



Social Capital of Rice Farmers in Waihatu Village, Kairatu Barat Subdistrict, West Seram Regency

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ABSTRACT

The role of social capital in the agricultural sector, especially in rice production, is crucial as it serves not only as a foundation for national food security but also as a driving force for the rural economy. In Waihatu Village, West Kairatu District, West Seram Regency, rice farmers encounter several obstacles, including limited access to modern technology, market information, and the impacts of climate change, all of which affect crop productivity. This descriptive qualitative study aims to examine the effectiveness of social capital in supporting farmers' productive activities. The research took place in Waihatu Village and involved data collection through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that social capital is already embedded in the interactions between rice farmers and buyers, demonstrating its positive effect on increasing farmer productivity. Key elements of social capital—trust, social networks, and social norms—play a significant role in enhancing agricultural output. Trust among farmers fosters cooperation and mutual assistance, especially in the exchange of knowledge about improved farming techniques. Social networks support the distribution of agricultural products, improve access to business capital, and strengthen ties between farmers and buyers. Additionally, the presence of social norms helps to establish work discipline, promote collaboration, and maintain social cohesion. Importantly, the ethnic diversity in Waihatu Village is not seen as a barrier but rather as a source of shared experiences and innovation in farming practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with great potential in the agricultural sector, particularly in rice farming, which serves as the main commodity in food production. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2020, Indonesia has approximately 63.2 million hectares of agricultural land, contributing around 14% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Additionally, more than 40% of the Indonesian population works in the agricultural sector. This

makes agriculture highly strategic not only in terms of national economic development but also in ensuring food security for a growing population (Watloly & Litaay, n.d.).

The agricultural sector in Indonesia, especially in rice production, significantly influences food security and the people's economy. In this context, agriculture is important not only economically but also in generating employment and sustaining the welfare of communities, particularly farmers who rely heavily on this sector. Sustainable agricultural development must be continuously promoted to enhance productivity and meet domestic food needs as well as support the export of agricultural commodities (Koritelu, 2025).

However, despite the great potential of the agricultural sector in Indonesia, many challenges persist, especially in improving productivity. One of the biggest challenges faced by farmers is the limited access to resources and agricultural technologies that could enhance yields. In addition, social problems arising from the relationships among farmers and between farmers and stakeholders also affect productivity, such as low levels of mutual trust and the lack of beneficial social networks for sharing information and resources (Istia et al., 2020).

Social capital, which includes elements such as trust, networks, and social norms, plays a crucial role in supporting farmers' productivity (Murwani et al., 2023). Social capital not only refers to the social relationships formed among individuals in society but also encompasses connections that create conducive conditions for the exchange of information, technology, and resources to help boost productivity. Well-organized and strong social capital allows farmers to share knowledge, access market information, and obtain improved agricultural technologies (Murwani et al., 2023).

This is reflected in the social reality of the community in Waihatu Village, West Kairatu District, West Seram Regency, which is one of the rice production centers and has significant potential for increasing agricultural productivity. Waihatu Village, originally a transmigrant settlement, has become one of the key rice-producing areas in Maluku Province. Since the arrival of transmigrants in 1973, rice farmers in Waihatu have undergone various challenges and significant developments (Manuputty et al., 2025). These farmers, who came from regions such as Central Java, West Nusa Tenggara, and Jakarta, started new lives by cultivating land provided by the government. Nevertheless, like farmers in other areas, those in Waihatu face numerous obstacles that hinder increased productivity, such as limited access to agricultural inputs, uneven distribution of fertilizers, and climate change impacts that affect crop yields (Manuputty et al., 2025).

According to the 2022 data from the Maluku Provincial Statistics Agency, the harvested rice area in West Seram Regency declined in 2023. The harvested area recorded in 2023 was 22.64 thousand hectares with a production of 79.96 thousand tons, a significant decrease compared to 2022, which recorded 23.99 thousand hectares and 92.60 thousand tons of production. This decline indicates the various challenges faced by farmers in Waihatu, both external—such as market price instability and lack of resources—and internal, such as limited farming management practices.

In this context, social capital plays an essential role in improving agricultural effectiveness. Social capital that emerges from healthy and cooperative interactions among farmers helps them share information, overcome challenges together, and collaborate to increase yields. Putnam (2000) in (Romadi & Warnaen, 2021) stated that a high level of social capital within a community enhances social efficiency and accelerates better decision-making for the common good. In this case, strong social capital enables farmers to access the necessary resources to

manage their production better and to coordinate with others, both in distributing their harvest and procuring agricultural inputs (Darmawan et al., 2022).

Strong social capital is not only formed within homogeneous farmer groups but also in relationships between rice farmers and customers, whether within the same ethnic group or across different ones in Waihatu. The rice farmers in Waihatu, who come from ethnic groups such as Javanese, West Nusa Tenggara, and Jakarta, work together in managing paddy fields. This collaboration has helped build mutual trust between farmers and customers, facilitating mutually beneficial transactions. High levels of trust between farmers and customers contribute to smoother social exchanges essential for the agricultural process. Furthermore, the social norms embedded in Waihatu's community life also help strengthen cooperation, stabilize the distribution process, and maintain good relationships among community members (Bagas et al., 2024).

However, although social capital offers many benefits, its application in supporting rice farmers' productivity does not always run smoothly (Fitriasandy & Anam, 2022). There are still many obstacles, including limited social networks that can expand access to information and advanced agricultural technologies. In addition, the uneven distribution of social capital among farmer groups in certain areas may also affect its effectiveness.

