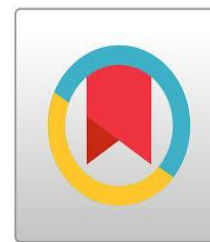


The Role of WALHI in Advocating for Communities Affected by the Food Estate Policy during the Joko Widodo Administration (Case Study in Gunung Mas Regency, Central Kalimantan)

Peran WALHI Dalam Mengadvokasi Masyarakat yang Terdampak Kebijakan Food Estate Pada Masa Pemerintahan Joko Widodo (Studi Kasus Pada Kabupaten Gunung Mas Kalimantan Tengah)



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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords WALHI; Food Estate; Advocacy;	ABSTRACT This research aims to explain the role of WALHI in advocating for communities affected by the food estate policy in Gunung Mas Regency, Central Kalimantan during the Joko Widodo administration. This research uses qualitative research with descriptive-analytical method. The data collection methods used were interviews and literature studies. The researcher interviewed several WALHI members who participated in advocating related to the food estate project to the community. The researcher also conducted a literature study related to the conceptual framework of food estate, policy impact, and the main theory, namely organic intellectualism from Antonio Gramsci. The results showed that there is a paradigm problem in the food estate policy. The food estate project in Gunung Mas Regency has an impact on the rights of local communities in managing land, forest areas, local food, and traditional agricultural systems of local communities. WALHI as the largest environmental movement organisation in Indonesia realised that the food estate project actually did not care about the principle of food sovereignty centred on the independence of local communities and the creation of an environmentally friendly agricultural system. WALHI then began its role as an organic intellectual that promotes and inspires the knowledge of local communities so that they can voice their bad experiences with food estate projects.
Kata Kunci WALHI; Food Estate; Advokasi;	ABSTRAK Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan peran WALHI dalam melakukan advokasi terhadap masyarakat terdampak kebijakan food estate di Kabupaten Gunung Mas, Kalimantan Tengah pada masa pemerintahan Joko Widodo. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif-analitis. Metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah wawancara dan studi pustaka. Peneliti mewawancarai beberapa anggota WALHI yang ikut melakukan advokasi terkait proyek food estate kepada masyarakat. Peneliti juga melakukan studi literatur terkait kerangka konseptual food estate, dampak kebijakan, dan teori utama yaitu intelektual organik dari Antonio Gramsci. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya permasalahan paradigma dalam kebijakan food estate. Proyek food estate di Kabupaten Gunung Mas berdampak pada hak masyarakat lokal dalam mengelola lahan, kawasan hutan, pangan lokal, dan sistem pertanian tradisional masyarakat lokal. WALHI sebagai organisasi gerakan lingkungan hidup terbesar di Indonesia menyadari bahwa proyek food estate sebenarnya tidak peduli dengan prinsip kedaulatan pangan yang berpusat pada kemandirian masyarakat lokal dan terciptanya sistem pertanian ramah lingkungan. WALHI kemudian memulai perannya sebagai intelektual organik yang mempromosikan dan menginspirasi pengetahuan masyarakat lokal sehingga mereka dapat menyuarakan pengalaman buruk mereka terhadap proyek food estate.
Article History Send 11 th October 2024 Review 16 th November 2024 Accepted 10 th December 2024	Copyright ©2025 Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora) This is an open access article under the CC-BY-NC-SA license. Akses artikel terbuka dengan model CC-BY-NC-SA sebagai lisensinya.



Introduction

Historically, there has been a regime change from the First Food Regime (1870-1914), the Second Food Regime (1945-1973), and the Third Food Regime (1990s) with a global food system characterized by “neoliberal globalization”. This change includes changes in how capital accumulates, new technologies and markets for food, increasing awareness of ecological threats, and the reproductive crisis of the working class. (Friedman, 2005). From the third food regime came the derivative “corporate food regime.” This regime is one of the important elements of the global development project, marked by financial deregulation, privatization, corporatization of agriculture, and casual employment. The corporate food regime sets world prices for agricultural commodities separate from production costs, making farmers vulnerable to takeover (McMichael, 2005). Thus, it can be understood that the food estate, which emerged as a response to the third food regime, is a key component of the global development project. This project is characterized by the deregulation of financial relations at the worldwide level, the determination of monetary value based on credit rather than labor, privatization adopted by countries with debt, corporatization in the agricultural sector and agro-exports, and casual work on a global scale.

Food estate is a food development concept that combines various agricultural, plantation and livestock sectors in one large area. This concept aims to increase food production sustainably and efficiently (Danurdara, 2023). Initially, the Indonesian government implemented a peatland development policy in Central Kalimantan during the reign of President Soeharto. This policy was regulated in Presidential Decree Number 82 of 1995 concerning Peatland Development for Food Crop Agriculture in Central Kalimantan (Presidential Decree 82/1995). However, the project was a failure because it caused severe environmental damage. This project was known as the "Mega Rice Project" from 1995 to 1999. The project resulted in large-scale peatland fires, which also caused forest damage and air pollution. In addition, this project also had a burden of disaster prevention costs that drained state finances and further impoverished the people (Nurindra, 2023). Therefore, President Habibie stopped the project by issuing Presidential Decree Number 80 of 1999, which regulates the Basic Principles of Planning and Management of Peatland Development Areas in Central Kalimantan (Presidential Decree 80/1999) (Eryan et al., 2020).

