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Unmuting Voices

Dayak Women's Narratives on
Structural and Gendered Injustice
in Oil Palm Expansion in West
Kalimantan, Indonesia

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Democratisation in Asia Pacific



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UNMUTING VOICES: DAYAK WOMEN'S NARRATIVES
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INDONESIA

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No words could have been written in this thesis without the women who were willing to share their lives to a curious foreigner. I dedicate this humble paper

to all of the women I met in West Kalimantan. Any misinterpretations of their message, or shortcomings in this paper, are mine alone.

Last but not least, I extend my utmost respect and love to my parents and especially to my brother, who have kept me motivated to continue fighting for disadvantaged and marginalised people both near and far.

Eunba Kim

BIOGRAPHY

Eunba Kim has studied human rights and democratization Master's program which is jointly hosted by Mahidol University (Thailand) and Universitas Gadjah Mada (Indonesia). Before her recent study, she has also graduated from UN-Mandated University for Peace, majoring International Peace Studies. Her topic of interest lies in women's rights and gender studies and alternative development. Eunba is now working as a research and training officer in the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, based in Bangkok, Thailand. Her current research project involves women's right to work and mobility in the context of safe and fair migration.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how the oil palm expansion process, driven by the capitalisation of nature and labour, renders structural injustice to the Dayak indigenous people in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Using feminist political ecology as a conceptual framework, it examines gender as a critical variable in analysing structural injustice as well as gendered injustice in the palm oil sector by scrutinising women's particular struggles and their gender-differentiated experiences. As palm oil production shares a huge portion of income in Indonesia, it has created an environment where efficiency outweighs workers' rights in and around the plantations. Moreover, despite women labourers' significant roles in the palm oil industry in Indonesia, their status has been undervalued and their rights have been ignored. The cash economy brought by the oil palm industry has disturbed subsistence farming community structures, with male labourers earning more and gaining a higher place in the social hierarchy than female labourers, who face increased social insecurity. This study finds that most women also have limited access to information and resources, leading to restricted choices and exclusion in decision-making processes. The lack of alternative livelihoods further informs women's risky situations, as they are customarily responsible for food security and household management in the context of Kalimantan. Using a qualitative method and narrative approach, this thesis highlights women's voices that have often been 'muted' in the palm oil sector. It argues that the patterns of structural injustice found in the oil palm industry are intertwined around the socially constructed idea of womanhood in Indonesia and fuelled by capitalistic ideals of economic growth and national development.

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1.

INTRODUCTION

Done right, palm oil should generate wealth and employment for local communities. Done wrong, oil palm estates can lead to land alienation, loss of livelihoods, social conflicts, exploitative labour relations and degraded ecosystems
Colchester et al. 2006

Under the banner of economic growth and national development, land and natural resources have been extracted, commoditised, and privatised in many countries in the Global South. Through this process, often dubbed 'land grabbing', the local and indigenous peoples who were the customary owners of the land have encountered numerous challenges that reach beyond land dispossession, including loss of nature, subsistence living, and indigenous culture. As such, local and indigenous peoples have to sell their labour at the cheapest rate to cope with the loss of their livelihood means. Land dispossession and its consequent challenges drive people to fit themselves into a capitalistic system that puts them in a vicious cycle of structural injustice. However, not everyone loses equally from this game; different degrees of struggle are experienced across gender, class, ethnicity, and age, among other categories. In this study, I draw cases from Dayak indigenous communities that are coping with palm oil plantation schemes in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Highlighting the transformations of relations in indigenous communities under the oil palm regime, this study analyses Dayak indigenous women labourers' experiences and struggles, who I argue in this thesis are among the most socially disadvantaged members of the palm oil regime.

In analysing the structural injustices that Dayak indigenous women labourers face in and around palm oil plantations, several indicators

of gender injustice from feminist political ecology will be employed to translate women's experiences into gender analysis. The first aim of this thesis is, thus, to explore women labourers' particular struggles in the palm oil regime by highlighting gender-differentiated aspects. The second aim is to, in doing so, present women's own narratives defining their status and challenging current practices. Lastly, I link these findings to indicate how palm oil plantations become fields of structural and gendered injustice owing to their capitalistic development imperative.

BACKGROUND

Indonesia is the world's largest palm oil producer and exporter (Indonesia-Investments 2016). As a key industry in Indonesia's economy, palm oil is an important source of foreign exchange and has created job opportunities for more than three million Indonesian rural poor (Dewi 2013, p. 164). While it is debatable whether the economic benefits of the oil palm industry are converted to peoples' well-being or interests, the social conflicts it spurs quite clearly indicate that there are asymmetric benefits between the industry and the rural poor.

As palm oil production represents a huge source of income in Indonesia, it has created an environment where efficiency outweighs workers' rights in and around the plantation. In the drive to maximise profits and improve production levels, compliance with laws and regulations is secondary and human rights principles are readily overlooked. Among the different manifestations of the oil palm industry's social impact, land disputes have perhaps received the widest public debate, at least in Indonesia. Legal ambiguity in land ownership allows plantation companies to easily exploit indigenous peoples' land, while the national model of development that connects economic growth and social development enables the extraction of natural resources (Großmann et al. 2017). In the capitalist development system, companies operate and maximise profits through cheap labour and high efficiency. Exploitation, thus, becomes a necessary component of the operation of capitalism (Mies et al. 1998). Companies accumulate profit by dispossessing indigenous peoples' land, often using deception and not providing adequate compensation. The issue of control over land is a crucial factor in discussing exploitation, which perpetuates structural and gendered injustices within the palm oil industry. Unable to reclaim

their land, the Dayak people must instead sell their labour to pay debts incurred through corporate deception.

The issue of labour is another concern that has emerged in parallel with the expansion of the industry. Palm oil may have brought economic benefits at the national level. However, labourers' wages are often far below minimum standards. Those in more vulnerable positions perform precarious work, i.e. non-standard forms of employment including temporary, casual, contract, outsourced, and daily labour. They thus suffer low wages, insecure employment, and a lack of benefits and job protection (Rainforest Action Network 2016, p. 20). Women tend to comprise a disproportionately high percentage of non-standard labour, rarely being employed on a permanent basis.

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the palm oil industry in Indonesia and, more generally, in Southeast Asia, female labourers are targets of greater exploitation and discrimination than their male counterpart. Women are positioned as a lower class, making them easily exploited with even cheaper labour. Recent work on the expansion of the oil palm industry in Southeast Asia has also shown how the enclosure and commoditisation of resources impacts resource access in highly gendered ways (Julia & White 2012; Elmhirst & Darmastuti 2014 as cited in Elmhirst 2015). However, most existing studies on the palm oil sector have used gender-neutral language. Along with the Indonesian state's widespread tendency to view "indigeneity" and "community" as homogenous (Siscawati & Mahaningtyas 2012), this neutrality in language often leads to more gendered injustice against indigenous women.

A number of NGOs and scholars have reported that workers in core plantations¹, especially women, are employed under casual arrangements that make them vulnerable to abuses (Amnesty International 2016; Julia & White 2011; Li 2015; Rainforest Action Network 2016; Surambo et al. 2010). Excessive workloads—daily quotas assigned to every labourer—within the plantation also play a role in making the labour too much for

¹ 'Core plantations' refers to large-scale palm oil estates owned and operated by a company. Those plantation owned by individual farmers are called 'smallhold plantation' or '*plasma*'.

workers to handle, giving them no choice but to bring family members. The vicious cycle of excessive workloads and seeking family assistance—often from wives but at times from children as well—allow plantation owners to freely exploit labourers, as family labourers are unregulated and unmonitored (Rainforest Action Network 2016). Moreover, many labourers find obstacles to claim their rights or form unions, not to mention that they are easily replaced with other labourers and thus pose little threat to companies. For these mixed reasons, workers mostly call on their wives to reach production targets so they can earn the full amount without needing to hire other workers². Women labourers (whether recognised as an official labour force or not) occupy the most vulnerable position in the systematic exploitation of the oil plantation labour structure.

However, as Indonesia has a broad tendency to assume that women and men benefit equally from development schemes through their membership in households (Li 2015), the issue of gender injustice has mostly been invisible or, rather, ‘silenced’. Recognising that women in Indonesia traditionally bear dual roles in both labour and social reproduction (taking care of household, securing food, sending children to school, etc.), this study argues that the negative effects of the palm oil industry affect women differently and, in a sense, is harder to bear. One might argue that historically and culturally, the invisibility or rather deliberate exclusion of Indonesian women is not a novel headline. However, this prevalent oppression is the very reason why my research attempts to unveil in detail, the lived experience of women labourers in the specific context of palm oil plantations. Moreover, considerable focus will be given to the impact of changes in livelihood due to oil palm expansion. As opening a palm oil estate mostly involves indigenous people losing land and the introduction of new economic structures, the research focus lies in how this change impacts the social and political status of Dayak indigenous women.

² These unpaid labourers are also called shadow workers, or *kernet* workers (Rainforest Action Network 2016). These terms refer to the workforce that helps regular workers (i.e. contracted permanent worker and daily workers) to meet a daily quota but is not recognised as an official workforce.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In its bid to analyse women labourers' particular vulnerability in the structural and gendered injustice spearheaded by palm oil industry, the research has three specific questions, as follows:

- How does the structural change of livelihood brought by the oil palm expansion impact Dayak indigenous women labourers in West Kalimantan?
- How does social construction of womanhood at the local and national level impact Dayak women's experiences in the plantation, household, and community?
- On what grounds do Dayak women labourers think and experience 'injustice' in the plantation, and why do they find it problematic (or not)?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social construction of womanhood in Indonesia

The ideal of the 'good wife and mother' has constructed the role of women in Indonesia (Parawansa 2002) and their responsibility (and utmost priority) to manage their families and homes since as early as the 1920s. These socially constructed gender norms also shaped expectations of women's role in the Indonesian state's development efforts, particularly in the New Order era but also beyond. Dating back to the 1960s, New Order policies reduced women to the 3 I's (*Istri*: wife, *Ibu*: mother, *Istri rumah tangga*: homemaker); this is also assumed to influence the roles and positions of women in palm oil plantations (Surambo et al. 2010). While women were confined to the domestic domain, they were not fully empowered to act even in household decision-making (Parawansa 2002, p. 71), whereas men were most frequently the beneficiaries of government development programs. The productive activities of women were regarded as 'side jobs' to supplement the husband's income, and the time spent on non-household activities was secondary to that spent on household tasks.

The term 'ibuism', articulated by Suryakusuma (2011), illustrates the concept of women's sacrificial role as mothers who exist not in their own right, but for something or somebody. Suryakusuma goes further

to coin the term ‘state ibuism’, developing the ‘ibuism’ concept as an ideology employed by the Indonesian state, which has historically supported and promoted unequal gender relations in its national development efforts. Finding similarities between the Indonesian construction of womanhood and Mies’ concept of the housewifisation of women, she notes that this process of constructing women’s roles relegated women to dependency on the household head, with the state ‘domesticating’ them through taming, segregation and de-politicisation to uphold national economic development efforts. In short, under ‘ibuism’, women are expected to serve their men, children, the family, the community and the state, and under housewifisation, this labour should be provided willingly, at an inappropriately low cost (if any) and without any expectation of real prestige or power. As such, under ibuism the labour and loyalties of Indonesian women have been systematically and often coercively harnessed for development goals. At the same time, women’s subordination and relegation to domestic roles has been reinforced (Tickamyer et al. 2013).

Legally, discriminatory practices based on gender roles are legitimised by Marriage Law No. 1/1974, which positioned men as ‘heads of the family’ (*kepala keluarga*), responsible for financially providing for the household, while defining women as ‘homemakers’ (*isteri ibu rumah tangah*) and thereby positioning women’s marital role as subordinate to men (O’Shaughnessy 2009, p. 10). Despite the increased participation of women in the labour force, the Marriage Law has continued limiting women’s roles in the public sphere,³ and women experience a dual workload at the workplace and at home. A study by United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2016) describes in detail the process through which Indonesian women organisations’ have fought to amend the discriminatory clause in the Marriage Law and challenge the patriarchal gender roles it stipulates. The transition to democratisation and decentralisation in the 1990s offered some victories for women’s movements, especially in relation to sexual violence against women; however, a number of challenges have remained. Under the co-existence of different legal systems, as well as the entanglement of the provincial and regency system, placing women’s political agenda on the table has

³ For example, Articles 31 and 34 of the Marriage Law state that the role of women is innate and limited to work within the house.

been a challenging task and often remained on the margins (Eddyono et al. 2016, p. 29). The persistent push to amend Marriage Law No. 1/1974 has yet to not achieve any substantial gain owing to a number of controversial issues, including polygamy and same-sex marriage, that have drawn disagreements among different groups of activists and been fiercely opposed by religious groups (ibid.).

The Marriage Law is also linked to male household heads' privilege in gaining control of land. In a palm oil plantation context, when communities register their land for their plot in a smallholder scheme, ownership is under the male's name almost by default. Julia and White (2011) describe how the issue of land ownership has further marginalised women's claim to resources that were once shared under customary law. The reduced roles of women through the institutionalised Marriage Law and ideological definition of women through 'ibuism' have resulted in injustice, placing women as secondary citizens.

