



## Agrarian Citizenship and the Protection of Farmers' Rights in Indonesia's Forest Areas

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### Abstract

The Ministry of Forestry designates Cimrutu Village, Central Java, Indonesia, as a forest area under the "concession" of Perhutani, a state-owned forestry company. This situation is detrimental to society as most of the community's agricultural rights and economic access to land are obstructed by the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry's policy forbidding communities from possessing land rights in forested regions. This study investigates the historical context of land tenure conflicts and disputes over land claims by communities governed and subsequently asserted by the State Forestry Public Company. Using a spatial analysis approach, the data-gathering technique was executed qualitatively on community-controlled land. The study's findings indicate that the community in Cimrutu Village has possessed the land since 1967, yet prolonged tenure disputes have arisen, exacerbating poverty due to farmers' restricted access. Urgent policy advancements are required for the welfare of individuals, specifically the removal of residential and livelihood lands from forested regions to ensure access to economic opportunities.

## I. Introduction

Peasant resistance movement issues, which typically commence with instability and violence, dominate agrarian studies in various regions of Indonesia (Gilbert and Afrizal, 2019; Berenschot et al., 2022; Salim, 2017). In response to peasant opposition, numerous protest movements advocating for land redistribution arose due to land claim disputes between farmers and indigenous populations in forested and non-forested areas.

Since Indonesia's independence, the political matter of agrarian rights for smallholders ([Dhiaulhaq and McCarthy, 2020](#); [Steinebach, 2017](#)), In particular, land tenure conflicts in forested and non-forested areas have not been effectively resolved ([Peluso, 2006](#); [Rachman, 2017](#)). Ironically, post-1998, agrarian issues were politicized and became a standard component of electoral campaigns despite suspicions regarding the distinctiveness of each party's platform. According to [Li \(2021\)](#), 21st century land reform involves more actors with diverse agendas, resulting in populist rather than substantive agrarian reform policy.

Since 2017, the Indonesian government has substituted the previous policy program, "agrarian reform and social forestry," with a new initiative. Given the significance of these agrarian challenges in Indonesia, the agenda must encompass a policy to tackle inequality, conflicts over forest area tenure, structural poverty, and environmental, ecological, or natural resource crises ([Cahyono et al., 2019](#); [Fridayanti and Dharmawan, 2015](#); [Zulfikar and Nasdian, 2018](#)). Land tenure conflicts in forest areas are frequently found to be the source of poverty for people living in and around those areas ([Fridayanti and Dharmawan, 2015](#); [Siburian, 2016](#)). This situation underscores the significance of the agrarian issue, as it is intrinsically connected to the concept of agrarian citizenship, which encompasses the fundamental rights of farming communities. It also pertains to justice and welfare, especially for those farming communities asserting land rights in forested regions.

This study analyses tenure disputes, communal agrarian rights, and claim conflicts in the forest region of Cimrutu village, Cilacap regency, Central Java, Indonesia, where community land tenure presents a challenge. The inhabitants' livelihoods and settlements depend on the condition of the soil ([Kusmayadi, 2015](#); [Zulaikha et al., 2016](#)). In the meantime, Perhutani (the state forestry public corporation) and Kesatuan Pengelolaan Hutan (the forest management unit) in West Banyumas, Central Java, assert that the entire administrative region of Cimrutu village falls within the forest area. The designation of Cimrutu village as a forest area hinders the community's ability to develop and secure funding for diverse enterprises. Cimrutu village has been precluded from accessing Agriculture Service grants for food land development since 2020 due to its designation as a forest area ([Interview with Cimrutu village officials, 2021](#)). According to [Peluso \(2011\)](#), there are many villages in Java that are included in forest areas where there are dynamics and differentiation in the relationship between the community and the state or state forestry public company, as well as tensions that the two cannot control.

Efforts to address land tenure disputes in Cimrutu through the engagement of diverse stakeholders at the district level have always been unsuccessful. The Ministry of Forestry proposed a land exchange to the Cimrutu community; however, the Cilacap regional administration opposed this due to challenges in identifying suitable replacement land. The local government intends to exclude Cimrutu village from the forest area. Still, it is hindered by Article 18, paragraph (2) of Law Number 41 of 1999 about forestry, which mandates that a province's forest area must include at least 30%.

Statistics Indonesia data indicates that community and state forests in Central Java comprise 41% of the overall area; nevertheless, the region is believed to possess less than 30% of the total watershed area ([BPS Jawa Tengah, 2021](#)). The 30% stipulation is why the Ministry of Forestry declines to exempt communities from Java's forest area, even though this stipulation is absent in paragraph 4 of the Job Creation law's forestry portion. In practice, the Ministry of Forestry is stringent in relinquishing forest land asserted by the community.

The resolution of the state against community forest land claims is a critical problem regarding the state's regulation, management, and policy implementation. The concept of agrarian citizenship is significant for farmers who have managed the land for decades and whose agricultural rights have been disregarded by the state. Two aspects merit discussion: the beneficiaries of official actions and the rationale behind the denial of rights to the farmers of Cimrutu village, who have possessed the property for decades. The community governs the land according to their ancestral rights, which have been transmitted through generations. This situation significantly undermines the community's perception of fairness, as they do not seek to exploit extensive land areas but aim to persist as subsistence farmers to attain food sovereignty ([Bowness and Wittman, 2021](#)). This study covers a relatively novel subject, as forest area claims are encompassed within the governmental framework for settlement concerning agrarian reform and social forestry initiatives. This issue can be addressed by adhering to Government Regulation Number 23 of 2021 concerning Forestry Implementation, Minister of Forestry Regulation Number 7 of 2021 regarding Forestry Planning, Alterations in the Designation and Function of Forest Areas, and Utilization of Forest Areas, as well as Presidential Regulation Number 62 of 2023 about the Acceleration of Agrarian Reform Implementation. Researchers from places beyond Java have undertaken pertinent investigations, which the RA-PS method addressed ([Salim et al., 2021](#)). Meanwhile, from the perspective of social forestry policy, evaluation and comparison studies, land management, assistance, and participation have also been carried out by several researchers ([Siscawati et al., 2017](#); [Moeliono et al., 2017](#); [Suharjito & Wulandari, 2019](#); [Wulandari & Kurniasih, 2019](#)). Utami, Ekawati, and Junarto published a study with a different perspective. They looked at how to find and use community land in forest areas for the provision of Land Objects for Agrarian Reform (TORA) in Sumatra using a spatial approach ([Utami et al., 2019](#); [Ekawati et al., 2019](#); [Junarto & Djurdjani, 2020](#)). Meanwhile, similar studies in the context of forest areas for resolving land claims in forest areas (*PPTKH*) in Java are still very limited.

