

# **MOPO'A HUTA RITUAL; The Resistance of Maize Peasants toward Agropolitan Program**

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## **Abstract**

The government's mission to improve people's welfare through the maize *agropolitan* program has apparently only been enjoyed by farmers. Meanwhile, peasants do not move from poor conditions. Peasants are getting poorer when they follow the government's advice to implement agricultural technology. Peasants get a lot of crops but mostly to pay for agricultural facilities. In order to survive, some choose to become tenant peasant, some still apply local wisdom; held the *mopo'a huta* (soil fertilizing) ritual. By this ritual, peasants believe that they will get help from the spirits of nature. they will provide soil fertility and save crops from pests. In this way, peasants only get a small amount, but the cost of implementing technology is low, so peasants still receive benefits. This paper concludes that the *mopo'a huta* ritual is a way for peasants to resist *agropolitan* programs.

## **Keywords**

Agropolitan Program, Maize, Resistance, peasants, and Mopo'a Huta Ritual.

## **1. Introduction**

The agropolitan program, which was initiated by the provincial government on a macro level, has been proven to have increased maize production. This puts Gorontalo province in the fourth rank of corn contributors at the national level in 2019. Based on data from the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture, Gorontalo Province in 2019 successfully produced 1.4 million tons and it is targeted that by 2020 the planting area for corn can increase to over 300 thousand hectares, as written by Jawapos.com (2020). The adoption of agricultural technology is the key to that success. However, on a micro level, the adoption of technology has not solved the problem, so the peasant community in the village of Molamahu Gorontalo held the *mopo'a huta* ritual as a way out of drought, soil fertility and plant pests. The *mopo'a huta* ritual contains *dayango* dances to invite spirits accompanied by the sound of *towohu* for several nights. At the end of the ritual, the community makes offerings (*sesajen*) to be offered to spirits. According to the belief of peasants who adhere to this ritual, spirits who control nature will immediately send rain, fertilize the soil and disinfect plant pests. The enthusiasm of the peasant community to hold the *dayango* dance cannot be stopped, even though there have been several times tensions between the community and security forces who did not give permission, the Gorontalo district government finally allowed the community to conduct *dayango* ritual, as written by Republikpos.com (2018).

As far as the author has investigated, studies on the *mopo'a huta* ritual in which there are *dayango* dances can be grouped into two clusters. First; studies that still revolve around descriptions of the negative stigma against *dayango* dances such as heresy, infidelity, duality of God, animism and deviant beliefs, (Niaga, 2013) (Galuwo, 2018) (Abbas, 2020). Second; studies that show the practice of the Dayango dance as a ritual to reject disease outbreaks and ask for rain and fertility (Saud, 2012); (Hunowu et al., 2020). As written by Saud (Saud, 2012), *Dayango* dance has specific purposes, for example mass treatment, rejecting disease outbreaks, asking for rain and soil fertility, etc. Meanwhile, according to Niaga (Niaga, 2013): and Galuwo (Galuwo, 2018), spirits who have been given *sesajen* are tasked with caring for the universe, maintaining plants, and treating diseases that attack living things. From the two clusters, it can be seen that holding the *mopo'a huta* ritual as an effort to minimize the high costs of using agricultural technology has

not been paid attention to, even though agricultural modernization has increasingly made peasants helpless (Hunowu et al., 2021) (Tahir, 2019) and eliminating local culture (Prayoga et al., 2019).

### **1.1. Objectives**

This study aims to provide information about the weaknesses of peasants (*petani kecil*) applying agricultural technology in an agropolitan program on the one hand, and to strengthen the control of economic resources for farmers (*petani kaya*) on the other. It also provides an explanation that the *mopo'a huta* ritual is a form of resistance from the peasants against this agropolitan program.

This paper is based on the argument that agricultural modernization called the agropolitan program has not only failed to provide solutions for peasants in overcoming drought, soil fertility and crop pest attacks but has also created poverty in maize peasants. The choice of holding the *mopo'a huta* ritual with the consideration that this ritual is an ancestral heritage is a more environmentally friendly and low cost, while the solution to the modernization of agriculture with the use of expensive technology can only be applied by farmers.