Labour and gender concerns in the context of the Indonesian palm oil industry

As Indonesia is a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) as well as the International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions on Equal Remuneration and Discrimination, the state is obliged to make appropriate measures to protect labour rights stipulated in the conventions. However, in reality, wages paid are below the provincial minimum, meaning plantation workers are unable to enjoy a decent standard of living (Li 2015). Another problem within palm oil plantations is the unequal wages paid for different forms of labour. Workers in non-standard forms of employment earn significantly lower wages than permanent workers, and are not guaranteed adequate access to legal protections, healthcare, work-related injury compensation, and other social protections. Moreover, the wages of men and women exhibit a stark difference. For example, the Indonesian press has reported that, on some plantations, men are paid between IDR 300,000 and IDR 750,000 per month as casual labourers, while women are only paid between IDR 90,000 and IDR 200,000 per month (Jiwan 2013, p. 70). One of the justifications for this wage gap is women being mostly assigned to maintenance jobs, which are considered less physically demanding. This claim is made despite the fact that maintenance work involves such precarious and

hazardous conditions as handling pesticides, including Gramoxone, which contains the highly toxic pesticide paraquat. Safety equipment, such as protective helmets and gloves, are not adequately provided for most women, who are either casual or so-called ‘shadow workers’. As a result, women are put in an extremely vulnerable position that jeopardises their health, including their reproductive health, according to a report by Amnesty International (2016).

As companies have found ways to reduce labour costs to maximise profit, the casualisation of labour has become a norm over the recent years. In her research into the gendered dynamics of Indonesia’s oil palm labour regime, Li (2014) describes the casualisation and sub-contracting practices of palm oil companies over the past decade of “neoliberalism”. Unlike in the early years of palm oil expansion (before 2000), when most labourers were recruited through their membership in households, companies have begun bringing in male and female labourers from different labour pools. In this new regime, companies no longer take care of their workers by supporting families with housing and other social benefits. This, together with companies’ tendency to favour migrant workers, means that the positions of indigenous peoples are even further weakened. Consequently, men and women compete for work as individuals, thus creating another dimension of power dynamics, enabling structural injustice that allows exploitation as a norm, and deepening vulnerability and inequality across different ethnic groups. Ultimately, local women are further marginalised.

Commoditisation of nature and its impact on indigenous landscapes

The establishment of palm oil plantations has led to sharp debate between development and conservation. On one side, the government pursues plantation expansion as a way to increase foreign investment, expecting that any economic benefits will trickle down to local communities. Some farmers welcome the immediate prosperity, and many communities anticipate that outside investment in the oil palm industry will lead to village development. However, indigenous peoples’ cultures, ways of life, and livelihoods, along with their dignity, are erased as land is cleared for oil palm planting. Dewi (2013) provides some examples of the ways in which large plantations have impoverished Dayak communities. In the process of establishing and expanding plantations, particularly in West Kalimantan, Dayak communities are

threatened by the loss of communal land, the loss of access to forests as a source of livelihood, and by the destruction of their traditional culture. Traditionally, the Dayak people have heavily relied on natural resources and sustained their livelihoods through cultivation and rice farming on their own land. However, the change from diverse cultivation to mono-crop plantation has drastically reduced the flexibility of indigenous peoples' livelihoods, and they are thus more greatly affected by fluctuations of crude palm oil prices in the global market.

A growing sense of gender hierarchy within the emergence of a cash economy is another marked change affecting indigenous Dayak communities in Kalimantan. Colfer (1982) discovered the hardening of gender roles as early as in the 1980s, when Long Segar women in West Kalimantan began experiencing reduced autonomy and greater dependence on men with the introduction of new technology, comparative lack of access to money-making opportunities, and reduced access to information (as cited in Elmhirst et al. 2016, p. 307). The impact of the cash economy reinforced by the oil palm industry is also seen in the emergence of societal conflict and cultural alienation within the indigenous groups, manifested through (for instance) excessive alcohol consumption (Dewi 2013, p. 170) and commercial sex work, which involves not only men as buyers but also women who exchange sexual intercourse for cash income (Julia & White 2011, p. 20). The rise of commercial sex work in Sanggau Regency has resulted in family conflicts as well as increased rates of sexually transmitted diseases among Dayak indigenous communities.

FEMINIST POLITICAL ECOLOGY AS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on my review of the related literature, I found a gap in studies linking the capitalisation of nature and labour and the gendered impact of palm oil expansion. For this thesis' conceptual framework, I employ Rouchéleau's 'feminist political ecology' (henceforth FPE). FPE is a framework that places gender as a critical variable in shaping resource access and control, interacting with class, caste, race, culture, and ethnicity to shape processes of ecological change, the struggles of men and women to sustain ecologically viable livelihoods, and community prospects for "sustainable development" (Rouchéleau et al. 1996). It also directs attention towards gendered processes within the politics

of environmental degradation and conservation, the neoliberalisation of nature, and the ongoing rounds of accumulation, enclosure, and dispossession associated with these (Elmhirst 2015, p. 519). Exploring the gendered relations of ecologies, economies, and politics in communities from industrial to agrarian societies, FPE focuses on three key themes: a. gendered knowledge, b. gendered rights and responsibilities, c. gendered politics and grassroots activism (Roucheleau et al. 1996).

The first theme, gendered knowledge, asserts that 'patriarchal gender norms inform basic conceptions of who counts as a knowledge producer, what counts as knowledge, and how knowledge is produced.' The main argument here is that series of gendered knowledge systematically disadvantage women and other marginalised groups by excluding them as knowers while simultaneously producing knowledge that renders their experiences invisible or represents them as inferior (Sundberg 2015). The second theme, gendered rights and responsibilities, raises grave concern on women's limited formal rights despite their larger share of responsibility for resource procurement (i.e. food security, meal planning, water, medicinal herbs, etc.) and environmental maintenance. From this stance, FPE sees gender asymmetry in environmental rights and responsibilities as deriving from power relations that are based on gender, among other factors. The third theme focuses on gendered politics and grassroots activism, highlighting women's voices and collective struggles in demanding more equitable development. It pays attention to the ways women redefine their identities and the issues pertaining to their daily practices by including their knowledge, experience, and interests (Roucheleau et al. 1996, p. 18).

For my study, I employ these three themes across several chapters. The first two themes, on gendered knowledge and gendered rights and responsibilities, are specifically selected to examine the experiences of local women in West Kalimantan within the context of global processes of environmental and economic change due to oil palm expansion. Although labour is not explicitly counted as a stand-alone theme, FPE considers it an emerging concern, arguing that the rights to control one's own labour and to regulate the actions of others are highly gendered (Roucheleau et al. 1996, p. 10). Thus, I also incorporate aspects of gendered labour division in this thesis.

Lastly, FPE emphasises research and practice that empowers and promotes social and ecological transformations among women and other marginalised groups. With this in mind, the third theme

(gendered politics and grassroots activism) is covered in a chapter on women's narratives. By employing the narrative method, I hope that this study provides women respondents with the opportunity to recognise and challenge the dominant masculine conceptions and practices of knowledge (Elmhirst 2015, p. 519) and further feel empowered by voicing their own stories, needs, and aspirations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

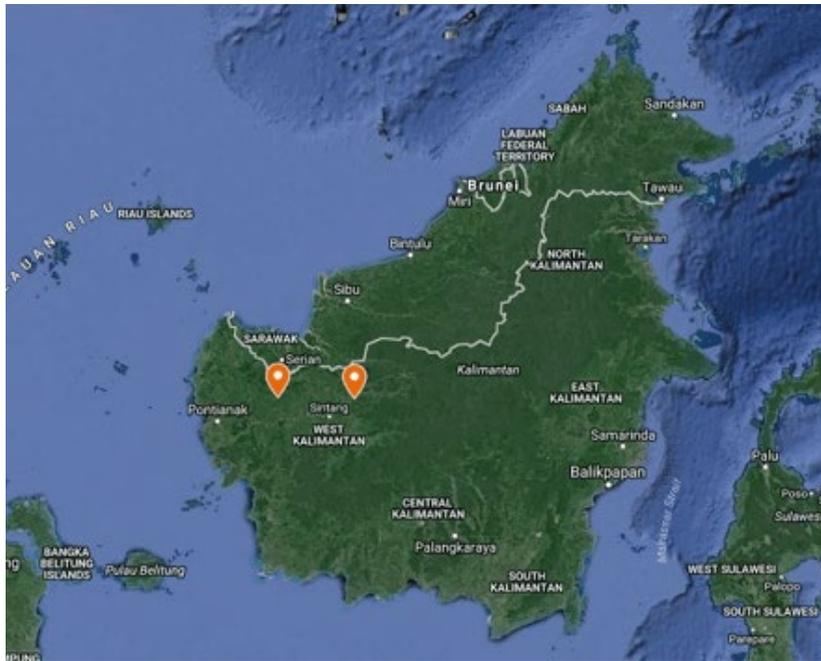
This study mainly employs a qualitative methodology and follows a narrative design to record Dayak indigenous women labourers' voices and lived experience in palm oil plantations. To discover patterns of gender injustice around palm oil plantations, a few key elements of gender injustice have been selected from the analytical framework (i.e. discrimination, violence/intimidation, exploitation, access to information, access to resources, etc.) and used as signposts to describe and assess women's experiences. Keeping in mind that 'personal is political', even a single respondent's testimony was viewed as a reality. In the narrative chapter (Chapter 5), I borrowed Creswell's (2007) crucial term in the narrative method: an 'epiphany'—special event(s) in an individual's life that represent turning points—was identified for the selected women. Due to the particular objective of this study and its purposeful sampling, the 'epiphany' is the introduction of palm oil industry as a matter of course. Starting from the epiphany, women's stories are 're-storied' by 'zooming in' and 'zooming out', focusing on the interaction between their personal and social perceptions and experience, set within the context of palm oil plantations and then related—guided by a feminist critique—with broader social implications.

Study site selection and data sources

Fieldwork was carried out for three weeks in March 2017 in two regencies of West Kalimantan, namely, Kapuas Hulu and Sanggau. Respondents were exclusively from the Dayak indigenous community, mostly from Dayak sub-ethnic groups. For this research, (trans-)migrant communities were not interviewed. However, perceptions on relations with the migrants that were shared by the Dayak respondents are described and analysed.

It should be acknowledged that I gained access to villages and women labourers in West Kalimantan with the support of staff working for the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP)⁴, an organisation working to advance indigenous peoples' rights. The selection of initial interviewees at the village head's discretion after consultation regarding the purpose of this research. However, after conducting the first few interviews, snowball sampling was used to recruit more respondents.

Figure 1. Map of two field sites: Sanggau Regency and Kapuas Hulu Regency



I selected two locations for my data collection to explore the varying dynamics that arise based on communities' different levels of dependency on the land. The two regencies selected, while similar in many ways,

⁴ FPP is an international NGO headquartered in the United Kingdom. To learn more about the organisation, see www.forestpeoples.org

exhibited different conditions based on the size and timespan of the land dispossession. In Sanggau, the entire village had given up its land, while in Kapuas Hulu, some neighbourhoods surrendered while others are still resisting. The circumstances in Sanggau are somewhat more stable than in Kapuas Hulu. In Sanggau, smallholder farmers have begun to profit from their plantations and fewer community members are engaged in the company-owned plantation. On the other hand, Kapuas Hulu has a more direct and ongoing dispute with the company, with more community members engaged as plantation labourers. Each site has yielded important insights that have contributed to the key findings. More background on these locations is provided below.

A. Entapang Village, Bonti District, Sanggau Regency

Sanggau Regency is located at the centre of West Kalimantan province, with its northern part bordering the Malaysian territory of Borneo. Beginning with state-owned palm oil plantations in the late 1970s, Sanggau is recorded as having the largest area dedicated to such plantations in West Kalimantan (BPS 2006 as cited in Rist et al. 2010). The largest ethnic group in Sanggau is the Dayak, including several sub-groups such as the Dayak-Hibun, etc. Two different types of palm oil plantation exist in Entapang Village: a core plantation owned and managed by the palm oil company PT. Mas II, and *plasma* (smallholder plantations) owned by individual farmers. In Entapang Village, almost all village residents gave their land to the company and received their own *plasma*, the size of which depended on the size of the land they surrendered. PT. Mas II became involved in the oil palm plantation in the mid-1990s, and the period for paying compensation has passed already. Currently, the villagers of Entapang rarely work for the plantation, mostly being involved with their own *plasma*. Those who still work for the company tend to own too little land to sustain their own livelihoods. As such, the context in Entapang is distinct from villages that rely heavily on employment at palm oil estates for their livelihood. In a way, villagers enjoy a more stable economy through the *plasma*. However, they are struggling and fighting against PT. MAS II's attempt to renew its land ownership, which for the villagers carries the implication of permanent loss of land.

B. Sejiram, Nanga Subaid, and Tajau Mada Villages, Seberuang District, Kapuas Hulu Regency

Kapuas Hulu Regency is located in the north-eastern part of West Kalimantan province, with its northern region bordering the Malaysian territory of Borneo. The largest ethnic group in Kapuas Hulu is the Dayak, including several sub-groups such as Dayak-Suaid, Dayak-Kantu, Dayak-Seberuang, etc. The villages covered by this research are Sejiram, Naga Suaid, Hantau, Tajau Mada, and Bati, all of which are found within the Seberuang District. Until the 1940s/1950s, the main source of livelihood in Seberuang District was rice farming. The development of the rubber industry later provided another source of livelihood, as well as (small-scale) cash income. Since 2010, PT. AMS—owned by Golden Agri-Resource, the second largest palm oil company in the world and the largest in Indonesia—has sought to open a plantation in Seberuang. A few villages have permitted the palm oil company to use their land; others have continued to reject and resist the company's land use. Tajau Mada Village, which surrendered its land to the company, has been experiencing complications related to land ownership and smallholder plantation (*plasma*) management. During *sosialisasi*—a discussion carried out between the company and the community—the company failed to explain any additional costs or debts that would be incurred by villagers after agreeing to let the company use their land, including the *plasma* set aside for villagers' individual plantations. When the villagers gave the company permission to use their land, they found out that they had to pay for the initial investment (such as land clearing, buying and planting the seedlings, etc.) over a period of five to six years. The company refuses to give villagers a certificate of *plasma* ownership unless the villagers signed an agreement surrendering their land.

