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Community and Cooperative Participation Among Land Reform Beneficiaries in Honduras*

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ABSTRACT

Honduras is the poorest country in Central America, and only Haiti is poorer in the Latin American region. One of the reasons why it remains so poor is that its agricultural development has lagged. This paper presents survey data on a sample of nearly 600 Honduran farmers who are beneficiaries of a new land title security programme. In order to explore some of the reasons why agricultural development has fared so poorly, the paper first presents a socioeconomic and demographic description of the beneficiaries and then describes the nature and levels of their community and cooperative participation. It is found that although interest in cooperatives is quite high, actual participation is very low. It is further found that a key factor in raising farm incomes is cooperative participation. Comparative data from neighbouring Costa Rica are presented.

*This research was carried out with the cooperation of the Instituto Nacional Agrario (INA) with the support of its Director, Ubodoro Arriaga I., and Ing. Emil Falk, Director of the Titling Project. The study was conducted as part of team effort which included the following members in addition to the authors: Mr. Jack Hood Vaughn and Dr. Michael Wise. The finding for the study came from the United States Agency for International Development and was supported by Development Associates, Inc. This paper was written while Seligson was an International Relations Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation.

INTRODUCTION

For the first time in history Central America has become a centre of world attention. Because of many years of neglect, comparatively little academic research has been conducted on the underlying socio-political systems of the region.[1]

As a result, most reports on Central America tend to be rather superficial, looking at dramatic incidents of rebellion and revolution without really probing their causes. This study hopes to add to our knowledge by examining patterns of community and cooperative participation in rural Honduras, seen by many as the geo-political centre of the Central American Isthmus.

Two perspectives on the current crisis in Central America predominate. One of these sees foreign intervention as the primary cause of the unrest. The other views social and economic conditions, especially poverty, illiteracy inequality and political repression as the core of the problem. In this paper we cannot hope to determine which of these perspectives is the more appropriate. We can, however, shed some light on the socioeconomic conditions prevalent in rural Honduras, and show how cooperative and communal participation can be an important tool toward improving those conditions. Some additional data from one of Honduras' neighbours in Central America, Costa Rica, will be incorporated in the analysis at appropriate points. The emphasis in this paper, however, will be upon the Honduran case because the Costa Rican materials have been discussed extensively in other recent publications (Seligson, 1982a; 1982b).

POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN HONDURAS

Honduras is an extremely poor country by any standard of comparison. The most recent World Development Report of the World Bank (1983) lists Honduras with a per capita GNP in 1981 of $600, Bolivia was listed at the same figure and only Haiti was lower in the Americas. Not only is Honduras poor, but the distribution of income is extremely skewed; the most recent data available reveals that 67.8 percent of income is earned by the upper 20 percent of the population. In a comparative study employing data on 50 nations (Muller, 1984: Table 1), only Ecuador, Kenya and Zimbabwe are shown to have a more unequal distribution of incomes.

Honduras also suffers from serious problems of social underdevelopment. The estimates for 1980 are that 40 percent of its population is illiterate, lower than any other Latin American nation for which the World Bank reports such data except Haiti. Demographic pressures threatens to make developmental efforts extraordinarily difficult. Honduras has a crude birth rate of 44 per thousand population (1981 data), tying with Nicaragua for the highest rate in Latin America and a projected population growth rate for the period

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[1] Some recent treatments which include extensive bibliographies are LaFeber (1984) and Ropp and Morris (1984).

1980-2000 of 3.1 percent, the highest in all of Latin America (World Bank, 1983:184-186).

In light of these troubling developmental indicators, it would be hoped that Honduras is making rapid progress toward overcoming them. Unfortunately, such is not the case. Over the period 1960-1981, per capita GNP growth averaged only 1.1 percent per annum compared with 3.4 percent for other 'lower middle-income' countries (as classified by the World Bank). Even more distressing is that growth is slowing rather than speeding up. Whereas the annual average growth in production (not per capita) was 5.3 percent in the 1960-1970 period, GNP grew at only 3.8 percent in the 1970-1981 period. A recent report released by the Technical Council for Economic Planning (CONSUPLANE) of Honduras highlights the seriousness of the present situation. The official rate of unemployment for 1983 is 21.1 percent of the economically active population, as compared to 19.3 percent in 1982. If present trends continue, unemployment will rise from its current 250,000 to some 300,000 by the end of 1984. Underemployment levels are extraordinarily high, affecting 57 percent of the 945,000 employed individuals. In the countryside, the situation is even worse, with 89 percent of all farm labourers underemployed. Between January 1982 and January 1983, according to the Honduran Chamber of Commerce and Industries, at least 300 business' shut down (Latin American Weekly Report, WR 83-48, 9 December, 1983, p. 5).

It is obvious to all observers that a major reason for the poor developmental record established over the past decade has been the stagnation of agricultural production. Although manufacturing has improved its growth rate somewhat in the 1970-81 period over the previous decade, the record in agriculture has been weak; the annual GDP growth rate of the agricultural sector slowed from 5.7 percent in 1960-1970 to 1.9 percent in the more recent period, the worst record turned in for any Central American country. The impact of this poor performance on the economy as a whole is considerable because 32 percent of the GDP is produced by the agricultural sector, a proportion higher than any other Latin American country and far higher than the 22 percent average for the world's 'lower middle-income' countries as a group (World Bank, 1983: 150-153).

Prospects for the future are not bright as a result of a number of factors, perhaps the most important of which is the devastation of the coffee plantations by coffee rust. As late as 1978 coffee was Honduras' largest earner of export income, but production appears to be declining as entire coffee farms are ruined by the disease. Another factor adversely affecting developmental prospects is the political unrest in Central America which is causing the Government of Honduras to devote an increasing share of its limited budget to military and security categories.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study grows out of an effort to improve conditions in rural Honduras undertaken by the Instituto de Nacional Agrario (INA), the land reform agency in that country. Although redistributive land reform programmes have been underway since 1962 (Ruhl, 1984), a major shift in

emphasis occurred in 1981 when the Constituent Assembly passed Decree No. 78, called the Ley de Protección a la Empresa Caficultora. The purpose of that law was to stimulate coffee production largely by providing a procedure by which fee simple title can be granted to smallholders on coffee lands. With the passage of that law, INA embarked upon a major effort of land titling which is designed eventually to cover the entire country. The current programme calls for the issuance of some 100,000 titles during the period 1982-1986.

The absence of secure title has been found to have many negative impacts on smallholders in Latin America. Those who do not have title are restricted in their access to institutional (and hence low interest) credit, have difficulty selling their land, and may be denied water rights. Another important impact, one directly relevant to the theme of this paper, is that tenure insecurity may have a deleterious effect on community cooperation. Peasants who do not have clear title to their land often find themselves in disputes with neighbours over boundary issues. A climate of distrust is created which erodes cooperative attitudes and behaviours. Since it is taken as axiomatic that communal cooperation is fundamental to successful rural development, the absence of tenure security is bound to have adverse consequences on such development. However, there is no systematic evidence on the impact of title security on community cooperation. In an effort to fill that lacunae in our understanding of the impact of title security, this paper makes a first step in what is envisioned as a five-year study. The findings of the entire study, which has been designed as a 'before-and-after' examination of the titling process, should help answer the key questions we have about the subject.