## **2. Literatur Review**

Previous research has shown that technology plays a very important role in various aspects of human life (Febriyantoro & Arisandi, 2018) (Mutia, 2016) (Ngafifi, 2014) (Karakara & Osabuohien, 2019). Technology has created fundamental changes for the socio-economic development of a nation (Dlodlo, 2009), including in the development of agriculture (Yuliatmoko, 2010). Agricultural technology has become a solution for farmers in increasing agricultural production so that rich farmers are increasingly prosperous (Sajogyo, 1977). Agricultural technology has transformed traditional peasants into modern and capitalist (D.H. Burger, 1962). The capitalist system has grown more deeply in the village area. There is dependence of peasants on a variety of products that come from the owners of capital in the agricultural sector. (Rinardi et al., 2019). The increase in production only benefits rich farmers while poor peasants are faced with risks, (Mosley, 2001) peasants are trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty, peasants return to their original conditions, have low capital (Nurjihadi & Dharmawan, 2016). On the other hand, some traditional peasants still maintain local wisdom, minimize dependence on technology by performing rituals to persuade spirits. By this way the spirits do not to interfere the community live and their farms.(Hunowu et al., 2020).

### **2.1. Increase Production through the Agropolitan Program**

Agricultural modernization actually aims to increase agricultural production. Since 2002, the Gorontalo provincial government through a corn-based agropolitan program has started implementing the program simultaneously. In 2002, the new corn harvested area of 45,718 hectares in 2003 increased to 58,716 hectares and in 2004 it reached 72,529 hectares. The harvested area in three years has increased by 58.64%. Maize production increased significantly. If in 2002 it only reached 130,252 tons, in 2003 it had increased to 183,998 tons, in 2004 it increased to 270,418 tons. Within three years, maize production had increased by 92.87%.(Mohammad, 2008)

As stated by Baruadi (Baruadi and Kamuli, 2013), The agropolitan program was one of the drivers of macroeconomic improvement between 2002-2008, as per capita income increased from 2.5 million to 4.9 million, economic growth increased from 6.45% to 7.51%, poverty fell from 32.13% to 24.88%. From the micro side, corn production increased from 7,000 tons to 752,727 tons. Conditions in 2011 economic growth of 7.68%, poverty 18.02%, and 4.61% open unemployment. corn production of 605,000 tons or below the RPJMD 2007-2012 target of one million tons.

The latest data shows that Gorontalo province has experienced a significant increase from 650 thousand tons in 2017 to 1.7 million tons the following year. Even Gorontalo maize is not only sufficient for domestic needs, but also exported to several countries such as the Philippines and Malaysia. In 2018 Gorontalo Province succeeded in exporting up to 113,000 tons of maize or about 30 percent of the total national maize exports, even though the target set by the Minister of Agriculture was only around 50,000 tons (Jawapos.com, 2020). Economically there is rapid growth, but ecologically and socio-culture, there is degradation. Various agricultural technology products that are full of chemicals are sold freely. As stated by Suhari (Suhari, 2014), Between 2013 and March 2014, the level of pesticide use on agricultural land in Gorontalo increased sharply by 10 percent. According to him, this figure is already high, ideally the use of pesticides is only in the range of 1-4 percent. This happens because farmers in Gorontalo are trying to find the right way to deal with crop pests, given the completely uncertain weather anomaly. Meanwhile, socially and culturally, there has been a change in cropping patterns based on local wisdom and a shift in social capital into

economy capital (D.H. Burger, 1962), peasants who do not have the capital to buy seeds, fertilizers, etc., choose to become farm laborers. (kompas.com/read/2016/04/26).

