



Rooted Resistance: Gendered Narratives of Land Dispossession and Planetary Health in Central Java

Dewi Candraningrum
Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia



Introduction

Java's food and land systems face severe threats from climate change, extractive policies, and environmental degradation. Despite systemic marginalization, Javanese women lead ecological stewardship through sustainable farming and resistance. Centering their knowledge is essential for regenerating food security, land justice, and planetary health in Indonesia.

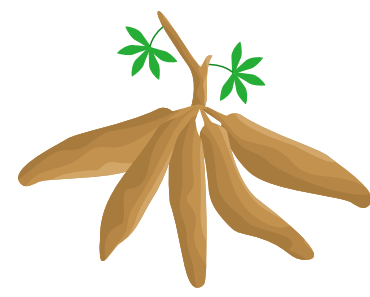
1



2

Methods

This study uses decolonial feminist ethnography to highlight Central Javanese women's ecological struggles, centering local knowledge through participatory, justice-driven methods and intersectional analysis.



Results and Discussions

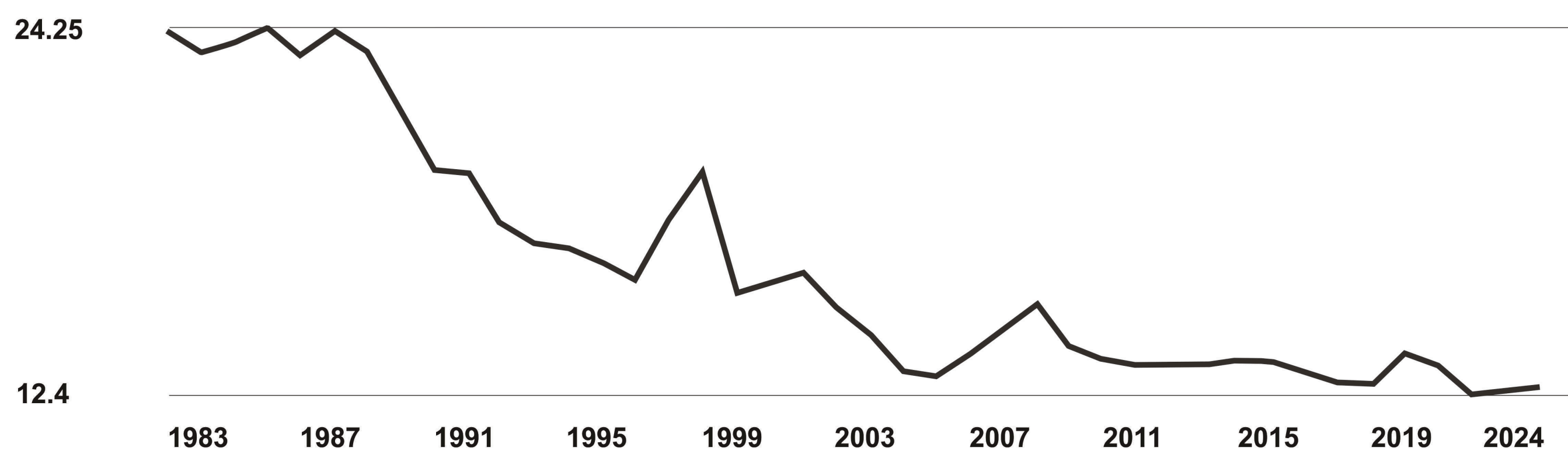
Dispossession and the Gendered Costs of Land System Change

This section examines how projects like the Kedung Ombo Dam and Kendeng cement mining reshape land tenure and displace agrarian communities. It highlights the gendered impacts, showing how women, especially farmers, lose land access and authority over ecological knowledge. Land, as a cultural and epistemic archive, holds matrilineal ties that development projects disrupt, affecting health and community sustainability.



From Extraction to Extinction: Feminist Resistance to Ecological Degradation and Planetary Ill-Health

This section examines how extractive industries—cement mining, industrial growth, and tourism—cause ecological harm, including biodiversity loss and food system disruption. Women like Sukinah and Neni Yuliawati resist these impacts, offering feminist critiques that connect land degradation to reproductive injustice and health crises. Their activism promotes care-based, regenerative economies rooted in community and environmental well-being.



This diagram shows with Indonesia's economic development trajectory, where the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, fishing) steadily loses its relative share in national output due to growth in the secondary and tertiary sectors (e.g., manufacturing, services, digital economy). The plateau in recent years suggests that the sector has reached a stable but reduced role in the national economy. (source: World Bank, the Agricultural Sector as percent of GDP

Source: https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Indonesia/share_of_agriculture/

3

Spiritual Ecologies and Decolonial Land Ethics: Reimagining Environmental Governance from Below

This section explores how women draw on Islamic, Catholic, and Saminist cosmologies to promote ethical land care. Alissa Wahid and Nunung Purwanti reinterpret spiritual teachings as calls for ecological justice, challenging technocratic development. Their work advances grassroots ethics of reciprocity and humility, envisioning post-extractive futures grounded in relationality over profit.



4

Conclusion and Outlook

This research reveals how Central Javanese women, as farmers, caregivers, and spiritual stewards, confront environmental injustice impacting food security, biodiversity, and reproductive rights. Their resistance offers locally rooted models of sustainability and justice. Advancing feminist, decolonial frameworks that center indigenous knowledge and women's agency is vital. Future climate policy and land governance must co-create solutions with communities, embracing intersectionality and relationality. These women's resilience provides a hopeful blueprint for gender-just, ecologically sustainable futures in Indonesia and beyond.

