

## **Multi-Layered Exclusions of Women Heads of Household Over Land: Case Study on Ex-Plantation Concession Area in Nanggung Village, Nanggung Sub-District, Bogor Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the position of women heads of household as landless peasants who face multi-layered exclusions over land in the implementation of land reform program that takes place at state land that formerly managed under an industrial plantation concession permit (Hak Guna Usaha/HGU for industrial plantation area). In doing so, this paper adopts feminist political ecology theory and the power of exclusion theory. Data presented in this paper are derived from qualitative research in Nanggung Village, Nanggung Sub-District, Bogor Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. In Nanggung Village, most villagers, including landless women heads of household, are tillers on small pieces of lands located within an area of state land. This area was managed by a private company that held an official concession permit from the central government to build an industrial plantation. The situation in Nanggung Village is representative of how agrarian injustice occurs where only 23% of the total village land is owned by its inhabitants in the form of housing areas, yards, gardens, and paddy fields. The rest of the village lands is considered state lands, controlled by a private plantation company, PT. Hevindo and the state forestry company, Perhutani. The PT. Hevindo has abandoned almost 75% of the plantation concession lands, but they still want to extend its concession license, which expired in 2013. With support from several NGOs, peasants of Nanggung Village have submitted a request that the abandoned state lands should be redistributed to the peasants through a national land reform program, namely the Object for Agrarian Reform (Tanah Objek Reforma Agraria, TORA). In this process, landless women heads of household face multi-layered exclusions in relation to nuclear family, extended family, peasant community,

villagers, non-government organizations (which have community empowerment programs in Nanggung Village), and the state domain. The Multi-layered exclusions faced by landless women heads of household were ignored in the struggle over land by local peasants' organizations, which used TORA program for claiming peasants' rights over land through the land redistribution. Consequently, landless women heads of household could not benefit from TORA program.

Key words

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women heads of household, multi-layered exclusions, agrarian reform, feminist study

## Introduction

That cassava was cleared, destroyed by the company. The cassava that I planted was growing well. O God, I'm crying there. Banana plants were uprooted, fruit trees were cut down out. Cassava, taro, and all plants with edible bulbs were cleared, destroyed. How did this happen? I can't stand it. When I went to the land again, the land was full of oil palm trees planted by the company (Mak Ipah, interviewed on April 23, 2018).

Mak Ipah's statement describes the crop destruction that occurred on the state land she has been tilling since 2000. Without any warning, the plants she cared for with her heart, ready to be harvested, were destroyed by the industrial plantation company in 2013 in line with the ending of a Hak Guna Usaha (HGU), a concession permit to manage state land for industrial plantation as well as other extractive industries. Using thugs to destroy crops further strengthened the exclusion of the tillers by the company. "Tiller" here refers to landless peasants who till the state land managed by a plantation company. A piece of state land that is temporarily utilized by a tiller is known in the Indonesian language as *lahan garapan*. Mak Ipah and many other tillers have no private land at all. However, they have access to state land through different ways. This situation is in line with the thinking of Hall, Hirsch, and Li (2011) that controlling access to land occurs through a variety of mechanisms and involves a variety of actors working in a power net that excludes certain individuals, certain social groups, and/or certain institutions. Companies like PT. Hevea Indonesia (Hevindo), whose concession permit was al-

ready expired and it actually abandoned the land for a long time, that want to regain de-jure access to state land by extending its plantation concession permits apply de-facto control through a variety of ways, starting with first step by prohibiting tillers from planting timber, then removing trees planted by tillers, installing “red stakes” marking the boundaries of plantation land, and finally destroying all plants. The exclusion of tillers from plantation land is carried out through violence involving thugs, who are feared by the local community.

The ex-HGU land is state land controlled by PT. Hevea Indonesia (Hevindo) in Nanggung Subdistrict, where Mak Ipah, one of the tillers, has worked the land, includes three villages: Nanggung Village, Cisarua Village, and Curug Bitung Village. The company obtained their plantation concession permit (Nr.29/H.G.U/DA/88) on 4 April, 1988 for a 25-year concession to build a 310 ha (hectare) rubber plantation on state land. This permit expired at the end of 2013. However, tillers worked this state plantation land even long before PT. Hevindo obtained their concession permit (HGU) from the government and have been doing so since the 1960–1970s, when other company namely PT. Sinar Mutiara controlled the state plantation land. When that company ceased operating, the land was taken over by PT. Cengkeh Zansibar in 1979. In 1983, the National Agrarian Project (PRONA) entered Nanggung Subdistrict with the aim of giving ownership rights to tillers on state plantation land within the subdistrict. PRONA is the first government pilot project of land redistribution in Indonesia, carried out by the National Land Agency. However, the implementation of that project in the area was mishandled with the result that many tillers did not receive the PRONA’s land certificate and therefore did not receive benefits from PRONA. In 1988, PT. Cengkeh Zansibar ceased operating and the plantation land was passed on to PT. Hevindo.