## **2.2. Poverty Circle**

Previous research has shown that the use of new agricultural technologies can increase production when skilled peasants adapt new cultivation systems to various types of crops. However, behind it all there is the dependence of farming community on various products that come from the owners of capital (Rinardi et al., 2019). Agricultural business is not cultivated traditionally using social relations. The capitalist system has replaced the traditional system which requires much capital (D.H. Burger, 1962). The capitalist system motivates farmers to get large profits to replace the funds that have been used to buy superior seeds, artificial fertilizers, pay farm laborers, buy pest-resistant pesticides, and so on. Agricultural products have indeed increased, but overall farmer welfare has decreased (Rinardi et al., 2019). The adoption of technology has actually made rich farmers prosperous, due to increased income. The opposite is experienced by peasants, who instead of becoming more prosperous, they are trapped in poverty (Sajogyo, 1977). This condition creates a wider social gap (Birowo, 1976). That is why Mosley (Mosley, 2005) stated that farming is a livelihood full of risks, especially for peasants in poor countries. Peasants are trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty because their agricultural business is not matched by the ability to manage risks. In modern era, agricultural technology is presented to manage risk. But these risks are increasingly being managed with technology, requiring much funds. Unlike traditional peasants who apply local wisdom, they are able to manage risks caused by nature. Carrying out the *mopo'a huta* ritual is how peasants manage these natural risks. (Dewi et al., 2018) (Ursula, 2015)

Life on maize farming is full of risks, Gorontalo peasants cannot replace it with other commodities. Rice farming is more complicated because it has to be treated all the time. Maize farming for Gorontalo community has been a hereditary tradition. As stated by Nurjihadi & Dharmawan (Nurjihadi & Dharmawan, 2016) An activity that is witnessed and carried out repeatedly will make a person skilled in these activities. Corn farmers are very skilled in dealing with maize farming; they can plant corn on a slope, on a mountain. They are skilled at shouldering and loading their crops from that height to the threshing and drying area.

The dependence of peasants on companies as owners of large capital that buy farmers' products has resulted in low bargaining power for peasants. The low bargaining position in turn results in low income, accumulation of debt, and very limited capacity to accumulate capital. Thus the vicious cycle of poverty becomes perfect where peasants return to their original condition, namely having low capital (Nurjihadi & Dharmawan, 2016). The planned multiplier effect will ultimately make the peasants poorer (Kurniawan, 2006). This condition is caused by the inability of peasants to obtain added value for the products they produce. The added value of agriculture actually benefits entrepreneurs and industry. (Harsono, 2009), In addition, the cheap food policy was introduced (Baker, 1979) instead, it puts peasants in a weak position.

## **2.3. Maintaining Harmony through Rituals**

Technology aims to facilitate human life. Since the invention of machines and the start of the era of automation, production has multiplied and reduced time and costs. However, in the end all these conveniences have a major impact on human life (Prasetyo and Trisyanti, 2019). The economic and ecological impacts of modernization for rural communities who still adhere to traditional wisdom can be resolved by holding rituals as a form of shielding from harm and can resist reinforcements. (Somba et al., 2019) (Setiawan, 2020) (Yashi, 2018). Various studies have shown that local wisdom related to agriculture, food and fertility is actualized in rituals (Dewi et al., 2018) (Ursula, 2015). Rituals containing *sesajen* for the farming community are aimed at creating harmony with nature (the ruler of the universe) (Holilah, 2016) (Hunowu et al., 2020). *Sesajen* actually connects the existing with the non-existent, the unseen and the real (Abdullah, 2013) Other studies have found that local wisdom can save the lives of the poor (Pattinama, 2009).

Previous writings have shown that there are gaps due to agricultural modernization. It has increased agricultural production, on one hand, it has plunged the farming community into poverty on the other hand. Although some writings showed an increase in agricultural production by adopting agricultural technology, other writings found the existence of agricultural capitalization which requires peasants to double their business by continuing to apply agricultural technology. This condition causes farmers to look for other ways to avoid high costs. Some of the rural communities as indicated by several writings still apply local wisdom, no research shows any resistance of the peasants against modernization.

### 3. Methods

This study used interviews and observations carried out in the corn farmer community in Molamahu village, Pulumala district. 20 farming community were selected for in-depth interviews. The selection takes into account the balance of the social class of farmers, namely land owners and farm laborers, the members of peasants groups and independent peasants. Peasants from this social class come from two categories based on the age of the peasants, namely old peasants and young peasants (Table 1).