A research design was prepared which would allow measurements of the impact of the titling programme upon its beneficiaries. The details of that design are presented in Seligson et al. (1983) and Jones et al. (1984) and will only be briefly summarized here. Similarly, the methodology of the Costa Rican comparative study is presented in Seligson (1982). In June and July of 1983 a sample of 569 smallholders living in the Department of Santa Barbara were interviewed. The interviews were conducted by a team composed entirely of residents of the region. The sample was of probability design, using the lists prepared by INA of beneficiaries of the titling programme. All of the respondents in the study had either just received titles to their land under the titling programme (that is within a month of two of the interview) or were to receive titles shortly after the interview. Hence, the data collected accurately present a picture of the respondents before any impact of titling could have occurred. A control group of 198 smallholders in a nearby department not scheduled to be included in the titling programme during the five year life of the project, were also interviewed. This control group possesses many key characteristics similar to the experimental group and therefore serves as an ideal control. It is planned that the respondents will be reinterviewed at appropriate points in the future to determine the impact of titling. Since this paper does not examine the dynamic impact of title, no analysis of the control group is conducted here.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OF HONDURAN SMALLHOLDERS

Redistributive land reforms focus their attention on assisting the landless poor. Titling programmes, in contrast, target the smallholding poor. In this section the principal demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the sample of titling beneficiaries will be summarized. The overall picture, to anticipate the discussion, is one of stability and poverty. The beneficiaries of the programme are not newcomers to the Santa Barbara region, nor is their acquisition of farmland a recent occurrence. Their stability, however, has not led to upward socioeconomic mobility. Indeed, although the baseline data provide only scant indications of conditions prior to the date of the interview, the general impression is that conditions are fast deteriorating. The central question for the long term evaluation of the titling programme, of course, is its ability to reverse this trend and help these dirt poor peasants live a better life.

Age, sex and marital status

The titling beneficiaries are a mature group of farmers. The mean age of the respondents is 46.6, and the median 44.6. There is, however, considerable variation in the range of ages of the beneficiaries (the standard deviation is 14.8). A handful of beneficiaries (.7 percent) are younger than 20 years of age and an almost equally small number (1.9 percent) are over 80 years of age (the oldest respondent was 91, and there were two who were 87). Between the ages of 20 to 30, one finds 12.7 percent of the beneficiaries, and between the ages of 60 to 80 there are an additional 17.4 percent. By far the largest concentration of beneficiaries is found in the age group of 31 to 50; fully half (50.5 percent) of all titling beneficiaries are in this age cohort.

The spouses of the beneficiaries are also a mature group, but are somewhat younger. The mean age of the spouses is 39.2, the median is 36.2 and the standard deviation is 13.9. There are somewhat more spouses than beneficiaries who are younger than 20 years of age (3.5 percent). The largest age cohort of spouses is from 20-40 years of age; 58.1 percent of the spouses are found in this group.

Age and farm size are closely linked in this sample of titling beneficiaries; the larger the farm the older the age of the owners (see Figure 1). Among the farmers with the smallest size holdings, those with less than 5 *manzanas* (1 hectare - 1.4 *manzanas*) their average age is 43, or about three years younger than the sample as a whole. For each farm size group above these smallholders, the average age increases, so that in the largest farm size category of 50 *manzanas* and larger., the average age reaches 52, or about six years older than the sample as a whole. Since ages of spouses tend to be closely correlated with that of their mates, it is not surprising that the spouses ages also increase along with farm size, although the variation is not as great as it was among the owners themselves.

The likely explanation for the close association of age and farm size is that a dynamic element is at work. As farmers grow older they are able to acquire more land. Of course, those farmers who are less successful are probably not

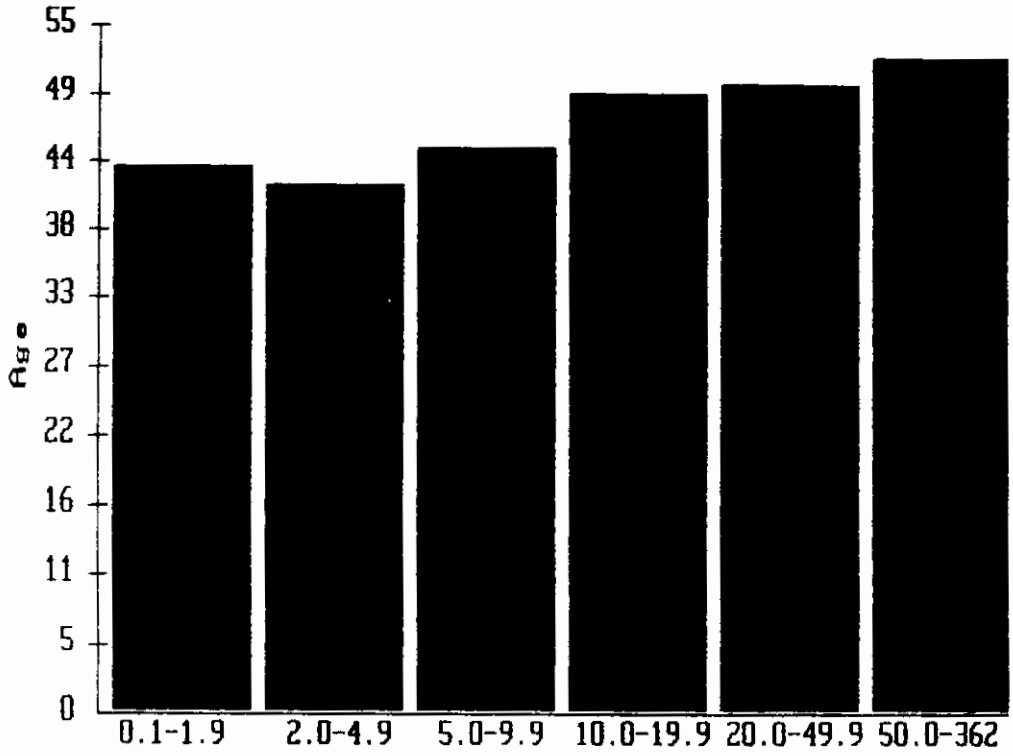

Figure 1. Owner's Age and Farm Size

apt to be able to increase their farm size, but since the standard deviation of age for each farm category varies little, (from a low of 12.9 to a high of 15.3) the general pattern seems to hold across farm size categories. Since farm size is closely linked to socioeconomic status (as is demonstrated below), the association of age and farm size takes on greater importance.

Although most farms in Central America are owned by men, women, especially widows and those who have been abandoned by their husbands, sometimes acquire farm land. Honduran titling beneficiaries are not an exception to this general rule. Of those interviewed for this study, 15.1 percent were women. While only 2.9 percent of the male beneficiaries were widowers, 31.4 percent of the female beneficiaries were widows. An additional 11.6 percent of the females were either single or divorced, compared to 7.0 percent of the men.

The female beneficiaries were significantly older than the males, having an average age of 45.7 compared to 38.5 for the men (the difference is significant at less than .001 (F-test)). In other key ways, however, the females did not differ significantly from the males. Hence, on the key variable of farm size, the women's holdings averaged 26.5 *manzanas* while the men's averaged 21.7. This difference, however was not statistically significant. The mean household size was slightly smaller among the women (6.1 vs. 6.5) as compared to the males, but here again the difference was not significant.

