

Facing the *unknown*

A study on the perspectives and experiences of Sepaku's villagers on Indonesia's capital relocation



*A Sepaku villager looking at a projects' concrete wall from his backyard.
Source: author*



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Abstract

Indonesia is building a 'smart and sustainable forest city' named Ibu Kota Negara (IKN) in East Kalimantan, Borneo Island, to replace the disaster-prone, polluted, and congested Jakarta as its new capital city in 2024. To do so, the Indonesian government aims to transform tens of thousands of predominantly rural lands, currently inhabited by tens of thousands of people, into urban areas. This study aims to fill the empirical knowledge gap concerning local perspectives and experiences on new cities. Through focusing on affected local populations, the study investigates how the early stages of the project relate to inclusive development, specifically the safeguard 'Free, Prior, and Informed Consent', and the 'right to the city' concept. Using a qualitative case-study research design, through household interviews and focus group discussions, this study focuses on the local mechanisms of a water management project in the Sepaku village. The results show that the new city evolves in nonlinear and fragmented ways, resulting in a co-occurrence of rural and urban activities that blur the rural-urban divide. Second, in several cases, the proposed land acquisition for the project did not align with the international safeguard 'Free, Prior, and Informed Consent.' Third, divergent perspectives were found, often showing the project's inability to adequately involve local people. Fourth, the divergent aspirations and needs unveiled why some farmers aspire to maintain their current livelihoods while the younger generation wishes to participate in the new city. Altogether, these results reveal the early challenges surrounding inclusive land governance and people's right to the new city. Finally, several suggestions reveal what can be done better to include local populations and what future research should assess.

Keywords: New cities; Urban land rush; Inclusive development; Right to the city, Free, Prior, and Informed Consent; Perspectives and Experiences

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IV) List of abbreviations

FPIC: Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

IKN: Ibu Kota Negara (New capital city)

PUPR: *Kementerian Pekerjaan Umum dan Perumahan Rakyat* (Ministry of Public Works and Housing).

RT: Rukun Tetangga (Neighborhood Association)

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

UN: United Nations

1. Introduction

Indonesia is relocating its capital city from Jakarta to an appointed area in East Kalimantan, Borneo Island, where an entire new city will be built from scratch. The planned city, named Ibu Kota Negara (IKN) Nusantara, was put forth by President Joko Widodo and was officially enacted through the 'Law on State Capital' in 2022 (Bappenas, 2022). IKN is said to replace Jakarta as the capital city on Indonesia's Independence Day in August 2024 (ibid.). The new city is expected to accommodate approximately 1.4 million people besides the countries' key administrative institutions upon completion in 2045 (IKN, 2023). The IKN masterplan distinguishes itself as the largest project under President Widodo's economic and sustainable development agenda, captured by the 'Indonesia 2045' vision. In line with the broader vision, IKN is proclaimed a 'smart and sustainable city for all' (IKN, 2023). With this ambition, Widodo aims to create a new center of green growth, while simultaneously addressing Jakarta's urban problems: the city is overpopulated, heavily polluted, congested, and sinking, thus prone to flooding (Rijanta et al., 2022). Moreover, the capital relocation carries economic and symbolic considerations by moving away from Java-centric development (ibid.).

Figure 1. Locations of Jakarta and IKN Nusantara. Source: Maulia (2022).



Especially in the global South, new cities are on the rise. Governments have often been unable to address the high urban demand and existing urban problems and are increasingly searching for alternative ways to deal with urbanization (Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021). New cities are proposed by either governments or private investors and serve as a rationale for dealing with rapid urbanization, urban sprawl, and existing urban problems, such as pollution, affordable housing, and natural disaster risks (ibid.). While new cities could provide opportunities to deal with contemporary urban

problems, they are criticized for their utopia-like assumptions and exclusive and elitist practices (Watson, 2009).

In the development realm, the rise of new cities has gained increasing attention due to the entanglement of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 ('make cities inclusive, resilient and sustainable') with the 'global land rush debate' (Zoomers et al., 2017). These relatively new international agendas address cities' vulnerabilities, yet they often overlook the fact that city development is a driver of land acquisitions, often even directly causing acquisitions (or so-called 'land grabs') (ibid.). Here, large-scale urban development projects are traditionally seen as necessary development, despite their negative ramifications for local communities (Van Noorloos et al., 2019a). Although an increasing amount of research has been devoted to the effects of urban development projects on local communities, the local needs and perspectives of local communities are often neglected (ibid.).

Under the term 'inclusive development,' inclusive practices have been proposed to deal with the negative ramifications of land acquisitions on marginalized people (Otsuki et al., 2017). Among these practices, the safeguard 'Free, Prior, and Informed Consent' (FPIC) is often recommended as a guideline for participatory land governance to protect the rights of local and indigenous communities (Franco, 2014). However, when looking at urban development projects, addressing the inclusivity of urban land investments in the rural sphere also requires researchers to at peoples' 'right to the city' (Zoomers et al., 2017). After all, urban development projects do not only exclude people from land, but also from participating in the urban project itself (ibid.).

Indonesia's appointed new capital city will cover an area of approximately 56,000 hectares and comprises of a total development zone of 256,000 hectares in East Kalimantan (IKN, 2023). Although the Indonesian government promised to include its current tens of thousands of inhabitants as much as possible, there are concerns about the negative ramifications of the capital relocation for the local people who currently inhabit the area. Some studies have already addressed the premature impacts of IKN (Rijanta et al., 2022; Saputra et al., 2022), however, research has yet to properly investigate how local people are included or excluded in the unfolding city-building processes.

1.1 Research objective and questions

This study aims to fill the empirical gap in new city literature by researching the perspectives and experiences of local people in the new capital city area. First, by emphasizing on 'perspectives,' this research tries to capture how people understand the new capital city from their point of view, resulting in different opinions, views, and perceptions. Second, the study focuses on 'experiences' to

examine how contemporary experiences shape and alter peoples' perspectives. Specifically, this research focuses on the local people of the Sepaku village, a village near the geographical center of IKN. Adjacent to this village, a water-infrastructure project – the Sepaku Intake – is in development as an effort to supply the future water needs of the planned city's inhabitants. Inevitably, land has to be acquired for these projects, potentially displacing local people. By equipping a qualitative approach, primarily through household interviews and focus groups conducted in the Sepaku village, this study aims to understand how individuals' perspectives and experiences on the new capital city are shaped and how these relate to the principle of FPIC, the right to the city concept, and the broader inclusive development debate.

Because the water management project directly affects the lands of some villagers, this case serves as an interesting and fruitful opportunity to examine to what extent the principles of FPIC are maintained. Moreover, as these acquisitions occur in light of urban development, they simultaneously provide an opportunity to examine to what extent individuals are included or excluded in the new capital city. Hence, this study seeks to investigate how the capital relation is seen and experienced from the point of view of the villagers of the small town Sepaku. The following research question is central to this paper:

'What are the perspectives and experiences of Sepaku's villagers towards the capital relocation, and how do these relate to inclusive development?'

Five sub-questions are proposed in the following order to answer the central question:

- I. What is the IKN masterplan and what are its motivations, considerations and critiques?
- II. What is the spatial and temporal state-of-the-art of the IKN project in and surrounding the Sepaku village?
- II. How are the local people included and involved in land acquisition processes?
- III. What are the local people's perspectives towards the capital relocation, and how are these shaped?
- IV. What are the aspirations and needs of the local people concerning the new capital city?

1.2. Outline

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. First, Chapter 2 introduces and discusses the relevant literature and theoretical streams, providing a foundation for this research. Chapter 3 introduces the methodology underpinning this thesis, touching upon the research design and applied methods, the choice of case selection, the sampling strategy, the methods of analysis, the

study limitations, and ethical considerations. Hereafter, Chapter 4 sets the context of this study, namely an overview of East Kalimantan and Indonesia's land governance history. Fourth, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 present the results of this research. Finally, Chapter 10 discusses the results and places them into broader debates, upon which key reflections on new cities and inclusive development will be provided.

2. Literature review and theoretical embedding

The following chapter provides the theoretical embedding and discusses relevant literature. This chapter first explores the conceptual debate of the urban land rush as an intrinsic part of the global land rush. Then, closely related concepts to the urban land grab debate, such as displacement, dispossession, and exclusion, are elaborated upon. Third, the inclusive development concept are discussed, focusing on the safeguard 'Free, Prior, and Informed Consent' and the 'right to the city' approach. The fourth section elaborates on the growing scholarly body of new cities. Finally, an overview of Indonesia's land governance history will be given.

