1. Introduction

This monograph examines the ways in which people experience ‘development’ and how it can shape and influence their lives. The book will explore forces that can drive change and some consequences of these forces, including ways people cope with change. The region of focus is Lampung, the southernmost province of Sumatra, Indonesia. The approach explores local understandings within a local and regional context.

My exploration begins at the provincial level, moves to one of the province’s highland regions, and concludes at a selected highland village. The increasing narrowness of geographical focus provides an opportunity to look at development on a variety of scales. The selected approach is an attempt to overcome what Eric Wolf (1982: 13) has called ‘the false confidence’ of micro-level ethnography. Similarly, the approach is employed to avoid treating ‘societies … [or] villages … as if they were the islands unto themselves, with little sense of the larger systems of relations in which these units are embedded’ (Ortner 1984: 142).

Imagining Development and Change

Two widely held views of post-colonial development are that (1) it has failed to deliver its stated objectives, and/or (2) it has been rejected by its intended beneficiaries. From these viewpoints, development can be seen as superceding colonialism as a new mode of domination and exploitation (see Sachs 1992; Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995).

Escobar (1995) has identified development as a regime of knowledge embedded in global asymmetrical power relations. In his view, development concerns a set of ideas and practices to bring or deliver ‘progress’. These ideas and practices are produced by and serve the interests of the First World (the North) and are applied to the Third World (the South). Consequences have been continued domination by the First World of the Third World, accompanied by processes of underdevelopment and resistance to development in the South. Continued poverty and environmental degradation have been the legacy of this structure of relations.

In a similar vein Ferguson (1994), basing his ethnographic study in Lesotho, identified what he considered to be ‘real’ effects of development. According to his account, the applied development failed to improve people’s livelihoods, primarily as a result of offering technical solutions to non-technical problems.
However, the real effect of development was the expansion of state power where development projects became the primary tool to improve the welfare of the people. Another real effect of development projects — that are planned, funded, and implemented by numerous international development agencies — has been the emergence of a global development industry (ibid.).

Hobart (1993) attributed the failure of development to the growth of ‘ignorance’, positioning development as a key element in determining global post-colonial relations. He saw the production and reproduction of development packages as often guided by principles of Western scientific knowledge. For Hobart, this Western scientific logic and rationality was incompatible with and in opposition to local indigenous knowledge. He suggests that it is little wonder that development packages have often ended in failure and describes development practitioners as being ignorant of local knowledge and continuing to apply inappropriate models based on Western scientific knowledge. The growth of such ignorance is believed to have kept development businesses running. Hence, Hobart concludes that processes of ‘under-development’ have continued.

Grillo (1997) offers a different perspective on what he understands as the ‘real’ effects of development. He regards Hobart’s viewpoint and that of others (Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995) as largely representing a ‘myth’. Grillo suggests that development is (poorly) represented as a ‘monolithic enterprise, heavily controlled from the top, convinced of the superiority of its own wisdom and impervious to local knowledge’ (Grillo 1997: 20). He argues that Hobart and others only permit developers, victims, and/or resistors to be involved in development and ignores other responses, agendas, and actors. Moreover, the myth oversimplifies the situation and positions the dominant power as an easy target. It fails to capture the multiple, diverse voices and realities embedded in the processes of planned change and transformation. Far from complete, static and impermeable structures, Grillo suggests that both Western scientific and indigenous knowledge continue to change and to be exchanged. As such, actors in development must adjust their perspectives and positions as circumstances change.

