



The Dynamics of Multi-Ethnic Communities and Farmer Mentality In Building Food Security In East Kolaka

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the cooperation of multiethnic communities and the formation of a farmer mentality in East Kolaka District, Southeast Sulawesi Province, in building food security. The purpose of this study is to understand how the interaction between diverse ethnic groups in East Kolaka society affects the way farmers manage agricultural resources and shape their mentality regarding agriculture so as to realize food security. The cultural interaction among multi-ethnic communities serves as a collective strength in East Kolaka District to address food scarcity and to build a food security system, which has not been optimally examined and elucidated in previous studies. Using qualitative approach, data was collected using in-depth interview and observation. This study was conducted in East Kolaka District, Southeast Sulawesi Province. The total number of informants is fourteen, including rice farmers, community leaders, members of farmer groups, agricultural extension workers, and village and sub-district government officials. The study shows that various ethnic groups have unique agricultural practices, traditional techniques, and different local knowledge. The interaction between these groups has resulted in an exchange of knowledge and experience, which in turn affects the mentality of farmers positively in the face of environmental and social changes, and can build their food security and even surplus. These findings have important implications in efforts to improve food security and agricultural sustainability in East Kolaka, as well as encourage inter-ethnic cooperation in the context of agriculture. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities of multi-ethnic societies and how interactions between these groups can shape peasant mentalities. The findings of this study can be an input for policymakers in designing more inclusive and sustainable strategies in agricultural resource management in similar regions.

1. Introduction

The dynamics of multiethnic society and coexistence between ethnicities in Indonesia today is still an interesting issue to understand. Multiethnic communities living side by side can jointly build food security and produce surplus rice. The interaction that occurs between these ethnicities can build a mentality in farming so that it not only produces harmonization but can build food security in the region.

So far, studies on inter-ethnic life in Indonesia tend to look at two sides, namely the problem of conflict that may occur due to ethnic, cultural and religious differences, and the problem of social integration in multiethnic societies. *First*, the tendency of existing studies on conflicts that occur in multiethnic societies is to discuss various cases of conflict in Indonesia, from non-indigenous issues, religious issues, to tribal issues (Harahap, 2018; Prasojo & Pabbajah, 2020), as well as studies on the root causes of conflicts and alternative solutions (Aulia *et al.*, 2023). *Second*, many studies pay attention to social interaction factors in multiethnic societies (Dewi & Riyanto, E.D., 2022; Hadirman *et al.*, 2023; Murcahyaningrum *et al.*, 2023; Sudi, 2020). While the trend of the existing literatures more focus on the harmony of multiethnic societies, little (if any) attention is paid to the positive dimension, where different ethnic groups create dynamic and interconnected social dynamics, and give birth to good cooperation across ethnicities.

This study complements the shortcomings of the existing study by looking at how multi-ethnic community interaction produces a positive farming mentality so that it can build its food security and rice surplus, so that it can become the main supplier of rice for Southeast Sulawesi Province and its surroundings. The problem of interaction of multiethnic communities is directly related to differences in culture, religion, and other differences. It is interesting to know how they live and work in agriculture together against this background of differences, so as to build their food security. In particular, this paper answers how the interaction between various ethnic groups in East Kolaka society affects the way farmers manage agricultural resources and shape their mentality regarding agriculture so as to realize food security. A deep understanding of this good cooperation between multiethnic communities in building food security can be an input for policymakers in designing more inclusive and sustainable strategies in agricultural resource management in similar regions.

This research is based on one argument that in the context of agriculture, this ethnic diversity plays an important role in shaping the unique characteristics of the agricultural sector (Sari & Zuber, 2020; Widyastuti *et al.*, 2022). Residents of these various ethnic groups are involved in various aspects of agriculture, from the cultivation of food crops to production. They maintain hereditary agricultural traditions that have deep roots in their respective cultures. However, what is more interesting is how these multi-ethnic communities interact in their agricultural activities. They not only exchange agricultural knowledge and skills, but also support each other in difficult situations such as weather changes or natural disasters (Salem & Mesra, 2020). Cross-ethnic cooperation in agriculture

is a distinctive characteristic that forms a unique social framework within East Kolaka's agricultural sector.

The role of multi-ethnic communities in East Kolaka's agricultural sector is not just a detail of local culture, but a key element that shapes the social and economic framework of the region. The presence of different ethnic groups creates dynamic and interconnected social dynamics. Their role is reflected in the careful division of labor. Each ethnic group brings knowledge inherent in their own culture and traditions. For example, some ethnic groups have expertise in cultivating certain food crops, while others have in-depth knowledge of traditional farming techniques. This forms a natural collaboration that increases overall agricultural productivity.