The study's findings are only available in the publication of [Sirajuddin \(2024\)](#) because in Java, the policy for *PPTKH* is a new legal issue. The findings indicate that numerous studies have presented outcomes pertaining to policy studies, historical contexts, and the resolution of community rights in forest regions through a regulation-centric rights resolution approach, neglecting the fundamental issue of community control over land in these areas. The study contends that this normative resolution fails to provide a substantive solution, as it overlooks the root problem and the state's bias, which are not encompassed within a just policy framework. The study proposes an

alternative perspective by emphasizing agrarian citizenship as a fundamental right for citizens, asserting that individuals asserting land claims in forest areas are unequivocally the state's responsibility to address, as a manifestation of substantive and distributive justice. The agrarian citizenship approach is crucial in fulfilling the basic rights of impoverished individuals whose livelihoods are contingent upon land for their essential subsistence needs.

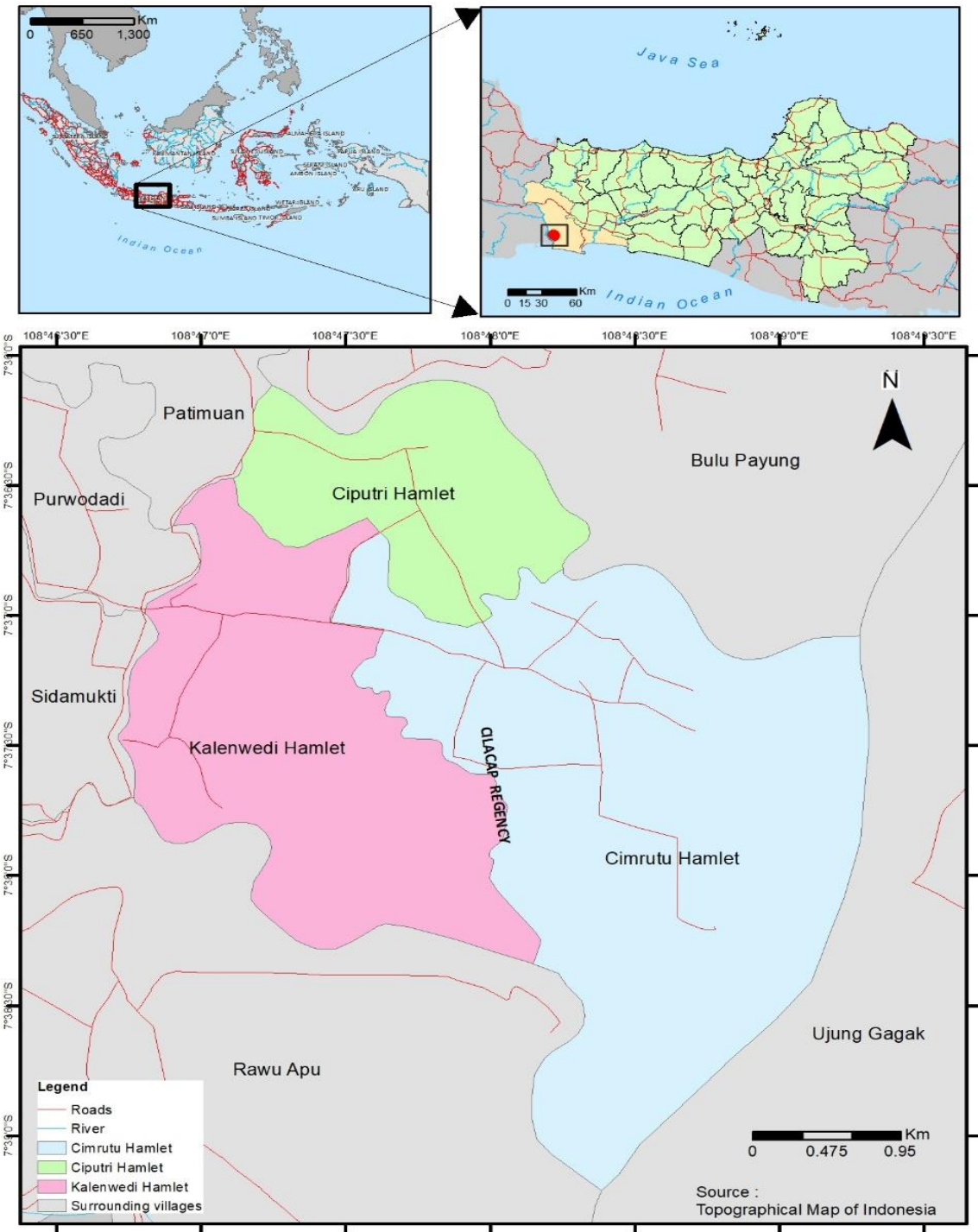
In that context, this study is highly pertinent and catalyzes comparable investigations by providing a variety of methodologies. This situation implies that the research conducted thus far regarding resolving claim conflicts in forest areas is still restricted to identifying objects—subjects—to achieve administrative justice. This study also examines the potential to improve the agrarian rights of rural agricultural communities by implementing the agrarian citizenship program ([Wittman, 2009a](#)) and pro-poor land reform initiatives ([Anafo, 2013](#)).

## II. Tenure Conflicts and Land Rights in Cimrutu Forest

The study was conducted in Cimrutu village, Cilacap regency, Central Java, Indonesia, by obtaining samples from two of the village's three hamlets. Due to time limitations, the spatial identification of the territory around Cimrutu hamlet could not be finalized. Cimrutu village was selected as the research site due to its designation as an officially recognized community formed by the government in 1999, despite its geographical inclusion inside a forested area. The Cimrutu community forfeits legal rights to assets and property due to its location within a forested region, resulting in diminished opportunities to enhance its agricultural economy. This study used the agrarian citizenship framework to analyze critical data about tenure conflicts and land tenure identification among farmers in Cimrutu village. Field data were collected using a qualitative strategy ([Lennox and Short, 2016](#); [Walliman, 2017](#)) and spatial analysis ([Alemie and Amsalu, 2020](#); [Santana-Cordero and Szabó, 2019](#)) by displaying community-controlled lands, competing claims, and identification, which were then spatially and temporally analyzed. The results of field identification confirm that the community's agrarian rights related to the life and livelihood of Cimrutu village's farmers are worth fighting for.

