



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Participation and social solidarity of farmers in supporting corn exports in Gorontalo regency

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### Abstract

The implementation of the regional autonomy system is clear evidence of such changes. Regional autonomy has brought about changes to the system of government in Indonesia from centralistic to desentralistic. The change of the government system also brought a share of development in the area including in Gorontalo Regency. One of the changes that occur is the help of corn seeds. Through this assistance, corn production from Gorontalo corn farmers proved to increase sharply from 692 thousand tons in 2016, to 1.5 million tons in 2018. Even from the total corn exports of 380 thousand tons in 2018, 113 thousand tons were produced by Gorontalo farmers. This research uses a type of qualitative research. This research aims to describe various conditions and situations of social reality that exist in society as objects of research and raise these realities to the surface as characteristics, characters, traits, models, signs, or images of conditions, situations or phenomena of solidarity and social capital of farmers. The social participation of farmers is realized from the formation of farmer groups that can be said to be part of the signification structure of farmers who are always coordinated with group members and the government so that there is an intense increase in corn exports, which indicates the government's concerns in a broader form to farmers but in the name of laws and regulations. The social solidarity of corn farmers manifested in the culture of participation of farmers in increasing corn commodity exports takes place by means of full involvement in all agropolitan program activities. The involvement has reciprocal elements or back-to-backs for farmers in the form of good crops and has an impact on their level of economic well-being.

**Keywords:** Participation; Social; Solidarity; Farmers; Government

### 1. Introduction

Indonesia has become a rich country in agriculture because it is supported by the government. The seriousness of the government is seen through the efforts of the agricultural modernization program that has been launched first. Although farmers need a high level of adaptation to various lifestyle changes that are a consequence of the program, the results still delight the Indonesian peasantry. This indicates the participation of farmers in the modernization program. So the farmers become an important part as implementers. Although the country uses a top-down and highly centralistic development system, it is fully responsible for the development of nations and communities.

In its development, the change of state leadership (president) also affects the system of government which also has an impact on various nation-building programs. Every time the president changes, then the president's policy changes. The government system that is 'Top-Down' and has dominated for decades has shifted to 'Down to Top'. The state is no longer the power that dominates the state but the people who become the power. It is the people who determine their own lives, while the state only facilitates it through development.

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Because at that time, the atmosphere of the country became different. The implementation of the regional autonomy system is clear evidence of such changes. Regional autonomy has brought about changes to the system of government in Indonesia from centralistic to desentralistic. This change has an impact on all dimensions of national life, especially development. Now regional development must rest on its own ability to obtain local native income (PAD). In this way farmers help local governments increase local income [1].

Farmers as the spearhead of agricultural development is the main resource or the main subject of development implementation. In the past, they were positioned as objects, considered to have no ideas of their own or decisions to carry out their agriculture, all agricultural ideas came from the government. Therefore, individually farmers need to have professional awareness and responsibility for their work. This awareness has an impact on their 'level of seriousness' to succeed and produce good production of the efforts that have begun. Awareness that farmers should have related knowledge and work skills, awareness that they must cooperate with governments, other institutions, and other farmers, as well as awareness to participate widely. This condition can generally be said that farmers must collaborate with all stakeholder components.

The decades of experience of the Indonesian people in agriculture make them mature for all the problems that occur. The adverse effects left by the agricultural modernization program become lessons that will be corrected and will not be repeated. If in the past assumptions about agriculture were always related to rice crops, then now it is undergoing expansion to other crops that have promising commodities such as corn crops.

This phenomenon indicates that corn crops have become the prima donna of agricultural development. In fact, in a number of provinces corn crops are indeed the focus of development and not rice crops. Some other provinces focus on developing rice crops and not corn crops. Gorontalo today can be referred to as a corn barn. This is because of the increase in corn production to be able to export to foreign countries, namely the Philippines which is a rice barn country. The Gorontalo government exported 12,500 tons of corn in August 2020 [2]. This shows a proud achievement because it shows the results of the hard work they have carried out systematically and planned so far.

