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Cocoa As a Cultural Resource and Local Economic Asset The Dayak Kenyah Community of Lung Anai Village in Supporting the Development of Indonesia's IKN

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Abstract: This study investigates the dual role of cocoa as both a cultural resource and an economic asset within the Dayak Kenyah community in Lung Anai, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Existing research on cocoa in Indigenous contexts in Kalimantan remains limited, with most studies focusing on broader agrarian issues, particularly



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oil palm and coal extraction.

Adopting an ethnographic approach based on field observations and in-depth interviews, this study demonstrates that cocoa extends beyond its function as a market commodity. It is embedded in cultural practices that shape collective identity, social relations, and local ecological knowledge. Cocoa cultivation and consumption are closely linked to ritual activities and community gatherings, reinforcing social cohesion and the community's relationship with nature.

The study further examines the socio-economic implications of Indonesia's new capital development, Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN), which introduces both opportunities and challenges for the Dayak Kenyah community. These include pressures on land rights, shifts in livelihood strategies, and processes of cultural and identity transformation.

The findings contribute to interdisciplinary discussions on Indigenous economies, cultural sustainability, and rural transformation, highlighting the importance of integrating local knowledge systems into national development agendas.

Keywords: Cocoa production; Dayak Kenyah community; indigenous livelihoods; cultural sustainability; rural transformation; Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN).

可作为文化资源与地方经济资产

龙安艾村达雅克肯雅社区在支持印度尼西亚新首都（IKN）建设中的作用

摘要：本研究探讨了可可在印度尼西亚东加里曼丹 Lung Anai 地区达雅克肯雅（Dayak Kenyah）社区中作为文化资源与经济资产的双重角色。当前关于加里曼丹地区原住民语境下可可研究仍较为有限，现有文献多集中于更广泛的农业问题，尤其是油棕种植和煤炭开采。

本研究采用民族志研究方法，通过实地观察与深度访谈发现，可可不仅是一种市场商品，更深度嵌入于当地文化实践之中，对集体认同、社会关系以及地方生态知识的形成具有重要作用。可可的种植与消费活动与仪式及社区聚会密切相关，从而强化了社会凝聚力以及社区与自然之间的联系。

此外，研究还分析了印度尼西亚新首都建设（Ibu Kota Nusantara, IKN）所带来的社会经济影响，该发展进程为达雅克肯雅社区带来了机遇与挑战，包括土地权利压力、生计方式转变以及文化与身份的重构。

研究结果为原住民经济、文化可持续性以及农村转型等跨学科研究提供了重要参考，并强调在国家发展进程中整合地方知识体系的重要性。

关键词：可可生产；达雅克肯雅社区；原住民生计；文化可持续性；农村转型；努山塔拉新首都（IKN）

1. Introduction

Ibu Kota Nusantara, abbreviated as IKN, is Indonesia's new capital city, inaugurated in August 2024. IKN is located partly in Kutai Kartanegara Regency (Kukar) and partly in North Penajam Paser Regency (PPU), East Kalimantan Province. The relocation of the national capital from Jakarta to IKN is motivated by several reasons, with the primary one being the aim to prevent Indonesia's economy from remaining concentrated on Java. The establishment of a

new capital is expected—by the “affected” communities—not to eliminate cultural systems that have long served as social institutions in their daily lives, while also improving their welfare.

The Dayak Kenyah are one subgroup of the Dayak peoples who are Indigenous to Kutai Kartanegara Regency, alongside the Kutai ethnic group. One of the areas inhabited by the Dayak Kenyah is Lung Anai Village, Loa Kulu District, Kutai Kartanegara Regency, which serves as a buffer area that directly “interfaces”

with the IKN development zone. The Dayak Kenyah community traditionally makes a living as swidden farmers. However, due to the “loss” of their farming land, they have adapted to changing conditions—one adaptation being the cultivation of cocoa. Approximately 95% of residents own cocoa gardens. On average, each household has 1–2 hectares of cocoa plantation, and one hectare contains around 600 cocoa trees. Initially, cocoa beans were sold to middlemen/collectors. Over time, with the recognition of cocoa’s local potential, various stakeholders introduced new knowledge in 2023 regarding the benefits of cocoa—one of which is its use as a raw material for chocolate production with the support of modern technology. Today, cocoa cultivation has become one of the main pillars of the Dayak Kenyah economy. Cocoa harvests are no longer sold to collectors, but are further processed into chocolate products.



Figure 1. Dayak Kenyah Cocoa Plantation in Lung Anai Village (RIIM Expedition, 2025)

Cocoa is one of Indonesia’s plantation commodities that plays a crucial role in the national economy. It is an important export commodity that generates foreign exchange for the country. Indonesia ranks as the world’s 7th largest cocoa producer. In addition to continuously growing export opportunities, the domestic market for cocoa beans remains substantial. Cocoa is economically important worldwide and is cultivated mainly in tropical and subtropical countries. Cocoa (*Theobroma cacao* L.) is a strategic plantation commodity with high economic value at both global and national levels. Indonesia is recognized as one of the world’s largest cocoa producers, contributing significantly to exports and providing employment through smallholder plantations. At the local level—particularly in rural areas and Indigenous communities—cocoa often becomes a foundation of household economies and part of broader socio-economic transformation. The domestic market for cocoa beans remains very large. Potential markets include cocoa processing industries on the island of Java (Wandi Abbas & Zainuddin Losi, 2025: 1). At present, West Africa produces the majority of the world’s cocoa. This crop provides economic support for cocoa-producing countries, smallholder farmers, and the chocolate confectionery industry (John Edem Kongor et al., 2024: 1).

