1979

The Social Organization of Small Farmers: a Case Study Analysis of Interaction, Satisfaction, and Cooperative Behavior.

Joyce Louise Smith

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF SMALL FARMERS: A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF INTERACTION, SATISFACTION, AND COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR.

THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE, PH.D., 1970
THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF SMALL FARMERS:
A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF INTERACTION, SATISFACTION,
AND COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Sociology

by

Joyce Louise Smith
B.A., Philander Smith College, 1966
M.A., Atlanta University, 1970
August, 1979
DEDICATION:

To Alisa
"With Love"

Understanding your past will brighten your future.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed as a case study analysis of the social organization of small farmers located in St. Landry Parish, Louisiana. The major goals of this study have been (1) to present an indepth analysis of selected social factors characterizing small farmers and (2) to explain how these factors were related to their social organization. This study also investigated selected factors which influenced the small farmers in their interactive roles, as well as the factors that were influential in their work relationships, work satisfaction, and work problems. Much of the emphasis in the study was placed on the roles that were played by the small farmers and their perceptions and orientations to how these roles were performed.

Specifically, the major goals of this study were to determine the nature and extent of the interactions of the small farmers; to determine the nature and extent of satisfaction that the small farmer experiences with his life situation; and to determine the nature and extent of agricultural cooperatives as a focus of attention for small farmers.

Six months was spent in participant observation in conjunction with the Southern Development Foundation's Small Farmers Project funded by the United States Department of
Labor. A total of 54 farmers, who were participating in the project, were regularly visited for informal interview sessions and observations in order to get an assessment of how they perceived their roles. In addition, these farmers were also observed as they interacted with others in both formal and informal group sessions.

The analysis was divided into three phases. The first phase of social interaction revealed that the small farmers preferred to remain within their immediate circle of relatives and friends to carry out the social aspects of their lives. The family was the most important focus of attention, with husbands, wives, children and other relatives being bound together in a close knit unit to create interdependency. This was a very important source of interaction because the farm labor that could be performed by family members was beneficial to the economic functioning of the family. Both the church and the Small Farmers Project were important groups in the social organization of these farmers because they served as educational, informational, and social outlets for them.

The second phase of satisfaction revealed that the economic condition of the small farmer was often a source of dissatisfaction, however, their communities and the social activities in which they were involved created satisfaction.
Their satisfaction was related to rewards, which existed more as an emotional situation than an economic one. Their economic expectations were low because they reflected those things that they had previously received.

The third phase of cooperative behavior revealed that the small farmers viewed their active participation in a cooperative as an expense since it involved additional time, money, and effort. Because of the farmers participation in the Small Farmers Project they had all become financial members of an agricultural cooperative. Even though these farmers were aware that the cooperative was an important organization for their existence, they were not actively involved. Their inactivity was based on the fear of losing their independence which has so often characterized the farming system.

This study, which concludes with a list of theoretical propositions relative to the roles of small farmers within their social organization, will be a supplement to the large number of research studies which have focused entirely on the economic conditions of small farmers.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a case study of a group of small farmers located in St. Landry Parish, Louisiana who are participating in a Small Farmers Project sponsored by The Southern Development Foundation and funded by the United States Department of Labor. This study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. The major focus of the study is to present an in-depth analysis of the social factors characterizing small farmers and to explain how these factors are related to the nature and type of organization of the farming system, to the farmers relationship to the land, and to their efficiency of production. This study also investigates the factors which shape the behavior of small farmers in their interactive roles, as well as factors that influence their work relationships, work satisfaction and work problems. This study concentrates largely on the content of the tasks performed, the roles played by the small farmers and their perceptions and orientations to their tasks.

Small farmers, as conceptualized in this study, are farm operators who own or have access to at least four (4) acres of land and are reporting less than $5,000 annual gross sales from their farm enterprise.
Small farmers are an essential and integral part of the rural population of Louisiana today. According to the 1974 Census of Agriculture, nearly 11,000 or one-third of the approximately 33,500 farms in Louisiana are less than 50 acres in size; 52.7 percent have less than 100 productive acres and 73 percent have annual sales of less than $20,000. Even though we have seen a loss of about 2,000 farms a year in Louisiana over the last ten years, many of them being small farms, about 70 percent of the farms in Louisiana are still classified as small farms by the Bureau of the Census. It is evident from these statistics that small farmers comprise a large portion of the total farm population of Louisiana.

Small farmers of Louisiana have traditionally relied on the production of a few cash crops such as sweet potatoes, cotton, and a variety of mixed vegetables. In addition, the farm was expected to produce most of the food consumed by the family. In other words, the farm was unspecialized, subsistence in nature, and family oriented. As a result of this unspecialized system of agriculture, small farmers are unable to compete with large farmers who use more technology, more capital, and energy intensive methods of producing their crops. As a consequence, the share of the commercial agricultural production held by small farmers
has been decreasing steadily over the past several decades, particularly since World War II. Many small farmers are thus forced into accepting a life of poverty as the price for their desire to stay in farming. Others apparently have no other alternative but to leave the land and seek employment in the city. Not possessing any skills other than those related to farming, however, they are often unable to compete for the better urban jobs, if indeed they are able to find employment at all. In the cities, many of these displaced farmers thus find themselves locked into the urban cycle of slum, poverty, and welfare dependency. In either case, the result is the demoralization and impoverishment of this important segment of the Louisiana population.

Structural changes in agriculture have led to the tenuous status of the small farmer. In low income areas of the south, particularly Louisiana, a large portion of the population is rural. Since the level of production of goods on many of these farms is small, economic welfare is of a low standard. As a consequence of this low productivity and limited market facilities, a number of social institutions and technical practices have been established to provide some insurance against the loss of income from small farm production. Old age, sickness, crop failure, and injury to livestock represent the principal causes of loss of income
and due to the lack of scientific knowledge, these risks are greater among the small farmers. At the same time, the personal hardship imposed by a loss of production is also greater. This is true because the small farmer's margin above subsistence is miniscule, a partial loss of output could easily put the small farmer and his family below the subsistence level. In the case of total crop failure, the small farmer compared to the large farmer with substantial income, has little or no accumulated wealth from which to provide sustenance until circumstances improve; hence, he has a need for economic mechanisms for averting risk.

Small farms and small farmers have often been characterized negatively. They have been characterized as backward, inefficient and anachronistic in this age of technical and scientific development (Landis, 1948; Pierce, 1972; Stewart, Hall and Smith, 1977; Murray and Coughenour, 1977). Small farmers live with little hope of financial fulfillment. They are often portrayed as being defeatist and fatalistic in outlook and are family and community oriented rather than society oriented (Atkinson, 1977; McAfee and Williams, 1977). In a large number of cases, they have limited education and training, and are socially and culturally restricted. They are relatively isolated from the educational agencies, and efforts to reach them are frequently rebuffed. They are not
inclined to seek advice because they may harbor distrust of professional workers (Brierley, 1974). Since professional workers generally prefer successful experiences and dislike failures, they are more prone to support those who adopt recommended practices promptly; thus the philosophy of building "success on success" is more easily demonstrated with clientele who have better potentials for growth and success than those possessed by small farmers.

Statement of the Problem

For many years sociologists have neglected the social organization of the small farm as a topic for quantitative or qualitative research. Galeski (1972), in his book Basic Concepts of Rural Sociology, notes that the development of sociological research on small farming was not initiated until after 1920. This initiation was stimulated by a great deal of financial support provided by the government and other organizations which were particularly alarmed at the rapid exodus of population from rural areas and increasing differences in living standards between villages and towns (Galeski, 1972:1-3).

Much of the emphasis on the study of rural life was influenced by the Country Life Commission which was appointed by President Roosevelt in 1908. The President was influenced in his decision to set up the Commission by Horace Plunkett.
who had observed the deterioration of rural life in Ireland and feared that if nothing was done about it, the United States might face the same situation (Chitambar, 1973:25). The doctrine of the Country Life Commission was an economic one. The Commission felt that if the farmer and his family had an adequate income, all other rural problems would take care of themselves (Smith and Zopf, 1970:11).

The structural transformation from a rural to an urban economy, occupational specialization, the development of markets for consumer goods and services, and the redistribution of the labor force, all have served to focus attention on the small farmer as he responds to these events that profoundly affect his level of living. As criticisms began to mount concerning various aspects of life for the small farmer, government commissions and agencies, as well as rural sociologists, became more interested in the small farmer as a vital and integral part of the social structure. As a result, work proliferated in the area of small farming. Much of this work was initiated through County Agricultural Extension Agencies, who presently employ county agents to work directly with the problems of small farmers, and through land grant universities. Unfortunately, in spite of this tremendous increase in small farm studies, work has been primarily concentrated on the economic aspects of the small farmer with an almost total neglect of the social,
behavioral or attitudinal characteristics of the farm operator which influence the social organization of the farming system. In addition to economic aspects, farming systems also include cultural traits, skills, techniques, prejudices and habits which influence the relationship between man and the utilization of his land (Smith and Zopf, 1970:213).

The small farm operation is a durable and resilient system. It has survived war, depression and national disaster. Up to this point, with the exception of the broiler industry and a few other sectors, the small farm has survived a technological revolution. It has strong ideological support, especially through the political system (Paarlberg, 1970:118). However, small farm businesses are encountering significant problems, as Harl (1970:5) warns:

Typically, many small farm business have been "born" and have also "died" with each generation. This has created a "small farm cycle" paralleling the human life cycle of birth, maturation, growth, decline and death. Research has shown that the early or beginning years and the terminal years of such a farm business are relatively inefficient. A peak of efficiency is reached about midway through the life cycle. With narrow profit margins and increasing capital requirements, the cycle becomes more and more crucial.

The problem to be addressed in this study is, what are the social factors characterizing small farmers? Specifically stated, the problem is one of ascertaining how small farmers interact with others in their environment.
For example, how do these small farmers project themselves so that their needs and problems are made known? Furthermore, the problem is one of assessing their ability to remedy or cope with problems, once they have been made aware of them.

Another question, germane to an analysis of the interaction of small farmers, is what are the factors unique to small farmers? Here emphasis is placed upon the particular life style manifested by small farmers. Traditionally, small farmers have been somewhat stereotyped or negatively stigmatized as uneducated, backward and lacking adequate farm management skills. Additionally, the problem is to determine the validity of such traditional assumptions.

Recently, the development of cooperatives on the American scene to offer aid and assistance to small farmers has been paramount. Therefore, another concern of this study is the impact of such an organization on the small farmer. What are the potentials of cooperatives for small farmers and will the cooperative be a viable alternative for solving the problems of small farmers?

The problem of social factors related to the behavior of small farmers as they respond within their social organization has not generally been addressed in the literature on small farmers. When recommendations were made concerning small farmers, government technicians, university economists and agricultural spokesmen stressed the technical and
economic aspects of agricultural development to the virtual exclusion of other aspects. Social goals, it was assumed, were to be direct or indirect consequences of such planning (Gumper, 1968:243). Experience has shown that this assumption is erroneous, since the failure to meet certain social demands can create additional failures in the development schemes, so that there is little improvement in small farms.

Sociologists and anthropologists have increased our awareness and appreciation of the fact that social factors exert some degree of influence on efficiency in farming, and hence, influence the degree of agricultural development. Past studies pertaining to the above problem have contributed to our understanding of the small farm population, their way of life, their value judgements, their beliefs, and their economic organization (Goldschmidt, 1947; Smith, 1953; Herskovits, 1963). This point illustrates the fact that the "analysis of economic and technological factors alone is insufficient to develop scientific and analytical formulations," (Herskovits, 1963:41) which could possibly reach the heart of the problem of small farmers. Thus, there is a need for an interdisciplinary approach which would be beneficial in formulating rational policy programs.

One approach to this is via an analysis of selected social factors which characterize the structural and dynamic
organization of small farmers as they are related to production efficiency and social development.

Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of this study are: (1) to determine the social factors which characterize the small farmers who are the subject of this study and (2) to explain how these factors are related to the nature and type of organization of their system of production. The objectives will be fulfilled through the following analyses: (a) a general analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of the small farm operator in St. Landry Parish; (b) an observational analysis of the interactional relationships that are projected by the small farmers participating in the Small Farmers Project; (c) an observational analysis of selected factors which could suggest satisfaction with farming as a way of life; and (d) an analysis of the social processes, such as cooperation, conflict and competition, emanating from the relationships between the small farmers and rural development workers. It is assumed in this study that the content of tasks performed by small farmers and their perceptions and orientations to their tasks play an important role in the assessment of the social organization of the farming system and the efficiency of production. Special emphasis will be given to cooperative behavior and to the potential for cooperative behavior by the small farmers.
The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To determine the nature and extent of the interactions of small farmers as these are connected to man-land relationships. Specific questions addressed regarding this objective are:
   
   (a) How do small farmers interact with others?
   
   (b) What are the personal, family, and community interactions of small farmers?
   
   (c) How are small farmers affected by social and cultural change?
   
   (d) What is the relationship between socio-demographic factors and the success of the small farmers?
   
   (e) What is the influence of significant and generalized others on the behavior of the small farmers?
   
   (f) How does the small farmer negotiate his reality?
   
   It is assumed that by observing the roles of the small farmers and their decision making and direction regarding their life situation (Parts II, IV and VII on the observation schedule), the researcher will be able to infer how social interaction, commitment and personal adjustment of the small farmer are related to his sense of social organization.

2. To determine the nature and extent of the satisfaction that the small farmers have with their life situations. Specific questions addressed regarding this objective are:

   (a) What are the factors that influence work satisfaction and work conflict of small farmers.
(b) How do small farmers perceive their farming system?

(c) How do small farmers adapt to problematic situations arising within their work roles?

(d) How does the life situation of small farmers influence their behavior?

(e) What is the relationship between material wealth and spiritual happiness in influencing the life situation of small farmers?

It is assumed that by observing the behavioral components of the small farmer (Parts I, III and VI on the observation schedule), the researcher will be able to ascertain those factors that lead to satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the life situation.

3. To determine the nature and extent of cooperatives as a focus of attention for the small farmers. Specific questions addressed regarding this objective are:

(a) Are cooperatives perceived as effective by the small farmers?

(b) How effective are cooperatives on the social organization of small farmers?

(c) How effective is the cooperative in meeting the needs of small farmers?

(d) How do socio-cultural characteristics of small farmers influence the success or failure of cooperatives?

(e) In what terms do small farmers describe their relationship to cooperatives?

It is assumed that by observing how the small farmers participate and interact within the cooperative (Parts IV and V on the observation schedule), some indication can be made
of the relevancy of the cooperative as an agent of change within the social organization of the small farmers.

This study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. The assumption is that this type of investigation will permit a more penetrating understanding as well as additional data about what is happening in the lives of the small farmers who are the subjects of this research investigation.

Significance of the Study

Based on previous research, it is obvious that the life situations of the small farmers are multidimensional. The nature of his roles, his life history, his social group interactions, his occupational experience, the acquisition of his farming knowledge, the character of his household, his level of living, as well as his training, education, religion, and race, all influence reactions of the small farmers to problems that they may encounter. Schutz (1973), refers to this multi-dimensionality as "multiple realities" in which man's interests in the world of everyday life are practical rather than theoretical. Men are naturally directed by motives as they attempt to adjust to their world of experience and realize their goals. Schutz calls this practical everyday world of working "the paramount reality," in that this is the area of social life in which men treat the world as a field to be dominated, and strive to overcome the resistance
of objects and others to their life plans (Zeitlin, 1973:173).

The small farmers, who are the subjects of this study, are "situated" in many different social settings, such as their farms, homes, communities, cooperatives, friendship groups and the Small Farmers project. All of these situations will influence the kinds of interactions that they will carry out. As these farmers express their wants and desires, they are likely to make decisions based on the sociocultural situations that they have encountered.

It has been suggested by past studies that small farmers are capable of making and generally do make decisions that are rational, given the local institutional and cultural milieu in which they exist (Gillette and Uphoff, 1973). Small farmers can survive, and if they are equipped with the tools of modern science, and are given the opportunities to produce and gather a full harvest, they can not only survive, but also prosper (Sen, 1975:1).

There is a need to observe directly and objectively the behavior of small farmers as they actively live their lives, and interact within their environments. Once we better understand this interaction, we can begin to more rationally design programs which may be useful to small farmers. Additionally, since so much research has been conducted on the economic aspects of small farmers, a study which deals with social and organizational factors could be extremely beneficial.
In the past, the industrialized society has been prone to isolate small farmers. Isolation,\(^1\) both physical and social, is a rural factor (Bealer, Willits and Kuvlesky, 1965; Smith and Zopf, 1970). This isolation may result in indifference toward many things that otherwise would be important. The small farmers' isolation, coupled with the nature of his occupation, largely eliminates rather than magnifies the interest in expensive goods. Anything desirable and comfortable rather than costly and stylish will do, for the most part (Vidich and Bensman, 1968; Brierley, 1978). At the same time, isolation from the centers where all sorts of goods are displayed in ways to create want, protects the small farmer against rapid change of standards (Smith and Zopf, 1970). This isolation, however, does not exert a disintegrating influence upon the small farmer, but rather solidifies the interests, thought processes, and even the

\(^1\)The concept of isolation as it is used here has sociological implications for the distinction between rural and urban. It does not imply that small farmers are absolutely isolated from a society. Traditionally, when farmers were studied, the concept of isolation became a factor in their assessment. The assumption here is that as long as the economic conditions of small farmers are relatively low, isolation will be a factor in their life situations. For further discussion of isolation relative to rural society, see Bealer, Willits and Kuvlesky (1965), "The Meaning of Rurality in American Society: Some Implications of Alternative Definitions." *Rural Sociology* 30:255-266, and Vidich and Bensman's (1968) discussion of the Traditional Farmer in Small Town in Mass Society. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
personalities of the family members. While isolated small farmers may lose something of life's highest satisfactions by reason of their restricted world of experience, a compensating factor gives to them a certain exalted consciousness of familial oneness in which the spontaneous reciprocation and sublime intimacy of interaction among members is a part (Gross, 1964). As a result of this social and physical isolation, developmental training programs have been urged for small farmers, but just exactly what approaches these training programs should take have not been full defined.

In the past, there has also been a tendency to utilize urban characteristics as a guideline for determining and adequately assessing the problems of small rural farmers. In so doing, rural has been conceptualized as that which is not urban. With increased demands on the rural sector of the population, particularly the small farmer, interest is now being directed toward the needs of these rural farmers. However, there is a lack of recent and accurate literature on the life situations and habits of these farmers. Important theoretical and policy statements can be gained from research of this nature.

Goldschmidt (1947), in his comparative study of the business conditions of the communities of Arvin and Dinuba, California, showed quite clearly that the scale of farming
has an important affect on the character of the community. Arvin was the home of large scale farm operations, while Dinuba was surrounded by small vineyards, orchards and dairies operated by families, without any large enterprises. Both communities farmed by irrigating the high value, market-oriented specialty crops that characterize the California agricultural industry; therefore both had a dependence upon unskilled, mobile labor and utilized the urban social system. The "quality of life," ranging from housing conditions to recreational facilities, from church participation to social democracy, was consistently better in the small farm community of Dinuba, than in the large farm community of Arvin. The extensiveness of the study and the number of government commissions and educational seminars conducted around the study are enough to justify the viability of small farm communities within the American society.

On the practical side, there is a need for this type of investigation to provide information on social policies instituted for small farm communities. How might communities find assistance in gaining knowledge of problems of seasonal unemployment, poverty, inflation, race relations and numerous other social and economic problems if the awareness of the more practical interpersonal problems that are constantly plaguing small farmers are not made overt?
Past studies have been economic or production-oriented rather than being people-oriented. Atkinson (1977:6) very aptly assessed this dilemma by stating that:

Little consideration has been given to the family farm unit. We need extensive study of the family, however, to provide information on attitudes, values, goals and aspirations of the small farmer. These valuable insights should aid development of more successful programs for small farm families. A greater understanding of the small farm family will help to establish more workable programs for any area or group of small farmers.

These characteristics regarding small, rural farmers are sufficiently great in number and degree to affirm the thesis that these small farmers bear a very important relationship to the character of American rural society and the total society. The attitudes toward the small farmer have been gradually changing and becoming less rigid. It is being realized that small-scale producers are rapidly becoming an important element in agricultural production and will be beneficial in society for many years to come. The tendency to ignore the small farmer is changing to the point where his overall welfare is becoming a major factor (Watts, 1977:153).

Though admittedly limited to a small locality, the results of this micro level study will have their value in presenting one aspect of rural life not often treated by researchers in sociology. In addition, this study could
possibly bring into focus the essential factor or factors that have been lacking in working successfully with small farmers, not only in St. Landry Parish, but in other areas with similar social, economic and geographic characteristics.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

While the major concern of this study is on the social organization of small farmers, there are other related areas of concern which will be presented here to provide a more comprehensive conceptualization and analysis of this social organization, particularly as it is perceived by small farmers. Research to date has concentrated chiefly on assessing the economic dimensions on the life situations of small farmers. There have been few investigations assessing the social factors that characterize small farmers and how these factors relate to the small farmer's perceptions of his social organization. This chapter will focus on four aspects of the relevant literature: (1) the importance of small farmers in American society, (2) the conceptualization of the small farmer in America, (3) the "quality of life" for small farmers, and (4) the agricultural cooperative as an aid for small farmers. In some instances, these aspects may overlap. However, for the most part, the four general areas have been kept separate.

The Importance of Small Farmers in American Society

The roots of conflict over the appropriate structure of farm sizes go deep into the colonial history of America.
The puritan colonists, on the one hand, carved out individual clearings and tenaciously insisted on a structure of small private plots, matching their convictions regarding the proper forms for civil and religious governance. The squatters, on the other hand, felt that the land had to be earned and defended by the sacrifices and hazards of pioneering. These conflicting attitudes toward the type of settlement were distilled in constitutional debates prior to 1789. By the time the constitution was sent to states to be ratified, the die was cast. The new country was to be a nation of small farms (Raup, 1972).

For Thomas Jefferson and the men of the eighteenth century who supported small farms their reasons were largely political and sociological. These small land holders projected a sense of freedom, independence, self-reliance, and the ability to resist oppressors (Griswold, 1948). These small farms were indicators of independence and democracy and they defined the relevancy of the full employment policy that existed. Griswold (1948:28) stated that:

Agriculture, to Thomas Jefferson, was not primarily a source of wealth but of human virtues and traits most congenial to popular self government. It had a sociological rather than an economic value.

Freedom of entry to land and thus to employment was a cornerstone to historic American policy toward the small or family farm.
Small farms also guaranteed the competitive structure of the economy. In the economic tradition extending from Adam Smith to John Stuart Mill, this argument became quite extensive. The belief in an open, competitive economy directed by market forces called for a model that in reality could be subjected to empirical test. Agriculture provided this, and nineteenth century American agriculture provided it best of all with the Preemption Act of 1841 and the Homestead Act of 1862\(^2\) (Raup, 1972).

The policy regarding the importance of small farms has been in the mainstream of the functional beliefs that have characterized the foundation of American society, namely, a self-governing democracy, freedom of occupational choice, and competitive markets as guides to economic behavior.

The increasing emphasis on the study of rural life and small farms at the turn of the century marked a new era for small farmers. Rural sociology emerged as a discipline

\(^2\)The Preemption Act of 1841 gave settlers the right to choose their tract of land ahead of sale and to buy 160 acres at $1.25 per acre. The Homestead Act of 1862 gave the farmer 160 acres outright if he would settle on the land for five years and improve it. These acts, in effect, set upper limits to the transaction unit of land, favoring the farmer and discouraging the speculator. For further discussion of these acts, see Paul W. Gates (1936). "The Homestead Law in an Incogrous Land System," American Historical Review, pp. 652-681.
because: (1) it was a response to the cries of perceptive leaders and emerging societal disorganization, particularly in rural areas; (2) the growth of social and political movements in the late nineteenth century which urged societal reform; (3) the growing emphasis on scientific inquiry; and (4) the rapid exodus of population from rural areas (Nelson, 1969:135).

In the past, the study of rural life was primarily literary and philosophical, oriented to the goals of improving the living conditions of the rural areas. In realizing these goals, it was discovered that what most people have in mind when they speak of rural social problems are actually what they conceive to be farm problems; and the farm problems considered were those arising out of the small farm organization, rather than out of agriculture in general.

Vogt (1917), notes that there is a direct relationship among low levels of living, tenancy and small farm size, and that everything distinctive in American rural life is in some way related to the small farm family. Similarly, Holmes (1932) conceptualized rural sociology as "a family farm life." Being a student of Charles Cooley, his major concern was the underlying concepts of primary and secondary group relationships within the family farm organization.
The important idea that forms of land ownership and possession determines the classification of farmers into owners and non-owners was developed by Sorokin, Zimmerman and Galpin (1930). Their thesis was that the social organization of a given rural area would reflect an orientation to a particular tenure system. Probably the most important contribution made by these scholars was the analytical distinction between land tenure and the size of holdings. Similarly, Kolb and Brunner (1940) discussed the importance of matters relating to land tenure, size of farms and farm problems.

T. Lynn Smith (1953) deals extensively with the relations of man in rural settings under four separate headings: forms of settlement, land division, land tenure, and the size of holdings. In collaboration with Zopf (1970), Smith maintained that the precise areas of man-land relations are: the manner in which the people are distributed on the land, or form of settlement; the way in which the land is divided for the purpose of surveying or recording, or land division; the nature of property rights to the land, or land tenure; the distribution of ownership and control of land, or size of holdings and size of farm; and the ways of extracting a living from the soil, or systems of agriculture. Smith and Zopf maintain that the size of holdings and the size of farms are the primary determinants of the
well being of those who are dependent upon agricultural and pastoral activities for their livelihood.

Loomis and Beegle (1950) suggested that rural relationships are positively correlated to human culture, interaction, and social stratification. Their thesis draws especially from Sorokin's meaningful interaction of two or more individuals and his requirement that interaction be an event by which one party tangibly influences the overt actions or the state of mind of the other. They also emphasized the importance of the family farm, particularly in the development of individual abilities and motivation, and suggested that the size of the farm would reflect habits of life and work.

The small farm exhibits certain characteristics that tend to isolate it from other types of social organization. According to Loomis and Beegle (1950) it more closely approximates a gemeinschaft type of social organization. The small farm projects the following characteristics:

1. The closeness of the farm to other areas of life - Small farms tend to be characterized by a remarkable degree of closeness to the family, to religion, to education, to politics, and to recreation. It is this closeness to relationships that is a primary factor in making the small farmers' world a distinct social world. Loomis (1950) suggests that the need for space, the absence of urbanization, and the family business, make farming a complex which is
particularly closely articulated and well-integrated with other cultural elements.

(2) Peak Activities - Many work activities exhibit a seasonal or daily variation. At the time of harvest there is not only an enormous concentration of work, but also a concentration of attention. Where a whole year's income is involved, then much of the family's and the whole community's attention is focused on the harvest and on prices if the crops planted are commercial. The periods of non-peak activities are usually neatly integrated in the pattern of total community activities.

(3) A low degree of predictability - Except for crops with a very short growing period there is usually a considerable time lapse between planting, harvesting, and marketing. This makes it necessary for the small farmer to take long range chances. He does not know what the weather will be like, what the prices will be, or whether he will be able to get labor in the week or on the day when he needs it.

Although it has been common in the past for professionals to write off the small scale producers as non-viable and uneconomic, the trend toward the importance of the small farmer is gradually increasing. While there is still criticism of the small farmer, professional attitudes are changing to the extent that these small farmers are gaining widespread attention in regard to policy making.
The Conceptualization of the Small Farmer in America

At the present time, there is very little consensus on who the small farmer is, and what his characteristics are. Numerous types of small farmers have been identified in the literature. Some characterizations that have been used are: small, small-scale, low income, limited resource, low resource, subsistence, part-time, retirement, hobby, family and family-sized (in that only family labor is used). The way that the small farm is conceptualized has an important impact on the social and economic characteristics of the small farmer, the types of problems that they may encounter and the most effective ways of solving these problems. The parameters of the conceptualization have ranged from the size dimension, to the amount of hired labor, to the number of hours worked off of the farm, and to the type of production that exists.

