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# SOCIAL PROTEST OF WOMEN FARMERS REGARDING AGRARIAN CONFLICT

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## ABSTRACT

*This article discusses a social protest of women farmers in North Polongbangkeng, Talakar Regency, and South Sulawesi Province. This action was carried out in order to demand the return of rights to their land which had been controlled by a company in this area. Another interesting thing about this phenomenon of social protest is that the root of the problem starts from the practice of the era of empire that was latent in conflict. The king's power, which has Karaeng title which is not limited to certain lands in its time, causes the people to feel shackled with their rights and freedoms in cultivating agricultural land. The combination of the trauma of the past with the current condition of land ownership by a company became the main factor in the emergence of social protests. Thus, there are three interesting things examined from this paper, namely: what is the situation that causes women farmers to choose to protest, what forms of actions are taken, and how they manage the course of the protest.*

**Keywords:** Agrarian Conflict, Social Protest, Farmer Women.

## INTRODUCTION

In the study of social sciences, especially sociology, agrarian conflict always has an important place and is a serious concern among sociologists. This is because the phenomenon of agrarian conflict is one of the most ancient social problems in the history of mankind. Even agrarian issues are not only related to the social aspects of rural farmers, but also to the economic and cultural fields. Thus, the study of agrarian problems becomes multidimensional, which is examined from various approaches and scientific theories. Evidence of the ancient history of the agrarian problem can be traced through the record that since the new stone age (neolithic) which is estimated to have started 9,000 years ago, humans have begun to end the nomadic pattern of life and food gathering, becoming a living pattern of food producing as well as being considered as the first agricultural revolution. At this time problems began to arise related to ownership and mastery, even though in a simple form (Ahmadin, 2007).

This paper examines the agrarian conflict that took place in North Polongbangkeng, Takalar with a historical sociological approach. This conflict involved farmers against the PTPN XIV Sugar Factory and the government. The trigger for the birth of the conflict in the form of the social protest movement, namely the change in ownership of land previously owned by farmers, and then claimed to belong to the PTPN XIV Sugar Factory. This condition causes farmers to lose their sources of livelihood, as well as being a problem for the future of their lives and their children (Mubyarto et al., 1992).

Based on this fact, it is known that the cause of the emergence of agrarian conflict is

caused by the differences in interests between (economic and political) control and the people. The authorities (the government and companies) consider land to be a means to achieve development goals, including industry, while the people (farmers) consider land to be everything that is sought for their lives. Life and death of the family is determined by the land (Lofland, 2017).

The connection is with agrarian conflict between farmers and the company in Polongbangkeng, an interesting phenomenon that is social protest actions carried out or involving women. Is it because the culture of the Indonesian people adheres to a patriarchal system, so that it is not an obstacle for women to participate in social movements or are there other factors? From this question the process of tracing the causes of women's involvement in the social protest actions at Polongbangkeng will begin.

Some of these facts show that agrarian issues are always interesting to study, moreover the focus of this paper specifically examines the actions of social processes which involve peasant women who struggle to win their rights.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Social protest is an expression or complaint of the people to the government as a result of a social crisis, both related to political, cultural, and economic problems. Social protests can be carried out in two ways, namely directly by taking demonstrations into the streets and indirect social protests carried out in the form or through mediation of symbolic media.

Talking about social conflict must be examined in the framework of the development of social theories, where there are two interconnected theories namely structural functionalism and conflict theory approaches. The first approach, the view that the community is integrated on the basis of the agreement of its members on certain social values that have the power to overcome differences of opinion and interests. Adherents of this theory regard society as a system that is functionally integrated into a form of equilibrium and analogizes society as a biological organism (Turner & Turner, 1978).

The second view is that adherents of conflict theory analogize that every society always has a conflict between the interests of the owners of authority who try to maintain the status quo with those who want to overhaul it (Craib, 2015). Conflict theory opposes structural functionalism theory, such as Dahrendorf said that functionalism theory views society as being static or moving in equilibrium conditions, while conflict theory sees society as being in a process of change characterized by continuous conflict between its elements. In addition, each element or institution provides support for stability, while elements contribute to social disintegration (Dahrendorf, 1959).

One interesting thing from the paradigm of structural functionalism theory is that all members of society are informally bound to general norms, values, and morality, while conflict theory views the order in a society as a result of pressure or implementation from the ruling class.

## METHODS

This research was carried out in North Polongbangkeng District, Takalar District, and South Sulawesi Province. The selection of this area is a research locus because in this area it is

the basis of conflicts between farmers and sugar factories where women participate in social protests.

This type of research is qualitative using a sociological conflict approach. Data was collected through observation and in-depth interviews (in-depth interviews) (Ahmadin, 2004). The initial observation was carried out by observing various social realities related to the involvement of farmers in North Polongbangkeng in carrying out social protests.

To obtain accurate data related to agrarian conflict in North Polongbangkeng, in-depth interviews were conducted with those who understood the motive of conducting social protests, the form and strategy of taking action, and the social and economic implications of the movement involving peasant women in North Polongbangkeng.