There are at least two key approaches in studying development, neither of which is mutually exclusive. The first is through observing and interpreting the ways people are affected by and/or react to development practices. The second is by studying development in the context of the expansion of power. With respect to these two approaches, James Scott’s work is of particular importance. Scott (1998) has approached development using both of these methods. His arguments are grounded in powerful concepts such as ‘weapons of the weak’ (Scott 1985) and ‘simplification and legibility’ (Scott 1998).
Scott (1985) used ethnographic materials to demonstrate ways in which peasants in a village in Malaysia experienced and reacted to the Green Revolution, the increase in agricultural production due to improved technology that occurred from the early 1940s to the late 1970s. He argues that Green Revolution initiatives in relation to rice cultivation (for example, improved varieties, double cropping and engine-powered harvesters) made the rich richer while the poor remained poor. The poor used ‘everyday forms of resistance’ — including a war of words, boycotts, disguised strikes, and petty theft — as ‘weapons’ in their class struggle against the rich and indirectly, against the state (ibid.). Scott claimed the poor peasants’ greatest accomplishment was to delay the complete transformation to capitalist forms of production, which was the aim of the agricultural development policy implemented by the Malaysian state.

In a later work, Scott’s concept of ‘simplification and legibility’ (1998) provided an explanation of why development schemes for improvement of human conditions have failed. According to Scott, ‘the legibility of a society provides the capacity for large scale social engineering’ and examples of development initiatives from around the globe — from ‘scientific’ forestry, agricultural development and city planning, to Soviet and African socialism — were painstakingly analysed. The failure of these schemes was attributed to expanding state power in order to control resources and people which was achieved by ‘simplifying’ complex, local, social practices from the ‘centre’ and above, enabling those in power to record, monitor, and manipulate their subjects. In the process, local knowledge and know-how were ignored within the simplified administrative grid of formal state observations.

In criticising this analysis, Ortner focused on the problem of locating resistance in its everyday forms. She raised the question of what is or is not resistance. ‘When a poor man steals from a rich man, is this resistance or simply a survival strategy?’ (Ortner 1995: 175). She argues that:

resistance … highlights the presence and play of power in most forms of relationship and activity … [but] we are not required to decide once and for all whether any given act fits into a fixed box called resistance …. [T] he intentionalities of actors evolve through praxis, and the meanings of acts change, both for the actors and for the analysts (ibid.).

And the elements that need to be emphasised include:

the ambiguity of resistance and the subjective ambivalence of the acts for those who engage in them … [because] in a relationship of power, the dominant often has something to offer and sometimes a great deal (though always of course at the price of continuing power). The subordinate thus has many grounds for ambivalence about resisting the relationship.
Moreover, there is never a single, unitary, subordinate ... in the simple sense that subaltern groups are internally divided ... [into various] forms of difference and that occupants of differing subject positions will have different, even, opposed, but still legitimate, perspectives on the situations (ibid.).

However, within the complexity of resistance and non-resistance (cooperation, reciprocity, and harmony) there is the tendency to overlook the latter. In this regard, Pelzer White advises that ‘we must add an inventory of “everyday forms of peasant collaboration” to balance our list of “everyday forms of peasant resistance” — both exist, both are important’ (White 1986, quoted in Ortner 1995: 176). In a similar vein, Brown somewhat exaggeratedly points out:

[H]uman institutions ... [such as] family, organisations, and systems of production doubtless impose forms of subjugation, [but] they are also institutions that enable. Without them society would cease to exist, and with it, the capacity of human beings to survive (Brown 1996: 734).

Like the concept of ‘legibility’, Scott’s ‘everyday forms of resistance’ place the state and the people in oppositional frameworks within this development context. In situations where development brings mixed results rather than only failure and resistance, alternative conceptual tools are needed. In dealing with the initiatives of development and its concomitant changes, people’s responses or strategies involve competition, accommodation, and compliance as well as resistance.

In the modern Indonesian uplands, as Li (1999a: xvii) explains, the state’s primary concern ‘has been to bring order, control and “development” to upland regions while deploying upland resources to serve national goals’. Key state initiatives in the Indonesian uplands are territorialisation and development (Li 1999b). Through territorialisation ‘modern states divide their territories into complex and overlapping political and economic zones, rearrange people and resources within this units and create regulations delineating how and by whom these area can be used’ (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995: 387).

