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PATRON-CLIENT IN CHANGING LIVELIHOOD FROM RUBBER PLANT TO PALM

Garuda Parampara Yuda
Social Safeguard Specialist
garudaparamparayuda@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Rubber gardening for people in several regions of West Kalimantan is the main livelihood. One of them is in Sei Kembayau Village. For generations, rubber gardening has been the livelihood of the villagers. Rubber plants have actually been passed down from generation to generation. The patron-client concept that currently exists is the basic foundation in survival and has been attached to rubber plantations in the community. This paper aims to see the patron-client pattern from the change in livelihood of rubber plants to oil palm plants. This study used ethnographic research methods. Take a holistic approach and describe it in depth or detail to obtain a genuine person's point of view. Tauke patron-clients and subordinates are still well established as an economic concept of the Sei Kembayau Village community, even though there is already a KUD present in the community as support for the palm oil economy. So that subordinates will still get social security from every Tauke as their patron.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the study of patron-client relationships has become increasingly important, both in the disciplines of anthropology, economics and politics (Kowalski & Rekść, 2023; Sayarı, 2014). This is evidenced by the many discussions about patron-clients by several disciplines. Actually, there are several factors that encourage the occurrence of this phenomenon: 1) the expanding object of the study of symptoms like this, from the study of relationships between people that are limited in nature to the study of various social and interorganizational relationships; 2) the study of patron-client relationship problems then covers a wide variety of societies found in various places in the world; 3) awareness among social scientists of the importance of this study, because the phenomenon seems to persist in some areas where people are already familiar with established political systems, and 4) the closer relationship of this study with the development of social exchange theory (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1980; Putra, 2007).

In Sei Kembayau Village, Meliau District, Sanggau Regency, West Kalimantan Province, the majority of people make a living as rubber planters (planting rubber, taking rubber sap and then selling it). This has happened a long time ago and hereditary. Rubber plants began to be introduced in West Kalimantan in 1909, and at that time the community considered that rubber plants were able to increase economic capabilities and minimize strata differences in society (Mulyasari, 2013). So that almost the majority of people plant rubber as their field crops. But in fact, in the rubber economy, in the community raises new nodes. That is the emergence of *Tauke* and subordinates. Where this is a patron-client concept, which is firmly established as a form of economy of rubber farming communities.

In Sei Kembayau Village itself, according to research conducted, it was explained that oil palm plants entered the village around 1993. This happened after counseling by the village head. He added that there began to be an awareness that palm oil commodities were more profitable for them than rubber plants. Until now, there are 30% of the people of Sei Kembayau Village who have oil palm plants in their fields. Although slow, the development of palm oil to rubber can increase from what is now. There are many considerations that make palm oil can enter Sei Kembayau Village. Among them, palm oil agricultural products are quite expensive to sell in the market, and the need for palm oil is increasing.

It is interesting what about the established patron-client pattern in Sei Kembayau Village from rubber plantations, when the influx of oil palm plants is currently increasingly in demand by the people of Sei Kembayau Village. This paper aims to see the patron-client pattern from the change in livelihood of rubber plants to oil palm plants. This paper aims to contribute to the literature by examining the patron-client pattern from the change in livelihood of rubber plants to oil palm plants. The study will provide insights into the social dynamics of this conversion and the relationships between different actors involved in the process.

METHOD

This study used ethnographic research methods. Ethnographic research itself is a qualitative research method. Ethnographic research usually approaches holistically and describes it in depth or in depth to obtain a native's point of view. And the data collection method used is usually a depth interview and participation obserpation where this data collection method is very in accordance with the initial purpose of describing in depth (Marjali, 2005).

In addition, in conducting ethnographic research, researchers must be able to carry out various methods simultaneously. In addition to participatory observation, researchers may conduct interviews (Spradley, 2016). In a sense, ethnographic interviews are a special type of speech event (Spradley, 2016). Three important elements in an ethnographic interview are the explicit objectives, explanations, and ethnographic questions. The interview itself in an ethnography is divided into two, structured and unstructured ways. There are two interview methods in conducting ethnographic research, namely unstructured freelance interviews and structured interviews (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). Unstructured interviews are obtained through daily chats when meeting with youth, youth parents, and some communities. A structured interview is an interview using questions that have previously been compiled by the researcher.

