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9. ABSTRACT <p>             This report presents the results of a study of agrarian reform programs in southern Honduras, with emphasis on the period 1960 to 1975. The work entailed reviewing the history of Honduran land policies, interviewing officials of the National Agrarian Institute (INA), and conducting in-depth interviews with small farmers in cooperatives and asentamientos (recent agrarian reform settlements). Honduran progress in providing land for impoverished campesinos during the 1960s and 1970s has been limited. In 1962 the INA was given legal authority to distribute national land. However, the problem for campesinos and the INA has been uncertainty concerning whether unworked land invaded and planted by campesino groups is legitimately owned private land or national land appropriated by private landowners and added to their haciendas. Lucky campesino invaders are those who eventually learn that they can claim title to the land they have planted. The less lucky are those eventually evicted from land found to be indeed privately owned. The Agrarian Reform Law No. 170 of January, 1975, is more comprehensive and progressive than earlier laws. It provides for sanctioning of various types of farm settlements, and is expected to support a more aggressive and productive INA agrarian reform program.           </p>
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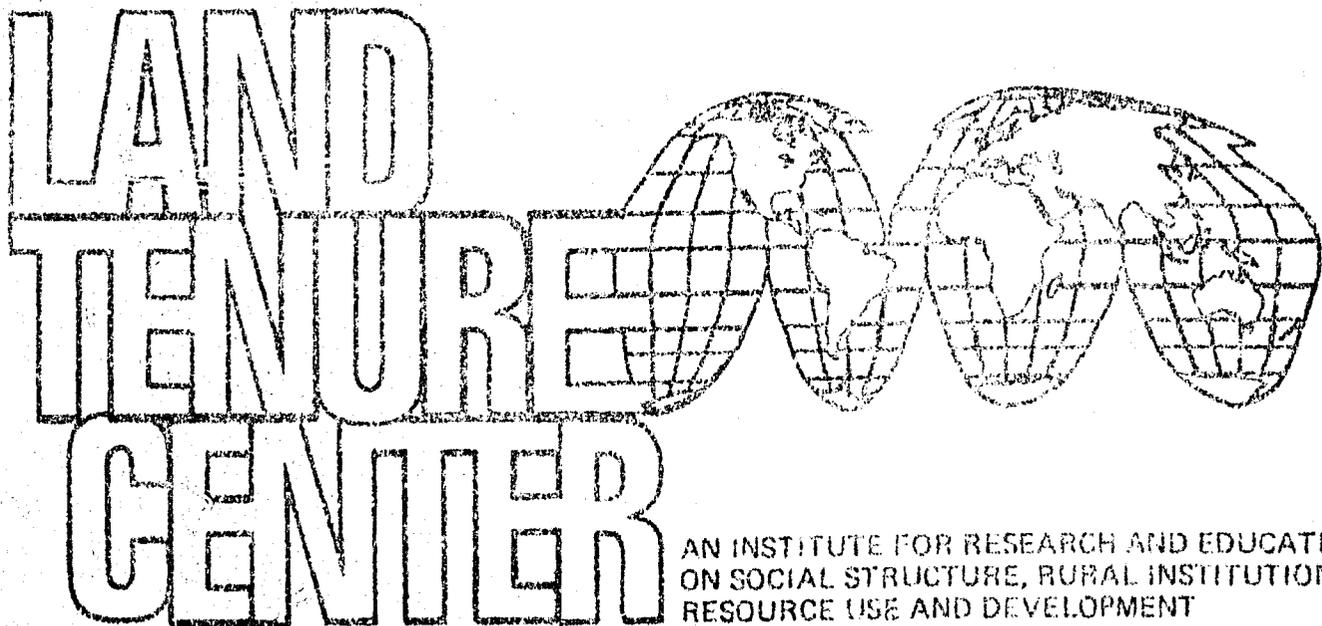
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by  
KENNETH H. PARSONS



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**AGRARIAN REFORM IN SOUTHERN HONDURAS**

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**TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS**

**July 1975**

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PREFACE

The research herein reported was undertaken as a part of an agreement between the Instituto Nacional Agrario (INA) of Honduras, the USAID Mission to Honduras, and the Land Tenure Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison to provide technical consultation to the staff of INA on agrarian reform policy. The period of the contract was for 14 months, from July 1, 1974. The research has centered on the experiences with agrarian reform programs in southern Honduras from approximately 1960 to 1975. We have not had time to undertake field research in the other parts of the country.

This statement reports the results of the research undertaken. In this, we have tried to understand the achievements of the agrarian reforms in southern Honduras principally through interviews with the participants. The main body of the research findings are presented in Part II. In order to get perspective on these programs, we reviewed briefly the evolution of land law and land settlement policies in Honduras which preceded the establishment of INA in 1961; a brief summary of this part of the inquiry is reported in Part I. During the course of the study a new Agrarian Reform Decree, No. 170, was promulgated in January 1975, replacing the temporary decree of December 1972, under which the recent agrarian reform settlements--asentamientos--were established. Accordingly, we have attempted some interpretations of the findings of this research in relation to the provisions of this new law, supplemented by a few general observations on the organization of agricultural economies through agrarian reform programs in a few other countries; these interpretations are presented in Part III.

In the formulations of this research project I benefited a great deal from discussions with Mario Ponce C., then Director of INA, and Virgilio Madrid, Deputy-Director, regarding the problems they were confronting in the administration of the program of INA. The suggestions and counsel of James Bleidner, USAID, and his associate, Clem Webber, were most helpful; also the USAID Capital Assistance Paper, prepared as a part of the programming of assistance to Honduran agriculture, enabled me to get a comprehensive overview of the agricultural development plan of the Government of Honduras. For all of this help I am grateful.

Throughout most of this past year I have had the counsel and help of Mr. Gustavo Paz as a "counterpart," only recently come to INA from the faculty of the National University of Honduras. We, in turn, were assisted by Miss Lizette Burchard, a student in social work at the National University. Their suggestions, their understanding of Honduras, and their bilingual talents have been indispensable. Both took major responsibilities in the design of the schedules. Mr. Paz assumed the major responsibility for the interviewing of the leaders of the asentamientos and cooperatives--assisted all of the time by Ramón Narvaez, a native of southern Honduras, and some of the time by Rose Emilia Rodriguez, both of the staff of INA; their assistance is much appreciated. Miss Burchard took full responsibility for the household interviews in the Monjarás community and had a major role in the interviewing of the small farmers. Both Mr. Paz and Miss Burchard have assisted in the analysis.

Throughout the past year the staff of the Land Tenure Center in Madison have responded generously to repeated calls for back-up assistance, especially library research, translations, and general counsel.

The whole project has been conducted under the pressure of the short time available, which has also been a period of much political change in the country.

For the final interpretations as presented in this study, the senior author assumes responsibility.

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July 1975

## PART ONE

### INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### CHAPTER 1. FROM LAND LAW AND LAND SETTLEMENTS TO AGRARIAN REFORM

##### I. Orientation

Agrarian reform became an active issue in public policy in Honduras in the 1960s, but the seeds from which it grew were planted long ago. In the 1970s Agrarian Reform has become the most controversial and contentious issue in national policy. Thus to understand the recent program of Agrarian Reform it is useful, and even necessary, to see the agrarian reform experience in Honduras in historical perspective in ways which give some insight into the process by which the issues have been shaped. In consequence, we have sought to understand the experience with agrarian reform in Honduras in relation to both the historic land policies and the development of agriculture; in these endeavors we have sought to identify the persistent issues which an agrarian reform program must confront.

The field inquiries to date have been concentrated in southern Honduras. The judgment to center the initial research in this area was based upon a number of considerations: the southern region is the most densely populated rural area in Honduras; it is an area in which the modernization of agriculture through market-oriented, diversified farming is most advanced; the two influences combined to stimulate extensive invasions of land by landless campesinos in recent years; this campesino unrest and the formation of campesino organizations in southern Honduras were given careful consideration in the recent study of the Rural Development Potential of the Radio School Movement; the availability of this published report made it possible to undertake the present study on a short-term contract of fourteen months, with a small staff; our transportation facilities were quite limited and the southern region was accessible; finally, the staff of the regional office of the INA in Choluteca was interested in the study and were fully cooperative, assisting the project in any way possible within their means.

##### II. Land Policy in Honduras in Historical Perspective

Programs for the reforms of agrarian structure in Honduras have been administered through the National Agrarian Institute since 1962. In mid-1974 when this study was initiated, INA was operating under an interim Decree No. 8, of December 1972, a decree of limited scope. This authority has recently been superseded by a more comprehensive agrarian reform Law, Decree No. 170. The program of INA is now being revised in conformity with this new law.

In as much as agrarian reform programs are by their very nature directed to the modification of antecedent conditions--and characteristically to the redress of extreme inequality of opportunity in the ownership, use,

and occupancy of land--the recent agrarian reform programs in Honduras need to be understood in relation to the earlier history of land policy and administration in this country.

The colonial policies of Spain, particularly in concessional grants of land for the establishment of encomiendas, as well as other kinds of rewards, fastened upon Honduras a profound inequality. Benjamin Villanueva indicates the roots of this inequality in his characterization of the continuities from and the transformation of the earlier encomienda system:

The small privileged minority of colonial times in Honduras came to see in private ownership of large tracts of land, rather than in management of the encomienda system, the basis of their own survival. Livestock production came to be a highly profitable enterprise in the large landholding units held primarily by these who acquired full property rights in land, the early privileged minority. For at the beginning of the colonial period, private ownership of land was given to the knights, captains and squires of the imperial state in amounts measured by caballerías (loosely translated as knight's units) while private property in land was given to the Spanish soldiers and peons--in the lower echelons of colonial society--in amounts measured by peonías (i.e., peon's units), with the former units being hundreds of times larger than the latter ones. In this way the encomienda system tended historically to disappear at the beginning of the XVII century and to be substituted by private property in land, mostly in the hands of the aristocracy. At the time, the owners of smaller amounts of land, the Spanish soldiers and peons, plus the new ethnic groups formed by the mixture of Spanish with Indians and negroes with Indians, tended to transform themselves into dependents of the landowning class, the present peasant culture.<sup>1</sup>

Starting from a basis of what might be called an endemic inequality, from the birth of the nation-state in 1821, the land policies of Honduras have had many provisions whereby small farmers could acquire land to farm. From 1836, but especially after 1870, the central government followed a policy of land grants to communities known as ejidos, wherein the poorer farmers could, at least supposedly, acquire land for personal cultivation, with usufructuary rights in land as tenants of the community.<sup>2</sup> The acquisition of land by prescription rights was recognized in 1872. "Farm

1. Benjamin Villanueva, "Institutional Innovation and Economic Development: Honduras: A Case Study" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Wis., 1968), pp. 10-11.

2. William Stokes, "The Land Laws of Honduras," Agricultural History 21 (July 1947): 151-52.

laborers who went into unoccupied territory and established farms and lived upon them for 3 years were to become ipso-facto owners in the eyes of the law."<sup>3</sup> This procedure required that the settler identify tracts of land and have them measured. In 1902, at least in Tela, some lands were measured up in lots 25 to 100 hectares in advance of settlement, which were to be granted to farmers who would cultivate them.<sup>4</sup>

In 1924 the principle of family lotification was adopted, whereby 50 acres of land were granted free to individual families, under a title which provided for inheritance but not alienation. This principle of grants of family land for the development of agriculture was widened in 1935 to embrace a rural colonization plan with the object of "the intensification and improvement of agriculture through the introduction of desirable immigrant colonists. Its basic mechanism was the family-lots principle, but added to this principle was the gratuitous supplying of tools, animals, seeds, etc., by the government as soon as the immigrants began a colony."<sup>5</sup>

"Reviewing all the agrarian laws and decrees from independence," Villanueva concludes that:

with the exception of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1961, which was a sharp variation in specific content . . . we can isolate the striking predominance of three basic objectives: first, to validate actual titles to ownership, for which a series of measures were devised so as to assure adequate physical identification and delimitation of proprietary rights to land; second, a fiscal revenue objective of land administration, not only through special taxes on registration and validation of titles, but also as a means to repay the public debts of the state. And third, and most important, the concessionary nature of land grants for the exploitation of coffee, sugar cane, cocoa, bananas, etc.-- as well as concessionary policies for the stimulation of family farming--as an embryonic conception of economic development through laissez faire, unavoidable consequence of the large extensions of uncultivated public lands and the easy availability of a cheap and abundant labor force.<sup>6</sup>

3. Ibid., p. 152.

4. Ibid.

5. Cited *ibid.*, p. 153. Honduras, Plan de Colonización Rural, pp. 5-6.

6. Villanueva, "Institutional Innovation and Economic Development," p. 21.

### III. Land Settlement Projects, 1951-1964

As this brief survey of the land policies of Honduras indicates, the country has followed what might be called a liberal land policy toward settlement of national lands by small farmers--always qualified in actual practice, no doubt, by the deep inequalities which were inherited from the colonial era. There were provisions by which small farmers could settle upon, use, and acquire ownership of the land they had cleared, and after 1924 a practice of family lotification was instituted, through which families could acquire 50-acre plots of land upon which to establish a farm. Also running through the several provisions incorporated in land law was an expressed concern regarding the development of agriculture. Yet there are several indications that the procedures by which the small farmer could acquire land did not achieve the degree of agricultural development which was considered desirable from the national viewpoint. The plan set forth in 1935 for settlement through the systematic colonization of immigrants suggests as much. But something was accomplished.

Analyzing the settlement histories of the hill communities in southern Honduras included in their study, White notes:

If one examines the history of these communities, it becomes clear that in many cases one or two families moved into a particular valley some 75 to 100 years ago and claimed a fairly sizeable piece of land. With relatively little in or out migration since, these valleys have gradually filled up with the descendants of the original families, occupying unclaimed land higher and higher up the sides of the mountains and dividing or subdividing the land with each generation . . . . Therefore the population growth of Honduras has been a gradual filling up of the rural communities with the descendants of the original neighborhood.<sup>7</sup>

In another context, White adds:

Fifty to seventy-five years ago, the population was much less dense, and it was possible then in many parts of Honduras to find fifty to one hundred manzanas [1 manzana = 1.7 acres, or 0.7 hectares] of unoccupied national or ejidal land. There one could go to begin his family or perhaps several families went together (friends and/or relatives). Frequently using the primitive slash and burn methods, an

7. Robert A. White, The Adult Education Program Acción Cultural Popular Honduras: Evaluation of the Rural Development Potential of the Radio School in Honduras (Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology, St. Louis University of Centro Loyola, Tegucigalpa, Oct. 1972), Part I, p. 37 [cited hereafter as White Report].

individual subsistence cultivator was able to utilize little more than five to ten manzanas at a given time; and given the fertility of virgin land, not much more was needed.<sup>8</sup>

Although we do not have at hand evidence which indicates, beyond the few inferences drawn here, just why Honduras embarked upon a rather extensive land settlement program, the country did so after 1951. As noted in the Country Paper on Honduras which was prepared for the FAO World Land Reform Conference in June-July 1966, nine major land settlement projects were started between 1951 and 1964.<sup>9</sup> These projects seem principally to have been a shift from the previous laissez faire policy of allowing individuals to settle on national land and then seek a confirmation of title to planned settlement, except that some of the projects were on land reacquired by the government from once private owners. In all of the projects, settlement was based upon individual allotments of land. These projects were the responsibility of the Land Reorganization Office of the Ministry of National Resources.

#### A. List of Settlements

1. Agricultural Settlement Scheme at Catacamas: This settlement was initiated in 1951 in the Department of Olancho: 4,027 hectares were divided, approximately, into 20-ha. plots. Only 38 families were settled here, with 26 out of approximately 200 plots occupied at the time of study (1961).

2. Land Allocation in the Valle de Lean: In 1954, 12,256 hectares of land were divided into 25-ha. lots; this would provide almost 500 plots. The land once belonged to the Tela Railroad Company and had reverted to the state. The project seems to have prospered. It was well located near a railway and highway leading to the major Atlantic coastal cities. "Another reason for the success was that this settlement occurred as a result of individual initiative, the land having already been occupied for the most part by local farmers and the project consisted merely of measuring and circumscribing their holdings."<sup>10</sup>

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8. Ibid., Part I, p. 81.

9. The information is principally from a summarized account of land settlement projects presented in the Honduras Country Paper, "Program of Reform of Agrarian Structure, Including Land Settlement, in Honduras," World Land Reform Conference, Rome, June-July 1966 [cited hereafter as Country Paper: Honduras]. This Country Paper, in turn, is based very largely upon an Informe Oficial of Mission 105 of the Organization of American States, Official Report on Agrarian Reform and Agricultural Development in Honduras, 3 vols. (1963, 1964).

10. Country Paper: Honduras, p. 2.

3. Land Allocation Project at Guaymas: In the Departments of Yoro and Atlántica; in 1958, 6,017 hectares were divided into 344 plots, an average of 17 to 18 hectares per lot. This project seemed to be going well at the time of the OAS review (1961 or 1962).

4. Land Allocation Project at Monjarás, in the Department of Choluteca, 1959: This land was recuperated as national land or purchased from a hacienda after intense local conflicts; 1,687 hectares of land were distributed in lots of approximately 10 ha. in size.

5. Land Allocation Project at La Ola in the Department of Choluteca: This tract of 6,480 hectares on the Choluteca River, known as Hacienda Ola, was divided into 20-ha. plots, beginning in 1959. The land had at one time been owned by the United Fruit Company and been handed back to the government, with the stipulation "that the land be divided into family-sized lots and that the beneficiaries should be, first of all, the small renters presently living on the land."<sup>11</sup>

6. Agricultural Settlement Scheme of "Taita-Bicoche": This project was initiated in 1960 in the Department of Olancho "along the banks of the Patuca, Wampū, Tinto and Guayape Rivers. This region has not yet been fully explored, but it is believed to contain large tracts of fertile table land suitable for farming." In 1961, 56 plots of 20 has. each were allocated. "It was planned to allocate approximately 100 hectares a grant, to settle 5000 families."<sup>12</sup>

7. Land Allocation at Buena Vista--Department of Choluteca: Starting in 1961, 1,700 has. of land were divided into 152 plots, of approximately 10 has. each. This project is adjacent to the Monjarás project (1959).

8. Agricultural Settlement Scheme at Aguán: In 1964, 500 has. of land in the Aguán Valley were divided into 52 plots on which families were settled to grow subsistence food crops; houses were provided. This project did not prosper and only parts of the settlement area were still occupied at the time of the Country Report, 1966. (This area is evidently now included in the major Aguán Project of INA.)

These land settlement projects all antedated the formation of the National Agrarian Institute, except the Aguán Project of 1964. (The distribution of the land on the Buena Vista Project was completed by INA.) However, INA did start out with a similar project emphasis. "Since its foundation the Institute has also set up a land allocation project at Guanchias, distributing 3,000 hectares among 300 farmers, and another such project at Flor de Valle, allocating 10,000 hectares to 500 farmers."<sup>13</sup>

11. White Report, Part II, p. 826.

12. Country Paper: Honduras, p. 2.

13. Ibid., p. 3.

Table 1. Summary Tabulation, Farm Settlement Schemes

Name of Project	Founding Date	Total Area (ha.)	Av. Size Plots (ha.)	No. of Plots
1) Catacamas	1951	4,027	20	200
2) Valle de Lean	1954	12,256	25	490
3) Guaymas	1958	6,017	17	344
4) Monjarás	1959	1,687	10	171
5) La Ola	1959	6,480	20	324
6) Taita-Bicoche	1960	1,120 <sup>a</sup>	20	556
7) Buena Vista	1961	1,700	10	152
8) Aguán	1964	500	10	52
		33,787		2,289

<sup>a</sup>First year allocation only.

This is an extensive program, even considering only those projects started by 1961 or before. In these earlier years, there was a distribution program of more than 33,000 hectares, with allotments of land for approximately 1,750 farmers. (These totals include only the allocations reported for the first year in Taita-Bicoche and do not include the Aguán project listed in Table 1.)

#### IV. The National Agrarian Institute

##### A. The General Context After 1962

The National Agrarian Institute was established by Decree No. 69 in March 1961. The basic law of Agrarian Reform, specifying the powers, functions, and responsibilities of the agency was promulgated by Decree No. 2, September 29, 1962, with amendments to these terms of reference set forth in Decree No. 127, of June 1963. This 1962-63 Law was the basic authorizing document for the articulation and conduct of Agrarian Reform policies in Honduras until the promulgation of Decree No. 170, Agrarian Reform Law of January 1975, except that there was an emergency Decree No. 8, December 1972, under which INA operated for two years while Law No. 170 was being drafted and proclaimed.

Although the 1962-63 Agrarian Reform Law was a comprehensive statute for the organization and conduct of Agrarian Reform activities, the program of INA as administered during most of the years of the decade 1962-72 was much less comprehensive than conceptualized in the law; only during the three-year term of the administration of Rigoberto Sandoval was there a vigorous reform program. In terms of the programs which were undertaken

under the 1962-63 Law, the key provisions<sup>14</sup> were that the National Agrarian Institute was authorized to serve as an agency for integrated rural development, particularly through the distribution and settlement of national and ejidal lands, and the provision of technical services to settlers.

In the establishment of the Agrarian Reform Institute, the policy of Honduras was in keeping with the prevailing climate of opinion in Latin America pursuant to the adoption of the Charter of Punta del Este in which

all the Latin American countries except Cuba have solemnly pledged to carry out the various objectives of the charter . . . popularly known as the Alliance for Progress. Prominent among the features of this treaty is number 6 on the list of objectives, which was phrased as follows:

'To encourage, in accordance with the characteristics of each country, programs of comprehensive agrarian reform leading to the effective transformation, where required, of unjust structure and systems of land tenure so that with the help of timely and adequate credit, technical assistance, and facilities for marketing and distribution of products, the land will become for the man who works it the basis of his economic stability, the foundation of his increasing welfare, and the guarantee of his freedom and dignity.'<sup>15</sup>

Even so, excepting the period of the Directorship of INA by Sandoval, the program actually administered by INA under the 1962-63 Law was very limited. The key to such dynamism as the program did have is seemingly to be found during most of this decade in the pressure group activities of campesino organizations. The threat of campesino invasions of land was reportedly a major element in the installation of Sandoval as Director. Also the actual invasions of national land by campesino groups forced the pace of the programs under Sandoval which identified national land and assigned the land to cooperatives. As will be discussed more fully below, the procedure by which land was secured by cooperatives was to invade land which a campesino group claimed to be national land. If investigation established that the land was, in fact, national land, the Director of INA could declare these lands recoverable by the group and assign

14. No attempt will be made here to expound fully the detailed provisions of the 1962-63 Agrarian Reform Law; it is doubtful that a comprehensive set of Reglamentos was ever issued. For example, the law provided for a progressively severe tax over the years on unutilized land; nothing ever came of this provision.

15. T. Lynn Smith, Agrarian Reform in Latin America (New York, 1965), pp. 6-7.

the lands to them. Since the national lands may have been incorporated into an hacienda along with some private lands, the privately owned lands had to be purchased if the entire tract was to be allotted to a cooperative. Although substantial areas were bought, limitations of funds made extensive purchases impossible.

After the resignation of Sandoval in 1971, the program of INA reverted to a lackadaisical condition, until the massive 1972 protest by campesino organizations backed by labor unions threatened unprecedented invasions. The protests precipitated a government crisis. A military coup d'état occurred, and Decree No. 8 was issued in December 1972.

The program of INA was based on this emergency Decree for about two years, under the directorship of Mario Ponce C. During this time more than 600 settlements on land, called asentamientos, were initiated. These asentamiento settlements differed from the cooperative settlements established during the Sandoval era of INA principally in that the authority of INA during this time was based on a temporary Decree and settlements could only be authorized on land claimed to be privately owned by use of a two-year lease.

Under Decree No. 8 privately owned land was "affectable," along with national and ejidal land, and could be assigned to groups for settlement if a determination was made that the land was unutilized or under-utilized. Such a determination was buttressed in the constitutional provision that private property in land must perform an adequate social function.

Since the new Agrarian Law 170 was promulgated in January 1975, and has not yet been fully implemented with Reglamentos, the authority for the INA-directed Agrarian Reform Projects, which were included in this study, was based on earlier laws--namely the Agrarian Reform Law of 1962-63 and Decree No. 8. Because campesino activities generated the power of social protest which pushed these reform programs along, it is essential to review briefly the origin and shape of these campesino movements, particularly in southern Honduras, the locus of our field research.

#### V. Recent Campesino Organizations in Southern Honduras and Their Connections with Agrarian Reform Programs

The Agrarian Reform programs in southern Honduras in recent years have been energized and shaped in no small degree by the power of discontented and nearly destitute campesinos. Since World War II, events have gradually closed in on the campesinos. Land for subsistence crops became increasingly hard to get, due partly to the increase in numbers of rural people and partly to changes in the structure of opportunities for the use of land, which made large-scale farming more profitable. Similar influences seem to have been at work throughout Latin America, with eruptions of campesino "invasions" in country after country. The 1961 Charter of Punta del Este reports a reading of the condition in Latin America at that time, and a commitment to Agrarian Reform so that the land could "become for the man who works it, the basis of his economic stability, the foundation of his economic stability and the guarantee of his freedom and

dignity."<sup>16</sup> The Agrarian Reform Honduras Law of 1962 was an outgrowth of the discussions of Punta del Este and provided the legal basis for the programs to be undertaken by INA. Thus INA from the beginning was thrown into a situation in which campesino agitation was already in ferment. The traditional society and economy of southern Honduras was already being shaken by events, especially the cumulative growth in rural population which had gradually filled up the countryside, and improvement in access to markets by new highways. The construction of the Panamerican Highway through Central America during World War II changed the economic location of southern Honduras. This highway not only connected Choluteca with the capitols of other Central American countries by the coastal highway, but also with Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and the Atlantic Coast by a branch running across Honduras. This sudden inclusion of southern Honduras in a wider market nexus stimulated large-scale commercial farming, especially in cotton and cattle production. The result was intensified competition for land.

Prior to this time, something of a "live-and-let-live" policy regarding the use and occupancy of land seems to have prevailed over much of southern Honduras. The more substantial families, perhaps with good connections to the government, established themselves in cattle production in the coastal area by acquiring ownership of at least a nuclear area which served as a base of operations. Lesser families could move into a valley area among the mountains, clear the land, and, as their numbers increased, spread their operations out from the valleys up the hillsides. The land became "theirs" through occupation and use, and they could become the legal owners of the land through the rights of prescription noted in the discussion of land law above.

As early as the 1930s, according to White, moves were underway to establish modern cattle ranches in the coastal plains area. Here, near Monjarás, occurred the first major confrontation in southern Honduras of land owners and campesinos over the rightful occupancy of land:

Before 1930 the land in the area of Monjarás was open and farmed here and there by small cultivators who cleared the land at will for their small patches. Then in the early 1930's the rights to these small plots were gradually bought up for two or three Lempiras each by a North American, Rafael Sturgeon. For part of the land Sturgeon apparently got title, but, in the opinion of the campesinos in the area, other national land he simply annexed by fencing it in. [They] apparently intended to establish in the Hacienda Buena Vista a ranch for the production of high quality Red Poll cattle. In the 1930's there was considerable open land in the area of the community of Monjarás, and the small farmers had no

<sup>16</sup> Smith, Agrarian Reform in Latin America, p. 7.

problem of finding other areas to plant their subsistence crops.<sup>17</sup>

The ownership and use of this area became a cause of intense conflicts in the late 1950s, some 20 years after the Buena Vista Hacienda had been established, over the issue of fencing in national lands. A campaign to recuperate the lands claimed by the campesinos to be national lands was spearheaded by a disgruntled former employee of this ranch. Under his leadership a committee of campesinos was formed to hire a lawyer and to search the land records in the national archives. Encouraged by what they interpreted to be the policy of the national government at that time regarding the distribution of national lands to farmers, campesinos invaded the land of this ranch and started to clear it. Despite repeated evictions, harassments, and arrests by the local police, the campesinos persisted. When University students took up the cause in the Mayday celebration of 1958, demanding that the national lands be given to the farmers, the government took notice and subsequently moved to recuperate the national lands and to purchase the land which was privately owned. By 1959 this land had been laid out in 10-ha. plots for distribution to small farmers. By 1961, the remainder of the ranch had been acquired and the whole area was allotted to small farmers in the early 1960s<sup>18</sup> and is now referred to as the Monjarás Buena-Vista Lotification. An analysis is being made of the farming experience on this project as a part of this research project.