2.1 The urban land rush

Over the past decade, development scholars have devoted increasing attention to the 'global land rush' and the 'New Urban Agenda' (Zoomers et al., 2017). The global land rush debate has historically focused on large-scale land investments and the consequent conversion of large rural land areas. Respectively, the New Urban Agenda has directed its attention to meeting the challenges of achieving 'inclusive, resilient and sustainable' cities (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11) (ibid.). The two phenomena are often seen as separate containers, given that the former focuses primarily on land grabs in the rural sphere, whilst the New Urban Agenda focuses on the city (ibid.). However, large-scale investments in rural land for (new) urban areas and infrastructure to deal with rapid urbanization and urban sprawl show how rural and urban land acquisitions are often entangled. Hence, the global land rush and the New Urban Agenda are inextricably linked to one another (ibid.).

Besides, separating the abovementioned conceptual debates reflects what Van Noorloos et al. (2019a) call a 'grab-development dichotomy.' Whereas academia often – and rightfully so – mentioned the negative consequences of rural land acquisitions (and therefore also called 'land grabs'), urban land acquisitions are seen as an indispensable part of planetary urbanism (ibid.). Hence, the land rush discourse has historically focused on rural land grab mechanisms because urban land grabs are often seen as 'necessary development.' However, an increasing number of development scholars argue that urban land grabs bring the same – if not more – negativities for marginalized people, such as dispossession and displacement (Zoomers et al., 2017; Van Noorloos et al., 2019a; Steel et al., 2017). To clarify, land investments are referred to as grabs when the acquisition process happens in illegal ways. A land exchange can be legal, but the methods to inform and involve local people are sometimes not adequate. Hence, here, the term 'grab' would still be justified (Kaag & Zoomers, 2014).

To continue, Steel et al. (2017) note that urban land acquisitions cannot be seen as separate from the workings of the urban real estate market, displacement processes, and public policies. Four impact areas of urban land investments are identified regarding the two connected debates: the changing intra-city dynamics, urban expansion in peri-urban areas, emerging (master-planned) cities, and investments in environmental or energy infrastructure and development corridors (Zoomers et al., 2017). Furthermore, these topics convey that land grabs often happen in complex ways that blur the rural and urban divide.

2.2 Displacement, dispossession, and exclusions

Large-scale urban projects can create severe dispossessions of land and displacement, as their surrounding spaces are hardly ever 'empty' (Leitner & Sheppard, 2018; Borras & Franco, 2013). These local implications of urban land investments on local communities and the surrounding environment are often overlooked for the greater good (Steel et al., 2017; Van Noorloos et al., 2019). A central research endeavor in the land rush discourse focuses on large formal land tenure arrangements to commodify and privatize urban land, resulting in direct displacements (Van Noorloos et al., 2019a). These practices, for instance, include privatizing land for development projects and evading squatters and street hawkers from the city's center and public spaces. Yet, various forms of displacement and dispossession have a less direct and visible character (ibid.).

In the urban land grab debate, displacement should not only be seen as a process of eviction but a dynamic process (ibid.). Indirect displacement dynamics include the effects of policies that lead to social exclusion and dispossession of marginalized people through, for instance, rising land and property values and enclavization (Steel et al., 2017). By the same token, yet in a different context, in their research on infrastructural megaprojects and their indirect consequences on livelihoods Gellert and Lynch (2003) describe indirect displacements as 'secondary displacements'. For example, with the construction of a large dam, local people might lose access to water and, ultimately their livelihoods (ibid.). Moreover, Van Noorloos et al. (2019a) add that an emphasis should be placed on the complexity of the concepts of dispossession and displacement and thinking about them in contextually adapted ways. Displacement and exclusion are often intertwined and can result into 'displacement chains'.

Local communities can even experience processes of exclusion and dispossession in the absence of spatial displacement (Li, 2017). While focusing on rural (palm oil) land grabs, Li (2017) argues how 'double displacement' occurs when land is needed, but the people are not needed for labor. In addition, a third type of displacement emerges when the selection of workers happens through ethnicity, age, and gender specifications (ibid.). Displacements and dispossessions are thus

not a one-off event, but an ongoing process that diminishes individuals' access to land, work, and territorial control (ibid.). Importantly, the same mechanisms can be found because of land grabs from projects such as infrastructural and urban development (Zoomers, 2010). To conclude, rapid land conversion can lead to various sorts of displacements, dispossessions, and exclusions, resulting from different forms of rural and urban land grabs from outside (ibid.).

2.3 Inclusive development and land governance

The term inclusive development recognizes that not everyone profited from the – neoliberal – modernization approach of development (Pouw & Gupta, 2017). The term has its foundations in social justice debates and stresses the importance of social demands, participation, and human rights (ibid.). Yet, the concept is contested in several ways: the types of content that 'inclusive' and 'development' entails, whether policymakers use the concept and the actual purpose of inclusive development. Despite these contestations, from a development standpoint, inclusive development includes '*social, ecological, and relational inclusiveness*' (ibid.). This relational perspective implies looking at the relationships and interactions between individuals, communities, institutions, and their environments (ibid.). What is more, modern policies can reinforce and exacerbate inequalities of the marginalized (ibid.).

Specifically concerning large-scale land investments, inclusive development promotes improved land governance, focusing on ways to benefit land investors and those affected by the investments (Zoomers & Otsuki, 2017). Land governance is earlier conceptualized by Palmer et al. (2009, p. 1) in a working manner as: "[...] the rules, processes and structures through which decisions are made about access to land and its use, the manner in which the decisions are implemented and enforced, the way that competing interests in land are managed." Improved land governance thus concerns fair consultations, fair consent, and respect for existing land rights surrounding these land decisions (Ros-Tonen et al., 2016). Over the last two decades, increasing attention has been paid to the importance of these participatory approaches to land governance, emphasizing the importance of consultations and consent-building.

Early thinking about participation in land governance was largely aimed at the formalization of customary land tenure. However, research has pointed out how formalization processes might lead to additional land grabs and are often paired with inconsistencies and increased insecurities. The proponents of land formalization assumed that granting land occupiers property rights would turn them into citizens, contributing to economic growth. Development scholars have widely criticized this heavily modernized thinking of land ownership, as formalization processes ignore the local and traditional contexts in which land was embedded (Peters, 2009). Because of the failure of

the formalization process, activists and academics sought new ways to recognize communal land that would enhance the negotiation position of local and indigenous communities. Influenced by the 'rights-based approach' to development and closely linked to inclusive development, 'Free, Prior, and Informed Consent/Consultation' (FPIC) and other participatory approaches are promoted concerning large-scale land investments (Franco, 2014).

2.3.1 Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

Following Fontana and Grugel, FPIC implies a) the absence of coercion, intimidation, or manipulation; b) early consent in the local decision-making processes; c) access to sufficient and appropriate information and the likely impacts of the project; d) the ability to (withhold) consent, considering customary institutions, gender, and age (Fontana & Grugel, 2016). However, FPIC is heavily contested in its conceptualization and actual purpose.

First, what the 'C' in FPIC essentially entails is contested. Whereas the mentioned conceptualization explicitly stresses the veto right (consent) of an (indigenous) community, the 'C' is merely used as a form of consultation by some (Franco, 2014). Critics point out that using consultation (and not consent) would undermine the true meaning of FPIC as governments and companies could continue to be free to act. Others argue that consultation is needed to achieve a win-win for both parties involved; however, the role of consent in this situation is ambiguous. Even the use of consent is contested: does it involve a right to withhold consent, or to veto a proposal? These differences in the use of FPIC result in it becoming either a basic democratic right and principle or merely a tool for a 'social license' to continue land deals (Franco, 2014).

Second, there is a debate about whose consent is required. Some scholars argue that the FPIC process should be limited to indigenous peoples only. However, this view has been increasingly criticized, considering ethnicity can create collective claims over territory, generating a 'culture of legality', a core feature of land grabbing (ibid.). As Franco argues, "If FPIC is to truly have social justice significance, its application should prioritise any and all marginalized and vulnerable people among all those who could be affected by any proposed project or land deal regardless of its proposed geopolitical location or purpose" (France, 2014, p. 14).

Despite its criticisms, it is widely agreed that FPIC can provide a tool for amplifying the voices of the marginalized and perhaps even enhancing social equity. Consistency in the use of FPIC goals and means could reduce social conflicts around the implementation of development projects. In addition, FPIC might even be helpful if the socio-political situation is unhelpful, as it could enforce strong social mobilization (Fontana & Grugel, 2016; Franco, 2014). Ultimately, considering FPIC can

provide pillars for this research's context to assess for land acquisition mechanisms of the top-down IKN masterplan.