Within 20 years, specifically in 2020 and 2000, data related to land tenure were tested using interview, observation, and spatial analysis techniques by processing satellite images. The 2020 image was interpreted by taking into account the elements of hue and color, shape, size, texture, pattern, shadow, site, and association ([Shutler et al., 2016](#); [Choudhury and Das, 2016](#)). Meanwhile, the 2000 image was digitally processed using the unsupervised classification method, which involves image data processing based on value classes that are grouped by a computer using a specific algorithm ([Kushardono, 2017](#)). The result of the normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) transformation application was used in the unsupervised classification method. This study was carried out to investigate the community's tenure of land parcels in the forest area, specifically whether they have been controlled by them for less than or

more than 20 years. As a working map, the author used the 2020 SPOT 7 and 2000 Landsat-7 satellite images and processed the 1998 property/building tax block map image, supplemented by information from village heads, hamlet heads, and local residents in Cimrutu. The analysis produced maps of possession, ownership, use, and utilization, as well as an old map of land tenure by the Cimrutu community. Figure 1 depicts a map of the research location in Cimrutu village, with a focus on the hamlets of Ciputri and Kalenwedi.



**Figure. 1.** Cimrutu village administrative map consisting of Cimrutu, Ciputri, and Kalenwedi hamlets (Topographical Map of Indonesia, 2024).

### III. Land Tenure Conflicts and Agrarian Justice in Forest Areas

#### A. Conflicts over migration and tenure in forest areas

According to the Head of Cimrutu Village and the manuscript “Treatise of History/Origin of Cimrutu Village Land” Cimrutu was once part of Purwodadi village, which included the Ciputri and Cimrutu hamlets. This area was formed by sedimentation or raised land (aanslibbing), which was cleared in 1967 ([Zulaikha et al., 2016](#)). Prior to the massive land clearing, some villages in the area, particularly around Patimuan sub-district, were already occupied by Javanese people. Initially, in 1949, there was a migration of Sundanese people from Parigi and Cigugur sub-districts, Ciamis regency, West Java, fleeing Darul Islam (Indonesian Islamic Army) attacks ([Kusmayadi, 2015](#)).

Land clearing followed as a result of the growing population’s need for new land. This expansion transformed the physical appearance of the hamlets of Ciputri and Cimrutu into residential areas and agricultural land. The government began taxing the residents of the area in 1987. Following that, infrastructure development began in response to the need for public services. Ciputri and Cimrutu hamlets were incorporated into new villages in 1999 under the name Cimrutu village, based on the Decree of the Governor of Central Java Number: 146.1/216/1999 dated December 9, 1999. Cimrutu village, Patimuan sub-district, Cilacap regency, became the definitive village as a result of this decision ([Interview with Cimrutu village head, 2021](#)).

Law Number 6 of 2014 about villages, which was changed by Law Number 3 of 2024 about villages, Article 4 (paragraphs b to i) states that one goal of a professionally formed village is to control the state system in the village, protect and preserve customs, culture, traditions, and public welfare, support village communities, and enhance the village as a place to thrive. The intent of the article is clear: a definitively established village is entitled to achieve its development by leveraging the potential inherent in it, one of which includes professionally formed administrative rights closely tied to the agrarian citizenship rights of the community. According to [Wittman \(2009b\)](#) and [Oprea et al. \(2024\)](#), agrarian citizenship refers to the recognition and affirmation of rights and identities essential for agricultural communities, emphasizing the connection between land, cultural practices, and political participation. This concept underscores how land ownership and agricultural practices influence individuals' sense of belonging and their engagement with state and community structures.

The problem is that the definitive determination of Cimrutu Village by the Ministry of Home Affairs is inconsistent with the policies of other ministries, particularly the Ministry of Forestry, which has constrained the space necessary for development and welfare. Restrictions imposed by land management policies hinder residents' ability to move freely, especially concerning the community's right to reside on agricultural land and access land in general. This forestry policy poses a significant issue from the perspective of agrarian citizens, as it undermines the community's fundamental right to utilize land. While the village's determination signifies administrative recognition, its restrictions in

other areas hinder the community's ability to function. Designation of Cimrutu Village as a definitive village would not have resulted in such a problem.

According to observations and interviews, the Cimrutu community is involved in rice farming, mixed crops (*palawija*), and brown sugar production. The main issue in Cimrutu village, however, is poverty, as the average amount of land owned is less than 0.5 hectares. According to the village head, 70% of the total population of Cimrutu village is impoverished, and they must rely on loans from outside the village to meet their daily needs. The government's refusal to remove Cimrutu Village from the forest area has harmed the Cimrutu community's economic access. The Department of Agriculture has stopped funding assistance to Cimrutu village for irrigation development and community agriculture since 2020 due to the village's forest status. Table 1 depicts the Cimrutu population, rice fields, and dry land.

**Table 1.** Population and land use in Cimrutu Village

No.	Total residents (M/F)	Rice fields	Area (ha)	Dry land	Area (ha)
1	1658 (M)	Technical irrigation	258.00	Moor/plantation	81.00
2	1578 (F)	Rainfed	772.00	Coconut	102.00
3	-	Yard/building	17.00	State forest	290.00
Total	3236		1047.00		463.00

*Source: The data was processed using BPS data, Patimuan District figures, and Cimrutu Village Profile data, 2024 (Edited).*

Following the failure of Perhutani's second program, which allowed residents to work on rice farming, infrastructure development in Cimrutu was legalized by Minister of Forestry Decree Number: 1056/Menhut-VII/1996, dated August 6, 1996. Before the division, the hamlets of Cimrutu and Ciputri in Purwodadi Village obtained permits for the construction of physical and agricultural infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, embankments, drainage canals, and irrigation networks. The project was known as the Citanduy Sidareja-Cihaur project, or *Procit* in the community, and it was funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). However, due to the mid-1997 monetary crisis, the project was put on hold ([Interview with Cimrutu Village Head, 2021](#)).

The Cimrutu Village community believed that if Perhutani and Ministry of Forestry allowed the community to manage the land and granted permits for infrastructure development, the residents' legality for agrarian citizenship would be greatly simplified. That was not the case, because Perhutani and the forestry authorities still claim ownership of the land. This is when the conflicts began, owing to Cimrutu farmers' ambiguous land status and difficult access to land legality. Perhutani and West Banyumas Forest Management Unit (KPH-*Kesatuan Pengelolaan Hutan*), on the other hand, refuse to show evidence that Cimrutu Village is included in their work area, despite both the Decree on the Inauguration of the Forest Area and a map of the Perhutani working area. These claims are extremely damaging to farmers because they relate to citizens' access to land ownership rights. As a result of Perhutani's lack of transparency, the Cimrutu community's relationships with Perhutani and KPH are strained ([Ambarwati et al., 2018](#)). The Cimrutu Village government questions Perhutani and KPH's unilateral claims because, as previously stated, Cimrutu farmers have historically followed all Perhutani wishes, and instead, Perhutani and KPH

claim the land as forest area, resulting in increasingly limited access for farmers.

