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LAND UTILIZATION AFTER LAND OCCUPATION: A CASE OF PEASANT MOVEMENT IN NANGGUNG DISTRICT, BOGOR REGENCY, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

One of the key challenges faced by the peasant movement after occupying disputed land is optimizing its utilization to support sustainable livelihoods. This study investigates land utilization practices following the occupation of abandoned plantation concession in Nanggung District, Bogor Regency. Of the 37 occupied land blocks across three villages in the district, this study focuses on a single block located in Cisarua Village. Employing a mixed-method approach, quantitative data were collected through a census survey of 47 farming households managing land in the selected block, complemented by qualitative data from in-depth interviews and field observations. The findings reveal diverse land utilization orientations—ranging from commercial and subsistence farming to non-agricultural activities—and substantial variations in commodity production and farm income. This diversity is primarily shaped by two factors: (1) individual respondent characteristics, notably farming experience, and (2) household characteristics, particularly landholding size. These findings underscore the importance of improving post-occupation support systems to ensure that land reform leads to long-term socio-economic benefits for peasant households.

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INTRODUCTION

The plantation sector remains the largest contributor to agrarian conflicts in Indonesia. According to the Consortium for Agrarian Reform (2024), agrarian conflicts in this sector accounted for 108 cases (44%) out of 241 total cases in 2023, impacting 37,553 households across 124,545 hectares of land under dispute. This marks an increase from 99 cases in 2022. Unsurprisingly, the plantation sector continues to dominate peasant movements advocating for agrarian justice throughout Indonesia (Shohibuddin & Bahri, 2019). These conflicts often stem from

uneven distribution of land, encroachments, and ambiguous tenure rights, leaving marginalized farmers vulnerable to exclusion and displacement.

Peasant movements pursuing agrarian justice manifest through various forms of collective action (Fabusoro, 2009). These include efforts to secure access to land and other natural resources, or to protect such access from threats of expropriation or ecological degradation. The former is known as the "struggle for access," while the latter is referred to as the "struggle against exclusion" (Shohibuddin, 2020). These two types of agrarian struggles are intrinsically linked, as farming households face two dialectic forces, namely the dialectic between powers of access (Ribot & Peluso, 2003) and powers of exclusion (Hall et al., 2011).

Regarding "struggle for access", most research on peasant movements has primarily focused on mobilization and strategies to secure access to lands under dispute, including through occupation movement (Setiawan et al., 2022). However, an equally critical issue remains underexplored: how occupied land is utilized productively by farming households to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Productive and profitable land use is essential to prevent piecemeal, distress land sales (Li, 2010; Shohibuddin, 2019) and to ensure that land ownership remains with farmers—a core aspect of the "struggle against exclusion." Therefore, studying land use and farm operations following land reform or occupation is essential for understanding agricultural productivity, social equity, and environmental sustainability (Susilowati & Maulana, 2012). These studies are deeply connected to the historical struggle of peasants for agrarian reform, which often arose as a collective response to economic inequalities and social injustices. Over time, these struggles have played a pivotal role in shaping land ownership patterns and agricultural practices globally (Adamopoulos & Restuccia, 2019; Restuccia, 2020).

Existing studies have highlighted the organizational dynamics of peasant movement and their alliances with supporting actors in negotiating the resolution of agrarian conflicts. These studies, however, largely focus on the pre-occupation phase, leaving issues about post-occupation land use unanswered. For instance, Susanto (2015) examined the history of agrarian conflicts and types of peasant mobilization in the land occupation movement. He identifies that effective local leadership and alliances with broader actors are key factors in the successful land occupation movement in the Pasundan highlands. Similarly, Maulana & Shohibuddin (2022 & 2024) demonstrated that a combination of internal solidarity, external alliances, and the ability to leverage political opportunities affects the nature of interaction between peasant movements and state actors in the agrarian reform movements. This zone of interaction, in turn, will influence the responses of reformist actors within state institutions when faced with demands for agrarian reform by the peasant movement concerning disputed plantation lands previously under the Right to Cultivate (Hak Guna Usaha/HGU) permit.

Despite the significant contributions of these studies, their focus has mainly been on the organizational and solidarity dynamics of peasant movements and their negotiation strategies with the government during conflict resolution. Little attention has been paid to what happens after the land is successfully occupied by peasants, specifically how the land is utilized, for what purposes, and what contribution it makes to household income. This is crucial for understanding why occupied land is often subject to piecemeal land sales and its accumulation among rural elites and

wealthy farmers (see Moyo, 2011; Sirait, 2017 and its introductory chapter by Shohibuddin, 2017).

Post-occupation land use is critical not only for the livelihoods of farmers but also for the broader goals of agrarian reform, such as reducing rural poverty and achieving sustainable land development (Home, 2022). Effective utilization of occupied land requires addressing multiple dimensions, including orientation of land utilization, commodity selection, and farm income generation (Supadi, 2008; Suratiyah, 2015). Failure to do so can result in land abandonment, reduced agricultural output, and the erosion of the social and economic gains achieved through land reform.

