

**LAND, FARMING, LIVELIHOODS AND POVERTY:
RETHINKING THE LINKS IN THE RURAL SOUTH**

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Summary

Lives and livelihoods in the Rural South are becoming increasingly divorced from farming and, therefore, from the land. Patterns and associations of wealth and poverty have become more diffuse and diverse as non-farm opportunities have expanded and heightened levels of mobility have led to the delocalisation of livelihoods. This, in turn, has had ramifications for the production and reproduction of poverty in the countryside, which is becoming progressively de-linked from agricultural resources. This requires a reconsideration of some old questions regarding how best to achieve pro-poor development in the Rural South.

Keywords

Rural South, Asia, agrarian change, poverty, rural livelihoods

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1. FEET OF CLAY: OUTLINING THE ISSUES (SIMPLY)

For most scholars and development practitioners, the poor world is largely a rural world and, in terms of livelihoods, this rural world is an agricultural one where farming predominates and where land is the critical resource. The assumption, sometimes explicitly stated but more often implicit, is that the solution to global poverty lies in the invigoration of farming and the redistribution of land. It is, in short, at the nexus between land and agricultural productivity that a resolution to rural poverty in the Global South – and therefore to global poverty – is to be found. For the UK's Department for International Development, "...land is a fundamental livelihood asset [and] secure, safe and affordable land is a necessary, but not always sufficient condition for reducing poverty (page 1)" (DFID, 2002a and see DFID, 2002b). Writing of rural Asia, Ali and Pernia state that "typically, the incidence of rural poverty is inversely related to the size of landholdings, decreasing from landless to submarginal, marginal to small, then to large farmers" (Ali & Pernia, 2003: 3).

In light of views such as these, it is no surprise that development interventions tend to focus on the redistribution of rural resources and/or on a (re-)invigoration of agricultural production. While the ideological inclination of those recommending fundamental land reform on the one hand, or the dissemination of new agricultural technologies (such as those of the Green Revolution) on the other may be different, they nonetheless identify the solution to rural poverty and underproduction lying in the countryside and, more particularly, in agricultural production. Not only do they see land/farming as a core ingredient in the essential recipe for rural development, but this is invariably framed in terms of small holder production. In these ways at least, they share the same ground and a common vision.

This paper seeks to challenge this farming- and land-focused vision on the basis that it overlooks the direction and trajectory of change in the Rural South and, therefore, also overlooks the emerging spaces for development intervention. It is in assuming that we should look to farming and the distribution and availability of resources in the countryside to address rural poverty that, it is argued, the difficulties and inconsistencies arise. In making this case, which I recognise will be contentious at times and problematic in places, I wish to link different bodies of work on agrarian change, namely: work on the structural transformations driving deagrarianization; on the production and reproduction of poverty in the countryside; on livelihoods; and on cultures of modernity. To do this, the paper will draw on evidence from across the Rural South and will attempt to make a generalised case that has resonance and relevance at a global level. In places, however, it will be necessary to flesh out and substantiate the broader assertions with detailed evidence and case studies, requiring a degree of elaboration at the local level. This more detailed material will be drawn, to a large extent, from the Southeast Asian region.¹ It is accepted that there are dangers in drawing associational links between 'cherry picked' case studies and the general experience of rural development. Nonetheless the paper intentionally attempts to get beyond the particular to reflect on the broader canvas of change.

(a) The role of land and farming: the Rural South and the Rural North

Livelihoods in the Rural South do, in many places and for many households – perhaps even in most places and for most households – continue to depend on small holder agricultural production. The large majority of people in the Global South live in the countryside and the livelihoods of most, it would seem, are dependent on farming (Table 1). But, and even putting aside data deficiencies which would indicate that the figures in Table 1 overstate the role of farming and the size of the rural population and understate the level of out-migration from rural areas (see Deshingkar, 2005: 14-15), there is the important issue of whether the present state of affairs in the Rural South will have any historical resilience. In other words, do the present and the past offer a reasonable guide to the future? Writing of Africa – the world's most agrarian continent – Bryceson challenges "the unwarranted assumption that the African continent's destiny is *necessarily* rooted in peasant agriculture" (1997a: 3 [emphasis in original]).

[Table 1 about here]

Scholars and development agencies do acknowledge the growing role of non-farm activities (local and extra-local) in rural economies and livelihoods. But the abiding sense is that these activities are still regarded as add-ons to the main business of farming. In the case of rural-urban migration such is the level of official disquiet that it is not uncommon for policy-makers and some scholars to propose controlling the process. The argument pursued in this paper is that not only are non-farm activities becoming central to rural livelihoods but also that

an increasing number of rural households have no commitment to farming whatsoever. It is not, therefore, just a question of weighting and balance, but of a more profound transition from one way of making a living, to another.

As a way into the discussion that follows, it is worth briefly reflecting on the recent historical experiences of Japan, Taiwan and South Korea where rural landscapes have been profoundly transformed over the last 30 or 40 years. The agrarian transitions of those countries have been collapsed into just two decades. No longer is access to land a necessary condition for reducing poverty, and farming is just one activity among many in the countryside. Indeed, “once the major source of income and employment, the agricultural sectors of Japan, Korea and Taiwan gave up resources to the growing non-agricultural sector until, after remarkably short periods of time by international standards, protection and subsidisation became essential to their survival” (Francks *et al.*, 1999: 215). While the pace of change in East Asia has been truly remarkable, the experience of the region does show how livelihoods and production in the countryside can be reworked in less than a generation, even while households retain their rural base. More recently, countries like Malaysia have experienced a similarly rapid and deep agrarian transformation.

Given the rate of rural transformations in some countries, it becomes all the more surprising how wedded scholars and development practitioners are to the rural/land/farming paradigm summarised above. One of the key lessons of longitudinal village studies is how scholars characteristically misinterpret the trajectory of change in ‘their’ communities.ⁱⁱ When Michael Moerman returned to Ban Ping in Chiang Rai province in the Northern region of Thailand after an absence of just four years he found that farmers’ actions had confounded his expectations: “It would be false to say that I had predicted this change, and dishonest not to confess that it surprised me” (1968: 185).ⁱⁱⁱ Eder, in his study (1999) of San Jose on Palawan in the Philippines gives an even more vivid impression of a scholar struggling to keep up with the pace of village change, leaving him with “the nagging feeling that I was somehow missing a vital larger picture” by using an original methodology that had “failed to capture change over time in the economic strategies of...households [and] other significant determinants of...household economic behaviour, particularly changing cultural values and ideologies” (Eder, 1999: xi).^{iv}

One of the most illuminating examples of longitudinal research – and learning – is provided by the work of Piers Blaikie and his colleagues in Nepal. In the mid-1970s Blaikie *et al.* (1980, 2002) believed that road-induced and market-led integration in west-central Nepal would “not deliver the benefits of increased agricultural production, increased commercialisation, and trade as forecast in the economic appraisal documents” (2002: 1256). The outcome, they reasoned, would be a deepening dependency and growing underdevelopment. The non-agricultural sources of employment and income that did exist at that time (such as employment in foreign armies) would not, in their view, postpone the ‘general crisis in the hills’ for very much longer (Blaikie *et al.*, 1980: 284). In a follow-up study in 1998 the same authors note that their pessimistic outlook did not materialise and admit that the essence of some of their original conclusions was wrong. Dependency may have deepened, but in a broadly positive manner, delivering higher incomes, more resilient livelihoods and higher standards of living (2002: 1268 and see Blaikie *et al.*, 2001). The authors conclude: “The original model underestimated the capacity of the global labour market to provide work and remittances to sustain rural life and to stave off a more generalized crisis...” (2002: 1268–9).

It may be that sheer familiarity with their subjects makes it difficult for scholars working at the village level to see the wood for the trees – I, certainly, have fallen into this trap – and to place their communities in the larger national and international contexts. The popularity of farmer-first approaches to both research and development may have also, unwittingly, contributed to forging generally narrow and often static interpretations of village conditions. Villager responses, based on bounded, indigenous knowledges, will tend to reinforce the status quo and legitimate existing conditions (see Mosse, 2001; Rigg, 1995). Researchers often take these at face value. Rhetorically, how can villagers who have culture in their blood, soil under their finger nails, and bodies stretched by their labor on the land possibly not know the direction they are headed far better than any academic cosseted in her or his university, not to mention government officials cocooned in capital cities and provincial centres? Even the international banks have been accused of narrowness of vision when it comes to the countryside. “The policy recommendations emanating from the World Bank and other international and national agencies over the past decade” Bryceson states, “have been

rooted in the stale assumption dating back to the colonial period that Africa is fundamentally an agrarian continent whose interface with the world market now and for the foreseeable future is in agricultural commodity exchange” (Bryceson, 1997a: 11).