As noted above, before 1959 the Government of Honduras had already undertaken several major land settlement projects on the Atlantic side of the country, in which land had been distributed to prospective settlers in family-sized holdings. In the Monjarás area, however, the land distribution program was a direct consequence of a campaign by campesino groups to recover national land for their own use. Although the recuperation of national lands was an issue in this Monjarás case, and has been a central issue in determining the availability, or affectability, of land for distribution to settlers throughout the history of INA, in the more typical case in southern Honduras the campesinos were aroused to form a local protective committee and eventually to join in campesino organizations by a slightly different issue. The farmers were stirred to action by the belief that the lands from which they were evicted to make way for large farms were in fact their own land. As White observed:

Very early in the interviewing of the neighbourhood leaders it became apparent that the land tenure conflicts of southern Honduras were due in great part to a kind of enclosure movement stimulated by new markets and other factors of agricultural development.

17. White Report, Part I, p. 181. This account of the campesino movements in southern Honduras is based very largely on this study by Robert A. White and associates of the Adult Education Program and Acción Cultural Popular Hondureña made in 1972.

18. Country Paper: Honduras.

The neighbourhood committees in defense of land, which later affiliated to the campesino federations, seemingly arose, partly as a defense against the eviction of the small farmers, as the large hacienda reached out for more land and put this land under more intensive cultivation, and partly as a response to a new economic structure.<sup>19</sup>

It seems reasonable, from what we have been able to learn of the economic history of southern Honduras prior to World War II, to characterize both the large-scale ranching and the small-scale subsistence farming of that time as being traditional. In neither was modern agriculture practiced; in both there was a surplus for sale, at least in the years with favorable weather. In the coastal region it seems that the landowners, at least initially, received concessional grants of land which became the nuclei of extensive ranching operations. Although their own land may have been fenced, the cattle evidently grazed widely over unfenced expanses of national land. The small farmers evidently fitted into this pattern of land use in an harmonious way. In this same expanse of national land the small farmers cleared fields here and there, shifting from time to time to clear new lands and allow the older lands to regenerate in cover and fertility.

In the mountain valleys, White seems to say, groups of relatives and neighbors would find unused land, clear it, and make it their own through the establishment of communities. With the natural increase in population, they cleared the land and pushed their milpa patches farther and farther up the hillsides. Probably everywhere in southern Honduras the campesinos developed cultural traits which White has characterized as a set of "strategies for maintaining a minimum of security." The rural lower-status population in trying to solve the fundamental problem or focal concerns of the year's supply of food, maintaining health, and personal identity and self-worth, tend to take a defensive, minimum-risk position because of the overwhelming factors of insecurity that it faces.

The campesino finds that every time he risks an investment of personal energy or resources to improve his situation, he always comes out of the venture losing. He gradually learns that the cards are so stacked against him that whatever he tries will most probably fail.

In the face of this continual defeat he must adopt a series of strategies to maintain a certain psychological and physical well-being:

1. Learn to lower aspirations to fit the actual realities of life;

19. White Report, Part II, p. 186.

2. Develop a fatalistic vision of the world in which it is impossible to change the order of events affecting one and it is a positive virtue to accept with resignation whatever suffering and adversity may come to one;
3. Develop strategies of minimum risk;
4. Establish alliances of interdependence in which available resources are pooled and the surpluses of one who is periodically more fortunate are distributed to the less fortunate;
5. Establish alliances of dependency in which there is an implicit inter-change of compliance--the only thing the powerless have to offer--for support and protection, especially in moments of crisis.<sup>20</sup>

Each of these cultural characteristics would seem to be significant for understanding the performance of campesinos in the agrarian reform programs of Honduras. Where campesinos actually have any latitude of choice, a minimum-risk strategy makes them reluctant to attempt innovations in farming, particularly those whose failure might endanger their chances of elemental survival. The traditional crops, farming systems, and agricultural practices are less risky and therefore less a threat to survival by crop failure. This sort of response may be exasperating to "advisors" who advocate something different, who may conclude that the farmers' attitudes are wrong-headed. But experiences the world over in recent decades with attempts at developmental transformation without a long process of demonstrated feasibility have almost always shown that the reluctant farmers have been wiser than the advisors. Not only do they have very narrow margins for survival, but the peasants are likely to have a profound understanding of the natural hazards and risks of farming in their own community.

The alliances of interdependence, which center in the extended families in peasant societies, emphasize the performance of useful tasks by even small children, embrace especially marriage and inheritance practices, and lead to a deep sense of group solidarity. One can see this in the dynamics of group formation in the occupation of land under Decree No. 8, almost always by relatives or neighbors. Also this is almost certainly one of the major psychological bases for the willingness to undertake cooperative endeavors in farming.

Our particular concern here is to understand how, under what conditions, and why campesinos with such cultural and personal traits resorted in southern Honduras to invasions of land, to open conflict with the large

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20. Ibid., Part I, pp. 70-71. Each of these strategies is interpreted and explained more fully in the White report, on the basis of replies to questions asked of the campesinos in the research project.

landholders (many of whom may have traditionally served as the "patron" of the community), and eventually to join in campesino organizations to secure land under the Agrarian Reform programs.

Four combinations of events seem to be especially important in this complex set of changes:

1. A cumulative increase in rural population of campesinos seeking land for food crops.
2. The construction of the Pan American Highway through southern Honduras, with a connecting highway through Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula to the Atlantic Coast, which opened up new markets for agricultural products.
3. The economic value of land was enhanced by the development stimulated by wider markets; this in turn intensified the competition for land, and hence its value. This enhancement of value placed new stresses upon the conventional land tenure arrangements. These new tensions exposed confusions in the legal and administrative bases of land law; the ambiguities were such that both the large land owners and the small farmers could find bases for claiming the land as their own.
4. As the campesinos formed community committees to protect, and recover, land which they claimed as their own, they drew both inspiration for and assistance in the formation of area-wide campesino organizations from the recently successful unionizations of the labor force of the big fruit companies on the Atlantic side of the country.

The rural population in Honduras has grown decade after decade, until the land for planting subsistence crops has become increasingly difficult to get. In southern Honduras at least the natural limit to cultivation has been reached on the hillsides; in the lower land competition for rental lands became intensified, with dramatic increases in rental prices. In short, rural southern Honduras has become over-populated, which in turn leads to greater economic pressure for intensification of land use. In the face of increasing scarcity of land, sons of small farmers found that they could not get land for subsistence food crops.

The construction of the Pan American Highway changed the economic location of southern Honduras and broke the area open for a "modernizing" development of agriculture, especially on the coastal plains. Cotton became a major crop in the 1950s and 1960s, and ranching became more of a modern business. The fencing of range land which is virtually necessary for either a breeding program to improve the quality of cattle or a pasture improvements program became more general. White suggests also that the enhanced business prospects for large-scale farming in southern Honduras led to the acquisition of large tracts of land by successful urban business and professional people. "Many of these haciendas have a history stretching back to the early colonial period when the southern coast of Honduras was already an important cattle growing area. In almost no case, however, have these haciendas been in the hands of a single powerful and wealthy Honduras family which can trace its ownership back to the colonial

period . . . . Land ownership is looked upon as the safest sort of investment, and it is also the basis of social prestige in the area. There is almost no merchant or professional man of any stature in the Choluteca area who does not buy his way into the recognized group of families by beginning his herd of cattle."<sup>21</sup>

It seems a reasonable inference from these observations that, with the modernization of farming and ranching which was stimulated by the opening up of new markets, large-scale farming became more of an investment-oriented business venture; as always seems to happen under such circumstances, a depersonalization of human arrangements also occurred.

In earlier days large landholders with claims to "tracts of national land were very liberal in allowing small farmers to plant subsistence crops on this land for nominal rent or no rent at all."<sup>22</sup> Under the new scheme of things, the small farmers faced a combination of enclosure by fencing and/or markedly increased rents. Rents rose from something like two sacks of grain per manzana to 15, 20, or even 30 Lempiras per manzana in the years of high cotton prices.

The tensions and conflicts intensified by these changes in population and economic structure in southern Honduras came to a focus upon the tenure of land. The reaction of the excluded campesinos was intensified by the conviction that much of the land which they had previously cultivated was theirs. It was this sense of "defending their own" which led to the deep bitterness toward the large landholders. As White summarized the issue:

Although the competition between large commercial agriculturalists and small, semisubsistence cultivators to control the land resources was generated by the growing population and the influences of national and international economic changes, one must not lose sight that the basis of the conflicts has been and is land tenure. The changing conditions that developed after 1950 would not have generated such bitter conflicts if the whole question of land tenure had not been enveloped in a series of confusions: 1) the lack of a clear, orderly procedure of land occupancy; 2) confusion over who actually has title to a specific piece of land; 3) a continual gap between the legal provisions which favor the small family-sized unit and actual implementation which allows powerful interests to flout the law and to manipulate the legal and administrative structure for their own benefit; 4) the lack of a clear agricultural development policy which decides what is to be the role of the small family-sized unit.

21. Ibid., Part II, p. 829.

22. Ibid., p. 816.

and that of the large commercial, exporting, multi-family units.<sup>23</sup>

In community after community the campesinos formed committees to defend and fight for what they considered to be the right to occupy their own lands. In this process natural leaders and genuine spokesmen for small farmers gradually rose to a position of influence in the communities. Despite harassment, arrests, and even imprisonment of their leaders, these local organizations persisted. The Radio School played a significant role in the encouragement and stimulation of campesinos to assert their own wills in these contests. This struggle, which need not be recounted in detail here, extended over many years.<sup>24</sup>

In the meantime, in 1962, the first Agrarian Reform Law of Honduras was enacted. One of the major features of this law was that INA was assigned responsibility for the distribution of national lands to landless campesinos. Although INA did not pursue an active policy of land distribution, by the late 1960s the responsibility for national lands made the organization a focal point of the campesino drive to occupy lands which they considered to be national lands.

Organized campesino activity was strengthened by three different developments in the middle and late 1960s. With the community groups of campesinos faring badly in their attempts to recuperate land which they had once farmed, they turned in a few instances to the labor organization in the north which had successfully won a strike against one of the banana companies in 1954, subsequently unionizing the workers. In this way ANACH, which had functioned as a labor organization in northern Honduras, was invited into southern Honduras. Subsections of ANACH were formed in three counties in 1968--El Triunfo, Monjarás, and El Naranjal--at about the same time the Ligas Campesinas (later UNC) also became active in southern Honduras.<sup>25</sup> "In 1968 both of the national campesino federations reorganized and adopted a new, and much more aggressive policy of pressure for land distribution."<sup>26</sup>

In 1969, after four years of failure in one community to get governmental support in their attempt to recuperate ejidal land, the campesinos announced their intention to occupy an area of land near Namasigue and plant crops. An Assembly of campesinos resolved: "We have waited sufficient time. Hunger obliges us to act since we have children to feed and women who do not even have anything to clothe themselves. We know that

23. Ibid., p. 820. Some of this confusion may eventually be eliminated, if the cadastral survey is completed.

24. The White Report has a detailed account of how this group struggle was carried on in a number of communities, especially Part II, pp. 812-866.

25. Ibid., p. 842.

26. Ibid., p. 861.

the land of El Bosque, La Chorrea and Las Minitas are common lands of Namasigue. We are all agreed on the necessities which are sapping our strength day by day and we no longer have a place to sow our subsistence crops. And our wives now no longer have clothes to cover their flesh. On the following day we will occupy the neighboring lands of the municipality."<sup>27</sup> They did, on August 25, 1969. They continued the occupancy of the land and planted their crops. The success was electrifying to the landless campesinos of the area.

One of the factors which contributed to this uninterrupted occupancy was that it coincided with the war with El Salvador. In this struggle Choluteca was bombed--and many of the substantial people of the city having automobiles fled to Nicaragua. The campesinos stayed and fought. This loyalty to the army led in turn to the reluctance of the government to use force to evict these people, which implicitly gave at least tacit acceptance to the forceful recuperation of national and ejidal lands from large land owners. Once the barriers were broken, the campesinos were more successful in their moves to occupy public lands.

In 1967 there was a change of Director and soon thereafter a shift in emphasis in the program of INA. Rigoberto Sandoval was made Director, seemingly as part of a response to increased activity by campesinos in occupying public land. But whatever the explanation, under the direction of Sandoval INA became more responsive to the search for land by campesino groups.

Under the Agrarian Reform Law of 1962, INA had been given some authority over the distribution of national and ejidal lands. Once land was invaded by a campesino group, INA was required to make a determination as to whether the land was public or privately owned. If it was adjudged to be private, the campesinos would be evicted; if not they could stay. This placed INA in the middle--petitioned by small farmers to validate their claim that the land was national land and therefore available for settlement sanctioning their occupation of the land, and counter-petitioned by large landholders for an eviction on the basis that the land was rightfully theirs. Although INA could sanction the occupation of land judged to be national or ejidal land, it had no authority over the privately owned portion of an hacienda. Such land was available for settlement only if INA purchased it, which it did do in a few instances.

In 1968 INA became involved in a crucial case which set a pattern for much that was to follow. In the Ulúa Valley on the north coast, the United Fruit Company had abandoned a large tract of land due to crop failure, and the land reverted to the national government. Campesinos invaded this land, claiming that it was available for settlement as national land, under the terms of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1962-63; INA upheld the claims of the campesinos. The group which occupied this land was composed of persons who had worked for the United Fruit Company and had been trained in the skills of banana production. INA not only sanctioned the occupation

<sup>27</sup>. Ibid., p. 847.

of the land but helped these workers organize themselves into a production cooperative for the growing of bananas and other fruits which were sold to the Fruit Company.

This cooperative--Las Guanchias--has, by most accounts, been unusually successful. This success is credited with having so impressed Director Sandoval that he set INA upon a course of organizing the campesinos who secured land through the sanction of INA into production cooperatives.

In their quest for land which they could occupy, campesino groups in at least one instance took up the issue of ownership of land by foreigners. Within 40 kilometers of the border such ownership is forbidden by the constitution. Thus campesino groups successfully pressed for the recuperation of a large hacienda in southern Honduras, a part of which was owned by a Nicaraguan and a part of which was national land. INA somehow found the money to purchase the privately owned land and established some 23 cooperatives and later asentamientos on this land, commonly referred to as San Bernardo.

Under the policy of promoting cooperative farms which was pursued until some time in 1970, INA sponsored about 75 cooperative farms as agrarian reform projects. Sandoval resigned after three years, amidst opposition to his emphasis upon cooperatives.

Subsequently--for the next two years or so--INA shifted to a conservative, even a negative policy toward the settlement of campesinos. This policy was ended abruptly in December 1972, with a massive march of tens of thousands of campesinos on Tegucigalpa. The former President and head of the Army, Oswaldo Lopez Arellano, led a military takeover of the government. One of the first official acts of this new government was to issue a new land reform law--Decree No. 8, of December 1972.

Under this Decree unutilized and underutilized private land was deemed to be "affectable" for occupation by campesino groups, as well as national and ejidal lands. Private lands considered affectable were those which were adjudged to be utilized insufficiently to meet the constitutional requirement that privately owned rural land must meet criteria for the social function of property. Private land occupied by campesino groups under the Decree was held by asentamientos under two-year leases which were mandated upon the owners.

Under the authority of Decree No. 8 and the directorship of Mario Ponce, more than 500 asentamientos were organized in approximately two years time. According to one estimate, approximately 55 percent of the land in the asentamientos was privately owned.

Under this regime the campesino groups were given both major responsibilities and opportunities. In the usual case, a group of campesinos came to INA with a request to occupy a particular tract of land. If it was determined by INA, through investigation, that the land was affectable (either underutilized private land or publicly owned lands), that it was of sufficient size and quality to provide at least minimum economic opportunities for members of the group, and that the petitioners were eligible

campesinos, then the group might occupy and use the land. This general arrangement gave strong support to campesino groups which were successful in organizing themselves and locating land acceptable for occupation and use. These groups have been very largely on their own in the occupation and use of the land, including the adoption of cropping systems--and if the land was sufficiently distant from their former homes, for the erection of houses and the provision of their own water supply. Especially in the organizing stage and the petitioning for land, the general campesino organizations--ANACH and UNC--were active in the formation of asentamientos.

The program of Agrarian Reform under authority of Decree No. 8 was terminated by the expiration of the Decree and the promulgation of a new Agrarian Reform Law No. 170 of January 1975. This new law is much more comprehensive than either of the previous laws. It provides for the determination of both ownership and use of rural land and has a set of provisions for placing ceilings on private holdings region by region. The law also has sufficient latitude in the provisions for the organization of farm settlement and economic systems of agriculture so that a variety of organizations could be sanctioned.

Currently--May 1975--under the new Director, Coronel Mario Maldonado, the entire program of INA is being reviewed and revised.

PART TWO

FIELD STUDIES:  
EXPERIENCE WITH AGRARIAN REFORM PROJECTS IN SOUTHERN HONDURAS

CHAPTER 2. THE EXPERIENCE OF SMALL FARMERS IN THE MONJARAS AREA

I. Introduction

This statement presents a preliminary or provisional analysis of the experience of 45 farm families on farms created from tracts of land allotted to settlers in an Agrarian Reform Program of the early 1960s. The standard size of individual allotments of land was 14 manzanas--approximately 10 hectares, or 25 acres of land per farm.

The farmers interviewed are those on land commonly referred to as the Monjaras-Buena Vista Lotifications. Some 320 grants of land were made to individual settlers in this Project.<sup>1</sup> Since this small farmer survey is only one part of a more inclusive study of the Agrarian Reform experience in southern Honduras, this present (and preliminary) statement is subject to subsequent revision in the light of the findings of the more comprehensive study (as outlined in the progress report for December 1974). This more comprehensive study embraces several aspects of the experience in southern Honduras, including interviews on asentamientos and cooperatives, and a comparative study in the Monjaras area through interviews with housewives to determine the experience with different approaches to Agrarian Reform, particularly as reflected in levels of living and the outlook of the family. As a part of this comparison, interviews were taken in the homes of 20 persons who work as wage laborers for the sugar factory, as well as in the homes of small farmers, members of asentamientos and of agricultural cooperatives. This study of small farms is significant, in a comparative analysis, partly because the small-farmer emphasis in Agrarian Reform was a major reform effort and merits study as such. Also, this small-farm experience is significant for possible comparison with more recent Agrarian Reform Programs undertaken with an emphasis upon cooperative or group farming.

1. At about this same time there was a parallel and similar, though somewhat larger program of land distribution nearby on what is referred to as the Ola Hacienda, land relinquished by one of the fruit companies. We have given this latter settlement project only brief attention, for several reasons: concentration of emphasis in the Monjaras area promised to be more productive, partly because of the possibilities of comparison with more recent reform programs. Also, our brief visits to the Ola Hacienda area indicated that this land was not so productive as in the Monjaras-Buena Vista Project, though the grants were larger. Also, essentially the same set of ideas or procedures were operative in both of these small-farm distribution programs.

Recent programs and planning in INA have given a central emphasis to asentamientos formed under a temporary Decree No. 8. Although there is considerable variation in the type of organization which characterizes the asentamientos, there has been a central emphasis upon cooperative endeavors. With the recently announced new Agrarian Reform Law No. 170, January 1975, it is expected that there will be both a modified and a more definite set of rules for the organization of farm settlements under the Agrarian Reform Program than had been the case heretofore. However, the entire historical experience in Honduras with Agrarian Reform Programs would seemingly be potentially significant on the shaping of future Agrarian Reform Programs: this is one of the premises of this study of small farms in the Monjaras-Buena Vista area. The central question is, therefore: What is the significance for Agrarian Reform Policy in Honduras of the experiment in establishing small farms in this community? We seek the significance through study of the performance, or experience, of the small farmers who settled on this land about 12 years ago.

## II. The Sample Farms Through Which Interviewed Farmers Were Chosen

The basic sampling procedure was to select every third farm by number, from a set of cards bearing both the number assigned to the tract in the original plot of the area and the name of the person of latest record as owner of the lot. The drawings produced 106 cards.<sup>2</sup>

The practice followed in the field in interviewing was to group the cards according to feasible patterns of travel by roads. Using this procedure, wherever interviews were not possible on the chosen farm for any reason--whether the occupant could not be found or the interviewer refused--we made it a policy to take the next house on the road.<sup>3</sup> Within these guidelines we conducted interviews as long as our time permitted; 45 useable schedules were taken and are the bases of this analysis: this sample of farms was widely distributed over the entire project area (except for the section where trouble was brewing which was avoided).

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2. This basic method of drawing every third card was modified slightly. In the first drawing for the Monjaras-Buena Vista Lotification, some 40 of the farms in this lotification had been chosen by INA as prospective participants in a new sugar cane growing cooperative and were not included in the cards from which the sample was drawn. In order to get a somewhat larger sample every ninth card was taken in a second drawing in this section. The over-all total number of cards drawn in this way for the entire Monjaras area was 106 houses. Since there was serious controversy under way in the area over the dissolution of the La Lucha Cooperative, we decided to avoid that section of the project area in which both the La Lucha Cooperative and the proposed new cooperative were located.

3. This procedure was modified in two instances; in one case, a neighbor present at one of our interviews was interviewed also, though he was not in our drawing; and in another case, a farmer was included because he grew cane for the factory, but was not a member of a cooperative.

### III. General Characteristics of the Farmers

Most of these farms are occupied by the original recipients of the land still living on their parcels. Of the 45 farms in the sample, 33 are occupied by the original grantees or their widows, with four additional farms in the process of passing within the family to a son. Thus, 37 of the 45 farms (or 82 percent) are held by the original settlers' families; 8 farms have been transferred by sale since 1967.

Also typically, the farmers have always been farmers, as were their fathers before them. Of the 45 farmers interviewed: 41 said that they had always farmed; 4 had had other occupations; 1 had been a fisherman; 1 had been a sailor before settling on the land in 1962; 1 was, and seemingly is, a shop-keeper in Monjaras. The fourth is a widow who said she had always been an "oficios domesticans," although she was seemingly managing the farm. Of the 45 respondents; 43 reported that their fathers had always been farmers; the other 2 did not know the occupation of their fathers, but they reported that they, themselves, had never done anything but farm. Only 3 reported not living on their parcels; 2 lived in Monjaras; 1 lived in the Buena Vista Colonia.

The 8 farmers who had purchased their farms were quite like their neighbors: all reported that both they and their fathers before them had been farmers; 1 of the 8 did not live on the parcel, but rather on the highway approaching Monjaras.

Table 2. Age of Farmers Interviewed

Under 30 years	1
30 - 39	8
40 - 49	16
50 - 59	12
60 - 69	1
70 - <sup>a</sup>	<u>5</u>
	43 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Four of the 5 farmers over 70 had wives in their 50s and had at least 1 grown son a home; one had a wife 40 years old with sons 10 to 12 years old at home.

<sup>b</sup>Two of the 45 farmers are widows: 1 widow, age 43, reported a man age 31 living in the house and working on the farm.

IV. Households and Families

The households on these farms are large, with an average of 8.9 persons per household.

Table 3. Number of Persons in Interviewed Farm Households  
(N = 45)

No. of Persons per Household	No. of Households	Total No. of Persons in Households	Average No. of Persons per Household
6 or less	8	38	4.75
7 - 9	14	107	7.64
10 - 12	21	228	10.9
Over 12	2	28	14.0
Totals and Average	45	401	8.9

Although there are several households in which there are persons other than members of the nuclear families of parents and children, the number of persons per household is mostly accounted for by the number of children per mother, as reported in Table 4.

Table 4. Number of Children per Interviewed Mother,  
by Age Groups of Mothers  
(N = 41)<sup>a</sup>

Age Group of Mothers	No. of Mothers of This Age Group	Total No. of Living Children	Total No. of Infant Deaths Reported	Total No. of Deaths of Older Children	Average No. of Living Children per Mother	Average No. of Reported Births per Mother
40 years and over	25	174	13	6	6.96	7.3
30 - 39 yrs.	12	87	7	2	7.25	8.0
Under 30 yrs.	4	18	1	1	4.50	4.75
Total and Average	41	279	21	9	6.8	7.5

<sup>a</sup> Four households are not included in this tabulation: in 2 households there are second marriages with wives under 30, who are evidently not the mothers of the children whose ages were given in the interview; 1 wife is divorced; 1 married couple has no children.

The Farms

This Monjarás-Buena Vista area was a planned settlement of land previously occupied by a ranch-hacienda. The total area is of an irregular shape, bordered in part by streams and on one side by a major highway. The land lies near the sea and toward the sea the terrain is interlaced with streams and bayous.

The land was platted principally into 14-manzana lots, with a grid of highway and road ways cut into this patterned plat. Near the borders or water-ways the lots are of irregular size; of the 45 in the sample 2 were reported to be 20 manzanas or more (20 or 22, respectively); another 4 are of partial size--7 to 10 manzanas. The bulk of these farms, however--39 of the 45--are on what are evidently standard-sized lots of 14 manzanas each, even though 10 of those were reported to have only 12 and 13 manzanas. In these latter cases the area in the public road ways seems to have been deducted from the total area of the farm as reported.

Excluding the 4 smallest holdings, those from 7-10 manzanas, the remaining 41 farms had an average of 13.9 manzanas total area per farm, of which 11.9 manzanas were reported to be cultivable. The difference between the two figures can be attributed in part to land used for home sites and land taken up by roads, but also some land is unsuitable for cultivation, such as land near the sea which is salty. Our interviews indicate that land which is considered to be noncultivable is used mostly for grazing cattle.

We have no measure of the quality of land on these farms; however, there is no doubt that, although the land in the survey area is on the whole good land in comparison with the rest of southern Honduras, it is not of uniformly high quality. The best land in this project area is land which can be irrigated by tube wells;<sup>4</sup> much of the land of this quality is in sugarcane, grown by cooperative farms.<sup>5</sup> On some of this high quality land, tube wells have been put down by INA in anticipation of expanding sugarcane production, a move which has been resisted by a number of owners of these individual farms. The conflicts over this shift to cane farming through cooperatives are at the root of much of the current controversy in that part of the area which we avoided in this field survey.

As one moves out from this heartland of the very best soil, much of it now in cane for the sugar factory or being planned for this use, the

4. We were told these run to about 300 feet.

5. These cane-growing cooperative farms, of which there are now 4, are characteristically organized by a member assigning land to the coop for group farming. Usually also, the land assigned is of about 10 manzanas, with the owner retaining 3 or 4 manzanas for home site, the growing of food crops, and possibly pasture for a few animals. Since we interviewed the officers of the 4 cane-growing coops, we interviewed only a few small farmers who have pooled this land through the coops.

land is less uniformly of high quality and its potential uses are variable. As the sea is approached, the land cannot be irrigated through tube wells due to the risk of drawing salt water into the ground water supply. There is some cane being grown for the factory by cooperatives on land which cannot be irrigated due to the salt hazard, but we were advised that the quality of the crop may be adversely affected as the salt content in the soil increases. Near the sea, the land is useful only for grazing. We do not now have an estimate of the proportion of the land in this project area which is of the highest quality--i.e., suitable for irrigated cane production--but it can scarcely exceed 30 or 40 percent of the total, as one judges the area by observing a map.

Outside of this heartland of excellent soils the potential uses of the land are quite different; in consequence, a more varied pattern of land use is necessary. Thus, most of the farmers whom we interviewed practiced a mixed type of farming with maíz and maicillo (corn and sorghum) as the central crops.<sup>6</sup> There is some growing of pineapple-cane for sale for direct consumption, as well as several other food crops, e.g., melons, sesame, beans, squash, yuca, etc. On farms with some pasture land, cattle are kept.

Since this land was distributed to small farmers approximately 12 or 13 years ago, and the original settler families are on 82 percent of the farms in the sample (37 out of 45), the farmers whom we interviewed had established these farms. Before subdivision, this land was in a cattle-ranching hacienda, almost wholly in natural pasture; thus the recipients of land had to clear the land to make it cultivable. Of the 37 original settlers and their families whom we interviewed, 36 reported that the land was not suitable for cropping when received; they cleared it. Only 1 of the original settlers indicated that his land was cultivable when he obtained it. Of the 36 reporting that they had to clear the land, only 1 reported that he had hired the land cleared. Thus 35 out of 37 families cleared the land with central reliance upon family labor: 17 cleared their land wholly by labor of the family; while 9 reported that they had supplemented family labor with some hired labor, and an additional 9 had hired some machine service for the clearing. Of the 8 farms which have been transferred by sale, half of these also cleared the land they now farm; 4 did not. In sum, 40 out of the 45 farmers interviewed had cleared the land they now farm, mostly with their own labor. Presumably, the same may be said about the wells they have dug, the simple houses they have built, and the fences<sup>7</sup> which surround and divide their farms.

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6. At least some of the farmers in the sugarcane production coops also grow corn and sorghum for home consumption.

7. The White Report notes that the only help which the first settlers received in establishing their farms was "some assistance from the newly formed agricultural extension agency, STICA, to construct fences" (Part II, p. 816).

