

The Green Revolution in North Arcot: Economic Trends, Household Mobility, and the Politics of an “Awkward Class”

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THE PRECEDING CHAPTER used village household data from the Cambridge-Madras universities and IFPRI-TNAU surveys to assess, after a decade, the growth and equity effects of the green revolution in North Arcot. A key motivation has been to test the diverging views that have emerged in the literature on the effects of the green revolution. This chapter continues with that task, but from the perspective that my own in-depth anthropological fieldwork and analysis can provide.

Methodology

As a member of the Cambridge project, I lived in and studied one village in particular in 1973–74—Nesal, to which I assigned the pseudonym Random in my earlier writings, a practice I maintain here—though I also spent time in the other 11 villages of the survey. The results of the research form the basis of a monograph (Harriss 1982). As baseline data, therefore, I was able to use both material I collected myself and survey data (including some of the original material as well as published results).

From December 1983 to February 1984, I went back to five of the original 12 villages studied by the Cambridge project, including Dusi, and Random, as well as three other villages—Veerasambanur, Vinayagapuram, and Duli. These were selected to represent variation in irrigation conditions and in access to urban centers (which seemed to account for much of the variation among the villages in terms of their social and economic character; see Chambers and Harriss 1977).

The author wishes to express his gratitude in particular to P. Kandhan; and to G. Jothi, T. Ganesan and S. Guhan for invaluable assistance in conducting his fieldwork in 1983–84.

Village	Access to Urban Centers	Irrigation
Random	Good	Good
Dusi	Good	Good
Duli	Good	Poor
Vinayagapuram	Remote	Good
Veerasambanur	Remote	Poor

Dusi is like Random in having good access to a major urban center (Kanchipuram), and, being under one of the biggest irrigation tanks in northern Tamil Nadu, it has good irrigation also, though it has very few wells and pumps. It is larger than the other villages and has the character of a small service center (with a cinema and a fair number of shops and other businesses). It is also an industrial village, with a large population of handloom weavers who work for master weavers based in Kanchipuram. The five villages together represent the range of village types distinguished by Robert Chambers and myself in our work on intervillage variation in 1973–74 (Chambers and Harriss 1977).

In Random, I completed a fresh census of the village and collected data on the history of landholding and land transactions in each household; on employment; on the costs of production and labor use; and on credit transactions and investment. The same information was collected for stratified random samples of households in each of the other villages, the samples being drawn from the 1973 household census list drawn up by the Cambridge and Madras universities team.

Veerasambanur: One-third sample of 1973 households = 37 households – 6 emigrants = 31 with 4 instances of partitioning = 36 households in 1984

Vinayagapuram: One-fifth sample of 1973 = 35 households – 3 emigrants = 32 with 2 instances of partitioning = 36 households in 1984

Duli: One-third sample of 1973 = 31 households, with 4 cases of partitioning = 36 households in 1984

Dusi: One-tenth sample of 1973 = 47 households – 4 emigrants = 43 with 3 cases of partitioning = 47 households in 1984

Total: 155 households

Livelihoods, Labor, Employment, and Wages

Data for Random confirm the finding in Chapter 2 that the labor requirements of paddy cultivation have probably increased since the early 1970s. Static comparisons in 1973 showed that high-yielding varieties (HYVs) required slightly more labor than the older varieties, and the

area under HYVs has expanded since then. The use of tractors and mechanical threshers has not developed to the point of displacing labor. The number of tractors owned by local people (living in Randam or adjacent villages) has not increased. There was one tractor owned locally in 1973; two more were added shortly afterward; in 1983 the number was one again, but two new tractors were added in 1984. In 1983 the owners of tractor repair workshops in Arni reported that the numbers of tractors and of mechanical threshers in the region of the town had not increased since the mid-1970s.

It is true of course that the area cultivated was reduced in the drought years from 1980 to 1983, but loss of agricultural work in that period was at least partially compensated by the availability of work in well deepening and by the Food for Work Program implemented by the state government. Cultivators in Randam reported a total expenditure of Rs 127,000 on well deepening during the drought, and employment equivalent to 50 days per annum for every agricultural labor household in the village in each of the three drought years.

Meanwhile, according to data on village labor markets, it appears that real wages have increased. This finding is confirmed in two of the other three villages for which I have comparable data (Table 4.1). The village that does not show clear evidence of real wage increases, Veerasambanur, is relatively remote and has poor irrigation facilities. Production there has stagnated, probably because of low groundwater potential. It may be noted that this is a village in which land values have apparently fallen (see Table 4.2).

What of the supply of agricultural labor? As discussed elsewhere (Chapter 6), the overall rate of population growth has been comparatively low in eastern North Arcot. My own censuses for Randam show an increase of as little as 8.7 percent from April 1973 to January 1984. This particularly low rate of increase may be partly accounted for by net emigration (33 households and 150 individuals having migrated out and 25 households and 98 individuals having come in), with a loss of agricultural-labor households in particular having occurred (13 households left and only 4 came in). However, some of this was purely local emigration, as people moved to new houses or new house sites just outside the bounds of the residential area of Randam village. The low rate of increase also reflects a reduced rate of population growth resulting from declining fertility. The use of family planning, usually though not exclusively through tubectomy, has increased considerably since 1973, and family sizes are smaller among the numerically predominant Agamudaiyan Mudaliars.

Among the other villages, the population of one (Duli) has grown much faster than the average (by 37 percent, according to census data).

TABLE 4.1
Agricultural Wages (Rs/day)

Task	Randam				Veerasambanur				Vinayagapuram				Duli			
	1984				1984				1984				1984			
	Actual	Deflated		1973	Actual	Deflated		1973	Actual	Deflated		1973	Actual	Deflated		1973
		(a)	(b)			(a)	(b)			(a)	(b)			(a)	(b)	
Ploughing (with animals)	10	4.57	5.26	2.5	5	2.28	2.63	0.75	5	2.28	2.63	2.0	7	3.30	3.68	2.0
Male coolie	5	2.28	2.63	2.0	3	1.37	1.58	2.0	4	1.83	2.10	1.7	5	2.28	2.10	1.3
Female transplanting	3	1.37	1.58	1.0	2	0.91	1.05	1.25	2	0.91	1.05	0.70	3	1.37	1.58	1.5

Notes: (a) Deflator based on general consumer price index for agricultural labor in Tamil Nadu.

(b) Deflator based on difference in paddy prices in Randam village between December 1973–February 1974 and 1983–84.

