

<https://doi.org/>

Village-Mediated Corporate Territorialization: Acquisition of Customary Land, Agrarian Fragmentation, and Resistance of the Dayak Indigenous Community to Oil Palm Plantation Expansion

Ahmad Wildan Habibi*

Departement of Sociology, Faculty of Social & Political Sciences, Banjarmasin, Indonesia
wildanhabibi@ulm.ac.id

Sri Hidayah

Departement of Sociology, Faculty of Social & Political Sciences, Banjarmasin, Indonesia
sri.hidayah@ulm.ac.id

Verdi Wahyu Cahyadi

Departement of Antropology, Faculty of Social & Political Sciences, Banjarmasin, Indonesia
verdiwcahyadi@ulm.ac.id

Ayu Erina Rosyada

Master of Sociology Alumnus of Universitas Airlangga, Faculty of Social & Political Sciences, Surabaya, Indonesia
ayuerinaa11@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/>

Received:

Revised:

Approved:

*Corresponding Author

Abstract

This article analyzes the acquisition of customary land by the Dayak indigenous community in the expansion of oil palm plantations in Sintang Regency, West Kalimantan, by highlighting the role of village government as a mediator in corporate territorialization. Unlike studies that often frame agrarian conflict as a binary contest between companies and indigenous communities, this article argues that control over customary land is produced through a configuration of power involving state legality, corporate strategy, village legitimacy, local elites, and community fragmentation. Using a critical qualitative approach based on an agrarian case study, data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis, including land release letters, village deliberation minutes, planning documents, regional maps, and community complaint archives. The findings show that village government does not always act as a neutral administrative institution, but may function as an administrative legitimizer, broker of consent, institutional translator, and amplifier of fragmentation in customary land release. Through deliberations, administrative documents, cooperatives, partnership schemes, and development narratives, customary land is redefined as productive land integrated into corporate production regimes. This process generates spatial, social, political, and symbolic agrarian fragmentation while weakening the collective capacity of indigenous communities to defend their living space. Nevertheless, Dayak communities build resistance through customary claims, territorial boundary documentation,



complaints, advocacy, and alliances with supporting actors. The article proposes the concept of village-mediated corporate territorialization to explain how agrarian capital gains local legitimacy and why protecting customary rights is essential for just, inclusive, and sustainable social development in contemporary Indonesia.

Keywords: customary land; Dayak indigenous people; corporate territorialization; village government; agrarian fragmentation; oil palm plantations.

1. Introduction

The expansion of global capital in the natural resources sector has transformed the relationship between states, markets, local communities, and agrarian space. Economic liberalization, increased investment flows, and strengthening global demand for plantation commodities have led to the emergence of various forms of large-scale land ownership. One of the most prominent sectors in this process is the palm oil plantation industry. In many producing countries, including Indonesia, palm oil is positioned as a strategic commodity due to its contribution to economic growth, national exports, job creation, and regional development. However, behind this narrative of economic success, palm oil expansion also raises complex social issues, particularly when plantation expansion occurs on the living spaces of indigenous peoples and rural communities (Ayompe et al., 2021; McCarthy, 2010).

In the literature on agrarian political economy, palm oil plantation expansion cannot be understood solely as modern agricultural development. This expansion is also linked to land grabbing, land commodification, and spatial reorganization that allows capital to operate through land control, concession legalization, and control of community access to agrarian resources (Berenschot et al., 2022; Pichler, 2015). In this context, land is not only a factor of production but also an arena for power struggles between the state, corporations, local elites, and indigenous communities. Through location permits, land use rights, concession maps, partnership schemes, and development planning documents, land previously managed based on social and customary norms can be transformed into a capitalist production space subject to the logic of accumulation (de Vos, 2018; Pichler, 2015). Various studies show that the process of acquiring plantation land often takes place through the transformation and even obscuration of customary rights and local authority, thereby increasing the vulnerability of communities to agrarian dispossession (Berenschot & Dhiaulhaq, 2025; Rietberg & Hospes, 2018).

These changes have serious consequences for indigenous communities. For indigenous communities, land not only holds economic value but also holds historical, genealogical, ecological, spiritual, and cultural significance. Land is the basis for sustainable livelihoods, collective identity, kinship relations, and the relationship between humans and nature. Various studies of indigenous communities in Indonesia's palm oil frontier regions show that loss of access to customary land is often accompanied by changes in livelihood patterns, weakened food sovereignty, degradation of social relations, and disruption of cultural reproduction and community identity (Chao, 2024; Urano, 2020). In Dayak communities, customary land, or pemali land, constitutes a living space regulated through customary norms, traditional institutional authority, and collective management mechanisms. Through this system, communities regulate territorial boundaries, the use of forests, fields, gardens, rivers, sacred areas, and the rights and obligations of community members. Therefore, the transfer of customary land to plantation companies not only means changes in land ownership, but also changes in social structures, power relations, and the sustainability of community life (Toumbourou & Dressler, 2024; Urano, 2020).

The main problem arises when customary-based land tenure systems confront the formal state legal system. In many cases, state law places greater weight on administrative evidence such as certificates, business permits, spatial maps, and concession documents. Conversely, customary claims based on historical tenure, collective memory, natural boundaries, and social legitimacy are often viewed as weaker. This imbalance in legal recognition demonstrates the imbalanced operation of legal pluralism, where more than one legal system exists within a society, but formal state law exerts a dominant coercive force. As a result, indigenous communities are vulnerable when confronted with companies that derive legitimacy from the state (Lund, 2023; Pichler, 2015; van der Muur, 2018).

Previous studies have extensively discussed agrarian conflicts, palm oil expansion, land grabbing, deforestation, changes in livelihoods, and indigenous community resistance. Studies on land grabbing highlight how global capital gains access to land through market mechanisms, state policies, and formal legal force (Berenschot & Dhiaulhaq, 2025; Jurkevics, 2022). The literature on accumulation by dispossession explains that capital expansion often occurs through the forced release or weakening of community rights to resources through legal and administrative instruments that benefit dominant actors (Pichler, 2015; Suhardiman et al., 2026). Meanwhile, studies on territorialization show that states and corporations control space by establishing boundaries, creating maps, determining territorial functions, regulating access, and excluding certain groups from resources they previously managed (de Vos et al., 2018; Myers et al., 2017; Peluso et al., 2008). However, most of these studies still tend to position agrarian conflicts as direct conflicts between indigenous communities and corporations, or between local communities and the state.

A key gap that has not been sufficiently explained by these studies is how village governance functions as a local legalization mechanism, linking state policies, corporate strategies, and the weakening of customary claims in the process of acquiring customary land. Yet, in many cases of oil palm plantation expansion, villages are not merely administrative arenas where conflict occurs, but rather part of the power configuration that can determine the direction of land control. Various studies have shown that land acquisition processes often occur through the transformation of local authority, negotiations mediated by village elites, and the production of legality that gains social legitimacy at the local level (Lund, 2023; Rietberg & Hospes, 2018; Urano, 2020). Through village planning documents, support from local elites, facilitation of deliberations, the formation of cooperatives, and the administrative legitimacy of land release, village governance can strengthen the position of corporations while weakening the capacity of indigenous communities to defend their customary land (Rietberg & Hospes, 2018; Urano, 2020).