Building on the preceding discussion, this study investigates land utilization practices following the 2010 occupation of the abandoned HGU plantation concession previously held by PT Hevea Indonesia (Hevindo). The occupation was led by the peasant organization Aliansi Masyarakat Nanggung Transformatif (AMANAT), which mobilized local farmers to reclaim and cultivate the land after the expiration of the HGU license. Farming households acquired individual plots of varying sizes, determined by prior land control, participation in the land struggle, and internal negotiated arrangements within the movement.

As a result of AMANAT's sustained advocacy, the Regent of Bogor formally endorsed land redistribution efforts by submitting an official letter to the National Land Agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional, BPN). Currently, AMANAT continues to push for collective ownership through a joint land title certificate (Sertifikat Hak Milik Bersama, SHMB) for each designated unit referred to as a "block". In this context, a block refers to an informal socio-spatial unit established by AMANAT to organize land claims and land consolidation. Unlike formal administrative units such as villages (desa) or hamlets (dusun), blocks serve as internal frameworks for managing collective land. In total, AMANAT has delineated 37 such blocks across three villages in Nanggung District (16 blocks in Cisarua, 8 in Curug Bitung, and 13 in Nanggung)—all situated within the former HGU area of PT Hevindo (Shohibuddin et al., forthcoming).

Specifically, this study examines the extent to which farming households have productively utilized the occupied land. Land utilization encompasses both agricultural and non-agricultural uses, each of which influences the added value generated. Agricultural utilization, as defined by Shinta (2011), involves utilizing production factors such as land, labor, capital, and skills to produce agricultural products for either subsistence or commercial farming. By analyzing agricultural utilization on occupied land, this study aims to evaluate land utilization orientation, quantities of commodity production, and net income generated from the utilization of occupied land.

Individual characteristics, such as farming experience, play a critical role in farming performance. Hapsari et al., (2019) highlight that farmers' knowledge, motivation, and expertise, shaped by their experience, significantly influence the productivity of their land. Additionally, household characteristics, particularly the size of cultivated land, are essential determinants of farming performance (Passel et al., 2006; Wiradi, 2019; Anigbogu et al., 2015).

This study hypothesizes that land use practices in the selected block are influenced by both individual and household characteristics of the farming

households. Specifically, it assumes that greater farming experience and larger landholdings are associated with more intensive and diversified land utilization, including a broader range of cultivated crops and higher levels of agricultural output. Accordingly, this study sets out to: (1) assess the current conditions of land utilization, including land-use orientation, types of commodity production, and levels of farm income; (2) analyze individual characteristics, particularly farming experience, and household characteristics, especially the size of occupied land; and (3) examine the extent to which these characteristics are correlated with patterns of land utilization in the selected block.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Location

This study was conducted in the former concession of the PT Hevindo plantation in Nanggung District, Bogor Regency, which peasant members of the AMANAT have occupied. The period of data collection in the field took place between August 2023 and December 2024 through multiple field visits.

The research specifically focuses on one selected occupied block located in Cisarua Village, Nanggung District. This specific block, covering approximately 10.6 hectares, was purposively selected based on initial field observations, indicating its relatively advanced land utilization compared to other occupied blocks in Cisarua Village. A detailed map of the study area (Figure 1) clearly identifies the location of this selected block in relation to the other 15 occupied blocks across Cisarua Village.

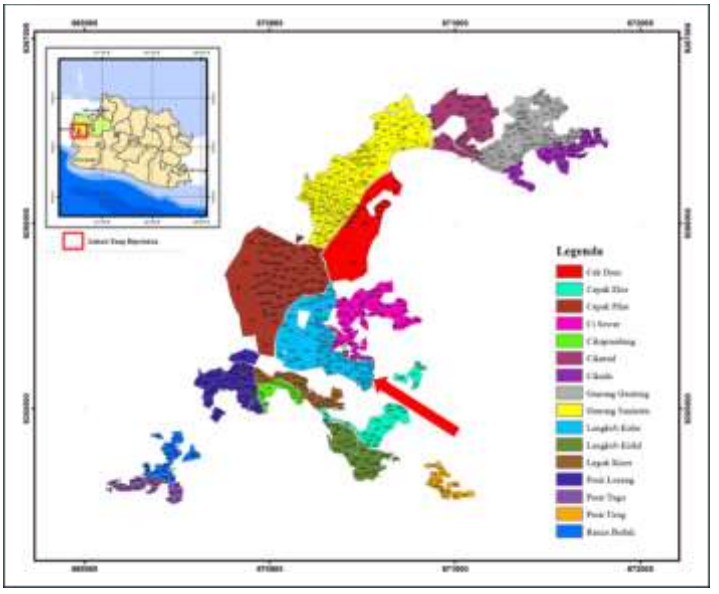

Figure 1.
Location of the Selected Block Among 16 Blocks in Cisarua Village
(The selected block is highlighted in light blue and indicated by a red arrow)
Source: AMANAT and JKPP

Research Approach

This research employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative data collection techniques to examine land utilization practices and associated household characteristics. Quantitative data were collected through a census method, encompassing all 47 households actively utilizing land within the selected block. In most cases, household heads were respondents; however, in cases of their absence, another adult household member with sufficient knowledge of household farming activities was interviewed. A structured survey questionnaire was employed to capture comprehensive information on socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, household size, educational attainment, occupation and landholding size), land utilization orientation, types of cultivated commodities, and associated farm income levels.