When President SBY came to power, the food estate idea was revived through the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE), which the Ministry of Agriculture approved on August 11, 2010. However, MIFEE drew protests from NGOs, seven academics, and research institutions who considered the government to be ignoring negative impacts such

as deforestation, destruction of biodiversity, social friction, and threats to the lives of residents. In addition 2011, there was also a food estate project in Bulungan Distric, East Kalimantan (now North Kalimantan), called the Delta Kayan Food Estate (DeKaFE). This project also failed for several reasons, such as unclear land status issues (clean and clear), a focus on increasing rice production without adequate plant suitability data, low productivity, and inadequate agricultural infrastructure (Eryan et al., 2020).

The food estate program was also planned during the administration of President Joko Widodo in the 2020-2024 National Strategic Program (PSN) as stated in Presidential Decree No. 109 of 2020 concerning the Acceleration of the Implementation of National Strategic Projects. President Joko Widodo wants to implement a food estate program to increase national food sovereignty, anticipate the food crisis, and provide opportunities for new jobs. This food estate policy is spread across the Gunung Mas, Pulau Pisang, Kapuas, and South Barito Regencies in Central Kalimantan, some of which were previously Peatland Development (PLG) areas when the New Order was in power. Initially, the work on the food estate in Central Kalimantan was under the coordination of the Coordinating Ministry for the Economy, along with the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture. Until the third week of July 2020, the Ministry of Defense was appointed as the leader for the food estate project due to instructions from President Joko Widodo, who also collaborated with the Ministry of PUPR, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and Ministry of SOEs. Therefore, Prabowo Subianto, as the Minister of Defense at that time, was automatically appointed as the coordinator of the region's development and development of food estates. Then, it became a consequence if, according to the instructions of the Ministry of Defense, the forests in the villages of Gunung Mas Distric, such as Tewai Baru, Sepang, Tampelas, and Pematang Limau, were turned into cassava plantations.

When the management of the food estate previously led by the Coordinating Ministry for the Economy focused on involving state-owned enterprises together with the private sector, this was different from what was done by the Ministry of Defense when it was plotted as the coordinator of the food estate; the relevant ministry proposed that the food estate be managed by a special company (this company is also the one involved in the granting of export permits in the lobster seed corruption case and still does not have long experience in agriculture because it was only established on April 3, 2020) where in the early stages of development it involved the main components and reserve components that were intertwined with the military. The Indonesian Environmental Forum or Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI), as an institution that has a mandate to promote and fight for the fulfillment of the right to food and

nutrition (HAPG), aims to monitor and supervise the implementation of the food estate. This effort, claimed to be a step towards achieving national food security, needs to be monitored to understand how it is implemented and its impact on fulfilling the right to food. In addition to the threat of environmental damage, implementing this food estate project has raised other problems, as expressed by WALHI in 2021, that it will increase state losses.

Nur Hidayati, Executive Director of WALHI, believes the food estate project will only strengthen corporate dominance in forest areas (Mutia & Astriani, 2022). As in other regions, the development of food estates in Central Kalimantan has caused various problems. The project has used 486,164 hectares of land, including natural forests (AOI Land, Katingan Block, Kapuas, Gunung Mas Block). In the last five months, 700 hectares of land in the production forest area has been used and led by the Ministry of Defense in Gunung Mas District to produce cassava commodities. However, 700 hectares of land used during this period needed an Environmental Impact Analysis or Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan (AMDAL) document. So, it has the potential to cause more severe environmental damage. In addition, this project also violates various other regulations, including the obligation to have a timber legality document (SLVK) and a timber utilization permit. This further worsens the destruction of natural forests and hinders the government's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the forestry and land use sectors. In seeing this problem, WALHI responded through the Civil Society Coalition by issuing a statement of position regarding the food estate in Peatlands in Central Kalimantan, that it wants the government not to repeat past mistakes and build a new disaster. The government must stop using the pandemic as an excuse to exploit peatlands. The parties that are members of the Civil Society Coalition have stated that they reject and urge the project to be stopped with the fundamental consideration that. First, the project will increase state losses. Data shows that almost all large-scale agricultural projects that rely on public funding and involve the private sector, accompanied by allegations of corrupt practices, tend to fail. In addition, damage to the peat ecosystem can trigger negative social and economic impacts, including the risk of forest fires that lead to a large financial burden for the state and increasing poverty in the community (Siaran Pers WALHI, 2020).