2.3.2 Inclusive urbanization and the 'right to the city'

Nonetheless, FPIC measures and the formalization of land tenure or housing may not be sufficient to ensure inclusivity of large urban developments in the rural spheres (Zoomers et al. 2017). Hence, the urban land grab agenda should not only examine land governance, but also how socially inclusive urbanization can be achieved (ibid.). The 'right to the city' approach was coined by the French sociologist Lefebvre in the late 1960s and gained traction in discussions about democracy in cities and access to cities' resources (Christian, 2011). In order to not get lost in the many different conceptualizations of the approach, according to David Harvey (2015), the right to the city approach entails a collective right and freedom to make and remake cities and ourselves. In Harvey's words:

'The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart's desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right since changing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization.' (Harvey, 2015, p. 1).

It is important to mention, that the right to the city concept carries merely utopian and philosophical notions, rather than providing a clear pathway of how the concept would look like in practice. However, over the last decades, the concept has been put forward in international policy agendas. In a policy paper for the UN Habitat, Brown and Kristiansen (2009) sum up the right to the city in five key axes: 1) enabling all inhabitants and communities to benefit from the liberties and freedoms of the city; 2) transparency, equity and efficiency in city governments; 3) participation in city-making; 4) recognition and diversity in economic, social, and cultural life; 5) reducing poverty, social exclusion and violence (ibid.).

However, the right to the city approach is often neglected in discussions about urban transformations at the countryside (Zoomers et al. 2017). For instance, farmers are often not included in urban masterplans which partly or fully transform rural areas to urban areas (ibid.). People's right to stay in these transformative areas is often dependent on their land rights and the type of work they have in the city. Often rural dwellers are the ones with temporary, low wage, and part-time contracts (ibid.). Because of the top-down planning of urban development projects, the perspectives of local people are often neglected, and unexpected outcomes can occur (Van Noorloos

et al., 2019b). If urban development projects do not consider these local perspectives, can such a project be inclusive at all?

Many development scholars thus argue that the way forward is not only focusing on inclusive land governance but also on the project's inclusivity (Otsuki et al., 2017; Zoomers et al., 2017). Urban development projects can only truly be inclusive when considering local people's needs and demands. Hence, rural-to-urban transformations require inclusive land practices, as exemplified by FPIC, and a homogenous distribution of urban resources to stress peoples' rights to the city (Zoomers et al., 2017). Capturing local people's perspectives and experiences seems a good starting point to assess how people could be included in the IKN masterplan.

2.4 New cities in the global South

As pointed out in the first section, land grabs for urban development projects such as new cities are gaining attraction worldwide. Although there is not one definite conceptualization, new cities have some agreed-upon characteristics: they are built administratively and geographically distinct from existing cities (Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021). The exact purpose of new cities is heavily dependent on place and context, but they often share the same foundations, such as projecting a distinct brand and vision of the future, like a mirror-opposite of surrounding cities (Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021).

Historically, the earliest planned cities stem from the colonial period, where colonial powers sought to establish their post-colonial identity in new cities (Moser, 2015). Subsequently, a new wave occurred during the decolonization era, where new cities were built to reflect a new national identity and to promote nation-state building. Despite differentiating heavily in context, since the 1990s, new city projects have been primarily built to serve as an economic hub in emerging economies (Moser, 2020). Hence, contemporary new cities differ from earlier state-led projects as they are projects financed by a complex web of foreign and domestic actors (ibid.). This turn was fueled by the global neo-liberalization agenda and other closely related developments, such as the technology push and the financialization of real estate and infrastructure in the late twentieth century (ibid.).

Because new cities are built from scratch, scholars argue that they hold promising potential for rethinking and reshaping urban life and tackling contemporary urban issues in the global South (Watson, 2009; Datta, 2015; Moser, 2020). If done correctly, cities could be designed to efficiently accommodate vast flows of commuters and make cities healthier by applying more green spaces (Moser, 2020). Additionally, in certain areas in the global South, such as the Pacific Rim, new cities could be built in areas less prone to natural disasters.

However, multi-disciplinary scholars argue that the strategies to master-plan entirely new cities are often based on questionable and unfeasible assumptions, such as the aim for a 'slum-free' world. Here, local and rural populations must make place for 'the greater good' (ibid.). New city scholars often refer to the projects as 'urban fantasies' or 'utopias' (Watson, 2009; Datta, 2015; Moser, 2020). Even though the premise of a new, smart, sustainable, and harmonious urban environment may seem like an inclusive form of planning, it often sets exclusivity mechanisms in motion given its attractiveness to investments from transnational and local elites (Van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018; Datta, 2015; Watson, 2013). Consequently, instead of benefiting a variety of people, new cities engineer social homogeneity and exclusions and enclaves based on ethnicity, religion, or socio-economic status (Moser, 2020).

Moreover, new cities in the global South often take place in peri-urban or 'rurban' areas with already complex land governance contexts (Van Noorloos et al., 2019a; Leitner & Sheppard, 2018). Considering the large spaces new cities can take up, combined with their potential to serve the elite, Van Noorloos et al. (2017) propose to look at new cities through the earlier introduced concept of (urban) land grabs. As many new cities are still either on the drawing board or in early construction, the empirical literature on the impacts of new cities on local communities and the bottom-up perspectives on new cities is small.

2.4.1 Research on local perspectives

Approximately 150 new city projects are proposed or under construction (Moser, 2020). Yet, little is known about how local people perceive and experience the new city (Van Noorloos et al., 2019a). Even though research on the effects of new cities has recently gained attention among development scholars and geographers, most research primarily focused on the top-down planning process and new cities' socio-spatial implications.

Some recent studies do focus on local perspectives. A recent study from Bandaiko and Arku (2023) found that policy actors justified Zimbabwe's proposed new capital city as establishing an alternative for the urban crisis confronting its current capital city, Harare. The researchers found that socio-spatial exclusions not only occur during the construction but already manifest at a conceptualized phase (ibid.). The researchers assessed that the public was not involved in the planning process, which denied their right to participate in the urban space. Moreover, the housing options were too expensive for the low-paid workers and surrounding local communities (ibid.). These processes diminished people's 'right to the city.'

Van Noorloos et al. (2019b) noted a high expectation of local inhabitants in the case of Konza Techno City in Kenya, which gradually declined throughout the city's development. Moreover,

it was found that a lack of participation in developing the city did not necessarily lead to negative feelings toward the problem. In fact, opinions varied within different communities due to numerous factors. Some people felt positive about the project due to employment options, and others perceived how the project could boost the value of their land. In contrast, farmers who experienced potential land loss were less optimistic about the project. Different (ethnic) backgrounds were tied to different views within the communities (ibid.).

3. Methodology

This research aims to uncover the perspectives and experiences of the inhabitants of the Sepaku village by employing an inductive, qualitative research approach. This research approach was deemed suitable as it enables one to understand “behaviour, beliefs, opinions, and emotions from the perspective of the study participant’s perspective” (Hennink et al., 2020, p. 36). Besides, qualitative research is useful for explaining how people give meaning to certain issues within the “complex social, cultural, economic, and physical contexts” where people live (ibid.). Sepaku village is a heterogeneous village that is rapidly evolving; thus, considering the context surrounding inhabitants, e.g., their life and family history, is key to answering the research question. Further, considering divergent life histories in a rapidly evolving context can create divergent perspectives and experiences. Capturing these perspectives and experiences is the main purpose of this research.

3.1 Data collection and applied methods

In-depth household interviews and group discussions served as the primary methods of data collection. In-depth household interviews were conducted to capture information about individuals’ life history and family situations. Further, this data collection method was considered appropriate given that the interviews were conducted in household environments throughout the Sepaku village. Second, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted amongst groups of men, women, and adolescents in Sepaku in order to gain information on the perspectives and experiences of different ‘segments’ of the study population (Hennink et al., 2020). Focus group discussions were chosen as a complementary source of primary data as the discussions could further substantiate or clarify data from the household interviews and possibly provide new insights (Morgan, 1988). Further, FGDs are suited for capturing community needs and evaluative policies and enable one to more closely observe larger ‘group’ dynamics and unique interactions that might not have emerged otherwise (Hennink et al., 2020). What is more, focus groups enable one to gather unique data wherein the communication among participants can lead to a deeper understanding of experiences that are central to this research.