On the other hand, the peasant mentality in East Kolaka is a central element shaping the direction and development of the agricultural sector in the region. As major players in agriculture, their views, values and beliefs have a significant impact on all aspects of agricultural activity. A view of agriculture, for example, includes their understanding of how plants grow, how they interact with the surrounding environment, and how best to manage natural resources. This view underlies their choices in exploiting farmland, choosing crops to plant, and even the harvesting strategies they use.

This research delves deeper into how the mentality of farmers in East Kolaka influences agricultural decision-making, innovation, and the sustainability measures they implement. It will provide valuable insights into how agricultural policies can be tailored to promote more sustainable practices, explore the potential for innovations that can increase productivity, and ensure that agriculture in East Kolaka and similar regions continues in the face of inevitable change. By understanding the role of the farmer mentality, we can shape a smarter and more sustainable agricultural future.

This research has broad significance as it not only provides deep insight into the role of multi-ethnic communities in agriculture in East Kolaka, but also delves into how farmers' views and mentalities influence the direction of agriculture and community development. The results of this study provide a basis for more effective policy-making in support of sustainable and inclusive agriculture in the region and provide relevant insights for similar cases in different parts of the world.

2. Method

Using qualitative approach, this study explores the dynamics of multiethnic society and the mentality of farmers in East Kolaka. This research was conducted for six months. Research informants included members of multiethnic communities involved in 14 paddy field farming, four rice farmers from various ethnic groups, as well as seven stakeholders such as regional agricultural officers and three members of local community.

Table 1. Research Informants

No	Name	Sex	Age	Position
1.	Firoaus	male	45	agricultural extension workers
2.	Suhardi	male	44	agricultural extension workers
3.	Saaolis	male	43	agricultural extension workers
4.	Arif	male	43	agricultural extension workers
5.	Suherman	male	48	farmers
6.	Muhamad Basri	male	58	farmers
7.	Muhmudin	male	45	farmers
8.	Made	male	45	farmers
9.	Tansi	male	45	farmers
10.	I Wayan Gede Edi Sanjaya	male	40	subdistrict head
11.	Saeho	male	45	sub-district employee
12.	Komang Parmini	female	50	community leaders
13.	Sulone	male	43	community leaders
14.	Sulwan	male	45	community leaders

Researchers to gain a deep understanding of their agricultural views, values, and practices. During observation process, the researcher observed the farming practices of the farmers, traditional knowledge practices in agriculture, as well as the community's interaction with its environment.

Data analysis begins with coding data, by identifying prominent themes or patterns (Bungin, 2008; Creswell, 2016). Themes that emerged include ethnic diversity, local agricultural systems, perceptions and values, challenges and opportunities, as well as interethnic interactions. Through data analysis focused on these themes, researchers can provide a deep description of the dynamics of multi-ethnic communities and farmer mentalities contribute to building food security and resilience in East Kolaka.

Data analysis techniques use qualitative analysis to get a comprehensive picture of the dynamics of multi-ethnic societies and farmer mentality in the context of agriculture in East Kolaka. The process begins with data coding, where relevant segments or sections are labeled based on themes.

In terms of research ethics, the researcher confirms meetings and interviews or observations to obtain informant consent and maintain privacy and data integrity. All interview processes with informants were recorded, with the permission of all informants.

3. Result and Discussion

- **Multi-Ethnic Society and Farmer Mentality in East Kolaka**

East Kolaka Regency is inhabited by various ethnic groups from different regions of Indonesia, such as the Mekongga, Javanese, Buginese, and Balinese ethnicities. Each ethnic group plays a crucial role in the agricultural sector of East Kolaka. The Mekongga Tolaki ethnicity, as indigenous people, provides much of the agricultural land, which is then utilized as farmland or sold to migrant communities. Subsequently, the Balinese, Buginese, and Javanese ethnicities work as farmers, often purchasing agricultural land and cultivating it into fields

for cultivation or cocoa plantations. Furthermore, the local farming system used by the farming community in East Kolaka still maintains traditional practices such as communal work. Additionally, the technology used remains predominantly traditional, employing tools like hand tractors and hoes for land cultivation. These traditional practices are also evident in the agricultural rituals performed by farmers, such as the Balinese farmers' adherence to the Tri Hita Karana principle in their farming system, as stated by I Wayan Gede Edi Sanjaya, a sub-district head, that "The Balinese community who come to East Kolaka still apply the belief of Tri Hita Karana in all aspects of their lives, including the farming habits of Balinese farmers. Until now, this belief is still practiced."