According to data for 2013 from Amanat, the peasants’ association in Nanggung Sub district, there were 849 tillers cultivating state land of ex-HGU controlled by PT. Hevindo in three villages, of which 17% were women (Amanat, 2013). For the Nanggung Village area, the location of this study, there were 392 tillers (70 women) in 23 blocks (Amanat, 2013). The tillers began to cultivate the plantation land since it had been abandoned by companies that faced bankruptcy and budget deficits. According to Amanat (2013), a total of 281.88 ha was being cultivated in this way.

As stated above, women peasants are part of the tillers in Nanggung Village. However, women peasants are still marginalized and tend to be ignored, even though their contribution to food production is very important. This situation is not unique to Nanggung Village. Data show that less than 13% of agricultural land

owners all over the world are women (UN Women, 2018). The absence of control and ownership of land, and difficulties in accessing credit and income from the labor market, causes women to be trapped in poverty (Ajala, 2017). In our research we found that women heads of household who are also tillers usually have access to only a very small piece of land, which is not their private land. This very small piece of land that they access respectively is mostly part of state lands. Merely working on arable land that is not even their private land means having no power over that land, and this results in a variety of limitations on these women in trying to meet their families' basic needs and exposes them and their family members to various forms of injustice. Not surprisingly, female household heads tend to trap in poverty. According to the Association of Women Head of Household in Indonesia (Pemberdayaan Perempuan Kepala Keluarga (PEKKA), 2017), the women who are head of households in Indonesia include widows, divorced women, married women whose husbands are not able to do productive work, as well as single women who are the main bread winner for their family (mostly family with elders or orphans) (PEKKA, 2017). The Indonesia Statistical Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik, BPS) data for 2014 show that 14.84% of households in Indonesia are headed by women, and the 2015–2019 National Medium-Term Development Plan (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional, RPJMN) document released by Bappenas (2014) states that poor households headed by women increased by 1.09% during the period from 2006–2012.

The identity as women heads of household who are landless causes a vulnerability to experiencing gender injustice. Forms of gender injustice experienced include sub-ordination, marginalization, multi-burdening, violence, and negative labeling. In Nanggung Village, the women heads of household who are tillers are often not involved in and are not considered important by the peasants' organizations currently struggling to gain access to land through agrarian reform policies such as TORA in the President Joko Widodo era (started from 2014). Even when involved, it is only at relatively low levels of involvement or participation, so women heads of household rarely benefit in any real way from the existence of the peasants' organization.

Thus, this paper explores the complexity of landless women heads of household facing multi-layered exclusion in obtaining and maintaining access to land, and analyzes how they experience multi-layered exclusion through feminist lenses. Our field findings and other data are used to evaluate agrarian reform policies such as TORA that apply at the national level.



## Theoretical Background

Previous research in a variety of areas related to this topic have contributed to this study: 1) gender discrimination in land ownership; 2) women's access to and control over land and natural resources; 3) "Intimate exclusion" from gaining access to natural resources; and (4) feminist political ecology perspectives on resource access and control. These previous studies have become the state of the art and a combination of their conceptual approaches serves as an important foundation for this study.

### Gender Discrimination in Land Ownership

Fonjong, Fombe, and Sama-Lang (2013) state that even though women are key actors in the struggle against poverty, women in Africa do not have security for the land they work. Whereas women have a role in providing food, education, childcare, and health services for families, customary practices dictate that women are not allowed to own land: Men own land while women work on or cultivate that land. This happens when the tenure system of communal land is gradually eliminated in favor individual ownership of land, which then affects aspects of culture, gender, class, politics, and economy. Restricting women's rights to have (opportunities) and make decisions about (choices) land is a critical factor that creates differences in family income in the process of the feminization of rural poverty.

Women in Anglophone Cameroon work on land with food crops that their families need and then use the results to contribute to the costs of children's education, health, and family welfare (Fonjong et al., 2013). This contrasts with men, who prioritize cash crops and use the resulting income to build houses, get drunk, or remarry. It therefore seems clear that women play an important role in fighting poverty. For this reason, women need to be educated about and have an awareness of laws that protect women's rights. In addition, gender-inclusive agrarian reform must be accompanied by gender awareness and a strengthening of capacity to develop gender mainstreaming in policy making and program implementation for all parties involved in the land tenure process while also advocating for legal or other measures that protect women's rights.

Research by Grabe, Grose, and Dutt (2015) in Tanzania and Nicaragua revealed that when women own land, they have power; when women do not own land, they are vulnerable to physical and psychological violence. Through this study, the au-

thors illustrate the social dynamics of gender by showing how the interaction between institutional power and interpersonal relationships explains the structure and processes that put women at risk.

### **Women's Access to and Control over Land and Natural Resources**

Mutopo (2014) explains how rural women are important actors in accessing land in the context of the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) in Zimbabwe. Through this FTLRP program, women can access land individually, with 50% of women in Tavaka Village having access to land as individuals (Mutopo, 2014).

