

Land Conflict and The Peasant Movement in West Telukjambe Karawang Regency

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Abstract — Land conflicts between peasants and corporations often occur because of two different interests. The corporations are more based on economic interests, while the peasants are more based on the interests of land value as inheritance and survival. The objective of this research was to describe land conflicts and peasant resistance movements in three villages in west Telukjambe, Karawang regency, West Java. The research method is descriptive with a qualitative approach, the data is collected through interviews, FGD and documents related to this research study. The results showed that the land conflict between three villages in West Telukjambe was triggered by a process of capital accumulation by corporations which was strengthened by regulations that were more favorable to capital owners. This encouraged peasants to take action through resistance movements supported by activists and students. However, peasants' resistance is faced with two big forces, namely the political power of the state and the economic power of corporations, as well as pressure and threats from other parties. This condition had an impact on the strength of the peasant movement which ultimately weakened. Declination of the peasant movement is not only influenced by external factors but also by internal influences.

Keywords — Capital Accumulation; Declination of Movement; Land Conflict; Peasant Movement

I. INTRODUCTION

The capitalist system that emerged in the economic sector is slowly causing inequality in the distribution of sources of shared prosperity (Maladi, 2012). Complete control of agricultural resources is nothing but to meet the needs of capitalism. In general, the capitalist production system further expands its working area through land control, including agricultural land. Control of agricultural land often leads to land conflicts with peasant as land owners.

The phenomenon of the struggle for land is happening globally and massive. It is not only in Africa (Arrighi et al., 2010; Chinsinga & Chasukwa, 2013; Clements, 2013; Magdoff, 2013), in Latin American (Clements, 2013; Jr et al., 2012), but also in Southeast and South Asia (Hall, 2011; Rudi et al., 2014). Indonesia is one of the countries that is not immune to the phenomenon of the struggle for land which has led to conflict. Based on data from the Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA), throughout 2020, there were 241 eruptions of agrarian conflicts in 359 villages/villages, involving 135,337 families on a land area 624,272,711. Even cumulatively, from 2015 to 2020, there have been 2,288 eruptions of agrarian conflicts throughout Indonesia (KPA, 2020). The picture shows that the conflict occurred because of confiscation and must be accompanied by resistance. It also shows that conflicts over land tenure continue to increase, resulting in losing community rights to land.

Harvey (2003) reveals the mechanism of deprivation, both in developed and developing countries. He calls it the cutting edge of accumulation by dispossession, namely assets owned by the state or jointly managed by the population released into the market when excess capital can be invested, renewed, and speculated using these assets. There are four characteristics in carrying out the

deprivation mechanism, namely a). Privatization and commodification, b). Financialization, c). Crisis management and manipulation, and d). Redistribution of state assets. Accumulation by dispossession reflects the absorption of capital through urban development mechanisms, which will lead to many conflicts over land grabs from low-income communities who have lived on their land sites for many years. Accumulation by dispossession causes struggles in the form of resistance in places of land grabbing, and almost all over the world are experiencing it (Dhosa, 2021).

Land issues are often preceded by problems of inequality in the structure of ownership and land tenure (Soetarto et al., 2007). This research focuses more on land conflicts resulting from land grabbing cases because a lot of land belonging to the community, especially peasants (which is more dominant as agricultural land) has been lost because it was confiscated or controlled by certain parties (such as corporations) for business interests, giving rise to inequality in land tenure. Inequality in land ownership and control structures is also experienced by most people in the Karawang area, one of which occurs in West Telukjambe due to the construction of an industrial area.

Initially, land tenure in Karawang, especially in Telukjambe, described the existence of abandoned Dutch plantations. At that time, the residents were originally plantation workers, began to occupy and cultivate the abandoned Dutch plantation land for generations. On November 8, 1962, the decree of the Minister of Agrarian Affairs No. 30/Ka/62 states that the land around the Tegalwaroe plantation is the object of land reform. Then the decree land reform committee Dt. II Karawang Number 29/PLD/VIII/52 on June 17, 1965, and the decree Kinag Jabar Number 228/C/VIII/52/1965, which gave ownership rights to the people land from the former private land of Tegalwaroe Landen.

