

The Farmers' Mutual Cooperation Community's Values in Agriculture

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ABSTRACT

The values of farmers' mutual cooperation in agriculture were examined in Javanese society, where challenges related to differences in provider quality hindered the assessment of the indigenous economic landscape. Economic indices from various sectors dating back to 1880 were interpreted. The Quantitative Descriptive method was employed to describe and analyze findings without broad generalizations. Participant statements and their responses were examined to identify discrepancies between research findings and existing theories. Qualitative research methods, including interviews and observational techniques, were used to collect data through oral or written communication, enhancing the compilation of observation reports on contextual learning progress. Data analysis was guided by the Miles and Huberman methodology, which directed the process from data collection to presentation and conclusion. Findings indicated a rapid increase in skilled workers after 1830, particularly among carpenters. The number of carpenters surged due to the arrival of newly trained experts, supporting the transportation of goods from rural areas to major cities and ports. Jepara and Rembang emerged as key centers for ship equipment and furniture production, with Rembang employing approximately 700 carpenters by 1840.

ABSTRAK

Nilai Gotong Royong pada masyarakat petani dalam bidang pertanian. Berbagai tantangan terkait perbedaan kualitas penyedia menghambat penilaian lanskap ekonomi pribumi dalam masyarakat Jawa. Perlu menafsirkan indeks dari berbagai sektor dalam ekonomi pribumi pada tahun 1880. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Deskriptif Kuantitatif, yang digunakan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis hasil tanpa membuat generalisasi yang lebih luas. Untuk mengidentifikasi disparitas antara temuan penelitian dan teori, perlu meneliti pernyataan peserta dan komposisi tanggapan mereka. Metode penelitian kualitatif mengumpulkan data melalui komunikasi verbal atau tertulis. Berbagai teknik, seperti aktivitas wawancara dan pendekatan observasi, digunakan untuk memperoleh data tentang kemajuan pembelajaran kontekstual, sehingga meningkatkan kemampuan menyusun laporan observasi. Teknik analisis data menggunakan metodologi Miles dan Huberman, mulai dari pengumpulan data hingga penyajian hingga penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan pesat dalam jumlah pekerja terampil setelah tahun 1830. Di antara mereka, tukang kayu mendominasi, dengan jumlah mereka meroket karena banyaknya ahli baru yang dilatih untuk memfasilitasi pengangkutan barang dari daerah pedesaan ke kota-kota besar dan pelabuhan. Jepara dan Rembang menjadi pusat produksi kapal dan peralatan furnitur, mempekerjakan sejumlah besar tukang kayu, mencapai hingga 700 orang di Rembang pada tahun 1840.

Kata-kata kunci:

Nilai Lokal;

Pertanian;

Gotong Royong;

Ekonomi

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Introduction

Human life in society was fundamentally rooted in social interaction. Humans were inherently social beings who could not thrive in isolation and relied on the support of others (Budi et al., 2020). Consequently, cooperation and mutual aid were essential for successfully executing various tasks within a community. Cooperation was classified into two categories: mutual cooperation and social service. Mutual cooperation manifested in agricultural activities, household chores, celebrations, and times of disaster or loss. Conversely, social service activities were directed toward the public good and might be initiated by the community or mandated externally. Examples included the construction of infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and community centers (Koentjaraningrat, 1987).

The principle of reciprocity underscored that individuals should assist those who had aided them or, at the very least, refrain from causing them harm. This principle posited that receiving a gift or service engendered an obligation for the recipient to reciprocate with a gift or service of comparable value in the future (Scott, 1973).

In the village context, the predominant demographic comprised small-scale farmers who adhered to subsistence ethics and the principle of reciprocity rather than engaging in market-oriented practices. These farmers cultivated rice through collaborative efforts, providing mutual support in the agricultural process. Instead of selling their harvest, they stored it for daily family needs, prioritizing sustenance over profit. This approach introduced inherent risks, as farmers relied on unpredictable natural conditions, including seasonal variations such as rainy and dry seasons. Events like rainfall, floods, and pest infestations significantly disrupted agricultural productivity (Julaikha & Bahri, 2014).