Therefore, it is important to continuously strengthen and utilize social capital to sustainably improve agricultural output. In this regard, social capital becomes a crucial factor—not only for fostering harmonious relationships among farmers but also as a driving force that supports increased agricultural productivity. Hence, research on the social capital of rice farmers in Waihatu Village, West Kairatu District, West Seram Regency is important to explore the forms of social capital that effectively and contributively support farmers' productive activities (Dewi et al., 2022).

This study also aims to explore the elements of social capital—such as trust, networks, and social norms—that can function effectively and contribute to improving rice farmers' productivity, as well as how social capital can be used to overcome constraints in the agricultural sector. Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled: “Social Capital Of Rice Farmers In Waihatu Village, West Kairatu District, West Seram Regency.”

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at providing a deeper and more detailed understanding of the social phenomena being investigated. Such an approach allows the researcher to explore and describe social realities comprehensively, considering various interconnected aspects. Through this method, the research seeks to offer clear insights into the effective functioning of social capital and its significant contribution to improving the productivity of rice farmers in Waihatu Village.

The research was conducted in Waihatu Village, located in the Kairatu Barat District, within the West Seram Regency. The choice of Waihatu as the research site was based on several considerations. Primarily, it is a central hub for rice production and has a rich social history as a transmigrant village, with residents originating from Central Java, Jakarta, and Lombok, relocated by the Indonesian government. The coexistence of diverse communities has created a unique social blend. These dynamics provide a compelling context for examining how social capital operates effectively to support rice farmer productivity.

The qualitative data used in this study came from two main sources. First, primary data were collected directly from the field through observations of rice farmer activities and customers, supplemented by in-depth interviews with key informants. Second, secondary data included literature reviews, books, and previous research documents relevant to the topic, particularly concerning the village's geographic, demographic, and social conditions. Informants were selected based on their experience and understanding of the issues. There were 11 informants divided into key and supporting categories: the village head, head of the farmers' group, religious leaders, community figures, farmers, and customers.

The informants included Supaimin (Village Head, age 48), Jordan Apono (Pastor, age 51), and Supriadi (Imam, age 57). Farmer informants included Hartono (58), Mulyono (48), and Gemo (58), with educational backgrounds ranging from elementary to senior high school. Additional informants consisted of customers such as Mukarom (41), Marles Looy (38), and Sule Sultan (53). These profiles reflect a broad cross-section of community roles and perspectives, enriching the study's data regarding how social capital manifests and influences productivity in rural farming contexts.

Three primary techniques were employed for data collection. The first was in-depth interviews, used to understand participants' thoughts and experiences regarding the role of social capital in agricultural productivity. The second was observation, allowing the researcher to directly witness social interactions and farming activities in Waihatu. This method provided contextual insights and a personal impression of the research setting. The third technique was documentation, involving the analysis of documents such as village records and photographs of farming activities and customer interactions that supported and validated the research findings.

To ensure data validity, the study employed triangulation—comparing multiple data sources to confirm consistency and accuracy. This included four validation techniques: credibility (verifying data accuracy through cross-checks), transferability (applicability of findings to similar contexts), dependability (ensuring consistent findings through repeatability), and confirmability (objectivity of the data free from researcher bias). Data analysis followed a qualitative approach, categorizing and interpreting information according to research questions. The findings were then presented in a narrative format, offering a detailed explanation of how effective social capital mechanisms enhance rice farmer productivity in Waihatu.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of Rice Farmers in Waihatu Village

The history of rice farming in Waihatu Village began in 1973 when the Indonesian government implemented a transmigration program aimed at population redistribution and regional development. Around 200 families from various regencies in Central Java, such as Blora, Wonogiri, Wonosobo, Kebumen, Pati, Banyumas, and Grobogan, were relocated to Waihatu. The government provided these transmigrants with settlements and agricultural land specifically for rice cultivation (Subagyo, 2021). This initiative intended to improve farmers' welfare by granting them direct access to productive land. Each family received a considerable portion of farmland to cultivate rice, which was their primary occupation in their places of origin.

Over time, the transmigrants adapted to their new environment, despite social and cultural challenges. Leveraging their previous experience in rice farming and supported by government assistance, they worked to improve agricultural yields. They perceived the fertile lands of Waihatu as offering better opportunities compared to their previous conditions in Java,

hoping to realize a better quality of life through farming. The growing number of farmers was also boosted by migration from other areas attracted by Waihatu's agricultural potential.

To organize this expanding farming community, farmer groups were formed as forums to unify farmers and facilitate agricultural activities. These groups also served as platforms to discuss and solve farming problems collectively. Later, these groups united under a joint farmer association called Gapoktan, which coordinated activities such as production, marketing, and access to agricultural technology and resources. The Gapoktan consists of 14 active farmer groups, each with its own identity but united by the goal of improving farmers' welfare through collaboration.

Waihatu's community is ethnically diverse, predominantly consisting of transmigrants from Central Java but also including people from Buton, Makassar, and West Sumatra. Despite their different cultural backgrounds, the village inhabitants live harmoniously, demonstrating values of tolerance and cooperation. This diversity enriches social life and strengthens the community's agricultural development through the exchange of knowledge and skills among different ethnic groups.

Overall, the history of rice farming in Waihatu Village exemplifies the success of the transmigration program in creating better livelihoods and fostering social diversity. The Gapoktan plays a vital role in organizing farmers, enhancing productivity, and supporting welfare. The village's pluralistic society stands as a model of harmonious coexistence and cooperative agricultural development.

