

Defining Land Ownership: Indigenous Rights VS Government policies

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Introduction

As urbanization accelerates and economic gains are relentlessly pursued, the definitions of land ownership and rights for the indigenous population of Nusantara versus government authority reveal a complex web of competing interest that will shape the future of cultural preservation and legal rights. Development and urbanization are signs of economic progress, but they can also hide complex social, cultural, and political issues, especially when involving indigenous lands. The case of the Nusantara Capital City development demonstrates this complexity, where economic growth goals contradict indigenous rights and land ownership issues. This research paper explores the various aspects of land acquisition, indigenous rights, and government interests in the context of this development. At the heart this discourse lies the inquiry into land ownership and rights allocation. The presence of indigenous communities in areas designated for development underscores a significant level of uncertainty. These communities, deeply intwined with their land both culturally and out of necessity, face the risk of displacement and loss of livelihoods, while the government, propelled by economic progress goals and foreign investments, works to understand and consolidate the complexities of land ownership to facilitate the effective development of the capital (Saputra et al, 2022).

At the intersection of land ownership complexities, a juxtaposition emerges between the economic incentives attracting both domestic and foreign investors, and the indigenous communities are left to confront the threats of eviction and dispossession, this sets the stage for a pivotal research question revolving around land and indigenous rights. The significance of Land ownership comes into focus, with certain communities holding land certificates that grant legal legitimacy, while others contend with uncertainty due to a lack of clear land deeds (Saputra et al, 2022). Drawing on insights presented in Literature reviews and legislative documents concerning indigenous land rights, and interviews with the Mentamir, Peulmalan, and Binuang peoples, indigenous to the Nusantara region, this research offers a firsthand perspective on the implications of this capital relocation.

Binuang Village, situated in Sepaku District within the North Penajam Paser Regency of East Kalimantan, Indonesia, has a longstanding history predating the country's independence. In 2010, the village expanded under the jurisdiction of Maridan Subdistrict, resulting in the creation of two distinct villages: Binuang Village and Telemang Village. Binuang Village has an area of around 1652 Ha, with a total of 700 family heads, with a total population of 2000 residents. The population of Binuang village compromises of diverse ethnic groups, including approximately 35% of the indigenous Paser tribe, also known as the native Penajam tribe; Javanese, Bugis, Sulawesi, Banjar Bone and Ambon tribes. This ethnic and cultural diversity fosters a vibrant cultural environment, likening Binuang village to a small Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in scope of society.

On average, the people of Binuang village earn their income from farming, hunting and being laborers, with the main commodities being produced from rubber plantations and palm oil plantations. In addition to farming, there are also residents in Binuang village involved in casual labor, while others actively contribute to the development of IKN (Nusantara). Social and cultural activities remain vibrant, with the ongoing efforts to preserves culture and traditions.

Weekly events such as the traditional Ronggeng, Habsyian and Yasinan dances are cherished community activities, showcasing the commitment to cultural heritage.

Pemaluan, a village within Sepaku district, is the ancestral homeland of the Balik people, an indigenous tribe in Indonesia, who have resided on this land for generations. Similarly, Mentawir village, located in the North Penjamin Paser Regency, is among the villages impacted by the development of IKN. Located near the water, Mentawir has a mangrove ecosystem that is important to the area's environmental well-being and serves as a popular destination for mangrove tourism. In the face of development projects like IKN, indigenous communities in villages such as Binuang, Pemaluan, and Mentamir are confronted with profound socio-cultural and environmental challenges. Our research explores the complex dynamics between economic development goals, indigenous land rights, and environment conservation efforts, examining the implications for community well-being, cultural preservation, and ecological sustainability in Nusantara.

Environmental Justice Implications

The indigenous communities in these areas are no longer legally recognized as stewards of the land, despite using, managing, and owning this land for generations. The government can repurpose land in the forest estate as it sees fit. Indigenous groups living on the forest estate do not have certificates, and because their ancestral land is considered government-owned, it is difficult to advocate or apply for legal ownership of the land. According to the Regulation of the Head of the National Land Affairs Agency Number 1 Year 2011, land not owned by individuals is considered state land (Regulation of the Head of the National Land Affairs Agency, 2011). Additionally, the law on land acquisition for development in public interest stipulates that the government guarantees the availability of land for public interest and manages it according to national and regional development plans, often overlooking traditional land rights (Law No.2, 2012). The government then designates the use of this land for either timber production, forest conservation, or watershed protection, broadly, with only very specific exceptions for community use.

