



Sustainable Development: Case Study of Customary Law and Land Acquisition Rejection in Kekeran Village

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Abstract

Kekeran Village maintains a robust customary policy to protect its living space, specifically through the traditional prohibition of selling agricultural land to external parties. This study aims to analyze the strategies of the Kekeran indigenous community in navigating land acquisition pressures from investors and preserving their agrarian sovereignty. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were gathered through participatory observation, documentary studies of awig-awig regulations, and in-depth interviews with customary leaders. Max Weber's social action theory is applied to examine the motives underlying community resistance. The results indicate that the rejection of land acquisition is an integration of value-rational and traditional actions, where land is perceived as a spiritual identity transcending economic commodity value. Collective strategies identified include strengthening social bonds, tightening customary sanctions, and synchronizing local rules with government regulations. In conclusion, local sovereignty supported by adherence to customary law is the primary key to achieving inclusive sustainable development. The synergy between technocratic policies and local wisdom effectively minimizes land conversion for the welfare of future generations.

Keywords: land acquisition; sustainable development; social action; customary law; Kekeran Village

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INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable development is a program that aims significantly at community and environmental advancement. The concept of sustainable development itself was first introduced through the "Our Common Future" report by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987. In that report, the concept is discussed as meeting current demands without compromising the ability of future generations. Theoretically, this development discourse is often viewed as a universal narrative; however, in practice within the Global South, it frequently clashes with traditional social structures and local sovereignty. In the southern hemisphere, development often acts as a double-edged sword; on one hand, it offers economic growth, yet on the other, it threatens the existence of indigenous living spaces that possess spiritual ties to the land.

However, sustainable development currently faces major challenges in its implementation, particularly regarding the context of land acquisition by investors. In the present era, land acquisition is often conducted solely for the interests of infrastructure, agriculture, and industrial development. Many cases of land acquisition have caused social and environmental conflicts, especially in areas with adequate natural resources. In agrarian sociology, this phenomenon is viewed as part of capital accumulation expansion that often marginalizes the rights of local communities. The power imbalance between investors supported by state policies and indigenous peoples is a primary characteristic of agrarian conflicts in the Global South, where land is not merely an economic commodity but a collective memory and cultural identity.

The term for rice fields in Bali is *subak*, which refers to an organization consisting of administrators and rules (*awig-awig*). *Subak* holds a role related to agricultural irrigation and water management based on the Tri Hita Karana principle (Parmadi and Kusuma 2016). In reality, however, *subak* faces serious challenges to its existence. This is due to industrial development leading to land conversion (Pasaribu and Agusta 2018). Furthermore, the role of *subak* is increasingly pressured in its efforts to mitigate the widespread conversion of agricultural land in developing urban corridors (Dipayana and Juliarthana 2021). The pressure of modernization and massive tourism in Bali creates a deconstruction of the noble values of Tri Hita Karana, where the harmony between humans and nature begins to be shifted by the logic of profit. This crisis is not merely an ecological problem but a threat to the socio-religious system that has endured for centuries.

There is a village in Bali named Kekeran Village, an indigenous village with a unique custom of not selling agricultural land to outsiders, including investors. This habit has become part of the identity and culture of the Kekeran Village community. The practice of not selling agricultural land serves as a strategy for the village community to maintain their rights over the land and the natural resources they possess. However, over time, this habit has also become a major challenge from investors wishing to purchase agricultural land in Kekeran Village. The resistance carried out by the Kekeran community is a form of rational social action, where they consider the sustainability of future generations above temporary financial gain. This demonstrates the existence of a strong local defense mechanism amidst the onslaught of economic neoliberalism entering rural areas.

To address this, there is a need for the roles of traditional village heads and the government in educating the community through existing regulations. This aims to minimize sustainable land conversion and preserve the environment and the Kekeran Village community. Synergy between formal law and customary law is key to creating an inclusive development model, where local community participation is not merely an addition but a determinant of development policy direction.

Rejection of land acquisition is often carried out by indigenous communities when they feel their rights to land and natural resources have been violated due to existing traditions and customs practiced for generations. This has formed the village's customary legal rules through *awig-awig* regarding the prohibition of agricultural land conversion. The community in Kekeran Indigenous Village, Mengwi District, Badung Regency, Bali, possesses *awig-awig* or customary norms regarding the sale of land to individuals from outside the indigenous village. This rule was established in 1938 and is currently maintained by the Kekeran indigenous community. Despite several changes in traditional leadership, these provisions have been consistently applied. The steadfastness in maintaining these *awig-awig* is a manifestation of indigenous people's sovereignty over their living space. In the context of the sociology of law, this phenomenon shows that customary law has higher social effectiveness compared to state law when related to the protection of communal resources in the Global South.