This article explores this gap. The main argument of this article is that the acquisition of customary land in oil palm plantation expansion does not simply occur through a binary relationship between corporations and indigenous communities. This process occurs through a more complex configuration of power, namely the interplay between state legality, corporate territorialization strategies, and the legitimacy of village governments. In this configuration, village governments cannot be understood solely as neutral local administrative institutions. Villages can, in fact, become nodes of power that determine whether customary land is maintained as community living space or converted into corporate production space. This article offers a reading that village governments can function as mediators, facilitators, and instruments of legitimacy in the process of corporate territorialization (de Vos et al., 2018; Lund, 2023).

The novelty of this article lies in its conceptualization of village-mediated corporate territorialization, a process whereby corporate control of space depends not only on state permits and concession maps, but also on administrative legitimacy, local elite support, and the use of village planning documents. This concept demonstrates that corporate territorialization operates in layers through state structures, village governments, and local social mechanisms (Kurniawan & Rye, 2025). Unlike studies that emphasize oil palm expansion as an economic project or agrarian conflict as solely a land dispute, this article demonstrates that customary land control occurs through a socio-political process involving the production of welfare discourses, administrative manipulation, the use of village planning documents, the formation of local elite support, and the internal fragmentation of indigenous communities.

Agrarian fragmentation is a significant consequence of this process. When customary lands previously managed collectively are mapped, measured, compensated, certified, or incorporated into plantation schemes, land tenure structures are fragmented (McCarthy, 2010). This fragmentation occurs not only spatially but also in social relations. Indigenous communities can be divided between groups that accept and reject companies, between village elites and ordinary citizens, between those receiving compensation and those losing access, and between villages with differing boundary claims. In situations like these, agrarian conflicts no longer take the form of vertical conflicts between communities and companies but also develop into horizontal conflicts within and between communities (Toumbourou & Dressler, 2024).

Indigenous resistance emerges in response to exclusion, the weakening of rights, and the appropriation of living space. This resistance can take the form of refusals to measure land, protests against land clearing, the reaffirmation of customary claims, community deliberations, complaints to the government, and even collective mobilization to defend customary territories. However, indigenous resistance often occurs within unequal spaces. Companies have formal legal support through state permits, while village governments can provide local political legitimacy for land release processes. In these circumstances, indigenous resistance spaces can be localized, weakened, or even broken through a combination of administrative, economic, and symbolic power (Berenschot et al., 2022).

West Kalimantan is an important empirical area for understanding these dynamics. This province is one of the main areas for oil palm plantation expansion in Indonesia and is also home to various Dayak communities with customary land tenure systems (Rietberg & Hospes, 2018). Sintang Regency, as one of the areas experiencing large-scale plantation development, demonstrates how Dayak customary lands, forests, fields, gardens, rivers, and residential areas are being targeted by corporate expansion. In this region, customary land claims of indigenous communities clash with state licensing policies, investment interests, and support for plantation development by some village government elites.

In the Dayak community of Sintang, customary land (*pemali*) is a crucial foundation for the community's socio-ecological sustainability. This land not only provides a livelihood through fields, rubber plantations, food crops, and forest products, but also serves as a binding space for social relations and cultural identity (Majid Cooke, 2012). However, when plantation companies entered through location permits and local government support, customary land began to be reconstructed as potential land for oil palm production. This process demonstrates a clash between customary territorialization based on history, natural boundaries, and collective norms and corporate territorialization based on concession maps, economic calculations, and formal legal documents (Pichler, 2015).

This article aims to answer three main questions. First, how do corporate territorialization strategies operate in the process of acquiring customary land for Dayak indigenous communities? Second, how does the power of village government play a role in legitimizing, facilitating, or weakening indigenous community resistance to land acquisition? Third, how does the land acquisition process generate agrarian fragmentation and shape patterns of social resistance amidst the expansion of oil palm plantations? Through these three questions, this article seeks to demonstrate that agrarian conflict in oil palm expansion needs to be understood as a relational process involving the state, corporations, village governments, and indigenous communities in a struggle for control over space.

This article contributes to the development of agrarian sociology, community development, and rural political economy by expanding the concept of territorialization into an analysis of power relations at the village level. It demonstrates that territorialization is not solely carried out by the state through spatial planning policies and concession permits, or by corporations through plantation maps and production schemes, but is also mediated by village governments through local administrative and political legitimacy. Therefore, villages become a crucial arena for understanding how capital gains access to customary lands and how indigenous peoples' resistance is shaped, negotiated, or weakened.

This article emphasizes that oil palm plantation expansion cannot be assessed solely by measures of economic growth or investment expansion. Concession-based development that ignores customary rights, customary legal systems, and community social sustainability has the potential to generate agrarian inequality, social vulnerability, and prolonged conflict. This study is crucial for formulating more just, inclusive, and sustainable social development policies, particularly regarding the protection of indigenous peoples and the management of agrarian resources in rural areas.

2. Theoretical Framework

The concept of corporate territorialization serves as a primary framework for explaining how plantation companies gain control over customary lands of indigenous communities through a combination of legal, administrative, and political instruments. Territorialization is understood as the process of establishing control over space through boundary delimitation, legalization of access rights,

land use regulations, and the establishment of legitimate authority over an area (Kurniawan & Rye, 2025; Lund, 2023). In the context of oil palm plantation expansion, this process occurs through location permits, land use rights (Hak Guna Usaha), concession maps, and various administrative mechanisms that transform customary spaces into corporate production spaces. Land control is exercised not only through physical control of the land but also through the production of legitimacy, enabling companies to acquire rights over areas previously managed communally by indigenous communities (de Vos et al., 2018; Pichler, 2015).

To understand how this spatial control occurs, this study utilizes the accumulation-by-dispossession perspective, which explains that capital expansion often occurs through the transfer of access and control over resources previously under community control. In the context of oil palm plantations, the acquisition of customary land is a form of dispossession that does not always occur through direct coercion, but can be carried out through legal procedures, compensation, administrative agreements, or development policies that provide legitimacy for land acquisition (Ito et al., 2014; Pichler, 2015). This perspective helps explain that the transformation of customary land into corporate production assets is part of the capital accumulation process supported by institutional structures and state policies (Lund, 2023; Suhardiman et al., 2026).

The perspective of legal pluralism is used to explain the contestation between customary and formal legal claims regarding land ownership. Indigenous Dayak communities base their land rights on historical ownership, customary norms, natural boundaries, and community legitimacy, while corporations derive legitimacy through permit documents and state regulations. When these two systems collide, state law generally holds a more dominant position, supported by administrative and political power (McWilliam, 2006; Tegan, 2015). In such situations, village governments become crucial actors mediating the relationship between the state, corporations, and indigenous communities. Through administrative support, facilitation of deliberation, and local political legitimacy, village governments can play a role in strengthening the process of corporate territorialization (Kurniawan & Rye, 2025). Based on this framework, the study argues that customary land acquisition, agrarian fragmentation, and indigenous community resistance are the result of interactions between corporate territorialization strategies, agrarian disposal mechanisms, legal pluralism, and institutional mediation of village government (Afrizal & Berenschot, 2022; Gilbert & Afrizal, 2019).

