

DIFFERENTIATION AMONG PADI HOUSEHOLDS IN THE MUDA REGION: A VILLAGE CASE STUDY

Diana Wong.

[The question as to whether agrarian differentiation or the extent to which class relations can be said to be developing in the Malaysian countryside is the subject of this paper. Drawing on data from a village study in the Muda region it is argued that social differentiation between village households can be found but these differences are not yet indicative of class differentiation. This is because the dynamics of household formation in the Malay peasant context is governed as much by the needs of subsistence reproduction as by production. Also, it is questionable whether village boundaries form the limits within which class formation is taking place within the present Malaysian context.

Tumpuan makalah ini ialah untuk membincangkan persoalan sejauh manakah perbezaan agraria atau hubungan kelas boleh dikatakan sedang berkembang di kawasan desa Malaysia. Berasaskan satu kajian kes daripada sebuah kampung di kawasan Muda, boleh dirumuskan bahawa terdapat perbezaan sosial di kalangan isirumah dalam masyarakat kampung tetapi ciri-ciri tersebut belum lagi menunjukkan dengan jelas kewujudan perbezaan kelas. Ini disebabkan oleh dinamika pembentukan isirumah dalam konteks masyarakat tani Melayu yang didorong sesama banyak oleh keperluan reproduksi saradiri dan pengeluaran. Antara lain, kita juga boleh mempersoalkan sama ada sempadan kampung merupakan had-had yang menentukan pembentukan kelas yang sedang berlaku dalam konteks Malaysia sekarang.]

Introduction

One of the central issues in peasant studies has been the vexatious one of differentiation - the extent to which class relations can be said to be developing in the countryside. The debate can be traced back to the varying interpretations of the way in which the Russian peasantry at the turn of the century was reacting to the tremendous socio-economic changes taking place at the national level. The Marxist position, as exemplified in Lenin's work (Lenin, 1972) argued that a trend towards the dispossession of the peasantry could be discerned, resulting in the development of a class of rich peasants who exploited the surplus labour of the poor peasants. Chayanov on the other hand, representing the so-called Organization and Production School (Chayanov, 1966), maintained that the differences in area of land operated by different peasant households were not a reflection of class differentiation but of a demographic one viz. that smaller households operate smaller plots of land, increase their land operations when the family size increases and reduces the size when family size decreases again, following the natural rhythm of the family development cycle. This discussion was re-

ignited in the late sixties and seventies as the Green Revolution then under-way became a subject of intensive study. Protagonists of the first position transposed Lenin's arguments into the Third World, armed additionally with Mao Tse-tung's threefold classification of the peasantry into rich, middle and poor (see, for example, Bernstein, 1979). Chayanov's conception of a homogenous, subsistence-orientated peasantry also found enthusiastic adherents among students of Third World peasantry, culminating in theoretical attempts to construct a "Peasant Mode of Production" (see Shanin, 1971).

These two theoretical poles can also be identified in recent studies of the Malaysian peasantry, although the issue of differentiation has been a dominant if not always explicit theme in Malaysian peasant studies since Wilson's pioneering work on land distribution in North Malaya (Wilson, 1958).

Centering on the issue of landownership, and arguing that an ongoing process of land concentration is evident at the village level, authors like Fatimah Halim (1980) employ class categories to differentiate between peasant households, in order

"To provide a characterization of the major classes at the village level" (p. 404).

These are, according to her, the Maoist ones of rich, middle, poor and proletarian peasants, whose differentiation

"is tied to the conditions under which surplus is generated, appropriated and consumed productively through investment in the means of production" (Fatimah 1980: 402).

While agreeing that land distribution is unequal, other scholars point to the existence of other mechanisms at the village level which have militated against the development of class relations. A recent variant of the homogeneity of the peasantry thesis is the "income-sharing" hypothesis of A. Fujimoto (1980). In particular, according to Fujimoto, the tenurial system and injunctions to alms like *zakat*

"act as the mechanisms of income redistribution in order to assure subsistence for all parties concerned" (Fujimoto 1980: 215).

