

The Urban Land, the Disputed Land: The Land Disputes of Pawirorejo in Surakarta 1982-1985

Aris Agus Styawan

Faculty of Humanity, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: arisagustyawan1697@mail.ugm.ac.id

Received: October 1, 2024; Reviewed: October 10, 2024; Accepted: November 7, 2024

Abstract: The issue of land disputes in urban areas during the New Order era intensified due to the massive use of land for housing needs and to support various development projects. Especially in the late 1970s, land issues had become a major concern in cities at the municipal level. This paper analyzed the causes of land disputes involving the Pawirorejo family in the city of Surakarta. This historical research used archival sources such as trial documents from the Surakarta Court Office, regional statistical data, and newspapers. The study's results suggest that the state-controlled lands in Surakarta, which did not receive full attention, triggered the Pawirorejo land dispute; consequently, the city government's weak control also played a role. Furthermore, land as a commodity with significant value in the city of Surakarta is vulnerable to conflicts, and the adage "land for the people" becomes very difficult to fully realize amidst the strengthening currents of development and the interests of the authorities. Therefore, the use and ownership of land in urban areas, especially state land in Surakarta, require explicit regulation through legal means.

Keywords: The Land Disputes, Pawirorejo, Surakarta, New Order

INTRODUCTION

The ascendance of the New Order government brought significant changes to agrarian issues in Indonesia after-1965. Bachriadi & Wiradi (2011) note that the New Order government heavily shaped the direction of land policy to facilitate investment and capital interests. This orientation led the government to treat land primarily as an economic commodity, a stark contrast to the previous regime's approach, which based land policies on the principle of "land for the people" through land reform. This shift benefited the government by streamlining development projects across regions; however, it simultaneously disadvantaged citizens who lost their land—often their most valuable economic asset. Consequently, this policy direction led to widespread land conflicts across many areas, both rural and urban.

By the late 1960s, several major Indonesian cities encountered complex land issues, coinciding with annual urban population growth and substantial rural-to-urban migration. In 1961, Indonesia's urban population was at 14.8%, with Java and Madura at 15.6% and cities outside these islands at 13.3% (Brand, 1969). *Kompas* informed that, Jakarta, representing Java's prime city, reached a population of 4,507,754 in 1969, with an annual urban growth mean rate of 4.9% from 1960–1969 (Kompas, 1969). Compared to the

1961 census, which recorded 2,973,052 people, this was a marked increase (Biro Pusat Statistik, 1961/Central Bureau of Statistics, 1961). This urban population surge intensified the demand for housing, which outpaced the limited urban land supply (Nasution, 1992).

Regarding urban housing needs, the *Pelita* (Five-Year Development Plan) report indicates that urban population growth at the end of *Pelita III* (1979-1983) led to an additional 7,202,742 people requiring approximately 1,532,498 new housing units, a significant increase from the 728,271 units needed in *Pelita II* (1974-1978) (Panudju, 1999). However, the government's priority to provide housing and urban space often conflicted with other interests. In recent decades, political, economic, and demographic forces become intertwined, limiting middle- and lower-income groups' access to land and housing in urban areas. Meanwhile, these forces expanded opportunities for a select few, including the state itself, to control land in the name of development (Cornelius, 1976; Wehrmann, 2008).

This study focuses on the city of Surakarta in Central Java, where land issues become particularly critical. Surakarta was previously a *Swapraja* area under the Kasunanan and Mangkunegaran (Field of Municipal Government Dati II Surakarta, 1983), making it part of the *vorstenlanden*, or "lands of kings." During the *Swapraja* period, land ownership in Surakarta belonged to the ruling monarchy (Larson, 1990). Following the abolition of the *Swapraja*, much of this land transitioned to state ownership (Winarti & Damayanti, 2017). Government Regulation No. 8 of 1953 defines state land as state-owned land that lacks property rights, encompassing usufructuary, building, management, usage, communal, and waqf land (Sumardjono, 2010).

The local population in Surakarta widely used the former *Swapraja* land for residential and economic purposes before it transformed into state land. However, they encountered the constant threat of eviction for development or other governmental purposes, particularly under the New Order, which suppressed dissent against its centralized development policies (Rachman, 1999; Setiawan, 2008). To avoid eviction, many residents sought legal ownership rights to the land, while others resorted to occupying state land without legal authorization (Kompas, 1977). The attachment to land as a home and source of livelihood fostered a sense of pride and identity for many people (Hardjosudarmo, 1970).

Nonetheless, academic literature on urban land conflicts and disputes in postcolonial Indonesia, especially during the New Order, remains limited. Most research focused on rural land control, landlordism, and peasant struggles, such as the large-scale Jenggawah case in Jember between farmers and PT. Perkebunan XXVII in 1970s (Evers & Korff, 2002; Lucas, 1992; Nurhasim, 1997). Murad (1991) distinguishes between "land conflict"—a general dispute resolved through mediation—and "land dispute," which escalates to formal legal adjudication. For disputes involving the government, legal bias

may arise if the judiciary lacks commitment to impartiality. Yet, both conflicts and disputes have roots in social and political factors (Lombard & Rakodi, 2016; Lucas & Warren, 2003; Wehrmann, 2008).