As a group, the respondents further demonstrated their social stability through their marital status. Only 7.4 percent of the beneficiaries were single. Divorce was encountered only among .4 percent of the sample, and separated beneficiaries totaled an additional .7 percent. The overwhelming majority of the beneficiaries were married either in civil marriage (53.1 percent) or common law (31.3 percent). Of those with spouses, 93.7 percent were living with them at the time of the study. Of those beneficiaries who were not living with their spouses, most were women. Among the female beneficiaries, only 72.1 percent were living with their spouses as compared to 96.9 percent for the males.[2]

The following table summarizes the picture of marital status.

Marital Status Among Beneficiaries

Marital Status	Percent
Civil marriage	53.1
Common law	31.3
Bachelor	7.4
Widow(er)	7.2
Separated	.7
Divorced	.4
Total	100.0

There was no direct relationship between farm size and marital status with one exception. Among the 31.3 percent of the respondents who had common law marriages, there was a clear trend associating smaller farm size with greater likelihood of common law marriage (see Figure 2). Hence, whereas only 21.4 percent of common law marriages were found among those with farms of 50 *manzanas* and larger, 40.6 percent of those with farms which were smaller than 2 *manzanas* had common law unions. If one wishes to consider common law marriage a less stable form of familial bond than civil marriage, a common assumption in Honduras, then it is possible to conclude from these findings that larger farm size is associated with more stable unions.

An additional indication of the stability of the titling beneficiaries was the large proportion of them who have children. Among all of the respondents 537, or 94.5 percent have at least one child.[3]

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[2] This difference is statistically moderately strong (Tau b = .33) and statistically significant ($< .001$).

[3] According to the marital status information obtained from the beneficiaries, a total of 42 reported being bachelors, 10 more than the number who reported having no children at all. This means, of course, that some of the bachelors ought to be reclassified as either having a common law marriage, or as having once been married (and are now, therefore, either separated, divorced or widowed). A check of the questionnaires for those anomalous cases revealed that they occured among older men who were probably widowers. The confusion arose because the question asked: "Are you a bachelor, married, or do you have a common law marriage", although the coding scheme allowed for the categories of widow(er), and divorcee. The failure

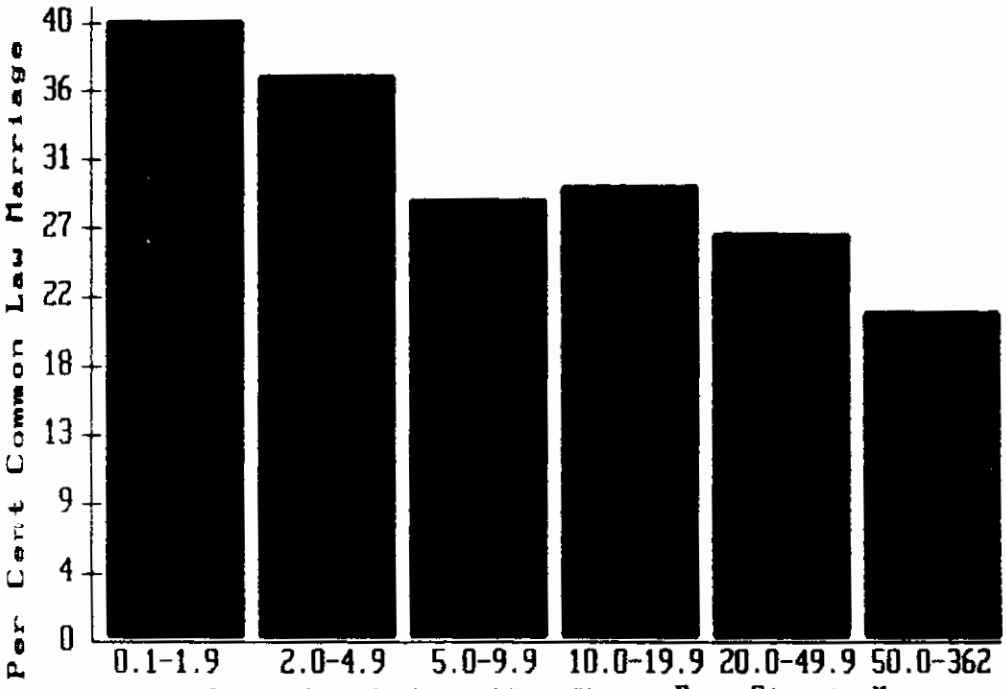

Figure 2. Common Law Marriage and Farm Size

The average household among the beneficiaries contained 6.5 persons (including the respondent). Household size varied rather directly and significantly with the size of the farm; the larger the farm the larger the household.[4]

Among the farmers with plots less than 2 *manzanas* the average number of persons in the household was 5.8, a number which rises steadily across the increasing farm units until it reaches an average of 7.6 among those with farms of 50 *manzanas* or larger. A summary of the household size information is presented in Figure 3. The explanation for the larger family sizes among the larger farm units it rather obvious; it was previously shown that age and farm size were closely associated. Hence, as farmers grow older in Honduras they tend to have a larger total number of children and hence their household size tends to increase. Of course, after a certain age, when the children are married off, household size might diminish, but even then there is a tendency for one or more of the children to live on with their parents, especially if the farm is large enough to support more than one family.

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to mention the widow option specifically is probably the cause of these inconsistencies, especially among those widows who had a common law marriage at the time of the death of their spouse.

[4] The F-test significance level is < .001.