State power in the Indonesian uplands has been directed towards achieving greater control over resources and people. A large portion of the land is classified as state forest for lease to logging and forest plantation companies. The net effect is to prohibit access to local people and transform them into labourers. Logged-over lands are then ‘developed’ into large-scale plantations by state and private companies or alternatively, designated as transmigration sites that ‘promote economic growth while also bringing political and administrative order to peripheral areas’ (Li 1999b: 15–16). A less aggressive initiative to intensify state control over people and resources has been accomplished by regularising the
spontaneous incursion of migrants into frontier zones (ibid.: 17). Once newcomers have been organised into administrative units (desa), their daily activities can be monitored and regulated through the various village committees and institutions specified by law. This initiative is made easier as newcomers want and need to be enmeshed in state systems in order to claim their place as citizens and as clients of state officials and institutions. Their eagerness to be welcomed into the fold could potentially legitimise their presence and consolidate their hold over resources.

At the heart of development relations lies a tension between ‘centres’ and ‘peripheries’. In this context, Tania Li introduced the concept of ‘relational formations’ of social marginality (Li 1999b, 2001). Marginality emerges from ongoing centre and periphery relations, rather than from resistance of the periphery toward the centre or the absence of centre and periphery relations. Indonesian upland communities often depicted as geographically isolated and socially marginal, such as the Meratus Dayak in Borneo (Tsing 1993) and the Lauje people in Sulawesi (Li 2001), were arguably created through the engagement of local tribes with pre-colonial courts, colonial administrations and post-colonial regimes. In pre-colonial and colonial periods, relations took the form of rule and trade; in post-colonial times ‘development’ is the leitmotif. Li explains:

[L]ike the Lauje, the Meratus practice shifting cultivation and continue to live and move about in ways that are illegible to the government administrators nominally responsible for them. Yet they are not an autonomous group resisting outside authority (ibid.: 44).

Their marginality was developed in dialogue with state formations. ‘[T]heir lifeways are formed not outside state agendas but relationally, in and through them’ (ibid.).

Li (2001) also contends that in cases like the Lauje of Sulawesi, rule and trade relations enabled the centre to control the people and exploit local resources (forest products, agricultural commodities, and labour) in the absence of legibility (maps, statistics, and monitoring). In the context of the failure of Indonesia’s New Order rural development programs, Dove and Kammen (2001: 633) suggest that the state produced illegibility as much as legibility. Illegibility is not an accidental product of weak governance, but may form a strategy by political central elites for political and economic purposes. State-based appropriation and exploitation of economic resources are facilitated in the absence of clearly defined local rights and practices.
Dove and Kammen (2001), also working within the framework of relations between the centre and periphery, examined development in terms of resource flows in everyday practices of development in Indonesia’s New Order era (1966–98). They suggested that:

[T]here were two co-occurring models of development: an official one and a ‘vernacular’ one. The former represents a formal, uniform, and idealised vision of what the state professed, whereas the latter represents a more nuanced, normative, and conflicting vision of what state agents actually strove for. The vernacular model is an intentional one: it was the product not of accident but institutionalised values and desires. (ibid.: 633)

As opposed to official models where development is supposed to promote the flow of resources from centre to periphery, vernacular models of development enabled the centre to block the flow of resources from the centre to periphery and in fact reverse the flow by extracting resources from the periphery. Contract farming on rubber cultivation, for example, was heralded as a way to provide assistance to the smallholders. In reality, the estate companies used contract farming on sugar cane as a means for sugar companies to extract resources from local smallholders while preventing the flow of other resources back to them. The types of resources that ‘were allowed to proceed unhindered down and out from the centre were those that central elites did not want’ (ibid.: 626–7). Examples of resources that were successfully transferred to marginalised people were Social Department programs and family planning services whose resources were modest. However, these agencies promulgated a view that the receiving areas were deficient and undeveloped, thereby justifying an increase in state intervention. Another resource that central elites allowed to flow were allotments in the transmigration program. ‘According to the official model of development, the state gave valuable resources to marginal groups; according to [the] vernacular model, it gave value-less resources to them’ (ibid.: 627).