The *Bendesa Adat* (Traditional Chief) of Kekeran, I Wayan Sukandia (2024), explained that customary rules governing land sales within the indigenous village area require every land buyer in the Kekeran area to become a *krama* or member. Automatically, new residents are invited to participate in religious activities at the Pura Kahyangan Tiga located in our village.

Furthermore, after becoming traditional *krama*, these new citizens must comply with the customary provisions applicable in Kekeran Indigenous Village. This mechanism of "forced social integration" for land buyers is a unique way for the indigenous village to conduct cultural assimilation, ensuring that newcomers do not damage the social order and remain respectful of existing local values.

Research conducted by Bilqis Sayyidatul Rosidah and Arief Sudrajat (2024) analyzed the mindset of the Padusan Village community. It discussed converting agricultural land into villas and showed that land conversion in Padusan Village was caused by various aspects, including economic drive from property developers, government support, and social and cultural transformation. Previous research, however, lacked a comprehensive analysis of the long-term impact of land conversion on the environment and the lives of the Padusan community. Meanwhile, it also did not offer many solutions to handle the problem of land conversion in Padusan Village. The gap in that research provides space for this study to observe how resistance in Kekeran Village is not just about economics, but about maintaining ecological sovereignty.

Mutiara's (2022) study titled “Implementation of Customary Law in Sustainable Infrastructure Development” shows that the implementation of infrastructure development in Indonesia faces challenges. Indonesia needs to strive to build infrastructure that suits the needs of indigenous peoples, considering cultural diversity and geographical conditions. This research examines the legal framework governing the use of indigenous lands and the role of law in the implementation of sustainable infrastructure development. The study uses a normative legal method by analyzing primary and secondary legal documents to answer the research problems. It was found that infrastructure development utilizing customary rights for the public interest can be carried out through land transfer by the government in collaboration with landowners. This is done according to the agreements reached between the indigenous community and the applicable laws and regulations. However, Mutiara's study tends to view customary law from a legal-formal perspective. This study will provide a sociological contribution by observing how collective action by the community becomes the main driving force for the effectiveness of customary law in the field.

Based on relevant previous research, the novelty of this research can be drawn to fill the shortcomings of those studies. First, it discusses the habit of not selling agricultural land. Second, it does not only focus on the issue but also on the rejection of land acquisition. Lastly,

this research explains that sustainable development can be achieved through participation and decision-making that considers community interests. This novelty positions Kekeran Village as a pilot model for other villages in the Global South in facing the threat of land exploitation by large investors.

Agricultural land conversion poses a significant threat to maintaining environmental sustainability and sustainable development in the region. Furthermore, long-term solutions are needed to balance the development of agricultural land that has high potential in a certain area. According to data from the official regional profile, there has been a reduction in the area of rice fields, where in 2018 it was 385 Ha/M2 and in 2021 it became 356 Ha/M2 (Kekeran Village 2021). These results show a decrease in the area of rice fields and can be a strong reason for the Kekeran Village community to suppress agricultural land conversion. These statistics show that despite strong customary rules, external pressure is still able to penetrate village boundaries, making this research urgent to formulate further strengthening strategies.

From the explanation above, this research is titled “Sustainable Development: A Case Study of Customary Law and Land Acquisition Rejection by Investors.” This research has a primary problem formulation focusing on: How is the strategy of the Kekeran Indigenous Village community in facing land acquisition by investors and maintaining their rights to land and natural resources? It is expected that the study conducted by the author can provide a deeper understanding of land acquisition on agricultural land to the readers. The sociological significance of this research lies in its ability to uncover the agency of local communities in navigating global interests for the survival of their community.

In accordance with the previous explanation, the impact of land acquisition by investors on sustainable development in Kekeran Village is still not well understood. Land acquisition can provide positive impacts, such as increased income and infrastructure development. However, land acquisition also provides negative impacts, such as the displacement of indigenous peoples and environmental damage. These negative impacts cause sustainable development in Kekeran Village to be disrupted. This development dilemma is a central issue in development studies in the Global South, where economic growth often stands in contrast to social justice.

Meanwhile, the existence of customary law as the basis for the Kekeran Village community to decide on the licensing and management of agricultural land must be maintained, but it also needs to be dynamic. Customary law that is dynamic can follow the evolving needs

of the community and remain strict in imposing sanctions. Without changing regulations, the community can still perform various efforts in maintaining land for economic needs and preserving nature. Theoretically, the dynamics of this customary law are in line with the sociological view of living law, where rules do not merely exist on paper but are continuously reproduced through daily social actions by the villagers.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research utilizes a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study type to understand the strategies implemented by the Kekeran Indigenous Village community in facing land acquisition by investors and protecting their rights to land and natural resources. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides a deeper and more complete understanding of the phenomenon under study through the perspective of social actors in the field.

