



Gender Perspectives on Food Security in Sarawak, Malaysia: A Case Study of the Outcomes of Migration on Agriculture



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Lucy Owens, [Francesco Facchini](#)¹, Adrian Stallknecht²

¹University of Copenhagen, Dept. of Food and Resource Economics (IFRO), Denmark

²University of Copenhagen, Dept. of Anthropology

OBJECTIVES

Two research questions were asked:

1. *What are the outcomes of agriculture and migration as livelihood strategies in relation to food security?*
2. *How these outcomes different for men and women?*

BACKGROUND AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Rural to urban migration is considered to be the biggest driver of rural change in Sarawak Borneo (Cheng Sim). In addition, the expansion of oil palm plantations is transforming the landscape of rural Sarawak.

Our field site was a village named Munggu Sawa in Sarawak, Borneo, Malaysia. It is home to an indigenous *Iban* community

METHODS AND APPROACH

12 days collecting data using interdisciplinary methods. Collaboration between KU, RUC and UNIMAS, Sarawak, Malaysia

Questionnaire Survey

24 questionnaires were filled out by all of the households who were willing to participate.

This gave a summary of the demographics in the village and was used to choose participants.

Interviews:

Both exploratory interviews with key stakeholder, the headman and also alongside the questionnaire survey.

In depth interviews were also conducted, participants selected according to results from survey.

Participant Observation and case studies

Based on the questionnaire and participant observations we identified a household as a case study.

We participated in harvesting rice and conducted informal interviews in the field.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Ranking matrix, where we split the participants into female and male groups to understand different perceptions of the importance of agricultural products for household security

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Agriculture

Subsistence crops and cash crops are still essential to achieve food security, even though migration and deagrarianization processes are increasingly resulting in an erosion of agricultural practices,

Migration

Every household has at least one member that has migrated out of Munggu Sawa. There is a distinction between reasons for female and male migration. Men are typically leaving to work and women for relationships.

Remittances are received by 68% of households, but their frequency and value varies significantly between households and only 56% of households receiving cash remittances. Consequently there are notable inequalities between households.

Migration, agriculture and gender

Overall, people in Munggu Sawa are able to meet their needs to eat through a combination of migration and agriculture. Creating a multi-local household strategy.

However, some elderly people, predominantly females in the village fall outside of this broad conclusion. This can be related to comparatively low socio economic status of women and declining health creates dependency on remittances, but in several cases they were inadequate, resulting in precariousness as they continue to work manually for subsistence food, despite severe health complications.

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