Second, the project will damage nature while the people accept it. The plan to develop a large agricultural area on peatlands is an act of government that does not care about the environment. The area that used to be the location of the Peatland Project (PLG) is currently experiencing serious problems that have resulted in damage to biodiversity and the environment, including the loss of endemic wood species and orangutan habitats, as well as harming the health of residents and becoming a source of disaster. This project has caused

various negative impacts, including drought, fires, greenhouse gas emissions, and losses for the community in Central Kalimantan. The government has failed to protect the community's right to a healthy environment, and this has been recognized as a violation of the law through the decision of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3555 / K / Pdt / 2018 dated July 16, 2019, which contains demands for the government to issue policies to prevent forest fires and protect peatlands as protected areas. However, under the leadership of President Jokowi, denials still occur even though peatlands must be maintained and rehabilitated (Siaran Pers WALHI, 2020). Third, the government should return food matters to the mainstay of food, namely farmers, and provide land rights because, after the failure of the Peatland Project (PLG), the government should carry out post-compensation recovery shown to some of the people in the area. However, land ownership inequality is increasingly visible, and land conflicts are increasing. The government has issued permits for oil palm plantations in the former Peatland Project or Proyek Lahan Gambut (PLG), which violates spatial planning regulations and environmental policies. This permit is detrimental to indigenous people by seizing their land rights, as well as eliminating customary systems and local wisdom. In addition, the placement of transmigration has also triggered land conflicts because it changes the social structure and land ownership model (Siaran Pers WALHI, 2020).

Before this research was conducted, several previous studies were relevant and useful as sources of information and references for researchers and became differentiators and markers of the novelty of this research. The government's opening of food estate land is considered to have caused various positive and negative impacts. For example, research Basundoro & Sulaeman, (2022) Who sees that the food estate program initiated by the Indonesian Government can be a good boost for the production sector, such as fertilizer and agricultural machinery, as well as national consumption (increased income from the farm sector), which will result in the opening of employment opportunities, economic growth, and the increasing realization of socio-economic justice. However Baringbing, (2021) Looking at it from a different perspective, the food estate policy has negative impacts, such as damaging the soil ecosystem if it does not pay attention to environmental regulations. Then, Yuliantika, Imamulhadi, and Sekarwati (2022) research saw a similar perspective. According to them, the food estate policy's negative impact is related to the destruction of the environmental ecosystem and the lower classes' vulnerability to marginalization (Yuliantika et al., 2022). Even the research of Rahutomo, Alexander, Yustika, and Nurziwara (2023) saw that a food estate would cause local people to lose their livelihood patterns and food supplies, including traditional medicines. Because forests are very closely related to Indigenous peoples as a source of

livelihood, when forest land is seized, it immediately robs the livelihoods of the local people (Rahutomo et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Yestati and Noor (2021) tried to see it from a different perspective; according to him, the food estate's negative impact is related to the destruction of the forest ecosystem and the socio-economic impact on the community. But it is also associated with the regulations in implementing the food estate program, which has not been able to accommodate the various aspirations of the community, especially in areas that are the location of the food estate because the program is still top-down. (Yestati & Noor, 2021).

This research offers a new perspective by focusing on the role of environmental organizations (WALHI) in advocating for communities affected by food estate policies. This research not only completes insight into the negative and positive impacts of food estate policies as in previous studies, but also provides an overview of the advocacy strategies carried out by WALHI to protect the rights of local communities and avoid environmental damage. This is important and relevant in supporting social justice for local communities and environmental preservation. Considering that the impact of environmental damage and social problems due to food estate policies is very large, this research is important to explore WALHI's role in advocating for affected communities in Gunung Mas Regency. Interestingly, this research is useful because it expands public knowledge regarding what questions and how the role of environmental organizations is related to food estate policy in Indonesia, and the public can understand the reality of food estate policy in Gunung Mas Regency. Thus, this research aims to explain the role of WALHI in advocating for communities affected by the Food Estate policy in Gunung Mas Regency during the Joko Widodo administration.

Method

This research uses qualitative research with descriptive-analytical methods. According to Creswell, qualitative research has characteristics such as various news stories that are arranged in such a way as to form patterns or theories that explain social phenomena (Somantri, 2005). Then descriptive-analytical is a method that functions to explain or provide an overview of an object being studied through data or samples that have been collected as they are without carrying out analysis to make conclusions that apply to the general public (Sugiyono, 2019). The data presented in this research was collected through a data collection method in the form of in-depth interviews with 3 Central Kalimantan WALHI respondents, 1 National Walhi respondent, and 2 research respondents related to food estate policy. The interview method was used to obtain in-depth results and come from the right sources, considering that this research will answer Walhi's role in advocating for communities affected by food estate policies in

Gunung Mas Regency. Interviews were conducted using online communication media such as Zoom, as well as direct interviews. The data that has been collected is then categorized to obtain themes related to food estate policy, its impact on society, and the role of Walhi. The steps include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To develop and strengthen existing data, triangulation was also carried out through library observations of academic texts, articles in the mass media, and the official Walhi website.