3. Research methodology

This research employs a critical qualitative design with an agrarian case study approach to analyze how the acquisition of customary land by the Dayak indigenous community occurs through the interplay of state legality, corporate strategies, and village government power (Hyett et al., 2014; Lai & Roccu, 2019). A qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on an in-depth understanding of power relations, the social experiences of indigenous communities, local legitimacy practices, and the dynamics of resistance that cannot be adequately explained through quantitative measurements (Nelson & Evans, 2014; Peters, 2022). A critical orientation is used to examine how customary land is reconstructed as an investment object, how village authorities play a role in the land release process, and how indigenous communities respond to these changes in spatial control structures (Das, 2015; Lai & Roccu, 2019).

Case studies were chosen because they allow the research to position agrarian conflict as a socio-political process tied to the local context and understood in depth through the interactions between the actors, institutions, and structures that shape it (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Crowe et al., 2011). In this study, the case of oil palm plantation expansion in the Dayak community area of Sintang Regency, West Kalimantan, is positioned as an empirical arena for understanding the workings of village-mediated corporate territorialization. The research focuses on three main aspects: the company's strategy in gaining access to customary land, the role of village government in producing administrative and social legitimacy, and the forms of agrarian fragmentation and indigenous community resistance that emerge because of this process. Placing the case as the unit of analysis allows the research to understand the relationship between the phenomenon of agrarian conflict and the surrounding socio-political context more comprehensively (Mtisi, 2022; Vold Hansen, 2022).

3.1. Data Sources and Informant Selection Criteria

Research data was obtained from three main sources: in-depth interviews, field observations, and secondary documentation. The use of multiple data sources was intended to strengthen triangulation, increase the credibility of the findings, and reduce reliance on a single type of data (Natow, 2020; Schlunegger et al., 2024). In-depth interviews were conducted with actors involved or affected by the customary land acquisition process, as qualitative interviews allow researchers to explore the actors' experiences, interpretations, social positions, and knowledge in detail (Harvey, 2011). Research informants included traditional leaders, customary land owners or managers, residents who accepted or rejected the company's presence, village officials, former village officials, cooperative or partnership group administrators, community advocacy activists, and other parties with knowledge of the history of land ownership and the entry of oil palm plantations.

Table 1. Profile of interview informants.

Code	Role / Affiliation	Age Range	Gender	Data Contribution
I1	Dayak traditional leaders	55–70	Male	History of customary land, customary boundaries, and the meaning of customary land
I2	Customary land owners/managers	45–65	Male	Land control, compensation processes, and changes in land access
I3	Residents who reject the company	35–55	Female	Experiences of resistance, loss of land access, and community conflict
I4	Residents who accept the company	30–50	Male	Reasons for receiving compensation, economic expectations, and partnership schemes
I5	Village officials	40–60	Male	Village roles in deliberation, administration, and legitimacy of land release
I6	Former village officials	50–65	Male	History of negotiations, company entry processes, and changes in village policies
I7	Cooperative/partnership group administrators	35–55	Male	Partnership schemes, benefit distribution, and community-company relationships
I8	Indigenous community advocates	30–45	Female	Advocacy, community complaints, and customary rights protection strategies

Note: All informant identities are disguised to maintain confidentiality and ethical protection in research.

Informants were selected purposively, considering their direct involvement in agrarian conflicts or negotiations. This technique is suitable for qualitative research because it allows for the selection of the most relevant, information-rich informants, and aligns with the research objectives (Campbell et al., 2020). The main criteria for informants were: (1) knowledge of the history of customary land, customary boundaries, and collective land management mechanisms; (2) involvement in deliberations, negotiations, compensation, or land release to companies; (3) experience in resistance, complaints, or rejection of land acquisitions; and (4) holding diverse social positions, whether as village elites, traditional leaders, ordinary citizens, or supporting actors. Snowball sampling was used to find additional informants based on referrals from initial informants, particularly to identify key actors involved in informal processes, such as closed negotiations, granting consent, or resolving internal conflicts. This strategy is commonly used when actor networks are difficult to map initially and access relies on social referrals (Noy, 2008; Parker et al., 2016).

Field observations were conducted to understand the social and spatial conditions of the areas subject to agrarian conflict. Observations focused on the location of customary land, former community fields or gardens, natural boundaries used in customary claims, areas cleared for oil palm plantations, village offices, and social spaces where communities held deliberations or consolidation. Observations are important because they enable researchers to understand social practices, spatial relations, and empirical contexts that do not always emerge explicitly in interviews (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Through these observations, the research seeks to understand how spatial changes occur in concrete terms, including changes in community access to land, forests, rivers, gardens, and areas of customary significance.

Secondary data were used to supplement field data. The documents analyzed included land release letters, minutes of village deliberations, area or concession maps, village planning documents, archives of community complaints, regulations related to plantations and indigenous peoples' rights, reports from civil society organizations, media coverage, and other relevant documents. Document analysis is a qualitative method useful for tracing historical traces, policies, administrative processes, and institutional constructions of an event (Bowen, 2009). These documents are not treated as neutral data but are analyzed as part of the production of legality and legitimacy in the process of customary land acquisition, as documents need to be read critically as social artifacts that both record and shape relations of power, bureaucracy, and claims of authority (Dalglish et al., 2020).

3.2. Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was conducted in stages through a process of reduction, categorization, thematic interpretation, and critical reading of power relations. This approach allowed researchers to move iteratively between empirical data and conceptual constructions, allowing social meaning to be systematically developed from the field data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the first stage, all interview results, observation notes, and research documents were transcribed and compiled into a data corpus. The data were then read repeatedly to identify initial themes related to the history of customary land tenure, the entry of companies, the role of village government, forms of compensation, changes in land access, internal conflicts, and indigenous community resistance strategies. Repeated reading and familiarization with the data were essential steps in developing analytical sensitivity to patterns of meaning emerging from the qualitative data (Nowell et al., 2017).

The second stage involved open coding to identify empirical categories emerging from the data. Open coding allowed for the identification of concepts and categories derived directly from informants' experiences and narratives, while a follow-up coding process helped conceptually establish relationships between categories (Harvey, 2011). Initial codes included, among others, "*customary land*," "*customary boundaries*," "*village deliberation*," "*company permits*," "*land compensation*," "*village elite support*," "*resistance from residents*," "*community fragmentation*," and "*customary resistance*". Axial coding was then conducted to connect these categories into broader analytical patterns. For example, codes regarding village deliberations, letters of agreement, and support from local elites were analyzed as part of village legitimacy mechanisms; while codes regarding inter-resident conflict, differing attitudes toward companies, and contested boundary claims were analyzed as forms of agrarian fragmentation. This process of developing relationships between categories helped generate deeper explanations of the social mechanisms at work behind the empirical events (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019).

The third stage employs critical discourse analysis of documents, actor statements, and development narratives used in the land acquisition process. Critical discourse analysis is used to identify how language, representation, and discursive practices contribute to the formation of legitimacy, power relations, and the normalization of certain policies (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). This analysis focuses on how terms such as "*development*," "*partnership*," "*welfare*," "*vacant land*," "*community consent*," and "*village investment*" are used to justify the transformation of customary land into corporate production spaces. In this way, the research interprets the conflict not only as a physical dispute over land but also as a struggle for meaning, legitimacy, and authority. This approach aligns with the tradition of critical discourse analysis, which views language as a social practice that plays a role in the reproduction and contestation of power relations (Fairclough, 2013).