Corn seed assistance to communities in various regions such as Tolangohula District, Gorontalo Regency. Through this assistance, corn production from Gorontalo corn farmers proved to increase sharply from 692 thousand tons in 2016, to 1.5 million tons in 2018. Even from the total corn exports of 380 thousand tons in 2018, 113 thousand tons were produced by Gorontalo farmers. This figure is greater than the initial target of only 58 thousand tons [3]. This is also reinforced by one of the achievements of corn export achievements showing the form of social interaction of Gorontalo Regency farmers as a cultural behavior of the community in the business of corn farming that is getting better. Participation as part of the culture is at the optimal level, because almost all elements of society are involved in it and cooperate. In this context, participation is also proven as part of the characteristics or characteristics of Indonesian cultured humans, the human and cultural relationship is likened to an animal trapped in the 'noose of meaning' that he weaves himself. While in Tylor's formulation (in Ritzer, 2014), that culture is expressed as 'a comprehensive complex, which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and various abilities and habits obtained by man as a member of society.

The description above illustrates how important socio-cultural resources are as farmers' capital in increasing corn production. Of course, corn farmers respond to this because to achieve this requires optimal support from the local social and cultural environment.

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## 2. Material and methods

This research uses a type of qualitative research. This research aims to describe various conditions and situations of social reality that exist in society as objects of research and raise these realities to the surface as characteristics, characters, traits, models, signs, or images of conditions, situations or phenomena of solidarity and social capital of farmers. [4] in his book wrote that a descriptive study intends to reveal the real reality of a particular society or community, regarding a symptom or relationship between several interrelated symptoms.

Basically, descriptive research uses qualitative methods. According to [5] suggests that the findings in qualitative methods are not the same as quantitative methods derived from mechanical procedures with statistical tools. Therefore, qualitative methods are strongly associated with research on the realities of life covering a person's socio-cultural history, individual behavior, or interactional relationships. Qualitative concepts mean that there is a focus of research that is emphasized on the utilization of nonstatistic or mathematical applications, especially in the process of data analysis towards scientific research findings. This description is a principle difference between qualitative research and quantitative research.

In social research, the terms 'structure' and 'actor' are known. The two are two different things at the same time opposite. Understanding structure (structuralism) socially looks at the pattern of relationships that work behind actors. Meanwhile, the term 'Actor' views the existence of a common sense perception of the actor's actions. Therefore, understanding the reality of individuals, or groups and social communities must go back and forth between objective and subjective structures [6]. However, there are also those who collaborate the two as two things that cause consequences, and are called 'Structures' or 'Structure-Actors'. This perspective is used in research as a middle ground.

In this study, the author took several stages starting from observing (observation), making research design, data collection, data processing, data analysis and data reporting.

- Initial observation or field smell was carried out by researchers to get various preliminary information related to the research area and focus on the object studied, namely corn farmers in Gorontalo Regency.
- The manufacture of the design is carried out in accordance with issues related to the focus of the object studied related to corn farmers concerning structure-actors in increasing corn exports, the interweaving of structure-actors in increasing corn exports, and supporting factors and inhibiting the increase in corn exports.
- Research preparation is to provide research instruments such as interview guides, observation guidelines, field recording, which will be used in obtaining data and information from backgrounds and research subjects.
- The implementation of the study is that the author takes to the field to conduct a live interview with the research subject. In this section, data is collected in the form of: the relationship of actor structures in increasing corn exports, the interweaving of structures-actors in increasing corn exports, and the obstacles they face in increasing corn exports.

As a qualitative research process, data processing, data analysis, and data processing are also carried out simultaneously at the time of data collection. For example, in the process of identifying and recapitulating observation results, and interviews, there is also a process of reduction, display of data and the withdrawal of preliminary conclusions. This process takes place simultaneously and is reciprocal.

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### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Social Participation of Corn Farmers

Corn farmers are one of the social entities in agricultural communities in Gorontalo Regency. Corn farmers are not much different from rice farmers in this location because the characteristics are also close although sometimes the type of agriculture has special characteristics that are different from rice paddy farmers but socially structures often have similarities. If there is a difference, then only in the mere transparency of the difference.

Theoretically, social participation indicates the total involvement of a person or community in the form of physical activity in a particular activity or program including mental, thought, moral, feeling, and material by covering the stages of planning, implementation, and control or evaluation by utilizing available local resources [7].