Result and Discussion

Paradigm and Policy Problems of Food Estate in Gunung Mas District

Food estate or food production center area, one of the strategies in the National Priority, is a food development concept carried out in an integrated manner, involving agriculture, plantations, animal husbandry, even marine and fisheries and forestry in a large area of land. The goal is to strengthen and equalize national food reserves by developing food barns outside Java. The development of food estates is considered very relevant to be carried out (Badan Pengembangan Infrastruktur Wilayah (BPIW), 2021). Food estates are designed with an approach involving upstream and downstream aspects, including providing agricultural infrastructure, irrigation, application of technology in cultivation, management and marketing of harvested crops, institutional improvement, and market guarantees. All of these must be implemented properly. In this context, the development of food estates requires the involvement of all Ministries/Institutions and related stakeholders, with activities carried out synergistically and coordinated by agencies at the coordinating ministry level. In addition, the concept of developing food estates also involves an agricultural diversification approach because the commodities produced are not only focused on food crops but have also begun to build plantation commodities such as plantation commodities (dwarf coconuts), horticulture (fruits and vegetables) and livestock (ducks) which are considered capable of supporting increased added value from the development of main commodities (food crops) (Regional Infrastructure Development Agency (Badan Pengembangan Infrastruktur Wilayah (BPIW), 2021).

Food estates are expected to help Indonesia avoid a food crisis. The main objectives of this initiative are to improve food security and resilience, increase the income and welfare of rural communities, and create new areas of economic growth. The masterplan for developing this food estate is based on the Social-Ecological System (SES) approach, a basic principle for sustainability, integration, resilience, inclusiveness, progress and modernity. In addition to integration between sectors, the development of food estates also ensures that upstream-

downstream integration covering geospatial, on-farm, and off-farm aspects runs optimally. The development of food estates on certain food commodities that are by agroecology and market demand, accompanied by efforts to increase added value in the downstream sector (agro-processing), can not only improve the competitiveness of food products but also encourage local economic development and integration between regions, especially between villages and cities (Badan Pengembangan Infrastruktur Wilayah (BPIW), 2021).

In 2020, President Joko Widodo issued Presidential Regulation (PP) Number 109 of 2020 concerning accelerating the Implementation of the National Strategic Program (Pangastuti et al., 2024). This is an effort to try again to realize food security through the food estate program in various regions, which is expected to become a new food barn to meet the increasing national food needs. Food estate projects often rely on military involvement in rural life, namely in food estate projects, so this hampers rural progressive movements. This food estate project covers tens of thousands of hectares with military and government involvement, but is continuously criticized as a historical failure (White et al., 2021). This program is included in the 2020-2024 National Strategic Program (PSN). It will be implemented in five provinces: North Sumatra, South Sumatra, Central Kalimantan, East Nusa Tenggara, and Papua. According to WALHI Central Kalimantan, the area of food estate land in Gunung Mas District is around 30,000 hectares. In 2021, 200-300 hectares were newly planted with cassava (Bayu, 2024). Food estate is another term for food industrialization. This concept begins with the assumption that a country needs a modern food barn. It is considered that the traditional food barn model or family farming is unable to meet national food needs, in addition to the national and global food crisis (Cahyono, 2024). Therefore, the government adopted a food estate policy, basically food industrialization at a large speed and scale. This seems to be considered a weak family farming model for producing national food. Research conducted by FAO found that family farming produces around 80 percent of the world's food (FAO News and Media, 2021). Even farmers in Indonesia are an important part of Asia Pacific farmers, 70 percent of whom are family farms (MUHID, 2022). According to the source, the food estate policy is deceiving the roots of the food crisis by looking at this situation as if the world food crisis can be solved with a food estate policy (Cahyono, 2024). The presence of the food estate policy is based on the capitalist food regime, which was initially presented to deal with the potential for a global food and energy crisis and is now seen as a market opportunity. This situation has allowed the government to turn the crisis into an opportunity. Market opportunities must be utilized so that they can quickly produce large quantities of food and

bioenergy sources. Only corporations, not farming families, can organize this production method (Savitri, 2013).

Law Number 18 of 2012 concerning Food explains three food paradigms: food sovereignty, independence, and security. Instead of placing the food sovereignty paradigm as the front axis in the food estate project in Gunung Mas District, the government only uses the food security paradigm. According to WALHI Central Kalimantan, the food estate project in Gunung Mas District was carried out by a contractor (Bayu, 2024). It is not surprising that Baringbing's research found that the community felt unfair because there was no openness and socialization from related parties about the location of the food estate land. Facts on the ground prove that this project did not include local communities. It is then understood that the food estate is based on the interests of the existence or absence of food (food crisis), not about who controls and maintains it (Cahyono, 2024). In the research of Prayoga et al. (2023), several times reminded the importance of community involvement in food estate programs on peatlands. According to him, one of the main socio-economic challenges in agricultural activities on peatlands is increasing local community participation. Not infrequently, people are reluctant to get involved if the economic benefits they will obtain are not yet clear. Therefore, community involvement in food estate programs is crucial, especially because peatlands have a high risk of disasters, such as forest and land fires, which can have major impacts if not managed properly. According to Alsafana Rasman et al., agriculture that considers ecological properties assumes that producers and consumers control the food chain. Thus, the food sovereignty paradigm concerns who and how food is produced (Rasman et al., 2023). Food sovereignty occurs when local communities are at the forefront of producing, distributing, and consuming agricultural products rather than simply meeting the needs of the market and companies. The rights of communities and communities are the main considerations in implementing the food sovereignty paradigm (Nugraha et al., 2016).