Locating the state/centre and people/periphery perspective relationally, the concepts of relational formation and the vernacular model of development can be applied strategically to analyse the formation of social marginality (Li 1999a, 2001) and the failure of development schemes (Dove and Kammen 2001). In this book, the concepts of relational formation and the vernacular model of development are combined and modified to analyse situations where state/centre and people/periphery relations do not necessarily lead to marginality and development failures. This study explores how people in geographically marginalised areas position themselves within the orbit of state power in order to promote resource flows from the centre to the periphery, while restricting resource extraction from the periphery to the centre.
To look only at the ill-effects of development risks overlooking its manifold benefits. In relation to the impacts and effects of development in Southeast Asia, Rigg contends that:

[I]t is hard to think of one indicator of human well-being that has not improved during the course of modernisation over the last half century. It is notable that those countries which have experienced sustained stagnation or decline in such indicators are those that have experienced an absence of development as modernisation …. [D]evelopment has led to real, substantial and, in some cases, sustained improvements in human well being …. Nor can this be rejected as a case of the benefits accruing to just a small segment of the population, leaving the majority mired in poverty …. [I]mprovements in livelihood have been broadly based, even if they have not been equally distributed (Rigg 2003: 328–9).

Development is ‘as much a fact of everyday life for most people of the world as other kinds of overarching frameworks of assumption and action’ (Croll and Parkin 1992, cited in Grillo 1997: 1). Pigg (1992), discussing examples from Nepal, goes on to assert that development connects villagers, the urban elite, national political institutions, international development agencies, and representatives of the Third World in the West. ‘Everyone wants a piece of the development pie’ (Pigg 1992: 511).

Smallholders, Production and Differentiation

Fundamental to an understanding of development and change are the ways rural populations reproduce their modes of livelihood. The people discussed in this study are predominantly smallholder farmers. The argument advanced is that flexibility in the social organisation of agricultural production and in the use of available resources to respond to constraints and opportunities is the key to the persistence of smallholder farming (as a system of agricultural production) and the smallholding tradition (as a social–agrarian structure).

People discussed in the present study accord with Netting’s definition of smallholders as:

rural cultivators practicing intensive, permanent, diversified agriculture on relatively small farms in areas of dense population. The family household is the major corporate social unit for mobilising agricultural labor, managing productive resources, and organising consumption. Smallholders have ownership or other well-defined tenure rights in land that are long term and often heritable (Netting 1993: 2).
Netting’s classification thus excludes:

shifting cultivators practicing long fallow or slash and burn farming where land is still plentiful and population density low, as in some parts of the humid tropic today; … herders whether they are nomadic pastoralists of east Africa or the ranchers of Texas; … and the farming systems of dry monocropping of wheat, sugar estates, cotton plantation with slaves, or California agribusiness (ibid: 2–3).

The argument that Netting advances for the persistence of smallholder household farming is that ‘intensive agriculture by landowning smallholder households is economically efficient, environmentally sustainable and socially integrative’ (ibid: 27).

One of the key characteristics of smallholder production is the superiority of household labour compared to communal labour in collective farming, or to hired labour in capitalist farming (ibid.). It is the smallholder household members who perform the diverse, skilled, and — in this setting — unsupervised tasks of intensive cultivation.

Population pressures and the market are often implicated as the driving forces of agricultural transformation toward intensive farming. Population growth increases land scarcity and promotes agricultural intensification (Boserup 1965), while markets create demand for cultivated commodities (Netting 1993, Brookfield 2000). Land abundance, along with the market attraction of rubber and labour shortages, has caused the indigenous people in Kalimantan to cultivate extensive rice swiddens and rubber gardens (along with other tree crops). With labour abundance and shrinking landholdings, rural populations in Java practise intensive irrigated rice cultivation (Dove 1986). With respect to economic efficiency of small-scale agricultural production, Dove notes that the production of intensive irrigated rice cultivators is significantly different from swidden cultivators. Where land availability is a constraint, intensive irrigated rice cultivation is aimed at a high return, namely production per unit of land. In swidden cultivation, which is characteristically constrained by labour shortages, farming is oriented towards a high return to labour, or production per unit of labour.