TABLE 4.2
Land Prices (Rs/acre, current prices)

<i>Village</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Wetland with Well & Pump Share</i>	<i>Wetland</i>	<i>Dryland</i>
Random	1971-74	12,900	8,900	2,500
	1979-83	14,000	8,700	3,450
Veerasambanur	1971-74	—	7,000	1,300
	1978-80	—	6,700	1,000
Vinayagapuram	1971-74	16,600	—	3,300
	1979-83	23,000	6,000	3,300
Duli	1971-75	—	5,000	1,600
	1979-83	—	18,000	2,000
Dusi	1970-74	—	11,100	1,500
	1980-83	—	24,600	4,400

Source: Data from recorded land sales and purchases.

The village has attracted some immigrants taking advantage of a favorable employment situation because the village is near the fast-growing town of Cheyyar. The populations of Vinayagapuram and Veerasambanur have grown less than the average. There has been net emigration from both villages, people from both having moved, especially to Vellore (the district capital), to Madras, and to Bangalore for work. These details are necessary to understand the data on employment.

Analysis of principal occupation by household in Random (see Table 4.3) shows that the number of households dependent primarily upon cultivation increased by 6 percent between 1973 and 1984; that the number depending primarily upon agricultural labor decreased by 10 percent; and that the number dependent upon other occupations increased by 35 percent. Analysis of the primary occupations (usual status) of individual men and women gives a slightly different impression (see Table 4.4). It appears that the number of men whose principal occupation is own cultivation actually decreased by nearly 20 percent from 1973 to 1984; that both the absolute number of men working principally as agricultural laborers and their share in the total labor force changed very little; and that the proportion of men working in activities other than cultivation and agricultural wage labor increased from 31 percent to 40 percent of the total. Meanwhile, the number of women working both in own cultivation and as agricultural laborers increased. Though I am doubtful as to the reliability and the comparability of these data on women's employment, I believe that there has

TABLE 4.3
Principal Occupations of Households, Randam (number of households)

Occupation	1973	1984
Cultivation	102 (37) ^a	108 (36)
Agricultural labor	93 (34)	84 (28)
Other	80 (29)	108 (36)
Trade	11	11
Livestock	6	9
Artisans/functionaries	12	18
Transport	2	2
Service ^b	36	45
Dependents	11	18
Money lending	2	2
Rents/interest	—	3

^aFigures in parentheses are percentages of total.

^bThe category "service" is meant in the conventional Indian usage and refers to employment in government service or in private-sector jobs that offer at least roughly comparable terms and conditions of work. It is not used in the sense of "domestic service."

TABLE 4.4
Occupational Structure of the Labor Force, Randam (number of workers)

Primary Occupation	Men		Women	
	1973	1984	1973	1984
Owner cultivation	137 (38)	109 (29)	8	18
Agricultural labor	107 (30)	114 (30)	136	158
Other	112 (31)	151 (40)	14	25
Total	356	374		

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages of total.

certainly been an increase in the size of the female agricultural labor force.

The clearest and firmest conclusion from these data is that activities other than cultivation and agricultural wage work have become relatively more important in Randam. "Other activities" that have expanded over the decade are paddy dealing, in which only two households were involved in a minor way in 1973, but which is now the principal occupation in four households and a subsidiary source of income in five others; (silk handloom) weaving, which was the principal activity in one household in 1973 and in nine in 1984; herding sheep, the principal occupation of six households in both 1973 and 1984, but the main activity of half as many men again in 1984 as in 1973; and a variety of service occupations, including local government jobs such as

working in the Tamil Nadu government's Nutritious Noon Meals Program.

Another change of importance since 1973, but one that does not appear in these data, is the increased importance of dairying. The Arni Milk Cooperative set up a depot in the village after 1973, and this and the credit made available by the cooperative have made dairying a more important source of income. In spite of the drought, which led to a 21 percent decrease in the numbers of draft animals held by Randam cultivators, the number of cows owned by people in the village increased by 25 percent between April 1973 and January 1984, and the number of households owning milk cattle increased from 21 percent of the total to 34 percent. Both this change and, even more so, the increased importance of sheep in the village economy have resulted from the expansion in the availability of cheap formal-sector credit for these purposes in the past 10 years.

In addition to the increase in the importance of activities other than cultivation and agricultural wage work in the village, there has been some increase in the number of dependent households (from 11 to 18); in four cases, households are now dependent upon remittances from relatives employed in Vellore, Bangalore, or Madras. Whereas in 1973 one person from Randam worked in Bombay, this number has now increased to five.

The decline in the number of households depending primarily upon agricultural labor—which seems to have taken place, even if the number of individuals working as agricultural laborers has not changed much—is partly due to emigration, for whereas 21 former agricultural-labor households moved into other occupations (15) and tenant cultivation (6), 18 households moved from these activities and from petty cultivation into primary dependence upon agricultural labor. It is of some importance, therefore, to know why 13 agricultural-labor households left the village, and where they went. Seven have migrated purely locally and continue to be employed as agricultural laborers; two have moved to local towns for employment as casual labor; two have gone to work in textile mills in Bombay; and one has gone to Madras for casual work. The movement of the last is unknown. It is not the case that people have been moving out of agricultural labor into “desperation” activities outside the agricultural economy.

It may be deduced from these observations that there has been some shift in Randam away from primary dependence upon agriculture toward other activities, though cultivation has continued to absorb roughly the same absolute numbers of people (388 in 1973 and 399 in 1984). It seems that the diversification of occupations locally (paddy trading, weaving, service employment) and increased migration for

TABLE 4.5
Occupational Structure of the Labor Force, Veerasambanur, Vinayagapuram, Duli, and Dusi (number of workers)

