

FARMERS' EXIT FROM SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE OUT-MIGRATION AND DEAGRIARIANISATION

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ABSTRACT

Banggi is the largest in the group of islands in Sabah's North. Of the multitude of ethnic groups on the island, the Bonggi is one whose livelihood orientation is land-based and, by extension, access to land, is crucial to survival. Yet development interventions have increasingly curtailed such access. This paper examines changes in Bonggi livelihoods as a result of curtailment of access to land with a particular emphasis on out-migration.

In the literature on deagrarianisation and agrarian transition, out-migration of farm families or of individuals from farming households is viewed as an important aspect of livelihood diversification. Out-migration supports rural household economies through remittances, and if such support exists on a large scale, a vibrant rural economy may emerge through interpenetration of urban and rural incomes. It is argued that the hope placed on the potential of remittances and the interpenetration of urban/rural incomes may have glossed over differential exit conditions, namely the different skills held by the migrants and the essential networks that may or may not be available to them. As well, exit from subsistence agriculture may not necessarily be permanent, so that a return to agriculture may yet remain a viable option for returnees for various economic and non economic reasons. The paper benefits from a long term ongoing engagement with the Bonggi from 2003 onwards. However, focused research using in depth interviews on out-migration covering the villages of Kapitangan, Kalangkaman, Limbuak Darat and Batu Layar on Banggi island was conducted in 2007 and 2009.

INTRODUCTION: BONGGI AND DEVELOPMENT

Banggi island, located in the Kudat administrative district in Sabah's north, is surrounded by the Sulu Sulawesi Sea to the East and North, and the South China sea to the West. It is the largest of a chain of islands to Kudat's north (see Figure 1). Bonggi is a major ethnic group on the island, and they claim to be the only long established indigenous community in the area compared to those they consider as more recent newcomers (such as Ubian and Kagayan). It is estimated that 4000 Banggi live in 11 villages (See Figure 2) , on an island that is home to approximately 14,000 people from six or more ethnic groups (Banggi Sub district Administration 2004). Figure 2 also indicates that most settlements are on the coastal areas of the island. This is a relatively recent formation which has arisen from resettlement policies associated with state and private sector agricultural projects and will be discussed in detail below.

Changes in Bonggi livelihoods in the villages of Sabur, Kapitangan, Kalangkaman, Limbuak Darat and Batu Layar on the island of Banggi range from a complete departure from subsistence production in favour of cash crop production, to one of spatial and

sectoral diversification .¹ Spatial diversification (delocalization) of livelihoods occurs through ex situ employment (often via migration) and sectoral diversification involves seizing employment opportunities that are not related to subsistence farming. Notably, Bryceson (2002) has written on deagrarianisation in the African continent. Deagrarianisation takes account of the agrarian transition facing many rural areas especially those in the developing world and refers to the structural transformation of livelihood and incomes structures at the household and community levels. The transformation is such that livelihood and income structures are no longer wholly dependent on agriculture. Phrased differently, deagrarianisation is a process affecting the structure of livelihood and rural incomes such that dependence on agriculture is lessened through diversification of livelihood and income sources. These dramatic changes can occur within a generation and belie the seemingly unchanging and stagnant agricultural orientation of the landscape of many rural areas such as Banggi island.

All development interventions affected Banggi access to land, as their land being largely untitled, are officially considered to be 'stateland' and are subject to appropriation by the state for 'development' purpose. One point made by Li (1999 and 2007) that may be useful for understanding Banggi marginalization is that the process must be understood in terms of the history of political, economic and social relationships of the interior, along with modern processes of state formation (both colonial and post-colonial) and capitalist expansion.

Since 1963 when Sabah became independent through merging with Malaya and Sarawak to form Malaysia, most parts of Banggi, have been visited by 'development' programs initiated by both government and the private sector. The government initiated agricultural development scheme (the *Pertanian* Scheme) which was only partially successful, has now re-emerged (from the Banggi perspective) in the form of the Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (FELCRA) project of developing large scale rubber plantation on Banggi.

Prior to 1963, territorialisation, an aspect of which is exclusion, was put in place via a range of legislations involving the conversion of local control to centralized control of natural resources. In this paper, the Sabah Land Ordinance (SLO) of 1930 is an important one to consider, and equally important is to note that territorialisation did not entirely succeed.