In the Bugis farming community, there is a ritual called *ma'doja bine*, where people who want to sow seeds first perform a prayer ritual after sunset until sunrise. *ma'doja bine* is performed to bless the rice planting and protect it from pest attacks. The prayers originate from Bugis folklore about Meong Pallo Karollae (Male Cat with 3-color patterns) with Dewi Sangia Sri, who is believed by the Bugis people to be the *Rice Goddess*. Similarly, in the Mekongga community, they recognize *Sanggoleo Mbae* as the *Rice Goddess*, while in the Javanese ethnicity, they believe in Dewi Sri or the *Rice Goddess*. These beliefs foster a sense of care among each other, including a strong belief in respecting nature as the farmers' source of livelihood. This is also described by Sulwan, a community leaders in Mekongga, as follows:

The Mekongga community believes that the fertility of the land in Mekongga is always guarded by the *Rice Goddess*, *Sanggoleo Mbae*. Therefore, not only farmers but the entire Mekongga community believes that environmental destruction will incur the wrath of *Sanggoleo Mbae* and disrupt the community's livelihood.

The ethnic mixing in East Kolaka Regency has made it one of the destinations for transmigration. Transmigrants enter East Kolaka through government transmigration programs and spontaneous transmigration. Through this transmigration program, East Kolaka is now inhabited by Balinese, Bugis, Javanese, Sundanese, as well as Tolaki people as local residents. [Lingkarsultra.com](https://lingkarsultra.com/2022/09/23/ida-bagus-putu-widiana-paparkan-sejarah-masuknya-transmigrasi-bali-di-koltim/) (2022) reported that Balinese people enter Ladongi East Kolaka through several stages of arrival.¹ Additionally, spontaneous transmigration from West Java and Central Java, as well as Bugis people, although some Bugis people entered East Kolaka first through spontaneous transmigration.²

The increasingly dynamic migration pattern makes East Kolaka in Southeast Sulawesi form villages that are multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious, and create various cultures and traditions or can be called multi-cultural. The creation of a multicultural society certainly does not only create cultural diversity and traditions, but makes various ethnicities can create a mutually beneficial

¹ <https://lingkarsultra.com/2022/09/23/ida-bagus-putu-widiana-paparkan-sejarah-masuknya-transmigrasi-bali-di-koltim/>, accessed on July 2023.

² <https://lingkarsultra.com/2022/09/23/ulang-tahun-transmigrasi-bali-ke-50-plt-bupati-koltim-titip-pesan-jaga-persatuan-dan-persaudaraan/>, accessed on July 2023.

cooperation, share knowledge, especially in terms of agriculture, work together in the application of agricultural land, and so on. The encounter of various ethnicities and local (indigenous) people certainly make East Kolaka rich in culture, in addition to the process of taking cultural elements between them.

East Kolaka is a prominent region with very rich ethnic and cultural diversity (Ni'Mah, 2018). The region is home to various ethnic groups living side by side, creating an environment rich in cultural pluralism. Some of the main ethnic groups that inhabit East Kolaka include the Tolaki Tribe, the Bugis Tribe, as well as several other ethnic groups such as the Javanese, Balinese, and various other small ethnic groups that have unique cultural heritage and traditions. This ethnic diversity is reflected not only in different languages and customs, but also in the daily life patterns of the population. Each ethnic group brings its unique contribution in the development of the region, including in the agricultural sector. This ethnic diversity created a social network among the inhabitants of East Kolaka.

The people of East Kolaka are known for their high rice production and are the main suppliers of rice for Southeast Sulawesi Province and its surrounding areas. At least data from the Food Office of East Kolaka Regency Government shows rice production in the last 3 years, as seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Rice Surplus in East Kolaka

No.	Rice Production	Surplus	Ton/Year
1.	64,470.94	52,743.98	2020
2.	75,268.69	64,018.48	2021
3.	74,814.76	62,438.84	2022

Source: Government Food Office of East Kolaka District, 2023

The mentality of farmers in East Kolaka becomes a central element shaping the direction and development of the agricultural sector in the region because the farmers are the main players in agricultural activities in the area. Their perspectives, values, and beliefs significantly impact various aspects of agricultural activities. Their views on agriculture encompass a deep understanding of plant growth processes, the interaction between plants and the surrounding environment, and best practices in natural resource management. This influences their decisions in utilizing agricultural land, selecting crop types to cultivate, and even the strategies used in the harvesting process. For example, if farmers have a strong understanding of the importance of ecosystem balance, they tend to employ environmentally friendly farming practices. Their perspectives also influence the selection of plant varieties that are more suitable for local environmental conditions and market needs. Additionally, views based on local wisdom and generational experiences are also important factors in shaping farmers' mentality. Values such as communal cooperation in mutual assistance, local wisdom in utilizing natural resources, and environmental sustainability also influence farmers' decisions in managing land and natural resources.