The secondary methods of data collection included conducting informant interviews, imaginary walks and informal conversations, and the use of secondary data sources. First, as the research subject is policy-related, informant interviews enabled the researcher to gain insights into the contextual and contemporary mechanisms of the new capital city (Lokot, 2021). Moreover, because informant interviews are usually conducted with individuals who hold exclusive or expert knowledge on a research topic, they enable the researcher to gain insights beyond household

interviews or FGDs (Taylor & Blake, 2015). Nonetheless, considering that key informants might be biased, their views were only used as secondary data, and careful considerations were made to the role of their data in the research. Second, imaginary walks and complementing informal conversations were used to observe the study location and capture spatial changes occurring in the area (Hennink et al., 2020). Imaginary walks were chosen as a form of data collection as they enable spaces to be closely observed by the researcher and also provide insight into the surrounding areas' social norms (ibid.). Considering that the first phase of construction of IKN is currently taking place (toll roads, land development, and other physical infrastructures), capturing recent physical developments in the area is crucial to answering the research question. Lastly, throughout the data-collection process, but primarily in the first phase, secondary data was derived from desktop sources such as policy documents and IKN websites in order to gain knowledge on IKN and its current mechanisms. Further, the collection of secondary data enabled the researcher to delve into the history of East Kalimantan and the development of IKN, in particular, a critical component in understanding the background of the research topic.

3.2 Research steps

To answer the central research question, this research involved several steps (see table 1 for an overview of which research methods were used for which sub question). The first step of this research comprised preliminary desktop research in which data about the IKN concept was gathered from secondary sources, primarily official governmental documents and the IKN website (www.ikn.go.id). Data sources from the website were read (e.g. press releases, articles, news, and policy documents) in order to gain initial knowledge on the contextual setting of IKN. Further, this enabled the researcher to examine the complex land governance history in East Kalimantan. These histories are key to understanding East Kalimantan's contemporary ethnical diversity and spatial distribution of the population, primary workforce, and differences in land ownership.

Secondly, imaginary walks and informal conversations were conducted in the Sepaku village and other surrounding villages between the governmental core and the Sepaku water management project (Bumi Harapan, Bukit Raya, and Pemaluan). The imaginary walks began along the main road of the capital city as this was deemed a place where several distinct changes in the area could be observed. Informal conversations were conducted along the provincial road to gain a deeper understanding of the spatial changes in the area. Hereafter, the researcher traveled outside of the government core to neighboring villages in order to gain more holistic insights. Both the imaginary walks and informal interviews enabled the researcher to gather extensive information on the spatial constellations of the IKN project and how these constellations vary. Besides, the spatial

constellations are constantly changing and are therefore important to mention for the reliability of this study.

The third step involved conducting three informant interviews. Informant interviews enabled the researcher to gain knowledge on the current state and development of the IKN masterplan. The informants were selected based on their expertise regarding the Sepaku intake and its effects. One interview was conducted with the Indonesia's Indigenous Peoples Allegiance AMAN, who outed their concern about the indigenous peoples who are affected because of the Sepaku Intake project. Second, the chief of the Sepaku village was interviewed to retrieve more knowledge on the plans of the Intake and how it will affect the villagers. The final informant interview was conducted with a government consultant for the IKN project to retrieve background information on how the IKN project is evolving, i.e., what is going well, and what can be improved.

The fourth, final, and central step of this research revolved around capturing perspectives and experiences through in-depth household interviews and focus group discussions in the case study area, the Sepaku village. These interviews (N=27) and group discussions (N=3) varied in duration of 30 minutes to one and a half hours with several villagers surrounding the Sepaku Intake project. In order to ensure and respect the native language of the participants, the interviews were conducted in Indonesian. During the data collection process, an interpreter was present to translate the content of the discussions into English. Questions were first asked about the individual's work and life background, duration of living in Sepaku, and land ownership situation. Then, questions were asked about what the villagers know about the Intake, and how they have been informed and consulted in the development process. Finally, the people's perspectives on and aspirations for the IKN project were investigated (see Annex A for a full overview of the interview and focus group discussion guides). The interviews also included showing participants pictures of IKN and asking about aspirations of IKN as a possible future living area.

Table 1. Sub questions and research methods applied

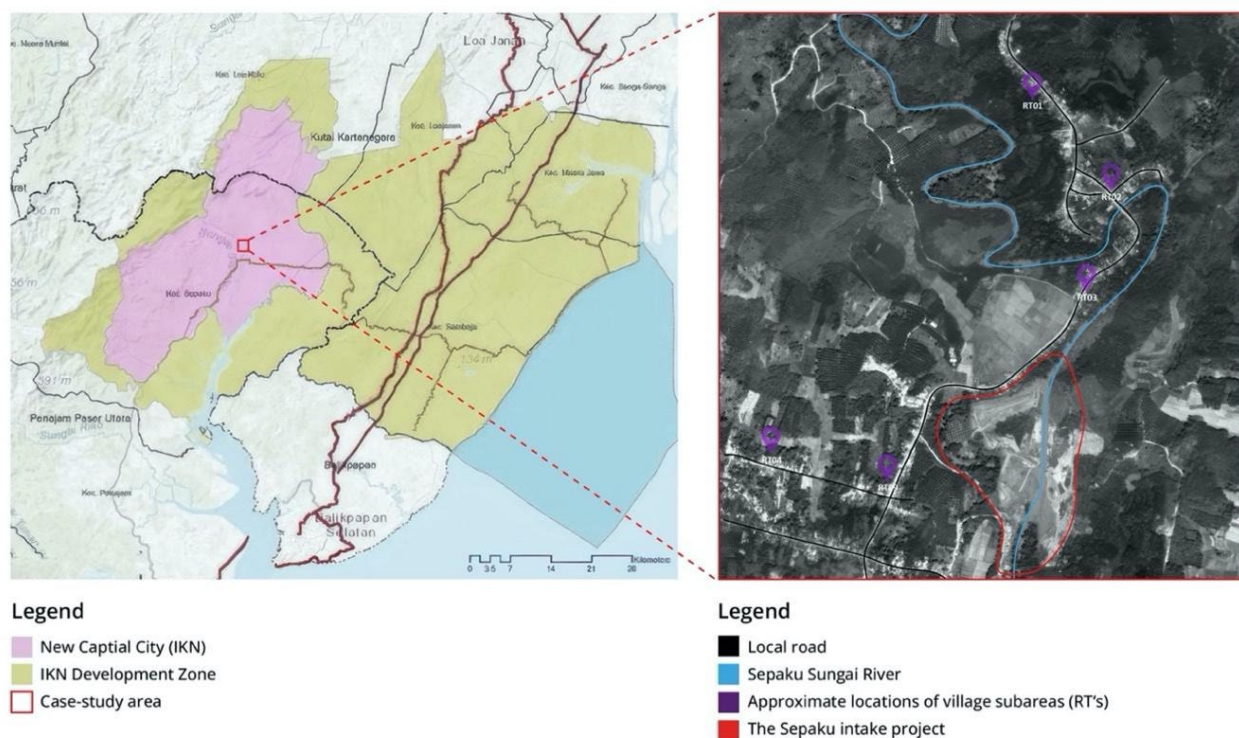
Research question	Applied methods
SQ1 – Spatial changes	Imaginary walks, informal interviews, informant interviews, secondary data.
SQ2 – Consultation and consent	Informant interviews, household interviews
SQ3 – Perspectives	Household interviews, group discussions
SQ4 – Needs and aspirations	Household interviews, group discussions

3.3 Case selection and sampling strategy

As IKN comprises 56,000 hectares of land, several careful considerations were made regarding the case selection. The first sub-question explores the essential current projects in the area and the consequent spaces on a meso-level. Through key informant interviews, transect walks, and informal conversations in the villages of Sepaku, Pemaluan, Bukit Raya and Bumi Harapan, several spatial constellations were identified to answer the sub-question. These villages span the area where a substantial amount of the first phase of the construction of IKN takes place (Saputra, 2022).

The case study area for the central part of this research comprised four neighborhoods in the Sepaku village (RT01, RT02, RT03, RT04 and RT09) which surround the water management project, the Sepaku Intake. This case study area was chosen as it is one of the projects in Phase 1 of the planning process. The proximity of the local village to the Sepaku Intake project and, similarly its central location in the capital city area provides an interesting mix. Further, this study area enables the investigation of the mechanisms around land acquisition while at the same time providing insights on the perspectives of the people towards the larger IKN project.

Figure 2. The case-study area. Source: Saputra (2022) and Google Earth (2023). Modified by author.



A total of 27 in-depth household interviews (41 participants) and three focus groups discussions (17 participants) were conducted in the study area, amounting to 58 total participants. Purposive sampling strategies were primarily used to select the participants. Purposive sampling is a recommended strategy for qualitative research, as it allows to recruit participants who are 'information-rich' (Patton, 2002), and to gain a diverse set of perspectives on the study issue (Hennink et al., 2020). For instance, it turned out that the headmen (or women) of the sub-areas in the village were more information-rich than other villagers, an interesting finding to begin with.