Table 1. Informan Categories

Informan Categories	Old Peasant	Young Peasant
Land Owner	4	2
Farm Laborer	5	9

In the data collection process, interview guidelines were used as the basis for formulating questions. Open-ended questions include three data areas, first data related to land ownership and its management process, and the second choice of production means (seeds, fertilizers, growth regulators, pesticides and inoculations). The three data relate to traditional wisdom practices by some peasants. They conducted the *mopo'a huta* ritual as the rejection for expensive technology.

The research conducted in Agustus and September 2021. It was time for the farming community conducted the harvest and continued by cultivating the land for replanting. Informants in this study were interviewed for their awareness and willingness. The questions were asked like regular chatting at home or on farms. They are directed to share their experiences in agricultural business, both landowners and farm laborers, old and young peasants.

The interview data were classified thematically to reinforce peasants' resistance to the adoption of agricultural technology. Data classification is carried out not only on the basis of theme but also by considering the aspects covered. The context of differences in experience is analyzed for its significance based on prevailing parameters, such as landowners, tenants and agricultural laborers, old farmers who tend to apply traditional agriculture and young modern farmers.

Data were analyzed in three stages: data restatement, data description, and data interpretation. Restatement is carried out by referring to interview quotes based on the farmer's point of view. Data descriptions are carried out to show data patterns or trends regarding the typology of choice for traditional and modern agriculture. The process of interpretation was carried out by paying attention to the individual and social context which was the reason for the resistance. The three stages of analysis form the basis for drawing conclusions (inference). Data sourced from farmers was a comparison that mutually reinforces data based on observations (Table 2).

Table 2. Stages of Data Analysis

Stages	Data Analysis
Data restatement	Referring to interview quotes based on the farmer's point of view
Data description	Showing data patterns or trends regarding the typology of choice for traditional and modern agriculture
Data interpretation	Paying attention to the individual and social context which was the reason for the resistance

### 4. Result and Discussion

The agropolitan program as an effort to improve peasants' welfare, cannot benefit lower-class peasants. Many peasants have difficulty applying agricultural technology. Land owners without capital borrow from rich farmers or traders. Some become farm laborers because they are already in debt. Some people choose to apply traditional wisdom by holding the ritual of *mopo'a huta* as a solution to drought and plant pests.

#### 4.1. Agricultural Technology Requires Capital

The application of agricultural technology requires sufficient capital. Lack of capital during the planting season forced peasants to borrow from rich farmers. The farmers have provided loans in the form of agricultural facilities. They are

also willing to pay for subsidized fertilizer that the members cannot redeem. The loan will be paid with the harvest. The crops had to be sold to wealthy farmers and traders. This is as recognized by R11.

“Now it is easier to farm but must provide capital. The capital is used to buy superior seeds, redeem subsidized fertilizers and hire labor and other services. If you don't have capital, you are forced to seek loans from rich farmers. The loan will be paid at harvest time. The corn that is harvested must be sold to rich farmers. The price is lower than the price of the warehouse (R11, Peasant, 40 years).

Modern agriculture requires a capital. Farmers with much capital will be successful. Different from traditional one. The success of the harvest is very much determined by hard work. As recognized by R5. “Previously, successful peasants were not measured by ownership of economic capital, but by hard work. Starting from getting up in the morning until just before sunset, it is full of activities; plowing, hoeing and clearing disturbing grass, planting, harvesting etc., resting at 9 o'clock for breakfast and lunch. The longer the duration of work, the more results you get. Today, agricultural business does not require a long duration of work. Agricultural technology has made work easier. No need to plow, hoe and clean the annoying grass. By technology, work is not every day. Only when preparing the land, planting, fertilizing, spraying and harvesting. The job only takes a short time. Rich farmers with an established economic capital, even lighter, only provide the means of production and labor wages, all the work of planting, fertilizing, spraying and harvesting is done by farm laborers who are given daily wages (R5, land owner, 48 years).

