

Agriculture liberalization and marginalized young local people: evidence from a sugar cane plantation

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Abstract

Since 1980s, Indonesia began to integrate its economy with global capitalism, particularly in the commodity production and trading such as in food plantation, forestry, and mining sector. Moreover, liberalization afterward creates diverse job opportunities and changes food production's model from small-scale farmers to a large-scale corporate basis, where we can find the largest number of foreign investors through a scheme of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) control the land and the food production such as sugar cane. The aim of this study is to understand the impact of agriculture liberalization to the livelihood of young local people. This research used social reproduction theory and social exclusion as frameworks. The study is conducted in Central Lampung districts, where is identified as a high massive agriculture liberalization area in sugar cane. The qualitative data is gathered from some literature reviews, direct observations, and in-depth interviews. The research found where liberalization was followed by the land grabbing, its food production's system has changed that were previously based on household and traditional, switched into a corporate-based system (food estate). This corporate based system employs many migrant workers, and after that changed the social class in the local community, between classes of employees and the local community classes as well. Limited capital and access of local people to get involved in the liberalization are considered to be the causes of marginalization of local people, including the young people's participation in the new social reproduction. Some policies are needed to give local people benefits from liberalization. Such policies to protect small-scale farmer and involve rural youth in the new food production system. The role of government becomes a critical factor in reducing inequality today, and creating a regeneration of agriculture to sustain food sovereignty.

Keywords: agriculture liberalization, central lampung district, marginalization, rural youth, social reproduction