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Transformation of Farmer Resistance in Conservation Areas: Land Occupation by Farmers in Mount Halimun-Salak National Park, West Java

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Transformation of Farmer Resistance in Conservation Areas: Land Occupation by Farmers in Mount Halimun-Salak National Park, West Java

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Abstract
Sejumlah penelitian menunjukkan berbagai konflik agraria sebagai respons petani lokal terhadap kebijakan taman nasional yang melarang mereka mengakses kawasan hutan konservasi. Namun, studi sebelumnya tidak menjelaskan dinamika hubungan kekuasaan antara otoritas taman dan petani yang menentang kebijakan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif yang dilengkapi dengan data sekunder untuk menjelaskan transformasi resistensi petani di kawasan Taman Nasional Gunung Halimun-Salak (TNGHS), yaitu dari khasanah perlawanan sehari-hari terhadap praktik pengusahaan lahan. Secara khusus, penelitian ini menggunakan kerangka analisis “powercube” untuk menjelaskan proses transformasi ini. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa perubahan telah terjadi dalam dimensi kekuatan petani. Berkaitan dengan ruang kekuasaan, kekuasaan petani ditransformasikan dari yang dipaksakan secara ketat dalam ruang tertutup menjadi lebih terbuka (diundang), yang memungkinkan mereka untuk melakukan negosiasi dengan pihak pengelola taman. Sementara itu, petani kini mengerahkan kekuatannya di tingkat wilayah TNGHS setempat setelah sebelumnya hanya berlangsung di dalam rumah tangga masing-masing. Akhirnya, bentuk kekuasaan telah berubah dari tersembunyi menjadi lebih terlihat, yang memungkinkan mereka memperoleh “pengakuan”...
otoritas TNGHS sebagai petani penggarap yang sah. Petani telah mampu menempati tanah dengan memanfaatkan ruang politik yang disediakan oleh periode demokratisasi, serta kemampuan mereka untuk memobilisasi modal ekonomi dan menjalin hubungan sosial dengan berbagai aktor, termasuk otoritas taman TNGHS.

Abstract

A number of studies have shown various agrarian conflicts as a response by local farmers against the policy of national parks that prohibits them from accessing conservation forest areas. However, previous studies had not explained the dynamics of power relations between park authorities and farmers who stand in opposition to these policies. This study employs a qualitative research approach complemented by secondary data to explain the transformation of farmer resistance in the Mount Halimun-Salak National Park (TNGHS) area, namely from their repertoire of everyday resistance to practices of land occupation. Specifically, this study uses the "powercube" analytical framework to explain the process of this transformation. The study concludes that changes have occurred within the dimensions of peasant power. Regarding the space of power, the power of farmers was transformed from being strictly exerted within closed spaces to being more open (invited), which enables them to conduct negotiations with the park authorities. Meanwhile, farmers now exert their power at the local TNGHS area level, after previously only taking place within each household. Finally, the form of power has changed from being hidden to more visible, which allows them to acquire the "recognition" of TNGHS authorities as legitimate sharecroppers. Farmers have been able to occupy land by taking advantage of the political space provided by a period of democratization, as well as their ability to mobilize economic capital and forge social relations with various actors, including the TNGHS park authorities.

Keywords: transformation, land occupation, everyday resistance, powercube, land access.

INTRODUCTION

Various studies have shown that government policies regarding the designation of national park areas in Indonesia, including the area of Mount Halimun and Mount Salak, have led to agrarian conflicts, conflicts of land tenure, as well as conflicts pertaining to the livelihoods of forest-dependant communities in opposition to state regulations (Cahyono 2012a,b, Siscawati 2012, Galudra 2015, Rahmawati 2008, Fridayanti and Dharmawan 2015, Adalina, et al. 2013, Afiff 2016). Field evidence shows that farmers have been conducting agriculture in the Mount Halimun-Salak National Park (TNGHS). By law, these activities are illegal as they violate the provision of national parks as spaces strictly meant for conservation purposes. This underlying tension provides the basis of our inquiry, namely why, and how, do local farmers in the Mount Halimun-Salak area resist state control over forest areas through its conservation policies? What happens when farmers conduct
agricultural activities in conservation areas that should not be used for other activities?

Until the 1990s, the management of forest land in post-colonial Indonesia retained the influence of the Dutch East Indies colonial government, which emphasized the need for the state to exert control over its natural resources. This outmoded framework, however, was rejuvenated under a modern twist in the 1980s. At the time, an emerging global trend driven by Western conservation groups encouraged Third World countries to protect their natural resources, including forests, by designating conservation areas for environmental protection. As a result, the state would increasingly oversee the actions of all parties who utilize resources in these tightly-controlled areas (Peluso 1993), including restricting the access of local people to forest resources.

Several studies in Africa and Southeast Asia have shown local community resistance, especially by farmers in forest areas, in opposition to conservation programs that limit their access to forests as the basis of their livelihood and socio-cultural life (Hochleithner 2017, Hall et al. 2011, Roth and Dressler 2010, Holmes 2007, Peluso 1993, 1992). However, these studies tend to investigate community resistance in secondary forests, which produce forest plants with sustainable principles, instead of those occurring in national parks. Peluso (1993, 1992), for example, limited her observations to the teak forests in Java, while Dressler and Roth (2010) explored market-based conservation efforts in Thailand and the Philippines. Meanwhile, Holmes (2007) discussed communal resistance pertaining to the management of both protected and production forests for commercial use in African, Latin American, and Asian countries.