Cocoa is an important perennial Neotropical crop that grows within approximately 20° north and 20° south of the equator (World Cocoa Foundation Report, 2014).

Cocoa is cultivated at elevations below 450 meters above sea level, with an optimal temperature range of 18°C to 32°C, and a minimum rainfall of 100 cm but not more than 100 cm per year. Cocoa is processed into chocolate beverages, cocoa powder, and cocoa butter, which are the main ingredients in chocolate and various other products such as cocoa drinks, ice cream, and baked goods, providing a distinctive and unique flavor to derived products (Mohd Shavez Beg et al., 2017).

Cocoa cultivation has become an option following the “loss” of the Dayak Kenyah community’s farming land in Lung Anai Village, Loa Kulu District, Kutai Kartanegara Regency. Nearly 95% of residents have cocoa plantations, and each family owns on average one to two hectares. Initially, wet cocoa beans were sold to collectors. Over time, with support and assistance from various parties, cocoa downstreaming (value-added processing) began. Cocoa is no longer sold only as wet beans; through processing supported by modern technology, cocoa beans are transformed into chocolate. Although chocolate processing only began in 2023, cocoa has clearly become a local cultural and economic resource for the Dayak Kenyah community in Lung Anai Village. Traditional culture has been able to proceed alongside modernization. “Small but with great impact”: through cocoa beans, Lung Anai can contribute to IKN and become known in several countries. For the Dayak Kenyah community in Lung Anai, Mahakam Ulu Regency, East Kalimantan, cocoa occupies a unique position. Cocoa is not merely a plantation crop that generates financial profit, but also carries symbolic and cultural meanings. Its presence in customary rituals, the distribution of harvests regulated by social norms, and its use as a medium to strengthen collective identity all demonstrate that cocoa is a multidimensional resource. This study is conducted due to the limited research on cocoa in the context of Indigenous communities in Kalimantan, since most agrarian studies focus on oil palm and mining. There is also a lack of interdisciplinary studies linking cocoa as an economic commodity and as a cultural resource, as well as limited analysis of the impacts of development on the economic and cultural sustainability of Indigenous communities.

The development of Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN) in East Kalimantan has significant impacts on the lives of Indigenous communities, including the Dayak Kenyah in Lung Anai. On one hand, this development opens new opportunities in terms of infrastructure, markets, and accessibility. On the other hand, threats to land sustainability, customary land rights, and changes in socio-economic structures are crucial issues that require attention. Therefore, the research problem addressed in this study is: How is cocoa understood as a cultural resource and as a marker of collective identity, and how does the development of IKN influence socio-economic dynamics among cocoa-farming communities in Lung Anai? This study aims to analyze cocoa’s dual role as an economic and cultural resource, to understand the

process through which a global commodity is indigenized in a local context, and to highlight the challenges and opportunities faced by the Dayak Kenyah community as a result of IKN development.

2. Literature Review

Cocoa has long been a global commodity that plays an important role in international trade. Historical accounts show that cocoa is not only an economic crop, but also carries political, social, and cultural implications (Coe, 2013). The International Cocoa Organization (ICCO, 2020) notes that global demand continues to rise alongside the growth of the chocolate industry. In this context, cocoa forms part of the world economy, illustrating the interconnectedness between producers in rural areas and consumers in industrialized countries. Indonesia is among the major cocoa producers after Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. However, unlike those two countries, most cocoa in Indonesia is produced by small-scale smallholder plantations (Hill & Vigneri, 2014). This creates distinct dynamics, as farmers must contend with global price fluctuations, limited market access, and pressure from large-scale agribusiness models. Livelihood studies emphasize the importance of understanding how rural communities access and combine different forms of capital, such as natural, social, financial, physical, and human capital (Bebbington, 1999). In rural Southeast Asia, smallholder household economies are often multi-strategic, combining farming, small enterprises, and labor migration (Bryceson, 2002). Studies on cocoa in rural settings show that this crop can provide a relatively stable source of economic diversification. However, the success of cocoa cultivation is also strongly shaped by infrastructure support, access to technology, and social networks that connect farmers to markets (White & Dasgupta, 2010).

2.1. Indigenous Communities and Local Wisdom

Local wisdom provides an important framework for understanding how Indigenous communities manage natural resources. Berkes (2012) emphasizes that Indigenous traditional ecological systems do not only focus on environmental conservation, but are also closely intertwined with belief systems, rituals, and cultural identity. Dayak Indigenous communities in Kalimantan are known to possess rich local knowledge systems for managing forests, land, and agricultural resources (Dove, 2011). Cramb's research (2007) also shows that agrarian transformation in the interior of Kalimantan cannot be separated from the role of Indigenous communities in maintaining a balance between economic needs and ecological sustainability. The concept of the cultural economy highlights that commodities should not be understood merely as economic goods, but also as cultural representations that carry symbolic meanings (Escobar, 2018). In Indigenous societies, commodities such as coffee, rice, or cocoa are

often integrated into rituals, celebrations, and social relations (Tsing, 2005). Bourdieu (1986) further argues that economic practices are always linked to cultural and social capital. In the case of the Dayak Kenyah, cocoa functions not only as a source of income, but also as part of social structure, gender-based divisions of labor, and a symbol of community solidarity.