Spatially, urban areas are highly susceptible to land conflict. Rapid urbanization and widespread land conversions—such as for roads, government buildings, schools, hospitals, parks, industries, entertainment centers, and residential developments—limited urban land availability, intensifying competition among social classes, the government, and private entities. Rising land prices made it more difficult for low-income urban residents to own land, leading them occupying land without "official documents" for housing and livelihood (Firman, 2000; Leeuwen & Haar, 2016; Lombard, 2012). Ambiguous land regulations further complicate urban land management (Firman, 2004; Zhu & Simarmata, 2015), while the state and private interests frequently invoke "public interest" as a pretext for land acquisitions, displacing low-income residents and inciting land conflicts and disputes (Meckelburg & Wardana, 2024).

Studies on urban land issues in Indonesia found how land changed hands from a community to an individual in Padang (Colombijn, 1992; Evers, 1975), how rapid development forced people to move to Jakarta (Jellinek, 1991), how agricultural land was lost in Semarang (Akhyat, 2020), how land ownership changed after 1917 in Yogyakarta (Setiawati, 2011), and how urban land struggles happened in Surabaya (Basundoro, 2013). These studies highlight patterns of land ownership and control changes, underscoring the need for focused research on urban land conflicts.

The studies above primarily focus on the processes that influence changes in land ownership and control patterns. Therefore, a specific examination of conflicts or land disputes in urban areas is very much needed. Existing studies, primarily focused on major cities, pose unique challenges, particularly considering the rapid development of many municipalities since the late 20th century (Mardiansjah et al., 2021). This article specifically examines a land dispute event in Surakarta, 1982-1985, with a case study on the Pawirorejo land. The author expects that this study can serve as an oasis and spark further research development in the future with a broader scope, especially regarding agrarian issues in the Surakarta region.

METHODS

This study used the historical method. Kuntowijoyo (1995) explains that historical research methodology involves several stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. In the heuristic stage, the author explored the sources by discovering an initial news article in *Kompas* newspaper, reporting on turmoil in the land acquisition process for the Cargo Terminal Development Project in Pedaringan. Based on this newspaper source, the author conducted further research by tracing documents held at the

Surakarta District Court. With assistance from the Legal Section's Clerk's Office, the author obtained key primary sources, including letters from the Mayor of Surakarta and decrees from the Governor of Central Java regarding land occupied by Pawirorejo.

Additionally, the primary source documents included bundles from the Surakarta District Court, containing a lawsuit and evidence submitted by Pawirorejo through his legal representative, the Surakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH Surakarta). These bundles also included documents and evidence from the defendants, specifically the Mayor of Surakarta (Defendant I) and Suroyo (Defendant II), and decisions from the Surakarta District Court (Document No. 473/1983/Pdt.G/P.N.Ska.) and the Semarang High Court (Document No. 342/1984/Pdt/P.T.Smg). Beyond these primary sources, the author also utilized statistical data from the Surakarta Regional Statistics Office and various newspapers, including *Bernas*, *Kompas*, and *Wawasan*, archived at the Surakarta Press Monument.

After collecting these sources, the researchers critically evaluated the data. The researchers physically obtained the main primary sources directly from the Surakarta District Court archives, thereby ensuring their authenticity. Regarding the credibility of the sources, the author exercised particular caution in reviewing the primary sources, primarily consisting of lawsuit documents, along with evidence and court rulings, and conducted a critical analysis during the interpretation stage. Due to difficulties in locating key informants, specifically the Pawirorejo family and other relatives involved, the author decided not to use interview sources in this study. The final stage, historiography, entailed compiling facts into a written historical narrative.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Land Issues in Surakarta in 1970s

The city of Surakarta is a Level II Regional City (Dati II) under Central Java Province. Surakarta's area comprises five districts: Laweyan, Serengan, Pasar Kliwon, Jebres, and Banjarsari. Surakarta's strategic location borders surrounding areas such as Karanganyar Regency, Boyolali Regency, and Sukoharjo Regency. People viewed Surakarta as an advanced, safe, and peaceful "traditional Javanese city" during the era of autonomous governance, with a populace loyal to the king's authority. However, after the end of the autonomous rule, the city became turbulent, and poverty became increasingly widespread. Larson (1990) explain, after the unrest of 1965–1966 until the early 1970s, Surakarta experienced stagnation under the military administration, with chaotic and deteriorating urban conditions.

A newspaper article from the early 1970s also described conditions in Surakarta, comparing the city to a "beautiful maiden with leprosy." This description stemmed from poor urban roads and the extensive use of "unofficial" lands as sites for informal housing occupied by the urban poor. These makeshift dwellings were small, cramped, and often

unsuitable for residential use. Many informal settlements were located along riverbanks, such as the edges of the Pepe and Kali Anyar Rivers, and in densely populated neighborhoods such as Sangkrah, Semanggi, and the areas around Sriwedari. Other neglected city spaces included areas like Tirtonadi, Gilingan, and Minapadi, where houses were often made from semi-permanent materials like simple wooden partitions and tin, sometimes with shared walls with neighboring structures (Kompas, 1973a).

In front of Surakarta's City Hall, in the Kampung Baru area, numerous shacks inhabited by impoverished residents existed. At the time, Kusnandar, the mayor, estimated that the city housed approximately 70,000 families of five to ten people, but about 18,000 additional houses were required to provide adequate living conditions (Kompas, 1973b). This calculation did not account for the growing number of homeless people across the city (Kompas, 1967). The limited availability of urban land posed a significant challenge, especially considering the city's small area of 43.51 km² and its population of around 413,077 in the 1971 Census.