Data analysis was carried out by the process of systematically searching for and organizing interview transcripts, field notes and other materials found in the field. All of that was collected to improve the understanding of researchers on something phenomenon. In other words, in the analysis of qualitative data, it contains the content of data collection and interpretation which is at the same time the main characteristic of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997).

Furthermore, data analysis was carried out as an effort to improve understanding of the cases studied and then look for meaning. Giving meaning is an important effort in interpretation and then explored by focusing on the ability of the human mind to capture the important things behind the facts found. In general, the stages of qualitative data analysis in this study, referring to the data analysis model of Miles & Huberman, (1994), namely: after the data, researchers conducted a reduction by summarizing the field report, recording the main points relevant to the focus of the study; systematically arrange based on certain categories and classifications; making display data; conduct cross-site analysis, and present findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Trigger Situation in the Emergence of Social Protests

Referring to the view of conflict theory which considers a change in society triggered by continuous conflict due to interests and power, the process of the emergence of social protests of women farmers in North Polongbangkeng Sub-District, Takalar District is examined in the context of historical conflicts. This is important because the cause of the conflict seems to have originated from the practices of suppression and limitation of farmers' rights to land since the past.

Judging from the geographical area conditions of North Polongbangkeng District, this region shows that it is very potential for the economic development of the agricultural sector. The pattern of the majority of the people is still characterized by subsistence economy in fulfilling the needs of life. If there is a sale of their agricultural production, it is not in the interests of capital accumulation but is limited to meeting family needs.

The practice of traditional land ownership and control under the control of the authority of a king or Karaeng, has taken place in the Polongbangkeng area long before independence. At that time the farmers who wanted to work on an agricultural land, had to get the approval of the ruler (Karaeng) with a number of rules set. Even the process of inheritance on certain lands also

requires the approval of the king on condition that they are willing to devote themselves.

The practice of exploitation of the agrarian rights of the people in North Polongbangkeng by a ruler (Karaeng), was told by a resident of HS (56 years) that someone could only work on land if allowed by karaeng and stated that he was ready to serve him. In addition, a ruler can also withdraw the permits for cultivating land if the farmer violates the applicable provisions, such as: not carrying out obligations, fighting or rebelling, and leaving the village for a long time. In fact, according to him, all land was not given ownership letters by karaeng and gave compensation whenever the king wanted. Those who refused to be compensated for certain land were labeled as members of the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party).

The description shows that latent conflict between farmers (the people) and the ruler (karaeng) has occurred in the North Polongbangkeng area. Thus, the trauma of the past over the practice of exploitation of a ruler over the people in the management of agricultural lands and their results was an indirect cause of the emergence of social protests in Polongbangkeng involving women.

Apparently the expression of Sociologist and political scientist Ralf Dahrendorf states that changes in the social system are always triggered by conflicts with motives of interests and power. If the holder of power wins the conflict, then he becomes the dominant force in perpetuating the established social system (Dahrendorf, 1959). This condition is what happens in the relationship between the people and the authorities in North Pongbangkeng, where a ruler with the authority possessed determines the policies of the agrarian sector.

What was imagined by Marx through the concept of class structure about imbalances in society because of the separation between humans and the means of production, occurred in the farming community in North Polongbangkeng? Land as the main means of production for the peasants in the countryside, controlled by the authorities or the owners of capital.

Another trigger for the emergence of female farmers' social protests is the existence of structural conflicts caused by government policies. Parties to the conflict in this matter are between farmers and owners of capital (capitalists) or the government through State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN). Another characteristic of structural conflict is reflected through the use of methods of oppression and subjugation to the people. Even the practice of physical oppression occurs, such as intimidation, terror, physical violence, arrest, and isolation of citizens.

One interesting acknowledgment from one of the women related to the trigger for a social protest was because the practice of taking agricultural land by the Sugar Factory, in their view, had already involved kitchen matters which were part of a mother's responsibility. For this reason, women felt they had to take part and fight with men to return their agricultural land. HS (56 years) said he struggled to do social protest initially without the knowledge of her husband. According to it, rather than having to buy more land at a price that is quite expensive, why not fight for his own land from the claims of the company.

Based on the description, it is known that the factor of the willingness to seize and take back his land became a trigger for the emergence of social protests among women farmers. On the other side of the land is their ancestral heritage that is entrusted to him to manage as a source of fulfillment of life's needs.

## Forms and Strategies for Social Protest of Women Farmers in North Polongbangkeng

As previously explained, women farmers in Polongbangkeng carried out social protests, triggered by the desire to take back the agricultural land that they were entitled to. For this reason, the women farmers conducted a series of social protests in the hope that their aspirations would be heard and the company resolved the land dispute.

The forms of action and strategies for the social protest of female farmers in Polongbangkeng Subdistrict to demand their rights controlled by PTPN XIV, namely from 2011 to 2015 farmer protests for agrarian dispute resolution were carried out in the form of mass mobilization demonstrations to the Takalar Regent office, DPRD Office Takalar, South Sulawesi DPRD Office, South Sulawesi Governor's Office, South Sulawesi Provincial BPN office, and even took action at the PTPN XIV sugar factory. In this mass action women participated as well as a political struggle program carried out through the organization of the Sarekat Tani Polongbangkeng Takalar organization.