2.2. Agrarian Politics and Transformation in Kalimantan

Studies on agrarian transformation in Kalimantan have largely highlighted shifts from subsistence patterns toward agribusiness, especially through the expansion of oil palm plantations and mining (Li, 2014; Peluso & Lund, 2011). There are relatively few studies that specifically discuss the role of cocoa in this process. Scott (2009), through the concept of the art of not being governed, explains that upland societies in Southeast Asia—including the Dayak—have developed adaptive strategies to respond to state intervention. In this context, cocoa cultivation among the Dayak Kenyah can be seen as an economic strategy as well as a form of cultural resistance in the face of capitalism and development pressures.

2.3. The Impacts of IKN Development on Local Communities

The development of Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN) in East Kalimantan is a national strategic project with major implications for local communities. Van Dam (2017) stresses that Indigenous peoples face power asymmetries when dealing with the state and investors. Li (2020) shows that the expansion of capitalism through plantations and development projects often produces agrarian injustice, including the dispossession of customary land. For the Dayak Kenyah in Lung Anai, the presence of IKN creates opportunities, such as improved infrastructure access and wider markets. However, the risks of losing customary land and erosion of cultural values are also very real. Therefore, research on cocoa as both an economic and cultural resource is important to understand how local communities adapt while maintaining their identity.

2.4. The Role of Local Communities in IKN Development

In addition to the concepts of cultural resources and local economic assets, to explain the role of the Dayak Kenyah in Lung Anai Village—cocoa cultivation—and its relationship to IKN development, this study uses Talcott Parsons' theory of normative function. Talcott Parsons (2023) argues that roles are fundamental components of the social system. Roles do not stand alone; they are always linked to values and norms that operate within society. A social system functions because there is alignment of roles among individuals. Parsons emphasizes that each role contributes to fulfilling the AGIL functions: Adaptation (adjusting to

the environment), Goal attainment (achieving collective goals), Integration (maintaining orderly social relationships), and Latency (maintaining cultural values). Applied to this context, the theory helps explain that, in pursuing the collective goal of improving welfare, the Dayak Kenyah have adapted to environmental conditions (land potential) by cultivating cocoa and processing it into chocolate, while continuing to maintain core values. With the downstream development of cocoa into chocolate products, the community hopes to contribute to IKN.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using a limited ethnographic method. An ethnographic approach was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of cultural practices, economic systems, and the symbolic meanings that the Dayak Kenyah community attaches to cocoa. This method allows researchers to understand social realities from the local community's perspective (the emic perspective), while also linking these realities to broader theoretical frameworks. The research was conducted in Lung Anai Village, Long/Loa Kulu Subdistrict, Kutai Kartanegara Regency. This site was chosen because (1) the majority of residents are Dayak Kenyah who continue to maintain their cultural identity, and (2) its location lies within an area indirectly affected by IKN development, making it relevant for examining current socio-economic dynamics. Data were collected using a combination of techniques as follows. Interviews were conducted with various informants, including the village head, cocoa farmers, women community figures, and village officials. The interviews were semi-structured, focusing on the role of cocoa in the economy, culture, and social dynamics.

Data were collected through a combination of interviews and observations. Informants for the interviews were selected using purposive sampling, meaning we deliberately chose individuals considered to have strong knowledge and direct involvement in matters related to cocoa. The informants included: the customary leader (who has authority over customary matters, including customary land that was initially intended for agriculture and later became cocoa land); the Village Head; the Village Head's wife (who coordinates production activities at the Chocolate House, from cocoa procurement to the production of chocolate bars and cocoa powder); village staff responsible for overseeing the Chocolate House; and Chocolate House employees.

The interviews were semi-structured, guided by an interview protocol focusing on the role of cocoa in the economy, culture, and social dynamics. We also conducted observations to complement data that could not be obtained through interviews. Field interviews and observations were carried out for twelve (12) days. This duration was expected to help build informants' trust in the researchers and, conversely, strengthen the

researchers' confidence by providing sufficient time for in-depth data collection and observation.

Alongside data collection, we conducted data reduction by selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting field information relevant to the research focus. The next stage involved data display in the form of descriptive narratives and tables. Finally, we drew conclusions by interpreting the data that had been collected.