One of the characteristics of this multicultural society is the ongoing interaction and integration between different groups of people, which creates a unique and complex social environment, tolerance between ethnic groups, so that people from different backgrounds can coexist and interact in daily life. Often this peaceful coexistence appears and is shown at celebrations, festivals and religious activities of different groups of people, reflecting the cultural diversity that exists. According to Yahya, (2019: 156), a local resident of Southeast Sulawesi mentioned the process of meeting various indigenous ethnicities and ethnicities by creating mutual cooperation and mutual cooperation with *kalosara* culture. *Kalosara* culture encourages internal brotherhood between the ethnic population of the local population and at the same time can be a consensus that can be accepted by any ethnicity, as illustrated from a social dance, named *lulo dance*. This may encourage close relationship, strengthen friendships and foster cooperation. *Kalosara* culture can also be an inspiration in various community activities ranging from the household level, work affairs, social affairs, education, and even political affairs.

In East Kolaka it seems that *kalosara* culture although different terms are found, such as *mepokoaso* or *samaturu* to describe togetherness and a sense of unity or brotherhood that is still applied today in everyday life, at least it can be seen from what was conveyed by a Balinese mother, Komang Parmini (50 years), as a community leaders, who stated that: "Behind this house there are sawo trees, durian trees, bananas, and mangoes. If all these trees are bearing fruit, everyone in need can take them. Please just take it ... likewise, if anyone needs help by asking for rice, then rice will be given as help."

What was conveyed by the Komang Parminis above shows that giving and assistance is not only for certain ethnicities, but all people can take and enjoy fruits in the back garden, all can take them. In rice field farming, *kalosara* culture can be seen from the many farmer groups consisting of Bugis farmers, Balinese farmers, Javanese farmers, and Sundanese farmers, they together make agreements in farming and obey the agreements that have been made. Cultural diversity in East Kolaka became the glue together in building the village.

Although in everyday life in East Kolaka there are mutual tolerance, mutual assistance, and so on that show them living side by side between ethnicities, there are also differences in character and mentality from various different ethnicities. This character and mentality are at least evident in the agricultural business they have been working on until now. The Balinese, the Bugis, the Javanese, the Sundanese, as well as the natives, differ in character and mentality in agricultural business as their main livelihood. This difference in character and mentality ultimately greatly affects the economic conditions, food security, and sustainable agricultural systems in East Kolaka. Koentjaraningrat (1994:37-38), uses the concept of mentality in the context of development to describe the mindset, outlook on life, and social orientation possessed by a group of people. The term mentality relates to the way of view and cultural attitudes inherent in a particular society, which can affect the development.

- **Ethnic Mentality in Building Food Security**

The thinking process is needed by everyone to survive in a situation that is always changing, uncertain, and competitive. This ability is a mental activity to help solve problems or make decisions (Rahayuning, *et al.*, 2021:14). The discussion below refers to the ability to think of different ethnicities in East Kolaka Region as a mental activity in dealing with a changing environment and uncertainty.

In understanding the role of ethnicity in influencing efforts to develop food security in the East Kolaka region, it is important to consider the diverse ethnicities present in the area, such as the Balinese, Bugis, Javanese, and Mekongga ethnic groups. Each ethnicity has unique mindsets, values, and practices that influence how they perceive and practice food security within the framework of communal values. For instance, the Balinese ethnicity holds strong views on the presence and role of rice goddesses in ensuring successful harvests, which then influences their agricultural rituals and practices. Meanwhile, the Bugis ethnicity implements a strong and well-organized farming system, emphasizing efficient and sustainable land management. On the other hand, the Javanese ethnicity bases their farming practices on the values of mutual cooperation and solidarity, where farmers assist each other in the planting and harvesting process. As for the Mekongga ethnicity, they have a more independent farming tradition that is oriented towards utilizing locally available resources. As articulated by a farmer, Mahmudin (45 years) that:

The most prominent aspect in the agricultural activities of our community in East Kolaka is the culture of mutual cooperation. Usually when clearing land, cleaning it or harvesting it is still usually done in mutual cooperation, usually by groups of farmers, consisting of various ethnic backgrounds in each group.