The fourth stage is a qualitative spatial analysis of changes in spatial control. Data from interviews, observations, and map documents are used to explore how customary territories are remapped, measured, compensated, or incorporated into plantation schemes. The integration of narrative and spatial data allows researchers to understand processes of spatial production, territorial change, and the dynamics of resource control that cannot always be explained through textual data alone (Elwood, 2006; Knigge & Cope, 2006). This analysis helps explain how corporate territorialization works through boundary changes, access arrangements, and the placement of customary lands within the legal-formal frameworks of companies and the state. A spatial-qualitative approach also allows for a more in-depth reading of the relationship between mapping practices, territorial claims, and the formation of spatial authority (Elwood, 2006).

3.3. Ethical considerations and research reflexivity

Ethical considerations were crucial to this research because customary land, agrarian conflict, and indigenous resistance are sensitive issues (R. M. Shaw et al., 2020). All informants were provided with an explanation of the research objectives, the type of data collected, and the potential use of the data in academic publications. Informant consent was obtained prior to the interviews as part of the application of the principle of informed consent in social research (Ferreira & Serpa, 2018). Informant names, specific village names, or other identities that could potentially pose social risks may be disguised to protect informants (Harris et al., 2020). Researchers also maintained sensitivity to indigenous knowledge, particularly information regarding customary land, sacred areas, historical boundaries, and internal community conflicts. Not all information provided by informants was treated as data that could be published publicly. Information deemed risky to the community or potentially exacerbating conflict was carefully analyzed and used only in a way that would not harm vulnerable parties, in line with the principles of research that is sensitive to the context of indigenous communities and vulnerable groups (Burnette et al., 2014; Tauri, 2018).

The research was reflexive, recognizing the researcher's position as an outsider interpreting the experiences of indigenous communities. Data interpretation was not solely based on formal documents or statements from village elites, but also considered the voices of ordinary citizens, traditional leaders, women, groups losing access to land, and groups involved in resistance. This step was crucial to avoid reproducing dominant narratives that often position plantation expansion as development without considering the experiences of indigenous communities' dispossession, while also recognizing that the researcher's position and perspective can influence the data interpretation process (Evans, 2023; Stephen Shaw et al., 2004).

3.4. Data Validity and Research Limitations

Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, method triangulation, and cross-confirmation between informants to strengthen the credibility of the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Interview data were compared with observational notes and secondary documents to ensure consistency of information (Thompson, 2004). Differences in versions regarding land history, approval processes, or forms of compensation were not immediately considered weaknesses in the data but were analyzed as part of the dynamics of conflict and agrarian fragmentation. Disagreements between actors are important clues to understanding the struggle for legitimacy in the customary land acquisition process, as differing perspectives can reveal tensions and contested meanings in qualitative data (Cho & Trent, 2006; Staras et al., 2025).

The limitations of this research lie in its qualitative and contextual nature. The research findings are not intended to be statistically generalized to all Dayak communities or all oil palm plantation areas in Indonesia. However, this study has analytical relevance for understanding how village governments can mediate corporate territorialization in other agrarian areas, in line with the principle of transferability in qualitative research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Another limitation relates to access to company documents and permits, which are not always transparent. This study utilizes field data, community testimonies, and local documents as primary sources for understanding the land acquisition process from

the perspective of indigenous communities and power relations at the village level (Whittemore et al., 2001).

4. Discussion

4.1. Corporate Territorialization and the Transformation of Customary Land as a Space for Capital Production

The acquisition of customary land belonging to the Dayak indigenous community in the expansion of oil palm plantations demonstrates that control of agrarian space does not occur solely through economic transactions or changes in land use. This process is a form of corporate territorialization mediated by legal, administrative, and discursive instruments. It is a process in which customary space is reconstructed so that it can be read, measured, valued, and integrated into capitalist production systems. Customary land, which previously served as living space, identity space, ecological space, and social reproduction for indigenous communities, has shifted to become an investment object, a production asset, and part of the global commodity accumulation chain (Pichler, 2015). Customary land cannot be understood as simply vacant land or an economic asset. As explained by a Dayak traditional leader:

"The Pemali land is not empty land. It contains the history of our ancestors, there are customary boundaries, and there are areas that cannot be opened carelessly. If the land is taken over by a company, what will be lost is not only the plantation, but also the memory of the village." (Interview, I1, Dayak Traditional Leader, 2024).

The "pemali" (land) described above has social, spiritual, ecological, and historical significance. Land serves as a living archive for communities, containing ancestral traces, customary boundaries, social prohibitions, and collective memory (Li, 2014). When such land is incorporated into concession maps, these customary meanings are not simply ignored but replaced by technocratic categories such as plantation blocks, production areas, core plantations, plasma plantations, or potential land. This categorical shift becomes the starting point for corporate territorialization (Peluso & Lund, 2011).

The territorialization process operates through a combination of location permits, land use rights, concession maps, regional planning documents, boundary markers, release letters, and partnership schemes (Pichler, 2015). These instruments make corporate claims appear administratively legitimate, while customary claims based on collective memory, natural boundaries, genealogical relationships, and customary authority are often positioned as less formal. This difference in evidentiary regimes creates a legal imbalance between indigenous communities and corporations (Arizona & Mada, 2023). Corporations are present with state documents, while indigenous communities are present with spatial histories that are not always recognized in bureaucratic formats. Changes in land access are evident in the experiences of customary landowners:

"We used to be able to enter the gardens, collect forest products, clear fields, and use the old road. After the company put up the markers, we started to have doubts. There were areas that were said to be included in the company map, but in fact, they were family and customary land." (Interview, I2, Customary Land Owner/Manager, 2024).

This quote demonstrates that dispossession does not always occur through direct eviction. Loss of access can occur gradually through the installation of markers, remapping, changes in land status, and the production of doubt among residents. Communities that previously had social security over space began to hesitate to access gardens, forests, old roads, or areas claimed by the company. This doubt is analytically important because it demonstrates that corporate power operates not only through formal ownership but also through the production of social uncertainty over customary space (Hall, 2013; Jahnavi & Satpathy, 2021).

This finding broadens the understanding of land grabbing and accumulation by dispossession. The acquisition of customary land does not operate solely through overt seizure, but also through

administrative normalization. Customary land is not immediately seized as an object of physical violence, but is first translated into legal-formal categories that can be processed by the state and companies. Once land is included in maps, documents, and compensation schemes, customary claims are weakened by having to confront the logic of formal legality (Engström et al., 2022; Ito et al., 2014; Suhardiman et al., 2026). A former village official described the linguistic shift that accompanied the company's entry:

"Initially, people still called it customary land. After discussions with the company, terms like vacant land, idle land, or land that can be collaborated with began to emerge. This language gradually changed how people viewed the land." (Interview, I6, Former Village Official, 2024).

This statement demonstrates that corporate territorialization also occurs through discursive reconstruction. The terms *"vacant land," "idle land,"* or *"land that can be collaborated with"* are not simply administrative terms. This term shifts the meaning of land from a customary space to an economic space deemed unproductive (de Vos et al., 2018; Pichler, 2015). Through the language of development, customary land is presented as a resource that needs to be optimized, while customary management practices are marginalized as less modern forms of utilization (Chao, 2024; Ito et al., 2014).

