Farming is the main occupation and source of income for most of the villagers of Gunung Terang. The few other occupations in the village include those of teacher, shopkeeper, reseller of farm produce, mechanic, builder, and car or motorbike taxi (ojek) driver. The proportion of villagers engaged in such off-farm work is relatively small — perhaps no more than 5 per cent. For most of those engaged in such activities, farming is still important, either as a primary or a secondary source of income.

When they were asked about the economic conditions of the families in the village, villagers often used the terms ‘strong’ (kuat), ‘established’ (mapan), and ‘prosperous’ (makmur) to refer to wealthy families; ‘poor’ (miskin), ‘have not’ (tidak punya), and ‘needy’ (kurang) for poor people; and ‘enough’ (cukup), ‘not bad’ (lumayan), ‘ordinary’ (biasa), ‘common’ (kebanyakan), ‘average’ (rata-rata), and ‘on the edge’ (pas-pasan) for those in between. The population of Gunung Terang village can thus be divided between a lower, medium, and upper stratum depending on their wealth. At the base are the poor, who comprise nearly half of the village population. The main characteristics of people in this group or class are their struggle to secure food to feed their families throughout the year, and their inability to afford their children’s higher education. They usually live in huts (gubuk) or humble houses.

The middle stratum of the village population consists of those who worry less about feeding their family, but are more concerned with how to support their children’s higher education, having a decent home, and possessing modern goods. The middle stratum can be further divided into what the villagers often refer to as pas-pasan (on the edge) or cukup makan (enough food), and cukup or lumayan (just enough, enough). While the former struggle to avoid becoming kekurangan (needy), the latter look for opportunities for further upward mobility. This stratum comprises about half of the village population. In the upper stratum, there are about two dozen families, roughly 3.3 per cent of a total of 708 village families or households, whom the villagers refer to as mapan (established) or kuat (strong). These families have successfully managed to accumulate wealth so that they have no problem feeding their families, building sturdy houses, or sending their children to university. They possess luxurious household goods and vehicles, and if they wish, they go on pilgrimages to Mecca.

The ‘outer’ hamlets of Rigis Atas, Rigis Bawah, Buluh Kapur, and Temiangan have a more or less equal number of low and medium stratum households. None of the wealthiest village families live there. In these hamlets, during ‘good’
years, the population tends to increase because of the arrival of new labourers, while it shrinks during poor years as the labourers move out. Medium stratum households dominate the ‘inner’ hamlets of Gunung Terang, Talang Jaya, Bedeng Sari, Petai Paya, and Simpang Tiga. All of the upper stratum households live there as well.

The following discussion illustrates the household circumstances of Gunung Terang villagers in the different economic strata. The stories are taken from fieldwork research in 2002, and some emphasis is placed on the processes of upward and downward mobility. Aliases are used for the names of individuals, but the places and times are real.

**The Lower Stratum**

Udin and his siblings were taken from Ciamis, in West Java, to Rigis Atas by their parents in 1973.1 Udin was six years old then. His parents sold their small rice fields and upland field (*ladang*) in Ciamis. On their journey to Sumber Jaya, they were robbed in Kotabumi and lost all of their cash. Unable to buy land, the family cleared some state forest land near Rigis Atas and transformed it into 2.5 hectares of coffee gardens. Over the ensuing years, they bought a 1-hectare field within the state forest zone, which they then converted into a housing lot, 0.25 hectares of rice field, and a coffee garden.

In the 1980s, the forestry office commenced the reforestation projects and Udin’s parents’ gardens, along with hundreds of their neighbours’ gardens, were planted with rosewood trees. They continued to look after and harvest the cherries from the coffee trees between the rosewood trees. In 1993–94, when the state forest zone’s boundary was enforced, they were advised to dismantle their house and abandon their coffee gardens and rice field. After that, Udin, like his parents and siblings, started to work as a sharecropper in Gunung Terang and in the neighbouring village of Cipta Waras. In 2002, he was a sharecropper on 3 hectares of coffee gardens and was caring for a dozen goats. Udin, with the help of his brother, had also cleared a fallowed field belonging to the village schoolteacher and converted it into a rice field. He was granted the right to use the rice field (about 0.5 hectares) for two years. He, his wife and his six children lived in a hut in Bedeng Sari that belonged to the owner of the coffee gardens on which he was sharecropping. Although they did not go into debt to secure their food supply, the family had few possessions and could not afford to send their children for education beyond elementary school.