In other words, potential surplus income is redistributed, rather than appropriated, as Fatimah Halim would have it. In this paper, I shall present data on differentiation between households in a Malay village located in the Muda region. I shall argue that social differentiation between the village households is indeed to be found, but that these differences are not yet indicative of *class* differentiation within the village. This, however, is not due

to the presence of "income-sharing" mechanisms, whose significance, I think, Fujimoto has misinterpreted, but rather to the following considerations: firstly, the dynamics of household formation in the Malay peasant context, is governed as much by the needs of subsistence reproduction (see Evers, 1980) as by production and secondly, it is questionable whether village boundaries form the limits within which class formation is taking place within the present Malaysian context.

General Description of the Village

Kg. Gelung Rambai is situated two miles away from the nearest town, Tunjang, and four miles away from the district capital, Jitra, in the district of Kubang Pasu. Tunjang is served by a number of Chinese grocery shops, rice dealers and a twice-weekly market, while in Jitra, are found the district office, other government offices such as the Post Office and the Drainage and Irrigation Department, a daily market as well as shops which specialize in selling clothes.

At first count there were 133 households in the village but during the period of field work, two households were dissolved; one was an old lady formerly living alone, whose illness forced her to move in with relatives, and the other, a young nuclear family, whose divorce led to the dissolution of the household.

Padi is the major crop, with rubber a poor second, and although it is worthwhile to stress again and again that every padi village in Kedah is different from the other, it seems that in the tenurial structure, this kampung is not far removed from the Muda average.*

Table 1: Tenurial Status of Farmers - a Comparison of the Muda Region and Gelung Rambai.

	Muda ¹	GR ²
Owner-operator	34.2	37
Owner-tenant	23.7	32
Tenant	39.2	31

Notes

¹Taken from Gibbons, Lim, Elliston and Shukor (1981), Table 52. The category owner-tenant is collapsed from categories o/t, o/f and o/t/f; the category tenant is collapsed from t, f, t/f.

²Taken from Mohd. Shadli Abdullah (1978), Chart 1, p. 92. The collapsing of the categories is done according to his footnote 2.

*One important point is of note viz. that due probably to the fact that the village is of long-established origin, there is a higher percentage of owners and owner-tenants and fewer pure tenants.

The Data Base

Instead of the normal practice of using land - be it in terms of land-ownership, size of land operations or tenurial category as an *a priori* criterion for categorization, I decided to ask an informant who was well-informed about the village, having been the unofficial village head for a long time, to tell me how he would characterize the households found in the village.

For the village the informant classified 45 households under the "*susah*" category, 44 under the "*sedang*" category, and 44 under the "*senang*" category. To my great horror, when asked a second time some months later, the same informant made a totally different assessment, giving 73 as "*susah*", 44 as "*sedang*" and 16 as "*senang*". Obviously, at least two different sets of criteria can be used, one which is stringent on the question of poverty (*susah*), viz., the first count, and the other, on the question of wealth (*senang*), viz. the second count. If we put the two sets together, we get the following:

	first count	second count
<i>susah</i>	45	73
<i>sedang</i>	44	44
<i>senang</i>	44	16

classification of households

<i>susah</i>	45
<i>susah-sedang</i>	25
<i>sedang</i>	17
<i>sedang-senang</i>	28
<i>senang</i>	16
total	131

It seems to me that the most interesting information we get from the categorization is the stringent definition of who the poor and the wealthy are in the village. Thus, the analysis which follows, uses the following grid classification of households

<i>susah</i>	45
<i>sedang</i>	70
<i>senang</i>	16
total	131

and tries to identify socio-economic characteristics of these various types of households.

Access to Land

If we look at Table II, we see that differential access to land does, indeed, characterize the three different groups. The average size of farm area operated by the poor households amounted to 1.96 re, as compared to 4.58 re for the middle households and 10.6 re for the rich households. However, division of the households according to size of farm operation would have resulted in a different set of households since if we take the cut-off point of 7 re, for example, 3 of the 14 households classified under rich cultivated 7 re or less, while 15 of the households classified as middle cultivated 7 re or more.

What is perhaps even more instructive is to look at the pattern of access to land for the three different groups. Whereas land owned by the household head amounted to 27.7% for the poor households and 26.6% for the middle households, 47.9% of the total operated area was in the personal ownership of the rich household heads. There is good reason to believe that the reason for this is due not only to a large inheritance but also to the purchase of land on the part of these wealthier households. As a matter of fact, 15 households have bought padi land involving a total area of 68 re since the end of the war but it should be noted that of this 68 re, only 11 re were bought after the introduction of double-cropping, which indicates that the frequency of land transactions has dropped since the introduction of double-cropping.