The proliferation of informal housing in Surakarta was largely due to rising urbanization and the city's poorly managed land distribution. Many newcomers from surrounding areas came to seek work, hoping to improve their lives. Due to their lack of specialized skills, they frequently found themselves engaged in informal jobs such as laboring in markets, on construction sites, or as rickshaw drivers. Meanwhile, the city government struggled with land management, partly due to the incomplete transfer of land ownership from the previous autonomous rule, under the authority of the Kasunanan Palace and Mangkunegaran Principality. The lack of specific regulations on urban land ownership and use further complicated the situation, as land policies continued to rely on the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law, which prioritized rural agricultural land over urban settlement (Basundoro, 2013).

Differences in land rights interpretation for former royal lands also contributed to frequent land conflicts in Surakarta, involving the royal authority, the city government, and residents (Bernas, 1992). Examples include the land compensation for the Army's Kopasanda in Kandang Menjangan, Kartasura, in the early 1970s, and the Sriwedari land dispute in 1983, illustrating conflicts between the royal authority and the Surakarta City Government over land control and ownership (Wali Kota Madya Dati II Surakarta, 1983d). In one report, Margono, the Chief of the Surakarta City Government, described the urban land situation as "*lemah kutho iku lemah gawat*" (urban land is sensitive and dangerous), particularly in the areas under the Surakarta governor's jurisdiction. A small parcel of land could become a disaster if mishandled (Bidang Pemerintahan Kotamadya Dati II Surakarta, 1983).



Figure 1. Area Needing Protection for Development Projects in Jebres District.
Source: Surakarta District Court, 1984

Other land disputes also involved residents. Cases that arose in the late 1970s to early 1980s included property rights claims by Poncodiharjo in Kentingan, Jebres Village. Poncodiharjo claimed ownership of State Land with Verponding No. C. 1366, a plot that was part of the Surakarta Mental Hospital and Jurug Zoo expansion project (Wali Kota Madya Dati II Surakarta, 1983b). Additionally, issues appeared within the residential land in Purbawardayan, Tegalharjo Village, where fifteen families resided, and with Prapto Utomo's encroachment on state land in Kedung Lumbu, Pasar Kliwon District (ITWILDA Provinsi Jawa Tengah, 1979). These cases demonstrate how unresolved land management issues contribute to additional urban challenges.

Jebres District saw the concentration of numerous development projects from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, including the Cargo Terminal Project (approximately 30 hectares), Mental Hospital (about 7 hectares), Student Dormitory (about 2 hectares), and Jurug Zoo Expansion (about 7 hectares). Among these, the Pedaringan Cargo Terminal Project required the most extensive land. However, residential neighborhoods and local farmland already populated this area. The city government argued that these strategic projects were part of regional equalization efforts, and their large-scale land demands left no alternative. In reality, the land acquisition and compensation process for these projects led to land conflicts.

The Project of Pedaringan Cargo Terminal and the Land Dispute Rise of Pawirorejo

The city government's efforts to advance the Pedaringan Cargo Terminal Development Project closely connected to the origin of the Pawirorejo land dispute. This project began in 1982, requiring approximately 30 hectares of land in the Kentingan area, Jebres District, on the eastern side of Surakarta. The project acquired 4 hectares (comprising 17 parcels) of privately owned land, with the remaining land belonging to the state. The

construction of the cargo terminal in this area led to the displacement of over 600 families in Jebres. The Pawirorejo family occupied one of the affected plots.

The Pawirorejo family lived at Kampung Tegalkuniran, RT 10/RW 03, Jebres District. They rejected the local government's conditions, specifically those set by the Land Acquisition Committee, regarding the use of their 267 m² plot, which was designated to replace part of the property owned by the Suroyo family, who was also directly impacted by the cargo terminal project. However, the Surakarta District Court's case records indicate that the Pawirorejo family occupied 300 m² of land, of which 50 m² was necessary for the cargo terminal development (Pengadilan Negeri Surakarta, 1984; Wali Kota Madya Dati II Surakarta, 1983c).

The Surakarta City Government initiated the first major terminal project, the Pedaringan Cargo Terminal, or City Warehousing Center (PPK), to eliminate the city's scattered warehousing system. Since the early 1980s, the city government has made concerted efforts to simplify the city's scattered warehousing system by constructing a large central warehouse facility. The previous presence of intra-city traffic intensified, the previous presence of warehouses in the city center became a source of congestion. Table 1 shows the results: Surakarta had 82 warehouses by the end of 1982, but this number significantly decreased to 57 in 1983, despite an increase in warehouse space to 6,128 m². Companies owned the majority of operational warehouses in Surakarta (Kompas, 1984b).

Table 1. Number of Warehouses and Warehouse Spaces in Surakarta, 1981–1983.