Brookfield (2000) emphasises capital and skills as the key elements of agricultural transformation besides labour. However, increases in productivity may not necessarily follow an increase in labour input. Conversely, there are cases where increases in production can actually reduce the demand for labour. Here investment in working capital, such as tools and animals, may be more closely linked to increases in production. Farmers’ skills are usually thought of in terms of agro-technical skills, but organisational skills are also often very important.
Although agricultural transformations can be triggered by various factors such as new technology, expanding commercialisation, and/or state interventions, the real foundation of such transformations is the skill of small farmers to organise their land, workforce and resources. Brookfield goes on to argue that the key factor in maintaining small farms’ ecological and production sustainability is agro-diversity, meaning a diversity of plant and animal species being cultivated. This approach requires special farming methods and labour organisation together with a deep knowledge of ecology and technology. Having the capability to respond and adapt to market opportunities is also crucial.

Flexibility in ‘[t]he ability to use different resources, and employ different strategies for making a living’ (Brookfield 2001: 187) is another key aspect for understanding agricultural transformations. Agricultural transformations can occur through intensification, meaning that improved productivity can be achieved through increased labour input, or ‘dis-intensification’ where increased productivity can be achieved through improved farming skills and techniques leading to a reduction of labour. In many cases, Brookfield argues, increasing production ‘involve[s] new skills in [the] use of “dynamic” land, and both agricultural and non-agricultural opportunities, and not increased inputs into any constant land or … increased current inputs of any kind except of management skills’ (ibid.: 189).

More often than not, smallholder farmers’ commodity market productions are made possible due to the incorporation of non-market capital. In the Sulawesi highlands, for example, one strategy was to use non-market inputs such as mutual labour assistance to pursue market relations without which the production of rice for the market is difficult or may not even be possible (Schrauwers 1999). Similarly, for Minangkabau smallholder farmers (Khan 1999), the main inputs for production such as labour, land, and capital were obtained largely through non-market capital. Access to land, for example, was obtained through inheritance, sharecropping, and squatting on forest reserves and plantations. In the production of rubber in Riau, smallholders retain their traditional elements of the farming system such as cultivation of jungle rubber, customary (adat) and communal land ownership and, wherever possible, subsistence rice farming (Potter and Badcock 2004).

State policies regulating access to upland lands in Indonesia often influence smallholder intensive agricultural practices. A large portion of the Indonesian uplands has been either classified as forest reserves or otherwise granted to plantation companies. Many indigenous peoples in Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi have changed their agricultural practices from dry land swidden of rice to tree crop cultivation and managed agro-forests, sometimes with accompanying wet rice (Potter 2001), in response to the loss of land to forest reserves and estate plantations. In the Lauje hills and Lindu areas of the Sulawesi Highlands, the
government’s inability to control these ‘state lands’ has enabled the indigenous population and Bugis migrants to use these forests and former swiddens, turning them into intensive cocoa groves (Li 2002).

One analysis of why smallholder traditions have seemingly persisted is conducted by examining agricultural transformations in the form of changes in farming practices. A second line of inquiry examines changes in the social organisation of farming. A key element in the social structure of rural society is rural differentiation.

Ben White defines agrarian or rural differentiation as a process that:

involves a cumulative and permanent (i.e., non-cyclical, which is not to say that it is never reversible) process of change in the ways in which different groups in rural society — and some outside it — gain access to the products of their own or others’ labor, based on their differential control over production resources and often, but not always, on increasing inequalities in access to land (White 1989: 20).