When cultivating land, farmers also need funds to buy agricultural needs. Farmers still have to spend their own money in limited amounts, and should not be free all so that they also feel the name of sacrifice in work so that the results feel different because it is the result of their own struggle. In the agropolitan program, farmers are required to engage in farmer groups as a mandatory requirement. Through involvement in farmer groups, farmers implement their involvement from the beginning of activities by thinking together and planning together the steps that will be carried out with other farmers in the future under the direction of extensionists. In the agropolitan program, there is already a macro draft of activities prepared by the government, but the implementation and details must still pass the proposal of farmers as implementers of the program. Farmers organize all detail agropolitan activities from the beginning to downstream, namely the sale of crops through the instructions of extensionists.

In the farmer group, farmers practice their knowledge of corn land processing obtained from training with extension workers that lasts for several months. At the same time farmers and extensionists evaluate or control their work through official or unofficial ansar meetings (1987). In the meeting, farmers are conditioned to convey their ideas or thoughts about what is faced in the field as a problem to be overcome or solved together for the common interest as well. Thus, farmers experience the involvement of feelings, morals in the program that is preceded by physical and thought involvement so that farmers really participate fully that they are the ones who have a program of living and being lived together, borne together, and prosperous together.

Corn farmers successfully involve themselves in the agropolitan program by going through several stages and passing some time. It takes some time to change the thinking and awareness of individual farmers as a social entity in society about the urgency of a program intended for them. In addition, it takes the farmer's patience in his involvement to enjoy the expected results that everything is not instant but must go through the process and stages to get to the expected point. That point is abundant crop yields followed by corn exports abroad. Up to this section, it can be said that community participation in the success of the agropolitan program is significantly successful with indicators that all farmers are fully involved in all stages of the program, then the goal is achieved with the occurrence of corn exports which indicates the availability of abundant corn stocks due to successful crops. Abundant harvests show the performance of corn crop management is going well and correctly, and so on.

### **3.2. Social Solidarity of Corn Farming Communities**

One of the fundamental characteristics of agricultural societies that have an important role is the existence of strong social solidarity. Social solidarity is conceptually understood as the existence of feelings of equality due to geographical similarities, or work and thus makes them have strong emotional social bonds. There is an identity equation that unites them. One of the problems that stand out to corn farmers in Gorontalo Regency based on the results of interviews of informants is that no corn farmers have managed to harvest significantly, their problems are always the same naturally or culturally as the location of land that is often inundated with water, the weather faced always causes them to fail to harvest or harvest is not qualified, the presence of rat pests. They also face structural problems such as not getting too much attention from the government until there is an agropolitan program. The lack of structural attention during this time causes them to get used to socio-cultural adaptations to continue their lives. These cultural and structural problems further make them stronger social solidarity.

The corn farming community in Gorontalo still basically has the characteristics of rural farming communities with strong mechanical solidarity forces. The realization of solidarity is contained in the establishment of Huyula a local mutual aid institution for farmers. In Huyula groups, farmers express their needs or problems as one-timers, likes, and as happy as possible [8]. Huyula is not just a place to vent about agricultural problems but all their social problems. They also crowded to help each other and solve together the problems of their group members. Huyula became their place to build the strength and social solidarity of the peasants. What Durkheim tells us about the characteristics of mechanical solidarity, seems to be represented in Huyula institutions, especially about the collective consciousness that very strongly binds their feelings.

The culture of corn farmers based on values is in line with the meaning of mechanical solidarity, while the culture of formal rationality is in line with organic solidarity as outlined earlier. In its development, the two forms of solidarity do take place simultaneously but what is more dominant is that organic solidarity dominates mechanical solidarity [9]. The dominance of organic solidarity over mechanical solidarity is consequential to the shift of solidarity patterns from mechanical to organic which the process occurs slowly or silently because it is awakened or constructed through the process with the support of formal institutions and impressed as 'cultural coercion'. This then puts corn farmers in a 'culture of transition' from mechanical to organic meaning they have already absorbed the characteristics of organic solidarity but have not abandoned mechanical solidarity and are still implementing it even though it is no longer completely.