The regent of Cilacap began efforts to resolve the conflict in 2000 by writing a letter to the Minister of Forestry and Plantations, essentially requesting that the lands of plots 5, 6, and 7 of Resort be considered for release to be processed into property rights. The governors and regents were not expected to provide recommendations on requests for forest area release, according to the response received. On May 6, 2008, the Head of Cimrutu Village wrote to the Head of the National Land Agency of the Republic of Indonesia. On January 6, 2009, he wrote to the Minister of Forestry, but neither letter received a response. Furthermore, the West Banyumas Forest Management Unit Administrator, based on letter number 615/059.9/PSDH/Byb/I dated June 11, 2008, offered to the Cilacap regent to apply the Joint Forest Management Pattern to the settlement of disputed lands. The offer could not be implemented in Cimrutu village because the community required certainty about its land rights.

In the context of resolving customary rights and land tenure in Cilacap regency, the Regent of Cilacap formed the land tenure, ownership, use, and utilization team in 2014. The absence of the Forest Area Consolidation Center, which is in charge of managing forests in Region XI-Java Madura, hindered its implementation when it started in 2015. The Director General of Planning and Environmental Management has directed that all Forest Area Consolidation Centers in Indonesia postpone the operation of identifying land activities in forest areas until the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Forestry issue joint implementation instructions.

On June 19–20, 2017, Commission A of the Cilacap Regency's Regional People's Representative Assembly conducted a working visit to the Community and Village Empowerment Service, Population and Civil Registration Office, and Department of Public Housing and Settlement Areas, resulting in a decision that essentially confirmed that the land in Cimrutu village was forest land that Perhutani had never released. A recommendation was made to submit a request for a forest area exchange to the Minister of Environment and Forestry in order to resolve the conflict. Furthermore, the Cilacap Regency Government requested that the Head of the Central Java Environment and Forestry Service assist in resolving the Perhutani land dispute in Cimrutu village. Following a site inspection on September 14, 2017 and a joint meeting on October 30, 2017, it was recommended that the problem be partially resolved through the Forest Area Exchange. Residential land and fields/yards covering 276.6 hectares would be resolved through Forest Area Exchange, and arable land covering 1111.10 hectares would be resolved through the issuance of a social forestry forest utilization permit. The Cilacap Regional Government rejected the settlement option due to the difficulty of finding replacement land for the implementation of the Forest Area Exchange as well as the high cost and length of the Forest Area Exchange administration process, causing conflict resolution efforts to stall until now.

## **B. Agrarian Citizenship and Agrarian justice**

Farmers from Cimrutu village have been working on land in Cikujang resort plots 5, 6, and 7 since 1970, having previously migrated to Cimrutu in 1967. Farmers began to manage land for settlements and livelihoods during this time period (rice fields). No wonder these farmers expect their agrarian rights to



be granted in order to prioritize the legality and security of land management. This opinion is consistent with Article 24, paragraph 2 of Government Regulation Number 24 of 1997 concerning Land Registration, which permits a landowner who has owned land for 20 years in a row to register their land as a land ownership right. As part of the state's assistance for small farmers like the people of Cimrutu, this piece demonstrates the respect for the community that is related to agrarian rights.

In accordance with these demands, Presidential Regulation Number 62 of 2023 has been issued to accelerate the implementation of agrarian reform. This regulation replaces Presidential Regulation Number 86 of 2018 and mandates that agrarian reform be implemented through a single door via the Agrarian Reform Task Force (*GTRA-Gugus Tugas Reforma Agraria*). The president-mandated Agrarian Reform Task Force should address all issues upstream, and institutions should address issues downstream in accordance with their respective roles and job descriptions. The aforementioned Presidential Decree binds all parties because the Minister of Economic Affairs coordinated it. The goal is clear: to collaborate to solve all problems related to agrarian affairs in Indonesia, particularly long-standing chronic problems.

The case of Cimrutu village, as well as other villages in Java, particularly those in forested areas, is one of chronic problems. If not addressed immediately, these issues will exacerbate poverty in local communities and pose a risk of open conflict. Of course, not all agrarian issues, particularly those involving land claims for forest areas, must result in land redistribution or the release of forest areas. The circumstances in the field determine them. The mechanisms are strictly accommodated by Presidential Regulation Number 62 of 2023 concerning the Acceleration of Implementation of Agrarian Reform, Government Regulation No. 23 of 2021 about Forestry Implementation, and Minister of Forestry Regulation No. 7 of 2021 about Forestry Planning, Changes in the Designation and Function of Forest Areas, and Use of Forest Areas.

According to the law and their citizenship rights status, Cimrutu farmers are real citizens, according to this study ([Suganda, 2021](#)). As a result, it is natural for local residents to demand their rights once their obligations as citizens have been met: the obligation to pay taxes, legal obligations, public participation, politics, and so on (according to Constitution Articles 27–28). The state protects citizens' civil and political rights, but their agrarian rights are a problem. The right can be fulfilled in a variety of ways because the community cleared land in accordance with the traditions and mechanisms in place in various parts of Indonesia at the time, namely clearing forests and then constructing living spaces.

Community forest clearing took place in various regions of Indonesia during the 1960s, and it was not entirely detrimental ([Rafiqi et al., 2021](#)). In contrast to the present, the Spatial Planning Law is rigorously enforced and mandates adherence to land designation. This reality should be examined within the legal and social framework, specifically referencing Articles 16 and 46 of the Basic Agrarian Law No. 5 of 1960, which pertain to the right to clear land and acknowledge the enduring influence of customary systems and patterns as recognized by law. The framework should analyze the issue from a broader perspective, particularly regarding the right to utilize land and forests to facilitate civilization development and enhance livelihoods. Agrarian policy fundamentally allows these activities, as individuals who clear land for their