<i>Sample Estimates</i>	<i>Veerasambanur</i>		<i>Vinayagapuram</i>		<i>Duli</i>		<i>Dusi</i>	
	<i>1973</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>1973</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>1973</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>1973</i>	<i>1984</i>
<i>Men</i>								
Owner-cultivation	27 (48)	17 (38)	29 (60)	25 (49)	20 (42)	22 (34)	32 (46)	25 (30)
Agricultural labor	29 (52)	15 (33)	12 (25)	9 (18)	23 (48)	18 (28)	5 (7)	5 (6)
Cattleherd			1			4 (6)		
Weaving		7 (16)		9 (18)			17 (25)	35 (42)
Wage earning		2 (4)				20 (31)		4 (5)
Service			3 (6)	3 (6)	5 (10)		4 (6)	2 (2)
Petty business		1		2 (4)		1	8 (12)	7 (8)
Profession			3 (6)	2 (4)				1
Remittances		3 (7)						
Money lending				1				
Other							3 (4)	4 (5)
% of male population in labor force	59	54	63	59	55	58	66	64
<i>Women</i>								
Owner-cultivation	6 (18)	22 (42)	6 (25)	19 (51)	1	12 (35)	20 (59)	10 (21)
Agricultural labor	27 (82)	27 (51)	17 (71)	13 (35)	10 (91)	16 (47)	3 (9)	12 (25)
Petty trade		1				5 (15)	6 (18)	18 (38)
Service (noon meals scheme)						1		
Dhobi			1	3 (8)				
Domestic service		1		1				8 (16)
Weaving		1		1				
Tailor		1						
Other							5 (14)	
% of female population in labor force	34	51	29	47	18	43	27	37

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages of totals.

work in larger, distant urban centers have tightened the agricultural labor market. It is probably significant in this connection that the number of *padials* (permanent, "attached" laborers) employed by Randam cultivators has increased also.

In my earlier analysis I argued that the effects of the expansion of groundwater irrigation and of HYV cultivation in these circumstances of rather intensive cultivation, far from leading to reduced employment of permanent laborers (as predicted in some of the green revolution literature), actually enhanced cultivators' interests in attaching labor to themselves (see Harriss 1982, Chapter 4). This seems to have been borne out by subsequent experience because the number of *padials* employed by Randam farmers has increased from 37 in 1973 to 46 in 1984.

Further qualitative evidence of a tightening of the local labor market is the observation that there has been some reduction in the length of the working day (commented upon widely by cultivators in the area), and an increase in the frequency with which early-morning "shift" work is carried on (whereby women work from about 6.30 A.M. until about 8:30, and may then work for the remainder of the day on a separate contract). (Note that in the calculations of wages in Table 4.1, I have used the wage for the standard working day, and this may be slightly shorter in 1984.)

Analysis of individual occupations in the sample households in the other four villages produces results that strongly confirm the tendency observed in Randam. In each of the villages there has been some decline in the number of men depending primarily upon own cultivation; a decline in the number dependent primarily upon agricultural labor; and a marked increase in the number primarily engaged in and dependent upon other occupations (notably, weaving both in the old weaving village of Dusi and in Veerasambanur and Vinayagapuram, where it was not previously carried on; and urban wage work in Duli; see Table 4.5).

The results for female employment are problematic, for I am much less certain of the comparability of data between the two observation points, particularly with regard to the number of those whose primary activity is owner cultivation. It seems possible, however, that overall female participation has increased, and unlikely that the number of those engaging in agricultural labor has declined.

There has been net emigration from two villages (Veerasambanur and Vinayagapuram) and only limited migration into a third (Duli). Indeed, in the cases of all three villages my estimates of the population size of the whole village in 1984, which are based on sample estimates, correspond closely with the 1981 census figures. I am confident, then,

that for these three villages my samples have not led me to ignore immigration into them. The picture in Dusi is more complicated, and there I believe there has been immigration of outsiders into the village, though not mainly for work in agricultural labor (see Guhan and Bharathan 1984).

In short, the conclusion that there has been some decline locally in the size of the male agricultural labor force seems justified, and findings for all the villages are strikingly consistent in pointing to a decline in the relative share of primary dependence upon cultivation activities as more employment outside agriculture has become available both locally and in major urban centers such as Madras and Bangalore. There has been a corresponding improvement in agricultural wages in all except one village, where cultivation has generally failed to expand.

It seems, therefore, that proletarianization of labor has been taking place over the last decade, at least in the sense that there has been a marked increase in the number of people and of households depending in some way upon wage work (including handloom weaving, which can properly be seen as a form of disguised wage work). Thus, in Vinayagapuram 25 percent of households now have members in regular or short-term wage work in Madras or Vellore; in Duli 33 percent of households have members working in Cheyyar; and in Veerasambanur 28 percent of households have members with nonagricultural wage incomes. But does this kind of "proletarianization" mean that increasing numbers of people in the villages have been fully separated from ownership of means of production? Has there been that widely anticipated tendency toward greater concentration of landholdings with the development of capitalist agriculture following the introduction of HYVs? Has there been a tendency for smaller landholders to be dispossessed as they resort to distress sales of land? Is there evidence of the kind of social and economic marginalization within the rural economy referred to by some writers (such as Pearse 1980) and quite often assumed to be taking place generally in India?

Differentiation of Peasantry? Land Transactions and Household Mobility

In the case of Randam village, I have data on the landholdings inherited by all households and details of subsequent purchase, sale, and other transactions. (The procedures employed here follow Cain 1981.) These data have been closely checked against official ownership records, and data collected in 1984 have been checked against those collected in 1973. The same data were also obtained for sample households in the

other four villages. In all cases the 1984 data were checked against those collected in 1973, but only for Veerasambanur and Dusi was it possible to check against the official records. I believe that the data are good for Randam and Veerasambanur, and least reliable for Vinayagapuram. Using these data I have analyzed the distribution of landownership holdings at the time of inheritance, in 1973, and in 1984, charted shifts in landownership and the mobility of households among landholding categories, and analyzed reasons for land sales and the sources of funds for land purchases. Note that data on landholding at inheritance are for the households still present in the villages in 1984, allowing for partitioning since 1973; and that the data for 1973 are for the households present in the village at that time (i.e., including those of people who have subsequently migrated out).

The results of a painstaking and time-consuming analysis may be rather quickly summarized as follows.

Changes in the Distribution of Land

Table 4.6 shows that in Veerasambanur there has been little change in the incidence of landlessness; in Dusi the incidence of landlessness has declined since inheritance and shows little change between 1973 and 1984; in Vinayagapuram landlessness has increased since inheritance, though from a low base; in Randam, though there has been no change in the incidence of landlessness between the time of inheritance and the present, there has been some increase since 1973 among the households living in the village in 1984. This is the result of partitioning of landless households and because of the downward mobility, in terms of landholding, of 17 households. These cases are mainly the result of women having been widowed and of indebtedness arising from drink. Finally, there is very clear evidence in Duli of increased landlessness from inheritance to 1984.

The distribution of landownership has become distinctly less unequal since inheritance in Dusi; it shows little change between inheritance and the present, and between 1973 and 1984 in Randam, Veerasambanur, and Vinayagapuram; and it has become markedly more unequal only in Duli (Table 4.6).