Respondents and Informants

Table 1 presents a detailed socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Notably, the majority of the respondents' households had heads of households whose primary occupations were in the non-agricultural sector, with only 40.4% identifying farmer and farm laborer as their main occupation. At the individual level, an even smaller proportion—25.6%—of individual respondents identified farmers and farm laborer as their primary occupation.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

Respondents' Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	16-30 years (youth)	9	19.1
	> 30 years	38	80.9
Gender	Male	29	61.7
	Female	18	38.3
Education	Primary (unfinished)	7	14.9
	Finishing primary education	38	80.9
	Finishing secondary and higher education	2	4.3
Occupation	Farmer	10	21.3
	Farm laborer	2	4.3
	Construction worker	3	6.4
	Trader	4	8.5
	Gurandil (illegal gold miner)	5	10.6
	Service worker/self-employed	6	12.8
	Housewife	15	31.9
	Village official	1	2.1
	Teacher	1	2.1
Occupation of household head	Farmer	15	31.9
	Farm laborer	4	8.5
	Construction worker	3	6.4
	Trader	3	6.4
	Gurandil (illegal gold miner)	14	29.8
	Service worker/self-employed	6	12.8
	Hansip (civil defense personnel)	1	2.1
	Teacher	1	2.1

Qualitative data were obtained through participant observations and in-depth interviews with informants purposively selected based on specific criteria, including direct involvement in land struggles, extensive agricultural experience, active participation in organizational activities within AMANAT, and supporting roles within village government and civil society organizations. Key informants comprised the coordinator of the selected block, an experienced farmer, an AMANAT leader, the village head, and representatives from the supporting NGOs. These qualitative insights provided critical contextual depth and complemented the interpretation of quantitative findings.

Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data analysis adhered to an iterative process outlined by Mezmir (2020), which includes data reduction, presentation, verification and conclusion. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Cross-tabulations were employed to clearly illustrate relationships between categorical variables, particularly the associations between individual characteristics (farming experience), household characteristics (landholding size), and land utilization practices (land-use orientation, commodity diversity, farm income).

For farm enterprise analysis, this study adopted the calculation of total costs, revenues, and income as described by Soekartawi (2006). Total costs (TC) were calculated using the formula $TC = VC + FC$, where VC represents Variable Costs and FC represents Fixed Costs. Total revenue (TR) was calculated using the formula $TR = P \times Q$, where P denotes Price, and Q represents Quantity sold. Finally, net income was determined using the formula $\pi = TR - TC$, where π represents net income.

The integration of these methodological clarifications and detailed data collection approaches aims to enhance the reliability, validity, and replicability of the study findings.

Conceptual Definitions

Several key concepts are defined for analytical clarity. First, landholding is defined as the total area of former HGU land occupied by respondent households, encompassing parcels both inside and outside the selected block. Inclusion of external parcels in this measurement was necessary, as additional land outside the selected block contributes to overall household natural capital, influencing agricultural productivity within the block. The concept of Right to Cultivate (HGU) is a legal permit granted by the National Land Agency, allowing enterprises to commercially exploit state land for plantations or agricultural production within a specified duration, typically ranging from 25 to 35 years, and extendable under certain conditions.

Farming activities considered in this research include staple food crops, plantation commodities, and forestry products, notably timber. Specifically, horticultural production comprises vegetables such as cucumbers and chilli peppers (red chilli and cayenne chilli), chosen due to their relevance to local agricultural practices and significant market value.

Land utilization in this study refers to the distinct forms of land use within the selected occupied block. Adapting a categorization from Shinta (2011) and Suratiyah (2015), land utilization is classified into three categories: subsistence farming,

commercial farming, and non-agricultural purposes. Subsistence farming refers to land utilization for agricultural activities primarily aimed at meeting household consumption needs, characterized by minimal market engagement. Commercial farming refers to land utilization for agricultural activities predominantly to produce commodities intended for market sales, typically involving significant use of inputs, higher production scales, and income generation. Non-agricultural purposes refer to land utilization for residential, infrastructural, or other activities not related to agriculture. Indicators for categorizing households into these groups include the primary purpose of production (subsistence vs. market-oriented), level of market engagement, and relative scale of agricultural inputs (e.g., labor, capital, technology).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Land Utilization Orientation

This study investigates the correlation of individual characteristics (i.e., farming experience) and household characteristics of respondents (i.e., landholding size) with one aspect of land utilization, namely the orientation of land utilization. The hypothesis posits that respondents' farming experience and the size of ex-HGU land controlled by their households correlate with the orientation of land utilization within the selected block.