2. TRAJECTORIES OF CHANGE IN THE RURAL SOUTH

In this section of the paper, the wider context will be outlined. Inevitably, in cavalierly squeezing the whole experience of change in the Rural South into a handful of paragraphs there will be gaps, oversights and grand generalisations. The purpose, however, is not to provide a balanced overview of the current situation in the Rural South but, instead, to identify and highlight those features of change that are seen to be likely to become more pronounced over time. In other words, what are the points of transformation and the broad direction of change? To summarise, the following processes and trends are occurring over a broad front:

- Occupations and livelihoods in the countryside are diversifying
- Occupational multiplicity is becoming more common and more pronounced
- The balance of household income is shifting from farm to non-farm
- Livelihoods and poverty are becoming de-linked from land (and from farming)
- Lives are becoming more mobile and livelihoods correspondingly delocalised
- Remittances are playing a growing role in rural household incomes
- The average age of farmers is rising
- Cultural and social changes are being implicated in livelihood modifications, and in new ways

The village of East Laguna in the Philippines has been studied continuously since Hayami set out from the International Rice Research Institute in Los Baños in September 1974 to find a ‘typical rice village’ (Hayami & Kikuchi, 2000).^v By the end of the 1990s, around a quarter of a century on from this initial foray, the region of east Laguna remained rural and the village was surrounded by rice fields.^{vi} While the village appears to be “as dormant [today]...as it was when we first visited it in the 1970s”, the reality is that East Laguna Village had become, by then, a very different place from the village selected some 30 years earlier. The closure of the land frontier, rapid population growth, new rice technologies, the infiltration of urban mores, public investment in infrastructure such as roads and schools, rising levels of landlessness, and the introduction of manufacturing activities in the village were just some of the changes to have buffeted the community and the wider region. East Laguna Village shows, in microcosm, the ways in which rural communities and agrarian economies across many parts of the Southeast Asian region are changing. In summary, over two decades the contribution of farming to household income declined from close to 90% to 36%, while the share of non-farm income rose from 13% to 64% (Figure 1).

[Figure 1 about here]

A similar picture of rural economic diversification and a progressive shift from farm to non-farm livelihoods is evident in the DORAS field survey of 45 sites in the Central Plains of Thailand undertaken in 1994-5, and in the same study’s more detailed examination of three villages in 1998-2000. The team found that 57% of farm households surveyed had multiple occupations that included one outside agriculture, and that farming was rapidly becoming a subsidiary activity for many rural households in the region, the so-styled ‘rice basket’ of Thailand (DORAS, 1996: 160; Molle *et al.*, 2001). Coupled with these structural and occupational shifts were demographic transformations in the make up of farming families. In the six core provinces of the Central Plains region the number of landholders aged 35 years or under declined from 24% in 1963 to 17% in 1978 and by 1993 had reached just 12%.^{vii} The number of landholders aged over 55 years old, meanwhile, increased over the same period from 28% to 37% (Molle & Thippawal Srijantr, 1999: 25).

While in Central Thailand occupational multiplicity may be highlighted as the emerging norm, Eder’s study of San Jose noted above identifies a significant increase in households who have no engagement with farming whatsoever (Figure 2). While those engaged only in farming remained relatively unchanged between 1971 and 1988, pluriactive households spanning the farm/non-farm divide declined from 58% to 32%, while those disengaged from farming more than doubled from 20% to 45% (Eder, 1999). This shift has an important generational angle: ‘core’ households (i.e. those that were present in 1971) show a preponderance of families with livelihoods based on farm activities or farm plus non-farm

activities; for 'off-spring' households (those established since 1971), however, non-farm-based livelihoods are the most important category (Figure 3).^{viii}

[Figures 2 and 3 about here]

In India, the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has been undertaking a continuing survey of rural households in 240 villages across 16 states since 1968. This rich data source shows that between 1971 and 1999 the share of non-farm incomes in total rural incomes rose from 19% to 48% (Foster & Rosenzweig, 2004: 517-8). Another large scale study is the Deagrarianisation and Rural Employment (DARE) research programme undertaken in six African countries (Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa) between 1996 and 1998. This provides the fullest and most up-to-date picture of what is happening to livelihoods and activity in rural Africa (see Bryceson, 2002). The headline figure is that the DARE programme found non-agricultural (non-farm) activities contributing a 'remarkable' 60%-80% of rural household income (Bryceson, 2002: 730), significantly higher than the usually quoted figure of around 40%.^{ix} The study also revealed a 'youthful wave' (page 733) of workers in non-farm activities.

This latter point – that there is a generational angle to deagrarianization where farming becomes, increasingly, a preserve of the old(er) – is most pronounced in East Asia. At the extreme, in Japan, by the early 1990s, one third of the agricultural labor force was already more than 65 years in age and the proportion in 2000 was over one half (Francks *et al.*, 1999: 82 and Economist 2005: 74).^x In some more remote upland areas of Japan the farm household has simply been unable to reproduce itself and land lies abandoned.^{xi} The figures for South Korea are no less dramatic: by 1990, 55% of the labor force in agriculture was over 50 years of age. Twenty years earlier, in 1970, it was just 20% (Francks *et al.*, 1999: 157).

'North Subang' in West Java, like East Laguna in the Philippines and the villages in the Central Plains of Thailand, "appears to the visitor as the prototype of [an] agrarian settlement" and is situated in the heart of the 'rice basket' of the island (Breman & Wiradi, 2002: 42).^{xii} Nonetheless, between 1990 and 1998 the share of the working population in North Subang engaged in agricultural pursuits fell from 75% to 58% (Figure 4). By 1998, two-thirds of households had at least one member working fully or largely outside agriculture, up from one-third in 1990. Had *krismon* (the Indonesian economic crisis) not occurred this trend would have been yet more pronounced, but even so the authors suggest that "North Subang is becoming less and less a rural settlement dominated by agriculture" (Breman & Wiradi, 2002: 101). Importantly, almost all the growth in non-farm employment between 1990 and 1998 was extra-local; non-farm employment in the village itself had stagnated. But while extra-local employment may have blossomed, the livelihood implications cannot simply be 'read-off' from this fact. Of the 82 villagers working outside the village (up from 40 in 1990) only nine were in well paid employment requiring a high level of skill. The remainder were divided between those who were self-employed (19, mostly petty traders in Jakarta), and those engaged in casual work (45, mostly earth movers). It would be tempting in this instance to assume that casual work of this kind is poverty-perpetuating because it does not deliver significantly higher incomes than farm work (on a daily basis). What it may do, however, is free villagers from the employment constraints of the agricultural seasons, allowing people to work through the year, so providing more regular work and income while also permitting scope for the creative combination of farming and non-farm activities.

[Figure 4 about here]

The final example comes from one of the world's poorest and most agrarian countries, the Lao People's Democratic Republic where, it is said, two-thirds of the rural population (which comprise 80% of the total) are subsistence cultivators (Lao PDR, 2003: 5). But even here, the effects of economic reform, marketisation and the integration of the country into the wider Greater Mekong Sub-region are rapidly transforming peasants in some areas into post-peasants. The evidence is patchy but, nonetheless, significant (see Rigg, 2005b). In late 2000 the ILO undertook a survey of illegal migrant workers to Thailand from 13 villages in seven districts in the three Lao border provinces of Khammouan, Savannakhet and Champassak (Inthasone Phetsiriseng, 2001). The survey covered 1,614 families. This is, so far, the most complete picture we have of levels of mobility and some of the underlying conditions and forces which are driving the process. On the basis of this survey, it would seem that the level of human mobility has escalated dramatically in the years since the mid-to late-1990s so that by 2000 between three and 13% of the populations of the study communities were working in Thailand (Figure 5). Lao illegal migrants, mainly young, are being channelled into low wage employment in textiles, construction, 'entertainment', food

processing and domestic work, as well as into farm-based wage labor. In some of the study villages, migration to Thailand has become so pronounced that it has begun to influence the availability of labor for agriculture and a clear 'gap' has emerged in the labor force of those aged 15–18 years old.

[Figure 5 about here]

How households and villages in circumstances of labor deficit respond would seem to depend on the level of remittances, labor costs in rural areas, and the willingness of other workers to fill the labor void. In Cavite in the Philippines labor gangs have been enticed in from neighbouring provinces to take advantage of the relatively high agricultural wages, themselves a product of the availability of non-farm work in the local export processing zone (Kelly, 1999). In Bangladesh it seems that heightened levels of rural-urban migration, associated labor shortages and the remittances that flow from the process have invigorated the land tenancy market, increased agricultural productivity by promoting mechanisation while also raising rural wages (Afsar, 2003: 14-15). In Peninsular Malaysia, and even with significant in-flows of laborers from Indonesia, Thailand and Bangladesh, large areas of agricultural land are simply left idle (Kato, 1994).