Data collection

a. In-depth interviews with women labourers

In conducting in-depth interviews with respondents, I used a flexible combination of semi-structured interviews and chatting over tea or coffee (the latter informal approach was used after the respondent and I had our first interview and after obtaining informed consent). Bearing in mind that the main methodology used in this study is a narrative one, the questions were mostly open-ended; when a respondent showed particular passion in answering certain questions, more questions

followed. As data of better quality could be obtained with a stronger rapport, I made equal effort to mingle with villagers in a casual setting.

b. Expert interviews

Expert interviews were conducted with a project officer and senior policy advisor of the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), which works to promote indigenous peoples' rights in the palm oil industry. Carrying out expert interviews helped me understand contextual factors and verify my analysis in the broader current of palm oil discourse in Indonesia. Also, during the field work, I had the opportunity to have a rich discussion with Link-AR Borneo and Walhi Kalbar, respectively a grassroots organisation and INGO working for indigenous peoples' rights and environmental impact in Kalimantan. Questions regarding gender and the palm oil sector were asked during formal and informal meetings with both organisations, thereby helping me conceptualise the impact of palm oil on women labourers in the villages.

c. Interviews with village heads

Although the primary respondents were women labourers, interviews with village heads were carried out to gain broader contextual knowledge of the history and culture of the people and place. This allowed me to understand the particularities of each village and helped me 'read between the lines', understanding implications that were not always articulated by women respondents during the interview process.

Data analysis

The unit of this study's analysis is the women labourers in the palm oil plantations, who mostly hold casual daily labourer status. As narrating gender injustice is the backbone of the research objective, I started my data analysis by conceptualising gender injustice in the context of palm oil plantations. For data coding, some key words (i.e. discrimination, violence/intimidation, exploitation, access to information, access to resources, etc.) were selected from the FPE framework to discover patterns of gender injustice around palm oil plantations. While I conceptualised gender injustice by drawing from an FPE point of view, I also paid special attention to the words women used. Bearing in mind that respondents might not necessarily use exact terms like gender injustice, human rights violations, labour exploitation, etc., I tried to

connect these terms to women's expressions of unfairness or things that must be improved or remedied to some extent.

THESIS ORGANISATION

This thesis is organised into six chapters. The first chapter contains the thesis' background, research objectives, methodologies and conceptual framework. It also provides related literature regarding other scholars and activist groups' research. The second chapter presents some context regarding land dispossession processes and the specific localities of the two field sites. I then proceed with the two main topics of this study. In chapter three, I provide an overview of the labour structures within the plantations, followed by the gendered implications for women labourers. In chapter four, I offer analysis of gender injustice in the process of palm oil development based on the key selected elements. Building on this, I examine the impact of the capitalisation of nature and labour on communities (particularly on women) and reveal the deprived rights of women under the palm oil system. The fifth chapter provides women labourers' narratives on their lived experiences in and around the palm oil industry, along with my gender analysis based on a feminist political ecology perspective. The final chapter presents my concluding remarks, summarises my key findings, and offers recommendations based on my analysis of the findings.

2.

CONTEXT

In this chapter, I describe some political, economic, and social contexts of Kalimantan and provide a brief background of the land dispossession process, which is a crucial factor in understanding the local dynamics around oil palm expansion. In Indonesia, the oil palm industry began in earnest in the early 1980s, with Sumatra being the frontier;⁵ oil palm development in West Kalimantan began booming a little later, in the late 1990s. By 2013, West Kalimantan ranked fifth among Indonesian provinces in terms of oil palm cultivation area, showing a drastic increase of 30 percent in a five-year span (Director General of Estate Crops 2014 as cited in IPAC 2016, p. 5). West Kalimantan, as with other regions, has also experienced numerous political, economic, social, and cultural clashes along with oil palm dominance in the province, which will be described in below.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

The ecological change across Kalimantan from vast forests to commercial agribusiness sites through oil palm and mining activities was not simply an environmental shift; it was more of a political process. After the fall of Suharto, the centralised government of the New Order era was replaced by rigorous decentralisation reforms in 2001 (Arenz et al. 2017, p. 14), which offered a way to strengthen regional autonomy in the islands outside Java that had been marginalised during Suharto's

⁵ Although the precise timeframe is debatable, in this chapter, I refer to the oil palm development as entrusted to the Ministry of Transmigration in 1983 (Rival & Levang 2014, p. 18).

time. Kalimantan was one such island, and local governments made their best efforts to take advantage of the momentum of enhanced authority. One victory of the decentralisation period was the Dayak indigenous people gaining political self-determination and becoming ruling majorities in some regencies. The Dayak people in Kalimantan felt empowered through the reorientation of their identity and culture. However, at the same time conflicts were emerging between indigenous and migrant communities, which will be discussed in more detail in the section on social context.

Apparently, the oil palm industry has been a key driver of both opportunity and crisis for the local and indigenous people in Kalimantan. New administrative units began to mushroom during the decentralisation period, opening up new political and economic opportunities that allowed oil palm investment as a driver of development. However, oil palm expansion only brought wealth to a few village leaders and local entrepreneurs; the vast amount of the benefits returned to the oil palm companies, both foreign and national. In the meantime, the majority of indigenous peoples—especially the less educated and poor—lost out hard, which further widened social gaps and eroded social cohesion (Gönner 2017, p. 58). Local government representatives and some village leaders could easily dispel the forest people who raised doubts about oil palm development (Rival & Levang 2014, p. 21), thus helping engineer oil palm expansion for the benefit of the few. Village heads' abuse of power and manipulation of land deals for their own benefit have prompted disputes and fragmentation within communities (Colchester et al. 2006, p. 80).

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Before the oil palm industry took over many parts of West Kalimantan, the main economic system in Kapuas Hulu and Sanggau was built on subsistence rice farming and shifting cultivation (*ladang*), as well as the rubber industry that had developed in the 1950s. Rubber tapping was one of the first mono-crops that brought wage labour to communities. However, it was run on a much smaller scale than the current oil palm industry. Among villagers, there is still ambivalence on the preference between oil palm and rubber. Rubber tapping remains the main pillar of livelihood among villagers in Kapuas Hulu, as it generates cash income,

grows on their own land (i.e. resource management is in their own hands) and provides more flexibility than being a daily wage labourer. Some prefer oil palm cultivation, as it provides a year-round harvest whereas rubber is usually harvested during the dry season (Rist et al. 2010, p. 1016). Independent smallholder farmers in Sanggau shared that oil palms are easier to manage and more profitable. As such, variations exist depending on whether farmers are independent smallholders or work as wage labourers for oil palm companies. However, communities that have fiercely resisted oil palm expansion have a strong determination in common. They do not see the 'development' asserted and promised by the oil palm companies as advancement, but as loss for their communities. For example, they reckon that planting oil palm requires more outside resources, whereas growing pepper, rice, and other crops can be done organically, from within the village, thereby indicating a notion of self-reliance.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

As mentioned earlier, one emerging challenge after decentralisation was conflict between Dayak indigenous people and (trans-)migrant communities from outside Kalimantan. In the palm oil sector specifically, and more broadly in, agribusiness, companies favour migrants over indigenous people in recruiting their labour force, stereotyping the Dayak people as lazy, unreliable, and complaintive (Li 2014). On the other hand, migrants are viewed as hard-working, diligent, and less likely to challenge the management. This view is a reflection of the fact that Dayak people are involved in direct confrontation (land disputes) with the companies, and as such constantly question and challenge the companies on various terms, especially those related to their land ownership. On the other hand, many (trans-)migrants come from Java, an overpopulated island where economic opportunities are extremely scarce. There are also poor landless farmers arriving from other islands. Both types of migrant workers are likely to take any available chances for earning income despite precarious conditions, as such employment is deemed a better opportunity than available in their point of origin. These migrants are relocated and often provided housing along with other settlement packages by the company that hires them. This raises another complaint from the Dayak indigenous community, as they

consider it unfair to give privileges to the migrants when the owners of the land are still struggling with many problems. However, there is also resentment from (trans-)migrant communities regarding sub-standard housing and low remuneration, among others, although it should be noted that conditions vary on a case-by-case basis.

In the cultural realm, much concern for the loss of Dayak culture and ways of life can be observed. In an interview, the head of Bati village in Kapuas Hulu Regency Mr Bodaeng shared his concern about the community's loss of identity, culture, and customary practices after accepting the oil palm plantation. For the Dayak people, one of the most important cultural ceremonies is the thanksgiving celebration *Gawai Dayak*, which is closely related to land and farming practices. The palm oil company's devaluation of *Gawai Dayak* is also viewed as a far-reaching problem, as the ceremony defines the Dayak people's relationship with nature, strengthens family bonds, and has been maintained for generations. Meanwhile, in some communities, persons who have accepted the offers from palm oil companies co-exist with persons resisting palm oil expansion. As such, there are growing incidences of inter-community conflict, recurrent across Kalimantan where the two distinct communities (those who surrendered their land and those who did not) border palm oil plantations. This kind of 'horizontal conflict' between citizens or communities has become quite common as customary land has been taken during the development of agribusiness across Kalimantan (Sirait 2009).

LAND DISPOSSESSION

For Dayak indigenous people, land and forest are indispensable sources of their identity, culture, livelihood, and socio-economic activities. As such, land dispossession is integral to understanding the social impact of palm oil estates on indigenous communities in West Kalimantan.

Indonesia has a long history of direct state intervention in forest ownership, management, and regulation, from the colonial period to the present. In 1967, under the rule of President Suharto (also cited as the New Order era), the Indonesian government issued the Basic Law of Forestry (1967), which in effect placed forests as state property, thus allowing political control and economic development based on

natural resource extraction (Siscawati et al. 2014, p. 17). This era saw the peak of large-scale forest exploitation, and the laws and regulations set up at this time have not changed much even today. After the fall of Suharto, a new law of forestry was enacted (Law of Forestry No. 41 of 1999). Unfortunately, the authority of defining and utilising forests still lies mostly in the state and excludes indigenous peoples' customary entitlement to forest land and resources. The state usually gives 'licences' to utilise state forests (including indigenous peoples' customary land) to private companies and state-owned enterprises, thereby allowing the conversion of large-scale concession.

Indonesia's new investment law (2007) allows plantation companies to lease land for up to 95 years, provided they fulfil the technical requirements for plantation business utilisation rights (Julia & White 2011, p. 8). This long tenure also means that, once a company obtains a land-use permit, indigenous communities almost permanently lose control over their customary land. Further trouble appears when land is 'licensed' by companies without informing the indigenous communities affected and without fair compensation. For example, companies often acquire permission to temporarily borrow land for oil palm cultivation. However, the process largely lacks the 'free, prior and informed consent' (FPIC) of indigenous and local peoples, whom companies convince to surrender their land by promising such benefits as new infrastructures, education for children, and other economic benefits among others. Companies commonly neither fulfil their promises nor arrange for compensation (distinct from the above-mentioned 'benefits') for acquired land. Moreover, farmers frequently complain about the unreasonable benefit sharing between smallholders and the oil palm companies.

In Seberuang, Kapuas Hulu, PT. AMS began the process of opening its plantation in 2010. Few villages have permitted the palm oil company to use their land; others have continued to reject and resist the company's advances. To persuade locals to allow the plantation's establishment, the company approached three *tumenggungs* (customary leaders), who were all male, and took them to a fancy hotel, offered them drinks, and welcomed them to enjoy themselves in the city. After luring them with such "modern" cultures, the company began its negotiations⁶. They

⁶ Interview with Mr Ferdinandus Emil, a head of Dayak customary law in Seberuang

also showed these customary leaders other places where the plantation operates and promised that the palm oil industry would bring a better economy, employment, and prosperity to the villages in Seberuang.

Eventually, the Tajau Mada community surrendered its land to the oil palm company. Presently, the village is experiencing complications of land ownership and smallholder (*plasma*) plantation management. According to the business utilisation rights (HGU, *bak guna usaba*) of the Indonesian national land agency (BPN), companies should set aside 20 percent of the concession area for smallholders. In other words, when the indigenous community permits the company to use land, the company is required to give back at least 20 percent of the land area to the landowners. Community members almost always decide to plant oil palm trees to gain income and benefit, as it is considered logical and efficient. However, as indigenous people lack the necessary collateral to start their own small-scale palm oil plantation and cultivate it, often the company plants the crops and the farmers must pay back their debts to company's operational input. This debt is usually deducted (Elmhirst et al. 2016, p. 304) from what farmers should be earning for themselves over an average period of five to six years. After calculating the debt for initial set-up costs, farmers earn close to nothing in the first few years. For instance, one plantation worker who gave up family land in Kapuas Hulu shared that, while repaying the debt, the family only received IDR 30,000 (equivalent to USD 2.25 as of April 2017) per month from three hectares of land⁷. Most farmers were not aware of the consequence (i.e. debt) when they gave up their land to the company. Unfortunately, Chong (as cited in Rist et al. 2010, p. 1017) states this is often the case throughout rural villages in Indonesia where oil palm companies claim stakes to land.