This research was conducted in Kekeran Village, Mengwi District, Badung Regency, Bali Province. The researcher chose this location because the village has a unique characteristic in maintaining land rights and natural resources through the strength of customary law which remains highly authentic. This study was carried out in two stages using data collection methods.

Data collection was conducted through observation and literature review. Observation aimed to obtain basic data regarding community habits in rejecting agricultural land sales and land acquisition by investors in Kekeran Village. The observation gathered information regarding the daily activities of the Kekeran Village community, including farming activities and social interactions. Furthermore, the strategies carried out by the Kekeran Indigenous Village community in overcoming land acquisition and maintaining land rights, as well as their natural resources, were also evaluated. Participatory observation was conducted passively to capture social dynamics without disturbing the local cultural activities. This passive stance did not mean the researcher remained a distant outside spectator; rather, she was physically present within the community's everyday routines which allowed her to witness farming practices and social exchanges as they naturally occurred in the field. Such positioning reflects a recognised continuum in participant observation research, ranging from passive to active involvement, in which the researcher's degree of engagement may vary depending on the nature of the activity being observed (Rossetti 2024). Within this continuum, the researcher adopted a passive position by refraining from directing or influencing the community's activities, while still

remaining embedded in the field long enough to capture authentic social dynamics related to the community's land protection efforts.

A literature study was conducted to obtain secondary data regarding the background and subjects studied. This activity aimed to collect information about Kekeran Village, including its history, culture, and community habits. The documents analyzed included village archives, customary regulations (*awig-awig*), and land use statistical data from the official Kekeran Village website. The instruments or tools used were field notes and photo documentation. Field notes served as the results of observations, while photo documentation was used to document local environmental conditions.

The sampling procedure in this research used a purposive sampling technique, where informants were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. There were five respondents or informants involved in this research. First, two people from the Kekeran Indigenous Village community who have experience in facing land acquisition. Second, two community figures (including the *Bendesa Adat*) who understand the community's strategy in overcoming land acquisition by investors. Third, one village official who understands government policy regarding land acquisition. The selection of respondents or informants considered how important they are or individuals perceived to have a good understanding of the local place and customary rules.

The collected data were then analyzed using interactive model qualitative data analysis techniques, which include the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction was conducted to sort information relevant to the strategy of rejecting land acquisition, then presented in the form of a descriptive narrative to see patterns of social action in the community. The validity of the data in this study was obtained through triangulation and cross-checking. Triangulation was conducted by comparing information from various sources and obtaining data relevant to the needs of this research. Meanwhile, cross-checking aimed to ensure that the information obtained was accurate and reliable, as well as to ensure the validity of the data for scientific accountability.

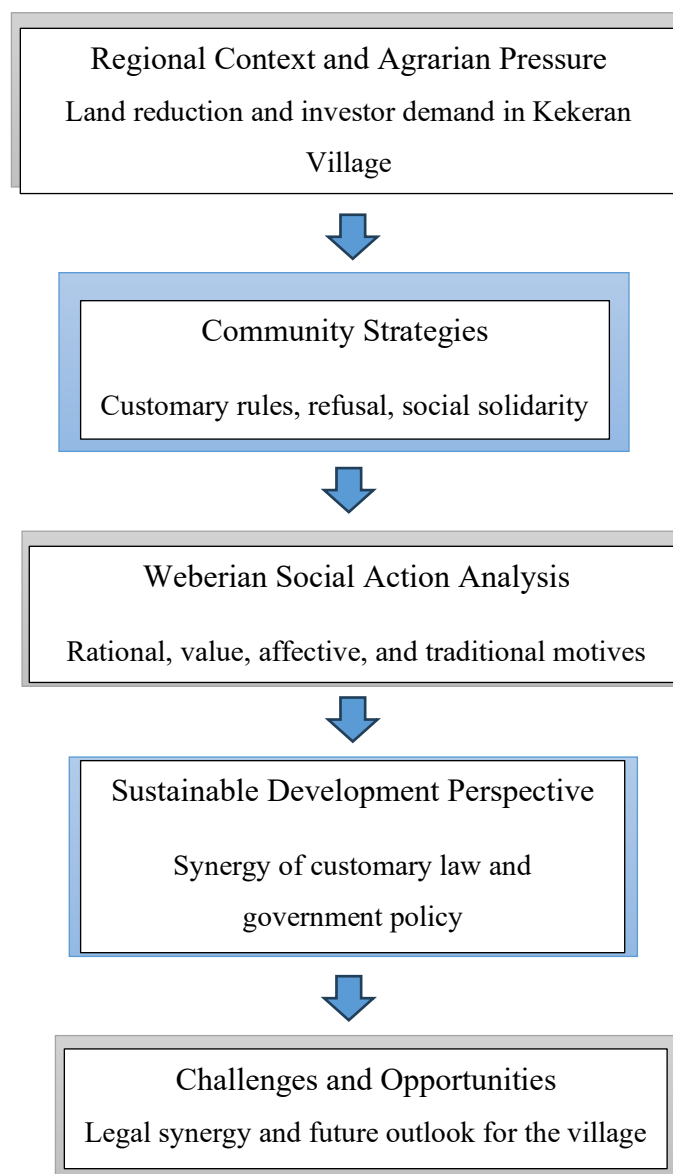
The research timeframe lasted for six months, covering background preparation, topic determination, primary and secondary information collection, information analysis, and research report writing. The preparation of the background and research topic was held for two months. Primary and secondary data collection was conducted for two months through observation and literature study. After that, data analysis lasted for about one month. Finally,