Hunt (1942) suggests that there is no single measure to determine the small farmer. Whatever measure of size that is used should be selected on the basis of the type of farm that exists. As a result, the size of the farm should be related to income, acreages, the efficient use of factors of production such as equipment and labor, to yields, to economy in buying and selling, to cost of credit, and to the amount of products produced for home consumption.
Ackerman and Harris (1947) relate the small farm to the family farm. They suggest that the farm is basically a production unit. In economic terms it is a firm, a going concern. The family is a sociological entity, as related to either production or consumption. The family farm concept, therefore, must be built in socio-economic terms, which describes it as something that actually can exist and does not necessitate reclassification as farm technology develops and as the supply of farm labor changes. The fundamental elements of a farm as a viable entity are land, labor, capital, and management. In its most rigid form, then, a family farm is one in which these four factors reside wholly within the family that works the land.

Johnson and Hargroder (1973) combining the variables of income and age, define the small farmer as a land owner whose farm had a value of farm products sold of $50.00 to $7,999 provided that the farm operator was under 65 years of age and the gross farm income accounted for more than fifty percent of the total family income. Similarly, the present definition that is used by the United States Department of Agriculture also emphasize the income situation. It conceptualizes the small farmer as an operator who markets less than $20,000 worth of farm products and has an off-farm income of less than $5,000.
Murray and Coughenour (1977), in a study of small farmers in the south, developed the following profile of small farmers. They are relatively old, lacking in education, low in family income, stable in employment and location, are better off than a decade ago, cannot purchase necessities, rate their income situation and political situation as poor, and are satisfied with the "good situation" in educational opportunities, public housing, wages, salaries, and agriculture. They concluded that small farmers in 1977 less often than in the early 1960's depend primarily on farming. Some have dual stable careers, others supplement their farm income with welfare or retirement. They realized that family incomes have improved, but family requirements have also increased even more rapidly. Judged against current desires, current income seems less adequate than ever before.

Orden, et. al. (1978), in their study of Small Farms in Louisiana, recognize that no definition of the small farmer will be agreed upon by everyone. They suggest that the current consensus appears to be that a small farmer is a farm operator whose gross farm sales are insufficient to provide an adequate family income.
The "Quality of Life" for Small Farmers

Goldschmidt (1947), in his study of Arvin and Dinuba, California, treated farm size as an independent variable and the character of social life and organization as dependent variables. He found that the two towns varied remarkably, variances that were consistent, statistically significant, and all in support of the principle that independent family farms create a healthier rural community. Though the total dollar volume of agricultural production was the same, the communities differed in the following ways:

(1) The small farms community (Dinuba) had twice as many business establishments as the large-farm town (Arvin) and did 61 percent more retail business, especially in household goods and building equipment.

(2) The small farms supported about 20 percent more people and at a measurably higher level of living.

(3) The majority of the small farm community population were independent entrepreneurs, as against less than 20 percent in the large farm community, where nearly two-thirds were agricultural wage laborers.

(4) The small farm community in all instances had better community facilities: more schools, more parks, more newspapers, more civic organizations and more churches.

(5) Physical facilities for community living - paved streets, sidewalks, garbage disposal, sewage disposal and other public services - were far greater in the small
farm community; indeed, in the industrial farm community some of these facilities were entirely wanting.

(6) The small farm community had more institutions for democratic decision-making and a much broader participation in such activities by its citizenry.

Thirty years after the original publishing of his study, Goldschmidt (1978b) stated that rural sociologists have indulged in an over-long siesta, to the extent that they know no more about the "quality of life" in rural communities than that discovered in the studies of the 1940's. With the ending of New Deal liberalism in agriculture stimulated by the Agricultural Appropriations Act of 1947, there was a decline of investigations into the character of rural life. Goldschmidt (1978b:15) states:

As sociologists and as individuals with careers in the investigation of the problematic aspects of social conditions, we did not suffer. Most of us - myself and a generation of rural sociologists proper - turned our attention to overseas conditions, examining rural problems where it was safe. We did not threaten the local power structure. While we were thus engaged, three million farms disappeared from the American scene and with them hundreds of thousands of small businesses.

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), in summing up a large amount of evidence on the relations between norms and small groups, speak of the "instrumental function" by which they mean the benefits that a group has to offer those who will
identify with it. One of the most important factors of identification is that of personal satisfaction. Within the informal group, the member secures a haven from the impersonal, rationalized relationships within which he must move in his interactive situations. It is here that he gets intimate response, understanding and recognition, and that he finds persons who understand him, are interested in his problems, and want to hear him talk about these problems.

Gross (1956) suggests that types of satisfaction are highly variable, however, two major types are "symbiotic" and "consensual." The "symbiotic" denotes that the individual finds himself in an informal group with others who can act as a complementary resource to him. The "consensual" is that which the individual secures from associating with those who hold beliefs and attitudes similar to his own.

Straus (1956) calls attention to a major selective factor when he writes, "Farming is a hereditary occupation to an extent almost unknown for other occupations in modern American society. By and large, only farmers' sons become farmers." Most small farmers grew up on farms themselves. This experience results in the internalization of a set of values which makes it difficult for those who have not had that experience to enter farming; in addition to the skills which are required, so too is a love of farming developed. Small farmers tend to show some satisfaction with the farm
environment for their children and the escape from the disadvantages of living and working in the cities.

According to Murray and Coughenour (1977), small farmers are more satisfied than dissatisfied with their quality of life and the direction of change. Far more small farmers felt the agricultural situation had improved during the past decade and that the situation is currently good despite low income. It appears that most of the small farmers are strongly attached to farming.

In a study by Wilkening (1978), it was shown that people who live in rural areas are generally more satisfied with their life style because they tend to have considerably more intimate interaction with other people. Youth education, wealth, and employment are factors that play a small part in making people happy. Wilkening suggests that satisfaction occurs when one has attained those goals in life that one finds important, not just high incomes. The raised aspirations resulting from higher education and income can lead to less satisfaction, rather than more satisfaction. People are satisfied in rural areas and small communities because conditions are more favorable and the aspirations are lower, and there is an increased likelihood of knowing one's neighbors. Wilkening concludes that the nature and extent of personal contact with neighbors tend to be positively related to general satisfaction.
The decline of the small family farm has been the greatest single indicator in the rapid disappearance of the self-employed category in the American work force. This decline caused alterations in work patterns and attitudes of small farmers. With the influx of specialization and technology in rural communities, the psychological value of the labor necessary for the small farm operation began to decline. The farm work ceased to offer direct satisfactions, rather the emphasis of the small farmer shifted from performance to pecuniary rewards, and to purchasable, rather than to social satisfaction (Terkel, 1974).

The Agricultural Cooperative as an aid for Small Farmers

The "War on Poverty" years, starting in 1964, motivated the development of a number of agricultural cooperatives to aid small farmers in coping with the disadvantages that were involved in their systems of production and marketing. These agricultural cooperatives were steadily increasing until 1973 when Congress abandoned the Office of Economic Opportunity which was a major funding agency for their development. This abandonment of the Office of Economic Opportunity caused serious financial problems for many of these cooperatives and eventually caused their liquidation, while others struggled to provide continued, but limited services for small farmers.
A cooperative is a business that is designed for making profits, and those small farmers who participate more in the cooperative will be more likely to get the most out of it. The hope has run high that such institutions might provide some help, however limited, to the thousands of small farmers whose ranks have been decimated by inability to compete effectively against increasingly large corporate farms.

Roy (1964) states that the small family-owned farms have disadvantages in marketing and production but that some of these can be overcome through the participation in cooperatives. Roy suggests that in order for the cooperative to be used as an instrument to help the small farmer, it may have to be modified, at least as it has traditionally operated in the United States. He suggests that a "true" cooperative is one which limits returns on capital; votes on the basis of one man, one vote; and allocates all net earnings to its members. A "quasi" cooperative is one which meets at least one of these conditions. The small farms would be stronger through cooperatives and cooperatives would be stronger through the participation of small farmers. In this regard, mechanization, combined with greater specialization may require more acreages, leading to a more efficient type of small farm, while management, member education, citizenship and public relations would be the goals of the cooperative.
Fortunately, however, these agricultural cooperatives have proven to be fairly flexible in meeting the needs of people under a wide variety of circumstances.

Zippert (1969) found that agricultural cooperatives can be a viable alternative for low-income persons only if these persons can perceive some benefits received relative to the cost of their participation. The most important factors of participation were understanding the goals of the cooperatives, a sense of responsibility, and active participation in the decision-making process. The study also indicated the role of a charismatic leader as a motivating factor for participation in a cooperative.

Ulmer (1969) in assessing the cooperative movement among poor people in the rural south listed the following goals of cooperatives: Are cooperatives helping people to obtain (1) more money; (2) decent housing; (3) land for farms, industry, and recreation; (4) adequate food; (5) education or the chance for self-development; (6) political and economic power; (7) adequate circumstances to keep young people from leaving the rural area; (8) strong, organized communities; (9) a measure of security in terms of such things as insurance against bad health, unemployment, and death? Ulmer concludes that the cooperative's strength is built upon the loyalty of its members, and the quality of service it can provide. If cooperatives are strengthened
and expanded in these areas, and subsidized on a long term basis, they can make an economic impact on the lives of small farmers.

Marshall and Godwin (1971) note that the economic future of small farmers clearly has important implications for the development of cooperatives. They argue that cooperatives can make it possible for small farmers to acquire the advantages of large-scale production and marketing techniques while maintaining a family farm. They conclude that small farmers can gain some of the advantages of both small-scale operations (to which they are committed by necessity) and large-scale marketing and purchasing activities if they can form cooperatives.

The future success of agricultural cooperatives as an aid to small farmers will largely depend on how well they adjust their operations to the changing and growing needs of their members. To improve operating performance will require increased emphasis on competent management, more effective member participation and public information programs, and adequate financial resources.
CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to set forth an appropriate, explicit, and comprehensive theoretical framework for subsequent conceptualizations and analyses of the problem and findings of this study. It is the researcher's opinion that an examination of the relationships between an individual and his group are necessary for a theoretical understanding of why different patterns of social organization emerge, persist, and/or change.

The Concept of Social Organization

No concept has been more central to sociology's existence than "social organization." And yet, it would appear that little agreement exists within sociology about any precise conceptualization of the term. As Znaniecki (1945) stated some thirty years ago:

A malicious critic of sociology could hardly find a better way of arousing skepticism about its scientific status than by collecting definitions given by sociologists of social organization and comparing the various ways in which relationships between organization and institutions are conceived. It is absolutely impossible to introduce any logical order into the present terminological chaos.

Hertzler's (1946) review of the different conceptualizations further illustrates the diversity of the concept
of social organization, as it was found over thirty years ago. Summarizing Hertzler, we find: (a) social organization may be looked upon as a social condition in which the associated individuals are in a state of static relationship; (b) social organization may be viewed in its structural and dynamic aspect as a substantive going concern; (c) social organization is viewed structurally as a comprehensive, complex and coordinated set of human relationships in the form of many differentiated groups; (d) social organization may be viewed processually or operationally, as the functioning mechanism of existence of associated human beings; (e) social organization may be thought of as a vast cultural complex; and (f) occasionally, social organization is thought of as social reorganization, that is as a deliberate planned process of strengthening social structure. Hertzler provided his own conceptualization which indicated the great breadth he felt the concept must have.

In general, social organization simply means that some sort of continuous and functioning ordering, arrangement, organization or patterning exists in the world of associated men. Societies, nations, communities, cities, villages and neighborhoods, institutional and service groups, including families, governmental units, schools, churches and libraries, occupational classes and other economic groupings, health and recreational, expressive and welfare agencies, all constitute forms of human association, form or orientation and arrangement and regularized functioning of interrelated human beings. Social organization, in fact, subsumes not only the structure, but also the function, and even the process of society (p.15).
Over twenty years after Hertzler, Olsen (1968:212-226) suggested that social organization could be analyzed from the following approaches: (a) a structural analysis which is used to describe and classify structural patterns of observed social phenomena; (b) a process analysis which is used to inquire into the on-going social processes that constitute social reality; (c) a causal analysis which is used to construct and verify inferences about cause and effect relationships among social phenomena; and (d) a functional analysis which is used to determine the consequences of social activities for the social setting in which they occur and, more precisely, for the fulfillment of organizational requirement. Olsen's own conceptualization was that:

Social organization is a dynamic process of bringing order and meaning into human social life... Since it involves at least two or more interacting persons it is the process of merging social actors into ordered social relationships, which become infused with cultural ideas... It is either actions and processes, or objects and entities (pp. 2-4).

More recently, Olsen (1978:31) in representing the interrelated wholeness of social organization, frequently employed the social system model. He recognized, however, that the social system model was not a representation of reality, but an analytical tool which enabled the conceptualization of social organization as a dynamic entity which
continuously displayed both morphostatic and morphogenic processes which simultaneously functioned to maintain and alter social organization.

Social organization develops as individuals interact to create ongoing relationships that form patterns of ordering that become infused with shared meanings... That is, organization emerges from the actions of individual personalities and can never be completely separated from them... Every instance of social organization displays a unique patterning of characteristics that gives it emergent reality... This emergence is itself a dynamic process that is continually being created (pp. 8-10).

Similarly, Bertrand (1972:3) implies a dynamic aspect of social organization when he suggests that social organization conveys the meaning of an organized network of social interaction which is relevant in terms of a given structural unit. The dynamics of this social organization arise from the fact that the component elements of social structures are linked almost entirely through the intercommunication of information.

The concept of social organization is viewed as involving both social differentiation and social integration. These are not static states but dynamic processes as well. As a result of these processes, social life becomes ordered and meaningful for the participants. The social organization needs to be relatively stable, yet at the same time it must be flexible in order to allow for adaptation to changing circumstances.
The structural dimension of social organization is a set of relationships in which social change is the basic element. Values, cultural norms, interpersonal influence, socialization, and reference group behavior are all related to the general process of social organization. As people attempt to satisfy their needs, accomplish their goals, and deal with the problems of their existence, social organization arises.

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the social organization found among a group of small farmers. Of course, to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the many facets of social organization would be nearly impossible (dependent on the conceptualization of social organization utilized). It would be safe to say that there are as many conceptions of social organization as there are paradigms in sociology. If anything, there are probably more conceptions than that since many sociologists are what might be called "paradigmless" (Chung, 1979), hence possessing their own conceptions. In this study only a very restricted literature on social organization will be cited and incorporated into the theoretical view utilized. This literature is most easily categorized as being within the symbolic interaction tradition.
Symbolic Interaction and Social Organization

Symbolic Interaction, according to Blumer (1969:1-6), refers to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or "define" each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their "response" is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions.

In the symbolic interaction perspective, social action and interaction are constantly being created through a process of self-indication, in which the person pieces together and guides his actions by interpreting everything of relevance to him in terms of its significance for his goal seeking activities. Methodologically, this means that what is important is to "catch" the interpretative process of interaction as it occurs in the experience of the acting units which use it; above all, one must avoid viewing "human society in terms of structure or organization" and treating "social action" as an expression of such structure or organization (Blumer, 1969:188-189).
Cooley (1962:23) saw the individual as a unique personality because he is the product of a unique combination of influences. This unique individual is cause as well as result of the larger life to which he is a part. Each individual is given the power of choice, however, his choices are limited to the social material to which he has access. The individual is never independent of society, he is forever inextricably tied in with the whole world of individuals. In a special way, however, he is bound to one, or possibly two or three small intimate groups to which Cooley used the term "primary group." There is no question in the individual's mind but that he belongs in a very real sense to his family and possibly to his local community or neighborhood. His dependence upon the larger society may hardly occur to him unless he is given to the habit of reflection, and even then it may seem to him but a shadowy relationship. The members of his primary group are his people, while those not in his immediate group may be to him simply outsiders.

The especially significant fact about the primary group relationship is that the individual's mind, or sense of social self tends to take on a certain stamp, characteristic of the group to which he is a member. This sense of social self develops as the individual undergoes a number of "looking glass self" experiences in which he interprets
the gestures of others and sees himself from the viewpoint of others - sees himself as he imagines others see him.

Utilizing the concepts of Cooley, Mead (1934) inserted the "self" as an object in the interaction process and stressed the fact that the outcome of interaction will be affected by the ways in which self-conceptions change the interpretation of gestures and subsequent rehearsal of alternative lines of behavior. This perspective of acting emphasizes that society and various patterns of social organization are both perpetuated and changed through the adjustive capacities of "mind" and the mediating impact of self. Mead (1934:261-262) states:

Thus the institutions of society are organized forms of group or social activity, forms so organized that the individual members of society can act adequately and socially by taking the attitudes of others toward these activities. There is no necessary or inevitable reason why social institutions should be oppressive or rigidly conservative, or why they should not rather be, as many are, flexible and progressive, fostering individuality rather than discouraging it.

According to Mead (1934:227), social organization is an emergent phenomenon, arising out of the adjustive interactions among individuals. Human society as we know it could not exist without minds and selves, since all its most characteristic features presuppose the possession of minds and selves by its individual members; but its individual members would not possess minds and selves if they had not arisen
within or emerged out of the human social process. This process is essentially what is called "taking the role of the other," in which the individual anticipates the meanings that others give to his actions. As the individual "takes the role of the other" in social interaction, he learns to view himself as others see him, from a partially objective rather than a wholly subjective viewpoint.

**Definition of the Situation**

In symbolic interaction, human beings assign meanings to, or define each other's actions as symbols instead of merely reacting to these actions as signs. One's response to another's action is therefore based not on the action itself, but on the meaning that one assumes the other actor is attempting to convey through his action. According to Thomas (1972) society is created, maintained, and changed by human capacities for thinking and defining as well as for self-reflection and evaluation. In other words, society, or a relatively stable pattern of interaction, is possible only through the capacity of people to define situations and to view themselves as objects in those situations.

As an individual engages in social interaction, he is continually interpreting or defining everything happening in that situation, and his subsequent actions are largely shaped by these "definitions of the situation." Since a situation entails no central principle of organization, no
set of fixed relations at its heart, its participants presumably may redefine its loosely bound elements one at a time, incrementally changing its overall character (Gonos, 1977:860).

Meanings and definitions of situations are expressed among participants through symbolic communication. The processes of human interaction and communication are inexorably interwoven in the symbolic interaction theory.

Social Ordering

As participants perpetuate the process of symbolic interaction through time they create social relationships exhibiting a degree of valid communication and the sharing of meanings. This allows for the patterning of collective activities. Social organization becomes that coordination of action which is created and sustained by the meanings that emerge from interaction. According to Blumer (1969), social organization enters into action only to the extent to which it supplies fixed sets of symbols which people use in interpreting their situation. For the individual, then, it is not that he fully comprehends social organization as some real, reified entity. Rather, he has a "sense" of it. Its exact meaning at any time is situationally determined. He only understands "it" as he directly encounters and experiences it (Falk and Pinhey, 1978).
Shared Culture

As people communicate the meanings of their actions to each other, work out shared interpretations of activities, and define situations similarly, they develop a common culture that is more or less shared by all of the participants. This shared culture influences and directs the social organization of the participants by providing them with interpretations of social life, role expectations, common definitions of situations, and social norms. To the extent that a common core of basic interaction patterns, role expectations, norms, and values are internalized into all of the participants in the interaction, social organization is possible (Cooley, 1962). It is always against the experiential backdrop that the individual acts. The degree to which the individual agrees with others on norms, roles, values, etc. will determine the degree to which he will interact with them in a more or less non-problematic way.

In light of discussion of symbolic interaction thus far, some of the basic assumptions of this theoretical perspective may be summarized as follows:

(1) The human mind and sense of social self, which are the foundations of all social organization, are created through symbolic interaction as the individual "takes the role of the other" and views himself as an object.
(2) To the extent that actors respond to the intended meanings they infer from the actions of others, rather than to overt behavior, they are engaging in symbolic interaction.

(3) Symbolic interaction results in valid communications to the extent that the actors correctly interpret the meanings that others attach to their actions.

(4) Social ordering becomes possible to the degree that actors share meanings and definitions of situations and act collectively on the basis of these common interpretations.

(5) Social organization is maintained and perpetuated to the extent that social actors share a common culture composed of collective meanings and norms.

Although the symbolic interaction view is extremely useful in the present study, it is important to understand that it provides only a partial explanation of the situations to be addressed. It is necessary to provide a theoretical perspective that more closely approximates the reality of the interactions that occur within group settings that may both enhance and impede group performance and goals. For the most part, the interaction perspective fails to account for the realm of social order, or patterned group relationships, which are necessary in this study. It tends to jump directly from interacting individuals (who interpret situations and guide their actions by these meanings) to the level of shared culture (which is created through the sharing of meanings
in symbolic communications). Although symbolic interaction theory does not deny the existence of social ordering, it largely ignores processes at this level of ordering, or else incorporates them into the concept of shared culture (Olsen, 1978:108-109). Because of this failure to explicitly deal with the patterns of social order, it is necessary to incorporate an alternative form of symbolic interaction into the theoretical framework of this study. This alternative form of interaction is a synthesis of symbolic interaction and role theory.

The Synthesis of Symbolic Interaction and Role Theory

Over the past two decades, Ralph Turner has consistently criticized the role theory perspective as it presently exists. The primary criticisms include such things as: (1) role theory presents an overly structured view of the world, with its emphasis on norms, status positions, and the

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3It must be noted here that the theoretical framework from Ralph Turner has not been put in print under his authorship. Instead, what one finds is Ralph Turner's most recent views outlined by Jonathan Turner (1978) who was provided a number of working papers and unpublished works by Ralph Turner. The unpublished papers used by J. Turner (1978) were: "A Strategy for Developing an Integrated Role Theory;" "Role Theory as Theory;" "The Role and the Person;" and "Role-Taking as Process." For a further discussion of this synthesis, see Jonathan Turner (1978), The Structure of Sociological Theory. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press.
the enactment of normative expectations; (2) role theory tends to concentrate an inordinate amount of research and theory building effort on "abnormal" social processes, such as role conflict and role strain, thereby ignoring the normal processes of human interaction; (3) role theory is not theory, but rather, a series of disjointed and unconnected propositions; (4) role theory has not utilized, to the degree required, Mead's concept of "role-taking" as its central concept.

To minimize these failures in role theory, Turner (1978) suggests that interaction theory concentrate its efforts on developing abstract theory which uses Mead's interpretation of role-taking and focuses on normal social processes. Consequently, by developing abstract propositions about major social processes, role theory can explain both highly structured and fluid patterns of interaction.

The Concept of Role

The concept of role has had a variety of meanings for sociologists which has motivated the development of a "model of conformity" in which actors perceive, enact, and receive social approval for conforming behavior. Turner (1962) suggests that this "model of conformity" accounts for only certain empirical situations. Much action and
interaction does not involve simple conformity but active construction and reciprocal lines of conduct among actors who seek to come to terms with each other in less structured situations. The concepts related to role theory, such as actor, other, situation or role will take on greater meaning as propositions that utilize these concepts are developed.

Turner adopts Blumer's position that theorists must begin with "sensitizing concepts." Blumer (1969:147-149) proposed that what he called the "definitive concept," that refers precisely to what is common to a class of objects, give way in sociology to the less powerful "sensitizing concept" to prevent unwarranted generalizations. As he explained, "working with and through the distinctive or unique nature of the empirical instance, instead of casting this unique nature aside calls, seemingly by necessity, for a sensitizing concept." Role theory, Turner concludes, must recognize this fact and incorporate the varying definitions or role into a unified conception that can capture the interactive processes underlying the creation, maintenance, and change patterns of social organization.

Assumptions of the Synthesis

The synthesis presented above entails certain new assumptions which must be specified. These assumptions are drawn from the work of Ralph Turner (1968) as presented by both himself and in their restated form presented by Jonathan Turner (1978).
The Role-Making Process - As people interact, they emit gestures by essentially placing themselves in the role of the other. The role-taking process is transformed into a role-making process in which humans act as if all others in their environment are playing identifiable roles.

The Norm of Consistency - As people interact, they assess behavior not in terms of its conformity to imputed norms, but rather in regard to its consistency. There is an implicit "norm of consistency" in people's interactions with each other.

The Tentative Nature of Interaction - Interaction is always a tentative process, a process of continuously testing the conception one has of the role of the other. Humans are constantly interpreting additional cues emitted by others and using these cues to see if they are consistent with those previously emitted and with the imputed roles of others.

The Process of Role Verification - Role verification and validation are achieved by the application of internal and external criteria. The internal criterion is the degree to which the actor perceives the imputation of a role to another as facilitating interaction. The external criterion is the actor's assessment of whether a role is likely to be judged by important people, relevant groups, or commonly agreed upon standards.
(5) Self-conception and role - Actors tend to present themselves in ways that will reinforce their self-conceptions. Roles which are not consistent with the person's self-conception are likely to be played with considerable distance and disdain, while those which an individual considers central to self definition will be played much differently.

As a result of the stated assumptions, Turner (1978) develops what he calls "main tendency" propositions. These main tendency statements are not true propositions because they are not in the form: under $C_1, C_2, C_3 \ldots C_n$, $x$ varies with $y$. Rather they are statements in the form: in most normal situations, event $x$ tends to occur. They are not statements of co-variance, but statements of what is presumed to typically transpire in the course of interaction. They are used to link concepts to empirical regularities and develop statements which would highlight what tends to occur in the normal operation of systems of interaction. These main tendency propositions are centered around six issues.

Emergence and Character of Roles

(1) In any interactive situation, behavior, sentiments, and motives tend to be differentiated into units which can be termed roles; once differentiated, elements of behavior, sentiment and motives which appear in the same situation tend to be assigned to existing roles. (Tendencies for role differentiation and accretion.)
(2) In any interactive situation, the meaning of individual actions for ego (the actor) and for alters is assigned on the basis of the imputed role. (Tendencies for meaningfulness.)

(3) In connection with every role, there is a tendency for certain attributes of actors, aspects of behavior and features of situations to become salient cues for the identification of roles. (Tendencies for role cues.)

(4) The character of a role, that is, its definition, will tend to change if there are persistent changes in either the behaviors of those presumed to be playing the role or the contexts in which the role is played. (Tendencies for behavioral correspondence.)

(5) Every role tends to acquire an evaluation in terms of rank and social desirability. (Tendencies for evaluation.)

Role as an Interactive Framework

(1) The establishment and persistence of interaction tends to depend upon the emergence and identification of ego and alter roles. (Tendency for interaction in terms of roles.)

(2) Each role tends to form a comprehensive way of coping with one or more relevant alter roles. (Tendency for role complementarity.)

(3) There is a tendency for stabilized roles to be assigned the character of legitimate expectations. (Tendency for legitimate expectations.)

Role in Relation to Actor

(1) Once stabilized, the role structure tends to persist, regardless of changes in actors. (Tendency for role persistence.)
(2) There is a tendency to identify a given individual with a given role, and a complementary tendency for an individual to adopt a given role, for the duration of the interaction. (Tendency in role allocation.)

(3) To the extent to which ego's role is an adaptation to alter's role, it incorporates some conception of alter's role. (Tendency for role-taking.)

(4) Role behavior tends to be judged as adequate or inadequate by comparison with a conception of the role in question. (Tendency to assess role adequacy.)

(5) The degree of adequacy in role performance of an actor determines the extent to which others will respond and reciprocate an actor's role performance. (Tendency for role reciprocity.)

**Role in Organizational Settings**

(1) To the extent to which roles are incorporated into an organizational setting, organizational goals tend to become crucial criteria for role differentiation, evaluation, complementarity, legitimacy or expectation, consensus, allocation, and judgements of adequacy. (Tendency for organization goal dominance.)

(2) To the extent to which roles are incorporated into an organizational setting, the right to define the legitimate character of roles, to set the evaluations on roles, to allocate roles, and to judge role adequacy tend to be lodged in particular roles. (Tendency for legitimate role definers.)