The farmers own this land under a form of deed known as "Dominio Pleno"; under this type of ownership the land passes by inheritance, but is neither freely alienable nor mortgageable. By permission of public authority the improvements to the land are transferrable by sale.

#### VI. Natural Hazards and Risks in Farming

The year 1974 was difficult for these farmers. The storms associated with Hurricane Fifi, which brought so much damage on the Atlantic side of the country, brought flooding to this area: 35 of the 45 farmers interviewed reported flood damage. On some farms the damage to crops was total, with the homes also flooded by some 3 feet of water.

Beyond this flood damage, farmers reported serious damage by pests, plant diseases, locusts, corn borer, or "plague." Another factor limiting the cropping potentials of this area is that it is drought-prone, as is most of southern Honduras. Thus the cropping systems of these farmers must somehow be designed to adjust to or cope with the constraints imposed by these natural hazards.

#### VII. Corn and Sorghum as Major Crops

The central crop on the majority of farms interviewed is some combination of corn and sorghum. Most farmers plant both. Frequently they are interplanted on the same tract of land. Either crop may be planted in either or both seasons, the primera and the postrera. Consequently, in this study we consider these two crops as a single crop. Similarly, we consolidated the plantings in the two seasons into a single crop area parameter: where crops are interplanted, the area used is that of the combined crop; that is, the area is not double-counted.

Of the 45 farms upon which we interviewed, corn and/or sorghum was planted on 42. Of the 3 farms upon which no corn or sorghum was planted, 2 grow cane for the factory as members of a cooperative and had used no reserved land for food crops; 1 had rented land (7 manzanas) out to another party to grow cotton. Of the 42 farmers planting corn/sorghum, 36 harvested some crop, 26 of whom reported some sale of one or both of these grains. This experience is analyzed and summarized below.

Forty-two farmers planted 467 manzanas of corn/sorghum, an average of 11.1 manzanas per farm. Of these,

Six reported the 1974 crops a total loss, with a total planted area of 59 manzanas, or 9.8 manzanas per farm. All 6 of these farmers reported flooding at the time of Hurricane Fifi, with considerable damage to other crops and houses as well.

Eight reported some harvest but no sales. These 8 had planted a total of 76.5 manzanas of corn and sorghum, with an average area of 9.6 manzanas per farm. This group harvested the crop from only 26

manzanas of land and reported an area loss of 66 percent; no crop was sold.

Fifteen farmers suffered some loss of crop but did have some left to sell. These 15 farmers planted 200 manzanas of corn or sorghum (an average of 13.3 manzanas per farm) and reported harvesting 111.5 manzanas; this was a crop loss of 44 percent in terms of the area planted.

Thirteen farmers planting corn and/or sorghum reported no crop area loss. They planted and harvested 131.5 manzanas, an average of 10.1 manzanas per farm. Of these 13, only 1 reported that all the harvest was consumed by the family, this one with 7 manzanas of these grains.

Thirty-three farmers reported the quantities of these grains, for both production and consumption. For these, 25 percent of the crop was reported to have been consumed by the family or fed to livestock, with 75 percent of the crop sold.<sup>8</sup>

Of the 36 farmers reporting some harvest of corn and sorghum, 26 reported total sales of 27,322 Lempiras, an average of 1,151 Lempiras per farm.

It is to be understood that these figures on production, consumption, and sales were secured through a single interview-visit, and may well have memory or other biases in them. They do indicate with considerable accuracy, in our judgment, the central role which these crops have in the systems of farming. They indicate quite well also something of the incidence of crop loss in 1974; and they clearly imply, it seems to us, an intent to produce these grains for market sale, as well as for home consumption. These intentions were deeply frustrated in 1974 by the unusually high loss of crops by flooding.

### VIII. Cash Crops Other Than Corn and Sorghum

#### A. Cane for the Factory

Four farmers reported growing cane for the factory:

3 of these were members of a cane-growing coop;

2 have assigned all their cropland to the cooperative;  
both work as laborers for the coop;

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8. White reported that a minimum of 3 manzanas of land is required in southern Honduras to produce enough maize and sorghum to meet the needs of one family. White Report, Part I, p. 858. This is roughly consistent with the percentage of crops sold or used calculated here, considering that the average planting of corn and sorghum was 11.1 manzanas per farm.

A widow said that she had assigned 7 manzanas of land to the coop for cane for the past two years, and the same land for rice the two preceding years, but that she had never received any cash returns from this land.

Two additional farmers interviewed indicated that they planned to assign their cropland to a cane-growing coop next year. In this way both expected to have assured employment at 3 Lempiras per day. One respondent indicated that he was doing this to make sure that he did not lose his land, since in his understanding he might otherwise lose his land under the new Agrarian Reform law.

B. Pineapple-Cane for Sale for Direct Consumption

Four farmers reported sales of pineapple-cane, which is sold on the street as a "sweet." Altogether these 4 farmers had 8 manzanas of this cane, which was sold to an intermediary at the farm at 5 centavos per stalk. The reported sales amounted to a total value of 1,450 Lempiras; this is equal to 181 Lempiras per manzana, or 362 Lempiras per grower. One farmer, who sold pineapple-cane in 1973, lost his current cane crop in the 1974 flood. Three other farmers have planted this type of cane which they expect to market next year.

C. Rice

Two farmers reported growing 1 manzana each of rice, with one farmer having lost his rice crop of 2 manzanas in the 1974 flood. A fourth farmer reported selling rice in 1973.

D. Cotton

Two farmers reported growing cotton; 1 had 10 manzanas of land in cotton in a coop; on the other farm cotton was growing on rented land, as noted above.

E. Sesame

Three farmers reported growing and selling sesame.

F. Other Crops

Two farmers reported cash sales of melons; one of yuca.

IX. Cropping Patterns

Although corn and sorghum are the basic or central crops grown on most of these small farms, the farmers are not engaged in a monoculture; a variety of crops is grown, especially for market sale.

Corn is no doubt the premier crop (see Table 5), with tortillas made from ground corn the main item in the diet; a substantial area of sorghum is also grown. The growing of sorghum, which is evidently an inferior good when compared to corn, is almost certainly a way of reducing the risks from drought.

Table 5. Reported Corn and Sorghum Planting Practices<sup>a</sup>

	<u>Percent of Total Area of Corn and Sorghum</u>
Planted to corn alone	41
Planted to sorghum alone	15
Corn and sorghum interplanted	44

<sup>a</sup>This classification combines the area planted as primera and postrera crops into one aggregate.

Of the 45 farmers, 26 grow either only corn and sorghum, or a special cash crop such as cane for the factory, or cotton. The other 19, all of whom planted corn and sorghum, planted some special cash crop: cotton, cane, sesame, rice. The most important of these supplementary cash crops is pineapple-cane: 5 farmers reported growing this crop for 1974 marketing (although the crop was destroyed by flooding on 1 farm). An additional 3 farmers have made plantings of this crop from which a harvest is expected later in 1975 (for a total of 8 farmers). This crop is evidently a key crop in diversification, since farmers growing pineapple-cane also grow additional cash crops, as noted in a footnote to Table 6. This variety of crops is significant both for suggestions regarding the ways in which farmers are attempting to supplement the basic grain crops with a cash crop and as an indication of the farm management and farming skills which these people have.

#### X. Family Labor Force and Labor Utilization

On 39 of the 45 farms the farm work was done principally by the family labor force.<sup>9</sup> The family labor force consists mainly of fathers and sons over 14, although sons-in-law, nephews, and brothers are also included in some cases. Major reliance upon members of the family for the labor performed on farms is one of the basic indicators of a family farm. In the analysis we have divided these farms into two classes: those on which

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9. Of the other 6, 4 had assigned most or all of their land to a production cooperative and 2 relied principally upon hired labor.

Table 6. Cropping Patterns, Small Farms, 1974  
(N = 45)

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Farms growing corn and sorghum only	23
Farms growing cane for factory only	2
Farms growing cotton only	1
Farms growing corn/sorghum with cane for factory	2
Farms growing corn/sorghum with pineapple-cane	9 <sup>a</sup>
Farms growing corn/sorghum with melons for sale	3
Farms growing corn/sorghum with sesame	2 <sup>b</sup>
Farms growing corn/sorghum with rice	2
Farms growing corn/sorghum with cotton	1

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<sup>a</sup>Includes 1 farmer who reported growing pineapple-cane for home consumption only, and 3 farmers with current plantings of commercial scale of pineapple-cane, with no sales for 1974. This group also includes 3 farms growing other commercial crops; 1 selling melons and yuca in 1974; 1 with 1 manzana of beans in 1974; another reported 1 manzana of sesame and 2 manzanas of rice in 1974, both of which crops were sold.

<sup>b</sup>Sesame also grown on some other farms.

the land is used exclusively<sup>10</sup> for the production of corn and sorghum and those with more diversified systems of farming.

This comparison is a striking one in two aspects. Despite the fact that the two classes of farms are apparently of identical average size, the diversified farmers actually plant larger areas of corn and sorghum as well as additional crops than the farmers who plant no other major crops, and do this with a smaller labor force. (This no doubt reports a higher ratio of postrera to primera crops on the more diversified farms.) Not only is the family labor force somewhat smaller on the more diversified farms than on the less diversified, but the diversified farms hire less seasonal labor. Two-thirds of the farms growing only corn and sorghum hire seasonal labor; only one of the other farms reported hiring seasonal labor.

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10. It is possible that some fruits and vegetables for home consumption may be produced on these farms and not reported.

Table 7. Family Labor Force and Labor Utilization

Classes	No. of Farms in Class	Av. Area per Farm Cultivable Land (mzs.)	Av. per Farm Corn and Sorghum (mzs.)	Av. No. Family Labor Force per Farm	Total of Cultivable Land per Family Worker	No. of Farms Hiring Seasonal Labor
Farms growing corn and sorghum only	23	11.4	11.5	2.8	4.1	16
Farms more diversified: corn and sorghum plus other enterprises	16	11.4	11.8	2.4	4.7	1
Total and average for group	39	11.4	11.6	2.7	4.2	17

#### XI. Livestock

The major kind of livestock on these farms was cattle, with the majority of farms with cattle having some pasture land. Twenty-two of the farmers interviewed reported some pasture land; those with the larger number of cattle had land that was not cultivable.

Aside from oxen, which provide the principal traction power, the economic value of cattle is from the sale of calves (which we failed to cover adequately in the survey) and for milk for family consumption. Milk production is almost certainly highly seasonal, with the cows freshening in the spring with the lush vegetation resulting from the rains. Only one farm reported selling milk and cheese to his neighbors during this flush season. But several of the farmers said that they gave or sold their surplus milk products to neighbors during the heavy milk production season.

A listing of the number and kinds of livestock reported follows:

- 33 farmers had oxen, of these 17 reported having some pasture land;
- 12 did not have oxen;
- 31 farmers had milk cows, 4 farmers had some beef cattle (of whom 2 had dairy cows also);
- 17 farmers reported having a horse, with 4 reporting 3 or more.

## XII. Consumption Patterns of Families

Inquiries about food consumption by the family were based upon four questions:<sup>11</sup> 1) a question regarding their basic diet; 2) which foods for family consumption were produced by them; 3) what foods were usually purchased; 4) how often do the children have milk, eggs, or meat?

In response to the question: what foods for the family do you produce, of the 45 interviewed:

- 2 did not respond to the question;
- 3 replied that they produced none of their own food, the land was wholly used for cash crops--cane or cotton;
- 3 replied that while they usually produced food crops, this year their food crops were all lost in the flood (1 respondent sold his cattle to buy food).

Thus, 37 of the 45 gave positive responses, affirming that they produced food for family consumption; 3 of these reported merely that they grew food crops on their land, without specification, with 34 indicating their product with some specificity. Of these 34:

- 9 responded that they produced corn for their family consumption;
  - 7 responded that they ate both corn and sorghum grown on their land.
- The remaining 18 reported more variety; all reported corn, beans, rice, and yuca;
- 3 reported only supplementary plant products (rice, beans, or yuca); 1 family had their own honey.
- Thus 15 of the families reported, in addition to corn and other grains, producing and using animal proteins--milk, cheese, eggs.

The fourth question--how often the children had milk and eggs<sup>12</sup>--is of special significance in an assessment of the interrelation between farm production and consumption.

11. Essentially, these same questions were asked of the housewives in the household survey of people living in Monjarás; also, approximately the same questions were asked in more generalized terms in the interviews of leaders of asentamientos. In this interpretation we simply summarize the responses given to two of the questions. The first and third questions will not be considered in this summary. This abbreviated emphasis results from the fact that there was substantial uniformity in the composition of the basic diet, with the purchases usually being characterized as those things consumed which were not produced on the farm.

12. Actually we also asked how often they ate meat, but concluded that this question was so deeply enmeshed in their self-respect that we should ignore the answers.

We should note that:

- 31 families reported having milk cows;
- 37 families reported having chickens; and
- 26 families reported having both cows and chickens.

In response to our fourth question,

- 36 families reported that their children had milk;
- 17 of these reported that the children had milk regularly, particularly small children (only 1 emphasized that his children had milk regularly only in the spring season of flush production, but his qualification probably applies to many of them);
- 6 of the families reporting that their children had milk regularly did not report having any milk cows; 1 of these families reported that the farmer's brother had a herd of dairy cows and supplied them with milk regularly;
- 2 families reported that only the small children had milk;
- 4 families reported buying milk, 3 of them for the small children only.

Regarding the consumption of eggs:

- 43 families reported that the children had eggs with some regularity, 20 of them reporting daily use of eggs;
- 6 of the families reporting use of eggs for children did not report having chickens;
- 1 family reported buying eggs.

Admittedly this information is fragmentary, but a few inferences seem warranted: these people are well aware of the value of milk and eggs for their children as evidenced by the fact that 36 families reported that they used milk with some regularity. Almost all of the families (43) reported using eggs. That most of the families do use milk and eggs with some regularity, at least during the flush season, is supported by the fact that two-thirds of the families had at least one milk cow and four-fifths of the families reported having chickens.

### XIII. Marketing, Credit, and Other Public Services

#### A. Marketing

Aside from the few who belonged to a production cooperative, most of the sales of farm products were made at the farm, to buyers or intermediaries.

Of the 45 farms, 5 reported that they had no cash sales.<sup>13</sup> Of the remaining 40, 5 had their cash crop land in a production cooperative and 1 had rented land for cotton. Of the remaining 34, 27 reported selling their crops to intermediaries, who characteristically came to the farm; 7 did not specify the channel of sales.

#### B. Agricultural Credit

Although 25 of the 45 farmers reported using no credit, most of the farmers in the sample indicate that they have thought seriously about credit:

- 20 either now use credit or at one time had a line of credit;
- 6 (all with livestock) indicated that they borrow regularly from the BNF;
- 5 additional farmers indicated that they had at one time borrowed through BNF, but were not doing so currently;
- 1 reported that he had a loan from BNF approved in 1972, but did not use it;
- 4 farmers reported that at one time they had a loan through INA (but one had not used the funds);
- 4 reported borrowing for other crops, through the production cooperative to which they belonged.

Twenty-five reported that they did not use credit. About one-half of them indicated that they considered credit to be their greatest need. This information was given in response to a double question which is discussed below.

Twelve of the 25 not using credit responded that their greatest need was for some production factor, e.g., fertilizer, which they could not get for lack of credit; one admitted that, although he considered credit to be his greatest need, he had never tried to secure credit--presumably because he doubted whether he could qualify. Seven of the 12 who reported credit to be their greatest need said that they could not get credit because they lacked collateral as security for loans.

#### C. Technical Assistance

In response to the question of whether and how often staff members of the Ministry of Agriculture or other advisory services visited them, only:

- 8 of the 45 farmers reported that they had visits from agricultural advisors;
- 5 of these 8 also had used credit at some time;
- 3 did not report ever having credit.

Of the 45 interviewed, 22, or one-half, had had neither credit nor any advisory service assistance.

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13. One of these 5 was new on his farm, having acquired it in 1974. The other 4 reported no sales. This lack of reported sales may have been intended to refer only to 1974, due to the emphasis given to 1974 in the interview.

D. Unmet Needs

As noted above, the respondents were asked a double question: what do you need the most for farming that you do not have? why don't you get it?

Eight reported that they needed nothing which they did not have (3 of these were members of production coops);

12 reported that their greatest need was for credit, of whom 7 said that they lacked sufficient collateral (as already noted);

21 reported that their greatest need was for some production inputs--insecticides, fertilizers, or machinery.

Sixteen of these indicated that they lacked these factors because of a shortage of credit, or a lack of money;

4 indicated that they had concerns about the economic factor--presumably whether the cost of the increased inputs could be met from increased returns.

The remaining 4 expressed various needs:

1 said he needed more land, but lacked the money to buy;

1 expressed a need for a tractor which he thought could serve the community;

1 said he needed technical help;

1 said that his greatest need was for money, but that he doubted a big investment would be very rewarding.

These responses regarding unmet needs indicate not only a desire to modernize and make technical progress, but also suggest major opportunities for public agencies to help meet these needs through making available production requisites and somehow meeting the credit and marketing needs of these farmers.

E. Membership in Cooperatives

Some sort of a farm cooperative was formed among the small farmers in 1964; there were originally 80 members, according to our interviews. Although we have heard this organization referred to as being a general cooperative, it seems to have been primarily a consumer cooperative and was still recognized as such early in 1975 when we were interviewing. Although we have not yet traced out the history of this association, it is evident that sometime around 1968 the cooperative, known as Buena Vista, became a production cooperative also, through the pooling of land by some individual farmer members with each owner designating the amount of land that he would place in the cooperative. The cooperative concentrated on growing cane for the local factory.

At the time of our interviews, there were two departments of the Buena Vista Cooperative--the department of the consumption coop, which was clearly being phased out, and a production cooperative which was primarily for cane

production. This coop had 11 members who had pooled their land, 96 manzanas in all, upon which cane was being grown for the factory. In addition, this coop had 62 manzanas of land in cotton on land owned by INA and rented to them (this leased land was a part of an area originally planned for use for industrial development).

There were in February 1975 two other production cooperatives, also growing principally cane, which had split off from the original Buena Vista production cooperative. One of these, Independencia with 19 members, was formed in 1972; the other, United Forces with 17 members, was organized in 1973. Thus there are now three production cooperatives with a combined membership of 47 farmers, formed by the partition of the original Buena Vista production cooperative. The partition evidently resulted from disagreement over leadership and policies.

The general practice in these cooperatives is that a farmer who contributes his land to a cooperative pool of land also works as laborer for the cooperative, at 3 Lempiras a day; but the contribution of land does not require that labor also be contributed.

Two of the cooperatives have a policy of distributing any dividend earnings to members, one-half on the basis of labor contributed and one-half on the basis of area of land allotted. One cooperative reported that it would calculate dividends on the basis of labor contributed only.

Such significance for the analysis of the economy of these small farms as the question about cooperatives<sup>14</sup> may have is in the indication of whether or not farmers had been members of one of the coops; whether they dropped out and why; and the general attitude toward cooperatives expressed by the people interviewed.

Of the 45 farmers interviewed:

- 4 had been, and 3 still were, members of the consumer coop, Buena Vista;
- 1 farmer who had withdrawn from the consumer cooperative was working as a member of a salt-making cooperative;
- 12 farmers were or had been members of a production cooperative;
- 6 farmers interviewed were members currently assigning land to one of the 3 functioning cooperatives mentioned above;
- 2 farmers had been members of the La Lucha Cooperative now in liquidation;

14. As originally drawn, the questionnaire asked only whether they belonged to any cooperative; if yes, which one; and did they sell or buy anything through cooperatives? Subsequently, for approximately the last three-fourths of the interviews, we added another question: if not, why not?

- 4 farmers had at one time or another been members of one of these production cooperatives and had withdrawn;
- 1 other farmer who had heretofore belonged only to the consumer cooperative indicated an intention of putting his land in the production cooperative in order to make his continued ownership of the land more secure, by meeting what he interpreted to be the cooperative performance requirement of the new Agrarian Reform law.

#### F. Attitude Towards Cooperatives

Of the 6 farmers interviewed who were members of the production cooperative, 4 had no comments; 2 noted that they received no dividends for their land, but 1 of these appreciated the steady employment which the cooperative provides. The prospect of being able to work regularly for wages of 3 Lempiras a day was also a consideration in the views of 1 farmer who expressed an intention of putting his land in a production coop. The farmers who had been members of a production coop and withdrew their lands were generally bitter and complained about the conduct of the directors of the coop.

Three farmers who did not belong to any of the cooperatives said they would like to belong to one if everyone worked, if they weren't so given to controversy, and if they were well organized. Three farmers who commented said they were not interested in coops, but preferred to work alone. Fourteen farmers who did not belong to one of the coops had attitudes very much like the 4 farmers who had withdrawn. Coops are places where people make trouble, or they get into debt, or where money is lost to dishonest directors.

As these comments indicate, membership in cooperatives is a controversial matter, and there is considerable resentment toward and even fear of INA, which several of these farmers consider to be pushing too hard to get farmers to join production cooperatives. In appraising this attitude it needs to be remembered that these farmers own their land and actually have the choice of going in, withdrawing from, or staying out of production cooperatives.

#### XIV. Education

Most of these families are sending their children to school, a few to high school outside the area.

Among the 45 families, only 3 reported that both of the parents had some formal schooling, up to fourth grade; in another 8 families one of the parents had attended school up to third grade; in 7 of these homes the mother only had attended school; in 28 families, neither parent had attended school. By contrast, there are only 4 households among these families in which no children are attending or have attended school, where the children like their parents are illiterate.

Thus in 89 percent of 37 homes,<sup>15</sup> where there are or were children of school age, some or all of the children attend school, and in 57 percent of the homes all the children have attended school. In 6 homes only sons have attended school; in 5 homes the older children, all of whom were above 12 years of age in 1962 when the families settled in the project, did not attend school. (Fuller details are presented below.)

Of the 45 families interviewed, in 6 cases the interview data were insufficient to permit classification.

Thirty-nine cases are then analyzable:

of these in 11 cases, one or both parents went to school;  
in 3 cases both parents had some schooling, 1 to fourth grade.

Of these 3 families currently:

1 had no children;  
1 had no children of school age;  
1 had all children in school.

In the remaining 8 cases:

in 1 case the father had gone to third grade but the mother had no schooling; in this household, the 5 sons go to school, daughters do not;  
in 7 cases the mother had some schooling--to the third grade--the father none;  
in 6 of these families all of the children went to school;  
in 1 case only the two young children went to school.<sup>16</sup>

In the 28 cases where neither mother nor father had any formal schooling, there were 4 cases where no child attended school.

Of the remaining 24:

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15. This 37 is arrived at by deducting from the total of 45 the 6 cases in which data are incomplete, 1 family where there are no children of school age, and 1 family with no children.

Of the 6 cases for which data are insufficient: 4 indicate that at least some of the children attend school; in 1 case the parents are reported able to read and write, with no comment on schooling for children, of which there were 5 from 8-14 years; in 1 case there were no data on education, the family has 5 children, two of whom are of potential school age--6-8 years.

16. The 6 children in this family who did not go to school were all above 12 years of age in 1962 when the family received their allotment of land--and may have had poorer access to school than is available in the present location.

in 14 families all of the children attend or have attended school;  
in 10 families some but not all of the children have attended school;  
in 1 family some children have attended school, others not--without any obvious differences of characteristics;  
in 5 only sons have been sent to school;  
in 4 only younger children have attended school;  
in 1 case a daughter who did not attend school was 17 years old when the family acquired this land;  
in another case the daughter who did not attend school was 12 years old when the family acquired the land;  
in 1 case the eldest son did not attend school;  
in 1 case only the younger daughter, now 19, attended school; the son, now 18, did not.

## XV. Attitudes Towards Farming

### A. Farming as a Career for their Children

The evidence on this point derives from the answers to two questions: Would you like your sons (children) to farm? Do any of your sons (children) wish to farm?<sup>17</sup>

Both parents and children, in most cases, are interested in their children having farming careers. In only 2 cases out of 43 (5 percent) did the parents report that they would not want their children to farm. There were 4 cases where the children were not interested in farming, and in another 4 the interest is qualified, depending on whether they can get enough education to secure other jobs; or in one case can get more land. In 3 cases the children are too young to have any views on this question.

This indicates that the interest in farming careers for the children is very high. In 95 percent of the cases the parents favored--about half with some qualification--a farming career for their children.<sup>18</sup> This no doubt reflects a personal attachment by the parents to their land, pride in farming, and an appreciation for the quality of life which they have been able to attain.<sup>19</sup> There are a number of farmers in this sample in

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17. This analysis is based upon the answers in 43 schedules, the questions were not answered in 2 schedules; in one of these homes there were no children; in the other, there were no sons, but 2 small daughters.

18. There is some ambiguity in the questions, since hijos means either sons or children. At the minimum, however, the parents almost universally wish at least one of their children to farm.

19. This attitude of parents toward farming careers for their children stands in stark contrast to the attitudes of fathers in a West African country where a traditional communal tenure system prevails (where the author has lived and worked some years). In Africa in response to a

which second houses have been or are being built to enable a son to have a house of his own on the farm.

To summarize in tabular form, 43 persons answered the questions:

in 32 cases (75 percent of the total of the cases) the interest of the children in farming was unqualified and affirmative;

for 11 of the parents, there were some qualification regarding farming careers for their children;

in 9 families the parents hoped their children would farm, unless they have better alternatives elsewhere;

1 family wants its children to have more schooling first (they were reported as attending primary school), and in another family they would wish for more land.

In the other 11 cases (25 percent) the attitudes are:

in 3 cases, the parents favor their children farming, but the children are too young to have any views on the matter;

in another 3 cases the parents favor a farming career for their children, but the children are undecided, they prefer other careers if they can qualify for them by education;

in 1 case parents favor a farming career for their children, but considered the present farm too small (on this farm 7 manzanas are in the coop and 5 are used by the family);

in 4 cases the children are not interested in farming as a career; in 2 of these the parents favor a farming career for their children; in 2 they do not.

#### B. The Parents' Commitment to Farming

The last question asked in the interview was: Do you expect to farm as long as you live? Forty-four persons answered yes (1 did not answer); only 3 of these were qualified. One observed that at his age, 47, there were few alternative opportunities. One responded yes, in part, because he had a shop in Monjarás to tend; and the third said yes, although this depended on whether there might be some other changes in his life (neither he nor any of his children attended school).

What do farmers find attractive in farming? Near the end of the interview each respondent was asked: What do you like most about farming? If one were to summarize the responses in a single phrase it would be independence, with the security and satisfaction of growing one's own food. Four emphasized the general attractiveness of farming to them, by phrases

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question about whether they would wish their sons to farm, invariably the answer was: "No, farmers have to work hard and are always poor."

such as "I am a traditional farmer," "I like everything about farming," or "I can get a better income than at other pursuits." Eight especially enjoy the growing of cane, mostly pineapple-cane; two emphasized their enjoyment of growing cattle.

But the responses clustered around two general views:

independence and the security they enjoyed, especially of the production of their basic food needs (17 cases); and the production of food crops, especially corn (15 cases).

A tabulation of the responses under four general categories is reported in the following listing of what these farmers like best about farming:

15 emphasized that they most enjoyed the crops they grow, especially corn;  
8 emphasized that they liked growing cane (7 of them . pineapple-cane, combined with corn and other food crops);  
4 emphasized only that they liked farming very much;  
17 emphasized that they valued most the independence and security, especially security of food for the family.

### Chapter 3. THE ORGANIZATION OF ASENTAMIENTOS AND COOPERATIVE FARMS IN SOUTHERN HONDURAS

This research effort is directed to the study of relative effectiveness of alternative ways of organizing farm settlements undertaken by the National Agrarian Institute of Honduras, the agency responsible for the administration of the recent agrarian reform programs. It may be recalled that the Agrarian Reform Programs in Honduras have had a succession of emphases, in which differing conceptions of reform, reconstruction, and economic organization of agriculture have been operative.

After 1924, the land law of Honduras had special provisions for granting to settlers of "family lots" of national lands (20 hectares). From 1951 and for approximately a decade thereafter, Honduras undertook several farm settlement programs with individual allotments of land of 10 to 25 hectares in size; most of these were intended to encourage frontier settlements. These grant and settlement programs for the distribution of national lands gradually became absorbed into an agrarian reform program. This came about through the eventual validation of the occupancy of national lands by invading groups of campesinos, in protest against their exclusion from lands which they had been cultivating and which they claimed were national land. Many areas of such lands had been enclosed in southern Honduras by the fencing in of cattle ranches or other large farms.