Similar to practices elsewhere such as Sarawak (Majid Cooke 2006) or Kalimantan (Eghenter 2006) legislations tend to transfer local control and management of land and forests to the state. The SLO declared all land, unless otherwise titled, as state land. For indigenous peoples, the potential for getting title to the land that they live on and in some instances protect, is provided for in Part 4 of the Ordinance, from Section 64 to Section 86 as well as in Section 15 which lists seven different ways of

¹ This paper benefits from intermittent fieldwork conducted over a period of six years beginning 2003. The Sabur fieldwork was conducted in 2003 and 2004, the Limbuak Darat and Batu Layar fieldwork in 2004 and 2005, and then again in 2008 and 2009, the Kalangkaman and Kapitangan fieldwork in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

claiming customary rights, and in Section 76 which covers communal title. However, there are two major shortcomings to indigenous claims to land. First, fallow lands which are integral to the swidden cycle are not captured by the Ordinance - a big administrative oversight which had implications for access to land by swidden practitioners. Second, in applying for land under Native Title, indigenous groups are not tied down by locality, namely, an indigenous person can apply for land anywhere in Sabah, even if s/he may not be from that locality. These shortcomings can be an opportunity for some and a problem for others.

Admittedly, the enforcement of the SLO in Sabah has been problematic for many reasons (Doolittle 2001), but the main point to be raised here is that these legislations formed part of a process of centralizing control over natural resources and of determining access rights to them in conformity with the state's administrative and political agendas (Peluso and Vandergeest 2001).

Territorialisation measures when translated into administrative strategies on Banggi island, had to accommodate the agendas of political parties in power. As happened elsewhere in Malaysia, party agendas shape the form and implementation of development projects (Cramb 2007).

DISPLACEMENT AND DEAGRARIANISATION

As noted, livelihood diversification is an important aspect of deagrarianisation. Deagrarianisation is supposed to be taking place when livelihoods have diversified spatially and sectorally. This section outlines the diversification of Bonggi livelihoods under the *Pertanian* scheme since the late 1960s until the present. The *Pertanian* (Agricultural) Scheme was a state financed scheme that began in the 1960s as seen in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: LIST OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTION INITIATED DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS ON BANGGI 1960S TO 2008:

Year	Type of development intervention	Development Agents	Area/villages/activities involved/affected	Status
Early 1960s	Agricultural and Resettlement Schemes	Department of Agriculture (Pertanian)	Objective: Poverty alleviation. Small holder coconut cultivation and small amount of commercial vegetables and corn. Almost all Bonggi settlements involved except Sabur Resettlement of Bonggi households from dispersed hillside settlements at Limbuak Darat in the south all the way north to Kalangkaman, Kapitangan and villages beyond.	Scheme was initiated by the then ruling party United Sabah National Organisation – USNO. Bonggi allocated land which were untitled, 15 hectares per family

			<p>Infrastructure provision – schools, roads and housing</p> <p>Subsidies for the growing of cocounuts</p>	
Late 1960s	Pertanian Scheme extended to Batu Layar		<p>Same activities as above.</p> <p>Resettlement of Bonggi from nearby hills to Batu Layar.</p>	
1974/75	Administration changed hands	<i>Pertanian</i> scheme taken over by Sabah Land Development Board (SLDB), a para statal	<p>SLDB Area extended further south from Limbuak at Batu Layar and inland towards the southeastern side of the island.</p> <p>Size of the SLDB scheme - 5,000 hectares. It did not include land under the <i>Pertanian</i> scheme.</p> <p>Logging to clear land for coconuts, experiments with oil palm. Only initial attempts made to grow coconuts. Land found to be unsuitable for oil palm</p>	<p>Due to change in political party in government in the mid 1970s , development of Banggi island was not a priority and attention turned elsewhere.</p> <p>All land applications were frozen.</p> <p>Bonggi land under the <i>Pertanian</i> scheme remained untitled.</p>
1980s	Administration changed hands	SLDB taken over by Borneo Samudra, a government affiliated organisation	No activities but Land freeze broken.	<p>Funds were unavailable to support the project.</p> <p>Some Bonggi started applying for land title, but others did not.</p>
1980s	Cattle farming (ranch) introduced	Company linked to the then Chief Minister	<p>10,000 acres. Customary land being untitled, Bonggi at Sabur had to relocate further North to the mangrove forests.</p> <p>Some families remaining in the Limbuak Hills relocated to Batu Layar.</p> <p>Extensive Logging to make way for cattle ranch Much labour for logging</p>	<p>Labour for logging largely from outside (Sulawesi and Sarawak). Management of cattle farm – foreign.</p> <p>Bonggi land under the <i>Pertanian</i> scheme remained untitled.</p>

			came from Sulawesi and Sarawak. A few Bonggi worked on cattle farm as labourers	
2007	Plantation agriculture introduced	Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (FELCRA)	Rubber plantations introduced on Bonggi.	Bonggi land under the <i>Pertanian</i> scheme untitled until today.