He makes a further distinction:

between the process of differentiation itself and various aspects of that process which we might call the causes, the mechanisms, and the symptoms or indicators of differentiation. Similarly, any analysis of rural differentiation processes in a specific place and time will have to encompass their contexts (regional, national, political, cultural, etc.) and also the constraints to differentiation (which may originate externally or internally and may affect the pace and form of differentiation) (ibid.: 25–6).

Netting (1993) suggests that smallholder agriculture is akin to gambling, where some players, due to their individual ability, play the game better than others. Differentiation and inequality are inevitable in this circumstance. The state often plays an important role in promoting or constraining differentiation. In the Tengger Highlands in East Java, for example, styles of land distribution by the colonial government led to the emergence of a ‘smallholding tradition’ (Hefner 1990). In lowland Java, New Order initiatives such as the Green Revolution and the absence of land reform favoured village elites and promoted differentiation (Hart et al. 1989). Li (2002) and Potter and Badcock (2004) suggest that studying agrarian structure is an exploration of human agency. The agrarian structure is the result and medium through which rural people discover and optimise constraints and opportunities in order to obtain the ‘good life’.

In lowland rice areas in Java, White and Wiradi (1989) reported that ownership of rice fields was very inequitable and differentiation ensued. On one hand,
wealthy households have many avenues for profitable investment and many demands that require non-productive expenditures that compete with the need for land acquisition. On the other hand, the many smaller owners whose agricultural incomes do not provide for production even at minimal levels are able to achieve subsistence incomes without the distress sale of their ‘sub-livelihood’ plots by participating in a variety of low-return, non-farm activities both inside and outside of the village.

In the Tengger Mountains (Hefner 1990), Malang (Suryanata 1999) and the Sulawesi uplands (Li 2002), wealthy migrants have taken over a large portion of upland food and cash crop fields through buying, renting and/or mortgaging property. In the process they have converted a large number of the local inhabitants into landless labourers. This differs from the situation in Langkat, North Sumatra (Ruiter 1999), where Batak villagers retained their control over smallholder rubber gardens, leaving the Javanese migrant labourers to occupy the lowest of the village’s socio-economic strata.

Hefner (1990) has pointed to a distinct rural social group he has interchangeably called the ‘middle peasantry’ or ‘smallholder peasantry’ whose ethos and aspirations are to maintain the ‘smallholding tradition’. Their persistence is attributed to a desire for social autonomy and their capacity to own land. ‘Situated between the more visible agrarian elite and the mass of the poor’, Hefner asserts, ‘the middle peasantry … received scant comments in many agrarian accounts of agrarian change. Influenced by … [the] vision of social polarisation … scholars assume that middle peasants are doomed to historical oblivion’ (ibid.: 154). Villagers in the Tengger Mountains, like rural people elsewhere in Java, were affected by the shrinking landholding pool as it was increasingly taken up as a consequence of emerging national markets and ensuing politics. The villagers, Hefner claimed, acknowledged that there are ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ but ‘[they] deny [the] suggestion that there might be an unbridgeable gap between rich and poor’ (ibid.). Hefner went on to explain that the middle peasantry in the Tengger Mountain regions:

is characterised by neither the servile dependence of a dominated underclass nor the collective solidarity romantically attributed to proletarians…. Its social orientation emphasized neither selfless collectivism nor self-possessed individualism. Its animating ethos is an almost-paradoxical mix of self-reliance and communalist commitment. Ideally, in this view, each household guarantees its own welfare (ibid.).

Hefner continues:

The aspiration of these uplanders … is … [that] one seeks to stand on one’s own and not to be ordered about. Only in doing so can one be fully
acknowledged as a member of the community. The simple achievement of respectful standing in a community of brethren is a valued end in its own right (ibid.: 157).