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1 A few years earlier, Udin's father had visited Lampung to sell clothes and mats.
In working the gardens and rice fields, Udin and his wife regularly involved their younger siblings and, as a result, had to share any income with them. Udin and his wife regularly worked as wage labourers (upahan) and had a long-term plan to save their income to move back to West Java. A few years before, Udin had pawned a 0.25-hectare of rice field in his wife’s village of origin in Bogor. The field was managed by his wife’s parents. He wished to be able to save enough money to take over this rice field and move back.

Karya, in his mid-thirties, migrated to Rigis Atas with his parents and siblings in 1982. Following an eruption of Mount Galunggung that year, they vacated their house and left all of their possessions in their home village in Ciamis, West Java. Bringing nothing other than their clothes and kitchen utensils, wage labour was their primary source of income upon their arrival in Rigis Atas. There they cleared the forest, planted coffee, and built a decent house. The gardens and house were within the state forest zone, but in 1993–94, following the eviction of the ‘forest encroachers’ (perambah hutan), they abandoned their gardens and house. The family first moved to Banding, near Lake Ranau, for a couple of years. Later, they moved again to Simpang Luas, near Liwa. Their efforts to establish a new life in these new places were not as successful as they had been in Rigis Atas. Luckily, the family had managed to buy a housing lot near the hamlet of Gunung Terang. Karya, his wife, and two little daughters lived in a humble stilted house on this lot. His main sources of income were from a motorbike taxi (ojek) and from buying produce from Rigis Atas, such as bananas and chilli, sometimes jackfruit and avocado, which he took by motorbike to sell to middlemen in Fajar Bulan. He also cultivated a few hundred capsicum chilli in his small house garden.

Kamino, also in his mid-thirties, was considered by his neighbours to be one of the poorest people in the hamlet of Rigis Atas. His grandparents took care of him and his siblings in Ponorogo, East Java, when his parents joined a transmigration program to Rumbia, Central Lampung, in 1973. Kamino arrived in Lampung in 1989 when his parents had already moved to Mesuji, another transmigration site in the northern Lampung lowlands. In 1990 he came to Rigis Atas, cleared the bush, and planted coffee while working as a wage labourer. He sold his 3.5 hectares of coffee gardens, used the money to marry a woman from his parents’ village in Mesuji, and bought a small plot of land. In 1993, after failing to make a decent life in Mesuji, he took his wife back to Rigis Atas and worked a hectare of coffee garden as a contract labourer (bujang), for which he was paid annually with a fixed amount of the harvest. The family had three small children and his eldest son was just starting to go to elementary school. Kamino and his family lived in a simple hut (gubuk) that belonged to the owner of the coffee garden that he was sharecropping. He also sharecropped another 1.5 hectares of young, non-bearing coffee garden belonging to another neighbour. Kamino
had recently planted green beans on 1 rante (400 square metres) of unused land that he borrowed (numpang) from another neighbour. In 1999, he used all of his family’s savings to make a down payment for a plot of coffee garden, but due to the drop in coffee prices, he was unable to complete the payments during the following years. As a result, the owner of the garden took the garden back without returning his down payment. Kamino and his wife obtained food for their family primarily from wage labour (upahan). Their income was so low that they could not even afford to buy government-subsidised ‘poor rice’ (beras miskin), the price of which is half of the market price but has to be paid for in cash. Kamino was well known in the neighbourhood as a strong and diligent man, but according to some of his neighbours, he did not manage his income well and he did not allow his wife to manage their finances, which was part of the reason for his failure to attain a better life.

Plate 7-1: A motorbike taxi (ojek).