Years	Warehouses		Spaces	
	Total	Area (m ²)	Total	Area (m ²)
1982	82	9.413	51	4.508
1983	57	8.805	39	6.128

Source: Census and Statistics Office of Surakarta Municipality Dati II, 1985

In 1982, the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) Levels I and II, along with additional support from the Regional Development Bank, initiated the construction of the Pedaringan Cargo Terminal. The first phase covered 8 hectares and cost 8.868 billion, from a total planned area of approximately 30 hectares. The Pedaringan Cargo Terminal consisted four general warehouses with a capacity of 12,960 tons, a fire-resistant warehouse with a capacity of 2,160 tons, a storage yard with a capacity of 3,640 tons, and space for 125 cargo trucks. Along with various other supporting facilities, the terminal also offered overnight accommodations for truck drivers at a rate of \$1,500 per night. The management of this cargo terminal was a joint effort with PT. Bhandha Ghara Reksha under the Ministry of Trade, while the local government receives 80 percent of the total revenue (Kompas, 1984b).

The Pedaringan Cargo Terminal was intended to boost the economic sector in Surakarta while also serving as a transit point for large trucks, which were seen as major contributors to traffic congestion and road damage within the city. The Gilingan area, which also served as a terminal and resting area for trucks, housed the city warehouses operating in the northern part of Surakarta before the construction of the Pedaringan Cargo Terminal (Kantor Sensus & Statistik Kotamadya Dati II Surakarta, 1977). Several weigh station posts located in Palur (Sroyo), Kartasura, and Wonogiri recorded a high volume of freight traffic passing through Surakarta. Table 2's data from 1975-1976 shows that most incoming and outgoing freight traffic passed through the weigh stations at Palur (from the east) and Kartasura (from the west), situated along major routes connecting Semarang-Solo-Surabaya and Jogja-Solo-Surabaya. Based on a 1982 report from the Department of Transportation, 11,400 heavy vehicles (large trucks) passed through the city, carrying approximately 753,000 tons of goods (Kompas, 1984b).

Table 2. Freight and Vehicles* Passing Through Weight Stations in Kartasura, Wonogiri, and Palur in 1975-1976

Weight Stations	The Numbers of Weighted Freights (Ton)		Vehicle Volumes	
	1975*	1976	1975*	1976
Kartasura	220.933	695.782	42.383	126.937
Wonogiri	8.865	70.984	2.773	23.154
Palur	239.225	746.524	33.817	119.183
Total	469.023	1.513.290	78.973	269.274

Source: Census and Statistics Office of Surakarta Municipality Dati II, 1977, 1978

Notes:

*Significant differences in the number of weighed vehicles and freight in 1975 were due to missing reports on transit vehicles and those destined for inter-district routes in Central Java.

*The goods and vehicles mentioned include not only freight trucks and trailers but also buses and passenger vehicles, like bemos and oplets.

During the land acquisition and relocation process for the Pedaringan Urban Warehouse Center, extended conflicts emerged. Although relocation efforts began before the warehouse center's inauguration on October 23, 1984, the process remained incomplete. Issues arose concerning the inflated number of allocated land plots for displaced residents. This inflation was due to various residents—who were actually ineligible—attempting to secure placement allocation letters. The list included deceased individuals and manipulations by some local officials to claim additional plots. Rightful recipients and certain officials often resold these allocated plots at prices ranging from 100,000 to 500,000 rupiahs. Additionally, there was extensive and unauthorized parceling of state lands,

private properties, and nearby Chinese cemeteries at the resettlement site (Kompas, 1984a).

In May 1984, the Mayor of Surakarta, Soekatmo Hadisoebroto, established a task force to address these issues. However, the inspection team—comprising representatives from social-political affairs, land affairs, the prosecutor's office, and the police—failed to fully resolve the matter. The land acquisition and allocation team reported at least 408 households receiving designated land plots. However, the Head of Public Relations for Surakarta's local government, Kasan Chariri, noted that 1,547 plot allocation letters had circulated, indicating inflated numbers. This revealed weak regulatory enforcement due to the lack of stringent land use laws (Monkkonen, 2013). The 1,547 plot allocation letters included certificates for the 334 households displaced by the Surakarta Mental Hospital construction. Households with ownership certificates (SHM) received priority in plot allocation. Each family holding SHM received a 200 m² plot, whereas residents without SHM or land cultivators with only Agrarische Zaken (AZ) documents received plots of only 90 m² (Kompas, 1984a).

The Escalating Conflict Leading to the Pawirorejo Land Dispute

At the time of the conflict, the Pawirorejo family had seven members: Mrs. Pawirorejo (widow of the late Mr. Pawirorejo), Sri Mulyani (daughter, wife of Walidi, unemployed), Suyanto (19-year-old son), Sri Lestari (17-year-old daughter), Gatot Surono (10-year-old son, in Grade IV), Agus Budiantoro (7-year-old son, in kindergarten), and Walidi (son-in-law, Sri Mulyani's husband). Mrs. Pawirorejo ran a small food stall in front of her house, which faced the main road, Jalan Kolonel Sutarto, near the road leading to Kentingan Campus, making the location strategic. Mrs. Pawirorejo objected to leaving the home she had for years, which was not only her residence but also her family's main source of income. Despite her daughter, Sri Mulyani, living with her husband Walidi (a truck driver), they still shared the same house (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Surakarta, 1983b).

