

Livelihood Dualism: Case Study of Wetland Conversion into Estate Impact in the Villages Based Javanese and Serawai Ethnics in Regency of Seluma, Province of Bengkulu, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of farmer livelihood dualism in rural area was indicated by the symptom of livelihood strategy that different by class. The lower and middle class showed survival strategy for their life while the upper class showed strategy of wealth accumulation. So the farmer's household diversified their source of income beside income from palm oil estate like rice farming, small business enterprises, and employing to the other farmer. In opposite, the upper class tended to specify on the palm oil estate as their source of income. This finding was revealed from survey of sixty household in combined with in-depth interviewed of some key informant. This phenomenon just occurred when the farmer converting their land from wetland to palm oil estate massively because the land converting affected to their working that shaped to this crop. When land conversion occurred, the employment alteration being estate farmer has affected their income source depend on their estate though Javanese and Serawai based household.

Key words: land conversion, livelihood strategy, palm oil, Javanese, Serawai, rational choice theory

INTRODUCTION

Livelihood dualism is a concept that we adapted from dual economy proposed by JH. Boeke (Mackie, 1980; Tetiani, 2005). This concept explained that the colonialism held in Indonesia, especially in Java have resulted emergence of capitalist economy in close proximity of pre-capitalist. Both of economy types grew in the same community but differ in people who participated. They were separated. The capitalist was represented by plantation economy while pre-capitalist by economy of people such as peasant in rural community and informal sector in urban. This concept was not free from critics. Just say Geertz who was prefer to perceive of colonialism impact as agricultural involution (Geertz, 1963). But in general the concept of dualism economy still relevance to analyze some phenomenon of development impact.

Livelihood refers to concept used by Ellis (2000) who stated that livelihood was a system comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household. He developed the concept from Chambers and Conway (1991) and Scoones (1998). The scholars who introduced concept of livelihood generally agreed that livelihood not only means to a living or strategy to live, rather more livelihood strategy. In Indonesia, formally this concept was proposed by Sajogyo (1992) when he found a phenomenon of modernization without development in Java. Then popularized by Dharmawan (2000) after wrote his thesis about livelihood and change in rural Indonesia.

We have published the process of land converting and its impact in shaping production structure of palm oil estate in rural community (Widiono, 1998). We used the theory of rational choice (Popkins, 1979; Hechter, 1989; Goldthorpe, 1998), then concluded that land conversion was rational step taken by farmers to overcome the economy aftermath the weakness of policy incentives and government control in food crops. The farmers tend to extent their estate by converting their wetland, adopted new technology, and reduced costs by using internal family workers.

Now, we will show that the land conversion not only problematic in term technical and economical, further more became problematic socially for their community. By combined dual economy and livelihood concepts we proposed livelihood dualisme. We raised it from the evidence of income dependence on palm oil, income diversification, single based income, and mutual relation between farmers and traders.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was case study conducted in the Javanese community namely Village of Rawasari District of East Seluma and Serawai ethnic community namely Pasar Seluma District of South Seluma. Both of the villages located in the Regency of Seluma, Province of Bengkulu. The case study done under tendency of wetland converting into small palm oil estate. As we know that this phenomenon have been occurring during several years ago (about 2000).

The data was collected during June-August 2007 from survey of 60 farmer households in combination with in-depth interview some key informants. The data consisted of motives to convert their land, income structure, adaptation and coping strategy. The data was analyzed quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Income Dependence On Palm Oil Estate

As Ellis (2000) said that farmer income composed of farm income, off farm income, and non-farm income. In this research farm income refer to income from palm oil estate, wetland, fishery, and yard; offfarm income were farm labor; and non-farm income were others income like small business. The fact showed that income tendency to depend on palm oil estate income (Figure 1). Income from palm oil estate was intended for food needs to be bought as well as for the cost of farm production. This phenomenon occurred in both of low, middle, and upper class households (Figure 2).