(3) To the extent to which roles are incorporated into an organization setting, differentiation tends to link roles to statuses in the organization. (Tendency for status.)

(4) To the extent to which roles are incorporated into an organizational setting, each role tends to develop as a pattern of adaptation to multiple alter roles. (Tendency for role sets.)
(5) To the extent to which roles are incorporated into an organizational setting, the persistence of roles is intensified through tradition and formalization. (Tendency for formalization.)

Role in Societal Setting

(1) Similar roles in different contexts tend to become merged, so as to be identified as a single role recurring in different relationships. (Tendency for economy or roles.)

(2) To the extent to which roles are referred to a social context, differentiation tends to link roles to social values. (Tendency for value anchorage.)

(3) The individual in society tends to be assigned and to assume roles which are consistent with each other. (Tendency for allocation consistency.)

Role and the Person

(1) Actors tend to act so as to alleviate role strain arising out of role contradiction, role conflict, and role inadequacy, and to heighten the gratifications of high role adequacy. (Tendency to resolve role strain.)

(2) Individuals in society tend to adopt as a framework for their own behavior and as a perspective for interpretation of the behavior of others a repertoire of role relationships. (Tendency to be socialized into common culture.)

(3) Individuals tend to form self-conceptions by selective identification of certain roles from their repertoires as more characteristically "themselves" than other roles. (Tendency to anchor self-conception.)

(4) The self-conception tends to stress those roles which supply the basis for effective adaptation to relevant alters. (Adaptivity of self-conception tendency.)
To the extent to which roles that must be played in situations contradict the self-conception, those roles will be assigned role distance and mechanisms of demonstrating lack of personal involvement employed. (Tendency for role distance.)

These tendency propositions are not true propositions in that they do not reveal relations of co-variance among variables. However, Turner (1978) believes that these propositions can help to generate true empirical propositions of the form: $x$ varies with $y$. This is done by attempting to determine the empirical conditions that shape the degree or rate of variation in a tendency proposition. These tendency propositions provide an initial set of guidelines for developing true propositions about relationships among variables.

The Synthesis Applied to the Study of Small Farmers

A major assumption of this study is that behavior is learned and is adaptive to the cultural milieu in which it occurs. A consistent finding in the research pertaining to the relationship between behavior and culture is that a person's beliefs, attitudes, opinions and patterns of behavior are related to his position in the social group. It has previously been pointed out that because of the interpretation given to small farmers by the society in which
they live, they tend to adapt a sub-cultural orientation. Closely aligned with this sub-cultural orientation is the possibility of the small farmers viewing themselves as marginal persons.

The small farmer can be better understood as existing with both temporal and spatial dimensions within an environment that contains other important units of society which are mutually influential in determining problems and goals. The theoretical model considering these spatial and temporal dimensions of the interactions of small farmers used in this study embraces the following assumptions:

(1) **Role Making Process** - As small farmers interact with others there is a tendency to experience their world as roles. The small farmers can identify with these roles by "putting themselves in the other's role." This would essentially allow for interaction and cooperation among the small farmers.

(2) **The "Folk Norm of Consistency"** - As small farmers interact with others, they group the other's behavior into a coherent pattern. In so doing, they are able to "make sense" of the other's actions, anticipate responses from others, and adjust their responses to others. If the responses from others are not consistent with role expectations, then social interaction will be problematic.
(3) **The tentative nature of interaction** - The interactions of small farmers are judged on a previously existing social organization. However, small farmers are constantly interpreting interactional cues to assess their consistency with previously existing ones. If they are consistent, small farmers will continue to adjust responses based on the imputed role of others. But if they are inconsistent, the perception of the other's role will be revised. The imputation of a role will persist as long as it provides a stable framework for interaction.

(4) **The process of Role Verification** - Small farmers have a need to verify that the interactional situations in which they are involved do constitute role behavior. This verification of behavior is based on a modeling of his behavior after other members of his community who engage in a similar life style or through groups and organizations to which he belongs.

(5) **Self-conception and role** - The self-conceptions of small farmers are attached to their roles. They develop self-attitudes and feelings out of their interactions with others, and present themselves in certain ways so as to reinforce their self-conceptions.

These assumptions are based on the processual nature of the roles of small farmers which emphasize both the temporal and spatial dimensions of their life situations.
They also point to the normal processes of interaction, yet they are sufficiently general to embrace the possibility of conflicting and stressful interactions. The structured nature of interactions is also implicit in these assumptions since formal norms and status positions are the major factors in determining the roles of small farmers, in addition to being a basic source of validation for imputed roles.

This study will utilize the "main tendency" propositions used by Turner (1978) as a guideline for establishing empirical propositions about the interactions of small farmers eventually assessing the nature of their social organization.

**Emergence and Character of Roles**

Small farmers are seen as viewing their social world in terms of roles; they use "folk norms" to achieve consistency in behavior and assign behavioral elements to imputed roles (role differentiation and accretion). They are viewed as interpreting situations by imputing roles to each other (meaningfulness tendency). Small farmers are observed to use cues of others, and the situation they are in, to identify roles (role cue). When role situations are permanently altered, the definition of the role will also undergo change (behavioral correspondence). Small farmers evaluate roles by ranking them in terms of power, prestige,
and esteem, while assessing them with regard to their degree of social desirability (tendency for evaluation).

Role as an Interactive Framework

The interaction of small farmers is dependent upon how they identify their roles. In addition, their roles tend to complement each other, such as husband-wife, or parent-child, and operate to regularize interactions. Those roles which are useful to small farmers and which allow for stable interaction are translated into legitimate expectations for future interactions.

Role in Relation to Actor

As soon as small farmers identify and assign each other to roles, these roles persist and other's will be assigned those roles when situationally appropriate. These farmers will adopt these roles for the duration of the interaction, in addition to understanding the role that others are playing. They will have a general conception of what the role requirements are and what constitutes adequate role performance. This adequacy of role performance will influence the way in which the role and its requirements are acknowledged by the small farmers.

Role in Organizational Settings

In structured situations, the goals of the organization and key personnel are important in the role-making
process for small farmers. The organizational setting facilitates the merger of the individual status and his role, and the development of ways of adapting to a number of other roles which are assigned by role definers or required by organizational goals. In addition, the organization facilitates the formalization of roles, in that written agreements and tradition come to have the power to maintain the role system and shape normative expectations.

Role in Societal Setting

The roles for small farmers are identified, assumed and imputed in the broader societal context, by grouping these roles within a unifying frame. The small farmers will identify societal roles as a means of "making sense" of their behavioral situations. In the societal setting, values become important for small farmers as a basis for identifying, differentiating, allocating, evaluating, and legitimating roles. In addition, the multiplicity of roles is assumed, however, small farmers tend to take on those roles that are consistent with each other.

Role and the Person

As a result of the multiplicity of roles, poorly defined but nonetheless expected, it is assumed that role conflict is an ever present facet of the behavior of small farmers. Thus, small farmers are constantly seeking to
resolve tensions among roles and to avoid contradictions between self-conceptions and roles.

These assumptions emphasize the fluid nature of the interactive processes of the small farmers. In addition, they represent the micro processes by which these small farmers come to terms with each other in varying types of situational contexts.
CHAPTER IV

THE METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The research design used in this dissertation is a case study. The study focuses on a group of small farmers in St. Landry Parish, located in south central Louisiana. All of the farmers are participants in a Small Farmers Project sponsored by The Southern Development Foundation and funded by the United States Department of Labor.

Given the breadth of the questions to be addressed in the research, several different types of data collection techniques were utilized. These included secondary analysis from previously collected data, such as the United States Bureau of the Census, the Louisiana Agricultural Extension Service and the Department of Agricultural Economics at Louisiana State University; data from participant observation of small farmers; and informal interviews with the small farmers who are participating in the Small Farmers Project.

The secondary analysis provided some general information of prevailing conditions in the small farm communities and parish in which the small farmers were located. Much has been written about the land area of St. Landry Parish and the social and economic characteristics of its people. This is due to the facts that St. Landry Parish is one of the largest parishes in Louisiana, that much of the land
area contains valuable mineral deposits and that it has a large settlement of French-speaking people. In addition, the parish is bordered on the western side by the Atchafalaya River which has recently been the subject of both state and national discussions. This secondary analysis provided some background information about the prevailing conditions within the parish.

The participant observation provided detailed knowledge about the behavior of small farmers as they lived their lives, in everyday, situated contexts. The informal interviews were used in conjunction with the participant observation to provide some structural support for the generalizations of the findings.

In the participant observation phase of the research, which was the highlight of the study, six months were spent in observation in the predominantly rural homogeneous areas in St. Landry Parish where the small farmers were located. The observation took place in conjunction with the Southern Development Foundation Small Farmers Project which was funded by the United States Department of Labor.

The Southern Development Foundation

The Southern Development Foundation is a private, tax-exempted, non-profit foundation that provides technical and financial assistance to residents of rural communities,
particularly farming communities. It provides technical assistance in the form of management, management training, agricultural training, farm planning, accounting and marketing services.

The philosophy of the Southern Development Foundation is the creation, design, and propagation of innovative models for community development that are suitable for replication. It has been working with designs that show great potential for raising the income levels of small farmers, thereby helping to stabilize rural areas. The essential elements of these designs are land, land tenure, egalitarian distribution of income opportunities, the use of technology more appropriate to small scale farming, and economics of scale through cooperative purchasing, production, and marketing.

The Small Farmers Project is designed to provide specialized training in agricultural production, marketing, and management to farmworkers and small farmers. Special emphasis was placed on labor-intensive, higher-income producing technology transferral, with the development of the necessary markets to sustain trainee self-employment efforts.

The Southern Development Foundation plan encompasses the development of the necessary support infrastructure to sustain small farmers in agriculture. Elements
of this infrastructure are land, capital, appropriate technology, training, management, and markets. Other objectives of the project are:

(1) The fostering of the development of cooperatives to provide economies of scale for farmworkers and small farmers in the purchasing of farm inputs and marketing of outputs.

(2) The development of linkages between economic development activities and employment and training programs.

(3) The encouraging of farmers to pursue several specific enterprises. (a) a mix of vegetable crops (b) the use of greenhouses (c) the use of irrigation

(4) The use of central training facilities and farm management instruction.

(5) The use of Rural Development Extension Specialists to contract with small farmers on their own acreages who want to market through one of the economic development activities.

(6) The testing of the use of some centralized technical assistance on an as needed basis.

(7) The use of Rural Development Extension Specialists to locate local, state, and federal resources to provide services for participants.

The small farmers were trained at the Southern Development Foundation's Experimental Farm located in Lawtell, Louisiana. The Experimental Farm is an eight acre demonstration plot designed to serve as a training center for small acreage owners or renters of farmland. Generally,
in order to participate in the Small Farmers Project, ownership or access to at least four (4) acres of land was required. Because most of the production capacity of small farms is never utilized, farm incomes of small farmers are unnecessarily low. A reported income of less than $5,000 from the farm enterprise was also necessary to participate in the project.

The concept behind the Experimental Farm was to provide economically disadvantaged small farmers with the requisite skills in vegetable production so that they could recognize the full income potentials of their land. The Experimental Farm trained fifty¹ small farmers on a part-time basis of twenty hours a week. These farmers learned actual production techniques for a variety of vegetables. Laboratory field work was supplemented by classroom training in farm and business management. The farmers trained at the Experimental Farm had some access to local retail markets.

¹Although the Small Farmers Project was limited to 50 farmers, a total of 54 farmers were used in this analysis. In January 1979, four farmers were terminated from the project for failure to meet the requirements of the project. Because these farmers were members of the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative, minimal contact was maintained with these farmers. Immediately after these farmers were terminated, four additional farmers were added to the project. There was ample time remaining in the participant observation to establish rapport with these new project participants.
The St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative, whose headquarters was located at the Experimental Farm, presently administers a farmer's market in Opelousas, Louisiana, the St. Landry Parish seat. Other retail markets in the parish were being developed with the assistance of the Southern Development Foundation.

The small farmers being trained at the Experimental Farm were encouraged to grow vegetables on their own farms after completing an initial training phase of three to six months. Field supervision and extension work on their own acreages were provided by Rural Development Extension Specialists employed by the Southern Development Foundation for these purposes.

The small farmers were provided capital to finance their operations through a number of methods. First, and a unique characteristic of the project, is that the farmers were receiving an allowance for their participation in the training activities on the Experimental Farm. They received the minimum wage for a twenty hour work week which from the inception of the program in August, 1978 to December, 1978 was $2.65 per hour. After January 1, 1979, the minimum wage was increased to $2.90 per hour. Second, the farmers were encouraged to join the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative, an organization that could borrow monies and then lend in turn to its members, in addition to providing
members with useful and necessary farm products at a reduced cost. Lastly, the Southern Development Foundation employed project staff to assist the small farmer in securing funds from local, state and governmental lending agencies to finance their farm operation with low interest rates.

The researcher's contact with the small farmers was mediated through the Southern Development Foundation Small Farmers Project. Much of the time was spent traveling around to individual farms with the Rural Development Extension Specialists, informally conversing with the small farmers, assisting with the training procedures of the project, and attending meetings with the small farmers that were either social, civic, religious or professional. The goal was to establish a social rapport with the small farmers that would aid in achieving the necessary information for the successful completion of the study. It was the desire of the researcher to visit each of the participants on their own terms at least twice during the course of the participant observation.

The Study Site

The St. Landry Parish area was chosen by the researcher for several reasons. In general, this study is concerned with the social aspects of the small farmers
organization; the formation, growth and structure of this organization; social processes within and among the small farmers; and the influence of the small farmers within group situations. In the first place, St. Landry Parish has one of the highest incidences of poverty in Louisiana; 45 percent of the population have incomes below the poverty level. Second, St. Landry Parish has a larger number of small farmers than any parish in Louisiana. In 1974, St. Landry Parish had more farms reporting less than $5,000 annual gross sales than any other parish in the state, a total of 63 percent. Third, a sociological study of small farmers in the area has never been conducted before. A study of small farmers within this region is calculated to disclose interesting and significant facts pertinent to the small farm structure and management of the larger area. The study would be of tangible value in helping to determine needed modifications in the future agricultural programs in not only this area but also in other areas of similar social, economic, and geographic characteristics. Fourth, an examination of United States Bureau of Census reports, as well as casual sources of information, has revealed a sufficient amount of homogeneity of the population from the standpoint of national, racial, and educational characteristics. There is very little economic heterogeneity in the area. The basic industry
is agriculture, with the larger urban communities existing in the parish primarily being local or terminal trade centers. Fifth, for a number of years, research in farm management and economics has been under way in this area with little attention being focused on social situations. It is believed that a sociological study would provide an important supplement to these studies and would amplify and support them. Sixth, since 1973, the Southern Development Foundation has had a significant influence in the parish. It has helped small farmers with technical assistance in the form of management, management training, farm planning, accounting and marketing services, thus acting as a developmental agency for the small farmers.

Participant Observation

During the period of the participant observation with the small farmers, observations were made of the work situation and of the interactions both within the home settings and within group settings. The researcher took an active part in the small farm program, including attending meetings that were of importance to the small farmer and even assisting with program implementation. The situations were observed by means of an observation check sheet designed to elicit behavioral and interactive techniques. This observation schedule was divided into seven basic categories. First, observations were made...
of the existing social organization of the small farmers; this included looking at satisfaction with farming and how much time the individuals spent with their farming operation. Second, the roles of the small farmers were observed, including family, work, group and organization roles. Third, observations were made of the small farmers' participation within his community; this included looking at land tenure and socio-economic status. Fourth, observations were made of the small farmers' decision-making and direction, including the sources of his agricultural knowledge. Fifth, observations were made of the farmers' participation in the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative and how important this organization was to the small farmer. Sixth, observations were made of the farmers' general attitude to agriculture and to his small farm operation. Lastly, observations were made of the farmer's general attitude to the questioning and observation by the researcher.

In conjunction with the participant observation, the small farmers were interviewed informally in order to assess their perceptions of their interactions. These informal interviews supplemented the participant observation from a structural point of view. As a result of the nature and extent of this case study, no formal
interview schedules were administered to the small farmers who were participating in this study. However, in order to assess certain major emphases of the study, questions relative to the social organization of small farmers were informally directed to the participants in casual conversation. Several conversations with the small farmers were necessary in order to successfully analyze their social behavior. Though there was adequate probing and follow-up, the informal interviews were essentially guided by the small farmers.

When visits were made to the households of the small farmers, the major concern in regards to conversation was to talk to the person who was the participant in the Small Farmers Project. However, several members of the family were usually present on the occasion and their responses were generally taken into consideration.

The recording of these interviews on tapes was at first utilized as a means of getting the details of the total conversations with the small farmers. This recording was eventually eliminated when the farmers began to question its use, and the researcher felt that the recording equipment was a hinderance to the open expression of the small farmers. The bi-monthly information session and the bi-weekly educational and training sessions in which a great deal of social interaction took place between
the small farmers and a number of resource persons were all recorded on tapes. Those portions that seemed useful to the research study was transcribed and analyzed.

Written records were kept on each small farmer visited, including the number of times they were visited. The average number of visits were two per farmer, though many farmers were visited much more than twice. Extensive field notes were made on everything that was learned through observation and conversation. These field notes existed in three different sets. The first set consisted of personal information on the small farmers. This was a note card that included information which was obtained from the files of the Small Farmers Project. These files were a valuable asset to the researcher in that they eliminated the necessity of having to ask farmers questions that they themselves would have been uncomfortable answering. The second set of cards included interaction information, notes from observation, and certain types of responses that were made by the small farmers. The third set of information was that projected in the bi-weekly and bi-monthly information, educational, and training sessions. Since all of this information was taped, it was considered, by the researcher, to be of a more complete and objective nature.
Analytical Techniques

The three types of notes were recorded and categorized in terms of their importance to the research according to the techniques used by Schatzman and Strauss (1973), and analyzed according to the techniques used by Lofland (1971).

The recording of field notes emphasized by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) that were used in this study are:

(1) Observational Notes - These were statements bearing upon events experienced principally through watching and listening. They contained as little interpretation as possible, and were as reliable as the observer could construct them. These observational notes represented events that were important enough to include in the recorded experience, as a piece of evidence for some yet to be realized proposition or as a property of context or situation. The observational notes included the who, what, when, where and how of the activity of the small farmers, and who said or did what, under stated circumstances. As a result of using these observational notes, it was possible to record actual conversations of the small farmers in exact words, phrases, or sentences.
(2) **Theoretical Notes** - These notes were the self-conscious, controlled attempts to derive meaning from any one or several observational notes. These theoretical notes allowed for the private declaration of meaning which produced the conceptual analysis of the research. They allowed interpretations, inferences and conjectures for the development of new concepts, and linkages between the new concepts and older ones. It was through the use of the theoretical notes that an analysis of the field notes could be carried on alternatively with the participant observation.

(3) **Methodological Notes** - These notes consisted of statements that reflected the operational procedures. They were essentially instructions and reminders to the researcher which allowed for a critique of the research tactics. These methodological notes gave a sense of direction and organization to the researcher in that they reflected timing, sequencing, setting, and maneuvering of the researcher.

Qualitative data are very complex, and are not easily convertible into standard measurable units of objects seen or heard; they vary in level of abstraction, in frequency of occurrence, and in relevance to central questions in the research. The recording and analyzing of the qualitative data involved self-conscious, systematic,
organized, and instrumental thinking on the part of the researcher and experiences with the small farmers, and the researcher and the data that were collected.

The system of analysis included arranging the situations in an orderly fashion along a continuum from the most microscopic social phenomenon to the most macroscopic, even though there was some overlapping of the phenomenon. The six units included by Lofland (1971) that were used in the analysis of this study are:

(1) Acts - Action in a situation that is temporarily brief, consuming only a few seconds, minutes or hours.

This was operationalized in this study by examining some of the personal, social or religious transactions that existed among the small farmers.

(2) Activities - Action in a setting of more major duration (days, weeks, months), constituting significant elements of the persons' involvement.

This was operationalized in this study by focusing on the farm operation in relationship to information obtained by the small farmers from the bi-weekly and bi-monthly meetings of the Small Farmers Project.

(3) Meanings - The verbal productions of participants that define and direct actions.

This was operationalized in this study by conversing with small farmers in regards to how they perceived their roles as small farmers and their perceptions of involvement in certain groups and organizations,
specifically the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative.

(4) Participation - Persons' holistic involvement in, or adaptation to, a situation or setting under study.

This was operationalized in this study by focusing on how the small farmer participated in certain groups and organizations.

(5) Relationships - Interrelationships among several persons simultaneously.

This was operationalized in this study by focusing on land tenure and status within certain groups. These groups were either social, personal, religious or business. Additionally, emphasis was given to the area groups that developed and the relationships that existed within the Small Farmers Project.

(6) Settings - The entire setting under study conceived as a unit of analysis.

This was operationalized in this study by focusing on the life situation of the small farmers and using the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative and the Small Farmers Project as a major focus within the interactions of the small farmers.

The general idea in the process of analyzing the data was to discover significant classes or categories of things, persons, and events and the properties that characterized them. It was necessary to synthesize these classes or categories with one another, as first with
simple propositional statements that expressed linkages
or relationships, and gradually until the propositions fell
into sets, in an increasing density of linkages or
relationships.

The classification and analysis of the field notes
and interview notes were carried on alternatively with
field work during the period of observation. This allowed
for the adaptation of the researcher's ideas to the data
as they were gathered and the generation of new ideas not
previously included in the research design. The researcher's
observational records were highly variable. As the
researcher developed a better and more precise under-
standing of activities in the field setting, the observa-
tional records were changed to reflect the observer's
changing understanding of the total situation of the small
farmers.
CHAPTER V

HISTORICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF STUDY AREA

This chapter provides a description of the area from which the study took place. Also included is a description of the population characteristics including information on the population composition, educational attainment, income and occupational characteristics.

Area Description

St. Landry\(^5\) Parish is located in the south central portion of Louisiana approximately 140 miles northwest of New Orleans, 54 miles west of Baton Rouge, 50 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico, and halfway between the states of Mississippi and Texas (See Figure 1).

Within the territory designated as St. Landry Parish, the physical environment plays an important role in the social organization and life processes, but it is conditioned and minimized by the more subtle and important factors of cultural tradition and influence. Many sociologists who deal with social organization would

\(^5\)The name St. Landry comes from the old St. Landry Catholic Church built by the Capuchins at Opelousas in 1777. This was supposed to have been the first church in southwestern Louisiana. The name was given to the parish in honor of the church. See Alcee Fortier (1914), Louisiana: Comprising Sketches of Her Counties. Volume II. New Orleans: Southern Historical Association. Pp. 417-418.
Figure 1. The Location of St. Landry Parish in the State of Louisiana.
suggest that every individual or group adapts itself to a total environment of which the physical locality is a factor. Although, there are very obvious and subtle significant differences between individuals living in different areas, it can never be assumed that these differences can be explained only in terms of the physical environment.

The history of St. Landry Parish incorporates a number of significant changes in the social and economic past of the parish. For example, the parish as it existed in 1805 at its inception is quite different from the parish that is in existence today. However, much of the social and cultural traditions within the parish have a direct relationship to the early inhabitants.

Early Inhabitants

The earliest known settlers of the St. Landry Parish region were the Opelousas Indians from whom the territory lying between the Atchafalaya and the Sabine Rivers was named.

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6 The following sources were used for the historical, social, and economic analysis of St. Landry Parish. Winston DeVille 1964, 1973; Fortier, 1914; Jones and Parenton, 1952; Martin and Associates, 1972; Sandoz, 1925; Texas and Pacific Railroad, 1949; St. Landry Parish Planning Board, 1947. In addition to these formal sources, a local historical assessment was made specifically regarding the migration of blacks into St. Landry Parish.
French settlers living east of the Atchafalaya River were fearful of the Opelousas Indians, for according to legend, they were cannibalistic. In addition to the fear, potential settlers experienced extreme difficulty in crossing through the waterways from the Mississippi River to Bayou Teche.

Gradually the Opelousas Indians began to disappear but a few of their cultural influences remained in the area, particularly culinary traditions. Such popular dishes and seasonings as tasso and file were introduced to the early settlers by the Indians and have been passed on through the generations.

White settlers began exploring the St. Landry Parish area around the end of the 17th century. As they explored they soon learned that the flat prairie land would support large herds of cattle with little or no effort. As a result, a flourishing beef industry developed which supplied the New Orleans markets with fresh meat.

The area of land at this time had no government and was wrought with turmoil and confusion. In 1720, Opelousas was established as a French military garrison which became a governing center for the area. In 1765, the first Acadians came into the area, which had been brought under Spanish control, along with settlers of French, Spanish and admixtures of German, English and Scotch-Irish. They
established the Creole traditions as distinct from the Cajun traditions of the descendents of the Acadian French. The Spanish post began to bring law and order to the area and the industrious Acadians began to develop farms for agricultural production. They were responsible for production of fowl, pigs, sheep and dairy cows. Among the agricultural crops was the production of cotton, which the farmers spun into cloth for their own use. In 1785, a census of the population gave the Opelousas territory a count of 1,211 people. A later count in 1788 reported 1,986 persons.

One of the greatest benefits of the Spanish administration was an orderly system of land grants and land tenure. This provided the penniless Acadians with a means of acquiring titles to the land that they worked and cleared.

The earliest recollection of migration of Negroes into St. Landry Parish was in 1783 with the arrival of slave ships into the port of Washington, Louisiana from New Orleans. Most of these Negroes were slaves from Africa, however, there were also a group of Negroes who migrated from the West Indies. These West Indians were ex-slaves set free by grateful masters or mulattoes descended from mixed marriages and declared free by a white father. Many of the free Negroes or "people of
color" enjoyed the same type of freedom as their French and Spanish counterparts. They sued and were sued in courts, they were, in some cases, buried in the parish cemetery and were sometimes styled "Mister" in official records. They were a distinct component of the economic development of the Opelousas post, many of them being skilled in specialized trades.

Almost all of the West Indian migrants were as financially affuent as the average white man at the post and many of them often purchased a relative and gave him his freedom. Of sixty-one marriage contracts at the Opelousas post between 1766 and 1803, the amount of property owned by the five free Negro couples who contracted marriage compared favorably with the Europeans or Creoles. The value of property owned by the Negro group was consistently above that owned by the Acadian population. In fact, the man and woman owning the most property in total worth were free people of color.

By 1792, there were twenty-six free Negro males at the Opelousas post. Many of the early Negro inhabitants in St. Landry Parish were born free people, they were fairly educated, and they maintained a certain degree of individuality. In fact in 1867, a newspaper, The St. Landry Progress, was published in both French and English by educated Negroes.
In 1802, Louisiana reverted to French territory and a year later, Napoleon sold it to the United States, which in 1805 created St. Landry Parish with Opelousas as the parish seat. St. Landry has been called the "mother of parishes" because out of the Opelousas Territory, the parishes of Acadia, Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Evangeline, and Jefferson Davis were created.

The Cultural Tradition

A study of the social organization of small farmers in St. Landry Parish must center around the Acadian descent that is so prevalent among the majority of the population. At the present time, in spite of the diversity of contacts with different cultures; the French heritage and language, the Catholic religion, and pleasure loving dispositions still play an extremely large role in the social processes and interaction of the people of St. Landry Parish. The line villages along the bayous, the vastness of small land holders (petit habitants), the cajun French dialect, the generality of the Catholic religion, the love for dances and festivities, the taste for creole gumbo with a very dark roux and "cafe noir" that stains the petit cups, the strict observance of the Lenten season, the habitual use of strong drinks among many, and a number of other traits and customs too numerous to mention are indicative of the Acadian ancestry
and culture patterns of the majority of the population of St. Landry Parish. Though there has been a great deal of Anglo-Saxon influence the French culture still prevails.