The Role of Social Capital in Farmer Productivity

Social capital is crucial for increasing farmers' productivity because it expands access to information, strengthens cooperation among farmers, and facilitates the adoption of agricultural technologies (Laksmi & Arjawa, 2023). Building and developing social capital should be prioritized to support productivity and farmers' welfare. However, in Waihatu Village, the effectiveness of social capital among rice farmers faces significant challenges, especially due to external factors.

One major challenge is the unpredictable and unstable weather. The region experiences alternating rainy and dry seasons with irregular patterns that disrupt planting and harvesting cycles. The fluctuating climate conditions cause damage to rice plants and reduce yields, thereby undermining the benefits of social capital in supporting productivity.

Another significant obstacle is the limited availability and high cost of agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides. Many farmers struggle to obtain subsidized fertilizers due to stock shortages, forcing them to rely on expensive non-subsidized options. The rising prices and scarcity of pesticides also hinder optimal pest control efforts, contributing further to declining harvests.

These external challenges cause the social capital among farmers in Waihatu to function below its potential. Despite strong cooperation within farmer groups and Gapoktan, the unpredictable climate and difficulties accessing inputs limit agricultural productivity. Farmers have responded by strengthening their cooperation and seeking support from government agricultural agencies through proposals and collective action to obtain better resources.

Hence, social capital remains a vital asset in mobilizing collective efforts and adapting to challenges. It enables farmers to share knowledge, coordinate activities, and pursue solutions together. However, to fully realize its benefits, social capital must be supported by improvements in infrastructure, consistent availability of agricultural inputs, and climate adaptation strategies.

Trust Reflected in the Shared Interests of Rice Farmers and Customers

Trust is a mutual belief formed through continuous and intensive interaction between individuals and groups, rooted in shared interests and common goals. This mutual trust enables the development of effective collaboration, especially in the exchange of resources and information necessary to achieve collective objectives (Laksmi & Arjawa, 2023). Trust not only serves as a key element in social relationships but also functions as a core component of social capital that strengthens cooperation among actors.

When social capital is built on a strong foundation of trust, it facilitates the flow of resources and information between individuals and groups. This promotes meaningful social connections and reinforces mutual understanding. In this context, trust is fundamental to establishing all forms of healthy social relationships. Therefore, building social capital requires a stable and deep level of trust among its actors.

Among the rice farmers in Waihatu Village, trust has developed in line with shared interests with their customers. This trust allows for practical arrangements, such as advance financial assistance for farmers in need, which is later deducted from their harvest income. This form of cooperation demonstrates that trust enables both parties to act in the best interest of each other. Farmers can meet urgent needs without turning to formal credit institutions, and customers are guaranteed a return through harvest yields.

Trust also serves as the main foundation in maintaining long-term cooperation. The mutual understanding between farmers and customers allows them to overcome obstacles through direct communication and coordination. In cases of difficulty, the parties involved tend to maintain openness and seek solutions collectively, showing that trust is not easily shaken and continues to grow stronger with experience.

This study finds that shared interests among rice farmers in Waihatu form the central basis for cross-ethnic cooperation. Although ethnic differences exist, these do not hinder the formation of strong networks between farmers and customers. Instead, trust arising from mutual goals encourages joint action, mutual aid, and routine visits for coordination, further strengthening social bonds.

The role of social capital becomes increasingly significant when it supports collective awareness and strengthens the ability of individuals from different ethnic backgrounds to collaborate. Trust rooted in shared interests forms the basis for solidarity—a sense of unity and mutual support—which enhances the resilience of farmers in facing economic and environmental challenges.

Solidarity among farmers and customers is reinforced by several factors, especially common economic goals. These shared interests become the main driving force for interaction and cooperation, as well as the exchange of resources based on trust. Strong social relationships within the farming community also promote joint problem-solving and collective action.

Furthermore, collaboration built on solidarity allows for more effective pursuit of economic goals. Trust fosters a willingness to share knowledge and information, improve communication, and strengthen relationships. In this way, the bond between farmers and customers becomes more than transactional—it evolves into a cooperative partnership based on mutual respect and shared responsibility.

Social capital also supports the development of resources not only for increasing productivity but also for expanding knowledge networks among farmers and between farmers

and customers. Through these interactions, they build sustainable relationships that contribute to the progress of agriculture in the village.

The role of trust in the social capital of Waihatu rice farmers can be categorized into four aspects. First, trust serves as the foundation of social capital by enabling cooperation that is both pragmatic and goal-oriented. Second, it acts as a bridge that fosters interethnic cooperation, thus expanding social networks beyond ethnic boundaries. Third, trust encourages solidarity, which manifests in coordinated actions, collective problem-solving, and resilience. Fourth, it improves access to resources—both financial and informational—supporting farmers' survival and innovation in the face of limitations. Hence, in Waihatu, trust is not just a social value but a strategic asset essential for building sustainable and inclusive agricultural development.

Gapoktan as a Social Network for Disseminating Information Among Farmers

Gapoktan in Waihatu Village serves as a collective organization that brings together rice farmers to exchange knowledge, experience, and agricultural information. This platform functions as a vital communication channel, allowing farmers to share useful information that can ultimately enhance productivity and the quality of agricultural yields (Rokhmania & Maulatuzulfa, 2022). As a form of social capital, Gapoktan has become an effective solution to strengthen cooperation and facilitate the achievement of common goals in the agricultural sector.

