



Socio-Cultural Issues In Agricultural Modernization: A Case Study of the Food Estate Program in Pulang Pisau Regency

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Abstract

The food estate program located in Pulang Pisau Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, focuses on the development of the agricultural sector. However, research using a qualitative approach has found that the increase in rice production in Pulang Pisau Regency, as an outlying area, is inversely proportional to the high price of rice in Palangkaraya City, the core or central area of activities in Central Kalimantan Province. This occurs because the rice production in Pulang Pisau Regency is directly bought by traders, who generally come from South Kalimantan. The rice is then processed in South Kalimantan and resold in the form of premium quality rice to Palangkaraya City. The Dayak culture of the indigenous population of Central Kalimantan, which lacks trading culture, provides an opportunity for the Banjar people, who have long been known as traders. As a result, although rice production in Pulang Pisau Regency increases, the price of rice remains high in Palangkaraya City due to the long production and distribution costs.

Keywords: food Estate, rice prices, cultural

Introduction

According to historical records, since Soeharto assumed national leadership in 1967 and consolidated his power until 1969, he fully embraced modernization theory as the foundation for development policy in Indonesia (Fakih, 2003; Restiyanto dan Yusroni, 2006; Ricklefs, 2007; Supriyatno, 2009) One of the phenomenal development programs is called the “Green Revolution,” which involves massive agricultural (Tanko et al., 2023) sector development as a response to Indonesia’s position as a rice-importing country, a legacy of the Old Order government. The tangible outcome of the New Order government’s Green Revolution program (Sollai, 2023) was the achievement of rice self-sufficiency in 1984 Even at that time, Indonesia had a reserve of 2 million tons of rice as a surplus from the national rice production of 25 million tons (Prayoga et al., 2019; Setia, 2023). In recognition of this success, the Indonesian government was invited by the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) to the commemorative forum of FAO's 40th anniversary in Rome in 1985 (Elhassnaoui et al., 2023) to present Indonesia's achievement in achieving food self-sufficiency (Ministry of Agriculture RI, 2023). At that time, Indonesia also provided assistance of 100,000 tons of rice to famine victims in Africa (Handani *et al.*, 2017; Ministry of Agriculture RI, 2023).

However, Indonesia's status as a self-sufficient rice nation did not last long because in 1995, it resumed rice imports, reaching up to 3 million tons (Sugianto in detikfinance.com, 2021). The situation prompted the government to enact various policies aimed at restoring Indonesia to self-sufficiency in rice. Santosa (2015) It is noted that there have been four national food estate development programs, namely the Peatland Development Program (PLG) covering 1 million hectares in Central Kalimantan, the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) in Merauke Regency, Papua, covering 1.2 million hectares, the Delta Kayan Food Estate in Bulungan Regency, East Kalimantan, covering approximately 0.5 million hectares, and the Jungkat Agri Complex in Kuburaya Regency, West Kalimantan, covering 0.25 million hectares. During President Joko Widodo's administration, based on Presidential Regulation No. 109 of 2020, the food estate program policy was established in Central Kalimantan Province in response to the FAO's warning urging all countries to anticipate food crises (Sandi in CNBC Indonesia, 22 Januari 2021). The territorial division for the implementation of the food estate program in Central Kalimantan is as follows: (1) Gunung Mas Regency for cassava development; (2) Pulang Pisau Regency and Kapuas Regency for rice agriculture development. The territorial division for the implementation of the food estate program in Central Kalimantan is as follows: (1) Gunung Mas Regency for cassava development; (2) Pulang Pisau Regency and Kapuas Regency for rice agriculture development. The territorial division for the implementation of the food estate program in Central Kalimantan is as follows: (1) Gunung Mas Regency for cassava development; (2) Pulang Pisau Regency and Kapuas Regency for rice agriculture development. The territorial division for the implementation of the food estate program in Central Kalimantan is as follows: (1) Gunung Mas Regency for cassava development; (2) Pulang Pisau Regency and Kapuas Regency for rice agriculture development (Decision of the Minister of National Development Planning/Head of the National Development Planning Agency No. KEP. 18/M.PPN/HK/03/2023).