the writing of the research report was completed in one month, which will be the core discussion in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section traces how agrarian pressure in Kekeran Village is met with community resistance, interpreted through Weberian social theory, and ultimately reshaped into a working model of sustainable development. Figure 1 outlines this progression before each stage is examined in turn.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Author (2025)

Regional Context Analysis and Agrarian Pressure

Kekeran Village is a village located in the Mengwi District, Badung Regency area, Bali. This village area covers approximately 4.05 km² with a rice field area of 356 Ha/M² and a population of around 5,000 people. However, in 2018, there was a reduction in rice field land covering 385 Ha/M², so there needs to be an emphasis on agricultural land conversion so that its authenticity is maintained. This phenomenon of conversion is not unique to Kekeran; as noted by Arsini and Surata (2021), the legal consequences of converting sustainable food agricultural land significantly impact land ownership and tenure patterns. This decline in land area indicates significant spatial pressure due to the expansion of urban and tourism areas around Badung Regency which has begun to penetrate into agrarian buffer zones.

Kekeran Village has geographical conditions with a beautiful and unique rice field landscape topography. This condition makes Kekeran Village have great potential for agricultural and tourism development. The socio-economic status of the community is relatively stable, with the majority of the population working as farmers and small entrepreneurs. However, this village still faces several challenges, such as the purchase of agricultural land by investors and the desire to acquire the land. The tension between tourism capitalism and land conservation creates a risk of marginalization for local farmers, particularly women farmers who often lead the fight for land rights amidst acquisition pressures (Astuti 2021).

Figure 2. Map of Kekeran Village



Source: Kekeran Village Website (2025)

Kekeran Village also has a long history of agricultural land ownership and use. Agricultural land in this village has been used for generations. The majority of its residents have agricultural land used for planting crops, such as rice, vegetables, and other plants. The Kekeran Village community has a strong social structure, resulting in very close relationships with family and neighbors. The culture of this village community is also very rich with various traditions and ceremonies that are still maintained today. This bond is a manifestation of social solidarity which becomes the basic capital in maintaining living space from external intervention.

Community Strategies in Facing Land Acquisition

The community in Kekeran Village has several strategies in facing land acquisition by investors. The first strategy is to maintain existing customary rules, namely not selling agricultural land to investors. This is supported by the Province of Bali (2019) in Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2019, which grants customary villages the authority to manage their own territory and traditional legal systems. Customary law in Indonesia plays a foundational role in the development of national agrarian law, serving as a protective barrier for local rights (Hartana and Darmayanti 2020).

The community still needs to maintain customary rules to indicate that in the region, there are still rules that need to be obeyed. Often, conflicts related to land sales cause negative impacts due to the lack of community involvement in maintaining their rights. This step can bring positive impacts if implemented according to applicable customary regulations and not opposing community rights. The strengthening of *awig-awig* (customary rules) here acts as a legal shield that provides certainty for the community in resisting global economic pressure.

The second strategy is to refuse investment offers from investors. If obeying the applicable customary rules, the village community must be sure of the refusal and the results of the deliberation. It cannot be denied that sometimes the offers provided by investors will be very realistic, but there are considerations from the community, especially related to maintaining environmental sustainability. What is feared is environmental damage that will be caused and reducing the traditions of Kekeran Village as a traditional village that still maintains environmental sustainability. This environmental awareness shows that the ecological and spiritual value of the land for the Kekeran community far exceeds the economic commodity value offered by investors.

The third strategy is to strengthen social ties, so that the village community can unite in facing pressure from investors. This is an important step, where social disunity often occurs in the community, making them tested by offers provided by investors. If social ties are strong, it will be easy for the community to refuse investor offers. The more investors interested in the Kekeran Village area, the heavier the challenges that need to be faced by the local community in fighting for land in their territory. Providing sanctions for those who violate customary rules is also an effort to increase community discipline. This collective solidarity prevents "gaps" in the village defense system that investors usually exploit to perform personal approaches to vulnerable individuals.