Deductive and inductive strategies were used to achieve diversity in the purposive sampling process (ibid.). Initially, during the design cycle, the study population has been identified deductively. Through research on East Kalimantan history revolving land governance, migration, and its current socio-demographic makeup, the ethnic diversity of East Kalimantan was identified. Hereafter, during the first stages of data collection, inductive strategies were applied in the first cycle of data collection through informant interviews with AMAN and the chief of Sepaku. Herewith, the several populations in the Sepaku village were identified, namely Javanese transmigrants in RT04 and RT09, the Indigenous Balik and Paser villagers in RT03, and the mix of Sulawesi and other migrants in RT01 and RT02.

Finally, to ensure inter-generation and inter-sexual diversity, the group discussions were held with three groups in the Sepaku village: women (N=6), men (N=5), and younger people (N=6). The group of men and women were selected on their proximity to the Sepaku Intake to gain more knowledge on how they experience the process of land acquisition for the project and to identify their needs for the new city.

3.3 Data analysis

The main objective of analysis in this case study is to identify the various narratives in the village towards the new city. In this case, a narrative analysis may inform how a participant makes sense of the project and its consequences (Hennink et al., 2020). Upon finishing the data collection process, interviews were transcribed in English by the researcher, while the interpreter handled the transcripts of the group discussions. This choice was made because the group discussion's character made it difficult for the interpreter to translate all relevant information during the process.

A hybrid of inductive and deductive methods was used to code the interviews. First, off-record memos were created, which were subsequently inductively turned into codes while re-reading a small portion of the transcript broad range of initial codes was then redefined after careful consideration and applied in the entirety of the transcripts. In the process of inductive coding, code-groups and categories were informed by the research questions, theoretical framework, and literature review.

Before coding the interviews, several themes emerged from the literature, such as differences in landownership (certificate versus *segei*) and the evaluative characteristics of FPIC (Free, prior, and informed consent). These topics served as the initial coding categories for the interview transcripts. After that, codes were created based on people's perspectives on the concept of IKN (e.g., negative versus positive perspectives on the project); perspectives on the current mechanisms of IKN (e.g., positive: 'more income', 'infrastructural development'; negative: 'no opportunities', 'polluted water'); short-term needs (e.g., 'land certificate,' 'job training'); and aspirations (e.g., 'maintain palm oil,' 'stay in Sepaku').

To deal with the large number of transcripts efficiently, the software program ATLAS.Ti was used in the coding process. This software enabled the categorization of households on key demographics and gave a clearer picture of the narratives captured by the research.

3.4 Limitations

This research carries several limitations that are important to mention. First, Indonesia's capital relocation is rapidly evolving; hence, the participants have to deal with several uncertainties.

Impacts will occur on a larger scale after IKNs official inauguration and the consequent relegalization of land deals. The displacements and actual inclusion in the perspectives and experiences of the project can naturally evolve and change. Nevertheless, it is important to study the effects of new cities from its early stages, as various sets of impacts can occur even before the construction (Van Noorloos et al., 2019a).

Moreover, the case study area does not represent the whole IKN area. While the researcher has attempted to involve as many people from diverse backgrounds as possible through purposive sampling, the project area consists of many other highly heterogeneous villages. Ultimately, the objective of qualitative research is to *understand* rather than generalize and earlier mentioned, adequate measures were taken to ensure reliability.

Finally, as the interviews were conducted in Indonesian, data can get lost in translation. While a bi-lingual translator attended all the interviews, the process of translation is a process of converting expressions and ideas from one language into another, which is embedded in the sociocultural language of the context (Torop, 2002). To ensure validity, the researcher often stopped the interviews to ask for clarifications, the researcher and translator carefully assessed key citations, and the researcher consulted regularly with the translator during the data analysis.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Qualitative research carries several ethical principles and considerations regarding permission and consent, voluntary participation, minimization of harm, anonymity, and confidentiality (Hennink et al., 2020). Essential to this study was considering the potential sensitivity of the subject. This research involved questions about land and livelihoods, which possibly could be threatened due to the recent developments of IKN. Participation was completely voluntary, and a clear introduction was provided to each participant about the objectives of the study. Further, the researcher ensured the participants that the data would be handled confidentially. The participants were asked if the interviews could be recorded for research purposes only. In a few cases, participants outed their concern that this research was related to the government. In those cases, the research was stopped for a moment to clarify the objective of the research, upon which the participants agreed to continue the interview.

Maintaining anonymity and confidentiality was also a key part of the data collection and beyond. As the case study area comprises of the Sepaku village, a small village within the IKN project, it is even more important that people's personal perspectives and experiences could not be related back to them, except for one case where a participant actively outed himself in media outlets about the topic and agreed to speak from his function. Likewise, the several village heads were not

named by name or the particular community they represented. Lastly, if participants wished to share their contact information, a follow-up notion about the research product will be sent upon finishing this project. Individuals' contact information was stored appropriately and is only available to the researcher.

4. Setting the context

This section provides a contextual overview of the new capital city project. The chapter starts with a general overview of Indonesia. Hereafter, the masterplan and its criticisms are described. Finally, the regional overview of East Kalimantan and, specifically, the new capital city area sets this research's socio-demographical and geographical context.

4.1. General overview of Indonesia

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic state, comprising over 17,000 islands that lie along the equator, between mainland Asia and Australia. The country has the fourth largest population in the world, with almost 280 million people, of whom around 56% live on Java Island, the world's most populated island (Worldbank, 2022). Currently, more than half of Indonesia's population lives in urban areas, and is still growing by around 2% per year (ibid.). The country is predominantly Muslim (86.7%), comprising over 300 ethnic groups and 700 languages (ibid.). After independence from its colonizer – the Netherlands – Indonesia has become one of the largest emerging economies. Besides, over the last decade, Indonesia has taken a leadership role in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a transnational agreement between 10 Southeast Asian countries on security, socio-economic and cultural developments (Anwar, 2020).

After Indonesia proclaimed independence from its Dutch colonizers in 1945, two periods of authoritarian leaders followed: the Sukarno (1945-1967) and Suharto (1967-1998) administrations. Sukarno became the first authoritarian leader by suspending Indonesia's parliament and restricting political parties while mostly shunning foreign relations (Ricklefs, 2001). During the Suharto period, Indonesia experienced rapid economic growth and relative political stability, albeit overshadowed by widespread corruption and oppression (ibid.). After the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, Indonesia underwent several democratic developments, although the country still struggles with corruption, discrimination, and violence against minority groups (Freedom House, 2022).

Indonesia currently struggles with several environmental problems, such as deforestation and natural disaster risks. Indonesia is the world's largest palm oil and coal exporter, causing problems for people and the environment (Ten Kate et al., 2021). Recently, President Widodo has embraced the global sustainability agenda, partly captured in his 'Vision of Indonesia 2045' (*Wawasan Indonesia 2045*). With this agenda, Widodo sets an ideal for Indonesia to become a top-five global economy, characterized by key terms such as equity, sustainability, and advanced technology (Mukherjee, 2021). The development of IKN is a key project within the 2045 vision (IKN, 2023). The next section will elaborate upon the IKN masterplan.

4.2 Land governance in Indonesia

It is important to highlight two key processes which complexify land: a) the contested meaning of 'land', and b) the role of the 'state' in the land rush. First, a key part of the struggle between land grabs and local communities is the contested meaning of land (Borras & Franco, 2013). 'Land' has different connotations for different groups of people, e.g., an economic/commercial value or a resource. Another key component in the land deals process is the state's role, as the steps required to turn 'marginal lands' into a commodity require state action. According to Borras Jr. et al. (2013), states can act three-fold to acquire land: as a process of land administration, exerting sovereignty and authority, and using coercion and violence to have people comply with its decisions. When faced with (the possibilities) of land loss, communities respond in different ways: some resist expulsion, some demand better compensation, and others mobilize to demand improvements regarding their incorporation into the areas (Borras & Franco, 2013).

Indonesia's contemporary land situation finds its early roots in two laws from the Dutch colonial state: I) Forest Laws from 1865, which declared three-quarters of the colony as forest, and II) the Agrarian Law from 1870, which claimed agricultural land without formal land ownership as state-owned (Peluso, 1992). His predecessor Sukarno mostly concentrated on forest land use planning in Java and disregarded international capitalists. With the Basic Agrarian Law (BAL), the Indonesian government provided itself with the rights and responsibility to control and access Indonesia's land and resources for its society's welfare (Sangaji, 2007). In essence, the law aimed to combine modern laws with traditional tenure systems (Bakker & Moniaga, 2010). BAL would provide some limitations for privatized land, while recognizing customary land tenure of local communities (ibid.). However, it indicated that all lands were alienable if conflicted with national interests (Sangaji, 2007).