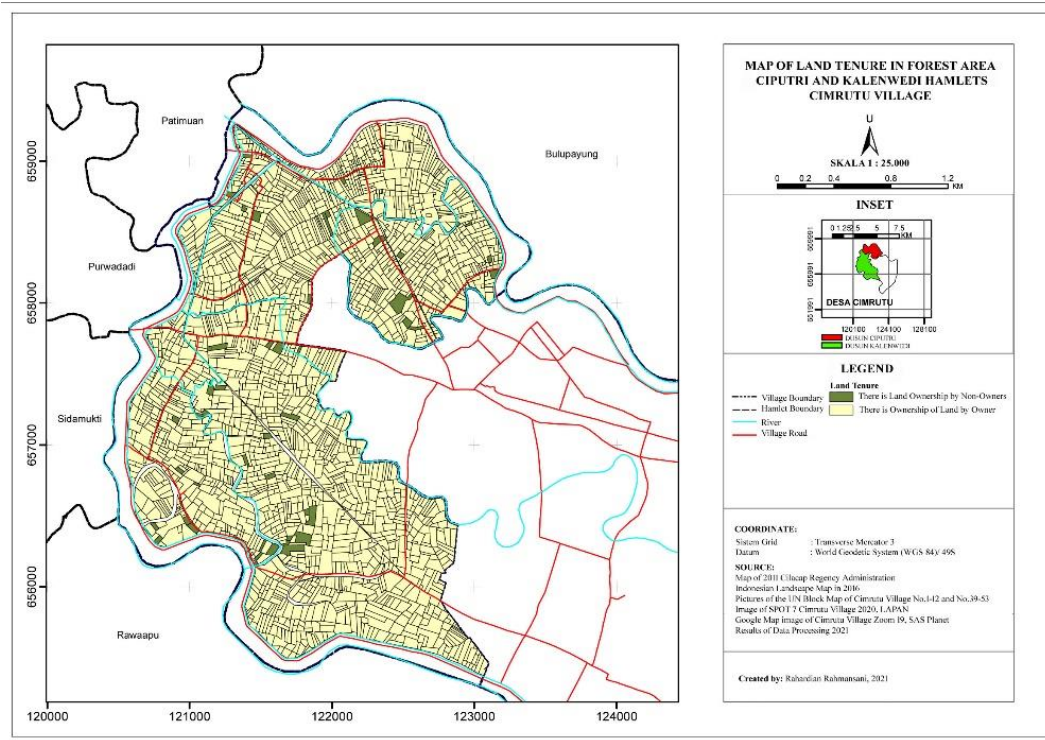
livelihood are recognized as agents contributing to food sovereignty ([Bowness and Wittman, 2021](#)). Consequently, the state has a duty to promote justice and welfare. According to Borras, the government holds the responsibility of supporting and fulfilling agrarian rights. [Borras and Franco \(2009\)](#) assert that land and citizenship rights are fundamental to agrarian citizenship, particularly for impoverished rural farmers. Agrarian citizenship, as a subset of political citizenship, is essential for farmers in the pursuit of food sovereignty ([Clarke et al., 2014](#)). The state is obligated to safeguard citizens' rights to production, distribution of food, recognition as members of the nation, and agrarian rights ([Salim, 2019](#)). The Cimrutu community's assertion of rights to state forest land across generations presents a compelling argument; it is rooted not in land appropriation but in the continuity of their way of life. Under the current circumstances, the state ought to engage rigorously and with commendable intentions to address long-standing issues. If the state does not intervene, community forest claims may remain a commodity exploited by certain parties seeking rapid financial gain.

More broadly, agrarian citizenship in the context of food sovereignty ([Desmarais and Wittman, 2014](#)) and Borras' clearer perspective on fair land management policies and pro-poor land reform must be repositioned. If agrarian and land reform policies change, the focus must remain on the distribution of lands controlled by the community, regardless of whether they are state land or community land rights (in Cimrutu). The key is the owner's (the power's) policy and to what extent the state is willing to redistribute the land to the community, whether through a redistribution mechanism, a distribution mechanism (the genuine agrarian reform model), or a non-(re)distribution and (re)concentration mechanism, which means continuing with the current situation ([Borras Jr. and Franco, 2012](#)). The concepts proposed by Wittman and the schemes proposed by Borras above are subject to change in response to state policies, which are also influenced by the community's agrarian movement. This means that policy implementation at the field level must be flexible and balanced in order to foster community food self-sufficiency and sovereignty. Fulfilling the country's agrarian citizenship for the community is a result that should be done as a form of policy design in order to create justice and welfare for its citizens ([Colebatch, 2018](#)).

### **C. Land tenure mapping in Cimrutu Village**

The study's findings are to strengthen the argument regarding the agrarian rights of farmers in Cimrutu Village from a spatial perspective. The results of the Mapping of Land Control, Ownership, Use, and Utilization were carried out in Cimrutu Village for two hamlets, namely Ciputri and Kalenwedi Hamlets. The study also uses SPOT 7 satellite imagery from LAPAN and Google Maps satellite imagery from SAS Planet. The author uses Google Maps imagery to aid in image interpretation, a task that SPOT 7 satellite imagery cannot perform due to its extensive cloud cover. Another source used is the 1998 PBB Block Map image, which contains information related to the shape of the land plot and the Plot Sequence Number (NUB-Nomor Urut Bidang), which corresponds to the number on the Tax Payable/Land and Building Tax Notification Letter (SPPT/PBB-Surat Pemberitahuan Pajak Terhutang/Pajak Bumi Bangunan). Subject data is taken from the 2021 Land and Building Tax Collection & Payment List (DHKP-Daftar Himpunan Ketetapan Pajak & Pembayaran) data. The

Cimrutu Village apparatus and the hamlet head assist in the on-screen digitization of the P4T mapping process. The mapping of two hamlets shows a total of 2,379 land plots. Land parcels with the same owner as in the 2021 list of land and building tax assessments and payments are classified according to the type of control held by the owner. Meanwhile, land parcels that have been traded but are still under construction by the sellers are classified as non-ownership. Figure 2 depicts the results of land tenure mapping in the hamlets of Ciputri and Kalenwedi. Table 2 shows the distribution of the number and area of land parcels in Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets by type of land tenure.