#### I. Emphases of First Agrarian Reform Program

The first Agrarian Reform Law of 1962, which was approximately an outgrowth of the agreement embodied in the charter of Punta del Este of 1961, continued for some years the program emphasis on settlement of national lands. Under this 1962 Law INA was assigned administrative responsibility for the distribution of national lands. During the 1950s and 1960s as land for subsistence crops became increasingly difficult for small farmers to secure, especially in southern Honduras, and as their plight became more desperate, campesinos joined together in community after community for the purpose of recuperating or recovering for their own use lands which they considered to be national lands, but from which they had been excluded.

The protests and invasions were directed against the large landholders who had, it was claimed, enclosed national lands along with lands which they owned in their recently fenced farms and cattle ranches. Since INA had some jurisdiction over these national lands, the campesinos appealed to INA; thus the organization became the arbiter between campesino groups and large landholders over the rightful occupancy of national lands. By the late 1960s, with campesino groups becoming more numerous, better organized, and stronger, the jurisdiction over the distribution of national land granted to INA by the Agrarian Reform Law of 1962 took on new significance.

The large individual landholdings into which the disputed national lands had been incorporated usually had at least a nucleus of privately

owned land, over which INA had no jurisdiction. Thus when INA, after 1967, began to accept as valid the petitions of the campesino groups that the lands they sought were national lands, the haciendas had to be either divided or INA had to buy the privately owned land. This latter course was followed in southern Honduras in some instances, to an extent which we have not attempted to determine. Where the national land was recuperated and the private land was purchased, with INA taking over the entire hacienda as happened in a case near San Bernardo (noted above), there was a large block of land under the jurisdiction of INA; similar large blocks of land came under the jurisdiction of INA in other parts of Honduras by somewhat similar means, or by the reversion of lands to the government through abandonment by international companies on the Atlantic side.

It may be recalled from preceding discussions that in 1968 and for some two or three years thereafter INA opted for a policy of establishing cooperative farms. Some substantial blocks of land so included thus became virtual social laboratories for experiments in cooperative farming.

The government of Honduras, about 1971, retreated from this positive policy of promoting cooperative farms, and INA in fact became virtually inactive; but the underlying problems of rural poverty and landlessness remained. With campesino protests mounting and with support from labor unions, a massive protest march on Tegucigalpa was organized in late 1972. This created a crisis and a change of government, out of which came Decree No. 8 in December 1972. For approximately two years, until January 1975, INA operated with this new grant of authority, under which the agency sponsored the organization of more than 600 settlements called asentamientos. The authority granted through Decree No. 8 differed from the 1962 Law particularly in that private land was declared "affectable" and available to campesino groups if it could be established that these private lands were not being effectively utilized--i.e., did not meet the constitutional provision that privately owned land had to be used in ways which were commensurate with the social function of private property in rural lands. This more extensive definition of affectability--with un- or under-utilized privately owned lands as well as national lands now open for occupation by campesinos--evoked a marked increase in applications to INA by groups seeking to secure land for themselves.

Each group which succeeded in getting land had the privilege of choosing, at least in principle, how they would organize their farming activities: by working as individuals, or undertaking group farming, or by mixing the two kinds of organization. Where they adopted a communitarian form--or group farming--the system of organization was quite similar to that of the cooperative farm. But there were differences.

The privately owned land which the asentamiento groups acquired as affectable under Decree No. 8 was not purchased by INA, but was made available to settlers under a two-year lease. These lease documents specified that the land was available to them for a maximum time of two years. This short time horizon meant that the asentamientos confronted an insecurity of expectations regarding continued use or occupancy of the land which the earlier cooperative farms did not have since cooperative farms were

either on recuperated national lands over which INA had jurisdiction, or they were on lands which INA had purchased.

The asentamientos were the creations of INA, and lacked a "recognized juridical personality" as a cooperative under the national laws for agricultural cooperatives. This meant in turn that asentamiento groups could not qualify as cooperatives in applications for loans from the National Development Bank (BNF), unless their applications were endorsed, i.e., secured, by INA. This virtually meant in turn that only the cooperative or communitarian aspects of the systems of farming in asentamientos could qualify for loans.

After a number of field visits in southern Honduras to both asentamientos and cooperatives in the planning of this research, we concluded that the similarities in the patterns of organization of the asentamientos and cooperatives were sufficiently deep that they could be treated as the same kind of organization. The fact that the cooperative farms were approximately five years older than asentamientos should, we hypothesized, enable us to treat the two organizations as being essentially earlier and later versions of the same system.

It is to be noted, however, that the whole INA program of sponsoring both cooperatives and asentamientos was essentially noncommittal on the tenure of land. The basic land law of Honduras forbade the ownership of farm land by cooperatives prior to the recent Agrarian Reform Law No. 170. In consequence, except in one instance of doubtful legal validity, the ownership of land did not pass to the cooperative farms. This has meant that variations in tenure forms, as the counterpart of the different kinds of organization of the farm firms--individual, communitarian, or mixed--cannot be studied from the experience of the participants.

## II. The Sample of Cooperatives and Asentamientos

Having made a decision, noted above, to concentrate the initial phase of this research effort in southern Honduras, some method of selecting which groups to interview had to be chosen, for it was quite unlikely that we could interview on all of the asentamientos and cooperatives that had been formed by the settlement of groups of persons on land obtained by sanction of INA. We chose, therefore, to follow a proposeful strategy in sampling rather than a randomizing of choices. At this stage of the inquiry we thought that it might be important to be able to study cooperatives and asentamientos in situations where they were clustered together, giving some basis for judgments about the comparability of performance on similar soils and locations. Within this similar situational context, we anticipated that differences in length of time of operations might be important. The attractiveness of this situational grouping of interviewees was further enhanced by the decision to include as a one part of a comparative analysis a sample of the survey of the small farms in the Monjarás area in which the plots had been distributed in the early 1960s. Thus in the Monjarás area, it was possible to study small farms, cooperative farms, and the more recently organized asentamientos in one community on reasonably comparable soils.

Accordingly, we decided to interview on all of the cooperatives and asentamientos in the San Bernardo area, some 24 of which had been carved out of a large hacienda acquired by INA in the late 1960s. In the Monjarás area, we interviewed on 10 asentamientos or cooperatives that had been established on land acquired through the administrative process of INA.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the field interviewing, January and February 1975, there was available a tentative list of asentamientos in southern Honduras which had been selected on a preliminary basis as prospective asentamientos to be included in a group of some 40 asentamientos in Honduras in a special, or concentrated experimental development program in which the proceeds of a USAID loan would be used to help finance a kind of community-wide impact development effort. By including all of these especially identified asentamientos which had not been included in the other two areas of concentration, we interviewed on 9 asentamientos in what are referred to as the Tapaire and Tacalito communities.

The time available for field interviews had by this time been largely spent, with interviews having been taken in 49 of the asentamientos and cooperatives. At this juncture, late February, the staff of INA began a program of interviewing by a complex schedule on all of the asentamientos initiated under Decree No. 8; consequently, we stopped further field interviews.

As is inevitable in the taking of a schedule of a complex dynamic process, the schedules are not all equally adequate and useable. For example, 5 of the asentamientos were formed so late in 1974 as to have virtually no crop production experience; in some other cases the data in the schedules were incomplete or inconsistent. Consequently, the number of asentamientos and cooperatives included at different points in the analysis is variable.

### III. The Settlers: Dynamics of Group Formation and Settlement

The Agrarian Reform group settlements in southern Honduras report, in a general way, the outcome to date of campesino risings which have been moulded or shaped by the organizational policies of INA--directed to accommodating individual groups of campesinos on particular tracts of land. The whole process has been energized, or powered, by the petitions and wills of groups of campesinos desperately in need of land to farm. Many

1. In addition, we interviewed the leadership of three of the sugar-growing cooperatives and one cooperative recently formed for cattle production, the land in the latter case being too poor for cropping. These cooperatives are not included in this segment of the analysis because they have been formed by a pooling of land which had been acquired previously and is owned by individual farmers. The land was not acquired by the methods used in the formation of general cooperative and asentamiento farms.

of these groups have received assistance, counsel, and no doubt encouragement, from campesino organizations; but the groups are not merely units of such over-all organizations. They are organic groups formed mostly by people who have known each other a long time and have worked together as neighbors, relatives, or friends.

As noted in earlier sections of this report, the campesinos who sought and secured land were essentially "excluded people." The basic occupation of these people has been farming, with their abilities shaped by working in traditional agriculture, but they lacked land to farm, or to speak more generally, lacked economic opportunities in farming. This lack of opportunities is a consequence of many things: the increase in rural population against a fixed--and largely occupied--land area has left countless sons of farmers with more meagre opportunities in farming than their fathers and grandfathers had before them; this scarcity of land has been enhanced since World War II by the enclosure of large-scale farms and ranches by fencing, which in turn needs to be understood as part of the response to the economic opportunities in markets extended by improved highways.

The campesinos who have formed and are members of the 49 cooperative farms and asentamientos upon which we interviewed were almost equally divided between persons who had been primarily renters of tracts of land, with some supplementary employment, and those who considered themselves primarily laborers, who may also have rented some land for subsistence crops: of the 49 associations, with 1,192 members, 54 percent of those interviewed considered themselves to have been primarily renters, and 46 percent to have been laborers. In two areas particularly, there was a marked deviation from these averages: on the 6 asentamientos where interviews were conducted in the Santa Rosa Community, 88 percent reported themselves to have been laborers; on the 7 asentamientos where interviews were conducted in the Tapaire Community, 92 percent of those interviewed were reported to have been renters, primarily.

In about one-fourth of the cases (11 out of 49), at least some of the members were reported to have had other occupations supplementary to farming. The most commonly reported supplementary occupation was that of mason (in 7 groups) with carpenter, shoemaker, machinist, fisherman, saw mill worker, and salt maker also reported.

The cooperative farms, as the term is used in this study, have a longer history than the asentamientos; there does not appear to be much difference in the basic characteristics of the groups which received land under these two differing authorities. In both cases the groups of renters or laborers were formed to secure land, frequently by invasion.

In response to the question of why the group was formed, the almost universal response--in 90 percent of the cases--was that they needed and lacked land to farm; the other 10 percent emphasized that they needed work.

In response to a question as to whether there was any particular happening or event which served as a catalyst in the formation of groups seeking land, a few of the groups reported that they had been without employment after foreigners for whom they had previously worked lost their land

(presumably in most instances the return of Salvadoreans to their own country after the 1969 war). Others were inspired by the example of farmers who had secured places on the cooperative farms; some became aware of the potential for group action to secure land under Decree No. 8. Disaster had overtaken some, such as crop failure and an absolute lack of economic opportunities in farming.

Another major variable in the concerted action by groups to occupy particular areas of land is the degree to which individual groups were affiliated with or assisted by a national campesino organization. Of the 49 groups occupying the cooperative and asentamiento farms included in the survey, 19 (39 percent) were affiliated with the UNC, and 14 (28 percent) were affiliated with ANACH, with an identical number (14) reporting that they had organized their groups wholly by their own efforts. Two of the associations were assisted in their organization by other sponsors-- a cooperative sponsored by FUNHDESA and an asentamiento group which credited INA with help in organizing. Sponsorship, the type of group organization, and the source of the lands occupied are covered in Table 8.

Table 8. Classification of Cooperatives and Asentamientos By Source of Land and Organizational Sponsorship

	Total No.	ANACH	UNC	Other	None
Cooperatives on:					
national land	10	3	3	1	3
private land	<u>3</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	13	3	5	1	4
Asentamientos on:					
national land	25	8	7	1	9
private land	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	36	11	14	1	10
Combined total on:					
national lands	35	11	10	2	12
private lands	<u>14</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	49	14	19	2	14

A larger proportion of the groups established on private lands were sponsored by UNC than otherwise, 9 out of 14 cases (64 percent of the UNC-sponsored group), whereas the self-organized farmer groups accounted for a slightly larger number of farm settlements established on national lands,

with little difference from the number sponsored by either of the two national campesino groups on national lands.

The relatively high proportion of these groups established on national land, in comparison to private land, is partly a matter of the level of program activity in southern Honduras before Decree No. 8 was issued. The central requirement then was that the land had to be either national land or private land purchased by INA prior to settlement.

Characteristically, the settlers formed groups of 12 to 23 persons. On 25 of the 35 asentamientos visited, the membership was within the range of 12 to 23 persons. Eight of the 13 cooperative farms (62 percent) were also of this size (see Table 9).

Table 9. The General Patterns of Settlement: Sample of Asentamientos and Cooperatives in Southern Honduras

Area and Type of Organization	No. of Settlements	Total No. of Participant Members	Average No. of Members per Asentamiento	Asso. Classified by Number of Members per Asenta.					
				< 11	12-23	24-35	36-49	50-99	>100
<u>Cooperatives:</u>									
San Bernardo	8	199	24.9	4	3	1			
Monjarás	<u>5</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>19.8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>				
Total	13	298	22.9	8	4	1			
<u>Asentamientos:</u>									
San Bernardo	16	321	20.1	4	11				1
Santa Rosa	6	214	35.7		4			1	1
Monjarás	5	84	16.8		5				
Tapaire and Tacalito	<u>9</u>	<u>275</u>	<u>30.6</u>		<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	
Total	36	894	24.8	4	25	1	2	2	2
Grand Totals	49	1,192	24.3	4	33	5	3	2	2

As indicated in Table 9 both the cooperative and the asentamiento groups are smaller in the Monjarás community than in the other areas where we interviewed. The average size of cooperatives in the whole sample was just under 23; for asentamientos, about 25.

It seems a reasonable inference, in comparing the total programs and the conditions under which the agency operated, that the programs of INA were more planned and centrally controlled during the years 1964-70 when cooperatives were emphasized, than during 1973-74 when asentamientos were organized under Decree No. 8. During this later period there was a surge

of spontaneous activity by campesino groups under Decree No. 8 which seems to reflect desperate attempts to secure land.

#### IV. The Search for Land

One of the interesting, and probably deeply significant, characteristics of the agrarian reform programs of Honduras both before and after the authority of Decree No. 8 is that the campesino groups took the initiative in finding land for possible settlement. In one sense, this is simply a continuation of the practice throughout most of the history of Honduras--that persons in need of land could go to the frontier of unused national lands and acquire prescriptive rights to the ownership of land through continued occupancy and use. Also, as noted by White, these movements to new land were commonly done by groups of neighbors, relatives, and friends. In almost every case in our sample the groups securing land had at least a core group of kinfolks and neighbors. This fact of selective group formation in itself should be an important factor in the stability and eventual success of the groups.

The critical questions in the search for land under the Agrarian Reform Law of 1962 were: a) whether the land was suitable for farming; and b) whether the land was actually national land. These are the questions which all frontier settlements have had to answer throughout the history of Honduras. The search for national land by campesino groups in southern Honduras, which culminated successfully in the formation of cooperative farms during the Sandoval era at INA (1967-1970) focused mostly on the question of whether national lands had been incorporated unlawfully into large landholdings.

Under Decree No. 8, during 1973 and 1974 when asentamientos were being formed, the search for land took on another dimension: was the land, even though privately owned, being utilized effectively? For if the privately owned land was demonstrably underutilized it was potentially "affectable" by authority of INA for occupation and use by the petitioning group. Thus the opportunities to secure land for use and occupancy were realizable by a group, mostly according to its intimate knowledge of the ownership of land, the degree of current utilization, and the quality of the soil. The groups that "found" high quality land which was affectable were the lucky ones.

Also, this probably means that this process of search for land was highly localized. Groups went after land which they knew. One question asked in the survey, which gives us some indication of the distances over which the successful searches for land were made, was a query regarding whether they still lived in the same houses as before acquiring the land. In the majority of cases, the families continue to live in the same houses they had previously occupied. (See Table 10.) This does not necessarily mean that they will continue indefinitely to live in the same houses as before. But at this stage of the program the securing of land in either a cooperative farm or an asentamiento in our sample of cases really means that those people who remain in their former house have gone through what

Table 10. Residence of Settlers: Number Living in Same House as Before Getting Land (The Question: Do You Live in Same House as Before You Acquired the Land?)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Response</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Cooperatives:</u>				
San Bernardo	4	4		8
Monjarás	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>		<u>5</u>
Total	7	6		13
<u>Asentamientos:</u>				
San Bernardo	7	9		16
Santa Rosa	3	2		6
Monjarás	3 <sup>a</sup>	2	1	5
Tapaire-Tacalito	<u>6<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>3</u>		<u>9</u>
Total	19	16	1	36
Grand Total	26	22	1	49

<sup>a</sup>In one group some live in the same house; others had to build on the new site.

is basically a change in tenure and employment opportunities, rather than through a process of forming a new community.

The most common age group for residents of these farms, the modal age group, is between the ages of 20 and 34. This is the case for the associations except for the asentamientos grouped in the Santa Rosa area, where 63 percent of the members were estimated to be over 35 years of age at the time of interview.<sup>2</sup> The youngest groups are in the cooperatives of the Monjarás area, where two-thirds of the members were reported to be between the ages of 20 and 34. Considering the fact that the cooperatives were organized five or six years before asentamientos, these cooperatives were formed by relatively young men.

#### V. Settlements on the Land

The search of the successful groups for land ended with the assignment by INA of a particular area or territory to the group as their own,

2. The ages of the heads of family reported to us were stated by the leaders of the group who gave us the interviews. They are approximations only but should be relatively reliable--since these groups are composed of people who have known each other for many years as relatives, neighbors, and friends.

Table 11. Participants or Members in Different Kinds of Associations,  
by Communities Included in the Sample  
(N = 49)

	Total Member- ship	Total Member- ship with Ages Given <sup>a</sup>	Members by Ages:				Percent of Members by Age			
			Under 20	20- 34	35- 49	50 and Over	Under 20	20- 34	35- 49	50 and Over
<b>Cooperatives:</b>										
San Bernardo (N = 8)	199	193	8	103	56	26	4.1	53.4	29.0	13.5
Monjarás (N = 5)	<u>99</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>2.0</u>	<u>66.7</u>	<u>17.2</u>	<u>14.1</u>
Total N = 13	298	292	10	169	73	40	3.4	57.9	25.0	13.7
<b>Asentamientos:</b>										
San Bernardo (N = 16)	321	298	6	172	91	29	2.0	51.7	30.6	9.7
Santa Rosa (N = 6)	214	214	10	57	134	13	4.7	26.7	62.6	6.0
Monjarás (N = 5)	84	78	1	39	25	13	1.2	50.0	32.1	10.7
Tapaire and Tacalito (N = 9)	<u>275</u>	<u>275</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>121</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>4.7</u>	<u>44.0</u>	<u>32.4</u>	<u>18.9</u>
Total N = 36	894	865	30	389	339	107	3.5	45.0	39.1	12.4
Grand Total	1,192	1,157	40	558	412	147	3.5	48.2	35.6	12.7

<sup>a</sup>Figures differ from Total Membership by 35 because in a number of the interviews individuals were counted as participants who are single, but were not included among the heads of families for whom the ages were estimated. Whereas the membership total appears to be the better figure for calculating land per family, the age distribution can be calculated only for heads of families.

if they used the land fully enough to make it their own. Some of the groups got much better land than others; some of the groups have much less land relative to their numbers than others.

Among the groups included in our study, the cooperative farms have both smaller groups and relatively more land than the more recently organized asentamientos. The 13 cooperatives had an average of 23 families

(22.9) per cooperative, with 226 manzanas of cultivable land.<sup>3</sup> This is an average of almost 10 manzanas (9.8) per member. (See Table 12.)

Table 12. Average Number of Member-Families per Association by Communities in Sample and Cultivable Land per Family (N = 49)

Type of Association by Communities in Sample	Land Area in Assns.		Av. Area of Cultivable Land per Assn. mnz.	Total No. Members in Assns. in Sample	Av. No. Members per Assn.	Av. Area Cultivable Land per Member and Family (mnz)
	Total Area mnz.	Cultivable Area mnz.				
<u>Cooperatives:</u>						
San Bernardo (N = 8)	2,197	2,013	252	199	24.9	10.1
Monjarás (N = 5)	<u>1,100</u>	<u>920</u>	<u>184</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>19.8</u>	<u>9.3</u>
Total N = 13	3,297	2,933	226	298	22.9	9.8
<u>Asentamientos:</u>						
San Bernardo (N = 16)	2,681	1,833	115	321	20.1	5.7
Santa Rosa (N = 6)	1,310	911	152	214	35.7	4.3
Monjarás (N = 5)	554	402	80	84	16.8	4.8
Tapaire and Tacalito (N = 9)	<u>1,248</u>	<u>932</u>	<u>104</u>	<u>275</u>	<u>30.6</u>	<u>3.4</u>
Total N = 36	5,793	4,078	113	894	24.8	4.6
Grand Total	9,090	7,011	143	1,192	24.3	5.9

The asentamientos had somewhat larger groups, especially in the Santa Rosa, Tapaire, and Tacalito communities. The average for all 36 of the asentamientos was almost 25 families (members); this is an average of two more families per group than in the cooperative farms included in the sample. On the average, however, the asentamiento groups had just half as much cultivable land per group as did the cooperatives, with some of it of poorer quality. The differences between the cooperative farms and

3. We have accepted the respondents' definition of "cultivable."

the asentamientos, in terms of area of cultivable land per family, are more evident in Table 13.

Table 13. Average Number of Families per Group and Area of Cultivable Land per Family, Cooperatives and Asentamientos in Sample (N = 49)

Cultivable Land per Family	Number of Associations in Class	Average Number of Members per Association	Average Area of Cultivable Land per Family (mz.)
<u>Cooperatives:</u>			
3.5 Mz. or less			
3.6-7.0 Mz.			
7.1-10.5 Mz.	10	23.5	9.4
10.6-14.0 Mz.	2	22.0	13.2
Over 14 Mz.	<u>1</u>	<u>16.0</u>	<u>15.3</u>
	13	22.9	9.8
<u>Asentamientos:</u>			
3.5 Mz. or less	14	33	2.4
3.6-7.0 Mz.	14	22.5	5.3
7.1-10.5 Mz.	5	13	9.3
10.6-14.0 Mz.	1	17	12.2
Over 14 Mz.	<u>2</u>	<u>15.5</u>	<u>15.9</u>
	36	24.8	4.57

In no cooperative is there less than 7 manzanas of land per member-family; in 3 there are more than 10.5. By contrast, in 28 out of 36 (78 percent) asentamientos in our sample, there was less than 7 manzanas of cultivable land per family. In 3 of these associations there is more than 10.5 manzanas of cultivable land per family.

The smaller areas of land per family and the larger groups in the asentamientos, when compared to the older cooperatives, seemingly reflect both the increasing urgency of the quest for land by groups in recent years and the decreasing availability of "affectable" land.

CHAPTER 4. SYSTEMS OF ECONOMY AND PROGRESS IN DEVELOPMENT:  
ASENTAMIENTOS AND COOPERATIVES

The ways in which cash crops supplement the production of food crops on these asentamientos and cooperatives is an approximate indicator of the progress which has been made in development. Virtually all of the asentamientos and cooperative associations reported that the members produce their own basic food, especially maize; in only one case, a cooperative, was it reported that the members produced none of their own food, and this was qualified by the observation that at times a little corn is planted. This generalization regarding progress in development according to crops grown needs to be qualified somewhat in those instances where the members of the group have cattle. Cattle growing will likely grow in importance for those groups which have land not suitable for cultivation, but the development of herds of cattle requires time and for cattle growing to be of major economic importance requires more land per family than is found on these projects. At least in southern Honduras, the agrarian reform program centers on the growing of crops.

Table 14. Cooperatives and Asentamientos Classified  
According to Cropping Systems

Cropping System	Cooperatives (N=12)	Asentamientos (N=31)	Total (N=43)
Food and major cash crops			
Cotton and rice	10	6	16
Cotton, no rice	1	2	3
Rice, cane, no cotton	1	6	7
Food and minor cash crops (cashews, sesame, melons)	--	9	9
Food crops only	--	8	8

All of the cooperatives and 14 of the 31 asentamientos grow a major cash crop, particularly cotton or rice, with most of them growing cotton. Nine of the asentamientos grow minor cash crops, particularly sesame, melons, and cashews. The remaining 8 asentamientos concentrated on food crops, particularly corn; some of these asentamiento groups are getting into cattle. On the whole, the people on these 8 asentamientos still practice subsistence agriculture.

A classification of cooperatives and asentamientos by cropping systems is also a rough indication of the quality of land, and land is the measure of economic opportunities, given the present array of crops being grown in southern Honduras. Cotton is the major cash crop and is grown on 16 of the cooperatives and asentamientos included in this study. But cotton growing is not a viable alternative for the groups which did not get land of sufficiently high quality.

## I. The Process of Agricultural Development

The process of development of the asentamientos and cooperatives in southern Honduras has been rooted in the search for land by groups of landless campesinos; the agrarian reform program, particularly as conducted under Decree No. 8 in 1973 and 1974, reflected an attempt to turn the energy of the potential campesino invasions to constructive uses by directing and facilitating the settlement of groups of campesinos on land which was either national land or privately held land adjudged not to meet the constitutional criteria for the "social functions" for the private ownership of rural lands. This process of identifying and assigning "affectable" land was turbulent and controversial. All of this was in the background and a part of the given "facts of the case" in this research effort.

Once the land was assigned to a group, the members could bring their energies and abilities to bear upon the exploitation of such opportunities as were inherent in the occupancy and use of "their" assigned tract of land. At this stage, the members of these groups became in a sense clients of INA. By the time that a group had secured an allotment of land, it was already something of an organized community of relatives, neighbors, and friends among whom natural leaders had likely arisen. The staff of INA helped the group become more formally organized, with members of the staff of INA visiting the group with some regularity to advise on different aspects of their efforts. These new settlers were experienced farmers, skilled in ways of traditional agriculture. Since the land, for the most part, had been used for pasture, the first task was to clear the land for crops in time for the rains.

There are two foundation stones, to speak figuratively, for the development of agriculture, whether individual farms, cooperative farms, or asentamientos: a) the experience, abilities, and energies of the settlers; and b) the land as the basis of economic opportunities in farming. These two aspects--abilities and opportunities--are interrelated over time. Each influences and limits the other: a farmer cannot develop his abilities as a farmer without opportunities on the land to exercise these abilities. But the processes of development are different for the enhancement of abilities in comparison with an expansion of opportunities.

Whatever the quality of opportunities which any given tract of land may embody, something can no doubt be done to improve the abilities and the quality of efforts which cultivators expend in the use of the land: better methods of tillage; the planting of crops in rows rather than broadcast; the introduction of better varieties or even of new plant species, such as grain legumes; the planting of household gardens which can improve the diet; etc. Education to undertake such innovations can improve the productivity of efforts--even in a subsistence agricultural economy.

At the core of virtually all of the farm economies studied here, including the asentamientos and cooperatives, there is a subsistence economy for food crop production. They are the counterparts, or the contemporary forms, of the survival economies which the campesinos--like peasants everywhere--have devised over their long histories. Among the 43 cooperatives and asentamientos included in this analysis, 38 reported the

members had household gardens. All but 1 association reported that the families consumed the corn grown by them. In 26 of the settlements, the food crops were grown by the individual families. In 16 the corn and sorghum were produced by group farming.

Opportunities in the use of land for an individual or a group can be widened and made secure in a number of ways: a) by changes in the tenure relations which provide cultivators with greater security of expectations and a larger share of the crops; b) by securing land which is more fertile or is suitable for a wider array of uses; or c) by innovations in cropping patterns through the introduction of crops which have greater potentialities than the crops conventionally grown--as cashews are now being introduced in the dry hill lands of southern Honduras.

As one studies the experiences of the cooperative farms and asentamientos included in this study, the main index to the relative progress in the development of their agriculture seems to be the quality and extent of the land which the particular group secured. Some of these groups received in the land allotted to them nothing more than a reasonably secure opportunity to practice the subsistence-survival economies of their forefathers. Our own impressions are that they are grateful for this much, even as they wish for better land. Where groups secured land which is suitable for cotton, rice, or sugarcane, they found many kinds of assistance at their disposal, particularly if they were willing to undertake group farming. If a major cash crop could be grown, and they were willing to farm cooperatively, credit could be arranged by which to meet the costs of growing such crops--even to paying themselves wages in the meantime.

## II. Asentamientos Engaged Principally in Subsistence Agriculture

There are 8 asentamientos which are engaged principally in a self-subsistence kind of agriculture. More than half of their land was reported to be uncultivable; much of it is hilly. All of the groups grow corn; in 7 of them the corn is grown individually. On the 5 asentamientos reporting the area of corn grown, there was an average of 2.5 manzanas of corn per family.