Source: Interviews, Limbuak Darat and Batu Layar (11 to 13. 08. 04)
Newspapers: Sabah Times 08.05.06; Daily Express 9.08.07. 12.08.07

Table 1 refers to the waves of development projects that have swept across the Bonggi landscape. Diversification of livelihood for all Bonggi villages under the first government initiated project, the *Pertanian* scheme was dramatic. The *Pertanian* scheme was successful in transforming the Bonggi landscape from one of largely old growth and secondary forest (as a result of shifting cultivation) to a sea of coconuts. Bonggi were encouraged to resettle in villages along the road at Limbuak Darat and later, Batu Layar, and many complied as they started engaging in the commercial economy of small holder coconut growing with assistance from the Sabah Department of Agriculture. They complied because of the special relationship some Bonggi had with the first Chief Minister of Sabah whom some of them regarded as their patron/protector.²

They did not worry too much about not having land title partly because in the 1960s/70s there was no much interest from outsiders for land on remote Bonggi island, much of which is inaccessible. Today, land being under pressure, Bonggi reminice on the promise of Tun Mustapha to their ancestors:

The Tun said to us, just work on your land, for as long as I live this will be Bonggi land even if you do not have title
(interviews at Batu Layar and Limbuak Darat, 7.06.05)

Until today not one Bonggi has title to the land. (Sabah Times 08.05.06, interviews Limbuak Darat and Batu Layar 11 to 13 .08.04). 'The issue for Bonggi today is land' (interview, former state assembly representative for Bonggi island, Kota Kinabalu, 5.12.09)

With regard to SLDB, it being a creature of the state government,³ the 5,000 hectares assigned to it in the 1980s by the government of the day was left unattended.

² Among some Bonggi who were involved with Tun Mustapha in fighting the Japanese forces during its occupation of Sabah during the Second World War, the realization that Tun Mustapha was not alone in that struggle, made him less of a hero than the myth that surrounded the Tun. Younger Bonggi were told by their grandparents that there were other armed forces fighting for Bonggi and Sabah generally, including Australian forces (interviews Kalankaman, 30.12.07). Consequently, among some younger Bonggi the image of the Tun as patron is starting to unravel.

In sum, the area set aside for SLDB management progressed from being 'frozen' during Berjaya's time to being left unattended during PBS time. When a new coalition government was formed in 1994 dominated by the United Malays National Organisation – UMNO – another 13 years passed before there was a resurgence of political interest on Banggi. The idea of large scale estate style development for growing rubber was revived through the land development agency FELCRA. Since 2007, land applications have again been frozen, most likely in anticipation of expanded development associated with FELCRA.

In the villages, Bonggi are aware of their marginal position.

We know the land approval process. The Land and Survey verifies the location of the land, the Land Utilisation Committee evaluates, recommends or rejects. Our problem is that we do not have anyone who pushes our interest. There is no Bonggi representative in the state assembly, nor in the offices of the state assembly. At the local representative office, they are all Ubian. We have no representation, no voice, and no area allocated to us to live.

(Atin, Kalangkaman 30.12.07 – 31.12.07)⁴

From an administrative perspective, the freeze is necessary so that overlapping land claims can be sorted out. Overlapping land claims occur all over Sabah because of a weakness in the SLO.⁵

In many instances, when checking on the status of their land applications, Bonggi found that approval was difficult until the overlapping claims were sorted out by the Land and Survey Department. This means that despite their claims to indigeneity their claims to land do not have priority, so that their applications are given the same importance as those made by other indigenous applicants from outside Banggi.