In general, these studies orient themselves around the concept of “everyday resistance” as introduced by Scott (1985). Similarly, this research also observes the everyday resistance of farmers in the Mount Halimun-Salak area, but stands in dialogue with the previous studies mentioned above. We agree with findings that posit agricultural activities in conservation areas as a form of resistance against the implementation of conservation policies (Holmes 2007, Cahyono 2012a), and aim to expand on this. Several studies have criticized the use of everyday resistance as a conceptual framework in conservation-related conflicts, explicitly because the concept originally emerged from the relationship between plantation owners and their workers (Holmes 2007). Nonetheless, we contend that this concept remains relevant for studying conflicts.
in protected areas or conservation projects, especially in explaining the relation between authorities in charge of managing the area and the people living around it.

In his research, Holmes (2007) distinguished between implicit, or everyday resistance, and the explicit resistance-form of direct protest behavior. While this paper does not intend to further expand on this distinction, we nonetheless try to explain how the implicit, everyday acts of resistance were transformed into more direct and visible forms of contention. This transformation is indicative when TNGHS authorities eventually recognize the agricultural activities carried out by farmers in the Halimun-Salak area. By employing the “powercube” framework (Gaventa 2020), we argue that farmers were able to cultivate their struggle by taking advantage of the various forms, spaces, and levels of power to provide leverage against authorities of Mount Halimun Salak National Park.

Finally, previous studies on resistance against conservation policies have highlighted its degree of complexity, among others due to specific regional contexts and the dynamics of existing power relations (Holmes 2007). Acknowledging this problem, Holmes refrained from providing any specific recommendations, but rather emphasized the importance of understanding the political background which led to the emergence of collective resistance, as well as encouraging to find a balance between the interests of the populace and preserving biodiversity. In our opinion, the transformation from everyday resistance to land occupation by farmers suggests a shift toward such a balance. Thus, conservation programs need to change their approach from that of one-sided coercion and allow greater space for participation.

METHOD

This study was conducted in the corridor of Mount Halimun-Salak National Park, Sukabumi Regency, in Malati Ligaris (a pseudonym for this research village). In 2012, we had previously conducted an evaluation study of conservation programs in the area, which provides us with initial knowledge on the conditions of people living there. For this study, we conducted intensive field research from August to October 2019 and later returned to confirm and deepen initial findings in April 2020.

We commenced this study by reviewing various literature and secondary data, such as policies and other changes that have occurred in
Mount Halimun-Salak National Park. Primary data were obtained by listening to our informants, in particular about how they have experienced various changes affecting their systems of livelihood as farmers in the TNGHS area. We also conducted participatory observations as well as in-depth interviews with 26 informants comprising the main actors involved in managing and utilizing the conservation area: community leaders, village and sub-district government officials, managers of the TNGHS Center, farmer groups, agricultural extension workers, middlemen, and environmental activists. In addition to fieldwork, WhatsApp and telephone conversations were also used to collect data due to mobility restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As one facet of our research involves the tensions between parties fighting over land tenure rights, we took steps to ensure that the data collecting process would not provoke further conflict. All our informants were assured of the confidentiality of the information they shared. Collected data is analyzed using the narrative analysis method, while narrative composition techniques help us to understand our informants’ individual experiences by connecting one person’s account to others. Finally, narrative control ensures that we understand the context of the events narrated by the informants (Marvasti 2004).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTS

The Power and Context of Resistance

In general, power is defined as the capacity to perform an action. When a person’s actions lead to broad changes in the social world, then that person has power. Social scientists often discuss power using three propositions: power over (domination), power to (the ability to act), and power with (collaboration in action) (Haugaard 2021, Gaventa 2020, McGee 2016). All three are processes that allow social transformation to occur: even a very repressive “power over” will invite resistance from the dominated group. This group could then use various collaborating strategies (“power with”) that allow “power to”—the capacity to act—to emerge in order to challenge the dominating group. Opposing actors can use both strategies, working with multiple parties and making the most of possible action opportunities. These interactions and processes can be explained analytically using a ‘powercube.’

The powercube analysis framework used in this study was developed by Gaventa (2020). In his early research, Gaventa (1982) pointed out the
powerlessness and weakness of an Appalachian Valley society governed by local elites and rulers. In this study, Gaventa employed the three dimensions of power from Steven Lukes (1974) to the mining conflict in the Appalachian Valley, namely that elites: 1. Make decisions on the commons to their own benefit; 2. Use their political position to secure various actors that affect their interests, and; 3. Spread a sense of powerlessness, acceptance, and therefore silence in the face of ongoing injustice.

In the powercube framework, these three dimensions are aspects within the spectrum of interacting power. As Gaventa (2020) later asserted, following Lukes, power must not only be understood in terms of the actors involved within that power, but also those who are excluded from it. Based on this insight, he concluded that power assumes three distinct forms. The first is *visible* power, and focuses on parties involved in open decision-making. Another form is the *hidden* power, which involves unspoken rules of the game of the decision-making process that tend to benefit certain parties (such as mechanisms behind closed doors or institutional arrangements). And finally, there is *invisible* power, which deals with the internalization of ideologies, values, norms, and the development of discourses.

Another related concept pertains to the *spaces* of power—the opportunities, events, and channels that can be used by the citizenry to criticize or change certain policies, discourses, decisions, or relationships that affect their lives and interests. Gaventa (2020) defines three distinct spaces of power, namely *closed* spaces, where decision-making is done behind closed doors to the exclusion of some parties from the process; *invited* spaces, namely public arenas which allow involvement but with certain institutional arrangements; and *claimed/created* spaces, where actors who are unable to enter the closed and invited spaces create one themselves to achieve their agenda and voice their opinions. Correspondingly, the *level* of power pertains to the scope where power is exerted—be it in a household, local, national, or global level.