Customary law also coexists with agrarian law which regulates land ownership rights, including communal land (*tanah ulayat*). According to customary law, communal land refers to land owned collectively, especially in terms of agriculture. This causes frequent loss of land rights due to double ownership with other interests, such as infrastructure development, investment, and industrial growth (Ilyasa 2020). Legal uncertainty leads to low protection for the rights of indigenous communities, and a lack of understanding and respect for customary law becomes the main reason for land disputes in several locations in Indonesia. This situation requires targeted policies that understand communal rights in realizing justice and welfare for indigenous peoples.

Max Weber's Social Action Theory Analysis

Max Weber's theory can be used to understand the rejection of land acquisition by identifying the types of social actions that underlie it. Rejection can be seen as a social action, thus having meaning for the individuals involved and directed toward the party performing the acquisition. This action can be categorized based on its motives, namely instrumental rational, value, affective, or traditional (Weber 1946). Rejection can be caused by rational considerations, such as inadequate prices, potential negative impacts on livelihoods, or lack of clarity in the acquisition process. In this case, rejection is a rational action to achieve a goal (maintaining land rights). Rejection can be based on deeply held values, such as kinship values, tradition, or justice. This action can be considered a rational action to maintain those values.

Rejection can be caused by emotions, such as a sense of injustice, insecurity, or loss of identity. This action can be spontaneous and not always rational. Rejection can be based on habits and traditions that have existed in the community. Weber's construction of social theory emphasizes that human behavior contains subjective meanings influenced by the actions of

others (Albrow 1990). For example, the rejection of land acquisition by farmers because they feel the offered price is too low (instrumental rational), or because they feel that the land is the main source of livelihood and must be maintained (value rational). Rejection can also be based on emotions because they feel the land is part of their identity (affective), so rejection is part of a tradition that has been passed down for generations in their family (traditional). These four types of action are intertwined in Kekeran Village, where rejection is not just about material things, but a form of comprehensive defense of existential life.

Max Weber's social action theory explains that resistance to land procurement is complex and influenced by various factors, including logic, morals, emotions, and tradition. Understanding the reasons behind the rejection facilitates more effective communication for those performing land procurement and helps in identifying solutions that suit the needs and aspirations of the community. Weber argued that rationality involves replacing irrational behavior with rational action. This process can occur through education, which allows individuals involved in educational activities to acquire a more logical mindset. Max Weber's rationality theory has a significant influence on sustainable development, especially in the planning and implementation of development initiatives. Weber emphasizes the importance of formal and means-end rationality in organizations, which can be used to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of development. However, other aspects must juga be considered, such as value rationality and affective action, so that sustainable development does not only focus on technical efficiency but juga considers social and cultural values.

Weber emphasizes the importance of rationally structured organizations, so rules must be clear, hierarchy must be defined, and the separation of tasks must be strict. The application of formal rationality in development can increase efficiency, facilitate coordination, and ensure the implementation of development projects according to plan. However, excessive focus on formal rationality can ignore other important aspects, such as community participation and local needs. Therefore, the Kekeran Village community balances the formal rationality of bureaucracy with the strength of their traditional value rationality. This tension becomes more analytically significant when examined through the lens of legal-rational bureaucracy since land conflicts frequently originate not from community resistance alone but from structural weaknesses within the formal administrative system itself. When a land registration system fails to guarantee the certainty of recorded rights, as commonly found in systems that do not fully adopt positive publication principles, the resulting ambiguity directly undermines the very

legitimacy that formal rationality is meant to provide (Wahid, Handayani, and 2025). In such conditions, the community's reliance on value rationality and tradition functions not merely as an alternative to bureaucratic order but as a compensatory response to the state's incomplete rational-legal authority over land. This interaction illustrates that rejection in Kekeran Village cannot be reduced to a simple clash between modern and traditional logics rather, it reflects how weaknesses in formal-legal rationality create space for value-based and traditional actions to reassert themselves as the community's primary mechanism for securing land certainty.

In addition to formal rationality, Weber highlighted the importance of value rationality, which relates to actions driven by moral and ethical principles. Value rationality is crucial in sustainable development to ensure that these initiatives are not only economically beneficial but also socially and ecologically just and sustainable. Max Weber's rationality theory provides an important framework for sustainable development. By understanding formal rationality, value rationality, and affective action, we can plan and implement development projects that are more effective, efficient, and socially and environmentally sustainable. Max Weber's rationality theory, in the context of land acquisition rejection, can be interpreted as an action based on rational considerations of gains and losses, as well as considering the values and traditions inherent in the land. This rejection can be an expression of value rationality (*wertrational*), where individuals consider certain values related to the land, such as historical, cultural, or spiritual values (Weber 2019).

Weber distinguishes between rational actions based on calculations of gain (*instrumental rationality*) and values (*wertrational*). In the context of land acquisition, landowners may reject compensation offers because they assess that the financial gain offered is not proportional to the loss, both economically and in those values. The act of rejection can also be interpreted as an expression of value rationality. Landowners might consider values such as historical, cultural, or spiritual values related to the land. This rejection can be driven by a desire to maintain family heritage or traditional values attached to the land.