Farmers with 1 hectare of land. Minimum capital is around 7 million rupiah to complete agricultural facilities and workers' wages. “Production facility costs of Rp. 1,840,000. service fees ranging from rental of tractors, rental of fertilizers, spray harvesting and post harvest Rp. 5,585,000. At the time of harvest the corn price is Rp. 3,650 per kg, a minimum yield of Rp. 9,125,000 on a yield of 2.5 tons of corn. The remainder is Rp. 1,698,000. at subsequent planting, they are no longer plowed, thus reducing tractor rents. If the yields are better and it reaches 4 tons, they can get 14,600,000 yields, so farmers can get Rp. 4,938,000. The more land you have, the lower the costs incurred, and vice versa ”(R2, land owner, 63 years; R3, land owner, 69 years). For more details regarding the financing component of 1 hectare of land, it is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Financing Component 1 Hectare of Land

<b>Production Facilities/Services</b>	<b>Total/Volume</b>	<b>Costs (IDR)</b>
Seeds	12 kg	400.000
Fertilizer	4 pairs	900.000
Pesticide	1 kg	260.000
Herbicide	1 tube	280.000
Plowing	by tractor	1.000.000
Lining	by plow	500.000
Planting	16 persons @50000	800.000
Fertilizing	8 persons @50000	400.000
Spraying	2x6 tanks @80000	240.000
Cut down	1 hectare	300.000
Peeling	100 sacks @8000	800.000
Transport	100 sacks @5000	500.000
Shed	2.5 tons @120000	335.000
Drying	2.5 tons @100000	250.000
Drying Place	2.5 tons @50000	150.000
Transport to Drying Place	100 sacks @5000	500.000
Transport to Corn Shed	2.5 tons@100000	250.000
Unloading	2 trucks @30000	60.000
Total		7.427.000
Price/kg IDR 3.650x2.5 tons = 9.125.000 – 7.427.000		1.698.000

The financing components above are different for each farmer. Depending on the area of land and yields, garden distance etc. For rich farmers, the more land they work on, the lower the processing costs. Rich farmers also act as traders and provide agricultural facilities such as transportation, clothes thresher etc. As stated in R6 below: “Rich

farmers will get multiple profits because they also act as collectors or buyers of small farmers' crops. Rich farmers who provide loans to small farmers oblige them to sell their crops to rich farmers. Rich farmers prepare tractors, thresher machines, drying machines, transport cars, etc., all of which are rented out so that they benefit from various sources. A rich farmer who owns his own tractor, clothesline, truck etc., the yield is greater than a small farmer who owns narrow land and rents a tractor. The farmer groups are formed only for the requirements of obtaining fertilizer and seed assistance. Groups are not involved in cooperation". (R6, Chairman of the farmer group, 51 years).

Wealthy farmers will help the small farmers every need with a harvest payment. Peasants have to sell their crops to the farmers. "I have farmer groups in several locations. I helped them with seeds, bought fertilizer and borrowed money. During harvest time I asked them to sell their corn to me, so they would not bother with transportation, I provided transportation both from the harvest location and to the sales warehouse. If the harvest fails, I continue to lend until the farmer is successful and can pay off the debt (R16, Farmer, 43 years).

#### **4.2. Technology Adoption Has Created Small Farmers' Dependence and Poverty**

Seeing the success of farmers, the peasants try to follow. They borrow money from farmers. The farmers lend both means of production (seeds, fertilizers, growth regulators, pesticides and inoculations) as well as money to pay workers. As recognized by R11;

"At first I owed a rich farmer a debt, he gave me superior seeds and sprays. My fertilizer assistance cannot be redeemed, and then the rich farmers pay for it. Some people help me with my job so I have to pay a salary. After harvest, the results can cover debts and family needs. When the planting season arrived, I was forced to borrow again, and so on, until one day my corn crop was attacked by caterpillars. I sprayed it with poison, it made the corn less weight, some traders refused because of its low quality. So that the harvest can only cover part of the debt because I use part of the harvest for family needs. And so on so that there is nothing but debt to the rich peasants ". (R11, Peasant, 40 years).