This is a form of territorialization. By taking indigenous land and repurposing it for Nusantara, the Indonesian government is redefining the territory and adding borders (city limits) where before there were none. This is accompanied by a cultural program to bring “urbanization and development” to the region as well as migrating Jakarta residents to the area to make it more urban and Indonesian rather than a diverse area of indigenous groups.

This leads us to discuss the concept of legitimization, described in *Assembling Nusantara* as “A form of justification for land use and a basis for moral values related to land use or utilisation (Hall ,2013)”. Legitimation is a way for the government to justify taking ownership of land that belongs to indigenous groups, and to use that land to promote corporations or other industrial motives. It is strongly tied to market motivations (like land prices) that determine aspects of land exclusion. Increases in land prices due to factors like location or agricultural commodities has provided opportunities for large companies to acquire land and expand their businesses (Warsilah et al., 2023). An example of this is the marginalization of the Datak, Kutai,

and Malay tribes in E.K., due to government policies increasing and expanding the mining industry as well as oil palm plantations.

Legitimation causing eviction of indigenous/residents in land adjacent to IKN is a serious concern. This is because, as Warsilah says, “the construction of a new capital city (IKN) is like a magnet that will attract investors vying for local tribal customary land.”

Research Question

How have historical land policies affected current indigenous land ownership and rights?

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative methods approach, analyzing both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data collection in the form of interviews with the Binuang village community in March 2024. Several secondary sources, such as IKN legal documents, focus group transcripts from Pemaluan and Mentawir villages, and various academic literature about Nusantara were examined. In the Pemaluan and Mentawir focus groups, discussions were separated by gender. Nine women and six men were interviewed in Pemaluan. In Mentawir, nine men and nine women participated in focus groups. All focus groups took place in July 2023. We analyzed these documents with an environmental justice lens, focusing on keywords such as "land," "land grab," "certificate," "letters," "ownership," "indigenous," and "rights."

Results and Discussion

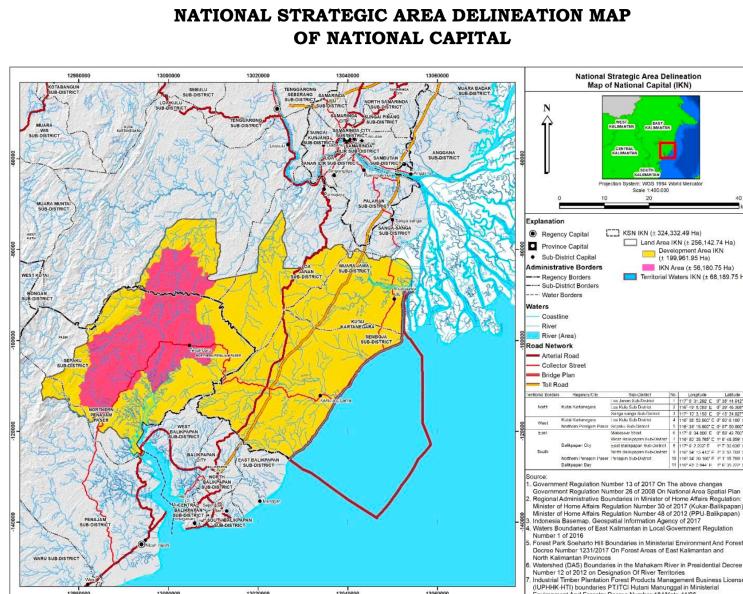


Figure 1. National Strategic Area Delineation Map of National Capital.

Source: Law No. 3, 2022



Figure 2. Nusantara's Development Phases.

Source: IKN Authority, 2023

Nusantara's Master Plan

The Master Plan for the Nusantara Capital (IKN) development stands as a pivotal roadmap in Indonesia's journey towards realizing its 2045 vision of ascending to a top 5 global economy and becoming a high-income nation. Anchored in East Kalimantan on Borneo, the IKN signifies a strategic shift aimed at fostering equitable economic growth in the east (Joko Widodo, The House of Representatives 2022). This research study offers an insightful analysis, spotlighting key elements such as community engagement, land acquisition, and management within the master plan.