The process of shifting as a transitional society begins when the agropolitan program is implemented in the form of the obligation of farmers to join farmer groups [10]. The government reasoned that through the farmer group they could be monitored and coordinated to receive assistance as well as their development in implementing the program. This government statement indicates that there are indicators set as a measure to assess the achievements of the program. These measures are a term in society characterized by organic solidarity..

The shift has basically happened before through the introduction of communication technology that makes the farmer community open-minded but still slow. Agropolitan programs accelerate and strengthen the shifting process so that over a long period of time there is a great consensus on social transformation. This means corn farmers can keep farming but they are more rational (instrumental) than ever before because there are results they want and have set the stages towards achieving it. Aspects of mechanical solidarity remain but only occur in some parts of his life for example in neighbors or society while his organic solidarity remains in his work.

### **3.3. Social Capital of Corn Farming Communities**

Social capital is seen in the form of an individual's willingness to prioritize the interests of community groups. The consequence of such willingness is to foster strong interactions that produce performance that contain social value. The basis of social capital is trust, ideology and religion. James Coleman saw social capital as both internal and innate

inherent in the structure of interpersonal relations. The structure of relationships forms a social network that creates a variety of social qualities in the form of mutual trust, openness, unity of norms, and establishing various types of sanctions for its members. That is, every person or individual who builds social relationships by itself forms social capital, or in every social relationship that takes place always brings elements of social capital. Explaining the understanding of the social reality of the corn farmer community that all forms of social relations in it always have social capital as the elements mentioned earlier such as back and forth, trust, cooperation. Indeed, facts show that social ties between corn farmers always contain elements of social capital. Social harmonization formed among them is based on the existence of social capital which is also a characteristic of social solidarity.

Social capital is also the glue for each individual farmer, in the form of norms, beliefs and networks of work, so that mutually beneficial cooperation occurs, to achieve common goals. Social capital is also understood as the knowledge and understanding shared by the community, as well as the pattern of relationships that allow a group of individuals to perform one productive activity. This social capital is formed in conjunction with the existence of their community. The interesting thing is that social capital has not changed even though the form of social solidarity shifted from mechanical to organic in the transitional process. This means that social capital as a content in social solidarity remains a substance of solidarity that undergoes transformation. It also indicates that only the form of deed shifts but that social values and capital do not change because this substance is present continuously in any form. It is shapeless and its shape follows the form in which man places his interactions or solidarity. This means that social capital is also present in organic solidarity that is present in the rational-formal or rational instrumental relationship of its relationship with the extensionists, the relationship with the farm shop, and partly in relation to other farmers. Social capital remains present in the building of government trust in farmers. The government believes in farmers who can succeed in producing abundant corn harvests and farmers believe the government can provide fertilizer, seed, and so on so that farmers remain eager to run agropolitan programs until they actually produce abundant crops.

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#### **4. Conclusion**

The social solidarity of corn farmers manifested in the culture of participation of farmers in increasing corn commodity exports takes place by means of full involvement in all agropolitan program activities. The involvement has reciprocal elements or back-to-backs for farmers in the form of good crops and has an impact on their level of economic well-being. Farmers also involve themselves completely in terms of energy, materials, and thoughts. In terms of manpower, farmers are directly involved in the field with extensionists organizing activities. In terms of material, farmers still have to spend funds to buy fertilizers, toxins (subsidies) if the supply from the government runs out, and in mind farmers still try to solve the problems faced in the field with new ideas obtained from the knowledge of extension workers through field schools. In addition, this agropolitan program is intended for farmers so that farmers do not have the choice to reject it, but instead join it by following all its procedures because it is ultimately useful for the benefit of farmers themselves.

Farmers' social capital is realized from the formation of farmer groups that can be said to be part of the signification structure of farmers who are always coordinated with group members and the government so that there is an intense increase in corn exports, which indicates the government's concerns in a broader form to farmers but in the name of laws and regulations. This is manifested in agropolitan activity programs such as rules that require farmers to join farmer groups. This rule seems burdensome, but the essence is that with this rule the government actually pays attention to farmers to improve their welfare with the first step of becoming part of a farmer group, and so on.

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#### **Compliance with ethical standards**

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##### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No Conflict of Interest by Authors.

##### *Statement of informed consent*

All information obtained from informants in this study has received approval from the informant and is an important part of this research.

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