As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents (57.4%) utilize their land for commercial agriculture. Thus, the dominant orientation of land utilization in the selected block is geared toward generating economic value through the sale of agricultural commodities.

Table 2. Correlation of Individual and Household Characteristics with Land Utilization Orientation in Selected Block, 2023

Individual and Household Characteristics of Respondents	Orientation of Land Utilization			Total
	Subsistence Agriculture	Commercial Agriculture	Non-Agriculture	
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Farming Experience of Respondents				
None (0 years)	20.00	0.00	80.00	100.00
Moderate (2-10 years)	10.00	50.00	40.00	100.00
Long (11-23 years)	13.30	60.00	26.60	100.00
Very long (>23 years)	0.00	76.40	23.60	100.00
Total	8.51	57.40	34.10	100.00
Size of Land Occupied by Respondents' Household				
Small (≤413 m²)	0,00	12,50	87.50	100.00
Moderate (414 m²-4,119 m²)	8,80	64,70	26.50	100.00
Large (≥4,120 m²)	20,00	80,00	0.00	100.00
Total	8,51	57,40	34.10	100.00

Respondents with extensive farming experience predominantly oriented their land for commercial agriculture. Specifically, 76.4% of those with very long experience, 60% of those with long experience, and 50% of those with moderate experience utilized their land commercially. In contrast, respondents with no farming experience did not engage in commercial agriculture. Instead, most used it

for non-agricultural purposes, such as residential areas (80%), or for subsistence agriculture, growing cassava to meet household consumption needs (20%).

These findings suggest a positive correlation between respondents' farming experience and the likelihood of engaging in commercial agriculture in the selected block. This trend aligns with studies on peasant economies, which emphasize that accumulated farming knowledge enhances market integration (Van der Ploeg, 2018). Experienced farmers are more adept at optimizing land productivity, understanding market mechanisms, and securing input-output chains. Conversely, a lack of farming experience results in either residential land use or limited subsistence activities due to the absence of skills, networks, and capital required for commercial farming (Bernstein, 2010).

However, some experienced farmers used the land for non-agricultural purposes, primarily residential, indicating the influence of other variables, such as landholding size. In this regard, respondents in the large and moderate land sizes predominantly utilized their land for commercial agriculture, at 80% and 64.7%, respectively. None of the respondents in the large category used their land for non-agricultural purposes, whereas 26.5% of those in the moderate category did.

Conversely, among respondents in the small landholding category, the majority (87.5%) utilized their land for non-agricultural purposes, while only 12.5% engaged in commercial agriculture, and none practiced subsistence agriculture. Spatial constraints and the prioritization of basic household need primarily drive this pattern of land use. Small plots typically do not provide sufficient area for economically viable agricultural activities. Faced with competing land use priorities, farmer households often allocate limited space to fulfil immediate necessities, most notably, housing. This tendency is particularly common in land occupation contexts, where formal housing infrastructure is limited, scarce or altogether absent.

These findings highlight that larger landholdings are associated with greater potential for commercial agriculture in the selected block. Conversely, smaller landholdings are more likely to be utilized for non-agricultural purposes, such as residential use. This finding resonates with broader concerns about land fragmentation and its impact on smallholder viability. Small land sizes limit economies of scale, access to credit, and mechanization, which hinders market-oriented farming (Jayne et al., 2014). The trend also supports the de-agrarianization thesis, which posits that land constraints push peasants toward non-farm activities, including residential use or informal employment (Bryceson, 2002). Interestingly, the moderate landholding category (414 m^2-4,119 m^2) presents a mixed pattern, with 64.7% engaged in commercial agriculture, 26.5% in non-agriculture, and 8.8% in subsistence farming. This suggests that while moderate land size enables commercialization, other factors (e.g., capital, infrastructure, or alternative livelihood strategies) influence diversification into non-agricultural activities.

Quantities of Commodity Production

This study also investigates the correlation of respondents' characteristics with quantities of commodity production during the most recent harvest in the selected block. The analysis focuses on commercially oriented commodities, which include bananas, horticultural crops, and timber plants. The hypothesis posits that the

farming experience of respondents and the size of ex-HGU land controlled by their households correlate with quantities of agricultural production for each commodity.

Banana Production

In the selected block, banana harvesting is carried out biweekly. Table 3 below presents the correlation between respondents' individual and household characteristics and the quantities of banana production in the most recent harvest. Among respondents, 55.4% cultivated bananas commercially, with production quantities varying. Those with extensive farming experience, categorized as very long (70.6%), long (53.4%), and moderate (60%), were the most involved in this commodity production.

Most respondents who cultivated bananas produced a moderate quantity, accounting for 25.5%. In terms of farming experience, they were mostly in the categories of moderate (30%) and very long experience (29.4%). In contrast, respondents without farming experience did not grow bananas, indicating that longer farming experience increases the likelihood of cultivating bananas for commercial production.