Mutopo says that there are several ways women can access land. Twenty-five percent of women access land by controlling land in the village or working on empty agricultural land that has been abandoned by a family and become communal land. Another 25% of women access land through marital ties, based on local customary rules by which the husband was obligated to give his wife a piece of his land “as way of respecting the cultural notion that the wife had led to the enlargement of the family through her reproductive capacity” (Mutopo, 2014, p. 202). Ten percent of women access land by renting land owned by other villagers. The research findings suggest that land-based livelihoods are the basis for women to claim their rights to land. Through FTLRP, women can negotiate to get individual access. (Mutopo, 2014).

The topic of gender relations and land was also examined by Febri Sativiani Putri Cantika in Sukabumi District, West Java Province, Indonesia. The results of the Cantika (2008) study show that there are two categories of property ownership, individual property of either husband or wife through inheritance and ‘gono-gini’ (joint property between husband and wife). The families who were research subjects of Cantika’s study have three different types of property ownership based on these two categories. Some families have the first type where they only have one form of property ownership where the land(s) have the status of inherited land(s) owned by the husband or the wife or have the status as joint property between husband and wife. Other families have the second type where they have two forms of ownership in which their lands have the status of belonging to husband and wife (individually through inheritance), or their lands are a combination of property of husband (through inheritance) and ‘gono-gini’ (joint property), or a combination of property of wife (through inheritance) and ‘gono-gini’. Meanwhile, there are families that have the third type where they have a combination of lands with

three different status (belonging to husband, wife, and 'gono-gini'). Furthermore, in the area where Cantika did her research there are seven type of land tenure/controlling, the first until the fourth type has one form of land tenure (tilled, rent, profit sharing, grant), while the fifth and the sixth type has two forms of land tenure (tilled-sharing, profit-sharing), and the seventh type has three forms of land tenure (tilled-rent-grants). These types are quite common in other areas in West Java, including Nanggung Village. In obtaining and maintaining access to land controlled by their relatives or neighbors, landless peasants would adopt one of these seven types of land tenure.

Research by Rahmawati and Abdulkadir-Sunito (2013) provides an explanation of the profiles of male and female activities in reproductive, productive, and social activities; and profiles of male and female access to and control in managing community forest resources; and compares the factors that influence men's and women's access to and control in managing community forest resources. The results showed that women in farm labor households devote more of their time to reproductive and productive activities than women in farmer households. Women in farm labor households have access to community forest resources but have no control over those resources. In farm households, land tenure factors, husband and wife participation in group activities, and local knowledge of husband and wife in cultivating crops in forest land affect access to and control over community forest resources; however, in farm labor households, these same factors do not affect access to and control over community forest resources.

### **Intimate Exclusion of Natural Resources**

Regarding intimate exclusion, Howson's (2017) research in Lamandau-Indonesia provided interesting findings. This study used the power of exclusion approach of Hall et al. (2011) by adopting a feminist geopolitical view together with the concept of power. The research focuses on intimate exclusion as described by Hall et al. (2011), a daily process of accumulation and disposition among fellow villagers. The empirical findings of this study indicate that the intersection of gender, race, and class mediate the occurrence of exclusion practices from various Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) benefits. The interaction between regulation, pressure, market, and legitimacy led to various types of intimate exclusion based on race and gender. Land rearrangements and market economies do not occur in isolated spaces but through reactions to a broad process of exclusion, increased competition for land

control, and REDD+ benefits. Through this research, Howson (2017) emphasizes the danger that if the development of REDD+ projects does not favor marginalized groups, the project will fail to resolve the inequality that is the root cause of the degradation of the Sungai Lamandau forest.

### **Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) on Resource Access and Control**

FPE provides the conceptual tools necessary for revealing intra-household power dynamics by problematizing the assumed division between public and private spheres. Its work has shown how gendered discourses and practices associated with national and international policies bleed into the reproductive realm (Elmhirst, 2018). Within this FPE analysis, conceptual weight is given to the ways in which capitalism transforms and produces nature, intersecting with gender hierarchies at different scales; patterns of enclosure and marketization are seen to have important gender effects. According to Julia and White's (2012) study in West Kalimantan, the conversion of Dayak Hibun land into smallholder palm oil schemes has led to the loss of women's tenure rights. Furthermore, as plantation expansion reduces women's access to the forest, their ability to derive income from non-timber forest products such as rattan and forest vegetables declines.

Elmhirst (2018) stated that FPE has adopted the concept of intersectionality, an approach to gender that studies the interconnections among various dimensions of social relationship and subject formation. Subjectivities are produced through the way different areas of power (gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, disability) intersect and emerge in relation to one another rather than being based on stable or given understandings of social difference (Lykke, 2010).

Based on the findings of the previous studies, this paper examines the experience of women peasants as landless women heads of household by adopting feminist political ecology and the power of exclusion approaches. Landless women heads of household have a complex relationship with the land they till and in the way they are impacted by agrarian injustice related to the enclosure of land through plantation concession permits. In this study, we explore the struggles of landless women heads of households in gaining access to land and the complexity of that struggle in the face of multi-layered exclusion in land redistribution.

