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## Current form of Reciprocity between Land Owners Peasant and Peasant Laborer in Central Java-Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

The main focus of this research is aimed to discover the current form of reciprocity between landowners and farm laborers in the rural areas of Purbalingga and Banyumas, Central Java Province, Indonesia. This research is also aimed to find how the patron can maintain their work relation to client. This study uses a qualitative descriptive. All peasant who were working as peasant laborers in the research location included as the research subject. The determination of informant is done by purposive sampling, while the number of informants is not determined rigidly but is adjusted to the needs and completeness of the data. The result of the study shows that the forms of reciprocal relations is general and some are special. In reciprocal relationships which are general, it inclined to be symmetrical and fair. However in some other cases that were special, there is symmetrical or asymmetrical reciprocal relationship. Suggestion to be given is that symmetrical reciprocal relationships are better be maintained so the quality of relationship will improved, while for relationships that are asymmetrical and unfair can also be improved by providing sufficient space for peasant workers through integrated and sustainable empowerment.

**Keywords:** reciprocity, peasants, landowner, laborer.

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### 1. Introduction

The problem of social relations in the farming community remains one of the determinants of the unsustainability of community-based agricultural development. The trend of scarcity of land causes social relations between owner farmers and farm laborers to strengthen in the reciprocity bond.

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Reciprocity of social relations has a strong function to increase the ability of technology adoption in small agriculture (Damisa & Igonoh 2007). Reciprocity is also used by half of the peasants to overcome the problem of complex farming, especially decreasing land fertility (Mapfumo, 2009). The existence of reciprocity relations actually has several forms in the dynamics of rural farming communities. Communication that Reciprocity is also used by half of the peasants to overcome the problem of complex farming, especially decreasing land fertility (Mapfumo, 2009). The existence of reciprocity relations actually has several forms in the dynamics of rural farming communities. Communication that is conducive to smallholder collaboration networks with reciprocity relationships can increase adoption capacity which eventually will increased production (Mashavave, et al., 2013).

Reciprocity relations it self have a variety of forms. The motive to form reciprocity is based on the principle of reciprocal social relations, both symmetrical and asymmetrical. It is formed by reason of each individual has a tendency to reciprocate for the attitudes and actions of other individuals in the form of reward or punishment (Falk and Fischbacher, 2006). The form of reciprocal relationship is always determined by a variety of factors that originate from the person, the value of the group's social norms and the community environment. It can not be denied, everyone has the intention to evaluate the attitudes and actions of kindness or labor received from others. This reality results in a decision making to establish the form of reciprocity that is intertwined with the consequences for the two parties interacting. The reciprocity of the peasants' between with peasant laborers in rural Central Java, Indonesia is unique. The form of social relations is not only motivated by economic motives but also combined by socio-cultural motives and the natural environment (land concessions). The closeness of residence and kinship ties also determine the form of reciprocity between the land owner peasant and the peasant laborer.

Every time there is reciprocity relations between the owner's peasants and the peasant laborers, there will automatically be repeated interactions. Continuous social interaction then forms a potential social network as an alternative viable solution (Baldassari, 2015). Self-social capacity that reflected by social and economy status influence on orientation and reciprocity motives between poor land owners and farm laborers (Dumasari and Watemin, 2013). Strategic management strategies in developing farming in agriculture have a close relationship with the form of farming in rural areas (Dumasari and Rahayu, 2016). A strong collaboration network between peasants is able to develop bioculture technology with beneficial crop circulation every harvest period which ultimately supports social dynamics (Thomas and Caillon, 2016).

Solidarity is one element which build the strength of reciprocity in the pattern of social relations between landowners and rural peasants. The concept of exchange is based on ownership and the desire to give to others. Practically, land owner will provide assistance in the form of energy expenditure, contributions, and costs. On the other side, the concept of receiving has three interrelated things to give, receive and pay (Mauss, 1995). Willingness to give and hope to receive rewards is a core concept of reciprocity relationship, including social relations between peasants and peasant laborers. This transition relationship also depends on the strength of the social cohesion of the agricultural community (Dumasari, et al., 2019). Forms of reciprocity are distinguished according to their nature, namely general, balanced and negative (Sahlins, 1972). Balance is a satisfying target of achievement between the parties involved in a reciprocal relationship. Achieve a balance indicated by some of parties received the common values of concrete form that is exchanged (Gouldner 1960). Homans (1974) have arguments that the social exchange would be balance and simmetric, but Blau did deny it. Blau (1964) declared if the reciprocal relations is inserted power then the relations switches from form of symmetric to asymmetrical.