The company operating in Tajau Mada village still refuses to give certificates of *plasma* ownership unless villagers sign an agreement of land surrender, which implies the permanent loss of their land in the future. The concession uses the *satu atap* (one roof) system, whereby smallholders' *plasma* land is managed together with the company's large concession. With this system, it is nearly impossible for smallholder farmers to locate their land and claim their profits. Smallholders who

District, 31 March 2017.

⁷ Interview with Mr Damianus Kardi and Mrs Siana on 27 March 2017.

surrendered their land to the company have thus become 'bonded' labourers without other means to repay their debts or sustain themselves. Unfortunately, these problems are common—though not uniform—across communities that accepted the oil palm industry. Colchester's report on oil palm controversy illustrates the way farmers speak emotively about the "ghosts on our land" because of the endless and vicious cycle of debt they are trapped in (Colchester & Jiwan 2006). Colchester further remarks that this phenomenon is the extraction of 'forced labour', a 'contemporary form of slavery' (Colchester 2010, cited in Jiwan 2013, p. 69).

Meanwhile, in Bati Village, which is located next to Tajau Mada and has refused palm oil concession, women did not necessarily represent themselves in the negotiation or decision-making process. The head of the Bati shared that the decision to reject the palm oil plantation was unanimous, adding that not a single villager had ideas otherwise. However, when I talked to a woman villager about the consultation process, her response showed a contradiction.

"We decided through a community meeting and nobody agreed. I rarely get invited, but my son attended the meeting. I don't know how the decision was made, but I usually hear updates from others." (Mrs Marta Limbong, Bati Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

The Bati village head held high confidence that his administration had taken all the villagers' opinions into account, but which specific group of people was counted still remains questionable, based on Mrs Marta's response. It would not be fair to say that the decision-making process is egalitarian (as the village head asserted elsewhere) and unanimous when part of the community does not know how decisions are made and are rarely being invited. This tendency is in line with Julia and White's findings that 'the voice of the men was considered to be the unanimous voice of the villagers' among the Dayak community in West Kalimantan (2011).

On another note, families were lucky if they still had some land left for food production. The most vulnerable were community members who owned no land. I do not intend to romanticise or idealise the sole subsistence economy, or to make a blanket assumption that they lived in an egalitarian society where people did not face inequality. In fact, my research found very different levels of wealth and poverty within Dayak

communities before and after the oil palms arrived. Women's varied situations in Sanggau was particularly indicative of this. When I asked why most community members were not engaged in the company-owned plantation, the women in the village told me it is because they all have plots of land (they were able to secure 20 percent of each hectare they surrendered) and manage oil palm as a smallholder, selling the fresh oil palm fruit bunches to the company's factory. By managing their own smallhold plantation, they gain profit from their own land; for them, this is more dignified than working as a subordinate of the company and at times facing discrimination and exploitation.

Some women labourers I interviewed were working on the company-owned plantation because they did not own sufficient land. Their parents only had small plots of land to pass to them, while a few neighbours had huge plots of land and made quite an affluent living from their palm oil plantation. From my observations, I also found emotional distance between members who were better off and those who had less. During an informal conversation at the house of the village head where I was based, one woman told me that women who work for the company do not show up in the gatherings. She also added that they do not socialise with other community members. Among the community members, those women working at the PT. MAS plantation were seen as poorer and unfortunate compared to those who made a living on their own land. While the Sanggau community was slowly seeing benefits, those women without land lagged increasingly behind in isolation.

What I can assert from the above observations and findings is that land is the first and foremost part of Dayak communities in protecting their livelihood and their culture, as well as defending their dignity and rights. However, without transparency in the land transfer process, wage labour has become the only option for survival for Dayak communities in West Kalimantan.

3.

PALM OIL LABOUR AND GENDERED IMPLICATION

This chapter provides an overview of the labour structure within the palm oil plantations, followed by its gendered implications for Dayak indigenous women labourers. First, I problematise the hierarchal labour structure that enables men to gain a higher status, while women complete tasks under exploitative conditions. Some elements that make palm oil plantations structurally unjust, especially to women labourers, include devaluation of women's work, employment insecurity, and health risks. More analysis will follow using a feminist political ecology framework (i.e. gendered knowledge and gendered rights and responsibilities) in this chapter. Lastly, I argue that the change of ecology and livelihood brought by oil palm expansion in West Kalimantan shoulders Dayak women with multiple burdens as labourers, wives, mothers, and homemakers.

DIVISION OF LABOUR IN PALM OIL PLANTATIONS

There are roughly three units for tasks carried out in palm oil plantations, namely harvest, maintenance, and nursery. Based on my fieldwork, most male labourers are engaged in the harvest unit, whereas women are mainly engaged in the maintenance and nursery units. Each fresh fruit bunch (FFB) weighs at least 30 kg (plantation management does not accept any below 30 kg) and is collected manually with a long bamboo stick (of a few metres length) that is tipped with a machete. Either the male harvester or a counterpart female labourer assigned to collect the loose fruit carries the FFB that are dispersed on the ground. With the equatorial heat and intense humidity, these tasks are strenuous labour requiring physical strength and considerable technique. As such,

harvesting tasks are mostly done by males, though anecdotal evidence suggests that female workers also engage in harvesting. My fieldwork also verified that women labourers rarely worked as harvesters,⁸ except on their own smallhold plot.

Tasks assigned to the maintenance unit include spreading fertiliser, spraying pesticides, clearing overgrown weeds around the trees, and pruning branches. Working in the maintenance unit does not necessarily mean, however, that a labourer carries out every task mentioned above. In some cases, women labourers do all these tasks, while in other cases all tasks were carried out except the spraying. Despite using the highly toxic pesticide paraquat,⁹ as documented by researchers and NGOs, the labourers responded that they were unaware of the pesticide's specifics. All, however, agreed regarding its harmful effect on the body, as per their first-hand experiences. Spreading fertiliser also exposes women to chemicals, though perhaps to a lesser extent than spraying pesticide.

The nursery is another unit that is mostly occupied by women labourers, who take care of oil palm seedlings until they are fully grown and ready to be replanted and bear fruits. The tasks of the nursery unit are similar to those of the maintenance unit, but considered less physically demanding as the whole plot for the nursery covers 1–2 hectares. For this reason, older women generally work in the nursery unit.

OVERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN NON-STANDARD FORMS OF LABOUR

The contract arrangements for these different units is an important aspect that deserves attention. During my fieldwork, I found that maintenance and nursery units almost universally employ casual daily labours, a non-standard form of labour. More permanent work arrangements were offered in the harvesting unit. Before analysing

⁸ In cases where women work in the harvest unit, their task is usually collecting loose fruit, with their husband being the main harvester. Companies tend to hire married couples as teams, as this is considered efficient and thought to reduce the risk of inappropriate affairs among workers.

⁹ Paraquat exposure may cause nosebleeds, eye irritation, contact dermatitis, nail loss, and abdominal ulcerations (Wakker 2004, as cited in Pye & Bhattacharya 2013). Other documented health effects of exposure to paraquat include Parkinson's disease, neurological disorders, endocrine disruption, and cancer (Rainforest Action Network 2016).

further, I have listed some employment terms used in the palm oil sector in Indonesia that I found useful in understanding the gendered dynamics of its structure.

BHL (*buruh harian lepas*) refers to daily casual labourers, and *SKU* (*standar ketetapan umum*) refers to regular workers, who in principle receive a monthly salary and full social packages. Although the details of these social packages might differ between estates, they usually include health insurance, rice allowances, pensions, and one day of paid leave for menstruating women. However, these are only applicable to permanent workers. Those working under non-standard forms of labour, such as casual daily labourers or sub-contract workers, are only minimally provided for, if at all. From the plantation companies' point of view, hiring non-standard forms of labour reduces their operational and administration costs while still offering the same amount of labour. Non-standard forms of labour also imply that, when these temporary labourers experience industrial accidents or hazards, they cannot hold companies accountable. As seen in many industries driven by capitalist values that prioritise profit and efficiency over peoples' rights and well-being, plantation labourers become commodities that can be replaced when they are 'depreciated'. While both men and women work in the casual labour pool, women predominantly represent the work force with a highly unstable nature. Li's recent paper (2014) has noted the trend of casualising the workforce in the oil palm sector.

UNINFORMED CONSENT WARRANTS EXPLOITATION

In addition to discriminatory practices in assigning women to the casual labour force, lack of access to information is another factor that puts Dayak women work in exploitative work conditions. Here, access to information does not only mean the availability of information, but also whether workers receive detailed information about potential consequences of their labour. Many Dayak women labourers testified that, during the recruitment process, explanations of their terms of employment, including work hours, break time, and availability of social benefits, were unclear. While this reduced understanding could relate to their low level of education and less familiarity working in the company setting, it is apparent that the companies do not provide contracts that could serve as legal proof that workers can hold companies accountable

for matters relating to their labour conditions. Many women respondents were unaware of the different implications of working as casual daily labourers and as permanent workers, nor were they notified about what they could claim as daily labourers. They did not receive information about the promotion of workers from daily labour status to permanent status, nor was the process transparent. Based on my interviews, the usual case is that managers determine who will apply for a permanent position; as such, thus the discretion is up to persons in managerial positions or at times *mandor* (foremen), who are mostly men.

Companies, with their asymmetric power over labourers, also abuse workers during the distribution of wages. On payday, daily labourers are expected to cue for at least half a day to get their wages. As the company does not inform workers what time they will distribute the wages, there was a case when labourers began queuing in the morning and only got their wages at 11 at night. While this might be an issue with mismanagement, the company in question did not provide adequate information to labourers, whose security is at stake if this conduct repeats. Often, when they receive their pay late at night, women labourers wait for fellow workers living in the same area so they can return home safely. Though this could be a specific case limited to one particular plantation, overall all companies manipulate their power over labourers.

Barriers to information access persist within plantations along the lines of hierarchal labour relations. Some women complained about the information flow across their plantations. One respondent shared, “the foreman who is in charge of my team does not let workers communicate directly with the managerial level.” Another added, “The way information is delivered by the management is not transparent, and some information is not disclosed properly. For example, we are supposed to get an allowance for the national holiday (on Eid al-Fitr) once a year. As the amount changes every year, some of us asked how much would receive this year, and they just said they didn’t know. We would only find out when we received the allowance.” While labour laws regulate the amount of holiday allowance, the company is not transparent about the issue. My respondents shared their grudges against managers’ dismissive attitudes towards plantation labourers. There is also a complete block of workers unions, which obscures workers’ agency in demanding their rights. Although the issue is outside the scope of my research, it deserves a mention as it implicates Dayak women labourers’ weak status.

DISCRIMINATORY LABOUR PRACTICES BASED ON GENDER

Field interviews suggested that, when estate managers transition casual labourers to permanent ones, husbands get a significantly higher promotion than their wives. Mrs Tresia shared her experience with discrimination, which occurred despite her having worked on the plantation for years longer than her husband.

I started working for the plantation in 2009, three years before my husband joined. But my husband became a permanent worker four years ago, while I just received permanent status nine months ago. The company usually chooses husbands for promotion because they are the harvesters.”

(Mrs Tresia, Tajau Mada Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

As discussed previously, companies only provide social packages to permanent workers. The research findings show that companies allocate these benefits discriminatorily, based on gender. This discrimination is mainly caused by the recognition of males as household heads, following Indonesian law and customary practice. The broad assumption that males are the sole breadwinners in their families plays a role in the promotion of more men over women, thereby undermining women's work as supplementary to the husband's main income (Blackburn 2004, p. 168). In a plantation managed by PT. MAS II in Sanggau, if a male (household head) works for the company, he receives a rice allowance for the whole family (providing for up to three children). However, if a woman is the only one working at the plantation (i.e. her husband is not employed there), the company only gives sufficient rice allowances and healthcare for the labourer herself. They provide for the whole family only when the labourer is a widow who has children to take care of. The household head concept, based on who is the breadwinner, is no longer applicable, as women working on palm oil plantations are responsible not only for household care, but also for earning an income. Nevertheless, discriminatory labour practices fixate women's roles and existence as secondary to their husbands' in the family.

Regarding remunerations, both plantations in Sanggau and Kapuas Hulu paid equal wage to Dayak men and Dayak women, depending on their work hours and achievement of the daily quota. However, my fieldwork revealed that males are likely to earn more, as they have greater opportunity to gain *premi* (bonuses) from their harvesting

tasks. Moreover, plantation managers place different values on the tasks done by men and women. As the company views harvesting as the most important task in crude palm oil production, males receive more opportunities to become permanent workers, while women's task of maintenance is treated as a side-job that needs to be done to 'support' males' work. This view is in-line with men's work in the public sphere being valued as more important, with the label of productive work, while women's works in the private sphere is valued less and termed reproductive work in the capitalist division (Mies 1986, p. 31). The below responses reflect some women's views on the matter of sidelining maintenance work.

But for you to have fruit, you need to take good care of it [the plant], fertilise it, and then only it can bear a fruit and [you can] finally harvest!
(Mrs Siana, Tajau Mada Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

Harvesting is done solely by men, and the only job left for us is the spraying and fertilizing. We are helping nurture the oil palms; if there is nobody doing the nursing, the company will not be able to harvest the fruit.
(Mrs Sabin, Entapang Village, Sanggau Regency)

Contrary to the company's view, which undermines maintenance jobs, women labourers assert the indispensable value of their tasks. These maintenance tasks might be the ones left for Dayak indigenous women after (trans-)migrant workers and male labourers take the harvest tasks, but women see the intrinsic value of nurturing. They recognize that, however many labourers work on the harvest, they would not be able to carry out their task without women nurturing the oil palms. As Roucheleau (1996) pointed out, the pattern of perceiving women as 'providers' of labour and 'tenders' of the household intersects with the view that women's work is devalued, despite their substantial contribution to the means of livelihood. Implicit in this view is the notion that women's reproductive responsibilities are not particularly significant (Roucheleau 1996, p. 298).