The term "food sovereignty" was first introduced by the international farmers' organization La Via Campesina and was later adopted as a movement by organizations that identified themselves with critical political economy. This movement emerged in the context of broader agitation against globalization and transnational corporations. This movement is also characterized by a redistributive agrarian reform agenda, demands for farmers' rights, community strengthening, and trade protectionism. In a colloquium on food sovereignty held at Yale University in 2013 and widely attended, food sovereignty was defined as "the right of people to democratically control or determine their own food systems, and to produce sufficient and healthy food in culturally appropriate ways and ecologically sustainable in and near their

territories". From this perspective, food sovereignty is not only an alternative to the dominant neoliberal model of agriculture and trade, but also represents an operational scale that is local or sub-national (Neilson and Wright, 2017). In Indonesia, food estate projects seem to avoid using the term food sovereignty because instead of fulfilling and enhancing people's rights to democratically control or determine their own food systems, food estate projects are nothing more than food industrialization that focuses on corporate interests. Ironically, issues of malnutrition, food access for the poor, and geographic inequality remain inadequately addressed.

Failure of the Food Estate Program and its Impact on Communities in Gunung Mas Distric

The food estate project in Gunung Mas Distric has failed. Sociologically, this is evidenced by the disappointment of local people who did not get justice while implementing the food estate program. According to WALHI Central Kalimantan, the government did not protect local people from the takeover of agricultural land and forest areas by contractors who carried out the food estate project (Bayu, 2024). As a result, this revokes the rights of local communities to fulfill their needs according to local propriety. Even the community is forced to give up their land and, at the same time, is not involved in the implementation process of the food estate project. This certainly has a detrimental impact on the local community itself. Land that used to be able to produce a life for them is now inaccessible. Community participation or involvement in the planning process for implementing the food estate program is very important, considering that their lives depend entirely on agricultural land and forest areas. By involving the community, the government is also at least able to get support and reduce the possibility of local conflicts. Therefore, the success of the food estate program can be measured by how much food is produced and by the ability of the implementer to hear the needs and aspirations of the local community to minimize (Risdianto et al., 2024). Ecologically, this is proven by implementing an agricultural system that does not consider environmental aspects. Because basically, the food estate project is the industrialization of agriculture, then acceleration and large scale and massive use of technology are the principles that must be applied. As a result, agricultural land cannot fulfill the principles they carry. Initially, the people of Central Kalimantan used a two-planting, two-harvesting system for farming. However, after the food estate project, farmers were forced to plant three times and harvest three times. It turned out that this system did not work. On the other hand, farmers worked more (overwork). The environment was also damaged because soil conditions did not cause it.

According to WALHI National, this project exploited water, peatlands, workers, and deforestation. In addition to damaging the environment and local agricultural systems, the most wrong thing about this food estate is that what is planted is not local food (Ghofar, 2024). The food estate project in Gunung Mas is managed by the Ministry of Defense (Kemenhan). The food planted is cassava. WALHI sees that this is not achieved through community production and consumption. The government is forcing the agricultural system to run very quickly in terms of production. However, this does not consider the elements of agricultural land, technology, and human resources that manage the food estate project in Gunung Mas Distric.

The use of peatlands and protected forest areas by converting them into agricultural land can result in deforestation and degradation of forest functions, which will have an impact on increasing Indonesia's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and ultimately worsening climate change conditions (Maskun et al., 2021). Food estate project activities can damage the biophysics of peatlands, the impact of which requires a long and large amount of time and effort to repair. This is due to the position of peatlands as a natural resource that cannot be renewed (Yenny et al., 2022). Food estate policies have the potential to create risks of threats to the environment and society. Activities such as peatland conversion result in habitat fragmentation, drought, human-animal conflict, and even the risk of fire. The approach to modernizing the agricultural system in food estate projects can limit alternative sources of income, trigger exploitation, and worsen social inequality due to control of assets by corporations. What's worse is if the food estate project minimizes local community participation in determining the food estate area. This will hamper community welfare and create social conflict in the affected areas.

If we map the impact of the failure of this food estate, the following things are found: first, exploitation of local communities. This exploitation takes the form of efforts to take over people's agricultural land so that they lose access. This results in economic and social losses for the community itself. Second, environmental damage. This damage will certainly impact the people living in Gunung Mas Distric. The food estate project will significantly affect carbon release due to deforestation, biodiversity, reduced water absorption and flooding (Rasman et al., 2023). Third, local food shortages. Instead of the food estate project being present as an effort to produce a national food barn, local food and consumption patterns are reduced and changed, and Gunung Mas Distric is trying its luck by planting cassava, which is not even relevant to local food needs. Such large land control has made the local agricultural system uncontrolled and irrelevant. Thus, the food estate project in Gunung Mas Distric is considered to hurt the local community through social injustice, exploitation of resources, incompatibility

of food policies with local needs, and lack of community involvement in the decision-making process.