The vision for the IKN transcends mere urban development; it aspires to cultivate a sustainable, inclusive "world city for all" that authentically reflects Indonesia's national identity while propelling economic parity across the region. Spanning approximately 256,142 hectares, with the core Nusantara Capital Area encompassing 56,180 hectares, the IKN is envisioned as a multifaceted entity, integrating green spaces and advanced technologies to embody the principles of a "forest city," a "sponge city, and a "smart city" (Joko Widodo, The House of Representatives 2022). Fundamental to the plan are principles of sustainability, innovation, and equitable growth, which unfold across five delineated phases from 2022 to 2045 (Joko Widodo, The House of Representatives 2022). Central to this vision is the emphasis on community engagement and cultural harmony, serving as guiding tenets throughout the development process.

Community engagement emerges as a cornerstone of the master plan, recognizing the intrinsic value of involving residents in the developmental trajectory of their surroundings. The plan adopts participatory approaches to ensure that the voices of indigenous communities, migrants, and other local groups are heard and integrated into the fabric of the new capital city (Joko Widodo, The House of Representatives 2022). By fostering inclusive decision-making processes, the master plan endeavors to build trust, enhance social cohesion, and empower communities to actively contribute to and benefit from the development initiatives.

Effective land acquisition and management strategies are crucial for the successful implementation of the master plan. Detailed provisions are outlined to ensure fair compensation,

legal compliance, and sustainable land use practices (Joko Widodo, The House of Representatives 2022). The plan prioritizes adherence to existing laws and regulations while safeguarding the rights of landowners and communities. By adopting transparent and participatory processes, the master plan aims to mitigate potential conflicts and ensure that land acquisition activities are conducted in a manner that respects local customs, traditions, and livelihoods.

The Indonesia government has structured the development of the new National city (IKN) into five distinct stages (Figure 2.).

Stage 1: 2022-2024

In this stage, the initial construction will take place, including housing for civil servants (Aparature Sipi Negara, ASN), the Indonesian National Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI), the National Police (Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, Polri), and the Indonesian Intelligence Agency (Badan Intelijen Negra, BIN). These institutions will be vital to the function and security of the new National Capital city (IKN) and are estimated to relocate in early 2024 (Law No. 3, 2022).

Stage 2: 2025-2029

The main infrastructure, including airports and public transportation, is anticipated to be ready. Six industrial clusters and two enablers will be established, focusing on sustainable agriculture, renewable energy low carbon energy mining, ecotourism and more. During this stage a significant population increase is expected, largely due to the construction of world class universities and more (Law No. 3, 2022).

Stage 3: 2030-2023

This stage will include the development of territory infrastructure, wastewater treatment plants (IPAL), drinking water treatment plants (IPAM), and the operationalization of Batu Lepek Reservoir. Sponge facilities aimed at restoring natural hydrological cycles disrupted by the development will also have constructed. The implementation of green and blue open corridors will connect cities to nature, capture urban runoff that will be channeled to urban parks, and will be responsible for rainwater harvesting (Law No. 3, 2022).

Stage 4: 2035-2039

There will be rapid development in education and health sectors, driving other economic activities. Infrastructure expansion during this stage will include the continued development of regional railways, wastewater treatment, and provision of electricity and energy. There will be continued focus on sustainable agriculture, pharmaceuticals, ecotourism etc. (Law No. 3, 2022).

Stage 5: 2040-2045

Sustainable industrial development and stable population growth with urban density of around 100 people per hectare. Infrastructure and supporting transportation, and activity centers will be completed. These 5 stages aim to achieve a sustainable, and technologically advanced National Capital (IKN) by 2045 (Law No.3, 2022).

Funding for the development will be sourced from state budget and other avenues, with an emphasis on sustainable practices such as energy use, waste management, and environmental conservation. Public participation is encouraged through consultations and partnerships to ensure the development process is inclusive and considers the aspirations and rights of local communities (Law No. 3, 2022).

Our research study underscores the master plan's ambitious yet pragmatic approach, emphasizing the critical role of community engagement and responsible land acquisition and

management practices. Detailed strategies are outlined to navigate the complexities inherent in these processes, reflecting a commitment to fostering sustainable development and social inclusion. However, the study also acknowledges the challenges posed by funding constraints, resource allocation, and coordination, underscoring the need for ongoing dialogue, transparency, and accountability throughout the development journey.

The Master Plan for the Nusantara Capital presents a holistic vision for Indonesia's new capital city, underpinned by principles of sustainability, innovation, and equitable growth. By prioritizing community engagement and adopting responsible land acquisition and management practices, the master plan endeavors to create a city that not only embodies Indonesia's identity but also serves as a model for inclusive and sustainable urban development. This research study provides valuable insights into the transformative potential of the master plan, shedding light on its implications for Indonesia's socio-economic landscape and the well-being of its communities.