Source: Courtesy of the author.
Hambali was the head of another poor family in Rigis Atas. In his fifties, with four teenage children, he and his wife struggled to pay the debts that they incurred to buy rice. He migrated to Lampung from Salatiga, Central Java, in 1979. He first lived in Simpang Sender, near Lake Ranau, working as a wage labourer in a coffee garden. In the mid-1980s, he and his family moved to Rigis Atas where they bought a fallow field and planted it with coffee while continuing to work as wage labourers. In 1993, they sold this plot and bought another 3 hectares of coffee garden, but soon sold the garden to pay their accumulated debts. Thereafter, they sharecropped (maro) a coffee garden and worked as wage labourers (upahan). Most often the wages that they received were much less than the debts they already owed. In 2001, they bought nearly a hectare of land covered with imperata grass, where they built a hut to live in and planted the rest with coffee. Hambali’s son dropped out of junior high school, while none of his three daughters were educated beyond elementary school. His eldest daughter, who was 16 years old, had just started to work as a domestic helper in Jakarta. Hambali and his wife expected their other children to follow suit.

Like Hambali, Ahmadi — a Semendonese man in his mid-forties — was struggling to feed his family. He was no longer able to support his two sons studying at the junior high school, which forced them to drop out, and only his youngest daughter was still studying at elementary school. His wife was a tunggu tubang. She inherited her parents’ house, a 0.6-hectare coffee garden, and a 0.5-hectare rice field, all of which were located in his wife’s village of Srimenanti. His wife’s parents were both sick and in constant need of his wife’s care and cash for medication. The rice field was rented out to pay for his wife’s parents’ food and medical treatments. Ahmadi and his two sons lived in a hut in Rigis Atas and took care of a sharecropped young coffee garden. They regularly returned home to their house in Srimenanti. The land that they planted with coffee in Rigis Atas was his eldest sister’s tunggu tubang property and was inherited from their parents. The land, about a hectare in size, was originally a productive terraced rice field which was abandoned in the 1980s when the reforestation project planted rosewood trees on it. The land was soon transformed into bush. In 2001, Ahmadi’s family cleared the bush and planted it with coffee. According to Ahmadi, with any further drop in the coffee price, his family’s investment in the coffee garden would have been a waste. Ahmadi was thus uncertain about the future of his family.
Bi Ati, in her fifties, along with her husband and four children, had migrated to Lampung from Karawang, one of West Java’s lowland rice bowls, in 1982. They first lived in Dwikora, a village on the eastern tip of Sumber Jaya, working as wage labourers, clearing the forest, planting coffee, and weeding gardens. In 1994–95, after the military operations to evict farmers from the state forest in Dwikora, the family moved around within Sumber Jaya before finally arriving in Rigis Atas. Here they sharecropped nearly 0.75 hectares of rice field and 2.5 hectares of an old, unproductive coffee garden belonging to a Semendonese villager who lived in Fajar Bulan. Bi Ati and her family lived in a house on stilts in the middle of the rice field. The income they received from the rice field was never enough to feed the whole family. According to Bi Ati, the low productivity of the rice field was largely due to a combination of low quality seeds, lack of chemical fertiliser, rat infestation, and poor upkeep. Rather than pouring all available labour into the rice field, the family frequently engaged in wage labour to pay the debts they incurred to buy rice. Warsi, Bi Ati’s eldest daughter, had been working in Saudi Arabia since 2001, leaving her only daughter with Bi Ati, while her husband lived in Karawang. Asih, Bi Ati’s second daughter, and Asih’s small son were also living with Bi Ati. Asih’s husband had just left her, and no one knew his whereabouts. Discussing her situation, Bi Ati once said:
I want my family to move back to Karawang. Being poor but close to relatives (saudara) would be better. Being poor without [having] anyone to turn to for help, like we are now here, is very difficult.

As soon as they had enough money to buy the bus tickets, Bi Ati insisted they would definitely return to Karawang and leave the region for good. But even saving money for bus tickets was difficult for the family.

