

**TRANSFORMATION OF MODERN AGRICULTURE
INTO ORGANIC AGRICULTURE
AT SUBAK WANGAYA BETAN, PENEHEL DISTRICT,
TABANAN REGENCY, BALI PROVINCE**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation discusses the transformation of modern agriculture into organic agriculture at Subak Wangaya Betan, Penehel District, Tabanan Regency, Bali Province. This study is conducted in the perspective of Cultural Studies and the problem is that the dark side of modern agriculture is getting visible. The chemical substances used in agriculture have turned out to result in many problems such as the damage of land quality, the continuous decrease in plant productivity and environment, the marginalization of farmers. Therefore, many farmers have been aware and have transformed into ecologically organic agriculture as what has taken place at Subak Wangaya Betan. The farmers have transformed from modern agriculture into organic agriculture. However, the process of the transformation has left many problems; therefore, a deep study is necessarily conducted to answer various existing questions.

The problems in this study are formulated in three basic questions such as follows. *First*, how has the process of the transformation from modern agriculture into organic agriculture taken place at Subak Wangaya Betan? *Second*, why has the transformation from modern agriculture into organic agriculture taken place? *Third*, what are the implications and meanings of the transformation from modern agriculture into organic agriculture at Subak Wangaya Betan? In general, this study aims at identifying and comprehending more clearly the transformation from modern agriculture into organic agriculture taking place at Betan Wangaya *Subak*.

This research was conducted using qualitative method with multidisciplinary approach in accordance with the paradigm of cultural studies. In the first stage, primary and secondary data were collected. In the second stage, theories were selected for analyzing the data. Several critical theories such as the theory of Discourse of Power and Knowledge, the theory of Hegemony and the theory of Deconstruction, which are eclectic in nature, were decided to select for analyzing the data. In this third stage, the selected data were analyzed and interpreted. In the fourth stage, the results were constructed and reported.

Based on the analysis conducted, three findings could be reported. *First*, agricultural transformation has taken place at Subak Wangaya Betan, from agrochemical-based modern agriculture in which inorganic, chemical pesticide and hybrid varieties are used into organic agriculture in which no chemical substances are used. The agricultural transformation has not been suddenly conducted; it has been a planned process, has been conducted through a highly systematic mechanism with many stages and has consumed a lot of time and needed in-depth studies. *Second*, many factors have led to the agricultural transformation taking place at Subak Wangaya Betan. They are external factors such as political, economic, social, cultural and ecological aspects and internal factors such as the negative side of green revolution implementation, natural resources, cooperative farmers, and adherent farmers. They are all equally strong and synergize in encouraging and accelerating the agricultural transformation. *Third*, it turns out that the agricultural transformation taking place at Subak Wangaya Betan has several implications and meanings. The implications are that the ideology adhered to by the farmers has changed, the establishment of new institutions, an increase in the farmers' income, improved rice field ecosystem and environment. The meanings of organic agriculture are spiritual meaning, empowerment meaning and welfare meaning.

Keywords: agricultural transformation, modern agriculture, organic agriculture, Subak Wangaya Betan.

BACKGROUND

The multinational capitalist has created a single agricultural system through highly established monopoly practices. The capitalist has been able to make farmers transform the agricultural system which they had applied for hundreds of years, that is, the ecological agricultural system which was environmentally friendly into modern agricultural era known as “green revolution”.

Initially, the green revolution (the modern agriculture) directly contributed to the spectacular development of agricultural products. However, the dark side of such modern technology is immediately visible. Now it has been clear that the modern technology does not help the farmers. Millions of them keep being marginalized and hungry. The quality of the land they cultivate and their environment is degrading. In this case, the modern agriculture benefits the corporation of petrochemical capitalist. The capitalist has created a pseudo- state of being established and manipulated the farmers in such a way that they use more and more chemical substances leading to a multibillion dollar business.

The decrease in land quality and productivity of almost all types of plants undertaken has been visible since 1990s. The use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in large quantities have changed the whole agricultural order and marginalized the traditional knowledge and local genius which have developed in accordance with the local culture. Furthermore, the traditional knowledge and local genius have been left and neglected.

However, many farmers have been aware of the dangers of the modern agriculture and have transformed into the organic ecologic method. Such a transformation has taken place at Subak Wangaya Betan. The farmers have transformed from the modern agriculture into the organic agriculture.