To answer the objectives of the study, the explanation of the findings will start from a) *Tauke* and subordinates (who *Tauke* and who are subordinates); b) the patron-client pattern of *Tauke* and subordinates; c) patron-client *Tauke* subordinates in the rubber supply chain; d) patron-client *Tauke* subordinates in the palm oil supply chain; and e) as a conclusion that explains the patron-client in the rubber and palm oil supply chain.

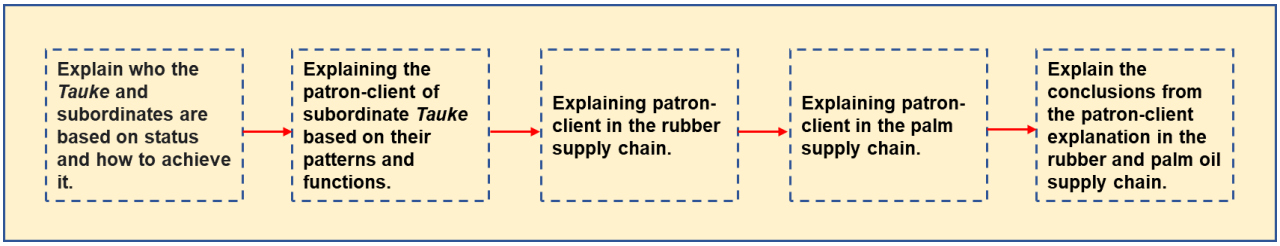

Figure 1. Research Methods and Explanation of Written Findings

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tauke and Subordinates

This study explains that *Tauke* or subordinates are the impact of ancestral farming activities. We know that the ownership pattern of village communities around forests begins with natural forest clearing activities. People who clear more forest will get more land. Any individual who diligently clears the forest will get more land. Most *Tauke* with a large land tenure base and many plots of their ancestors were diligent in clearing forests. So they today why owning a lot of land is inherited from their ancestors before.

The large amount of land owned by *Tauke* has more opportunities to acquire other land. They buy from the villagers themselves or in areas outside the village. This ability is generated from the productivity of the rubber commodity produced. Because the larger the land, the more rubber rods planted, the more sap produced. Because of this, *Tauke* is more economically powerful than subordinates.

Contrary to *Tauke*, the men did not have large land and many plots. This is also because their ancestors were known to be lazy to clear forests first. So there is not much that can be passed on by later generations. As for supporting the family in the village, so far it is sourced only from rubber sap sold. The less land they own, the less rubber sap they will sell. The weaker they are also able to support their families. More extreme if the ancestors are lazy, then divided up to be passed on to the next generation, then there are also families who do not have land. Or what was also found in this study, subordinates will lose land because they want to get money quickly. One of the paths taken by selling the land. So what happens is that most of the men who do not have the land, to survive will be rubber stains (*Noreh* is an activity where rubber farmers take rubber sap on their phohon with a small knife with a curved top and a sharp tip) in the *Tauke* rubber speed.

From the pattern of land ownership above, it will be in line with social status in the community. It will be clearly seen that *Tauke* will be more economically empowered than subordinates. In terms of land ownership, it is also clearly visible and unequal. To explain the social status of *Tauke* and subordinates can be seen the criteria in the table below:

Table 1. Description of *Tauke*'s Social Status - Subordinates in Sei Kembayau Village

Subordinates		***Tauke***	
Low	**Medium**	**High**	**High**
Criterion:	Criterion:	Criterion:	Criterion:

1) No land ownership; 2) Poor economic conditions; 3) Low social status.	1) Own < 1 Ha of land, and only 1 plot of land; 2) Moderate economic conditions; 3) Moderate social status.	1) Own land > 1 Ha, and more than 1 plot of land; 2) High/rich economic conditions; 3) High social status.	1) Have land > 1 Ha, can be 1 plot of land or more; 2) No land at all, but large capital owners; 3) High/rich economic conditions; 4) High social status; 5) Have a direct relationship with a rubber company.