We were told to go see the boss at the Department, but after we met the boss, the office people told us he was the wrong one, and we should have met with the second boss.... I think they are just playing us around ... we are just like cigarettes (sigup) that can be thrown away any time

(Tugal, Kalangkaman 1.01.08)

³ An indication of the role of SLDB in the context of Sabah development can be seen in the recently exposed case of it being used for providing elected officials with wealth via share transfers and for supplying political parties with election funds New Straits Times 17.08.08; Bernama, 20.07.07 : <http://www.bernama.com> accessed on 2.05.08; New York Times, 3.05.08). Thus, it can be concluded that SLDB would not have had the will to find alternative paths for development on Banggi if it was not pushed by political parties in power.

³ For example, in the 2008 elections held in early March, the Banggi seat was fought over by five contenders, none of them Bonggi (Daily Express 25.02.08:1,2). The winning candidate was an Ubian.

⁴ The fact that under the Sabah Land Ordinance any Sabah indigenous person can apply for land anywhere in the state under Native Title without having to be a resident of the place, can be considered a loophole in the law.

In 2007, having been unsuccessful through normal channels, Bonggi of Limbuak Darat tried a different avenue by approaching the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM). Despite the imminent threat of losing their land, the language used in their note to Suhakam was reconciliatory and it was a language of rights:

We do not want to obstruct the agricultural station from coming to our village because we have received much help in our effort to grow coconuts since 1964; but we do not want our rights to live on the land we have worked on since our grandparents' time to be ignored. If this problem is not taken into consideration, we are sure that our livelihoods will be threatened.

(Letter to Suhakam, from Limbuak Darat village dated 11 February 2007).

MIGRATION CHARACTERISTICS

Taking into account the interface between non farm work and farm employment is an important aspect of the agrarian transition literature. The interface is favourable if remittances from household members can be relied upon. In many instances it is young people in mature households who migrate who are counted upon to contribute to household incomes through remittances (Rigg 2005: 187; 1998: 507). Or conversely, the availability of young people to work in the family farm, frees up the labour of the heads of household for non-farm work (Rigg 1998:507). Consequently, remittances from non farm work may become a mechanism for preventing marginalization. If household members earn sufficiently high income this may certainly be true. There are houses being built in Kalangkaman and Limbuak Darat as a result of non farm work (field notes Kalangkaman 31.12.07 and Limbuak Darat 29.11. 09). Over the years, many informal conversations held with young people who have returned to the island as well as with older returnees indicate that earnings are not sufficiently high for remittances to be a reliable source of income for households left behind. Data based on interviews with 24 returned migrants, used in this section of the paper captures some of the main characteristics of non- farm work engaged in by Bonggi.

The sample, admittedly small, is nevertheless useful for supplementing impressions built on observation and conversations over the last 6 years. Collected at random, the sample successfully captured returnees from a range of age cohorts.

TABLE 2: AGE BY EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY UPON RETURN

AGE	Farming	Not farming	Total
21 - 30 years	2	4	6
31 - 40	4	3	7
41 - 50	2	1	3
51 - 60	6	0	6
60+	1	1	2
TOTAL	15	9	24

N = 24

Table 2 shows that many more returnees are engaged in farming than not. All 6 respondents in the 51 – 60 age category were engaged in farming. Those not farming (9 respondents) were from the younger age groups of 21 -30 and 31 – 40 although two were farming part time and one respondent wanted to farm in the near future. Obviously farming is considered an acceptable activity even among the young. Those not farming were variously engaged in non-farm work including working for FELCRA, for

contractors building roads and housing, or other non-farm work such as being a security guard.

TABLE 3: EDUCATION BY GENDER

Educational Level	Women	Men	Total
Completed High School	1	0	1
Some High School	-	2	2
Some primary	-	1	1
No schooling	3	17	20
TOTAL	4	20	24

N = 24

TABLE 4: DESTINATION OF MIGRATION AND NATURE OF WORK (multiple responses)

Destination of migration	Nature of Work	Total
Kota Kinabalu	Day/Casual labourer in shops, digging drains	3
Kudat, rural	Coconut and oil palm plantations	10
Kudat, rural	fishing fleet (<i>pukat tunda</i>)	8
Sabah East Coast (Sandakan, Kinabatangan, Telupid, Pitas, Lahad Datu)	Timber camp, agricultural labour, builders' labourer (contract work)	7
West Coast Sabah (Sipitang)	Fishing fleet, timber camp	2
In and out and intermittent trips Sabah Westcoast (Kota Kinabalu, Kota Marudu, Kudat)	Plantation, fishing fleet and builders' labourer	6
Peninsula Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Trengganu	Factory and holiday resort work	3
Singapore	Builders' labourer	1
Total number of jobs held		50

TABLE 5: LENGTH OF TIME AWAY

Less than a year	2
1 – 3 years	2
4 – 6 years	1
7 – 9 years	3
10 – 12 years	2
13 – 15 years	3
16 + years	5
In and out 10 years or less	3
In and out 11 years or more	3
Summary: 67% of respondents have been working/living outside Banggi for 10 or more years. Range = 8 months to 42 years.	