## Methods

### Sample and Participant Selection

This study uses the paradigm of a feminist perspective to be able to raise the women voices and to increase our knowledge of women's experiences, especially landless women heads of household. The emphasis in research with a feminist perspective is women and their problems. This study uses a qualitative approach to more deeply explore and analyze the social reality and the complex situation facing landless women heads of household in the face of multi-layered exclusion in relation to access to land.

The criteria for the main subjects for our research are: a) women heads of household with reference to the criteria proposed by PEKKA (2017), a cooperative representing women heads of household, and b) having tilled land in the PT. Hevindo HGU plantation area for at least ten years. The main subjects were selected through focused discussions with elite and non-elite groups, and five women heads of household were selected. They are aged 50–60 years, come from three hamlets in Nanggung Village, and four of them are widows and still have dependent children. One of them still has husband but her husband has no income for the family.

### Data Collecting and Analysis

Data collected in this study include primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through involved observation, focused discussion, in-depth interviews, and through life history method. Secondary data were collected through references and literature review. Data collection took place from February to May 2018.

Systematic data processing is carried out through stages: a) Data from interviews are organized through verbatim transcripts, b) transcripts are examined to find topics repeatedly mentioned by research subjects, c) transcripts are given certain names and codes for easy categorization, d) data are analyzed according to the theoretical foundation used and other supporting materials such as document studies and results of field observations, and finally e) data that has been processed is presented in a descriptive form.

The following sections consist of analytical discussion based on key findings.

## Discussion

### Women Heads of Household's Access to Land

Landless women heads of household in Nanggung Village are able to till few small plots of lands that are not their privately owned land with official land certificate issued by the state. These plots of lands are mostly state lands that are abandoned. These women gain access to utilize these lands through various mechanisms, such as an access to land acquired by the family in previous generations (in this case the access to utilize abandoned state land has been inherited; in other words, it is the user rights that was inherited); this practice is common in many parts in Indonesia, an access to private land owned by others, mostly family members, other relatives and neighbors through *maparo* (sharecropping), and an access to land acquired by tilling on ex-HGU plantation land. According to Ribot and Peluso (2003), access is the ability to benefit from resources, which can be seen as a bundle and a net of power that allows a person, a group of people, or an institution to acquire, control, and maintain resources. Different people, groups, or institutions can have and implement different bundles and networks of power. This means certain people, groups, or institutions can have direct access to resources, while others must obtain or maintain this access through those who do have control over these resources. In obtaining or maintaining access to land, landless women heads of household in Nanggung Village have to negotiate with different actors who have control over the land. These actors include their own family members, relatives, neighbors, as well as powerful actors such as village thugs, village government officers, members of peasants association at the village, members of NGOs who work with peasants on the issue of land redistribution, officers of the companies who have the concession permit from the government, and government officers who develop the land redistribution program.

Landless women heads of households also face problems of being excluded from the process of getting access to land. All women heads of households who served as our research subjects have experienced being excluded, as shown in the following figure. The exclusions faced by women heads of household are multi-layered, involving the nuclear family, the extended family, the peasant community, village government, the arena of struggle over land that include some NGOs whose work aimed to assist landless peasants in getting the land through government program on land redistribution, and the state domain.

Exclusion in the realms of the nuclear family, extended family, smallholder

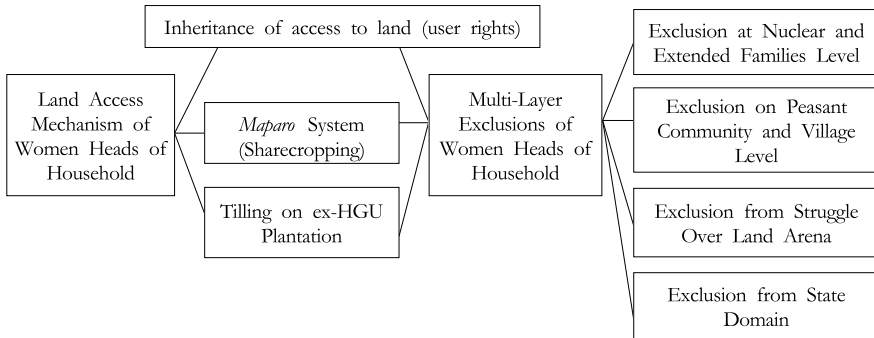


Figure 1. Land Access Mechanism and Exclusion Over Land based on this research

community, and village government is what is termed as a process of intimate exclusion. Hall et al. (2011) state that intimate exclusion occurs through a “daily” process that is not overt but eats away slowly and allows a person’s access to land to become marginalized. Furthermore Hall et al. (2011) revealed that this process can occur through mechanisms of family, friendship, social status, and culture that have persuasive power and can over time alter the existing social fabric. Access to and exclusion from land are two sides of a coin and cannot be separated; access to land provides an opportunity for exclusion and then allows a person or group of people to gain access again.