At this point, the article's conceptual contribution can be emphasized: village-mediated corporate territorialization operates through three main mechanisms: the redefinition of customary space, the production of administrative legality, and the normalization of development discourse. The redefinition of customary space occurs when customary land is translated into production land (Rietberg & Hospes, 2018). The production of administrative legality occurs when maps, letters, minutes, and village documents are used to strengthen corporate claims (Pichler, 2015; Supriatna et al., 2024). The normalization of development discourse occurs when oil palm expansion is framed as a path to prosperity, employment, and village modernization (Ito et al., 2014; Urano, 2020).

This argument enriches the literature on agrarian conflict by demonstrating that corporate control over customary land does not solely depend on state permits or the power of capital. Such control also depends on the success of companies, the state, and local actors in changing how communities understand land (Berenschot & Dhiaulhaq, 2025; Jurkevics, 2022). The control of space works in tandem with the control of meaning. Customary land is not only legally transferred but also socially re-presented to make its release seem reasonable, legitimate, and profitable (Pichler, 2015).

The acquisition of customary land is not a simple administrative event, but rather a socio-political process that transforms the relations between people, land, custom, and capital. The theoretical claim offered is that corporate territorialization in oil palm expansion operates through a double conversion: the material conversion of customary space into a space of production, and the symbolic conversion of customary land into an object of development. This double conversion forms the basis for the weakening of customary rights and the formation of social vulnerability in Dayak communities.

4.2. Village Government as Administrative Legitim�er and Broker of Consent

The role of village government in oil palm plantation expansion cannot be understood solely as a neutral administrative facilitator. This article's findings indicate that villages can function as administrative legitimizers, namely local institutions that provide administrative structure to the land release process, and as brokers of consent, namely intermediaries that help shape, direct, or demonstrate community approval of company entry. This position makes villages a crucial node in the linkages between state legality, corporate strategy, and indigenous community claims. This role is evident in deliberation mechanisms, the issuance of land certificates, support for land measurement, the formation of cooperatives or partnership groups, the preparation of village documents, and the provision of local recommendations to companies. Formally, these mechanisms can be read as village development procedures. Analytically, they can also function as channels for local legalization of customary land release. A village official explained:

"The village is usually asked to facilitate deliberations. We invite residents, traditional leaders, and the company. After that, a report is drawn up. From the outside, it appears everyone has agreed, but in reality, some still hold objections within the village." (Interview, I5, Village Official, 2024).

This quote is important because it illustrates the difference between procedural and substantive consent. The presence of residents in deliberations and the existence of minutes does not automatically

indicate that the entire community agrees to free, equal, and informed land release. Deliberation documents can create an image of consensus, while objections from some residents persist in the community's social space (Afrizal & Berenschot, 2022). At this point, the village operates as a producer of procedural consent, which is administratively valid but does not necessarily reflect complete collective agreement. This reading deepens the theory of legal pluralism. Indigenous communities base their claims to land on historical ownership, natural boundaries, customary norms, and community legitimacy. Companies base their claims on permits, maps, letters, and state legal documents.

Village governments exist between these two systems. This intermediate position does not always result in fair mediation. In many cases, villages can be more closely aligned with the administrative logic of the state and companies because formal documents have greater power in the agrarian decision-making process (Bakker & Moniaga, 2010). Power relations at the village level also determine the direction of this mediation. Village elites have greater access to information, bureaucracy, companies, and negotiation processes. They can determine who is invited to deliberations, how information is conveyed, what form of compensation is received, and how community consent is recorded. This unequal access opens up space for elite capture, not only in the distribution of economic benefits but also in the production of political legitimacy (McCarthy et al., 2012). A resident who accepted the company stated:

"I accepted because we were promised plasma, jobs, and compensation. If I didn't participate, we were afraid we wouldn't get anything, while the surrounding land would already be under the company's control." (Interview, I4, Resident Who Accepted the Company, 2024).

This statement demonstrates that community acceptance cannot always be interpreted as full support for oil palm expansion. This acceptance is better understood as constrained agency, an action that appears to be a choice but is shaped by limited information, situational pressures, fear of losing benefits, and changes in the ownership structure surrounding the community (Urano, 2020). Residents accepted not because they understood all the risks, but because they perceived greater risks of refusing: losing compensation, being excluded from the plasma scheme, or being isolated when the surrounding area becomes under the company's control.

This analysis is important because it corrects the assumption that agrarian conflicts always show a clear division between pro-company and anti-company groups. Residents' attitudes are more complex. Some accept because they hope to gain employment, some accept due to social pressure, some reject because they want to defend their customary lands, and others fall somewhere in between. This complexity demonstrates that oil palm expansion not only creates vertical conflict between companies and communities but also creates a spectrum of social positions within communities (McCarthy, 2010). Partnership schemes exacerbate this complexity. A cooperative or partnership group administrator explained:

"Many residents only know that there will be plasma yields. They don't all understand the distribution of yields, fee deductions, or when the plantation will actually produce. The cooperative acts as a liaison, but not all information is clearly communicated to members." (Interview, I7, Cooperative/Partnership Group Administrator, 2024).

Partnerships, as quoted in this quote, cannot be understood as a neutral mechanism for economic empowerment. Plasma and cooperative schemes can create new spaces of dependency when information regarding yield sharing, fee deductions, production waiting periods, and contractual relationships is not evenly understood by members. Cooperatives act as a bridge between communities and companies, but this intermediary role also creates an information hierarchy. Communities who do not understand the details of partnership schemes have weaker negotiating capacity. This situation aligns with findings on contract farming, which show that partnership relationships are often shaped by information gaps and an unequal distribution of power between companies and small-scale producers, resulting in new dependency relationships within the framework of economic cooperation (Abbasi et al., 2021).

The role of villages, cooperatives, and local elites demonstrates that customary land acquisition occurs through a chain of local intermediaries. This chain prevents corporations from always acting directly with indigenous communities. Companies can work through village officials, cooperative administrators, local figures, and deliberation documents. As a result, agrarian conflicts appear to be internal village issues,

even though the structures that shape them are intertwined with corporate interests and state legality. These findings strengthen the argument that large-scale agrarian investment expansion operates through local social networks that reorganize relationships of trust, authority, and community representation, allowing corporations to gain legitimacy through the mediation of local actors rather than through direct confrontation with communities (Khadjavi et al., 2021).

The conceptual contribution of this sub-chapter lies in the assertion that villages perform three functions in corporate territorialization. First, villages act as administrative legitimizers through the production of letters, minutes, recommendations, and local documents. Second, villages act as brokers of consent through facilitating deliberations, selecting participants, and forming narratives of agreement. Third, villages act as institutional translators, translating corporate and state claims into local development languages such as partnerships, welfare, plasma, and job opportunities. From an agrarian political sociology perspective, these three functions demonstrate that the process of corporate territorialization relies not only on state legal instruments but also on the capacity of local institutions to produce social legitimacy and translate external interests into a framework of meaning acceptable to the community (Khadjavi et al., 2021).

The theoretical claim that can be drawn is that village governance is not only an arena where agrarian conflicts take place but also a political infrastructure that allows corporate claims to gain social legitimacy at the local level. This position makes villages ambivalent: they can serve as spaces for the protection of customary rights, but also as channels for the release of customary land. This ambivalence is what needs to be a primary concern in studies of social development, decentralization, and agrarian resource governance.