Bi Ati’s only son, Satria, in his thirties, was expecting his second child. He and his family had recently moved to a small hut belonging to the owner of 1.5 hectares of coffee garden that Satria was sharecropping. To buy rice for his family, he worked as a wage labourer and planted small capsicum chillies in the coffee garden. He endorsed his parents’ decision to move back to Karawang as soon as possible, and said that if things got worse, he would follow in his parents’ footsteps and return to Java for good with his family.

Ujang and his wife arrived in Gunung Terang in 1980. He was born in Gunung Terang hamlet, but since he was a boy had lived in Talang Padang, a Semendonese region in the neighbouring district of Tanggamus. He studied and married in Talang Padang. His wife was not a tunggu tubang so she did not inherit any of her parents’ property. In Gunung Terang, Ujang taught young children to read the Qur’an. Initially, he received 15 kg of rice and 15 kg of dry coffee beans as an annual tuition fee from each of his pupils, but after 2000, none of his pupils’ parents could afford to pay the fee. He lived in a simple stilted house belonging to his close kin. From 1995 to 1999, he was able to rent 1.5 hectares of coffee garden in Gunung Terang, and was sharecropping this garden in 2002. Ujang put a high priority on his children’s education. His eldest daughter was a high school graduate and taught in an elementary school on a casual basis. His son and other daughter went to junior high school. With a very small income, his family could only support their children’s education by maintaining a very simple life.

In addition to young families and households struggling for upward mobility, the lower stratum of the village was also occupied by older couples, widows, and widowers, many of whom were sick. Their children either lived elsewhere, or if they lived nearby they did not ‘have enough’. While upward social mobility in the future was thought to be possible for the younger generation, it would be difficult if not impossible for the older generation.

**The Middle Stratum**

Triman, who was in his early fifties at the time of my fieldwork, departed from Salatiga in Central Java in 1978 and moved to Bukit Kemuning, where he
first lived as a wage labourer. The following year, he used the savings he had accumulated to buy a 0.75-hectare coffee garden in Gunung Terang. He married a Javanese woman from Bedeng Sari, bought a housing lot, and built a simple wooden house in his wife's hamlet. They had eight children, none of whom had received an education beyond elementary school. Half of his children were teenagers who helped with his daily farming activities. Besides the coffee garden, he owned a 0.25-hectare rice field and half a dozen goats. The family cleared a fallow field belonging to a Semendonese villager, transformed it into a rice field, and were given the right to farm it for two years. As far as food security was concerned, Triman's family was in a better situation than those in the lower stratum, but the family still had to struggle to meet their other needs.

Plate 7-3. Hoeing a rice field.

Source: Courtesy of the author.

Ali was a Semendonese villager in his late thirties who lived in the hamlet of Gunung Terang. He was born in the village and married a Semendo neighbour. The family had two daughters, one in elementary school and the other in junior high school. As a tunggu tubang, his wife inherited all of her parents' property — a house, a 0.5-hectare rice field, and a 2.5-hectare coffee and pepper garden. Her parents were still able to feed themselves by farming a 0.8-hectare coffee
7. Social Stratification in Gunung Terang

garden, and they lived in a separate house (*turun*) located in that garden. The *tunggu tubang* rice field had been borrowed by one of Ali’s wife’s younger brothers, and its harvest was shared between Ali’s wife, Ali’s wife’s brother who farmed the field, and Ali’s wife’s parents. Ali regularly hired labourers to weed and harvest the coffee and pepper garden. He and his wife did the other farming work themselves.

Syafri, in his early fifties, was born in Gunung Terang. In 1979, he married a widow with one daughter from her first marriage. The couple then had two more daughters and a son. His wife was a *tunggu tubang* in Muara Enim, in South Sumatra, and was entitled to the harvests of her parents’ rice field and coffee garden. In 1980, Syafri bought 2 hectares of coffee and pepper garden, and in 1988 he bought a 1-hectare rice field and a 1.5-hectare coffee garden. He also bought a housing lot in Gunung Terang hamlet and built a sturdy wooden house. The house had luxurious possessions within, such as a big television, satellite dish, stereo set and nice furniture. The family managed their gardens and rice field on their own, while labourers were hired for weeding the gardens and hoeing and transplanting the rice field. The family would have two *tunggu tubang* daughters. Syafri’s wife’s daughter from her first marriage would be entitled to all of Syafri wife’s parents’ *tunggu tubang* properties in Muara Enim, while Syafri’s own eldest daughter would inherit all of the family properties in Gunung Terang. The former was living with her husband and baby in a hut in the rice field. The latter had just graduated from high school and was preparing to study at a university in the capital of the province. Syafri’s younger children were studying at junior high school.