Our research finds out that women heads of household still have husbands who have become disabled persons due to accidents they had when worked as illegal gold miners or have adult sons who are also landless peasants and living with them have more complicated situations. As stated before, landless women heads of household have access to abandoned state lands, where the access to till these lands have been commonly inherited. But the decisions regarding the management of inherited access to till an abandoned state land is not entirely in their hands even when the inheritance of the access is from the women’s own families. Even though the decision to manage inherited access to use/to till that land should be the wife’s right because it comes from the wife’s family inheritance line, but practically the decision comes from her husband or son. This is different for women heads of household who no longer have a husband or son who lives with them, the decisions regarding the management of inherited access to use an abandoned state land is in their hands.

For women heads of household who till ex-HGU state land, communication is established between the tillers and the plantation foreman at the beginning.

Women tillers ask for permission to plant abandoned land, and the foreman implicitly asks for a share of the harvest. The efforts made by women heads of household to ask permission from the plantation foreman also illustrate the approach of the lower social class of Sundanese people who choose “peaceful pathways” and avoid conflicts. This phenomenon supports Elmhirst’s (2011) contention that efforts to maintain access to and control over land as a source of livelihood are closely related to the formation of identity.

### **Different Forms of Exclusionary Power Faced by Landless Women Heads of Household**

The lands in Nanggung Village that have status of privately-owned lands actually cover only 23 % of total area of the village. This includes area for housing, garden, and paddy fields. Not all of the paddy fields are owned by the Nanggung Village community themselves; many are owned by people from outside the village. It is not surprising therefore that the most common livelihood in the community is as a farmer or farm laborer (40%). The remaining area of Nanggung Village (77 %) is considered as state lands (Ratnasari, 2013). These state lands are divided into two different functions. The first one is state forest zone, managed by state forestry company namely Perhutani. The second one is state non-forest zone, managed for plantation area by a company that has official concession permit from the central government (HGU). There are small areas of abandoned plots located within these two types of state lands. These are the areas where the landless peasants of Nanggung Village have cultivated. The landless peasants of Nanggung Village knew that the lands they have been tilling are controlled by a powerful institution (either state forestry company or a private plantation company). As mentioned previously, the landless peasants usually refer these lands as ‘tilling land’ (*laban garapan*). They have been cultivating the tilling lands for more than 30 years. They even inherited the access to cultivate these lands to their children. Their children are aware that what they are inherited are not privately-owned lands but only an access to cultivate them.

The limited land owned by the community and more strict regulation to cultivate on the state forest zone within the area of Nanggung Village have led people to cultivate HGU plantation lands that have been abandoned by the plantation company in Nanggung Village. According to Amanat (2013), as mentioned earlier, 392 tillers (70 of which were women) were working on 23 blocks in Nanggung Village. These 392 tillers represent 345 families, of which 23 are families headed by



women.

For landless women heads of household who can still maintain some access to abandoned state land, there are problems arising from the limited access to land they do have. In other words, the area of abandoned state land managed as agricultural land is extremely limited, especially after the state forestry company (Perhutani) established more strict regulation to forbid landless peasants to cultivate state forest zone. For landless women heads of household who are widows, they have more problems. The difficulties of life they experience are exacerbated in certain contexts by the discrimination they suffer because their status as landless widows is so poor that community members and village officials (government) do not want to help them, often forcing them to transfer their access to '*laban garapan*' to other people with monetary compensation. As discussed previously, '*laban garapan*' refers to abandoned state lands they till or they continue tilling after their parents 'inherited' them the access to till. *Laban garapan* includes arable lands located within ex-HGU plantation and state forest zone. The amount of the monetary compensation they receive from transferring this access to lahan is based on the types of plants cultivated on *laban garapan*. Furthermore, because they do not own land and have lost access to arable land (with the status of *laban garapan*), they are forced to work as low-paying coolie as described by Mak Ipah below.

The rocks are placed in a sack, lifted to the top of the head using a towel mat. Very heavy rocks carried from below near the river are carried up to the top near the truck. The salary is only IDR 50 thousand per day. Hard work, so I want to drink more but eating does not feel good because of exhaustion. (Mak Ipah, interviewed on April 23, 2018)

In 2013 the company carried out exclusionary acts against the tillers using thugs to destroy their plants. This action was intended to exclude tillers so that the company could get back the de-facto control of that state land. At the same time, they tried to submit an official application to extend their official HGU permit. This situation shows that even though the company had not held the de-jure control of the land through the official extension of HGU permit, they had applied various actions showing that they had the de-facto control. As we observed earlier, actions like this accord with the thinking of Hall et al. (2011) whereby a variety of mechanisms and actors work to control access to land using a power net that excludes certain individuals, social groups, and/or institutions. Company like PT. Hevindo

tries to continue controlling access to state plantation land in a variety of ways and with the use of much-feared hired enforcers: prohibiting the planting of timber, removing tree by tillers, clearly marking the boundaries of plantation land with red stakes, culminating in the complete destruction of crops.

