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Integrating Organic Farming into the Indonesian Bioeconomy? Sustainable Agriculture between Productivism and Deep Ecology

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Summary

The production, utilisation and management of natural and biological resources, and the rapidly expanding web of relations accompanying them, are increasingly conceptualised as a ‘bioeconomy’, or as multiple bioeconomies. Various interpretations of the concept set different premises and priorities. In Indonesia, the bioeconomy as a national project aims to improve resource efficiency and to find new ways to convert biomass into a diverse and comprehensive range of products. As an object of government strategy and part of the bioeconomy, organic agriculture is directed at capital-intensive agribusiness, economic growth and (global) competitiveness. At the same time, organic farming is evolving as a social movement which aims at local food sovereignty, sustainable agriculture as well as at social and environmental justice. The values of civil society actors, and their objectives, encapsulated in the organic movement, partly overlap with and partly contradict government strategies, and present potential alternatives for the bioeconomy. Focusing on Indonesia, this study addresses the political-economic and socioecological challenges in integrating organic farming into the bioeconomy. Conceptualising organic farming and sustainable agriculture as situated between productivism and deep ecology, the paper contributes to the debates over food-policy discourses in general and organic farming in Indonesia in particular, and to theorising sustainable agriculture at the social–ecological nexus.

Keywords: Indonesia, bioeconomy, organic farming, sustainability, values, productivism, deep ecology

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