TABLE 6: SAVINGS

(able to save while away?) (how use savings?)

Yes	0	
Yes, a Little	6	Usage: to build a house: 4 To get married: 2 To process land title: 1
No not at all	18	
Total	24	

TABLE 7: REASONS FOR MIGRATION (multiple responses)

Find extra cash	10
Find work	7
Other economic: school fees, help family, raise living standards	6
Follow family	4
Buy basic needs (clothes, food)	2
Other reasons: expose children to city education, to see other places	2
Total	31

TABLE 8: REASONS FOR RETURN (multiple responses)

Salary not enough/job insecure	5
Family: get married, to be with family	8
To look after own land	8
Identity: To return to my own place/want to start own life/not wanting to be in wage work any more	8
To rest	2
Old age	1
Total no. of reasons	32

TABLE 8: VIEW OF FUTURE IN BANGGI

Good	0
Quite Good, if we try	2
Same as now	5
Uncertain	8
Harder	2
No response	7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Bonggi lack of education channeled them into unskilled non-farm work (Tables 3 and 4). Except for 4 respondents, the majority had no education. Although having made an exit from subsistence agriculture, most could only find low paying labouring jobs in commercial agriculture (coconut and oil palm plantation), in commercial fishing as well as in forestry work (in logging and timber camps). Jobs that are not agriculture related are in the form of insecure factory or construction industry jobs. In the Sabah

economy, factory line jobs, as well as those in the plantation and construction industries are not only low paying but are often taken up by migrant labour, precisely because they are shunned by many locals for being low paying (Majid Cooke 2009).

The main reason for migrating is economic, namely looking for paid work, and for extra cash which provided Bonggi with the income to meet basic needs of shelter, food and education (Table 7). Generally, even after long years of being away (67% of respondents having been away for 10 years or more) very little savings were accumulated (Tables 5 and 6), so that many aspirations of wanting to help family or to raise household incomes were not met.

That non farm extra local work opened up a whole new window of opportunity for new forms of employment appeared to have benefited Bonggi, and they seized the opportunity by finding work all over Sabah, Peninsular Malaysia and, to a smaller extent, internationally, in Singapore (Table 4). Nevertheless, the principle that non farm work would feed into household income does not apply in this instance because not enough cash was earned to enable Bonggi to send regular remittances home. As well, the island's distance from Kudat and other places in the Sabah mainland where Bonggi work has its costs both financially and socially. The financial costs incurred in returning home are high for all, so that regular home visits are not possible. Since there are no banks on Bonggi, the lack of visits home, as well as the low paying jobs make regular remittances nearly impossible.

The exceptions are those who move 'in and out' as seasonal labourers and who would need to factor the cost of the return trip into the equation. Many respondents indicated that they could only afford to return home in between contracts. Socially, it means that the remittances viewed in the deagrarianisation literature, as a key mechanism for lifting households out of poverty are not operational in the Bonggi case. Lastly, the lack of remittances means that the interpenetration of urban and rural incomes important in the process of transition, did not happen so that in many villages, the two northern ones of Kapitangan and Kalangakaman included, the livelihoods tend to remain agricultural. By extension, despite diversification of livelihoods and income structures, the agrarian transition is not taking place, at least, for the moment.

Small gains were made in material terms, nevertheless. Table 5 shows that from non-farm work, 4 respondents were able to build dwellings and 2 were able to get married. The one respondent who returned after 15 years of work in timber camps and elsewhere about 15 years ago, with a plan of using his savings to process land title application for his ancestral land, in the end, gave up because of the tortuous procedure involved in acquiring title. In any case, the money set aside for the process became too tempting, and was soon used for other needs and so became depleted. So his family land remains untitled until today.