The benefit of reciprocal balanced that is mutually beneficial determines the empowerment of peasants. Nonetheless, the effect of commercialization which was moved by the social structure of the farming community in rural areas was to encourage changes in the form of reciprocity, especially in the social relations between the land owner and peasants laborers. Thus, the focus of the research theme was set on a study of the current form of reciprocity between landowners and farm laborers in the rural areas of Purbalingga and Banyumas, Central Java Province, Indonesia.

## 2. Materials and methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive. The ethical and emic approach is also used to maintain the objectivity and accuracy of research data. The research location was determined purposively in the area of Kutasari and Padamara Sub-Districts, Purbalingga Districts. For District of Banyumas is taken two sub-district, namely: Kembaran and Sumbang sub-districts. The research locations are in the area of Central Java Province, Indonesia. The basis for considering the choice of research location, the first criterion is start from the reality of land scarcity trends that have caused the number of workers to increase over time. Beside that, the second criterion is one sub-district is closely related with the cities (Purbalingga and Purwokerto-the center of capital town of district) and the other one is relatively far from the city. The research subjects included all peasants who were working as peasant laborers in the research location. The technique of determining the informant is done by purposive side. The number of informants is not determined rigidly but is adjusted to the needs and completeness of the data. Key informants were determined by the snowball rolling technique. Key informants included owner peasants, community leaders and village officials. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews, FGDs, transect walks and participating observations. Participatory observations made during the study refer to the stages proposed by (Spradley, 1980). Secondary data obtained through analysis of documentation and search for article material published in scientific journals and have relevance to the research problem. All data collected is processed qualitatively. The data analysis technique used is the Interactive Model from (Miles and Hubermas, 1991).

## 3. Result and discussion

Reciprocal relations takes place on social relations between landowners and peasant laborers is part of the social process. The reciprocal relation established is based on the mutual need of human being (Homans, 1974). Besides, it is also based on the pressure factors of the elements of social capital, namely mutual trust, local social values and norms and the nature of cooperation. Reciprocal relation between landowners and peasant laborers tend to be lasting and voluntarily. Rarely both of them have a bargaining process in their transactions. From time to time for many agreements on the processing techniques of rice farming planted with rice either with a monoculture system or intercropping with corn and vegetables rarely changes. The agreement on the initial transaction regarding the rights and obligations of both of them continues for several years. This is particularly true of longstanding reciprocity in villages that are relatively far from urban community that tend commercialize.

The reality of the different forms of reciprocal relation is found in research villages that are relatively close to urban commercialization. Reciprocal bonds tend to be more labile. Landowner peasants act selectively and often replace peasant workers who work in the fields if something happens that is considered detrimental. The rerecruiting of peasant laborers is carried out by the peasants who own the land if there is an error in carrying out the rice fields which involves economic losses such as income failures due to agricultural workers' negligence in managing the land. The actions of other farm workers who are not tolerated by farmers who own the land when they need to move to another job and leave production activities, for example, fertilize or weed eradication for some time.

Peasant workers in the villages affected by the commercialization of the city at any time build reciprocal relations with landowners. In spite of this, work relations can be cut off when the landowner breaches the agreement, for example, it is not appropriate to pay wages according to the time of day or week. Delayed payment of wages caused peasant laborers to stop doing the work of rice farming. Unilateral deductions from wages without the knowledge of farm laborers repeatedly are also a factor in the severity of reciprocity social relations with landowners. However, the severance of reciprocity social relations does not last forever. Reciprocity social relations can be reconnected when the landowner peasants invite peasant laborer with a persuasive approach. In many cases, they ordinarily apologize to each other.