The presence of Gapoktan significantly aids farmers in obtaining essential information related to farming processes, such as the distribution of fertilizers and technical farming practices. With 14 farmer groups now unified under the Gapoktan structure, farmers are better positioned to access agricultural resources. This organizational structure encourages participation and inclusion, ensuring that each farmer group has equal opportunities to benefit from agricultural inputs and support services.

Functioning as a social network, Gapoktan enables farmers to collaborate more effectively and build supportive relationships rooted in mutual trust and solidarity. Social norms embedded within the organization help guide interactions, maintain cohesion, and foster a sense of collective responsibility. The cooperative environment developed within Gapoktan not only improves information exchange but also empowers farmers to adapt to challenges through shared problem-solving and collective action.

Gapoktan also acts as a resource hub where farmers gain access to essential farming tools, seeds, and support systems. This coordinated effort ensures that the needs of farming communities are met more efficiently. The ability to borrow equipment or distribute seeds equitably is an example of how Gapoktan supports practical agricultural needs, while also reinforcing cooperative behavior.

In the context of social network theory, the relationships formed within Gapoktan reflect both strong and weak social ties. Strong social ties—such as those between farmers within the same group—are characterized by trust, mutual support, and frequent interaction. These ties provide access to critical knowledge, improve farming skills, and contribute to overall productivity. Farmers benefit from sharing experiences and collaborating on risk management strategies related to their agricultural activities.

Meanwhile, weak social ties—such as those between farmers and external stakeholders—also play an essential role. Though these relationships may lack emotional closeness, they provide valuable connections to broader sources of information and resources. Interactions with suppliers, buyers, or market actors allow farmers to gather insights on pricing, market demand,

and input availability. These networks, though less intimate, expand opportunities for innovation and strategic partnerships.

Strong networks formed within Gapoktan have also facilitated greater engagement with agricultural extension agents. These external collaborations provide farmers with access to training, new techniques, and innovations that can be adopted and shared within the community. The network serves as a conduit for knowledge transfer that is vital to modernizing traditional farming methods and improving the quality of harvests.

Both strong and weak social ties have complementary roles. While strong networks enhance solidarity and facilitate collective farming practices, weak networks introduce farmers to novel information and external support. The integration of both networks allows for a more dynamic and adaptive farming community that is better equipped to address internal and external challenges.

The data collected from field research in Waihatu clearly illustrate the instrumental role of Gapoktan in strengthening agricultural social networks. Farmers use the organization as a forum to exchange relevant agricultural information, navigate practical challenges such as fertilizer distribution, and engage in decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods. Gapoktan has thus proven to be both a center of interaction and a problem-solving institution for farmers.

In conclusion, Gapoktan is not merely an administrative entity—it represents a strategic model of community-based resource management grounded in social capital. By facilitating cooperation, enhancing access to information, and promoting both strong and weak social ties, Gapoktan contributes significantly to increasing productivity and improving the welfare of rice farmers in Waihatu Village. This model may serve as a replicable approach to agricultural development in similar rural contexts.

The Role of Shared Norms in Regulating Planting Schedules and Strengthening Social Capital among Rice Farmers in Waihatu

Social norms embedded within social capital refer to a set of unwritten rules collectively agreed upon and adhered to by individuals in a social network. These norms play a vital role in shaping and guiding members' behavior, fostering trust among individuals and groups, regulating harmonious social interactions, and instilling discipline and obedience to the agreed-upon order (Alfiansyah, 2023). As highlighted by Mr. Mulyono during an interview (10/01/2025), these norms are operationalized through annual meetings between the farmer groups and Gapoktan, where decisions such as the rice planting schedule are made. The planting season is agreed upon during the first annual meeting, usually no later than January, followed by another meeting for the second planting season. Sanctions, such as being prohibited from using shared agricultural tools, are applied to those who violate these agreements.

This process was affirmed by other informants, such as Mr. Gemo (07/01/2025), who emphasized that rice is planted twice a year, and the schedule is set according to Gapoktan's instructions. Because planting often coincides with religious holidays, the timing must be planned carefully. The annual meeting ensures synchronization of planting and includes an accountability session where Gapoktan reports on activities and finances, reinforcing transparency and planning for the upcoming cycle.

Mr. Ponirin (08/01/2025) added that the rice planting season is dictated by Gapoktan, and no group is allowed to plant outside the agreed schedule. Violators face sanctions, and all members are invited to participate in the accountability meetings where reports are shared and

future directions are decided collectively. This structure ensures consistent and fair application of social norms.

Similarly, Mr. Supriono (08/01/2025) explained that in Waihatu, rice planting schedules are determined collectively to ensure simultaneous planting and harvesting. This agreement includes penalties for violators and encompasses not only the planting schedule meeting but also annual accountability sessions. These gatherings serve to maintain transparency and trust between Gapoktan and the farmers.

Social norms play a critical role in society by creating a sense of security and serving as tools for social control. They help distinguish acceptable behavior and maintain group stability by minimizing internal conflicts. In this context, norms are applied fairly and consistently to build trust and cooperation among community members, especially regarding decisions such as planting schedules.

These norms act as behavioral benchmarks and directly influence trust and collaboration among community members. The collective agreement between Gapoktan and rice farmers regarding planting schedules encourages cooperation, enhances productivity through synchronized farming, and strengthens solidarity. Furthermore, the accountability process ensures that every activity and fund managed by Gapoktan is transparent, which is essential for sustaining group activities and maintaining social trust.