The mentality of cooperation and mutual assistance transforms into a culture of mutual cooperation ingrained in the farming community's habits, becoming a crucial part in supporting development. Koentjaraningrat (1994:35-36) emphasized the importance of understanding and considering the mentality of local communities when designing and implementing development programs. According to him, an approach that takes into account the mentality of the community will be more effective than trying to apply development models from outside without considering local values, beliefs, and perspectives.

Interactions between ethnic groups also play a vital role in the overall dynamics of agriculture and food security. Collaboration and knowledge exchange among ethnic groups can enhance efficiency in farming practices and strengthen local food security. However, conflicts or tensions between ethnic groups can hinder collective efforts to achieve sustainable food security. Integrating local values and traditional farming practices from various ethnicities can form a strong foundation in creating a sustainable food system for the entire East Kolaka community.

Using the collective mentality approach, Koentjaraningrat (1994:37) aims to emphasize that development is not only a technical and economic aspect but also about understanding and appreciating cultural identity and community perspectives. An approach that considers local mentality is expected to create development that is more sustainable and responsive to the needs and expectations of the people involved in the development process.

The mentality of farmers in East Kolaka based on various ethnicities and cultures in the processing of rice farming as the main livelihood in East Kolaka can be described in several ways, namely, traditional approach, risk perception, dependence on seasons and water sources, modernization and technology, environmental conservation, which will be discussed below.

Traditional Approach

In rural communities in general, agricultural processing is still strongly influenced by traditional approaches. This mentality includes hereditary beliefs, customs, and farming methods passed down from one generation to the next. Like the Balinese, the Bugis, Javanese in East Kolaka, also cultivate rice farming using traditional methods brought from their respective regions. Ethnicity is an important factor in the overall configuration of society as well as the formation of individual livelihoods.

The Balinese and Bugis in East Kolaka, always apply the traditional way of rice farming that has been taught by their ancestors since they lived in the area. Starting from how to make rice plots, make rice field ripens, dam water, plow fields, nursery, plant, and harvest results. The Kolaki people as a local community learn from the Balinese and Bugis in this rice farm. The Balinese even have local wisdom applied in East Kolaka, namely the Subak system.

Subak is a traditional organization that specifically regulates irrigation systems used in rice cultivation in Bali. Subak is a traditional socio-religious institution that is very important in the distribution of water in rice fields in Bali. In carrying out its activities, Subak is based on the philosophy of harmonization of Tri Hita Karana or three causes that can provide happiness to humans. Tri Hita Karana consisting of *parhyangan* or human relations with the Creator, *pawongan* or human relationships with others, and *palemahan* or relationships between humans and their natural environment. Likewise, the belief in abundant agricultural products is inseparable from the belief of the Balinese Hindu community in hereditary traditions (Suryawan 2017:2023). This is clearly seen in the application of ceremonial culture in agriculture, starting from before the processing of agricultural land, planting to harvesting.

In East Kolaka, Subak's local wisdom is applied not only by the Balinese but also adopted by the Bugis, Javanese and Sundanese. They were members of a farmer group and agreed to implement this subak system. Ethnicities that still focus on rice farming as the main livelihood and have high enthusiasm to move forward and want abundant harvests are Balinese and Bugis. That's why Subak's local wisdom is still used by the Balinese and Bugis people in their rice field farming until now.

Not only in the Subak water system, the Balinese and Bugis are very consistent in the uniformity of planting period. They work together in creating channels, setting plant boundaries and establishing planting periods. If the planting period has been determined, then all farmers must obey and obey. They implemented a fine system for farmers who did not comply with the predetermined planting time. If there are people who are not the same in the planting period, they will be fined. Fines can be one to three million rupiah if you do not carry out a simultaneous planting period. This simultaneous planting period is very important to avoid pests of rice plant diseases.

Another local wisdom still tightly held by the Balinese and Bugis communities is to reserve about 10% of the rice harvest from all crops, which will be stored in a special place. For the Balinese, this food reserve is housed in a special building called *mungгах lumbung* (rice barn). This rice barn is considered sacred because it is associated with the Balinese belief that rice comes from the body of Dewi Sri. The rice barn is constructed with a special area, adorned with typical Balinese ornaments, to ensure it does not mix with rice for daily consumption. In contrast, the Bugis people also have the habit of reserving 10% of their rice harvest, but they store it only at home without a special place. This rice barn serves as a reserve of rice. The forms of rice barns of the Balinese and Bugis communities can be seen in the Figure 1, below:

Figure 1. *Mungгах Lumbung* of the Balinese people in East Kolaka.