Data were analyzed through open coding to identify key themes from the field data, and then these themes were linked into broader categories (economy, culture, identity, and development). The study then developed a theoretical narrative regarding the role of cocoa in Dayak Kenyah life. The analysis also refers to the livelihood framework (Bebbington, 1999) and cultural economy (Escobar, 2018) to strengthen interpretation. This research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles, including: maintaining informant confidentiality; respecting Dayak Kenyah customary rules in data collection; and providing feedback on the research findings to the community as a form of social responsibility.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. A Brief Overview of Lung Anai Village

Lung Anai Village, Loa Kulu Subdistrict, Kutai Kartanegara Regency, was established in 2004–2006, with its legal basis in Kutai Kartanegara Regent Regulation No. 180.188/HK-151/2005. Lung Anai covers an area of 185 hectares and is bounded by Rempanga Hamlet (Sungai Payang) to the north, Kuntab Hamlet (Sungai Payang) to the south, Sentuk Hamlet (Sungai Payang) to the west, and the Jembayan River to the east. In terms of distance, the village administrative center is approximately 28 km from the subdistrict government center, around 40 km from the regency capital, about 60 km from the provincial capital, and roughly 50–80 km from IKN depending on the route taken. The relatively short distance from the village to IKN creates significant opportunities for villagers to develop local potential that can improve welfare. In this case, it involves strengthening cocoa production and its downstream processing into chocolate products (Lung Anai Chocolate), which is expected to enhance community prosperity.

The population of Lung Anai Village is 500 people across 157 households, consisting of 270 men and 230 women. By age group, there are 109 people aged 0–15, 350 people aged 15–65, and 41 people aged 65 and above. Most residents traditionally worked as rice farmers. However, as agricultural land has diminished or been lost, rice farmers have shifted toward cocoa farming. The majority of Kenyah households in Lung Anai own approximately 1–2 hectares of cocoa gardens. This cocoa land ownership involves “almost all” family members in its management—women, men, youth, and older people—each contributing according to their

capacity and the level of physical demand required. In terms of education, the community includes residents with qualifications ranging from basic education to postgraduate degrees. Those with higher education contribute to village development, including improving community welfare through cocoa cultivation.

Village facilities include the Lung Anai Village Hall, which serves as the center of village government activities, and the Amin Adat (customary hall), which is used for community gatherings and activities such as residents' meetings, village deliberations, thanksgiving ceremonies, welcoming guests, and mourning events. Traditions that continue to be practiced include the traditional sport/game of sumpit (blowpipe), the Ajai dance, the Enggang dance, Nugan activities, Mecaq Ubeq, and customary wedding ceremonies (Profile of Lung Anai Cultural Village, Loa Kulu Subdistrict, 2015).



Figure 2. Village Government Office (RIIM Expedition, 2025.)



Figure 3. Amin Adat, a Venue for Community Activities (RIIM Expedition, 2025.)

4.2. History of Lung Anai Village

The origins of Lung Anai's residents trace back to Long Ampung Village, South Kayan Subdistrict, Bulungan Regency. Administratively, that area is now part of Malinau Regency. While living there, the community faced difficulties in obtaining adequate basic needs such as food, clothing, and education. Therefore, in 1957, several elders sought to migrate while simultaneously conducting a survey to find a new settlement area that could improve community welfare. The target areas explored included Kutai Regency, Bulungan Regency, and Berau Regency.

In 1970–1971, a community leader named Mr. Pelibut from Apau Kayan led an expedition to Kutai Timur Regency. The first target area was Long Segar. In 1984, Mr. Pajan Usat led a group of 30 households to Jembayan to conduct an expedition and open farming land. According to local history, these 30 households settled near a tributary commonly called Lung Anai, meaning a tributary rich in fish.

In 1985, 35 households from Long Segar followed and moved to Lung Anai. Later, 6 households from Gemar Baru Village also joined. At that time, Lung Anai became a hamlet—Tanah Merah Hamlet—within Sungai Payang Village. Following the reform era as referenced in Law No. 22 of 1999 on Regional Government, in 2005 Tanah Merah Hamlet was designated as a Preparatory Village under the name Lung Anai Preparatory Cultural Village, led by Mr. Uluk Alung as the preparatory village head.

After the Village Consultative Body was established, in 2007 a definitive village head election was held. Mr. Tingai Lawing was elected and served for the next six years. In 2013, the second village head election was held, and Mr. Uluk Alung was elected. In 2019, during the third election, Mr. Lukas Nay was elected and continues to serve to the present (Profile of Lung Anai Cultural Village, Loa Kulu Subdistrict, 2015).

4.3. Dayak Kenyah Cultural Values in Cocoa Cultivation and Use

Cocoa gardening is carried out in groups. In 1987, the first group cultivated cocoa on the border area with IKN, covering 300 hectares. In 2004, the second group cultivated cocoa in the Benteng Naga Mas area, covering 100 hectares. In 2010, the third group cultivated cocoa in the rubber company area, covering 200 hectares. One group consists of 50 households, and each household comprises an average of three people.

Cocoa plantations in Lung Anai Village are individually owned (at the household level). Approximately 95% of residents own cocoa gardens. On average, each family has 1–2 hectares, and one hectare contains around 600 cocoa trees. Dayak Kenyah farmers integrate local wisdom into farming practices—including cocoa cultivation—such as in land selection, intercropping systems, and sustainable harvest patterns, which are further enriched with modern technology.

Cocoa is planted using an intercropping system, meaning it is planted alongside companion crops, one of which is rubber trees. Intercropping is primarily intended to make use of otherwise empty land. Cocoa seedlings come from local stock, i.e., seeds taken from their own gardens (self-propagated), although some seedlings are brought in from outside, such as MCC 01, MCC 02, and others.