When examining actions like these, there are four forms of power (Hall et al., 2011) that contribute to the process of land exclusion experienced by the tillers: regulation, coercion with force, market, and legitimacy. The first form, regulation, can be clearly seen through the legislation stipulated by the State that supports the process of designating land in the Nanggung Village area as state land (both as part of state forest zone and as APL (Areal Penggunaan Lain, or Other Use Areas) that is usually used to develop plantation, mining or other extractive industries, and regulations that support the issuance of a concession permit in a form of HGU plantation to private companies.

The second form of the power of land exclusion, coercion with force, was asserted by the plantation concession holding company who hired enforcers to frighten, intimidate, and threaten tillers, even going as far as destroying the crops on arable land. This series of actions made farmers fearful, especially women heads of household who are tillers.

The third form of exclusionary power, the market, is also clearly visible in this research area whereby the company replaces the types of plants grown on HGU land to keep up with market developments at national and international levels. One type of plant chosen is palm oil, which is a new commodity for both the company and for the history of managing this land for as long as it has been under the HGU plantation concession. This situation shows how market power applies because oil palm is a high-value plantation sector commodity and much in demand by the market. The company therefore tried as hard as possible to extend the HGU permit and to prevent and forbid cultivators from entering plantation land so that they could develop palm oil plantations.

The fourth form of the power of land exclusion is legitimacy, indicated by the Bogor Regent Decree Nr. 593.4/477-Distanhut/2011 on 23 June 2011, addressed to the Head of the Republic of Indonesia National Land Agency regarding technical considerations and crop diversification. This letter legitimized the company's attempts to control plantation land. In addition to the letter, the legitimacy of their land tenure was also realized through the placing of cement stakes painted red as proof of state control of access to the land. A further form of legitimacy is the presence of company representatives who work at the site level, namely the plantation foreman, whose task is to protect the HGU land from the threat of encroach-

ment by local residents.

In addition to the exclusions carried out by the company against the tillers who are mostly landless peasants, women heads of household faced multiple layers of exclusion in obtaining and maintaining access to the land. Such exclusion was experienced in the arena of the nuclear family, the extended family, the farming community, village government, the struggle for land, and the state.

Exclusion of women heads of household at the nuclear and extended families level begins with the loss of access to *laban garapan* for various reasons related to gender roles and other social aspects created by nuclear families and extended families as excuses to exclude women from *laban garapan* or property which is actually their inheritance. Mak Ipah from Kampong Ranca Bakti has been excluded by her family from *laban garapan* in which she supposed to inherit the access to this land from her grandmother. Since childhood, Mak Ipah lived with her grandmother because she had been an orphan since she was one year old and helped her grandmother to manage the rice fields since she was a child. When her grandmother died, the paddy fields were distributed to all the children. However, because Mak Ipah's parents had died, she did not inherit any land. In other words, Mak Ipah experienced intimate exclusion in being excluded from *laban garapan* she had helped to manage since childhood. As she married a landless man, both of them worked as daily paid laborers in their neighbors' lands (which many of them are *laban garapan*). After her husband died, Mak Ipah decided to till the ex-HGU land but after some time her plants were destroyed by thugs hired by the company. The loss of access to *laban garapan* at ex-HGU area has forced Mak Ipah to do other work. The consequences of such a lack of access to land and exclusion experienced by women heads of household at the nuclear and extended families level then have to be faced, such as having to work as low-paid laborers and being unable to send their children to school or marry them off early.

Exclusion of women heads of household in the arena of peasant community and village government occurs by removing access from people who should have had access to land and even preventing people who have limited access to land to have access to arable land. Again, this is in line with the thinking of Hall et al. (2011, pp. 7-8) that the exclusion process can occur in three types: "the ways in which already-existing access to land is maintained by the exclusion of other potential users; the ways in which people who have access lose it; and the ways in which people who lack of access are prevented from getting it". In the arena of peasant communities, Mak Juha from Kampung Pasir Peuteuy found herself excluded from *laban garapan* she had worked for a long time. She lost her *laban ga-*

*rapan* in the former HGU plantation area when she did not replant that piece of land after the destruction of crops by thugs. She did not have enough time to work on the land because she was busy working as a coolie to survive and to support her children who are still in school. Seeing lahan garapan that was idle, the land was processed by her neighbors, Mang Atang and Mang Layung. Since then, Mak Juha has lost access to her lahan garapan located within former HGU plantation area. Mak Juha still have access to a piece of lahan garapan in other area (outside ex-HGU plantation area).

Mak Juha experienced another lost when she had to transfer the access of her other piece of *laban garapan* outside ex-HGU plantation area when she needed money to repair her roof. The access of her *laban garapan* was transferred to her neighbor for a nominal amount of money. At that time, Mak Juha's land was overgrown with jeunjing wood, which at that time was quite valuable, but the money her neighbor paid was far below that value. This shows that Mak Juha has a low bargaining position and is compelled by need to accept such decisions. After losing the access to all of her *laban garapan*, Mak Juha has more problems. She has been struggling to continue sending her children to school and unable to seek treatment or finance the treatment of sick family members. Her struggles that are closely related to the loss of access to *laban garapan* are ignored by her neighbors and village government. She was not informed when central government started to have special program to support school children from poor families and another program that provides free health care insurance for poor families. Exclusion events experienced by women heads of household in the community and villages are form of discrimination against female heads of household such as a lack of assistance from the village government for women heads of household.