The Pawirorejo family's opposition stemmed from several factors: first, they had occupied the land since 1956 after Mr. Pawirorejo (a soldier with Battalion 16, Regiment 26, Division IV of the Indonesian Army) purchased it from Tjokrodikromo (Mbah Cokro), who had lived there since the Dutch colonial era. Second, from 1956 to 1983, the family fulfilled their obligations by paying land taxes and local development levies (Ipeda) assigned by the Jebres subdistrict and received Ipeda assessment letter No. C. 1512. Third, the Pawirorejo family formally requested expedited approval of land ownership on March 18, 1972, a move that received support from the then-head of Jebres Village (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Surakarta, 1983b).

The government cleared the Pawirorejo Family's house by providing resettlement plot compensation and covering relocation expenses. The Pawirorejo party independently carried out the demolition of the building. It was not clearly stated how much the

demolition cost given to Pawirorejo, but based on the demolition costs received by other residents, the range of the cost given was between 30 thousand and 60 thousand rupiah. Figure 2 shares the illustration. The Suroyo Family occupies the 770 m² private land next to Pawirorejo's land. On the other side, the Parto Pandi Family and the Liong Jien Family own private land. Of the land The cargo terminal development project affects part of the Suroyo family's land, which spans an area of 348 m² (Deputy Mayor of Dati II Surakarta, 1983a, 1983c).

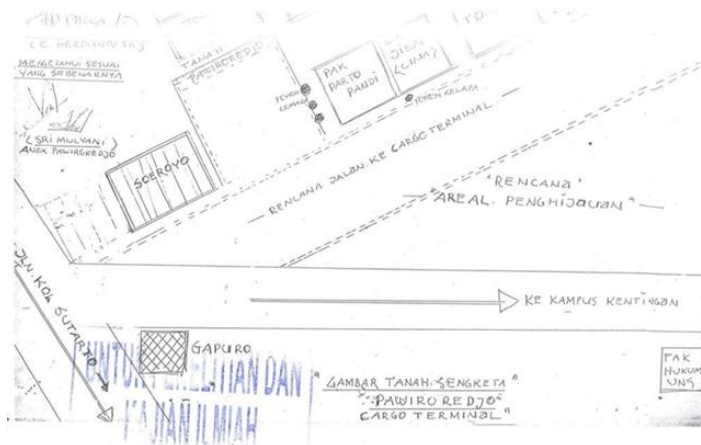


Figure 2. Map of Pawirorejo Dispute Land Due to Pedaringan Cargo Terminal Construction

Source: Surakarta District Court, 1984

The land acquisition committee and the Surakarta city government used two main compensation methods: for privately owned land, they paired partial monetary compensation with substitute land, and for state-owned land, they provided resettlement plots or other compensation agreed upon through discussion. The project affected seventeen private land plots totaling 4 hectares. The 267 m² former Pawirorejo property would partially compensate the Suroyo family for their affected land (Wali Kota Madya Dati II Surakarta, 1983c). However, after dismantling their house, the Pawirorejo family made up their mind and rejected the agreement upon hearing that their former plot would compensate the Suroyo family. This led them to construct a new building beside their demolished home (Deputy Mayor of Dati II Surakarta, 1983c)(see Figure 3).



Figure 3. The New House Building of Pawirorejo besides the Original House Building Remnants

Source: Surakarta District Court, 1984

The Suroyo family's attempt to immediately build a new structure on the remaining yard land, previously part of the Pawirorejo family's property, exacerbated the tension. The Pawirorejo family believed that the city's land acquisition project, which also affected the Suroyo family, abused their land by replacing it. Conversely, the city government viewed the policy of acquiring land from the Pawirorejo Family to supplant a portion of the Suroyo Family's directly adjacent land not as a misuse, but rather as a logical and practical decision, given the limited financial resources available for land acquisition for the Pedaringan Cargo Terminal Development Project (Deputy Mayor of Dati II Surakarta, 1983d).

To prevent delays in the land acquisition for the Cargo Terminal Development Project, the Surakarta City Government promptly took decisive action by ordering the demolition of new structures on March 15, 1983 ((Wali Kota Madya Dati II Surakarta, 1983a). Despite this, the Pawirorejo Family continued their efforts to reclaim their former land and hinder the construction of houses by the Suroyo Family, with the support of the Surakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH). Suroyo began laying the foundation on the land where the Pawirorejo house once stood. Previously, on June 14, 1983, several altercations occurred, starting with Suroyo and his wife burning construction materials salvaged from the demolished Pawirorejo house. This escalated when Suroyo poured kerosene on Walidi and Sri Mulyani, the son-in-law and daughter-in-law of Pawirorejo (Pawirorejo's children). The actions by the Suroyo family were aimed at solidifying their claim over the land and preventing the possibility of the Pawirorejo family contesting it through legal proceedings (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Surakarta, 1983a; Pengadilan Negeri Surakarta, 1984). Subsequently, with the assistance of LBH Surakarta's legal counsel, Soemarno P. Wiryanto, the Pawirorejo Family filed a lawsuit in the Surakarta District Court on June 20, 1983, under case number 203/K/LBH/83.

The Final Resolution of the Pawirorejo Land Dispute

In Javanese philosophy, a vital life teaching says: "When building or occupying a residence, one should not simply take up space but must consider whether the land that sustains life is acquired justly and blesses its inhabitants." The Pawirorejo family understands this, striving to have their residence legally recognized by attempting various "legitimate" means. One such effort started on July 30, 1973, when they submitted their first letter, No. 001/7/1973, along with its attachments to the Mayor of Surakarta, requesting the formalization of their land ownership, which was dated March 18, 1972.