GENDERED IMPLICATIONS OF THE CASUAL LABOUR FORCE

An interview with a Dayak woman who currently works as a daily labourer near Entapang Village revealed that neither she nor her co-

workers holds a contract or other document that lists the terms and conditions of their employment. She explained that, without a contract, workers could quit their jobs at any time, and that this gave her a sense of flexibility. However, the lack of a contract also means that the company can discharge labourers at any point they deem necessary. She also added that labour contracts are held by the male labourers who drop the palm oil fruits and load the fruit bunches into trucks. Although her designation is officially a daily labourer, she has been working regularly at the plantation since 2010, which reveals the insecure employment conditions. On the other hand, this also means that the company is avoiding its obligation to shift labourers to permanent work positions after they have worked for more than a certain period. According to Indonesian law,¹⁰ if a company hires a daily labourer for more than 21 days or more for more than three consecutive months, that labourer must be hired in a permanent position (Amnesty International 2016). My field investigation also found that casual daily labourers receive their wages every two weeks, which suggests that companies may be trying to avoid the responsibility of hiring more permanent workers by arbitrarily fixing the work period as less than 21 days. The lack of contracts and, more importantly, the labourers' lack of information put them in a highly vulnerable position without proper safeguarding mechanisms.

The provision of safety equipment also differs depending on labourers' employment arrangement. Companies usually provide safety equipment for labourers with permanent positions, while casual daily labourers must equip themselves. Although some companies provide safety gear for all workers regardless of their employment status, it is common practice for casual workers to be expected to handle their own safety. As such, occupational safety is frequently the responsibility of each individual labourer. Labourers are also required to sanitise equipment themselves after exposure to toxic substances. However, owing to the vast expanse of the plantations and lack of soap and water, it is nearly impossible to sanitise promptly if harmful substances directly affect workers' eyes or hands. Such negligence could potentially cause detrimental effects, especially related to health. Taking into account that most casual daily labourers are women, and that they are often associated with tasks that expose them to chemicals and toxic substances, long-

¹⁰ Article. 10, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration Decree No. 100/2004

term health hazards for women are inevitable. Women labourers tasked with spraying are in an especially worrisome position. As mentioned earlier, numerous NGOs and researchers have problematised the use of paraquat, a pesticide whose use is prohibited by the World Health Organization in many parts of the world. Although at this stage evidence is mostly anecdotal, concerns are high on the pesticide's impact on respiratory and reproductive health (Amnesty International 2016; Li 2014; Surambo et al. 2010). As casual daily labourers are responsible for their own gear, their health is their own risk, and regular medical check-ups are not affordable for many Dayak women labourers.

SPLIT PREFERENCES ON WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Despite more benefits being provided to permanent workers, some women prefer unstable casual labourer positions. To make more a living by engaging in side jobs, Dayak women labourers deliberately choose to maintain their daily labourer status. This decision, however, comes from the single option palm oil economy pushing women to search for alternatives. The fact that most labourers are mothers also results in them choosing a more flexible work status due to their child-rearing responsibilities. I noticed a pattern of 'learned helplessness' among women workers excusing their low levels of education, which presumably intersect with their working-class status as well. A similar tendency of 'internalisation' was noted when respondents shared their views about sharing household works. Although women seem responsible for more household chores (non-wage labour) as well as parenting responsibilities, they did not necessarily recognise this. However, that they wake up as early as 2:30 reflects the lopsided division of domestic chores.

The binary concept of the husband as the breadwinner in the public sphere and the wife as a supporter of the household in the private sphere is still prevalent, despite more women joining the work force. Dayak women labourers' choice to be casual or permanent workers is dictated by their socially constructed roles in the family and, more broadly, in society. Some women are content to be casual labourers, as they can fully perform their household responsibilities, while other women are happy to attain permanent status, as the associated benefits enable them to support their family better. Although I do not dismiss women's pursuit of the maximum happiness for their families, I must

note that, when companies abuse their socially constructed roles, it becomes discrimination and a human rights violation.

Palm oil companies are actively involved in playing with the local power dynamics between men and women. For harvesting teams, companies generally recruit married couples in pairs; if they are not a couple, it is difficult for them to work efficiently as it is hard for the men to receive more help from women. Companies take advantage of this family 'cohesion' to achieve higher targets. There are reports of extra unpaid labour (also referred to shadow labour or family labour), where husbands get assistance from their wives and at times their children to meet their daily targets or earn bonuses (Jiwan 2013, p. 72). The rhetoric that positions wives as supporters for their husbands 'for the betterment of the family' and, more broadly, 'for the development of the nation', is played out here. The invisible work-force is justified in this rhetoric, and companies turn a blind eye, although they know that their targets are unreasonably high for one single labourer.

WOMEN'S MULTIPLE BURDENS AS LABOURERS, WIVES, MOTHERS, AND HOMEMAKERS

One respondent from the Dayak Malayu sub-ethnic group confirmed the lopsided burden of household work. "Outside the house, work is equally done by both men and women. This has been the case since we used to farm. We worked on the farm together. However, when it comes to household chores, it is mostly women who do the domestic work. Educating children and parenting, such as helping the kids do their homework, is also the women's role." Another respondent shared a reflection of the division of labour in the household. "When my husband comes back home early on the weekdays, he helps with some household chores, for example, boiling the water for drinking and cleaning. But no cooking, because basically, men don't touch the kitchen." As securing the family's food and daily is mainly done by women, oil palm expansion has had several implications, putting a greater burden on women. For example, Elmhirst's piece on 'Revisiting gender and forestry' documents that indigenous women who cultivate rice for family consumption must walk increasingly farther as oil palms replace paddy fields, and they have to grow in more remote lands (Elmhirst et al. 2016, p. 309). The following illustration of a Dayak woman labourer's daily routine

and thoughts about her life around a palm oil plantation indicates the multiple burdens put on women as labourers, wives, mothers, and homemakers.

Mrs Dewi¹¹ wakes up at four in the early morning every day. She starts her day by cooking for her family and washing the dishes. Her work at the palm oil plantation starts at 6:30 and ends at 14:00 in the afternoon. At the plantation, she is tasked with fertilising, weeding, and pruning as a casual daily labourer. She earns IDR 86,200 per day if she completes her daily quota of seven fertiliser sacks, meaning 350kg per day. She usually reaches her target by cooperating with other workers. If she fails to meet the quota, IDR 10,000 will be deducted from her wages for each sack. Sometimes she works harder to reach more than her target, to earn the *premi* (bonus), but this does not happen often as it is hard work. During the fishing season, she does not attend to her regular palm oil work, instead, spends 1–2 weeks on catching fish as she could earn more than what she receives at the plantation as the casual labourer. Outside her work hours, she also sells clothes to palm oil workers, because the wage she earns from the plantation is not enough for her family, especially with two daughters in college. After the plantation work, she returns home and finishes the rest of the household chores, including cooking dinner, washing clothes, and cleaning the house. Her husband rarely helps her, as he is busy with his job. Her day ends around eight at night when she either watches television or goes to sleep early.

Mrs Dewi told me that she has deliberately chosen to remain a casual daily labourer because she prioritised the flexibility it offered. She needs this flexibility because she has to take care of her children and because she does not want to miss a chance of earning income, even a meagre amount of money, through non-oil palm activities. Given that her two children are studying in the provincial capital, education costs the family some money. Her eagerness to educate her children reflects the level of sacrifice she has provided them with, while the power dynamics with her husband needs a further interview. However, based on her responses and the researcher's observation, most household work is done by Mrs Dewi, thereby burdening her and limiting her choices. As a result of being the main caretaker, she pushes herself to fulfil her many responsibilities. Consequently, her only choice is remaining a casual daily labourer.

¹¹ Her name has been changed as requested by the interviewee.

4.

GENDERED PROCESSES IN OIL PALM EXPANSION

This chapter focuses on Dayak indigenous women labourers' experiences with the development of palm oil plantations in their communities. My research finds that the process and consequences of oil palm expansion are felt differently by men and women; as such, I view oil palm expansion as a 'gendered' process. Mainly employing FPE's framework of gendered rights and responsibilities, I pay particular attention to the processes that preclude Dayak women from taking part in decision-making in their communities and provide an analysis on society's gender norms that are directly linked to local power dynamics. I further elaborate the implications for Dayak women as livelihoods change from dominantly self-subsistence farming to wage labour in palm oil plantations. My argument is that, as nature and labour are capitalised along with oil palm development, gender asymmetry had also deepened in Dayak communities. Capitalistic development highlights women's economic empowerment, but obscures the fact that they must endure multiple burdens as the cash economy dictates their life opportunities.

GENDERED KNOWLEDGE, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In both field locations in Sanggau and Kapuas Hulu, Dayak women's lack of access to information and resources was obvious. The information to which I refer here are the factors determinant of their daily lives and livelihood means. In the case of Entapang Village in Sanggau, villagers had all given up their lands to the plantation company. In the process of acquiring the land, the company promised infrastructures such as concrete roads, electricity, a water system, and high schools for children, which has remained an unfulfilled process even twenty

years later. While land conflicts have been ongoing for almost two decades, information regarding the land was not widely shared among the communities, especially women labourers. When asked about their awareness of land issues related to the palm oil industry, some women interviewees responded that they had not heard of any conflicts. In fact, the community routinely discussed land disputes through meetings where most participants were men. There was an imbalance in access to information within the village. This partly reflects the ‘gendered rights and responsibilities’, a key theme of feminist political ecology, which do not see women’s participation in the public sphere as part of their responsibilities; the land issues are seen as something that should be dealt with by men.

The company’s creation of an environment that made the community dependent entirely on oil palm plantation while land ownership remained at stake has affected Dayak women’s lives, for they are burdened with taking care of their family’s needs as one of many layers of labour. Once a company takes land ownership—often without FPIC—there is no guarantee that villagers might be able to reclaim their land or even their own houses. Women’s lack of access to information and decision-making processes is mainly caused by their exclusion from formal meetings. While Entapang Village has seen some successes in bringing land conflict issues to a higher level¹² by collaboration with several NGOs, village representatives are mostly men, and the dissemination of information within the wider community is not effective. The village head, along with other male representatives, has also undermined women’s capability to be vocal and active in demanding rights related to land as well as jobs on the palm oil plantation. In most cases, men are entrusted with ‘important’ talks or communicating with outsiders regarding palm oil conflict. Moreover, both formal and informal meetings are attended predominantly by men, while women—if they make a presence at all—are the wives or relatives of acknowledged male representatives (i.e. the village head, previous village head, etc.). This is in line with FPE’s framework on gendered knowledge, which asserts that

¹² An interview conducted with Entapang’s village head, Mr Musa, revealed that the village was able to send a complaint letter to the Prime Minister of Malaysia through collaboration with civil society organisations. After series of protest and demands, the Malaysian prime minister officially warned the companies to uphold the principles stipulated in the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). However, implementation of these principles still requires progress, and land ownership issues remain unresolved as of March 2017.

'patriarchal gender norms inform basic conceptions of who counts as a knowledge producer, what counts as knowledge, and how knowledge is produced'. Gendered knowledge, in the context of Sanggau and Kapuas Hulu, dictates the level of women's engagement in communal decisions. The village head of Entapang cautioned me that women in the village might not easily understand my questions or give appropriate answers due to their low level of education, most having only finished elementary school. His remarks reflected men's common perceptions of women's capability and status within the village. Although women's lower level of education could be identified as a potential weakness, it should not undermine their capability to voice and act to protect their rights and well-being. In fact, the perception of women's roles—i.e., perceived gendered roles and responsibilities—creates an environment that ignores education for women, thereby perpetuating the structures that enable men to gain more education and power while women are sidelined. The lack of access to information is an important component of gender injustice, as it holds great implications for the democratic procedures that preclude the realisation of gender equality as well as the fulfilment of women's rights. As discussed previously, women's lack of access to information eventually results in a lack of access to resources, thereby bringing about exclusion in decision-making processes and leaving them with limited life choices. Some concrete examples will follow in the next section.

EXCLUSION IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND LIMITED LIFE CHOICES FOR WOMEN

In Kapuas Hulu, one case of the lack of access to information can be found in the *plasma* (smallholder) cooperative. In Tajau Mada village, *plasma* cooperative meetings play a significant role; villagers have mostly surrendered their land, and negotiation happens during this meeting. However, most representatives in the *plasma* cooperative are men. There are only four women (all of whom are widows) out of two hundred total members. In one interview, a Dayak woman labourer whose husband was the head of the *plasma* cooperative shared that she does not know much about the *plasma* or what is discussed and agreed upon in the cooperative meetings. She said there is a handbook that she can consult for more information on what is discussed in the

meetings. She tried to read this book, but did not remember what was important. If information access is limited for the wife of the *plasma* cooperative head, I must assume that other women have even less access to information, if any.

