

Taking Back the Authority: Epistemic Justice, Sustainability of Life, and the Politics of Indigenous Women

Editorial

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Reviewing Rules, Roles, and Power in Indigenous Communities from a Feminist Legal Studies Perspective

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Patricia Beata Kurnia, Nada Salsabila, Putri Nurfitriani, & Alifia Putri Yudanti

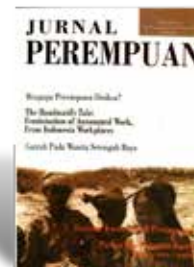
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Taking Back the Authority: Epistemic Justice, Sustainability of Life, and the Politics of Indigenous Women

Amid the global climate crisis, the massive scale of extractive development, and the intensification of various forms of control over living spaces, Indigenous Peoples continue to face threats to the survival of their communities, territories, and knowledge systems. In these circumstances, Indigenous women find themselves in a contradictory position. On the one hand, they are the guardians of life, who ensure the sustainability of their communities through their ecological knowledge, their food systems, their cultural traditions, and their social solidarity. However, they are often excluded from decision-making processes, overlooked within the legal system, and not recognised as legitimate sources of knowledge or political agents.

This issue of *Jurnal Perempuan* focuses on the theme “Taking Back the Authority: Epistemic Justice, Sustainability of Life, and the Politics of Indigenous Women.” This theme is grounded in the realisation that the struggle of Indigenous women is not merely about the recognition of rights, but also involves a struggle for authority: the authority to define knowledge, determine the direction of community life, safeguard their living spaces, and envision a just future for future generations.

In many situations, Indigenous women are treated as objects of policy, development, or protection. However, the eight articles in this issue reveal the contrary. Indigenous women play a vital role as generators of knowledge, leaders within their communities, guardians of sustainable livelihoods, and driving forces behind resistance to injustice, yet they are side-lined and highly vulnerable to violence. In this issue, we view Indigenous women and communities as agents with authority over their own lives and communities, not merely as part of a vulnerable group.

Most of the articles in this issue explore the concept of epistemic justice. For centuries, the knowledge that Indigenous women have concerned the land, food, the sea, forests, health, rituals, and community life has often been regarded as marginal knowledge. It has been deemed less valid than the knowledge of the state, the market, or academic institutions. However, this knowledge forms the foundation of Indigenous community sustainability and provides a vital alternative to development models that cause ecological damage

and social inequality. Therefore, advocating for the rights of Indigenous women as members of Indigenous communities also means advocating for the recognition of the knowledge systems they have created and preserved.

This issue begins with three articles, inviting readers to explore the position of Indigenous women within the legal and political context of national recognition. Ani Widyani Soetjipto reveals that the process of recognising Indigenous communities through the Indigenous Peoples Bill is still rife with problems, particularly with regard to the absence of Indigenous women as fully recognised legal subjects. Meanwhile, Lidwina Inge Nurtjahyo emphasises the importance of critically interpreting customary law through a feminist lens, to ensure that its recognition does not reinforce the subordination of women. Ratih Baiduri and Reh Bungana Beru Perangin Angin explore the lack of participation by Indigenous women in decision-making processes, underscoring the significance of Indigenous women’s leadership and the implementation of CEDAW General Recommendation No. 39 in achieving more just and inclusive recognition.

These three articles demonstrate that the challenges faced by Indigenous women relate not only to representation, but also to issues of power. Who is considered a legal person? Who has the right to speak on behalf of the community? Furthermore, who has the authority to determine the future direction of Indigenous communities? These questions are crucial because recognition that is not accompanied by a transformation of power relations risks perpetuating long-standing injustices.

The second section of this issue invites readers to explore the world of Indigenous women’s knowledge. Articles on *Osing* women by Wiwin Indiarti, *Kei* women by Maemuna Renhoran, and *Kasepuhan Citorek* and *Dayak Iban* women of Sungai Utik by Yayan Hidayat demonstrate the close link between Indigenous women’s knowledge and the sustainability of their communities. Ritual kitchens, coastal areas, seeds, fields, forests, and food reserves serve as physical spaces for generating knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation.

These articles show that Indigenous women are the guardians of tradition and the future. In the face of the climate crisis and threats to livelihoods, Indigenous women's knowledge of natural resource management, food systems, and the relationship between humans and nature offers vital insights into the sustainability of life. In this context, epistemic justice is of paramount importance: without recognition of Indigenous women's knowledge, efforts to achieve sustainability will lose their social and ecological foundations.

The third and final section of this issue examines various forms of resistance by Indigenous women against state-imposed structural repression and encroachment on their living spaces. In their article, Fenny Tria Yunita and Dien Vidie Rosa reveal that Indigenous women cannot be viewed as subalterns with no voice. Adopting an Indigenous feminist perspective, the article demonstrates how Indigenous women continue to assert their existence through their daily activities, a spiritual connection to ancestral lands, and efforts to ensure the sustainability of their communities.