Under Suharto's New Order politics, the Dutch colonist's policies were reiterated in post-colonial Indonesia (Peluso, 1992). With the Basic Forestry Act, Suharto empowered the central government to control, manage, and administer all state forest lands (Zerner, 1990). The unilateral claim by the Indonesian government to control most of their forest areas is conceptualized by Peluso and Vandergeest (2001) as the enforcement of the 'political forest'. The enclosure of communal land created limitations for local communities as the government enforced territorial control and a control on forest resources (ibid.). Forest areas were divided by Suharto's administration into several categories, such as industrial forests and conservation forests (Siscawati, 2014). Together with the Foreign Investment Act, Suharto's New Order opened space for foreign investment and capitalist development, largely favoring extractivists under extensive concessions areas rights (Kartasubrata,

1985). Similarly, the New Order regime disregarded customary claims to land, as it would hinder the state's control and profit-making (Peluso & Vandergeest, 2001).

In the same period, during Suharto's administration, the government set up transmigration projects (*transmigrasi*) to relocate people from the populated Java and Sumatra to start their lives in the outer islands, such as Kalimantan. With this, the government set aside land (2 hectares) with legal certainty, directly displacing customary landholders (Peluso, 1995). Transmigration also displaced customary landholders indirectly because transmigrants sought to buy land independently from the surrounding population (*ibid.*). However, the program also dispossessed the transmigrants, as the project did not make land provisions for future generations, who often became laborers instead of landowners (Li, 2017).

In 1998, after the fall of the Suharto regime and the subsequent democratization of Indonesia (*reformasi*), a new turn in land politics took place. This area marks the decentralization of the highly centralized forest land. The reforms changed the centralized control of forests into a regionalized framework (Aspinall & Fealy, 2003). The decentralization of authority led to an upsurge of local people who tried to claim land and forest resources. Many communities typified by the New Order area as isolated now demanded the recognition of their *adat* community rights (Davidson & Henley, 2007). To deal with these increasing land claims, the state allowed some communities to use forestry areas. However, the state would remain the 'legal' landowner. Contemporary issues include ambiguities between guidelines and different interpretations and implementation of laws, leading to contestations and negotiations on the national and local levels (*ibid.*).

Indonesia's land governance can thus not be seen as separate from contemporary land grabs, as Suharto's authoritative regime paved the way for logging concessionaires to loyalists and international firms (Gellert, 2010). At the end of Suharto's regime, hundreds of timber logging, palm oil, and mining concessions comprised almost half of Indonesia's government-identified state forests. McCarthy et al., (2012) identified several key transformations that led to large-scale land acquisitions: industrial logging and the transformation of food crops, turning logging and food estate areas into palm oil and timber plantations, and more recently, biofuel and forest projects for carbon sequestration (*ibid.*). Although some Indonesians benefited from the production of forests and agricultural modernization, the accumulation of capital and land happened at the expense of many (Batubara et al., 2022).

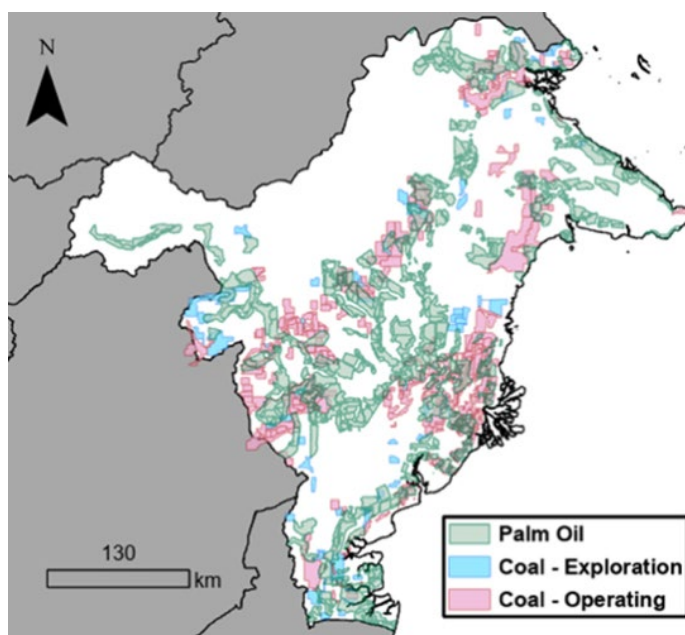
4.3 Introduction to the new capital city area: East Kalimantan

East Kalimantan, with its population of 3,8 million, is the least populated of the four provinces of Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of Borneo (BPS, 2023). East Kalimantan is the fourth biggest province in size, while only hosting just over 1 percent of Indonesia's population (ibid). East Kalimantan's socio-demographic makeup is highly diversified due to various historical migratory trajectories, mainly from Java, Sulawesi, and South Kalimantan. The largest ethnic groups are the Javanese from Java (29,55%), Bugis from Sumatra (18,26%), and Banjar from South Kalimantan (13,94%) (BPS, 2012). The two largest native ethnic groups in East Kalimantan are the Dayak (9,91%) and Kutai (9,21%). Although multiple religions are practiced, Islam is the most dominant religion (87,41%) (ibid.).

The province's economy heavily depends on various industrial extractives such as mining, logging, and palm oil (Ten Kate et al., 2021). More than half of East Kalimantan's landscape is covered by industrial palm oil or coal mining permits, sometimes overlapping, with drastic ramifications for the land and livelihoods of local people (Toumbourou et al., 2022). As a result, the province, once famous for its extensive rainforest (as part of the Bornean inner forest) has experienced a dramatic decrease in natural rainforest over the last hundred years.

The new capital city area is located in the southern part of the province, in a relatively sparsely populated area between the cities Balikpapan and Samarinda. The new city area largely overlaps the Sepaku district. Sepaku's population comprises around 36.000 people, scattered around 15 peri-urban villages and rural land. Agriculture (mainly palm oil and rice) is the main income source for the villagers (Saputra, 2022).

Figure 3. Concessions areas in East Kalimantan. Source: Toumbourou et al. (2020).



5. Results: The IKN masterplan

Officially, the new capital city is named ‘Nusantara’ (‘the outer islands’), however, as Nusantara is not yet enacted as the new capital city, the project is commonly referred to as *Ibu Kota Negara* (‘new capital city’). IKN is legally rooted in the ‘Law on the State Capital’ (*Undang-Undang Ibu Kota Negara*) (Buana, 2022). On 29 September 2021, the bill was published by President Joko Widodo. An ‘Omnibus Law’ of 43 different changes to laws and regulations related to IKN were bundled together to ‘*smoothen the State Capital relocation process*’ (Bappenas, 2019). As such, already on 18 January 2022, the bill was passed by the Indonesian government. With just 111 days after the published proposal, the bill became the fastest-passed law in Indonesian history (Buana, 2022). With the formation of the law, Widodo has inaugurated a special agency called the Capital City Authority, which functions with several ministerial capacities (ibid.). The project is expected to cost approximately 466 million Indonesian Rupiah (32.7 billion US Dollars), of which 20% will be governmentally funded, and the rest coming from public-private partnerships and investors. To realize this additional funding, IKN will provide tax exemptions and other investment incentives (IKN, 2023).

Historically, many of Indonesia’s presidents have outed their interests in establishing a new capital city (Saputra, 2022). Nevertheless, Widodo is the first president who succeeds in realizing this plan. In 2019, Widodo announced his plan to appoint the new capital city in the East Kalimantan province (ibid.). This location was chosen due to various reasons. Amongst others, the appointed site is in proximity to two big cities and is hence accessible where main infrastructures are already in place (toll roads and airports.). Moreover, the area holds ‘extensive amounts of land which hold the status of Protected Forests and Plantations’ (IKN, 2023).

This section comprises the following elements. First, the considerations and motivations of IKN are presented. These are captured through various policy documents. After that, an overview of the contemporary concerns and critiques are conveyed, as well as the responses of the IKN authorities.

5.1. Considerations and motivations

There is not one exact reason for the capital relocation. President Widodo mentioned multiple reasons, considerations, and visions for IKN. Importantly, IKN is part of President Widodo’s greater ‘Vision of Indonesia 2024’ (Bappenas, 2022). Its four pillars are achieving human, sustainable and equitable development while strengthening national resilience and governance (ibid.). IKN’s primary notions reflect this vision in many ways by attempting to create a green and innovative economic

superhub. Hence, several sustainable city concepts, such as the ‘smart city’ and ‘forest city’ concepts, are enrooted in the masterplan (ibid.). Here, the smart city concept is used in the context of IKN as: “A city supported by technology as the accelerator to increase productivity and life quality” (Bappenas, 2020). Second, the forest city concept “puts forward social and modern practices while still paying attention to environmental sustainability” (ibid.). According to the official website of IKN, the forest city concept provides room for spatial patterns for green spaces while improving ecosystems and conservation efforts, as can be seen from the concept versions of IKN (see Figure 3).