Source: Personal documentation, 2023

For the Balinese community, storing food reserves in *mungгах lumbung* or rice barns is considered a sacred practice because it is closely associated with the belief that rice comes from the body of Dewi Sri. The rice barns are constructed with special places and adorned with typical Balinese ornaments, ensuring that the rice does not mix with the daily supply of rice. Additionally, these barns serve as a food mitigation strategy during crop failures or food shortages. The rice reserves stored in the barns can be used to meet the community's needs in case of rice scarcity. This reflects the social values and solidarity within the Balinese society, where solidarity and mutual cooperation are manifested through the practice of sharing food resources. With the presence of rice barns, the Balinese community can maintain food security and assist each other in difficult

situations, strengthening social bonds, and preserving richly meaningful belief traditions in their daily lives.

Figure 2. Bugis Rice Barn in East Kolaka



Source: Personal documentation, 2023

Figure 2 above depicts the form of Bugis Rice Barns in East Kolaka. These barns serve as reserves for rice supplies to face periods of scarcity or as preparation in case of crop failures. Additionally, they are also prepared for guests or sudden activities, and for sharing with villagers in need. With the presence of these barns, the Bugis community can ensure food availability in difficult situations and maintain solidarity and mutual cooperation within their community.

Unlike the case with the Balinese and Bugis, the Tolaki people as a local community in East Kolaka have diverse livelihoods, such as trading, clove and pepper gardening, handyman-ship, farming, and so on which causes Tolaki people not to focus on rice field farming. According to agricultural extension workers in East Kolaka, this diversity of livelihoods stems from the habit of Tolaki people selling their agricultural land to migrant communities, as stated by Pak Suhardi (42 years), an agricultural extension worker, below:

.. This tradition of selling agricultural land for Tolaki people is also due to the need for funds due to the tradition of procuring very large panai money in Tolaki marriages. As a result, many Tolaki people now have no agricultural land to cultivate.

The tradition of selling land has led the Tolaki Mekongga community to no longer own agricultural land, causing them to engage more in trading to meet their daily needs. This differs from the Tolaki community in Konawe, who are more focused on rice field farming, thus ensuring the sustainability and development of agricultural land until today. The dynamics of land availability in East Kolaka can pose risks to the environmental ecosystem and regional development.

Risk Perception

Multi-ethnic people's perceptions of the risks of farming in East Kolaka are very diverse. The mentality of farmers can influence how they respond to risks in

agriculture. For example, some farmers are more conservative and reluctant to adopt new agricultural technologies for fear of failure or unwanted changes in their agricultural production.

Balinese people in East Kolaka tend to be very cautious about the risks of farming, whether it is using new seeds, fertilizers, or new technology. They believe more in the farming traditions taught by their ancestors, so in agriculture they strengthen and maintain traditions such as deliberation, water pickup, rice bunting traditions, and harvest parties as a form of gratitude after harvest. The implementation of this tradition reinforces their belief in success in agriculture, rather than trying new things with unclear results. However, that does not mean the Balinese are averse to new things in agriculture. Caution in accepting new things, such as seeds, fertilizers, pest poisons, or new technologies is slowly being accepted and tested. This attitude seems to affect relatively stable agricultural production, and better work management.

Unlike the Bugis who live in East Kolaka, they tend to be quicker to accept new technologies and apply them widely. The attitude of accepting new technologies quickly, be it innovative farming techniques or using more productive crop varieties at least shows that farmers are more likely to take risks. This seems good but of course must be accompanied by adequate knowledge about the new technology to be adopted. Farmers who lack knowledge of new agricultural practices may face risks in their agricultural productivity and efficiency.

Some jobs that used to be done in mutual cooperation have now been replaced with technology. For example, the use of tractors and the wage system for Bugis farmers replaced the traditional way of gotong royong. Another risk in the acceptance of this new technology is the erosion of farming traditions as taught by their ancestors. Some abandoned traditions or customs such as descending into the rice fields simultaneously are no longer a concern. Farmers will go down to the fields no longer follow the pattern of planting simultaneously, resulting in an unbroken chain of pests. As a result, the harvest can fail due to pest attacks.