Meanwhile, the article on Bombana, Dolok Parmonangan and Sihaporas, written by Patricia Beata Kurnia, Nada Salsabila, Putri Nurfitriani, and Alifa Putri Yudanti, reveals that state repression occurs not only through physical violence, but also through criminalisation, restrictions on access to resources, and the destruction of living spaces. In such circumstances, Indigenous women play a crucial role in ensuring the survival of their communities through social solidarity,

ecological knowledge, reproductive labour, and various forms of resistance practised in everyday life. In this context, resistance is not always manifested through demonstrations or open confrontation, but also through efforts to care for and protect people and ensure their survival.

The eight articles in this issue reveal that the struggle of Indigenous women is essentially an effort to sustain life amidst various forms of marginalisation. This life encompasses more than just biological survival; it also includes the common thread linking knowledge, culture, the environment in which they live, social relationships, and the future of their communities.

From parliament to the ritual kitchens, from coastal areas to customary forests, and from international forums to agrarian conflicts, Indigenous women demonstrate that they are not only affected by social and ecological change, but also key actors in determining its direction. In a world increasingly confronted by ecological crises, social injustice, and shrinking democratic space, the experiences of Indigenous women offer valuable insights into sustaining life through just relationships between people, communities and nature.

In this issue, we therefore invite you, our esteemed readers, to recognise that the voices of Indigenous women are about more than just increasing representation. They are also about creating new opportunities for a fairer, more sustainable and equitable future. **(Patricia Beata Kurnia)**

Ani Widyani Soetjipto

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"Double Squeeze": Internal Colonialism, Intimate Exclusion, and Absence of Female Subjects in the Draft Bill on Customary Law Communities

Manuscript Code: DDC 305

Jurnal Perempuan Vol. 31 No. 1, 2026, pp. 1-12, 2 Lists of Tables, 44 References

Indigenous women serve as central custodians of ecological knowledge and social reproduction, yet they are systematically marginalised by a "Double Squeeze": external pressure from state-led extractive expansion and internal patriarchal customary structures. This paper argues that the two-decade stagnation of the Customary Law Communities Bill (RUU MHA) needs to be understood as a manifestation of State Capitalism seeking to secure Indigenous territories as investment assets under the guise of Green Developmentalism. Through a Comparative Textual Analysis of the 2026 House Draft and the 2025 Civil Society version, using the lens of Feminist Political Ecology (FPE). This research reveals how the deliberate erasure of female subjects from legal texts facilitates "Intimate Exclusions". In this process, the state effectively co-opts local patriarchal elites to legitimise land dispossession. The study concludes that passing the Bill without explicit gender affirmation and protection of women's managed areas (*wilayah kelola*) risks legalising the dispossession of Indigenous women's living spaces to ensure investment security. It calls for a fundamental reconstruction of the Bill to recognise women as equal legal subjects and to institutionalise their substantive veto power in land-related decision-making.

Keywords: Indigenous Peoples bill, indigenous women, feminist political ecology, state capitalism, green developmentalism

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Reviewing Rules, Roles, and Power in Indigenous Communities from a Feminist Legal Studies Perspective

Manuscript Code: DDC 305

Jurnal Perempuan Vol. 31 No. 1, 2026, pp. 13-24, 36 References

In the discussions of Indigenous or customary communities, Indigenous women are rarely mentioned. Research on Indigenous communities using a feminist perspective is rare. Some advocacy products also fail to mention Indigenous women. Scholarly works on Indigenous women often portray them as a single entity. This article is not the result of field research on a group of Indigenous communities nor does it specifically involve Indigenous women. Instead, this article is based on literature research of research articles, advocacy documents, court decisions, and regulations related to Indigenous communities. The focus of this article is on how Indigenous women are recognised by the state, specifically in the legal realm. This article is intended as a conceptual piece that narrates the impact of women's exclusion from decision-making processes in the context of Indigenous communities and strategies for changing these practices.

Keywords: feminist legal studies, Indigenous women, public participation, structural violence

Ratih Baiduri & Reh Bungana Beru Perangin Angin

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Indigenous Women's Leadership and the Implementation of CEDAW GR 39 in Advocating for the Indigenous Peoples Bill

Manuscript Code: DDC 305

Jurnal Perempuan Vol. 31 No. 1, 2026, pp. 25-38, 55 References

The experiences and contributions of Indigenous women have not been accommodated in legislative policies, despite their strategic role in maintaining living space and community sustainability. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach through literature review and analysis of various documents, utilising intersectional feminism and feminist political ecology perspectives. The research findings indicate that the Indigenous Peoples Bill does not adequately regulate and protect indigenous women. The Indigenous Peoples Bill does not implement CEDAW GR 39. The absence of explicit regulations regarding indigenous women in the Indigenous Peoples Bill could lead to harm for indigenous women, Indigenous communities, the nation, and the state. Indigenous women are at the forefront of preserving traditional knowledge, especially regarding medicine, natural resources, economic sources, food sources, water sources, culture, and traditions. Therefore, it is crucial to recognise and protect Indigenous women in the Indigenous Communities Bill.