Interview data confirms that social norms are crucial in guiding cooperation between Gapoktan and rice farmers, particularly in determining planting schedules. These norms are not formally documented but are based on shared values and traditions, consistently followed over time. Their primary function is to maintain order and social harmony among members of the farming community.

The regulatory function of these norms contributes to social stability in Waihatu, especially regarding rice planting schedules. Gapoktan plays a key role in facilitating agreements through annual forums, such as planting schedule meetings and accountability sessions. The decisions made in these forums guide all farmers and demonstrate how collectively formed norms can direct actions uniformly, ensuring efficiency and preventing overlapping schedules.

Discipline and obedience are reinforced through structured annual meetings and accountability sessions. Social sanctions, like restricting access to agricultural tools, are imposed on rule breakers. These measures represent internal control mechanisms, reminding members that individual actions must align with collective interests.

Strong trust and accountability between farmers and Gapoktan are the foundation of sustainable cooperation. Open communication through decision-making forums not only provides transparency but also strengthens trust. These mechanisms promote mutual understanding, accountability, and shared responsibility, which are all essential elements of social capital.

Shared agreements on planting schedules serve both social and practical purposes. Synchronized planting enhances resource efficiency and reduces risks such as pest outbreaks. Therefore, the norms established within the rice farming community of Waihatu are more than abstract principles—they are institutionalized systems practiced through meetings, agreements, and sanctions. These norms sustain social order, build trust, increase production efficiency, and promote active member participation in decision-making. As such, collective norms form the foundation of robust and productive social capital among rice farmers.

Lastly, politeness and mutual respect, as described by Mr. Gemo and Mr. Ponirin, are essential norms for maintaining social exchanges between farmers and their customers. These unwritten but widely accepted norms ensure harmonious interactions and trust. They guide behavior within the community and act as a moral filter that encourages members to uphold collective values and respect each other's roles, strengthening the social fabric that supports the continuity of their cooperation.

Efforts to Sustain the Functionality of Social Capital in the Lives of Rice Farmers

In the context of improving agricultural productivity, the sustainability and functionality of social capital among rice farmers in Waihatu holds a critical role (Putro et al., 2022). Strong and cohesive social capital facilitates access to various resources, including social networks, information exchange, collective support, and strategic collaboration. These factors strengthen farmers' adaptive capacity in facing the continuously evolving dynamics and challenges in the agricultural sector. However, social capital is not static; it is dynamic and heavily influenced by structural, cultural, and contextual factors. Therefore, it requires planned, systematic, and continuous interventions to ensure its sustainability, especially in this era of globalization and rapid social change that introduces new pressures and complexities to the socio-economic lives of local rice farmers.

According to Mr. Gemo, a rice farmer, "... There was a time when a customer contacted me to order one ton of rice and expected delivery within two days. However, I encountered a problem because the owner of the rice-cutting machine was working in another area, so I couldn't fulfill my promise. I apologized and explained the situation" (interview with Mr. Gemo, 7/1/2025). Similarly, Mr. Ponirin and Mr. Supriono stated that weather conditions and production delays often hinder timely deliveries. "... When customers from Ambon place an order, we usually reconfirm. However, during rainy seasons, delivery is often delayed, and production drops due to crops falling. We always try to communicate these issues to maintain customer satisfaction" (interviews with Mr. Ponirin and Mr. Supriono, 8/1/2025).

The interviews reveal recurring issues such as delays in meeting customer expectations, unpredictable weather, and decreased rice yields. These challenges underscore the importance of maintaining a functioning system of social capital among farmers. Key to improving productivity and farmer welfare is strengthening and preserving this social capital. It involves networks and social norms that allow individuals and groups to collaborate and achieve mutual goals. To ensure its continuity, farmers must improve communication, enhance managerial abilities, and engage more actively in decision-making through farmer group meetings and cooperation with agricultural agencies.

To address delayed deliveries, farmers must foster more effective and transparent communication with customers. Better communication helps align expectations, provide accurate updates on production and availability, and improve customer trust. Additionally, increasing rice yields requires strong farmer networks, continuous training, and the adoption of appropriate technology. Collaborations with agricultural offices and farmer groups (Gapoktan) in Waihatu are essential. Other vital measures include raising community awareness, promoting mutual cooperation, and involving farmers in collective decision-making processes, especially through annual meetings that schedule planting and harvesting.

These strategies are expected to improve productivity and the welfare of farmers by enhancing access to information, resources, and social networks. Social capital—encompassing trust, networks, and norms—enables farmers to form strong bonds with community leaders,

institutions, and fellow farmers. These bonds enhance resource sharing and provide opportunities for improved production. Social capital is not only a tool for resource access but also a mechanism for reinforcing social norms, enabling farmers to actively participate in social activities and maintain customer relationships.

Social capital plays an essential role in sustaining and improving the productivity of rice farmers in Waihatu. Strong social networks, collaborative norms, and mutual trust between farmers, customers, and institutions help overcome challenges such as delivery delays, adverse weather, and reduced crop yields. Addressing these challenges requires continuous and structured efforts to keep social capital functioning effectively. Farmers often face delivery timing issues due to unpredictable factors like equipment availability and weather, which affect both quality and quantity of harvests.