Habit of Not Selling Agricultural Land in Kekeran Village and the Influence of Social Solidarity According to Max Weber's Theory

Max Weber's social action theory states that both visible and hidden behavior contains subjective meaning, which is influenced by the actions of others. This philosophy explicitly focuses on action and behavior. This research uses a hypothesis in line with the social definition paradigm. The social definition paradigm does not start with an objective viewpoint of social

reality, such as macro structures and social institutions existing in society; rather, this paradigm starts with the human cognitive process.

According to Max Weber's social action theory, the habit of not selling land can be analyzed in several types of social action. These types of action can include value rational action (*wertrational action*), affective action (*affectual action*), and traditional action (*traditional action*), depending on the motives and meanings given by the individual or group.

The habit of not selling land, especially in the context of communities that still hold traditional values, can be analyzed through the lens of Max Weber's rationality. Weber identified several types of rationality and this habit relates to substantive rationality, affective rationality, or even actions based on tradition. In general, the habit of not selling land can be seen as a manifestation of various types of rationality identified by Weber, thus influenced by substantive values, emotions, and local traditions. A deep understanding of the local context is needed to further analyze this action and understand the meaning behind it. This proves that social reality in Kekeran Village is consciously constructed by the actors within it to achieve collective goals.

In the formation and definition of meaning in social interaction, individuals are seen as autonomous agents yet responsible for their actions. This shows that although behaving or interacting, individuals are influenced by social institutions and conventions, although this paradigm emphasizes more on individuals and their activities. If the habit of not selling land is based on tradition or long-standing habits in the community, for example, because there are unwritten rules or norms prohibiting the sale of land, it can be categorized as a traditional action. People might not sell land because they feel that the action violates traditions or habits that have existed for a long time. The act of not selling land can also be caused by rational considerations, for example, land is considered a valuable asset or there are long-term plans to use it.

Empirical evidence from rural sociology research supports this interpretation of land as more than a mere economic asset. Using nationally representative household panel data and ordered probit regression models, a study among Chinese rural households found that transferring land out significantly lowered the living satisfaction of middle-aged farmers and this negative effect intensified among households with a higher share of agricultural income, weaker social security coverage, and fewer adult children able to provide alternative support (Zhou et al. 2024). These findings indicate that the psychological cost of parting with land

increases precisely when land continues to serve as a primary source of security and meaning for the household, a pattern that closely mirrors the functional and emotional attachment observed among the Kekeran Village community. Such quantitative evidence reinforces the argument that reluctance to sell agricultural land is not incidental but reflects a measurable social mechanism in which land ownership sustains both livelihood security and subjective well-being.

Business is a subjective human aspiration, which is essential for sustaining family life in rural areas. This activity is carried out based on an evaluation of the means and ends of doing business, as well as the allocation of harvest income, which has subjective meaning for the community and influences the behavior of others. The activities of others indicate that there is no tradition of selling agricultural land. This is in line with the concept of social action, which refers to individual behavior that has subjective meaning for them and is directed at the actions of others. Actors aspire to achieve goals or are driven by ambition. Social reality is based on human subjective interpretations and evaluations. Weber sees it as the root of human drives and social behavior. According to Weber, the world is realized through these behaviors. Individuals perform actions based on their decisions to fulfill their aspirations or desires. After setting goals, they evaluate conditions and then choose a course of action. Weber said that the role of sociologists is to explain behavior based on its subjective meaning.

Weber argued that action acquires a social dimension only when the subjective meaning of behavior encourages people to show a constant level of consistency. Individual agents direct their behavior toward certain norms or expectations that manifest as shared practices. Environmental preservation is very important, because the area around settlements remains aesthetic and its cultural traditions are maintained. This collective action gives birth to a "spatial identity" where the community feels a moral obligation to maintain their village's landscape.

Sustainable Development Perspective in the Context of Kekeran Village

Max Weber's social action theory explains land acquisition strategy as a social activity filled with subjective meanings and different goals. These policies often involve interaction between the government, landowners, and the community, and therefore can be analyzed through Weber's four categories of social action: instrumental rational action, value rational action, emotional action, and traditional action.

Land acquisition policies are often based on clear rational goals, such as infrastructure development or economic development. Landowners see the acquisition process as an instrumental rational action, namely an action taken to achieve certain goals, such as compensation through efficient and effective means. Land acquisition policies can also be influenced by certain values held by the government or society, such as values of justice, sustainability, or public interest. This action is based on values considered important and can influence how the government carries out policies or how landowners respond.

Even using Max Weber's social action theory, we can understand land acquisition policy as a complex and multidimensional social action. This action is influenced by various factors, including rational goals, values, emotions, and traditions. Understanding these social actions is important for designing land acquisition policies that are more effective, fair, and sustainable.