In terms of the use of this new technology, Bugis farmers often do not pay attention to the impact and yield of their rice fields. Purchasing seeds and pest poisons through online sites (market places) often makes their harvest fail. Purchasing seeds online via the internet is only trial and error and often results in crop failure because the seeds purchased are not good. Local farmers or Kolaki farmers still burn forests and plant rice in the area. This certainly poses a risk to soil fertility and irrigation problems that only rely on rainwater. Farming without this calculation results in losses, especially crop failure.

Dependence on Seasons and Water Sources

Climate change and weather conditions significantly affect the harvest yield for farmers in East Kolaka District. For the people of East Kolaka, they understand the philosophy of rice cultivation similarly to dealing with pregnancy. This means that farmers, like expectant mothers, are aware of the planting age, pregnancy stage, when the rice starts to fill or become pregnant, and when it is ready for harvest. Thus, farmers observe the growth of rice, particularly its need

for nutrition, as an integral part of their local knowledge. Living in diversity, the farmers do not adhere to a single local wisdom because they each have their own perspectives on traditions or environmentally friendly local wisdom. Information from Suherman, a resident of Antula Village (48 years) mentioned that diverse local wisdom and the increasing advancement of digital technology can be utilized simultaneously to accommodate each other. Therefore, efforts to build food security can generate new ideas and innovations globally to realize sustainable rice farming systems for the welfare of the local community.

In areas with clear seasonal patterns, the mentality of farmers is often influenced by the seasons. They follow an agricultural schedule determined by the cycle of the growing season, rainy season, and harvest season. This mentality can also influence attitudes towards irrigation management and water conservation to deal with dry spells.

Farmers' dependence on seasons and water sources is common in agriculture. Farmers rely heavily on seasonal patterns, such as monsoon and dry seasons, as well as the availability of adequate water sources to irrigate their crops. However, in East Kolaka, there are some problems associated with this dependence, for example in some villages there is insufficient or irregular water availability which can hinder the growth of rice crops and result in crop failure. If farmers have to use expensive irrigation methods or pay more to access additional water, production costs will certainly increase. Usually dependence on limited water sources can encourage farmers to use water excessively and this will affect groundwater level subsidence and environmental degradation.

In East Kolaka, this water regulation is determined by farmer groups, both in terms of water level and amount of water. The goal is that all farmers can get water evenly. If there is a violation or there are farmers who do not comply with the rules of water use this will usually be expelled from the group. Especially in Bou village, the problem of water sources has become a problem until now. In the past, Bou village was only about 100 households, but now it is more than 600 families, with agricultural land that is also growing widely. The paddy fields in Bou village increased while water resources were limited. Currently, farmers anticipate by making boreholes in each field. The flow of the river is dammed and then flowed by pipes into the rice fields. To make this borewell, Bugis, Javanese, and Tolaki farmers work together. Boreholes in fact cannot meet the water needs for all agricultural land in Bou village, and there are often crop failures due to insufficient water needs in these fields.

The problem of lack of water availability not only has an impact on crop failure, but the simultaneous rice planting schedule cannot be implemented because not all farmers can get water in their rice fields. If the rice planting schedule is not carried out simultaneously, the pest chain cannot be broken. As a result, crop failure may occur. This crop failure made Bugis farmers in Bou village remember the traditions or rituals taught by their ancestors when they were in their area. These rituals in agriculture have been abandoned with the entry of new technology in farming. Crop failure as a social function to recall abandoned rituals.

Modernization and Technology

The utilization of technological advancements in agriculture can lead to an increase in local food production capacity in East Kolaka District, including rice, corn, and cocoa crops. According to Suhardi (44 years), one of the agricultural extension workers in East Kolaka, until the end of 2023, the harvest yields of farmers in East Kolaka experienced growth. However, the social awareness of the community regarding the spirit of mutual cooperation has been slowing down. This is due to the use of technology and competition among farmers in utilizing land and water resources. Farmers' dependence on technology is considered a fundamental necessity for increasing crop yields and the productivity of land and labor used in managing local agriculture.

In the era of globalization and modernization, the mentality of farmers can change along with the adoption of modern agricultural technology. Some farmers are more open to technology, such as the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or other modern agricultural tools, while others choose to stick to the conventional farming methods they have known for years.