Power is dynamic. It can change in itself, but can also change how dynamics between actors play out in relation to that power. The powercube framework does not only focus on community power but recognizes a continuum of levels at which power operates, from decision-making in a household to those on the global scale. The powercube analyzes forms, spaces, and levels of power that interact continuously and influence the possibility of change (Gaventa 2006, 2020). Meanwhile,
Haugaard (2021) argues that change can occur related to four dimensions of power in four dimensions of social interaction, namely: 1. Power Resources (the capacity to induce violence/coercion, the question of authority, organization, and democracy, as well as material or economic factors); 2. The Structure of Power (encouraging or inhibiting certain actions, as well as the distinction of how conflicts occur “within” or “outside” the structure); 3. Practical Knowledge and Natural Attitudes (colloquially referred to as ‘habitus’), and; 4. Subject Predisposition (the question of self-subjectification or social status in society).

Resistance and Access to Resources

Resistance is generally discussed in relation to power, as McGee (2016) quoted Foucault: “where there is power, there is resistance”. For Hoffman (1999:16), the reverse also rings true: “where there is resistance, there is power”. Resistance usually occurs when elites devise policies in their interests that lead to the suppression of general rights. In his Appalachian Valley study, Gaventa (1982) presented an argument on how the alliance of rulers and capital culminates in a power that renders people unable to rebel despite experiencing injustice. However, he later revised this argument after finding out that public resistance against authorities did occur in the form of collective social action (Gaventa, 2020).

A number of studies have discussed farmer resistance using Scott’s (1985) concept of everyday resistance, including studies on the resistance against conservation policies (Holmes 2007, Peluso 1993). According to Scott (1985), paying attention to the everyday practices of peasant resistance is more important than the event of a peasant uprising. Subjected to relations of power and capital which extract labor, food, taxes, rent, and interest from them, peasant struggle rarely assumes the form of direct and collective disobedience.

In contrast, everyday resistance requires little to no coordination or planning, but is individualized while avoiding direct or symbolic confrontation with authorities or elite norms (Scott, 1985). The everyday resistance of farmers is informal, covert, and is prompted by the motive to acquire rapid gains, particularly to gain access to land for their livelihood. These acts of resistance can take the form of violating conservation rules, lying to officers, opening up conservation area boundaries, hiding tree cutting machines, or planting trees that are not suitable for the area.
According to Tilly (in Peluso, 1992), “a variety of collective actions” are carried out as a means to act together in common interest. However, local residents are often disincentivized from taking this collective action as they have experienced repression when fighting back. From the cultural and political perspective of farmers, these collective actions often take the form of protest prompted by their firsthand experience of losing access to natural resources, and do not aim for a higher political goal such as altering configurations or overthrowing the state. As their livelihood relies on the capacity to fulfil basic subsistence from available resources, revoking their access to the forest area directly threatens their survival, sustainability of way of life, and means of social reproduction (Peluso 1992).

This is why, for farmers, successfully gaining access to forest resources amounts to one form of resistance. On a more general level, access to resources pertains to the ability of actors to benefit from something—including material objects, people, institutions, and symbols. This ability is situated in a network of power, in which existing social relations may hinder or facilitate people in achieving their goals. These various components can change over time. They can also change the nature of power, as well as change the avenues through which resources are able to be accessed (Ribot and Peluso 2003, 2020).

Any attempts to gain, maintain, or control access to resources are basically struggles situated in the domain of social relations. For actors fighting for access to forest resources, their relations with one another may be that of cooperation, competition, conflict, or negotiation (Ribot and Peluso 2020). In the case of TNGHS, various forms of relations were established between farmers and forestry officials, as well as the government, in which all parties are trying to gain and maintain access to the forest.

STUDY RESULTS

Trajectory of Land Control in the TNGHS Area

The TNGHS area experienced a history and process of land tenure and exclusion similar to that of other forest areas in Java. Figure 1 shows that throughout history, ruling regimes have issued policies on forest use to fulfil their own interests. Meanwhile, local residents and farmers found their access to the forest to be limited.
Figure 1 shows that the purpose of land acquisition in forest areas by authorities has continuously changed from the colonial period until after the nation’s independence. In the 16th century, access to the forest was available for both local residents and outsiders as forest areas were still in abundance. At that time, kings in Java claimed territories as their dominion not to control the resources within the area, but to exert their power over the people living there (Peluso 1992). During this pre-colonial period, the VOC had already commenced its operations throughout the archipelago, making profits through trading.

Throughout the colonial period (1800-1940), land tenure was carried out by the Dutch East Indies government by implementing *cultuurstelsel*, or Forced Cultivation, which mandated farmers to provide their land and labor to grow various traded plantation commodities (Hall et al. 2011). In 1870, the government adopted a law that opened up opportunities for private capital, in particular Dutch companies aiming to develop new plantations in the colonies (Bedner and Arizona 2019; Hall et al. 2011). At the time, the Dutch had issued a Land Law (*Agrarische Wet*) and Domain Declaration (*Domein Verklaring*) recognizing the ownership of local elites—meaning Javanese aristocrats—of permanently cultivated lands, but affirmed the ownership of forests and arable fallow lands to the colonial government.
According to colonial law, land cultivated by elite groups may not be sold or mortgaged. Nonetheless, local elites were able to concentrate land tenure and conduct land transfers because the law only prevented this group from selling land, not buying them. As a result, local elites used their privileged rights to accumulate land, while many people in Java become landless farmers. Furthermore, the implementation of a “scientific” approach to forestry, in which special areas for nature conservation must be kept away from human interference, had resulted in the exclusion of smallholders in Java and triggered over a century of resistance that remains unabated to this day (Hall et al. 2011, Peluso 1992, Li 1999). During the Japanese occupation, the wartime government exploited forest products under the authority of Sangyobu (Ministry of Economy) and Zoosen Kyo Ku (Department of Shipping) to supply food for the army, as well as to cultivate coffee and other secondary crops (Peluso and Vandergeest 2001, Firdaus et al. 2014, Peluso 1992, Lukas & Peluso 2019).