As most Dayak women are excluded from decision-making processes, they rarely find any avenues to voice their best interests. In many cases, only later are women informed when their family land (registered under their husband's name) is transferred to the company for opening up its plantation. Once such land is acquired by the company, villagers cannot reclaim it individually. Families, especially the women, must thus resort to coping mechanisms after its loss. To make ends meet, Dayak women find ways to feed their family and pay for their children's education by finding side-jobs or by committing to on-farm and off-farm work. Many women interviewed have between two and six side jobs, excluding their plantation work. These side jobs include making desserts to be sold to co-workers, sewing clothes, providing massages, seasonal fishing, rice farming, and rubber tapping. Some engage in rice farming, but largely for family consumption. Others work on rubber plantations, as Dayak communities have been cultivating rubber farms for several decades and it is a preferred crop for generating cash income. As permanent workers receive a rice allowance as part of the company's social benefit, they purchase rice from the market instead of growing their own. Again, this highlights how hierarchical labour arrangement affects women and men differently. Despite women's engagement in the wage labour force, in addition to their non-wage labour at home, they are still required to secure food for their families, which in turn pushes them towards rice farming if they are casual workers.

The dominance of male representation in cooperative meetings also reflects the land registration system, where males are officially owners of and responsible for land. The shifting of land ownership to males after companies negotiate with villages to obtain their land has further marginalised Dayak women in claiming resources that were once shared under customary law (Julia & White 2011, p. 13). Jiwan, in his article on the political ecology of the palm oil industry in Indonesia, also recognises indigenous women's particular struggles in the process of land commoditisation, as their livelihoods, cultures, and economic circumstances are transformed. Afrizal (2006) notes that, while under customary law lands may be held by women (as among the Minangkabau in West Sumatra) or equally by men and women (as

among most Dayak peoples in Borneo), formal titles as smallholders are vested with male heads of households (as cited in Jiwan 2013, p. 67). From the onset of land negotiation, companies approach the men—who are legally the landowners—and persuade them to surrender the land. Recognising males as household heads and granting them a higher degree of authority and control of resources is institutionalised by the Marriage Law. Having no authority over land signifies the powerlessness of women. It is not just a matter of under whose name the land is listed, but has far reaching implications that bring about Dayak women labourers' exclusion in decision-making processes and that perpetuate women's multi-layered marginalisation and exploitation. The reduced roles of women further undermine their capability to fully participate in claiming their rights as well as securing the well-being of their families and communities.

THE LOST RIGHTS IMPLIED BY THE CAPITALISATION OF NATURE AND LABOUR

As described earlier, land grabbing by corporations is one of the root causes of conflict among indigenous communities in West Kalimantan, and also entails human rights violations and gender injustice. Using what may be termed 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2003), private actors maximise their profit by dispossessing the land of indigenous peoples. In this 'capitalisation of nature', human rights and welfare become secondary. After the inception of oil palm cultivation through corporate land grabbing, Dayak communities partially (or entirely) lose the land on which they had been producing subsistence crops. As the new cash economy is reinforced, things that communities had taken for granted emerge as new challenges.

One might argue in favour of the palm oil industry in purely monetary terms, saying that the Dayak indigenous people are now able to generate income, which they had not been able to do before. With cash in hand, they can afford more things such as cell phones, motorbikes, higher education, etc. However, increased 'purchasing power' does not mean increased wealth. Rather, it reveals the level of 'indebtedness' these indigenous peoples get into. Along with the debt they pay for companies' initial investments, Dayak people become familiar with consumer culture, procuring things from outside through cash where their necessities had once been provided within their community, forest,

and land. Mrs Triani, who works as a casual daily labourer in Sejiram Village, shared the need to purchase her family's basic needs:

I have to buy everything from rice to vegetables, meat, fish, and everything because we don't do any farming.
(Mrs Triani, Sejiram Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

Dayak indigenous people became accustomed to the wave of cash economy quite subtly, such that some Dayak women did not realise their debts when buying products on credit. Having cash and purchasing commodities does not necessarily mean 'development.' They eat and consume things that they previously could not afford, at the expense of cash, which keeps them indebted. On the surface, it may seem that they are becoming 'better-off', but this is short-sighted. As in a Dayak context, women are mostly responsible for food security and household management, losing the land used for subsistence farming means they must work harder to feed their families. Under this structurally unjust system, women sell their labour, to some extent providing it at the lowest cost, as it is one of the few options available.

Furthermore, while it looks like Dayak women join the 'workforce' by generating income, the loss of farmland burdens their daily practices. Although women's economic empowerment discourse frequently evaluates increasing numbers of women joining the workforce as women's emancipation and a leap towards gender equality, such a view fails to consider women's dual burdens. In fact, women face continuous labour both inside and outside the house. Evaluating and analysing women's lived experiences through a male-centric value setting, not recognizing that, while men's income generation and productive activities through wage labour are made possible by women taking care of housework, women still perform this non-wage labour while being involved in wage labour. This is an invisible exploitation that I term gender injustice. When one social group gains at the cost of another group's sacrifice and exploitation, it is not 'development' in a true sense. The invisible exploitation of Dayak women's labour on both the wage and non-wage front amounts to a structural injustice that serves as a precondition for capitalist development.

5.

UNMUTING VOICES: RECLAIMING
DAYAK WOMEN'S NARRATIVES

The previous chapters' reflection of Dayak women labourers' experiences provided examples of gender relations within households and communities as well as gender dynamics between labourers and palm oil companies. Guided by the FPE framework, this chapter offers comprehensive analysis of how capitalist development implicates structural and gendered injustice in villages in West Kalimantan. In this chapter, I put forward the narratives of the Dayak women labourers I interviewed in Sanggau and Kapuas Hulu. These women convey their messages, opinions, struggles, uncertainties, hopes, and aspirations, eventually forming their narratives—which might or might not match the conventional thinking. The women's profiles are listed in the following table.

#	Name & age	Company/location	Labour status
1	Mrs Sabin (35)	PT. MAS II, Entapang/Sanggau	<i>BHL</i> *
2	Mrs Doma (38)	PT. MAS II, Entapang/Sanggau	<i>BHL</i>
3	Mrs Simpak (38)	PT. MAS II, Mundun/Sanggau	<i>BHL</i>
4	Mrs Marsiliana (28)	PT. MAS II, Mundun/Sanggau	<i>SKU</i> *
5	Mrs Palagia (30s)	PT. MAS II, Entapang/Sanggau	<i>SKU</i>
6	Mrs Triani (40)	PT. AMS, Sejiram/Kapuas Hulu	<i>BHL</i>
7	Mrs Siana (44)	PT. AMS, Tajau Mada/ Kapuas Hulu	<i>BHL</i>
8	Mrs Tresia (46)	PT. AMS, Tajau Mada/ Kapuas Hulu	<i>SKU</i>
9	Mrs Rose (36)	PT. AMS, Hantau/ Kapuas Hulu	<i>BHL</i>
10	Mrs Maria Diana (38)	PT. AMS, Hantau/ Kapuas Hulu	<i>SKU</i>
11	Mrs Rini (35)	PT. AMS, Hantau/ Kapuas Hulu	<i>SKU</i>
12	Mrs Noemi (67)	PT. AMS, Sejiram/ Kapuas Hulu	<i>BHL</i>
13	Mrs Dewi (pseudonym)		<i>BHL</i>

**BHL*: *Buru Harian Lepas* (daily casual labourer)

**SKU*: *Standar Ketetapan Umum* (general approved standard; usually refers to permanent workers)

‘OTHER’ PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS WORK CONDITIONS IN PALM OIL PLANTATION

Throughout this study, I have mostly highlighted the negative aspects of palm oil expansion. However, as mentioned in the first chapter, this industry has had both positive and negative effects on communities and on the national level. When done right, palm oil can certainly bring gains, especially to smallholder farmers (Pye et al. 2013; Rist et al. 2010). One of the most frequent positive remarks about the palm oil industry by the community is the increased availability of income sources. The below remarks show by some Dayak women labourers’ acceptance of the oil palm industry.

Working at the palm oil plantation gives us economic stability.
(Mrs Doma and Mrs Sabin, Entapang Village, Sanggau Regency)

Personally, I do not see any benefits from the palm oil plantation for our community. But as I only harvested for our family’s consumption before, the advantage is that I can earn money now.
(Mrs Simpak, Mundun Village, Sanggau Regency)

The women labourers who show particular satisfaction regarding the economic benefits of palm oil tended not to plant rubber, which used to be the main cash-generating crop before the introduction of oil palms. In a changing landscape, it is not simple to stick to traditional livelihoods when one’s whole village joins a new system. As the cash economy becomes inevitable, it becomes harder to maintain the old ways at individual or familial level, unless the whole village jointly resists palm oil expansion and thereby protects its conventional livelihood and culture. It is interesting to note that Mrs Simpak sees an advantage of oil palm at a personal level, but does not agree that it benefits her wider community level. The following accounts show more about Dayak women labourers’ satisfaction with and excitement for their employment on the plantations.

There is no big advantage from the plantation, but I am happy to have my own job.
(Mrs Marsiliana, Mundun Village, Sanggau Regency)

The best thing is that I can work every day. I have a place so I can wake up and go earn money. Before joining the plantation, I mostly stayed at home as a full-time housewife... as I am an ‘employee’ now, I go to work every day.
(Mrs Triani, Sejiram Village, Sanggau Regency)

Mrs Triani showed her satisfaction with having a workplace to which she travels every day, giving her a sense of empowerment and independence; this is also implied in Mrs Marsiliana's comment. However, I would like to direct attention to the way Mrs Triani identifies herself in the palm oil work force. Although her official designation is *BHL*—literally meaning casual daily labourer—she calls herself an 'employee'. From conversations with palm oil activists based in Kapuas Hulu, I found that more companies have begun calling their workers '*karyawan*' (employees) rather than '*buruh*' (labourers). Although it is hard to trace whether the companies themselves began to strategically call labourers *karyawan*, how communities perceive the term is quite interesting. In an Indonesian context, the term '*karyawan*' usually refers to a white-collared job. By calling workers *karyawan*, it gives the notion that workers are officially hired and part of a workforce that contributes to 'development' at district or regional level. Although perceptions of the 'employee' label might vary from person to person, it is worth noting the subtle difference. This tendency is also observed by Julia and White (2011), who mention the pride Dayak community find in the term *gaji* (salary). It gives the impression that they receive payment on a fixed day of the month, like a modern-day office worker receives a monthly salary. During my fieldwork, many women willingly showed their *gaji*, printed and neatly organised in tables, with a breakdown of what is included and deducted. On another note, while receiving *gaji* might be a source of pride for women labourers, those interviewed could not fully explain the complicated calculations and reasons why some amounts were deducted. As the paycheque is one product of the cash economy that symbolises the selling of one's labour and indicates a capitalist way of life, plantation labourers are gradually and subtly immersed in the new system. It is ironic, because none of the labourers—including permanent workers—had any form of written contract; some even lacked verbal agreement before commencing their work. As such, the company's provision of paper proof is selective. Whether the company's distributing of salary slips is intended to evade the responsibility of recruiting workers to permanent positions (as discussed in chapter three) is a topic that needs further research.

SENSE OF INJUSTICE FELT BY DAYAK WOMEN LABOURERS

As the indigenous peoples of West Kalimantan are not a homogenous group, neither are the Dayak women labourers on the palm oil plantations. Despite commonalities in cultural identity and values, means of livelihood, and shared history, among others, women's levels of self-assertion in expressing their experiences varied. Some Dayak women considered palm oil plantations to be their workplace and thus understood companies' regulations as requiring their obeisance despite said regulations not always meeting their expectations. Others had a more adamant opinion of what is fair for them and their community, and further affirmed that they deserve better as the owners of the land used. Though some women explicitly mentioned terms such as 'subordination' (*subordinasi*) or 'discrimination' (*diskriminasi*), more women expressed what they genuinely 'feel' about a certain situation, whether it feels fair or unfair, just or unjust, according to their experiences.

Subordination

Mrs Siana was one of the interviewees who was most expressive and emotive about her experiences as a labourer and her current situation.

Earning daily wages makes me feel hurt (*sakit*). The feeling that I have to work as a subordinate (*subordinasi*) of someone (the company), and they command me to do this or that, and the fact that I receive money from someone else and have no capital I can use for my family, makes me feel hurt.

(Mrs Siana, Tajau Mada Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

Mrs Siana expressed her impression of daily wage labour as 'subordination' that makes her feel 'hurt'. For her, having lost her land to the company but still being required to work for them and pay an unjustifiable debt is an injustice. As she puts it, through the process of land dispossession, and the hardship—both physical and emotional—she underwent as she coped with the changing environment, injustice has been inflicted on her and the family. Duile (2017) also provides an important insight which helps to understand the Dayak peoples' ideals of sustainability, subsistence economy, collectivity, and cooperation, underlining the opposite of 'Dayakness' as a monoculture, individuality and competition, the state and globalisation, and so forth. In accordance with Duile's description of 'Dayakness' as noted above, Mrs Siana further elaborates her opinion that working in a hierarchical system within the palm oil industry is incompatible with her Dayak identity.

Oil palm is not our culture, in the sense that it is a recent development and not our customary practice or livelihood. It is still new to us. People here do not have enough capital to own their own oil palms, and working on the plantation also means not working on our land, and everything is decided by the company, not by our own will.”

(Mrs Siana, Tajau Mada Village, Kapuas Hulu regency)

As narrated above, the freedom to make family and livelihood choices is also an important element. This is not to say that all residents of Sejiram Village showed equal animosity towards the plantation. Rather, I would like to point out that these animosities come from the company's lack of transparency and deception during the process of land acquisition. Mrs Siana's words “everything is decided by the company” implies exclusion in decision making and replacement of ownership.