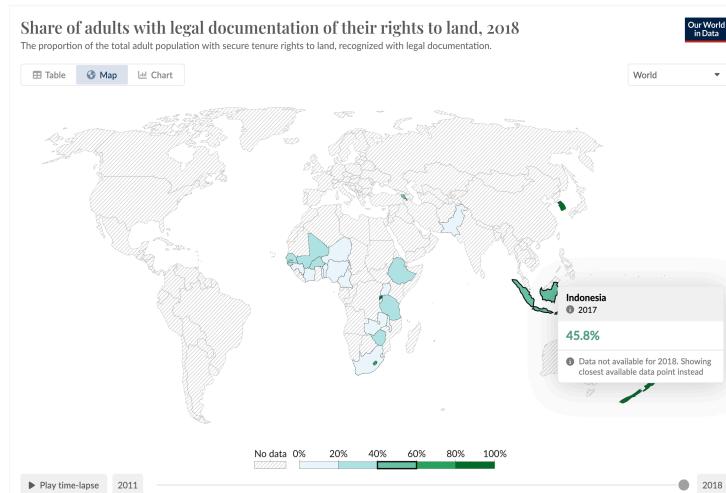


Figure 3. Share of adults with legal documentation of their land rights.

Source: Data from multiple sources compiled by the UN – processed by Our World in Data.

Land Tenure assessment: A legal perspective

- Exactly 150 years after the Dutch colonial government enacted transformative agrarian laws in 1780, Indonesia continues to wrestle with the implications. The core issue remains the unclear boundary between state land claims and community land claims (Neilson, 2020). To understand the land conflicts in Indonesia's new capital city, it is essential to examine the legal framework governing land use and land rights in Indonesia. This framework includes a series of laws and regulations designed to balance equitable land distribution. Understanding these laws is crucial for addressing the underlying causes of land conflicts and formulating effective policies. The following sections very briefly introduce you to a series of key laws and their implications for land rights and land use.

Basic Agrarian Law (BAL) No.5/1960

The most important legislation governing land right, BAL ensures the equitable land distribution and preventing excessive land concentration. Aims to integrate the recognition of land rights, land ownership, cultivation, building, forest product collection and more. Under this law, land rights can be revoked in the public or national interest, provided appropriate compensation is given. It also mandates that the granting of documentary evidence of rights serves as a strong instrument of evidence. Land registration must consider the condition of the state and of the society, the need for socio-economic needs, and the possibility of implementing as determined by the Minister of Agrarian Affairs (Law No.5,1960).

Land Acquisition for Development in public interest No. 2/2012

This law recognizes and respects community rights to land, including customary land (indigenous land). Article 40 specifies that compensation for customary land rights is provided in forms such as replacement land, resettlement, or other agreed forms. The law ensures that the principles of humanity, justice, or other participations are upheld during the land acquisition process. This includes engaging with the affected communities, ensuring their participation in consultation, and providing fair compensation for their land, thus balancing development needs with the protection of indigenous rights and interests (Law no.2, 2012).

Rights to Manage, Land Rights, Apartment Unit, And Land Registration No. 18/2021

Acknowledges and protects indigenous customary land, referred to as “Ulayat Land”. Ulayat Land id defined as land controlled by adat (customary) law communities that is not attached to any formal land rights. The regulation permits the right to manage Ulyat land, explicitly stating that such rights are stipulated for the adat law community. This ensures that indigenous communities retain authority over their customary lands. The regulation also mandates that any land management derived from Ulyat land be stipulated under a ministerial decree and undergo periodic supervision to safeguard the interest and rights of the indigenous communities, additionally, the regulation addresses reclamations activities on Ulyat land, emphasizing the need to consider the rights and interest of the adat law community, ensuring to fair compensation and adherence to proper procedures.

This brief analysis and summary of the key laws regarding land rights in Indonesia are not intended to advocate for any viewpoint. Instead, they serve as a tool to provide foundational context as you, the reader, dive into the complexities of land conflicts. Keep these legal frameworks in mind as you explore the voices from Penaluau and Metawir, allowing these perspectives to deepen your understanding of the issue at hand.