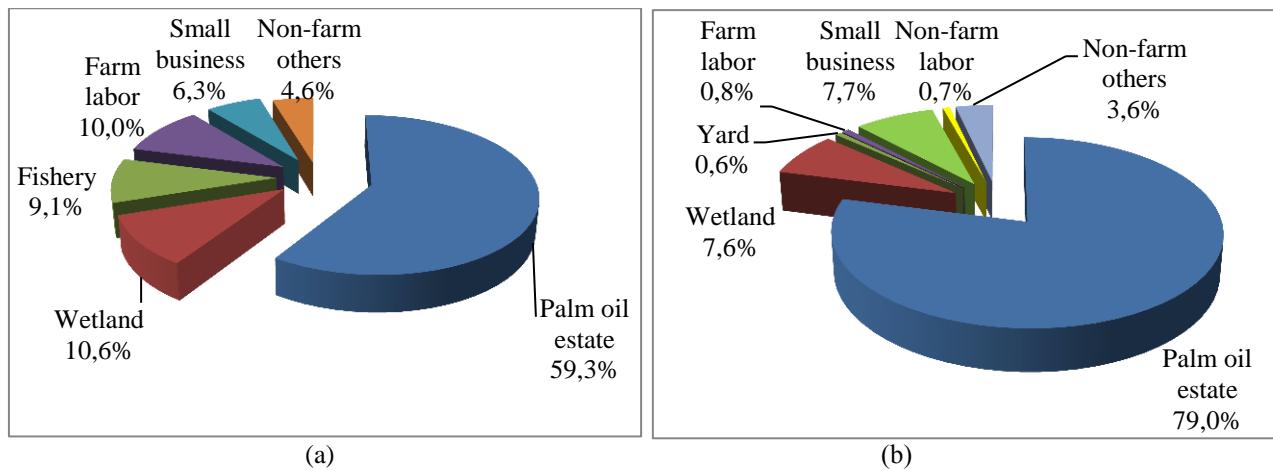


Figure 1. Income structure of farmer household in Pasar Seluma (a) and Rawasari (b), 2007