In the Old Order era (1945-1965), land tenure was transferred from the remaining colonial apparatus to the newly-established Indonesian government. The burgeoning post-independence political activism prompted a people’s movement to reclaim land from former Dutch plantations. In 1952, the government established the Forestry Bureau with authority to control state lands designated as forest areas. Government Regulation No.64/1957 was issued to regulate forest management and use. In Java and Madura, land tenure handed over to Pemerintah Daerah Swatantra Tingkat I, or the first level of the autonomous regional government, although the central government still presides directly over nature reserves and nature reserves. Throughout this period, the local government allowed communities to work in forest areas, but required them to allocate part of the yield for the state (Firdaus et al. 2014).

In the New Order era, the state-owned forestry enterprise Perum Perhutani was given authority over all forest lands through the implementation of Law No. 5/1967 on Forestry, which was adopted from the Dutch Forestry Law of 1927 and 1932. Heeding the advice of conservationists regarding ecological balance, the law stipulates that 30% of the entire land area of Java be covered with forests (Peluso 1992).

Through Law No. 5/1990 on the Conservation of Forest Resources and Their Ecosystems, as well as the amendment to the Forestry Law in 1999, the state would designate national parks as conservation areas under the supervision of the National Park Authority overseen by the
Ministry of Forestry (Afiff 2016). The law dictates that conservation areas may not be used for settlements, cultivating rice fields, or other agricultural practices. On the other hand, critics pointed out that various conservation efforts have ignored the rights of people who have been utilizing the forest and its surrounding areas for their livelihood.

The way policymakers excluded these local populations led to accusations of “green-grabbing”, namely the seizure of land and resources for environmental purposes.

There have also been cases of “appropriation”—the transfer of ownership, control, and the rights to use resources that used to be publicly or privately owned (particularly by the poor) into the hands of more powerful groups (Fairhead et al. 2012). Similar to other cases in parts of Southeast Asia, the change of ownership and other state-regulated restriction of land use and management has excluded entire communities from their livelihoods. In conservation areas, large numbers of people are prevented from accessing land either due to state provisions or because the land is controlled as private property (Hall et al. 2011). Both, essentially, are the legacies of colonial history.

In the TNHGS area, both forest communities and government institutions have sought to gain control over the forest, especially since the fall of the New Order. The struggle for recognition over land is often based on claims of indigeneity or the local identity of being “Putra Daerah” (heirs of the region), while village governments are also provided ownership rights over forest areas as regulated in Law No. 6/2014 on Villages. Those who are unable to employ these primordial claims struggle for land by becoming part of a farmers’ union. In Java and Sumatra, for example, unions carried out land reform movements, or “land reform by leverage” (Hall et al. 2011). These trajectories showcase the different mechanisms forest communities have employed to gain recognition over their claim of land, which rely heavily on informal relations and processes, with weak accountability and transparency (McCarthy 2007). These mechanisms have often been utilized by civil society groups when assisting forest communities in advocating their rights (Dhiaulhaq & McCarthy 2019; Bedner and Arizona 2019).

**History of Conservation in the TNGHS Area**

Lund and Rachman (2017) have referred to the Halimun-Salak area as a “frontier”: an arena where the struggle for resources have led to the
transformation or elimination of the existing social order, land ownership rights, notions of citizenship, as well as other social contracts. These pre-existing social contracts affecting actors in Mount Halimun-Salak National Park could not be separated from the history of forest management in Indonesia, especially in Java where millions of farmers have lived around the perimeter of government-controlled forest lands (Peluso 1992).

Attention to conservation in Mount Halimun and Salak began in the early 1940s, when the Dutch colonial government considered the two mountains to be suitable as a nature reserve. However, this initiative was not immediately implemented by the Indonesian government after independence (Galudra et al. 2010). Since 1961, forest areas in the Halimun-Salak was overseen by PN Perhutani, the state-owned corporation (Firdaus et al. 2014), including areas that are strictly designated for conservation. The state became even more stringent in protecting forest areas ever since the 1967 Forestry Law, which stipulates “state forests” as part of state land under the purview of the Ministry of Forestry. This provision was followed by strict surveillance measures by the forest police (Polhut) to protect the area from encroachment, and violators are subject to serious legal sanctions (Peluso 1992, Li 1999, Afiff 2016).

Other laws also espouse a similar protectionist framework to forest areas. The 1990 Law on the Conservation of Forest Resources and Their Ecosystems promoted the expansion of conservation areas and social forestry programs, while the 1999 Forestry Law provided the legal basis for the management of national parks in Indonesia (Afiff 2016). In line with these provisions, the government, through the Minister of Forestry, issued Decree No. 175/2003 which expanded the range of Mount Halimun-Salak National Park. This policy was met with resistance by the Perhutani, whose entire concession area was turned into a nature reserve as a result. This resistance, however, failed to overturn the decision as the corporation had already been plagued by prior accusations of poor forest management (Galudra 2010). Under a conservation scheme, national parks must be free from all human interference, including activities by the local community to utilize forest resources. Throughout its implementation, the TNGHS conservation program has had to deal with people conducting illegal logging, illegal gold mining, encroachment, to the poverty suffered by the local forest community. From a strict conservation agenda, these problems are deemed to have hindered the program’s objectives (Galudra 2016).
During the reform period, local communities were finally given greater claim over forests through the 2014 Village Law, which recognizes forest areas as part of village assets. The government has also drawn up plans to implement a forest management system involving stakeholders on the grassroots level, especially local communities and indigenous peoples. These initiatives reflect a shift in power relations between forestry experts, the village government, and peasants, representing a historical change in the trajectory of political configuration and control over forests in Java (Lukas and Peluso 2019). These changes in power relations became the impetus to forms of farmer resistance against conservation policies.