Overcoming these uncertainties requires transparent communication with customers to prevent dissatisfaction and maintain mutually beneficial relationships. Open information sharing about delays or production quality issues is key to maintaining trust and ensuring long-term partnerships. Social capital, consisting of networks, norms, and trust, acts as a valuable resource in dealing with such problems. It promotes collaboration and cooperation among farmers, customers, and supporting institutions. For instance, the partnership between farmers and Gapoktan for training and access to advanced agricultural technologies proves crucial for increasing rice yields and enhancing production efficiency.

To solve the issues of delivery delays and declining yields, farmers are working to improve communication, boost production capacity, and strengthen their role in decision-making. A major step is enhancing trust with customers through consistent communication. Strengthening networks among farmers and between farmers and institutions is also essential for better access to resources, information, and technology. Collaborations with agricultural offices and Gapoktan in Waihatu play a central role in technical development, helping farmers adapt to unpredictable conditions like climate change. These efforts not only aim to improve productivity but also the socio-economic well-being of farmers through sustainable agricultural practices.

Social Capital-Based Risk Management

Risk management in agriculture is a decision-making process based on available information and knowledge aimed at minimizing risk impacts and enhancing farmers' capacity to cope with challenges. Social capital, including social networks, shared norms, and the community's collective capacity, plays a vital role in supporting this process (Sudja'i et al., 2021). Through social networks, farmers can exchange information and resources, while social norms like mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) strengthen collaboration among farmers in addressing agricultural problems.

In practice, social capital-based risk management enables farmers to identify, analyze, and respond to risks that may affect the success of their farming ventures. For instance, when faced with unexpected climate changes or delays in product delivery, open communication and trust between farmers and customers become crucial in resolving these issues. Therefore, integrating social capital into risk management not only enhances the resilience and sustainability of agricultural enterprises but also strengthens the social relationships that underpin long-term success.

In the context of farming in Waihatu Village, risk management involves not only technical knowledge or the ability to manage production uncertainties but also depends heavily on the social capital possessed by farmers. This includes their networks, social norms, and the

collective capacity of the community, which all contribute significantly to the effectiveness of risk management strategies. These social connections allow farmers to share insights, support one another, and coordinate actions to address various challenges.

The risk management strategies applied by Waihatu farmers show that their success in facing agricultural challenges depends largely on open communication and trust between them and other stakeholders, including fellow farmers and customers. Farmers manage risks through active participation and the formation of strong social networks. For example, when delivery delays occur due to unfavorable weather, farmers promptly inform customers of the situation and offer alternative solutions such as rescheduling delivery dates.

To farmers, open and honest communication is a fundamental strategy that must be considered from the outset. By being transparent about delays and offering feasible alternatives, farmers can preserve customer trust and ensure their needs are still met. This aligns with the importance of maintaining trust as part of social capital, which helps sustain mutually beneficial relationships in the long term.

Farmers also realize that challenges may stem not only from customer demands but from internal factors such as inconsistent access to farming inputs like fertilizers and pesticides. To address these issues, it is essential for farmers to build broader networks, such as with other farmers or farmer groups. These networks serve as platforms for sharing resource information and coordinating joint actions to overcome problems more effectively.

Furthermore, the social norms in Waihatu Village, particularly those emphasizing gotong royong, are deeply embedded in the community and reinforce cooperation among farmers. This mutual assistance extends beyond physical labor to include knowledge and experience sharing, which is essential in reducing risk and enhancing productivity. Drawing on Giddens' concept of reflexivity, social capital also fosters farmers' ability to reflect on past challenges, evaluate decisions, and make better choices in the future. Thus, agricultural risk management in Waihatu is not only a matter of technical competence but also of cultivating strong social ties. By leveraging these ties, farmers can improve both their economic resilience and social solidarity, ensuring long-term success in farming.

The Dynamics of Social Capital in the Lives of Rice Farmers

The social dynamics among rice farmers in Waihatu Village play a crucial role in influencing and strengthening the social capital they possess. Social dynamics refer to the ongoing processes of interaction and relationships among individuals or groups within a society, shaped by changes in social, economic, and cultural conditions. These dynamics are instrumental in forming social networks, cooperation, and the exchange of information among farmers, which in turn contribute to increased agricultural productivity and the farmers' ability to manage unexpected risks.

Social capital, which encompasses social relationships, social norms, and the community's collective capacity, is closely linked to these social dynamics. One key impact of social dynamics on social capital is the ability to expand and strengthen social networks among farmers. These networks, formed through intense social interaction, allow farmers to share valuable information and experiences related to agricultural management. In Waihatu Village, farmers frequently gather through the farmers' group (Gapoktan) to exchange insights about farming techniques, weather forecasts, and market or supply chain challenges. These meetings are platforms for collective problem-solving and decision-making, covering topics such as land management, seed selection, and irrigation systems.

On the other hand, the influence of social capital on social dynamics is evident in farmers' ability to manage risks and adapt to emerging challenges. Social capital enables the establishment of solid cooperation, not only among farmers but also with other stakeholders such as buyers or suppliers. This cooperation facilitates access to important information on weather patterns, market prices, and agricultural technology, which helps improve farming efficiency. Accurate and timely information becomes crucial in helping farmers plan and make informed decisions to mitigate risks effectively.

Moreover, social capital enhances farmers' capacity to adapt to uncertainty and change in the agricultural sector. Strong social networks allow farmers to share strategies and solutions for risk management, especially in response to climate change, crop failures, or price volatility. The mutual trust and cooperation that underpin social capital make it easier for farmers to collectively manage risks by sharing resources or finding alternative solutions. For example, when there is a shortage in fertilizer distribution, the existing network allows farmers to support each other by providing resources or finding substitutes together.