Cocoa cultivation involves not only men but also women and even children. Broadly, the stages of work in cocoa cultivation include transporting seedlings, planting, tree maintenance, harvesting cocoa pods, and

post-harvest activities. Cocoa tree maintenance includes pruning, manual weed control, and pest monitoring. Cocoa cultivation does not use fertilizer.

Men typically work in planting activities, beginning with transporting seedlings, clearing land, preparing planting holes, and planting. Children usually assist by carrying seedlings. Crop maintenance—starting from weeding to light pruning—is sometimes carried out by men alone and sometimes jointly by men and women. Cocoa pod harvesting is carried out collaboratively by men and women. Men pick pods from trunks or branches using cutting tools, while women help collect the pods, split the shells, and remove the beans. Post-harvest work is largely carried out by women because it requires meticulousness and patience and is usually done near the home. Post-harvest tasks include fermentation, drying, and sorting cocoa beans.



Figure 4. Cocoa Pods (RIIM Expedition, 2025)

The processing of cocoa into chocolate by the Dayak Kenyah community in Lung Anai Village is remarkable, as it shows that tradition can coexist with modernization. Indigenous community members, who own their own cocoa gardens and manage the process independently up to the production of chocolate, experience a strong sense of pride. The chocolate derivative products produced include chocolate bars and cocoa powder.



Figure 5. Lung Anai Chocolate (RIIM Expedition, 2025)



Figure 6. Lung Anai Chocolate (RIIM Expedition, 2025)

4.4. The Role of Cocoa as a Local Economic Resource for the Dayak Kenyah Community

Initially, during cocoa harvest seasons, many farmers sold wet cocoa beans to collectors/middlemen. After the establishment of the Chocolate House (Rumah Cokelat), improved processing activities (fermentation and drying) were introduced to increase product value added (dried beans and processed chocolate products), thereby increasing farmers' income. Coordinated by the village—through the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes)—cocoa farmers partnered with private institutions and the local government to build facilities such as a drying house, processing machines, and an educational space known as the Lung Anai Chocolate House (Rumah Cokelat Lung Anai). This initiative targets improvements in post-harvest quality, certification (BPOM/halal), and packaging of finished products so that they can be marketed more widely. Its impact has been an increase in selling price and growing demand for processed chocolate products from Lung Anai.



Figure 7. Chocolate Processing Facility (RIIM Expedition, 2025)



Figure 8. Production Rooms Inside the Chocolate House (RIIM Expedition, 2025)

Chocolate is made from ripe cocoa pods and several other ingredients. The production technique includes the following stages: sorting; splitting the pod and removing the beans; fermentation; drying; cleaning and sorting beans from impurities and grading by size; roasting; separating the beans from the husk; and placing the beans into a machine for coarse cocoa paste processing (Source: Lung Anai Chocolate House).



Figure 9. Cocoa Beans (RIIM Expedition, 2025)

Stages of producing chocolate candy:

- The coarse paste is refined and mixed with other ingredients according to the formula using a machine (refiner and conching).
- The mixture is molded and placed in a cooling cabinet.
- The mixture is heated, then poured into molds and left for some time in the cooling cabinet.
- Once the chocolate candy hardens, it is packaged.
- The packaged chocolate is stored in a cool room.

Stages of producing cocoa powder:

- The coarse paste is pressed to extract cocoa oil/vegetable fat.
- It is put into a cocoa powder machine.
- It is enriched/processed using a mechanical sieving machine.
- The cocoa powder is packaged.
- The packaged powder is stored in a cool room.

Chocolate production is carried out once a week, or even more frequently, depending on the condition of the equipment, available human resources, and the supply of raw materials. Beyond limitations in raw material availability, machine capacity is also a constraint. The machines currently in use are still small in scale. In a single processing cycle, the production capacity is only around 5 kilograms of cocoa beans. Another factor is the community's daily routine as swidden farmers. They farm from Monday to Friday, while Saturday is used for rest and Sunday for worship.

Parketing initially took place only at the Chocolate House (Rumah Cokelat) in Lung Anai Village, with buyers mainly consisting of visitors who came to the village for various purposes. In addition, a mining company located not far from the village—which also contributed to the establishment of the Chocolate House—became an important buyer. The company regularly purchases the chocolate for refreshments and as souvenirs for guests visiting the company. There are also Korean and American buyers who routinely purchase 200 bars each month. Some people have even brought Lung Anai chocolate to the Netherlands. Beyond the Chocolate House in Lung Anai Village as the production and marketing site, a Lung Anai Chocolate outlet was later opened on Jalan Tambak Rel, GG Syarifuddin 3, Baru Tenggara Subdistrict, Kutai

Kartanegara Regency.

Lung Anai chocolate candy is sold in box packaging containing eight pieces at a price of IDR 40,000, with flavor variants including milk chocolate, cashew, and cheese. This product is categorized as premium chocolate candy because it is made using cocoa butter. At present, the community also produces chocolate candy made with vegetable fat, sold at IDR 20,000, as well as chocolate candy made using a combination of cocoa butter and vegetable fat, sold at IDR 25,000.