Transformation of Farmer Resistance

This section employs the powercube analytical framework (Gaventa 2020) to analyze how the struggle of farmers in the GHSNP area was transformed from everyday resistance into more overt forms of contention, namely land occupation. We argue that each actor within this conflict possesses power, defined as the ability to carry out certain actions, with the goal of acquiring or regulating access to the TNGHS area. The transformation of resistance was analyzed by comparing how the three dimensions of power (its forms, spaces, and levels) have changed over time between the TNGHS authorities (Actor 1) and farmers (Actor 2) throughout two different timeframes: the initial implementation of state policy which allows the expansion of TNGHS as a conservation site in 2003 (T1), and at the time this study was conducted in 2021 (T2).

T1: Responses to the 2003 TNGHS Expansion Policy

This study finds that in T1, state and conservation authorities as Actor 1 employ power in its hidden form, as the policy to expand the conservation area in TNGHS was established without informing the residents living there and taking their interests into consideration. Consequently, this implies that the space of power is a closed space, as Actor 1 have prohibited Actor 2, the farmers, from accessing the conservation area for agricultural activities. Meanwhile, the level of power was confined within a local scope, namely the TNGHS area itself.
In T1, Actor 1 exert their power by implementing strict rules prohibiting residents living around the forest perimeter from conducting activities within the conservation area as their privileged domain of control.

If we were caught clearing land in the forest during the PA (Pelestarian Alam, or Nature Conservation) management period, our equipment would have been immediately seized and all our crops destroyed. We had to quickly hide into the forest. We always hide when we know there will be forest rangers going around to monitor the area (Mrs. UC, resident of a nearby village).

In the village where this study was conducted, conflicts have taken place between residents and TNGHS authorities. Several informants divulged to us how residents were arrested because the Forest Police (Polhut) knew that people were taking away forest products.

When they were discovered by the Forest Police, both the buyer and the wood supplier were put to trial in court and sentenced to one year in prison. During this case, people visited the TNGHS office in trucks to protest the arrest of their fellow villagers. Officers confronted the crowd by firing their guns and hitting a nearby tree. These warning shots scared the protesters away. They returned home to their villages feeling sad and angry (Mr. YT, community leader).

Once, TNGHS officers arrested a resident who took the trunk of a fern tree in the national park area. The resident was taken to the TNGHS Balai (Central) Office for legal processing but was released after youth activists negotiated with park officials. The activists tried hard to convince the officers to not punish the resident as villagers have not been aware of park regulations (Mr.AF, youth activist).

Compared to other conservation areas in Indonesia, human activities from the “outside” is considered to be more frequent in TNGHS as the region already had settlements around it since the colonial era (Galudra 2005). Several studies have shown agrarian conflicts occurring in the TNGHS conservation area (Siscawati 2012, Rahmawati 2013), and people living on the edges of its forest have admitted to experiencing anxiety that they will lose their rights to arable land. Although participatory forest management has been promoted by various international agencies in recent decades (Kellert et al. 2000), local people have found that
their access to forests remains severely limited, resulting in continued opposition against conservation programs. Other studies have shown that local residents who continue to be legally barred from accessing the forest, will continue to conduct activities illegally instead (Maryudi and Krott 2012). A similar pattern, this study shows, has also happened in the TNGHS area.

In T1, Actor 2 had resorted to carrying out what Scott (1985) refers to as the everyday form of peasant resistance: accessing the conservation area discreetly, using informal, even illegal avenues, and only aiming for short-term gains. The impossibility to obtain legal access from Actor 1 had led farmers to fulfil their livelihood through a hidden form of power. Conversely, Actor 2 also conduct their power in a closed space, refraining from openly cooperating or formally interacting with TNGHS authorities, knowing very well that farmers will remain legally barred from using the conservation area for agricultural activities. Finally, farmers wield their power on a household level, as these everyday acts of resistance are usually only carried out with household members instead of being a concentrated effort with other members of the village community.

To mitigate these violations, TNGHS authorities have implemented various strategies to protect the forest from encroachers. Similar to cases of conflict with the local community in other conservation programs (Peluso 1992, 1993), authorities have implemented a strategy of repression against residents. The 1979 Government Decree designating Halimun-Salak as a nature reserve dictates Forest Police units to guard the area, including to prevent residents from taking forest products. The Polhut will arrest violators and give sanctions according to the severity of their actions. Serious offences, such as felling protected timber trees, will amount to imprisonment.

However, farmers living around the forest perimeter have no other means of livelihood except to utilize resources within the forest area. Therefore, they have resorted to developing various strategies to gain access to the forest, even if directly violating conservation provisions.

...we have to play cat-and-mouse [with the officers], especially on weekdays when they usually patrol the area. Residents open the fields little by little. If the officers find out, the place would be sealed (a warning that no activities should be conducted there). Once this happens, residents would stop and postpone their activities for a
while. If residents deem that the land they are working on is not being monitored, they will continue to work on it until the field is ready to be planted. This was carried out continuously until officers eventually get bored from taking preventive measures and let them go. If someone eventually does get caught, they sometimes provide false information about their name and residential address (Mr. DY, community leader).

When local residents commit actions that are considered to be serious violations, they have implemented various strategies to avoid imprisonment. Several informants told us that tree fellers would trick officers by handing over a broken tree-cutting machine while secretly keeping the gear that was actually used to cut down trees. Residents also carry out daily resistance by encroaching over conservation area boundaries. One informant proclaimed that they were ready to face the officers if being caught.

...yes, if the officers caught me, what else would I do? I have been forced to clear land to survive. From a young age, I was already used to seeing and doing it myself—how to cross forest boundaries that have been given a (yellow) police line to sneak into the national park area. If there are no officers on patrol, we would tear down the boundary line. After we have completed working on the land, we will put up the police barrier again (Mrs. MH, a sharecropper).