However, the land reform process did not run smoothly. In 1971, the government ordered land reform activities to continue. Land that has been recorded is immediately detailed and classified to be issued a land ownership certificate. Along with this, the development program in Karawang during that period had an impact on land use for industrialization. Through Presidential Decree Number 53, in 1989, Karawang was designated as one of the industrial area development districts in West Java. The orientation of land policy for industrial development is more in favor of capital and the market system (Ananta, 2016).

Several studies on land in Karawang show land-use conflicts due to the expansion of industrial development in urban areas to community lands (Rahardiansah, 2017; Widapratama & Darwis, 2019). After Karawang was designated as one of the industrial development areas, there was a change in characteristics because, in the past, Karawang was the national rice barn, especially in the Java area. The conflict was finally unavoidable and even increased because of the powerful influence of oligarchic political practices. This condition gave rise to a resistance movement from peasants. The cause of the land conflict in Karawang was more influenced by capital accumulation which was so strong that there was a resistance movement from peasant. Harvey (2005) stated that as long as capital accumulation continues, there will be a stronger basis for the emergence of resistance movements.

This research aims to describe land conflicts and the peasant movements in three villages (Wanasari, Wanakerta and Margamulya Villages) in Telukjambe Barat District, Karawang Regency with an emphasis on analyzing land conflicts and the dynamics of peasant movements.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The informant selection technique was carried out using the Snowball technique. Data collection uses primary data, namely observations, Focus Group Discussion and in-depth interviews, and secondary data, namely literature searches and relevant documents. Informants consisted of peasants who owned land in three villages, village heads, non-government organizations (NGOs), and the National Land Agency. This study uses an interactive model consisting of reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Land Conflict of three village in West Telukjambe

Land conflicts in three villages (Wanasari, Wanakerta and Margamulya) in West Telukjambe, Karawang Regency, have been going on since the 1970s, to be precise in early 1974. The heads of villages around West Telukjambe asked peasants to hand over girik (power over land) because PT DB wants to rent the land for three years. PT DB then submitted an application for Cultivation Rights, namely Cultivation Rights (HGU) to the Minister of Home Affairs cq, the Director General of Agrarian Affairs, and the West Java Land Office for the land. However, PT DB did not get Cultivation Rights. When the lease period expired, the farmer

returned to working on his land by holding on to the village Letter C (proof of land ownership) and asking the village head to return the girik to the farmer, but the farmer never got his girik back.

In 1986, PT. DB handed over all the assets of land ownership covering an area of 581 to PT. MJU. After PT. MJU controls the land, PT MJU resells the rights to the arable land to PT SAMP covers an area of 351 hectares, and PT. MA area of 231 hectares in 1990. PT. MA was able to resolve land ownership issues with the local community while PT. SAMP prefers to claim 351 hectares of land in three villages. The transfer of land lease rights to PT SAMP is accompanied by a deed of land release so that with this deed, PT SAMP can launch its action by executing a land area of approximately 351 hectares. The peasant who managed the land was eventually caught up in the legal process and fell out with PT SAMP. In the counterclaim trial at the Karawang District Court, PT SAMP was declared victorious. The condition of peasants is getting worse with the existence of a review or PK 160, which is used as the basis by PT SAMP to carry out land executions.

B. Land grabbing as a cause of conflict

Ownership of land assets by controlling is a combination of political, economic and social interest factors as a fabric of a social reality that must be revealed objectively (Tjondronegoro, 2008). The control of land or land assets often occurs through buying and selling, renting, confiscation and forcible taking or land grabbing.