4.3. Fragmentation, Fragmentation Amplifier, and Resistance as Social Resilience

The acquisition of customary land through state legality, corporate strategies, and village mediation has resulted in spatial, social, political, and symbolic agrarian fragmentation. This fragmentation not only involves dividing land into production areas but also changes in social relations within indigenous communities (Diepart & Sem, 2018; Mukhlis et al., 2025). Previously collectively managed customary land is being divided into concession areas, smallholdings, company roads, production zones, compensation areas, and remaining community management areas. This spatial fragmentation is accompanied by a breakdown in social solidarity.

Spatial fragmentation arises when customary territories are remapped according to corporate needs. Social fragmentation arises when communities are divided into groups that accept and reject the company. Political fragmentation arises when customary authorities, village governments, cooperatives, and community groups have differing claims regarding who legitimately represents the community. Symbolic fragmentation arises when groups resisting a company are labeled as obstacles to development, while those accepting it are positioned as supporters of village modernization (Daniswara et al., 2025; Kenney-Lazar, 2018). One resident resisting the company stated:

“Those of us who resist are often considered obstacles to development. In fact, we just want our customary land to remain intact. After compensation, families can have differing opinions. Some accept it, some get angry, and some stop speaking to each other.” (Interview, I3, Resident Rejecting the Company, 2024).

This quote demonstrates that agrarian fragmentation moves from the material sphere to the relational sphere. Compensation not only changes land status but also alters family relationships, village solidarity, and moral legitimacy among residents. The label *“obstructing development”* works as a mechanism to delegitimize customary resistance. Resistance to land release is not seen as an effort to defend customary rights, but as an obstacle to economic progress (Ito et al., 2014; Kenney-Lazar, 2018). This analysis reveals a third function of villages and local institutions in corporate territorialization: as fragmentation amplifiers. Villages, cooperatives, deliberations, and local documents can exacerbate fragmentation when decision-making processes are opaque, compensation distribution is unequal, and customary claims are not recognized. Fragmentation does not arise naturally from community disagreements. It is produced through unequal information structures, selective benefit distribution, the use of development language, and differential access to administrative processes (Berenschot & Dhiaulhaq, 2025).

Social vulnerability is a direct consequence of this fragmentation. Groups that lose land without adequate compensation face the risk of losing their livelihoods. Farmers who previously relied on fields, rubber plantations, forests, rivers, and natural resources must adapt to a plantation economy that relies on wages, plasma schemes, and commodity markets. Women, the poor, and groups whose access to land is not formally registered experience greater vulnerability because their contributions to the management of customary spaces are often not recognized in ownership documents (Levien, 2017).

This situation demonstrates that the acquisition of customary land not only creates economic change but also generates social vulnerability. This vulnerability arises from the loss of access to food, weakened community control over resources, increased dependence on companies, and the breakdown of social solidarity. When customary land is lost, communities lose social protection mechanisms inherent in customary systems, such as collective access to forests, gardens, rivers, and common spaces (Ayinpoya Akafari et al., 2021). Indigenous community resistance emerges in response to this vulnerability. Resistance takes the form of not only open protests but also the reaffirmation of customary claims, refusal of land measurements, suspension of company activities, internal deliberations, reporting to the government, participatory mapping, and advocacy with civil society organizations.

This resistance demonstrates that indigenous peoples are not merely victims, but political actors seeking to defend their living space and future. These actions demonstrate the emergence of politics from below, namely the ability of affected groups to organize collective responses, defend land rights, and renegotiate power relations formed through the process of dispossession (Kandel, 2015). This is as explained by an activist assisting indigenous communities:

"Communities are starting to collect stories about customary boundaries, create land records, and compile complaints. They realize that if they only speak orally, they are often considered weak. Therefore, customary knowledge must also be translated into documents that the government can read." (Interview, 18, Indigenous Community Activist, 2024).

The transformation of resistance strategies in this quote demonstrates that communities are not only defending customary claims through oral memory but are also beginning to translate customary knowledge into administrative formats that can be recognized by the state. This strategy can be understood as legal translation from below, namely the efforts of indigenous communities to transform history, natural boundaries, and local knowledge into documents that can be used in policy and advocacy arenas. This process reflects the adaptation of indigenous communities to state recognition mechanisms without relinquishing customary legitimacy as the basis for collective claims (Afiff & Rachman, 2019; Dhiaulhaq & McCarthy, 2020).

The resistance of the Dayak indigenous community should be read as a form of social resilience. Social resilience not only means the ability to withstand external pressures, but also the ability to organize oneself, maintain collective identity, revitalize customary norms, build alliances, and negotiate recognition within unequal legal structures. Resistance becomes a practice of social reproduction because through it, communities maintain the continuity of their identity, living space, and value systems. In this context, community resilience rests on the ability to maintain local institutions, customary knowledge, and collective solidarity in the face of various forms of marginalization (Benyei et al., 2022).

This study expands the literature on community resilience by demonstrating that indigenous community resilience cannot be separated from agrarian justice. Communities cannot be resilient if the material basis of their livelihoods is weakened. Social resilience cannot be built solely through post-conflict empowerment programs; it must begin with the recognition of customary rights, the protection of living spaces, and the limitation of corporate power in determining the future of indigenous territories. These findings confirm that the recognition of land rights is a crucial prerequisite for the social, economic, and ecological sustainability of indigenous communities (Dhiaulhaq & McCarthy, 2020; Errico & Claeys, 2020). Agrarian fragmentation is a social mechanism that allows for deeper dispossession, while customary resistance is a social mechanism for restoring community control over space, identity, and collective futures. Fragmentation weakens solidarity, while resistance seeks to rebuild it through custom, advocacy, documentation, and political alliances.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the acquisition of customary land in oil palm expansion cannot be understood as a linear process between companies and indigenous communities. The process unfolds through a configuration of power involving the state, corporations, village governments, cooperatives, local elites, customary leaders, accepting residents, rejecting residents, and supporting activists. This configuration demonstrates that agrarian conflict is a relational arena where legality, legitimacy, development discourse, and resistance collide.

The main contribution of this article is the concept of village-mediated corporate territorialization. This concept explains that corporations control land not only through state permits and capital, but also through local legitimacy produced by village governments and intermediary institutions. Villages act as administrative legitimizers, brokers of consent, institutional translators, and fragmentation amplifiers. These four functions explain why the release of customary land can proceed through seemingly legitimate procedures, despite leaving objections, information gaps, social fragmentation, and the weakening of customary rights.

This article also emphasizes that concession-based development needs to be critiqued from a social justice perspective. Palm oil expansion can generate infrastructure, jobs, and income, but these benefits must not offset the social costs borne by indigenous communities. The loss of customary land means the loss of livelihoods, the weakening of collective identity, the fracturing of community solidarity, and the diminishing capacity of communities to determine the future of their own living spaces.