The formation of farmer groups has been carried out to obtain assistance. There are two forms of farmer groups. First, the small farmer groups as a condition for receiving subsidized fertilizer and seeds. Second, large groups (Gapoktan) who were given tractor assistance and operational cars. Group members can use tractors to plow the land and cars to load crops for half the normal price. Over time, these costs have been leveled by non-members, as recognized by R10;

"I joined a farmer group to receive subsidized fertilizer. My land is 1 hectare, so I get Ponska fertilizer 300 kg of urea 200 kg. redeemed with Rp. 1,250,000. because they did not have cash, rich peasants loaned them out and paid 1,500,000. There is also a Gapoktan farmer group, the assistance is tractors and open cap cars, group members only pay half of the costs paid by non-member farmers. Over time, there is no difference between members and non-members "R10

Government assistance to farmers whose crops failed to work, some farmers who did not have money were forced to take seeds from the harvest. As recognized by the following informants:

"The seeds of government assistance to farmer groups are not as good as the seeds bought directly or loaned by rich farmers. The results are less abundant and the scales are heavy, so farmers still choose to buy. There are also farmers who are forced to plant seeds from the harvest because they do not have capital. The results are not optimal". (R11; Land Owner, 49 years).

#### **4.3. Traditional Farmers Hold Agricultural Rituals**

Facing unsupported agricultural technology, some peasants still conduct traditional agriculture. They believe that should be carried out as admitted by the following informants: "Abstinence for us violates the wisdom of our ancestors (*dila mowali momahe mongo panggola*). attack by plant pests on the orders of spirits (*walu-waluta to ibilisi*). In order for the farmer to be safe, he must carry out the ancestral heritage in the form of the mopo'a huta ritual. This ritual is intended to organize the village so that the entire village, be it plants, livestock and humans, live prosperously and prosperously. (R4, Peasant, 52 years).

The *mopo'a huta* ritual is held regularly once a year or every dry season. This ritual lasts for seven nights or depending on the situation and conditions. The ritual contains dance. The local people call *dayango*. the dancers are unconscious, possessed by a spirit. The dance is accompanied by the wasp of *towohu*, a type of drum that is played according to a certain rhythm. On the last day, around 7 in the morning. *Sesajen* made from certain ingredients are held to be served to spirits (Hunowu et al., 2020).

“The *mopo'a huta* ritual contains *dayango* dances for several nights and then on the last night prepares an offering to be offered to the rulers of nature the next day before sunrise. The *mopo'a huta* ritual is a ritual that is held to organize the contents of the village; crops, livestock and people. With ritual, the rain will fall regularly, the plants will thrive and are not disturbed by plant pests, especially rats, caterpillars and grasshoppers. Rats eat the corn that has just been planted. Caterpillars and grasshoppers attack the leaves to the fruit. The livestock breed well, are not attacked by disease. Especially the chickens that attacked by death. Likewise, humans are free from strange diseases, diseases that cannot be cured medically”(R20; Land Owner, 38 Years).

"We are not able to apply agricultural technology. Caterpillar pests are the most dangerous pests, if sprayed; they reduce the quality of the corn. The right way is to apply local wisdom; see a good day for planting, and perform a *dayango* dance to persuade the spirits not to disturb humans by spreading pests". R4, peasant 52 years). "In the past, the *mopo'a huta* ritual was a kind of annual ritual that was enlivened by all people, from children to adults, in crowds attending the ritual. Today, the *mopo'a huta* ritual is only followed by a handful of people. They are adult and even elderly farmers, who have long believed in the efficacy of rituals in organizing village contents. Young people no longer believe in this ritual and think that all agricultural problems can be solved with technology”(R10, Land Owner, 49 years).

"Apart from the presence of technology that can replace the function of rituals, a better understanding of people's religions is one of the factors that influence the existence of the *mopo'a huta* ritual. According to religious circles, the *mopo'a huta* ritual is an act of shirk, so it deserves to be eliminated. This condition makes the followers of the *mopo'a huta* ritual increasingly marginalized. Although this ritual is still held by a handful of peasants, the general public who do not agree with the ritual do not directly prohibit or disband it, because the adherents are usually from among the village elders. (R12; Land owner, 67 years).