Even more startling is the different value which land owned by the spouse of the household head has for the three different groups. Just 3.1% of the total area operated by the poor households belonged to the spouse, for the middle households, it was a mere 5.3%, but for the rich households, it came up to 22.9%. In another paper, I have described the frequency of marriages between poor young men and daughters of wealthy families (Wong, 1982), in the days when labour was scarce and *adat* law of inheritance was still adhered to. Rich households are thus those, in which property has either been brought together or where a poor young man has married into a wealthy family (Wong, 1982).

Tanah pesaka, undivided ancestral estates, was a more important source of access to the poor households than to the middle or rich ones. This is probably an indication of the more subsistence nature of the padi production of the poor households. The division of the ancestral estate is not only expensive but its non-division also hinders the possibility of sale, an important consideration for the maintenance of subsistence farming.

Of particular interest is the role of tenancy for the three different groups. For the rich households, rented land was the least important of all the different sources of access, although it is interesting to note that lease is

the most important of all the three rental forms. For the poor and middle households, cash rent is the most significant form of access to land, although lease is also important for the middle households (in fact, the highest percentage among all three household groupings). Interestingly enough, BSTS* is fairly insignificant, accounting for 10% of land operated by the poor households, 9.1% for the middle households and 1.2% for the rich households. Incidentally, the low significance of BSTS was also noted by Shadli Abdullah (Shadli 1978). He recorded 39 re under BSTS, in 1967/77, which agrees with our figure of 40.5 re in 1980.

Although far more data would be required for a conclusive argumentation, it seems to me that the following table suggests that a process of social differentiation is taking place with respect to access to land. Whereas the rich households arrive at their larger holdings through land purchases and leases, the middle households do so through cash rentals and especially leases, while the poor households are trying to hold on to their ancestral land and are being increasingly forced to enter into unfavourable sharecropping arrangements in order to gain access to rented land.

Farm Operation

The kind of farm operation can also be sharply distinguished, as can be seen from Table III. While all the poor farm operators had to rent in a pedestrian tractor for the ploughing, 19% of the middle households had access to a kubota and 57% of the rich households. While 88% of the poor farm operators did the transplanting with their own labour, only 47% of the middle households did so and none of the rich households. Similarly, none of the rich households expended their own labour for the harvesting, only 2% of the middle households and 36% of the poor households. It should be noted, however, that the amount of household as well as hired labour would have been much higher had it not been for the introduction of the combine harvester, which virtually monopolized the harvesting process within two years of its introduction to the village.

We thus have a trend towards the development of two kinds of farms. On the one hand, a small farm that is still run very much with the aid of family labour and on the other, a kind of farm operation in which the farmer is primarily a "farm manager", or, as one the poor farm labourers in the village said of a middle farmer, "*dia sudah jadi towkay*". All the major work processes are executed with the aid of hired labour or machinery, which is, of course, far more cash-intensive than labour-intensive.

*BSTS: land tenure without rent

Table II: Types of Access to Land

Types of Access	Poor (n = 45)			Middle (n = 69)			Rich (n = 15)		
	Area	%	No. of Hh	Area	%	No. of Hh	Area	%	No. of Hh
Land owned by Hh	24.5	27.7	18	84	26.6	29	94.3	47.9	15
Land owned by spouse	2.75	3.1	2	17	5.3	7	45	22.9	10
Ancestral land	21.25	24	15	29.25	9.2	18	30	22.9	10
BSTS	9	10	21	29	9.1		2.5	1.2	1
Rent	27.75	31.4		109.25	34.5		7.7	3.9	2
Lease	1	1.1	1	47.75	15	12	17	8.6	4
Share-cropping	2	2.2	1						
Total rented area									
Total operated area	88.25	100		316.25	100		196.5	100	
Average " "	1.96			4.58			10.6		
Land rented out									
NSTS									7
Lease				3.5			23		6
Rent				8			4.5		1
				3			9		

Note: Area figures are in relong (rc)