Much has been written regarding the French culture from the time of its first implantation into Louisiana. Whether or not these interpretations are true, the stereotypical connotation of the people still lingers on. Stoddard (1812:310) writes:

In contemplating the character of the French people, the old observation, "that of ignorance tends to happiness," seems in a degree to be verified among them. If we admit this observation to be correct, we degrade human nature; but of all the people on the globe the French of Louisiana appear to be the happiest. Their happiness, indeed, may be of the negative kind, but if the occurrences of the present moment, the reflections of the past, and the anticipations of the future, give them no painful sensations we can hardly pronounce them miserable; their minds are passive, except when roused by insult or imposition, and they are exempt from those dreadful pangs, which attach themselves to the victims of sensibility. Indolence is prevalent among them, but they are honest in their dealings, and punctual in the performance of contracts. They obtain but little and little satisfies their desires. They usually live within their incomes, and never so uneasy as when in debt. While the English Americans are hard at labor, and sweat under the burning rays of a meridian sun, they will be seated in their houses, or under some cooling shade, amusing themselves with their pipes and tobacco, in drinking of coffee, and in repeating the incidents of their several perambulations over distant lakes and mountains. When occasion presses, however, they are not deficient in exertion. They are very patient under fatigue, and will subsist for months on such food as the woods afford without a murmur. They enjoy what they have, and are perfectly contented with it.
In his *Louisiana As It Is*, Dennett (1879:22-23) writes:

Most of the population of the prairies is of Acadian origin, and with but a few notable exceptions, they are not a thrifty people. They are kind, hospitable, and sociable among themselves, but shy and suspicious of a stranger, especially if he speaks no French. Many of them are squatters on the prairies between the Vermillion River and the Sabine. Their houses, often half framed and half built of mud, are located sometimes on the open prairie, sometimes in the skirts of the belts of timber, and often without even a yard or garden enclosed. A neighboring marais will be surrounded by a rude "pieux" fence, and a small crop of rice raised. The horse and cattle run at all times on the common prairie... With thousands of cows roaming on the prairies, you seldom see butter or milk in their houses. With the means around them of living well, they fare no better than the people who live in poor lands. Their educational advantages are poor, but they learn to ride and use a shot gun expertly as soon as they learn to walk.

**Economics of the Area**

St. Landry Parish has received its economic benefits from a variety of ventures. Early in the 18th century the Ports of Washington and Port Barre were the terminals of barges and boats from New Orleans and other Mississippi river ports. Washington held the position as the chief shipping port in southwest Louisiana, and shared with Port Barre the commercial advantages of being the main ports. Near the end of the 18th century, largely from the influence of the Acadian French who had migrated from Nova Scotia, fowl and livestock production and crop production began to provide settlers with a means of livelihood.
In addition to cotton as one of the early crops, indigo was also tried as a cash crop. Several disastrous crop failures with indigo caused farmers to abandon it. Sugar cane was introduced in the area as a major crop early in the 18th century. However, it was gradually abandoned and is only grown in the parish presently for the manufacturing of syrup. Rice became a cash crop at about the same time and still remains an important cash crop.

Oil was discovered in St. Landry Parish near Port Barre around 1930. Since that time the petroleum mining industry have made major contributions to the parish economy. From 1930 to 1955 there was considerable activity in the parish related to petroleum mining. Income from these activities was in the form of exploration permits, lease bonuses and lease rentals, and the supplying of room, board and supplies to the exploration crews. Geophysical crews still work the area occasionally and production royalties, lease bonuses and lease rentals are still a major source of income for some parish residents.

Timber was once a major product of St. Landry Parish. In the 1920's and 1930's a considerable volume of timber was cut to supply lumber markets in the area. However, since 1940 timber production has had a steady decline. Thousands of acres of timberland have been cleared in recent years for agricultural crop production, especially soybeans.
Apparently landowners prefer the higher yield and higher return per acre of land by cultivating soybeans, rice and similar crops.

The discussion of the early economic history is incomplete without some emphasis on the influence of the "cotton economy." Planters began to grow cotton in the area around 1800 and stimulated by the American capitalistic economy, the price of cotton rose to between 20 and 28 cents a pound, a rather substantial price for those days. Although the cotton economy began as a family enterprise, it soon became a large plantation operation based upon slavery. Following the Civil War and the freeing of slaves, large cotton plantations were operated by farmer tenants, both black and white. Many of these farmers existed at a subsistence level for generations. Most were uneducated and had no other way to earn a livelihood.

Within the last 20 years cotton has been replaced, to some extent, by the development of synthetic fibers. There has been a decline in cotton production in the nation and this decline is reflected in St. Landry Parish. Mechanization of cotton production on some of the large cotton plantations remaining in the parish have further aggravated the local economy. Most of the farm tenants have been displaced and they have moved to urban areas,
within and outside of the parish in search of jobs or to obtain welfare assistance.

St. Landry Parish is a thriving agricultural region, and because of its fertile soil and its flat terrain with ridges formed by bayous and streams overflowing over a period of centuries, it is well suited to the production of a variety of crops. In addition, because of its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico, its warm, humid and sub-tropical climate influences the economic well-being of its people and determines, to a great extent, the kinds of activities by which they earn a livelihood. It is warmer in winter, cooler in summer, and wetter year around than much of the United States, a consideration which probably contributes to the fact that the Creole inhabitants are relatively long lived. The climate is mild with no extreme changes in temperature or rainfall, this in itself allows for year around production of agricultural crops. It has an annual rainfall of 50 to 65 inches, the annual normal temperature is 68 degrees, and seasonal temperatures are not too extreme (See Table 1).

Population Characteristics of St. Landry Parish

St. Landry Parish consists of twelve municipalities and seven wards which are scattered throughout the parish
### TABLE I

SEASONAL TEMPERATURE-ST. LANDRY PARISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Average Temperature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer - June, July, August</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn - September, October, November</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter - December, January, February</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring - March, April, May</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Annual Temperature - 68.1°F

on its 932 square miles of land (See Figure 2). The population size of many of its communities is quite small. In addition to the smallness of the communities and the scattered nature of the municipalities, many parish residents live in rural areas along federal, state and parish roads. In some portions of the parish, the population per square mile is quite low. In other sections, while the population density is higher, considerable distances separate the residents.

Tables 2 and 3 present population statistics for St. Landry Parish. In Table 2, it is noted that total parish population reached 66,661 persons in 1910 and then declined during the next two decades to slightly over 60,000 persons. Between 1930 and 1950 there was a brisk population growth with population increasing to 78,481 in 1950. Although the population increased between 1950 and 1960, it was not significant (3.4 percent). The 1970 census revealed a slight decline in parish population.

Interestingly enough, all municipalities in the parish, except Palmetto, Leonville, (and Eunice which lost a fraction of 1 percent of its population) showed population increases.
Figure 2. The Location of Ward Boundaries in St. Landry Parish
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish Total</td>
<td>66,661</td>
<td>51,697</td>
<td>60,074</td>
<td>71,481</td>
<td>78,476</td>
<td>81,493</td>
<td>80,364</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opelousas</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,299</td>
<td>8,980</td>
<td>11,659</td>
<td>17,417</td>
<td>20,121</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eunice*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,597</td>
<td>5,242</td>
<td>8,184</td>
<td>11,326</td>
<td>11,278</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Barre</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>1,066</td>
<td>1,876</td>
<td>2,133</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnaudville*</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>1,184</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melville</td>
<td>1,093</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>1,541</td>
<td>1,828</td>
<td>1,901</td>
<td>1,939</td>
<td>2,076</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krotz Springs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>1,435</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>1,528</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>1,291</td>
<td>1,271</td>
<td>1,473</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>1,307</td>
<td>1,675</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Coteau</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>1,103</td>
<td>1,165</td>
<td>1,401</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonville</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmetto</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>-27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campton</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Part of the Municipality is in the Adjoining parish

*Source: United States Census of Population, General Characteristics, 1970*
### TABLE 3

**POPULATION - ST. LANDRY PARISH**

**TOTAL LAND AREA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward 1</td>
<td>26,714</td>
<td>30,269</td>
<td>31,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 2</td>
<td>7,566</td>
<td>6,926</td>
<td>6,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 3</td>
<td>5,921</td>
<td>5,380</td>
<td>5,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 4</td>
<td>10,971</td>
<td>10,618</td>
<td>10,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 5</td>
<td>6,685</td>
<td>5,690</td>
<td>5,123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 6</td>
<td>16,664</td>
<td>19,617</td>
<td>18,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 7</td>
<td>3,955</td>
<td>2,993</td>
<td>2,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Area (Miles)</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>930</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank among 64 Parishes</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population per Mile</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>86.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 4, there has been a significant decrease in the rural population in the last 20 years, while the urban population has been steadily increasing. However, in comparison to the state's rural and urban populations, this is a likely trend. From 1950 to 1970, the rural-urban composition of the population in St. Landry Parish and the state of Louisiana made a complete reversal.

The trend toward the consolidation of small farms occurred during the period between 1960 and 1970. Some 3,970 farms reported in 1964 were reduced to 1,900 in 1974. Consolidation of these farms into larger farms was generally considered a development contributing to more mechanization and more efficiency in farm management.

The average value of farms in St. Landry Parish has increased significantly. In 1964 the average value per farm was slightly under $20,000; in 1969 the average farm was valued slightly over $40,000. This increase, of course, reflects to a great extent the fact that total acreage in farms has increased as well as a general rising trend in land value. The increase in the average value of an acre of land is more indicative of the general increase in farm land value. During the period between 1964 and 1969, the average value per acre of farm land in St. Landry Parish increased from $245 per acre to about $338 per acre, an increase of 37.9 percent.
TABLE 4

URBAN-RURAL POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural Population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percent Decrease 60-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>37,257</td>
<td>22,073</td>
<td>8,648</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Farm</td>
<td>21,376</td>
<td>30,677</td>
<td>40,307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Rural - Parish</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Rural - State</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Population</strong></td>
<td>19,843</td>
<td>28,743</td>
<td>31,399</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Urban - Parish</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Urban - State</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 5**

**FARM CHARACTERISTICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1964</th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>1974</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Farms</td>
<td>3,970</td>
<td>2,864</td>
<td>1,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land in farms (acres)</td>
<td>330,015</td>
<td>336,329</td>
<td>309,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average farm size (acres)</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>117.4</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race and Nativity

Table 6 shows population characteristics in St. Landry Parish in 1970. It can be observed that the black population and the others category amounted to 33,315 persons, constituting 41.4 percent of the total population. This percentage reflects a reduction of the black population to the total population. This is quite significant in that the United States Census of 1840, 1850, 1860, 1890, 1900 and 1920 showed a larger proportion of blacks to whites. During these periods "free mulattoes" were numerous, and many of them, prior to the Civil War, settled in Orleans, Natchitoches, and St. Landry Parishes (Smith, 1937:14).

Many free Negroes settled in Opelousas and "Niggerville" (now called Washington), some of whom were rich and even owned slaves. They were of extremely high color, yet they kept pretty much to themselves, not attempting to enter the white society (Olmstead, 1861:34).

According to Table 7, the percent of the population for non-whites in 1950 was 44.6; in 1960 it was 43.0; and in 1970 it was 41.4. This reflects a slow but steady decline of non-whites within the parish. The parish seems to be following the state's trend in the reduction of the non-white population. The percentage for the non-white population in the state in 1950 was 33.0; in 1960 it was 32.1 and in 1970 it was 30.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Sex Male</th>
<th>Sex Female</th>
<th>Race White</th>
<th>Race Negro</th>
<th>Race Other</th>
<th>Age Median</th>
<th>Age Percent Below 18</th>
<th>Age Percent Over 65</th>
<th>Households Number</th>
<th>Persons Per H.H.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish Total</td>
<td>38,833</td>
<td>41,531</td>
<td>47,057</td>
<td>33,202</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>33,994</td>
<td>6,654</td>
<td>21,887</td>
<td>79,929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opelousas</td>
<td>9,354</td>
<td>10,767</td>
<td>9,917</td>
<td>10,184</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>2,635</td>
<td>10,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eunice</td>
<td>5,513</td>
<td>5,877</td>
<td>8,906</td>
<td>2,475</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>2,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Barre</td>
<td>1,043</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>1,770</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>2,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melville</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>1,092</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>2,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>1,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnaudville</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>1,563</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>1,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>1,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krotz Springs</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>1,434</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>1,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Coteau</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>1,230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: U.S. Census of Population. General Characteristics, 1970*
The rural farm population is composed of 5,915 whites and 5,310 blacks. This reflects a total of 14.4 percent of the population for the parish. There is a significant proportion of rural farm people in St. Landry Parish in comparison to the state, which is only 4.7 percent rural farm.

Age and Sex

Of the total population of St. Landry Parish in 1970, 38,833 (48.3 percent) were males and 41,531 (51.7 percent) were females. The sex composition of the parish has remained relatively stable during the last two decades (See Table 8). There was only a slight decrease in the male population between 1960 and 1970.
TABLE 8
SEX COMPOSITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>38,798</td>
<td>39,895</td>
<td>38,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>39,678</td>
<td>41,598</td>
<td>41,531</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The parish population can be classified as relatively young. The median age in 1970 was only 23.3 years. The 33,994 persons under 18 years of age represented 42.3 percent of the parish population. This compared with 38.1 percent for the state as a whole. Similarly, the number of persons in St. Landry Parish, age 65 or older amounted to only 8.2 percent whereas these older persons represented 8.4 percent of the state's population.

Household Characteristics

The family size in St. Landry Parish is slightly larger than the state's. In the parish there were 3.65 persons per household, compared to 3.37 persons per household for the state.

In analyzing household size it becomes apparent that the conditions of housing and dwelling units in the parish be considered. It is reported by the Census of
Housing that of a total of 23,949 dwelling units in the parish, 6,096 (25 percent) were classified as lacking some or all plumbing facilities. In comparison, the state has only 10.5 percent of its dwelling units lacking some or all plumbing facilities.

Owners occupied 60 percent of all dwelling units, which was slightly less than in the state, where 63.1 percent of the dwelling units were occupied by owners. Considering owner occupied units, it was found that 21.9 percent of the 14,357 units lacked some or all plumbing facilities. Renter occupied units had a higher percentage of units lacking some or all plumbing facilities (39.3 percent).

The median contract rent for the parish was $34.00 per month.

The median value of housing units in St. Landry Parish varies between $5,400 per unit to $10,200 per unit. Opelousas had the highest value with Arnaudville close behind with $10,100. The median value of owner occupied housing in 1970 was $8,600 compared to $7,000 in 1960.

Field inspection revealed that the overall quality of housing was poor. According to a survey in 1974 by the Opelousas Housing Authority of 5,808 dwelling units, 2,375 (40.8 percent) of these units were judged to be substandard by being dilapidated or obsolete.
Education

The educational attainment of St. Landry Parish falls below that for the state. It is noted in Table 9 that the parish is constantly rated lower in all categories in comparison to other parishes within the state. The only category that has shown a slight improvement from 1960 to 1970 is the percent with 4 or more years of college. Although it was not extremely high it was enough to upgrade the rank of the parish slightly.

Of all persons 25 years of age and older in 1970, the median years of school completed was only 7.8. However, this was an improvement for the 10 year period as the median years of schooling completed in 1960 was only 5.9. For the state the median years of schooling completed in 1970 was 10.8, while in 1960 it was only 8.8. The educational attainment tends to follow the state and national average for the 10 year period, in that there is approximately a two grade increase for St. Landry Parish, Louisiana, and the United States. The United States educational attainment increased from 10.6 in 1960 to 12.7 in 1970.

When taking into consideration the male and female population of the parish, females are slightly more educated than males. The median number of years of schooling completed for females was 8.1 compared to 7.6 for the males.
TABLE 9
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
25 years and over

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% with no school</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank*</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% less than 5 years</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% least 4 years H.S.</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 4 or more college</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median years of school</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The parish is ranked among the 64 parishes, the state is ranked among the 50 states.


The rural farm population tend to fall slightly below the average for the parish. Their median number of years of schooling completed is only 6.8 out of a total rural farm population of 5,436, only 150 had completed 4 or more years of college while 776 had completed no schooling. This is consistent with the parish in that the majority of the population was found in the grade school category.
In 1970, the United States Census Bureau had established a poverty level of $3,388 and 38.3 percent of the parish families fell below this level. The median income among families in the parish was only $4,919, with the parish ranking number 52 among the 64 parishes in Louisiana. This was lower than the state's median income of $7,530. The state was ranked 43 among the 50 states.

**TABLE 10**

**MEDIAN EARNINGS OF SELECTED OCCUPATION GROUPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Median Earning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Managerial and Kindred Workers</td>
<td>$7,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen, Foremen and Kindred Workers</td>
<td>5,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operatives, including transport</td>
<td>4,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers, except farm</td>
<td>3,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers and Farm Managers</td>
<td>2,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Laborers, except unpaid and Farm Foremen</td>
<td>1,488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Females**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerical and Kindred</td>
<td>3,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operatives, including transport</td>
<td>2,232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 10 shows the median earnings for males and females in selected occupational groups. As it would be expected, the professional, managerial and kindred workers
have the highest median earnings. Farm laborers and farm foremen were the lowest paid. There is also a difference in median incomes for males and females in the parish. Males have a median income of $4,977 as compared to $2,212 for females. This trend is also reflected in the state with a median income for males being $6,536 as compared to $3,003 for females.

Records of unemployment in the parish in 1971 indicated 2,350 persons were unemployed for an unemployment rate of 10.5 percent.

Farm Income

Since 51.8 percent of the 596,480 acres of land is considered as farmland, agricultural production is very important in St. Landry Parish.

The sale of agricultural products, livestock and poultry increased by 21 percent over the 1964 to 1969 period. The market value of agricultural products sold in 1969 was $17,319,785. A substantial increase in the sale of livestock and poultry represented a 34.7 percent increase. The sale of some $2,853,621 in 1964 increased to $3,845,144 in 1969.

In Table 11, it is noted that Agricultural income for the selected products decreased after 1968 but gradually rose again to slightly over the 1968 figure in 1971.
## TABLE 11

AGRICULTURAL INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beef Cattle</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
<td>5,500,000</td>
<td>5,900,000</td>
<td>6,084,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>2,100,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>780,000</td>
<td>1,040,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>4,200,000</td>
<td>3,600,000</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>2,570,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>1,100,000</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>1,215,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>3,400,000</td>
<td>3,900,000</td>
<td>3,827,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td>6,300,000</td>
<td>4,700,000</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>9,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swine</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>630,000</td>
<td>389,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Potatoes</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>4,400,000</td>
<td>3,400,000</td>
<td>3,780,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain Sorghum</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>360,000</td>
<td>129,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>1,100,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>1,285,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>29,350,000</td>
<td>25,800,000</td>
<td>26,920,000</td>
<td>29,919,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: County Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
Soybeans and cotton were the biggest income producers in 1978. By 1971, cotton income had dropped to around 61 percent of the 1968 figure. Soybeans, however, continued to increase in importance as a cash crop. The 1971 figure was 152 percent greater. Beef cattle income has also made a steady increase. The 1971 figure was over 33 percent greater than the 1968 income from the sale of beef cattle. Sweet potatoes, once ranked very high in percent of total farm income, appear to be falling in importance. In 1968 some $5,000,000 income from the sale of sweet potatoes was received. Four years later this figure had dropped to around $3,780,000.

Land Tenure

In 1974, the average white farmer in St. Landry Parish held an average of 190 acres of farm land, while the average black farmer had an average of only 40.5 acres. It is important to note that in 1969, blacks in the parish had 37,565 acres of farm land. This figure decreased by more than 50 percent in 1974 to only 17,494 acres.

As the number of acres decreased for black farmers so did the percent of tenancy from 39.9 percent in 1969 to 14.3 percent in 1974. Full owners decreased from 457 to 265, part owners decreased from 100 to 53, and tenants decreased from 370 to 53. This, however, is not consistent
with all farm operators in the parish. There was an increase in farm tenancy from 12.8 percent to 23.7 percent. Full owners increased from 1969 to 1974 by 406, from 1,237 to 1,643; part owners increased by 122, from 420 to 542; and tenants increased by 436, from 243 to 679.
CHAPTER VI

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SMALL FARMERS

The purpose of this chapter is to present an in-depth analysis of the social and economic characteristics of the small farmers who are the participants in this study. The analysis used here is both a preliminary discussion of the small farmers and a presentation of information fundamental to an understanding of the interaction, satisfaction, and potential for cooperative behavior of the study group.

In conjunction with the scattered nature of the municipalities and wards throughout the parish, the small farmers who were participating in the Small Farmers Project were likewise scattered throughout the parish (See Figure 3). They represented eight of the twelve municipalities and five of the seven wards.

All of these farmers are considered to be a part of the rural farm population in St. Landry Parish, since many of them considered farming as a full time occupation. Consequently, only two of the farmers were engaged in additional occupations.

Race and Nativity

The racial composition of the small farmers studied was extremely one-sided in favor of the black population.
Figure 3. The Location of Small Farmers in St. Landry Parish
Fifty-three of the farmers were black (98.1 percent), while only one farmer was white (1.9 percent). A general explanation for this racial composition is that the Southern Development Foundation has been basically concerned with working toward improving the status of limited resource farmers with small acreages. Many of the limited resource farmers that are located in the parish are black. The racial composition of the group of farmers in the study group is inconsistent with the rural farm population of the parish which includes 52.6 percent white and 47.3 percent black.

**Age and Sex**

The ages of the small farmers studied ranged from 24 years to 76 years. Age distributions are presented in Table 12. Only 16.7 percent of this group were under 35 years of age, while 20.3 percent were 65 years of age or older. This characteristic is also inconsistent with the parish population which is much younger than those persons who are participating in the project. As the mean age of the small farmers studied was 51.2 years, many of them are in the twilight of their active working life and possibly have a limited capacity to increase production, a reluctance to change their method of farming, and generally a conservative outlook on agricultural investments. The age of the small farmers who are participating in this study is consistent with the parish in that the average age for farm operators in 1974 was 52.6 years.
TABLE 12
AGE COMPOSITION OF THE SMALL FARMERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24-34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean age of the Small Farmers ...........51.2
Additionally, only 5 (9.3 percent) of the small farmers studied were females. Four (80 percent) of the female participants were married. Their salary from the Small Farmers Project represented a secondary source of income primarily because three of the husbands were gainfully employed in non-farm occupations. However, they were considered as part-time farmers because they did much of the heavy farm labor around the "place". Another husband was handicapped and as a result was unable to engage in any physical activities that were necessary for the operation of the farm and was unable to make any major decisions.

There were 49 (90.7 percent) males participating in the project. These males were considered as full-time farmers and as a result were not engaged in any full-time off-farm employment.

Marital Status

Forty-five (83.3 percent) farmers indicated they were married. It is important to note here that during the early visits with the small farmers, the researcher

7 The term "place" was often used by the small farmers to denote the farm area and home. It was most often used by renters and sharecroppers. This led the researcher to believe that the term meant a lack of emotional attachment to the farm and land area because it was not extensively used by landowners.
was often confronted with the notion of couples living together without the benefit of matrimony. As a result of this hearsay, the figures of the number of married is suspected of being high, as no attempt was made to distinguish between couples who were married and those who were living together. However, one farmer did introduce his spouse as "my common-law wife." For the purpose of this study the difference is unimportant, for if a man admitted to having a wife, whether or not the law recognized her as such, then this had both economic and social implications for assessing the roles of the small farmers. Six (11.1 percent) of the farmers reported that they were single, while two (3.7 percent) reported that their spouses were deceased and only one (1.8 percent) reported as being divorced.

**TABLE 13**

**MARITAL STATUS OF THE SMALL FARMERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Household Size

The family size or household size of the small farmers studied was more consistent with the state average than with the parish average. The average number of persons per household was 3.3 compared to 3.65 for the parish. There was a total of 131 children living in the households. Sixty-nine female children and 62 male children. Additionally, there was a total of 47 other relatives within the households, making a large proportion of the households of an extended nature.

The size of the household did not represent the size of the family, as a number of the children were grown and had left home. Available data indicated that the average small farm family had at least two or three children no longer living at home. Thus, the average small farm family had a total of five or six children.

Educational Attainment

For many of the small farmers studied formal education ended at whatever grade they had achieved before dropping out. Only four (7.4 percent) of the farmers studied had attended any type of formal training program. Three of these had attended and completed a Vocational-Technical school with a specialty in welding. One of these had attained an Associate of Arts degree in Building Construction.
Educational attainment of the small farmers ranged from virtually no formal schooling to the completion of a two year associate degree program. However, the median level of educational attainment was only 5.0 years. This is lower than both the parish and the state levels, whose median years of schooling completed was 7.8 and 10.8 respectively. Although the median years of schooling completed for the rural farm population was lower than that for the parish (6.8), it is not as low as the median years of schooling completed for the small farmers who are the participants in this study.

Among the study group, in comparison to the parish, women were more educated than men. The mean level of education completed for females was 9.6 years compared to only 4.8 years for the males.

### TABLE 14

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE SMALL FARMERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Completed in School</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 and above</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Level of Educational Completion..........5.2 years
Income and Occupation

The mean income level of the small farmers studied was $2,716.11, which is below the poverty level of $3,388 established by the United States Bureau of the Census in 1970. It is also below the income level of the parish. Even with the low income only 12 (22.2 percent) of the farmers were receiving any type of supplement to their incomes. This supplement was most often in the form of food stamps ranging from $35.00 per month received by a farmer with two dependents to $370.00 per month received by a farmer with eight dependents. The farmers received no unemployment compensation, which is important enough to suggest that these farmers considered their farming operations as full-time occupations.

One important factor that had a direct relationship to the income of the small farmers was their participation in the Small Farmers Project. The Small Farmers Project compensated the small farmers for a twenty hour work week with the minimum wage of $2.65 per hour until January 1, 1979. After this time the minimum wage was increased to $2.90 per hour. This amount of money represented a total of approximately $56.00 to $58.00 per week or an additional $3,016 per year. Although these monies are not reflected in the income listed in Table 15, they are important in how the small farmers perceive their roles in the Small Farmers Project.
TABLE 15
INCOME OF THE SMALL FARMERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ 600-1,500</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,600-2,500</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,600-3,500</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,600-4,500</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,600-5,500</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,600-6,500</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Income - 2,716.11

Land Tenure

Land tenure is a feature of the economy of the small farmers that can determine the type of interactions that exist among them and the ways in which they assess their roles. According to Smith and Zopf (1970:159):

Land tenure refers to the rights that people have in the land, that is, to their legal privileges to use, cultivate, dispose of, and even exploit specified portions of the earth's surface. Tenure is, therefore, a social relationship between human beings and the land; it is reflected in a broad array of social relations regarding the use of the soil. In turn, tenure is closely associated with other relationships between man and the land, such as the size of agricultural holdings, class and caste systems, planes of existence and aspiration for improvements, changes in status, and systems of agriculture.
There were three major types of farm tenure existing among the small farmers studied. They were ownership, cash tenancy or renting, and sharecropping. Out of the 54 farmers who were participating in this study, twenty-eight (51.8 percent) of them owned their own land. This ownership represented a total of 713 acres with the mean age of ownership being 56.5 years. Eight (14.8 percent) of the small farmers were renting or had cash tenancy on a total of 51 acres of land, and 18 (33.3 percent) of the farmers sharecropped on a total of 528 acres of land.

The range in the size of the small farmers' holdings was between 4 and 80 acres of land. The average amount of land that was occupied by the small farmers was 24.11 acres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Tenure</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharecrop</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Tenure</td>
<td>Number of Acres</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,302</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Number of Acres - 24.11
CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS OF INTERACTION, SATISFACTION, AND COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR

This chapter analyzes the social interaction, satisfaction, and cooperative behavior of the small farmers studied. It is through participation in various situations of symbolic contact that the perception of roles are projected. The participation in a number of groups and organizations will influence the role relationships of small farmers as they acquire their farming knowledge, learn about special programs and engage in a life situation that will affect either directly or indirectly their system of agriculture.