Another form of resistance is to violate the prohibition to clear land in conservation areas, as well as ignoring the legal obligation for conservation purposes.

...it has been explained by the officers that we have been prohibited from planting crops on previously cultivated land. And then we had to plant timber trees that were not allowed to be cut. I have been forced to clear land to support my family because my husband is no longer working... I planted banana trees, with broad and green leaves, to cover the land I cleared. This way, authorities cannot see the cleared land when watching [the area] from above (MH, a sharecropper).

Farmers plant banana trees because they understand TNGHS authorities often carry out satellite mapping to track changes in forest cover
over time, and to identify human activities that led to alterations in the landscape. Park authorities have produced a “Threat Map” which identifies various forms of disturbances affecting the national park (Figure 2). This map has allowed them to officially classify the everyday acts of resistance carried out by farmers as encroachment.

In some cases, everyday resistance was made possible because officers recruited from among the locals would only warn and provide advice to farmers instead of reporting the violations they have committed, as they would feel bad for taking action against their fellow villagers. The head of a local farmers’ association explained that they have tried to establish good relations with TNGHS officers. At times, a kind of compromise would take place between the two parties: officers would “leave” farmers to work within the national park area, while as an act of “reciprocity” or gratitude, farmers will be ready to provide assistance or support to the officers if needed.

Now the park officials are being nice to the people here. Yes, we just “understand” one another. For example, if an officer wants to throw a celebration [eg. a wedding, or the birth of a child], we help them...
out by sharing our products. Usually, the officer would come to our house themselves and convey their needs (Mr. U, leader of the forest farmers’ association).

Residents seem accustomed to being kind to TNGHS officers, and they show similar hospitality to the agricultural extension workers who act as our intermediaries. We recognized this nuance when participating in meetings between farmer groups and the extension officers, where the farmers were friendly with our involvement. They accompanied both researchers and officers to sightsee around the village, and talk extensively about the lands that have been cultivated by farmers in the area. When we were about to leave for home, our hostess gave us a large gourd as a gift, which she had harvested herself. The researcher recognizes feeling perplexed in this situation as they had just very recently met, but the hostess nonetheless insisted on gifting the gourd (Field Notes, 8 April 2021).

We also encountered a case where TNGHS officers and villagers living near the conservation area collaborated together to develop a business farming goats.

That man [referring to the TNGHS officer once assigned to the area] used to stop by my house often when he was on duty. Just now, he was looking at the goats kept in the fold next to the house. [The TNGHS officer provided goats] as capital, and the goats are kept by my husband, then they will share the results (profit). Now the goats have grown big and they want to sell it. …the time is right before Eid al-Adha (Mrs. AT, resident of a village near the forest edge).

The primary data that we have gathered demonstrates that farmers in the TNGHS area perform various strategies of everyday resistance, from engaging in illegal behavior to efforts appeasing and avoiding direct conflicts with authorities. All these repertoire amounts to the same goal, namely to gain access to resources in the TNGHS area.

**T2: Period of Study (2019-2021)**

This study found that the dimensions of power among Actor 1 and Actor 2 have been transformed during our period of study (T2) in 2019-2021. Nonetheless, some similarities between the two periods have
persisted. In T2, Actor 1 still exerts hidden power as park authorities continue to exclude farmers from the process of drafting future changes to conservation regulations. Through an interview with the Head of TNGHS Region III (Sukabumi), we were informed of plans to continue treating the Mount Halimun-Salak corridor as a conservation area in even more detailed stages. This implies that no sort of vegetable farming currently practiced by smallholders will be allowed in the future. While TNGHS authorities have not openly discussed this plan with farmers, some smallholders have been clinging to the hope to one day acquire ownership rights of the land that they have been working on. There is no denying that culturally, farmers view land as a valuable and inheritable asset.

However, the space of power where Actor 1 exerts their control is no longer completely closed as it used to be in T1, as authorities do not indiscriminately clamp down on farmers for accessing the TNGHS area for agricultural activities anymore. While Actor 1 has continued to use the dominating “power over” mechanism when interacting with farmers, this power has not always been outright repressive, and has even led authorities to open up pathways of dialogue with the farmers. All these dynamics remain constrained within the same level of power as T1, namely the local TNGHS area.

In 2010, a meeting was held by the national park authorities in the village meeting room. We [TNGHS officers] invite farmers who work on land in the national park area for dialogue. We informed them that farmers who have worked on land in the TNGHS area are asked to report themselves to the park officials so that their names are known and recorded as cultivators in the area. Farmers who are not present and fail to report themselves at that time will be subject to legal actions if they are one day found to be working on land in the national park area (Mr.X, former National Park Officer).

According to our informants, not all smallholders were present at this meeting as they remained wary and skeptical that the new arrangement would actually be beneficial. Many of them still remember past experiences of being ceaselessly monitored and pressured by conservation officers.

In T2, Actor 2 (farmers) had grown into carrying out open resistance as they felt to have acquired “recognition” from TNGHS authorities.
as legitimate sharecroppers in the area. The 2010 dialogue between smallholders and the TNGHS management provided the basis of a social contract, and became a turning point between the two parties. This transformation took place although the meeting did not yield any formal agreement that could provide a legal basis, with park officials only registering attendance and recording the names of all smallholders.

We felt the impression that the recognition given by the park manager does result in Actor 2 feeling more safe and comfortable. Nonetheless, they remain vigilant if future decisions result in changes that are not in their favor. In T2, Actor 2 still applies hidden power because in the end, they “remain skeptical” of actually having unmalleable rights to work on land in the designated conservation area. These suspicions persist because the TNGHS authorities still require farmers to do two things: 1. Planting timber plants that are not allowed to be cut down, and, 2. To not expand on and sell arable land.