However, this effort bore no positive results. The denial of the Pawirorejo family's land application raised questions, as the reasons for the rejection remained unclear, even after the land became a subject of court dispute. Surprisingly, the Parto Pandi and Suroyo families submitted their applications concurrently with the Pawirorejo families. The Legal Aid Institute of Surakarta, 1983, and the Surakarta District Court, 1984, granted ownership status to both, transforming their lands into officially owned property while rejecting Pawirorejo's application (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Surakarta, 1983a; Pengadilan Negeri Surakarta, 1984). This suggests that the government and land institutions failed to provide fair and transparent land tenure security, often leaving unregistered land without clear legal protection (Obeng-Odoom & Haila, 2024).



Figure 4. The Pedaringan Cargo Terminal Condition in Jebres, Surakarta
Source: Wawasan, 1986

Based on the considerations of Governor Ismail of Central Java, who reviewed the Pawirorejo family case, the governor issued a letter on October 20, 1983, recommending two measures. First, all freed state land should remain under local government control, with its use aligned with development goals. Second, former privately owned lands affected by the Cargo Terminal Development Project should receive replacement land from other sources, not from reclaimed state land (Gubernur Dati I Jawa Tengah, 1983). The legal proceedings were contentious, with early mediation failing. During the trial, the Pawirorejo

family served as the plaintiff, the city government as defendant I, and the Suroyo family as defendants II and III. The city government vigorously defended its position, presenting supporting documents and three key witnesses: Drs. Abdulrachman, Hadi Walimin, and Sukarno. The Suroyo family, acting as Defendants II, provided documents such as a 1960 Land Registration Office Certificate and a Plot Designation Letter, both bearing Suroyo's name.

Meanwhile, on the plaintiff's side, the Pawirorejo family only has a photocopy of the Land Validation Application Letter Number 001/7/1973 in the name of Pawirorejo and Mulyono along with its attachments and a bundle of photocopies of the Ipeda Payment Order dated January 2, 1982. The Surakarta District Court issued a verdict letter on March 29, 1984, after a lengthy process, rejecting all the claims submitted by the plaintiff, the Pawirorejo Family, and fining them 29,175 rupiah in court costs. The Pawirorejo family attempted to appeal to the Semarang High Court, but the High Court's decision in Semarang, via Letter No. 342/1984/Pdt/P.T.Smg. dated March 13, 1985, upheld the Surakarta District Court's previous decision due to insufficient evidence (Pengadilan Tinggi Semarang, 1985).

With the issuance of the final verdict from the Semarang High Court, it marks the end of the Pawirorejo family's efforts to seek justice. The involvement of government officials in this dispute highlighted that state interests took precedence over public welfare (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Furthermore, the New Order's agrarian reform policies and dual legal system often triggered land conflicts, especially in projects requiring land clearance (Gold & Zuckerman, 2014). Until the completion and inauguration of the first phase of the Pedaringan Cargo Terminal construction on October 22, 1984, the issue of land plot allocation remained unresolved. This situation raises questions about the construction committee's readiness to resolve compensation for the local land acquisition. On the other hand, the development efforts continue with the provision of supporting spaces and other complementary facilities, including the arrangement of the terminal's interior areas. The Pedaringan Cargo Terminal completed its entire area by April 1986, as depicted in Figure 4.

CONCLUSIONS

The issue of urban land in Indonesia becomes a critical and complex problem. The government's consistent land regulation does not match the increasing use of urban land. The results of this study emphasize that the New Order government, along with local governments, did not prioritize the regulation of land use in urban areas, particularly concerning residential areas for city dwellers. As a result, numerous issues arose in urban areas, often turning land into a point of contention. The occurrence of a land dispute case involving the Pawirorejo Family and the city government in the context of the Cargo Terminal Development Project provides an important insight into the state of land affairs

in Surakarta, particularly during the 1970s to early 1980s. The existence of state-controlled lands in the city of Surakarta did not receive full attention. Thus, the weak oversight of the city government over those lands led to the emergence of land dispute conflicts.

The Pawirorejo family, as citizens, merely sought to preserve the land they occupied for years and secured legal recognition of their ownership rights. The Pawirorejo family was aware that the land they resided on was state land, so from the very beginning, they showed their faith by applying for it to change its status to private property. Throughout this process, the Pawirorejo family diligently paid land taxes and *Ipeda*. On the other hand, the city government maintained that any illegal occupation of state land was an unjustifiable act and a violation of the law. Contrary to expectations, the government's role as a protector and guide for the urban community did not materialize. The issue of urban land remains highly problematic due to this condition, as it revolves around prioritizing certain "interests" and marginalizing others.