These observations are amplified by further data on changes in shares of land owned from inheritance (see Table 4.7). In Randam, Veerasambanur, and Vinayagapuram the members of the upper quintile of landholders at the time of inheritance have, in aggregate, lost land. Those in the lower quintiles have generally gained land in Randam and Veerasambanur, but the pattern is a little more complex in Vinayagapuram, with both loss and gain in the middle of the inheritance

TABLE 4.6
Changes in Distribution of Landownership

	<i>Random</i>			<i>Veerasambanur</i>			<i>Vinayagapuram</i>			<i>Duli</i>			<i>Dusi</i>		
	<i>At Inheri- tance</i>	1973	1984	<i>At Inheri- tance</i>	1973	1984	<i>At Inheri- tance</i>	1973	1984	<i>At Inheri- tance</i>	1973	1984	<i>At Inheri- tance</i>	1973	1984
Landless households (% total households)	44.0	41.0	44.0	21.0	23.0	21.0	5.5	11.0	11.0	11.8	19.4	20.6	38.3	32.6	34.0
Percentage of total land area owned by:															
Top size decile ^a	53.4	55.2	51.7	28.7	32.3	30.7	50.0	54.0	49.0	28.6	43.3	40.1	47.2	45.9	39.0
Lower half of size distribution ^a	1.5	1.7	1.2	12.0	11.0	12.8	13.4	10.4	10.2	19.5	12.9	11.3	4.0	7.8	5.9

^aThe size distribution of households includes the landless.

TABLE 4.7
Changes in Area of Land Owned from Inheritance to 1984 by Size Group (acres)

<i>Ownership Category at Inheritance (by quintile)</i>	<i>Randam</i>	<i>Veerasambanur</i>	<i>Vinayagapuram</i>	<i>Duli</i>	<i>Dusi</i>
Poorest	0	+ 2.77	+ 0.87	+ 1.00	+ 4.75
2	+ 37.67	+ 4.54	+ 4.84	- 0.77	+ 8.02
3	+ 57.05	+ 1.59	- 3.85	- 4.66	+ 10.01
4	+ 37.18	- 1.37	+ 11.58	+ 29.84	- 0.86
5	- 24.72	- 14.64	- 8.88	+ 5.86	+ 7.26

Note: Figures are the changes in the total land area held by all farms in each size group. They are not expressed on a per farm basis.

distribution. In Dusi there have been relatively much greater gains of land in the middle and lower quintiles, loss in the fourth quintile, and a small gain in the uppermost quintile. Only in Duli have the members of both the upper quintiles gained land, and those in the lower quintiles remained the same or lost land.

It is remarkable that in all five villages the number of "gainers" of land since inheritance outweighs—though not always by much—the number of "losers" of land (Tables 4.8 and 4.9). Again, though, there is a difference between Duli and the other four villages. In Duli alone does the group of the largest landholders at inheritance include more gainers than losers, while the group of smallest landowners at inheritance includes more losers than gainers of land. It can reasonably be concluded, therefore, that except in the case of Duli there is no evidence for increased concentration of landholdings or loss of land by the smallest landholders, but rather the reverse. The reason for the tendency toward increased concentration observed in Duli is that people in that village have steadily been buying back land from Sengunda Mudaliar moneylenders and master weavers in the town of Cheyyar, who acquired control of large amounts of village land, probably during the depression in the 1930s. (This occurred in Vinayagapuram too. In the 1930s, all the land of that village reportedly came under the control of a single Chettiar banker in Polur.) The buying back of land in Duli has led to increased concentration of landholding because the larger village landholders have been doing most of the purchasing. Increased concentration does not appear to have been the result primarily of transfers of land from smaller to larger landholders.

This argument is supported by analysis of household mobility between landholding classes from inheritance to the present. The greatest amount of mobility occurred in Vinayagapuram, where 42 percent of

TABLE 4.8
Gains and Losses of Land from Inheritance to 1984, Randam (number of households)

	<i>Ownership Category at Inheritance (by quartile)</i>					<i>Total</i>
	<i>Landless</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	
Gainers	18 (14)	13 (31)	13 (32)	11 (27)	8 (20)	63 (21)
No change	112 (86)	24 (57)	19 (46)	11 (27)	14 (34)	180 (61)
Losers	0	5 (12)	9 (22)	19 (46)	19 (46)	52 (18)
Total	130	42	41	41	41	295

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

TABLE 4.9
Gains and Losses of Land from Inheritance to 1984, Veerasambanur, Vinayagapuram, Duli, and Dusi (number of households)

	Ownership Category at Inheritance (by tercile)				Total
	Landless	1	2	3	
<i>Veerasambanur</i>					
Gainers	3	4	3	2	12 (36)
No change	4	3	2	2	11 (33)
Losers	0	2	4	4	10 (31)
Total	7	9	9	8	33
<i>Vinayagapuram</i>					
Gainers	1	5	4	5	15 (42)
No change	1	5	2	3	11 (30)
Losers	0	2	5	3	10 (28)
Total	2	12	11	11	36
<i>Duli</i>					
Gainers	0	3	3	5	11 (32)
No change	4	4	4	2	14 (41)
Losers	0	3	3	3	9 (26)
Total	4	10	10	10	34
<i>Dusi</i>					
Gainers	4	5	2	5	16 (34)
No change	14	4	4	2	24 (51)
Losers	0	1	4	2	7 (15)
Total	18	10	10	9	47

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

the households changed positions, but here and in Randam, Dusi, and Veerasambanur there was more upward than downward mobility. The least mobility and the only instance of more downward than upward mobility were found in Duli.

There thus appears to be quite strong evidence against the simpler versions of the classic differentiation thesis, which supports the findings

of Attwood for a village in Maharashtra (Attwood 1979) and of Cain for several villages in the semiarid tropics of India (Cain 1981). These are the only studies known to me that offer dynamic analysis at the household level comparable to that presented in this chapter.¹ However, the evidence presented thus far of course does not permit one to conclude that concentration of agricultural capital has not been occurring, especially in circumstances like these where there is so much difference in productivity between irrigated and nonirrigated land. The loss of land by larger landholders in Randam, Veerasambanur, and Vinayagapuram could be accounted for as the result of land sales to finance investments. To some extent this probably is the case, particularly in Randam, where 40 percent of land sales by the largest landholders at inheritance were for investment in land. Yet analysis of the distribution of landownership by value in 1973 and 1984 in Randam—using average values of land of different types in the periods 1971–74 and 1979–83—shows virtually no change at all. Since the most substantial component of agricultural capital is made up of wells and pumps, and investments in these are reflected in land values, it seems fair to conclude that in Randam there has been no increase in the concentration of agricultural capital since 1973.