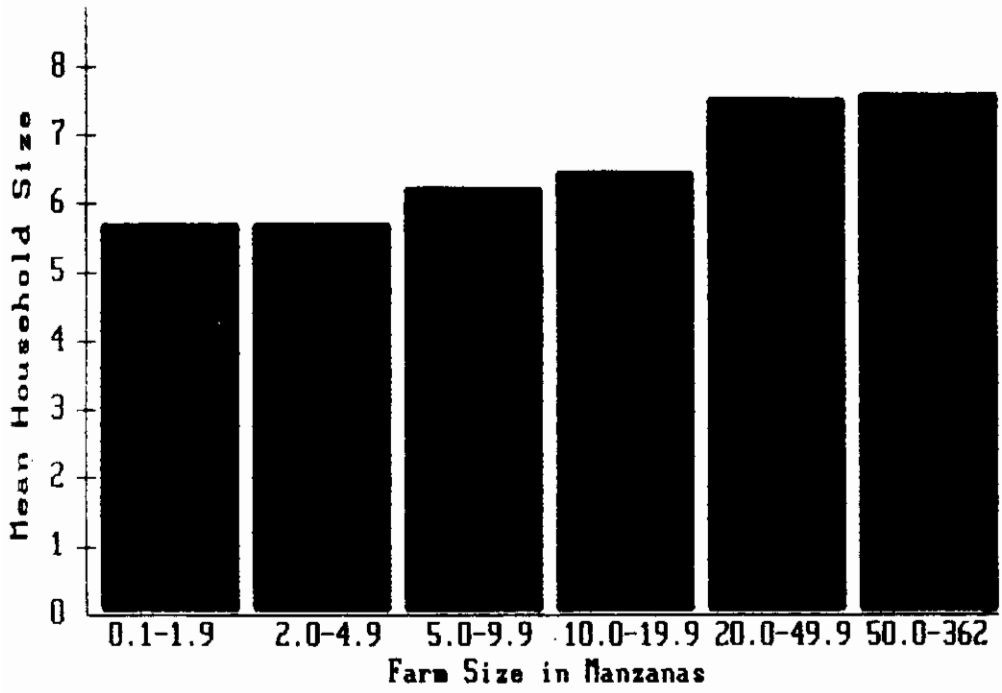

Figure 3. Household Size and Farm Size

Migration

Migration patterns revealed in the data once again reinforce the image of stability, and stable residential patterns have considerable importance for community participation. Most of the respondents are natives of the Department of Santa Barbara. It was found that 357 of the 569 respondents, or 62.7 percent were native born. Of those who had migrated to the Department, nearly all (91.5 percent) came from three nearby Departments. Hence, even among those who were migrants to the Department, these are not individuals coming from a vastly different sociocultural milieu. In addition, even among the immigrants, most came as young children and have resided in Santa Barbara for many years. The average immigrant to the Department among the sample of beneficiaries has lived there for 20.2 years. Size of land holding was also closely related to migration. The average number of years of residence increases steadily from a low of 16.7 years in the smallest farm category to a high of 24.6 years in the largest (see Figure 4).[5]

Not only are the respondents long-term residents of the region, most have very deep roots in their communities, a factor which bodes well for community

[5] Although the relationship is perfectly monotonic, the differences are not statistically significant. There are three cases of missing data out of the 212 cases.

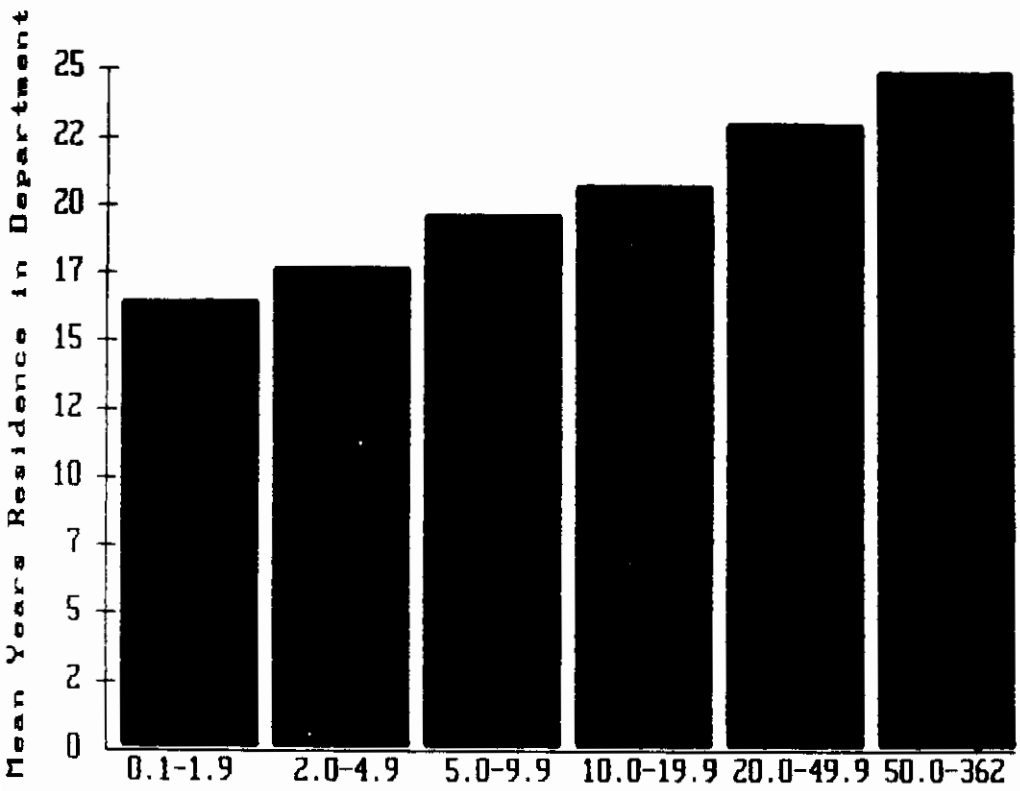

Figure 4. Inter-Departmental Migration and Farm Size

development programmes and other kinds of self-help cooperative efforts. As a group, the respondents have lived in the villages in which they resided at the time of the interview for an average of 26.2 years (the median was 22.0 and the standard deviation 19.3). Of the 569 respondents, however, 212 (37.3 percent of the sample) migrated to Santa Barbara from another Department and therefore could not have been born in the village in which the interview took place. An additional 191 of those who had been born in Santa Barbara had moved to their present village from some other village in the Department. In total, then, 70.8 percent of the respondents had migrated from their village of birth by the time they were interviewed in 1983.[6]

Even among the inter-village migrants, a picture of stability emerges. The average number of years these migrants had lived in their present village was 18.1. Once again, farm size is associated with demographic patterns: the owners of the smalles plots had lived in their villages for the shortest length of time (16.0 years), whereas those who hold the largest plots had the greatest longevity of dwelling. The relationship between farm size and years of village residence is summarized in Figure 5.

[6] This amounts to a total of 403 respondents who had either been born outside of Santa Barbara or who had undergone intra-departmental migration.