A significant period of socio-economic transformation in Java commenced in 1830 with the introduction of the corporate system and continued until the mid-1880s when economic decline ensued. This transformation gradually undermined the economic viability of indigenous communities. Traditional agricultural practices that once satisfied community needs began yielding to a more materialistic lifestyle, prompting the population to increasingly purchase or acquire household necessities (Sainath, 2016).

The economic impact of this shift was noted by Van Niel in the changing habits of the rural population. Access to a broader economic market was facilitated for Javanese individuals through local food factories and merchants. Enhanced communication within market areas, along with the production of large boats and household goods, stimulated economic activity. As a result, financial activities beyond traditional agricultural practices were engaged in by Javanese individuals, significantly transforming the indigenous economy. This development challenged the notion of economic involution, which posited that population growth was solely absorbed by the agricultural sector—an idea widely rejected by scholars (Claver & Knight, 2018).

Economic disparities among communities were recognized as a consequence of rising producer productivity. Increasing economic inequality among workers was asserted to reflect the initial state of economic life within Indigenous communities. The assessment of these communities' economic conditions posed challenges due to variations in data quality. However, since the 1880s, when data collection became more systematic, indices across various economic sectors became interpretable. Although these statistics are categorized into several main groups, aligning them with modern statistical standards presented significant challenges. Clear definitions to distinguish these categories were lacking, necessitating comparisons of different representations to classify workers. Large areas of labor produced agricultural goods for sale,

involving interconnected producers, traders, and landowners (Aginta, Gunawan, & Mendez, 2021).

Between the 1830s and 1880s, Java underwent substantial socio-economic transformations as an industrial system emerged, which fostered more materialistic values and altered the modalities through which individuals addressed their needs (Sainath, 2016). This study aimed to examine the dynamics of economic and population growth during this period, with a particular emphasis on the ethical values of farmers within agricultural societies from the 1820s to the 1880s (Claver & Knight, 2018; Richards, 2015).

Statistics indicated that approximately 87% of the workforce engaged in economic activities; however, this figure represented only a portion of the population that was financially involved. Regional disparities in labor participation highlighted varying local economic conditions and employment opportunities. The objective of this study was to quantify the non-agricultural sector within Indigenous communities during the 1880s for subsequent analysis (Claver & Knight, 2018).

Agriculture remained the predominant sector, accounting for approximately 76% of economic activity related to food production. Even in areas with alternative employment opportunities, agriculture employed around 70% of the workforce. In regions with limited job prospects, the majority of inhabitants were engaged in farming, although not all rented or leased land was critical for their livelihoods (Richards, 2015).

Employment was vital for farmers, with approximately 60% of the agricultural sector comprising agricultural laborers. Social disparities among farmers intensified in the mid-1850s and persisted for several decades. Cattle ranchers and fish farmers represented only 0.4% and 2.2% of the agricultural workforce, respectively, while 23% were engaged in non-agricultural activities (Dong et al., 2018).

Certain non-agricultural workers were registered for taxation, underscoring a focus on skilled craftsmen, entrepreneurs, and individuals producing unique goods and services for rural households. This sector, representing less than 4% of the total workforce, was dispersed, with approximately 40% located in Java and a significant concentration in East Java (Richards, 2015).

This situation considerably influenced the agricultural sector in Central Java. The region boasted a robust industrial tradition, with numerous farmers contributing to employment growth within the industry. In fact, the trade sector in Java surpassed the industrial sector, with Central Java exhibiting notable involvement. This trade sector primarily consisted of sales and skilled traders, in addition to agricultural products. However, the overall infrastructure of this sector remained underdeveloped during the colonial period (Dong et al., 2018).

In West and East Java, the service sector, particularly in relation to job applications, was in high demand. European cities and industries provided numerous job opportunities, attracting a significant portion of the population. Central Java featured two regions with substantial service sectors: Pekalongan, recognized for sugar production and trade, and Semarang, noted for its labor force and administrative authority.

Data illustrated the significance of non-agricultural economic activities in Java, especially within an agricultural society. In the early 19th century, only a small number of households engaged in non-agricultural work. This material aimed to aid students in understanding the distinctions between the economic activities of indigenous Indonesian communities across both sectors.