Smallholders in the Lampung highlands are also characterised by the ethos and aspiration stressing social autonomy; that ‘one seeks to stand on one’s own’ and ‘each household guarantees its own welfare’. Their aspirations include: having enough money to meet family needs; providing an education for their children; acquiring modern household equipment; improving their housing; and having access to credit. These goals are to be achieved through personal development, ‘the development of a person by themselves’ (Green 2000: 68). This ‘self-development’ is pursued within the context of state-led development. For migrant smallholders in the Lampung highlands, state-led development offers resources that have enabled them to achieve self-development goals. They have transformed a forest frontier into a flourishing highland. In the process, as this book argues, they have produced and reproduced the smallholder tradition. It is further argued that their village’s social life is organised principally to attract state resources and to reap the benefits of development.

The Field Research

Research for this monograph was conducted between March 2002 and February 2003 when I lived in Sumber Jaya and Way Tenong, two adjoining sub-districts (kecamatan) in West Lampung District (kabupaten). Most of the time I lived in the village of Gunung Terang in two different homes — first in a Semendo neighbourhood in the main village hamlet of Gunung Terang, and then in the hamlet of Rigis Atas on the slopes of the Bukit Rigis Mountain.

I visited and sometimes stayed for several days in other villages of the region. Friends from WATALA\(^1\) and ICRAF\(^2\) often visited me in the village or invited me to visit their work sites. I also regularly participated in their community meetings and workshops. ICRAF and WATALA have been working in West Lampung District for several years to support negotiation processes between local communities and government agencies on the issues of natural resource management. ICRAF scientists collaborate with various national research institutions and also conduct their own socio-economic, biophysical and policy research in the region. During my stay in Gunung Terang, friends from WATALA and ICRAF conducted community mapping of the village and assisted

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1 Keluarga Pencinta Alam dan Lingkungan Hidup [Friends of Nature and the Environment], an environmental NGO founded in 1978 by students in the Faculty of Agriculture at Lampung University.
2 The International Centre for Research in Agroforestry, now called the World Agroforestry Centre.
the community group in Rigis Atas with obtaining a community forestry permission contract. Assistance in obtaining such contracts was also given to community groups in other villages across the region.

The 2002–3 fieldwork was not my first visit to the Sumber Jaya and Way Tenong region. Between 1994 and 1995, I visited the region with other friends and NGO activists from WATALA, WALHI\(^3\) and YLBHI\(^4\) at the invitation of the World Bank and PT PLN (Perusahaan Listrik Negara, the state-owned electricity company) to assess the social impact of the construction of the Way Besai Dam and to discuss plans to mitigate these impacts.\(^5\) We were expecting villagers’ resistance to this mega project, but to our surprise villagers were receptive and local leaders denied the suggestion that villagers rejected the project. When we pointed out possible hardships for landless and near landless villagers in finding alternative sources of livelihood — as suggested in the environmental impact assessment report — a common response from village leaders was that the project would provide more benefit than harm. A Semendo village leader even stated that to refuse the project was a sin and against their ancestors’ wishes. It was said that their ancestors knew and had told them that a big dam would be built in the area.

During the 1994–95 period, the military began operations to destroy smallholder gardens and houses inside the boundary of the state forest zones for replacement by plantation forests. The market villages of Sumber Jaya and Fajar Bulan were transformed into small market towns. The villages were electrified. Along the road, sturdy wooden and brick houses were constructed or refurbished thanks to the rise in prices and production of coffee. Between 1996 and 1998, on my trips to and from Krui I frequently stopped in Fajar Bulan and Sumber Jaya either for a short rest or to meet acquaintances.

Between 1998 and 2000, I conducted a series of fieldwork visits to Sumber Jaya and Way Tenong. I was working for ICRAF and visited different parts of the region with friends from WATALA. We did a general survey of community–forest interactions and household economy. This was the period of reformasi (the overthrow of Suharto in 1998 and the demise of the New Order regime), the El Niño drought, and the krismon monetary crisis in 1997 which led to a dramatic fall in value of the Indonesian currency, all of which were embraced as ‘good things’ by the people in the region. Reformasi was interpreted as granting ‘freedom’ to reclaim land in forest zones, El Niño effectively brought higher

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3 Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia [Indonesian Forum for Environment] is a national NGO with a secretariat in Jakarta and regional secretariats in many Indonesian provinces.