By looking at several problems that occur, there are obstacles in developing food estates in Indonesia caused by environmental factors and human intervention. Therefore, according to Alifya et al. (2024), as a solution to the food crisis, food estate is actually not appropriate to apply in Indonesia. The main problem lies in poor food distribution, including weaknesses in infrastructure and distribution management. Apart from that, people's low purchasing power due to high food prices is making the situation worse. Lack of technology and innovation to support food estate land management is also an obstacle. Not infrequently, the land used is low quality peat, which is accompanied by deforestation. This causes significant environmental damage in the long term. Therefore, these various things have given rise to skepticism in some circles of society regarding the success of the food estate program. One of the main obstacles to food estates in the past was the lack of support from the community and inadequate planning, so that implementation was not optimal.

Thus, according to Ayu (2022), it is important for the food estate program to consider not only economic aspects, but also political, environmental and socio-cultural dimensions. Potential problems and challenges that may arise must be analyzed in depth first to avoid repeating the failure of food security programs in the past. From a political economy perspective, food security involves a close triangular relationship between government, corporations and society. The government, with its authority to manage resources, collaborates with corporations to encourage investment that supports domestic production activities. The aim is to create a sustainable economic cycle and provide real benefits to society. However, in some cases there has been concern that the role of the community, which should be at the center of this policy, is actually marginalized and only becomes a complementary element. As a result, the visible relationship is dominated by transactions between the state and the market, without meaningful involvement of society.

WALHI Advocacy for the Food Estate Program in Gunung Mas Distric

Policy advocacy is an action designed to change a particular public policy, such as laws and regulations, court decisions, decisions and Presidential Regulations, Political Party platforms, and other institutional policies. Advocacy is recognized and protected by the 1945 Constitution, Article 27, paragraph 2, which states, "All citizens have equal standing before the law and government and are required to uphold the law and government without exception." Therefore, advocacy can be interpreted as an effort to ensure and urge the government to always

be responsible for protecting and improving the welfare of all its citizens (Zulyadi, 2014). In its development, advocacy is used for various purposes that focus on efforts to achieve social justice through changes or the formulation of public policies. There are several groups involved in advocacy, also called actors; according to Mustika, the actors or actors in policy advocacy are as follows: (1) Students (individuals, groups, student organizations); (2) Social Organizations and Political Organizations; (3) Non-governmental organizations such as Non-Governmental Organizations; (4) Community communities such as farmers, workers, fishermen; (5) Powerful and influential organizations in society; (6) Religious-based community organizations; (7) Business groups; (8) Media groups; (9) RT, Dukuh, and Lurah groups; and (10) Other groups interested in change for better welfare (Mahardhani, 2018).

Advocacy activities are planned and structured by individuals or groups to fight for changes in unequal social relations into equal ones. This change is intended to realize democratic power relations and provide opportunities for weak communities to participate in the decision-making process related to resource allocation (Danialsyah & Zahra, 2022). In addition, the main purpose of public policy advocacy is to obtain support and assistance in order to ensure the constitutional rights of individuals or communities. Wahyudi, in his book *Understanding Public Policy and Advocacy Strategies*, lists five objectives of policy advocacy, namely: (1) Improving Policy Substance; (2) Improving the Policy Formulation and Decision Process; (3) Improving Policy Implementation and Accountability; (4) Changing Public Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding Policy; and (5) Increasing Transparency of Policy Accountability (Wahyudi & Kurniawan, 2008). Indonesian Environmental Forum or Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI) is the largest environmental movement organization in Indonesia, with a membership of 487 organizations from non-governmental organizations and nature lovers organizations, as well as 203 individual members spread across 28 provinces in Indonesia. Since 1980 until now, WALHI has actively encouraged efforts to save and restore the environment in Indonesia. WALHI works to continue to encourage the realization of recognition of the right to the environment, protection and fulfillment of human rights as a form of state responsibility for fulfilling people's sources of life (Siaran Pers WALHI, 2020). WALHI realizes that this struggle is increasingly faced with tough challenges from day to day, especially those originating from the increasingly solid dominance and penetration of the global capitalist regime through free market agendas and the hegemony of the new liberalism (neoliberalism), and the increasing support and partisanship of dominant political forces in the country towards the interests of industrial countries or the global economic regime. The global

capitalist regime places the people, the environment and sources of life for the people, even the earth, as sacrifices for capital accumulation. The endless exploitation and exploitation of natural resources that has led to an environmental crisis has affected the economic, social and cultural order of life and ultimately increased the threat of vulnerability to the safety and lives of all citizens, both in rural and urban areas.