Table III: Types of Farm Operation

	Ploughing		Transplanting			Harvesting			
	own/family	rental	own labour	hired labour	both	own labour	hired labour	comb. harv.	M/OL M/HL OL/HL
poor: No. of HH n = 39 %	—	39 100	35 88	3 8	1 4	14 36	2 5	9 23	5 13
middle: No. of HH n = 58 %	11 19	47 81	27 47	16 28	15 25	1 2	2 3	42 72	12 21
rich: No. of HH n = 14 %	8 57	6 43	—	13 93	1 7	—	1 7	9 64	3 21
									1 7

Note:

M = Machine
OL = Own Labour
HL = Hired Labour
HH = Households

Table IV: Participation of Households in Wage Labour

	Agriculture	contract	Transp.-Padi	Skilled
Poor: No. of HH n = 39	27	17	3	—
Middle: No. of HH n = 58	15	5	9	11
Rich: No. of HH n = 14	—	—	—	—

The Role of Wage Labour

Table IV points to another vital difference between the households, viz. whereas the rich households hire in labour, as could be seen in Table III, poor households are essentially wage labour households. None of the rich households engaged in wage labour. 27 of the poor households, on the other hand, engaged in farms wage labour while 17 also worked as labourers outside of the village economy. Middle households also supplemented their income with wage labour but it should be noted that this was more in the direction of skilled labour, primarily carpentry and the transportation of padi, which is facilitated by the ownership of the motorcycle.

Can we thus speak of class differentiation and the existence of a proletarian class in the village?

Family Structure and the Family Development Cycle

For an answer to this, it would be instructive to look at table V. Of the 38 poor households on whom I have demographic data, 12 were either single or denuded families, of whom 9 were female headed. That is, either old men or women living fully alone and dependent for their survival on charity, or older women and men, either divorced or widowed, living with a grandchild or adopted child. These households depended for their survival partly on wage labour and partly on *zakat*.

The nuclear family structure, which is usually taken to be the typical Malay form, is dominant for the middle households, making up for 87% of the households. The significance of the stem structure for the rich households is significant, making up for 45% of the households. None of the middle or rich households were of a denuded form.

A more detailed analysis of the family development development cycle cannot be attempted here (for this, see Wong, 1982). Suffice it to say here that although a correlation can certainly be found between farm size and family size (compare tables II and V) the causal correlation cannot be made to run in one way only. Chayanov's account of demographic differentiation presumes that the family development cycle operates in an organic, biological fashion, whereas the data here show that this is not so. The poor do not succeed in completing their life cycle in a way which would correspond to the cultural and biological norm, and this lack of success is clearly related to the play of socio-economic factors.

Nonetheless, these households cannot be said to be proletarian ones either. For the term to have any meaning, it should be related to the specific relation which the households has to the system of production. That these

households exist in this form indicates that household formation and delineation is still to a large extent influenced not only by considerations of production, but also of subsistence reproduction (non-market production of use-values), a task regulated by the kinship system.*

Class Differentiation

Class differentiation can be said to have taken place when individual households reproduce themselves by entering into a structured relationship to other households within a context of production. In doing so, the entire system is also reproduced. In the case of these village households, however, while increasing integration into the national economy has led to increasing differentiation, the internal dynamics of household formation, which change the production and consumption constraints of the individual household over time, have not been completely levelled out.

I have been using the terms "poor", "middle" and "rich" households all along but they are rather inadequate translations of the Malay term "*susah*". "*sedang*" and "*senang*". *Susah* and *senang* refer, I think, to the long-term life chances of the household rather than to the current production and consumption pattern of the household. This could be an explanation for the fact that certain households which either cultivated larger farms or had higher per capita incomes than certain of the *senang* households were classified by my informant as *sedang*. This assumes of course that the long-term life chances are still not completely determined by current income patterns.

On the other hand, as we have noted, a definite pattern of systematic differentiation seems to be emerging with regard to access to means of production and other indicators of differentiation.

I suggest that the *process* of class differentiation is still taking place, its on-going nature, as well as its development within an extra-village context, making all attempts at the categorization of classes within the village premature. In the rest of the paper, I shall attempt to reconstruct the pro-

*By this, I do not mean, however, that interpretation of kinship which sees it in a diffuse fashion as contributing to the "sharing of poverty" or in Fujimoto's term, to "income-sharing", be it via tenurial arrangements like BSTS, or injunctions to alms like *zakat*. As I have shown earlier, BSTS is not as significant as one would have thought in regulating access to land in the village, and neither is *zakat* (see Wong, 1982). In the same 1982 paper, I try to show how usufructuary access was used by kin for surplus accumulation at the cost of other kin. As I will show later, income-sharing through the provision of employment within the village could not be maintained either.