Table 3. Correlation of Individual and Household Characteristics with Quantities of Banana Production in Selected Block, 2023

Individual and Household Characteristics of Respondents	Quantity of Banana Production (Latest Harvest)				Total
	None	Small (≤ 12 bunches)	Moderate (13-33 bunches)	Large (≥ 33 bunches)	
	(%)	(%)	%	(%)	(%)
Farming Experience of Respondents					
None (0 years)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Moderate (2-10 years)	40.00	20.00	30.00	10.00	100.00
Long (11-23 years)	46.60	13.30	26.60	13.50	100.00
Very long (>23 years)	29.40	29.40	29.40	11.80	100.00
Total	44.60	19.10	25.50	10.80	100.00
Size of Land Occupied by Respondents' Household					
Small (≤413 m^2)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Moderate (414 m^2-4,119 m^2)	32.30	26.40	29.40	11.90	100.00
Large (≥4,120 m^2)	40.00	0.00	40.00	20.00	100.00
Total	44.60	19.10	25.50	10.80	100.00

Interestingly, 29.4% of respondents with very long farming experience did not cultivate bananas. The size of household landholding influences this. Respondents whose households occupied moderate (67.7%) and large landholdings (60%) were more likely to grow bananas, while those with small landholdings did not engage in banana cultivation. These findings suggest that larger landholdings enhance the potential for banana production for commercial purposes, whereas limited land is often allocated to housing instead of agriculture.

These findings align with peasant commercialization models, which emphasize how secure land access and accumulated farming skills allow smallholders to integrate into market economies. However, the absence of banana cultivation among those with small landholdings (≤413 m^2) suggests land constraints

as a structural barrier to production, reinforcing debates on land inequality and rural poverty (Cousins, 2013).

Horticultural Crops Production

Horticultural crops were less common in the selected block, with only 4.4% of respondents cultivating them. Table 4 presents the correlation between respondents' individual and household characteristics and the quantities of horticultural crop production during the latest growing season. This low participation is due to the labor-intensive nature of production and the limited agricultural labor available in the selected block. Most respondents were employed in non-agricultural occupations, leaving little time for high-maintenance horticulture production. Technically, horticulture cultivation requires more advanced skills and extra care, which can be time-consuming. This contrasts with banana plants, which are easy to grow and can thrive with minimal maintenance.

Table 4. Correlation of Individual and Household Characteristics with Quantities of Horticultural Crops Production in Selected Block, 2023

Individual and Household Characteristics of Respondents	Quantity of Horticultural Crops Production (Latest Growing Season)				Total
	None	Small (1 commodities)	Moderate (2 commodities)	Large (≥ 3 commodities)	
	(%)	(%)	%	(%)	(%)
Farming Experience of Respondents					
None (0 years)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Moderate (2-10 years)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Long (11-23 years)	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Very long (>23 years)	0,00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Total	95.56	2.20	2.20	0.00	100.00
Size of Land Occupied by Respondents' Household					
Small (≤413 m^2)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Moderate (414 m^2-4,119 m^2)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Large (≥4,120 m^2)	95.56	2.20	2.20	0.00	100.00
Total	95.56	2.20	2.20	0.00	100.00

Among the few respondents growing horticultural crops, those with long and very long farming experience engaged in this activity. One respondent with long experience grew cucumbers, yielding 1,000 kg, while another with very long experience cultivated chilli peppers, producing 375 kg of red chilli and 250 kg of cayenne chilli. Respondents with high landholding were exclusively involved in horticultural farming, as it requires both advanced skills and significant financial investment. The findings demonstrate that both prolonged farming experience and large landholding increase the likelihood of commercial horticultural crop production.

Horticulture's limited adoption suggests that farmers in marginalized regions prioritize low-risk, low-investment crops (like bananas) over high-maintenance, capital-intensive crops (Rigg, 2006). Additionally, the lack of horticulture among smallholders suggests that land size and financial barriers restrict engagement in higher-value agricultural markets (Hall et al., 2017).

Timber Crops Production

Most farmers produced timber crops in large quantities (12.9%), while smaller portions were categorized under moderate (10.6%) and small (10.6%) quantities.

Table 5. Correlation of Individual and Household Characteristics with Quantities of Timber Crops Production in Selected Block, 2023

Individual and Household Characteristics of Respondents	Quantity of Timber Crops Production (Latest Harvest)				Total
	None	Small (5-33 trees)	Moderate (34-100 trees)	Large (> 100 trees)	
	(%)	(%)	%	(%)	(%)
Farming Experience of Respondents					
None (0 years)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Moderate (2-10 years)	80.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	100.00
Long (11-23 years)	66.60	13.30	13.30	6.80	100.00
Very long (>23 years)	47.10	17.60	5.80	29.50	100.00
Total	65.90	10.60	10.60	12.90	100.00
Size of Land Occupied by Respondents' Household					
Small (≤413 m^2)	87.50	0.00	12.50	0.00	100.00
Moderate (414 m^2-4,119 m^2)	64.70	14.70	8.80	11.80	100.00
Large (≥4,120 m^2)	40.00	0.00	20.00	40.00	100.00
Total	65.90	10.60	10.60	12.90	100.00

Respondents with very long farming experience were the most engaged (52.9%), with dominant production levels categorized as large (29.5%). The next rank was respondents with long farming experience (34%), with the majority of their crop production falling into low and moderate categories (each at 13.3%). The next rank was respondents with moderate farming experience (20%), all of whom had production in the moderate category. Meanwhile, respondents with no farming experience did not cultivate timber crops at all.