Keywords: CEDAW GR 39, Indigenous women's leadership, advocacy for Indigenous Peoples

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Osing People's Ritual Kitchen: An Epistemic Space of Indigenous Women at Java's Eastern Tip

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Jurnal Perempuan Vol. 31 No. 1, 2026, pp. 39-52, 22 References

This article examines the ritual kitchen of *Osing* people in Banyuwangi as an epistemic space of Indigenous women rather than merely a domestic sphere. Drawing on an ethnographic approach and a critical reading of *olah rasa* practices, the study positions Indigenous women as knowing subjects who actively produce, preserve, and transmit cultural, ecological, and spiritual values. The ritual kitchen is understood as a site of knowledge production that is embodied, relational, and contextual, where knowledge is transmitted through practice, bodily discipline, and adherence to ancestral mandates. Ritual culinary practices analysis reveals that *Osing* Indigenous women's knowledge plays a vital role in sustaining tradition, ensuring local food resilience, and maintaining human-nature relations. Nevertheless, Indigenous women's positions remain frequently marginalised in customary decision-making processes and development agendas, giving rise to epistemic injustice. Thus, recognising the kitchen as an epistemic space is a necessary condition for the gender-just preservation of Indigenous knowledge.

Keywords: Indigenous women, ritual kitchen, epistemic space, *olah rasa*, *Osing* people

Maimuna Renhoran

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The Rights of Indigenous Women in Coastal Life and Knowledge: A Gender Perspective on Kei Women

Manuscript Code: DDC 305

Jurnal Perempuan Vol. 31 No. 1, 2026, pp. 53-64, 37 References

The recognition of Indigenous peoples as legal subjects within Indonesia's legal and policy frameworks is often presented as a progressive step toward social justice, yet such recognition frequently overlooks gendered power relations operating within Indigenous communities. This article examines Indigenous women's rights from a gender perspective, focusing on *Kei* women in Southeast Maluku, to demonstrate that recognising Indigenous communities as collective entities does not automatically ensure the substantive fulfilment of women's rights. Using a socio-legal approach, the article conceptualises rights as social practices negotiated at the intersection of customary law (Larvul Ngabal), state policies, and coastal governance. The analysis centred on three interrelated dimensions: rights to coastal resources, rights to meaningful participation in decision-making, and rights to the recognition of Indigenous women's knowledge. The findings show that *Kei* women's everyday knowledge and practices are central to community sustainability, yet are systematically marginalised by epistemic hierarchies and technocratic, gender-blind coastal policies. The article argues that realising Indigenous women's rights requires a substantive justice approach that transforms the power relations constraining women's agency, not merely formal recognition. This study affirms that Indigenous women's rights must be understood as an integral part of the broader agenda for gender justice and social-ecological sustainability in Indonesia's coastal regions.

Keywords: Indigenous women, women's rights, gender, *Kei* Indigenous community, local knowledge, coastal governance

Yayan Hidayat

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Indigenous Women's Resilience, Knowledge, and Food Sovereignty: A Study of the Role of Indigenous Women from Kasepuhan Citorek in Lebak, West Java and Indigenous Women from Dayak Iban Menua Sungai Utik in Kapuas Hulu, West Kalimantan

Manuscript Code: DDC 305

Jurnal Perempuan Vol. 31 No. 1, 2026, pp. 65-80, 3 Lists of Figures, 23 References

This study aims to analyse the role of Indigenous women in strengthening the resilience of Indigenous communities in *Kasepuhan Citorek* (Lebak) and *Dayak Iban Menua Sungai Utik* (Kapuas Hulu). This study uses a critical paradigm with a multiple case study approach and qualitative analysis, data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document studies for 7 (seven) months. Data were analysed using the framework of rights to self-determination and Indigenous feminism. The results of the study indicate that the recognition of Indigenous territories, strengthening the rights of Indigenous women, food sovereignty, and the implementation of self-determination are interrelated in building the sustainability and resilience of Indigenous communities amidst the climate crisis and extractive development. Indigenous women play a central role as guardians of ecological knowledge, managers of food reserves, and decision-makers in the customary system. These findings confirm that strengthening the rights of Indigenous women is inseparable from the original rights of Indigenous communities, and is the foundation of the ecological, social, and political sustainability of Indigenous communities amidst the pressures of extractive development and the climate crisis. The existence of Indigenous women is often invisible and unrecognised. However, as with Indigenous feminism,

gender justice is an inseparable part of recognising the sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. This means that recognising Indigenous Peoples is an integral part of recognising the rights of Indigenous women.

