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Farmers' Cultural Flexibility in Food Estate Development Corporate Based in Central Kalimantan

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ABSTRACT

Food Estate development based on Corporate places farmers as subjects who should be able to dynamically develop themselves as advanced farmers, independent farmers, and modern farmers. These development efforts require intensive social interaction to take advantage of cultural flexibility in adapting and transforming, resulting in innovations and development towards a modern farming society. Through qualitative descriptive methods, in-depth interviews were conducted to explain the dynamics of farmers' lives in fulfilling the demands of life and responding to various challenges as part of the social realities of life that must be faced. The study results show that the farming activities in Belanti Siam Village, Pulang Pisau Regency, and Dadahup Village can gradually develop into modern farmers. With the support of stakeholders, the food estate development area can be developed as a strategic economic area to support Central Kalimantan as a supporting area for the National Capital City (IKN) Nusantara.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Food Estate is a policy of the National Government to reduce dependence on food imports, anticipating the impact of climate change and global warming and fulfillment of food needs. The food production center is located in the former one million-hectare peatland project with 10,000 hectares of land clearing in Pulang Pisau Regency and 20,000 hectares in Kapuas Regency. Central Kalimantan, as a buffer area for the National Capital (IKN) Nusantara, food estate is very strategic for national food fulfillment and agro-ecotourism development. The development of a corporate-based Food Estate with an agroecosystem approach places farmers as part of the program recipients. It implements the policies established by the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (BPTP) as a *Center of Excellence* (Arimjaya & Wibowo, 2021).

Social reality shows that farmers as social communities can reflect modern agricultural technology through *cultural flexibility* by adapting and transforming agricultural technology through the active role of farmers as actors from within the farmer's environment and support from outside actors to develop agricultural innovations towards agriculture. Modern, namely corporation-based agriculture. Thus there will be an intensive reciprocal interaction in encouraging social learning in farmer groups (Altieri, 2004).

Traditional ecological knowledge is understood as an adaptive knowledge mechanism between generations and passed on to future generations, including in regulating people's lives. Adaptation as cultural flexibility in responding to the dynamics of life that is constantly changing, the role of

traditional leaders as essential actors in strengthening social solidarity and support from the private sector in developing community businesses, such as Prosperous Peat Tourism (Arisanty et al., 2021; Berkes et al., 2000; Fatkhullah et al., 2021; Rosadi et al., 2021).

In connection with the need for support from the private sector, the dynamics of community life, there is always a clash in meeting the needs of life (*pambelom*). Therefore, building awareness to support and share (*hakambelom*) in achieving mutual progress is necessary. Therefore, the cultural value of *hakambelom* (mutual life) must be internalized in people's lives. One of the effective models in inculcating cultural values by carrying out traditional ceremonies is strengthening social solidarity and social cohesiveness in a pluralistic society (Usop & Rajiani, 2021).

Regarding the ecosystem aspect, the rice plants have 52.14% reducing peat degradation, rubber plants are 47.55%, and oil palms are 47.67%, so rice plants are the first choice to be considered on peatlands (Surahman et al., 2018). The recommend oil palm plantations because they interfere with the sustainability of the ecosystem, with reduced vegetation and the extinction of biodiversity. The use of peat land follows the characteristics of peat, more suitable for rice, corn, sweet potato, and cassava (Rachmawan et al., 2021; Tampubolon et al., 2020). Likewise, Rinting and Suherman (2014) found that peat soil is more suitable for horticultural crops, vegetables, fruits, and annual crops. Conducted a case study in Kubu Raya Sub-district. Peat land is intended for wheat, pineapple, rice, and oil palm crops (Wahyunto et al., 2020).

In this diverse farming activity, Suherman et al. Focus on optimizing production without sacrificing environmental functions. Therefore, it is necessary to be careful in utilizing and managing natural resources. In this context, increasing peatland conversion for oil palm plantations will reduce environmental impacts by reducing carbon stocks in forests and the impact of increased emissions due to peatland fires (Agus et al., 2014).