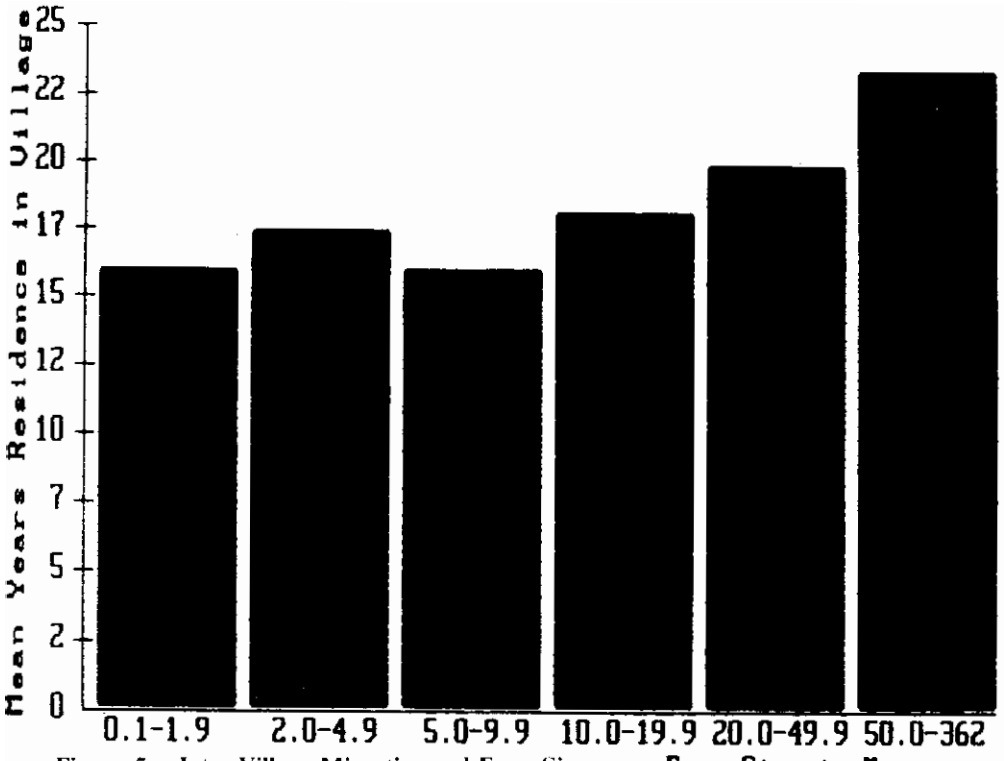

Figure 5. Inter-Village Migration and Farm Size

Education

The beneficiaries of the titling program are a poorly educated group. As can be seen in Figure 6, over half (52 percent) of the beneficiaries have had no formal education whatsoever. Only 4.0 percent of the respondents have completed primary school, and an additional 2.8 percent have gone beyond that level. The average years of schooling possessed by the beneficiaries was a shockingly low 1.6 years, the median was only .5 years and the standard deviation was 2.6. Some respondents did manage to obtain some additional formal education through participation in various short courses (*cursillos*). It was found that 16.0 percent of the beneficiaries received such additional training.

Farm size was found to be associated with education. Among the owners of plots of less than 2 *manzanas* the average number of years of education was 1.0, a figure which generally increases quite steadily up through the largest group of farms, the owners of which have 2.6 years of education (see Figure 7).[7]

Participation in short courses is also somewhat related to farm size, but not as directly. Among farms in the four lowest size categories (up through 19.9 *manzanas*) participation in these additional educational experiences fluc-

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[7] These differences are significant at the .006 level.

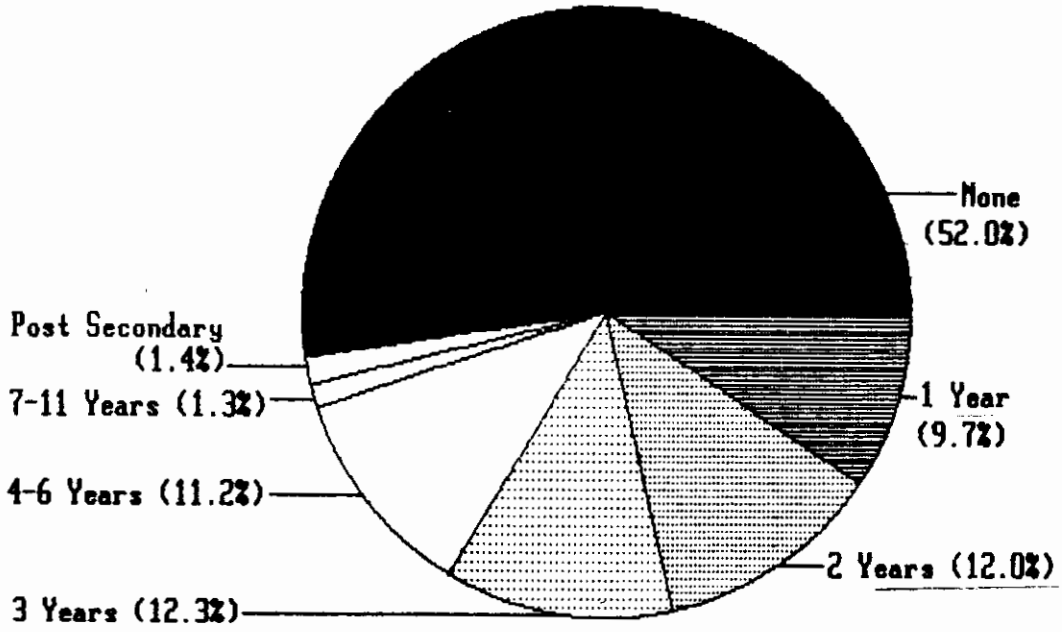

Figure 6. Years of Formal Education

tuates between 11.3 percent and 13.1 percent. But among those who own from 20 to 49.9 *manzanas*, short course participation increases to a high of 26.7 percent, but then drops off again slightly to 23.2 percent among the owners of the largest farms.[8]

The overall education picture is dismal and threatens to reduce the impact of development programmes aimed at the beneficiaries. At the very least, the low level of education must be taken into account in the design of such programmes. Efforts to teach new farm practices, for example, must avoid heavy reliance on printed material. But even more serious consideration needs to be given to a mass literacy campaign since no matter how carefully developmental programmes are planned, there is no substitute to having a literate audience. Adult literacy training has worked successfully in rural Latin America when the students are given a steady stream of relevant reading material after the formal training has been completed. When such follow-up material is not made available, literacy skills tend to quickly atrophy.

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[8] The relationship is statistically significant (sig. = .001) but rather weak (Tau b = .10).

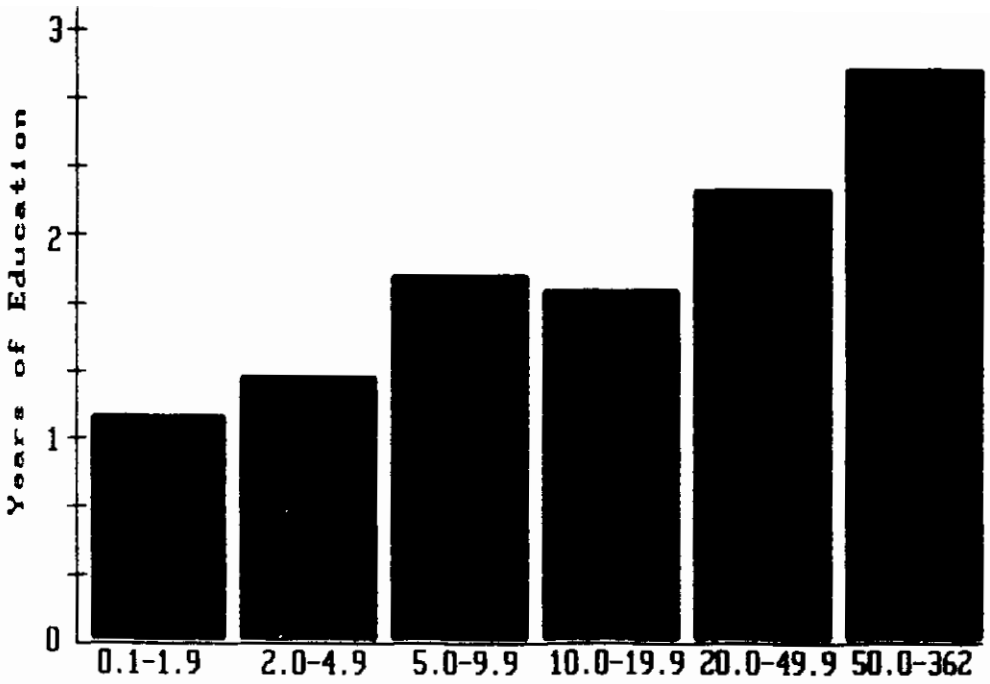

Figure 7. Education and Farm Size

Indicators of Poverty

Poverty is the single most striking characteristic of the titling beneficiaries. The extremity of the situation was evident to the interview team throughout the field work and statistically demonstrated by the data which was collected during the course of the interviews.