Keywords: self-determination, food sovereignty, Indigenous women, Indigenous territory

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Repositioning the Subaltern: An Indigenous Feminist Analysis of Indigenous Women's Resistance to Territorial Dispossession

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Jurnal Perempuan Vol. 31 No. 1, 2026, pp. 81-94, 1 List of Table, 41 References

Indigenous women play a crucial role in safeguarding their customary territories and the environment of their communities. However, they are often positioned as subaltern subjects marginalised within legal discourse as well as within the narratives of resistance themselves. This study integrates Indigenous Feminism and subaltern theory to analyse Indigenous women's resistance to territorial dispossession. Existing scholarship has often subsumed such resistance within generalised ecofeminist discourses, thereby neglecting the specific cosmological, spiritual, and cultural logics that underpin Indigenous women's actions. Through a qualitative socio-legal approach, this research examines the resistance practices of Indigenous women in Mollo (East Nusa Tenggara), Kendeng (Central Java), and Enggros (Papua). The findings demonstrate that Indigenous women's resistance does not always manifest in overtly confrontational or formal legal forms, but rather through everyday practices, cultural regeneration, and spirituality. The dominance of modern epistemology tends to overlook these forms of resistance, resulting in the delegitimisation of Indigenous women's voices. Therefore, repositioning the subaltern must involve recognising Indigenous women's knowledge and political practices, both within their communities and in state policy discourse.

Keywords: Indigenous feminism, indigenous women, subaltern, deprivation of customary territory

Patricia Kurnia Beata, Nada Salsabila, Putri Nurfitriani, & Alifa Putri Yudanti

Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia

Repression by State and Indigenous People Fight: A Study at Bombana, Southeast Sulawesi and Dolok Parmonangan and Sihaporas, North Sumatera

Manuscript Code: DDC 305

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Structural repression against Indigenous communities in Indonesia, particularly as part of marginalised communities, continues to intensify through various forms of violence by state actors, including criminalization, dispossessions of living spaces, restrictions on access to natural resources, and physical violence that disproportionately affects Indigenous women and their children. In this article, the authors analyse forms of state repression and Indigenous resistance practices in Bombana, Southeast Sulawesi, as well as Dolok Parmonangan and Sihaporas, North Sumatra. This article employs a qualitative approach using multisited ethnography through in-depth interviews, participant observation, ethnographic reflection, and document analysis. The

analysis in this study draws on Johan Galtung's framework of structural violence, feminist political ecology of Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, Crenshaw's intersectionality, and Scott's concept of everyday resistance. The findings in this paper reveal that repression operates through direct violence, permeating everyday life in the form of trauma, surveillance, and uncertainties. In this context, the authors find that the Indigenous women experience multiple forms of repression while

simultaneously playing crucial roles in sustaining their communities through collective solidarity, ecological knowledge, reproductive labour, and everyday resistance practices.

Keywords: Indigenous communities, Indigenous women, state repression, agrarian conflict, intersectionality, Feminist Political Ecology, multisite ethnography

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JP appears annually and the contents of each issue include: editorials, peer-reviewed papers by leading writers; reviews, short stories, and poetry. A key feature of the journal is appreciation of the value of literature, fiction, and the visual narrative (works of art, such as paintings and drawings) in the study of women's issues

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To discuss ideas for contributions, please contact the Chief Editor: Anita Dhewy via anitadhewy@jurnalperempuan.com. Research papers should be between 5000-10000 words. Please make sure to include in your submission pack an **abstract outlining the title, purpose, methodology and main findings**. It is worth considering that, as your paper will be located and read online, the quality of your abstract will determine whether readers go on to access your full paper. We recommend you place particular focus on the impact of your research on further research, practice or society. What does your paper contribute? In addition, please provide up to **six descriptive keywords**.

Formatting your paper

Headings should be short and in bold text, with a clear and consistent hierarchy. Please identify **Notes or Endnotes** with consecutive numbers, enclosed in square brackets and listed at the end of the article. **Figures** and other images should be submitted as .jpeg (.jpg) or .tif files of a high quality. Please number them consecutively with Arabic numerals and mark their intended location within the body of the text clearly. If images are not the original work of the author, it is the author's responsibility to obtain written consent from the copyright holder before using them. Authors will be asked to confirm the status of images, tables and figures in the journal submission pack. Images which are neither the authors' own work, nor are accompanied by the necessary permission, will not be published.

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