Before the cash economy completely shifted the landscape of the Dayak peoples' livelihoods, there was no hierarchal relationship—at least when it came to managing their livelihood—since both men and women worked their farms together as a family team. Some existing research also confirms flexibility across Dayak traditions (Colfer 1982, p. 156). Men and women were not discriminated on the basis of who ‘sows’ and who ‘reaps’. However, with the capitalist system brought by the oil palm industry, gender relations have become profoundly lopsided, particularly as local residents began engaging in oil palm plantation labour, where men could gain a higher position in the cash economy while women endured more burdens in the process of impoverishment. Everything, thus, is decided by the company, including the value of the work done by men and women and who deserves most the opportunity for a stable income. Mrs Siana's expressive comment on the ‘debt letter’ also displays many emotions entangled in the unfair relationship between community members and the palm oil company.

Every time I receive the ‘debt letter’ from the bank, I think to myself, ‘we are doomed’. Imagine receiving a letter of debt when you never see the money. Where is the money? The company never told us about the debt. The debt letter really scares me. It has a stamp on it, and if we sign it, it will become official, that we agreed to all of this. They said they would pay for all operational costs, no tax involved, but [there was] not a single mention of debt.

(Mrs Siana, Tajau Mada Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

Here, along with indignation towards the company for its deception, the ‘debt letter’ symbolises community members' powerlessness against

the powerful oil palm companies. As the Dayak community has little experience with debt, especially in this 'formal' way, fear and uncertainty lead them to cling to whichever wage labour is available. It also creates a cycle of 'bonded labour' attached to their land and their debt. Under this structurally unjust system, Dayak women must sell their labour and, to some extent, provide their labour at the lowest cost as it is one of the few options left to support their livelihood and pay off their 'debt'.

Intimidation

The hierarchal nature of the plantation management has a role in Dayak women's experiences with intimidation. Mrs Sabin, in our first meeting, was reserved when sharing things that gave a negative impression of the company. However, she showed quite a strong opinion when she began to talk about her experience with the *mandor* (foreman).¹³

Sometimes the *mandor* (foreman) yells at us when we are having a break. Although we only rest during the given break time, the *mandor* doesn't like to see us sitting down and says stand up and get back to work.
(Mrs Sabin, Entapang Village, Sanggau Regency)

Many women interviewees expressed their frustration towards the *mandors*, who frequently intimidate women labourers, especially when they are resting after or between work. In many plantations, there is no official break time or lunch hour, and as such workers usually take short breaks to have a snack or rest. However, in most cases, the *mandors* do not accept this, yelling or coercing them to get back to work. In some plantation, only ten minutes is given for lunch before labourers are pushed to continue their work. As pointed out in Li's study on the social impacts of oil palm in Indonesia (2015, p. 25), this continued intimidation has a gendered dimension, as the *mandors* are mostly men who do no heavy lifting; they just stand around watching women doing the strenuous labour. Mrs Triani shared her preference for a woman *mandor*, stating:

¹³ In a maintenance unit within a core plantation, a number of labourers (ten, on average) are grouped and supervised by one *mandor*, who oversees labourers' daily targets and achievements.

Only one out of ten foremen is female, and I am lucky to have a female *mandor* because she is more flexible. She understands our [female workers'] difficulties and is thus more accommodating. It's better to have a female *mandor* because, from what I experienced and observed, male *mandors'* way of management is much stricter and tougher. For example, if one misses a small blade of grass, they will order the worker to go all the way back to pluck it.

(Mrs Triani, Sejiram Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

The following account by Mrs Sabin shows an interesting dynamic between women labourers and the *mandor* in how the women respond to intimidation and define their power.

And I wondered, why didn't the [*mandor*] allow us to eat and drink and rest during our break time? How we solved [our frustration] was gathering the workers, talking to *mandor satu* [the boss of the foremen], and complaining together. When we went all together, he was scared of us and just ran away. Because we women talk a lot and are witty and he could not stand against us. Yes, our mouths are our power. But in the end, he did not solve our problem and just kept avoiding us."

(Mrs Sabin, Entapang Village, Sanggau Regency)

Though it might seem somewhat unorganised, Dayak women labourers in Sanggau exerted their power of togetherness—or solidarity—by taking collective action in their daily interactions. The way Mrs Sabin phrased women's characteristics is also interesting. Their voices might be dismissed on the ground level, but when it is amplified by a collective agency or connected with a wider community, they claim this as 'power' that carries the potential to transform the status quo. So far, no women's labour union is present in the Indonesian palm oil sector (conversation with Link-AR Borneo staff, March 2017). However, women labourers' day-to-day resistance shows clearly that collective action is, in fact, taking place, and that women are not submissive in demanding their rights.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Existing documents on palm oil and its social impact on women suggest that health issues are perhaps the most critical concern for women. As described in detail in chapter three, women predominantly take the task of spreading fertilisers and spraying pesticides that contain

highly toxic chemicals. There are numerous reports that, despite high risks, plantation management does not adequately inform labourers of the consequences or even mention that the substances carry toxic elements. During my fieldwork, when I asked women respondents whether they were aware of the risks entailed in their work, all of them said no. Although they knew that these fertilisers and sprays were not good for their health—as they experienced first-hand—they could not precisely tell what these substances were or how they affect their health. The below accounts are some of the women’s responses describing their health risks experienced after carrying out hazardous tasks.

When I used to work in the field [as a maintenance worker], it was really hard. It is just too hot, and especially with all the safety equipment you feel like dying. Not many people want to spray because it is hard to do and people do not want to wear safety equipment under the heat. Perhaps because of the substances in the spray, our sweat even smells different. There are two types of sprays, and one of them, when you spray, you can’t even see someone standing right next to you. My skin felt like as if I had touched chillies, had a hot and spicy sense.

(Mrs Marsiliana, Mundun Village, Sanggau Regency)

Spraying jobs are considered maintenance and viewed as less labour intensive. Defining what is labour intensive is problematic, as the current palm oil regime does not distinguish the different degrees of risks entailed in each task. It broadly views that harvesting requires more physical strength and spraying tasks are ‘lighter’. However, spraying pesticides involves extremely hazardous conditions, and thus cannot simply be regarded as light work. The assignment of sprayers to the maintenance unit has several gender implications. Maintenance units are mostly filled with casual daily labourers (generally women) who do not receive social packages, including medical coverage. Women respondents also verified that many companies do not provide casual daily labourers with safety equipment, meaning that sprayers have to equip themselves with goggles and masks. This is unrealistic, as such high-functioning equipment is costly for casual wage labourers. Requiring compulsory medical check-ups for all employees might seem reasonable for some workers, but it does not guarantee that the companies take responsibility for any harm already done to sprayers or that the companies take preventive action. In detail, Mrs Sabin demonstrated how her health deteriorated every year and what the company provided to sprayers to cope with such uncomfortable symptoms.

When I was doing the spraying tasks, I felt extremely tired and itchy. I kept coughing, had a runny nose, sore throat, headache, eye pain... even though I wore a mask and goggles. The company only provided milk to help relieve the stuffiness we get from spraying. My blood pressure was 198, and the doctor from Pontianak said I shouldn't spray because it's too dangerous for me. After two years of spraying, the management eventually changed my task to spreading fertiliser.

(Mrs Sabin, Entapang Village, Sanggau Regency)

Mrs Sabin had seen her health deteriorating every year, but the company did not take any action to compensate her. Her position as a casual daily labourer made her highly vulnerable, as she could not hold the company accountable for her health. On the other hand, the company did not take action to prevent or resolve the issue; it shifted her to another position, but maintained her casual daily labourer status. As long as health symptoms are 'minor', companies refuse to pay the cost of ensuring their workers' health is in good condition other than distributing milk to ease stuffiness. Without the legal means or political leverage to protest against huge palm oil estates, Dayak women labourers—as they are primarily assigned to the casual labour force over migrant workers—continue to endure exploitation and injustice. The following account from Mrs Sabin provides a tragic illustration of how the lack of choice (means of alternative livelihood, available tasks for women, patriarchal culture in the plantation) leaves Dayak women powerless in the palm oil regime.

If I had to continue spraying task until now, I will do it because I am in the lower rank and I should listen to my boss. If they ask me to do it, I don't have a choice.

(Mrs Sabin, Entapang Village, Sanggau Regency)

PLURAL IDENTITIES OF WOMEN LABOURERS

In villages near palm oil plantations, Dayak women's experiences differed according to their life course, social class, ethnicity, family status, and physical condition, as well as the availability of *plasma* land and other considerations. Their reflections on themselves and others showed a combination of sympathy, doubt, and concern. For example, Mrs Sabin shared her doubts whether she could continue the strenuous work until later in her life course.

If you are a *karyawan* (permanent worker), the company gives you many benefits, including a pension after retirement. But look at us, we are young but look so old because of the hard work. How will we make it to 55?

(Mrs Sabin, Entapang Village, Sanggau Regency)

The average age of women labourers ranged between 30 and 50. however, a considerable number of older Dayak women were also working in the plantation in Kapuas Hulu, some even in their 70s. As their physical strength is less than young labourers, they are mostly assigned to the nursery unit, where they are only required to cover 1–2 hectares of land.

I am forty years old and I am one of the youngest workers in our plantation. Most of them are quite old, ranging from their 50s to even their 70s. They still work beyond retirement age due to economic reasons. They lost their land and have no other means to earn [a living].

(Mrs Triani, Sejiram Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

While younger women expressed doubt and concern about whether they would still be able to work as they aged, 67-year-old Mrs Maria Noemi's account of her daily routine illustrates there is no retirement for women with multiple workloads.

Other than working at the plantation, I do many side jobs. I wake up at 2:30 am every morning and make snacks that I sell to other plantation workers while we queue for fingerprinting. I make 100 snacks every day and sell them for 1,000 rupiah each. Also, if I have some money to spare, I buy a chicken and raise it for a while and sell it later. I also offer clothes repairing services with my sewing machine. Taking care of the children had mostly been my job, although my husband helped me wash clothes from time to time. Why work until I am old and my kids are all grown up? They cannot always help me, and I do not want to be a burden to them when I can still work. I do not have any savings at all because, when I get money, I have to pay the debt, buy food for the family. I don't own any jewellery, I own nothing for myself. There is no such thing as a 'holiday' for me. What keeps me going are my 'needs' and 'money'.

(Mrs Maria Noemi, Sejiram Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

Other than elderly women, there are also cases of Dayak women labourers with specific contexts: the pregnant, the sick, and the women *mandor*. In principle, the company prohibits pregnant women from working in the field. However, if a woman needs or wants to work of her

own volition, her foreman might hide her so she can continue working. Such women keep working so they do not lose their jobs, and also because this is the only job through which they can earn an income. Economic difficulty is perhaps the most cited reason for these women in special cases pushing themselves beyond their capacities. Hiring a pregnant woman for plantation work is a highly sensitive matter due to labour intensity and chemical exposure through fertilisers and pesticides. One of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil¹⁴ (RSPO) principles also prohibits companies from hiring pregnant women. When a company is 'caught in action' by the RSPO, it directly affects their operations on the ground and may cause enormous damage to their reputation if it is publicised. Although further investigation is deemed necessary, my fieldwork revealed that at least the companies which my respondents worked for had stopped assigning women to carry out spraying tasks in recent years. While this is an improvement over nothing, for addressing gendered exploitation it is hardly enough.

MULTIPLE DISCRIMINATIONS AGAINST DAYAK INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Women respondents were especially vocal regarding their resentment of migrant workers. Unlike the government-led transmigration scheme, estates recruit landless and/or rural poor—especially Javanese—through brokers and bring them to work on plantations. As these migrants are not local, companies supply a number of social services aside from remunerations to help them adjust to their new settlement, including housing and stipends; such services are not granted to locals. Along with the marginalisation and stereotyping encountered by indigenous communities as a whole, Dayak indigenous women must endure multiple layers of discrimination. Firstly, they marginalized in the hierarchal division of labour when males are prioritized in the granting of permanent status. Secondly, migrant workers enjoy relatively stable

¹⁴ The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) is a global, multi-stakeholder initiative on sustainable palm oil. Members of RSPO and participants in its activities come from many different backgrounds, including plantation companies, processors and traders, consumer goods manufacturers and retailers of palm oil products, financial institutions, environmental NGOs, and social NGOs, as well as from many countries that produce or use palm oil. The vision of RSPO is to "transform the markets by making sustainable palm oil the norm" (rspo.org/about/how-we-work)

employment, regardless of their competence or ability to complete tasks. The below account illustrates the tensions between Dayak women and women migrant workers.

There are workers coming from Java and they are all permanent workers, while local people are daily labourers. We protested and raised our voices to fight for equality, but nothing. We had no result. We are the landowners and we let the company develop the land, but what we get is unequal treatment. Javanese workers also get more benefits than us. For example, they get a stipend every 6 months and rice and housing services. They also receive all the safety equipment from the company, even the machetes and goggles, but there's nothing for locals! We have to buy it all by ourselves.

(Mrs Tresia, Tajau Mada Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

While migrant workers receive access to higher salary and stable positions, Dayak indigenous women take the most precarious work left in the plantation. As such, a different degree of injustice and exploitation is played out across ethnic groups. Dayak indigenous women are marginalised in this system of recruiting from different labour pools. A strong sense of unfairness and resentment was expressed by another respondent.

