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THIS LONG-AWAITED summarization of the findings of the Southwestern Land Tenure Research Project, is a welcome contribution to the literature of agricultural economics, rural sociology, and regional research organizations and methodology. The study deals with socio-economic problems of the region (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas) but it warrants consideration by social scientists both outside and within the region. It is a valuable reference for certain courses in farm management, rural sociology, land economics, and agricultural policy.

The purpose was "to determine and measure the relationships between the tenure status of the farm family and its economic and social performance." Readers are cautioned early not to expect an evaluation of these relationships, in terms of policy implications or methodological conclusions. These aspects are occupying separate reports.

After a general chapter on the regional tenure situation and problems, there are chapters by regional staff members on tenure and farm organization, tenure and family status, factors related to changes in tenure status, leasing arrangements and landlord-tenant relations, land tenure and soil conservation, legal aspects of land tenure and farm credit, use and sources of capital, impact of federal programs on tenure, and community and institutional factors in tenure—a rather comprehensive study of the rural economy of the region.

Aside from some of the usual tenure-linked factors—size of farm, age of operator, mobility—the study raises considerable doubt of the influences of tenure upon major components of farm family well-being but scale of operations appears to be influential.

As contributions of several kinds of subject-matter specialists are brought together, some repetitions and conflicts result. As an example, one contributor finds "Land use and crop organization on the farms studied showed little variation between operators of different tenure"; another concludes "From the standpoint of major land use and type of farming, there is almost always some degree of difference between owners and tenants in a given area." Thus, readers are left without definite conclusion on an important part of the study.

This reviewer would favor having policy and

methodological conclusions in this volume, as direct and logical outgrowths of the analysis. Until the findings are interpreted in terms of problem solving, it is difficult to appraise the significance of what the relationships may mean. Where attempts were made to push the analysis into the arena of improvement of action, serious questions may be raised about some of the deductions. For example, in the analysis of impact of Federal programs upon tenure, it is concluded that little progress was made in the less efficient sectors of the economy—the sick areas most in need of adjustment. After this analysis, it is a surprise to find proposed as an alternative to the present agricultural programs, a general program "which would provide for a level of minimum conditions for those engaged in farming. . . ." Apparently, the fundamental problems of misallocation of resources, inefficiencies of production, and high population-resource relationships, are not brought into the adjustment process.

High points center around the tenure classification, management index, capital accumulation processes, and appreciation of environmental factors within which rural problems exist and within which solutions must be worked out.

This study differs from most rural social science regional projects in that (1) it was conducted on a regional cooperative basis implemented by regional workers' conferences and a regional staff, (2) subject matter and methods were kept relatively uniform throughout the five-State region although there was considerable autonomy within each State, and (3) research specialists from rural sociology, law, farm management, and land economics, worked together on the many facets of the problems.

In addition to this and two forthcoming reports on policy and research, 38 reports have been or are being published by the cooperating States. The project was carried out under grants of funds from the General Education Board and the Farm Foundation.

Harold Hoffsommer, director of the project and editor of this volume, and the staff of cooperators deserve congratulations on bringing the project to successful completion, in light of the trying war years during which much of the work was done.

John F. Timmons