Method

This study used qualitative methods to explore the values of mutual cooperation among farming communities in Java during the 1830s. The research focused on understanding the social and cultural context of farmers who engaged in mutual cooperation as a communal labor system within the agrarian sector. Employing a historical-qualitative approach, the study analyzed documents and secondary sources, including colonial archives, ethnographic reports, and scholarly assessments of the socio-economic conditions of farmers in Java. Content analysis served as the analytical technique, revealing the meanings embedded in the texts and interpreting the values and practices of mutual cooperation during that period. This methodology highlighted patterns of social interaction and solidarity that emerged in agricultural activities and other social engagements. To increase data validity, the study implemented a triangulation approach, comparing various historical sources, including colonial reports and earlier research, to achieve a nuanced understanding. The term "mutual cooperation" was examined within its historical context to clarify its usage and identify similar terms that described related communal labor practices. This approach provided insight into how the values of mutual cooperation evolved as integral aspects of identity and social solidarity among farming communities, as well as how these values addressed the socio-economic challenges of the time.

Result and Discussion

The agricultural community's emphasis on collective action underscored the importance of mutual cooperation, which fostered a shared lifestyle where labor and achievements were collectively produced and celebrated. This strong sense of community cohesion generated social capital that fueled development. Effective communication through various forums enabled farmers to tackle socio-economic challenges together, enhancing their planning and problem-solving capabilities.

Characterized by solidarity and unity, mutual cooperation cultivated collective behavior and knowledge sharing, reinforcing social bonds. This social capital played a crucial role in farmers' daily practices (Abdullah, 2022). Its significance manifested in three key areas: First, agrarian culture shaped social interactions within farming communities. Second, these interactions directly influenced the community's livelihood patterns, as farmers frequently sought assistance from relatives or neighbors for land management through informal wage agreements, boosting productivity and economic welfare. Third, while the economic benefits were considerable, the primary focus remained on collective efforts, achievements, and solidarity among farmers (Collier, 2002).

In the early 19th century, only about 6% of households participated in non-agricultural work, primarily in manufacturing and trade related to consumer goods. During this period, the workforce diversified significantly, with many individuals employed in shipbuilding and mixed manufacturing sectors. Local crafts, including pottery, met community needs; for instance, the Banten region produced approximately 30,000 ceramic pieces annually for local consumption, alongside various pots and bricks. In Pekalongan, artisans specialized in handicrafts for export, although few maintained consistent year-round employment and often relied on external labor (Istika et al., 2022). Initial shipments of these goods were set to begin in Central Java, followed by deliveries to East Java.

Throughout the region, skilled artisans such as blacksmiths, brass craftsmen, carpenters, and goldsmiths thrived in urban centers like Jepara and Rembang, where shipbuilding and furniture manufacturing flourished. Despite lower wages compared to rural areas, many skilled workers preferred these urban locations for employment. Goldsmiths and silversmiths primarily operated in cities, while some carpenters specialized in crafting puppets, masks, and musical instruments, often traveling between sites (Ataniyazov, 2023).

In contrast, the crafts and factory sector represented the smallest segment of the economy. A shortage of skilled labor and sustainable industry prompted individuals to seek non-agricultural jobs, especially in Semarang, where diverse workers earned income based on industrial standards. In regions known for their craft traditions, such as southern Priangan, many residents produced oil, mats, clothing, textiles, agricultural tools, and household furniture, as agriculture declined in importance (Maria Clara Mau et al., 2023).

Trade in the region remained minimal; most farmers and artisans created goods for personal use. Trade income was insufficient to support families, leading to perceptions of Chinese and Arab traders as fierce competitors. Small-scale labor initiatives were scarce, with few individuals earning wages for transporting goods between villages and towns.

Rural Java's low levels of non-agricultural economic activity in the early 19th century stemmed from the population's reliance on agriculture for income and basic needs. Favorable harvests occurred only when conditions allowed, while factors such as lack of funding hindered non-agricultural employment opportunities. Although some individuals received informal training from family members, they focused more on producing goods than on developing industrial skills. For example, craftsmen in Jepara struggled to establish workshops due to insufficient resources, as their earnings barely covered basic necessities.

After 1830, the demand for skilled workers, particularly carpenters, surged significantly. This demand arose from the need to transport goods from rural areas to urban centers and ports, as well as to provide carpentry services to sugar mills. From the mid-1850s onward, carpenters found substantial employment in sugar mills and other industries, transforming the local economy. In Bagelan, they contributed to building boats for river transport (Grattan-Guinness, 1984).