The social and collective nature of farming life in Waihatu is especially evident in the role played by Gapoktan as a hub for farmer interactions. These regular meetings not only strengthen social ties among farmers but also provide a channel for communication and collective learning. Through these forums, farmers discuss technical aspects of farming and broader agricultural conditions such as market trends and weather patterns. Gapoktan serves as a vital mechanism for farmers to help one another in navigating the uncertainties of the agricultural world.

This cooperation extends beyond the sharing of information. In a farming context filled with unpredictability—such as erratic weather or fluctuating prices—collaboration among farmers becomes essential. Farmers coordinate with one another, not only to solve technical problems but also to manage risk collectively. These collaborative practices, supported by trust and shared norms, help reduce the burden on individual farmers and enhance the group's overall resilience.

A key insight emerging from the farmers' experiences is the importance of access to relevant and timely information. Gapoktan meetings play a central role in facilitating this access, allowing farmers to receive critical updates on weather forecasts, market conditions, and modern farming techniques. These social networks also connect farmers to external actors such as suppliers and agricultural agencies, expanding their informational reach and enabling better decision-making and opportunity recognition.

In conclusion, the interplay between social dynamics and social capital is mutually reinforcing in the lives of rice farmers in Waihatu Village. Social interactions fostered through Gapoktan gatherings and peer collaboration help build and solidify social capital, which in turn supports agricultural productivity and risk management. Strong social capital enhances access to information, resources, and mutual support, enabling farmers to address challenges more effectively. At the same time, it strengthens social cohesion and collective problem-solving. Thus, the success of agricultural endeavors is not only determined by technical skills but is also deeply influenced by the strength of social networks and cooperative spirit within the farming community.

Marxist Perspective on the Social Movement from Waimital (Gemba) to Waihatu

The phrase "from Waimital (Gemba) to Waihatu" may not be found in mainstream Marxist or sociological literature, but it can be interpreted through Karl Marx's theory of social transformation. This shift illustrates a broader movement from a traditional society toward a

more modern and self-organized community. Waimital, established in 1954, was one of the earliest transmigration settlements in Maluku. It received settlers from various regions in Java through a government program aimed at redistributing the population, opening new agricultural lands, and promoting national integration. The community was not simply relocated; it was ideologically driven by a vision of starting a new, more organized life. Initially named GEMBA—short for *Gerakan Masyarakat Baru* or New People's Movement—the settlement carried a powerful ideological meaning, signifying hope for a better and more prosperous society.

Despite this idealism, the settlers were confronted with harsh realities. The promised infrastructure, such as permanent housing and productive farmland, was insufficient. Many families had to temporarily live with relatives or local residents. This dependence clashed with the spirit of self-reliance that had driven their migration. From Marx's perspective, this situation reflects a contradiction between old structures—symbolized by bureaucratic inefficiencies and uneven resource distribution—and the emerging collective consciousness of a community striving for autonomy. Marx argues that social change arises through dialectical conflict. Waimital represents the dependent and stagnant social order, while Waihatu symbolizes a new, self-reliant structure born from grassroots dissatisfaction. Thus, the migration was not merely geographic but symbolic of a broader, bottom-up transformation led by the people themselves.

Driven by the desire for independence and dignity, the community began to settle a new area, later named Waihatu, combining the names of nearby villages—Waisamu and Hatusua. Etymologically, "Wai" (water) and "Hatu" (stone) reflect both geographical conditions and aspirations for fertility and resilience. Building Waihatu was a collective effort, with residents working together to construct homes, cultivate land, and organize social life. Over time, Waihatu evolved from a barren and underdeveloped area into a vibrant and organized agricultural village. It became a symbol of successful self-governance, built on solidarity, shared struggle, and the collective experience of overcoming adversity. In Marxist terms, this development reflects revolutionary praxis—deliberate action taken by the people to change their material conditions.

This transformation aligns with the concept of new social movements, which, unlike classical labor struggles focused purely on economic conditions, address identity, environment, culture, civil rights, and democratic spaces. In Waimital's case, the initial settlement failed to meet basic needs, generating a collective sense of exclusion. Over time, residents moved beyond passive acceptance, forming a conscious collective will to build a more livable and just environment. The decision to move and create Waihatu was a form of social protest and self-determination, asserting the community's right to shape their future. This act reflects the core of new social movements: active participation, collective identity, and a challenge to structural injustice through community action.

Furthermore, this shift can be interpreted as symbolic resistance to the state's failure to fulfill development promises. By building Waihatu independently, the people claimed their agency, no longer as victims of a flawed transmigration program, but as active agents of change. They created new social, economic, and cultural structures more aligned with their values and needs. In this sense, Waihatu's founding was not merely an administrative event but a significant milestone in the social emancipation of transmigrant communities, rooted in autonomy, justice, and a collective vision for a better future.

The historical journey of Waihatu also illustrates key elements of Marxist social theory: class consciousness and social mobilization. Initially, the settlers were primarily focused on survival, unaware of their collective social position. Over time, however, they developed a shared

awareness of their identity as a marginalized agricultural class with common interests and goals. This growing consciousness led to organization and collective efforts to improve their living conditions, signifying a shift from being passive subjects to active participants in the transformation of their society.

Social mobilization became a crucial tool in this process. The people harnessed their social capital—trust, shared norms, and strong networks—to organize and act collectively. In Marx's view, such mobilization is a hallmark of class consciousness, where a group recognizes its position within the larger system of production and power relations. Through this awareness, they transitioned from mere objects within a social structure to active agents capable of shaping their conditions. This transformation had not only economic consequences but also cultural and political implications, as the community began asserting its right to self-determination.