One of the clearest indications of the widespread poverty among the beneficiaries was the absence of sanitary facilities of any kind among nearly two-thirds of them. Specifically, it was found that 64.4 percent of the respondents had no toilet facilities, and an additional 20.5 percent had a latrine. Only 15.2 percent had indoor plumbing. The widespread absence of sanitary facilities is disturbing both because of the well-known link between such absence and disease, particularly infant diarrheas, and because of the extensive latrinization campaign which has been underway in Central America for over twenty years but apparently has had only a limited impact on this region of Honduras. No doubt the high infant mortality of Honduras (86 per 1,000 in 1981) compared to Costa Rica (27 per 1,000 in 1981) can in large measure be accounted for by the absence of acceptable sanitation facilities (World Bank, 1983:192-193).

A further indication of poverty with direct consequences for health is the physical conditions of the homes, specifically the floors. The interviewers observed the condition of the main room of the house (generally where the interview took place) and reported that nearly half (48.7 percent) had dirt

floors. Since many children in rural Honduras go barefoot, especially at home, the problem of parasitic infection is, at least in part, directly linked to these dirt floors. In the rainy season, moreover, the absence of an elevated foundation often results in the entry of water into the homes, flooding the dirt floors and producing a mud puddle in the middle of the home.

A similarly distressing picture of water supply was encountered. Although 58.6 percent of the beneficiaries obtained their water from the tap (either in the home or public), it is not clear how potable the water supplied by many of those systems actually is. An additional 25.1 percent of the respondents obtained their water from wells, but in most cases these wells did not feature minimum standards to help guarantee clean water. Finally, 16.3 percent of the respondents obtained their water directly from rivers and streams, a certain guarantee of parasitic infections throughout the household since rivers and streams in Honduras serve as open sewers for human and animal waste. In addition, agricultural spray pumps are frequently washed in these rivers and streams, spreading their poisons into the water supply.

A look into the respondent's homes revealed a general absence of many basic necessities. Only 17.6 percent of the titling beneficiaries have electric lights in their homes. Over two-thirds (68.2 percent) use home-made kerosene lamps (*candil*) or pine-torches (*ocote*). Other sources of lighting include gas lamps (12.5 percent) and candles (1.8 percent). While the absence of electric lighting in the homes may well be more a function of the general availability of this public service in rural Honduras, the fact that 36.0 percent of the respondents had no radios, when battery powered transistor units are readily available at a low cost, is a more direct indication of poverty. Televisions were a rarity among the sample, found in only 3.7 percent of the homes. Almost equally rare were automobiles, trucks (7.7 percent) and refrigerators (11.8 percent). The most common artifact beyond the radio was the sewing machine (27.2 percent), and since many of these are foot-pedal models their ownership was not inhibited by the absence of a public electric supply.

The homes themselves were generally quite poor. Only 33.2 percent had tile or asbestos roofs, while 11.0 percent had a straw roof with the remaining 55.9 percent using sheets of galvanized steel (zinc). The most common building material for the walls of the house was *bahareque* (37.6 percent), followed by *adobe* (22.5 percent) and milled wood (21.5 percent). The building material of choice, cement or cement block, was found among only 16.3 percent of the respondents. The homes themselves frequently (31.4 percent) consisted of one single room, having no divisions for privacy among the family members.

PARTICIPATION

The titling beneficiaries were overwhelmingly convinced that their economic situation had recently deteriorated (see Figure 8). Over three-quarters (78.1 percent) believed that their economic situation was worse today than it was a year ago. No doubt the widespread presence of coffee rust (*la roya del café*) which has devastated the economy of the region is largely responsible for that opinion. In addition, the national economic crisis and the unrest in the Central American region as a whole must had added to that perception. Yet, only a

little over a third (37.1 percent) believed that things will be worse next year. Indeed, the majority (52.4 percent) believed that things will be improving. Over the long term, a healthy two-thirds majority (65.6 percent) opined that their children will be living better than they now live.

What is the cause of this optimism? Perhaps it is the sense that the problems they face can be overcome. In this section the principal problems which the beneficiaries face will be enumerated, along with their sense of optimism toward solving those problems. Communal and cooperative participation activities, viewed here as key mechanisms for solving those problems, will be summarized. Finally, attitudes toward such participation will be discussed.

COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

A series of three questions was asked of the respondents which attempted to determine what they felt was the most serious problem in their villages, whether they felt that something could be done about the problem and if they had actually attempted to resolve the problem. This series of questions performs two functions. First, it obtained information on community problems and the attitudes and actions taken by the peasants to resolve them. But it also serves as a measure of a sense of efficacy and taken together form a simplified version of the cross-culturally validated 'Problem-Solving Efficacy Scale' (see Seligson, 1980a; 1980b; 1980c).[9]

The overwhelming majority (91.7 percent) of the respondents were able to identify at least one communal problem when asked: "As you know, in all communities there are problems which affect all of the neighbours. What do you think is the principle problem of this community?" This level of response is not taken as an indication of the severity of the problems of the community but rather as a measure of the levels of efficacy held by the respondents. The assumption here is that all communities have problems. However, the first step toward resolving them is identifying them. This question requested the naming of a specific problem and hence indicates a cognitive awareness of such problems. In contrast to these Honduran titling beneficiaries, among a similar sample of redistributive land reform beneficiaries in Costa Rica, 85.7 percent of the respondents were able to identify a communal problem. The small difference in percentages should not be taken to have substantive significance but rather the closeness of the two percentages is a clear indication of the similarity of efficacy levels. When compared to a cross section of peasants in Costa Rica who were not land reform beneficiaries, only 63.1 percent were able to name a problem. And a national sample, both urban and rural in Costa Rica, yielded a 64.5 percent response. Hence, compared to non-reform beneficiaries, both Honduran and Costa Rican beneficiaries demonstrate considerably higher problem awareness.

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[9] The scale has shown to be both reliable and valid in several trials in Costa Rica and Mexico. Moreover, it has been shown to be a more powerful predictor of behaviour than the conventional measures.