4.5. The Role of the Dayak Kenyah Community in Relation to IKN Development

IKN, which was inaugurated in August 2024, has not yet fully functioned to this day, given that Jakarta still operates as the national capital. Nevertheless, “affected” communities hope that—later on, and even starting now—they can take an active role with the presence of the new capital. Such roles may be carried out individually or collectively.

While IKN has not yet functioned as a capital city in practice, the IKN area currently serves more as a tourist destination. It is possible that this function will remain in the future, as people want to see what the new capital looks like. In line with the Government's “promise” not to disregard “affected” communities, the Government has also begun to recognize the potential held by communities around IKN. One such community is the Dayak Kenyah who live in Lung Anai Village, Loa Kulu Subdistrict.

It is the Dayak Kenyah community in Lung Anai Village, Loa Kulu Subdistrict, who not only have strong potential in handicrafts due to their uniqueness and aesthetic value, but—more “fantastically”—are now also able to produce chocolate under the label Lung Anai Chocolate. This is remarkable because Lung Anai Chocolate is produced by an Indigenous community that remains deeply rooted in tradition yet is able to coexist with modernization: the raw materials come from the community's own gardens, and production is managed independently. Moreover, Lung Anai Chocolate's quality is well established, having won First Prize for Regional Specialty Processing at the provincial level in East Kalimantan, and being recognized as a 2025 Featured Village Product. For these reasons, Lung Anai Chocolate is able and worthy to contribute to IKN, and has even been given “space” at IKN as a venue to market its chocolate products.



Figure 10. Awards for Lung Anai Chocolate and Halal Certificate (Source: RIIM Expedition, 2025)

4.6. Cocoa as an Economic Resource

For the Dayak Kenyah community in Lung Anai, cocoa has become one of the main commodities since it was introduced in the 1980s through a regional government program. Most households own cocoa gardens of varying sizes, ranging from 0.5 to 1 hectare. Cocoa harvests are used to meet basic needs such as children's education, health expenses, and household necessities. Income from cocoa is considered relatively stable compared to other commodities such as upland rice or rattan. Although global cocoa prices fluctuate, the community views cocoa as more promising because it has a continuous harvest cycle throughout the year. Cocoa production is carried out collectively within the family. Men are usually responsible for planting and pruning, while women are more dominant in fermentation and drying of cocoa beans and in processing chocolate-based foods. This division of labor demonstrates a gender dimension in the cocoa economy. Women play an important role in maintaining post-harvest quality and managing post-harvest cocoa processes. This highlights the gendered structure of the cocoa economy, positioning women as strategic actors.



Photo 11. Lung Anai Chocolate-Making by Women (RIIM Expedition, 2025)

On the other hand, IKN development raises the potential for friction between state agendas and local interests, particularly regarding the sustainability of cocoa land as an economic base and as a cultural symbol for the community. Cocoa is not merely a commercial crop, but also an important instrument for family social mobility. This analysis can be understood through Bebbington's (1999) framework of livelihood assets, which emphasizes that livelihood assets consist of multiple forms of capital, such as financial, social, and human capital. In this context, cocoa functions as financial capital, strengthening household resilience against economic vulnerability and opening space for improved welfare.

Harvests are sold to collectors at the subdistrict level and then marketed to major cities in East Kalimantan. However, limited road infrastructure and transportation access often reduce farm-gate prices. This illustrates that the Dayak Kenyah occupy a subordinate position within the cocoa supply chain. Therefore, the hamlet head (Kadus) in Lung Anai has promoted the processing of cocoa beans into chocolate-based foods. However, several constraints remain: limited raw material supply, cocoa bean quality that is sometimes inconsistent, and

limited marketing capacity. When raw materials are scarce and bean quality is low, processed output is also limited and selling prices become unstable. This situation shows that raw material constraints limit production capacity and household income, and also affect the economic position of women as the primary actors in cocoa processing. Li's (2007) perspective in gender and development emphasizes that although women remain key actors in local economies, their productivity and economic influence depend heavily on the availability of resources. Key challenges faced by the community include global price fluctuations that create income uncertainty, limited post-harvest technology, cocoa bean quality that often does not meet export standards, and restricted market access because farmers depend on middlemen who offer low prices. Even so, cocoa remains the main economic foundation because the community considers it more adaptive to local conditions than oil palm or other commodities.

4.7. Cocoa as a Cultural Resource

Cocoa has become a cultural resource for the Dayak Kenyah community in Lung Anai Village. The term cultural resources began to gain popularity in Indonesia in the 1990s. Cultural resources are defined as:

“Symbolic instruments within a culture that can potentially be utilized by members of that culture to solve certain problems or to achieve certain goals.”

(Final Report Writing Team, Study on Cultural Resources in the National Capital Area of North Penajam Paser Regency and Kutai Kartanegara Regency, East Kalimantan Province, 2022: 7)

This definition is based on the view that culture is essentially a collection of cultural elements, and that these elements constitute resources that can provide benefits for humans. Thus, culture becomes a form of resource; and to distinguish it from natural resources and human resources, it is referred to as a cultural resource. Meanwhile, local economy refers to an economy that uses local potential to improve people's prosperity and welfare.