In conclusion, the journey from Waimital (Gemba) to Waihatu is more than a geographic relocation; it is a profound example of grassroots social transformation. It reflects the core of Marxist thought—where struggle against injustice, collective consciousness, and community action converge to create new social realities. Waihatu stands as a testament to the power of people to rise from marginalization and build inclusive, democratic, and sustainable communities.

Inter-Ethnic Cooperation Networks as a Manifestation of Social Capital Formation

Inter-ethnic cooperation networks in the lives of rice farmers in Waihatu Village play a vital role in forming effective social capital. Although ethnic differences can be a potential source of conflict, these networks instead become a unifying force that strengthens relationships among farmers from diverse cultural backgrounds. The social capital formed from these strong social ties fosters solidarity, trust, and information sharing, which in turn enhances productivity and overall quality of life for the farmers.

This collaboration allows for the expansion of social networks that facilitate the exchange of crucial agricultural knowledge, including farming techniques, weather forecasts, and market prices. Formal institutions such as farmer groups (Gapoktan) provide platforms for farmers to meet, share experiences, and collectively address challenges. Farmers from various ethnic backgrounds can discuss matters such as land management and seed selection, thereby enriching their agricultural expertise and promoting innovation in farming practices.

Nonetheless, building strong inter-ethnic cooperation is not without its difficulties. It requires a collective commitment to cultivating trust, reducing potential conflicts, and fostering mutual respect. With the social capital formed through these networks, farmers can access valuable resources more efficiently, such as market information or agricultural technologies. Furthermore, these collaborative ties help farmers collectively manage risks, such as weather changes or price fluctuations, by creating support systems and shared solutions to navigate adversity.

Within the agrarian socio-economic life of Waihatu, inter-ethnic cooperation is essential for the development of social capital. Social capital refers to networks of social relationships based on trust, reciprocity, and cooperation, which can be mobilized to achieve collective goals. In a multi-ethnic community like Waihatu, such cooperation is not merely a pragmatic necessity for managing agricultural resources—it is also a social strategy that reinforces cohesion, solidarity, and improved livelihoods.

Even though ethnic differences are often associated with social tensions or exclusion, on the ground, inter-ethnic cooperation in agriculture has proven to be a unifying force. Farmers

from different backgrounds successfully form functional and productive working relationships. This cooperation fosters an inclusive environment where values such as trust, openness, and mutual respect form the foundation of harmonious interactions and collective progress.

Coordination and communication between farmers and buyers—especially in the context of distributing agricultural products—are also shaped by these social ties. Local buyers typically interact frequently and informally with farmers, arranging harvest schedules and pick-up times in advance, either by phone or in person. This flexibility enhances trust-based relationships. In contrast, distant buyers, such as those from Ambon City, rely more on strategic planning and periodic bulk purchases, yet still maintain relationships grounded in mutual trust and continuity.

Social capital in Waihatu is not merely a byproduct of personal relationships; it is also formed through adaptive strategies within the agricultural distribution system. These networks, whether locally embedded or more geographically dispersed, are functional and responsive to the needs of farmers and customers alike. They reflect the flexibility and resilience of social capital in managing agricultural distribution challenges, demonstrating that ethnic diversity, when guided by shared values and institutional support, can become a powerful asset in improving agricultural productivity and communal welfare.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion presented in the previous chapter and referring to the research questions, the conclusion of this study on the social capital of rice farmers in Waihatu Village, Kairatu Barat Subdistrict, West Seram Regency can be summarized as follows. Social capital plays a highly significant role in improving the productivity of rice farmers in Waihatu Village. This form of capital includes elements such as trust, social networks, and social norms, which collectively strengthen collaboration among farmers and between farmers and their customers. Social capital impacts not only the quantity of production but also enhances the quality of social relations and solidarity among farming group members, especially when facing both technical and non-technical challenges such as limited access to fertilizers, agricultural chemicals, and climate variability.

The existence of social networks among farmers and their customers serves as a vital instrument that strengthens cooperation, facilitates the distribution of agricultural products, and expands access to crucial information such as planting techniques, market prices, and agricultural innovations. These networks enable knowledge exchange among farmers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, fostering a collaborative atmosphere that supports collective agricultural success. In addition, local social norms function as behavioral guidelines that govern the social lives of farmers—such as shared agreements on planting schedules, communal labor practices (gotong royong), and mutual respect within the group. These norms help enhance work discipline, build trust, and maintain social cohesion, all of which positively influence agricultural productivity. Furthermore, trust serves as a fundamental basis for establishing harmonious working relationships, encouraging open communication, broader information sharing, and participatory decision-making, which together create a productive and goal-oriented work environment.

Moreover, the ethnic diversity found in Waihatu Village does not hinder social life or agricultural activities; instead, it acts as a collective strength that fosters strong social solidarity among farmers. This diversity allows for the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and agricultural practices across different ethnic groups, thereby enriching insights, improving skills, and expanding the capacity of farmers to manage their farming activities. Harmonious

interaction between ethnic groups enables farmers to adopt a broader range of farming techniques, innovate in land management and crop distribution, and build more inclusive and robust social networks. This success illustrates that ethnic diversity is not merely a social background but a valuable form of social capital that contributes significantly to productive cooperation, enhanced social cohesion, and ultimately, the overall welfare of the farming community.

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