Studies from Bangladesh (Afsar, 2003), China (de Brauw *et al.*, 2001), and Asia more widely (Deshingkar, 2005) identify important structural changes in the composition and sources of rural household incomes. These include a declining share from agriculture, growing levels of mobility and associated remittance flows, a diversification of household and rural economies, and an increase in income for those 'left behind'. As one would expect, there are no neat, blanket generalisations that can be made about the effects of these changes in the Rural South except to note that they are having important – though variable – impacts on poverty, production and productivity, patterns of consumption, economic growth, investment, gender relations and inequality in the countryside. While the identification of general effects may be problematic, it is possible to identify some common forces propelling these wide scale changes in the composition and trajectory of economic activity and livelihoods in the Rural South. Individual cases will, necessarily, be individual but five propelling forces would seem to have some degree of common currency across the Rural South even if their relative importance varies between sites, countries and continents. These are:

- The erosion of the profitability and returns to small holder agricultural production
- The emergence of new opportunities in the non-farm sector, both local and non-local
- Environmental degradation
- Increasing land shortages
- Cultural and social change

In Table 2 these forces – which are termed 'first level propelling forces' – are underpinned by a raft of 'second-level propelling forces', not all of which will be found in individual countries or cases. The broad outcome though, will be similar – to squeeze farming and agriculture in a variety of ways. As ever, the devil is in the detail but it is nonetheless valuable to take a step back from the minutiae of individual cases in this way to see whether the larger picture has any coherence and any common features.

[Table 2 about here]

(a) The role of culture and society: factors and positions

Of the first level propelling factors identified above it is the last – cultural and social change – which has received the least attention, perhaps because it is the most nebulous and difficult to pin down. Maybe it is also because the analysis of agricultural and employment change has tended to be concentrated, in the social sciences, in economics and associated disciplines. Land shortages, environmental degradation, structural changes in the economy and in employment are generally well documented, even if some key implications (as suggested here) are overlooked. Cultural and social factors and, less obviously, social and cultural positions, are also deeply implicated in the economic changes outlined above and in people's views of these changes.

To begin with the positions that people take, it is not unusual for government officials, development practitioners as well as researchers to express a strong moral preference (Bryceson, 1997a: 9) for village life and rural pursuits. There is a normative position that rural people should remain in the countryside and in farming. Villages are viewed as units of culture and social organisation and are seen to have a certain moral validity which can be traced back through history and which is firmly embedded in local cultural norms and social

practices and structures.^{xiii} It is when villages are fragmented by modernity, when village production is undermined by industrialisation, and when villagers are extracted from their natal homes that things are perceived to go wrong. Farrington *et al.* term this the 'yeoman farmer fallacy' (Farrington *et al.*, 2002: 15).

This positioning of farming, villages and the countryside sometimes begins with an attempt to place farming at the centre of national identity. Falvey, on Thai agriculture, writes: "Agriculture has created Thailand and continues to shape Thai identity, support Thai lifestyles, and portray the Kingdom to the world" (2000: 17; see also Rigg & Ritchie, 2002). In Malaysia, the soul of the Malay, and therefore the soul of Malaysia, is still widely felt to be centred on a *kampung* (village) life and a rice-based livelihood. There often emerges a disjuncture between how some elites view farming and agriculture (often from afar), and how rural people view the occupation. In the east coast state of Kelantan the great bulk of the population are Malay and the primary economic activity is still small holder agriculture. Yet the "fabric of rural life in Kelantan has been transformed over the past two decades by the outmigration of young Kelantanese women to factory jobs in Penang" (Kusago & Barham, 2001: 1239). The association of Malay identity with farming continues, even while Malays themselves are migrating in ever-growing numbers out of farming and away from the *kampung*.

That migration and mobility are playing a growing role in livelihoods in the Rural South is generally acknowledged and there is a rich literature on the topic. Surprisingly, though – partly, perhaps, for the reasons outlined above combined with the general underestimation of the scale of migration noted earlier in the paper – government agencies have continued to overlook this progressive disembedding of rural livelihoods from rural spaces. Writing of seasonal labour migration in rural Nepal, Gill concludes that it is "too important a topic for policy makers to continue to overlook" (2003: 28). For India, it has been stated that "official awareness of the magnitude of seasonal migration or the importance of it in the lives of the [rural] poor is abysmally low" (Deshingkar & Start, 2003: 1; see also Dang 2003). In South Asia, as in Southeast Asia and many parts of Africa there is, it seems, a paradigmatic blind spot on the part of officials when it comes to understanding rural livelihoods in terms of non-local activities. In those instances where farming is not seen as central to national identity, there is often still the widespread belief that rural people are somehow 'attached' to the land in a primordial sense and that if migration is occurring it should be controlled (Deshingkar 2005: 27-8). Hamilton and Fischer, writing of the Maya farmers of Guatemala state that "ethnographers have long noted Maya peoples' attachment to the land" and add that this is "a trait broadly shared among farming and peasant peoples the world over" (2003: 90). Such axioms are erected partly so that they can be challenged and the assumption of peasant attachment to the land is one such.

From the perspective of villagers themselves, a rather different view often presents itself. Education, newspapers, radio and television, and consumerism more generally have profoundly altered the way that rural people think about work, farming and their – and more particularly, their children's – futures. Rural existences are becoming almost as monetised in countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia as are urban lives.^{xiv} Farming has become, often in little more than a decade, a low status occupation to be avoided. This view has a marked generational component: it is younger people who most urgently and fervently wish to build futures that avoid farming (Table 3). Not surprisingly, those who express some concern at the pace and direction of change tend to be the older generations. There is a methodological challenge in seeing this shift in generational terms, namely: how far does it reflect life cycle changes – implying that these young people will, in time, see the attractions of agriculture and return to farming – and how far is it part of a more profound and permanent process of cultural change which will feed through into later life? Both are, self-evidently, at work: there are behaviours, views and outlooks that can be associated with particular stages in the life course; there are also those that reflect the era in which people are living (see Monk & Katz, 1993). But, just as economic remittances fuelled by migration can transform income, investment and consumption patterns, so 'social remittances' can transform production and consumption practices (see Goldring, 2004). There is a need, therefore, to tie economic and livelihood changes (with which this paper is primarily concerned) into wider social and cultural modifications.

[Table 3 about here]

3. POVERTY TRANSITIONS IN THE NEW RURAL SOUTH

The paper now reaches its last substantive section in which I want to reflect on the production and reproduction of poverty in the Rural South in the light of the changes outlined above. The

question that underpins this next section is straight forward, at least in the asking: how have these evolving changes to livelihoods influenced the production and reproduction of poverty in the countryside?

(a) 'Old' poverty and 'new' poverty

For many in the mainstream of development work, poverty is an inheritance of the past. Individuals living simple and meagre lives are, almost necessarily, poor. The drive for market integration is founded on the assumption that it is because people are physically and mentally separated from the mainstream (i.e. from the market and from the state) that they are poor. In the case of Laos, the concentration of scarce resources on the construction of roads is founded on just such a belief and literature on the country is replete with references to the need to intensify market relations if poverty is to be reduced. The World Bank, for example, offers the view that "...remoteness is an important cause of rural poverty [in Laos]..." (World Bank, 1999: 7) while the UNDP argues that "lack of access causes poverty" in the country (UNDP, 1996: 3; see also Rigg 2005b). This conceptualisation of poverty is termed here 'old poverty'.

There is also a thread of literature on Laos, and on other countries, that sees poverty as in large part created by the development process: "It is perhaps warranted to assume that in the majority of cases [in Laos], those groups who are living more of less traditional existences based on subsistence agriculture have ample nourishment and lead normal lives by their own standards. ... It may likewise be assumed that those who are diagnosed as extremely poor or starving have been victims of man-made social or environmental upheaval, not infrequently in the name of rural development" (ILO, 2000: 9). It has been the engagement of people with the market and the Lao state that has made them poor (ADB, 2001). It is in this way that poverty in Laos (and elsewhere) is conceptualised as 'new'.

It is all too easy to see 'old' poverty being the standard view of the mainstream, including governments and multilateral agencies, and 'new' poverty being embraced by radical scholars and many development workers linked to NGOs. More important than deciding which one of these views is 'right' – and in a sense they both are – is to consider their implications for our understanding of the production and reproduction of poverty and in terms of the earlier discussion.