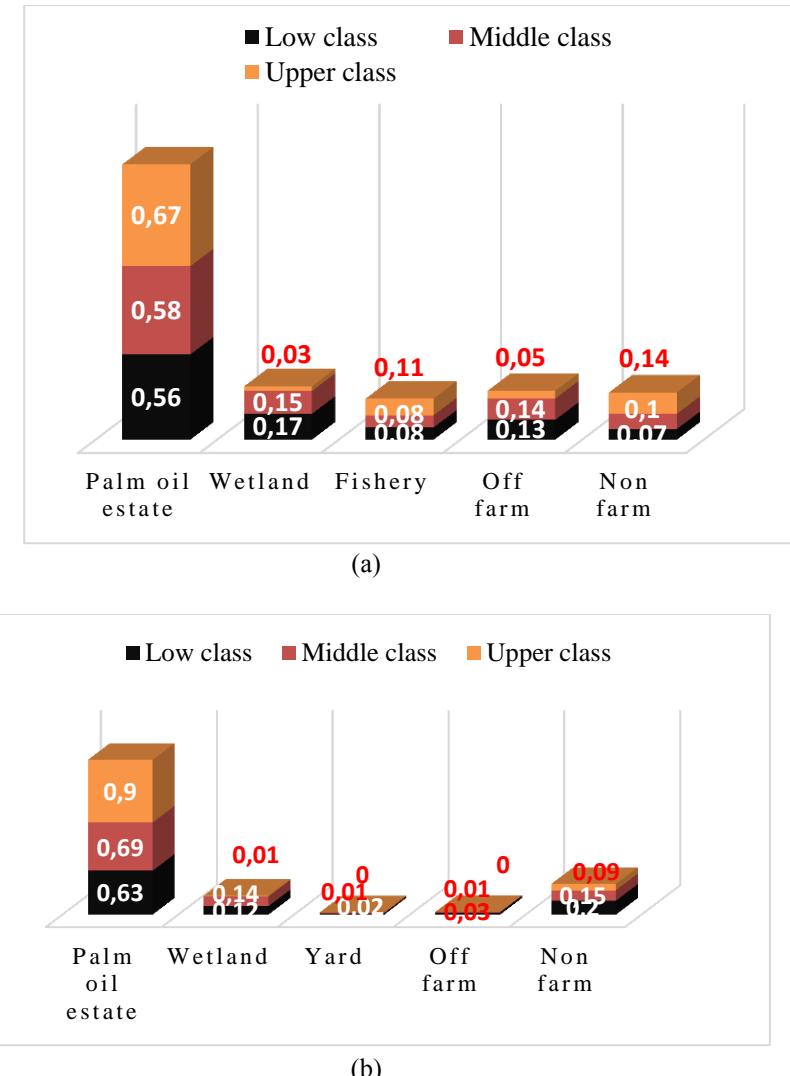


Figure 2. Proportion of income by class in Pasar Seluma (a) and Rawasari (b), 2007

Notes: Criteria of farmer classification by landholder:

1. Pasar Seluma Village:
Low class: 0.51-0.82 ha, n= 12; Middle class: 0.83-2.24 ha, n= 14; Upper class: 2.25-6.88 ha, n= 4
2. Rawasari Village:
Low class: 1.125-2.29 ha, n= 11; Middle class: 2.30-5.82 ha, n= 14; Upper class: 5.83-17.00 ha, n= 5

According to Figure 2 (a and b), the income farmer of Rawasari tend to more depend on palm oil estate. This was parallel to proportion wetland converting that occurred. By which 86-87% wetland have been converting into palm oil estate. The upper class of Rawasari farmer almost have not another income sources. While the upper class of Pasar Seluma farmer have secondary income from off farm and non-farm activities although for less portion. We could talk that the farmer converting their land massively was not followed by various occupation like labor employment, trading and services.

The growth of palm oil estate as a social phenomenon in the farmer community, in one side have increased their cashflow because this product was commercial agriculture (Pahan, 2007), not subsistence. So the production of estate has not yet created any other activities especially non-farm activities. They only created off farm activities especially when the farmers harvest the palm oil fruit. For the harvesting they used labor from internal family or relatives.

Diversification Versus Single Based Income and Their Consequences

According to Dharmawan (2000), the prospect of Indonesia villages livelihood pattern would be characterized by increasing the complexity of farmer income sources. This was driven by the emergence of various non-farm activities that parallel with the increasing number of population. The

complexity would be reflected by income diversification. So diversification was one of strategy to preserve their life and to increase their standar of living.

Our research found that income diversification occured on the middle and lower class households. Otherwise the upper class tend to single based income source (see Figure 2 and Table 2). In this case the farmers from Javanese (Rawasari) became more specialistrather than Serawai ethnic (Pasar Seluma). However both were likely to rely on single based income (palm oil estate). The number of household by the types of income diversity presented in Table 2.

From Table 2 we could conclude that farmer in Pasar Seluma became more diversified than Rawasari. The diversification could be mixed of palm oil estate with off farm or non farm activities or others farm. The proportion income from palm oil estate in Pasar Seluma in each class more less than Rawasari (see Figure 2). But income from wetland and off farm activities in Pasar Seluma was bigger. Thus this represented that income diversification in Pasar Seluma tend to use off farm activities as secondary income. While in Rawasari tend to use non-farm activities.

Table 2. Number of farmer by types of income diversity in 2007 (%)

| Type of Diversification | Pasar Seluma | | | Rawasari | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------|-------|----------|--------|-------|
| | Low | Middle | Upper | Low | Middle | Upper |
| 1. Palm oil estate | 33 | 21 | 75 | 45 | 64 | 80 |
| 2. Non-farm | 8 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 14 | 0 |
| 3. Palm oil estate&other farm | 42 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4. Palm oil estate&off-farm | 17 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. Palm oil estate&non-farm | 0 | 14 | 0 | 18 | 22 | 20 |
| 6. Other farm&off farm | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7. Other mix | 0 | 7 | 25 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Data collected from 30 household in each village (selected randomly, 2007). Note: Type of diversification used criteria proportion of 67% total income for each item.