Four of the asentamientos are organized wholly on an individualistic basis. Only 46 percent of the land was reported cultivable, and much of this is hilly land. There is an average of 2.9 manzanas of cultivable land per family on these 4 asentamientos. On 2 of them some cattle are kept: on 1 with 105 members, 41 families have their own cattle. On this asentamiento some sesame was sold, but the respondent did not know how much. On another of these individually farmed asentamientos, 3 families out of a total of 20 members had their own milk cows. This latter asentamiento group expressed an interest in securing a loan to enable them to establish a planting of cashews.

One of these individually farmed asentamientos, with 50 members on 70 manzanas of land--all said to be cultivable--reported that all of the

Table 15. Asentamientos Principally Engaged in Subsistence Farming:  
Patterns of Agriculture and Land Use  
(N = 8)

	Total No. of Members	Total Area of Cultivable Land (mnz.)	Percent of Cultivable Total Area Cultivable %	Land per Member (mnz.)	Percent of Land Cultivated Individually	Percent of Land Cultivated by Group
Crop farming: wholly indi- vidual (N=4)	220	635	46	2.9	100	--
Crop and cat- tle growing: crops culti- vated indi- vidually; cattle in group economy (N=2)	65	75	28	1.2	100	--
Crop and cat- tle growing: both mixed economy (N=1)	9	80	40	8.9	64	36
Crop farming: group economy (N=1)	15	75	100	5.0	--	100
Totals and Av.	309	865	53.5	4.5		

50 "heads of family" worked elsewhere for wages during 2 months of the year. Most of them evidently work in Nicaragua.

There are no marked differences in the age distribution of the heads of families. Fifty-six percent of the individual farmers were 35-49 years of age, as was the case for the men on the other four asentamientos. Another 10 percent of the total group was over 50 years of age.

On 3 of the asentamientos the groups are attempting to add cattle growing to the subsistence crop production. On 2 of these asentamientos the land under cultivation is all cultivated individually. One with 19 members has a cattle loan for 23,000 Lempiras. This cattle enterprise is operated as a group economy. Another asentamiento, on which the land is all cultivated individually, indicated that they were seeking a cattle loan and that if they succeeded they would organize the work on this enterprise as a group economy. The third asentamiento group, with 9 members, has already secured a cattle loan for 33,000 Lempiras. The cultivated

land on this asentamiento is worked about two-thirds by group efforts and one-third individually. On these 3 asentamientos only one-third of the land was reported to be cultivable.

Unless these groups have an access to range land outside their own asentamientos, it is difficult to see how they can achieve much economic progress by cattle growing. The 3 asentamientos listed in Table 15 which combine cropping and cattle raising, together have only 470 manzanas of land, with a total of 74 families. This is only 4.3 manzanas of noncultivated land per family. Even so, in terms of plans for development to achieve some economic progress beyond growing their own corn and sorghum, cattle growing has been chosen as their avenue of growth.

On all of the asentamientos, excepting the 1 organized wholly as a group economy, individual families were allotted areas of land for their own use. On 1 asentamiento, the land was reportedly allotted to individual families on the basis of the size of the family labor force; on another, 8 manzanas of land were allotted per family. Both of these asentamientos are organized wholly on an individual farming basis. On the other 5 asentamientos, land was allotted to individual families in lots of 1 to 3 manzanas each.

All of the asentamientos reported that the members had their own hand tools, but 3 reported that their group owned some tools. Only 1 asentamiento reported any oxen--15 yoke owned by individuals. No machinery hire was reported on any of these settlements. Only 2 asentamientos reported paying their members any wages--the 2 which have received cattle loans. Although the members of these asentamientos are trying to achieve something beyond a mere subsistence survival by growing food crops, they remain engaged not only in essentially subsistence farming, but almost wholly in "hand-power" farming as well.

### III. Asentamientos Growing Minor Cash Crops as Well as Food Crops

There are 9 asentamientos in our sample which grow only minor cash crops in addition to their food crops. These minor crops are watermelon, cantaloupe, sesame, and cashew. Eight of those asentamientos reported crop growing only: 1, which grows cashews, is engaged in, or is getting started in, cattle growing. The basic characteristics of these asentamientos, particularly regarding land use, are reported in Table 16.

Of the 9 asentamientos, 5 have a mixed economy, meaning in this context that 45 percent of the cultivated land is allotted to individuals, with 55 percent cultivated in a communitarian manner by the group. The other 4, including the asentamiento engaged in cattle raising, farm all their cultivated land in group fashion.

Five of these associations, including the 3 asentamientos engaged in group farming which had no cattle, reported allotments of land to individual families in lots of 1 to 3 manzanas. The average allotment per family is approximately 1.5 manzanas in size.

Table 16. Asentamientos Growing Minor Cash Crops: Patterns of Land Use  
(N = 9)

	No. of Members	Total Area of Cultivable Land (mnz.)	Percent of Land Area Cultivable	Cultivable Land per:		Area of Corn and Sorghum Grown per Family (mnz.)	Area of Cash Crops per Asentamiento (mnz.)	Percent of Land Cultivated	
				Asentamiento (mnz.)	Member Family (mnz.)			in Group Economy	Individually
Crop growing: mixed farming (N=5)	68	279	65	56	4.1	2.3	16.2	55	45
Crop growing: group farming (N=3)	53	163	80	54	3.1	1.2	7.8	100	--
Cattle growing: group economy (N=1)	10	55	13	55	5.5	1.5	45 <sup>a</sup>	100	--
Totals and Avs.	131	497	47	55	3.8	1.8	16.6	74	26

<sup>a</sup>Cashews are the cash crop.

The proportions of land reported to be cultivable on these 9 asentamientos varied from 13 percent for the 1 raising cattle to 80 percent for the 3 asentamientos engaged in crop farming by group effort. On the 8 asentamientos engaged in crop production only, 70 percent of the total land area was reported to be cultivable.

Of the 55 manzanas of land per asentamiento reported to be cultivable, 16.6 manzanas were in a cash crop. If the cattle-growing asentamiento with 45 manzanas planted to cashews is excluded, the remaining 8 asentamientos had an average of 13 manzanas of land in cash crops. This is about 24 percent of their cultivable land--or 0.86 manzanas of cash crops per family. For the group as a whole slightly less than 2 manzanas of corn and sorghum per family were planted; for the crop-growing asentamientos, the corn and sorghum planted per family was 1.8 manzanas. Thus the cash crops utilize less than half of the area planted to corn and sorghum. Clearly these asentamientos have made little progress beyond the growing of their subsistence crops.

The settlers on these asentamientos are predominantly young people (Table 17): 55 percent of them are between 20 and 34 years of age, and 57 percent were under age 35. The youngest group were those group farmers growing crops only: with two-thirds (66 percent) of the heads of families under 35. This is in some contrast with the group of subsistence agriculture asentamientos (Table 15) where 56 percent were in the 35 to 49 year age group and 66 percent were over age 35.

Table 17. Asentamientos Growing Minor Cash Crops:  
Age Distribution of Heads of Families

	Under 20 Yrs. (%)	20-34 (%)	35-49 (%)	50 Yrs. and Over (%)
Crop farm: mixed farm economies		46	39	15
Group farm: group economies	2	64	30	4
Group farms: cattle growing	<u>20</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>--</u>
Percentages	2	55	34	9

The working capital of these asentamientos growing minor cash crops evidently is provided by loans from the National Development Bank (with endorsement by INA). All of the groups had such loans (see Table 18). One of the mixed-economy asentamientos had a 12,000 Lempiras loan for land clearing. With this loan included, the 5 mixed-farming asentamientos had loans averaging 4,376 Lempiras each. If this amount for land clearing is excluded, the average loan is just under 2,000 Lempiras, which is an

Table 18. Loans to Asentamientos Growing Minor Cash Crops, 1974  
(in Lempiras)

Type of Economic System	Total Loans	Loans per Asentamiento	Loan per Manzanas Cultivable Land	Loan per Member Family
Crop-growing asentamientos: mixed economies (N=5)	21,880 <sup>a</sup> 9,880 <sup>b</sup>	4,376 <sup>a</sup> 1,976 <sup>b</sup>	78 35	322 145
Crop-growing asentamientos: group economies (N=3)	15,500 <sup>c</sup>	5,167	95	186
Cattle-growing asentamientos: group economy (N=1)	23,000 <sup>d</sup>	23,000		2,300

<sup>a</sup>Includes 12,000 loan to one asentamiento for land clearing.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes 12,000 loan to one asentamiento for land clearing.

<sup>c</sup>Includes loans to one asentamiento for warehouse, fencing, etc.

<sup>d</sup>Principally cattle loan, with funds for wells, tanks, etc.

amount that can reasonably be considered as representing liquid capital for use in crop production. Taking the 8 asentamientos as a group which are specializing in crop farming, the average loan for an asentamiento, including loans for land clearing and other capital improvements, was 4,673 Lempiras per asentamiento, or an average of 309 Lempiras per member family. The cattle-growing asentamiento has a different investment problem with a loan of 23,000 Lempiras, approximately two-thirds for the purchase of cattle and one-third for wells, water tanks, and other capital improvements.

#### A. Farming Systems

Considering only the 8 asentamientos growing crops alone, the central crop enterprise on all of them was either corn, or corn combined with sorghum. These crops were supplemented variously by cash crops, with 2 of the asentamientos reporting substantial sales of corn.

The crop combinations reported were:

Corn/sorghum with sesame	- 4
Corn/sorghum with sesame and yucca	- 1
Corn/sorghum with sesame and cashews	- 1
Corn/sorghum with melons	- 2

The principal cash crop on these asentamientos was sesame, with 6 out of the 8 crop-growing asentamientos reporting plantings. These 6 had a total of 68 manzanas of sesame. Five of these reported having sold some sesame in 1974; total reported sales were 209 quintals (this may not be

the entire crop on these farms). The sale prices reported were 40.00 to 43.50 Lempiras per quintal of sesame.

Two asentamientos--one engaged in mixed farming and the other in group farming--reported total corn sales of 750 quintals. One of the asentamientos reported a sales price of 8 Lempiras per quintal. Additionally, 2 asentamientos reported growing melons--watermelon and cantaloupe--with a combined area of 39 manzanas for the two; the crops were being harvested and sold at the time of the interviews so no reports were received on sales.

#### B. Labor Force: Hired Labor

The central labor force on these asentamientos is the male heads of families: there were 114 adult males on the 8 crop-growing asentamientos (an average of 14 men per asentamiento). On these same asentamientos 93 sons over 12 years of age were reported. On the asentamientos engaged in group farming the number of sons over 12 was the same as the number of adult males--18 per asentamiento. If one counts the sons over 12 years of age as a part of the regular labor force of the asentamientos and families<sup>1</sup> but with a man-equivalent of one-half an adult male, the male labor force on these asentamientos would be equivalent to 156 adult males, an average of about 20 per association. This is equivalent to 1 adult male worker for each 2.1 manzanas of land in crops on the 8 crop-growing asentamientos. In terms of total cultivable land on these 8 asentamientos, rather than land reported as planted to crops, this is an average of 3 manzanas of cultivable land per man-equivalent.

The concentration of labor on the 3 asentamientos engaged wholly in group farming is more intense. On these farms there is one man-equivalent<sup>2</sup> per 1.1 manzanas of crops planted in 1974. On the asentamientos organized as mixed economies there are 3.1 manzanas of land in crops per man-equivalent in the asentamiento labor force.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that small amounts of labor are hired. On 7 asentamientos engaged in crop farming (for 1 asentamiento the labor-hired record is incomplete), only 2 reported hiring any farm labor, one for 15 days, the other for 14 days--both of these being mixed economy asentamientos growing corn and sesame.

In response to the question of: What rate of wages was paid to the members of the asentamiento and their families? One asentamiento made

1. Regarding the work of children in the campesino family, White observes, "The younger sons begin to work in the fields at the age of eleven or twelve--as soon as possible to avoid hiring laborers. The young girls are expected at a very early age to haul waters, care for younger brothers and sisters, and help in the family preparation of food." White Report, Vol. 1, p. 76.

2. Adult males plus sons over 12 years of age with each son counted as equal to one-half a man-equivalent for farm labor.

no reply. On another asentamiento, one engaged in group farming, they reported that no wages were paid. Of the other 7 asentamientos, 6 reported that they paid their members 2 Lempiras a day for work; the other paid 2.50 Lempiras. Five of these reported that if they hired outside labor they would pay the same rates (only two of these asentamientos reported hiring any labor--one for 14 days and the other for 15 days, as noted above). The basic rate on both was 2 Lempiras a day.

#### C. Machinery Hire

Of the 8 crop-growing asentamientos producing minor cash crops, only 1 reported owning any oxen. (This 1 also reported spending 36 Lempiras hiring a machine to prepare land for 2 manzanas of yucca.) No oxen were reported on the other 7 asentamientos; 4 of these 7 did hire machines. Since all of these asentamientos had loan funds, it is to be presumed that such funds were used both to hire machinery and pay themselves wages. The 3 group farms all hired machinery for land preparation at an average of 1,755 Lempiras per asentamiento; thus the group farms are at once the smallest in terms of land in relation to the family labor force and the most mechanized.

#### IV. Asentamientos Growing Major Cash Crops: Cotton and Rice

Of the 31 asentamientos included in this detailed analysis, 14, or 45 percent, grew either cotton or rice or both. Among these 14, 6 grew cotton and rice, as well as some other cash crops in several instances. On most of these settlements corn was grown also. Among these 14 asentamientos growing major cash crops, 11 were organized as group economies with all the land worked in a group manner, while 3 have mixed economies. On these latter settlements, 60 percent of the land was farmed by group or communitarian methods, with 40 percent being farmed individually. None of the settlements growing these major cash crops were organized wholly as individual farms (see Table 19).

The 11 group farms had plantings in 1974 of 382 manzanas of cotton and 413 manzanas of rice.<sup>3</sup> On the mixed economy asentamientos there was a total of 100 manzanas of cotton and 102 manzanas of rice. Taking the 14 asentamientos as a group there were 493 manzanas of cotton and 515 manzanas of rice. This is a total of just under 1,000 manzanas of these two crops, about equally divided between cotton and rice--or 71 manzanas per asentamiento--for the 14 as a whole.

Although a total of 128 manzanas of other cash crops were grown on these 14 asentamientos (mostly sesame and watermelon), with corn or sorghum grown for self-consumption on most of them, the major enterprise by far on these asentamientos was the growing of cotton and rice. The average of all cash crops was 80 manzanas per asentamiento. (This is equivalent to 136 acres, or 56 hectares, of cash crops per asentamiento.)

3. Including a second planting of rice of 30 manzanas on one asentamiento.

Table 19. Asentamientos Growing Major Cash Crops--Cotton and Rice: Patterns of Land Use

Organization: Type of Economy and Cash Cropping Patterns	No. of Members	Total Areas Culti- vable Land (mz.)	Culti- vable Land per Asenta- miento (mz.)	Percent of Land Culti- vable	Cash Crops:			Total Cash Crops (mz.)	Av. Area of Cash Crops per Asenta- miento (mz.)
					Cotton (mz.)	Rice (mz.)	Other (mz.)		
Group farming:									
Growing cotton and rice (N=6)	79	835	139	85	322	193	52	567	95
Growing cotton, no rice (N=1)	19	78	78	45	60	—	—	60	60
Growing rice, no cotton (N=4)	76	354	88	99	—	220	—	220 <sup>a</sup>	55
Total group farming (N=11)	174	1,267	115	84	382	413	52	847	77
Mixed farming:									
Cotton, no rice (N=1)	103	300	300	67	100	—	—	100	100
Rice, no cotton (N=2)	32	314	157	81	—	102	76	178	89
Total mixed <sup>b</sup> (N=3)	132	614	205	73	100	102	76	278	93
All asentamientos growing cotton and rice (N=14)	306	1,881	133	80	482	515	128	1,125	80

<sup>a</sup> Rice partially double-cropped, one asentamiento.

<sup>b</sup> On the 3 asentamientos reporting mixed farming systems, 60 percent of the cultivated land was reported to be farmed by group farming and 40 percent by individuals.

Taking the group of 14 asentamientos as a whole, 80 percent of the total area was reported to be cultivable, with variation by asentamientos from 45 percent cultivable to 100 percent. One-half of these asentamientos reported that all of their land was cultivable.

On these asentamientos there were a total of 309 member-participants. Thinking in terms of land resources per family, there was an average of 6.1 manzanas of cultivable land per family (Table 20). This varied from

Table 20. Asentamientos Growing Major Cash Crops--Cotton and Rice: Cultivable Land and Crops Grown per Member

Organization: Type of Economy and Cropping Patterns	No. of Member Families	Cultivable Land per Member Family	Cash Crops per Member Family	Corn/Sorghum per Member Family
Group Farming:				
Growing cotton and rice	79	10.6	7.2	3.3 <sup>a</sup>
Growing cotton, no rice	19	4.1	3.2	0.9
Growing rice, no cotton	76	4.7	2.9	3.8 <sup>b</sup>
Total Group Farming	174	7.3	4.9	3.2 <sup>c</sup>
Mixed Farming:				
Rice and Cotton	135	4.5	1.6	1.8
Total All Asentamientos	309	6.1	3.7	2.5 <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Based on data for 4 families out of 6 reporting areas planted to corn.

<sup>b</sup>Based on data for 3 families out of 4 reporting areas planted to corn.

<sup>c</sup>Average for 8 asentamientos reporting area of corn and sorghum.

<sup>d</sup>Average of the 11 asentamientos reporting area of corn and sorghum.

one asentamiento to the next. The asentamientos growing both cotton and rice were the most fortunate in this respect, with a total of 10.6 manzanas of cultivable land per family. Within this group of 6 settlements, the cultivable land per member varied from a low of 5.2 to a high of 15.3 manzanas per family. For the remaining 8 asentamientos, the variation in cultivable land per family ranged from 1.6 manzanas to 11.6, with only 2 having more than 8 manzanas of cultivable land per family.

The area of cash crops grown per family had a comparable variation, around an average of 3.7 manzanas per family--with the group farmers growing both cotton and rice being the most fortunate, with an average of 7.3 manzanas of cash crops per family on what is undoubtedly very high-grade land. On the asentamientos engaged in mixed farming, there were only 1.6 manzanas of all cash crops (cotton, rice, sesame, watermelon) per family.

Taking the group of 14 as a whole, one finds about 2-3 manzanas of corn and sorghum (mostly corn) per family. The average of those reporting was 2.5 manzanas of these food grains per family.<sup>4</sup>

On those asentamientos which reported land allotted to individuals for food crops the most common allotment was 1.5-2 manzanas per family. In terms of the ages of the heads of families (as estimated by the group of leaders participating in the interviews) about 60 percent of these farmers are under 35 years of age (see Table 21). Fewer than 10 percent in the aggregate were over 50 years of age.

Table 21. Asentamientos Growing Major Cash Crops: Percentage Age Distribution of Heads of Families

Organization: Type of Economy and Cash Cropping Patterns	Age Distribution Heads of Families by Age Groups			
	Under 20 Yrs.	20-34 Yrs.	35-49 Yrs.	50 Yrs. and Older
Group Farming:				
Cotton and Rice (N=6)	-	55	35	10
Cotton, no rice (N=1)	-	89	11	--
Rice, no cotton (N=4)	7	55	30	8
Total (N=11)	3	59	30	8
Mixed Farming:				
Cotton, no rice (N=1)	-	49	39	12
Rice, no cotton (N=2)	3	78	19	--
Total (N=3)	1	56	34	10
Total Growing Cotton and Rice (N=14)	2	57	32	9

4. The reporting of corn and sorghum planted per family was a bit uneven. This is due, one may suppose, partly to the fact that this is the most likely of all crops to be grown individually. In a few instances no corn plantings were reported, even though in response to a question regarding the production of food crops by members it was reported that the members grew their own corn.

A. The Labor Force

The farm labor force on these asentamientos consists of three groups of people: the man who usually heads the family, the sons over 12 years of age (who rarely attend school), plus whatever labor is hired from the outside. Taking the group as a whole, there were 305 male heads of families (out of a total of 309) with 141 sons over 12 years of age. In estimating the size of the family labor force, we assume as before that these sons would not be able on the average to do as much work as their fathers and therefore consider each as one-half man-equivalent in the family labor force. Combining the number of fathers and sons over 12, we calculated that these asentamientos have a total labor force of 369 man-equivalents.<sup>5</sup> When the family labor forces are so calculated, we find an average of 4.7 manzanas of crops (including both corn and cash crops) per man-equivalent on these asentamientos. As would be expected, the area of crops grown per man-equivalent is quite variable asentamiento by asentamiento. The variation in area of crops grown per man-equivalent of the family labor force is from under 2 manzanas per man-equivalent on 2 asentamientos,<sup>6</sup> to 13.2 manzanas per man-equivalent on 1 asentamiento with few members, where no sons over 12 years of age were reported.

One of the points of anticipated significance in the size of the family labor force, in relation to area of crops grown, was in regard to the amount of outside labor hired. On 3 of the 6 asentamientos growing both cotton and rice some labor was hired, on 3 asentamientos for work on cotton and on 2 for work on rice also. In addition, 3 of the asentamientos growing rice but no cotton hired some outside labor. Unfortunately we are not able to quantify accurately the amount of labor hired, except to note that 4 out of the 6 asentamientos reporting the hiring of labor had a labor force (combined fathers and sons) of 13 or fewer man-equivalents. The asentamientos reporting the most hired labor, 35 persons for one month, grew 9.6 manzanas of crops per man-equivalent in their family labor forces.

The farming on these asentamientos is substantially mechanized. Oxen were reported on only 2 of the 14 asentamientos interviewed: both of these were worked as group farms. One had 2 yoke of oxen, the other 10. The latter asentamiento was organized in April 1973, and planted both first and second crops of both corn and rice. The first crop of corn was lost in the floods in this area which were associated with Hurricane Fifi; the second crop of rice was reported to have failed also. This asentamiento made extensive use of hired machinery for land clearing as well as for land preparation and the harvesting of rice.

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5. The disparity between these totals is due to the fact that the labor force was calculated asentamiento by asentamiento, with the fractional man-equivalent for sons in odd numbers always being dropped.

6. These were 2 of the asentamientos for which there were no reports on the area of corn grown; it may be, therefore, an understatement by one-half regarding area cultivated per worker on these asentamientos, since usually about 2 manzanas of corn are grown per family.

All of the other asentamientos except the 1 which has its own tractor and equipment were virtually wholly dependent upon the hiring of machinery for land preparation and the harvesting of rice. As reported in the interviews, 7 asentamientos hiring machinery paid 64 Lempiras per manzana for machinery hire for land preparation in putting out the cotton crop. Eleven of the 12 asentamientos growing rice reported an average of 60 Lempiras per manzana for land preparation. In addition, the rice was harvested by machines, a cost of some 2 Lempiras per quintal, according to our respondents. One asentamiento also reported paying 17,500 Lempiras for land clearing, the greater part of which was in preparation for the planting of rice.

### B. The Pattern of Cropping

As already noted, the pattern of cropping on these asentamientos varies around the central enterprises of cotton and rice. Seven of the asentamientos reported growing cotton, 11 rice. Twelve of the 14 reported growing corn, with sesame, watermelons, or sorghum growing on half of them; 2 are starting plantings of cashews. (See Table 22.)

Table 22. Cropping Combinations: 14 Asentamientos Growing Cotton, Rice, or Both

<u>Cropping Combinations</u>	<u>N</u>
Cotton and rice only	2
Cotton, rice, and corn	1
Cotton, rice, corn, and sandia	1
Cotton, rice, corn, and sorghum	1
Cotton, rice, corn, and cashews	1
Cotton, rice, corn, sorghum, and sesame	1
Cotton and corn	1
Rice and corn	1
Rice, corn, and sesame	2
Rice, corn, and sorghum	1
Rice, corn, and sandia	1
Rice, corn, sesame, and cashews	1

### C. Production of Cotton and Rice

Since 89 percent of the area in cash crops in these 14 asentamientos is in cotton or rice, their success with these crops is of major importance in the economy of the groups. As noted above, there was almost 1,000 manzanas of these two crops on these 14 asentamientos. Cotton was planted on 8 of these asentamientos with a total area of 482 manzanas. Seventy-five percent of this area was reported harvested at the time of the interviews, January and February 1975, with a reported yield of 19.6 quintals per manzana. (See Table 23.)

Table 23. Asentamientos Growing Major Cash Crops--Cotton and Rice: Area Planted, Area Harvested, and Reported Production

Crop	No. of Asentamientos Growing Crop	Area Planted (mnz.)	Area Harvested (mnz.)	Percent of Planted Area Harvested	Reported Yield of Harvested Area per Mnz. (qq)	Production of Crop (qq)
Cotton	8	482	390	75 <sup>a</sup>	19.6	7,637
Rice	12	510	255	50 <sup>b</sup>	28.0	7,214

<sup>a</sup>This shortfall of 92 mnz. on one asentamiento is probably due to the fact that the harvest was not complete.

<sup>b</sup>This 50 percent which the harvested area falls short of planted area appears to be due at least for the most part to crop failure by drought, pests, or flooding. Thirty-nine percent of the planted crop was reported as having failed. The explanation for the remaining difference is unclear from our field data. The schedules were taken in January and February 1975; by this time all of the rice would have been harvested.

Rice was planted on 12 of the asentamientos to a total of 510 manzanas. Only 50 percent of this planted area was reported as having been harvested. Just why this 50 percent shortfall in harvested area occurred cannot be determined fully from the responses given in the interviews: 39 percent of planted area was reported as having been lost; why the remaining 11 percent of the planted area was not harvested is not indicated. This, too, could be due to crop failure. But whatever the reasons, only one-half of the planted area was reported as having been harvested. For the area harvested, a yield of 28 quintals of rice per manzana was reported, with a total of 7,214 quintals.

#### D. Loan Funds as Working Capital

With farming so heavily mechanized, and expenditures for mechanical land preparation of 60 Lempiras per manzana, and some hiring of outside labor, it is obvious that these asentamientos must have substantial sums of working capital. This is evidently supplied by the National Development Bank, through endorsement by INA on the asentamientos formed under Decree No. 8. These asentamientos growing major cash crops had average loan authorizations in 1974 of 45,159 Lempiras, for a total of 632,230 Lempiras (Table 24). About 80 percent of these funds were loaned for crop production; much of the remaining 20 percent (125,645 Lempiras) was made to a few asentamientos--to 2 for land clearing, and to 1 for the purchase of a tractor, equipment, and current production requisites.

When associations are grouped according to the combination of cash crops, the group farmers growing both cotton and rice had loans authorized

Table 24. Loans Authorized to Asentamientos Growing Major Cash Crops (in Lempiras)

Type of Economy and Cropping Systems	Total Loans	Crop Loans	For Other Purposes
<b>Group Farming:</b>			
Cotton and rice (N=6)	346,200	324,445	21,755 <sup>a</sup>
Cotton or rice (N=5)	123,030	102,140	20,890 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Mixed Farming:</b>			
Cotton or rice (N=3)	163,000	80,000	83,000 <sup>c</sup>
<b>Total (N=14)</b>	<b>632,230</b>	<b>506,585</b>	<b>125,645</b>
<b>Average per Asentamiento</b>	<b>45,159</b>	<b>36,184</b>	<b>8,975</b>

<sup>a</sup>Includes a loan of 19,000 Lempiras to 1 asentamiento for land clearing.

<sup>b</sup>About one-half to 2 asentamientos for land clearing.

<sup>c</sup>Loan to 1 asentamiento for purchase of tractor, implements, fertilizer, and fungicides, and payment of wages.

for 4,384 Lempiras per member, or 415 Lempiras per manzana of cultivable land (Table 25). The asentamientos growing either cotton or rice, but not both, fared quite similarly when the aggregate loans only are considered, with something like 275 Lempiras per manzana of cultivable land and 1,275 Lempiras per member.<sup>7</sup>

We do not have adequate detail from our field interviews regarding the expenditure of loan funds. But it seems clear that, if these loan funds approved were actually used, a substantial portion of them were used to pay wages--mostly to the members, since the cost for machines for land preparation is something like 60 Lempiras per manzana. Eleven of the asentamientos reported paying members 2 Lempiras a day in wages; with 3 paying

7. However, the aggregate for the mixed farming group is influenced strongly by the one big loan for capital improvements. If this asentamiento is excluded, the loan for the other two group farming asentamientos is 197 Lempiras per manzana of cultivable land and 1,938 Lempiras per member.