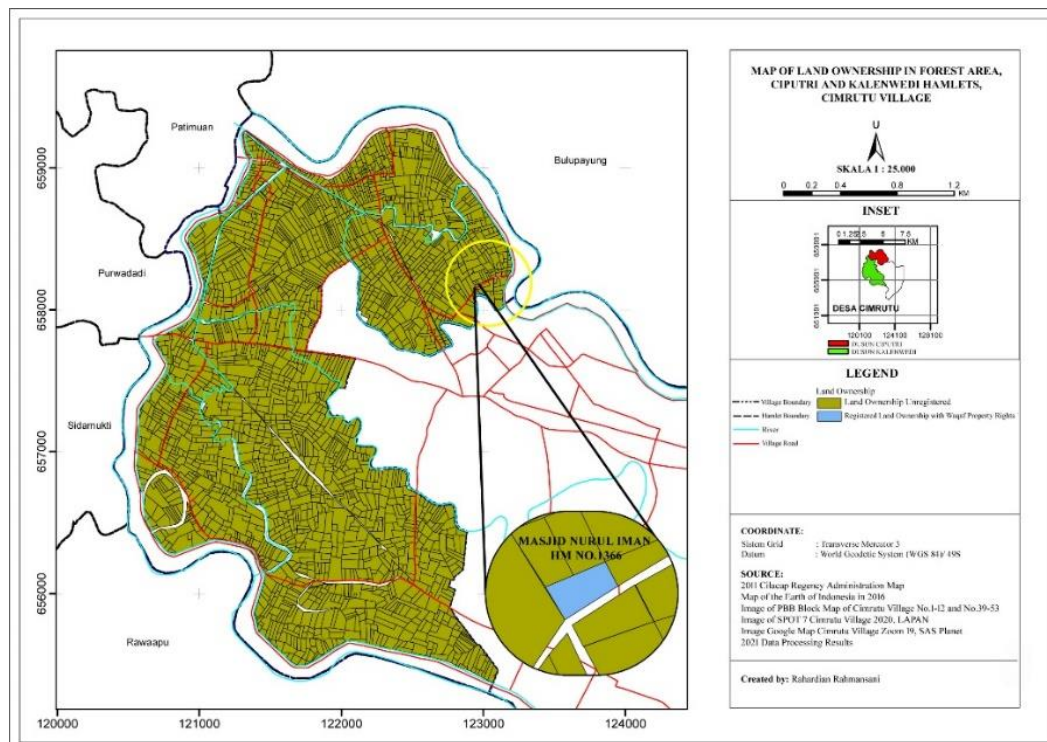
**Fig. 2.** Mapping of land tenure in Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets. *Source: Primary data, 2024.*

**Table 2.** Land tenure in Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets

No	Type of land tenure	Number of fields		Area (ha)		Area (%)	
		Ciputri	Kalenwedi	Ciputri	Kalenwedi	Ciputri	Kalenwedi
1	Ownership of land by owner	892	1.435	170.65	381.92	97.16	97.90
2	Ownership of non-owner	19	33	4.99	8.20	2.84	2.10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>1.468</b>	<b>175.64</b>	<b>390.12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data, 2024 (Edited).*

Meanwhile, land ownership mapping shows that there is only one registered land parcel. In Ciputri hamlet, the plot of land is in the shape of a mosque with a waqf land certificate issued in 1992. Figure 3 is used to describe land ownership mapping.



**Fig. 3.** Land ownership map: Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets. *Source: Primary data, 2024.*

Table 3 shows the distribution of land ownership in the Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets in greater detail.

**Table 3.** Land ownership in Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets

No	Type of land ownership	Number of fields		Area (ha)		Area (%)	
		Ciputri	Kalenwedi	Ciputri	Kalenwedi	Ciputri	Kalenwedi
1	Unregistered land ownership	910	1468	175.59	390.12	99.97	100
2	Registered land ownership	1	0	0.05	0	0.24	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>1468</b>	<b>175.64</b>	<b>390.12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data, 2024 (Edited).*

Figure 4 depicts the different types of land use based on data from land use mapping in Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets.

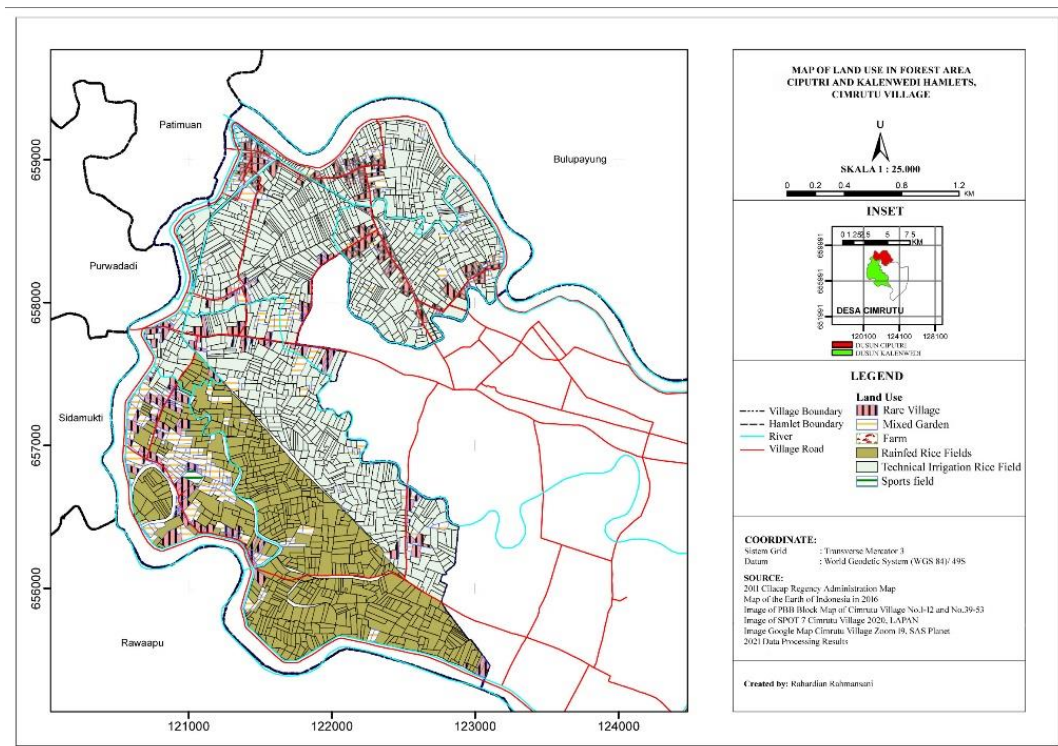


Fig. 4. Land Tenure Map: Ciputri and Kalenwedi. Source: Primary data, 2024.

Land use in Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets includes rare village land use, mixed plantation land use, livestock, rainfed rice fields, technical irrigated rice fields, and sports fields. Table 4 depicts the land use distribution by area in Ciputri hamlet.

Table 4. Land Use Types: Ciputri and Kalenwedi

No	Type of land ownership	Number of fields		Area (ha)		Area (%)	
		Ciputri	Kalenwedi	Ciputri	Kalenwedi	Ciputri	Kalenwedi
1	Rare village	168	144	20.56	28.97	11.71	7.43
2	Mixed plantation	127	214	13.03	42.67	7.42	10.94
3	Technical irrigation rice	616	1	142.05	0.11	80.88	0.03
4	Livestock	-	587	-	170.14	-	43.61
5	Rainfed rice fields	-	521	-	147.38	-	37.78
6	Sports fields	-	1	-	0.85	-	0.22
Total		911	1468	175.64	390.12	100	100

Source: Primary data, 2024 (Edited).