Table V: Demographic Features of the Households

	Avg. HH size	HH head	Structure		
			N	S	D with 3rd gen.
Poor Hh' %	3.7	9 = 20% female	22 58	3 8	12 31 1 3
Middle %	4.6	100% male	55 87	5 8	0 3 5
Rich ² %	7	100% male	8 57	6 43	

1. 7 HH missing

1. 2 HH missing

cess of differentiation as it has proceeded within the village, leaving open the more difficult question of the definitive transition to class differentiation.

The Process of Social Differentiation

Class differentiation is generally seen to be the result of increasing commercialization of agriculture, which leads to the increasing concentration of landownership and the subsequent dispossession and elimination of the peasantry. This is seen to constitute the historical experience of the West, where the dispossessed peasantry disappeared into the ranks of an industrial proletariat. The same process of commercialization is generally seen to have overtaken Asia with the advent of the "Green Revolution", the difference here being the proletarianization of the displaced peasantry on the land itself, due to the absence of employment opportunities in the cities.

As Lim *et. al.* notes, however, the Muda data belie the seeming inevitability of the above mentioned process. No concentration of land can be discerned from their census data, nor from my field data. In the words of Lim *et. al.*, however,

"such a possibility runs against many prevailing notions about the distribution of agricultural landownership on the country and especially of the adverse impact of the commercialization of the economy on landownership distribution more particularly since the advent of the Green Revolution" (Lim, *et. al.* 1980: 13).

Underlying these notions is the common misconception that socio-economic differentiation at the village level arose only after the introduction of double-cropping led to the destruction of a "subsistence economy". It cannot be too often repeated that this dualistic model of subsistence economy versus cash-economy glosses over the considerable changes which were wrought in the nature of the subsistence basis of the village economy even before the establishment of capitalist forms of production. It seems to me that any discussion of the transformation of the subsistence economy, in Malaysia at least, could make use of the following typology:

1. Subsistence
2. Subsistence plus commercialization without any increase in production
3. Subsistence plus commercialization of surplus production made available through real production increases
4. Subsistence plus capitalization.

The first type, subsistence production 'pure', is at the moment merely an ideal-type construct, without any possibility of empirical research because it no longer exists, not in Malaysia and probably nowhere else in the world today. Subsistence plus commercialization without any significant increase in production was to be found in north Malaya up till the introduction of double-cropping in the late sixties and early seventies. Subsistence plus commercialization of production made available through real production increases characterizes the period of the introduction of double-cropping, which did lead to a very real increase in the size of the surplus available to the farming household. Capitalization (not just commercialization as such) is in the process of setting in, on the heels of the "Green Revolution" in the form of the increasing use of the combined harvester, and the emergence of large-scale farming units, some 30 to 40 relongs, based on the employment of agricultural machinery and wage labour.

In (2), the process of impoverishment proceeds very rapidly, as does that of social differentiation. This occurs primarily through the excessive sale of padi at the harvesting period, when prices are at their lowest. These households then run out of their stocks before the next harvest is due, and are then forced to borrow padi or raise cash credits at highly usurious rates. I was told by the villagers that *padi kunca* was one of the easiest, quickest and most common ways of getting rich in the village. The few genealogical records which I have collected also show that three generations ago, the size of farm holdings was much larger than they are now, and that these lands were bought from others, usually through the system of mortgage known as *jual janji*, or through "*beli usaha*", i.e. buying the land which has just been opened by someone who usually has to sell in order to pay-off the debts incurred during the non-productive period of felling the big trees etc.

Padi kunca has virtually disappeared. Chettiers are now almost non-existent. Double-cropping allowed all farm operators to keep enough padi for their own consumption. Wage labourers were paid in kind during harvesting and thus, even they had no need to buy rice for their own consumption. In a way, the situation stabilized. Most of the land sales which have taken place in this *kampung* occurred in the fifties and sixties.