Specifically in Pulang Pisau Regency, the implementation of the food estate program, which began in 2020, successfully increased rice production from 60,366.46 tons to 73,179.37 tons in 2021, and continued to rise to 85,923.18 tons in 2022 (Badan Pusat Statistik Kalimantan Tengah, 2023). Considering the geographical position of Pulang Pisau Regency, which shares a direct border with Palangkaraya City, the rice demand in Palangkaraya City can certainly be met at reasonable prices. According to the theory of "central place" by Walter Christaller (1933) (Vasudevan, 2023) and August Losch (1940) (Soria-Lopez et al., 2023), Pulang Pisau Regency is considered a peripheral area to Palangkaraya City, which serves as the center of various activities in Central Kalimantan. However, in reality, the increase in rice production in Pulang Pisau Regency is inversely proportional to the expensive rice prices in Palangkaraya City. As reported by Bank Indonesia's website, the National Strategic Food Price Information Center, Central Kalimantan ranks first in terms of the highest rice prices in traditional markets, reaching Rp. 18,800/kg (25 Januari 2024). Based on the above description, this research specifically examines the increase in rice production in Pulang Pisau Regency, which is inversely related to the high price of rice in Palangkaraya City, from the perspective of the socio-cultural system of the local community.

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Literature Review

In Indonesia, the traditional agricultural sector began to interact with modernization since the New Order government implemented the green revolution program. According to modernization theory, societal development progresses in a linear manner from primitive to advanced societies (Comte in Etzioni dan Etzioni, 1964; Suwarsono dan Y. So, 1991). The evolutionary approach adds that modernization leads societies to transition progressively and sequentially from primitive to advanced stages. However, studies by Smelser and Mc. Clelland (in Etzioni dan Etzioni, 1964) found that development in developing countries is hindered by internal factors such as social-cultural values, work ethic, motivation for progress, socio-economic and political institutions, and the general time orientation of the society (Wang et al., 2024).

Essentially, modernization theories argue that (1) societies in developing countries lack the appropriate mentality for development, and (2) the value systems in societies in developing countries are not conducive to development (Budiman in Frank, 1984). In his statement, Huntington (1971) explicitly states that modernization theory views “modern” and “traditional” as two conflicting concepts. Therefore, in the process of modernization, things deemed traditional have no significant role and must be replaced (Ammann et al., 2024).

Entering the 1970s era, modernization theories began to receive criticism, both from within their own circles and from Marxist schools of thought, which have different political and academic traditions. In addition to theoretical objections, criticism of modernization theory can be seen through the study by Wong (in Berger and Hsiao, 1988), which examines the influence of family institutions on internal organization in various Chinese-owned companies in Hong Kong. The results indicate that the metaphor of the family institution forms the basis for patron-client relationships between employees and company owners. Economically, this virtuous paternalistic relationship can help entrepreneurs attract and retain workers in highly volatile industries (Huang et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, Dove (1988) examined the interaction of national development policies with various local cultural diversities. The main message conveyed by this study is that traditional culture is closely and consistently related to the economic, social, and political changes in the society where its traditional culture is embedded. Traditional culture is always undergoing dynamic changes, thus not hindering the development process but rather aiding its smooth progression. From an environmental perspective Dove's study (1988) found that traditional culture plays a positive role in preserving the environment. This is evident in the environmental restoration resulting from the implementation of swidden farming in areas within commercial forest concessions in Kalimantan Island.

Theoretical and empirical discussions above affirm that the traditional culture of society does not necessarily translate as a hindrance to the development process. In fact, in certain circumstances, the traditional culture of some Indonesian communities plays a positive role in fostering development success, including in the modern agricultural sector development as the core of the food estate program developed in Pulang Pisau Regency.

Research Method

This research employs a qualitative approach. The research location is in Pulang Pisau Regency, an outlying area of Palangkaraya City. Secondary data were obtained from the Central Statistics Agency, Bank Indonesia Central Kalimantan, and various other written

sources. Primary data were gathered through interview techniques with officials from the Department of Food Crops, Horticulture, and Livestock, the Food Security Agency, the Central Kalimantan Regional Office of the National Logistics Agency (Bulog), the Kahayan Kuala Agricultural Extension Center, and the Pandih Batu Agricultural Extension Center. Additionally, interviews were conducted with several farmers in Bahaur Tengah Village and Belanti Siam Village, as well as rice traders. Following Miles and Huberman (2004), all data were analyzed using the Interactive Model technique.