The size of household landholding significantly influenced timber crop production. Among respondents whose household occupied a large landholding, 60% grew timber crops, mostly producing large quantities (40%). Conversely, as the size of landholding decreased, timber farming participation declined to 35.3% in the moderate category, dominated by small production (14.7%) and to 12.5% in the low category, dominated by moderate production (12.5%). The preference for timber crops among large landholders suggests that secure land tenure and stable farming experience encourage investment in long-term, high-value commodities. These findings confirm that longer farming experience and larger landholdings positively affect the likelihood and scale of timber crop production.

The result of this study underscores the connection between respondents' farming experience, landholding, and agricultural production in the selected block. Prolonged experience and greater land access are key determinants of farming orientation and production scale, whether for bananas, horticultural crops, or timber crops. Conversely, limited farming experience and smaller landholding constrain agricultural production, often leading to non-agricultural land use, such as housing.

Levels of Farm Income

The final aspect examined in this study is the income level generated from the cultivation of selected commodities on a specific land block, namely bananas, horticultural crops, and timber plants. The study hypothesizes the correlation of respondents' characteristics (farming experience and household landholding in the former HGU area) with income levels from these commodities.

Farm Income from Banana Production

The following table (Table 6) shows that respondents earning income from the latest banana harvest were primarily in the moderate category (23.4%), followed by the low category (21.2%), and the high category (10.8%). Notably, nearly half of the respondents (44.6%) reported no income from banana farming.

Table 6. Correlation of Individual and Household Characteristics with Income from Banana Production in Selected Block, 2023

Individual and Household Characteristics of Respondents	Levels of Income from Banana Production (Latest Harvest)				Total
	None	Low (≤ IDR 294,577)	Moderate (IDR >294,577-IDR 840,499)	High (≥ IDR 840.500)	
	(%)	(%)	%	(%)	(%)
Farming Experience of Respondents					
None (0 years)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Moderate (2-10 years)	40.00	20.00	30.00	10.00	100.00
Long (11-23 years)	46.60	20.00	20.00	13.40	100.00
Very long (>23 years)	29.40	29.40	29.40	11.80	100.00
Total	44.60	21.20	23.40	10.80	100.00
Size of Land Occupied by Respondents' Household					
Small (≤413 m^2)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Moderate (414 m^2-4,119 m^2)	32.30	26.50	29.40	11.70	100.00
Large (≥4,120 m^2)	40.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	100.00
Total	44.60	21.20	23.40	10.80	100.00

Respondents with the highest income levels from banana farming (13.4%) were primarily those with long farming experience. Meanwhile, moderate income was most common among respondents with moderate farming experience (30%), and low income was dominated by those with very long farming experience (29.4%). Respondents without farming experience made up the largest proportion (100%) of those with no income from banana farming, likely influenced by their limited landholding (see below). The findings suggest no significant correlation between farming experience and income from banana cultivation. This is likely due to the simplicity of banana cultivation, which requires minimal skill and maintenance. Bananas proliferate once planted, making them accessible to farmers of all experience levels.

The size of household landholding had a more pronounced impact. Higher income levels were most prevalent among respondents with large landholdings (20%), while moderate income was most common in households with medium-sized landholdings (29.4%). Respondents with limited landholding did not earn any income from banana cultivation, as their land was predominantly used for non-

agricultural purposes, such as housing. These results suggest a positive correlation between household landholding and income from banana farming in the selected block.

Farm Income from Horticultural Crops Production

Income derived from horticultural crops in the most recent growing season represents another significant finding. As noted, only two respondents earned income from horticultural farming by cultivating red chilli, cayenne pepper, and cucumber, reflecting the relatively high skill and capital requirements for this type of cultivation. Consequently, the vast majority of respondents (95.56%) reported no income from horticultural crops due to a lack of this cultivation on their land.

Table 7. Correlation of Individual and Household Characteristics with Income from Horticultural Crops Production in Selected Block, 2023

Individual and Household Characteristics of Respondents	Levels of Income from Horticultural Crops Production (Latest Growing Season)				Total
	None	Low (≤ IDR 2,5000,000)	Moderate (> IDR 2,500,000-3,000,000)	High (> IDR 3,000,000)	
	(%)	(%)	%	(%)	(%)
Farming Experience of Respondents					
None (0 years)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Moderate (2-10 years)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Long (11-23 years)	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Very long (>23 years)	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	100.00
Total	95.56	0.00	2,20	2,20	100.00
Size of Land Occupied by Respondents' Household					
Small (≤413 m^2)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Moderate (414 m^2-4,119 m^2)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Large (≥4,120 m^2)	95.56	0.00	2,20	2,20	100.00
Total	95.56	0.00	2,20	2,20	100.00

As highlighted in the following table (Table 7), the two respondents earning from horticultural crops farming exclusively those categorized as having very long and long farming experience, coupled with high levels of household landholding in the former HGU area. Conversely, respondents having moderate or no farming experience at all reported no income from horticultural crop farming. Similarly, no income earned from horticultural crop cultivation was also recorded among respondents whose household landholding fell into the medium or low categories. These findings indicate a strong correlation between longer farming experience and larger landholding with farm income from horticultural farming. Greater farming experience and landholding positively corresponded to higher income levels from horticultural crop production.