The landless families today, apart from those of young men who would get inadequate shares of their parents 'property' are those who were forced to sell their land in the fifties and sixties, or whose fathers did so. Indebtedness still occurs extensively, but nowadays, one prefers to incur consumption and generally, one manages to repay at least part of the debt at harvest time.

In fact, because farming has now become a more profitable operation, what has been happening in respect to land is that landowners who us-

ed to rent their land out have been reclaiming these lands either for their own operation, or to be leased out to others, who can afford to pay, on long-term leases. In the pre-double cropping days, when land preparation was being done by buffaloes, the labour available to one household was not sufficient to complete large acreages so that land was rented out as a matter of course, even when not out of necessity. Now that the tractor has replaced the buffalo for tilling purposes, as much land as possible can be made ready for planting in a short time.

At the same time, these richer as well as middle farmers compete with landless or virtually landless households for access to land which is being rented out or leased out by others. Since rents have now been monetarized, and must be paid in cash at the beginning of the season, rather than in kind at harvest time, land which is available for rent is taken up by landowner operators rather than by poor households, who cannot afford to pay the rent in cash in advance. An even more disturbing trend is the increasing shift to *pajak*, or leasing of land on a long-term basis. Even more capital is required on the part of the lessee, and it is usually only the middle and the richer farmers who can afford to raise this capital. Access to land has thus become more restricted, even though no process of land concentration (through sale and acquisition of land) can be detected.

The income effects of this restriction have been attenuated by the fact that double-cropping has also resulted in a far greater demand for wage labour, now required twice a year and during concentrated peak periods. There has been a steady rise in the wage levels: in 1972, the wage for transplanting was \$16 per relong but food had to be provided; by 1976, the last season where food was still provided, it had risen to \$24. In 1979, it was \$35 per relong. It is said that just doing wage labour alone is as profitable as operating two relongs of rented land. Double-cropping has thus generated both a supply and a demand for wage labour. Present trends, however, will lead to a continual expansion of the supply but a considerable reduction of the demand for wage labour.

The introduction of the combine harvester will also solve the second-last bottle-neck in the large-scale commercial production of padi viz. rapid harvesting of the crop. This would further encourage the development of capitalized farming, which is already becoming evident. Apart from the combine harvesters, one of the more striking phenomena on the padi landscape in recent years is that of Chinese farms. These are usually operated by established shop-owners or other small town Chinese with capital generated from other sources. Now that farming has become capitalized and profitable, they are beginning to invest their capital and labour into this sector. Since the area is a Malay Reservation, they take up land under *pajak* - usually on very long-term leases - involving large acreages like 30 to 40 relongs, from wealthy Malay families forced through some circumstance or

other to lease out their land as a means of raising capital. As this phenomenon becomes more widespread, access to land for the small peasant will become even more difficult.

Concurrent with the increasing importance of capital for the successful operation and expansion of farms, is the increasing elimination of various sources of subsistence production, especially for the poorer households. This would make the farm households much more vulnerable to a crop failure, or recurrent crop failures, which no longer seem a remote possibility, but this will not be discussed at this stage.

There has also been a discernible trend towards later marriages (interestingly enough, in contrast to the consequences of the introduction of the cash-economy in West African countries). Of the 32 young men between the ages of 16-25 who are still in the village, only 4 are married. An indirect result is that these young, unmarried men are much more amenable to emigration into the cities than young married couples, for whom the subsistence items like housing, babysitting etc. are much more important, and more easily available in the village. 8 people from this age group started leaving the village this year, and this trend can be expected to continue. Emigration of young women to the factories of Sungei Patani and Penang will also probably pick up again as the combine harvester displaces female labour from the harvesting process.

In 19771, the combine harvester was introduced to the village and by the last season, already accounted for about 70% of the total amount harvested. It must be borne in mind that the combine harvester, as can be gathered from its name, replaces two processes which were formerly done manually: viz.

- harvesting, usually done by women, and
- threshing, which is done by young boys and men.

Harvesting contracts on the basis of *derau* used to be given out whereas there has been a shift in the mode of payment for threshing - from being based on the area (relong) to being based on the actual number of sacks threshed. The going rate is \$2 per sack.

