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T H E L A N D T E N U R E C E N T E R

A COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AND TRAINING PROGRAM

of

THE AMERICAN NATIONS

THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

and

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

310 King Hall
University of Wisconsin

Madison, Wisconsin
January 1965

THE IDEA

In Latin America as elsewhere, control of land and property carries with it political power, economic advantage and social prestige. Developing nations in the twentieth century are facing crucial tests in adjusting their systems of land use and control to feed and clothe growing populations. The question remains whether such adjustments can be made peacefully and intelligently without bloodshed and political oppression.

Thus, it is not surprising that U. S. universities should turn their attention to problems of land tenure and agrarian development. In the words of a recent University of Wisconsin report on research and services for the newly developing nations, "A great University cannot stand apart from one of the major efforts of its time."

And in Latin America as in few places in the world have issues of property rights, reasonable compensation for labor and equitable distribution of land and wealth been swept so strongly into reform movements and national revolutions.

WHY WISCONSIN

Nearly a half century ago a course was organized at the University of Wisconsin to foster study and research on land problems. Many of the ideas and results of research of this early period are contained in a book titled "Land Economics" by Professors Richard T. Ely and George S. Wehrwein. During the same period, John R. Commons was developing his ideas of institutional economics with research directed at public policy, social security, collective bargaining and public administration. These ideas are contained in the well-known book, "Legal Foundations of Capitalism." Dozens of former graduate students of these and other scholars are now in key positions in agricultural departments and agrarian reform agencies in developing countries all over the world. A few years ago the University drew world-wide attention to this subject through a seven-week-long World Land Tenure Conference, attended by representatives from 38 countries.

Today the University of Wisconsin has an active and sizable Latin American program. The Agency for International Development supports a major part of the

work of the Land Tenure Center and has an institutional development contract with the College of Agriculture for teaching and research at Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The Ford Foundation supports a Latin American area program. Numerous funds and foundations contribute to lesser graduate and research activities covering a broad range of areas such as economics, sociology, anthropology, history, languages, commerce, journalism, education, political science, geography, biological sciences, medicine, engineering, and other fields.

There are more than 100 regular faculty members at the University of Wisconsin with a major interest in Latin American problems.

ABOUT THE LAND TENURE CENTER

The Land Tenure Center (LTC) was started May 11, 1962 with a three-year contract for \$1,250,000 from the Agency for International Development (AID).

From the beginning the Land Tenure Center has attempted to build a program to deal with agrarian policy issues in Latin America. It is a program which incorporates training within research and which encompasses the wide range of interests and special skills

available in the University, in Latin American agencies, and in the U. S. Government.

When the Land Tenure Center started it envisioned a program which would operate from two locations in Latin America and from a campus center at the University of Wisconsin. Since the beginning, however, there has been an overwhelming stream of requests from Latin American agencies, institutions, universities, governments, AID missions, and individuals asking the Land Tenure Center to assist with studies of land use, colonization, reforms, water rights, rural unions, productivity, information programs and a host of other problems. The Land Tenure Center has worked in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Bolivia, Venezuela, Costa Rica, and Guatemala, and is continuing research in most of these countries.

In the course of this activity scores of promising young Latin Americans and interested U. S. students have taken part in research to gain experience for future work in Latin America.

More than 50 graduate students are at the University of Wisconsin and in Latin America at the present

time to assist with studies on agrarian development. Some support for these students is made available directly through the Land Tenure Center, but it can accommodate only a limited number of those who are trained and ready to work on Latin American projects.

THE LAND TENURE CENTER PROGRAM

Because changes in land tenure and agrarian structure have economic, political and social ramifications, the research of the Land Tenure Center is by nature multidisciplinary.

The Land Tenure Center is not a curriculum or a department in the ordinary university sense. It is a coordinating and service facility to aid the University in carrying on an integrated program of research and training. All staff appointments are made with established University departments. A research advisory committee representing the fields of economics, sociology, law, agricultural journalism, political science, commerce, Ibero-American studies, Latin American institutions and AID assists in the development and review of program proposals and policy matters.