At present all farmers in East Kolaka are generally receptive to technology, although the acceptance of this new technology there are differences in attitudes among the various ethnicities. Balinese farmers are different from Bugis farmers, and also different from Javanese farmers and Sundanese farmers, as well as Tolaki farmers as indigenous people. Balinese farmers are quite careful and calculate using new technology, for example purchasing seeds online, purchasing fertilizers online, using heavy equipment such as tractors, and so on in agriculture. They accept new technology but still use traditional ways or traditions from ancestors. Bugis farmers tend to be very quick to accept new technology, and ancestral traditions tend to be forgotten. However, learning from the crop failures experienced, they realized the importance of the traditions that had been taught by these ancestors. Javanese and Sundanese farmers are somewhat different, they individually develop and focus on farming by learning from Balinese and Bugis farmers, although many of them are not advanced in agriculture.

The acceptance of new technology in agriculture should be under the supervision of agricultural extension workers. However, there are also differences between various ethnicities in responding to extension services from agricultural extension workers. Bugis farmers and Balinese farmers, as well as some Javanese farmers are very responsive if given counseling. These farmers are indeed eager to progress, succeed in agriculture, and have a bountiful harvest, so extension services are the main thing for them. Unlike the case with Tolaki farmers, they only want to participate and listen to agricultural extension services if there is money. Tolaki farmers are also affected by their many livelihoods, in the sense that they do not focus on rice farming alone.

In general, farmers in East Kolaka have tractors to assist in the cultivation of agricultural land. Tractors are not only for tillage, but can also be used for planting, fertilizing, watering, and even processing agricultural land after

harvest. These tractors play a key role in assisting farmers in improving the efficiency and productivity of their farms. The use of these tractors can reduce dependence on human labor in agricultural processes and make it more possible to implement modern agricultural practices more effectively. Using tractors in agriculture directly reduces mutual aid, no longer requiring much manpower. The wage system can also eliminate mutual aid.

In addition to tractors, farmers in East Kolaka already use mobile grain mills, which go to farmers in need. Traditional milling using tools such as mortar and large pestle is no longer found. Grain milling cars go around the village every day looking for farmers in need.

Environmental Conservation

Based on observations in the field, in East Kolaka District, to maintain balanced environmental security in enhancing sustainable agricultural management, the community holds the philosophy of *mekambare* (mutual cooperation), which is forged into unity despite the diversity of ethnicities. According to them, food security is currently one of the most central issues in agricultural development, serving as a primary supporter in building the health and mindset of the community. Food security is closely related to social resilience, social stability, national resilience, and economic stability, both locally, nationally, and globally (Jers *et al.*, 2021 & 2023).

Some farmers have a strong mentality regarding environmental conservation. They are more concerned with the environmental impact of agricultural practices and strive to adopt environmentally friendly agricultural practices such as agroforestry, the use of organic fertilizers, or the efficient treatment of agricultural waste. Some farmers have a strong mentality regarding environmental conservation. They are more concerned with the environmental impact of agricultural practices and strive to adopt environmentally friendly agricultural practices such as agroforestry, the use of organic fertilizers, or the efficient treatment of agricultural waste.

This is also the case in the use of pesticides purchased online or purchased at the market by asking directly to the trader at the market. The quality of pesticides purchased tends to be uncertain, and will have an impact on reducing soil and crop fertility. It is important to note that mentality in agriculture can differ from region to region, and can also change over time. Factors such as cultural traditions, social environment, and technology adoption will influence how farmers mentalize in carrying out their farms.

4. Conclusion

This study describes the dynamics of multi-ethnic communities in East Kolaka District, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, as well as their impact on farmer mentality and agricultural resource management. East Kolaka Regency is known for its cultural and ethnic diversity, including the Bugis, Javanese, Balinese, and Tolaki Mekongga communities.

The results showed that ethnic diversity in East Kolaka affects the way farmers manage their farmland. Each ethnic group has unique agricultural practices and different local knowledge. Interactions among these groups result in knowledge exchange that positively influences farmers' mentality in facing environmental and social changes. Additionally, the study highlights the role of local institutions and farmer organizations in facilitating cross-ethnic collaboration and preserving local wisdom related to agriculture. These findings have important implications in efforts to improve food security and agricultural sustainability in East Kolaka, as well as promoting cross-ethnic cooperation in the agricultural context.

In the context of farmer mentality, Balinese tend to be cautious and maintain their agricultural traditions, while Bugis are more open to new technologies. Tolaki Mekongga people, as a local community, have diverse livelihoods, so they do not focus on paddy field farming. Moreover, perceptions of risk in agriculture differ among ethnic groups. Balinese tend to be conservative, while Bugis tend to quickly accept new technologies adopted in sustainable farming practices. On the other hand, farmers' dependence on seasons and water sources still influences farming practices in this area. The findings from this study can serve as a reference for policymakers in designing more inclusive and sustainable strategies in agricultural resource management.

Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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