The Pawirorejo Family's situation serves as a valuable lesson for other urban communities, emphasizing the importance of addressing land issues, particularly those related to residential areas, given the increasing use of land in the city for various development purposes. Meanwhile, the city government should exercise greater caution in managing various urban development projects, demonstrating the ability to prioritize effectively. Does a project prioritize the interests of the people, particularly the provision of a decent life for the poor, or does it solely focus on pursuing economic interests and benefiting certain parties or groups? The people understand and deem the pretext of "public interest" appropriate for use in the land acquisition process. Furthermore, the occurrence of land conflicts is inseparable from weak regulations and minimal oversight by the city government. Therefore, in addition to increasing oversight, there is a need for legal instruments that clearly regulate land use and ownership in urban areas, particularly state land in the city of Surakarta.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author expresses heartfelt thanks to Dr. Arif Akhyat, M.A., for his invaluable critiques and feedback in completing this work. The author also expresses gratitude to Ary Widhiatmo, S.H., M.H., and the entire staff at the Subsection of Legal Affairs at the Surakarta District Court Clerk's Office for their assistance in providing information and conducting case file research.

REFERENCES

- Akhyat, A. (2020). *Komunitas Pertanian di Kota Semarang, 1880-an-1940-an*. Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- Bachriadi, D., & Wiradi, G. (2011). *Enam Dekade Ketimpangan: Masalah Penguasaan Tanah di Indonesia*. Agrarian Resource Center, Bina Desa Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria.

- Basundoro, P. (2013). *Merebut Ruang Kota: Aksi Rakyat Miskin Kota Surabaya 1900- 1960 an.* Marjin Kiri.
- Bernas. (1992, June 19). *Masalah Pertanahan di Surakarta.*
- Bidang Pemerintahan Kotamadya Dati II Surakarta. (1983). *Surat Laporan Bidang Pemerintahan Kotamadya Surakarta yang Ditujukan Kepada Pembantu Gubernur KDH. Tingkat I Jawa Tengah, June 23, 1983.*
- Biro Pusat Statistik. (1961). *Sensus Penduduk 1961 (Population Census 1961) Republik Indonesia.*
- Brand, W. (1969). 'Some Statistical Data on Indonesia. *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde, Deel 125.*
- Census and Statistics Office of Surakarta Municipality Dati II. (1977). *Surakarta Dalam Angka Tahun 1974/1975.*
- Census and Statistics Office of Surakarta Municipality Dati II. (1978). *Surakarta Dalam Angka Tahun 1976/1977.*
- Census and Statistics Office of Surakarta Municipality Dati II. (1985). *Surakarta Dalam Angka Tahun 1984.*
- Colombijn, F. (1992). Dynamics and Dynamite: Minangkabau Urban Land Ownership in The 1990s. *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde, Vol. 148(¾ de Afl), 428–464.*
- Cornelius, W. A. (1976). The Impact of Cityward Migration on Urban Land and Housing Markets. In J. Walton & L. M. Masotti (Eds.), *The City in Comparative Perspective.* John Wiley.
- Deputy Mayor of Dati II Surakarta. (1983a). *Surat Perintah No. 593/I.1536 April 13, 1983.*
- Deputy Mayor of Dati II Surakarta. (1983b). *Surat Walikotaamadya Dati II Surakarta No. 590/3015 August 22, 1983.*
- Deputy Mayor of Dati II Surakarta. (1983c). *Surat Walikotaamadya Dati II Surakarta No. 593.7/I.2177 June 23, 1983.*
- Deputy Mayor of Dati II Surakarta (1983d). *Surat Walikotaamadya Dati II Surakarta No. 593/350/'83 July 8, 1983.*
- Evers, H. D. (1975). Changing Patterns of Minangkabau Landownership. *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde, Vol. 131(1ste Afl), 86–110.*
- Evers, H. D., & Korff, R. (2002). *Urbanisme di Asia Tenggara: Makna dan Kekuasaan Dalam Ruang-Ruang Sosial.* Yayasan Obor Indonesia.
- Firman, T. (2000). Rural to Urban Land Conversion in Indonesia During Boom and Bust Periods. *Land Use Policy, 17, 13–20.* [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0264-8377\(99\)00037-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0264-8377(99)00037-X).
- Firman, T. (2004). Major Issues in Indonesia's Urban Land Development. *Land Use Policy, 21(4), 347–355.* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2003.04.002>.
- Gold, M. E., & Zuckerman, R. B. (2014). Indonesian Land Rights and Development. *Columbia Journal of Asian Law, 1(28).*
- Gubernur Dati I Jawa Tengah. (1983). *Surat Gubernur Dati I Jawa Tengah No. 1011. I/10535, October 20, 1983.*
- Hardjosudarmo, S. (1970). *Masalah Tanah Di Indonesia (Suatu Studi Sekitar Pelaksanaan Landreform di Jawa dan Madura).* Bhratara.
- ITWILDA Provinsi Jawa Tengah. (1979). *Surat Kepala Inspektorat Wilayah Daerah Provinsi Dati I Jawa Tengah No. SK.001/69/480 Rhs., April 7, 1979.*
- Jellinek, L. (1991). *The Wheel of Fortune: The History of a Poor Community in Jakarta.* University of Hawaii Press.
- Kompas. (1967, September 29). *Surakarta: Razia Gelandangan.*