This data highlights a significant correlation between farming experience, landholding size, and the ability to earn income from horticultural crop farming. Horticultural farming typically requires a higher level of technical knowledge, resource allocation, and risk management compared to other crops. Additionally, larger landholdings provide the spatial flexibility needed for horticultural crop diversification and optimization, allowing for economies of scale and potentially

higher returns. Conversely, respondents with limited or no experience in farming may lack the necessary skills to venture into horticultural production, which can involve higher upfront costs and greater risks. Similarly, respondents with small landholdings may prioritize crops that are less labor- and capital-intensive, further limiting their ability to diversify into horticulture.

Farm Income from Timber Crops Production

Income from timber crop production in the selected block was limited, with only 36.2% of respondents earning from this commodity. Most respondents (63.8%) indicated that they had not earned any income from timber crop production. This condition is attributable to the limited number of farmers interested in cultivating timber species on their land. Moreover, among those who did plant such crops, many had not yet reached the harvesting stage, as the trees were still in the early growth phase and had not yet reached productive maturity for harvest.

Table 8. Correlation of Individual and Household Characteristics with Income from Timber Crops Production in Selected Block, 2023

Individual and Household Characteristics of Respondents	Levels of Income from Timber Crops Production (Latest Growing Season)				Total
	None	Low (≤ IDR 0- < 750,000)	Moderate (> IDR 700,000- 1,950,000)	High (> IDR 1,950,000)	
	(%)	(%)	%	(%)	(%)
Farming Experience of Respondents					
None (0 years)	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Moderate (2-10 years)	80.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	100.00
Long (11-23 years)	66.60	6.60	13.30	13.30	100.00
Very long (>23 years)	41.10	23.50	5.80	29.60	100.00
Total	63.80	10.60	10.60	14.80	100.00
Size of Land Occupied by Respondents' Household					
Small (≤413 m^2)	87.50	0.00	12.50	0.00	100.00
Moderate (414 m^2-4,119 m^2)	61.70	14.70	8.90	14.70	100.00
Large (≥4,120 m^2)	40.00	0.00	20.00	40.00	100.00
Total	63.80	10.60	10.60	14.80	100.00

Table 8 illustrates a strong relationship between farming experience and income levels from timber crop cultivation. Respondents with extensive farming experience (categorized as "very long") constitute the largest proportion (29.6%) within the high-income category. Conversely, those with moderate experience dominated the middle-income category (20%). Notably, respondents with no farming experience at all recorded no income from timber crop farming, with a 100% prevalence of this category. This percentage decreases as farming experience increases, indicating that longer farming experience correlates with higher income from timber farming in the selected block.

Similarly, the relationship between household landholding and timber crop income exhibits comparable trends. Respondents with low landholding accounted for the largest proportion (87.5%) of those with no income from timber crops. This percentage decreases progressively with larger landholding, falling to 61.7% among

those with medium landholding and 40% among those with large landholding levels. High-income respondents are predominantly from the large landholding category (40%), with the medium-income group also dominated by this category (20%). In contrast, respondents with medium landholding levels constitute the largest proportion (14.7%) of the low-income category.

These findings underscore the importance of both farming experience and landholding size as key factors influencing income from timber crop farming. Experienced farmers likely possess a deeper knowledge of timber crop cultivation, including planting, maintenance, and harvesting strategies, enabling them to optimize yields and revenues. Larger landholdings, meanwhile, provide the spatial capacity for scaling up timber production and leveraging economies of scale, thereby enhancing income potential.

These findings align with debates on long-term agricultural investment, where secure land tenure and farming experience encourage investment in timber production, which requires extended growing periods before yielding returns. The study supports the argument that large-scale landholding and experience provide the conditions for profitable engagement in high-value timber production (Cousins, 2013).

Reflection on Broader Implications

The findings of this study reaffirm that land occupation by peasant movements can indeed yield tangible improvements in rural livelihoods, particularly when accompanied by adequate agricultural experience, sufficient land access, and enabling institutional conditions. Evidence from the selected block demonstrates discernible positive outcomes—such as a clear shift toward commercial farming, the emergence of timber and horticultural production, and increased farm income among households with adequate landholding. These outcomes substantiate the claim that reclaiming land through grassroots action extends beyond symbolic resistance. These are substantive achievements that affirm the transformative potential of peasant-led agrarian reform—aligning with earlier studies that highlight the emancipatory potential of bottom-up land reform efforts or land reform by leverage (Borras, 2007; Moyo & Yeros, 2005; Shohibuddin, 2010).