The phenomenon of land grabbing, such as in the case of 3 villages in Telukjambe Barat, has become one of the areas experiencing the impact of industrialization and has opened up opportunities for large corporations to invest. Karawang is one of the investment areas of concern in the economic corridor on the island of Java and is the target of business actors, namely corporations. PT SAMP-PT APLN carries out the practice of controlling community land because it is related to the government's plan to make Karawang a comprehensive industrial area based on automotive and electronic machines (Ananta, 2016). The process of controlling land that occurred in three villages (Wanasari, Wanakerta and Margamulya villages) can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The process of controlling land that occurred in three villages

1974 -1977	1980 – an	1990 –an
Control by PT. DB	PT. DB transferred the land ownership to PT. MJU	Claim PT. SAMP to open an industrial area
2007	2012	2014
The lawsuit by the peasants but still won by PT. SAMP	The ownership of land by PT. APLN	Execution of land in three villages and triggering open conflicts

Land grabbing in three villages (Wanakerta, Wanasari, and Margamulya) has the mechanism and pattern proposed by Harvey (2005) as a form of capital accumulation by dispossession. Capital efforts through land privatization in three villages in Telukjambe Barat use document manipulation practices and speculation patterns. The informant revealed that when PT DB wanted to lease the land for reforestation, the village head started instructing the land-owning peasants to collect girik. However, after three years, the reforestation program was unsuccessful, and peasants demanded the company return their land. Unexpectedly, without the knowledge of the land-owning peasants, a sale and purchase transaction of their land took place with PT MJU. After that, PT MJU handed over the land owned by the peasants to PT SAMP.

In addition, strengthening the law on land ownership status has explicitly weakened the legality of land ownership for peasants. The land-owning peasants began to struggle by filing a lawsuit to the court, and there were mutual lawsuits, but the court, in the end, still won PT SAMP. Speculation such as data manipulation coupled with state policy support for corporations has cornered peasant groups and weakened them where legal support for peasants' land ownership rights has undergone a deregulation process and is not recognized by the state. In 2012, PT APLN acquired PT SAMP by buying its 55% stake. One of the strategies is to build local alliances by involving brokers who are also considered land mafias and paid thugs in securing and intimidating peasants.

In the context of what happened in the three villages, it shows the influence of power relations, which is marked by the logic of power, which also perpetuates land grabbing. As Harvey (2010), this logic of power has two sides, namely territorial and capitalist. At that time, the territorial politics of states and empires reentered to claim an essential role in the ongoing drama of capital accumulation and surplus accumulation. The influence of power relations in the three villages is part of capital accumulation and the beginning of the weakening of the peasants' position. This condition gave rise to a struggle in the form of a peasant movement to claim their land ownership rights openly and assisted by several movement alliances.

C. The Dynamics of the Peasant Movement

Land grabbing in three villages, namely Wanasari, Wanakerta and Margamulya, did not occur naturally but through a mechanism of accumulation by dispossession. This mechanism is in the form of land privatization through document manipulation, which is strengthened by the state's role in deregulating land ownership rights. As a result, it sparked resistance from peasants in three villages who felt that PT SAMP had taken their land. The motive for resistance is generally rooted in some form of complaint or perceived injustice. There are various forms of peasant movements ranging from protests, lawsuits, demonstrations, and marches to demonstrations to fight for the rights to the land seized by PT. SAMP.

The alignments and resources of actors significantly affect land ownership in the three villages of Telukjambe Barat. The three villages became arenas of open battle with various components inherent among the three actors with interest in the land. Farmers as landowners have an inherent component as the basis of resistance movements such as the Siliwangi Youth Force (AMS), SEPETAK, GMBI, Peasants, and students. Corporations and the state are two groups of actors who have power in the capital, politics, and the military, which can significantly influence land tenure.