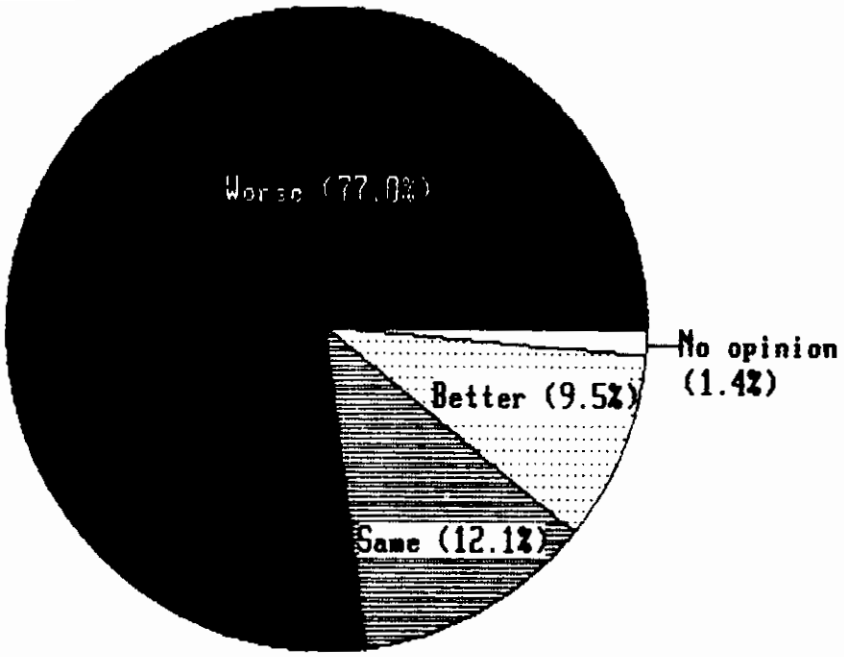

Figure 8. Economic Situation

The problems actually named in Honduras were many and varied. There was, however, a large concentration of responses in three categories: roads, mentioned by 22.0 percent of all respondents, potable water, mentioned by 16.2 percent of all respondents and medical services, mentioned by 13.5 percent. The remaining problems were mentioned by fewer than 10 percent of the respondents and were widely scattered, although electric lights, credit and jobs were each mentioned by over 5 percent of all respondents. A table listing the problems mentioned is presented below.

Principal Problem in the Village

Problem	% of Respondents
Roads	22.0
Potable water	16.2
Medical services	13.5
Electricity	7.0
Credit	6.0
Employment	5.8
Coffee diseases	3.2
Lack of land	2.3
Hunger	1.4
Cost of living	1.2
Crop diseases	1.2
Other	11.9
No problems*	8.3
Total	100.0

*Each of the remaining problems was noted by fewer than 1.0 percent. They include such things as poor soil, lack of latrines, poor coffee prices, etc.

An examination of the relationship between the problems mentioned and size of farm reveals no consistent pattern, with one exception. While the pattern is not completely consistent, there is a trend for those with larger plots to be more concerned about roads. Hence, 18.8 percent of the farmers in the smallest land size category mentioned roads as a problem, whereas 27.3 percent of the farmers in the largest category noted roads as their main problem (see Figure 9).

The responses to the next question in the 'Problem-Solving' series produced the most surprising findings of all. When asked: "Do you think you could do something to help solve the problem?" an overwhelming 87.5 percent of the beneficiaries responded in the affirmative.[10]

This is a very high percentage in absolute terms, but is even more impressive in comparative terms; in Costa Rica 56.5 percent of land reform beneficiaries and 34.7 percent of a cross-section of peasants (landed and landless) responded positively to this item. A comparison with a national cross-section sample of all Costa Ricans, both urban and rural found only 18.0 percent with an affirmative response.

An examination of the relationship between farm size and their sense of efficacy as measured in the item under consideration is of limited utility because so few negative responses at all were given by owners of farms in the two largest size categories, whereas all of the inefficacious responses were clustered in the bottom four categories. Given the limited variation in the item, however, the relationship was not statistically significant.

It is clear that the beneficiaries overwhelmingly feel that they can work to solve community problems. Unfortunately, this strong feeling is not translated into action by most respondents. When asked: "Have you done something to solve the problem", only 39.67 percent said "yes". Since the problem being

[10] This percentage is based only upon all of the respondents. Looking only at the 91.5 percent who had named a community problem in the previous question, it is found that 97.5 percent felt that they could do something to solve the problem.

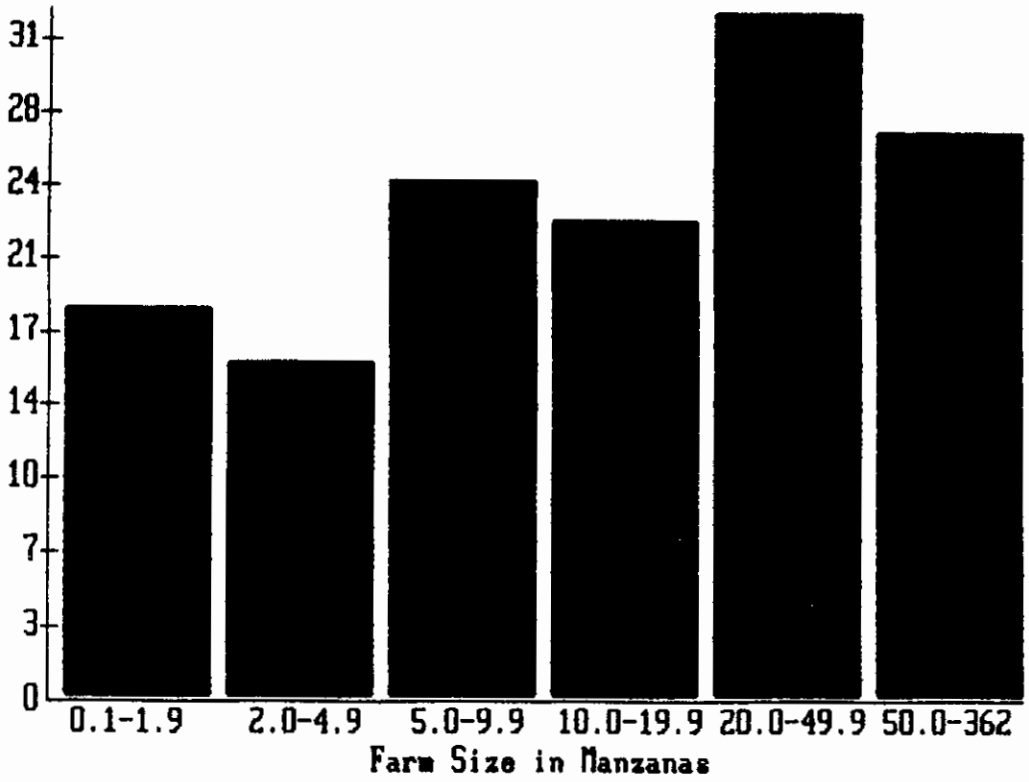

Figure 9. Roads as Principal Community Problem

discussed is one mentioned by the respondent as the most important problem for him/her, it is disappointing to see how many have not attempted to help solve the problem. In Costa Rica, among the land reform beneficiaries, almost all of those who felt that they could do something to help solve the problem had actually done so (49.9 percent of the entire sample). Hence, in Costa Rica, attitudé and action are more closely associated than in Honduras. More importantly, a higher proportion of land reform beneficiaries in Costa Rica have actually worked on the resolution of a problem.

In the context of the gravity of the problems which confront rural Honduras, and in light of the respondents' overwhelming view that things are worse than they were a year ago, it is painfully disappointing to see how many beneficiaries have not been actively engaged in problem-solving at the local level. It is very important, therefore, to probe the possible explanations for this lack of action. Some limited insight comes from looking at the farm size categories. A statistically significant relationship does emerge between farm size and problem-solving actions, but it is a weak one. (The Tau c is -.10 and sig. = .02.) Hence, while 38.6 percent of the farmers with the smallest plots report having worked to solve a problem, 54.9 percent of those in the second largest farm size category so reported. The largest farm category, however, suffers a drop-off in affirmative responses to 41.5, thus indicating no clear pattern of relationship. More important, is that only in the second largest category do

more than half of the respondents report having worked on a problem; in all of the other categories the data show inactive majorities.