There is a National WALHI Advocacy scheme and Regional WALHI for the Food Estate project in Gunung Mas Distric. National WALHI helps channel information to WALHI in the regions. National WALHI is very proactive in channeling various kinds of information from one region to another regional WALHI. However, the conditions can also be reversed if the information is related to national strategic projects. When the central government decides on a national strategic project such as the food estate policy, National WALHI immediately informs WALHI in the regions about it. From here, regional WALHI responds and monitors from each region regarding the monitoring of evictions or impacts on the community and environmental damage. In this case, regional WALHI is the spearhead, and National WALHI is the supporter. This includes forming a network and fully supporting the needs of journalists in exposing new findings in the regions. The Advocacy stance of National WALHI and those in the regions remains the same because it is based on regional findings. For example, facts regarding evictions, land grabbing, deforestation, human rights violations, and potential impacts of fires caused are found. In this case, the spearhead of advocacy remains with the regional WALHI. Advocacy includes organizing lawsuits, community assistance, research, and action. Meanwhile, the National Walhi has supported journalists, exposure, field visits, fellowships, and others (Ghofar, 2024).

WALHI's organization is based on findings in the community. They try to dig up as much information as possible in the community regarding the food estate project. With the findings, they get the community to express their own opinions and experiences regarding the conditions or negative impacts they feel. In other words, Walhi seeks to maximize the role of the community in the context of advocacy. In this way, local communities affected by food estate policies can express their opinions regarding their public interests. This right is guaranteed by Article 28 of the post-amendment 1945 Constitution, including freedom of expression with responsibility. This freedom must still respect the values of morality, order, national integrity and religion. This commitment is also reflected in the Human Rights articles which support self-development, the struggle for collective rights, and freedom of association, assembly and opinion (Boediningsi & Rusmaya, 2022). For WALHI, the community must

always speak up about their concerns rather than WALHI as the community representative. This is continuously attempted, so the community is willing to sue, and WALHI supports the lawsuit (Ghofar, 2024). In Gunung Mas Distric, WALHI Central Kalimantan tried to make non-litigation efforts to the local community by sharing knowledge. They organized a discussion to share knowledge between WALHI and the Gunung Mas community. This increased community knowledge so local communities and affected groups could advocate independently (Bayu, 2024). In addition to advocacy organizing, which is carried out directly and involves community involvement, WALHI also uses the Internet as an advocacy medium. The media has a vital role in representing the interests of the community. In general, mass media that are often used in advocacy materials are (1) News Releases, (2) Main Coverage; (3) Columns, (4) Editorial; (5) Press Conference; (6) Press Opportunities; (7) Photo Opportunity; (8) Backgrounder; (9) Position Papers; (10) Statement; (11) Readers' Letters; (12) Radio Drama Scripts; (13) Website and Internet; and (14) Radio and TV) (Mahardhani, 2018) On the official WALHI website, they use the Internet as a medium for public advocacy for the food estate project (Siaran Pers WALHI, 2020). The author found nine (9) contents regarding the food estate project, 2 of which used an infographic model, and the rest were press releases based on WALHI's findings regarding the food estate.

Organic Intellectuals: WALHI and Affected Communities

The intellectual group is an entity isolated from other social segments. Every individual has the potential to be part of an intellectual group, depending on their level of intelligence and how they apply it. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Neo-Marxist thinker, put forward his views on intellectual groups and their duties in the structure of society. According to Gramsci, intellectual groups can be divided into two categories in a functional context. First, traditional intellectuals such as literary experts, scientists, and the like occupy positions between layers of society with an inter-class presence. They have roots in past and present class relations and influence the formation of various historical classes—second, organic intellectual groups are elements of political thinkers and organizers of a basic social class. Organic intellectual groups can usually be identified by their profession, which reflects the characteristics of class work, so it is not only a function in guiding the ideas and aspirations of their organic class. The division of the two categories cannot be separated from the dynamics of power between the state and society, especially in the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. An organic intellectual group which is a thinking and political organizing element of a basic social class.

Groups of organic intellectuals can usually be identified based on their profession, which reflects the occupational characteristics of the class, so it is not only their function in guiding the ideas and aspirations of their organic class. The division of these two categories cannot be separated from the power dynamics between the state and society, especially in the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. Organic intellectuals, according to Gramsci, are a type of intellectual who does not only focus on abstract thinking, but also has an active role in organizing and leading social change. They come from certain social groups and function to awaken the masses through the economic, social and political sectors. Every individual has the intellectual capacity to think rationally, but not all can optimize their intelligence to advance society (Yahya, 2019).

Organic intellectuals are not only focused on objective aspects but rather on applying knowledge in everyday life. Organic intellectual groups tend to be active in efforts to uphold justice, so organic intellectuals need to understand theories and systems to become intellectual leaders who represent marginalized communities' aspirations, especially in opposing government policies (Utomo, 2013). Organic intellectual groups emerge in society with the aim of understanding and trying to find solutions to all problems in their environment. They are part of society and exist to serve the community. Organic intellectuals are responsible for developing change initiatives around them. According to Gramsci's view, organic intellectuals must demonstrate two main functions: organizational and connective. In this context, organic intellectuals need to mobilize civil society to fight for their rights, which are not yet obtained from the political realm. They have the power of thought and knowledge and succeed in becoming mass movers. In addition, organic intellectuals also have relationships with the political community. This indicates that they have the knowledge and ability to mobilize society in the struggle for civil rights and connections with the political community. Thus, they can lobby or negotiate with political parties to achieve the civil rights fought for in the movement (Utomo, 2013).