Ciputri comprises three land uses: rare communities, mixed plantations, and technically irrigated rice fields. It contrasts with Kalenwedi hamlet in various aspects, notably its greater area. Table 4 illustrates the distribution of



No	Type of land ownership	Number of fields		Area (ha)		Area (%)	
		Ciputri	Kalenwedi	Ciputri	Kalenwedi	Ciputri	Kalenwedi
5	Housing activity	161	141	19.48	28.23	11.09	7.23
6	Agricultural production	616	861	142.05	248.19	80.88	63.62
7	Public cemetery	-	1	-	0.60	-	0.15
8	Livestock	-	1	-	0.11	-	0.03
9	Sports facilities	-	1	-	0.85	-	0.22
	Total	911	1468	175.64	390.12	100	100

Source: Primary data, 2024 (Edited).

The final section is the outcome of image processing-based identification and mapping of the Cimrutu area to ascertain the length of community control over the land, whether it is less than or more than 20 years. The purpose of presenting this data was to identify opportunities for settling forest area claims in accordance with Presidential Regulation No. 88 of 2017 concerning Settlement of Land Tenure in Forest Areas: land tenure of more than 20 years can be released or redistributed from forest areas; land tenure of less than 20 years can be settled with other schemes (Salim and Utami, 2019). Based on the value of vegetation density in combination with land use, the author determined the length of land tenure. Table 6 shows how attribute data appears in the shapefile format as a result of the overlay.

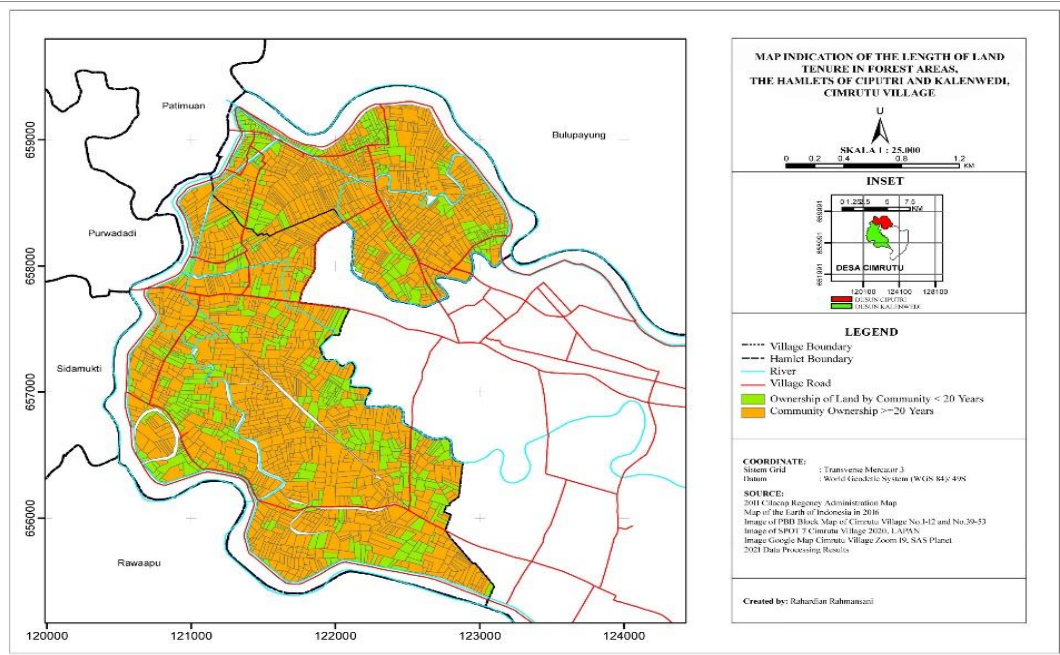
**Table 6.** Identification of the length of land tenure by the community

Combination	Length of Tenure
Low-density vegetation; Rare village	>= 20 years
Low-density vegetation; Technical irrigation rice fields	>= 20 years
Medium-density vegetation; Mixed plantation	< 20 years
Low-density vegetation; Technical irrigation rice fields	>= 20 years
Non-vegetation; Technical irrigation rice fields	>= 20 years
Non-vegetation; Technical irrigation rice fields	>= 20 years
Medium-density vegetation; Rare village	< 20 years
Non-vegetation; Technical irrigation rice fields	>= 20 years
Medium-density vegetation; Mixed plantation	< 20 years
High-density vegetation; Mixed plantation	< 20 years

Source: Primary data, 2024 (Edited).

Non-vegetation and low-density vegetation are identified as having a tenure of more than 20 years, while medium and high-density vegetation are identified as having a tenure of less than 20 years. Due to several considerations, such as the community working on arable land in the form of rainfed rice fields prior to the irrigation system, which led to the possibility of vegetation values being read at the time of satellite recording in 2000, low-density vegetation is also identified as having a tenure of more than 20 years. Furthermore, many plots of land in the form of housing have been built haphazardly, so that the surroundings of their homes are dominated by plants. As a result, the vegetation density value is read as low-density vegetation rather than non-vegetation.

Figure 6 depicts the results of mapping the length of land tenure in the hamlets of Ciputri and Kalenwedi.



**Fig. 6.** Land Tenure Duration Map: Ciputri and Kalenwedi Hamlets. *Source: Primary data, 2024.*

The identification results show that the community has owned an average of 77.56% of the land in the Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets for more than 20 years. Table 7 shows the distribution of the number of fields and area in Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets based on tenure length.

**Table 7.** Land tenure in Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets

No	Type of land ownership	Number of fields		Area (ha)		Area (%)	
		Ciputri	Kalenwedi	Ciputri	Kalenwedi	Ciputri	Kalenwedi
1	< 20 years	241	337	39.69	86.93	22.60	22.28
2	≥ 20 years	670	1131	135.95	303.19	77.40	77.72
	Total	911	1468	175.64	390.12	100	100

*Source: Primary data, 2024 (Edited).*

The results of the study's identification and mapping of the two hamlets mentioned above, which he carried out alongside village officials and Cimruti locals, revealed forceful evidence of communal land control for more than 20 years. Such evidence signifies that the author believes that the state should show support for the community's intrinsic agricultural rights or agrarian citizenship. This sentiment alludes to [Wittman \(2009b\)](#) study in Brazil and [Oprea et al. \(2024\)](#), which defined agrarian citizenship as the recognition and affirmation of rights that should serve as an identity for agricultural communities. Without this approach, the state will miss out on the potential to provide agricultural justice to farmers who have worked hard to achieve food sovereignty.