Cultural resources are important to protect for several reasons:

(1) Use value in the present—meaning they can be immediately utilized for various purposes such as research, group identity, history, tourism, and economic activities.

(2) Value that is important not only for the present but also for the future—namely option value, as a reserve for future generations by leaving cultural heritage for the future even though current needs may not yet be known, while maintaining its stability so that it does not change.

(3) Existence value, namely a sense of satisfaction that comes from having certainty that the resource will endure or continue to exist, even if one does not directly use it. Cocoa not only has economic value, but also a symbolic dimension. In certain Dayak Kenyah customary rituals, cocoa harvests are used as part of

offerings to ancestors. For example, in the harvest festival (*mecaq undaq*), part of the cocoa harvest is placed together with newly harvested rice as a symbol of gratitude for abundance. Cocoa is also present in harvest celebrations that involve music, dance, and communal feasts. The presence of cocoa in collective celebrations shows that this crop has been indigenized into the Dayak Kenyah cultural cosmos. Cocoa has become part of the collective identity of the Lung Anai community. For many residents, owning a cocoa garden is seen as a marker of household independence. Cocoa also symbolizes the community's integration into the market economy without abandoning their cultural roots. In this sense, cocoa is not merely a "commodity," but also a cultural marker that strengthens Dayak Kenyah identity.

4.8. Social Dynamics Resulting from IKN Development

The development of IKN has brought flows of migrant workers and investors into East Kalimantan. This has led to rising land values and new market access. Some Dayak Kenyah community members see opportunities to increase cocoa production, as access to potential consumers becomes closer. However, there are concerns that customary land may be converted for infrastructure or investment purposes. This could weaken the local cocoa-based economic foundation. The Lung Anai community faces serious challenges related to land rights. Development projects often do not fully take into account the presence of customary territories. Some families worry about losing access to forests and their cocoa gardens. This phenomenon indicates the potential for agrarian conflict that could weaken the community's economic and cultural foundations. Despite these pressures, the Dayak Kenyah community is not passive. They have formed cocoa farmer groups to strengthen their bargaining position, sought recognition of customary territories, and begun building cooperation with local NGOs. This strategy represents community agency in responding to major transformations arising from IKN development. They have even obtained a Business Identification Number (NIB) and the necessary business permits to support home-industry processed food production, complete with certification.



Figure 12. NIB (Business Identification Number) for Lung Anai Chocolate (Source: RIIM Expedition, 2025)

4.9. Discussion

This definition is based on the view that culture is essentially a collection of cultural elements, and that these elements constitute resources that can provide benefits for humans. Thus, culture becomes a form of resource; and to distinguish it from natural resources and human resources, it is referred to as a cultural resource. Meanwhile, local economy refers to an economy that uses local potential to improve people's prosperity and welfare. In line with Escobar (2018), cocoa in Lung Anai functions not only as an economic commodity, but also as a cultural artifact carrying meanings of identity, solidarity, and spirituality. Referring to Bebbington's (1999) framework, cocoa becomes part of a livelihood strategy that involves a combination of natural, social, and cultural capital. Cocoa is not merely an economic asset; it is also a form of cultural capital that sustains Dayak Kenyah identity. From a political ecology perspective (Peluso & Lund, 2011; Li, 2014), cocoa dynamics in Lung Anai illustrate how an Indigenous community faces external pressures from state capitalism through the development of IKN. The community uses cocoa as a basis for resistance as well as adaptation to change. The presence of cocoa in Lung Anai reflects a process of indigenizing a global commodity. Cocoa, originally an introduced crop, has been internalized into Dayak Kenyah cosmology and has become an integral part of their cultural economy. Below is an analysis of Dayak Kenyah cocoa in Lung Anai based on ethnographic field data.

Field findings in Lung Anai show that cocoa is not positioned solely as an economic commodity, but is embedded within social relations, cultural practices, and the Dayak Kenyah local knowledge system. This condition affirms Arturo Escobar's (2018) view that material objects in local societies are never neutral; rather, they are meaning-laden and intertwined within networks of cultural relations. Empirically, cocoa in Lung Anai is found to be involved in: mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) in land clearing, garden maintenance, sharing of harvests within kinship networks, and as a symbol of life continuity passed down across generations. This indicates that cocoa functions as a cultural artifact—as emphasized by Escobar—because it becomes a medium linking humans, nature, and collective values. In this sense, cocoa is not only "cultivated," but also "interpreted" and "made meaningful."

Further, within Anthony Bebbington's (1999) framework, cocoa can be understood as part of an asset-based livelihood strategy. Field data show that natural capital—namely customary forest land and soil fertility—supports cocoa production, while social capital—kinship networks and community solidarity—strengthens the distribution of labor and harvest outcomes. Meanwhile, cultural capital—local knowledge about land management and planting cycles—is transmitted across generations. The

combination of these three forms of capital demonstrates that cocoa is not merely a source of income; it is a node that ties together the community’s livelihood system in a holistic way.