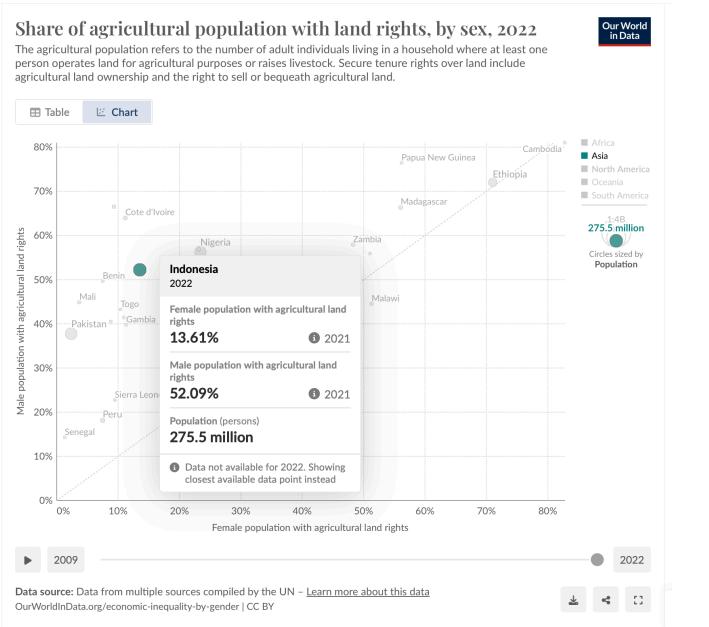


Figure 4. Share of agricultural population with land rights, by sex, 2022.
Source: OurWorldInData.org/economic-inequality-by-gender

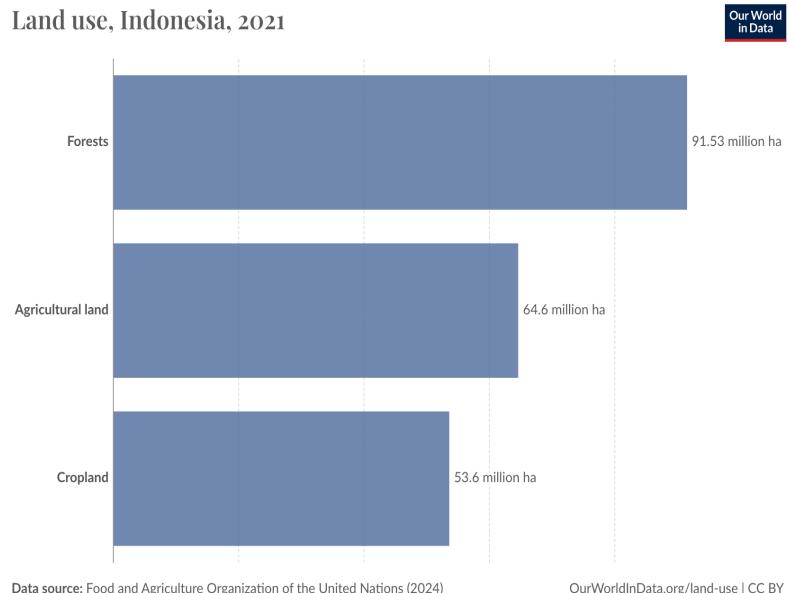


Figure 5. Land use, Indonesia, 2021.
Source: OurWorldInData.org

Land tenure conflict

Land tenure conflicts surrounding the area of the new National Capital presents a significant challenge to Indonesia's ambitious project to relocate its current capital from a sinking Jakarta to Nusantara (IKN) in East Kalimantan. The transition involves substantial land

acquisition and relocation, sparking disputes among indigenous communities, private landholders, and the government. These conflicts stem from historical land claims, overlapping land use rights, and insufficient legal recognition of indigenous territories. The current legal and institutional systems fail to align with the legal consciousness and cultural practices of Indonesian society, leading to ineffective disputes resolutions and continued conflicts (Sunarno, 2019).

The introduction of significant legislation, such as the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law, established state ownership of unoccupied land and recognized communal rights while allowing land revocation for public interest. This has led to disputes over compensation and land use, complicating land owner registration and certification, leaving landholders vulnerable to dispossession (Syaban & Opoku, 2024). With approximately half the land in East Kalimantan being community owned, there are concerns about potential agrarian conflicts, particularly in Penajam Paser Utara and Kutai Kartanegara, identified as potential agrarian conflict hotspots by the Agrarian Reform Consortium (Syaban & Opoku, 2024).