Women heads of household also experience exclusion in the arena of struggle for land in which peasants' organization works closely with several NGOs in advocating rights to land for landless peasants. Marginalized groups such as women heads of household have not become active beneficiaries of activities carried out by these NGOs, including one NGO that work closely with the landless peasants in Nanggung Village for quite a long time. This is because these organizations do not have the right approaches and strategies to be able to involve landless women heads of household. In addition, this organization has not been sensitive enough to cultural, religious, and gender factors that interrelate and influence one another that prevent landless women heads of household to participate in activities they carried out. When a meeting is held by a peasants association/forum/NGOs, women heads of household who are also tillers should come to such a meeting but

not all of them have the confidence to do so. Of course, if the meeting is held at night, landless women working during the day especially are unlikely to attend it as they are still busy taking care domestic duties and socially they feel hesitant to attend an evening activity outside their houses. Even if they the meeting is held in the afternoon, such women are still working as tillers and coolies, they cannot attend it. Feminist political ecology scholars asserts that NGOs that function to encourage collective action in the struggle for land and natural resources can actually contribute to a reinterpretation of self-identity, an understanding of gender issues, and an understanding of the environmental problems that occur (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayer, & Wangari, 1996). Our research findings show that the NGOs who have been working with landless peasants have not succeeded in assisting landless women, especially landless women heads of household in building a reinterpretation of their self-identity as a citizen whose rights to land needs to be realized. These NGOs have also not been succeeding in building gender-related understanding of the peasants' community. These NGOs involve more elite men and women in their activities and neglect landless peasants with landless women being completely ignored. Landless women heads of household are not yet in their thought at all

Exclusion in the state domain occurs through the implementation of agrarian reform policies and program that still not paying attention on marginalized groups that are supposed to become the main beneficiaries of the agrarian reform program, including women heads of household and in particular landless women heads of household. The implementation of the agrarian reform program in a manner not in accordance with its objectives causes vulnerable marginalized groups, including women heads of families, to be prevented from accessing land that they could exploit as a livelihood. The state, in this case the state apparatus which operates the agrarian reform policy and program, must be able to pay attention to various social groups, especially landless peasants and landless women heads of household, that have obtained and maintained access to *laban garapan* of abandoned state lands. Considering that the state provides tenure rights over state land through plantation HGU concession permits and that the state grants land ownership rights to its citizens, the state should grant land tenure rights to land in certain state land area that becomes the object of agrarian reform for landless tillers, including landless women heads of household. Another feminist political ecology scholar points out that each party receiving a right to anything is not a single entity; they differ in gender, class, and ethnicity, and in terms of those who have power relations between one party and another (Elmhirst, 2011). Elmhirst's state-

ment also works at the context of Nanggung Village. For example, the landless peasants in this village, who will be the beneficiaries of the agrarian reform program on the HGU plantation land, is very diverse, there are male and female tillers, there are tillers who are male or female family heads, there are rich and poor in social status, and other such differences. Of course, the poor landless tillers become subordinate to the rich tillers, as they often become laborers, including on the land cultivated by the rich. State officials therefore need to be careful in determining the beneficiaries of the agrarian reform program to ensure the program identifies the correct targets.

## Conclusion

We have shown that landless women heads of household in Nanggung Village gain access to utilize state lands through various mechanisms such as: inheriting access to till abandoned state lands, gaining access to private land owned by others through sharecropping, and getting access to ex-HGU state land. In obtaining or maintaining access to land through different mechanisms, landless women heads of household in Nanggung Village have to negotiate with different actors who have control over said land. These actors range from actors who they know very well such as their own family members, relatives, and neighbors, to more powerful actors such as village thugs, members of peasant associations in their village, members of NGOs who work with peasants on the issue of land redistribution, village government officers, officers of companies who hold concession permits from the national government, and officers of national government institutions who developed the land redistribution program.

Landless women heads of household also face problems of being excluded from the process of getting access to land through different forms of exclusionary powers that are multi-layered. These involve the nuclear family, the extended family, the peasant community, the village government, the arena of struggle over land that includes peasant organizations and NGOs who work closely with them, and the state domain including the national agrarian reform policy and program.

The multi-layered forms of exclusionary power which are faced by landless women heads of household often leaves them in poverty, meaning that they tend to occupy a low social class. Such women in Nanggung Village are denied equal space and opportunities. The local peasant organization that was formed to advocate for landless peasants' rights are completely male-dominated both in terms of

membership and management structure. There is no place for women heads of household to be able to voice their thoughts and opinions.