West Telukjambe has become an important battleground between interest groups, namely peasant landowners, corporations, and the state. The three groups each have movement resources and resistance strategies to control land areas as objects of dispute. The position of peasant is quite large, especially the resources or groups of movement. These two actors have very high resources. The state has legal and political policies and instruments that can suppress the peasant resistance movement from a legal perspective. On the other hand, corporations have the capital and ability to negotiate politically to influence legal policy on the legality of land ownership.

Harvey (2005) states that the process of accumulation by dispossession is born out of a dialectical relationship between the logic of territorial power and the logic of capitalistic power. Both of these logics are represented by the state and corporations, the two main actors in the contest for land tenure.

In the context of land grabbing in West Telukjambe, village heads act as catalysts and mediators between peasants and corporations. In the negotiation process carried out by the village head, only one-sided communication did not involve peasants. Corporations make various efforts to obtain ownership rights by mobilizing land mafia groups from local groups that can suppress peasants. The role of the land mafia and thugs is quite effective in suppressing peasants in various ways, such as giving threats and pressure to peasants to keep handing over their land to the company.

The peasants in the resistance movement began to be in a position of open confrontation when groups of other movements and agrarian observers participated in it. Consolidation of resistance emerged from outside, which organized the peasants who had lost their land rights to two major groups, namely corporations and the state. The resistance movement created strong friction between peasants and PT SAMP. The peasants' struggle in demanding the right to their land ownership is not easy because the movement initiated by the peasants, which the movement group accommodates, does not have a strong negotiator and political space. Therefore, confrontation through demonstration is the primary choice, considering that all forms of resistance through legal means always lose. The political power of the state and the economic power of PT SAMP became instruments that the peasant resistance movement group could not penetrate.