41.32% of the land in East Kalimantan is land controlled by the community, reflecting strong communal ties that are unrecognized by formal legal frameworks. Additionally, 17.40% of the land in East Kalimantan is uncontrolled land, creating potential for conflicts involving community claims, government interest, and unclaimed territories. The intersection of unspecified and unregistered lands, combined with the complex ownership patterns, highlights the intricate land tenure systems in East Kalimantan, which are central to the region's agrarian disputes (Syaban & Opoku, 2024).

In 1997, the Minister of Forestry issued Decree No. 137 / Kpts-II / 1997, granting permits for Industrial Plantation Forest (HPHTI) covering approximately 235,140 hectares to PT. Riau Andalan Pulp & Paper (RAPP) and Sinar Mas Group. By 2008, the industrial plantation forest area grew expanded to 429,070.97 hectares, into areas including villages, community plantations, and traditional (Ulayat) lands, managed and occupied long before this decree (Prihatin, 2019). According to the decree, land that already belongs to villages or areas cultivated by third parties should be excluded from HPHTI working areas, or the company must settle the matter with the relevant parties (Prihatin, 2019).

These conflicts arise due to differing perceptions of land use among various parties, leading to significant, unresolved disputes throughout the areas of the new National Capital. The persistence of these disputes highlights the necessity for a clear and legal framework that respects existing community rights and the land tenure systems. Addressing these conflicts effectively requires adhering to established regulations and a comprehensive approach that considers the legal, socio-economic, and political aspects of land tenure.

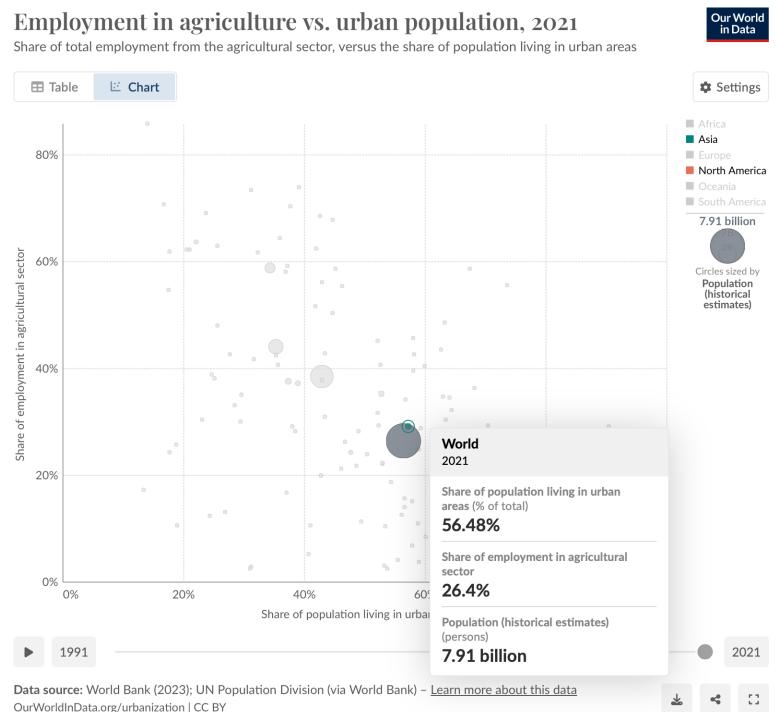


Figure 6. Employment in agriculture vs. urban population, 2021.

Source: OurWorldInData.org

The reality of Nusantara: voices from Pemaluan and Mentawir

Though the Indonesian government has outlined various lofty goals and protocols for their creation of Nusantara, reality may not always follow expectations. Thus, it is crucial to gain insight from the lived experience of the indigenous peoples being impacted as this new green capital comes into fruition. Anonymous villagers from both Pemaluan and Mentawir provided their input and concerns regarding the impacts of Nusantara in their community through focus group interviews.

It is important to note that although there have been no recorded land evictions from either village, the looming threat of eviction and its consequences are quite evident in the villagers' concerns. This concern has escalated by the complex land status in east Kalimantan, where significant portion of land remains unregistered. According to figure three, only 45.8% of adults held legal documentation of their rights to land. Unregistered state land in other use areas (APL) amounts to 73,411.04 hectares and 48,677.30 hectares respectively, indicating large amount land without formal recognition (Syaban & Opoku, 2024). Most of the villagers support themselves and their community financially through agricultural work on their farmland so thus eviction would result in a loss of work and loss of profits. Furthermore, the creation of Nusantara near these villages has increased the price of land from around 25 million/hectare to around 1 billion/hectare (FGD Pemaluan Men, July 2023). Therefore, if eviction occurs, the villagers will no longer be able to afford land near their communities and families. This also brings the villagers' concern of finding a new job with their mainly agricultural skill set if they are not able to buy more farmland (FGD Mentawir Men, July 2023). However, eviction has implications well