4 Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia [Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation] has their headquarters in Jakarta and regional offices and posts throughout Indonesia.

5 The project paid relatively high compensation to hundreds of families in Way Petai, Sukapura, and Dwikora whose rice fields and coffee gardens were used for the project. PT PLN also provided credit for the village community groups.
coffee production and made the dried shrubland easy to burn, while the impact of the *krismon* caused a hike in the export price of coffee and brought in a flush of money. The region was flooded with luxury items from wool blankets and electronics to motorbikes and cars.

When I returned to the region in early 2002, the ‘good times’ of *reformasi* and *krismon* were over. Cars and motorbikes had been sold and many houses that had been under construction were left unfinished. More recent migrants had left the region to return home or had moved on to new frontier zones in the neighbouring province of Bengkulu and elsewhere. The talk among ordinary smallholders in the region changed from aspiring to higher education for the children and sturdy modern houses for themselves to how to provide enough food for their families and sufficient inputs to their diversified agricultural production.

**Book Outline**

Chapter Two traces the history of Lampung in the twentieth century. The focus of discussion is on the rural areas of the province. Depicted as an ‘empty land’ in the early 1900s, by the end of the century Lampung was perceived as a province peopled by land-hungry migrants. Colonial and post-colonial initiatives were identified as the driving forces of Lampung’s transformation in the twentieth century. Colonial and post-colonial government initiatives aimed at bringing ‘progress’ to Lampung brought mixed results including rapid growth in agricultural production, the formation of ‘wealthy zones’ in some areas, and the creation of pockets of poverty in other areas. The chapter explores the ways people in different rural regions of the province have experienced this transformation.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five explore how migrants transformed one of Lampung’s ‘last frontiers’ into one of its highland ‘wealthy zones’. The chapters also explore how these migrants shaped their own modes of life in the process. Chapter Three gives an account of the history of the influx of different groups of migrants to settle in the Sumber Jaya and Way Tenong region. Although the bulk of these migrants migrated ‘spontaneously’, they were heavily integrated into the planned development framework leading to the transformation of the region into a ‘wealthy zone’. This situation is described in the second part of Chapter Three.

Chapter Four further explores the nature of villagers’ integration into the state. It is argued that the level of ‘progress’ that the Sumber Jaya and Way Tenong regions have achieved is largely the result of villagers’ efforts to bring
the state to the village as a strategy to tap state resources. The chapter outlines villagers’ engagements with the state within the context of national politics, rural development and village administration.

Chapter Five illustrates the ways in which local people defend smallholder farming by resisting attempts by forestry authorities to exact greater control over land and people. Having been in conflict with forestry authorities for decades, after reformasi some of the villagers in the region agreed to engage in a new kind of relationship with forestry authorities. Collaboration between government and ‘community’ in ‘sustainable natural resources management’ is perceived to be the official goal of the new relationship. In practice, however, the desires of both parties are not easily reconciled and the struggle over control of land and resources continues.

Chapter Six outlines the history of the formation of Gunung Terang as an administrative village and focuses on the village’s organisation: its administration; leadership; and sub-divisions. The chapter considers this village in the context of internal community affairs as well as within the framework of wider village relations. It is argued that the village’s collective strategy is to mediate official relations between people and the state as well as within the community.

Chapters Seven and Eight, which focus on the village economy, are devoted to examining the persistence of smallholders. They explore the flexibility of smallholding agriculture, beginning in Chapter Seven with a discussion of socioeconomic differentiation among villagers. This discussion is then followed in Chapter Eight by a closer look at the persistence, modification, and alteration in farming systems. by a closer look at the persistence, modification, and alteration in farming systems. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the dynamics of the social organisation of smallholder agricultural production (land, labour and capital).

Chapter Nine summarises the trends discussed in the previous chapters.