(i) The production and reproduction of poverty I

In a rural context where livelihoods are fundamentally founded on agriculture, poverty is a product of resource failures and inequalities, and central to this are the distribution and productivity of land. We can, in such a context, conceptualise poverty being reproduced over time through inequalities in access to resources (especially land) being passed from one generation to the next. Poverty, in this sense, is inherited as, of course, is wealth. The cry of 'land to the tiller' and the impetus for land reform in many countries are propelled by a wish to break this cycle and the generalised failure to grasp the nettle of reform led many to predict, in the 1970s and 1980s, an impending agrarian crisis in a range of countries.^{xv} That these crises have not, in the main, materialised has been due to a range of factors, but two stand out. First, productivity increases in some areas of farming have been greater than anticipated and have permitted rural households to maintain their existing standards of living on declining areas of farmland and, at least, staved off a progressive process of immiseration in the countryside. Second and more important, however, has been the rapid diversification of rural livelihoods, a marked increase in mobility, and a proliferation in opportunities outside farming. It is this second *tranche* of changes that require a reconsideration of how poverty is produced and reproduced in the new Rural South. To illustrate this, consider the experience of Mrs Chandaeng.

Mrs Chandaeng lives in Ban Sawai in Sang Thong district around 60 km from Vientiane, the capital of Laos. We interviewed her at the end of 2001. She was born and raised in Xieng Khouang province. Here she met and married her husband. They left the war-shattered province to settle in her husband's natal village and lived there until he died in 1988 when Mrs Chandaeng was 37 years old and her youngest daughter just two. A dispute with her husband's brother forced Mrs Chandaeng to move once again and she settled in Ban Sawai with her young family in 1991. Unable to secure any land beyond her house plot she struggled to raise her six children. Her ability to survive – and indeed, finally to prosper – as a landless, widowed mother of six was linked, ultimately, to the fact that four of her children managed to secure work in neighbouring Thailand. At the time we interviewed Mrs

Chandaeng, her children were remitting around US\$25–50 a month. At that time her son was working as a laborer on a shrimp farm while her three daughters, Wan (19 years old), Lot (17), and Daeng (15) were employed as housekeepers in Bangkok. With these funds Mrs Chandaeng was financing the construction of a new house. She may have explained her children's sojourns in Thailand in terms of 'when you are poor, you have to go', but the outcome was a degree of economic prosperity, at least in village terms.

In Laos – one of Asia's most 'rural' countries – Mrs Chandaeng may still be the exception to the rule, but this is not true everywhere in Laos (see Figure 5 and the discussion in connection with this figure), and even less so in most other countries in the region. The key point is that the production and therefore the reproduction of poverty are becoming de-linked from land and from agricultural resources more widely. It is becoming increasingly difficult, often impossible, to 'read off' poverty on the basis of the usual markers. Sen addresses a similar set of processes and issues in Bangladesh where he writes that a 'rice-centric' interpretation of rural development is "fast approaching its limit" (Sen, 2003: 516). In his study, the key factor distinguishing 'ascending' from 'descending' households is the degree to which the former have managed to display "strong non-agricultural orientations" (2003: 521).

In Hayami and Kikuchi's (2000) study of East Laguna a similarly sharp de-linking of land from livelihoods, and therefore of land from poverty, is evident. Importantly, this has occurred in the context of significant agricultural progress. The 1950s saw the extension of irrigation to the village and the introduction of double cropping (an 'epochal change' [page 27]), permitting output to rise and keep pace with population growth even with the closure of the land frontier and growing land scarcity. This was followed, from the mid-1960s, by the rapid diffusion of the bio-chemical innovations linked to the new rice technology – high yielding seeds, and the application of increasing quantities of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides – leading, in the authors' terms, to a 'bonanza' (page 33) for rice farmers. A further wave of agricultural innovations can be dated from the early 1980s when labor-saving technologies were introduced. Finally, from the beginning of the 1990s, with the stuttering recovery of the Philippine economy, so non-farm opportunities proliferated. This included both a dramatic expansion of *in situ* manufacturing (focused on village-based 'cottage industries') as well as a burgeoning of opportunities beyond the village. Farming households rapidly became pluriactive units of production where agriculture was one activity among several.

The significance of these changes for building an understanding of village livelihoods and patterns of poverty over time is clear in Figures 6 and 7. Figure 7 shows that over the period from 1975 land ownership in East Laguna became increasingly concentrated so that by the mid-1990s 20% of the population owned 99% of land.^{xvi} Over the same period, however, the distribution of incomes remained largely unchanged with the richest 20% maintaining their share at 56% (Figure 6). Clearly incomes remained skewed and village poverty, though it declined from close to 70% to around 56%, stubbornly high. But an agrarian crisis did not materialise and to appreciate why necessitates a view of rural livelihoods in East Laguna that not only shifts the focus from land and agriculture to non-farm activities, but also from the village as a spatial unit to the wider geographical context.

[Figures 6 and 7 about here]

So, to return to the key point of this section: how is poverty – and, by association, wealth – being produced and reproduced in the new Rural South exemplified by Mrs Chandaeng, the village of East Laguna, and elsewhere? Parents are intent on providing their children with the skills and education to engage with work outside farming and beyond the village (see Rigg & Sakunee Nattapoolwat, 2001). Rather than bestowing on their children the inherited benefits of land parents are willing, in more than a few cases, actually to mortgage their land to find the funds so that their children can escape from farming (see Hayami & Kikuchi, 2000: 69-70).

How does this, in turn, link with the discussion at the outset over 'old' and 'new' poverty? Essentially the argument offered here is that the processes that underpin the production of 'new' poverty (broadly, the incorporation of rural communities and households into the economic mainstream through market integration) offer the means by which individuals and households can escape from 'old' poverty (that arises from dependence on traditional technologies, limited income, and remoteness/dislocation from the resources of the state and the market). The two are not competing conceptualisations of poverty but rather reflect the different ways in which poverty can be produced. Moreover it is likely that in individual villages both types of poverty will co-exist. In the context of Laos I have argued that there are households who are poor because of their separation from the market and the

facilities of the state (old poverty), and households who are poor because they have been drawn into the modernisation process on highly unfavourable terms: "In the new rural world beginning to emerge in Laos some of the land poor and landless have managed to escape poverty through creative engagement with non-farm activities" (Rigg, 2005b). Land has lost its strategic role for these households and instead it is other factors and capabilities which come into play: education, skills and networks, for example.

(ii) The production and reproduction of poverty II

The discussion above glides over a question which must lie at the heart of understanding pro-poor (and anti-poor) growth in the countryside: How far do these new opportunities reinforce and accentuate old patterns of social differentiation? It may be, in other words, that rather than helping to rework patterns of poverty, these new opportunities, and particularly those that are the most remunerative, are inaccessible to the rural poor. It is also possible, of course, that these new activities may break the class envelope that formerly consigned the rural poor, and their descendants, to poverty (see below).

There is little doubt that activities with the highest potential for income generation are also those with the highest barriers to entry and they, therefore, are concentrated among middle and rich rural households. At the same time, distress diversification by the rural poor often generates little surplus that can lift households out of their pre-ordained, inherited position in the village. In this line of thinking, rather than representing a 'break' with the established patterns of poverty production, the diversification of rural livelihoods has merely served to widen the divide between the rural rich and the rural poor.

In their study of North Subang in Java, Breman and Wiradi argue that access to land is closely linked to access to capital; and access to capital determines the types of non-farm activities that households can become involved in, and therefore the likely returns. Social mobility in such a context is limited (Breman & Wiradi, 2002: 51-3).^{xvii} While geographical mobility increased enormously over the last two decades of the 20th century, in employment terms it has been quite sharply structured and has not led to a concomitant degree of social mobility. We have, in North Subang, diversifying and delocalising rural livelihoods but not ones, it would seem, that have restructured patterns of poverty and prosperity. This sort of development has not been pro-poor and may even have been anti-poor to the degree that it has widened the gulf between the poor and the non-poor.

That said, even this apparently pessimistic vision of the scope for such structural changes to challenge social inequalities, offers some reason for optimism. To begin with, without the growing availability of low-paying non-farm work it is hard to imagine how poor rural households, landless or with sub-livelihood holdings, would have managed to maintain their rural presence at all. As Deshingkar writes with reference to migration from rural areas, "pessimistic migration analyses...fail to pose the converse question of what these households would have done in the absence of the opportunity to migrate" (2005: 2). This point is also pertinent to the diversification of rural livelihoods more generally. Even when livelihood diversification has been based on distress diversification it has delivered an income of sorts and while non-farm work may not provide wages much higher than farm work (but rarely lower), such employment has increased the amount of work available to a poor household as they creatively combine farm and non-farm. Second, there is evidence of a degree of porosity in the associations noted above. Poor households do, sometimes, access work which permits a degree of wealth accumulation. The trick, in policy terms, is to ensure that this process is encouraged and supported. As is explained in greater detail in the conclusion, the fact that richer households access the better paying non-farm employment opportunities is not a reason to control the process as a whole, but to provide the poor with the skills and opportunities to lever themselves into those niches where work offers better returns. The experience of countries like Malaysia demonstrates that this is possible.