Figure 4. Proposed pictures of IKN. Forest city design (left), urban spaces (right). Source: IKN (2023).



Furthermore, the new city should become a new symbol of national identity (Bappenas, 2022). With the name Nusantara (‘the outer islands’), the government claims to embrace the diversity of Indonesia’s islands through a unified concept. Whereas development practices historically have taken place in Java, the capital relocation should stimulate economic development outside Java. Hence, Nusantara is said to become the new ‘center of gravity’ in the geographical middle of Indonesia (ibid.). During an event on the new national capital, President Widodo said: “Indonesia needs national-scope economic justice. There are 17 thousand islands, not just one. We need equality and equitable development. This is what we expect from the construction of the IKN” (Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia (Setkab), 2022). Altogether, according to the National Capital Authority, IKN should become ‘The World’s Sustainable City’ that is ‘locally integrated, globally-connected, and universally inspired’ (IKN, 2023).

5.2 The planning process

The appointed IKN area in East Kalimantan lies in the Penajam North Paser and Kutai Kartanegara regencies. IKN's land comprises three main parts: I) the Central Government Core Area (KIPP), covering 6,596 hectares; II) the Urban Area (K-IKN), covering 56,180 hectares; and III) the Development Area, covering 199,962 hectares. Hence, IKN's total National Strategic Area (KSN) amounts up to 256,142 hectares (around 2,500 km²). Moreover, the total land cover on paper consists of 65% tropical forest through reforestation, 25% urban built area, and 10% parks and food production area (ibid.).

To realize this, the IKN authority wants to build the city in several phases (IKN, 2023). First, the initial phase (until 2024) involves building governmental buildings, basic infrastructure, and the first phase of relocating public servants from Jakarta. Subsequently, from 2025 to 2035, the development of the planned urban area will be tackled. By doing so, several innovation and economic clusters will be built in the inner development area. From 2035 to 2045, the construction will focus on the development corridor with Balikpapan and Samarinda. Eventually, these construction phases lead to the post-development stage of 2045 and beyond. Then, IKN must uphold the status of 'Global City for All', among the ten most livable cities in the world, achieving a 100% renewable energy goal while hosting more than one million people (IKN, 2023).

5.3 Contemporary concerns and critique

The capital relocation has met extensive international attention, yet often consisting of criticism from NGOs and (international) media outlets. From an economic perspective, the lack of investors, together with the significant impact of COVID-19 on the Indonesian economy, has raised concerns regarding the project's financial feasibility (Maulia, 2022). The IKN authority seeks to raise 81% of the total expected costs for IKN from public-private partnerships and domestic and international investors. Though several countries and companies have expressed their interest in IKN, no concrete investment agreements have been reached (ibid.).

From an environmental perspective, NGOs such as Forest Watch Indonesia (FWI) expressed concerns about the consequences of the capital relocation on the environmental impact for East Kalimantan. The remaining forest in the IKN development zone is currently around 10%, the rest being either concession areas or other areas typed by monoculture (FWI, 2022). According to FWI, increasing amounts of deforestation of the remaining forest have already occurred, while the project has said actually to reforest the area (ibid.). Moreover, animals such as monkeys and crocodiles will be threatened due to the capital relocation (ibid.).

Besides, human and indigenous rights organizations point towards the potential displacement of tens of thousands of indigenous peoples in the project area. Several media outlets have covered the potential loss of the culture of indigenous communities due to potential displacement (Hasibuan, 2023). For example, Indonesia's largest indigenous rights group, AMAN, has released several statements of resistance. According to AMAN, 20,000 indigenous peoples in the IKN development zone are potentially facing displacement (ibid.). Although there have not been widespread spatial displacements yet, as of May 2023, the water management project 'Sepaku Intake' might displace several (indigenous) households (Informant, 01).

Box 1. The Sepaku Intake project

Phase 1 of IKNs construction consists primarily of the construction of infrastructure and the governmental core. The Sepaku Intake project is a water management project located near the Sepaku village in the new capital city area, and it will support the newly constructed Sepaku Semoi dam. Together, these water projects will provide clean water to deal with the influx of people in the area in the coming decades (ultimately 1.4 million people). The Sepaku Intake is built by the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing (PUPR). According to the ministry, the project was over 90% completed in April 2023. Eventually, the Intake will produce around 3000 liters of clean water per second for the new inhabitants of IKN (PUPR Indonesia, 2023). The remaining work includes the normalization of the Sepaku Sungai river and the finishing of the

Nevertheless, the head of the IKN authority has said to embrace indigenous and local communities:

"We have to respect them. The Indigenous people, the local wisdom. That should be part of our development process. That is why we have some inclusive forums, trying to get dialogue with all the stakeholders. So they will be part of our development part in the future" (Bappenas, 2021, p. 1)."

To what extent this will happen remains to be seen. The next section introduces the area that will form the new capital city.

6. Results: Spatial changes

Though still rapidly evolving, the spatial impacts of the capital relocation on the Sepaku district have been drastic. As it is beyond the scope of this study to comprehensively describe all changes that have occurred on the spatial level, the most notable changes in the area will be elaborated upon. This chapter is laid out as follows, first emphasis is placed on the specific projects that are currently being implemented in the IKN development area. Then, this chapter will discuss how the area has become a breeding place for non-project related businesses that shape the area. Finally, the focus will be on the consequences of the spatial changes for the case study area: the Sepaku village.

6.1 The governmental core and the provincial road

Box 2. Field observation, the provincial road.

The drive from Balikpapan to *Titik Nol*, the 'Ground Zero' of Nusantara was despite the relatively small distance some two hours. The yet-to-open tollway from Balikpapan to Nusantara will cut this time significantly, the driver said. He mentioned the big improvements on the roads since the introduction of the capital relocation. Before IKN, the wide asphalt road did not exist. While driving alongside the large palm oil plantations, two main things caught my eye: a constant supply of huge trucks passing by, and the increasing amount of *Dilarang* (Forbidden) signs. 'IKN!', said the driver with a laugh. As time passed, we passed more and more trucks until arriving in the new IKN area, where the large construction walls revealed the serious size of the project.

As mentioned in the contextual chapter, the first phase of the construction of IKN consists of building the governmental core and the vital infrastructure for the development area (IKN, 2023). These projects take place in different spaces in the IKN development area. According to the head of the Ministry of National Development and Planning (PUPR), the progress of this first phase of development is at approximately 26% as of April 2023 (Setkab, 2023). This number comes from the number of packages that have been carried out in relation to the total number of packages for the first phase of development planning (ibid.). After a slow start due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the development progress is now accelerating (Novi & Bagus, 2023). It is expected that the current thousands of workers will be supplemented to almost 17,000 in 2024 (ibid.). Hence the question, what specific projects are carried out now, and what are their spatial implications?

The governmental area (*KIPP*) comprises an area of approximately 6,000 hectares. In this area, the main governmental buildings will be built, such as the presidential palace and housing for government administrators. The funding of KIPP is fully comprised of the state budget and was started in 2022. The KIPP area is separated from the main road mostly by tall walls with the

descriptions of 'IKN' and 'PUPR' on the provincial road's west side, clearly showing the large, demarcated project (figure 5).

Figure 5. The demarcated KIPP area. (Source: Author).



Large palm tree fields on the other side of the road constitute a sharp contrast with the KIPP zone. This area is a palm oil concession area still used by PT Agromas East Kalimantan (AIEK). AIEK holds several concessions permits in the surrounding areas. In the villages surrounding the KIPP area, AIEK operates approximately 70% of the land (RSPO, 2015). Thus, while the State Capital Law eventually grants the IKN authority over land, many concession areas still comprise large parts of the landscape.

To continue, as illustrated in box 1, the one provincial road, '*Jalan Negara*' ('capital road'), connects the IKN area to the surrounding cities of Balikpapan and Samarinda. This regional road has been upgraded for the IKN project as hundreds, if not thousands, of trucks, carry heavy loads of equipment toward the core areas daily. With the introduction of the new toll roads, the two-hour ride from Balikpapan to IKN will be cut down significantly, to around 30 minutes. In 2020, the new toll road between Balikpapan and Samarinda was finished. Yet, as of May 2023, the progress of the three new proposed toll roads has been slow (around 5%), partly because of obstacles in the land acquisition process (PwC, 2023). To further accelerate the development of toll roads connecting IKN to the nearest airport in Balikpapan, the IKN authority claims the land acquisition process will be expedited (ibid.).

6.2 Unintended changes

Soon after the IKN bill was passed, President Widodo issued a hold on land transactions to prevent the land prices from skyrocketing [Informant, 03]. Despite this stop, many opportunity seekers have settled along the provincial road, and workers have (temporarily) moved to IKN. With the influx of opportunity seekers and workers, new guesthouses, supermarkets, and restaurants were built or are currently under construction. Interestingly, these changes are not government-related but stem from the high interest in the developing area.