2. METHODS

Refers to the thoughts above, this study aims to understand the farming community's understanding of utilizing cultural flexibility in adapting and transforming the food estate program by grouping the community into groups of advanced, independent, and modern farmers. Thus the research method used is a descriptive qualitative method to understand the dynamics of community life through *in-depth interviews* with farmers, community leaders, extension workers, and village heads (Sugiyono, 2019).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural flexibility in Belanti Siam village in Pulang Pisau Regency, categorized as advanced farmers, shows an effort to survive rather than adapt, leading to innovation in managing food crops on peatlands. The farmers prefer to minimize the risk by planting twice and using superior seeds to spread the land to restore soil fertility and strengthen cooperation solidarity in land clearing, and agreeing not to leave land uncultivated to prevent the breeding of rat pests. In addition, in one plot of land, farmers do not plant crops other than rice on the assumption that these plants can serve as breeding grounds for rats. In addition, farmers prefer to choose non-organic fertilizers rather than organic fertilizers to ensure the fertility of rice plants (Rachmawan et al., 2021; Usop & Rajiani, 2021).

In the independent farming community dominated by the local community in Dadahup, Kapuas Regency, farming adaptation has entered a transformative area by developing a cropping pattern using superior seeds for two plantings and one-time using local seeds. They have also conducted trials of planting local seeds from cross cultivation between local seeds and superior seeds from IPB under the name IR Dadahup, planting other crops such as vegetables, fruits, and jelutung type rubber, which has a high selling value. In this farming business, they prefer organic fertilizers to non-organic fertilizers. To maintain the sustainability of the farming business, they have also opened an Agribusiness

secondary school in their farming environment. Institutionally, they have formed a corporate Farmers Group Association (Gapoktan) whose function is to serve the needs of members, including marketing the products of farmer members. However, with limited capital, this Corporate Gapoktan has been unable to function (Dakir, 2017; Herman et al., 2022).

The ongoing transformation in Dadahup will become an embryo and develop into a modern farmer by strengthening the capacity of the Corporate Gapoktan as an institution that accommodates farmers' products and markets them. They are also very enthusiastic about strengthening the use of superior seeds for two plantings and one planting using local seeds; continue the development of high economic value crops, namely jelutung rubber and fruits, as well as secondary crops to meet daily needs. Every agribusiness activity always creates a multiplier effect, namely the presence of business opportunities that have the potential to be developed in food estate areas such as transportation, markets, and agro-ecotourism businesses by utilizing large areas of fruit, vegetable, and fishing ponds and creating a *green* environment and green economy to create awareness of environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, and social and cultural sustainability, through the development of homestays for the weekend. The hope is the creation of Kapuas and Pulang Pisau as strategic areas to support national food needs that broadly impact people's lives (*sustainable livelihood*) and sustainable development. In addition, preserving cultural values through traditional ceremonies is needed apart from being a social cohesiveness and for developing cultural arts in supporting agro-eco-tourism (Abbas et al., 2021; Usop & Rajiani, 2021; Yeny et al., 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

In a group of advanced farmers in Belanti Siam village, Pulang Pisau Regency, high solidarity was found among farmers to minimize risks of crop failure and threats from rats and birds. Farmers, community leaders, and extension workers as actors who intensely interact in the dynamics of the life of the farming community who should be able to take advantage of cultural flexibility to innovate and prefer to survive rather than take risks. In contrast to independent farmers in Dadahup village, cultural flexibility is shown by the courage to make innovations and ecosystem development efforts by developing plants with high economic value that are following the designation of peatlands; development and strengthening of the institutional capacity of the Corporate Gapoktan and agricultural business sustainability by opening an Agribusiness High School educational institution.

Development to become a modern farmer requires support involving the government and the business world, and banking to develop farmer institutions as a Corporate Gapoktan that can serve members of the farmers and the development of businesses outside the agricultural sector to encourage the mobility of goods, services, and people to visit these strategic areas. Furthermore, the potential likely to be developed related to the buffer function of Central Kalimantan for the State Capital (IKN) provides an opportunity to develop agro-eco-tourism based on the natural environment produced by farmers' products which is expanded according to market needs. Thus, it will encourage Kapuas Regency and Pulang Pisau Regency as strategic economic development areas, especially in fulfilling national food, with consistency in the agroecosystem approach.

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