The form of reciprocal relations in information can take place between individuals (landowners and peasant of workers). The form of reciprocal relations between individuals is more personal and can be characterized by close bonding between the two parties. It is happening between individual landowners and peasant laborers. This form of social relationships seems more challenging in every transaction. The reciprocal relations that is continuing to be institutionalized between the two parties

can be seen from: working time, wages and the type of other work agreed in the procurement of production facilities. In some farm laborers' groups can be invented some consensus between peasant laborers and the peasants who own the land. This form of reciprocity is seen in Figure 1.

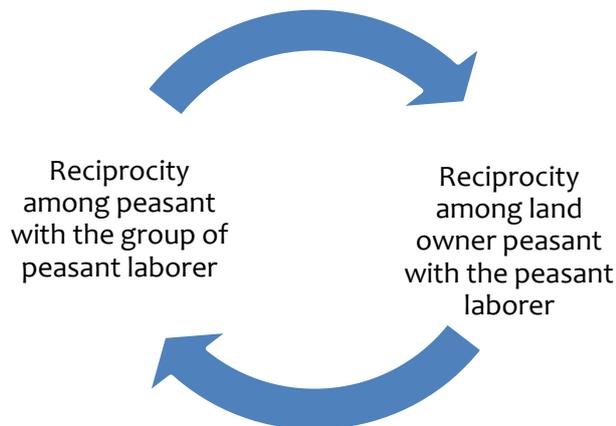


Figure 1. Forms of reciprocal relations in social interaction

The form of reciprocity between landowners and peasant laborers can be distinguished from general and special characteristics. General reciprocity is shown by social relations in the form of exchanges involving social activities. Since the landowners and farm laborers live in the same village environment, the two parties are also involved in social relations in the form of public exchanges. Both of the research locations showed the reciprocity in the form of mutual cooperation. Reciprocity in the form of mutual assistance involves social relations which tend to be in the form of labor exchanges in community activities to clean the environment of rice fields, improve village infrastructure (roads, mosques, culverts, making banners, preparation of landfills). Mutual cooperation involving farmers who own land with peasant laborers is often carried out to control pests of plant diseases such as rat pest fogging. Forms of reciprocity mutual cooperation some are done routinely while some are not routinely. The activity is carried out when there is a routine cleaning of the village environment every month. The splice takes place when there is a celebration for certain families who become neighbors in the village. Other residents including landowners and farm laborers also helped in the form of outpouring of energy and material assistance. Another form of reciprocal relation between landowners and agricultural laborers is special. Symmetrical reciprocity tends to benefit both parties. Meanwhile, asymmetrical reciprocity is detrimental to one party in a weaker position. It is needed empowerment process for raising them, so that the laborer, especially who located in far from urban area, can raise their social and economic access sustainability (Santosa and Suyanto, 2017; Santosa dan Iqbal, 2018). This is a proof of depth interview result of the informant who agreed with the production divide four which 75 % for landowner and 25% of production for cultivator with note that all of production cost for landowner.

“Mr. Joko Maryono (not his real name). Here the tendency of people is the rental system, but in the area of the village of Gandatapa, Sumbang Sub-District, the profit sharing tends to be in the form of four, known as Mrapat (Divede four). This system is most loved here. So the land owner receives three-fourths of the total yield, while the paddy farmers get only one-fourth, but the entire cost of production is borne by the land owner. In my opinion it's fair, because smallholder farmers do not bear the risk of crop failure”.

This is another proof of depth interview result of the informant who took with the production divide two which 50 % for landowner and 50% of production for cultivator with note that all of production cost for laborer. In javaness terminology, this is maro system

As said by Mr. Taskim in Sumbang District (Not his real name). “I work on rice fields covering an area of approximately 60 ubin (approximately 840 meters). I try hard so that the fields can harvest with maximum results, because if it fails I bear a lot of losses because of the production costs I bear not the land owner”.

There is something more profitable, Mr. Taslan (not his real name). Almost in line with Mr. Taskim. I am a farmer with an area of 2000 meters (142 ubin) in Padamara Village, Padamara District, Purbalingga Regency.

