

The Tappers' Tenacity: Labour Market Dynamics and Work Culture Among Siwalan Farmers in Rural Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the labour market dynamics and distinct work culture of siwalan tappers in Aeng Panas Village, Madura. Despite being a traditional, locally significant occupation, it often lacks scholarly attention. Using a qualitative rapid ethnography approach—relying on in-depth interviews. The findings reveal siwalan tapping operates in a segmented informal labour market, driven by community bonds and intergenerational knowledge, not formal qualifications. The farmers' culture is defined by resilience, communal cooperation, and adherence to customary practices, prioritizing social cohesion and livelihood security over pure profit. While monetary income is modest, tappers gain crucial non-pecuniary advantages, such as social support and traditional credit. Evidence of compensating wage differentials accounts for the job's dangers and specialized skills. This study offers empirical insights into how a unique occupational culture influences labour supply and demand. The findings have implications for regional development policies that must be sensitive to existing cultural values and informal economic structures.