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVISM

A far clearer explanation for the low levels of activism emerges from an examination of the participation data gathered in the questionnaire. It was found that only 4.6 percent of all beneficiaries participated in agricultural cooperatives, and only 3.2 percent were members. In Costa Rica, it was found that 53.1 percent reform beneficiaries participated in cooperatives (Seligson, 1982:106). Since a great deal of local problem solving in rural areas is undertaken within the framework of cooperatives, it is not surprising that Honduran problem-solving is so low. There was somewhat higher participation found among the owners of the largest farms, but even among that group cooperative membership was very low. The implication is clear: increase cooperative membership and a greater self-help effort will likely follow. To do so, of course, would require extensive promotional and educational activities on the part of INA and/or other governmental agencies and private groups.

Considerable additional participation data is available in the Honduran questionnaire. It was found that participation in savings and credit cooperatives was very low, involving only 4.4 percent of the beneficiaries. Nearly as low participation levels were found in peasants associations; only 7.9 percent of the beneficiaries reported such participation.

The one area in which there was relatively high participation was that which was related to the school. Since, as was reported above, nearly all the beneficiaries have children, it is not surprising to see them active in the two school-based organizations: *El Patronato* and *La Asociación de Padres de Familia*. In the first of these organizations 51.1 percent of the beneficiaries participate; 13.5 percent served on the boards of directors. In the second school-based organization 33.1 percent of the beneficiaries participate.

COOPERATIVE POTENTIAL

If the Government of Honduras were to embark upon a major promotional campaign, how successful would it likely to be in stirring interest? The evidence gathered in the present survey gives strong indications that such a campaign would not fall on deaf ears.

The respondents were asked: "Would you be in agreement in uniting with your neighbours to sell your products?" An overwhelming 88.2 percent responded in the affirmative. The support for this view is found among all land tenure size groupings, with the smallest farmers being slightly more receptive (90.0 percent) than the largest farmers (88.5 percent), but the difference was not statistically significant.

A more direct question concerning interest in cooperative participation was also asked: "If in a nearby village a cooperative were to be established for the purchase and sale of your goods, do you think you would join it?" A total of 81.4 percent of the beneficiaries responded in the affirmative to this question,

and an additional 12.3 percent were uncertain. Only 6.3 percent were definitely not interested. There was no significant relationship between farm size and interest in joining a cooperative.

The weight of the evidence presented here indicates that Honduran titling beneficiaries have a high sense of efficacy and that they are able to define the problems which affect them. For the most part, however, they do little to try to resolve those problems. Interest in cooperatives is very high and it is possible that an active campaign to form such organizations might stimulate self-help activities which might serve to resolve some of these community problems.

PARTICIPATION AND ECONOMIC WELFARE

A primary goal of the titling project is to increase the incomes of the beneficiaries. It will not be known if the titles actually helped achieve this goal until the follow-up studies are done at the end of the project. However, it is possible with the data at hand to take a cross-sectional look at the respondents to see what factors were most closely related to higher incomes. Such an examination was performed on the data in a multiple regression analysis in which the dependent variable was total gross farm income.[11]

As expected, the single most important factor related to farm income was farm size, a variable repeatedly shown to be salient in the analysis presented in this paper. Four other variables each had a significant impact on farm income: the use of improved farm practices, duration of residence in the department, agricultural credit and sales to a cooperative. Cooperative participation correlated .26 with farm income.

The results of this analysis make it clear that cooperative participation is an important element in raising incomes in rural Honduras, at least among this sample of beneficiaries. However, the very low rate of such participation must be seen as a factor restraining such increases. It would make a great deal of sense, especially in light of the strong desire on the part of the respondents to join cooperatives, to implement a promotion programme. The economic payoffs promise to be considerable.

PERCEPTION OF THE TITLING PROGRAMME

In concluding this discussion of perception, it is appropriate that consideration be given to the beneficiaries perception of the titling programme. Almost all of the respondents (95.2 percent) stated that they had heard of the programme. Those who had not no doubt knew of the titling activities (otherwise their farms would not have been included in the cadastral evaluation), but perhaps

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[11] This was calculated for each respondent by multiplying the volume of crop produced by the market price. Also considered was livestock production. However, the study did not attempt to include minor sources of income because of the great additional cost in interviewing time such an effort would have entailed.

were unfamiliar with the term 'Titling Programme' (*Programa de Titulación de Tierras*).

The most common source of information about the Programme which first reached the beneficiaries was the radio or newspaper (63.8 percent), with the radio the far more common source, given the widespread illiteracy and lack of newspapers in these rural areas. The INA promoters were the second most common source of initial information (21.3 percent), followed by the Cadaster workers (8.1 percent) and finally friends (6.0 percent).

Nearly all (91.9 percent) of the beneficiaries mentioned at least one advantage to the titling programme[12]

. while in contrast only 33.0 percent mentioned at least one disadvantage. The questionnaire allowed for the naming of up to three advantages and three disadvantages, and hence it is possible for the totals to sum to over 100 percent. The most frequently mentioned advantage to the title, far exceeding all other advantages, was the sense of security it gave the titling holder. This advantage was mentioned by over three-quarters (77.2 percent) of the respondents who saw an advantage in titling. If added to this are those who said that titling would 'legalize their situation&eq., an additional 20.1 percent can be included in the security category. In total, then, security related concerns were noted by 97.3 percent of those mentioning at least one advantage. The only other frequently mentioned advantage was its usefulness in obtaining credit. Nearly half of those who mentioned an advantage named this one. Other advantages mentioned by at least 2 percent were: increasing the value of the land (3.3. percent) and improving the chances for the sale of the land (2.9 percent).

Disadvantages, although perceived by only one-third of the beneficiaries, concentrated on the problem of having to pay for the land. Over two-fifths (43.5 percent) of those who saw a disadvantage in titling noted this problem. Taxes were mentioned 7.4 percent of the time. All other disadvantages were mentioned less than 2 percent of the time. There was no association between land size and either advantages or disadvantages perceived.

In sum, the titling programme is perceived in a very favourable light. The small number of disadvantages which are mentioned are focused on the cost to the beneficiary of paying for the land and the potential cost in new or added land taxes.

CONCLUSION

Honduras has embarked upon a major effort to provide legal title to smallholders. The programme is thus far only in its initial stages, and the data presented here do not yet indicate what the impact of that programme will be. However, some conclusions are warranted even at this early juncture. First, the socioeconomic problems of the beneficiaries are severe. Second, the beneficiaries have a high sense of personal efficacy and are able, furthermore, to identify the problems they face. Third, the level of active participation in

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12 This was in response to an open-ended question: "In your opinion what are the advantages and disadvantages, that is the good and the bad, of having a property title."

problem solving is very low. Fourth, a principal reason why such activity appear to be so low is the low levels of cooperative participation. Fifth, participation in cooperatives is directly related to increased income.

Taking all of these findings together highlights the importance of cooperative participation in Honduras. The serious economic and social problems faced by this poor nation require increased attention to the promotion of cooperatives. Resolving the underlying socioeconomic problems of the rural poor in Honduras could well be viewed by policy makers both in the United States and in Central America as a key element in the resolution of the serious problems of political instability which are confronting that region today.

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