood. A study of the relationships among local government, political organizations and the formal law would yield valuable data for development programs.

Area IIITechnology, employment and income
distribution relationships

A broad range of studies are needed concerning the consequences of modernization, such as the impact of changing technology (like green revolution inputs and mechanization) and related measures of rural modernization on employment creation and income distribution in rural areas. This also includes the attendant problem of the economic, social and political consequences of rapid rural to urban migration and employment shifts.

Changing technology in agriculture frequently results in institutional adjustment but can also create the need for direct intervention to achieve institutional change. The secondary effects of technology also need to be studied in terms of tenure conditions, market controls, new forms of community influence and the changing structure of training and employment opportunities for young people.

Of particular concern are uneven effects of the new technology in agriculture. A great deal more needs to be learned about how small scale farmers and new settlers can benefit from new crop varieties, mechanization and pest controls, and how they can maintain their relative positions after broad scale technical changes have been introduced.

This area of work will also address a variety of problems concerned with the development of new technology itself and with its dissemination from centers of research to agricultural producers. The creation of institutions for technical study and the design of service delivery systems should be key elements in this study.

Questions about the work of the Land Tenure Center should be addressed to-----

310 King Hall
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin 53706