#### D. The Development of Policies Necessitates the Recognition of Land Tenure Assertions.

The outcomes of land mapping identification in the Ciputri and Kalenwedi hamlets help elucidate the land tenure type in Cimrutu village. It can indeed function as a resource for the Agrarian Reform Task Force constituted by the regent of Cilacap Regency in 2019. Additional supporting data, such maps of the community's land tenure, may also be utilized. The researcher elucidates to policymakers which items may and may not be extracted from the forest area.

The above results of land data identification and processing using the spatial approach show the situation and status of land tenure in Cimrutu village, including both residential and livelihood lands. In terms of physical control, almost all land is under the owners' ownership, both that which the original owners still hold and that which new owners (heirs) have acquired. Only 2.47% of the land in the two hamlets above has been transferred to other parties, implying that 97.53% of the land is still controlled by the original owners, who opened the area in the beginning and have been using their land for settlements and livelihoods. Despite the fact that land use has changed over time, the Cimrutu community has consistently used the land for settlements, rainfed ([Nurliza et al., 2017](#)) rice fields, and other food crops. Because the majority of residents (70%) are poor, housing ownership is not feasible, and average land ownership is less than 0.5 hectares, there is no excess of land tenure.

The Cimrutu people have always used the land they control in accordance with their designation (agriculture). In fact, the area is no longer classified as a forest. It is now a residential area as well as agricultural land. Geographically, it is true that the community used raised land (*aanslibbing*) to allow mangroves to grow in the area, but the length of the community's land utilization process has changed the structure and form of the land itself, so that the land that originally looked like a forest in the 1960s has changed its functions and utilization into residential and agricultural land. This is not an unusual change because population growth has an impact on the landscape and ownership of raised land ([Christian et al., 2019](#)). Presidential Regulation No. 62 of 2023, paragraph 1, defines emergent land (*aanslibbing*) as an object of agrarian reform that may be allocated to farmers in need, as stipulated by the laws. Furthermore, the community has governed the land for almost two decades.

Based on this occurrence, the problem of resolving land tenure claims in forest areas in Cimrutu and Java is generally addressed in Article 18 of Forestry Law Number 41 of 1999. The article forbids a province from releasing forest areas with less than 30% of the watershed's land area. Based on the data, there are no clear, exact figures for Central Java as a whole because the Ministry of Forestry authorities do not officially release the area of forest areas in Central Java. Meanwhile, the Central Java BPS has revealed that more than 30% of Central Java is covered by forest. However, because the forestry authority reports to the Ministry of Forestry, this ministry has the most authority over the size of the forest area in Central Java. The release of forest areas in Java is guaranteed under the old scheme with the forest area exchange mechanism because the total forest area in Central Java is less than 30%. The same is offered for Cimrutu village: the only possible mechanism for removing the village from the forest area is forest area exchange. The Cilacap Regional Government

rejected this offer due to a lack of available land. As a result, the only moderate mechanism is redistribution through agrarian reform and social forestry, because the Ministry of Forestry is also heavily campaigning for social forestry in the Perhutani area for Javanese people who live in or near forests ([Raharjo et al., 2020](#)). This scheme is the most moderate and mutually beneficial to both parties, as it does not require them to adhere to each other's principles.

Job Creation Law facilitates the implementation of agrarian reform policies in Java. Article 36, paragraph 4, of the Forestry section has annulled the 30% provision in Forestry Law Article 18, paragraph 2. The Job Creation Law was subsequently succeeded by Government Regulation Number 23 of 2021 Regarding Forestry Implementation, which clarifies that the requirement to maintain a forest area of at least 30% of the watershed, island, and province is no longer applicable. People often view the removal of community land in Java's forest areas as insurmountable, especially when it comes to residential and livelihood-related land use. Policymakers' failure to regulate this issue may lead to a moral hazard. The discussion surrounding the removal of community land from forest areas should prioritize community interests, aiming to establish settlements and food sovereignty. This approach must consider the ecological implications for forests and natural resources, rather than permitting unrestricted land release ([Saraswati and Dharmawan, 2015](#)).

Besides this discussion, it is possible to apply Government Regulation No. 23 of 2021 and Presidential Regulation Number 62 of 2023, based on data from the evaluation of how long land has been used, particularly for areas meant for homes and farming, which is 20 years. Land for jobs and food production can be given out under a social forestry plan for 20 years. Land designated for livelihoods and food production may be allocated under a social forestry scheme with a tenure of 20 years. This issue applies particularly to residential land, which, despite the 20-year tenure, can still be addressed through the mechanism for releasing forest areas as stipulated by the presidential regulation. This solution considers the local community's agrarian rights, which the state must protect. Legally transferring ownership rights of these assets to the community will enhance economic access for its members. It will facilitate the resolution of tenure disputes within the community. Policymakers may utilize the priority scale derived from the aforementioned land identification and mapping to ensure mutual consideration of interests among all parties involved. The agrarian citizenship of farmers in Cimrutu village can be acknowledged, thereby preventing the state from being viewed as negligent or as an entity favouring pro-poor land reform. Farmers, as agrarian citizens, deserve respect as key stakeholders in the maintenance of food sovereignty. Various stakeholders must ensure that the situation in India does not repeat itself, as numerous farmers have taken their lives due to governmental neglect ([Meek and Khadse, 2022](#)).

#### IV. Conclusion

As indicated by the findings, the community has appropriately exposed and managed land using the customary system prevalent in Indonesia. The community that opens, utilizes, and maintains land resources within its territory is granted priority land proprietorship by the customary system in Indonesia. The sustained cultivation of land demonstrates the community's dedication to establishing an agricultural and livelihood system that has endured for decades, from 1967 to the present. The state does not regard the community's endeavours to acquire agrarian rights as an essential component of their traditional method of establishing a home. Rather, they regard them as individuals who are invading forest land. Despite efforts to advocate for their rights, The Ministry of Forestry denied the community's land claim, suggesting that authorities have not responded adequately. This colonial perspective suggests that the land is deemed to be the state's property in the absence of administrative proof of ownership. This perspective has a detrimental effect on the community, as the numerous attempts to advocate for land rights have not resulted in positive outcomes, which could potentially lead to broader conflict in the future. The state has to ensure that its citizens have access to sufficient living conditions and resources, with a particular emphasis on the well-being of the indigent population. The situation in Cimrutu village is an anomaly; it is an administrative area with a complete government apparatus defined by law, including recognized institutions, a legal governance system, and lawful physical government development. However, it is located within an illegitimate space or area.

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