In sum, there is very little evidence here for the existence of a process of differentiation involving increased concentration of landownership and the ownership of agricultural capital more generally, and losses of land by smaller landholders.

Land Transactions

Analysis of land sales and purchases in the villages shows that the land market is generally more active than is commonly supposed to be the case in rural India, and indeed that it may be more active than in Western Europe, where about 1 percent of the total stock of land is bought or sold each year (information from Harrison 1985). In Randam in the 1970s the corresponding figure was 1.5 percent per annum, in Vinayagapuram 2.7 percent, and in Duli 3.5 percent.

In Randam and Duli more than one-third of the land area sold since inheritance has been for investment in other land or in groundwater irrigation; and in each case one-third of the total number of sales transactions has been for these purposes also. In Duli such sales have been almost entirely by the largest landowners, but in Randam smaller holders have also engaged in sales for these purposes. If we consider house

1. Since the time of writing, comparable analysis has been offered in Athreya, Djurfeldt, and Lindberg 1990 and in Walker and Ryan 1990.

construction and marriage payments to be investments too, as well as purchase of cattle and tractors, then we find that in Randam 68 percent of the area sold and 63 percent of transactions have been for investment; in Veerasambanur 40 percent of the area and 39 percent of transactions; in Vinayagapuram 76 percent of the area and perhaps 79 percent of transactions; and in Duli 48 percent of the area and 50 percent of transactions. In Dusi only 18 percent of the total land sold and 10 percent of transactions were for consumption or medical expenses (27 percent and 19 percent, respectively, if the category of land sold in order to repay outstanding cooperative debts is included). These sales were made by landholders in the medium and large categories. A more common reason for the sale of land was to finance investment, including purchase of land of better quality and land improvement (19 percent of transactions and 23 percent of the land area sold). In Dusi also, other important reasons for sales include marriage cost, house construction, and education, which together account for 37 percent of both the area sold and the total number of transactions.

It may be significant that the villages with the highest proportion of land sold and frequency of transactions for consumption purposes are the two villages with poor irrigation, Veerasambanur and Duli. In all the villages it is remarkable that sales for purposes of direct consumption—what might in principle be “distress sales”—have been made at least as much and usually more by the bigger landholders. (In Randam this was 15 percent of the area sold from the top quartile, 39 percent of that sold from the third quartile, and only 11 percent in each case from the first and second quartiles. Only among those originally landless does it go over 50 percent of the area sold.)

Thus, the available evidence shows that the incidence of distress land sales is rather low, certainly less than 20 percent of all land sales, further supporting the conclusion that concentration of landholdings as a result of the development of capitalist agriculture or of distress sales by poorer landholders is not taking place.

Class Mobility in Randam

The data for Randam allow more detailed examination of household mobility and of mobility between agrarian classes for the period of burgeoning green revolution from 1973 to 1984. The matrix shown in Table 4.10 records cases of mobility among agrarian classes as these were distinguished in my earlier work (see Harriss 1982, Chapters 4 and 5).

In the matrix “A” refers to capitalist farmers, defined as those who

TABLE 4.10
Class Mobility, Random (number of households)

	Total 1973	1984						
		A	B	C	D	Agric. Labor	Other	Migrated Out
A	9	7	5	—	—	—	—	—
B	22	3	25	10	—	—	4	1
C	32	—	2	22	4	—	5	2
D	39	—	—	—	21	12	12	5
Agric. labor	93	—	—	—	6	62	15	13
Other	80	—	—	1	4	6	50	12
Migrated in		—	—	3	6	4	12	—
Total 1984		10	32	36	41	84	98	33

Note: A = capitalist farmers, B = rich peasants, C = middle peasants, and D = poor peasants. See text for definitions of these terms.

own sufficient resources to be able to produce surplus equivalent to more than 12 months' household livelihood requirements, employing wage labor, and not themselves engaging directly in productive labor. "B" refers to rich peasants, defined as those who own sufficient resources to be able to produce surplus equivalent to 12 months' livelihood requirements or more, employing wage labor, and themselves engaging in productive work on their lands. "C" refers to middle peasants, defined as those who own sufficient resources to be able to produce some surplus above their own 12 months' household livelihood requirements, who employ labor, and who themselves work on their lands but do not hire themselves out to work for others. "D" refers to poor peasants, who own insufficient resources to be able to produce their own household livelihood requirements for 12 months, and who work for other people more than they employ others to work on their lands. The category "other" includes all those households in which an activity other than cultivation or agricultural wage work supplies the principal source of livelihood, though these households may be engaged in cultivation or in agricultural labor as subsidiary activities. (The matrix includes cases of partitioning, and so the horizontal rows do not add up to the number of households in each category present in 1973.)

In general what the matrix shows is a perhaps remarkable stability in the absolute numbers of households in each class category—except for the marked increase in "other"—in spite of a good deal of movement, rather more of it downward than upward among the classes of cultivators, though there are indications of cyclical mobility.

Among the reasons for mobility, what Shanin refers to as "sub-

stantive changes" (see Shanin, 1972) figure importantly, especially the effects of partitioning. Few cases can be attributed in one way or another to the effects of the green revolution. In summary:

Mobility from A to B ("capitalist farmer" to "rich peasant"): Five cases of downward mobility, four due to partitioning, one to poor irrigation wells.

Mobility from B to A ("rich peasant" to "capitalist farmer"): Three cases of upward mobility. Demographic factors are involved, as in two cases there was only a single son, while in the third two brothers remain in a joint family. All are involved in money lending; one has a teaching income.

Mobility from B to C ("rich peasant" to "middle peasant"): Ten cases of downward mobility, seven of them due to partitioning and three to hazard (one because of a serious fire, one because of the failure of a well, and one because of the death of the former household head and with him a money-lending business).

Mobility from B to "other" (from "rich peasant" to "other"): Four cases, two being dependent old men and one a divorced and separated wife. Only one case can be considered one of downward mobility because of large cultivation debts brought about by poor management (this followed from psychological problems). The former rich peasant concerned now makes a living from a small cycle hire business.

Mobility from C to B (from "middle peasant" to "rich peasant"): Two cases of upward mobility, each because of the availability of supplementary income from paddy trading, in a joint family.