An important social protest in the history of their struggle namely on September 24, 2011 in Makassar, there were around 1,000 people who were members of the alliance of the South Sulawesi People's Struggle Front held a demonstration to urge the South Sulawesi State Land Agency (BPN). His demand was to immediately form a dispute resolution team and submit public documents (Land Identification, Letter of Measure and HGU Certificate) which had never been given by the Polongbangkeng community.

In addition, it was also noted that in January 2012, women farmers who were members of the STP again held an action and involved around 400 farmers from Polongbangkeng. They marched on motorcycle vehicles and pegged on PTPN XIV HGU land. An important momentum from their movement, namely utilizing a historic day commemorating National Education Day, 2 May 2014. The women joined the Polongbangkeng Farmers Union to carry out massive actions at the PT. Perkebunan Nusantara XIV, Urip Sumihardjo Street, and Makassar. After that, they continued to hold demonstrations at the South Sulawesi DPRD office. A Polongbangkeng Farmers Union Trustee named Daeng Torro confirmed the demands of the period of action which urged PTPN XIV to immediately resolve the land conflict in Takalar which he said was very disturbing to the residents in providing for their lives and families and they had received terror and intimidation from the police, soldiers and thugs.

In the struggle of the women, it did not run smoothly. It was evident that when they clashed in Pakkawa on October 27, 2014, many women were beaten and many old people fainted on the land. Even some of them were injured and caught. During the incident, Brimob forces, Takalar police, soldiers, and Satpol PP, were numerous on location. Even among the 100 officers, there were also among them thugs who came riding in several truck cars.

The description shows that the long-term efforts of North Polongbangkeng farmers in fighting for their rights to land have a positive impact, where their struggle is not in vain, including about the land that was successfully fought for. Starting from 2012, the struggle to reclaim land controlled by PTPN XIV began to be intensified with various strategies and has succeeded in mastering and processing around 1,700 ha of land that is claimed by STP members. Even so, it still leaves a number of problems, such as the measurement of land that has not been

maximized, the emergence of conflicts related to land borders, and part of the land that is controlled by peasants who have not yet joined the STP in large numbers.

The success or failure of agrarian reform must not depend on the generosity of the government and the existing political market. The experience of the State in carrying out agrarian reform on the generosity of the government, the results are not sustainable and easily reversed. The involvement of people's organizations should not be artificial and half-done (Ellis, 1993; Saad, 1989; Anderson, 2019). People's organizations must be involved from the planning, implementation, supervision and evaluation. At present, dozens of popular organizations are growing at national, regional and local levels (Riedinger, 1995; Anderson, 2019). Generally people's organizations are born from Agrarian conflicts. Some have practiced agrarian reform, overhauled structures, organized production and empowered local governments. So there is no reason for democratic governments who want to carry out agrarian reform not to involve people's organizations. Good government and strong people's organizations are the main pillars of agrarian reform (Rosset, 2013).

The involvement of peasant organizations is crucial to the success or failure of agrarian reform. We cannot depend on the generosity of the government and the existing political market. Lahiff et al. (2007) stated the experience of the State which carried out an agrarian reform on the generosity of the government; the results were unsustainable and easily reversed. The involvement of people's organizations should not be artificial and half-done (Lucas & Warren, 2003; Borrás, 2003).

People's organizations must be involved, especially women, from the planning, implementation, supervision and evaluation. At present, dozens of people's organizations are growing at national, regional and local levels. In the end, people's organizations were born from agrarian conflicts. Some have practiced agrarian reform, overhauled structures, organized production and empowered local governments so that there is no reason for democratic governments to want to carry out agrarian reform not to involve people's organizations. Good government and strong people's organizations are the main pillars of agrarian reform.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the description of the involvement of peasant women in agrarian conflict in North Polongbangkeng Sub district, it is known that the situation or trigger factors for the birth of social protests are divided into two things namely indirect causes and direct causes. Past trauma by the practice of ownership and control of royal lands by Karaeng in North Polongbangkeng was an indirect factor in the emergence of social protests, while the company claims PTPN XIV on land owned by farmers was a direct cause of protests that led to farmers' capabilities. The forms and strategies of social protest are carried out by conducting a series of demonstration actions to the company, the Takalar Regency government, as well as at the provincial level in Makassar City, South Sulawesi. Women participated in social protests by organizing themselves into an organization called Sarekat Tani Polongbangkeng (STP), then involved in various demonstrations carried out from 2011 to 2014.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This article is premised on the (EU 2003) classification of SMEs as businesses with less than 250 and 50 persons for middle-sized and small size establishments. The stratified approach was used to derive our sample. We divided the sample population into groups (strata) and then selected samples from each stratum for the survey. For this study, we applied a two-fold structured questionnaire. The first part focused questions regarding participants' demographics and business types, while the second segment focused questions regarding business success factors relevant to the scope of the study. The test re-test reliability method (trustworthiness assessment of the questionnaire) and Cronbach Alpha test (internal constancy), resulted to a value of 0.070 and 0.875 respectively.

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