Table 25. Loans to Asentamientos Growing Major Cash Crops, per Asentamiento and in Relation to Area of Cultivable Land and Membership (in Lempiras)

Type of Economy and Cropping Systems	Average Loan per Asentamiento for:			Average Loan per Mnz. of Cultivable	
	Total	Crops	Others	Land	Member
Group Farming:					
Cotton and rice (N=6)	57,700	54,074	3,626 <sup>a</sup>	415	4,382
Cotton or rice (N=5)	24,606	20,428	4,178 <sup>a</sup>	285	1,295
Mixed Farming:					
Cotton or rice (N=3)	54,333	26,667	27,666 <sup>a</sup>	265	1,235
Average Group	45,159	36,184	8,975	336	2,066

<sup>a</sup>See footnotes to Table 24.

3 Lempiras a day. When outside labor is hired, it is paid at the same rate.

#### V. Cooperative Farms

The farm settlements established under the auspices of INA before Decree No. 8 are all production cooperatives, operated as group farms. The 12 cooperatives included in this detailed analysis are on very good land, 88 percent of which was reported to be cultivable (see Table 26). These associations have an average of 23 members each, with 225 manzanas of cultivable land. An average of 176 manzanas of land was reported to be in cash crops. On the average these cooperative farms have 9.9 manzanas of cultivable land per member, of which 7.8 manzanas are in cash crops. The cooperative farms producing both cotton and rice have 10 manzanas of cultivable land per member (see Table 27).

These cooperative farms, which are the oldest in southern Honduras, and probably the most developed of the settlements established by INA, continue to produce their subsistence crops--with 9 of the 12 reporting an average of 1.9 manzanas of corn per family.

The membership is relatively young, with 66 percent of the heads of families under 35 years of age (Table 28). Since 9 out of the 12 cooperatives were formed in 1970 or before, most of the members were in their twenties at the time of organization.

Table 26. Cooperative Farms Growing Major Cash Crops:  
Patterns of Land Use  
(N = 12)

Type of Economy and Cropping Patterns	Total No. of Members	Culti- vable			Cash Crops (in mnz.)			Av. Cash Crops per Coop.	
		Total Culti- vable Area (mnz.)	Land in Coop. (mnz.)	Percent of Land Culti- vable	Cotton	Rice	Other Total		
Cooperatives:									
Growing cotton and rice (N=10)	237	2,311	237	87	1,265	480	114	1,859	186
Growing cotton or rice (N=2)	35	32.7	163	95	190	52	14	256	128
Totals and Avs.	27.2	2,698	225	88	1,455	532	128	2,115	176

Table 27. Cooperative Farms Growing Major Cash Crops:  
Cultivable Land and Crops Grown per Member

Cooperative Farms by Major Cash Crop	No. of Members	Cultivable Land per Member	Cash Crops per Member	Corn/Sorghum per Member
Growing cotton and rice	237	10.0	7.84	1.7 <sup>a</sup>
Cotton or rice	35	9.3	7.31	2.5 <sup>b</sup>
All cooperative farms	272	9.9	7.75	1.9 <sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Based on reports from 8 of the 10 cooperatives.

<sup>b</sup>Based on a report from 1 of 2 cooperatives.

<sup>c</sup>Based on reports from 9 of the 12 cooperatives.

The following combinations of crops were reported on these 12 cooperative farms:

cotton and rice	1
cotton, rice, and corn	2
cotton, rice, corn, and sesame	1
cotton, rice, corn, and melons <sup>8</sup>	4
cotton, rice, melons, and cashews	1
cotton, corn, and watermelon	2
rice and cane	1

8. Both watermelons and cantaloupe.

Table 28. Cooperative Farms by Major Cash Crops Grown:  
Percentage Age Distribution of Heads of Families  
(N = 12)

Group Farms: Cropping Systems	Under 20 Yrs.	20-34 Yrs.	35-49 Yrs.	50 Yrs. and Older
Growing cotton and rice (N=10)	3	63	21	13
Growing cotton or rice (N=2)	6	57	23	14
Percentages	4	62	21	13

Of the 12: 11 grow cotton; 11 grow rice; and 7 grow melons (watermelons or cantaloupe). The latter are short-term cash crops, and probably second-season crops.

A. The Labor Force

The labor force on the cooperatives consisted centrally of the 271 male heads of families. It is presumed that the sons over 12 years of age are available for farm work also, as they would be under normal campesino farm life in Honduras. All together there were 160 sons reported as being 12 years or older. Considering these sons as each being the equivalent of one-half of an able-bodied adult for farm work, the family labor force of these combined groups would total 353 man-equivalents.

The total area of crops, cash crops as well as corn, reported as being grown on these cooperatives would be equal to 7.2 manzanas of crops per man-equivalent. Considering only the 11 cooperative farms growing cotton--a labor-intensive crop--this is 4.3 manzanas of cotton per man-equivalent of the family labor force. The area of cotton per man-equivalent of the family labor force, cooperative by cooperative, has the following distribution:

	No. of Cooperatives
3 manzanas of cotton or less per man-equivalent	2
3 to 4.4 manzanas per man-equivalent	3
4.5 to 5.9 manzanas per man-equivalent	5
6.0 manzanas or more per man-equivalent	1

With an average of 4.3 manzanas of cotton per man unit on these cooperatives, it is not surprising that 10 of the cooperatives reported hiring labor in cotton production, either for cultivation or harvest. The only

cooperative not reporting hiring labor for cotton had the smallest area of cotton per family worker--2.1 manzanas per man unit.

Of the 12 cooperatives, 8 reported paying their members 2 Lempiras per day, with the same rate of payment for outsiders. One reported wage rates of 2.50 Lempiras per day for both members and outsiders. Three of the cooperatives (all of which have their own machinery and equipment) paid their members 3 Lempiras per day, with one of these paying 2.50 Lempiras for outside labor and the other two paying 2 Lempiras per day for outsiders.

#### B. Mechanization of Farming

Farming on these cooperative farms is extensively mechanized: 5 of the 12 cooperative farms have their own machines--tractors with complementary equipment. The cooperatives with their own tractors had an average of 153 manzanas of cotton each. The 6 growing cotton which do not have machines had an average of 115 manzanas of cotton per cooperative. All of the cooperatives without tractors and equipment of their own hired machine work for land preparation for cotton; data are too fragmentary to permit calculation of rates of expenditure per manzana.

In the production of rice the situation is comparable: 4 of the 5 cooperatives having their own mechanical equipment grew rice. Seven of the cooperatives not having tractors reported growing rice. Of these 7, 5 reported hiring the land preparation for rice;<sup>9</sup> these 5 had an average of 36 manzanas of rice per cooperative and reported paying 45 Lempiras per manzana for land preparation. The harvesting of rice by a combine is evidently the general practice, with rates of 2 Lempiras per quintal.

The 11 cooperatives growing cotton reported an average of 139 manzanas of cotton each. At the time of our interviews 93 percent of the area had been harvested, with a reported average production of 28 quintals per manzana. (See Table 29.) Eleven of the cooperatives also planted rice equal to about one-third of the area planted to cotton--48 manzanas per cooperative. The area harvested was 83 percent of the plantings. On this harvested area a yield of 32 quintals per manzana was reported.

#### C. Loan Funds as Working Capital

The 12 cooperative farms reported loans in 1974 of 130,147 Lempiras per cooperative--or a total of 1,561,716 Lempiras. Ninety-one percent of these loan funds were allotted to crop production. These loans amount to 579 Lempiras per manzana, or 5,742 Lempiras per member. (See Table 30.)

9. This number of 5 rather than 7 is probably a failure in reporting rather than lack of machinery hire, since both of these cooperatives reported hiring machinery for land preparation in the growing of cotton.

Table 29. Cooperative Farms: Area Planted to, Area Harvested of, and Reported Production of Cotton and Rice

Crop	No. of Cooperatives Growing Crop	Area Planted (mnz.)	Area Harvested (mnz.)	Percent of Planted Area Harvested <sup>a</sup>	Reported Yield of Harvested Crops (qq)	Production of Crop (qq)
Cotton	11	1,530	1,430	93	28	40,129
Rice	11	532	440	83	32	13,910

<sup>a</sup>As noted above, there was an unexplained shortfall on asentamientos between planted and harvested cotton and rice of nearly 50 percent. The comparable shortfalls for the cooperative farms are much less, indicating that the latter are more favorably situated than are the asentamientos.

Table 30. Cooperative Farms: Loans Authorized 1974 (in Lempiras)

Cooperative Farms	Loans 1974			Average Loans	
	Total	For Crops	Other Purposes	Per Manzana Cultivable Land	Per Member
Growing cotton and rice (N=10)	1,321,176	1,272,196	48,980 <sup>a</sup>	557	5,575
Growing cotton or rice (N=2)	240,540	154,540	86,000 <sup>b</sup>	736	6,872
Total (N=12)	1,561,716	1,426,736	134,980	579	5,742
Per Cooperative Average for Group	130,143	118,895	11,248		

<sup>a</sup>Includes 17,480 for land clearing; remainder mostly for machinery.

<sup>b</sup>Loan to establish an irrigation system for cane.

VI. Some Comparisons: Systems of Economy and Resources, Asentamientos and Cooperatives

The basic categories used in classifying the asentamientos and cooperative farms sponsored by INA, as included in our sample are, by intention, developmental categories. The basic category is that of subsistence agriculture; groups rise above a subsistence level in agriculture only if they have the opportunities--the resources--and the abilities to make this climb. The resources, if sufficiently available, are the ladder which campesinos climb--to speak figuratively--toward a better life through developmental effort. If the campesinos have little land, or little land upon which valuable cash crops can be grown, they will remain subsistence farmers.

On such bases we have classified approximately one-sixth of the settlements we have studied as being in subsistence agriculture (see Table 31). They are making efforts to climb the development ladder--2 already have loans to buy cattle, and a third (also classified as a mixed-crop cattle economy) is seeking such a loan. On 1 of the individually

Table 31. Asentamientos and Cooperatives by Type of Economy and Production Patterns

Type of Economy	Individual Farming Crops	Mixed	Mixed	Group Economy Cropping	Group Economy Cattle	Total
		Economy Crop Farming	Economy Crops and Cattle			
1. Asentamientos: principally subsistence	4	-	3 <sup>a</sup>	--	-	7
2. Asentamientos: minor cash crops	-	5	-	3	1	9
3. Asentamientos: major cash crops	-	3	-	11	-	14
4. Cooperative farms: major cash crops	-	-	-	12	-	12
Total	4	8	3	26	1	42

<sup>a</sup>Two of these farm all their crop land individually: of the 2, 1 has a cattle loan, the other seeks a cattle loan. The cattle economy in the one, and in the projections of the second, is a group economy.

farmed asentamientos some sesame was reportedly sold; another group expressed the hope that they could get a loan to plant cashews. One of these asentamientos, classified as being subsistence agriculture, works communally, farming as a group, but it still raises only modest amounts of food crops. There are 9 asentamientos which grow cash crops as well as food crops,

particularly sesame and melons (including watermelons), with some plantings of cashews.

It is, however, only those asentamientos and cooperative farms that have land which is suitable for major cash crops--cotton, rice, or cane<sup>10</sup>--that have a good start on economic development. Fourteen asentamientos out of 31 in our sample and all 12 of the cooperatives are in this position. There are neither individual farmers nor cattle on these "major cash crop" settlements. Corn (or sorghum) was reported as having been grown on most of the asentamientos or cooperatives, usually 1 to 2 manzanas per family.

On the basis of our sample, 65 percent of the asentamientos and cooperative farms are operated as group economies, about 25 percent have mixed economies, and less than 10 percent (4 out of 43) are farmed wholly by individual crop farming arrangements.

The category of "mixed economy" has some ambiguity. In 8 out of the 11 mixed economy asentamientos, the consideration of "mixed" farming is wholly a matter of how the crop land is cultivated. Under mixed farming, some is cultivated communally or by group methods, the rest individually. On the "mixed economies" with cattle, the cattle growing is a group enterprise, but in 2 of the mixed economies with cattle, the crop farming is done "individually," so that if one considers only crop farming, there are 6 rather than 4 "individual" crop farmers.

As might be expected, the farmers who are individual crop farmers are the oldest of the various groups. More than two-thirds (68 percent) are over 35 years of age (Table 32), whereas about two-thirds (64 percent) of the group farmers are under 35 years of age. The mixed farming group is in between.

Table 32. Asentamientos and Cooperatives: Age Distribution of Heads of Families by Kind of Farming Systems

Kind of Farming System	No. of Asentamientos	No. of Members	Age Distribution: Heads of Families <sup>a</sup>			
			Under 20 Yrs. (%)	20-34 Yrs. (%)	35-49 Yrs. (%)	50 Yrs. and Older (%)
Individual farming	4	220	7	29	56	12
Mixed farming	11	274	<sup>b</sup>	45	43	12
Group farming	28	524	3	61	25	11
Total	43	1,018	3	50	37	10

<sup>a</sup>Age distribution of heads of families based on 1,002 persons, since the ages for 16 member-participants not given in interview.

<sup>b</sup>Less than 1 percent.

10. One asentamiento is starting to grow cane.

The kind of crops grown is evidently a fair index of the quality of the land, with subsistence agriculture on the poorer land and major cash crops on the best land. One factor in the quality of land, for crop production at least, is the degree of slope of the terrain. Generally speaking, rough land is poor land for farming. The proportion of the land reported to be cultivable is therefore one approximate index of quality. On the asentamientos engaged principally in subsistence agriculture, 45 percent of the land was reported to be cultivable. The cultivable proportion increased with each category to 88 percent being cultivable on the cooperative farms growing major cash crops. Also, the better the land, the larger the allotment of land per association (settlement), as well as per member.

On the asentamientos with subsistence agricultural economies, there were only 39 manzanas of cultivable land per asentamiento, or an average of 2.8 manzanas per family. On the asentamientos growing minor food crops, there were 55 manzanas per association, or 3.8 per member (Table 33).

Table 33. Summary of Land Resources and Patterns of Land Use:  
Asentamientos and Cooperatives

Classification of Asentamientos and Cooperatives	No. of Assns.	Total Number of Members	Total	Percent	Culti-	Cultivable
			Area of Culti- vable Land (mnz.)	of Land Area Culti- vable	vable Land per Assn. (mnz.)	Land per Family (mnz.)
<b>Asentamientos:</b>						
1) Principally engaged in subsistence crop	8	309	865	45	39	2.8
2) Growing minor cash crop as well as food crops	9	131	497	55	55	3.8
3) Growing major cash crops	14	306	1,881	80	133	6.1
<b>Cooperative Farms:</b>						
Major cash crops	12	272	2,698	88	225	9.9

The asentamientos growing major cash crops had more than twice as much cultivable land per asentamiento--133 manzanas--and almost twice as much per member at 6.1 manzanas per member. The cooperative farms growing cotton or rice are the most fortunate, with 225 manzanas of cultivable land per association, and 9.9 manzanas per member. Thus the cooperative farms have almost six times as much cultivable land per group as do those

asentamientos engaged in subsistence agriculture, and more than four times as much land per member.

If the quality and extent of the land available is the basic dimension of economic opportunity, the availability of loan funds is the major means for facilitating the exploitation of such opportunities, at least to groups of people starting to farm for themselves and who have virtually no assets other than their own skills and energies.

Of the 43 asentamientos and cooperatives included in our sample, only the 6 asentamientos engaged in a subsistence type of crop farming had no loan funds available in 1974 (Table 34). Three of the asentamientos had

Table 34. Loans Authorized by Kinds of Farming Systems

Association by Kinds of Farming Systems	No. of Assns.	Total Member-ship of Assns.	Total Cultivable Land (m <sup>2</sup> .)	Total Loan (L)	Loan per Assn. (L)	Loan per Members (L)
Loans for cattle growing	3	38	180	80,450	26,817	2,117
Loans for crop production:						
to asentamientos growing principally subsistence crops	6	281	740	--	--	--
to asentamientos growing minor cash crops	8	121	442	37,380	4,673	309
to asentamientos growing major cash crops	14	306	1,881	632,230	45,159	2,066
to cooperative farms growing major cash crops	12	272	2,698	1,561,716	130,143	5,742

loans to help them get started in cattle farming. Since the purchase of cattle, the provision of a water supply, fences, etc., require major capital cost, these loans were substantial--about 27,000 Lempiras per asentamiento and more than 2,000 Lempiras per member.<sup>11</sup>

But the cattle-growing asentamientos aside, and considering only crop-growing asentamientos and cooperatives, the size of the loans range from nothing on the subsistence agriculture asentamientos to more than 130,000

11. Some part of these loans were no doubt used to pay wages to the members who make such improvements.

Lempiras per cooperative, or 5,742 Lempiras per member, on the cooperative farms growing major cash crops---cotton or rice.

These comparisons of the wide range in the availability of loans is not pointed out in any sense of criticism, nor to suggest that all of the associations should be treated alike. We have not had the time to study policies and procedures by which loans are made. But since they are made by the Development Bank they are no doubt made on the basis of the prospective earnings from the crops, the production of which is facilitated by the loans.

Rather, these variations in the amount and quality of land, as well as the variations in loan-fund availability, seem to us to be something of an index of the challenge which is faced in Honduras in helping farm families get established in agriculture in such a manner as to "incorporate the rural people under the production process, giving them land, financial and technical assistance which would permit them to reach income levels that would assure them an economic and social well-being" (Preamble to Agrarian Reform Law, Decree No. 170, 1975).

## CHAPTER 5. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF ASENTAMIENTOS AND COOPERATIVES

An assembly of the members is the sovereign body in the organization of asentamientos and cooperatives. This assembly elects a president and other officers, characteristically for one-year terms. For the 43 associations which constitute our sample: 1 asentamiento reported that it elected officers each season; 2 reported that their officers were elected for an indefinite period. The remaining 40 reported electing officers for one-year terms. When asked about the qualities which they considered important in the officers of the groups, out of 43 associations:

- 23 considered the ability to read and write to be important;
- 18 reported that they considered experience important;
- 16 emphasized the ability to take responsibility;
- 16 thought an honored status important;
- 14 emphasized the capacity to work;
- 6 mentioned honesty; and
- 6 wanted dynamic leaders.

The one trait that was emphasized by more than half of the associations was the ability to read and write. The appreciation of this ability is carried over into the plans for their children, including their attendance in school, as noted below.

### I. The Organization of the Communal Labor Force

On 39 out of the 43 associations in our sample, 90 percent of the cases, some or all of the labor force was organized on a group or communal basis. In 11 asentamientos some kind of mixed farming is being undertaken; in these cases the individual sector of the farm labor force is not considered communal. Thus there are 11 mixed farms, where only a part of the farm work is done in a communal fashion. On the 28 group economies all the labor force is organized on a group basis.

In 8 of the associations--3 with mixed farming and 5 group farming systems--the president (or the director) also acts as the labor manager or coordinator (see Item 2a, Table 35 A). In the remaining 31 cases there is a labor manager or coordinator other than the president. The length of time for which the labor coordinator or manager serves is variable, but most of them serve for one year. (See Section 3, Table 35 A.) Taking all labor managers or coordinators, including the 8 presidents who serve as managers, 22 out of 38,<sup>1</sup> or 58 percent, serve for one year. If the 8 presidents who serve in the dual capacity of president and manager or coordinator are not counted, 6 are elected for one-year terms and 2 for indefinite terms. The remaining 30 managers or coordinators are appointed to the following terms:

1. Information lacking on length of term of service for one manager.

Table 35 A. Organization of Communal Labor Force: Mixed Farming and Group Farming by Type of Farming Systems and Major Enterprises

A) Organization of the Communal Labor Force

	Mixed Farming Asentamientos				Group Farming						
	Subsistence Agri- culture plus Cattle	Growing Minor Food Crops	Growing Major Food Crops	Total Mixed	Asentamientos				Coops		Total Group Farm- ing Total
					Subsistence Agri- culture	Cash Crops plus Cattle	Growing Minor Cash Crops	Growing Major Cash Crops	Growing Major Cash Crops	Total	
Number of Associations	3	5	3	11	1	1	3	11	12	28	39
1. Assignments of labor force:											
a) tasks assigned individually, daily	1	2 <sup>b</sup>	1	4	1	1		6 <sup>a</sup>	4	11	15
b) tasks assigned individually, time not specified	1			1				5	4	9	10
c) tasks assigned by groups daily	1 <sup>a</sup>	3	2	6	1		3		3	7	13
d) by agreement according to needs											
2. Work assignments made by:											
a) President (or officers)		2	1 <sup>c</sup>	3	1		2	1	1	5	8
b) managers or coordinators	3 <sup>d</sup>	3	2	8		1	1	10	11	23	31
3. Manager, coordinator (ind. president)	<u>e</u>										
a) serves 1-yr. term		4	2	6 <sup>e</sup>		3	2	3 <sup>e</sup>	8 <sup>e</sup>	16 <sup>e</sup>	22
b) serves for a crop season								6	3	9	9
c) serves shorter period (15-30 days)	1	1		2				1		1	3
						1	1			2	4

(Table 35 A. Organization of Communal Labor Force. cont.)

<sup>a</sup> Group now works individually, but if they got credit they would work communally.

<sup>b</sup> Partly individually, partly collectively.

<sup>c</sup> Done by directors.

<sup>d</sup> In one asentamiento, by secretary of labor.

<sup>e</sup> No data for one asentamiento.

<sup>f</sup> For cotton only.

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16 for one year;  
9 for a crop season;  
3 for short periods, 1 week - 1 month;  
2 for an indefinite term.

The manager or coordinator is in effect the foreman of the communal labor force who assigns or allots the specific tasks to be done in the farming operations. In 25 out of the 39 associations the tasks were reported to be assigned individually; in 15 (or 60 percent) of these cases the tasks are assigned daily. In 13 cases the tasks were reported as assigned to groups on a daily basis.

In seeking to find out how much discretion and authority the managers or coordinators had regarding employment of the asentamientos or cooperatives, 3 questions were asked: whether the manager assigned persons to specific tasks; whether they decided how many members of one family were employed; and whether they decided about hiring outside labor. The responses are tabulated in Table 35 B.<sup>2</sup> In 32 of the 34 cases (94 percent), the manager or coordinator assigns the tasks to individuals or groups. But he has authority in only 14 out of 34 associations (41 percent) to decide how many members of one family will work;<sup>3</sup> while on 19 of the asentamientos and cooperatives (56 percent) he has the authority to decide on the hiring of outside labor.

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2. These data are available for only 34 out of the 39 associations.

3. Presumably for wages paid from loan funds.

Table 35 B. Organization of Communal Labor Force: Mixed Farming and Group Farming  
by Type of Farming Systems and Major Enterprises

B) Range of Decisions by Authorized Administrator of Communal Labor Force

	Mixed Farming				Group Farming				Coop- era- tives Major Cash Crops	Total Group Farming	Grand Total
	Asentamientos				Asentamientos						
	Subsis- tence Agri- culture	Growing Minor Cash Crops	Growing Major Cash Crops	Total Mixed Farm- ing	Subsis- tence Agri- culture	Cash Crops with Cattle	Minor Cash Crops	Major Cash Crops			
Number of Associations	3	5	3	11	1	1	3	11	12	28	39
Decisions on labor allocation and employment made by authorized manager (manager, coordinator, or president)	a	b	a	c				a		c	
a) Assigns members of labor force to specific tasks:											
yes	2	3	2	7	1		2	10	12	25	32
no						1	1			2	2
b) Decides how many members of one family are employed:											
yes	1	2		3	1		2	1	7	11	14
no	1	1	2	4		1	1	9	5	16	20
c) Decides about hiring outside labor:											
yes	1	3		4	1		2	4	8	15	19
no	1		2	3		1	1	6	4	12	15

<sup>a</sup>No data 1 asentamiento.

<sup>b</sup>No data 2 asentamientos.

<sup>c</sup>No data 4 asentamientos.

CHAPTER 6. SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS, PROSPECTS AND OUTLOOK:  
MEMBERS OF ASENTAMIENTOS AND COOPERATIVES

I. Milk for the Children

Considering the consumption of milk by children to be something of an index of achievement in the level of family living, we asked the respondents whom we interviewed whether many families have milk for small children. Table 36 summarizes the answers to this question by the general type of economy of the associations.

Table 36. Asentamientos and Cooperatives Classified According to Availability of Milk for Children

Kind of Economy and Cropping System	No. of Asentamientos	Proportion Reported To Have Milk for Children				Percent of Asentamientos Where	
		All	Approx. One-Half	Less Than One-Fourth	None	All Families Have Milk	No Family Has Milk
<b>Asentamientos:</b>							
subsistence agriculture	8	3	1	2	2	38	25
growing minor cash crops	9	1	1	1	6	11	67
growing major cash crops	14	3		2	9	21	64
<b>Cooperatives:</b>							
major cash crops	12	5	2	2	3	42	25

These rough estimates indicate that the milk availability for children was highest in what may be termed the poorest group of settlers, as well as among the most prosperous: the asentamientos with subsistence agriculture and the cooperative farms. Approximately 40 percent of the families in each of these groups reported having milk for the children, and only 25 percent were totally without milk. This is understandable in that the high percentage of the land on asentamientos engaged in essentially subsistence agriculture is not cultivable, with several families having milk cows; the cooperative farms have been established some 3 to 4 years longer than the asentamientos, have the best resources, and have no doubt made the most progress.

In between are the asentamientos growing cash crops, either minor or major crops. In both classes about two-thirds of the asentamientos reported that none of their families had milk for the children.

## II. Availability of Schools for Children

The inquiry about school facilities was limited to one set of questions. Is there a school for your children? How many grades does it have? How far from home is the school? The replies are summarized in Table 37. Since the replies to the questions are summarized in terms of two dimensions--distance from home and number of grades in the school--and the differences appear to be minor among the different classes of associations, we are summarizing in one table the data for the 39 asentamientos and cooperatives where the children were reported as attending school. The children from 4 of the asentamientos do not attend school, either because no school exists, or because the school is too far away, e.g., 6 kilometers. In at least one of these 4 asentamientos concerned parent have arranged for some instruction by a field worker of a campesino organization.

Table 37. Availability of Schools for the Children of the Asentamientos and Cooperatives Attending School

Grade of School Available	Distance from Home				Total
	In Community	Under 2 Kms. from Home	2-4 Kms. from Home	Over 4 Kms.	
2	2	3	1		6
3	5	4		1	10
4	2	3			5
5	1			1	2
6	<u>13</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	-	<u>16</u>
	23	11	3	2	39

## III. Careers for the Children: Plans to Take Sons into Farming

In our visits to a member of asentamientos and cooperative farms, we were impressed by the seeming change that was occurring in attitudes and the outlook on life. Once these campesinos had achieved some security of expectations in the occupancy of the land, even the slender hold that they had under the lease arrangements under Decree No. 8, they began to think about the future in a positive way. One of our inquiries, exploring the thinking about the future, was about the future of their children. "What future do you see here for your children? Are there any provisions for taking them into the asentamientos, or cooperatives?" There was a wide range of responses to this question. The asentamientos and the cooperative farms growing major cash crops--cotton, rice, and cane--had the most positive response. But more than a third of the associations either reported no plans, or an unqualified no. There were 5 unqualified "no" responses, to 4 unqualified "yes" responses.

Table 38. Responses to Question: Do You Have Plans to Take Your Sons into the Asentamiento or Cooperative?

Types of Systems of Economy	No. of Asso- ciation- tions	Average Area of Cultivable Land per Family (mnz.)	Yes		Yes, at a Certain Age They Will Be Taken to the Fields		Yes, Only If as a Last Resort		No Plans	Have Thought About It
			Yes	ternative	Yes	Only	Yes	No		
<b>Asentamientos:</b>										
subsistence agriculture	8	2.8			1		2	1	2	2
growing minor cash crops	9	3.8			3		1	1	4	
growing major cash crops	14	6.1	1	3	1		2	1	3	3
<b>Cooperatives:</b>										
growing major cash crops	12	9.9	3		3		1	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

IV. Settlers' Appraisal of Their New Life on Asentamientos and Cooperatives

The recent agrarian reforms of Honduras have the avowed public purposes of using previously under-employed labor on previously under-utilized land to increase agricultural production in ways which permit the settlers to reach income levels that would assure their economic and social well-being. Thus, an enhancement of the quality of life of the campesinos is one of the several purposes of these programs. In our visits with the campesinos on these settlement projects we sought, by open-ended questions leaving the respondents free to express their own thinking, to find out, if possible, whether their outlook on life had been changed by the privileges of settling on the land and how they appraised their current situation and prospects.