Mobility from C to D (from "middle peasant" to "poor peasant"): Four cases of downward mobility, because of hazard, failure of wells, and illness. One case is due to demographic factors, the effects of large family size.

Mobility from C to "other" (from "middle peasant" to "other"): Five cases altogether: two of Harijans downwardly mobile because of the hazards of failure of a well in one case and a family dispute in the other; one of a Harijan who is now dependent upon rental income because of old age; one case of a move into weaving following the partitioning of a household, where property has not yet been divided; and the last one a move into a service occupation following the failure of a well.

Mobility from D to agricultural labor (from "poor peasant" to "agricultural labor"): Twelve cases of downward mobility, six of them because of the cessation of sharecropping arrangements, three as a result of partitioning, and three because of the effects of drought and poor wells.

Mobility from agricultural labor to "other": Ten cases that can be considered "downward," seven of them a result of partitioning; and two cases that are upward, partly resulting from decisions to remain in joint families.

Mobility from agricultural labor to "poor peasant": Six cases, four of them a result of the acquisition of land for sharecropping, and two the result of land purchases made possible by earning additional income from sharecropping.

In summary, “substantive changes” relating to the demographic character of households and to partitioning appear to have been the single most important influence on downward mobility, involved in 25 out of 41 cases of downward mobility, excluding those involving cessation of sharecropping arrangements; and these factors have also been significant in influencing upward mobility, for among the rather few clear cases of upward mobility most have involved, among other factors, decisions to remain in a joint family. The “substantive changes” have mostly had the effect of leveling down. Among other factors that have affected mobility among the agrarian classes, the most important has been the quality of access to groundwater. These data from Randam also do not appear to support the thesis that the new technology accelerates and intensifies the differentiation of the peasantry.

Credit and the Reproduction of Households

My analysis of the agrarian economy of northern Tamil Nadu in the early 1970s emphasized the crucial role of traders’ credit. I argued that product and credit markets are interlinked, that mercantile credit played a key function in the reproduction of small-scale production—advances from traders being crucial to the renewal of the productive cycle—and that the dependence of small producers on paddy traders in particular was instrumental in maintaining rates of profit in trade higher than those available in agricultural production itself.

This argument seemed to be confirmed by my first conversation with farmers during the fieldwork I carried out in 1983–84, in Veerasambanur, where I found farmers relating a tale closely comparable with my analysis. It was true, they said, that the new varieties and the advent of electric pumpsets had increased their production of paddy. But, they maintained, they derived no benefit from this increased output: “All the benefit goes to those two, Mudaliar X and Chettiar Y, for they buy all the paddy from these four villages [Veerasambanur and its neighbors] and we are all in debt to them. We can do nothing if they underweigh or deduct from our payments.” However, the data from Veerasambanur and the other villages (see Tables 4.11 and 4.12) do not entirely support the thesis that I advanced for the early 1970s.

The interlinking of transactions in commodity and credit markets continues to be significant. *Mundy* loans (advances from paddy traders) remain important sources of credit in Randam, Veerasambanur, and Vinayagapuram, though not in Duli (where most paddy is sold in a regulated market in Cheyyar) or in Dusi (where advances from master weavers and credit obtained from the mortgaging of land are much

TABLE 4.11
Structure of Outstanding Credit by Purpose of Loan, 1984 (percent of total outstanding debt)

<i>Village</i>	<i>Consumption</i>	<i>Cultivation Costs</i>	<i>Cultivation & Consumption</i>	<i>Marriage & Ritual Expenses</i>	<i>Well Investment</i>	<i>Cattle or Sheep Purchase</i>	<i>Housing</i>	<i>Other^a</i>
Random	10	13	16	10	14	9	9	19
Veerasambanur	14 (46) ^b	15 (31)	9	14 (20)	42 (37)	4	1	1
Vinayagapuram	9	16	7	15	13	10	—	30
Duli	13 (44)	33 (44)	5	3	20 (25)	11	2	13
Dusi	6	8	11 ^c	39	2	6	8	20

^aIncludes purchases of tractors and land.

^bFigures in parentheses are the percentage of households with this category of credit.

^cIncludes cost of weaving as well as of cultivation.

more extensive). In Randam and Veerasambanur all but a handful of cultivators, and in Vinayagapuram still a majority of cultivators, have a more or less permanent relationship with a particular *mundy*, regularly obtaining credit from the *mundy* owner. The amount of credit that can be obtained varies systematically according to the class of peasant—up to about Rs 20,000 for capitalist farmers in Randam, Rs 2,000–3,000 at a time for rich peasants, Rs 500–2,000 for middle peasants, and Rs 200–1,000 for poor peasants. In terms of the regularity with which this source of credit is used and the numbers of cultivators availing themselves of it, it is especially important. It is the first link in a chain of relationships that are instrumental in channeling resources out of agriculture, and to a large extent out of the rural economy altogether.

It may be noted that there is no evidence to suggest that the uses of money in commerce are less attractive investments now than they were in 1973–74. It was argued (by B. Harriss 1981 and J. Harriss 1982) that higher rates of profit in commercial activities tended to constrain productive investment in agriculture or outside. Information on investment preferences among business people in Arni in our 1983 survey confirms this argument (Harriss and Harriss 1984).

What is otherwise most striking in these data on credit is the importance of formal credit in all the villages—though less in Vinayagapuram than elsewhere—and the amount of credit that is available from within each village. In Randam the amount outstanding to other villagers is reported as being over 3.5 *lakhs* of rupees (Rs 364,220) or the equivalent of Rs 1,200 per household. The total sum outstanding represents the equivalent of the net returns from cultivation of twice the amount of paddy land held by people in the village. Though a number of individuals have contributed disproportionately to the village credit in circulation, it is not dominated by one or two moneylenders, as it is in Vinayagapuram where two big men account for 70 percent of the village credit in circulation and for 22 percent of all the loans in circulation in the village. Their preeminence in the credit, land, and labor markets of the village may help to account for the smaller share of formal credit in the outstanding loans of Vinayagapuram.