beyond just financial since many of these villagers have spent generations in this location and their loss of important cultural ties and sacred graveyards would be devastating. This has led some villages like Pemaluan to consider turning their village into a model/tourist village in attempts to save their community (FGD Pemaluan Men, July 2023). To do so would require a massive lifestyle change and would disrupt the daily lives of the villagers to cater to the palates of tourists. Other than these cultural and community concerns, the villagers have also expressed their worry regarding the Indonesian government's compensation plans.

It was mentioned to the villagers that they would be provided compensation if they wished to sell their land and move elsewhere, but according to the interviews, the rate of compensation as well as the timeline are unclear. Furthermore, the Ministry of Forestry stopped providing and certifying land legality papers around March of 2021 according to the villagers in Pemaluan (FGD Pemaluan Men, July 2023). These land legality papers essentially prove ownership of the land, thus without them, the land is seen as state land and the villagers are not able to sell, despite having worked the land for generations. The lack of land ownership papers also allows the government to claim the land and evict the villagers without much that can be done legally. However, those that do have the legal papers for their land still have concerns about the government compensation as illustrated by the Pemaluan villagers' recollection of another villager in the Sepaku area that was evicted and compensated unfairly (FGD Pemaluan Women, July 2023). According to the villagers, the government had a special team appraise the land and provided a figure that was lower than expected. However, due to the nature of the eviction and selling of the land, the Sepaku villager felt as if they could not argue with the appraisal. Therefore, the villagers are concerned that even if they wish to sell their land before being forced out, it will not be on their terms.

In Binuang village, members experience difficulties with land ownership rights and differing views on what IKN will bring to the community. Conflicts in the Binuang Village community regarding the development of the National Capital (IKN) stem from the conversion of land owned by residents of Binuang Village. Previously owned land now has a Right of Use status due to the development of IKN. This has led to conflicts between the community and the government, as the development of IKN has resulted in the loss of land rights for the residents. The development of IKN has also affected the safety and health of the community, as it has caused air pollution due to its proximity to densely populated areas. Binuang Village is a route used by heavy vehicles such as cement trucks and dump trucks, leading to respiratory problems for residents due to the dust and polluted air generated by these vehicles.

The residents' views on the development of the National Capital (IKN) on the community's income vary. Some residents believe that the development of IKN has little impact on their income because they have their own rubber and oil palm plantations, so the development of IKN does not significantly affect their income. However, the income from rubber and oil palm plantations is insufficient for their livelihoods due to fluctuating revenue from these plantations caused by poor harvests, low selling prices of harvested products, and the monopoly of palm oil and rubber companies that determine selling prices. Residents without their own rubber and oil palm plantations feel that the development of IKN will certainly affect their income. Although many job opportunities are available, they cannot benefit from them because the job qualifications require at least a high school education, while almost 50% of the population is not

educated. This situation forces residents to rely solely on natural resources such as gardening, farming, and hunting for their livelihoods.

Reform

Change is imminent as the government has acknowledged its mismanagements of agrarian resources. Decree No. IX/MPR/2001 on Agrarian Reform and Natural Resources Management marks a critical turning point in Indonesia's approach to land and resource governance. This decree serves as the foundational legislative framework meant to reconstruct the system of control, ownership, utilization, and management, of agrarian resources to ensure legal certainty, and protection for all Indonesia people. This decree highlights the need for sustainable and fair resource management to promote both environmental preservation and socio-economic development (Sihombing, 2017).

Additionally, decree No. IX/MPR/2001 establishes a comprehensive policy direction for agrarian reform, emphasizing the importance of integrating inter-sectional policies and addressing existing legal inconsistencies. One of its primary objectives is to review and revise various laws related to land and natural resources to align them with principles of equity and sustainability (DECREE NUMBER IX/MPR, 2001). However, the implementation of the decree has faced numerous obstacles, including long-established bureaucratic practices, legal ambiguities, and conflicting interest between various stakeholders (Sihombing, 2017). Despite these challenges there have been notable efforts to advance agrarian reform aim to empower local communities, enhance tenure security, and promote sustainable land use practices. The decree is a pivotal moment in Indonesia's journey towards equitable and sustainable resource governance.