Subak Wangaya Betan is one of the *subaks* (farmers’ traditional organization) which is located at Dusun Wangaya Betan, Penebel District, Tabanan Regency, Bali Province. The agricultural transformation at Subak Wangaya Betan has been massively conducted since 2006. Great attempts should be made as it does not involve transfer of ideology but also transfer of technology, knowledge, willingness, ability, braveness and even capital and target market. How the farmers at Subak Wangaya Betan have invested in the initial stage of transformation and how responsive they are to conducting the transformation are interesting phenomena.

The agricultural transformation at Subak Wangaya Betan has been directed to the transformation of the subsystem of material infrastructure such as the transformation in the technique of plant cultivation. The question is whether this transformation has involved the other subsystems in addition to the material subsystem.

This research aims at identifying and comprehending more clearly the transformation from the modern agriculture into the organic agriculture. It tries to answer the problems which are formulated in three basic questions as follows. (1) How has the process of transformation from the modern agriculture into the organic agriculture taken place at Subak Wangaya Betan? (2) Why the transformation from the modern agriculture into the organic agriculture has taken place at Subak Wangaya Betan? (3) What are the implications and meanings of the transformation from the modern agriculture into the organic agriculture at Subak Wangaya Betan?

MATERIAL AND DISCUSSION

Qualitative method is employed in this study in which the transformation from the modern agriculture into the organic agriculture at Subak Wangaya Betan, Penebel District, Tabanan Regency, Bali Province is discussed. *First*, the data on the general picture of the location where the research was conducted were collected and the transformation from the modern culture into the organic culture taking place at Subak Wangaya Betan (where the research was conducted) was observed. *Second*, the theories used for analyzing the existing problems were selected. The theories used are the theory of Discourse of Power and Knowledge, the theory of Hegemony, and the theory of Deconstruction. *Third*, the data collected were analyzed and interpreted. *Four*, the results were reported.

FINDINGS

First, the agricultural transformation conducted by the farmers at Subak Wangaya Betan cannot be separated from the hegemony applied both by the government and the cooperative farmers over the farmers. The mastery of the government (the PPL of BPTP of Bali Province) and the cooperative farmers of knowledge has made them able to hegemonize the farmers to apply the organic agriculture without being pressured and feeling pressured.

Second, the incentive provided by the government to the farmers and the *subak* leadership strength have contributed to the agricultural transformation taking place at Subak Wangaya Betan. The strong influence of leadership, especially the leadership controlled by the cooperative pioneer farmers who have economic, social and cultural (intellectual) capitals has been able to encourage the agricultural transformation taking place at that subak. In addition, the free incentive in the form of agricultural production facilities provided by the government, which has social and cultural capitals apart from economic capital, has also contributed to the transformation..

Third, the agricultural transformation taking place at the location where the research was conducted reflects the success in changing agricultural ideology from the modern agriculture, which is deemed less beneficial, into the organic agriculture, which is dreamed of by every farmer who cares about the importance of health, environmental friendliness, benefit and sustainability. The organic agriculture is meant to provide someone with image; if he/she consumes organic product, he/she will have confidence, his/her prestige will enhance. In addition, the organic products are safe to consume, have high quality and are healthy.

CONCLUSIONS

First, agricultural transformation has taken place at Subak Wangaya Betan, from agrochemical - based modern agriculture in which inorganic fertilizers, chemical pesticides and hybrid varieties are used into organic agriculture in which no chemical substance is used. Such an agricultural transformation has not taken place suddenly but it has been conducted through a planned process with a highly systemic mechanism involving many stages which need a lot of time and thorough studies. *Second*, many factors such as external ones which include political, economic, social, cultural and ecological aspects and internal factors which include the negative side of green revolution implementation, natural resources, cooperative farmers and inherent farmers have

contributed to the agricultural transformation taking place at Subak Wangaya Betan. They are equally strong and synergize to encourage and accelerate the agricultural transformation. *Third*, it turns out that the agricultural transformation taking place at Subak Wangaya Betan has implications and meanings. Its implications are the change in the ideology adhered to by the farmers, the establishment of new institutions, an increase in the farmers' income, improved rice field ecosystem and improved environment. The organic agriculture has spiritual meaning, empowerment meaning and welfare meaning.

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