In response to this “agreement”, farmers are still carrying out everyday resistance by clearing out and selling arable plots of land. However, the opening of new arable land does not occur on a massive scale, and is only conducted by poor farmers who never got to be registered as smallholders by the TNGHS management as they only opened up new land after the agreement has taken place. Apart from this group, there are 380 farmers in the village who have been registered as cultivators in the TNGHS area.

Meanwhile, the farmers that had succeeded in getting recognition as registered smallholders in T2 have succeeded in establishing their own created/claimed space. These spaces are the result of everyday acts of resistance by small farmers through cooperation with other parties who provide capital for their agricultural activities. In the village we studied, the role of big middlemen in the development of agricultural business could not be understated: they provide capital to farmers, buy their crops at low prices, and then sell them to others down the value chain to further accumulate capital. This is not a risk-free process, as the middlemen might lose some money from loans that are unable to be returned. Nonetheless, a mutually beneficial relationship was established between both parties, as farmers benefit from receiving guarantees for their farming utilities, to be able to sell their crops, and to receive a portion of profit from these sales.
Another factor that emboldened farmers in making claims to land is the democratic space which opened up during Indonesia’s Reform Period after 1998. As a community leader explained to us:

During Megawati [whose Presidential tenure lasted during the early Reform Era from 2001-2004], at that time...basically there was abandoned land, and people may work on it. From there, farmers who have a need for more plots to cultivate add a little patch of land to their surrounding area (Ustadz IJ, community leader).

In T2, farmers are able to utilize power not only within their households, but also within the larger local scope of TNGHS. Several farmers in the village formed a forest farmers’ association, both to assert their existence as a legitimate social group and to obtain land rights. However, land occupation of the TNGHS conservation area post-1998 also involved a number of free riders—people outside the village who took advantage of logging opportunities—as well as student movements and agrarian activists.

There were massive felling of trees during the 1998 crisis. Many people from outside the local area came and brought various heavy machinery. Meanwhile, residents were only able to collect wood for their immediate needs due to limited equipment (Mr. AD, Head of the Forest Farmer Group).

During the 1997-98 crisis, there was a large-scale occupation by farmers in the TNGHS area. This movement was provoked by students during the reformation period to take back land that had been forcibly taken from the local community in the past. At that time, many people would enter PT Perhutani’s land and cut down trees there, causing deforestation (Mr. CE, farmer).

During this period, farmers who previously had worked in the Perum Perhutani concession area prior to the TNGHS Expansion policy began to reopen their land. Individuals who own large capital managed to open up a wider area for themselves as they were able to finance both equipment and labor.
DISCUSSION

Power Relations and Access to Forest Resources

Throughout the history of forest management in Java, smallholders have been continually excluded from power and capital relations (Hall, et al. 2011) (Figure 3).

Scott (1985) referred to the encroachment of plantation areas or state forests as a form of daily resistance, which was carried out in a discreet and unhurried manner. These stealthy encroachments have succeeded in opening farmers’ access to agricultural land in the TNGHS area. Residents consider these obtrusions to be a normal facet of life, even if they are well aware that the land they work on legally belongs to the state. Farmers in the TNGHS area conduct everyday acts of resistance in a number of ways, from discreetly encroaching a conservation area; laying low in the presence of patrolling officers, then resuming agricultural activities once the coast is clear; to lying about their personal details or hiding away tree-cutting machines in the event of getting caught. They also refused the mandate to plant timber trees, and planted banana trees instead as a substitute for land cover. In one incident, a farmer’s hut was burned down after he was suspected to have collaborated with national park officers to limit other farmers in accessing forest areas.

Farmers became increasingly daring to encroach on restricted park areas after being provided with political legitimacy during Indonesia’s democratic transition throughout the 1998 Reform Period. Several informants explained that illegitimate logging activities were carried out...
on such a massive scale during President Megawati’s administration (2001-2004) that entire forest areas were turned into barren hills. Outsiders bring heavy machinery into the area, while local residents are only involved as laborers to cut and transport the already-felled logs. For a while, the enterprise was so lucrative that local residents invited their kins who had emigrated to the cities to return home and take advantage of the logging boom. Local laborers would often work to the point of severe exhaustion, and some were even involved in fatal accidents involving falling trees.

We argue that the expansion of agricultural lands by local residents in the TNGHS area is an effort to “reclaim” their rights to the forest, which had already been their source of livelihood even before the policy to expand and police conservation lands. In this sense, the case of farmer resistance in Mount Halimun-Salak is similar to the findings of Peluso (1992), which cites Scott to explain the phenomena of illegitimate logging in teak forests by local villagers as counter-appropriation. Meanwhile, the transformation of how land is used in the TNGHS area echoes Lukas and Peluso (2019) on the increasing role of villagers in the management of forest land, as well as the gradually declining control forest authorities have over their domain.

**Powercube Analysis of the Transformation of Farmer Resistance**

Contestation over forest resources have included conflicts of land tenure, clashes against authorities, the crises befalling local communities struggling to fulfill their livelihood, as well as competing discourses pertaining to sovereignty, legitimacy, and control (Galudra 2000). A number of studies have shown that the rapidly-shifting political situations in Indonesia during the 1998 Reform period had engendered new tensions between government agencies, the private sector, and local communities. Transformations to the national political landscape, which led to a period when the state lost some of its ability to police access to natural resources, prompted peasant movements to take back land that was unfairly taken from them in the past (Peluso et al. 2008, Siscawati and Rachman 2018, Lund and Rachman 2016). As a result, the number of land conflicts has considerably risen throughout this period.

As political reforms opened up new spaces for political action, land occupation would occur frequently in West Java and other parts of In-
Indonesia, relatively free from the usual threat of systematic suppression. The political situation had provided farmers with time to consolidate land tenure and engage in strategies that would help them legalize or legitimize land use, if not always successful (Lund and Rachman 2017). In the region surrounding Mount Halimun-Salak, villagers had taken advantage of a “void” in which companies lost their capacity to control plantation areas and commenced land occupations there.