However, the uneven distribution of these benefits also reveals the enduring structural asymmetries that persist after land has been redistributed. Variations in land size, farming experience, and access to capital and knowledge have produced unequal outcomes among farming households. In particular, small landholdings and limited agricultural capacity constrain households from transitioning beyond subsistence or non-agricultural uses. These findings echo broader critiques of redistributive reform that fail to dismantle deeper inequalities without sustained post-redistribution support. For example, studies in Zimbabwe (Scoones, 2009) and the Philippines (Franco, 2008) have similarly shown that land redistribution alone does not guarantee equitable agrarian outcomes in the absence of robust post-reform support systems. In contrast, cases from Brazil's Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) demonstrate that sustained institutional backing, cooperative structures, and technical assistance can significantly enhance the long-term viability of redistributive reforms (Wolford, 2010).

In this context, the observed patterns of land underutilization or residential use among small landholders in the study area are not coincidental. Rather, they represent logical consequences of persistent structural barriers—such as insecure tenure, limited state investment in small-scale farming, asymmetric access to markets and credit, and the absence of inclusive rural development frameworks. These barriers reproduce agrarian inequalities even after formal redistribution has taken place, underscoring the critiques of minimal state land reforms that fail to confront broader questions of social justice and rural power relations (Deininger & Feder, 2001; Hall, 2011).

Thus, land occupation must not be viewed as the culmination of peasant struggle, but rather as its point of departure. It should be followed by concerted and sustained efforts to secure legal land rights, strengthen peasant institutions, expand access to extension services, input subsidies, infrastructure, technology, and equitable market integration. Agrarian reform, to be meaningful, must be embedded within a wider strategy of rural development and democratization.

Without such sustained engagement and structural supports, the gains of land occupation risk erosion, and the broader goals of agrarian justice—livelihood security, ecological stewardship, and rural democratization—remain unfulfilled. Advancing this agenda requires not only policy responsiveness but also collective political will to recognize and uphold the rights of rural communities beyond the moment of land seizure.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that patterns of land utilization in the selected block are influenced greatly by farming experience and landholding size. Households with larger plots and greater experience tend to intensify and diversify production through cultivating commercial crops and higher-value agricultural activities, whereas those with limited land and capacity tend towards non-agricultural uses (e.g., housing) or persist in low-return farming. This underscores that outcomes hinge on unequal access not only to land but also to knowledge, labor, and capital. Such evidence suggests that land redistribution alone does not secure productive or equitable land use. Rather, post-occupation trajectories reflect the interplay between structural constraints and household capabilities.

Theoretically, this study affirms that land is not a static asset allocated through formal reform, but a resource embedded within broader fields of access and exclusion. Persistent inequalities in technology, institutional support, and markets continue to shape livelihood outcomes after redistribution. As such, this study contributes to the debates on agrarian transformation by emphasizing the importance of post-reform processes and structural conditions in agrarian transformation.

Policy should therefore treat agrarian reform as a long-term process that both secures land rights and builds resilient livelihoods, farmer agency, and inclusive development. Integrated and context-specific support by allocating equitable resources, technical assistance, finance, infrastructure, and market integration is essential for land reform to improve rural welfare and advance agrarian justice in post-occupation settings.

To ensure that land utilization in post-occupation settings makes a meaningful contribution to sustainable rural development, a coherent set of strategic interventions is necessary.

1. Land-use intensification and the adoption of appropriate technologies that enhance productivity without requiring land expansion.
2. Capacity building through improving technical competencies and entrepreneurial skills should be prioritized, especially for inexperienced and younger farmers.
3. Enhancing collective efficiency through integrated production systems at the block level to enable coordination across production, post-harvest handling, and market access.
4. Improving the institutional capacity of peasant organizations to assume leadership in land governance, cooperative enterprise development, and collective resource management.
5. Institutionalizing participatory governance mechanisms by establishing a local council, incorporating gender-sensitive approaches, and recognizing customary norms.
6. Improving access to capital and financial services through subsidized credit, cooperative financing, and targeted social philanthropy support.

Together, these interventions constitute a comprehensive strategy for post-redistribution development that situates land reform within a broader project of rural revitalization, institutional strengthening, and inclusive agrarian change.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

[Author 1]: designed the research framework; developed the research instruments; collected the data; conducted the analysis; and drafted the manuscript. [Author 2]: conceptualized the research idea; refined the research design; supervised the research process; substantively finalized the manuscript; and coordinated revisions during peer review. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests—financially, personally, or professionally—that could have influenced the design, conduct, outcomes, or interpretation of this research. The authors are solely responsible for the content and writing of this article.

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ETHIC STATEMENT

Formal ethics review and approval were waived for this study as it did not involve any intervention and presented minimal risk to participants. Nevertheless, throughout the research, the team strictly adhered to the "not harm principle"—ensuring voluntary participation, the right to withdraw, and proactive avoidance of social, economic, or reputational risks. Informed consent was obtained from all informants and respondents before participation, and all data were de-identified, securely stored, and treated as strictly confidential. Only aggregated findings are reported.

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