Social Interaction

The creation of social organization begins with social interaction between two or more social actors. Social interaction occurs whenever the actions of one actor affect the actions or thoughts of another actor in some manner (Olsen, 1978:81). These actions may be physical, in the sense that each person does something physically to the other, or symbolic, in the sense that each person exchanges symbolic meanings with the other, in the form of language or other significant gestures (Merrill, 1957:24). In either case, social interaction is based upon communication. According
to John Dewey (1916:5), society not only continues to exist by transmission, by communication, but it may be said to exist in transmission, in communication. This was a very important consideration in this study in that many of the farmers verbally communicated by intermingling French and English, especially in informal situations. A level of understanding had to be achieved in order to comprehend the transmissions. Warriner (1970) describes this as an "adjustment process":

The generally problematic character of communication, as well as the fact that in societies such as ours actors have widely different catalogs of reference, means that in any new interactional system there is at the start much disconfirmation or only partial confirmation. The problem then is, given some lack of commonality of the actors' catalogs of reference, how is the probable validity of the inferences increased? In general we can speak of this as the adjustment process. Some adjustment may be accomplished by random "search behavior," but more frequently it results from a metalanguage use of other signs or the development of totally new signs and meanings of the particular interactional system.

Social interaction is carried on by socialized individuals each with a definite personality and a social self acquired through contact with other similarly developed individuals. In the process of socialization, the individual learns to "take the role of the other" and mentally put himself in the place of the one with whom he is interacting (Mead, 1934). In this way, each person weighs
the impact of his words and gestures upon the other. In "taking the role of the other" the person also stimulates himself. Social interaction involves not only the interaction of one person with another person, but of each person with himself. In addition, it implies both stimulation and inhibition of behavior between members of a group. It is a moving process in which the participants note and gauge each other's actions, each organizing his action with regard to the other and, in so doing, inhibiting himself, encouraging himself, and guiding himself as he builds up his action (Blumer, 1953).

There is a certain degree of predictability in the nature of social interaction. This is important because, first, each member of the group can tell what the other person in the group is going to do in his ordinary social relationships. He predicts the behavior of the others on the basis of what he himself would do under similar circumstances. Second, the predictability of social interaction means that it can be scientifically studied by persons who understand the group and who are familiar with its method of communication.

It is common knowledge that persons tend to interact with those persons with whom opportunity for personal contact is favored by close proximity. Homans (1950) has asserted that if the frequency of interaction between two or more
persons increases, the degree of their liking for one another will increase. Newcomb (1956) has argued that when two persons interact, the reward-punishment ratio more often will be reinforcing. While this is not always the case, it is probably true that if individuals continue to interact it is because they have found their interactions to be more rewarding than punishing. The postulate here is that any prolonged interaction between two individuals involves more reciprocal rewards than punishments.

Olsen (1978) in looking at social interaction as a dynamic process considers the underlying causes of this ongoing interaction as:

1. **Personal Needs** - The social interaction serves as a source of gratification for social, biological, emotional, or intellectual needs.

2. **Common Interests** - Mutual concerns can bring people together and lead to ongoing interaction.

3. **The Exercise of force** - Compensations and deprivations or rewards and punishments are motivating factors for ongoing interaction.

4. **Functional Interdependence** - When individuals depend on each other they will arrange their interaction on a situation of exchange.

5. **Expectations and Obligations** - In response to the innumerable social expectations and obligations in our dealings with others, we develop ongoing interactions out of a sense of duty or responsibility.

6. **Shared Values** - When actors discover that they share a set of basic values, they will likely develop ongoing interactions and feel attached to each other by a common bond.
Lofland (1971) notes that one guide for one's analysis is to bracket on the situatedness of acts and actions. That such acts and actions may be somewhat predictable is testimony to Schutz's notion of not only "typified actors" (i.e., roles played out in acts and actions) but "typified situations" (i.e., settings which are similar even though the actors are different). In this study, the focus was on four such settings: family gatherings, church-related activities, interactions with friends and neighbors, and attendance at Small Farmers Project meetings.

Interaction Among Family Members

The families in this study bear witness to the effects of parental socialization. Almost all of the farmers studied were born of parents who themselves were active in agriculture. This is somewhat obvious since the generation preceding the present one was basically geared toward an agricultural economy, particularly in St. Landry Parish. The economic way of life of the present generation of small farmers is, in fact, virtually the same as that of their parents; they tend to produce certain types of crops which are traditional to the parish, such as sweet potatoes, and a variety of mixed vegetables. They raise a few swine, cattle, and poultry, and engage in a life style that is "somewhat traditional."
During their childhood, these farmers assisted their parents on the land and around the home, as soon as they could perform light chores. In many cases, they were major bread-winners within the family. By the time most of the males were 14 years of age, and sometimes even sooner, they would be familiar with many of the farming activities. Females of the same age usually had less experience working land since their time was occupied with household duties.

Although the nuclear family is quite common in America, this is not the case with these farmers. It was not uncommon to find extended family relationships with grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles and even nephews and nieces residing in the same household. These small farm families were an exception to the relatively isolated, conjugal pattern characteristic of an industrial and predominantly urban society. Most of the small farmers lived in close proximity to their parents and therefore visited them more easily and often. This preserved the strong ties of the family of orientation. Further, they were cultivating land owned by or obtained from their parents; farming is one of the few remaining occupations where residing near the family of orientation promotes one's occupational interests locally.
Even though these farmers considered themselves as being very poor, they were observed as being a proud group of people. They were extremely proud of their families and the types of social relationships that prevailed within them. They didn't like to get something for nothing, and would work very hard for what they got. There was a total involvement of all of the family members in the operation of the farm as a business enterprise.

**Husband-Wife Interaction**

The small farm husbands were directors and performers of major tasks of the farming operation. Their dominant positions were reinforced by the association of their name with the land, and by assuming the role of relating their families to the community. The husbands were responsible for much of the marketing activity and assumed the role of economic supporter of the family. The wives, on the other hand, maintained a close association with raising the children and emotionally supporting the family. She acted as a unifying influence of the family to the community and took the leading role in the religious participation of the family. Although not formally acknowledged, the wives were not usually dominated by their husbands. This was specifically exemplified in the wives control of financial affairs and the decision making process.
The interactions that existed among the small farm families, especially the husbands and wives, were often centered around money. Farming itself constitutes an unpredictable enterprise which makes it difficult to adequately plan a system of production. The farmer would plant so many acres and then hope for the best. The weather, insects, and moisture make the difference between a poor and a good crop. Taking these problems into consideration, the small farm family was intimately bound to each other. The relationship between husbands and wives was an uneasy one at least partly as a result of being poor and having to support a large family, yet the prospect of divorce was nil. One farmer expressed it in this way: "If it was not for that old lady over there, I would have not been able to make it. I'll kill a dead snake for messing with her." As he talked, she sat back with a smile on her face relishing the admiration and consideration that he had given her, seemingly well pleased that this had been openly expressed. She later said, "it is good to hear him say things like that every once in a while, I didn't know he appreciated me that much, he never tells me so."

A large proportion of the wives did a considerable amount of field work. In fact, the usual practice was for the wives to work in the field as much as their housekeeping and cooking permitted, particularly during harvest time.
Also they were specifically responsible for the care and feeding of poultry on the farm.

Although the women in the study were in charge of the farming operation, they had not forsaken their traditional female roles. This value orientation was held by both men and women. The old adage of "a woman's place is in the home" certainly held true for these small farmers, but this adage seemed a facade. During harvest season it was not unusual to see the wife working side-by-side in the field with her husband. She worked just as hard as her husband in order to finish the harvest at a reasonable time. In addition, there was also the normal traditional female roles to carry out. Consequently, the women had neither the time nor the energy to work the land alone on a large scale. They usually had only a minimum of land under cultivation; even then, this was cultivated with the assistance of their husbands, children, and other family members.

**Parent-Child Interaction**

The size of the farmers household was an indication of his social and economic responsibilities. In addition, family members represented a possible source of labor. Children between the ages of 5 and 15 years of age contributed to the family's labor force by helping with the
planting, weeding and harvesting; thus socializing still another generation into farming. In fact, the urgent need for extra labor during harvesting time necessitated this kind of family cooperation. It also demonstrated the seasonal shifts in the male-female division of labor. Members of the household who were over 15 years of age could not always be counted on to contribute to the production on the farm; some of them were still in school and considered it beneath their dignity to soil their hands, while others were employed elsewhere and only slept at home. A few members of the household were old and less fortunate relatives who, in return for food and shelter, assisted in light chores around the home especially caring for the children.

Children played an important role with the small farmer's family. There was a total of 131 children living in the homes, 69 females and 62 males ranging between the ages of 9 months to 24 years. The sons usually operated under the father's direction and the daughters operated under the mother's direction. For sons and daughters, the learning on the farm was likely to make up almost the whole of their knowledge about farming. The males learned planting and harvesting techniques and how to buy and sell for farm needs. The females learned how to care for the barnyard, which included the raising of chickens, ducks, guineas, and turkeys, and they also learned how to cook. The pride
of farm cooking was exceptional, with many females cherishing the idea of having to perform this chore for their families.

The children received not only their training on the farm but eventually inherited the farm as well, which was a source of capital. This procedure is, of course, not peculiar to the farm but it has important implications for the maintenance of community control and the preserving of local traditions. The fact that the farm occupies a large area and is operated by the small farm family, produces an association of the family names with the land. This leads to property transferral over many generations and stable status within the farm community.

The small farmers studied showed a great deal of dependency on their children which can be explained on the basis of educational attainment and age. Since the mean age of the farmers was 51.2 years there was more of a concern with health and survival than with the utilization of their land and learning new techniques that could increase their level of living. "My children do all of my reading and writing for me so I don't have to learn how," stated one of the farmers. It is interesting to note here that even though the farmers hoped for a long life, they were somewhat pessimistic about achieving it. A 52 year old farmer said, "my time around here ain't long and I want to get the best out of it now." He could not be
convinced that for some people life goes beyond the age of 52. Many farmers felt that they had worked extremely hard all of their lives without accomplishing much and the only thing to do now is merely exist.

The dependency on children was also reflected in the small farmers family size. Even though the size of the household was 3.3 children, the average small farm family consisted of five to six children. The reason most often heard for having such large families was that the more children one had, the greater the probability that one or more would offer to support their parents in old age. In addition, many of the small farmers were devout Catholics which served to solidify the family as a close-knit unit. Therefore, religion was very influential in the family for matters pertaining to birth, death, and marriage.

In the case of children who had migrated to other areas of the state or country for employment, this was an important source of family income. Many of these children would send financial support for the welfare and maintenance of their parents, brothers and sisters. As the nature and value of these financial contributions were difficult to estimate, no attempt was made to acquire such personal information. At least some of those handicapped by old age and sickness, relied on these contributions to supplement their incomes and as a substitute for a welfare scheme.
Thus the number of children who had migrated to cities with better employment opportunities represented a potential source of revenue which, if totally ignored, would leave unexplained the economic condition of the small farmers.

Although education was at the center of attention for the children of the small farmers, school attendance was sometimes sporadic, especially during harvesting season. Often the children instead of attending school stayed out to help their parents with the farm work, this led to their losing time in school and eventually falling behind their age and grade levels. This was one of the major reasons why the children of small farmers dropped out of school. This irregular attendance was a reflection of the financial situation of the household, the failure to acquire hired labor at a price that was easily affordable, and the value attached to education by the parents. This situation was more prevalent among male children than female children.

Of the small farmers studied, only two had children in college, one male and one female. College away from home was non-existent. The children were commuters to colleges within the area. One was attending Louisiana State University at Eunice, while the other was a student at The University of Southwestern Louisiana at Lafayette. Because of their continued residence in the home, they still had some responsibilities in the operation of the farming enterprise.
One interesting interaction pattern that existed was the role relationships of sons and daughters. The small farmers, in essence, "loved" their sons but "raised" their daughters. In other words, when a son was "loved" he could succeed in the world, but a daughter had to be "raised" in order to succeed. As a result of this parental orientation, more emphasis was placed on physical labor with little attention to formal education for males. Daughters, on the other hand, were given special consideration in formal education, in order to support themselves just in case they didn't marry "a good old country boy." This situation was very important in assessing the educational level of men and women within the study group. Women very often had more formal education than men.

The Out-Migration Problem

There were many family "get togethers" especially during holidays. It is amazing that all of the urban migrants return home for special holidays and momentarily regret having left. However, they felt that the urban area was "their place in the sun," providing better educational and occupational opportunities. Many out-migrants work in the city until they retire and then return home and live out their lives. This, however, could be a reflection on the back to rural life style which is presently existing
in rural communities or the attachment that the people have to family land. This attachment to family land is epitomized in this statement: "I made a promise to my mother on her death bed that I would come back here and take care of the land. I was born and reared right here on this land. I did leave after I got married and moved to New Orleans where I stayed until my spouse died in 1964. I couldn't let Mama down so I moved back here. I love farming very much anyway and besides it's the only thing I know how to do."

The family relationships were very close-knit. If a farmer owned his land and his daughter married, the farmer would offer the new son-in-law a piece of the land (either give, rent or sell it to him). In several situations, the farmers had even built houses on their land for their daughters and sons-in-law. It was not uncommon for a farmer's house to be surrounded by those of his children. These small farmers hated to see their children grow up and leave home and many of them would do everything in their power to get them to stay. It was echoed many times that the children grew up too fast. "Now that I'm old and need my children, they are growing up and leaving home," stated one of the farmers. The idea of children being responsible for or to their parents was a prevalent value orientation held by the small farmers studied.
Relatives of the small farmers usually migrated to Lake Charles, Louisiana or Houston, Texas. These farmers usually had relatives already settled in these areas. The migration to Lake Charles was due to the large amount of seasonal off-farm employment that existed in that area. It was not uncommon to see buses of workers being transported to large cities for a day's work, usually in the construction industry. Lake Charles was one of the daily rounds. Small Farmers' children were often employed in the oil industry in Houston. This was a source of great accomplishment for the farmer, and the fact that they had sons and daughters gainfully employed in a major city in the United States made them very proud.\(^8\)

Although the small farmers rarely wanted to see their children grow up and leave home, the children were willing and could not wait to grow up and leave the responsibilities of farm life. One daughter said, "I ain't

\(^8\)There was a good deal of conflict existing for the children of small farmers concerning the loyalty to parents and the desire to move to areas where the employment opportunities were greater. This conflict was somewhat minimized by the ability to find successful employment. The small farmers, even though they wanted their children to stay on the farm, realized that the farm offered no great rewards. They were better able to accept the migration of their children if this migration produced "successful" employment.
never been nowhere, I am ready to get out and see what the world is like. I've been living in these woods all of my life and when I graduate I'm going to Opelousas and find me a job." This female had no idea of the type of job that she would be able to secure, yet she was determined to leave the small farm setting.

**The Role of Religion**

Given the relative isolation of rural living, membership in recognized groups and organizations has long been held as important by rural folk. In American society, this has found expression in such organizations as the Grange, 4-H, and particularly the church. As Honigsheim (1950) noted, it may be difficult to separate one's religion and one's community, they are interdependent in that one influences the other. All of the small farmers studied were church members, with most being Catholic. The importance of the church in the lives of these small farmers was unquestionable.

The important concerns of the farmers were problems which arose out of the unpredictable nature of farming, or those which were subjected to limited controls. This created a source of tension for the small farmers. The farmer did all that he could in preparing his crops, and then he would wait and hope. Adverse conditions such as the weather, prices, insects, and a scarcity of labor when
urgently needed could create a disastrous situation. This lack of control and uncertainty produced an environment conducive to the rise of religious and emotional behavior.

The Catholic religion was the first to be established in St. Landry Parish, dating back to 1777. Old church records show that both French and Spanish were Catholic and with them to the post of Opelousas, came Catholic priests to minister the wants of the people. The first Protestant church was erected in Opelousas in 1825, it was used by all Protestant denominations. The first Methodist-Episcopal church was built in 1845 (Dupre, 1925).

Many of the social activities that the small farmers engaged in centered around the church, which served as both an educational agency and an informational center. As Max Weber (1958:35-36) points out:

One's religious beliefs are important, as religion not only provides a cadre for social action, but plays an essential role in controlling, limiting and guiding economic behavior. Outlook, needs, responses and the motivational structure of a people are conditioned by the beliefs of their faith.

The Catholic fair, which is an annual event in every community where a Catholic church is located, was looked forward to by this group of farmers and their families with great anticipation. While serving as a means of raising funds to support the activities of the church, it furnished
a great deal of social interaction for all of those involved. The gaiety of the situation was overwhelming. Dancing, participation in games of chance, eating gumbo, and drinking coffee was engaged in by all of the persons present. The fair usually lasts from Friday night through Sunday night in the fall. During these fairs all of the problems that were normally associated with the small farmers were momentarily eliminated. Consequently, there was no discussion of crop failures, management techniques or how to effectively grow crops and raise livestocks. This was one time of the year when the worry about daily problems was suspended. There was a great deal of active preparation for these fairs and they were usually discussed several months prior to their occurrence.

In the small farm communities of St. Landry Parish, just as in other areas of the state, the timing of religious ceremonies was associated with basic changes in agriculture. The church fairs usually occurred right after the harvesting season. The Lenten season occurred directly after winter planting, and Christmas occurred at a time when there was little work and an abundance of food. A function of these activities was to increase family and group interaction and to symbolize unity. They also reordered social relationships in accordance with technical needs, reinforced the farmer's faith in these techniques,
and provided him with group support to face the risks of uncertainty.

There were always religious discussions among the farmers. As a matter of fact when any type of interaction was initiated, it somehow ended in a religious debate. This in itself was enough to suggest the importance of religion to the small farmers. In a discussion among two farmers about what had transpired at a Catholic funeral, there was reference to a relative who had gone to Houston and converted over to the Jehovah Witness religion. As a result of his conversion he could not remain at the funeral when they started "saying the beads" and consequently got up to leave. The farmer stated: "that boy's been raised in the Catholic faith all of his life and he go to the big city and find a woman and she turn his whole life around. You know a religion is good for you if you take care of it, but one that turns you against your family ain't no good for you. I won't even let that boy come to my house now."

Similarly, there were discussions on basic types of religions. It was observed that there was a latent prejudice against people who were not of the Catholic faith. In other words, it was not an obvious or outspoken situation, but it was always at the focal point of communication.
Many justifications were made for this situation such as, "I don't care what faith you belong to, you can be Catholic or Protestant, but if you pray to God, you can be blessed," or "You see, Mrs. So and So is not a Catholic and she seems like a good Christian woman."

The small farmers were just as proud of their religion as they were of their families. "I'm a good Catholic and participate as much as I can, I'm getting old now and I can't do as much as I use to," stated one farmer. When the researcher was asked her religious denomination and replied "not Catholic", the small farmer stated that it didn't make any difference. To verify her association with non-Catholics, the farmer stated, "my spouse was not Catholic, but we would go to Mass together every Sunday and then go to the Protestant services."

The isolation of the small farmers was also a factor within their life situation and therefore helped to preserve their unique religious beliefs and practices. One example of this was the fact that even though the rule of eliminating meat from the Friday meal has passed from the rituals of the Catholic faith, it was still highly practiced by the small farmers who were Catholic. They simply explained it as a habit that they had failed to exonerate.
Since the church was one of the strongest institutions for this group of small farmers, church groups and organizations were very important. Those who were Catholic were members of the Knights of Peter Claver, which is a male oriented organization designed for community services and the progress of the church. The females belonged to a number of women auxillaries. The Protestants were usually members of their Deacon Boards. As a result of the educational hierarchy that existed among the small farmers, the females were more actively involved in their church organization than the males.

Interaction with Friends and Neighbors

In addition to the fact that there was a great deal of dependency of the small farmer on his family, there was also a great deal of interaction with and dependency on friends and neighbors. This was reflected in the high amount of neighborhood sharing. It is important to keep in mind that many of the neighbors had relatively close kinship ties. The small farmers would often turn to their friends and neighbors for advice and assistance, and a great deal of respect was placed on their relationships.

Friends and neighbors meant the same thing for these small farmers in that friendships were based on close proximity of homes within the communities. When the questions were asked, "Who could you go to within your community to
get something done?" or "Who would you trust within your community?" The answer was always the same: "my nearest neighbor."

Geographical proximity is obviously a universal determinant of social interaction because people cannot interact with others unless they can make some contact. Physical proximity in one form or another determines the chances for contact. The nearer people are to each other, the more apt they are to meet and exchange some amounts of information, however little and trival, such as comments about the weather. This proximity need not necessarily be measured in feet or miles but can also occur in momentary encounters. Although a person may have made contact with several persons, the fact that he will go on and develop friendships with some of them and not others will be affected by physical proximity. Physical distance tends to increase the cost of interaction in such a way that if the rewards of interaction with two persons are the same, a person is more likely to interact with the one who is nearer (Homans, 1950).

One important finding in friendship interaction is that reported by Festinger, Schachter and Back (1950) which suggests that individuals are more likely to choose conformers as friends than they are to choose deviates. This suggests that individual conformers are rewarded with friendships, or had friendships to lose if they did not conform.
The larger the number of individuals rewarded the larger the number of conformers. From the study the following "causal chain" was developed to show that location tends to lead to social acceptance; social acceptance tends to lead to conformity; and finally, conformity reacts so as to produce further social acceptance (Homans, 1974:152-153).

Geographical Location $\rightarrow$ Social Acceptance $\rightarrow$ Conformity

Geographical proximity, social acceptance and conformity are important in this study because of the diversity of locations of the small farmers. As noted earlier, the farmers were scattered throughout St. Landry Parish representing eight of the twelve municipalities and five of the seven wards.

As a result of these scattered locations the small farmers usually developed social relationships. They usually traveled to the Experimental Farm together, especially if they lived a considerable distance from the Experimental Farm. Each of the areas represented had a leader who was informally selected by the group to act as spokesman for the area. These leaders were selected either because they were substantial land owners, they had been living in the area for a considerable length of time, they had a "successful" farm operation, or they were outspoken and had a social rapport with non-farm leaders.
Through the interaction among area group members it was determined that there were informal norms that were followed. These norms would be best described as "emergent"; i.e., they did not exist prior to the Small Farmers Project. As long as there was conformity to these norms there was social interaction among the farmers. If no conformity prevailed, the interaction tapered off. In one situation, a group of area farmers refused to let another area farmer ride with them to the Experimental Farm, because as they suggested, "he don't want to do what is right." The norms ranged from less salient ones such as the time the group would leave their area in order to get to the meetings on time to the more salient type such as how much each rider would pay the driver for gasoline and transportation expenses.

As a result of the frequency of contact between these area members, it was observed that these area relationships provided important functions for the small farmers. Some of these functions were:

(1) **Satisfaction** - By identifying with the area group, the small farmers achieved a degree of personal satisfaction. Because of the similarity of location, there were shared values existing. A very good example of this is that one area group was predominantly Baptist. This group would be satisfied in knowing that they all had the same religious beliefs. Within these area groups there was
intimate response, understanding, and recognition. The small farmers in the area groups had a haven from the impersonal, rationalized relationships that was so often existing when they encountered the entire group of farmers.

(2) Control - These area friendships were centers of power. Depending on their size and intimacy of relationships, they could sway a decision in their direction. The power of friendship resources were used to achieve any goal that was considered important. If one of the members of the area group decided to grow a particular crop, all of the members would do so. This was especially true if the decision was made by an area leader. However, this also could have been a reflection of the nature of sharing work.

(3) Protection and Assistance - The area groups typically stood together when one member was having difficulty. They would essentially take over each other's farming operation in case of emergencies, make excuses for each other, and in general support each other if accused or vilified. There were many examples of assistance and protection flourishing when visits were made to the homes of the small farmers. It was not uncommon to go into an area and see all of the farmers working in the garden of a farmer who had gotten behind in his work. In addition, as a group they made general repairs on each other's homes, automobiles, and farm equipment, of which they also shared.
(4) Communication - The area groups provided more opportunity for formal and informal communication. When it was necessary to relay some information to the farmers in a particular area, one telephone call would be enough to reach them all. The farmer called would immediately contact all of the area farmers. This was an important communication network in the area groups; in addition, it made it possible for farmers to meet in order to design progress schemes for themselves.

Despite the area friendships that existed, the small farmers in this study were characterized by a high degree of shared history. This history was attributed to the large number of social bonds that existed among the farmers. Among the major bonds were the Acadian French heritage, the French language, the Catholic religion, expressions of collective responsibilities, and distinctive forms of recreation. These social bonds reflected a noticeable degree of homogeneity and solidarity among the small farmers.

The farmers in the study were pleasure loving, as revealed by their various forms of recreation. A great deal of interest was shown in gumbos, card parties, and dances. The Saturday night "fais-do-do" provided the opportunity for drinking of "cafe noir," whiskey, beer, and wine (often referred to as "hog wine" or "sour cat"). When referring to the festive celebrations and the drinking of spirituous
liquor one farmer stated, "drink no longer water on this particular date, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake." The gumbos were usually given in conjunction with a fund raising activity through the church, however, the gaiety of the situation was just as important as the French dances.

Many of the neighbor and friendship relationships offered games of chance through cards and pool. The common games played were tonk, bouray, and poker. Betting, of course, added enjoyment and excitement to these forms of recreation.

The Mardi Gras season was tradition for festivity and fun among the small farmers. Although many could not afford the type of celebration usually found in large cities, they tended to enjoy the Mardi Gras season in their own way with singing and dancing. The celebration lasting from Sunday through Tuesday climaxed with a ball, usually put on by a church organization and seasoned with gumbo and strong drinks. At 12:00 midnight, the festivity was stopped and the Lenten season began with the piousness and devotion by the small farmers which would last until Easter Sunday.

One of the most important sources of interaction that existed among the small farmers was the preparation for the Christmas party that was given by the Small Farmers
Project. Farmers who had previously shown some reluctance in voicing their opinions were openly expressing their concerns for the success of the celebration. It was a situation where there was 100 percent cooperation and participation. Farmers made donations of chickens, ducks, guineas, shrimp and all of the goodies that could be found in a south Louisiana gumbo. Both males and females volunteered their time to prepare for the festivities which had all of the flavor of a Catholic fair or Mardi Gras celebration.

Another very important aspect of friend and neighbor interaction was the "boucherie." All area friendships were participants in this activity which in all situations observed followed the same procedures. All of the men would capture the hog and slaughter it, while the women were busy preparing for the making of both red and white boudin. It was an all day process which began about 7:30 in the morning and lasted until the last drop of whiskey was consumed. By 9:30 a.m. the pork backbones were cooking and at 12:00 noon

A "boucherie" was a community hog killing which provided for a festive attitude and extensive social interaction. These "boucheries" were as important as the holy holiday seasons (such as Christmas and Easter) for the small farmers in St. Landry Parish. It's celebration provided a time when relatives who had migrated to urban areas returned home for the family and community celebrations.
all of the friends and neighbors who had assisted with the "boucherie" were eating pork backbones, baked sweet potatoes, and fresh fried pork cracklins. The remainder of the afternoon was spent making boudin, informally communicating, and playing cards.

Even though the small farmers had access to a community cannery which made hog killing and the making of boudin much easier, many of them preferred to do it the "old way." This "old way" allowed for much more social interaction among the small farmers and provided them with the opportunity to get together and talk about their common problems. This opportunity would not have existed if the community cannery was used.

The "boucherie" took place during the winter of the year, and always when the "wind came out of the north." In other words, when it was colder, or the temperature was around 45 degrees. Due to the climatic conditions of the parish, the average temperature during the winter months was 64 degrees which would not be feasible for an outdoor "boucherie."

It is important to mention here that a large percentage of the small farmers used the phases of the moon to carry out their farming operations. A MacDonald's Farmers or Grier's Almanac was found in most (73 percent) of the homes. These almanacs were consulted for the
planting and cultivation of crops. The popularity of these publications stems from their appeal to the traditional and superstitious nature of the farmers.

A commonly noted example of the influence of the moon in the planting of crops was when the moon was "coming-up," only crops that produce above the ground, such as cabbages and tomatoes should be planted, but when the moon is "going-down," only crops which produce below the ground, such as potatoes should be planted. In addition to planting, other farming activities such as pruning, weeding, fertilizing, and harvesting were considered to be most effectively performed in conjunction with the phase of the moon. Those who followed the moon cycle did so regardless of their educational level and experience. It was considered as "taking a chance" if the moon cycles were not followed.

