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Land rights and the forces of adat in democratizing Indonesia : continuous conflict between plantations, farmers, and forests in South Sulawesi

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WILLEM EGBERT VAN DER MUUR

LAND RIGHTS

AND THE FORCES OF ADAT
IN DEMOCRATIZING INDONESIA

Since the fall of the authoritarian New Order regime in 1998, the indigenous movement in Indonesia has become one of the world's largest national movements to champion the cause of rural communities. Its advocacy has successfully pushed the government to implement legal reforms that have widened the scope for recognition of collective land rights. In the context of Indonesia's widespread land conflicts, an important question is who gets to benefit from laws that grant collective land rights on the basis of indigeneity? By design, such laws are limited in their scope, given that they only grant rights to those that qualify as indigenous.

In order to explain how indigeneity can actually empower communities involved in land conflicts with the government or plantation companies, this book adopts the perspective of actors and stakeholders at the local level. By looking at the interaction between local land claimants, activists, and state actors at the district level, the book surveys both the deployment and the reception of claims to land rights on the basis of indigeneity. Focusing on how local land users in the province of South Sulawesi invoke indigeneity in their struggles over land, this book explores the local and regional processes through which claims to indigenous adat land rights succeed or fail to be recognized.

The book combines case studies, legal analysis, and theories on social movements and collective action frames. Doing so, it provides unique and rich insights for those interested in civil society advocacy and its impact on state, law, and society, as well those interested in the role of adat and custom at various levels of society. The book alarmingly shows that by making indigeneity a prerequisite for land rights, the most vulnerable people may actually be excluded from obtaining such rights.

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CONTINUOUS CONFLICT BETWEEN PLANTATIONS, FARMERS, AND FORESTS IN SOUTH SULAWESI