This study highlights the transformation of farmer resistance, which started as acts of closed, everyday resistance, to open contention by occupying land and reporting themselves as cultivators to TNGHS authorities. The entire transformation process can be understood using the powercube analysis framework (Gaventa 2020) as shown in the following figure.

Figure 3 Transformation of Farmer Resistance Based on the ‘Powercube’ Analytical Framework (Gaventa 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors and dimensions of Power</th>
<th>T1 Transformation</th>
<th>T2</th>
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<tr>
<td>TNGHS authorities (Actor 1)</td>
<td>Policy on TNGHS expansion</td>
<td>Agreement on the use of arable land in TNGHS by farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of power</td>
<td>Hidden</td>
<td>Moving towards more open decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space of Power</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Invited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Power</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>National-Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanism</td>
<td>“Power over”</td>
<td>Moving from “Power over” to practices which incorporate “Power to”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmers (Actor 2)</th>
<th>Everyday Resistance</th>
<th>Land Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form of power</td>
<td>Hidden</td>
<td>Moving towards more open decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space of Power</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Invited and Claimed/Created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Power</td>
<td>Household</td>
<td>Household-Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanism</td>
<td>“Power to” Stealthy expansion</td>
<td>“Power to” Open expansion: making open claims over land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the powercube analysis framework, we are able to explain how changes in resistance occur due to changes in the dimensions of power (its forms, spaces, and levels) of Actor 1 and Actor 2. For example, changes occur when Actor 1 in T1 employs power in a hidden form, but gradually opens it up in T2—albeit not yet explicitly, as farmers are still excluded from the process of formulating conservation plans in the corridor area. By gathering farmers to discuss the use of land they have cultivated, Actor 1 also shifted their space of power from a closed to
an invited one. Meanwhile, the level of power also experienced a slight change from T1 (when conservation policies were devised on a national scope) to T2 (taking local contexts and interests into account as part of the conservation program).

Changes have also occurred in the dimensions of power pertaining to Actor 2. When the TNGHS expansion policy was put into effect (T1), farmers had also exercised power in its hidden form, but gradually became bolder by making explicit demands to the land they occupied (T2). Even so, they still make tacit decisions when it comes to opening up new plots and selling arable land. The pivotal change can be seen in how Actor 2 reacts to an opening of Actor 1’s space of power from being closed to invited, and succeeded in opening a dialogue on how to utilize the arable land. Finally, the more open forms of contention conducted by Actor 2 altered their level of power from discreet, individual acts of resistance at the household level to concerted political intervention in the local TNGHS area.

CONCLUSION

Various changes in how ruling regimes govern forest areas in Indonesia across different periods had also impacted forest management in the Mount Halimun-Salak National Park (TNGHS) area. Since the colonial Dutch East Indies period to the New Order and Reformation era, economic interests have continued to be a prominent driver of forest degradation. During the New Order, the government responded to pressure from international advocacy groups by issuing policies to expand conservation areas throughout the nation, but had failed to consider its impact on the livelihood of people living around the forest area.

Using the “powercube” analytical framework, this study has shown the transformation process of farmer resistance from covert, everyday acts of struggle to access and utilize forest resources to more open forms of contention (Scott 1985). Primary data suggests various factors have played a role in influencing this transformation, which corresponds to the dimensions (form, space, and level) of power pertaining to Actor 1 (national park authorities being apparatus of the state) and Actor (farmers living near to the forest area). We found that not all dimensions of power for both actors have changed during the two periods that comprise our study, namely after the 2003 policy which mandates the expansion of conservation areas in TNGHS (T1), and from 2019-
2021 (T2). Although significant transformations did occur, the form of power within this conflict has yet to become completely visible for both parties, which has prevented them from conducting open discussions on mutually-profitable strategies, as well as finding a balance between improving the lives of farmers and preserving forests.

Although the expansion of agricultural areas by farmers did not unfold in a coordinated manner, they can nonetheless be regarded as a collective action driven by shared emotions and collective interests to control land in the conservation area. Their collective actions are prompted by immediate material needs, namely to ensure their livelihood, rather than being politically-charged and aimed towards the authority of the state. It is these modest aims that allowed them to forge a mutually beneficial relationship with a wide range of parties, from TNGHS officers and high-ranking managers, middlemen, as well as other actors from outside the village.

To further understand how power is dynamic and can transform the relationships of the actors involved, we argue that this analysis can benefit from using other frameworks to complement the powercube model. In this regard, a more in-depth explanation of the various factors driving change can also use the four dimensions of power from Haugaard (2021). The transformation of farmer resistance in the TNGHS corridor has been driven, among others, by changes in “Power Resources”, namely when conservation officers, as Actor 1, no longer apply excessive violence when responding to every act of violation committed by farmers. Meanwhile, the farmers, as Actor 2, have also collaborated with middlemen to obtain sources of economic power to carry out land occupations in the TNGHS area. Transformation in the Structure of Power during the Reform Era, which promoted a wave of democratization, have also encouraged the transformation of peasant resistance to become more overt and concerted. On the other hand, farmers’ behavior the aptitude of farmers in carrying out everyday resistance has been supported by a natural attitude/habitus that guides their thoughts and actions. Finally, the collective memory of being subjected to domination and violence in the past fostered the predisposition that affects the attitude of farmers to not completely trust the policies and arrangements of park authorities.

This study asserts the importance of reviewing the management policies of conservation areas. In general, the planning of conservation programs need to take into account the large number of farmers that would be affected by the changes, their different interests, as well as
factors that might support the institutionalization of these interests, so that intervention programs could be implemented to the economical benefit of farmers and the preservation of the conservation area.

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