Like Ali and Syafri, Effendi, a man in his mid thirties, also married a Semendo woman. The couple had two sons who were studying at elementary school. The family lived in a small but sturdy stilted wooden house in Rigis Atas, close to their garden. Unlike Ali and Syafri’s wives, Effendi’s wife was not a *tunggu tubang*. This couple acquired all of the properties they had by their own efforts. Both were born and raised in Fajar Bulan. In 1990, soon after their marriage, they cleared 3 hectares of state forest in the neighbouring region of Simpang Luas. A hectare of the cleared field was planted with coffee and the rest was transformed into an upland rice field (*ladang padi*). In 1993, while maintaining their coffee garden in Simpang Luas, the couple sharecropped 1 hectare of coffee garden in the neighbouring village of Srimenanti. They rented a house and lived in Srimenenati where Effendi’s wife opened a small stall (*warung*). In 1996, using the money from selling their garden in Simpang Luas and the savings they had accumulated, they bought 2 hectares of coffee garden and 1 hectare of imperata (grass) field in Rigis Atas which was later planted with coffee. Effendi sharecropped half of his coffee garden and managed the other half with his wife. He hired labourers to weed and harvest the coffee garden and planted capsicum
chilli in his coffee garden together with fruit and timber trees. Effendi owned and operated a movable motorised coffee mill, and was very busy milling his neighbours’ coffee beans during the coffee harvest seasons.

Sutisna, a man in his early fifties, came to Rigis Atas from Ciamis, West Java, in 1979. With three other men, he worked as a contract labourer (bujang) and maintained Sucipta’s coffee gardens in Rigis Atas. Sucipta was a trader who sold clothes from Tasikmalaya, in West Java, to various places in Lampung and South Sumatra. He bought 6 hectares of coffee gardens in Rigis Atas which were all managed by contract labourers he brought from Java. After his gardens delivered a peak harvest (agung), he sold the gardens and opened a clothing shop in Tasikmalaya. In the years that followed, Sutisna took over 2 hectares of Sucipta’s coffee gardens and paid for them in three instalments — one each harvest season. In the early 1980s, following the drop in the coffee prices, Sutisna went to Palembang where he worked as a labourer in a chilli garden and a brick factory for a year. He returned to Rigis Atas and married a Javanese woman from the neighbouring village of Gedung Surian. He sold 1 hectare of his coffee garden and built a simple house. While maintaining the remaining hectare of coffee garden with his wife, he worked as a wage labourer and ran a motorised portable coffee mill. His wife opened a small stall (warung) selling items such as rice, cooking oil, sugar, salt, micin (monosodium glutamate), instant noodles, soap, cigarettes, snacks, and lollies.

In the mid-1990s, Sutisna sold his garden and house, and sent his wife and four children to live with his mother in Ciamis. He bought half a hectare of coffee garden nearby and built a hut to live in. He later bought two more coffee gardens, with a combined area of 1 hectare, in the nearby state forest. These had been abandoned by their owners after they were evicted by the military and forestry officers. In 2001, Sutisna planted capsicum chilli under the coffee and rosewood trees in his gardens. He was the first person in Rigis Atas to plant chilli for commercial purposes, and his neighbours frequently consulted him on how to plant chilli in their own coffee gardens. Sutisna regularly hired his fellow neighbours and his younger brother (who lived with him) as wage labourers to manage his coffee and chilli gardens. With the income from his chilli plants he was able send cash to his family in Java on a regular basis.
The Upper Stratum