At the same time, the combine harvester has generated demand for two new kinds of wage labour:

1. The combine harvester spews out the grain in one big heap and this must now be entered into the gunny sacks as quickly as possible to prevent damage.
2. These gunny sacks all piled up within one day have to be transported

back to the village as quickly as possible to prevent theft.

(1) has provided pocket money for young boys who do it when they are out of school or while on holiday. (2) has become an important source of income for the young boys and men in the village who possess a motor-bicycle. In one season, one can earn up to \$300, at \$2 per sack transported.

To some extent, therefore, the displacement of labour has been made up for by the creation of new jobs, but the people who have benefitted are not the same ones who have been displaced. Possession of a motorcycle is already an indicator of relative well-being so that not all those who are willing and able to thresh are able to transport.

In the village today, there are four young men who are dependent on threshing as a source of income because they do not operate farms of their own. Three of them are new to the village, having married in. The other suffers from asthmatic fits, which is probably why he has not yet left the village in search of work elsewhere.

Apart from these four, there are almost 10 other people who engage in wage labour for threshing but who have other sources of income as well. The loss of employment opportunity in threshing is not such a threat to them.

But this points already to one important fact - that the number of young men in the village has been substantially reduced by emigration. There does, therefore, seem to be a real shortage of young men in the village for threshing and the introduction of the combine harvester will not have such a disruptive effect on the threshers - or alternatively it has already had this effect in forcing them to flee. It would seem to me, however, that the immediate cause of the wave of emigration was not the combine harvester as such, but this will be discussed later.

The disruptive effect on the harvesting process, and the harvesters, is another story. The pool of women available for wage labour has remained the same, and in fact, that available for harvesting is even more because young girls who do not do transplanting do try their hand at harvesting. Thus, we have a potential labour force of over 60 - who have now been displaced.

For the season 1979/80, as mentioned earlier, "*berderau*" broke down entirely. Everything was reduced to daily-rated labour. During a few hectic weeks, perhaps two, the women have to keep rejecting offers of work but after that, they find that in the meantime, the combine has already finished up the rest. Within a month, everything is over. Total earnings have dropped considerably.

It would be useful to discuss here the much-vaunted principle of help between kin which would prevent a farm operator from calling in the combine, at the cost of depriving a fellow-villager of work. During the season mentioned, almost all contractual relationships (mentioned above) were broken by the farm operators; in the case of one particular informant, the giver of the contract is also a close kin, of whom she had once said "he would give me work because how else would I be able to eat?". This is not to deny the existence of this principle, which is often referred to by the villagers; it is merely to point out that it is breaking down.

A few people from the *Barisan* faction retained their contracts. The reason given by one informant was that these were big farm operators, who wanted to ensure that they would have sufficient labour available for transplanting. The kinship tie was not given as the explanation, as the people involved were not related. The case mentioned in the previous paragraph involved a middle farmer.

Coming back to the class issue touched on earlier, it thus seems that with respect to labour as with land, the situation is changing rapidly to one where social differences can better explain and predict.

Another way out is that of illegally opening state land. "Opening" in this fashion actually involves "*beli usaha*", buying the effort of those who have already done the preliminary work of felling the big trees. Such purchases are much cheaper than for existing padi and rubber lands. Thus, 12 re in 1977 cost \$2,700. About 14 households have expanded in this way. All these households continue to live in Gelong Rambai and commute to their holdings. Of note is that all the households which have bought such land are either middle or wealthy households, and not totally impoverished households seeking a way out of their poverty. This is explained by the investitive nature of land opening, which requires the ability to live off existing resources before the fruits of the labour can be enjoyed. The difficulty encountered by a poor household in looking for new land is illustrated by the case of A.T., a poor farmer, who has ancestral land amounting to 0.7 re. Through having contributed his labour to levelling the land, he managed to rent in an additional 1.5 re. Last year, in order to go to Pahang to look into the possibility of opening new land, he had to lease out his 0.7 re in order to raise the necessary funds to pay for his travel expenses. Once there, he found out that it would cost \$150 per relong to "*beli usaha*" and he did not have the money. His plans for opening up land had to be given up.

The general trend is, therefore, towards a greater concentration of wealth, based on the ownership of capital primarily in the form of land. It is postulated, however, that those who will move out will not come primarily from the "*susah*" category, because of the continuing significance of subsistence production to the survival of households. Should this happen, then a polarization into class-based households may result.

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