Interestingly, economic reason, in particular, not earning enough from non farm employment (Table 8) is only one of a network of reasons. Identity and family reasons are the major drivers for return. After being away, the land beckons to be worked on and protected, the desire of wanting to start an independent life became strong, as was the thought of enjoying the support of close family and friends. As noted earlier, protection of the land (*jaga tanah*) is based on the fear that, if untitled and apparently unimproved, the land could be regarded as unowned 'state land', and can be taken away for 'development' reasons or encroached upon by outsiders.

Table 9 shows uncertainty about the future in Bonggi. The high level of uncertainty has to do with anxiety over land. The view of the future being the same

refers to a level of pessimism about much improvement happening in their lives in the future. A woman, Losu from Kapitangan expressed the pessimism thus:

Same as now. I want to improve but how? The best I can do is to farm, that's all, for our own use. Not much we can sell, transport is expensive. My baby I will take to the clinic only when I have the money. We have land but we don't know how to process it for getting title. I have never been to school. Depends on the headman.

(Losu, Kapitangan village 29.11.09)

Especially for those in the northern part at Kapitangan where the major livelihood activity remains agriculture and the prospect of non-farm work less certain than the opportunities presented at Batu Layar and Limbuak Darat, the past experience of having lived in town provided respondents with a basis for comparison. In this comparison the advantages of living with family, on one's own land, of being in control of one's own time far outweigh the opportunities associated with wage work (*makan gaji*). To return was, therefore, a calculated risk.

It's good to come back to one's own country, even if it is not that good, it is your own. In other people's country no work no food. When the towkay (the employer) does not like us, we have to leave. Here when we want to work, we work. Here we have many relatives. It is easier here in the village, because there are many relatives

[Omar, Kapitangan Village 28.11.09]

A few respondents (6) however, were planning to return to waged work in the next year or so for the same sorts of reasons that they left the first time; but for most returnees, Banggi is where home is.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Drawing attention to the deep changes taking place in the structure of rural livelihoods and incomes have produced two kinds of responses among scholars. On the one hand there are those who regard these changes as highly disturbing for its potential to make the poor poorer because of clear inequalities in access to non farm work. One strand of the deagrarianisation approach on the other hand, views these changes as opportunities for creating flexibility, choice and opportunity, although there are variations within this approach about what choice really mean for those who are diversifying in terms of their long term capacity to maintain sustainable livelihoods, and that in some instances, deagrarianisation may in fact produce poverty under certain conditions. There is a shared understanding though that diversification provides the rural poor with the opportunity to survive *in situ*, although increasingly, not on the land (Rigg 2006: 195). This position allows for the development of an argument that the best way to alleviate poverty is to direct resources towards expanding non-farm work, not in providing services (subsidies, financial assistance) to make farmers stay on the land. According to this perspective, to engage in the latter in fact encourages the poor to remain poor.

'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.'

[Rigg 2006:1950]

What this paper has tried to do is to ask the question what kind of policy would the deagrarianisation approach produce for people who willingly diversify and yet remain poor because the interpenetration of urban and rural incomes and resources have not occurred or created substantive change? If the answer lies in providing those making an exit from agriculture with the necessary skills to leave rural areas and escape from farming, then what is the best avenue to follow, market or state led? If the answer is to create more opportunities for non farm work, how can access to them be structured so that the exit conditions that marginalized those leaving agriculture could be examined more closely in order to provide the kinds of assistance necessary for entry into the commercial economy?

The study has shown that exit conditions characterized by displacement and marginalization have not helped the Bonggi get jobs that would hasten their journey out of poverty. The good job opportunities in the non farm sector being available do not necessarily mean they are accessible for groups like the Bonggi.

What may happen down the line (as predicted in the literature) is the creation of a new breed of agrarian entrepreneurs and the amalgamation of land holdings resulting in the emergence of large landowners. The sociological question would be: does power and control that is bound to accompany such entrepreneurial activity necessarily make for responsible farm management that will decrease poverty levels? This paper has shown that elite control of resources has provided low paying jobs but it has also created displacement of indigenous Bonggi from their customary land. Because of power and control agrarian transition is not linear, it can be stunted or accelerated.

The clear implication of this paper is that there is a need for more attention (academic and policy) to be directed towards analyzing more closely the different conditions of exit experienced by communities and households as they leave subsistence agriculture.

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