The process of multi-layered exclusions in gaining access to land through different forms experienced by landless women head of household in Nanggung Village, shows that each form of exclusionary power stated by Hall et al. (2011) has strong gender dimensions that closely interlink with the dimensions of class and position in the household. Furthermore, this process clearly reflects that the identity such as being landless women heads of household in Nanggung Village not only affects their efforts to maintain access to and control over land as a source of livelihood as argued by Elmhirst (2011), but also causes a vulnerability to experiencing various forms of gender injustices and further multi-layered exclusions in gaining access to land.

The experience of landless women heads of household in Nanggung Village also reflects the position of landless women heads of household in the national agrarian reform policy in Indonesia. Their existence is still neglected within the policy and their opinions have not been taken into account. The national agrarian reform policy that has been implemented in Indonesia has not been gender sensitive and its practice is often not in accordance with its original objectives, such that vulnerable women who are family heads do not benefit from the program. Interestingly, NGOs that work with landless peasants and one particular peasant organization in Nanggung Village to gain access to land through this policy have adopted similar gender-blind discourses and have supported social practices at the village level that tend to neglect landless women heads of household. These findings support the understanding within feminist political ecology scholarship that discourses and practices associated with national policies bleed into the reproductive realm (Elmhirst, 2018).

The implemented agrarian reform policy should be pro-poor, siding with the poor as proposed by Borras and Franco (2010). Additionally, in our opinion, it has to go even beyond being pro-poor to the extent that it must be pro-gender equality and social inclusion, so that gender equality and social inclusion become integral part of agrarian reform policy and not just supporting components. Of course, to realize a pro-gender equality and social inclusive agrarian reform policy, it is necessary to increase and strengthen capacity for mainstreaming gender issues and gender-related needs (gender mainstreaming) in the implementation of program for all parties involved with the agrarian reform program. On the basis of our findings, our recommendations are as follows: a) A forum needs to be established where women, including women heads of household, can organize and voice their aspira-

tions, thoughts, and feelings considering that they still occupy subordinate roles in peasant organizations dominated by men, especially in the elite level; b) the Nanggung village government must develop a firm attitude and position, seeing as their current efforts are still half-hearted in favoring the interests of the poor. Village funds provided by central government and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds or support from state forestry companies that operate in state forest zones in Nanggung Village can be utilized and optimized to support the interests of poor people, including landless women heads of household; c) Various groups need to develop gender awareness, namely the government, NGOs, and local communities, so that the agrarian reform program can support justice and gender equality, meaning that it looks after the interests of marginalized groups, including the poor and women heads of household; d) NGOs who work closely with landless peasants need to have more gender sensitivity, skills and capacity to be able to identify the needs of landless women, especially heads of household.



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- Mak Juha. (2018, April 21–22). She is 55 years old and still has a husband who became a disabled person after having an accident when working in a gold mining area. She lives with one son (12 years old) and one daughter (14 years old). Interviewed at her house in Pasir Peuteuy Hamlet, Nanggung Village, Nanggung Sub-district, Bogor District, West Java.

## Appendix: Interview Questions

### 1. The meaning of land for landless women heads of household socially, culturally, economically, politically

- 1.1. How many plots of *laban garapan* (a piece of arable land that is part of state lands) do they till? Where are the locations of these *laban garapan*? What are you planting? What is the cropping system, is it profit sharing or what?
- 1.2. What is the knowledge and experience of the women heads of household on the history of the land they are working on?
- 1.3. What are the important stages or events in the life of the women heads of household related to the land under her cultivation?
- 1.4. How can land be utilized in the livelihoods of women heads of household? What are the results obtained from *laban garapan*? When will it be harvested and what will it be used for?
- 1.5. When not having access to land, how is the livelihood of the women heads of household?

### 2. Access and control of women heads of household over the ex-plantation concession area of PT. Hevindo and other lands

- 2.1. What is the process for obtaining *laban garapan*? Is the land being cultivated acquired or given by another party or what is the process?
- 2.2. Who are the actors involved or involved in obtaining *laban garapan*?
- 2.3. Are women heads of household free to determine the plants they plant or other activities on the land they cultivate?
- 2.4. Are women heads of household free in managing their crops or on the land they cultivate?

### 3. The experience of women heads of household in peasant organizations struggling for access to land owned by PT. Hevindo through the TORA program

- 3.1. Are women heads of household involved in institutions both informal and formal?
- 3.2. What is the role of women heads of household in these institutions?
- 3.3. Are women heads of household involved in the process of submitting the TORA program? What is the form of involvement?
- 3.4. What is the knowledge and understanding of women heads of household towards the TORA program?

- 3.5. What are the expectations of women heads of household in the TORA program?  
How are efforts to meet these expectations?
- 3.6. Has the farmer organization been helping the needs of women heads of household?

#### **4. Discrimination and other problems faced by women heads of household and other family members**

- 4.1. What pressures do women heads of household face?
- 4.2. What forms of discrimination do women heads of household experience?
- 4.3. What other problems do women heads of household face?
- 4.4. What is the resistance of women heads of household in facing the pressures and discrimination they experience?
- 4.5. What kind of effort to survive in facing this problem do women heads of household make?

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