Based on the advocacy conducted by WALHI, the author found that WALHI acts as an organic intellectual. They are starting from disseminating information about the food estate project from the center to the regions and vice versa, to organizing the community, which is carried out by socializing the impact of the food estate and gathering information for the affected community. Not only that, WALHI also moves as a community companion, conducting research, action, journalistic activities, and publication of findings. This can also be said to be part of Walhi's efforts to embody environmental politics which focuses on control

and ownership of natural resources, as well as the role of politics in fighting for social justice and a sustainable environment (Hafizah, 2021). This places WALHI as a promoter and provider of insight to the affected community and the public. Gramsci stated that the role of organic intellectuals is to provide insight into the language of knowledge and the right language of expression so that the community can articulate the things they feel and think. That way, the community will not easily get caught up in the ideological doctrine of the bourgeoisie, which is expressed through hegemony (Maulana, 2015). In addition to emphasizing the dissemination of information and insight about the food estate and its impacts, WALHI has become an amass mobilizer. According to WALHI, the affected community is in a difficult position in relation to the food estate project. On the one hand, they feel the food estate project's negative impacts and lack of justice. On the other hand, they also experience doubts about demanding the rights of local communities. Therefore, WALHI plays a significant role in shaping the mentality, knowledge, and supporters of the movement of the affected communities. This is what focuses on affirming WALHI's intellectual function as organic intellectuals who base themselves on the conditions and environment in which they are involved (Chrisman, (2013). Walhi not only plays a role in helping the people of Gunung Mas Regency face the negative impacts of the food estate project, but also empowers them to become leading actors in fighting for their rights. By providing space for the community to voice their own concerns and experiences, Walhi initiated the creation of collective awareness and courage to act, both through dialogue and legal channels. This is what makes Walhi an organization that uses organic intellectuals. With their movements and struggles, Walhi creates strong solidarity between themselves and the community, while strengthening the community's position in fighting for justice and a sustainable environment in their own region.

Although WALHI is an organic intellectual, local communities still have organic knowledge. This can certainly be explained and proven from another perspective. In the context of family farming, the local community of Gunung Mas has adequate knowledge regarding good and correct agricultural land management. As in the general phenomenon of local communities, they have adequate knowledge and understanding about selecting good agricultural locations, agricultural systems that consider the land's ability to produce, and the use of traditional technology appropriately. The emergence of knowledge is because, in terms of quality and quantity, they have lived in the area for generations. Therefore, they are very familiar with and understand the environmental conditions in which they live. This is the organic intellectual possessed by the community in producing local food. This can be

confirmed through Gramsci, that human nature and intellectual activity cannot be understood in isolation from the totality of the social relations that shape them, because both are influenced by the historical and social context in which they develop. He distinguishes between organic intellectuals who play a role in existing modes of production and traditional intellectuals who may not be involved in contemporary social and political structures (Martins, 2017). As conveyed by one of the speakers, the community in Gunung Mas Distric has organic intellectuals regarding understanding the areas or regions that can be used as agricultural land. They know and understand the differences between peatland and agricultural areas (Firman, 2024) Thus, in the context of the food estate and all the activities that follow it, WALHI, as an organic intellectual, plays a role in advocating for local communities regarding negative things that will happen in the food estate project. Local communities are also organic intellectuals in the context of knowing and understanding agricultural systems that are good for the community and do not contribute to ecological damage. According to Baharuddin et al (2021), in the Indonesian context, WALHI can be classified as a transformational NGO because it politically criticizes the dominant paradigm and ideology in the development agenda which does not pay attention to environmental aspects. Walhi encourages the implementation of alternative paradigms that focus on social and environmental justice. Walhi is pushing for an alternative agenda to avoid ecological disasters, which occur due to the accumulation of environmentally unfriendly development models carried out by countries and companies. These disasters occur when development activities damage ecosystems and cause environmental degradation which has a negative impact on society.

Conclusion

Paradigmatically, the food estate policy must fully understand the food crisis problem. Instead of protecting and developing family farming as the basis of food production in Indonesia, the food estate project only afflicts local communities. It increases ecological damage through the negative impacts it produces. The impacts found are in the form of denial of the rights of local communities to manage land independently according to local wisdom, decreasing forest areas, which result in the potential for natural disasters, and decreasing local food production because the food estate project does not plant local food, and destroying the traditional agricultural system that local communities have carried out. Therefore, WALHI, as Indonesia's largest environmental movement organization, realizes that the food estate project needs to care about the principles of food sovereignty, which are centered on the independence

of local communities and the creation of an environmentally friendly agricultural system. With that awareness, WALHI began its role as an organic intellectual who carries and inspires the knowledge of local communities so that they can voice their bad experiences with the food estate project. Further research can examine the effectiveness of WALHI's role as an organic intellectual organization that fights for the rights of local communities. The research focus can include concrete achievements from advocacy strategies as well as challenges faced in fighting for local food sovereignty, social justice and environmental conservation.

Acknowledgments compile this section and complete it

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