Culturally, *Tauke* becomes a patron who has more power than subordinates so that they can bind so that subordinates work with him. This power is based on financial strength that is able to provide guarantees or be able to meet the needs of subordinates. As Scott (1972) also explained, he thinks patron-clients are "... a special case of dyadic (two person) ties, involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits or both, for a person of a lower status (client) who for his part reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron."

Patron-Client *Tauke* and Subordinates

The helplessness of the men to survive at that time was saved by the existence of *Tauke*. With a lot of *Tauke* land, and personally not having enough families to manage the land, he invited these men to work rubber noreh in their fields. Later *Tauke* will reward with direct money, or by providing daily necessities. In addition, if subordinates have economic difficulties or are faced with sudden needs such as illness, death, or marriage, they can borrow money from *Tauke*. The men will be powerless to refuse, because the opportunity to work in the *Tauke* field is the only way to survive.

In Sei Kembayau Village, wages and provision of necessities of life are known as the *bond* and *song* system. This system is actually the most powerful form in patron-client *Tauke* and subordinates. *Bond* itself means two things: 1) is the debt of the subordinates to the *Tauke* when the subordinates have no money to buy daily necessities or other necessities; 2) debts of subordinates who have not been paid off when they have menorah *Tauke* rubber or sell rubber products to the *Tauke*. While *Song* is the excess money returned by *Tauke* from the sale of rubber of his men to *Tauke*, provided that all debts of his men have been paid off. If there are still unpaid debts, the process is that subordinates always *bond* to *Tauke*. So if you want cash and regardless of *Tauke*, subordinates need to work harder on the *Tauke* field to get more rubber sap.

In this *bond* and song, the ups and downs in rubber prices will be very influential. When the price of rubber is falling, the *bond* of the clients increases. Because the price of rubber is not comparable to the needs required by the client. Vice versa, if the price of rubber rises, the *bond*

will be quickly paid off and can get *a song*. Therefore, almost all *Tauke* in Sei Kembayau Village who act as patrons have "grocery stalls" that provide some daily staples. As subordinates, they can take whatever they need for daily needs. But not necessarily the subordinates take as they want without paying, they still pay but in a different form. The subordinates pay for the daily needs they take from the *Tauke* stall by carving rubber trees or selling rubber products to the *Tauke*.

Usually, the subordinates sell to *Tauke* who have a lot of money or the stall provides more daily necessities. This selection is important for the subordinates because: 1) the subordinates feel more confident to the *Tauke* that the rubber will always be accommodated and bought, and 2) the subordinates can be more free to take all kinds of daily necessities at the *Tauke* stall which is a greater amount of daily necessities. But from this study, the number of subordinates who can be cared for by *Tauke* is 4-5 people. This happens because of the ability of the *Tauke* itself who can buy the harvest of the subordinates. Usually what happens if a *Tauke* already has 4-5 men, to enter the six men will be difficult, and rare. In addition, indeed from the narration of a *Tauke*, fewer subordinates will be easier to manage.

But every subordinate who is not bound by *Tauke* and does not bear the risk on himself, they can freely choose other *Tauke* that will be a place to sell their rubber products (Jonge, 1989). In addition, the existence of inequality and the absence of fairness from the exchange between rubber and the amount of needs that can be taken by subordinates is also the cause of subordinates breaking away from a *Tauke*. As also stated by Lande (1977) "*. . . Yet while a man may be obliged to give up his freedom and his dignity in exchange for a secure livelihood, he knows the relationship is inequitable. It may be assumed that he can distinguish what is 'fair' or desirable from what he is obliged to do survive. In any society or among any atrium of society there are a set of normative standards governing 'fair' value' and justice that are distinct from the market price or the customary pattern of exchange which the relative bargaining power of unequal creates."*

For subordinates who are still in one *Tauke*, usually they still have debts / *bonds* that have not been paid off. As Scott (1972) put it "*A client, in this sense, is someone who has entered an unequal exchange relation in which he is unable to reciprocate fully. A debt of obligation binds him to the patron."*

The exit and entry of subordinates into the *Tauke* shelter in the patron-client relationship in Sei Kembayau Village itself is normal and natural. It is just that every *Tauke* and subordinate are also aware that they can't just casually let *Tauke* go out of the *Tauke*'s footwear, and their own men can't just casually get out of the *Tauke*'s shade. Because of the implication that subordinates cannot definitely get social security comfort by not relying on a certain *Tauke*, and *Tauke* himself feels that he is losing because he cannot meet the amount of rubber supply from the lack of rubber suppliers to him. In addition, if it is very unequal, subordinates can easily get out of the *Tauke* shade. This condition is also supported by the communal community because it is felt that *Tauke* is unfair. That way, the quick action in and out of the subordinates to the *Tauke* is also detrimental to each party.