Fahrozi, a Semendonese villager in his mid-forties, was born in Gunung Terang. He married a tunggu tubang woman who inherited a big wooden stilted house, 4 hectares of coffee and pepper gardens, and 2.5 hectares of rice fields. The family managed 1 hectare of the garden, while sharecropping the rest of the garden and the rice field. His wife’s parents moved out (turun) of the house to occupy and manage coffee and pepper gardens elsewhere. Until 1999, Fahrozi was active in the coffee and pepper reselling business, and was one of half a dozen coffee middlemen in the village. In 1999, he bought 10 hectares of bush land in the neighbouring region of Sukau. When the coffee price fell, he did not have enough capital to carry out his plan to plant his fields with coffee and pepper, but he was still able to afford to build a big sturdy wooden stilted house as a family home. Fahrozi had three children. His eldest daughter had just graduated from high school and was preparing to study further in the provincial capital, Bandar Lampung. She would receive the house and other properties in her tunggu tubang capacity. Fahrozi believed that his sons — the first then studying
at elementary school and the second still under school age — would also go to university. Otherwise, they would inherit the bushland that he had just bought and become farmers.

Sunaryo was a Javanese villager in his sixties who came to Gunung Terang in 1983. Prior to that, he and his family had come from Purwodadi in Central Java to join a transmigration program in Rumbia, in lowland central Lampung, in 1974. The lack of irrigation in Rumbia forced the family to leave the transmigration site. In Gunung Terang, Sunaryo began his business cutting and selling timber from the state forest in Rigis Atas where the family first lived. He ran the business for over a decade with the backing of the local police and military officers, without whose support he would have been jailed. Sunaryo used the proceeds from the timber business to buy 4 hectares of old coffee garden in 1983, 2 hectares in 1987, 1 hectare in 1992, and 2.5 hectares in 1997. In 1997, he also bought 1.5 hectares of rice fields which he soon converted to a coffee garden, which meant that he had a total of 11 hectares of coffee gardens. In the same year, he bought a 0.25-hectare housing lot (kapling) in Bedeng Sari, built a large brick house and moved into it. Sunaryo had seven children, of whom three — a daughter and two sons — were already married. Sunaryo gave each of these three children 1.5 hectares of coffee garden and a house. His other four sons, all in their twenties and either junior or senior high school graduates, collectively managed the remaining 6.5 hectares. Each of them would inherit the same area of land when they got married. Sunaryo and his wife said that they would bequeath the house and housing lot to their youngest son or the last one to marry, who would in return take care of them in their old age. The family had been cultivating red chilli in their housing lot and small chilli in the coffee gardens.

Unlike Fahrozi and Sunaryo, Sabar and Rahman had much less land, but much more wealth. Sabar had only 3 hectares of coffee garden but was an active coffee middleman and, more importantly, was a moneylender. His family lived in the capital of the province, Bandar Lampung. His house in Gunung Terang functioned more as a store for sacks of dried coffee beans which he bought and resold, and an office for his moneylending business. Rahman had no coffee gardens, but he did own the largest shop (warung) in the village that sold household items. Following in Sabar’s footsteps, Rahman also engaged in moneylending in the village. Over a decade before, after some years of work as a kenek (bus driver’s assistant), he and his wife rented a small house and opened a small shop. He started his moneylending business as a broker, and later set up his own service. He was the most active moneylender in the village in 2001–02.

Two village officials — Bu Mas Muda, the village head, and Udin, the chair of Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Pekon (LPMP), the village council for community empowerment — were among the established (mapan) families in
the village. According to villagers, it was not because of their official position that they became wealthy. On the contrary, the fact that both were in established families was the main reason that the villagers chose them as village officials. Both families owned more than 3 hectares of highly productive coffee gardens and had also started commercial vegetable farming.

As far as wealth is concerned, the wealthy families in Gunung Terang were much less wealthy than the rich merchants (big coffee resellers and owners of big retail shops) in Fajar Bulan, Sumber Jaya and in other villages. For these rich merchants, the amount of land owned is not the determining factor for wealth accumulation. Access to capital and trade networks matter more.