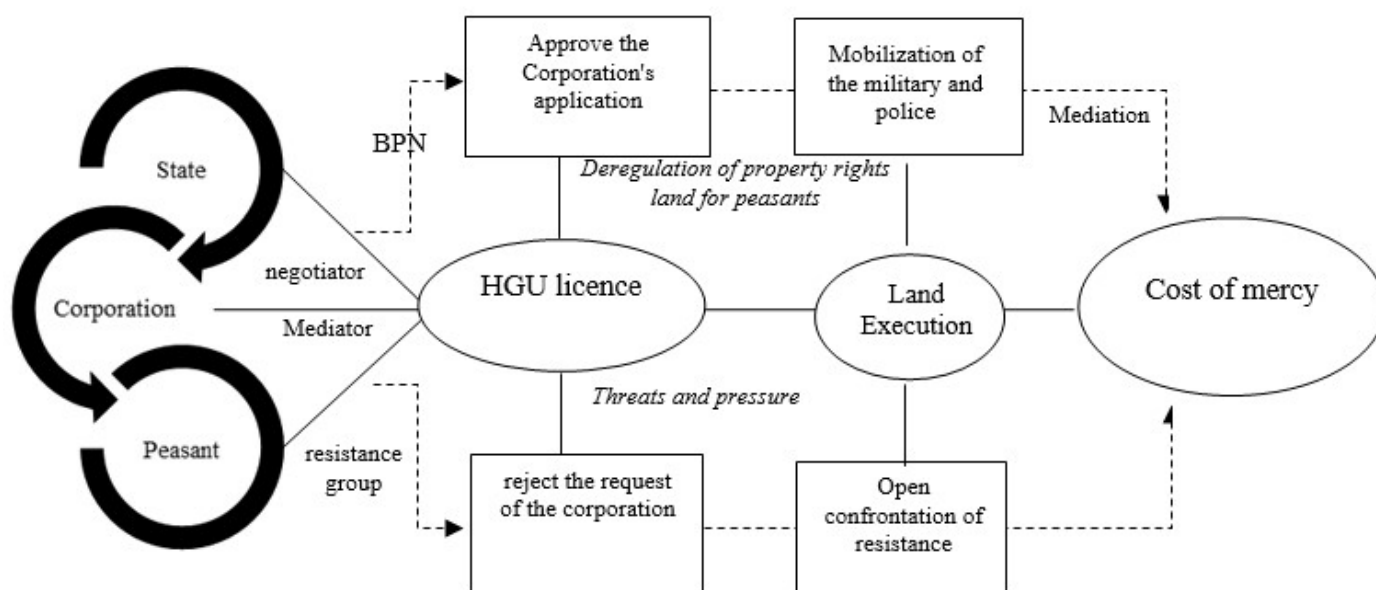


Figure 1. Flow of Interests of Actor and Resistance Movement

D. Declination of The Peasant Movement

Several land tenure conflicts with different consequences, and in general, peasant resistance to the power of large corporations in collaboration with local governments often occurs. Some resistances succeed in rapidly taking land even without significant resistance or upheaval, and some succeed in a short period of time and receive relatively balanced incentives. However, in the context of the peasant resistance movement, three villages in West Telukjambe experienced a decline, leading to the movement's failure.

The case of three villages in West Telukjambe with a very long process of resistance since 1974 has a different ending. The farmers' movement group finally gave up, especially after the court's decision not to get the land, besides that, they also did not get proper facilities and incentives. The peasant resistance movement in three villages in West Telukjambe was strongly influenced by the accumulation of capital, which caused the weakening of the movement both externally and internally. The weakening of the peasant movement can be explained in the following table 2.

Table 2. Factors Weakening The Peasant Resistance Movement

External Factors	Internal Factors
a. Aspects of legality as an effort to privatize through the practice of document manipulation.	a. Social ties between peasants are not strong because they are not well organized
b. The division of the state in providing space for the private sector through the Constitutional Court's decision and HGU licensing	b. There is no single leadership in organizing the farmers
c. The existence of thuggery in securing the claimed land	c. The motivation of peasant groups in carrying out resistance movements is only organized by movement groups from outside
d. There is a land mafia	d. Resistance movement groups (NGOs) do not have a strong negotiation path both to the state and to corporations so that the opportunity to mediate the interests of farmers is not achieved
	e. Resistance movement groups (NGOs) do not have a strong negotiation path both to the state and to corporations so that the opportunity to mediate the interests of peasants is not achieved

The study results show that the failure of the peasant resistance movement was caused by the weakening of the movement, both externally and internally. Externally, the position of peasants has begun to weaken since the existence of state policies that provide space and access for the development of industrial estates around peasants' land. Then the position of the peasants was also weakened due to the mechanism of privatization and legal support for land ownership, as well as pressure and threats from certain parties who helped capitalists achieve their goals. The accumulation of these weaknesses influenced the peasant resistance movement. Meanwhile, from the internal side, there are obstacles, so no solid strength is created to achieve the movement's goals.

The topic of peasant resistance movements against large corporations whose land control practices are tied to global capitalism (neoliberalism) in new spatial formations has given rise to something new. First, the peasant resistance movement occurred in areas experiencing economic and industrial development, supported by the support of various alliances, media, legal institutions, and close to the capital city but ended in the decline of the movement. Second, the decline of the movement occurred because there were internal and external factors in the resistance movement as factors that weakened the peasant movement.

IV. CONCLUSION

The land conflict between corporations and peasants in West Telukjambe occurred due to a struggle for land rights that had long been owned by peasants in three villages (Wanasari, Wanakerta and Margamulya). Land control mechanisms through the practice of land privatization and deregulation of land ownership rights have triggered resistance from peasants.

Various forms of peasant resistance movements in three villages in West Telukjambe, ranging from protests, demonstrations or rallies, actions demanding rights to legal action through the courts, have been carried out through a long process from year to year. This resistance movement received support from several movement activists or non-government organizations (NGOs) and students. However, the process of struggle of the peasant resistance movement is not easy because it is faced with actors who have great power, namely the political power of the State, and the economic power of corporations. In addition, pressure and threats from other parties have contributed to the upheaval of land conflicts. This condition had an impact on the strength of the farming movement which ultimately experienced a decline in the movement.

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