This research shows that the welfare of the peasants by adopting technology is not proven, welfare only occurs for farmers. They are supported by sufficient funding. Apart from funding the cultivation of vast gardens, rich farmers also lend funds and production facilities to the peasants. The loan will be paid at harvest by selling the crops to rich farmers. The peasants who could not afford this way went another way through the application of local wisdom. First; personally applying traditional procedures such as looking at the stars to determine the planting period. Second; holding a collective *mopo'a huta* ritual. These traditional methods are used to reduce the application of ineffective technology.

#### **4.4. Technology Adoption Increases the Production of Rich Farmers**

The alignment of technology to rich farmers has been shown in many previous studies, especially in the green revolution program. Many found the co-optation of rich farmers (patron) to the peasants (clients). Patrons try to maintain this pattern of relationships to maintain their existence in carrying out economic activities (Rustinsyah, 2011). Peasants who borrow money from farmers (patrons) have tied up an agreement to sell their crops to their patrons. The patrons will provide transportation services, clothesline etc. Sometimes a skipper plays with the moisture content so that the price of corn will be cut, the moisture content is above 16%, will be cut 500,000 per 1 ton. Corn purchased with high moisture content will be dried again by the skipper before being sold to a container (warehouse owner), so that the moisture content is no longer cut. This patron-client relationship is getting stronger, in contrast to the findings (Rustinsyah, 2011) which indicates a weakened client condition.

This pattern of patron-client relations has actually made the peasants more exploited. Moreover, if the crops are not able to cover the debt, the longer it will accumulate, in the end the land will be sold to rich farmers to cover the debt. They finally become farm laborer. Being a farm laborer is considered safer because every day you can receive wages. To become a cultivator with a wage of 50,000 per day, in a month he can receive a wage of 1,500,000. suppose every day work. This option is more profitable than cultivating 1 ha of land by yourself with the yield in one harvest period (3 months) an income of IDR. 1,698,000.

#### **4.5. The Adoption of Technology Has Created Poverty for the Peasants**

The poverty of corn peasants in Gorontalo is caused by high processing and production costs. Farmers with narrow land must be in debt for land cultivation and production costs. When harvesting, the results obtained are mostly to pay off debts. This condition is different from poverty in Java. The main cause of poverty in rural areas, most of whom earn a living as farmers, is because most farmers are classified as small farmers with an average land area of less than 0.5 hectares. (Susilowati & Maulana, 2016).

The farmer groups that were formed did not help much. In fact, it is an opportunity for rich farmers to exploit peasants. The group exists to make it easier for its members to buy subsidized fertilizer. The distributor will provide the subsidized fertilizer to group members by bringing ID cards. Unregistered peasants in group are not allowed to receive. Many peasants cannot make up for the fertilizer. This opportunity is exploited by rich farmers to pay for all the rights of small farmers and then distributed to farmers with an agreement to be paid with the harvest. The produce must be sold to richer farmers at a lower price. Farmers will receive the remaining debt discount, when the harvest fails, peasants cannot pay off their debt and when planting, they are forced to borrow more agricultural facilities to rich farmers. The *Gapoktan* group that is given facility assistance actually benefits the group leader who is in control of all these facilities. Government intervention to overcome crop failure by providing insurance programs for peasants did not work. The government policy stipulates that the price of corn should not be below Rp. 3000 / kg makes maize prices stable.

#### **4.6. Back to Traditional Wisdom**

Agricultural technology does not completely provide solutions to problems faced by farmers. Especially plant pests. A caterpillar attack can eat up the corn leaves overnight. The use of pesticides actually results in a decrease in the quality of the corn. The trader has a quality corn detector. The corn, which is heavily sprayed to repel pests, is of such low quality that some traders refuse to accept it. Corn caterpillars, in the belief of peasants, come from germs in the soil which are caused by disturbance by spirits to humans. These germs can only be destroyed by holding the *mopo'a huta* ritual. Therefore, farmers routinely hold this ritual as a way to regulate the village and its inhabitants. This was shown by Yanti (Yanti et al., 2018) that the ritual can have a positive impact in terms of saving corn plants from various pests and animal disturbances that come from supernatural beings who inhabit agricultural land. (Suryaningsi, 2017).