“I should have given 50% of the harvest, but because of the result, there are not many owners who happen to be kind-hearted. I only gave him (owner) 2 datsin (200 kg) during the harvest yesterday. Yes, I say the results are not maximum due to pest attacks. So the same profit, the loss is shared. I happen to have a good employer”.

Based on the results of the interview record shows that the more the city of a community of farmers is more rational in responding to changes that occur, but the original character as a subsistence farmer as described by Scott (1984) that they have safety first principle and non profit maximation are still remains inherent. In Figure 2 detailed explanation of some forms of reciprocity in the fabric of social relations between landowners and peasant laborers.

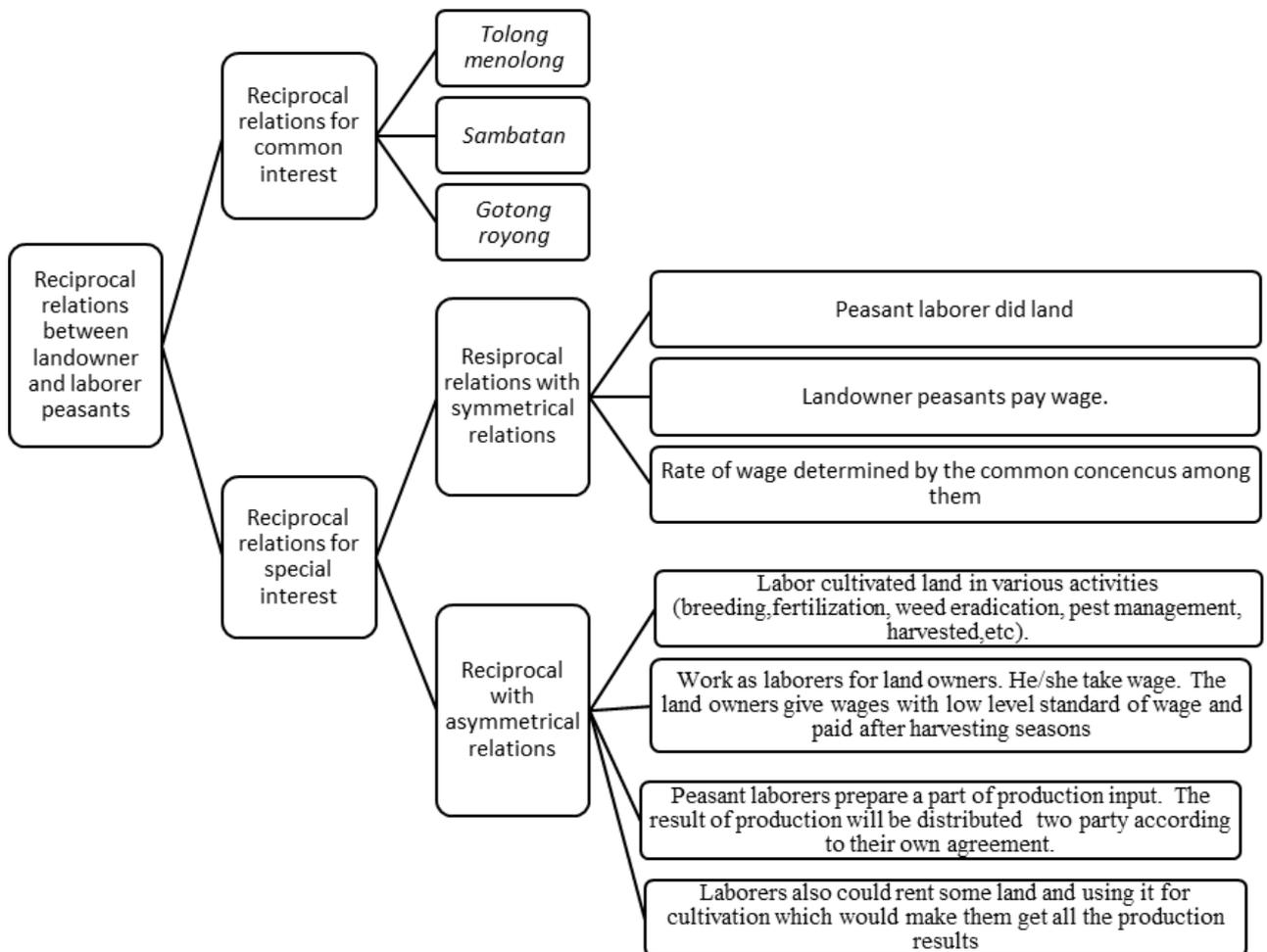


Figure 2. Form of reciprocal relation and its sustainability

In work relationships that take place both symmetrical and asymmetrical opposites, patron (in this case landowners) try to maintain their relationship with their client's (landless peasants/laborers) (Rustinsyah, 2011). Patron serve their client in a good way according the local norms, provide appropriate gifts and provide other gifts according to local culture and provide