From a political ecology perspective, as discussed by Nancy Lee Peluso and Christian Lund (2011) and Tania Murray Li (2014), cocoa dynamics in Lung Anai reveal power relations between Indigenous communities and state intervention, particularly in the context of IKN development. Field data indicate that:

- development expansion and spatial planning policies have the potential to shift community access to land;
- tensions emerge between land capitalization logics and community-based subsistence practices;
- yet the Dayak Kenyah are not entirely passive—they adapt cocoa as a flexible commodity to sustain their livelihoods.

In this context, cocoa functions as: (1) a tool of resistance, by maintaining claims over living space through ongoing cultivation practices; and (2) a tool of adaptation, enabling participation in the market economy without entirely losing cultural identity.

Moreover, the field findings also strengthen the argument about the indigenization of a global commodity. Cocoa, historically an introduced crop, has undergone a localization of meaning. The Dayak Kenyah have not only adopted cocoa as an economic crop, but have also integrated it into their cosmology and social practices. This is evident in how the community links cocoa to intergenerational sustainability, in local narratives that frame gardens as “living spaces” rather than mere sites of production, and in management practices that continue to prioritize ecological balance. Thus, cocoa in Lung Anai can be understood as the outcome of a dialectic between commodity globalization and cultural localization. It is no longer a foreign entity, but has become an integral part of Dayak Kenyah identity. By linking field findings with these theoretical frameworks, it can be concluded that cocoa in Lung Anai functions as a ****multidimensional entity—economic, social, cultural, and political—****reflecting the Dayak Kenyah community’s capacity to cultivate, interpret, and respond to structural change in creative and adaptive ways.

Field Data	Ethnographic Quote	Relevant Theory	Academic Interpretation
Cocoa supports household economies	“If there were no cocoa, maybe I wouldn’t have extra income for my family...”	Bebbington (1999) – <i>Livelihood Assets</i>	Cocoa functions as financial capital, demonstrating the strategic role of the commodity within household-based development.
Cocoa is integrated into customary rituals	“Since our farming land is gone, now we plant cocoa, and we also plant rice. Cocoa is just as important as rice.”	Escobar (1995) – <i>Encountering Development</i> (Hamlet Head / <i>Kadus</i>)	Cocoa undergoes indigenization, becoming part of local cultural identity—an example of global-local hybridization in an Indigenous community.

Field Data	Ethnographic Quote	Relevant Theory	Academic Interpretation
Women’s role in post-harvest processing	“Men do the planting, but once it’s harvest time, we are the ones who manage it for the business.”	Li (2007) – <i>The Will to Improve</i> (Hamlet Head’s wife / <i>Ibu Kadus</i>)	Women are not only technical laborers, but also key economic actors who transform cocoa beans into processed chocolate foods—an everyday, practice-based form of economic empowerment.
Concern over land loss due to IKN	“With IKN and coal mining, agricultural land is gone. We are afraid that later our cocoa gardens will also be gone—replaced by buildings or roads. If that happens, how will we live?”	Scott (1998) – <i>Seeing Like a State</i>	Shows friction between state logics (IKN development) and local logics (cocoa-based livelihoods); cocoa becomes a symbol of cultural resistance to development-driven homogenization.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that cocoa plays a dual strategic role for the Dayak Kenyah community in Lung Anai, East Kalimantan. Economically, cocoa functions as financial capital: it is a primary source of household income, supports basic needs, and strengthens family self-reliance. Culturally, cocoa has been indigenized into the community’s value system through rituals, celebrations, and symbols of collective identity. In cultural terms, cocoa has undergone a process of indigenization such that it is integrated into customary rituals and has become part of the community’s collective identity. However, the sustainability of the cocoa economy faces challenges, including global price fluctuations, limited post-harvest technology, and restricted market access. At the same time, IKN development creates new opportunities while also posing threats to the sustainability of customary land and the local economic base. Therefore, cocoa in Lung Anai is not merely an economic commodity, but also a cultural resource that becomes a medium for resistance, adaptation, and negotiation by the Dayak Kenyah community as they confront structural transformations arising from the development of Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN).

This study offers novelty in two aspects. First, it emphasizes both the economic and cultural dimensions by showing how cocoa has become a symbol of identity, a component of ritual practice, a form of financial capital, and a force that strengthens social solidarity among the Dayak Kenyah. Through the indigenization of a global commodity—cocoa—an introduced crop from outside Kalimantan has been internalized into the local cultural cosmos. This indigenization process shows how Indigenous communities can transform an introduced plant into an integral part of social and spiritual life. Second, this study contributes new insights by linking cocoa dynamics in Lung Anai with socio-economic transformation driven by IKN development. This opens a new discussion on how local commodities can function as a medium of resistance and adaptation to state capitalism. Through these two contributions, this research advances scholarly discourse in cultural economy, political ecology, and Indigenous studies in an era shaped by development and globalization.

Thus, this study recommends that development policies in the IKN region adopt a culture-based development approach and principles of ecological justice, through the following strategic steps: (1) legal recognition of customary territories and cocoa management practices; (2) strengthening community-based local economies; (3) integrating local knowledge into resource management; and (4) protecting the socio-cultural systems that support community sustainability. In closing, cocoa in Lung Anai demonstrates that the Dayak Kenyah are not merely objects of development, but active subjects with the capacity to respond to and shape the direction of change. Therefore, inclusive policies grounded in recognition of local values are key to realizing development that is equitable and sustainable.

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