In Jepara and Rembang, many carpenters worked in the shipbuilding and furniture industries, with Rembang employing around 700 carpenters by 1840. The workforce expanded notably in rural areas, where individuals received compensation for furniture manufacturing. Urban centers like Semarang and Surabaya also had large communities of carpenters available for work. By the late 1850s, approximately 920 registered carpenters, wheelwrights, and shipbuilders were active in Surabaya, and the number of skilled contractors increased significantly. By the early 1830s, many construction projects were contracted out due to a labor shortage, creating consistent employment opportunities and encouraging individuals to pursue careers in construction (Bahmani-Oskooee et al., 2015).

In the early 1830s, blacksmiths in Java became increasingly prominent, with 879 artisans recorded across nine locations (Guerrero et al., 2015). They played a vital role in repairing machinery, crafting agricultural tools, building carts, and producing household items. As demand for their skills grew, particularly in Tegal and Pekalongan—which boasted over 100 blacksmiths by the late 1850s—many individuals pursued blacksmithing as a trade. In Jepara and Rembang, blacksmiths specialized in shipbuilding, while those in rural areas focused on household goods, contributing to a burgeoning market.

Simultaneously, the pottery production industry surged, significantly increasing the need for workers. Within two decades, pottery had established itself as a key industry in places like Bagelan, Madiun, and Jepara, with Semarang serving a large market in northern Kediri and Gresik during the late 19th century. The demand for building materials also rose, especially in Gresik and Lamongan, where suppliers provided essential resources such as lime, wood chips, and logs for the sugar industry. Consequently, lime kilns in Jepara and Rembang thrived alongside sugar factories in northeastern and East Java.

This evolving industrial landscape required a diverse range of skills, leading to a notable increase in the number of copper craftsmen, leatherworkers, and goldsmiths. By 1840, approximately 700 gold craftsmen operated in Rembang, with many others working in the Bagelan area by the early 1850s (Pinior et al., 2017). By the 1870s, almost every village in Java had silver or gold artisans, indicating significant transformation in the artisan economy.

While industrial growth prominently featured in Java, regions like Bagelan, Madiun, and Rembang emerged as essential training centers for skilled labor, supplying goods throughout the island. The geography of the communication network between Central and East Java facilitated the efficient transport of agricultural products. Initially, urban centers attracted skilled workers and rural individuals seeking to sell or trade their goods in larger markets. However, after 1850, industrial and artisanal activities flourished in rural areas.

Trade expanded significantly, involving numerous farmers. By 1880, many laborers across Java engaged in long-term economic activities, with shopkeepers, peddlers, and large-scale traders—particularly hajj pilgrims—playing significant roles in this growing market (Buheji et al., 2022). The establishment of regular market days in various regions led to permanent markets along multiple routes, becoming vital to the economic life of both urban and rural Java. The growth of the market network is evident in rising market tax revenues, which increased from 1,209,600 rupiah to 2,077,590 rupiah between 1833 and 1850. Furthermore, improved road infrastructure facilitated trade, enabling the sale of non-local goods and the exchange of local products in broader markets, significantly boosting economic growth, particularly in Central Java.

In the 1850s, rural trade in Java experienced significant growth, largely driven by the abolition of the market tax, which encouraged increased sales (Richardson, L. 2015). Traders in Pekalongan exchanged goods such as peanuts, soybeans, tobacco, indigo, textile oil, and batik for cotton, shrimp paste, leather goods, oil, and coconuts from other regions. Small village shops, or warungs, facilitated this trade, allowing local traders to sell goods to urban stallholders in exchange for local products.

As rural trade flourished, the rise in the number of small traders was fueled by improved communication infrastructure, particularly in the rural areas around Surabaya. For instance, traders from Priangan traveled to Batavia to sell their goods and went to Solo to collect textiles, enhancing accessibility and communication. Despite this expansion, larger transactions primarily remained with urban traders who competed with Chinese merchants.