In Wolf's (2013) view, a kinship relationship is the result of a person's socialization process in his life, which contains mutual trust that can be used by him to achieve a certain goal. This relationship is also based on sanctions that exist in the kerbat system or by sanctions from the community. If there is a kinship that does not act as expected by other relatives or its actions are considered not in accordance with applicable rules, such sanctions can be applied. This is very different from instrumental friendship, which occurs because each party has a vested interest in each other and each also acts and is seen as a potential means of liaison to others outside the relationship between the two parties. Each individual here is a sponsor for the other.

Patron-Client in the Rubber Supply Chain

Rubber plants in Sie Kembayau Village are very dependent on weather conditions. If during the dry season rubber plants usually produce more rubber sap, inversely proportional to when in the rainy season. If the rainy season rubber sap will be a little. Because during the rainy season rubber rubber shrinks due to the carrying of rubber by rainwater. Thus, the income of residents due to the rainy season is also reduced. When it is summer, the rubber income of the population can reach 17-20kg in a week. If it is the rainy season, the amount of rubber income for the population depends on how many times they have noreh rubber. Usually, if it rains, farmers can get at least 11-14kg in a week. In normal times or around summer the farmers do noreh activities a week 4-5 times and in the rainy season about 2-3 times. In a day noreh is only done in the morning around 05:00 - 09:00. For the rubber itself can only be taken after the rubber is 5-6 years old, and can be productive within 15-20 years.

In addition, in one rubber field landscape, which consists of many plots of land, rubber noreh must be done in turns. If previously the rubber tree was inscribed on land A, then the next day the tree in the same field should not be inscribed and must move to another tree. This is for rubber farmers so that the sap in rubber trees does not run out quickly and the hope is that after undergoing rotation sap will appear again on the tree. Indirectly to maintain sap productivity in the tree.

Regarding the price of rubber commodities here, according to the people of Sei Kembayau Village, it is not profitable enough. But besides that, rubber prices also do not continue to stagnate with a certain nominal, can go up and sometimes down. So the price of rubber here is also very fruculative. For determination of rubber prices at the farmer level, it always changes to follow the standard price of the Singapore Commodity Exchange (SICOM) (Singapore Exchange, 2023). SICOM itself is a joint reference internationally for rubber pricing. Although the price of rubber is fructuative, it is still the main commodity for the people of Sei Kembayau Village. Because the average price of rubber per kg from the cheapest to expensive is around Rp 6,000 to Rp 9,000. This becomes relevant when viewed in terms of rubber field ownership, for the lower middle class alone each family has 1-2 rubber plantations, while for the upper middle class each family has 2-3 rubber plantations. If you look at the area of the rubber plantation, one plantation can reach ± 10,000m². So the general size if you have one rubber field which every week in the summer reaches a sap capacity of around 38kg, with a price per kg of Rp 6,000 then a week each family head can

have Rp 231,000. So a month they can get Rp 924,000. This condition will be less when it is the rainy season.

Patron-client is very much felt in the economic application of the people of Sei Kembayau Village. *Tauke* here plays a big role in the running of the community's economy. A *Tauke* has a large share in the sale of garden products owned by subordinates. For subordinates, *Tauke* as a place where they will get money.

For the rubber supply chain flow here the *Tauke* buys rubber products to subordinates for Rp 6,000 per kg, and the *Tauke* sells to *Tauke* in Meliau for around Rp 8,000 per kg. That way the *Tauke* gets a profit of Rp2000 from the sale to Meliau. This is if *Tauke* from Sei Kembayu sells its own harvest to *Tauke* in Meliau. This is acceptable to *Tauke* Meliau because *Tauke* Sei Kembayau has to incur additional costs for transportation. Meanwhile, if the Meliau *Tauke* itself takes it, the price drops by around Rp. 7,000 per kg because the transportation money is borne by the Meliau *Tauke* itself. But usually, Meliau *Tauke* rarely takes it alone because there is already *Tauke* in Sei Kembayau Village that delivers it.