Those households being squeezed in agriculture, and experiencing what was described as 'old poverty' above, are provided by such diversification with the opportunity to survive in the village, if increasingly not on the land and the possibility, it is suggested here, to build new lives with higher standards of living. This is rarely neat and often uneven over time. Begum and Sen writing of the 'unsustainable' livelihoods of rickshaw pullers in Dhaka, from the very poorest segments of rural society, note that while this work may initially offer a route out of poverty and a means towards a modest degree of upward mobility, such is pullers' vulnerability to health shocks that it is not sustainable in the long-run (Begum and Sen, 2004). At the same time, remaining in farming may also lead to a stagnation or decline in livelihoods.

Writing of reform in China, Hy Van Luong and Unger argue that “for those families in China who remained largely in agriculture, however ... [their] living standards began to stagnate and in a great many cases declined. ... Those families who were stuck entirely in farming were very noticeably hurt” (Hy Van Luong & Unger, 1998: 67-68).

All of this assumes, of course, that maintaining some sort of presence on the land (and in the village), when this is combined with various non-farm pursuits, is the best way forward. There is reason to argue, however, that this only consigns the rural poor to continuing penury. As the concluding section of this paper briefly outlines, it may be that policies should be aimed at oiling and assisting the process of transformation of farmers into non-farmers, and rural people into urbanites, rather than shoring up the livelihoods of small holders through agricultural subsidies, land reforms and piecemeal employment creation schemes. This, though, is only likely to operate in a developmentally positive fashion in circumstances where there is a vibrant industrial (non-farm) sector able to absorb rural workers. Without such a sector, people displaced from the countryside will simply undergo a geographical shift from rural to urban, while their standard of living will either remain the same or, possibly, decline still further.

4. CONCLUSIONS: OLD QUESTIONS, NEW ANSWERS

The changes outlined above have, in places, fundamentally changed patterns and associations regarding wealth and poverty that we have become accustomed to, and comfortable with. No longer are the land rich necessarily also the prosperous in rural areas. No longer can we assume that small farmers are better off than landless laborers (see López & Valdés, 2000 on Latin America). No longer can we state, with surety, that tenants are in a better position than owner occupiers (see Molle & Thippawal Srijantr, 1999 on Thailand). No longer are agriculture and farming the desired, default position of rural households. No longer do parents desire a settled, farming life for their children. And no longer should we assume that agricultural development is best way to promote rural development, and rural development the best means of raising rural incomes and improving livelihoods (see Deshingkar, 2005).

Assessing development in four villages, two in the north and two in the south of Vietnam, Kabeer and Tran Thi Van Anh conclude: “...it is clear that the ability of household members, whether male or female, to diversify out of farming is a key factor in determining the levels of household income and well-being” and therefore, they add later “to the achievement of economic growth, poverty reduction and social development in rural areas of Viet Nam” (2000: 30 & 35). The opening section of the paper noted the centrality of land and land policy in many visions of rural/agricultural development. Griffin *et al.* (2002) have recently made a renewed call for redistributive land reform as a means of tackling rural poverty arguing that such reform will raise yields and agricultural output, lead to higher total factor productivity, raise average incomes, narrow inequalities and, therefore, reduce poverty (see also Akram-Lodhi, 2005 and Byres, 2004). In contrast to the position adopted by Griffin *et al.* (2002), this paper argues that redistributive land reform does not, in the main, offer a solution to rural poverty, for two reasons. First, because the nature and direction of growth is progressively eroding the central role of land in rural livelihoods, as outlined above.^{xviii} And second, because for land redistribution to have any marked effect it would have to be sufficiently deep to give landless rural dwellers a plot of sufficient size to sustain livelihoods at an acceptable level – rather than just consigning them to rural poverty, but on the land. Furthermore, even deep land reform may satisfy rural needs for just a generation before the reproduction of the household and rural population growth causes the same issues of land shortages and livelihood deficiencies to resurface. The politics of agrarian reform can not, in the final analysis, stem the logic of economic and demographic change. This is a point that López and Valdés (2000: 205-6) make in their review of six Latin American countries (Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay and Peru). Where such reform and resettlement has been undertaken, for example in Zimbabwe, incomes on farms have stagnated and, it seems, “many of the opportunities opened up by Zimbabwe’s first experiment with resettlement appear to have been exhausted” (Kinsey, 2002). Even here, and dramatically so away from Zimbabwe’s resettlement areas in the communal lands, livelihood diversification is meeting a widening livelihood gap.

The best means of promoting pro-poor growth in the countryside may have less to do with supporting small-holder farming, whether through land redistribution or policies of agricultural development, and more to do with endowing poor people with the skills so that

they can escape from farming and, perhaps, escape from the countryside.^{xix} Investing in farming and agriculture may, indeed, preferentially support the non-poor and thereby widen inequalities in the countryside. This is an argument that Adams pursues in his study of Egypt where, he suggests, investing in agricultural activities will be inequality increasing because of the concentration of agricultural resources (in particular, land) among a small and wealthy sub-set of the rural population (Adams, 2002). One can imagine a similar trajectory and outcome in East Laguna where agricultural investments and initiatives will benefit the minority of the population who have access to land (see Figure 7).

Where agrarian reform does lead to a redistribution of land, it may not lead to a concomitant redistribution of wealth. Land owners may find it attractive to give up their land, particularly when it is transferred at market value (as with market-led agrarian reform, see Borras 2005) and in a context where farming is losing its attractiveness, where alternative occupations are multiplying, and where non-farm investments yield a higher return than farm investments. In East Cirebon land sales were not always an indication of desperation but of relatively wealthy households freeing up capital to invest in other activities (in this instance, in brickworks) (Bremen & Wiradi, 2002: 232).

There is, though, another way of looking at the issue, which is to re-focus the question on rural spaces, rather than on rural populations. What is the best means of supporting the emergence of productive and sustainable rural spaces and rural economies? This requires governments to think of farmers not as peasants, but as agrarian entrepreneurs. The challenge is to ensure that those (relatively) few households who remain on the land can make the transition from being peasant farmers who produce largely to meet subsistence needs, to becoming commercially aware producers geared to the demands of the market. This, of course, assumes out of the equation a large proportion of the current rural population who could never become rural entrepreneurs because they lack the (land) resources to do so; their interests are best served by seeing rural futures as differentiated and complex with multiple avenues towards achieving sustainable livelihoods that are increasingly likely to be divorced, spatially and occupationally, from the land.

Table 4 sets out three questions that lie at the heart of rural development policy in the Rural South:

- Who are the rural rich and who are the rural poor?
- What is the most effective way to assist and support the livelihoods of the rural poor?
- How do we build sustainable futures in the Rural South?

[Table 4 about here]

The table also provides the 'old' or 'established' answers to these questions and, as a way of conclusion, a set of 'new' or 'revisionist' answers. These are framed in such a way so as to make clear the essence of the paper's argument. It is accepted that in reality a partial and geographically fragmented process of change is underway where clear transitions from one set of 'answers' to another are unlikely. As the paper has tried to make clear, the reason why these questions in certain contexts and circumstances are raising different answers is because a number of associations or links have become frayed and, in some cases, broken. Livelihoods have become de-linked from farming; poverty and inequality from land ownership; and poverty and inequality from occupation and activity. In Europe it may have taken half a century to grasp the nettle of rural development and see farming as just one of many activities in rural spaces. In the Rural South the luxury of such a desultory approach may not be possible.

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Table 1
A Rural and Agricultural Global South?

	% population living in countryside (2002)	% working population in agriculture	
		1990	1999
Developing countries	59	58	
Least developed countries	74	-	
East Asia & the Pacific	60	69	
Latin America & the Caribbean	24	26	
South Asia	70	64	
Sub-Saharan Africa	65	68	
High income	22	5	
Middle income	47	31	
Low income	69	69	
Southeast Asia			
Cambodia	88	-	74
Indonesia	55	55	45
Laos	80	78	78
Malaysia	37	27	19
Myanmar	71	73	63
Philippines	40	46	40
Thailand	68	64	51
Vietnam	75	71	71

Sources: UNDP (http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2004/pdf/hdr04_HDI.pdf); World Bank 1996; World development indicators, www.worldbank.org; UNDP statistics, www.undp.org.