Interaction with friends and neighbors was the basic means through which small farmers could assess their roles within their communities. Through these interactions they acquired much of their farming knowledge, learned informally which crops would be more beneficial to them, and how to care for these crops. Consequently, this informal knowledge perpetuated itself into the established practices of the small farmers.
Participation in the Small Farmers Project

This section of the chapter analyzes the Small Farmers Project in which the farmers were participants. It should be noted that this analysis is not an evaluation of the project but only an analysis of how the small farmers perceived their roles in the project.

The Small Farmers Project initially began operation in August 1978. It was designed to provide specialized training in agricultural production, marketing, and management for the farmers with special emphasis on labor-intensive, higher income producing technology. It also assisted in the development of the necessary markets to sustain the small farmer's self employment efforts.

The participation of farmers in this project facilitated a great deal of interaction not only among farmers from within similar neighborhood areas but also with those who were outside of the neighborhood and who possessed similar types of problems. In addition, the small farmers had the opportunity to interact with individuals who were not small farmers. Many of the interactions that prevailed within the Small Farmers Project were focused on the problematic nature of farming as an occupation.

In no country in the world has the principle of association been more successfully used, or more unsparingly applied to a multitude of different objects, than in America. The Americans make associations to give entertainments, to found seminaries,
to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; in this manner they found hospitals, prisons, and schools. If it is proposed to inculcate some truth or to foster some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form a society (de Tocqueville, 1945:106).

The Small Farmers Project did indeed form a society in which the farmers came together for some clearly specified purpose or goal. Although the farmers were recruited for participation, it was of a voluntary nature in which they could resign if their individual goals were not achieved. This was highly unlikely in that the farmers were paid minimum wages for a twenty hour work week. This in itself, along with the seasonal nature of farm work, was enough to maintain participation. The project was specifically designed to produce some changes within the life situation of the farmers and to further their individual values.

These goals and objectives of the Small Farmers Project were fulfilled through a number of meetings. A typical bi-monthly meeting would always begin with one of the farmers giving a non-denominational group prayer. More often it was The Lord's Prayer in unison. If this were not the case it would immediately be brought to the attention of the Rural Development Extension Specialist who was in charge of the meeting. This was observed when during the course of one of the meetings one farmer stood up and said, "I knew when we started this meeting it was not going to be a good
one because we did not give honor to the Man who is responsible for all of us being here. Why don't we start this all over and do it right." He immediately led the group in prayer with no objections from either the farmers present or the Rural Development Extension Specialist. After the prayer there would be farm information, which was always a one way type of communication, particularly at the beginning of the project. As farmers became more personally aware of the Rural Development Extension Specialists, their inter­personal relationships with them became more open and out­going. They began to be more observant of information that would affect them and report this information to the group.

The farm information was usually followed by a guest speaker who would present some helpful information to the farmers. Table 18 lists some of the guest speakers who represented agencies in which the small farmers could utilize in order to improve their farming operations. The Small Farmers Project provided an excellent communication network to facilitate the participants in making decisions that would be beneficial to them.

The guest speaker was followed by general announce­ments concerning the requirements for participation in the project and those things that would take place if the farmers failed to carry out the requirements or abide by the rules and regulations. This often served as a mechanism of control
<table>
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<tr>
<th>RESOURCE AGENCIES PARTICIPATING IN THE SMALL FARMERS PROJECT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Representative from Southern University Livestock and Poultry Show encouraging small farmers to participate in the show.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A black writer from Chicago discussing the program of the Institute of Positive Education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>President of the Southern Development Foundation discussing the importance of cooperatives to small farmers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Supervisor of the Farmers Home Administration discussing the limited resource loans that are available and encouraging small farmers to apply for them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant County Agent of Evangeline Parish discussing his work with small farmers in that parish.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant County Agent of St. Landry Parish discussing potential money making crops for small farmers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attorney from the National Association of Landowners discussing the land loss crisis of blacks and mineral rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Specialist discussing the Agricultural Resource and Instructional Team who are preparing Farm Record Keeping Books specifically designed for people with limited education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Economist of St. Landry Parish discussing how to get the most out of the food budget.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative from the Consortium for the Development of the Rural Southeast discussing their role in assisting limited resource persons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Assistance Department of the Southern Development Foundation giving a series of group sessions on cooperative education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representatives from Louisiana Department of Agriculture discussing the availability of youth loans and encouraging the children of small farmers to apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Income Housing Office of St. Landry Parish offering assistance to farmers in locating adequate housing.</td>
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for the farmers in that once they had met the qualifications for the project, they acquired an intimate attachment of it. This attachment was more likely to be the result of the closing phase of the bi-monthly meetings, when the stipend checks were issued. These bi-monthly meetings would usually last from two to three hours.

The bi-weekly meetings were referred to as split sessions, in that half of the farmers would meet on Mondays, while the other half would meet on Thursdays. These meetings were more individualized because they were geared toward increasing the literacy rate of the small farmers. In other words, they were educational and training sessions where farmers not only engaged in reading, writing, and arithmetic, but were given some type of demonstration on the Experimental Farm, such as taking soil samples or using certain types of pesticides.

These bi-weekly sessions were convened by the Rural Development Extension Specialists and a neighborhood school teacher supplied by the St. Landry Parish School Board. These educational and training sessions were designed to incorporate practical farm knowledge; reading, writing, and arithmetic were related to making adequate farm plans and keeping sufficient farm records. These sessions would usually last for three hours.
The small farmers were much more open and expressive in the bi-weekly sessions than in the bi-monthly sessions. The reasons were that there was a smaller group in each session and the amount of individual attention that the small farmers were given was greater. This led the researcher to believe that these small farmers, although they projected a great deal of neighborhood sharing of work and activities, were more concerned about particular things that affected them directly. In addition, it could be assumed that the frequency, duration, and intensity of interaction were important to the small farmers.

Since the mean level of education completed among the small farmers was only 5.2 years, many of them would be considered as illiterate by today's standards. Although many of them could neither read nor write, they were not unintelligent. This situation might be explained by the special set of cultural factors operating among the small farmers. As one farmer aptly put, "I may be short on book learning, but I got plenty of mother wit." Or "I can figure good in my head but when it come down to putting it on paper I can't do it." In other words, these farmers, because of the special set of circumstances that existed (for example, poor and having to support a large family), were unable to take advantage of opportunities available to many of their rural counterparts. They were humble and thankful for the
opportunity that the Small Farmers Project had afforded them. Oftentimes, during the educational and training sessions, many of the farmers would express themselves by urging or encouraging their fellow participants to try to take full advantage of the opportunity. One 58 year old farmer said, "I'm fortunate to be in the situation that I'm in today, you know an opportunity like this don't present itself but once in a lifetime. It ain't too much we old farmers can do now, but we ought to try to get our youngsters involved in programs like this. We got to work together to make sure that our children can get the benefits of our labor and be willing to make something out of our farms. You know the backbone of the earth is farmers and people are beginning to realize it. Let's give our children the opportunity." This farmer received a great deal of support for his statement from the participants.

The interaction of small farmers within the Small Farmers Project was divided into four problem areas. These problem areas were the focal concerns of the project; they were designed to promote some changes in the "quality of life" of the small farmers. These areas are (1) land and labor, (2) capital and credit, (3) production and management, and (4) marketing.
Land and Labor

The roles that were projected with respect to the principal types of land tenure for the small farmers served as a drawback to a viable system of farming. In addition, these roles limited the development and efficiency of the farming system. Farmers often made excuses for their small land holdings. They offered these excuses as explanations for not being able to increase their income and break out of the vicious cycle of mere subsistence.

The average land area held by the small farmers was only 24.11 acres. This was small since the average farm size in St. Landry Parish in 1974 was 163 acres of land. The range in size of farms was between 4 and 80 acres of land, regardless of the type of land tenure that existed. This difference in farm size was reflected in the nature and structure of the farms. It was a problem trying to determine whether the size of the farm had any relationship to the efficiency of production, however, the importance of farm size varied in different places and depended upon the type of crops that were being produced. Although these small farmers were subjected to limited acreages, it did not suggest that they were inefficient producers. The limited number of crops produced were of good quality because they were conscientious farmers and had produced the same crops over a number of years. They had gone through a process of trial
and error learning. Consequently, the mechanisms and chances for branching off into wider areas of production were extremely remote. The project provided some possibilities for securing better seed, better breeding animals, and better equipment than the small farmers could afford if they were not participants. In addition to buying and selling, the project made credit available to the farmers.

The three major types of land tenure that existed among the small farmers were ownership, cash tenancy, and sharecropping. Fifty-one percent (n=28) were owners with an average of 25.8 acres of land, 14.8 percent (n=8) had cash tenancy with an average of 6.4 acres of land, and 33.3 percent (n=18) sharecropped with an average of 29.3 acres of land.

(1) Ownership of Land - All of the farmers studied believed that ownership of land was the only real and permanent source of security and independence. Consequently, the farmer's prestige and status were accorded in proportion to the number of acres of land that he owned. This was reflected by the fact that those farmers who had been informally selected as area leaders were those who owned the largest number of acres of land and had been in their community for a number of years. These two variables were generally related to each other. About 40 percent of all land owned by small farmers represented inherited or family
land, and as a result had a family name attached to it. This was enough to confer status upon an individual farmer. The family land was often the object of special sentimental attachments by the small farmers, as it was venerated because it held a strong family tradition and symbolism.

The small farmers who owned their own land, more intensively cultivated it, thus receiving a greater input of labor and capital per unit area. The farmer who owned his land had security of tenure and was therefore more likely to make long term investments on his land. If the Rural Development Extension Specialists made recommendations to the farmers who owned his land to make some permanent improvements on his farm, such as planting permanent tree crops, installing drains, or constructing all weather access to the land, this would be done without much hesitation. However, it took a great deal of consideration for non-owners to make land improvements, yet they were more willing to upgrade their livestock.

Often with the expense of maintaining large families, land ownership was not attained until the farmer had reached the age of 50 or above. The mean age of land owners was 56.5 years. This suggests that by the time the farmers had achieved some ownership stability with their land, many of them considered themselves to be physically incapable of working the land to maximize their returns from it.
Ownership and age were related to leadership and status among the small farmers. This was shown by the interactions that existed within the Small Farmers Project. Out of the eleven farmers who were 65 years of age or older, nine of them owned their own land. Seven of these felt that they had a progressive farm, not because of the physical labor they themselves were putting into it presently, but because of the younger family members who were living within their households and who were willing to cultivate the land. One farmer stated, "I have put forth my time on the land, but I feel that my participation in this program will serve as an example for the younger farmers. I'm willing to do anything these people tell me to improve my lot in life and being an old man, the others will follow me."

The pride of ownership was an important feature in the lives of the small farmers. They seldom considered selling their land unless there appeared to be no other alternative. Of the 28 farmers who were land owners, none of them were willing to sell their land. They realized the value of land today and often said that their land was worth three times more than what they paid for it. Apart from anything else they usually had the intention of leaving their land to their children, even though many of them were reasonably sure that their children did not want to farm. In several cases the small farmers had specifically purchased land for their children. One of the oldest farmers participating in the
project stated that he had divided his land into eight equal parts for his children, and had given them the option of building their homes on the land. Only two of the children had done this, the other six had migrated to larger urban areas and, according to the farmer, had no intentions of coming back to the homeland. Every conscious effort was made on the part of the farmers to keep their land within the family.

The awareness of the value of land was the subject of one of the bi-weekly meetings. A representative of the National Association of Landowners came in to discuss the scarcity of farm land and the severity of the problem of the loss of land, especially among black farmers. In addition, the destruction of good farm land that had been leased to oil and gas companies was discussed. This touched the hearts of many of the small land owners who had been in a similar situation or had known someone who had. A small percentage of these farmers were also leasing land to oil and gas companies. This was one example of the extensiveness of the perception of roles for the small farmer especially when they were confronted with problems that were directly related to how they perceived their roles. The roles that the farmers assumed were related to the social values that they held. Many of the farmers were stimulated enough by the land problem to attend a number of meetings which took place
outside of their community. One farmer replied that he was very concerned about the situation but his attendance at these meetings had taken him away from his farm work for a great length of time. He offered this as an explanation for the passiveness of small farmers in a number of information sessions. "We don't have the time to go all over the place, nor the money. If we do leave we get behind in our work and it is hard to catch up." This was an example of the role strain that often existed among the small farmers as they perceived their individual goals and related them to the goals of the Small Farmers Project.

It was apparent that when the small farmers heard something that was beneficial to them, they shared the information with their neighbors and friends. They were not selfish with the information they received. Oftentimes the resource persons used by the Small Farmers Project were invited to relay their information to groups and organizations in which the farmers were members. This was a reflection of the limited amount of competition that existed in regards to work roles of neighbors and friends. It was the general philosophy of the small farmers that information without work was no good. Everyone knew that the man who works the hardest would reap the most benefits, and landowners were the first to give a detailed analysis of how hard they had worked to maintain their land. These
farmers were "takers" but not "seekers." As long as the information was brought to them they would listen and try to utilize it, but they would never take the initiative to seek out information. They always had to work was the major reason for not being a "seeker" of potentially helpful information. In this situation, there was observed an "instinct of work and suffering." "Sure we have fun, but its good clean fun," stated one of the farmers, "actually we were put on this earth to work for what we get." Even though these farmers were pleasure loving they often felt guilty about engaging in fun, especially when there was farm work to do. Because of the high value placed on physical work, these farmers often incorporated fun into their work situations.

(2) Cash Tenancy - With the ideal of independence existing among these small farmers, renting of land was generally considered to be an undesirable form of land tenure. The opinion expressed by many of the farmers, especially those who were renting or sharecropping, was that they preferred to wait until they had attained enough capital so they could purchase land. However, renting was utilized as a possibility for farming only for a short period of time.
It should be noted here that many of the small farmers expressed skepticism in renting land. Several farmers stated that they had been misled by farm owners and had lost money and crops through renting land. This could be explained largely by the educational level of many of the farmers and the exploitation of land owners. Because of their lack of understanding, many of the small farmers had failed to get written leases from the landowners. Without this written lease there were no legal grounds to stand on to regain the lost revenue. Many farmers felt that they could be evicted from the land leaving the products of their labor on the land. A situation of this kind was observed in which a small farmer had been renting land from a landowner for over ten years. With the rise of soybean prices and the demand for soybean production in the parish, the landowner decided to place all of his land in soybeans which caused the displacement of the farmer.

There was a limitation on the availability of land within the parish. Whenever land was available, the renter would usually get it from large landowners who had idle farm land. This caused the farmers to question the quality of the land. The average cash value of rented land was between $30.00 and $38.00 per acre annually depending on the area in which it was located. This was considered as extremely high by these farmers, especially when they were familiar
with others who were renting land for as little as $12.00 per acre annually.

Renting accounted for only 3.9 percent of the land that the small farmers occupied, and held a general relationship to income level. Those farmers who were renters held the least amount of land, which represented a total of 51 acres and an average of 6.4 acres of land per renter. The amount of rented land ranged from 4 to 10 acres.

The farmers who were renters showed little control over their own life situations. They were not as outspoken in their interactions as those who were owners. Lacking security of tenure, the renters usually gave little care and attention to the land, however they did place a lot of emphasis on producing quality crops. There was a concern with getting a quick cash crop with a minimum of effort and investment.

There were very few farmers who engaged in more than one type of tenure. Even though several farmers had idle farm land they were not willing to rent it. It was a security measure just in case they or some members of their family wanted to utilize the land for some kind of farm production. Only one farmer was both an owner and a renter of land.

(3) **Sharecropping** - Although this system of land tenure was considered as menial, status degrading, oppressive
and cruel, it represented the life style of 33.3 percent of the small farmers. There were 528 acres of land being sharecropped and a mean of 29.3 acres per farmer. Sharecropping was a common method of land tenure for the small farmers; through it they accepted some physical responsibility for the land and regarded themselves as having some occupancy for it, without the mental responsibility of record keeping and management.

A large percentage of the sharecroppers were primarily engaged in the production of soybeans, rice, or sweet potatoes. These three crops represented the major sources of agricultural income in St. Landry Parish in 1970. Many large farmers were engaged in the production of these crops and the small farmers would assist with this production and in return take a portion of the profit of the harvested crops. The share in all cases was one-third of the crops that were produced. According to Smith and Zopf (1970:169):

Sharecropping as a means of paying wages to a laborer is a one-sided arrangement, favoring the well educated, sophisticated landowner and placing the laborer of humble means, minimal education, and virtually nonexistent political power almost always at a disadvantage. It is fundamentally an exploitive system in which the landowner extracts the best possible terms from the laborer, and the worker, in turn, extracts from the soil the maximum crop which can be produced with a minimum input of any means of production except labor.
The reactions of the sharecropper was not to make improvements on the land, but to utilize it through the minimum of time and effort. Sharecropped land was usually close to the small farmers home; landowners usually allowed the sharecropper to work land that was in close proximity to his home. In this way the farmer could double as a night watchman over land in which he had some vested interest. This is not to suggest that all of the sharecroppers were in close proximity to their land, since it was found that a few of the farmers lived at least 10 miles from their sharecropped land.

The farmers who sharecropped had no control over their land usage or the type of crops that could be planted. They were very indecisive about conditions of the land, however, they tended to be more scientifically oriented in terms of how to get the best seed, how to use the right kinds of pesticides, and the best conditions for growing the crops they produced.

One of the goals of the Small Farmers Project was to get the participants to realize the value of land and the importance of land ownership. Through interaction with the Rural Development Extension Specialists, the farmers began to display the idea of eventual ownership of land. There was a situation in which a sharecropper had managed to save some money to buy land, but found there was none
available. He realized he was not making any progress by sharecropping and had even asked his "boss" to sell him land that he had worked for eight years growing soybeans. The "boss", of course, had refused. This farmer was faced with either continuing to farm or getting out of farming altogether. "I love to farm," he said, "it is the only thing I know how to do." From this statement there was some indication of the relationship between loving to do something because you don't have any skills to do anything else. These farmers realized that their skills were limited and as a result placed all of their hope in farming.

To the small farmers, sharecropping and renting represented the worst aspects of inefficient land use, including poor farming methods and neglect. Such conditions were manifested in the willingness to make even short term investments, particularly when there was skepticism surrounding the length and security of tenure. One suggestion that was made by the Small Farmers Project was to make the best of the situation that the farmers encountered. Even though these farmers may not have been completely satisfied with their system of land tenure, they were encouraged to produce quality crops that would be suitable for marketing and to breed good quality livestock that would bring maximum returns. As these farmers began to be more open to discussion and more trustful of the Rural Development Extension
Specialists, they became more concerned about their production processes. This interaction showed an intensification of roles through the formalization process as they were perceived by the small farmers.

Many of the farmers, when asked to estimate the value of good farm land, placed it between $1,500 to $2,500 per acre. Over fifty percent of them had reported annual income from farm production below these figures. Because individual possession of land was so highly regarded and renting was often the source of inadequate security among these farmers, they were more likely to sharecrop until they could save and eventually acquire individual ownership. These farmers would rather rent land and become relatively independent farmers while they were young and in good physical condition. Consequently, these small farmers were often 50 years of age or older before they owned their own land, thus many years of farming were not spent on their own land.

**Capital and Credit**

As a result of the size of the farmers holdings and the mere subsistence level of living, a considerable portion of the interactions of the farmers with the Rural Development Extension Specialists were based on how to secure capital and credit to finance their farm operation. Since one of
the many objectives of the project was to locate local, state, and federal resources to provide services for the participants, a great deal of emphasis was placed on lending agencies and the credit potential of the farmer.

A basic factor in analyzing the size of the small farmers income included hidden expenses. In many cases, the small farmer, in order to be successful or make a profit, had to purchase his own tools and implements. Since the mean income of these farmers was only $2,716.11, financial barriers were in existence that placed the farmer at a disadvantage. As Weber (1946) points out, "a person does not and never had owned all of his tools, although his attempts to own at least a portion of them is likely to keep him poor."

The attainment of material success, as manifested in a level of living, was not accomplished solely on the basis of the small farmers ability, but reflected a set of values and beliefs and means by which they could rationalize success or the lack of it. As mentioned previously, the small farmer is basically isolated from the ideal of conspicuous consumption. This, along with his capital and his occupation, precludes him from engaging in frivolous materialism. Thus, "success" for these small farmers was based on having the necessities of life, for example adequate food, clothes, shelter, and transportation. These necessites
did not have to be extremely expensive or ultra modern.

A visual investigation was made concerning the distribution of goods and services present in each household. The most ubiquitous item found was a table model radio, usually an older model that had been well preserved and was in good working condition. The only other items found in more than half of the homes were a table model black and white television set, and a telephone. This does not mean that all of the farmers were limited to these three possessions. There were a number of farmers who owned floor model color television sets and automatic washers and dryers. A food freezer was found in almost all of the homes to facilitate the storage of farm produce.

The small farmers were generally unable to support a good house for their families. A dwelling was a luxury and did not add anything to the income of the family, rather it was an expense to the land and labor. It would take a good farm business or additional sources of income to support a good modern home with all of the modern conveniences. According to the 1970 census, 25.5 percent of all homes in St. Landry Parish were considered as poor. Those units that were rented were poorer than those that were owned. A similar situation was reflected among the farmers studied, which was also an indication of the "pride of ownership." Those farmers who were renters had a mean contract rent of $40.00 per month and had a higher percentage of units that lacked
some plumbing facilities. Only one farmer was lacking indoor toilet facilities, but with the additional income supplied by the Small Farmers Project additions were being made on this home which would support this facility.

There were very few farmers without some form of transportation. Forty-five farmers (83.3 percent) owned at least a farm truck which was in good working condition, while 20 of the 54 farmers owned both a car and a truck dating from a 1963 to a 1974 model. One explanation given by a farmer for only having a truck was, "I told the old lady that we didn't need a car because of the type of work that needs to be done around the place I would only make a car into a truck and it won't last long that way. A truck can take all of this heavy stuff."

Some of the farmers stated that transportation to and from the Experimental Farm was a problem, but only in certain situations. For example, when one farmer was giving an explanation for his lateness for one of the meetings, he stated, "most of the people here know my condition, I don't have no transportation and my car is broke. I got Brother Jesse's battery this morning. His truck won't start and he has been having problems with that. That be mostly our problem for being late." Another one said, "many of them passed me up this morning and I was just creeping along. My
motor is shot. I'll have to get that fixed though or I'll just have to leave home a little earlier."

At least half of the farmers owned or had access to tractors or tilling equipment. The tractors owned were usually older models, but were kept in good working condition since many of the farmers were "jacks of all trades" and could do the necessary repairs on their equipment. Several farmers owned more than one tractor in addition to a number of implements that would facilitate efficient farm operation. There was one farmer who cultivated 10 acres of land with two mules and a hand plow, however, this was observed as not relating to the amount of capital on hand, but to the age and traditionalism of that particular farmer.

These farmers lived a day-to-day type of existence. With the expense of maintaining large families most of them found saving money very difficult. Less than half of them were engaged in a regular system of savings, and these were farmers who were making more than the mean income of $2,716.11. Many of the farmers stated they could not afford to save, "it take all of the money that I can make to support my family," stated several farmers. Or as another farmer put it, "I'm a working man and when I'm through with my potatoes, I got to find a job so that my family can still live. We can't make it on just them potatoes."
One of the advantages of the Small Farmers Project was the initiation of a savings club where farmers could sign a deduction form and have a certain amount of money taken from their stipend checks as regular savings. Forty-three farmers (79.6 percent) had taken advantage of this opportunity with deductions ranging from $4.00 to $22.50 bi-monthly. The project provided extra income to farmers, some of whom had to use it as a source of subsistence while others could afford to place this money in reserve.

The small farmers were cautious spenders and primarily purchased only those things that were necessary. They realized they were poor and did not hesitate to relay this information to others. They were generally aware of the risks involved in farming as an occupation and were somewhat fearful of taking a chance especially when it meant involving their land or crops. As a result they usually focused on planting crops that had been proven to bring them some return.

The farmers had reservations about getting credit because they could remember or had even experienced situations in which either land, automobiles, or farm equipment were lost to lending institutions. They viewed the ownership of land or farm equipment as one of the advantages of securing a farm improvement loan, since these items could be used as
collateral for the loan. However, the reluctancy prevailed among the farmers.

St. Landry Parish lenders, according to the farmers, have always had a reputation for eliminating the loan applications of the small land holders. This has been the case for local, state, and federal lending agencies. The small size units which were traditionally common in the parish and the nature of the agricultural credit institutions have made credit costs to these farmers more expensive. These farmers expressed the following concerns when they were asked about credit. "We can't get credit because of small acreages;" "the interest rates are too high;" "we need more long and short term financing;" "we need higher farm loans and longer repayment periods;" "there is too much time lag between loan approval and getting the funds;" "our young people can't get into farming because of the high cost of land and equipment, and we need credit to get our youngsters involved in 4-H and Future Farmers of America;" and "small farmers should be given the encouragement and financial loans to buy land when they are young and physically capable of working the land." In general, these farmers felt that the negative credit situation existed because of their small size and their race.

Many avenues of credit had been previously utilized by the small farmers. These lending agencies included
private individuals, local credit merchants and banks, agricultural credit corporations, and governmental credit agencies. They often discussed the Farmers Home Administration and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Services as potential sources of credit.

The Small Farmers Project had considerable contact with the local Farmers Home Administration and one day each week had been set aside for the participants to go in with their farm's plans and make application for loans. Through this contact, seven farmers had loan applications approved ranging from $12,000 to $25,000. With success at the Farmers Home Administration, many farmers were becoming interested in submitting loan applications to make improvements on their farms or to begin a new type of farming operation. This is not to suggest that all of the farmers were interested in making a loan; many continued to be suspicious of credit, however, some of the farmers were taking advantage of the awareness they had received regarding their credit potential.

Production and Management

A recent study (Murray and Coughenour, 1977) of farmers in low income areas of the south attempted to measure "quality of life." The authors observed such items as income, occupation, household possessions, age, and education. The
data indicated that because of the special set of circumstances relating to these variables, farmers were inefficient managers. In addition, these variables denoted, to a certain degree, whether these farmers were progressive or conservative. This would be reflected in the types of crops produced and the efficiency of management.

One of the major objectives of the Small Farmers Project was to encourage farmers to pursue several specific agricultural enterprises, specifically mixed vegetables, in order to acquire an adequate yearly income. The farmers were encouraged to grow two warm season crops and two cool season crops (See Table 19). The fact that one crop was clearly more profitable than others did not necessarily mean that all of the resources should be devoted to only one crop unless such specialization would bring greater returns. Many of the crops that were produced were seasonal in nature and the labor was required for only part of the year.

As a result of the low risk tolerance and the tradition of planting soybeans, rice, and sweet potatoes, many of these farmers "hung" on to these crops. It was difficult to convince these farmers to try other alternative crop production to improve their farming operation. There were some limitations placed on their management techniques and many of them were not aware of the crops that were bringing them the greatest returns. They had not been
TABLE 19

TYPE OF VEGETABLE CROPS PRODUCED
TO FACILITATE YEARLY INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warm Season Crops</th>
<th>Cool Season Crops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green Beans</td>
<td>Carrots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okra</td>
<td>Mustard Greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumbers</td>
<td>Beets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>Broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Corn</td>
<td>Cabbage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Peas</td>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watermelons</td>
<td>Louisiana Lettuce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Squash</td>
<td>Garlic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskmelons</td>
<td>Shallots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkins</td>
<td>Butterbeans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Potatoes</td>
<td>Irish Potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
adequately informed as to how to assess their expenditures and relate this to their profits.

The income of the average potato farmer was too small to justify months of leisure. It was necessary to use some other crops to supplement the potatoes (for example, those that used labor and equipment when not needed by potatoes). Such supplementary crops may have been less profitable than potatoes, but if they added to the total income for the year then it may have been necessary to add them. There could be no remedy for the low incomes of many of these small farmers until they incorporated into their operation a farm organization that would give them a better distribution of production and management in relationship to labor and capital.