In the relationship between *Tauke* Sei Kembayau Village and *Tauke* Meliau, *Tauke* Meliau gives trust, authority and power in managing its business to *Tauke* in Sei Kembayau Village. This process began with the *Tauke* of Sei Kembayau Village being given capital by the Meliau *Tauke* to buy rubber products from his subordinates and sell them back to him. This condition is also known by the subordinates, if the *Tauke* in Sie Kembayau Village is trusted by many *Tauke*s in Malinau District, then they indirectly help the subordinates in carrying out their lives. As only described by Cohen (1966) who reviews the symptoms of patronage in Bornu, Africa. Only here Lande does not use the term patron-client relationship but rather a feudal relationship, that is, a relationship involving two people, one superior to the other, and the higher party providing protection, economic security and position in society in exchange for loyalty, obedience and services that have been provided by the lower party (subordinate).

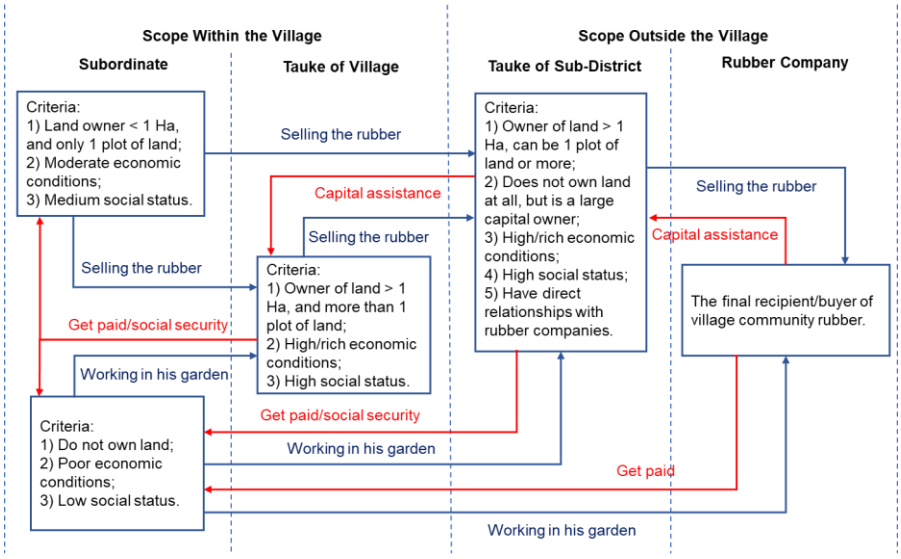

Figure 2. Patron-Client Rubber Supply Chain

Patron-Client in Palm Oil Supply Chain

Palm oil in the Sei Kembayau Village community is a new economic commodity that initially met with opposition. This conflict was triggered by: 1) unpreparedness and incomprehension of oil palm plants. So that this ignorance makes people unwilling to change rubber plants to oil palm plants. According to them, rubber itself is an ancestral relic plant prepared for him later. With such understanding, it is difficult for them to release rubber plants into oil palm. Because there is romanticism in rubber plants; 2) there is fear in the people of Sei Kembayau Village towards oil palm farming. I see this fear because of the uncertainty of palm oil products being sold. That way the farmers suffered losses. They also experience fortitude about changing existing patterns (rubber) to new patterns (palm oil). This is due to the loss of comfort they already feel in rubber when it will be replaced with palm oil.

In essence, what actually happens here is that the people of Sei Kembayau Village experience fear of changes in their livelihood patterns, from old to new. Robustness regarding this pattern change is also found from research by Belcher et al. (2004). They saw that "At the same time a slate of social and economic changes are, in effect, changing the rules of the game. Changing human populations (increasing in some forest areas, decreasing in others), the introduction of alien cultures and values to forest areas, increasing competition for land and forest resources, improved infrastructure, communications and market access in forest areas, and new economic opportunities and changing de facto resource rights, among others, have the effect of changing relative prices of land, labor, local produce and consumer goods, and the decision-making environment of local forest managers."