Table 2
First and second level propelling forces in rural transformations

First level propelling forces	Selected second level propelling forces/factors	Examples
1. Erosion of profitability of small-holder farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National policies favouring industry (urban/industrial bias) 'Surplus transfer' from agriculture through taxation Structural adjustment and neo-liberalism Declining terms of trade between farm and non-farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National policies and declining competitiveness of African small-holder agriculture (Bryceson 1997b: 239-242) Extraction of surplus from the agricultural sector through taxation in Taiwan and Japan (Francks <i>et al</i> 1999, Bello <i>et al.</i> 1998) Consistent policy of bias against agriculture in China (Carter 2000: 21) Very slim profit margins for rice farmers in the Philippines (Kelly 2000: 88) Low farm wages and the disempowerment of peasants in Thailand (Glassman 2004: 105) The Burmese state's progressive taxation of farmers through the forced sale of quotas at below market prices (Chaw Chaw 2003: 208-9)

2. Emergence of new, non-farm opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign investment • National policies of export-led development focused on manufacturing • Improving access and heightened levels of mobility associated with infrastructural improvements • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massive expansion of Township & Village Enterprises (TVEs) in China (Kirkby & Zhao Xiaobin 1999, Parish <i>et al.</i> 1995, Smyth 1998, Weixing Chen 1998, Wang 1997) • Philippines (Kelly 2000) • Infrastructure-driven market integration in Laos (Rigg 2005b)
3. Environmental degradation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental conflicts between farm and non-farm activities in rural areas • Labor shortages hampering essential maintenance of farm infrastructure • Over-cropping, over-grazing and other non-sustainable cultivation practices • Deforestation and associated environmental degradation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-arid regions of Africa (Bryceson 1997b: 237-239) • Irrigation systems falling into disrepair in the Philippines (Kelly 2000) and Japan (Francks <i>et al.</i> 1999: 82) due to labor shortages. • Land degradation in Bangladesh (Ali 2004)
4. Increasing land shortages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth • Sequestration of land by the state and agencies linked to the state • Closing of the land frontier • Concentration of land resources in a small class of landed households • Effects of land reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land reform and effects on land availability in the Philippines (Hayami and Kikuchi 2000)
5. Social and cultural changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility • Media-led consumerism • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing of farmers (Francks <i>et al.</i> 1999: 82 and 157 on Japan and South Korea; Rigg and Sakunee Nattapoolwat 2001 on Thailand) • <i>Than samai</i> cultures of modernity among young women in Thailand (Mills 1997, 1999) and cultural change among young people in the Philippines (Kelly 2000: 102-3) • Higher levels of mobility driven by changing cultural values in Laos (Inthasone Phetsiriseng 2001)

Table 3
Changing rural desires: Asian views

Site	Date of survey	Comment	Source
Desa Buyut, Cirebon, north Java	September 2001	"...the youth of the village...express little interest in working in the farming sector..." (page 261)	SMERU 2004
Barrio Bunga, Cavite, Philippines	1995	"...young people have shifted their aspirations and expectations away from a rural life and towards other forms of work."	Kelly 2000: 103
Ban Naa Sakae, Northeastern Thailand	1987-1993	"In my youth we wanted to go work in the fields, to help our parents. All our friends did the same. Now children go to school for so many years and they don't want to do farm work" (Phôyaay Daeng, aged 64 [1990]).	Mills 1999: 81
Temon sub-district, Yogyakarta, Indonesia	2000	"Most return migrants stated that they do not want to work in the agricultural sector even if they still have agricultural land or have the ability to buy new land"	Supang Chantavanich <i>et al.</i> 2001: 124
Rangoon (Yangon) periphery, Burma (Myanmar)	2000	"In terms of personal motivation, women migrate to the city to experience new things and to expand their knowledge, to flee from tiresome agricultural work, to gain a good reputation from working in the city, to escape the control of parents and elders, and to attain personal freedom. Therefore...the decision to seek factory work is not straightforwardly economic. ... Most of them do not wish to return home...unless they become wealth. ... None of them want to return homw for the time being because they do not want to work on the farm."	Chaw Chaw 2003: 216 and 219-220)

Table 4**Rural poverty and rural production: questions, answers and associations**

Questions/issues	'Old' or 'established' answers	'New' or 'revisionist' answers	Broken links/associations
Who are the rural rich?	The land rich	Both the land rich and the land poor	Livelihoods have become progressively de-linked from farming and therefore from land
What is the best way to assist the rural poor?	To redistribute land To invest in agriculture	To re-skill the poor (Investing in agriculture is inequality widening)	Poverty and inequality have become de-linked from activity and occupation
How do we build sustainable futures in the Rural South?	Through supporting small-holder farming	Through supporting people's efforts to leave farming By permitting the amalgamation of land holding and the emergence of large land owners and agrarian entrepreneurs	The association of pro-poor policies with small holder farming has been broken

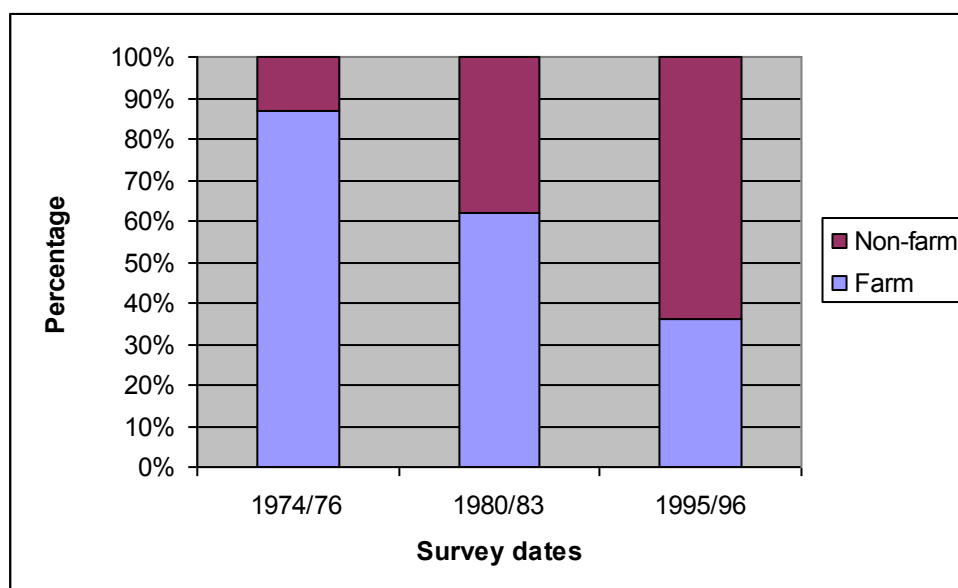


Figure 1
Source of income, farm and non-farm, East Laguna Village, Philippines

Source: based on data in Hayami and Kikuchi, 2000: 235

Source data

	Farm	Non-farm
1974/76	87	13
1980/83	62	38
1995/96	36	64

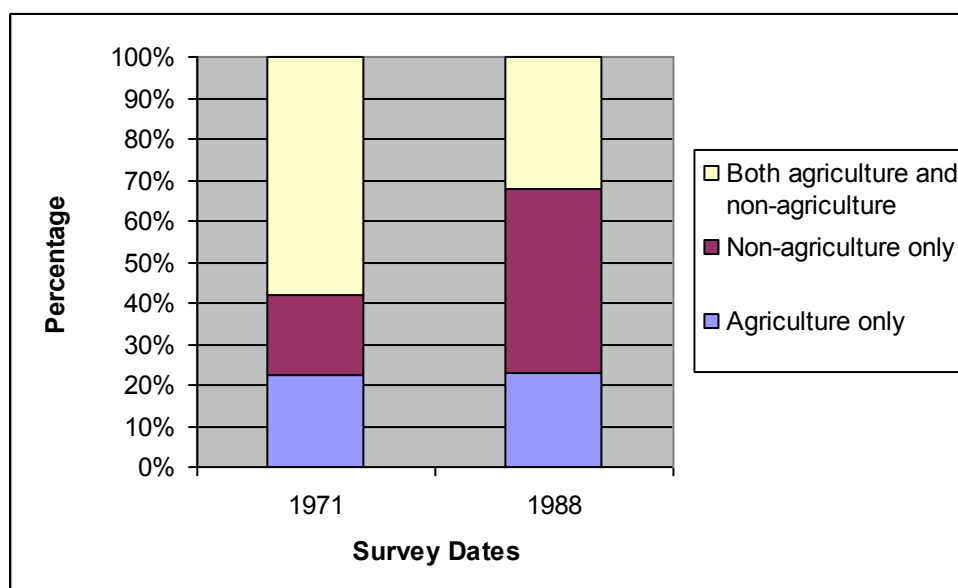


Figure 2
Sources of household income, San Jose, Philippines (1971 and 1988)