- Kompas. (1969, February 2). *Penduduk Ibu Kota Jakarta: Dari 6.000 orang di Tahun 1923 Hingga 4.5 Juta Lebih Dewasa Ini*.
- Kompas. (1973a, January 11). *Solo Ditertibkan Pasukan "Sunan Kuning."*
- Kompas. (1973b, March 30). *Solo Memerlukan 18.000 Rumah Sehat*.
- Kompas. (1977, April 28). *Penggunaan Tanah di Sala Mulai Ditertibkan*.
- Kompas. (1984a, October 19). *Kacau, Pemukiman Kembali Penduduk Solo Yang Tergusur*.
- Kompas. (1984b, October 24). *"Pedaringan" Solo Diresmikan*.
- Kuntowijoyo. (1995). *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah*. Yayasan Bentang Budaya.
- Larson, G. D. (1990). *Masa Menjelang Revolusi: Kraton dan Kehidupan Politik di Surakarta 1912-1942*. Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Leeuwen, M. Van, & Haar, G. Van Der. (2016). Theorizing The Land-Violent Conflict Nexus. *World Development*, 78, 94–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.10.011>.
- Lombard, M. (2012). *Land Tenure and Urban Conflict. A Review of The Literature* (8; Global Urban Research Center Working Paper).
- Lombard, M., & Rakodi, C. (2016). Urban land conflict in the Global South: Towards an analytical framework. *Urban Studies*, 13(53), 2683–2699. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098016659616>.
- Lucas, A. (1992). Land Disputes in Indonesia: Some Current Perspectives. *Indonesia*, 53, 79–92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3351117>.
- Lucas, A., & Warren, C. (2003). The State, The People, and Their Mediators: The Struggle over Agrarian Law Reform in Post-New Order Indonesia. *Indonesia*, 76, 87–126.
- Mardiansjah, F. H., Rahayu, P., & Rukmana, D. (2021). New Patterns of Urbanization in Indonesia: Emergence of Non-Statutory Towns and New Extended Urban Regions. *Environment and Urbanization ASIA*, 12(1), 11–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0975425321990384>.
- Meckelburg, R., & Wardana, A. (2024). The Political Economy of Land Acquisition for Development in The Public Interest: The Case of Indonesia. *Land Use Policy*, 137. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2023.107017>.
- Monkkonen, P. (2013). Urban Land-Use Regulations and Housing Markets in Developing Countries: Evidence From Indonesia on The Importance of Enforcement. *Land Use Policy*, 34, 255–264. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2013.03.015>.
- Murad, R. (1991). *Penyelesaian Sengketa Hukum Hak Atas Tanah*. Alumni.
- Nasution, A. B. (1992). Beberapa Aspek Hukum Dalam Masalah Pertanahan dan Pemukiman di Kota Besar. In E. Budihardjo (Ed.), *Sejumlah Masalah Pemukiman Kota*. Alumni.
- Nurhasim, M. (1997, July). Konflik Tanah di Jenggawah: Tipologi dan Pola Penyelesaiannya. *PRISMA*, 79–96.
- Obeng-Odoom, F., & Haila, A. (2024). The Power Of Uncertified Urban Land. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.13244>.
- Panudju, B. (1999). *Pengadaan Perumahan Kota Dengan Peran Serta Masyarakat Berpenghasilan Rendah*. Alumni.
- Rachman, N. F. (1999). *Petani & Penguasa: Dinamika Perjalanan Politik Agraria Indonesia*. Insist Press.
- Rahmawati, E., Rahayu, E. W. P., & Sukirno. (2023). State Actors in Agrarian Conflicts: A Judicial Review in Rule of Law Perspective. *Journal of Southeast Asian Human Rights*, 7(1), 276–298.

- Semarang High Court. (1985). *Surat Keputusan Pengadilan Tinggi Semarang No. 342/1984/Pdt/P.T.Smg. March 13, 1985.*
- Setiawan, U. (2008). *Dinamika Reforma Agraria Di Indonesia Setelah Orde Baru.* In S. M. P. Tjondronegoro & G. Wiradi (Eds.), *Dua Abad Penguasaan Tanah: Pola Penguasaan Tanah Pertanian Di Jawa Dari Masa Ke Masa.* Yayasan Obor Indonesia.
- Setiawati, N. A. (2011). *Dari Tanah Sultan Menuju Tanah Rakyat: Pola Pemilikan, Penguasaan, dan Sengketa Tanah di Kota Yogyakarta Setelah Reorganisasi Tanah 1917.* STPN Press.
- Sumardjono, M. S. W. (2010). *Tanah Untuk Kesejahteraan Rakyat.* Penerbit Bagian Hukum Agraria Fakultas Hukum UGM.
- Surakarta District Court. (1984). *Surat Keputusan Pengadilan Negeri Surakarta No. 473/1983/Pdt.G/PN.Ska March 29, 1984.*
- Surakarta Legal Aid Institute. (1983a). *Surat Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Surakarta No. 174/K/LBH/'83 May 16, 1983.*
- Surakarta Legal Aid Institute. (1983b). *Surat Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Surakarta No. 203/K/LBH/'83, June 20, 1983.*
- Wawasan. (1986, April 19). *Terminal Cargo Solo, Satu-Satunya di Indonesia.*
- Wehrmann, B. (2008). *Land Conflict: A Practical Guide To Dealing With Land Disputes.* Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit.
- Winarti, W., & Damayanti, C. (2017). *The Policy Of Swapraja Land Management In Surakarta During New Order Regime.* *European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 40.
- Zhu, J., & Simarmata, H. A. (2015). *Formal Land Rights Versus Informal Land Rights: Governance For Sustainable Urbanization in The Jakarta Metropolitan Region, Indonesia.* *Land Use Policy*, 43, 63–73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2014.10.016>.