As mentioned in the previous chapter, around 1993, the door began to open for the entry of oil palm into Sei Kembayau Village. This happened after counseling by the village head. There are many considerations that make palm oil can enter Sei Kembayau Village. Among them, palm oil agricultural products are quite expensive to sell in the market, and the need for palm oil is increasing so that it keeps demand always there.

At this time the price of palm oil reaches Rp 2200 per kg. Each palm plot contains 250 palm trees. Every one month palm oil can be harvested up to two times. In one kapling for one month can harvest as much as ± 3 tons. However, the 3 tons are for oil palm plantations that are well maintained and maintained. It is also influenced by weather factors. When the weather is hot, palm oil yields decrease, if in the rainy season palm oil increases. This summer the yield of palm oil ± 1.5-2 tons in one plot.

If it is calculated that each family has only one palm oil and the harvest is around 1.5 tons, then every one month they get Rp 6,600,000. This benefit feels great for the people of Sei Kembayau Village, so there is nothing wrong with moving to oil palm. This is still the amount of income from farmers with only 1 ha of land. For the upper middle class, it can have 2-3 palm plots. That way they can get a large income. With such palm oil prices, it seems natural for farmers to convert their rubber plantations to oil palm. For harvest age and production period, it is actually not much different from rubber plants. For palm plants can only be harvested after the tree is 4 years old, and for a production period of 10-20 years. So the main reason for the people of Sei

Kembayau Village to change and include oil palm in their fields is indeed because oil palm plants are more profitable.

Apart from the benefits, the effect felt from the entry of oil palm is better facilities and infrastructure in Sei Kembayau Village. When there is no oil palm, their land roads are damaged and difficult for vehicles to pass, even if possible, this takes a long time to get through. This road condition makes them inefficient travel time, when going to travel a lot of time wasted on the trip. Because if you have to choose another road such as water it is also erratic, while the water recedes they cannot pass through the river, only when the tide can only be used as a route to travel by canoe. After the entry of the palm oil their roads are repaired so that they are suitable for use and do not take up too much time on the road when going to travel. This happens because palm oil is shipped by road so that the parties concerned / companies must repair roads so that their palm oil business runs smoothly.

In Sei Kembayau Village, oil palm plantations are controlled by several companies. There are three companies that play a role in this palm oil economy, including: PT. BHD, PT. DSP, and PT. PN III. For PT. BHD and PT. DSP is private, while PT. PN III, a state-owned enterprise. Here there are criteria that must be considered by the Sei Kembayu community to sell to some of these PTs. For PT. PN III they require the community to authenticate good quality palm oil. Here PT. PN III asked for each palm bunch weighing ±40kg, and for rotten palm kernels from PT. PN III did not want to buy. But here PT. PN III consequently bought palm oil Rp2300 per kg from farmers. As for PT. BHD and PT. Their DSPs do not pay much attention to this criterion. They are willing to buy from farmers RP 1700 per kg without determining the weight of the bunch and can buy rotten palm kernels.

In this process, the government formed a Village Unit Cooperative (KUD, *Koperasi Unit Desa*) to accommodate oil palm from farmers. From KUD then sold to the factory. So for oil palm farmers, if they want to get money, not from selling directly and then getting money. At least they have to wait for one month to get money from the sale of palm oil. While the money was obtained from the KUD. This model is like payroll for employees. Much of the little money earned was influenced by the small number of farmers depositing oil palm into the KUD. Here all those who have palm oil will be treated equally from the KUD. Whether it's those who have *Tauke* or who have subordinates. Here enough of these oil palm farmers take care of and collect them to the KUD after one bulla will get a salary from the KUD.

With a glimpse of this picture, the role of *Tauke* and subordinates is not visible. But actually this role still exists and runs the same as the pattern that occurs in rubber. For the people of Sei Kembayau Village, they will always want to get fast money. With the excuse of the necessities of life that must be resolved immediately. Whether it's for daily meals or for school fees. This reason is what makes the role of *Tauke*-subordinates remain.