Conclusion

The construction of IKN has highlighted significant challenges regarding Indigenous land rights and land use in Indonesia. Decree No. IX/MPR/2001 which emphasizes agrarian reform and management of natural resources, sets a foundation for addressing land rights. However, the practical implementation of the decree often falls short, particularly for indigenous communities. Land conflicts have escalated as the government claims land for the development of Nusantara, often disregarding the land rights of indigenous people.

The analysis of Indonesian Forest Law and first-person accounts of indigenous groups reveals that legal frameworks intended to protect these communities are not properly enforced. Indigenous people face significant barriers in obtaining land certificates, leaving them vulnerable to displacement without fair compensation. The rapid increase in land value amplifies their sense of injustice, as promised compensation, by law, do not reflect the current market rates.

Environment justice issues are significant with indigenous communities suffering from increased air pollution as they struggle to maintain their ancestral lands.

While the economic benefits of IKN are anticipated by many, it is important that these benefits are equally distributed. Ensuring that indigenous communities are not only compensated

but also have clear land ownership and are protected from environmental harm is crucial for achieving true justice and sustainability in the development of Nusantara.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
Certificates	A document issued evidencing the official Registration of the record of a title to real Property.
Forest Estate	An area (forest) that is stipulated by the Ministry Of forestry in Indonesia.
Legitimation	A form of justification for land use and a basis for moral values related to land use or utilization.
Land Tenure	The relationship that individuals and groups hold with respect to land and land-based resources, such as trees, minerals, pastures, and water. Land tenure rules define the ways in which property rights to land are allocated, transferred, used, or managed in a particular society.
Agrarian Law	Regulates the division of the public lands.

Author Biographies

My name is Trinity Chou! I use she/her pronouns and I'm currently a senior majoring in Geology and double minoring in chemistry and environmental justice. I'm originally from Marlboro, NJ and I moved to NC when I was 11, but I still identify as a northerner (lol). For fun I like to crochet, go to the gym, and cuddle with my cat Bean! My new year's resolution is to get more into calisthenics! I'm super excited to work with the UNMUL students because I think it's a great way to connect with peers from a different background and culture that I otherwise would never have the pleasure of meeting!

Fun fact: there are three cats in my house that I share with my roommates so we're practically crazy cat ladies at this point.

My name is Mary Leigh Cook, and I'm a Junior majoring in Information Science with minors in Data Science and Environmental Justice. I am from Winston Salem, North Carolina, but I currently live in the Charlotte, North Carolina area. My favorite hobbies include listening to music, boxing, reading, and spending time with my family, friends, and cats.

My name is Nabilla Ananda Ocha Pratama, you can call me Oca, I come from Indonesia and study at Mulawarman University in Samarinda City, majoring in Forest Management, this year I am 21 years old; this is my third year on campus, two semesters left to graduate. I can't wait to graduate. btw I like cooking, culinary and traveling, I visit many places. The activities that I like most so far are relaxing and camping in the forest listening to the sounds of birds and breathing fresh air in the forest, that's why I chose the forestry major as my choice for studying. I hope that our forests will continue to be maintained for the sake of world sustainability. My hope is that we can all become warm good friends. Thank you, guys.

Hello, my name is Mang Iang! I am currently a junior studying Environmental Health Sciences and minoring in Environmental Justice. I am an out-of-state student originally from Maryland. Some of my favorite hobbies include photography, cooking, and trying new foods with my friends. I also really enjoy listening to music while also exploring and discovering new genres as well. A fun fact about me is that I can speak five different languages, 3 out of which I am fluent in.

My name is Avi Kumar, and I'm a sophomore majoring in Computer Science and minoring in French. I am originally from Buffalo, NY, and this is my second year at UNC. In my free time I love to crochet and design my own items. I also love hiking, swimming, and being outside in general.

My name is Senam Adedze, a senior majoring in Geography with minors in Data Science and French. I am from Annandale, VA. And interested in the intersection of public health, environmental justice, and climate change.



Hello! I'm Mandy, a global studies major with a focus in global health and a minor in Data Science at UNC Chapel Hill. I am from New York, but I was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. In my free time, I enjoy watching and playing sports such as Formula 1, the English Premier League, La Liga, etc. When I'm not immersed in sports, you'll often find me with a book in hand. I have a 3-year-old Belgian Malinois, named Odin who is ridiculously intelligent and equally annoying, but I wouldn't change a thing about him.

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