A. Principal Concerns about Present Situations and Prospects

The issue that concerned these people more frequently than any other was that of securing credits or repaying the loans they already have (see Table 39). This is easy to understand. These folks were mostly very poor people, armed with only their acquired skills and a few hand tools; once land was allotted to them they had to prepare the land--in most instances by clearing natural pasture land--and grow their crops. The loans to groups have enabled them to pay themselves wages while they made a crop, and on

Table 39. Summary of Reported Principal Concerns About Present Situation and Prospects for Future, Members of Asentamientos and Cooperatives

1) Concerns about land:		26
a) Hope they can keep the land	10	
b) Need more land	8	
c) Need better land	6	
d) Need their own private land	2	
2) Concerns about credit and debts:		31
a) Need loans:		20
i) for general credit	11	
ii) to buy cattle	3	
iii) to buy machinery and equipment	3	
iv) to establish irrigation	2	
v) to plant cashews	1	
b) Worried about repayment of loans		11
3) Concerns about living:		13
a) Need better housing	10	
b) Concern for future of children	3	
4) Need improved community facilities:		24
a) Schools, or better schools	8	
b) Health centers	8	
c) Better access roads	5	
d) Pure drinking water	3	
5) Need better group effort		7

most of the settlements to hire machines in ways which makes the cultivation of major crops into mechanized farming.

They worry about whether they will be able to secure loans to meet expenses, to buy cattle or equipment, or to plant permanent crops. But about one-fourth of them, in 11 cases out of 43, worry about whether they can repay the loans they have already received. This concern about loans quite obviously assumes that they have land to farm. About a fourth of them (10 out of 43) expressed the hope that they would be able to keep the land. But several were anxious to get more land or better land than they have. This too is quite understandable considering the great variation in both the amount and the quality of land which the several groups received, as shown in Table 33 above. Some have experienced total crop failure.

The houses are little more than simple shelters and now that these people can face the future thoughtfully, from a position of some security,

they worry about the kind of houses their families live in. There is widespread concern about the adequacy of community facilities--schools, health centers, access roads, and pure water. About one-sixth of them (7 out of 43) emphasize a need for better ways of working together.

None of these concerns are surprising. But they signify, in our judgment, that these people, having achieved this much access to opportunities, now look to the future and are concerned about how they and their families can realize a better life.

**B. Changes in Outlook on Life**

It was the lack of land which led these people to form groups and search out "affectable" land. Having been accepted by INA as qualified claimants and assigned a tract of land, it is only natural that they would emphasize the advantages they now enjoy in having secure possession of some land (see Table 40).

Table 40. Summary of Reported Changes in Outlook on Life by Members of Asentamientos and Cooperatives

	<u>Number of Group Emphasizing</u>
1) Have advantages of secure possession of land	22
a) With land they have secure opportunities to work	10
b) Escape from insecurity and slavery of wage employment	6
c) Life is more tranquil	4
d) With independence can learn new practices	2
2) Have advantages of working together in group and community	11
a) Groups give support	7
b) Have support of community effort	4
3) Have prospects for better income	9
4) Can now get credit and better technical assistance	3
5) Can now work with machines	1
6) Life has not changed--crops have failed	2

Secure possession of land means also security of employment, within the limits of the productive potential of the land. To some degree they have escaped from uncertainty of employment into a more tranquil existence.

Some expressed deep relief at being freed from the slavery of working as farm or ranch hands. One-half of the respondents emphasized the new security on the land as affecting major changes in their outlook on life.

The working together in groups has also opened up new vistas of possibilities, as reported by a fourth of them. Group efforts are not new to them, and, as we noted above from the research of Robert White and associates, campesinos formed what were referred to as "alliances of interdependence" in achieving a minimization of risks in their struggles to survive. However, the predominance of the practice of "working collectively" has also been a source of contention on these settlements. Of the 43 settlements included in this analysis, there were "drop-outs" or defections on 40 of them from the original group which was allotted the land. The reason most frequently cited--in 16 cases--was that the "drop-out" either didn't want to work collectively (13) or that they left because they did not get their own (private plots of) land.<sup>1</sup>

But the predominant outlook of these settlers was reported as being hopeful. Among the other advantages they see in their future are the enhanced opportunities for credit and technical assistance, and generally enhanced prospects for a "better income." On 2 of the asentamientos, they reported that their lives had not been changed by being allotted land since their crops had failed (Table 40).

Admittedly none of these reports of views and attitudes are more than merely suggestive, yet as one heard these campesinos relate their stories, one got an impression of heightened hopes and expectations. These people see themselves as now having at least a chance to achieve something, to be somebody. As one articulate spokesman for a group who had worked as day laborers on a ranch before getting their land described the change in outlook: "Before, we did not know from one day to the next, let alone from for one week or one year ahead, whether we would have employment. On pay day we frequently took the money and got drunk. Before, nobody came to see us to ask us any questions, as you are now doing. Now we worry about the future of our families such as how we can get a school with six grades instead of two. Now that we have the land we are somebody."

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1. In 13 of the remaining 24 cases reporting defections, the withdrawals were reported as having been made voluntarily. This does not preclude withdrawing because of an objection to working collectively.

CHAPTER 7. TENURE AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUS IN AGRICULTURE:  
A COMPARATIVE VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE  
OF THE MONJARÁS HOUSEHOLDS

The variety of experiences with agrarian reform programs in the Monjarás community, together with the operation of a sugar factory as major employer, seemed to provide an unusual opportunity to get a comparative view of the level and achievements of family living which corresponded with participation in the different kinds of economic organizations: wage employment in the sugar factory; small-scale individual farming; participation in an asentamiento, and in the cooperative farms. Participants in the different kinds of economic endeavors live more or less side by side in the town of Monjarás.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, it was decided that interviews by a woman of the women in the households--wives and mothers--might provide some common ground for comparison of the way in which the participation in the various kinds of economic organization influenced the quality of family living.

I. Selecting the Sample

Acting on this general idea, a schedule was designed for household interviews, with a correlative decision to interview 20 wives each of men who were employed in agriculture in four different ways: as wage laborers by the sugar factory, as small farmers, as members of asentamientos, and as members of farm cooperatives. The latter types of organization have been sponsored by INA since 1962; some of the small farmers living in Monjarás have land which was distributed under the program of distribution of land to small farmers in the Monjarás-Buena Vista Lotification of 1959-62; the sugar factory is a major employer and might be considered to represent employment in agriculture under a program of agricultural development through an industrial approach to rural development.

Since we were interested in comparing participation or employment in four alternative types of economic organization in agriculture, rather than a study of the Monjarás community as such, ways had to be devised to select 20 families for interview in each of the four kinds of organization. The basic procedure, after the prospective interviewer had become acquainted in a general way with the community, was to go to informed and interested persons, especially those serving in a public role, as a public health worker who knew the women quite well, and the patronage, who was himself a small farmer. From these persons, and through their assistance, a list was drawn up of households they considered to be representative of the small farmers and the sugar factory laborers who lived in Monjarás. By the same method the neighborhoods in which members of the different

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1. A substantial number of the members of asentamientos and cooperative farms live in the same houses which they occupied before joining one of the asentamientos or cooperatives.

asentamientos and cooperatives lived were identified. In interviewing members of these latter organizations the decision was made to spread the interviews widely, interviewing no more than five members of any asentamiento or cooperative.<sup>2</sup>

## II. The Small Farmer Group

All of the small farmers interviewed were either full owners of the land they farmed, or part owners, i.e., they owned some land and rented some. The tenure status of these small farmers and the manner in which their land was acquired are covered in Table 41.

Table 41. Tenure Status of Small Farmers in Village of Monjarás  
(N = 20)

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1) Number of full owners		17
a) How land was acquired:		
i) wife doesn't know	2	
ii) all purchased	6	
iii) received land through distribution of Monjarás-Buena Vista Lotification	5	
iv) by inheritance	2	
v) bought part and inherited part	2	
2) Part owners		3
a) How land was acquired:		
i) inherited part, rents part	2	
ii) bought part, rents part	1	
		20

---

## III. The Occupational Background of the Laborers, Asentados, and Members of Cooperatives

The background or previous occupations of the members of the three groups--sugar factory workers, members of asentamientos, and cooperatives--are quite similar. Most of them had been jornaleros, wage laborers in agriculture (Table 42). Three had been renters; three had been small farmers. The remainder worked in a variety of specialized jobs--from servants to chauffeurs.

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2. Some of these interviews were taken at the new residences of the members of asentamientos who have moved a short distance from Monjarás and are building houses on the new sites.

Table 42. Previous Occupation of Sugar Factory Workers, and Members of Asentamientos and Cooperative Farms: Household Survey, Monjarás

Previous Occupation	Sugar Factory Workers	Members of:	
		Asentamientos	Cooperatives
Jornaleros--wage laborers in ag.	15	15	14 <sup>a</sup>
Combined Jornalero and renter			2
Renter	2		1
Small farmer			3
Fisherman		1	
Combined hired laborer and growing own milpa	1		
Sugar factory worker			1
Other specialized tasks	2 <sup>b</sup>	2 <sup>c</sup>	1
Total	20	18 <sup>d</sup>	22 <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Includes one jornalero who also worked as mozo (servant of hacienda).

<sup>b</sup>One was a fungicide applicator for a banana company; one a driver--chauffeur.

<sup>c</sup>One sold lottery tickets; one was a mozo.

<sup>d</sup>Through some initially mistaken identities, interviews were held of 22 cooperative members and only 18 asentados.

IV. Length of Time in Present Status: Wage Laborers and Members of Asentamientos and Cooperatives

Most of the members of the cooperatives and the sugar factory workers have been in their present occupations 5 years or more (Table 43). The asentamientos are newly organized, 1972 being the oldest. A second sugar factory is being established in the Monjarás community, and some of the recently employed sugar factory workers may actually be working for this new factory.

One of the problems confronting the sugar factory workers is that employment is seasonal. Only 2 of the 20 employees work 12 months a year; these 2 are machinist and tractor driver, respectively. Most of these employees work 5 to 7 months a year, as the following tabulation indicates in more detail.

<u>No. Employed</u>	<u>Months a Year</u>
2	12
2	7
11	6
2	5
3	2 (or for indefinite terms)

Table 43. Length of Time in Present Occupations:  
Three Groups, Household Survey, Monjarás

	Sugar Factory Workers	Members of:	
		Asentamientos	Cooperatives
1 year of less	3	10	
2 years <sup>a</sup>	1	2	1
3 years	1	6	2
4 years	2		2
5 years	3		6
6 years	2		8
7 years	8		3
Total Number	20	18	22

<sup>a</sup>Since the interviews were all held in January and February 1975, we consider 1973 to be the second year back, and correspondingly for earlier years.

V. Changes in Quality of Living Resulting from the Achievement of Their Present Status as Sugar Factory Wage Laborers and Members of Asentamientos and Cooperatives

The wage laborers did not report much sense of improvement in their lives as a result of getting employment with the sugar factory. The seasonal employment leaves them without work much of the year; three-fourths of them work six months a year or less. Two-thirds of those for whom we have responses report that this employment in comparison with previous employments had not made any difference in the way they lived (the going rate of wages for laborers at the sugar factory was reported to be 3 Lempiras per day; this is evidently above the general level of wages in the community). One-third of the wives responding to the question said that they did have better income and steadier employment at least during the time the men worked. Even so, 11 out of 20 of these laborers reported owning their own houses.

The response of the wives of the members of the asentamientos depended very much of the length of time that they had belonged to the asentamientos.

Ten out of 18 of these families (Table 43) reported joining the asentamientos in 1974. Of these 10, 6 reported that they had experienced no change in their lives; 2 of these 6 reported that nothing had been sold by the asentamiento.

Four out of 10 of the 1974 members of asentamientos reported improvements. One said that she could now have chickens; another reported that life was more tranquil, and that they now have their own corn; 2 reported that now they could have a molino (a hand mill to grind corn for tortillas). These same two women also appreciated having their own corn and better water supply. One of them said also that now she could have dishes and chairs.

The 8 women whose husbands had joined the asentamientos in 1972-73 reported more substantial changes: 3 reported that now they had their own house; 3 expressed appreciation for having land to grow their own corn and have daily work; one said that with a more secure job they ate better; the other reported that now they have better clothes and eat better.

The response of the wives of the members of the cooperative farms was mostly very favorable; none had joined later than 1973, and some as early as 1968 (Table 43). Of the 22, only 1 reported no change in their lives; the other 21 all reported that there had been improvements in the way they lived.

These responses are tabulated and summarized slightly in Table 44. In each instance, the responses as tabulated report the order in which the housewife respondent listed the benefits which they now enjoy. They most appreciate having their own house, or a better house. Six emphasized that they ate better and had better clothes, or medical facilities. Seven emphasized their more secure status and better economic conditions. One emphasized that the people worked better in a group; another appreciated that they were working for themselves. One emphasized that now that they live better she gets along better with her husband.

## VI. Family Characteristics of These Groups

Since these household interviews were conducted with the wife and mother, or mistress of the household, the basic age data are of the wife. By this criterion, the small farmers and the wage laborers are the older groups--with 80 percent of the wives of the wage-workers and 90 percent of the wives of the small farmers being 30 years old or more (Table 45). By contrast, about two-thirds of the wives of the members of cooperative farms and asentamientos are under 30 years of age.

Virtually all of the families in all four groups send their children to school. Only 2 families with children of school age reported not sending

Table 44. Tabulation of Answers to Questions of Whether Membership in Cooperative Had Made any Difference in the Lives of the Family, Household Survey, Monjarás

Total number of responders	22
No difference	1
Improvements in way the family lives	21
Reasons as given for improvements:	
1) Have own house	2
2) Have own house and better food	1
3) Have land and own house	1
4) Have better houses--total no.	3
a) and are less poor	1
b) and eat better	1
c) and have better food and clothing	1
5) Eat better food--total no.	4
a) and have better medical facilities	2
b) and have better clothing	1
c) and have more money	1
6) Live better and get along better with my husband	1
7) More secure; have permanent work	3
8) More secure income; can buy food on credit at coop.	1
9) Better economic conditions generally	3
10) Work better in groups	1
11) Work for ourselves	1

their children to school: one a member of a cooperative and one family a member of an asentamiento.<sup>3</sup>

When the family size is considered in terms of living children per mother the families of the employees of the sugar factory are the smallest; this is the case for all age groupings of all the occupational groups,

3. It may be noted that our information is not completely adequate on this point, since we failed to get the individual ages of children. We therefore cannot be certain about the number of children of school age. More precisely stated, there are only two cases of women between the ages of 25 and 45 who had children who reported sending none of their children to school.

Table 45. Age Distribution of Mothers and Number of Children per Mother by Age Groups and by Occupations: Household Survey, Monjarás

	No. of Households	Age Distribution, Mothers				Average No. of Living Children:				Percent of Women:	
		Under 20	20-29	30-39	40 and Over	Under 20	20-29	30-39	40 and Over	Under 30	Over 30
Small farms	20		2	7	11	3	4.1	6.4		10	90
Cooperative farms	22	2	12	5	3	1	2.8	5.4	6.7	64	36
Asentamientos	18	2	10	5	1	5	2.7	7.0	5.0	67	33
Laborers	20		4	9	7		1.5	4.4	4.4	20	80

except for one class--the wives of small farmers age 30-39 years had the smallest families, 4.1 children per mother. The wives of the wage workers of this same age had 4.4 children per mother. Although the women whose husbands are small farmers, members of asentamientos or cooperatives have relatively large families with 5 to 7 living children per mother for women over 30 years of age (except for the 30-year-old group of the wives of small farmers, as noted), for the laborers at the sugar factory there are fewer living children per mother, with 4.4 living children per mother for women over 30.

#### VII. Incidence of Death Among Children

At least a part of the explanation for the smaller families of sugar factory workers is evidently to be explained by the relatively high death rates for infants and children (Table 46). In the interviews each woman was asked both about the number of living children, and whether any of their children had died, and if so at what age and of what disease. In the responses at least some, and probably most, of the women also reported the number of miscarriages. Of these reported deaths, two-thirds of the total are accounted for by deaths of infants under one year of age. The incidence of deaths at this age is especially heavy among the families of the agricultural laborers. The 27 deaths of children (including 2 miscarriages) are more than one-third of the number of living children. Taking deaths from all causes and all ages (only 2 of the children over 5 years of age), the deaths of the children of the sugar factory workers represent 26 percent of all the children borne by these mothers. The death loss rate is twice as high as for the other three groups of families combined.

Table 46. Number of Children Living and Dead per Mother, Classified by Age of Mother and Occupational Status of Husband

	No. of Households	No. of Living Children	Deaths of Children, Including Miscarriages			Total No. of Deaths as Percent of Total Living or Dead
			Miscarriages	Under 1 Yr.	5 to 10 Yrs.	
<b>Agricultural Laborers</b>						
Wife under 20 yrs.						
20-29 yrs.	4	6	1	2		3
30-39 yrs.	9	40	1	10	4	15
40 yrs. and over	7	31		4	3	9
Total and Av.	20	76	2	16	7	27
<b>Asentamientos</b>						
Wife under 20 yrs.	2	1				
20-29 yrs.	10	27		4		4
30-39 yrs.	5	35		3		3
40 yrs. and over	1	5				
Total and Av.	18	68		7		7
<b>Cooperatives</b>						
Wife under 20 yrs.	2	2				
20-29 yrs.	12	34	2	4		6
30-39 yrs.	5	27	4	5		9
Over 40 yrs.	3	20		1	1	2
Total and Av.	22	83	6	10	1	17
<b>Small Farmers</b>						
Wife under 20 yrs.						
20-29 yrs.	2	6			1	1
30-39 yrs.	7	29	1	2		3
40 yrs. and over	11	70	1	9	1	11
Total and Av.	20	105	7	11	2	15

The most common of the reported causes of deaths among infants were tetanus and gastroenteritis (Table 47). Death from these diseases was most frequent among the laborers working for the sugar factory. Although these households are only one-fourth of our total sample, they reported more than half of the deaths from these diseases.

Table 47. Reported Causes of Death of Children, by Occupational Groups, Household Survey, Monjarás

Type of Illness	Laborers Sugar Factory	Member Asenta- mientos	Member Cooper- atives	Small Farmers	Total
<u>Infants under 1 yr.</u>					
Gastroentiritis	7		2	1	10
Tetanus	7	2	3	2	14
Bronchitis	2	1			3
Premature birth				4	4
Polio				1	1
Cause not known or not reported	2	2	4	1	9
<u>Children 1-10</u>					
Malaria	2			2	4
Gastroentiritis	1		1	1	3
Polio				1	1
Cause not known or not reported	2		1		3

The most frequent cause of death among children 1 to 10 years of age was malaria, with 4 deaths, and 3 from gastroentiritis. There was one death from polio reported among infants, and one among children 1-10 years old. Both of these deaths occurred in the families of small farmers.

#### VIII. Milk Consumption by Children

One question asked of the mothers was whether the children were given milk and if so how often. The responses to these questions are summarized in Table 48. There is a striking contrast among these groups. The children in the households of sugar factory workers and the members of the asentamientos almost never have milk. By contrast, for most of the households of members of the cooperatives and the small farmers, the children were reported to have milk daily.<sup>4</sup>

4. The responses to this question probably have some indicative value, especially of intent and appreciation of the values of milk for children, but they probably should not be taken as literally accurate. At the least, the consumption of milk daily is likely to be seasonally limited.

Table 48. Reported Frequency of Giving Milk to Children by Occupational Groups, Household Survey, Monjarás

Frequency with Which Milk Is Given to Children	Laborers Sugar Factory	Member Asentamientos	Member Cooperatives	Small Farmers
Daily <sup>a</sup>	2		17	19
Twice a week	1			
Once a week	1	1		
Twice a month		1		
Three times a month		1		
Never	13	13	3	
No children in household	3	2	2	1
Total	20	18	22	20

<sup>a</sup>Sometimes only to small children.

#### IX. Some Indexes of Comparative Welfare

We conclude this examination of the evidence regarding the relative conditions and prospects of the four groups of people working in agriculture in the Monjarás community by reference to comparative data on housing. In terms of averages the small farmers enjoy much more ample housing than the other three groups--with twice as many rooms per house as the others. The obverse of this relationship is that the families of the small farmers have fewer than one-half as many persons per room as do the wage laborers and members of the asentamientos. The housing situation of members of the cooperative farms is more nearly comparable to that of the small farmers and suggests why improved and more secure housing was one of the realized improvements in the way of living that the members have enjoyed through participation in the cooperative.

We have tabulated the average number of rooms per house, and the number of persons per room living in the house by age groups of the respondent wives, as well as by the major occupational groupings. In this way, one may get some indication of the change that occurs to a family over a number of years. Only the small farmers have houses that are larger as the age of the housewife increases. In this group there is something of a steady progression from 3 rooms per house for women in their 20s to 3.8 rooms per house for women over 40. For these families too the number of persons per room gradually increases from 1.5 persons per room to 2.2 persons in families where the wife and mother are over 40.

Table 49. Persons per House and Persons per Room, Living in House,  
by Age of Wife and Occupational Status of Husband,  
Household Survey, Monjarás

Age of Wife	Rooms per House:				Persons per Room in Household:			
	Farm Laborers	Asenta- mientos	Cooper- atives <sup>a</sup>	Small Farmers	Farm Laborers	Asenta- mientos	Cooper- atives <sup>a</sup>	Small Farmers
Under 20		1.5	1.0			2.3	3.0	
20-29	1.8	1.1	1.9	3.0	4.6	4.8	3.1	1.5
30-39	1.2	1.8	1.8	3.3	5.8	5.6	4.0	2.1
40 and over	1.7	1.0	2.3	3.8	3.1	5.0	2.7	2.2
Average	1.5	1.3	1.8	3.6	4.4	4.8	3.3	2.1

<sup>a</sup>Based on information from 18 households; information incomplete for 4 households.

## PART THREE. SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATIONS

### CHAPTER 8. POLICY ISSUES IMPLIED IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF HONDURAN AGRICULTURE THROUGH AGRARIAN REFORM

#### I. Introduction

In this concluding section we attempt to state some of the policy issues implicit in programs for the reconstruction and development of Honduran agriculture through agrarian reform. We emphasize the problems of reconstruction and development partly because these aspects are frequently neglected or treated in doctrinaire fashion in reform programs which concentrate upon the acquisition of large landholdings and the righting of old wrongs; partly because the ultimate test of any agrarian reform program must be in the effectiveness and performance of the reconstructed system rather than in the elimination of the defects of the old order; and partly because when one studies the experiences with agrarian reforms in Honduras, as we have been doing for this past year, it is the experience with reconstruction and development with which one is concerned.

This is not to minimize in the least the difficulties which an agrarian reform program in Honduras confronts in the acquisition of land for distribution to settlers, but the issues of acquisition are of a different order than those of reconstruction. Here we would note only that when one views the new Agrarian Reform Law in its entirety it is not an attack on private ownership of farm land as such--the provision for the permissible "retained" area is clear evidence on this point; rather, it is implicit in this Law that the farm land to be retained in private ownership must not be hoarded, but must be used in ways which meet the criteria for the "social function of property." It is also implicit in the Law that the ceiling on holdings is to limit the size of land ownership to that sufficient to provide a base for efficient-sized farms to be operated by the owners. This would also rule out investments in land above the size of farms essential for efficiency.

A thorough-going socialist or communist land reform program takes all agricultural land, for private ownership of such land is viewed as having no positive social function. But the agrarian reform programs so far adopted in Honduras, as we read the record, have been attempts to reduce somewhat the inequality of privilege and opportunity which has been inherited from the past--and which is now so severe as to stifle development and leave great numbers of rural people in dire poverty and threaten the stability of public order.

#### II. The Processes of Agricultural Development

Agricultural development during this century over much of the less developed world has concentrated upon improvements in the production of export crops, leaving the production of food crops to traditional ways of

farming. This has been due in part to the fact that the less developed countries have hot climates and agricultural modernization has concentrated upon the production of "exotic" crops, frequently in enclaves, for export to the countries of the temperate zone; whereas in Europe, Japan, the northern USA, and Canada the modernization of agriculture was based very largely upon the increased production of indigenous food crops with the surplus production, if any, available for export. All over the less developed world the need to modernize the traditional food crop economies is now becoming increasingly urgent, for the historic policies of country after country have left the increasing populations of these countries dependent upon a stagnant agriculture for their food supplies. Honduras is caught in this predicament, and agrarian reform programs should give support to the modernization of the food-producing economy.

In formulating policies for agricultural development a distinction needs to be drawn between the economic growth of agriculture and the development of agriculture. The former--economic growth of agriculture--is both more easily defined and more easily programmed than the development of agriculture, but the outcomes are likely to be very different in the lives of the farm people. Economic growth is measurable in terms of inputs and outputs, and within limits even in physical terms. The way to achieve economic growth is to add needed inputs to the production process--mechanization, modern technology, fertilizer, pesticides, fungicides, hybridized seed--and the achievement of market and credit orientations of the farms as economic firms. This approach if pursued systematically runs the risk, in fact it is almost certain, of treating cultivators as mere labor power--as being essentially a part of the machinery or the livestock of the concern. Honduras needs more than an array of mindless campesinos if it is to become a modern economy.

It should be possible to provide secure economic opportunities in farming to enough campesinos to enable them, and especially their children, to serve as entrepreneurs and an expanded middle class, which is so essential to national economic development. In this respect the Agrarian Reform Law No. 170 seems particularly short-sighted in the provision that "the contributions of the members of the enterprise shall consist essentially of personal work." Even the cooperative farms need to be organized so as to stimulate the growth of the campesino's capacity for self-willed and responsible conduct. In fact, the campesinos, at least the better of them, already have such capacities, as judged by the people whom we interviewed, and this talent should be nurtured and given an opportunity to grow. Thus the development of agriculture must include but go beyond the scope of economic growth, for it must be concerned not only with material output achieved at acceptable cost-return ratios, but also with the welfare, the status, and the dignity of farm people, and this entails changes in the structure of opportunities. In short, agricultural development is concerned with the development of the people and improvement in their economic and social well-being as well as with economic growth as measured in increments of production. Clearly Agrarian Reform Law No. 170 is concerned with the development of the people and the modification of the structure of opportunities as well as with economic growth.

Traditional agriculture is what economists call a two-factor economy--it is labor applied to land--or more precisely it is the effort and energies of man used in the exploitation of the natural fertility of the soil (including such fertility as is regenerated through the bush fallow of land left to rest after a period of cultivation). Agricultural development takes hold in a country by modifying this traditional system. Thus the two bases or foundations of agriculture as traditionally practiced in Honduras are: (a) land as the embodiment of opportunities; and (b) the energies and abilities of the people who work the land. These two aspects of farm economy are reciprocally inter-related in the operation and management of farms, but they are improved by different means. The dimensions of opportunities on the land are expanded by investment in land and community improvements, including irrigation, and are exploited more fully by improved cultural and cropping practices, including the adoption of improved varieties of crops, fertilization (if the cost-return ratios warrant), and so on. The traditional abilities of farmers are improved through education and example, but especially they are developed through responsible uses of abilities and by access to secure and rewarding opportunities upon which to exercise and develop their abilities. It is this challenge to improve and develop the abilities of traditional farmers that agricultural development through agrarian reform must somehow meet--and which is at the same time the great opportunity of an agrarian reform program in Honduras. If an agricultural development program denigrates the traditional skills of farm people, assumes that the people are "just what they are," and neglects what "they might become" through responsible self-willed conduct, programs may then concentrate on mechanization and the establishment of large-scale farms. But in so doing the potential abilities of people may be lost, at great social cost.

One of the interesting and hopeful aspects of the emphasis upon cooperatives in the agrarian reform programs is that through cooperative efforts the latent abilities of the farmers may grow, at least in the early years of development. That depends, of course, on how the cooperatives are organized, and the kind of secure and differentiated roles that the members have. Historically there has been a great deal of cooperative effort in Honduras in the survival type of economies which farm people have worked out. As one studies the dynamics of land settlements, both historically and under the agrarian reform program of Honduras,<sup>1</sup> the processes of agricultural development on the human side have been based very largely upon the formation of groups of settlers--relatives, neighbors and friends--who together sought out available land and established farms and communities. In such settlements the farmers no doubt did what they knew how to do--cultivate the land in the traditional manner. Their way of adjusting to high risks of crop failure, ill health, etc., was to form alliances for sharing among themselves so that those temporarily without food would be assisted by the more fortunate or more industrious. Essentially these same processes of settlement which prevailed historically operated under Decree No. 8 in 1973 and 1974. However, these historic

1. See Sections III, IV, V of Chapter 3 *infra*.

land settlement processes have seemingly come to an end under Law No. 170, for not only is the invasion of private land forbidden henceforth, but the Law provides that the acquisition of land and its distribution to settlers will come about by means of the administrative machinery of a public agency for identifying and acquiring land which is surplus above calculated ceilings, the requisitioning of land that is being hoarded in sterile investment, and whatever land there is still in the public domain which is suitable for farming. Through such administrative procedures for the allocation of land it should be possible to avoid the marked inequalities between and among settlements in the land allotments which the settlers received in the hectic days of agrarian reform under Decree No. 8. Among the asentamientos which we studied in southern Honduras, those on the poorest land secured as a group of 8 asentamientos only 2.8 manzanas of cultivable land per family, while the members of the asentamientos on the best land--that suitable for cotton, rice, or cane--received an average of 6.1 manzanas of land per family. Members of the cooperative farms established by INA before Decree No. 8 also on cotton and rice land received on the average almost 10 manzanas of cultivable land per family (Table 33).