There was a great deal of uncertainty when dependency was placed on one crop (monoculture). These farmers had always accepted an undue amount of risks in their reliance upon potatoes for practically all of their income. The anticipated returns from one crop would not be realized because of a number of factors. Two of these factors that often affected these farmers were natural hazards and economic hazards. The natural hazards included the weather, insect, and diseases, whereas, the economic hazards were drastic changes in prices, which may have been unfavorable to one crop but favorable to another crop. With the limitations of adequate storage facilities, many of these
farmers could not afford to hold out with their produce until the prices increased. The planting of many different crops would not give complete insurance against failure but it would offer a partial insurance.

A one crop system provided income at only one time of the year. This placed the farmer at an economic disadvantage after the harvesting season. A given amount of income at one time of the year was often not used as effectively as the same amount of money distributed over several months of the year, and there was less danger of extravagant spending when the money was distributed throughout the year.

These small farmers could not exist by depending on one crop. They had to utilize other things around their farms to deal with the rising cost of living. Therefore, the farmers found it necessary to supplement their potatoes with mixed garden vegetables, hogs, chickens, and cattle. The land had to be combined with other factors of production to carry on an adequate farm business. The amount of land the farmer worked determined the efficiency with which the other factors of production were used.

The Small Farmers Project emphasized the establishment of adequate farm inventories and plans with diversified farming operations. Farmers were urged to keep records of all of their farm expenditures. These farmers, as a whole,
did not keep very good records of their farming operation, if they kept records at all. They had neither the training nor the time to keep good sets of farm records. Many complained of the fact that they had to spend too much time doing farm labor leaving too little time for management. Many of these farmers had been accustomed to memorizing their farm expenditures which was problematic. Although these farmers prided themselves with being able to memorize thing very well, they were not aware that many things could not be recalled to memory when they were needed. The wives of the farmers were much more active in keeping the written records for the farming operation.

Marketing

The availability of markets has always been a problem for farmers and it was no less so for the small farmers. Oftentimes, farmers would plant their crops with no certainty as to where their products would be sold and in many cases the products were eventually used for home consumption with no income received from their labor.

One of the major objectives of the Small Farmers Project was to contract with small farmers who wanted to market through one of the economic development activities. The major economic outlets for marketing were provided through the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative, who sponsored a marketing shed in Opelousas, and the St. Landry
Agricultural Development Corporation.

The St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative was one of the major goals of the Small Farmers Project. The ideal outcome is that after the project is completed, these small farmers will be able to be self sufficient with their work through the cooperative. All of the participants were encouraged and did join the cooperative with a $20.00 annual membership fee. This allowed them to take advantage of all of the services that were offered by the cooperative.

The St. Landry Agricultural Development Corporation was a non-profit foundation whose aim was to train and employ farmworkers in St. Landry Parish. It operated a 340 acre vegetable farm in the parish, which provided training in production, farm management, and marketing. As a result of producing large volumes of vegetables it was an excellent marketing situation. These large volumes increased the potential for getting better prices when products were sold. Additionally, it had the flexibility to enter interstate fresh and wholesale markets. There was a large packing shed on the premises to process vegetables for market. The St. Landry Agricultural Development Corporation contracted with area farmers in the parish to market their vegetable production. This benefited those farmers who did not ordinarily have these markets and gave them better prices.
A small percentage of the farmers had developed market outlets of their own, however, these markets were very small and did not facilitate all of the crops they produced. One farmer had established some contact with a local supermarket that would buy all of a certain crop that he produced. As a result, he had planned his crop production in order to facilitate the market.

One of the largest problems that these farmers encountered was the fact that they were unable to contract with markets because of smaller quantities. Many market outlets wanted to buy in bulk in which these farmers individually did not possess. The Small Farmers Project had been successful in securing adequate markets which would necessitate the combining of products from individual farmers to create larger quantities.

A large percentage of the farmers stressed the need for training in marketing and how to make contacts with local markets in order to sell their produce. They realized that the market was a very important aspect in their farming operation, yet they seemed unconcerned when their market outlets were not available. If they produced quality products they could readily sell them to their friends and neighbors, do a little truck farming, or use the produce for home consumption.

The Small Farmers Project provided many outlets for social interaction for the farmers they otherwise would have
been missing. Some of the farmers were provided all expense paid trips to out of state conferences where they were able to interact with other small farmers from different regions. In addition, they were also given the opportunity to view many types of successful farming operations. This broader societal perspective on the situation of farmers was important in the allocation of role consistency for the small farmers. They often remarked, "there are some other little guys out there too."

**Satisfaction**

In a study by Wilensky (1964) an attempt was made to establish what people thought were desirable qualities of themselves as persons; these same people were then asked whether the work they did was congruent or discordant with that prized self-image. Wilensky concluded that work was evaluated positively or negatively along six dimensions (1) the degree to which it permitted ordinary social contacts with others; (2) the degree to which there was opportunity to exercise one's own judgement and intelligence; (3) the chance to be recognized for doing work well; (4) the chance to use one's own skills; (5) relative freedom from close supervision; and (6) opportunity for promotion and advancement. The conclusions suggested that relative degrees of constraint, freedom, and mobility are equally important in determining certain degrees of satisfaction.
The results of the above study relate directly to the small farmers who were found to be independent workers. Their satisfaction was found in being their own boss and not having to live in an urban area. Their farm work provided the opportunity for social contact, though it may have only been with relatives, and they enjoyed the work because it was often associated with fun.

In trying to assess the satisfaction of small farmers, a great deal of emphasis was placed on what these farmers did rather than what they said they did. A working assumption was that if a person is satisfied with his life situation then he would be more productive. This assumption leaves much to be desired in the lives of these farmers, since they were basically a group whose productivity has been limited by their socio-economic conditions; also satisfaction tends to be related to success.

It was generally observed through the overt behavior of the farmers, that the greater the rewards to the farmers the greater their satisfactions would be to their life situation. On the other hand, the more the farmers still desired, the less their satisfactions to their life situation. Satisfaction with a particular situation depended on the needs which the situation fulfilled for the small farmers.
The analysis of satisfaction was divided into three categories, based on how certain situations were observed. These categories are (1) economic, (2) community, and (3) social.

**Economic**

The economic situations were the major sources of dissatisfaction among the small farmers. When such characteristics as educational attainment, income, residence status or type of home, and vehicle ownership were taken into consideration, the small farmers simply did not possess these things in adequate supply. In other words, their rewards were somewhat limited when these economic characteristics were assessed. Although these farmers were not chronic complainers, they were quite open in expressing their dissatisfaction with their lot in life. This was especially true when they were in the smaller, more informal group settings. One farmer stated, "nobody is concerned about the small farmers, we break our backs from sunup to sundown and try to sell our crops at a reasonable price and get nothing. This is the reason that we are so unhappy, we can't get nowhere because we don't have any money, just look at the cost of fuel, feed, and fertilizer, yet the farm prices have stayed the same and some have even dropped."

As a result of the economic situation of these small farmers, the researcher felt that they simply discounted
their financial situation. In other words, rather than using their financial situation as a source of satisfaction, they tended to make the best possible adaptation to their life situation and directed themselves to other areas of their lives to attain a sense of satisfaction.

Even though these farmers were lacking in education, they were generally not proud of this. They realized the value that was placed on education by the society and any opportunity for some formal or informal training would probably be welcomed. In this situation, a sense of satisfaction could be observed primarily because they had the opportunity to participate in the Small Farmers Project. However, a sense of dissatisfaction was also observed because the farmers had been unable to take advantage of such an opportunity at an earlier stage within their lives. It was stated by many of the farmers, "you know this is a great opportunity, I just wished it had come along a little sooner."

The researcher found these farmers to be highly motivated but due to the special set of economic circumstances existing within their lives, these motivations could not be capitalized on. This is not to imply that all of the farmers were motivated, but in general terms, if these farmers were presented with an opportunity to increase their level of living they more than likely would do so.
Community

The previous discussion of the family, friend and neighbor interaction is a basis for understanding the satisfactions and dissatisfactions of the small farmer with his community. These farmers often considered their community as a convenient place to live, specifically because it provided for them all of the services that they needed. They were satisfied with the density of the population, the homogeneity of the neighborhood, and their community associations. They feared living in large urban areas, and preferred to remain within the confines of their own familiar surroundings because it provided safety and security for them. Many of the small farmers did not even want to visit large cities and would do so only when it was absolutely necessary. They were dissatisfied that their relatives had migrated to urban areas, because to them, these areas represented crime, violence, and "hard living." It is important to note that many of these farmers were born and reared within these communities and their family names provided symbolism within the community. "I can get anything I want in this community because everybody knows me here and I know everybody," stated several farmers.

There was likely to be a community store which provided credit for all of those who were known in that community. This provided an avenue of security for the farmers;
they could purchase necessary goods even when they were short on cash.

The concepts of "insiders" and "outsiders" are important here because members of the community knew who was "in" and who was "out". If a person was an "outsider" he would be questioned extensively by the "insiders" and required to give name, place of birth, and reasons for being in the community. This was the orientation session which would let the "insiders" know if the "outsider" could be trusted. These farmers showed extreme skepticism of persons who were not born and reared within their community, and wanted to be aware of the "outsiders" purposes or goals for being in the community.

The rewards for living within a particular community led to a great deal of satisfaction. These rewards created a strong attachment among the area farmers during the formal and informal interaction settings. Through the community, the small farmers had status which was obtained because of the length of time they had been a part of the particular community. They had friends and neighbors who not only protected their houses and land, but who had similar beliefs, roles, and goals. These things seemed to have been neatly integrated into the pattern of activities within the community.
Social

The social situations created more satisfaction among the small farmers with their life situation and the nature of farming as an occupation. These social situations included the ease of making friends; the number of close relatives within the community, especially children; the number of close friends; the ease of contact with the nearest neighbor; community integration; religious participation; and satisfaction with family life. These things were associated with satisfaction or a "sense of satisfaction."

The rewards that the small farmers received from their social situations were extremely important in projecting satisfaction. It was often heard from the farmers that "you can have all of the money in the world, but if you don't have friends it don't mean anything to you." The number of friendships was related to the degree of satisfaction which the small farmers possessed.

Since the family was an important focus of attention, the small farmers placed a great value on family relationships. They often dissociated themselves from individuals who could not get along with their families. They regarded themselves as having a close relationship to their family, religion, and community and if there was some nonconformity to this trend of thought, negative sanctions would be applied.
Overall, these farmers showed a degree of satisfaction with their life situations. This satisfaction was more than likely a reflection of their expectations, which were somewhat low. These expectations were largely based on what they had previously received; they had not received much and as a result did not expect much. One farmer said, "you live like you are going to die, I've lived poor and I'm going to die poor."

Farming as an occupation was a source of satisfaction for these small farmers. This was related to their occupational skills and educational attainment. Because these farmers lacked occupational skills and the level of education necessary to receive such skills, the satisfaction was functional to them. It was often stated, "we love the farm very much, but it's hard to explain to our kids why we have to do without some things because we can't afford them, but we can't do any better, what else can we do." This was a source of discontent among the farmers.

Older farmers were more satisfied with their life situation than younger farmers, but were dissatisfied with the progress that was being made in the society. They constantly emphasized going back to the "good old days" when land was cheap and labor was appreciated. They felt that the invention of the television was projecting negative influences on their youngsters and automobiles were a source of destruction, particularly with the number of accidents
which occur. "I'd like to go back to the days when the world didn't move so fast, I'm sitting here wishing that I still had my mules and wagon," one farmer stated. When asked what he would do with mules and wagon on a two lane highway with cars going 55 miles per hour or faster, he simply stated, "I'll drive on the shoulders."

The small farmers were generally satisfied with their life situations because they tended to have more interactions with family, friends and neighbors, they trusted their homogeneous communities, and they were their own bosses. The fact that they had low incomes was generally not related to their satisfaction, even though this income produced some dissatisfaction.

**Cooperative Behavior**

The purpose of this section of the chapter is to analyze cooperative behavior as it was observed in the interactions of the small farmers. As a result of the nature and extent of the small farmers participation in the American system of agriculture, the development of cooperatives as a means of organizing small farmers has been paramount.

The Industrial Revolution was the starting point of the modern cooperative movement. New invention uprooted millions of farm people and transplanted them into cities to become industrial workers. The idea of self-sufficiency was abandoned and specialization became the rule. The object of
one's labor became more and more to make money in order to acquire the necessities of life. One became increasingly dependent on others for those things (like food) which he, himself had previously provided. Consequently, small farmers with the idea of maintaining the family unit of production, and depending on the individual rather than the organization, were reluctant to accept the life style of working within the industrial organization. As a result of this industrial transformation, the small farmer was in a position where limitations were placed upon his economic production. This created dissatisfaction among farmers which caused them to fall in line with modern trends and seek some means of developing cooperatives to aid them in solving their problems.

According to Marshall and Godwin (1971:15-16), a cooperative is a type of business firm which has three distinguishing characteristics:

1. A Cooperative is owned and controlled by its member-customer on a democratic basis. Each member usually has one vote, but in some cases votes are allocated to members on the basis of patronage. This distinguishes cooperatives from corporations, which allocate control and voting rights in proportion to the capital invested by stockholders, who may or may not be customers of the firm.

2. Cooperatives differ from other businesses in the manner in which surplus earnings are distributed. The net margin over costs is returned to customers in proportion to their capital investment. These returns are called refunds. This technique usually enables
members and patrons to obtain goods and/or services at lower prices and returns on investments at higher prices than those received or paid by customers of other types of firms.

3. Membership in a cooperative is voluntary. Cooperatives are organized to serve the needs of their members, whereas other commercial firms are organized to earn profits and returns on invested capital. The cooperative's primary purpose is to help its members realize higher incomes, lower costs, or more efficient and dependable service.

Cooperatives have been designed to mutually benefit small farmers. In essence, this suggests that certain benefits are provided directly to the members while assuming that the members can decide what is in their own best interest. For a cooperative to be successful, then, a sufficient amount of membership participation is required.

Many of the studies on social participation have been of a static nature which emphasized socio-economic variables that placed limitations on participation. These socio-economic variables, such as age, sex, marital status, education, or social status, are inefficient factors in motivating members to become actively involved within their organization.

The small farmers and many low income individuals often view their participation in groups and organizations as an expense, since participation is more likely to require additional time, money, and effort. However, they usually
join the organization to achieve a particular goal, which is complementary to the cost of participation. Thus, it can be assumed that the members receive rewards for their participation within an organization which are equal to or greater than the expense that is incurred.

The creation of farmer cooperatives for small land holders has been visualized (1) as a way to help the small farmer with input and output markets, (2) as a way to solve the income problems for small farmers, and (3) as a way to preserve the concept of the family farm. Even though many of these cooperatives have been successful, those that have been designed specifically to promote the efforts of the small farmers have been faced with limited member participation. As a result of limited resources, managerial skills, operating capital, and restricted access to markets, successful cooperatives for small land holders have been problematic. These limited resources have often prevented small farm operators from becoming members of established cooperatives or from establishing cooperatives of their own. In addition, the small and unstable volume of business generated by small farm operations have led to a large amount of failure in farm cooperatives, along with the lack of participation of members.

Failure in cooperatives, however, is not always based on the economic limitations. Marshall and Goodwin (1971:20-21) suggests that certain requirements must exist
within the cooperative in order for it to be successful.

These requirements are:

1. A basic requirement for economic success among cooperatives is social cohesion, which may be produced by religious, racial, patriotic, or ideological considerations. Social cohesion is important because it facilitates the mutual confidence necessary for democratic control.

2. The services provided by the cooperative must be in strong and continuous demand by the members. If the cooperative is not based on strongly felt membership needs or if members can obtain greater benefits from public traders, the cooperative will have difficulty surviving.

3. Good management is one of the most important ingredients of successful cooperatives and one of the most common causes of failure among poor farmers' cooperatives.

4. The cooperative must be able to meet political and economic opposition from those who feel threatened by its objectives.

5. The cooperative ordinarily requires a favorable economic environment and must have the ability to survive economic adversity.

6. The amount and character of outside help often is crucial to the success of cooperatives, particularly in early stages. Help might come from governments, federations of cooperatives, foundations, or sympathetic organizations and individuals.

The development of a cooperative and the participation of small farmers in the cooperative movement in St. Landry Parish is not entirely new. The Grand Marie Vegetable Producers Cooperative, Inc., was organized in Sunset, Louisiana in 1965 by a group of poor black farmers who felt they were being persecuted by exploitive white merchants. The cooperative was primarily concerned with marketing sweet potatoes
purchased from its members, later expanding its operation to include a variety of mixed vegetables, such as okra, cabbage, cucumbers, peppers, and onions. In 1970, the cooperative began to experience severe financial difficulty as a result of poor management and a lack of participation. Many of the members were renters and sharecroppers and the idea of cooperation was an entirely new experience for them. With the inactive membership and the board of directors consisting of poor farmers with no experience in organizational effectiveness, Grand Marie was forced out of existence in 1976.

Eleven farmers who were participating in this study were members of The Grand Marie Vegetable Producers Cooperative. They attributed the failure of the cooperative to the lack of information about cooperative relationships and the inability of the manager. They stated that they were not actively involved in the functioning of the cooperative and saw it only as a means by which they could market their produce. Several of these farmers stated that they had lost a great deal of money through their participation, however, they suggested that "it was good while it lasted," since they had some place to market their goods. One farmer said, "in the beginning of the coop we were making money, it was good then, but after a while people began to lose interest and things began to go down the drain. I lost my truck through the coop, but I gained a lot of things too." When
asked if he would become financially involved in a cooperative again, he said, "yes, I can see some benefits in them."

The St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative was organized in April, 1977, with emphasis placed on the small, low income farmer. Its goals have been to provide some relief for small farmers in purchasing farm supplies and the sale of farm produce.

One of the ways to narrow the gap between money received and expended by small farmers for goods and supplies is through cooperative purchasing. Fertilizer, feed, fuel, and sometimes even farm equipment and machinery can be purchased at a savings of 10 to 20 percent. One farmer said, "I can save 40 to 45 cents on a pound of nitrate by buying it through the cooperative." This is indicative of the benefits from cooperative membership and the importance such membership could have for low income people.

The St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative operates a farmers market in Opelousas, the parish seat, which has been successful in selling both produce that is grown on the Experimental Farm and produce purchased from members. In addition, the cooperative has been beneficial in exploring other fresh vegetable markets and working in conjunction with the St. Landry Agricultural Development Corporation.

When the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative was begun, only 25 members were financially involved. As a
result of the Small Farmers Project, the membership increased in 1978 to 75 financial members. The small farmers who were participating in the Small Farmers Project were encouraged to join the cooperative and the ease of joining was with the signing of a deduction form, in which the $20.00 annual membership fee could be deducted from their allowance checks. Many of the small farmers took advantage of this opportunity.

At one of the bi-monthly meetings for the Small Farmers Project, a resource person in cooperative education presented a list of norms to the group of farmers present and asked them to respond to these norms. These responses were important in that levels of participation could be based on them. It was a session in which all farmers interacted and presented a list of agreed-upon responses.

These norms and the farmers responses were:

1. Trust - "To say what you mean and do what you say," or "to trust in yourself."

2. Honesty - "From the depth of your heart."

3. Openness - "To express yourself, open mind, open heart, being open to receive."

4. Liberation - "Freedom," or "to do what you believe in," or "taking advantage of opportunities before you."

5. Acceptance - "Being willing to take on ideas from others," or "to accept one's self for who I am."

6. Understanding - "To be aware of."

7. Support - "To stand behind something," or "taking care of your family."
8. Communication - "To receive and understand," or "to talk or explain yourself to people."

9. Feelings - "That which is in my heart."

10. Feedback - "To take others reactions."

11. Sharing - "Helping each other."

12. Risk-taking - "You got to take a chance, to make sure it will work," or "to try new things."

13. Commitment - "To work with something until it is finished."

14. Here and now - "The present time."

15. Respect - "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

16. Struggle - "Survival, nothing is worthwhile without a struggle."

17. Responsibility - "Doing your share," or "personally responsible for what happens."

After the participation session, one farmer, who had been a strong cooperative supporter for many years and a leader within his area group, got up to offer words of encouragement to the group of small farmers. "I want to tell you all that this here is just like a dream to me and I am just hoping and trusting. I have been reaching at this here for a good many years to see us come together and cooperate. If we let this opportunity pass us, it may not represent itself no more, cause we are on our way up and the only way that we can go up is to stand together and
look up. Together we stand and divided we fall. Let us stick together, let us continue on pushing. Have your heart and mind right to do the right thing and hold together. You see when you stick together you are strong. Why don't we just get together and say what we can do."

These comments served as an inspiration for the small farmers and a motivation for financial participation within the cooperative. It can be observed that the responses made to the norms by the small farmers were a reflection of the perceptions that they had of their interactive roles.

It was a major assumption of this study that the small farmers joined this voluntary organization because of a need to take advantage of the services that were provided by the cooperative, however, it was observed that very few farmers took advantage of these services. This was a reflection of the type of self-sufficiency that has so often been prevalent among the small farmers. Many of these farmers, though realizing they were poor, considered themselves to be independent. They were "rugged individualists" in the most economic sense of this expression. They saw themselves as being "personally responsible for what happens within their lives," and they alone were supporters of their families. It was said over and over again that "I am a proud person, and those things that I get, I'm willing to work for." This stance clashed with the policy of the stipend
check being received for doing no work other than that on their own farms. It required only training and education that would be beneficial in their farming operation. However, this, too, was work from the standpoint that their time was involved.

The small farmers in this study were not active participants in the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative. They were merely names on the membership list indicating that they had paid a $20.00 membership fee. Many factors contributed to their lack of participation and active involvement in the cooperative. First, is the length of time that the cooperative has been in existence. As mentioned previously, the cooperative was organized in April, 1977 with only 25 members. Thus, it is a very young organization with recent growth in membership only coming from those participating in the Small Farmers Project. Second, the distance between the headquarters of the cooperative and some of the farmers' homes is as far as 40 miles. Travel to the headquarters to purchase supplies at a reduced rate will not be realized as a savings due to offsetting transportation costs. Third, the farmers in this study did not have an adequate understanding of the functions of the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative. Many of the farmers were not aware of the operations of their cooperative. As a result, they failed to realize the services that were available to them.
Many of the discussions on cooperatives were presented in very general terms with no emphasis placed specifically on the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative. Fourth, these small farmers, due to lack of control in making rules and regulations, had no identity with the cooperative. As a result, the type of emotional attachment that had been experienced with other groups and organizations in which they were members was non-existent. They felt no responsibility to the cooperative. Lastly, the degree of satisfaction they felt with farming as it had existed in the past was jeopardized. They had considered themselves to be independent farmers who made their own decisions about their farming operations. Many of the farmers felt that active participation in the cooperative would lead to dependency and a general loss of autonomy.

It was observed that many of the small farmers felt that membership in a cooperative was the "in" thing. It represented an individual ideology to which the small farmers and other low income persons felt that they should respond. The emphasis on self-help was a motivation for small farmers to join the cooperative, even if it was only a monetary type of motivation.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This has been an exploratory and descriptive case study of a group of small farmers located in St. Landry Parish who were participating in a Small Farmers Project sponsored by the Southern Development Foundation and funded by the United States Department of Labor. Particular emphasis was given to an analysis of the social roles characterizing these small farmers and how these roles were related to their sense of social organization. In addition, an analysis of factors which shape the behavior of small farmers in their interactive roles, as well as factors that influence work relationships, work satisfaction, and work problems were also considered. The potential for cooperative behavior was briefly treated as a basis for understanding the social organization of these small farmers.

The study encountered certain methodological problems which were directly associated with two aspects of the research, namely, the type of data collection method used, and the availability of data on the social and behavioral aspects of small farmers. The experience of resolving these problems provided valuable insight into the difficulties which have so often been associated with quantitative research on small farmers. In addition, this experience
allowed some conclusions to be drawn as to the effectiveness of participant observation as a method of data collection for the study of rural social organization.

Although participant observation has been questioned as to its ability to specify consistency among different researchers at different times, the focus of the researcher was to keep the field work role within the dimensions of scientific investigation. As a result, the researcher was able to modify the analytical categories during the course of the research. This modification allowed for a more suitable analysis of the research situations encountered.

The ability to modify analytical categories in participant observation does not suggest that the method is atheoretical. The use of good field techniques may be as grounded in theory as any other method because the adaptability and flexibility of exploration and reformulation of emerging theoretical concerns are possible. The relationship between research and theory is evident in the "theories of the middle range," in which Merton (1958:5-6) suggests that theories immediate to the minor working hypotheses evolves in abundance during the day-by-day routines of research, and the all inclusive speculations comprising very large numbers of empirically observed uniformities of social behavior.

The major purposes in the design of the study were to establish an observation schedule for assessing farmer's
perceptions of their roles, and to establish an intimate rapport with the farmers in the study area. The achievement of these objectives allowed the researcher to obtain a maximum degree of cooperation from the small farmers, while at the same time causing a minimum of inconvenience and embarrassment for them. As a result, the farmers openly expressed themselves in informal sessions. This open expression could also be because the farmers were "directors" of the informal interview sessions, and the researcher was directly associated with the Small Farmers Project.

The actual experience of observing the small farmers in interaction settings both within family and other group situations was a valuable aid in obtaining a subjective evaluation of the economic and social conditions of the life situation of the small farmer. By collecting the data in this manner, it was possible to capture an understanding of the farm practices of the small farmers and to observe them in their work and non-work roles.

The problems encountered in entering the field setting and analyzing the data led to certain methodological considerations. In the earlier stages of the research it was necessary for the researcher to understand the field situation in order to get an adequate picture of the parameters and complexity of the setting. This understanding allowed for more systematic observations. The first contact with the farmers provided information which was useful in
organizing time, emphasizing field notes, and anticipating the research task.

While it was necessary to actively participate in the life situations of the farmers, it was also important to maintain a degree of marginality. Taking the concepts of "frontstage" and "backstage" from Goffman (1959), it was necessary to use this type of behavior in dealing with the small farmers. The "backstage" was important for analysis purposes; it allowed for more objective evaluations, while the "frontstage" was important in maintaining an acceptable rapport with the small farmers. This "front" and "back" behavior necessitated a regular process of leaving the field for a day each week in order to place the field notes in perspective and make periodic reviews of what was actually happening in the field. These reviews proved beneficial in determining the direction of the research.

The conclusions pertaining to this study of small farmers were considered under the major purposes of the research which are: social interaction, satisfaction, and cooperative behavior.

Interaction

In observing interaction among the small farmers, the purposes were to discover the interaction of small farmers with others; to assess their personal, family, and community interactions; to determine the effects of social
change on small farmers; to determine the relationship between socio-demographic factors and the success of the small farmers; to assess the influence of significant and generalized others on small farmers; and to determine how the small farmers negotiate their reality.

It became apparent through the observation that the small farmers depended a great deal upon their family, friends, and local community as arenas for interaction. Many of the farmers lived in communities where they were well known and as a result felt safe and secure through their community participation.

One of the most important situations for the analysis of social interaction was land tenure. The ownership of land was a symbol of status for the farmers, and those who were non-owners were strongly motivated to eventually become owners. Roughly 40 percent of the land owned by the farmers was inherited land and was considered family land. This land was usually inherited in small fragments which often limited the alternatives available for their farming operation. For those persons who were renting or sharecropping, it was difficult to save money to purchase land and attempts to do so created economic hardships. The cost-price squeeze of the life situation of the small farmer made it extremely difficult to purchase the high priced land. As a result of the farmers perception of his role as a land owner and the
inability to purchase land, the researcher observed a philosophy among the farmers that related to the "here and now." It was often expressed as, "live for today, cause we don't know what the next day will bring."