In general, the purposes of the Land Tenure Center are threefold:

1. To acquire empirically based, scientific knowledge on the economic, social, political, legal and administrative aspects of land tenure and agrarian structure in Latin America through a conceptually integrated multidisciplinary program of research and training.
2. To provide useful feedback of the results of the research to administrators, community leaders, research technicians, students and others in Latin America and in the U. S. involved in development programs and policies.
3. To tie training and research together thus increasing the number of competent Latin American and U. S. researchers who will be able to devote their attention to agrarian problems in the future.

HOW RESEARCH PROJECTS ARE DEVELOPED

The Land Tenure Center attempts to build its research program around the policy concerns of people in rural communities of Latin America. Several

guiding principles are followed in undertaking research projects.

First, the research needs to be useful to those who must deal with development problems in Latin America. Local people cooperate in developing and carrying out research. Where possible, informal arrangements are made with interested local institutions. Training is an integral part of the research. Young Latin Americans, because of their introductions to field work, interviewing and data analysis, often continue their work and study in similar fields. Publication and distribution of research results in Spanish and Portuguese are encouraged and supported. Researchers are asked to follow up on their studies by making policy recommendations and by assisting with future planning.

Second, the research must focus on problems of rural people. This often calls for field interviews and survey techniques and for work outside of the main cities.

All Land Tenure Center projects are reviewed and discussed by persons representing several University

departments before work is undertaken in the field. Where possible, studies are linked to other on-going activities. Several points of view may be brought to bear. Interdisciplinary seminars and workshops consider the projects and often urge modifications.

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

As the foregoing indicates, the Land Tenure Center is more than a collection of research projects -- it is an attempt at an integrated research and training program. And the University and the Agency for International Development have a broader role than simply gathering research information and training research workers. Making the results of research generally available and useful is an important part of the program.

The following are examples of some of the program activities:

1. The Land Tenure Center in cooperation with the Department of Agricultural Economics is developing a special land tenure and rural development library containing more than 20,000 items. The library is oriented

especially to non-book materials such as reports, laws, data summaries, papers and governmental documents reporting much of what is known about rural conditions in Latin America.

2. The library staff and individual researchers are preparing bibliographies of some of the most useful materials on special areas such as colonization, taxation and legal institutions.

3. Special attention is being given to the development of glossaries of land tenure and labor terms as they apply to various Latin American countries. This work is an outgrowth of interests by researchers in the field and those studying Spanish in special classes conducted by the Land Tenure Center.

4. The Land Tenure Center publishes a newsletter which appears irregularly. Two publication series have been started in an effort to encourage more widespread and general discussion of current Latin American issues and research problems.

A list of available publications of the Land Tenure Center is available on request.

5. A series of 16 mm motion picture films is being developed as a research tool to document rural

conditions and land relationships in Bolivia, Colombia and Chile. These films are produced in cooperation with LTC research workers in the field and add an important visual dimension to written documentation.

The films are available for purchase or loan. Write the Land Tenure Center or the Department of Agricultural Journalism for more information.

6. A limited number of graduate research assistantships are awarded through the Land Tenure Center as funds permit. Details are available from the Land Tenure Center.

THE FUTURE

The University of Wisconsin is committed to a continuing interest and activity in Latin America. AID support to the Land Tenure Center after July 1, 1965 will be on an annual basis with prospects for a four-year program.

The Land Tenure Center is currently cooperating with the Centro Interamericano de Reforma Agraria and the National University in Bogotá, Escuela de Estudios Económicos Latino-americanos para Graduados in Santiago

and the Central American Universities Association, and with the USAID Missions and other organizations in each country where work is done. Expanded projects are being developed in Brazil and Bolivia.

For more information write or visit.

THE LAND TENURE CENTER
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or contact LTC personnel located in Latin America.