opportunities for free loans in emergency situations. The finding of this research didn't accordance wholly with Blau (Poloma, 2010). The following variations on patron efforts to maintain their position in Table 4 The research location can be seen from Table 1.

Table 1.  
The effort of patron to maintain their work relations

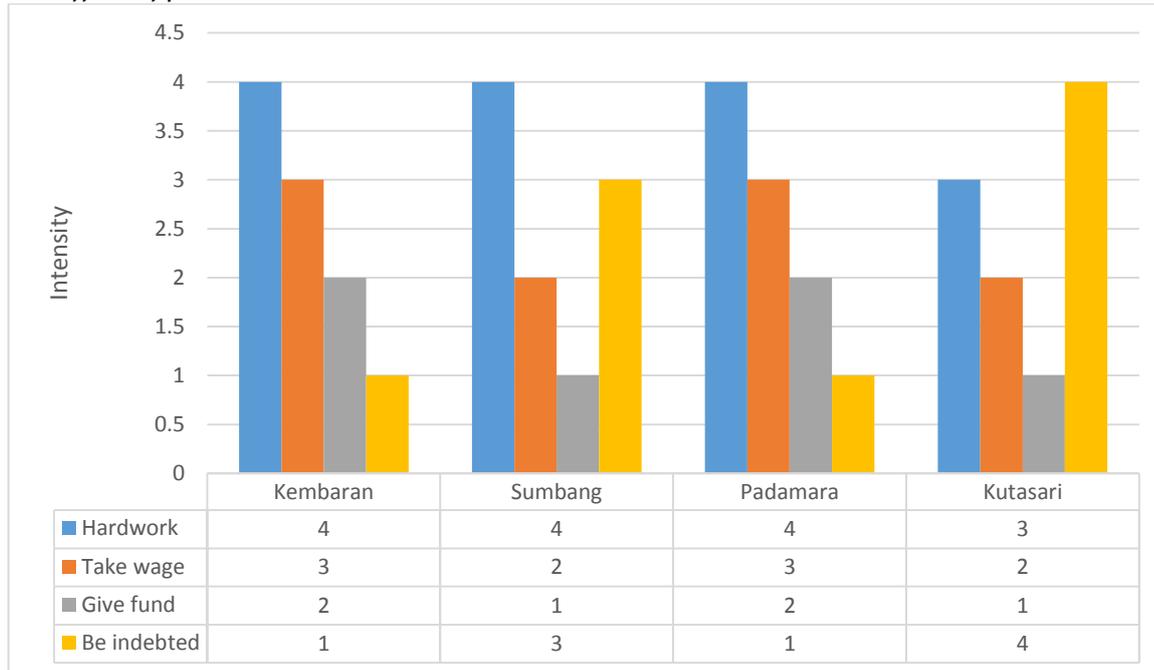


Table 1. illustrates that almost all farmers in the four locations stated that an important effort that could be made was to work hard and try to maintain a harmonious working relationship are indeed as determinant factors. Beside that, provision of adequate wages and providing additional funds is necessary, but not solely that which always determines.

#### 4. Conclusion

The forms of reciprocal relations are general and some are special. For reciprocal relationships that are general tend to be symmetrical and fair, special relationships can be symmetrical, but can also be asymmetrical. The suggestion can be given is that symmetrical reciprocal relationships are better be maintained so the quality of the relationship is improved, while for relationships that are asymmetrical and unfair so that equality can be improved by providing.

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