Even so, it would seem worthwhile as the agrarian reform program moves forward on programs for the distribution of land to campesinos to incorporate into the program some method of group self-selection and organization such as functioned under Decree No. 8, to provide a social matrix within which individual settler families can continue the social practices of mutual support, and especially to ensure that the campesinos will enter into settlement projects acting upon their own volition. For it should be remembered that the needs for agricultural development in Honduras can be met only by the kind of willing and energetic participation of campesinos which lift these people from passive endurance of a hazardous survival to the responsible and venturesome conduct of a self-willed people.

When viewed from the perspective of the farmer now engaged in traditional farming, the process of agricultural development can be considered as having two stages: the first stage is obtaining a secure opportunity to grow their own food crops. The lack of even this opportunity was the principal driving force in the invasions of land which have occurred in Honduras over the last several years. Through the programs of INA a few thousand Honduran campesinos have secured the minimum opportunity--a chance to grow their own food. Virtually all the settlers whom we interviewed both under the INA programs and the farm allotment programs which preceded them plant their own milpa. That is, these people continue to practice the self-subsistence agriculture as they and their ancestors have done for centuries. This, in our judgment, is commendable, and these self-subsistence economies are worthy of major improvements--as subsistence economies. Whether or not the farmers can actually achieve more than this depends partly on their own efforts, but also such progress depends upon the quality and extent of land they have received, for the second stage of agricultural development involves market orientation--a production of surplus above family consumption.

As every farmer knows, economic progress is much easier, is even made possible by having enough good land to farm. Where these farm settlements did not get good land, and cannot get good land in sufficient

quantity to engage in the recognized conventional cash crop farming characteristic of their area, they will have to adapt, have to be helped to devise some other kind of farming, or to remain subsistence farmers--hopefully with some supplementary kinds of employment.

### III. What Kinds of Farms: Individual, Cooperative, or Something in Between?

The first agrarian reform programs in Honduras, undertaken in the late 1950s and early 1960s, were designed to establish family, or small, farms. By the late 1960s and early 1970s the emphasis in the agrarian reform programs had shifted to the establishment of cooperative farms. As the agrarian reform program is being reorganized under the new Law 170, it would seem appropriate to consider anew the questions regarding the kinds of farming systems which should be promoted in the years ahead.

The general question for public policy in Honduras is: what kinds of farming systems are most likely to give strongest support to agricultural development under the differing conditions of soil and climate which occur in Honduras? The variations are so great that it is to be presumed that among the several different kinds of farms which are possible some are better adapted than others to particular situations. The policy of INA regarding the kinds of farms to be promoted should be consistent with the overall requirements for agricultural development of Honduras.

In our research efforts in southern Honduras we analyzed the experiences with different kinds of farms which had been established through agrarian reform programs, as far as our time and the experiences of settlers permitted. The oldest farm settlement scheme in southern Honduras is the Monjarás-Buena Vista Lotification, a small farmer scheme near Monjarás; we included this area in our study. We also interviewed the leaders or officers on approximately 60 percent of the cooperative farms in southern Honduras which were organized before the issuance of Decree No. 8 in December 1972; and we analyzed the experiences of a sample of the 31 asentamientos organized under Decree No. 8. Although we did not cover fully in this sampling the range of experience in Honduras, we do have a considerable variety.

The small farms were, of course, organized as individual family units. Among the 43 cooperatives and asentamientos studied intensively the members on 4 of these asentamientos were also farming in wholly individual fashion--all of the crop land was assigned to individual families. The members of 11 of the asentamientos were engaged in mixed farming, with two kinds of mixtures: on 2 of them the crop land was all allotted to individual families, but they were attempting to start growing cattle on a group basis; on the other 9 the crop land was farmed partly by individual families and partly on a group or communitarian basis, with one of these groups growing cattle communally. The remaining 28 worked as group or cooperative farms--all of the 12 cooperatives analyzed and 16 of the asentamientos organized under Decree No. 8. We report the details of this analysis in the Research Report (Part II, Chapters 2-7, above); in this statement on policy we shall build on this analysis but also deal with some organizational questions in more general terms.

A. Individual Farms

The individual farms, particularly the small-scale individual farms, are the simplest kind of farm economy yet devised, particularly where the farm family owns and operates the farm--as is the case in the Monjarás-Buena Vista project area. Furthermore, such farms are close to the heart of both the experience and the aspirations of Honduran campesinos. The head of the family is the head of the firm, the entrepreneur, and the family both owns the land and provides most of the labor force.

The small farmers receiving land through the Monjarás-Buena Vista Lotification have title to their lands under a dominio pleno type of property. Land so held can be inherited but not sold, although the improvements may be sold to another party by consent of public authorities, in this case INA. Although the land so held cannot be mortgaged as security for a loan, since it is unalienable, none of the farmers interviewed complained about this point. They deeply appreciate the security of having their own land. The renting of land has also been frowned upon, and under Law 170 is declared to be an illegal practice (as we read the law). This means that the area of a farm in this project is fixed--at 10 hectares--and cannot be expanded or contracted with changes in the family labor capacity. (In the U.S. where farm land is held under fee simple ownership, it is common practice for a farm family to rent land of neighbors as the sons grow up who are interested in farming, with the frequently offsetting practice of farmers renting out some of their land as the farmer ages, particularly if he is farming alone.)

This kind of farm is not looked upon with favor as a model for agrarian reform settlements, for reasons not wholly clear to us, but apparently including the attitudes that: modernization of agriculture requires large-scale mechanization, with strong preferences for export crops; these family farms are too small to modernize; the farmers are not interested in adapting new methods of farming, but are interested only in growing "corn and beans"; and so on.

Perhaps so, but our study of the small farms in the Monjarás community did not bear this out. To be sure, corn and sorghum is their major enterprise, but excepting the one-third who suffered the most severe damage from the weather (including the flooding associated with Hurricane Fifi) some corn was sold. On three-fourths of the farms both production and consumption was reported; of total product, three-fourths was reported sold and one-fourth consumed. About one-half of the farms reported growing cash crops other than corn or sorghum. Furthermore, most of these farmers so enjoy their farming, with the independence and security they have, that they wish their sons to farm. This is not to say that these farmers have an idyllic existence, but that they do have the kind of interests and devotion to hard work which can serve as a foundation for agricultural development. In fact, farms such as these meet the primary criterion laid down in Article 4, Law 170: "For the purposes of the present law, it should be understood that the Agrarian Reform proposes to unite in one person the three attributes of owner, entrepreneur and worker."

## 8. Kinds of Cooperation in Farming

At least three modifications of this system of individual farms or alternative kinds of economic organization of farming are worthy of consideration in an agrarian reform program. Much depends upon what crop is being grown, and whether there are any genuine economies of scale in production. (1) There are crops which can and should be grown in an industrialized type of farming; it is here that the strongest case can be made for group farming. This is the case where the technology is complicated or sophisticated; where economies of scale are important; and where specialization and division of labor is both possible and productive. (2) It is also possible, as has occurred in a number of countries, that farming be organized with a combination of small holdings worked individually, and the remainder of the land, even the greater part of it, worked collectively, with analogous ownership of crops. (3) There are many kinds of cooperation in farming which entail the cooperative efforts of individuals working together on those aspects of farming in which group effort is rewarding, but with the final responsibilities and most of the initiative and decision-making left to individual farmers who own the crops grown on their land.

1. Cooperative Associations of Independent Farmers. To begin with the simplest kind of cooperative effort--which is the most common kind of farmer cooperation practiced today, at least in the developed economies--independent farmers join cooperatives to do together those things which they cannot do, or cannot do so well, individually, such as securing credit, marketing of products, buying fertilizer or other supplies, and (less frequently) owning machinery which is too expensive for individual farmers. An independent farmer joining in any such cooperative activities incurs certain obligations as well as the correlative advantages. If credit is secured cooperatively, each farmer may be required to buy stock in the cooperative association equal to, say, 5 percent (a common figure) of his loan. He is responsible for paying his own debts: if his neighbors default on their loans his stock may be forfeited, but his losses for other farmers' defaults are limited under such arrangements to 5 percent of his capacity to borrow from the association. If the cooperative is a marketing cooperative, the members agree that they will patronize the cooperative--selling their crops through the coop or buying their supplies through the association. If someone refuses to do so, and sells or buys outside the coop, he is liable for "liquidated damages" equivalent to the loss incurred by the cooperative through the loss of the business of the particular farm.

In such ways the independent farmer remains independent while realizing the advantages of group action. The economic and legal status of the individual farmer is safeguarded--he cannot be financially ruined by dishonest officers of the cooperative--and his survival and economic progress depend upon his own efforts. This type of cooperation would seem to be promising among the small farmers such as we interviewed in the Monjarás area, where a diversified farming is practiced.

2. Communal Farming. By communal farming we mean group farming in which the members associate themselves together to pool their labor and work their land in common. Someone is elected to be the manager, or, as more usually happens where such a system endures many years, someone is

appointed by over-riding authority to take charge and "run" the collective. The crops grown belong to the group. The members share in the net proceeds according to their contributions, usually labor power. Where members have land of their own, this too is pooled--as in the sugarcane growing cooperatives in the Monjarás area established by small farmers who own their land. In such a case there may be a "share" to land as well as to labor.

In the cooperative farms and asentamientos of southern Honduras formed by the assignment of land to groups by INA, the common practice is to pay wages to the members--if they have loan funds which permit this--according to hours worked, and if there is a surplus to distribute this as a dividend on the same basis.

Although no mention was made by the leaders of any of these associations of any variations in the scale of wages paid to members according to the quality of the skill exercised, it is the near-universal experience, so far as we know, for such communal organizations to pay the workers acquiring special skills--such as mechanics, machine operators, specialists in animal care and breeding--at higher rates than ordinary labor. This problem is ahead for most of the cooperative farms in southern Honduras if they survive and prosper because they are still practicing a rather simple kind of farming where mechanized work is hired.

Agricultural production is by means of economic systems which are based upon and must be made consistent with biological processes. Thus the production processes take time, in accordance with the habits and requirements of nature, and require that the farmer must adjust to the vagaries of weather as well as to the other processes of nature. This means, in turn, that agriculture cannot, particularly where dependent upon natural rainfall, be based upon extensive control of the physical processes of production; farmers accept and adjust to nature. This situation stands in stark contrast to urban-based industries where factories use chemical and mechanical processes which are under the control of man. From such necessities it follows that, whereas production processes in industry can be done simultaneously, in agriculture the processes are sequential. An automobile can be wholly made, literally, in a few minutes if the plant is large enough to have a multitude of activities going on simultaneously in different places. This is the real basis for the minute specialization and division of labor which characterizes much of urban industry. In agriculture, instead of specialization the farmer does a succession of tasks from planting to harvest. He is a "jack of all trades." Instead of division of labor the farmer practices a combination of crop and livestock enterprises, so that crops having different labor requirements can grow side by side, not all requiring the same intensity of labor at the same time.

This necessity of sequential rather than simultaneous production processes means not only that there is little opportunity for specialization and division of labor, but it also means that there are very limited economies of scale.

Guanchias is reported to be a very successful cooperative farm venture (which unfortunately we did not have time to study as we had hoped)

There may be crops other than bananas which are equally suitable for collective farming. But just because a cooperative farm succeeds in growing bananas it does not follow that all kinds of farming are equally suitable for cooperative organization.

It may be argued also that mechanization of production requires a larger scale of farming than the 5 and 10 hectares of land visualized as the permissible size of small farms in Law 170. There are at least two offsetting considerations here. The machines can be adjusted to the size of the farm--as the Swiss and the Japanese have done. When this is not feasible, the hiring of machinery used on smaller farms can serve as an alternative and a simpler form of economic organization than a cooperative economy. It should be noted here that the overriding need in Honduras is for the development of types of farming which are both labor intensive and increase production per manzana, at least on the better lands.

The points about cooperative farming which worry us the most are two: one is that cooperative farming will be undertaken in situations in which there are no economic advantages to such farming; and the other is the fear that the management and control of these cooperatives will fall into the hands of the literate "fast talkers" in the group, who may be unscrupulous as well. One does not spend much time in the countryside before he hears of cases where the person in control of these cooperatives has made off with at least part of the proceeds of the sale of the crops, or some other act which is indefensible in principle.

The conclusion which emerges from this kind of scrutiny is not that cooperative farms--organized as communal economic ventures--should be avoided. The faith in and hope for communal farming is so pervasive, at least among intellectuals, that they clearly deserve to be considered as one of the possible ways to organize Honduran agriculture under the agrarian reform program.

Rather, we would here suggest that the promotion of cooperative farms be judged on their merits, and be judged in comparison with alternative kinds of farming according to their efficiencies, productivity, and promotion of well-being and rural tranquility over time. For one thing, communal farming may be a very good, even the best, way for some years in which landless campesinos can escape from their present plight of poverty and insecurity and gradually become accustomed to more modern kinds of farming. This could be wholly true and still lead to situations in a few years' time where some modification of the communal system is necessary to maintain peace and harmony in the group.

3. Mixed Systems. (a) Small holdings for self-cultivation with group farming of the surplus land. Cooperatives combining individual and group farming are found in both Russia and China; they are essentially retreats from a thorough-going communal organization of agriculture. These countries--the two most important communist countries of the world--after decades of revolution and turmoil have arrived at arrangements where the workers on the collective farms are allowed to have their own house and a small holding of land. Both the house and the land are "theirs," and the crops grown on this land belong to those who grow them.

In China the system of village economy which has resulted from decades of revolution very much resembles the traditional Chinese village. The individual family lives in its own house, which the family may have occupied for generations, and has its own family garden. The land not so used is farmed by the village commune. Similarly, family labor not used in the house and garden is available for the communal labor force, which may be employed on the communal village farm or may be employed in a small industry in or nearby the village. As recently characterized by a long-time student of Chinese agriculture (now with FAO, after several visits to China as a Pakistani planning official): "Commune members generally live in their own houses, which are gradually being improved and rebuilt with assistance from the commune; and they own small private plots on which they grow vegetables or raise poultry and pigs."<sup>2</sup>

In Russia, also after decades of Marxian inspired revolution, the general layout of the collective farms, in a vast number of cases, combines large fields which are cultivated and harvested collectively with small holdings nearby which the workers on the commune farm individually and privately. These private holdings have produced much of the vegetable supply and animal protein consumed in the cities. By a recent account: "The Soviet Union permits collective farmers to cultivate small private plots in their spare time and sell the produce for their own profit. These plots account for a mere 4 per cent of the land under cultivation in the USSR, yet by value, they produce a fourth of the country's food."<sup>3</sup> These individually farmed plots in Russia are much larger than mere household gardens, as is evident from the commercial importance of the production in the retail markets.

Such outcomes in the two most important communist countries after decades of centralized authority and turbulent revolutions are deeply significant. These concessions of private economy to the peasant people demonstrate the necessity of recognizing the traditional attitudes of the peasants and honoring their beliefs and attitudes if the country is to have their willing and energetic participation in the economy. These arrangements also suggest how dependent a nation becomes upon the skills, wisdom, and sense of fitness of the campesinos.

(b) Group farming with individual ownership of the crop. In Egypt the land reform program allotted the land taken from big landowners to the peasant cultivators in a way that subordinated the tenure of land to the technology of farming. The land reform program divided the land of the village into three fields--also referred to as rotations--on which 5 crops are usually grown in three years. (That is, the land being irrigated is double-cropped two years out of three.) Each recipient of land was allotted land in each of three fields--with allotments of not more

2. Sartig Aziz, "The Chinese Approach to Rural Development," International Development Review 15, no. 4 (1973): 3.

3. Time, 14 July 1975, p. 41.

than one or two acres--approximately one manzana in each field. Some tasks are done under village management for the entire field--as deep plowing for cotton, dusting pesticides, or irrigation. As one sees the crops growing they run continuously as if under one ownership, but the field may belong to a hundred different owners. The cultivation and harvesting of the crop is the responsibility of the owner of the land, although he is required to meet high standards of cultivation for the village management has authority to have the crop cultivated and charge the cost against the value of the crop. The farmer owns the crop grown on his own land.

This manner of making the tenure of land subordinate to the technological requirements of farming has in recent years been extended to all of the Egyptian Delta; since the land is owned in small tracts, some in very small pieces--and this ownership is defended fiercely--the consolidation of farming operations into a few big fields in each village was achieved by negotiated exchanges of land among the peasants. It has evidently been accepted among the peasants because of the substantial increases in yield and decreases in labor requirements which have resulted from the rationalization of the land-use patterns.

### C. Comments

These few remarks on various kinds of cooperative endeavors in farming may at least suggest with some concreteness the importance of provisions which define clearly the status of the farmer in a cooperative undertaking. There are deep inter-connections between the ways in which a farmer's claims to land are defined and how he is compensated for his efforts, the economic and legal status of the participants in the cooperative, and the physical layout of the whole settlement. The surest way to induce the energetic and willing participation of farmers is to design settlement projects in such a way as to ensure that a farmer can reap the rewards of his own efforts. Farmers who own their land know where they stand in relation to other persons. The land is theirs as is the crop grown on it. If an independent farmer joins a cooperative of any kind both his rights and his duties therein can be defined with precision. The same kind of secure status may be possible in any cooperative, but so far as we know such arrangements have yet to be worked out in Honduras.

As one attempts to relate these different experiences in cooperative farming to the agrarian reform programs in Honduras two points stand out. First, it should be possible to institute highly productive cooperative programs in credit, marketing, and possibly machine ownership for the small farmers in Honduras, as exemplified by the small farmers in the Monjarás area. One wonders why so little effort has been put into this, in contrast to the strong efforts made by INA to establish cooperative farms.

Secondly, as one studies the experience of the asentamientos and cooperative farms in southern Honduras it would seem quite simple and feasible, if there are to be cooperative farms, to assign to each individual family as its own not only enough land for a house and household garden--as is explicitly provided for in Law 170--but also enough land of its own

upon which the family could grow its own food crops--a milpa patch. Land so used for food crops can have and probably will have a higher value of product per manzana than in any other use--particularly if appropriate extension programs are mounted. Also, such an arrangement would not only go far to meeting the basic needs of the campesinos for land to grow their own food crops--a need which spurred these people on to invade lands--but also it would go far to protect the chance of survival of hard-working families, giving them some security from the possible mismanagement by officers and the indolence of their neighbors.

#### IV. Increasing Employment in Agriculture

Recent programs of agrarian reform, particularly those under Decree No. 8, had a basic purpose of settling underemployed labor on underutilized land in the hope of increasing both employment and production in ways which enhanced the dignity and well-being of the settlers.

The settlement of people on the land in the agrarian reform asentamientos multiplied the number of persons per 1,000 manzanas of land occupied in southern Honduras, correlative with the shifts to using land mainly for annual crops rather than ranching. One of the consequences of these shifts in land use is that the settlers are now planting crops which are more susceptible to damage by drought than the grasses and other range vegetation which they replace. Southern Honduras is a drought-prone area and recent seasons may have suffered unusual shortages of rainfall. But the crop losses are of arresting proportions--particularly when a family becomes economically dependent on a few manzanas of land, such as have been allotted through the agrarian reform program. Judging from our survey, something like one-half of the 1974 rice crop was lost through drought, and by August 1975 the first season (primera) corn crop in southern Honduras is reported to be near a total--at least 80 percent--loss.

It is to be noted, however, that the systems of farming being established, particularly on the better lands in southern Honduras--on the asentamientos and cooperative farms--do not have major potentials for employment creation as they are now being farmed.

The production of both cotton and rice, and to a lesser degree other crops, is substantially mechanized. There are very few oxen on these settlements; thus, excepting farmers on the poorer land (who evidently prepare the soil by hand), the seed preparation is mostly mechanized. Cotton is seemingly dusted for pests by an airplane, but is picked by hand. Picking requires much labor in season. For the rice crop (upland rice) both the seed bed preparation and the harvesting are mechanized, mostly by hired machinery, although several of the groups are acquiring their own tractors and equipment. There are other tasks in rice growing--particularly weeding and the scaring away of birds from the ripening grain--which do require considerable labor in season. We would judge that the economic feasibility of borrowing money to hire machinery and to pay wages to the members of these groups to be repaid out of the proceeds of the sale of the crop is yet to be established.

The pressing need for employment by persons living in southern Honduras will almost certainly require that in the future more attention be given to ways of increasing employment in farming by the agrarian reform programs than has been the case so far. Efforts will need to be directed to at least two problems. One is the fullest possible development of the irrigation potentials of this area. The other is the intensification of production, particularly of food crops, on the smaller holdings of land.

Considering the latter problem first, one place to concentrate efforts to increase labor-intensive food crop production would surely be among the small farmers on good land, such as is the case in the Monjarás area. If the settlers on the asentamientos and cooperative farms had individual plots of their own--even 1 manzana--the production of food crops on these lands might be enhanced by the same programs as for the independent small farmers.

There are no doubt some crops which could be grown in southern Honduras as substitutes for the present crops--even the traditional variety of corn. For there are new, recently developed varieties of corn of very high protein content which are reportedly adapted to this area and acceptable to consumers. This new high protein corn is almost as rich in protein as meat, and requires only a modest supplementation by vitamins and minerals to make a completely balanced diet. This sort of substitution would be eminently worthwhile even if there were no increases in employment.

The general point to be made, however, is that agricultural development programs, including those sponsored by INA, should make a determined effort to introduce cropping systems in southern Honduras which increase both production and employment per manzana of land. The operative theory of agricultural development so far accepted by INA seems to be to push sugarcane wherever irrigation water is available, and large-scale mechanized farming elsewhere. This is not enough.

Individual farmers themselves can do something to improve their farming systems, and some in the Monjarás area are trying to use their land more intensively; but guidance and assistance on such adaptations must come from research and extension people who really understand both the theoretical possibilities of substitute crops and the cropping systems as well as the practical limitations of such innovations. This sort of knowledgeable professional personnel seems to be in extremely short supply in Honduras, and will probably remain so until the bright children from the farm homes have opportunities to go to school at all levels and become the eventual "change agents" in rural Honduras.

Increases in crop production and employment through intensification of agriculture eventually depend upon the availability of water--and this in turn virtually requires public programs for the development of irrigation. It may be anticipated with considerable confidence that the development of irrigation, and the equitable distribution of the rights to use water, will be as controversial as land reform itself.

## V. Rural Development Combining Agricultural and Industrial Employment

We have been trying to emphasize in the above comments something of the economic requirements of agricultural development on a relatively fixed area of land, under conditions of a growing and already abundant labor supply, with some effort to relate these conditions to the provisions of the Agrarian Reform Law No. 170. But as one looks ahead there would seem to be substantial limits to the possibilities of rural economic development in Honduras through the intensification of resource use in agriculture. At least there is an increasingly stronger emphasis over much of the world on the need to combine industrial and agricultural employment in rural areas. The aggregation of people on the cooperative farms, assuming adequate housing and community facilities, could serve as a nucleus of small-scale industry in place after place if appropriate forms of industry can be devised. It is interesting and probably deeply significant that a number of countries which have emphasized cooperative or collective forms of agricultural economy are now experimenting with the establishment of small-scale industries in the agricultural settlements. Both Israel and Russia are now doing this. Such a combination of employment is also visualized for Tanzania. For this kind of industrial development the aggregating of people into group farm settlements can be an advantage. In China, as noted above, the individual families have their own houses and garden areas; thus, it is the surplus family labor, surplus above the needs of home and garden, that is collectively employed. Through the establishment of local factories of some sort this surplus labor can be used in either agricultural or industrial employments as needed.

One of the stubborn facts about agriculture is its seasonality. This means that there may be many months in the year when there is no employment in farming. We found, for example in Monjarás in our household survey, that most of the men who worked as laborers for the sugar factory had employment there only six months a year or less.

It is something of a comment on the vision with which the small farm lotification was planned in the Monjarás-Buena Vista area that provision was made for what is now called an "industrial park." Sixty-two manzanas of land were set aside for future industrial use. Industry was not developed and the land is currently being planted to cotton by one of the sugarcane cooperative farms. Also we understand that the Interamerican Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IICA) has a research program underway exploring the ways in which industrial development can be incorporated in the economic reconstruction undertaken through agrarian reform programs.

## VI. Improving the Titles to Land

Under the new Law 170, INA is charged with the responsibilities to carry out a national agrarian census of the status of the present uses and ownership of land, and to establish a national land register (Chapter 6, Special Resolutions, Sections I and II). This sort of information would surely reduce the kind of confusion and counterclaims that were generated in southern Honduras in the 1950s and 1960s over the land claimed as rightfully theirs by both landowners and campesinos.

There is, furthermore, a provision in the new law regarding the ownership of former lands which have been occupied "no less than 10 years preceeding the issuance of the law" by private claimants "who can prove that they are exploiting this land in accordance with the principles established in that same law, will have the right to become owners of said lands not exceeding 200 hectares" (Article 15). These provisions could clarify the title to a great deal of land. There is also a provision, perhaps the most controversial in the law, which sets ceilings on the size of private ownership of agricultural land (Article 25). The limit on individual landholding is placed at 100 hectares of irrigated land and from 250 to 1,000 hectares of flat lands, with higher limits for land of 30 degrees or more. These ceilings are presented as a means of eliminating latifundia. Although it is not specified, one infers that these areal limits are intended to allow for farms or ranches of sufficient size to permit efficient going concerns; this is a concept allowing some degree of possible variation in area.

Such ceilings on the size of holdings are qualified by provisions regarding the ways in which the ownership of land is expected to meet the requirements for "the social function" of property in land. If the land is not being used with sufficient intensity, the owner has three years in which to put the land to use. Upon failure to do this the law states that all the land will be expropriated except 50 to 100 hectares (Article 28).

The general intent of this set of provisions is clearly that the hoarding of land shall cease. It has been possible in Honduras to hoard land, i.e., to hold land without using it, as "a store of wealth" and an appreciating asset, because there are virtually no taxes on the land and therefore very few cash costs are entailed in holding idle land. There are some additional provisions in the law regarding the holding of land of which the intent and prospective outcomes are not clear. There is a prohibition against joint-ownerships (Article 27), even those acquired by inheritance. The point of this is not evident; by implication it might be presumed to force small ownership units to be divided, thereby forcing into the open de facto minifundia where a small tract of land might be held jointly and be near the 5 hectares minimum. But this sort of provision, which has been tried in many countries, has characteristically been circumvented by family arrangements which assign the ownership of land to one member to meet the requirements of the law, but continue to stay together as a "survival" economic unit.

There are also, and more importantly, strong provisions against "indirect cultivation" of land. "Holdings exploited by renters, subletters, share croppers, colonists are expropriable" (Article 33). There is a great deal of experience in the world with prohibitions on the renting of land; invariably, so far as we know, such provisions have pushed most of the tenants down to the status of wage laborers. In India, where renting of land has been prohibited for many years, probably tens of millions of cultivators were pushed by such provisions from being "tenants at will" to the more precarious status of "laborers at will." The technical point at issue is that of "whose will is supreme" in directing the farming

operations. The owner of land who takes the financial risks and functions through a manager is characteristically deemed to be engaged in "direct cultivation."

Taken together, however, those regulations would introduce a degree of security regarding the ownership of farm land which has heretofore been lacking in Honduras. The basic explanation of the effective rules regarding the ownership of land is evidently historical. The large holdings were acquired through the conversion of privileged concessions to property rights in land on which many of the earlier privileges remained. This set of arrangements may have functioned well in an earlier day when there was sufficient land available, so that campesinos could also enjoy the privileges of occupying land and using it for their own purposes. But with the growth in population and economic development, land became more scarce; with increasing scarcity, conflicts over the use and occupancy of land multiplied. Furthermore, it is inherent in the processes of economic development, especially where significant degrees of freedom are allowed, that economic development breeds a cumulative inequality. Justice and eventually public order require public measures of redistribution of land or of income by taxation and public expenditures or otherwise.

Since the resolution of conflicts is the basic function of the working rules by which a society and economy are organized, the traditional rules are brought into question by development. In broadest terms, land reform and land redistribution programs, such as are visualized in Agrarian Reform Law 170, are directed to the redress of an inequality of wealth and opportunities that has become a stifling influence on the economy and a threat to public order.