In this case the lower and middle farmer both of the villages tended to diversify their income in order to survive their living by combined income source and did any way to generate secondary income (survival strategy). Otherwise the upper farmer tended to specialize in order to accumulate their wealth (startegy of wealth accumulation). There was a suspect that the farmer extent their estate to rely on their living. It just give one chance for the lower and middle farmer to diversify their income. We said that diversification occured because of the expanded estate by the farmers. So it was different with Rajagukguk (1995) and Dharmawan (2000) findings that in the wetlandbased villages, diversification taken place by developed non-farm activites.

Table3. Several ways to generate secondary income of farmers in Pasar Seluma and Rawasari, 2007

| No | Ways | Description | Contribution |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. | Utilize spare time | Became labour in upper farmer or plantation | Weekly earn |
| 2. | Mobilisation of family members | Opening village-shop managed by wife | Daily earn (consumption) |
| 3. | Mobilisation of natural resources | Yard utilization Getting fish in sea or river | Cash money monthly and consumption Cash money daiy and consumption |
| 4. | Mobilisation of skill | Became construction worker | Cash money periodically |
| 5. | Create social network | Develop relation to another farmer in order to be priority in harvesting activity (mutual reciprocity). Develop relation to wholesaler in order to get trust in debt (mutual reciprocity). | To ensure the secondary income as worker. To ensure in addresing urgent needs |

Source: In-depth interview to key informants, 2007.

We could be detailing this finding as follow. The lower and middle farmer in Pasar Seluma utilized their spare time in the harvesting period to become labour in the other farmers. They also worked as day laborer in plantations around their village. While the farmers in Rawasari increased their earn by opening village-shop or microenterprises generally managed by their wife. There were any ways to generate secondary income as presented in Table 3.

In addition to diversify the income, the farmers cover their vulnerability by coping strategies through any ways like taking saving (if available), sold livestocks, sold land, borrow to neighbours and wholesalers who was called *toke*. Generally the coping strategies were used when the farmers would run the great needs like paid medical or school expenses.

Mutual Relation between Farmers and *Toke*

Land conversion affected farmers action became rational by allocate resources to develop their estates. It was logical consequences because palm oil was commercial commodity who farmer couldn't direct consumpt. The farmers should sell their products to buyers located in their village. In the other hand the buyers namely *toke* run non-economic roles in their relation. The *toke*'s even became buffer to their livelihood because of any vulnerability who threaten them.

The relations became mutual reciprocal each other. Refer to Popkin (1979), although urgent conditions, farmer invested socially by utilized some fund stocks to ensure the continuity of economic relation with the *tokes*. The availability of cash money that could be borrow by farmers anytime were facility in several urgent needs. Otherwise the *tokes* provided loans to farmers would be ensure trust the farmers in selling their products. These were a rational choice for farmers and *tokes*.

Ways that reached the farmers when faced with urgent needs became habitual for farmers in borrowing money to the *tokes*. So in the sale of palm oil, in addressing their urgent needs have created multi dimensional social relations between the farmers and the *tokes*. Multidimensional relationship was believed to be a social buffer that could coordinate social interactions in rural communities.

CONCLUSIONS

After converting their lands, the farmers income became depending on the palm oil estate. Even the upper class farmers tend to have single base income of this source. They managed their estate intensively and extensively to accumulate their wealth. While the middle and lower class farmers diversified their income. They worked to secure their needs by occupying any activity in sectors off farm and non-farm beside managing their palm oil estate were not so large. This was the phenomenon of livelihood dualism.

This phenomenon just occurred when the farmers convert their wetlands into palm oil estates. Until now the livelihood security was buffered by mutual reciprocal relation between farmers and *tokes*. When the conversion continued in a long time and in the same time another sectors was not developed, will threaten livelihood sustainability in the villages. So we should pay more attention to the land converting impacts as well as to provide any efforts to stimulate growing trade and service activities.

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