Source: based on data in Eder, 1999: 75

Source data

	1971	1988
Agriculture only	22.3	23
Non-agriculture only	19.6	44.6
Both agriculture and non-agriculture	58	32.4

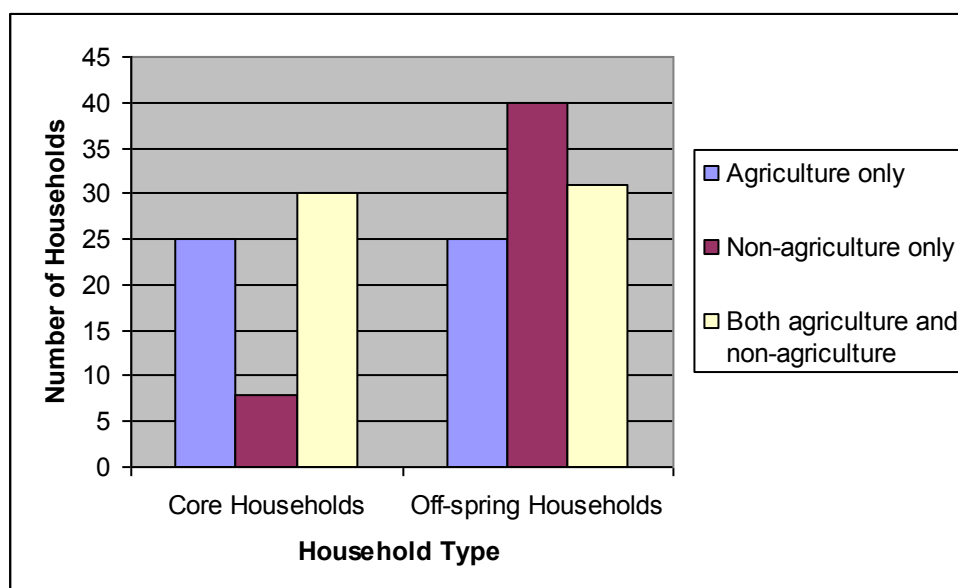


Figure 3
Income sources for core and off-spring households, San Jose, Philippines (1988)

Source: based on data in Eder, 1999: 78-9

Source data

	Core Households	Off-spring Households
Agriculture only	25	25
Non-agriculture only	8	40
Both agriculture and non-agriculture	30	31

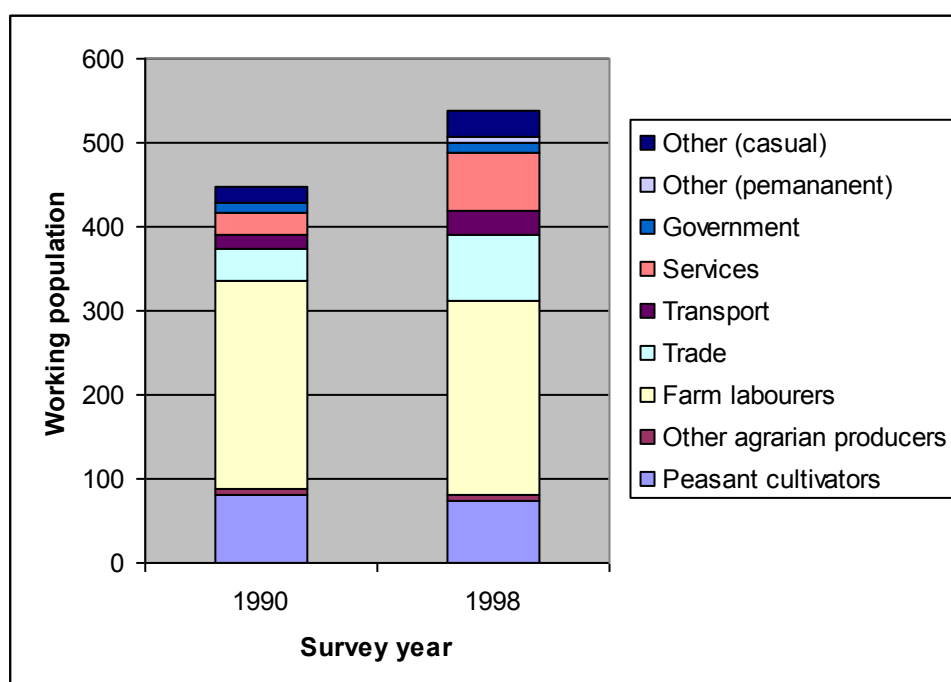


Figure 4
Distribution of the working population within and outside agriculture in North Subang, 1990 and 1998

Source: data extracted from Breman and Wiradi, 2002: 101

	1990	1998
Peasant cultivators	82	73
Other agrarian producers	5	9
Farm labourers	249	229
Trade	39	80
Transport	16	29
Services	26	69
Government	11	11
Other (permanent)		8
Other (casual)	20	30
	448	538

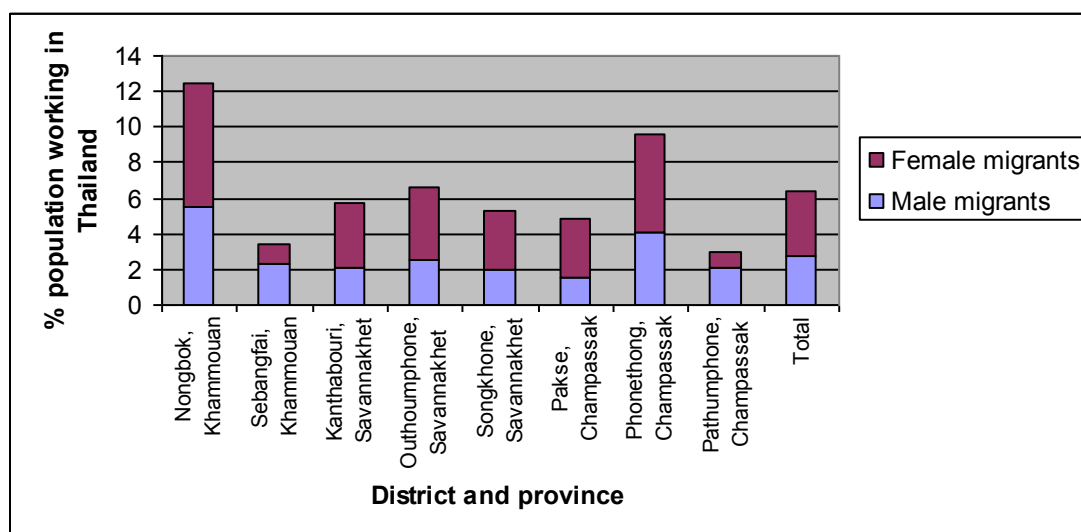


Figure 5
Mobility in 13 villages, seven districts and three provinces: illegal labor migration to Thailand (2000)

Note: the total population of the villages in this survey was 15,594 and the total number of migrants, 992.

Source: data extracted from Inthasone Phetsiriseng, 2001

	Male migrants	Female migrants	
Nongbok, Khammouan	5.50	7.01	12.51
Sebangfai, Khammouan	2.29	1.08	3.38
Kanthabouri, Savannakhet	2.10	3.59	5.69
Outhoumphone, Savannakhet	2.51	4.13	6.64
Songkhone, Savannakhet	1.94	3.37	5.31
Pakse, Champassak	1.56	3.29	4.86
Phonethong, Champassak	4.13	5.43	9.56
Pathumphone, Champassak	2.07	0.87	2.93
Total	2.76	3.60	6.36