The late 19th century saw a growing business environment and population increase in Priangan, contributing to the rise of small traders (Moreau et al. 2017). However, the development of the service industry was initially slow due to reliance on traditional labor practices. This changed with the introduction of compulsory labor and the shift to "free" labor in 1880, when wage workers became half of all employees in Java's service sector. In East Java,

nearly two-thirds of service jobs were labor-intensive, while West Java and Central Java saw lower percentages.

As processing operations expanded, the demand for workers outpaced supply. Urban construction in cities like Batavia, Semarang, and Surabaya created numerous jobs, leading to the establishment of shops, factories, and government offices. The government proposed a substantial workforce for various roles and established a retraining program in 1854, compelling local governments to support workers. Workers were gradually assigned tasks such as collecting building materials and performing general construction.

However, efforts to improve wages stagnated, resulting in a labor supply shortage. Reports from 1858 highlighted that the government often overlooked construction and irrigation standards when workers were inadequately compensated. Meanwhile, the demand for labor in the plantation sector grew, complicating the government's ability to recruit low-wage workers for public projects. While the government acknowledged worker needs, it chose to ease financial burdens by compensating workers based on their daily food requirements.

The reduction of compulsory labor in the early 1850s prompted economically disadvantaged rural individuals to seek job opportunities, particularly in the sugar industry, where wage scarcity initially hindered recruitment efforts. Wealthy farmers began employing these individuals for essential services as economic activity in small towns increased, drawing more rural residents facing limited job prospects.

As sugar producers struggled to maintain control over their workforce, the government acknowledged severe recruitment challenges, especially in larger urban centers. By the 1870s, amid growing labor needs, training opportunities increased, although some rural workers remained transient. Sugar factories, initially reluctant to recognize their labor needs, started actively attracting wage laborers and formed various arrangements with lower-level Chinese officials to secure workers (Kaufmann & Kaliberda, 2016).

While officials could easily recruit villagers due to increased tax obligations, they often faced political challenges when dissent arose. By the 1880s, securing labor became easier in some regions of Java, reflecting the government's evolving recruitment strategies in alignment with those of sugar factories.

Additionally, laborers and transport workers play a vital role in the service sector, yet labor statistics often overlook this reality, accounting for only about 10,000 ship workers. Various methods of goods transportation, such as ships and carts, are utilized on land and water. In particular, cart drivers in sugar plantation areas find their work rewarding due to high demand, which allows them to earn competitive labor wages.

As manufacturers and traders expanded their operations, many were slow to adapt to the development of railways, continuing to rely on carts, boats, and horses for transport. In Central and East Java, water transport remained common, particularly in Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and Surabaya, where over half of the local boat owners operated (Lestari, Abbas, & Mutiani, 2020).

By the mid-nineteenth century, the number of non-agricultural workers in Java steadily increased, reflecting the growth of the indigenous population and a shift towards food crop production, which played a significant role in occupational diversification. Understanding labor movements in Javanese society necessitates an analysis of the economic exchanges and changes among indigenous people.

Economic diversity has been crucial for growth, demonstrated by the experiences of Western countries and Japan during the Tokugawa period. A correlation exists between higher

per capita income and an increase in non-agricultural activities. Similarly, Java has witnessed consistent growth driven by farmers' demand for commodities and services, which highlights the need for expanded markets and trade. This burgeoning trade lays a solid foundation for industrial development and boosts rural prosperity.

In Semarang, local communities focused on preparing textiles, food, and processed exports for the European market. This was propelled by the expansion of food production, supported by financial channels, since the early 1850s. Meanwhile, Surabaya's community sought prosperity, exemplified by the efficiency improvements in the sugar industry and the rising demand for housing and amenities among the native nobility and office workers (Haraguchi et al., 2017).

Economic growth significantly enhanced Javanese society by boosting food production and income levels. The peasant workforce, which comprises the majority of the rural population, experienced an improvement in living standards, evidenced by increased rice production and its utilization. Their ability to pay taxes from agricultural trade income was essential for maintaining stability among workers and their families. Trade income, alongside agricultural sales, supported their livelihoods.

As shifts in consumption patterns emerged, demand for goods and services grew, motivating workers to pursue better earnings through trade. However, this rising demand also created challenges in accessing suitable land for farming and fulfilling the needs of farmers.