For this *Tauke*-subordinate pattern, *Tauke* still plays a role as well as rubber commodities and subordinates still play a role like subordinates in rubber commodities. Here the subordinates can sell their palm products to the *Tauke*, and vice versa the *Tauke* wants to receive palm products from the subordinates. But here there is a price difference when the subordinates sell their palm

products to *Tauke*. *Tauke* buys palm oil products to his subordinates for around Rp950 per kg. The men also received at this price. For them, even if it is bought at a low price, it does not matter because they quickly get money. So the subordinates can quickly earn money from selling to *Tauke*. And the *Tauke*s also benefit from this. This additional benefit is Rp450. So with this, *Tauke* and subordinates both benefit. So that cooperation between *Tauke*-subordinates is equally beneficial and not weakened. Karen palm and rubber are both roads, besides the people of Sei Kembayau Village noreh rubber they can also harvest their palms.

As for people who do not have palm oil kapling, they also get a role from changing the type of this plant. They can work for anyone or one of the *Tauke* because of debt attachment. Here everyone who helps harvest oil palm and take care of oil palm gets a reward from the owner of the plot. This wage is Rp250 per kg. This actually applies to anyone who wants to help or be invited by oil palm plantation owners. So in my opinion, the change of plants from rubber to palm oil does not change the existing patron-client pattern.

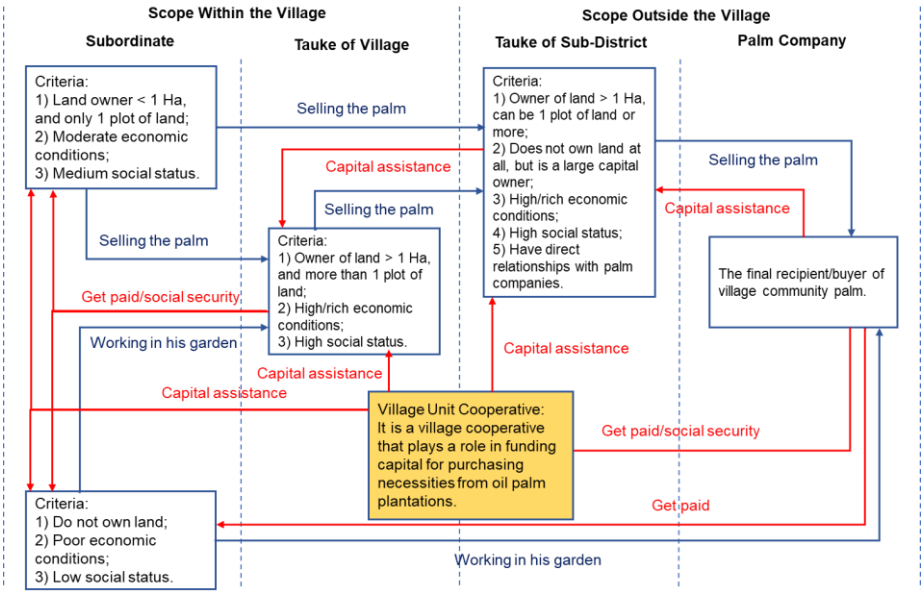

Figure 3. Palm Oil Supply Chain Patron-Client

CONCLUSION

As already explained in the article above. The status of differences in social status will still be present in the people of Sei Kembayau Village. Because its formation is historically based on the land clearing of previous ancestors. Who is diligent in clearing land will become a more established and economically strong family, compared to ancestors who are not diligent, so the current family is classified as less land and economically less established and weak. This condition confirms that the established will take the *Tauke* from the weak to the subordinates. This will happen in all forms of the economy of rural communities.

Tauke and his subordinates remain established as a patron-client pattern of the community in Sei Kembayau Village despite the increase in rubber and palm oil economic crops. The existence

of Village Unit Cooperatives from the palm oil economy is only a complement to the palm oil supply chain, not a new entity that disrupts the existence of *Tauke* in the community. Social security is still given to subordinates, even though commodities are exchanged from rubber to palm oil. *Tauke* in Sei Kembayau Village is currently adding and changing its plants into oil palm. The form of work in oil palm land is similar to oil palm. The men work on the *Tauke* land until the *bond* is paid off, or if they still survive, they will get *a song*.

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