All women migrant workers have permanent (status), but not everyone can work well. Especially the Javanese; [their] quality of work is so poor, but they get better benefits than us. It made me think, 'My work quality is as good as theirs or better than theirs, but why can't I get the permanent status?' One day, I had a chat with the Javanese ladies. I asked if they had ever worked on a plantation before. They said no. They only had experience working indoors as maids, selling vegetables, things like that. Then I asked if they had ever held machetes before? They said never. And I asked them, 'Then how come you have better work conditions than us?' And they answered, 'We also fell into a trap. They [the brokers] promised us to give five million rupiah and even ten million per month, and they said it would be office work, no hard labour involved, housing with air-conditioning... but it's all been false promises.' After I talked with them, I felt both sympathy for and grievance towards them at the same time.

(Mrs Siana, Tajau Mada Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

From her interactions with women migrant workers, Mrs Siana began to question the plantation management's illogicality in offering better work terms and conditions to unskilled or low skilled workers compared to local workers. She also reckons that her work

performance deserves recognition, and that one way to receive such credit is permanent worker status. In fact, her rationale is congruent with the principles stipulated in the International Labor Organization's Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958). In its recommendation, the Convention highlights the promotion of equal opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation, as well as the need to ensure that all persons should, without discrimination, enjoy remuneration for work of equal value as well as equal working conditions (including social security measures and welfare facilities).¹⁵ It also recognises the need for advancement in accordance with workers' individual experience, ability, and diligence. Unfortunately, companies have not embraced these international labour principles, but dismissed indigenous women's demands. The discrimination between the migrants and indigenous community creates 'horizontal conflict'.¹⁶ This has become quite common in the oil palm sector, where companies disperse problems at the community level and blur 'vertical conflict' between themselves and the community. However, based on my analysis, what disturbs women labourers is less the 'unfairness' of their positions in comparison to migrant workers', but more the 'unfairness' that Dayak indigenous women undergo collectively. Since the arrival of palm oil, they have encountered marginalisation, exclusion, and powerlessness. Their struggle continues without any feasible solution. The bitter sense of losing out without gaining what they deserve shapes their sense of injustice.

DAYAK WOMEN'S ASPIRATIONS

Aside from listening to Dayak women's concerns, perceptions, and opinions on their situation and lived experiences in and around oil palm plantations, this research asked some questions to shed light on their aspirations for the future. As all of the women respondents were married

¹⁵ To access the full manuscript of the recommendation, see: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312449:NO

¹⁶ Research conducted by Dewi suggests that, in many cases, companies prefer to employ workers from other regions, so as to better divide and conquer. Workers without roots in the area or in the local culture are less organised than communities with long ties to the land are (Dewi 2013, p. 173).

and had children, many shared aspirations that reflected their primary identities. They showed particularly strong eagerness to support their children's education.

I have five daughters and I take care of them after work. I believe education is the only heritage and legacy I can give to them. The only wish I have is that they will not end up like me, working on the plantation. As long as they don't end up like me, I will be happy.

(Mrs Dewi)

I want to support my children until [they receive] a higher education because I do not want my kids to have such a physically challenging job like me, and they could perhaps have an easier job. It's not that I want them to work in an office, have a white-collar job, but I want them to be educated so they are not cheated [by the company] like us. And if they get an education, they will be more knowledgeable and have more networks that will help them in their future life, rather than fall victim to others' cheating and tricks.

(Mrs Siana, Tajau Mada Village, Kapuas Hulu Regency)

I want my daughter to study as high as possible. I don't want my daughter's education to be lower than mine. With higher education, she will live a different life. Her language or the way she talks, behaviour, attitude, skills... higher education will be better for her because the world is changing and she will be able to follow the changes. I want my daughter to be a doctor, but since it's expensive I don't know. And I will also let her choose what she wants to be and not push her to do my wishes.

(Mrs Palagia, Entapang Village, Sanggau Regency)

Apart from the prevailing view on education as a ladder of opportunity, a sense of disappointment and shame was implied in their wish for their children to live a 'better' life than themselves. Although not all respondents explicitly pointed out their lower level of education, my observation was that they partly saw their lack of knowledge as a reason for the unfortunate consequence of land loss. This pattern of self-reflection can be re-analysed with a gender outlook. In a society where women's voices are not deemed as important as men's, where there is only a narrow opportunity for women's representation in formal discussions, where women's roles are stratified to a certain division of labour, investing in education for women becomes the lowest priority. Moreover, in a society where a man's voice is considered the "right" voice, where men's tasks are valued as more important, and where men dominate the agenda in deciding what is good and bad, one cannot

simply dismiss the internalisation subtly experienced by both women and men. This internalisation informs their understandings of who deserves what and who carries out certain things based on the social construction. As such, Dayak women's lack of education should be viewed not as an isolated phenomenon, but within the larger picture of structural injustice. For this reason, it is a dangerous assumption to connect linearly the knowledge base (within the formal educational system) with the women's capability. In short, Dayak women's self-reflection on their lack of knowledge and education as a source of land loss and failure is not wholly true, in the sense that acquiring knowledge will not be a panacea protecting people from exploitation and deception. Rather, the question of what justifies and perpetuates the system that precludes Dayak women from reaching education should be raised, as it is more relevant to locating the root cause and navigating the way forward.

CONCLUSION

RECAPPING THE FINDINGS

This study has explored how the capitalisation of nature and labour by oil palm expansion has inflicted structural and gendered injustice on Dayak indigenous women in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. To address the questions of how the palm oil plantation scheme brings about gendered injustice in labour dimensions and daily practices, it has given particular attention to Dayak women labourers' experiences and struggles. The findings of my research are briefly summarised as follows:

1. In the changing livelihood landscape, a process attributed to oil palm inception, the Dayak community was not fully informed of possible consequences and often experienced deception regarding land dispossession. Dayak women were almost completely excluded from this process, as their socially constructed roles did not require their public participation. As a result, Dayak women were left with limited livelihood choices while simultaneously shouldering multiple burdens to secure food and manage the household economy.

2. The social construction of womanhood, which locks Indonesian women in the subordinate position of supporting their household head (husband), has brought about many gendered consequences. In a palm oil labour context, women carry out tasks that are considered secondary to the males' harvesting tasks. This is not only discriminatory, but also entails health risks and social insecurity. The ideology of 'state ibuism' is utilised to accelerate national development by exploiting Dayak indigenous women's cheap wage labour and their taken-for-granted non-wage labour.

3. Dayak women labourers find these structural and gendered injustices, especially the ways company undermine the value of their

work, problematic and disturbing. A strong sense of injustice was expressed in women's narratives on their subordinated position and discrimination based on (among others) gender/ ethnicity. They also showed a strong resentment of the unfair power dynamics in land dispossession, which affect their daily practices of wage labour and non-wage labour.

My research findings, as supported by existing studies, indicate that there are ambivalent views towards the oil palm industry among different groups of people in Indonesia. Although cases are highly contextual, persons with their own smallhold plantation and adequate mechanisms to safeguard their land and profit tend to have more positive views and experiences regarding oil palms. On the other hand, communities experiencing serious land disputes with oil palm companies as well as very limited options for alternative livelihoods are more likely to express negative perspectives. However, like a double-edged sword, a positive element on one side can manifest as a negative element at the same time. For example, communities are able to earn larger incomes and have a place to work every day, which implies an almost permanent shift from self-sufficiency to dependence on the cash economy. People who once lived in dignity with self-sufficiency have become mere daily wage labourers, working on their own land to reach the daily quotas for the benefit of enormous companies. Gaining access to cash income may seem to bring benefits that the Dayak indigenous community had not experienced before (i.e. the ability to purchase commodities and live a more consumerist life style), but this is short-sighted; in fact, the rise of cash economies entails risky long-term consequences. Villagers' land is grabbed by oil palm companies, putting them in a situation of permanent enslavement, working without proper consultation and compensation. Each family faces different circumstances and struggles, depending on the size of the family and its remaining land. Some families can cope with the current system, while others must find additional work to make ends meet.

In this structurally unjust system, Dayak women labourers face particular struggles and injustices that male and (trans-)migrant workers do not necessarily deal with. Drawing from the indicators of gendered injustice put forth by feminist political ecology, my research reveals that gendered knowledge, gendered rights and responsibility, and gendered labour division are critical determinants in Dayak women's struggles in West Kalimantan. Most women labourers have very limited access to

information and lack access to resources and control, thus leading to their restrictions in livelihood choices and exclusion in decision-making processes. Although Dayak women having less education also affects in their exclusion, it is more important to note the way communities—especially male members and companies—regard what counts as knowledge, and who counts as a knowledge producer (Sudberg 2015).

I view ‘palm oil plantations’ as not merely fields where livelihood activities occur, but as ‘factories’ where the capitalisation of nature and labour ‘produces’ ecological degradation and destructive development through wider globalised processes. In these ‘factories’, the role of reproduction is relegated under the emphasis of ‘production’. There are also signs that the growing pattern of recruiting human resources from different pools has prolonged the exploitation of labour. In this system, Dayak women labourers are a precondition to maximise profit, as their labour is cheap and their limited choices for alternative livelihood leads them to take even the precarious options that are available. The enforced shift from subsistence farming to cash economy has also detrimentally affected Dayak women, who sacrifice the most in this case by working their small plot of land (if any) in addition to their plantation labour. This double burden becomes a triple burden when factoring in household labour, which is still predominantly done by women.

Another concern is the labour structure that enables men to gain higher positions while women take up the most precarious work. Dayak women represent most of the casual daily labour force, which implies that they could be replaced at any time and that the companies do not take responsibility for their occupational hazards or provide them with social security benefits. Companies argue that they are providing jobs, and that Dayak indigenous labourers are receiving a stable cash income that they did not enjoy previously; with this logic, companies argue that they are offering a venue in which Dayak communities can work every day and gain cash incomes. However, this mindset of ‘capitalising’ the forest is problematic and dangerous, especially considering the unsustainable nature of the labour and the implications for the loss of nature, culture, and local wisdom of the Dayak indigenous people.

INTERSECTION OF GENDER INJUSTICE AND STRUCTURAL INJUSTICE

Based on these findings, I have drawn a pattern of structural injustice that forms during the process of palm oil expansion. This impacts Dayak women particularly owing to their socially constructed roles and responsibilities. They experience development injustice and institutionalised injustice, both of which intersect with gender injustice. An argument here is that these two tracks of injustice do not happen within a vacuum, but are intertwined with socially constructed ideas of womanhood and fuelled by the capitalistic ideals of economic growth and national development.

Firstly, development injustice occurs when emphasis of economic growth and capitalist values reinforce the cash economy in the Dayak indigenous community in West Kalimantan without considering cultural values or FPIC, let alone women's views or participation. The concept of 'state *ibuism*', in which society expects women to support their household heads and more broadly development of the nation, justifies the sacrifice and yielding of women's rights as wage labourers (in palm oil plantation) and as non-wage labourers (in the household). Companies take advantage of women's position as 'supporters', as wives without any merits of their own, to exploit and discriminate in their labour structures. Moreover, the hierarchal labour structure enables men and (trans-)migrants to gain a higher position while pushing Dayak women to the margins, where they must endure precarious work conditions formed through structural injustice. Meanwhile, unreasonably high daily quotas make labourers bring their wives to seek support without any payment or means of occupational safety. This is again reminiscent of the generally accepted '*ibuism*', where women's labour, whether in the household or outside, is justified as being for the family.

Secondly, the Marriage Law effectively institutionalises women's subordinate position in relation to men, as it only recognises males as household heads except when women are widowed. Although the Law does not explicitly bar women from owning land, customarily and in practice men have been the sole landowners and thus exerted greater control. This puts Dayak women in a vulnerable position, as they lose authority and autonomy, with implications for their access to information and resources as well as their ability to choose their own livelihood. By granting men almost exclusive legal rights over land, the law dismisses women's access to resources and thereby outright discriminates against

women. By doing so, the law fails to recognise women as equal, rightful citizens. Although there are no formalised barriers for women to participate in the community meetings where decisions on land take place, gender roles and the legitimisation of men as household heads affects the way in which women are not invited.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Whilst the Indonesian government and oil palm investors continue to highlight the economic benefits of the palm oil industry, a change from gender-neutral to gender sensitive language is direly required. The first step will be to recognise the contributions women make, both in the private realm and public realm, in sustaining the economy and listening to women's voices that have long been 'muted'. The narratives of Dayak women labourers presented in this study show just a glimpse of their many voices. By challenging and transforming socially constructed gender norms and by further promoting women's full participation in ecological and economic changes, women will finally be able to step into genuine empowerment and equality. Further recommendations related to the development injustice and institutionalised injustice mentioned above are as follows.

To tackle the development injustice caused by capital-driven economic development schemes, the first step should be acknowledging indigenous peoples' definitions of 'development', asking what development they want to see and what advancement they value while sustaining their cultural values and incorporating their indigenous knowledge of holistic well-being. Women's participation and contribution to the discussion is crucial, as I have argued throughout this thesis. It would be a good starting point to utilise existing mechanisms such as RSPO as a platform to strengthen women's participation.

To tackle institutional injustice, the notion that household heads are inexorably men should be challenged. Although amending the Marriage Law is a slow, ongoing process at national level, I believe there is still space to apply more autonomy in decision-making and land ownership at the local or regional level. Again, taking RSPO as a platform, civil society, companies, and local governments can draw agreements that make it mandatory for both husband and wife to decide mutually whether to surrender their land for palm oil plantation.

In both recommendations above, FPIC is central. However, stronger mechanisms must be in place to ensure indigenous women's full participation. Inviting women to discussions is clearly not enough. As such, further efforts should promote the analysis and resolution of the structural issues that obstruct Dayak indigenous women's participation in decision-making processes.

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