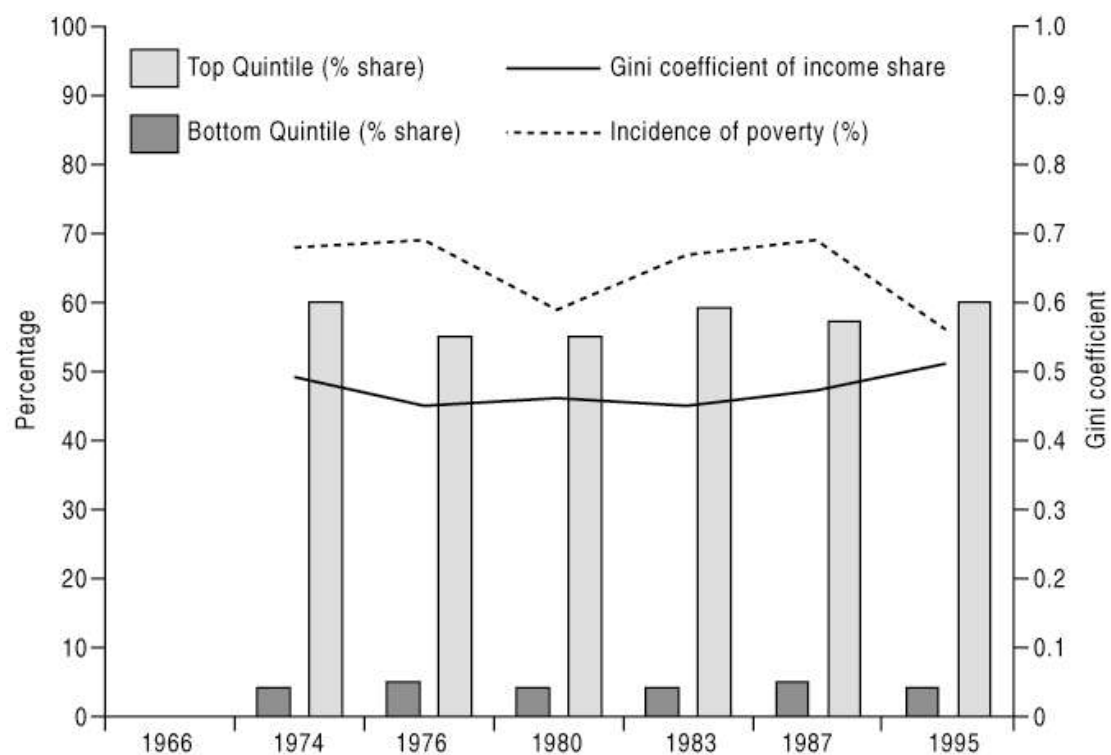


Figure 6
Share of income of top and bottom quintiles, East Laguna, Philippines (1974-1995)

Source: data extracted from Hayami and Kikuchi, 2000: 240

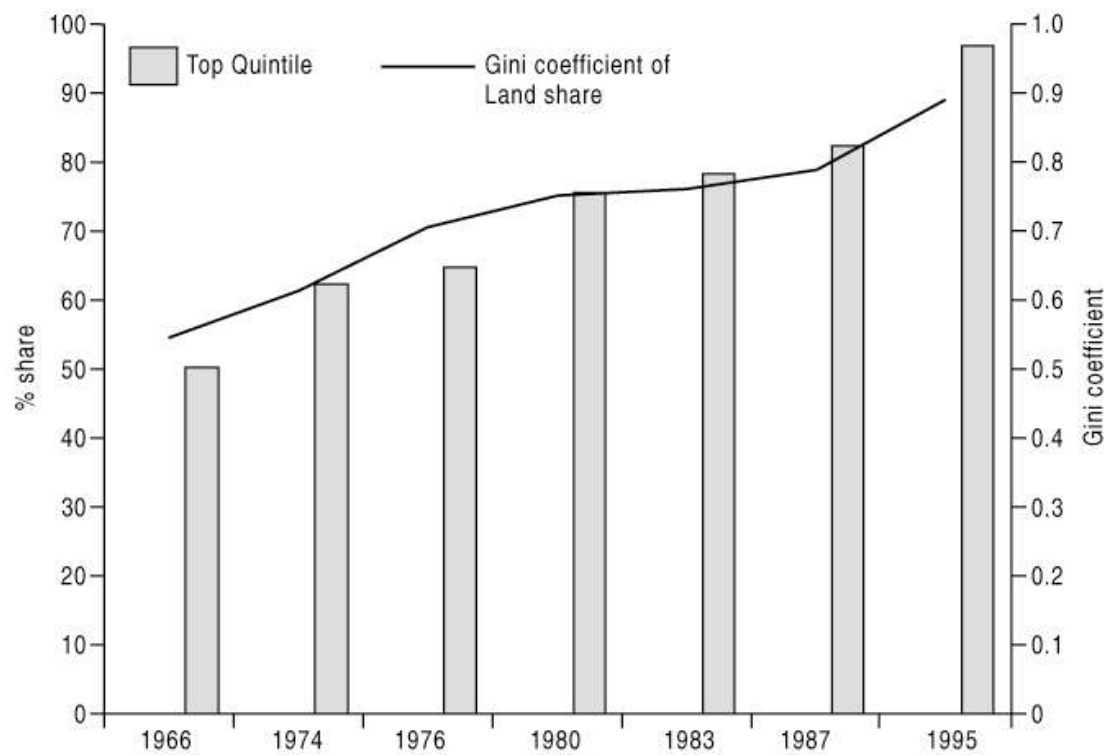


Figure 7
Share of land of top quintile, East Laguna, Philippines (1966-1995)

Note: land share of bottom quintile throughout the period is zero

Source: data extracted from Hayami and Kikuchi, 2000: 240

Notes

ⁱ A paper I wrote nearly 20 years ago (Rigg, 1986) raised some of the issues I explore here, and I have returned to the theme on a number of occasions since (Rigg 1998a, 1998b, 2005a, Rigg and Sakunee Nattapoolwat 2001, Bounthong *et al.*, 2004). This paper is an attempt to bring these ideas together in a rather wider consideration of the links between farming, rural development, employment diversification, patterns of poverty, and development interventions.

ⁱⁱ See, for example: Moerman 1968 and Rigg, 1995 on Thailand; Eder 1999 on the Philippines; and Blaikie *et al.* (1980, 2001, 2002) on Nepal.

ⁱⁱⁱ His study was based on an initial period of work in 1959-1960, with a follow-up visit in 1965.

^{iv} Eder began his work in San Jose in 1970-72. Since then he has visited San Jose on six further occasions, in 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, and 1994-5 (see Eder 1993 and 1999).

^v Between 1966 and 1997 eleven surveys were conducted in East Laguna Village.

^{vi} The authors continue to depict East Laguna Village and the surrounding area as rural.

^{vii} These provinces being Ayutthaya, Ang Thong, Pathum Thani, Singburi, Suphanburi and Nakhon Pathom.

^{viii} The number of households in the 'agriculture only' category is the same for core and off-spring households (n=25). As a proportion of the total number of households in each group, however, the figures are rather different: 26% for off-spring households and 40% for core households.

^{ix} This difference may be partly due to methodological differences in the measurement of farm and non-farm income but much more important is likely to be that most of the studies quoting the 40% figure are based on research undertaken in the 1980s or early 1990s (Bryceson 2002: 730).

^x In 1975, in a farming population of close to 8 million, fewer than 2 million Japanese farmers were aged over 65 years. In 2000 the farming population has shrunk to under 4 million and those aged more than 65 had risen to more than 2 million (Economist 2005).

^{xi} A topic of popular debate and concern is the difficulty male Japanese farmers have in finding a spouse when young women (particularly) are disinclined to marry a farmer. Mail order brides have been one way around the impasse.

^{xii} North Subang has been extensively studied: by Hayami and Kikuchi (1981) in the 1970s; by White and Wiradi (1989) in 1981; by Breman in 1990 (Breman 1995); by Pincus (1995) in 1990-91; and by Breman again in 1998-1999.

^{xiii} The best example of this in academia is the notion of the 'moral' economy of the peasant (Scott 1976).

^{xiv} This is a point that Breman and Wiradi make in the context of Java (2002: 257) as do Rigg and Sakunee Nattapoolwat (2001) for Northern Thailand.

^{xv} See, for example, Blaikie *et al.* (1980, 2002) on Nepal; Cederroth and Gerdin (1986) and Cederroth (1995) on Indonesia; Molle and Thippawal Srijantr (1999) and Molle *et al.* (2002) on Thailand; and Hayami and Kikuchi (2000) on the Philippines.

^{xvi} Ironically, this was accentuated by the land reform programme which may have helped to equalise land ownership among landowners but, by undermining the land rental market, made it impossible for the landless to rent land and, therefore, widened inequalities (in terms of land use) within the community as a whole.

^{xvii} Breman sharply criticises an earlier study of the same village by Hayami and Kikuchi (1981) for perpetuating the 'myth' of the autonomous village as closed and inward-looking and failing to appreciate the degree to which the village economy was implicated in wider networks of production and exchange.

^{xviii} Griffin *et al.* do write, in the appendix to their long paper: "...it should be recognised that land is not an equally important determinant of rural incomes in all agrarian societies. Non-farm rural activities are

much more significant in some countries than in others and where this is the case, the distribution of the ownership of land is relatively less important in determining the distribution of rural incomes" (2002: 324). A key argument of this paper is that non-farm rural activities are becoming increasingly important components of rural incomes and livelihoods in many countries and should no longer be regarded as the exception to the rule.

^{xix} "The realization is gradually gaining ground that to satisfy aspirations of upward mobility outside the village [of North Subang in Java] and outside agriculture requires more and different knowledge and training than can be acquired purely through experience" (Bremas and Wiradi 2002: 143).