Max Weber's rationality theory can be used to understand land acquisition policies, particularly regarding how those actions are regulated and executed. Weber emphasized that human actions, including in the context of public policy, are often driven by instrumental and value rationality. Value-rational policies also consider wider public interests, not just the interests of certain groups or individuals. In land acquisition policies, conflicts often occur between instrumental rationality and value rationality. For example, in the case of infrastructure development, priority toward efficiency and cost can conflict with the desire to maintain justice and property rights. This theory provides a useful framework for understanding how land acquisition policies are regulated and executed. There is an effort to understand various types of rationality and how they interact; we can analyze land acquisition policies more comprehensively and design fairer and more effective policies.

Sustainable development in Kekeran Village must consider several aspek, termasuk ekonomi, sosial, dan lingkungan. Meanwhile, development must ensure that economic activities do not damage the environment and sacrifice the social interests of the community. This can be achieved by the development of economic activities focused on local resources and not damaging the environment. Besides economics, it is juga necessary to look at social-cultural aspek, where community participation is juga a supporting factor in development success (Bakti and Syafei 2020; Loladestyn and Habibah 2025). Sustainable development planning at the local level requires a multi-dimensional approach that considers social,

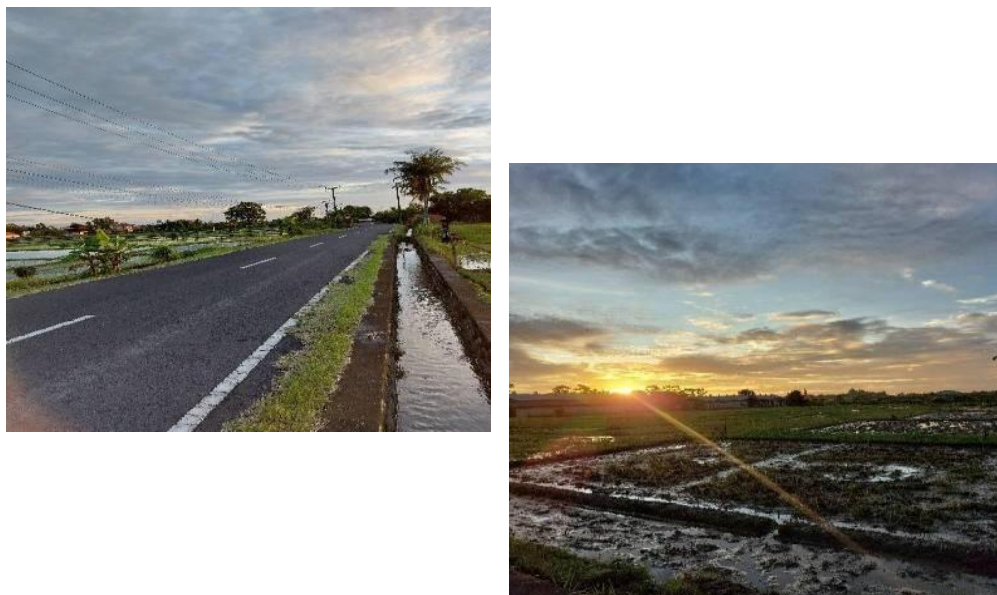
economic, and environmental aspects simultaneously (Keraf, Haryono, and Wanusmawatie 2022).

Bonds in Kekeran Village must continue to be maintained seeing that in recent years, more and more investors have put pressure on the community to want to sell their land or land acquisition. If the community obeys strict customary rules regarding land sales, they will eventually reject investor offers. The presence of rogue investors who will provide offers makes the community increasingly trapped and lacking support. Even to maintain bonds, there needs to be routine activities or discussions regarding investors who come to provide offers to them and the results are deliberated so as not to cause conflict. This deliberation is a concrete form of grassroots democracy that strengthens the community's bargaining power. This concern is consistent with broader findings on tourism-driven land conversion in Bali, where spatial policy, tourism expansion, and agricultural infrastructure have been identified as the most influential drivers of farmland conversion, with government agencies and investors as the dominant actors shaping land-use outcomes (Mahaendrayasa et al. 2024). Within this wider pattern, the customary deliberation practiced in Kekeran Village functions as a grassroots mechanism to protect indigenous land rights and preserve local food-producing capacity against the pressure of external investment.

Government policy plays a very important role in the protection of agricultural land in Kekeran Village. The government must create policies that support the protection of agricultural land and inhibit land acquisition by investors. The policies need adjustment with the customary law applicable in Kekeran Village to minimize conflict. Sustainable development in Kekeran Village must consider implications for food security and village sustainability. Not only government policies need to be considered, but the existence of customary law must juga be obeyed by the village community. This is because it suppresses the agricultural land conversion currently existing in Kekeran Village. Previously, land conversion had been carried out to fulfill community needs and made it uncontrollable, so there needs to be an emphasis to provide green open space. So that there is still agricultural land that can be utilized for the economic needs of the community whose profession is farming. The role of the *subak* organization is critical here, as it reduces land conversion through the implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* principles. Customary rules are juga tightened with restrictions on buying and selling land with residents outside the region. Selanjutnya, strict rules in buying and selling must juga be known by the village leader.