Basically the *mopo'a huta* ritual is a form of harmony between humans and nature (rulers). the entry of technology has disrupted the system of agricultural cultural values. On the one hand it can increase production, but on the other hand it is more profitable for the upper class farmers. In the end, the *mopo'a huta* ritual became a form of farmers' rejection of this costly modernization. The presence of agricultural technology has eliminated the belief of young people in the efficacy of the *mopo'a huta* ritual. Moreover, young people are more educated than older people so that the beliefs of young people are more influenced by their rationality. Better religious knowledge ensures that young people do not believe in the efficacy of the *mopo'a huta* ritual. At the micro level, technology is increasingly threatening the existence of local wisdom, while at the same time impoverishing small farmers. At the macro level, there is an increase in production that makes rich farmers prosperous, benefits corn entrepreneurs and multiplies the income of agricultural technology producers. Local governments also receive minimal profits and are rewarded for successfully increasing maize production.

Previous research has shown many effects of modernization on lowland rice farming communities. Lowland rice farmers survive by not selling all of their crops. They store rice for food supplies. This condition is different from corn farmers. They have to sell corn at a low price to buy rice at a high price. Rituals performed by other communities are mostly a form of abundant gratitude. There needs to be a policy that favors peasants from poverty. The *mopo'a huta* ritual which is held every year is an escape for the peasants from their inability to apply expensive agricultural technology.

### **5. Conclusion**

The application of agricultural technology with costly production facilities depletes farmers' income. Rich farmers use government intervention to exploit small farmers. The farmer groups formed by the government are actually an opportunity for rich farmers to make profits. Peasants reduce these expenses by applying traditional wisdom. Although technology can solve problems, not all of them can be solved, so local wisdom should not be ignored.

The abundant production results are obtained by rich farmers. It forces peasants to apply agricultural technology. Government assistance such as subsidized fertilizers, superior seeds and the setting of the price of maize turned into a poverty trap. Wealthy farmers help peasants by lending production facilities and borrowing money. The debt is paid with the harvest. There was an increase in crop yields but it was depleted to cover debt.

Modernization as a transition from traditional life to technology-based life can explain the life of farmers in adopting agricultural technology. This program actually has a noble purpose for the welfare of farmers. Unfortunately, modernization is expensive and favors the upper middle class. The failure of farmers to adopt expensive agricultural



technology causes them to return to their traditional conditions. Hold the mopo'a huta ritual as a form of resistance. A veiled resistance as argued by Scott, (2000), poor peasants survive by resisting, stealing bitterness, delaying and slowing down work, malingering, etc.

The resistance of the peasants by holding the mopo'a huta ritual was getting weaker as the number of followers decreased. The solidarity that strengthens them through the mutual cooperation tradition of providing ritual equipment is no longer sufficient for ritual implementation so that the costs are heavier and the implementation is random, as a result the ritual effect is no longer effective. Thus it can be said that the resistance of the peasants is getting weaker. There needs to be serious partisanship from the government to help small farmers, for example programming environmentally friendly agriculture and holding farmer savings and loan cooperation (*koperasi*). *Koperasi* that truly becomes a farmer partner in providing production facilities and accommodating farmers' harvest (Susilo, 2013) not a *koperasi* owned by entrepreneur as an instrument to exploit the peasants. Agricultural *koperasi* has an important role in supporting small farmers to increase market access, improve peasants' bargaining power, and increase their ability to adopt technology.

This research is limited to showing that the *mopo'a huta* ritual is a traditional agricultural practice which is a form of resistance from the peasants against modernization. Have not seen in depth the values and implications of the *mopo'a huta* ritual in forming community solidarity. Another aspect that is important to explore is another form of peasant resistance. Future research can look deeper into the patron-client relationship that traps the peasants in endless poverty.

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