The interest rates charged on private loans—larger ones generally on bonds—are modest, 24 percent being the rate most commonly charged within the village, though rates as low as 12 percent are not at all unusual. Higher annual rates of interest, up to 60 percent or very occasionally more, are charged only on small loans when vessels or jewelry are pledged to small-scale moneylenders in the village (mostly women), or when loans are obtained from pawnbrokers in Arni. However, these loans make up only a small share of the total amount of credit in circulation. Thus, although I believe that traders' credit con-

TABLE 4.12
Source of Outstanding Credit, 1984 (percent of total outstanding debt)

<i>Village</i>	<i>Private Person in Village</i>	<i>Private Person Outside</i>	<i>Private Party in Nearby Town</i>	<i>Pawnbroker</i>	<i>Nationalized Bank</i>	<i>Land Development Bank</i>	<i>Coop</i>	<i>Other Formal</i>	<i>Other Informal</i>	<i>Total Formal Credit</i>
Randam	22	14	9	3	24	7	14	1	6	46
Veerasambanur	19	21	12	2	13	28	3	—	2	44
Vinayagapuram	31	24	13	2	20	5	3	—	2	28
Duli	13	6	10	9	19	10	32	—	1	61
Dusi	17	—	29	5	17	—	4	—	27	21

tinues to play an important role in the reproduction of peasant households in eastern North Arcot, the role of *usurious* money lending is less extensive than has been supposed to be the case in rural India.

A most significant trend over the past decade is the expansion of formal-sector credit, which now accounts for over 60 percent of outstanding credit in Duli, and more than 40 percent in Randam and Veerasambanur. Credit supplied through the land development banks is long term and mostly for investment in wells and pumps; but credit obtained from the nationalized banks, representing about 20 percent of the total, is often for short-term consumption and cultivation costs, as is cooperative credit. Credit extended under Integrated Rural Development Programs intended for the relief of poverty among specific target groups is significant too, making up 15 percent of all loans outstanding in Vinayagapuram, 10 percent in Duli, and 6 percent in Randam. These are mostly loans for purchase of sheep, and some for the purchase of bullock carts, but both types of loans are sometimes used for other purposes, including land purchases, house construction, and wedding and funeral payments. The rate of repayment of these loans appears to be low, as is that of crop loans made available through the nationalized banks. It is widely believed by people in the villages that if they hold out long enough, debts incurred as a result of failure to repay these loans will eventually be canceled, as they have been in the past (as they were, for example, after the state legislative assembly elections in 1980).

The expansion in the supply of formal-sector credit has surely contributed to the weakening of usury in the strict sense within this economy. (This argument has recently been put forward and elaborated more than I have been able to do here by Athreya and his co-authors with reference to the region of Tiruchy, further south in Tamil Nadu: see Athreya et al. 1985). It is significant in another way, too. The so-called needs-based lending, which has been given so much emphasis in public policy over the past decade, has further intensified the direct relationships between a broad spectrum of rural people and the state apparatus. A many-stranded relationship has developed between rural people and the state: it involves electricity supplies and tariffs, interventions in paddy and groundnut markets, the supply of basic consumer goods at regulated prices through so-called cooperative shops, the Food for Work Program, and lately the Noon Meals Scheme for schoolchildren, as well as credit supplied through Integrated Rural Development Programs. These different interventions have been instrumental in creating overlapping alliances of rural people, in a sense "against" the state though in a context in which the state is regarded as, and partially

conforms to the role of, a patron. It is not the case that rural people are mobilizing to overthrow the state.

The Politics of the "Awkward Class" in South India

Trends of Change in North Arcot, 1973–1974

Paddy production has expanded appreciably over the past 10–15 years as a result of the introduction of the new technology of the green revolution. This expansion of production has yielded benefits that have been widely distributed. HYV paddy production does yield higher returns for most cultivators, though there has probably been a squeeze on the profitability of HYV cultivation since 1973, at least at some times. Real wages have increased for many if not for all agricultural laborers, and there is a greater diversity and volume of employment within the local economy, though not enough to have discouraged migration for work in the metropolitan cities both by members of the rural elite and by poor peasants and the landless.

These trends may be considered positive, and to run counter to the gloomier prognoses concerning the likely impact of the green revolution. But the possibility that the new technology has also increased the riskiness of paddy cultivation must be noted. It has also increased cultivators' need for credit, a need partly satisfied by the expansion of formal-sector credit. However, this expansion in the supply of formal-sector credit—together with the sensitivity of the issue of electricity tariffs and supply, and the problem of the relative prices of other agricultural inputs and outputs—has created conditions for confrontation between diverse groups of rural people and the state. This confrontation is reflected in the support that has been extended to the farmers' movements across a wide spectrum of agrarian social groups, and in the "farmerist" appeals of many politicians (see the report of interviews with candidates; B. Harriss 1984, pp. 274–77).

Class Formation and Agrarian Politics

The more or less conventional radical wisdom about the effects of the new technology, which was that intrarural class antagonisms would be intensified (perhaps the classic source for India is Frankel 1971) has not been borne out by the experience of the past 10 years.

There are several elements in the argument here:

1. Though benefits have certainly not been distributed equally, there is evidence that most groups of rural people have derived some benefit.

The potential antagonism between rich and poor peasants has been dampened because of the participation of poor peasants in the green revolution, and the shared experience of problems with the supply of power to pumpsets, supply of credit, and product prices.

2. There is little evidence of "depeasantization" and of increased landlessness and concentration of landholdings. (There is no evidence here of that more subtle kind of depeasantization detected by Byres [1981], who draws especially on research in Northwest India. These studies show reversion of formerly tenanted land and an increase in the incidence of reverse tenancy, and thus the loss of land area operated by poor peasants. Tenancy has been of little importance in North Arcot for a long time. There is evidence of, if anything, a slight increase in the incidence of land rented to poor peasants, rather than the reverse.) The distribution of landholdings appears generally to have become more rather than less equal.
3. There is no strong evidence of the swelling of the male agricultural labor force, but rather indications for the movement of labor, on relatively favorable terms, into other activities (Table 4.3). The absolute numbers of those engaged in agriculture as cultivators or as laborers appear to have remained roughly constant.
4. The employment of laborers on a (semi-) permanent basis has not declined and in some areas has actually increased; the significance of this is that such laborers are found, generally, to be less militant than casual laborers.

It is difficult to detect the crystallization of classes in themselves, and the class positions of many remain blurred in practice because of the combinations of activities in the same households.