For social development studies, this article offers a reading that community development cannot be separated from agrarian politics. Community empowerment is impossible when land, the social, ecological, and cultural foundation of indigenous communities, is transferred without truly free, equal, and informed consent. Sustainable social development must be based on the recognition of customary rights, accountable village governance, the protection of vulnerable groups, and conflict resolution mechanisms that position indigenous communities as political subjects, not simply recipients of development impacts.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References

- Abbasi, I. A., Ashari, H., Jan, A., & Ariffin, A. S. (2021). Contract farming towards social business: A new paradigm. *Sustainability*, 13(22), 12680. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132212680>
- Afiff, S. A., & Rachman, N. F. (2019). Institutional Activism: Seeking Customary Forest Rights Recognition from Within the Indonesian State. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 20(5), 453–470. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2019.1670245>
- Afrizal, & Berenschot, W. (2022). Land-Use Change Conflicts and Anti-Corporate Activism in Indonesia: A Review Essay. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 22(2), 333–356. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1017/jea.2022.12>
- Arizona, Y., & Mada, U. G. (2023). Adat as strategy for legal struggle and legal mobilization. *The Indonesian Journal of Socio-Legal Studies*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.54828/ijsls.2023v2n2.3>
- Ayinpoya Akafari, A., Kifle Abebe, G., Martiniello, G., Chaaban, J., & Chalak, A. (2021). Land appropriation, customary tenure and rural livelihoods: gold mining in Ghana. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(11), 2572–2592. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1965871>
- Ayompe, L. M., Schaafsma, M., & Egoh, B. N. (2021). Towards sustainable palm oil production: The positive and negative impacts on ecosystem services and human wellbeing. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 278, 123914. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.123914>

- Bakker, L., & Moniaga, S. (2010). The Space Between: Land Claims and the Law in Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 38(2), 187–203.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/156853110X490890>
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2015). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2008.1573>
- Benyei, P., Calvet-Mir, L., Reyes-García, V., & Villamayor-Tomas, S. (2022). Indigenous and local knowledge's role in social movement's struggles against threats to community-based natural resource management systems: Insights from a qualitative meta-analysis. *International Journal of the Commons*, 16(1), 263. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijc.1154>
- Berenschot, W., & Dhialuq, A. (2025). The production of rightlessness: palm oil companies and land dispossession in Indonesia. *Globalizations*, 22(8), 1377–1395.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2023.2253657>
- Berenschot, W., Dhialuq, A., Afrizal, Hospes, O., Adriana, R., & Poetry, E. (2022). Anti-Corporate Activism and Collusion: The Contentious Politics of Palm Oil Expansion in Indonesia. *Geoforum*, 131, 39–49. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2022.03.002>
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Burnette, C. E., Sanders, S., Butcher, H. K., & Rand, J. T. (2014). A Toolkit for Ethical and Culturally Sensitive Research: An Application with Indigenous Communities. *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 8(4), 364–382. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2014.885987>
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
- Chao, S. (2024). Hunger as more-than-human communicative modality on the West Papuan oil palm frontier. *American Anthropologist*, 126(4), 679–681.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.28001>
- Cho, Jeasik, & Trent, Allen. (2006). Validity in qualitative research revisited. *Qualitative Research*, 6(3), 319–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794106065006>
- Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 11(1), 100. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-11-100>
- Dalglish, S. L., Khalid, H., & McMahan, S. A. (2020). Document analysis in health policy research: the READ approach. *Health Policy and Planning*, 35(10), 1424–1431.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czaa064>
- Daniswara, N., Budirahayu, T., Ariadi, S., Reindrawati, D. Y., Abdillah, A., & Mutiara, A. (2025). Enhancing Urban Sustainability and Resilience: An Assessment of the Bandung Smart City Master Plan (2018-2023). *Grassroots Journal of Natural Resources*, 8(2), 358–391.
<https://doi.org/10.33002/nr2581.6853.080218>
- Das, Ujjaini. (2015). Toward Methodological Precision: Linking Qualitative Meta-theories and Methods to Environmental Justice Research Design. *Environmental Justice*, 8(2), 39–46.
<https://doi.org/10.1089/env.2014.0027>
- de Vos, R. (2018). Counter-Mapping against oil palm plantations: reclaiming village territory in Indonesia with the 2014 Village Law. *Critical Asian Studies*, 50(4), 615–633.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2018.1522595>
- de Vos, R., Köhne, M., & Roth, D. (2018). “We’ll turn your water into Coca-Cola”: The atomizing practices of oil palm plantation development in Indonesia. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 18(2), 385–405. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12246>
- Dhialuq, A., & McCarthy, J. F. (2020). Indigenous Rights and Agrarian Justice Framings in Forest Land Conflicts in Indonesia. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 21(1), 34–54.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2019.1670243>

- Diepart, J.-C., & Sem, T. (2018). Fragmented Territories: Incomplete Enclosures and Agrarian Change on the Agricultural Frontier of Samlaut District, North-West Cambodia. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 18(1), 156–177. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12155>
- Elwood, S. (2006). Critical issues in participatory GIS: Deconstructions, reconstructions, and new research directions. *Transactions in GIS*, 10(5), 693–708. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9671.2006.01023.x>
- Engström, L., Bélaïr, J., & Blache, A. (2022). Formalising village land dispossession? An aggregate analysis of the combined effects of the land formalisation and land acquisition agendas in Tanzania. *Land Use Policy*, 120, 106255. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2022.106255>
- Errico, S., & Claeys, P. (2020). Human Rights and the Commons: Exploring Approaches to the Governance of Land and Natural Resources beyond Indigenous Peoples' Rights. The Case of Peasants. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 27(1), 1–33. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/15718115-02604123>
- Evans, R. A. (2023). Reconciling positionality: An Indigenous researcher's reflexive account. *Genealogy*, 7(4), 79. <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy7040079>
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315834368>
- Ferreira, C. M., & Serpa, S. (2018). Informed consent in social sciences research: Ethical challenges. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 6(5), 13. <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v6i5.3106>
- Gilbert, D. E., & Afrizal. (2019). The land exclusion dilemma and Sumatra's agrarian reactionaries. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 46(4), 681–701. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1404990>
- Hall, D. (2013). Primitive Accumulation, Accumulation by Dispossession and the Global Land Grab. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(9), 1582–1604. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.843854>
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2019). *Ethnography Principles in Practice*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315146027>
- Harvey, W. S. (2011). Strategies for conducting elite interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 11(4), 431–441. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794111404329>
- Hyett, N., Kenny Dr, A., & Dickson-Swift Dr, V. (2014). Methodology or method? A critical review of qualitative case study reports. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 9(1), 23606. <https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v9.23606>
- Ito, T., Rachman, N. F., & Savitri, L. A. (2014). Power to make land dispossession acceptable: a policy discourse analysis of the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE), Papua, Indonesia. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(1), 29–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.873029>
- Jahnavi, K. L., & Satpathy, S. (2021). Unfolding the enigma of dispossession in India: An analysis of the discourse on land grabbing. *Sociological Bulletin*, 70(3), 331–348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00380229211018986>
- Jurkevics, A. (2022). Land grabbing and the perplexities of territorial sovereignty. *Political Theory*, 50(1), 32–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00905917211008591>
- Kandel, M. (2015). Politics from below? Small-, mid- and large-scale land dispossession in Teso, Uganda, and the relevance of scale. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42(3–4), 635–652. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2015.1016918>
- Kenney-Lazar, M. (2018). Governing Dispossession: Relational Land Grabbing in Laos. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 108(3), 679–694. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2017.1373627>
- Khadjavi, M., Sipangule, K., & Thiele, R. (2021). Social Capital and Large-Scale Agricultural Investments: An Experimental Investigation. *The Economic Journal*, 131(633), 420–449. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ej/ueaa050>
- Knigge, L., & Cope, M. (2006). Grounded visualization: Integrating the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data through grounded theory and visualization. *Environment & Planning A*, 38(11), 2021–2037. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a37327>

- Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *The European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 120–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092>
- Kurniawan, N. I., & Rye, S. A. (2025). The relational state and local struggles in the mapping of land in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 52(2), 343–365. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2024.2366329>
- Lai, D., & Roccu, R. (2019). Case study research and critical IR: the case for the extended case methodology. *International Relations*, 33(1), 67–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117818818243>
- Levien, M. (2017). Gender and land dispossession: a comparative analysis. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 44(6), 1111–1134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1367291>
- Li, T. M. (2014). What is land? Assembling a resource for global investment. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 39(4), 589–602. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12065>
- Lund, C. (2023). An air of legality – legalization under conditions of rightlessness in Indonesia. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 50(4), 1295–1316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2022.2096448>
- Majid Cooke, F. (2012). In the name of poverty alleviation: Experiments with oil palm smallholders and customary land in Sabah, Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 53(3), 240–253. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8373.2012.01490.x>
- McCarthy, J. F. (2010). Processes of inclusion and adverse incorporation: oil palm and agrarian change in Sumatra, Indonesia. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37(4), 821–850. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2010.512460>
- McCarthy, J. F., Vel, J. A. C., & Afiff, S. (2012). Trajectories of land acquisition and enclosure: development schemes, virtual land grabs, and green acquisitions in Indonesia’s Outer Islands. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39(2), 521–549. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2012.671768>
- McWilliam, A. (2006). Historical Reflections on Customary Land Rights in Indonesia. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 7(1), 45–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442210600551859>
- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *The European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>
- Mtisi, Samson. (2022). The Qualitative Case Study Research Strategy as Applied on a Rural Enterprise Development Doctoral Research Project. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 16094069221145848. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221145849>
- Mukhlis, M., Daniswara, N., Abdillah, A., & Sofiaturohmah, S. (2025). The Intersectional Lens: Unpacking the Socio-Ecological Impacts of Oil Palm Expansion in Rural Indonesia. *Sustainability*, 17(23), 10570. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su172310570>
- Myers, R., Intarini, D., Sirait, M. T., & Maryudi, A. (2017). Claiming the forest: Inclusions and exclusions under Indonesia’s ‘new’ forest policies on customary forests. *Land Use Policy*, 66, 205–213. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2017.04.039>
- Natow, R. S. (2020). The use of triangulation in qualitative studies employing elite interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 20(2), 160–173. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794119830077>
- Nelson, Geoffrey, & Evans, Scot D. (2014). Critical Community Psychology and Qualitative Research: A Conversation. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(2), 158–166. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413510873>
- Nowell, Lorelli S, Norris, Jill M, White, Deborah E, & Moules, Nancy J. (2017). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1609406917733847. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Noy, C. (2008). Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(4), 327–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401305>
- Parker, R. J., Boesch, H., Wooster, M. J., Moore, D. P., Webb, A. J., Gaveau, D., & Murdiyarso, D. (2016). Atmospheric CH₄ and CO₂ enhancements and biomass burning emission ratios derived

- from satellite observations of the 2015 Indonesian fire plumes. *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics*, 16(15), 10111–10131. <https://doi.org/10.5194/acp-16-10111-2016>
- Peluso, N. L., Afiff, S., & Rachman, N. F. (2008). Claiming the grounds for reform: Agrarian and environmental movements in Indonesia. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 8(2–3), 377–407. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2008.00174.x>
- Peluso, N. L., & Lund, C. (2011). New frontiers of land control: Introduction. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38(4), 667–681. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2011.607692>
- Peters, Fatima. (2022). The role of critical methodologies in climate psychology scholarship: themes, gaps, and futures. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 52(4), 510–521. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00812463221130158>
- Pichler, M. (2015). Legal Dispossession: State Strategies and Selectivities in the Expansion of Indonesian Palm Oil and Agrofuel Production. *Development and Change*, 46(3), 508–533. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12162>
- Rietberg, P. I., & Hospes, O. (2018). Unpacking land acquisition at the oil palm frontier: Obscuring customary rights and local authority in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 59(3), 338–348. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/apv.12206>
- Schlunegger, M. C., Zumstein-Shaha, M., & Palm, R. (2024). Methodologic and data-analysis triangulation in case studies: A scoping review. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 46(8), 611–622. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01939459241263011>
- Shaw, R. M., Howe, J., Beazer, J., & Carr, T. (2020). Ethics and positionality in qualitative research with vulnerable and marginal groups. *Qualitative Research*, 20(3), 277–293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794119841839>
- Shaw, Stephen, Bagwell, Susan, & Karmowska, Joanna. (2004). Ethnoscapes as Spectacle: Reimagining Multicultural Districts as New Destinations for Leisure and Tourism Consumption. *Urban Studies*, 41(10), 1983–2000. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098042000256341>
- Staras, Chase O, Wakefield, Juliet R H, McDermott, Daragh, & Jones, Bethany. (2025). The Development and Application of the Qualitative Triangulation Framework (QTF) for Exploring Tension Within and Across Qualitative Data Sets: Case Studies of Trans and Gender Diverse Youth's Healthcare Experiences. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 24, 16094069251371464. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069251371463>
- Suhardiman, D., Berenschot, W., Bachriadi, D., Kurniadi, B., Safitri, H., & Hakim, R. M. (2026). Dispossession by archive: contemporary land grabbing through colonial land deeds in Indonesia. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 53(3), 581–602. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2025.2517711>
- Supriatna, J., Djumarno, D., Saluy, A. B., & Kurniawan, D. (2024). Sustainability Analysis of Smallholder Oil Palm Plantations in Several Provinces in Indonesia. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 16(11). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16114383>
- Tauri, J. M. (2018). Research ethics, informed consent and the disempowerment of First Nation peoples. *Research Ethics*, 14(3), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1747016117739935>
- Tegnan, H. (2015). Legal pluralism and land administration in West Sumatra: the implementation of the regulations of both local and nagari governments on communal land tenure. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 47(2), 312–323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07329113.2015.1072386>
- Thompson, T. D. B. (2004). Can the caged bird sing? Reflections on the application of qualitative research methods to case study design in homeopathic medicine. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 4(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-4-4>
- Toumbourou, T. D., & Dressler, W. H. (2024). The Politics of Misalignment: NGO Livelihood Interventions and Exclusionary Land Claims in an Indonesian Oil Palm Enclave. *Critical Asian Studies*, 56(1), 89–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2023.2272736>
- Urano, M. (2020). Why the principle of informed self-determination does not help local farmers facing land loss: a case study from oil palm development in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Globalizations*, 17(4), 593–607. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2019.1654703>

- van der Muur, W. (2018). Forest conflicts and the informal nature of realizing indigenous land rights in Indonesia. *Citizenship Studies*, 22(2), 160–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2018.1445495>
- Vold Hansen, Tiril. (2022). The Role of the Literature and Theory in Defining and Bounding a Case. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 16094069221142998. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221142998>
- Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(4), 522–537. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973201129119299>
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2015). Methods of critical discourse studies. In *Introducing Qualitative Methods Series* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.