Rice production in Java has faced challenges for laborers, yet it has operated within a framework that seemingly prioritized their interests. This framework aimed to create more job opportunities for farmers, who constituted nearly 80% of households in 1840. However, by 1870, that representation had dwindled to about one-third. Despite job creation expanding the labor force and increasing land cultivation, the area dedicated to rice production grew by less than 2% annually, while overall rice output increased nearly 3% from 1830 to 1880. Notably, rice production in Kendari saw a significant rise during the mid-1830s. Initially, rice consumption was driven by necessity and often associated with illness. Nevertheless, improvements in production enabled exports to reach 25,000 tons, making rice more accessible. Even during the late 1840s, when famine struck parts of Central Java and indigo processing became less viable, rice production continued to thrive (Sainz-López, 2017).

A project conducted by the Gadjah Mada University Learning Center, funded by Bielefeld University, examined agriculture and trade in Central Java, particularly in the Jatinun sub-district of Surakarta. This study explored cottage industries, small-scale trade, non-agricultural employment, and landowner relationships. Jatinun, situated between Mount Merapi and fertile plains, illustrates Java's agricultural potential. Economic activities in this area include highland agriculture and rural industries such as brick making, tofu production, and metalworking. The community is served by two rural markets conveniently located near a trade center approximately 10 kilometers from the city center, 30 kilometers from the central district, and 100 kilometers from the provincial capital (Yang, Niu, & Sun, 2020).

The identification process in Indonesia encompasses trade, services, and industry. The study reveals weaknesses, particularly a lack of data on non-agricultural employment at the household level. The shift from agricultural to non-agricultural employment reflects changes in Indonesia's workforce. The agricultural share of total employment has declined, with the proportion of female workers in trade increasing from 10% in 1961 to 23% in 1980, mirroring similar growth in male employment during this period.

Rural farmers, who cultivate small plots to sustain their families and communities, often grapple with uncertainty and moral dilemmas. Their strong bond with the land and animals significantly influences their decision-making and principles. First-generation farmers are frequently motivated by a commitment to social and environmental justice. They strive to produce food that aligns with their values and demonstrate a profound ethic of stewardship toward nature. Peasant farmers navigate various moral considerations shaped by socio-economic and cultural factors, providing valuable insights from diverse perspectives.

Access to agricultural credit is essential for farmers' livelihoods in Benue State, Nigeria, as it directly impacts their ability to sustain their operations (Asogwa, 2014). Factors such as age, agricultural investment, and cooperative membership significantly influence this access. Additionally, socioeconomic factors and ethical considerations complicate farmers' decision-making, particularly regarding climate change adaptation and the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices (CSAP), which are critical for achieving food security and sustainable development in the face of environmental challenges (Adebayo et al., 2020; Wahab et al., 2024).

Farmers often navigate complex moral landscapes that involve resource access, cultural norms, and environmental challenges. For example, James C. Scott's research in Myanmar illustrates that farmers prioritize family safety and food security, often displaying a strong aversion to market uncertainties (Scott, 1981). This drive for stability leads to reciprocal practices characterized by mutual assistance during planting and harvesting seasons, as well as patron-client relationships among landowners, tenants, and laborers.

In pre-capitalist societies, villages acted as regulatory institutions that safeguarded their populations through moral regulations impacting farmers' well-being. Scholars have built upon Scott's concept of the moral economy, suggesting that affluent farmers tend to pursue innovation, leaving smaller farmers at a disadvantage in unstable markets (Rustinsyah, 2011; Popkin, 1986). Therefore, understanding the ethical dimensions of agriculture is crucial for developing policies that support farmers' livelihoods and well-being, as emphasized in the literature (Adebayo et al., 2020; Asogwa, 2014; Silberberger & Kimengsi, 2021; Thompson & Kutach, 1990; Wahab et al., 2024).

Samuel Popkin's research in Vietnam offers a fresh perspective on moral economy that diverges from James Scott's established framework. While traditional moral economy emphasizes the vulnerability of peasants, Popkin contends that this portrayal overlooks critical aspects of his findings and can be enhanced by his insights.