It was not only the difficulty of saving money that retarded the growth of these small farmers, but also the possibility of obtaining loans for making improvements on their farms. Because most of these farmers had limited resources, they did not have the necessary collateral to obtain loans nor the trust in lending agencies to even attempt such loans. The farmers felt that the size of their farming operation and their racial characteristics were serious impediments for obtaining loans.

In general, the farmers were relatively old, the mean age being 51.2 years. This was both an advantage and a disadvantage for the social organization of these small farmers. Age was a disadvantage because the farmer felt that it was a factor that could seriously limit his production. However, age was an advantage because it reflected status. The older farmers felt that their interaction in certain situations was an influential or motivating factor for the younger farmers. The researcher observed that there was a great deal of respect for age among the small farmers. Even though these older farmers were lacking in educational attainment, they were considered to be "wise". These older farmers
had their own ways of producing certain crops, ways which had been acquired through many years of experience. They had gone through crop failures but with each successive year, they had acquired an experience tested technique which was generally respected by the younger farmers.

The sex composition of the study group (90.7 percent male; 9.3 percent female) was no indication of the influence of females among the farmers. In addition to the researcher's interaction with the women who were participants in the Small Farmers Project, there was also interaction with the wives and female children of the male participants. Even though the females took on a somewhat passive role, it was observed that they had more active roles than was generally admitted by the males. The females were more educated than the males. This educational attainment gave the females an edge on certain skills which were necessary for successful rural living, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Many of the male farmers lacked confidence in themselves for performing these tasks and primarily depended upon the female members of the family for these things. However, males expected a certain amount of respect from these females and wanted to always be regarded as head of their household. This male dominance role placed the females in subservient roles in which they responded primarily to the needs of the males. In addition to carrying out the traditional female roles, such as household chores and taking care of the
children, the wives were unpaid farm laborers who worked in the fields just as hard as the husbands during the peak seasons of planting and harvesting. The men, as it is said, worked from sunup to sundown but the women's work was never done.

Educational attainment, income, and size of household were indicative of the social organization of the farmers which related to the type of social interaction projected. These socio-economic characteristics of small farmers have not been associated with a dynamic, progressive, and prosperous system of agriculture. In fact, they have tended to hamper the social and economic development of the small farmers. The typical small farmer studied was a man in his fifties, married, and responsible for a household of five to six persons. His education was limited to a little more than five years of formal schooling, or to a level where he reads and writes with difficulty. Most of his working life has been spent on a small farm. His farming knowledge had been acquired from his parents or his close friends and neighbors. This acquisition of farming knowledge resulted in his farming practices being strongly influenced by traditionalistic beliefs. His level of living was low and he lacked a sufficient amount of goods and services which reflected his unresponsiveness to assets at his disposal to revamp his farming practices for progress and prosperity.
The family interactions of the small farmers were by far the most important for social solidarity in their social organization. The family existed in an extended form with overt patriarchal dominance. In addition, the family served as a source of much of the farm labor. The small farmers wanted wives who were concerned about the farm as a source of income, and children who showed honor and obedience to them. There was a great value placed on children, not only because of the farm labor they performed, but because of the reliance placed on them for financial support in later life. Very few children of the small farmers were involved in farming as an occupation, most of them had migrated to larger urban areas to secure better paying jobs. Even though these farmers wanted their children to remain at home, they realized that farming was hard work with limited rewards. Because of the nature of farming as an occupation, the small farmers could better accept the migration of their children to larger urban areas.

The church, and church-related groups had a most important impact on the social organization of the small farmers. This was true because the church was concerned with the social problems of the small farmers. In addition, the church served the educational, informational, and social needs of the study group. There was uniformity in religion which served as a motivation for action. The Catholic
religion was dominant among the small farmers, with only a few being Protestant. The religion played an important role in the total life of the small farmers, as well as serving as a means of contact with the supernatural.

Friendships among the farmers were usually based on the geographical proximity of neighbors. These small farmers depended upon their friends and neighbors to protect their property, take care of their children, and share their farming knowledge. Through the participation in the Small Farmers Project, area groups were formed which served as sources of satisfaction, control, protection and assistance, and communication for the farmers. There was a great deal of homogeneity and solidarity among the area group members.

The interaction that existed in the Small Farmers Project was minimal, particularly at the beginning of the project. On the average, it took approximately four months for participants to become actively involved in the programs of the project. This would imply that farmers are hesitant before accepting new programs, irregardless of how important the new program is to increasing their economic conditions. It has often been suggested that small farmers are not trustful of rural development workers. This may relate to the building of "success on success" policy which is often the perceived conception of rural development workers by small farmers, and the unwillingness of the small farmer to take
undue risks. Small farmers, because of the social and educational limitations that prevail in their life situation, need extended time to understand the influences that a new program will have upon their social and economic well being. Too often, rural development workers go into a small farm setting with previously prepared farm outlines and plans before they have an adequate understanding of the social and economic problems of the farmers. They expect the small farmers to accept these plans yet the small farmer does not understand how the plan would be beneficial to him. In addition, the farmers are often placed in a "general" category, without the understanding that there could be some uniqueness existing among them.

The Small Farmers Project, in addition to providing extra income, provided training for the farmers in basic reading, writing and arithmetic. It also provided training in livestock management, soil testing, vegetable production, the use of chemicals, farm management, and record keeping. The vast amount of information that has been collected on small farmers has been geared to the economic aspects of his farming operation with an almost total neglect of social goals. This study is important because it focuses directly on the social goals of the small farmers and how they perceive their roles within their social organization. It is suggested here that if small farmers are taught the
basic necessities of living, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, they could utilize these social tools as a means of improving their economic condition. Too often, the educated segment of society has misunderstood the small farmer who could neither read nor write. As a result of this misunderstanding, the farmers have accepted roles that placed them in limited interaction situations with only their families and their close circle of friends and neighbors within their communities.

The Small Farmers Project provided these farmers with many avenues for social interaction with both persons in their own situation and those who could offer them some assistance. Nevertheless, some understanding of the shared goals was necessary between the small farmers and those with whom they interacted before they were willing to fully participate. It was as if the farmers had to "wait and see" before they could become involved in an interactive situation outside of the family or close circle of friends and neighbors.

Implications of Interaction

The most important implications for the analysis of social interaction of small farmers were found in the importance of the age of the farmers and the roles of the women, as they exist within the family organization. Cooley (1962)
described the growth of sentiments, such as love, hate, self-sacrifice, respect etc. in the family. These sentiments were based on sympathy or the ability to "take the role of the other," which provides a basic means for self control. The child obeys his elders, according to Cooley, not because there is a rule that he should obey, but because it is a reflection of the sentiment which provided social control.

Older farmers, particularly if they were involved in leadership roles, are an asset to rural farm settings. First of all, the older farmers showed a more sentimental attachment to their farm setting and would be unwilling to accept a new farm program that would be potentially destructive to the farm setting. Second, the older farmers were much more skeptical of change programs. Their age attested to their experience and they would be less likely to accept a new program unless they fully understood how it would benefit their social and economic conditions. Lastly, the older farmers generated a great deal of social control among members of their community. They served as motivating forces for the younger farmers, yet they were willing to let the younger farmers have the control if they felt that their goals were mutually shared. One disadvantage of the importance of older farmers may be a hinderance to the acceptance of good new ideas and excellent farm programs within the community.
Women played an important role in the success of the small farmers. If you wanted something done with adequate planning and control it would often be achieved through the women. Women had an enormous amount of control of the family, even though it was covert control. Many of the males in this study had neither the educational skills nor the time to completely dominate the family. The women were more educated than the men and could perform the evaluational tasks of the farm operation, therefore they were more knowledgeable of the assets and liabilities of the farming operation.

Although farm wives have been given hidden tasks and roles among the small farmers, it seems that they have much to offer the small farm social organization. It is necessary to research these roles more thoroughly in order to assess the degree of influence that is present among the rural women and the perceptions that these women have of that influence.

Satisfaction

In observing satisfaction, the purposes were to determine the factors that influence satisfaction; to assess the perception of the farmers to their farming system; to determine the adaptation of the farmer to problematic situations in his work roles; to determine how the life situation of the farmer influences his behavior; and to determine the relationship between material wealth and
spiritual happiness in achieving satisfaction.

The analysis of satisfaction produced certain problems related to methodology and "real" versus "ideal" situations. The fact that no satisfaction scale was administered to the small farmers made it difficult to place levels of significance upon certain types of satisfaction. However, through observing those situations that projected a sense of satisfaction without emphasizing the verbal communication of what was satisfying to the small farmers, these methodological problems were somewhat minimized.

In this research, satisfaction was related to productivity and rewards, and was analyzed on the basis of economic, community, and social situations.

The economic situations were often sources of dissatisfaction among the small farmers. When income, educational attainment, type of home, and vehicle ownership were considered, it became obvious that small farmers did not have the type of "necessities" they desired. They had been influenced by radio and television and were aware that "better" things existed in the world, but they felt hopeless in ever achieving some of those things. As a result they emphasized the necessities of life, which if achieved led to a degree of satisfaction. They expressed satisfaction with the opportunity to participate in the Small Farmers Project as the stipend check was an additional source of
income which could facilitate acquisition of some of their desires.

The community and social situations were indicative of satisfaction which were related to the interactive situation of the small farmers. The researcher observed that the community offered many advantages for the small farmers, the most important being the kinship connections that existed. In general, these farmers related these community and social situations to rewards received, and deemphasized the economic situations.

The satisfactions of the small farmers were observed to be related to an adjustment process. Because they had not received much in their life situation, they did not expect much. Consequently, they accepted their life situation as it existed with little hope of ever achieving satisfying economic situations. They directed their goals toward their spiritual or emotional well-being and sought these things within the interactions they had in their families and communities.

Implications of Satisfaction

The analysis of satisfaction as a motivating factor for small farmers brings to view a number of implications. First, in order to understand the satisfaction of small farmers, it may be necessary to take into account certain personality theories. There are few studies which could
serve as an indication of the small farm personality. In Landis (1948), a list of characteristics are used to describe the rural personality, however, these traits are often conflicting because they were compiled by analyzing research studies which had been conducted on a variety of rural people who varied a great deal. These research studies mainly used the census definition of the rural versus urban dichotomy which amounted to comparing the rural life situation with the urban life situation.

Second, many situational factors must be considered when studying the satisfaction of small farmers; certain traits or characteristics cannot be generalized. In some ways the small farmer is satisfied, but in what kinds of situations is he satisfied? The ideal is to start with the process of socialization and analyze the type of culture that the small farmer grew up in. It may be true that among small farmers the culture is simple and static, which could lead to satisfaction, yet the small farmer has also been exposed to other groups outside of his simple and static culture which show some diversity and could easily lead to dissatisfaction.

Third, although farming is looked upon as a means of livelihood for these farmers, it was also viewed as a value in itself. Not only did these farmers need to farm but they also wanted to farm. This factor must also be
considered when trying to determine the satisfaction of small farmers. Whether a person farms for financial security or for the pleasure of it will be indicative of the type of satisfaction that is derived from farming as an occupation.

Fourth, the fact that the family, church, friends, neighbors, and informal fellowship in general are neatly integrated into the community, gives some indication of the consistency of socialization. The family teachings are confirmed by these other groups and the resulting uniformity was a source of satisfaction for the small farmers.

**Cooperative Behavior**

In observing cooperative behavior, the purposes were to discover the perceived effectiveness of the cooperative to the small farmers; to determine the effectiveness of the cooperative in meeting the needs of the farmers; to assess the influence of the socio-cultural characteristics on the success or failure of the cooperative; and to determine the terms that small farmers used to describe their relationship to the cooperative.

The analysis of cooperative behavior was designed to give an indication of the small farmers' potential for interacting and actively participating within such a voluntary organization. These small farmers, through their
participation in the Small Farmers Project, had all become financial members of the St. Landry Vegetable Growers Cooperative. It was one of the goals of the project to get small farmers involved in the cooperative as a means of providing price benefits to them in purchasing farm supplies and marketing farm products.

There was virtually no active participation of the small farmers in the cooperative, only a financial participation. Active participation within the cooperative was often related to the needs and costs for the small farmer. The farmers suggested a list of needs and interests relative to their participation in the cooperative. These needs and interests were:

1. The selling of feed to members.
2. The selling of fertilizer to members.
3. Tractor repair.
4. Access to truck.
5. The selling of seeds to members.
6. Plants.
7. Marketing produce.
8. Tractor parts.
10. Tires and oil for car, truck and tractor.
11. Fencing material.
12. Chemicals.
13. Furnish breeding stock of hogs.
14. Creating jobs.
15. Cannery.
16. Youth programs.
17. Slaughterhouse.
18. Buy and lease land.
19. Training.
20. Farmers market.
22. Sell, rent, or lease equipment, specifically potato planters.
23. Packing Shed.
24. Information sharing.
At the present time, the cooperative was only providing two of these listed needs and interests for the small farmers. These needs were selling seeds to members and the accessibility of the farmers market, both of which were existing in limited supply. This limitation of supplies was one of the reasons for the failure of the small farmers to actively participate in the cooperative. They did not see the cooperative as an organization which could support their needs. Although the cooperative does not have the financial means necessary to support the majority of these needs, a number of these needs and interests would be a duplication of services already provided within the r communities.

One of the complaints often made by the small farmers, regarding their participation in the cooperative, was that they had no control of decision making. This feeling of powerlessness reduced their sense of responsibility, which is necessary for active participation within any group. Most of the farmers were not aware of the actual goals of the cooperative; for example, when they were asked to give the goals of the cooperative they were very hesitant. This was indicative of the failure of these farmers to understand the workings of the cooperative.

The researcher observed the only membership meeting of the cooperative between August 1978 and March 1979. There were thirty-six members of the study group present. Eight
of these members were nominated for positions on the Board of Directors. They felt that being a "real" farmer was the most important criteria for being on the Board of Directors.

**Implications of Cooperative Behavior**

An important implication in the analysis of cooperative behavior was that members need to see some benefits of their participation to become actively involved. This will occur only if they are aware of the functioning of the organization and see some responsibility to it. It is suggested by the researcher that the small farmers be more adequately informed, through cooperative education, as to the goals of the cooperative and how these goals can benefit them. In addition, the cooperative should provide a list of services that it can offer to the small farmers so that their needs and interests will be matched with the services of the cooperative.

As a result of the ease of payment of membership dues through the deduction method from the Small Farmers Project, the members may not have had a personal commitment to the cooperative. The farmers could have easily conceptualized the cooperative as a requirement of the Project rather than as a voluntary organization in which they could receive some benefits. An implication for further research
would be to go back to the cooperative after the Small Farmers project has expired in November 1979 and make an assessment of the number of project participants who continued their membership. This would be important in actually determining the impact of this type of cooperative activity on small farmers, and the future of cooperatives in the lives of these small farmers.

The cooperative, if it is to be the hope of the future for small farmers, must investigate ways to increase the participation of its members. This means assessing the needs of the small farmers and reorganizing the cooperative around these needs and interests. It also means that the cooperative must provide information on services that it can offer to the small farmers. This could be supplemented by having information available on where needs and interests can be obtained if they are not provided by the cooperative.

Theoretical Propositions

The purpose of this section of the conclusions is to provide a set of theoretical propositions which were derived from this study on the social organization of small farmers. These propositions, in addition to serving as a summary of the conclusions of this study, will serve as guidelines for further research on the roles of small
farmers as they experience their social organization. These propositions are organized around the "main tendency" propositional issues used by Turner (1978), which served as a guideline for establishing the empirical relationships regarding the social organization of the small farmers.

Emergence and Character of Roles

1. The more the farmer is socialized in a small farm setting, the greater is the likelihood that he would accept such a life style.

2. The training and socialization of children to farm work and farm life supports the creation and maintenance of the farm and community control, while also preserving traditional values.

3. The greater the investment of time, effort and money that is utilized by the small farmer in learning to play a role, the more important that role becomes to him.

4. The more sacrifices that are made by the small farmers in gaining or maintaining a role, the more the emotional attachment to that particular role.

5. More than usual, the success of the small farmer's system of production is dependent upon economic and environment related risks, such as the weather, insects, price fluctuations, and scarcity of labor.

6. The greater the intergenerational transfers of family land to the children, the more likely to be the furtherance and existence of the small farmer.

7. The greater the reinforcement of existing values, norms, and life situations in activities, events, and work situations, the greater the degree of participation and satisfaction in these situations.
8. The intergenerational influence of small farmers is important to the extent that it facilitates the development of shared norms, mutual trust, and leadership roles.

9. Small farmers perpetuate ongoing relationships only as long as these interactions are meaningful and rewarding to them at acceptable costs.

10. The more meaningful the interaction between the small farmers, the greater the chances for creating a "sense" of social organization.

11. Cultural norms emerge as small farmers develop or symbolize ways of collectively coping with the common life conditions, but through time the norms become dissociated from their origin and become the ways of life for the farmers.

Role as an Interactive Framework

1. The seasonal farm roles performed by the males and the daily farm roles performed by the females creates a division of farm labor characterized by interdependence.

2. The greater the traditional values created through intergenerational transferrals and linkages, the more important the extended family relationships to the small farmers.

3. The closer the residential proximity of family and relatives, the greater the mutual assistance and familial interaction patterns.

4. The closer the residential proximity of friends and neighbors, the greater the degree of interaction and cultural homogeneity among them.

5. The closer the physical proximity of farmers, the greater the rewards for interaction.
6. The closer the geographical proximity of farmers to each other, the greater the reinforcement of social acceptance.

7. The greater the awareness of the need for more information on problems and activities relating to successful farming, the greater the degree of interaction among farmers.

8. The greater the amount of interaction between friends and neighbors, the greater the degree of dependency on them for support, protection, assistance, and satisfaction.

Role in Relation to Actor

1. The lower the educational attainment of the small farmer, the more functional the role of children for explaining and interpreting formal material.

2. The greater the feeling that the small farmer had given his best effort to farming, the greater the degree of satisfaction with his current life situation and the expectations of retirement.

3. The greater the number of children that the small farmer had, the greater the degree of satisfaction and security that he would be taken care of later in life.

4. The closer the attachment of area friendship group members, the more important they were as a communication network for the dissemination of farming information.

5. The more reciprocal the interactions of the small farmers, the less the power imbalances of the relationship.

6. The more reciprocal the interactions, the greater the likelihood that the relationship between the small farmers would be ongoing.
7. The more the cultural values are reflective of the farmers conceptions of ultimate "reality," the more they are internalized within their personalities through socialization.

8. For the small farmer, cultural norms and values change rather slowly in response to new life situations, however, when the norms do shift they tend to be more relevant to existing life situations and internally consistent.

9. Cooperation among small farmers is greatly facilitated by the processes of internalization, identification, and compliance, which leads them to regulate their own actions as they interact with others.

10. The older the small farmer, the more important his social role to the others, and the more status and prestige he is accorded within his community.

**Role in Organizational Settings**

1. The stronger the religious beliefs and values, the greater the participation of small farmers in community based organizations and activities.

2. The social position and prestige of the small farmer is a function of the type and number of organizations to which he belongs.

3. The higher the education of the small farmer, the more likely he is to actively participate in groups and organizations.

4. The greater the amount of land owned by the small farmer, the more likely he is to take on an active role within the group.

5. The development of area friendship patterns of interactions are supported by socio-cultural homogeneity and leads to personal satisfaction in social interaction.
6. The closer the attachment of area friendship group members, the more they served as a basis of organizational power, leadership development, and control.

7. The involvement in a Small Farmers Project facilitates interaction and information exchange and leads to the development and reinforcement of area friendship groups.

8. The greater the small farmer's obligations to an organization, the more likely he is to participate actively within that organization.

9. The active participation of small farmers in an organization will be perpetuated as long as it is perceived to be rewarding to them.

10. If there are no other attractive alternatives existing within a community for small farmers, they are likely to become associated with an organization even though the organization does not satisfy their needs and interests.

11. The greater the control of collectively needed resources and functions by an individual, the more powerful that individual becomes relative to others.

Role in Societal Setting

1. The greater the religious orientation of small farmers, the greater the recognition of the social and economic value of keeping the farm and family in mutual contact and cooperation.

2. The greater the emphasis placed on the survival of the family as an economic and social unit, the greater the number of decisions that are made with family consideration in mind.

3. The greater the association of family names with the land, and the transferral of property over many generations, the more the land serves as a stable source of status conferring within the farm community.
4. The more the farmer is limited by his dependence upon a family labor system, the more limited is his economic output and productivity.

5. The greater the limitations on the education of the small farmer, the less likely he is to take full advantage of farming related information, practices, and opportunities. Programs like the Small Farmers Project are the exception, rather than the rule.

6. The greater the parental values emphasizing physical labor for males and education for females, the greater the potential of producing a sex-differentiated opportunity system.

7. The area friendships supported and facilitated the cultural heritage of the community which leads to collective responsibility and distinctive forms of recreation.

8. The greater the support and strength given to norms by small farmers, the more continuity, regularity, predictability, and overall sense of purpose and direction these norms tend to have.

Role and the Person

1. The size of the farmer's household is an indication of his social and economic responsibilities. As the size of the household increases, social and economic responsibilities also increase.

2. The stronger the value orientation toward mutual support in the family, the less likely that family problems and conflicts will create role tensions.

3. The greater the degree of cultural and economic homogeneity, the greater the degree of satisfaction in social contact and interaction.
4. The greater the awareness of the small farmer of the failure to successfully produce and market his products, the greater the dependency on those who can help to satisfy these needs.

5. The awareness of failure to pursue individual goals successfully creates the development of collective goals.

6. The greater the probability that a situation will prove rewarding to the small farmer, the more likely he is to continually initiate that situation.

7. The greater the degree of role conflict existing in a situation, the more likely that situation will be eliminated by the small farmer.

8. The area groups develop distinctive norms which reflected their particular interest. The more important these norms, the greater the expectations to conform to these norms.

9. The more adequately a role can be performed by the small farmer, the greater the chances of locating himself in that role.
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ATKINSON, Ron

BEAL, George M.

BEALER, Robert, Fern Willits and William Kuvlesky

BERGER, Peter and Thomas Luckmann

BERTRAND, Alvi:. L.

BLACK, Therel M.

BLUMER, Herbert

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Chung, Chang-Soo

Circourel, Aaron V.

Cooley, Charles H.

Copp, James H.

Cumper, G. E.
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Jones, J. H. and Vernon Parenton

Katz, E. and P. F. Lazarsfeld

Kluckhohn, Florence

Kolb, John H. and Edmund de S. Brunner

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Larson, Olaf  

Lofland, John  

Lofland, John  

Loomis, Charles and J. Allan Beegle  

Loomis, Charles P.  

Marshall, Ray and Lamond Godwin  

Martin, Dan S. and Associates  

McAfee, Dalton and Elynor Williams  

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Ulmer, Al

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United States Bureau of the Census

United States Bureau of the Census
United States Bureau of the Census  

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Vidich, Arthur and Joseph Bensman  

Vogt, Paul L.  

Waring, P. Alston and Walter M. Teller  

Warner, W. Keith and William D. Heffernan  

Warriner, Charles K.  

Watts, R.  

Weber, Max  

Weber, Max  

West, Jerry G. and Lionel Williamson  
Wilkening, Eugene

Wilensky, H. L.

Zeitlin, Irving

Zippert, Carol P.

Znaniecki, Florian
APPENDICES
APPENDIX I

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

1. The Social Organization of the Small Farm. Does it allow for:

   (a) Security - This will be observed in how satisfied the small farmer is with his life style.
   (b) Time - The time that the small farmer spends in farm work and off farm pursuits.
   (c) Cultural Experiences - Observation will be made of the types of reading materials that are available in the home and the types of activities engaged in outside of work.
   (d) Health - The cleanliness of the home and surroundings and the attitudes that they might project toward medical facilities.

II. Roles of the Small Farmer

   (a) As a family member - leadership within the family or dominant or submissive roles.
   (b) As a worker - leader or follower, or who performs the most basic work roles that are important to the farm.
   (c) As a business person - how and by whom are the financial relationships being carried out?
   (d) As a community member - the nature and type of the influence.
   (e) As a group or organization member - how active is the small farmer in these pursuits?
   (f) As a leader or follower - What type of leadership is portrayed and from what source?
   (g) Would these roles lead to stability or satisfaction or would they lead to stress and become potentials for dissatisfaction and conflict?

III. Community Solidarity

   (a) Socio-economic status - the individual in relation to his community.
   (b) Ownership of property - does it create a hierarchial arrangement?
   (c) Length of time in the Community - how important it is in creating a status hierarchy?
   (d) Willingness to leave the community or the desire to stay at all costs.
   (e) Social Interaction - the types that exist and whether it is a source of needed information.
   (f) Types of leadership - what variables are they based on?
IV. Decision Making and Direction

(a) Self - Does the small farmer make decisions without the assistance of others?
(b) Neighbors - What degree of dependency is there upon them?
(c) Agricultural Extension Service - dependency.
(d) Agricultural cooperatives - how important are they to the small farmers?
(e) Weather forecast, intuition and natural conditions.
(f) Agricultural magazines, newsletters or almanacs.

V. The Cooperative Spirit

(a) Participation in cooperatives - attendance at meetings.
(b) Leadership - the amount of input the small farmer makes in the cooperative endeavor.
(c) Trustworthiness

VI. General Attitude to Agriculture and to their Small Farm Operation.

(a) Carefree
(b) Mediocre
(c) Keen

VII. Attitude to Questioning and Observation

(a) Reluctant
(b) Deceptive
(c) Open and Obliging
APPENDIX II

FARM INVENTORY

TAKEN FROM RECORDS OF THE SMALL FARMERS PROJECT

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Name of farmer ___________________________________ Age ______
2. Spouse ___________________________________________
3. Number of children living at home _________________
   List Names and Ages
   ____________________________________________  ______
   ____________________________________________  ______
   ____________________________________________  ______
   ____________________________________________  ______
   ____________________________________________  ______
   ____________________________________________  ______
II. PROPERTY

A. LAND

1. Does farmer own, rent or share? Circle one

2. Please give size of farm in acres __________

3. List whether crops are planted and acreage planted, how many acres of land is pasture and how many acres lay idle.
   CROPS & ACREAGE   PASTURE   IDLE LAND
B. REAL ESTATE

1. Size of house _________________  Condition of house _____
2. Barn Space _________________  Condition of barn _____

Please list any other building such as garage, chicken coop, pantry, etc.

III. FARM MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT

Please itemize machinery and equipment and state its condition

1. _____________________________
2. _____________________________
3. _____________________________
4. _____________________________
5. _____________________________
6. _____________________________

IV. LIVESTOCK

1. Beef Cattles (No. of heads) _________________
2. Dairy Cattles (no. of heads) _________________
3. Swine _________________
4. Sheep _________________
5. Poultry (ducks, chickens, turkeys etc.) _________________

V. Crops, Acreage, estimated harvest date, and condition of crops.

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<th>HARVEST DATE</th>
<th>CONDITION OF CROPS</th>
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VI. FEED, SEED, CHEMICALS AND OTHER SUPPLIES ON HAND

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REMARKS, (SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, POTENTIAL)
VITA

The author, Joyce Louise Smith, was born in North Little Rock, Arkansas on July 24, 1944. She received her primary and secondary education in the North Little Rock Public School System. Upon graduation from Scipio A. Jones High School in 1962, she entered Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas.

In the spring of 1966, the author received the Bachelor of Arts Degree from Philander Smith College with a major in Sociology and a minor in Psychology. The following fall, the author was awarded a Manpower Fellowship by the Manpower Development and Training Program, and an Atlanta University Presidential Scholarship to pursue the Masters of Arts Degree at Atlanta University. She was awarded the Masters of Arts Degree in Sociology in the spring of 1970.

Prior to entering the Louisiana State University Graduate School, the author was employed as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Grambling State University, Grambling, Louisiana.

Presently, the author is enrolled in the Department of Sociology at Louisiana State University and is a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Joyce Louise Smith

Major Field: Sociology

Title of Thesis: The Social Organization of Small Farmers:
A Case Study Analysis of Interaction, Satisfaction,
and Cooperative Behavior

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman
James D. Traynham
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: June 26, 1979