Result and Discussion

As mentioned earlier, the food estate program implemented since 2020 in Pulang Pisau Regency has successfully increased rice or paddy production, as indicated by the following documentary study:

Table 1. Harvested Area and Rice Production in Pulang Pisau Regency

Year	Harvested Area/Ha	Rice Production/ton	Average	Treatment
2020	22.059	60.366	2,73	Intensification
2021	24.702	73.179	2,96	Intensification Extensification
2022	25.300	85.923	3,39	Intensification Extensification

Source: Central Kalimantan BPS, 2022.

However, the increase in rice production in Pulang Pisau Regency as a peripheral area contrast with the expensive rice prices in Palangkaraya City as a core area. Interviews with informants revealed that this phenomenon occurs because the majority of rice production is directly purchased by traders, who mostly come from Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan.

Rice is collected and processed in Banjarmasin into premium quality rice through modern rice milling factories. In theoretical terms, traders from Banjarmasin have capital in the form of rice milling factories (Rahayu dan Dinarossi, 2015). The rice, processed into premium quality rice, is then shipped and resold to Central Kalimantan, particularly to Palangkaraya City. The distance between Banjarmasin and Palangkaraya is approximately 192 km, passing through Kapuas Regency and Pulang Pisau Regency, which border directly with Palangkaraya City. The long production chain with longer transportation distances leads to expensive rice prices in Palangkaraya City.

1) Socio-cultural Analysis

As a modern agricultural development program, the food estate demands social changes from the actors involved, including farmers and the surrounding community at the program implementation sites. Interviews with farmers in Bahaur Tengah and Belanti Siam Villages found that the food estate program implements a pattern of planting superior rice varieties three times a year using the Agriculture Index (IP), while farmers' tradition was to plant once a year and now accommodatively they plant a maximum of twice a year in response to the food estate program. The farmers' tradition, with these changes, aligns with the conditions of tidal agricultural land and the soil's need for fallow periods.

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Although from the perspective of Korten and Carner's theory (1984), the rice planting pattern of the food estate program is not entirely in line with the socio-cultural system of the local community with all its local diversity, the planting pattern of twice a year is acceptable to local farmers, thus increasing rice production in Pulang Pisau Regency. This fact contradicts Huntington (1971) assertion that “modern” and “traditional” are two conflicting concepts.

On the other hand, socio-cultural aspects that become problems in the context of the food estate program are found, namely the trading culture not possessed by the local population, who are mostly Dayak people. The people of Central Kalimantan historically are not traders but rely on forest products (Koentjaraningrat, 1984; Musthafa et al., 2012; Institusi Dayakologi, 2017). Therefore, there are no local people taking advantage of downstream opportunities from the increased rice production in Pulang Pisau Regency. Consequently, rice is bought and processed by outsiders, especially the Banjar people, who have been known as traders since the time of the Banjar Kingdom (Hairus Salim HS, 1997; Pemkot Banjarmasin, 2017; and Sjarifuddin et al., 2003). As large-scale traders, the Banjar people have modern rice milling machines, enabling them to process and separate rice grains according to desired categories from low-grade to high-grade, low-medium-premium-super premium rice. Rice with good quality is then shipped and resold to Palangkaraya City, hence the saying in Central Kalimantan: “we sell rice, buy rice from South Kalimantan”.

Conclusion

The food estate program implemented in Pulang Pisau Regency has successfully increased rice production. However, this rice is generally purchased and processed into high-quality rice using modern rice mills in Banjarmasin. The high-quality rice is then resold in Central Kalimantan, particularly in Palangkaraya City. The long production and distribution chain leads to expensive rice prices in Palangkaraya City. This occurs because, socio-culturally, the indigenous people or Dayak ethnic group of Central Kalimantan are not inclined towards trading, so the opportunity is seized by the Banjar people, who have been known as traders since ancient times.

Therefore, it is recommended that the local government (the Central Kalimantan Provincial Government and/or the District/City Government), State-Owned Enterprises (BUMD), or other institutions initiate (1) the purchase of rice produced from the food estate program and from the general public; (2) the establishment of modern rice milling factories to process the rice into quality rice; and (3) sell it in markets across Central Kalimantan.

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