Typically, the moral economy framework depicts peasants as impoverished and perpetually at risk, asserting that the decline of small-scale production endangers their households. It suggests that peasants are resistant to market forces and prefer isolated villages for subsistence, a behavior often associated with pre-capitalist societies. In many such villages, a feudal system exists between peasants and landowners, characterized by communal land management and taxation. However, Popkin's analysis shifts the focus to individual decision-making, showing that village dynamics significantly shape peasant economic life (Popkin, 1980).

This perspective sees peasants as rational actors capable of innovation and market engagement, rather than mere victims of external pressures. Class conflict, rather than market dynamics alone, constrains farmers' ability to adopt new practices. Wealthy individuals often exploit market advantages, further complicating farmers' struggles for survival. Nonetheless, farmers actively strive to protect and improve their living standards through both short-term and long-term investments. The increasing prevalence of structured contracts with landlords

has enhanced farmers' security and profit potential. Additionally, the rise of independent trade has allowed farmers to lessen their reliance on dominant authorities. Scholars often refer to Popkin's reinterpretation of the moral economy as a rational economy (Popkin, 1986).

Evidence from recent research indicates that farmers in Java exhibit notable market savvy. Many sell surplus agricultural products during their free time, while some act as intermediaries, buying crops from neighboring villages for resale. However, it is important to note that not all farmers engage in marketing, as many traders operate within the villages as well (Natalia et al., 2022).

Recent analysis by Hayami and Kawagoe challenges the traditional view of a moral economy in Indonesia, demonstrating that farmers actively sell agricultural products. Their research indicates that many local traders and producers emerge from agricultural communities, with farmer entrepreneurs seizing market opportunities and gaining valuable insights through market transactions (Hayami and Kawagoe, 1993, p. 173). However, farmers still encounter significant hurdles in enhancing productivity and managing market interactions effectively (Hayami and Kawagoe, 1993).

Farmers in Indonesia navigate a dual system of market participation and subsistence agriculture, suggesting that they are neither fully reliant on subsistence farming nor completely integrated into market systems. While subsistence farming limits their market engagement to what households consume, the reality is that farmers are not a homogeneous group; they adapt to environmental changes. Those who engage in market activities can improve their living standards, but they also face risks such as financial losses and increased competition, which can disadvantage less efficient producers.

In Java, agriculture predominantly focuses on rice and secondary crops, with vegetables and fruits typically cultivated on a smaller scale for home consumption. Local markets often see farmers' wives directly selling surplus vegetable and fruit harvests, either individually or collectively. Within these communities, achieving self-sufficiency is uncommon; trade extends beyond basic barter, facilitated by village shops that allow for both internal and external exchanges, with women playing a key role in the marketing process (Dewey, 1962).

Despite the prevalence of informal trade, established regional markets represent critical hubs of commerce in urban areas. Scott emphasizes that the principles of moral economy shape farmers' economic activities, where subsistence and reciprocity guide their behavior, aligning with Popkin's rational economic perspective. As they navigate these challenges, farmers face class conflicts, low agricultural productivity, and intense competition—all of which complicate their reliance on subsistence practices. While historically, farmers cultivated food crops on rainfed land, many have shifted towards growing Siamese oranges, marking a significant move towards more profitable, long-term commercial farming (Natalia et al., 2022).

The strategic shift to Siamese oranges has significantly benefited farmers by reducing their dependence on subsistence farming. This transition allows for better integration into the agricultural market, particularly through partnerships with larger traders. Such investments pave the way for sustainable growth and improved economic stability in the long run.

Conclusion

Agriculture served as the primary economic resource for the majority of the population, fostering strong social relationships through cooperative efforts among farmers. Following 1830, there was a significant increase in the number of skilled workers, particularly in carpentry,

which emerged as a leading trade. This growth was driven by the need to transport goods from rural areas to urban centers and ports, with Jepara and Rembang evolving into key hubs for shipbuilding and furniture manufacturing. By 1840, Rembang alone employed approximately 700 carpenters. The early 1830s also saw a rise in demand for contractors due to a construction boom and a shortage of local labor, prompting many to enter this field. Additionally, the need for blacksmiths surged, as they played a crucial role in repairing machinery and producing agricultural tools; by this period, 879 blacksmiths were recorded across nine settlements. By the 1860s, nearly every village in Java had access to silversmiths or goldsmiths, reflecting substantial growth in the industrial sector, though this expansion varied across the region.

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