The more subtle analyses of the relationships between the introduction of the new technology and class formation and class action, like that of Byres (1981), express a good deal of skepticism about the argument that the green revolution would turn red. However, these analyses do emphasize the way in which the new technology has served to consolidate further the rich peasantry as a powerful, dominant class, particularly in certain areas like Northwest India; and the way in which it may—again in certain areas with much more likelihood than in others—contribute to a consolidation and heightened self-awareness of the subaltern class(es). North Arcot district obviously has a small and economically very powerful rich peasantry, but it does not seem to me to exercise dominance in the way the North Indian rich peasantry does, according to Byres and others. It has not been able to keep down the level of real wages paid to agricultural labor, nor has it been successful, apparently, in persuading the state to raise the prices of agricultural products in relation to costs, as the rich peasantry of North India is said to have succeeded in doing, according to Byres and others. With

regard to class action by the subordinated class, there are a few indications in eastern North Arcot that agricultural labor has increased its bargaining power, but there is still little indication of militant political organization among them. Militancy is much more likely to be caste based than class based, as in Veerasambanur where there are two men among the Paraiyans who are involved in the Anna DMK party, and who have on occasion made use of their party connections to bring pressure to bear, on behalf of the Harijan community as a whole, on the Mudaliars in the main caste village. Generalization is of course dangerous, and it is true that radical political action, dubbed "Naxalite" by the authorities, has been undertaken not too far away in the south-western part of North Arcot, in the Javadi hills. But it has been localized, and seems exceptional, though it indicates the potential that exists.

The government of Tamil Nadu has lately allocated resources to rural people in a way that has been highly visible politically. Whether its appropriations and allocations of resources overall have been urban biased or rural biased is probably less important for politics than the visibility of a scheme like the noon meals scheme. This was slated for implementation in 1981–82 with a provision in the estimates of Rs 1 billion, which is equivalent to slightly more than 10 percent of the total budgeted allocation for development purposes in the revenue account (data from the Tamil Nadu economic appraisal for 1981; published by the Evaluation and Research Department of the state government in August 1983). The noon meals scheme, even at its inception—and it has grown subsequently—is equivalent to a large share of the development expenditure of the Tamil Nadu government, and given the distribution of the population as a whole, it represents resources paid over principally to rural people.

It is not only through the noon meals scheme and the ration shops that the state in Tamil Nadu apparently subsidizes rural people. There is an element of subsidy in the Food for Work Program; the provision of cheap credit under Integrated Rural Development Programs and the supply of credit and electricity to the cultivating peasantry represent a considerable drain on state resources. This is because of the volume of overdue debts owed the cooperative banking system, and the subsidizing of rural electricity supplies (the general argument here is made strongly by Shetty 1978).

Whether amounting to rural bias or not, some of these transfers have contributed to the building up and maintenance of support for the Anna DMK regime—none more clearly so than the noon meals scheme—and to the defusing of antagonisms in the countryside. At the same time the political issues posed by problems over electricity supplies

and the electricity tariff, and outstanding debts to public banking institutions, create alliances between groups of people who are potentially divided by class-based antagonisms. These groups mobilize to make demands on the state.

It can be argued that the resources allocated to the rural sector undercut the potential for accumulation in the industrial sector. It is widely recognized that the state has been falling behind in industrial development and that a particularly important reason for this has to do with the problems of power supply. Part of the opportunity cost of a program like the noon meals scheme is the potential investment in power generation forgone. Given the problems faced by industry in Tamil Nadu, it is not surprising that both the DMK when it was in power between 1967 and 1975 and the Anna DMK since 1977 have generally been repressive toward the organized working class. The local state in Tamil Nadu shows contradictions like those observed in developing states elsewhere: policies of patronage and subsidy are pursued for political reasons even though they may actually undercut development objectives, in turn giving rise to conflicts between interest groups in which the state intervenes (there are points of comparison in Bates's work on African states; 1981, 1983).

What is distinctive about the state of Tamil Nadu is that the policies pursued by the Dravidian political parties in power, as well as their success in political mobilization—involving nationalist ideology, socialist rhetoric, populist appeals, and the skillful deployment of popular media, especially the cinema—have effectively precluded the development of class politics. Competition between the DMK and the Anna DMK, indistinguishable though they are in terms of ideology and policy, is very strong at local-level villages, in the cities, and among the organized working class. This competition cuts right across classes in themselves and creates vertical alliances. In Randam, in Veerasambanur, and in Duli, party allegiances bring together rich and poor peasants and landless laborers. These alignments certainly help to account for the apparently increased bargaining power of agricultural wage workers, for agricultural laborers can and do call on the support of rich peasants like the former *panchayat* president of Randam, who, as I described in my earlier work (Harriss 1982, Chapter 7), acquired his position of power by commanding their support. But the existence of these alignments also helps to account for the general, if not invariable, lack of class-based political organization among agricultural laborers, and contributes to the creation of alliances between rich, middle, and poor peasants such as has been seen in the farmers' movement in Tamil Nadu (Guruswamy 1985). As Shanin (1972) argued in relation to the Russian peasantry in the earlier part of this century, the peasants of

Tamil Nadu, though they are certainly not homogeneous and undifferentiated, do sometimes act together politically. They are an awkward class politically, and awkward for conventional categories of analysis.

Conclusions

This account of agrarian social and economic change in North Arcot exposes a number of generalizations that have been made about the political economy of Indian agriculture. I have referred at length to the limitations of a good deal of radical analysis of the green revolution. Here the point is not simply that eastern North Arcot doesn't seem to fit the interpretations offered, but also that this longitudinal case study shows up processes that are likely to be of more general occurrence and that have been neglected. Most important is the point that the tendencies that exert a push toward polarization also give rise to increased income-earning activities, which have the effect of stabilizing smallholding property (see Bhaduri, Rahman, and Arn 1986 on this point, referring to a Bangladesh case study). There does appear to have been a decline in the incidence of owner cultivation in the labor force, but there has been a decline also in the incidence of agricultural labor. While wage working has increased, people remain peasants, so there has been a pattern of proletarianization without depeasantization. Political alignments have become, if anything, more affected by the contradictory class locations of individuals and by vertical arrangements.

At the same time it is doubtful whether the green revolution in this case has had quite the dynamic effects claimed by its proponents. It is true that my findings with regard to the role of merchant-usurers' capital and of oligopoly power in the villages are not clear cut; but mercantile credit clearly remains important in reproduction of small property. The extent of dependence on usurious money lending is less than it was, and financial power is more diffuse than is taken to be the case in general models of agrarian semifeudalism. Yet given the continuing entrenchment of merchant capital (which appears also in our study of economic activity in Arni; Harriss and Harriss 1984), it would be premature to dismiss the analytical claims of these models. The burden of these last remarks is that if we recognize the limitations of our models, we must be wary of allowing them to drive particular historical analysis. Yet in the case of the green revolution, both radicals and liberals seem to me to have done precisely this.