Meanwhile, in sustainable development, there needs to be consideration in various aspects from the government. The goal is to continue implementing the applicable customary rules, and tightening them will have an impact on the community to further obey the rules. If land conversion is still needed for community needs and for mutual convenience, it will certainly have a positive impact. Emphasis on rejecting outside investors is also a right step as an effort to minimize land conversion, thus aiming to harm local business rotation and the environment. Supporting facilities for the community so they can still carry out planting without worrying about the water which is starting to decrease as a result of development occurring upstream of the river. The synergy between the government's technocratic policies and local customary wisdom is the main key to inclusive sustainable development.

Figure 3. Overview of Agricultural Land in Kekeran Village



Source: Author (2025)

Challenges and Opportunities for the Kekeran Village Community

The Kekeran Village community faces several challenges and opportunities in maintaining agricultural land ownership and developing sustainable development. For example, pressure from investors and changes in government policy. However, the community still has opportunities in the field of sustainable economy without selling land, such as holding economic activities that utilize local resources and do not damage the environment. The community and government play a very important role in supporting village sustainability. The community must be involved in the decision-making stage and the government must create policies that support the protection of agricultural land and inhibit land acquisition by investors.

The existence of the organization (*subak*) in overcoming conversion is very important because it helps increase the sense of kinship and solidarity for the community working as farmers, as well as maintaining their land.

“Considering the provisions contained in Article 1 and Article 2 regarding the implementation of communal rights (*hak ulayat*), as well as similar rights from indigenous legal communities. As long as it still exists in reality, this must be done in such a way that it is in line with national and state interests, which are based on national unity and must not conflict with higher laws and regulations.”

The regulation above explains that the rights of local communities, and similar ones owned by indigenous peoples are masih recognized, but communal rights are sering requested for spesifik recognition. This is to avoid conflict and fraudulent practices in land buying and selling. The existence of the Republic of Indonesia (1960), commonly known as the UUPA (Basic Agrarian Law), can juga make customary law the basis for national agricultural law and its existence is recognized in development. This legal synergy is necessary to address challenges in implementing agrarian and customary laws, especially in areas facing intense investment pressure (Harahap and Fahririn 2024). Ultimately, land culture and food security are inseparable from the legal protection of indigenous communities (Utomo 2019).

Prevention of the transfer of agricultural land use to non-agricultural land is juga regulated in the Regency of Badung (2013), specifically the Regional Regulation Number 26 of 2013 regarding the Badung Regency Spatial Plan for 2013 to 2033 in Article 81 Paragraph (2) letter d that:

“Prevention and regulation of the conversion of agricultural land with irrigation, so that it is established as sustainable food agricultural land for integrated cultivation activities, except for public infrastructure and has been determined in this Regional Regulation.”

The explanation of the article is that there needs to be prevention and discussion in the change of agricultural land function. Land rights are also increasingly considered, especially ownership rights which must be officially registered and not necessarily everyone has a land certificate if the land owned is hereditary land. Therefore, there needs to be cooperation with the government in maintaining agricultural land according to its function. This formal legal force must be a partner for the customary legal force so that Kekeran Village remains a food barn and cultural guardian amidst the onslaught of modernity.

CONCLUSION

The research results indicate that the rapid pace of economic and tourism development in Badung Regency has had a negative impact on the reduction of agricultural land area in Kekeran Village through massive land conversion. This phenomenon poses a real threat to food security, environmental sustainability, and the welfare of the farming community that depends on their land. This study concludes that the Kekeran Village community has successfully stemmed the tide of land acquisition through the integration of social actions that are value-rational and traditional in nature, where customary rules (*awig-awig*) serve as highly effective legal and moral instruments. These findings align with the research objectives, proving that the strength of social solidarity and adherence to customary law can counterbalance the pressure of formal rationality from investors. The synergy between the protection of sustainable food agricultural land in government regulations and the tightening of customary rules regarding land transactions is the main key to maintaining agrarian sovereignty in rural areas.

Based on the conceptual implications of this research, it is suggested that the Badung Regency Government strengthen the synchronization of spatial planning policies by providing more specific legal recognition of communal rights and local wisdom at the customary village level. Furthermore, future research should further explore the effectiveness of digitalizing customary village land administration to prevent land manipulation practices by third parties. The Kekeran Village community is also recommended to continue developing creative economic models based on agro-tourism that do not change land functions as an adaptation strategy against the pressures of the global tourism economy.

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