Local people who reside near the main road often sublet their land to outside investors who build guesthouses, hotels, and restaurants (ibid.). One woman spoke about how the government's plan to relocate the capital city motivated her to move from Java to Sepaku and to open a restaurant [Conversation, Restaurant owner]. Moreover, large chains have opened venues, such as the Indonesian supermarket chain Indomaret, which has recently opened three venues alongside the main road. A local taxi driver recollected that before IKN was planned, there never was such a supermarket [Conversation, Taxi driver].

In addition, the local people who settled in the area long before IKN was planned seem to adapt to the ongoing changes in the area. For instance, a local farmer in Bumi Harapan was renovating his house to be able to rent it to newcomers [Conversation, Farmer]. The man admitted that things were changing in the area but that it was not much of a concern.

A stark contrast can be found when comparing the developments alongside the main road and the surrounding villages. As phase 1 of the projects' planning concerns the main infrastructure and the construction of the KIPP area, the spatial constellations within the villages of Pemaluan, Bumi Harapan, Bukit Raya – villages that are further away from the main road – have changed, but nowhere near like the developments alongside the main road, as illustrated by Figure 6.

Figure 6. Construction along the provincial road (left), and a small farm in the Bumi Harapan village (right). (Source, Author).



6.3 Changes in the Sepaku village

Box 3. Field observation: Sepaku village

Beside the main road stood a large sign: 'Sepaku Intake'. Once we took a turn to the right of the provincial road, the road immediately became bumpy. To our right, a few men loaded up a truck full of palm oil. We drove down a hill, from where I could see large rice fields on the left, and a big concrete wall to the right. Behind the wall lay a large, excavated area and further away a big concrete construction. The driver told me it was part of the Intake project which would manage floodings of the Sepaku Sungai river. We passed several hundred wooden houses, which contrasted with the newly built concrete structures along the provincial road. Further away from the project, some villagers passed by on scooters, carrying sacks filled up with palm oil. Not even the convoys of trucks on the provincial road came close to the noise they made with their scooters.

One of the major infrastructural projects is the realization of the Sepaku Intake project, which would provide clean water as well as manage the water levels (as described in Chapter 4, Box 1). The Intake lies adjacent to the Sepaku village (*Keluaran Sepaku*). Its construction started in 2022 and its progress achieved 80% as of May 2023 (PUPR, 2023). During this period, the government acquired several hectares of palm oil land owned by local people. Since the proposed outline of the project has recently been realized, a concrete wall now separates the villagers from the Intake project. Figure 7 shows an aerial view of the proposed plan and the stage as of April 2023.

Interestingly, the houses on the left side of the dam are not apparent in the proposed outlook of the Intake. Indeed, according to the plans, the area where people live next to the river

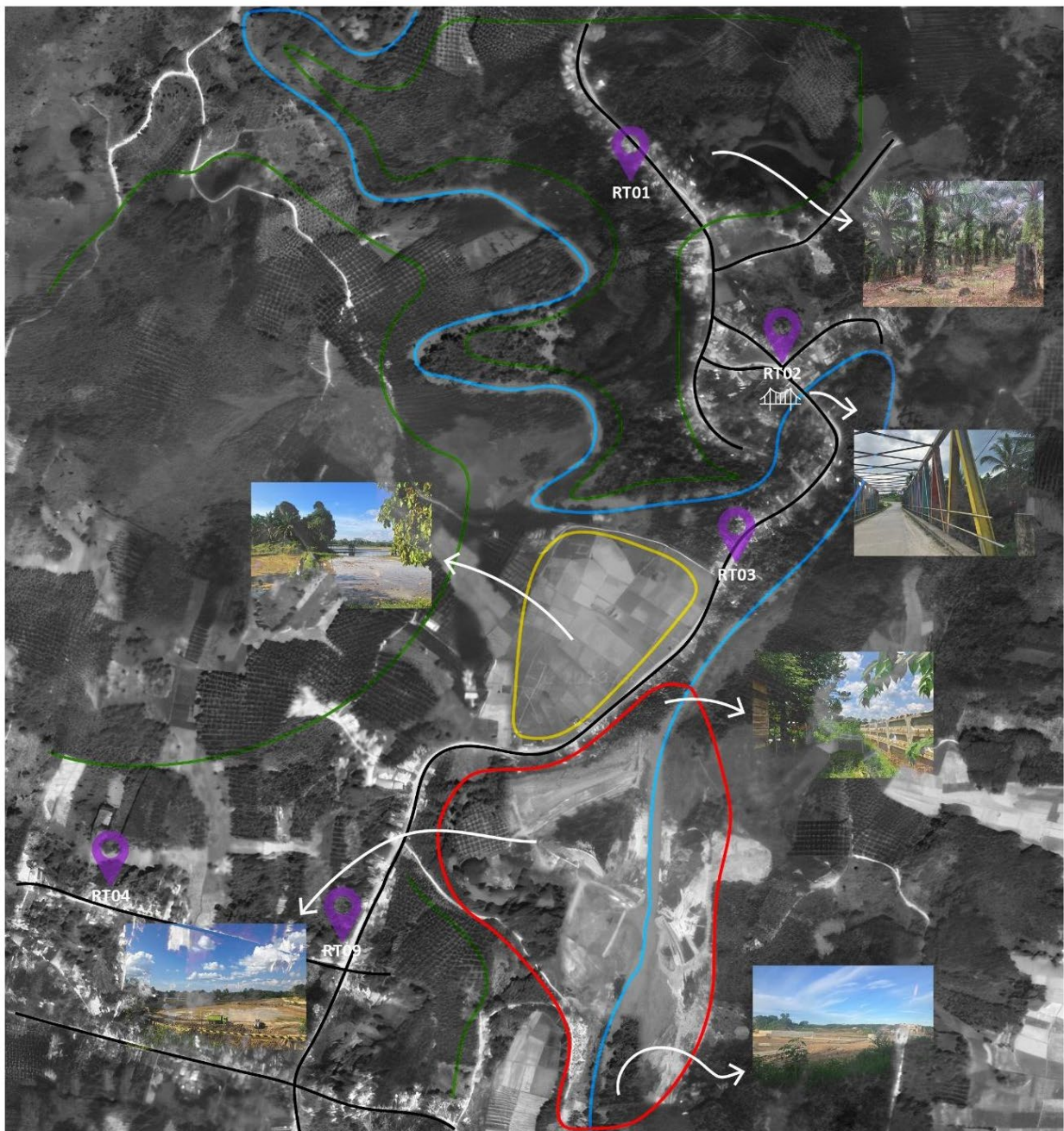
will have to make place for a water retention area and the installation of water pumps (Informant, 02). Hence, 22 households living in subunit 02 (RT02) are expected to be relocated.

Figure 7. Aerial overview of the Sepaku Intake, April 2023 (left); and the Sepaku Intake concept version (right). Source: PUPR (2023).









At the time of writing, community-managed palm oil land and rice fields form a significant part of the landscape around the village. Aside from the Intake project and the newly built bridge, the oil palm and rice fields and several hundred wooden houses still comprise the village's most significant part (see Figure 8). Nevertheless, plans for expansion of the Intake suggest that this could change in the near future. The following section dives into how the villagers are informed and consulted about the Intake project.

Figure 8. Overview of spatial changes in the study area. Source: Google Earth; modified by author.



Legend

-  Local road
-  Approximate Sepaku Intake project area
-  Sepaku Sungai River
-  Community-managed plantation areas (primarily oil palm)
-  Approximate locations of village subareas (RT's)
-  Community-managed paddy fields

7. Results: Communication and consultation

The following section dives into the current experiences of the people of the Sepaku village surrounding the Sepaku Intake water management project. It aims to examine the extent the local people in the village have been consulted about the project and how communication flows within the village. First, an overview of the different communities that live in the village is presented. Then, insight into the communication and information flows about IKN will be provided, illustrating that villagers' knowledge and awareness depend on people-to-people communication. The final section turns to the nature of consultations and also touches upon coercive elements used by the project enforcers.

7.1. Sepaku's heterogeneity

The Sepaku village comprises around 1900 inhabitants and comprises 9 subareas, or *RTs* (Saputra, 2022). These *RTs* are led by one inhabitant of each administration, the *Ketua*, chosen through an election (Informant, 03). The community heads serve as middlemen or women between the local society and the chief of Sepaku. In contrast to the chief, the position of *RT* is voluntary. Hence, the village head role is often equipped by experienced local people who were either born in Sepaku or have resided there for several decades. In addition to the village heads, there are several other important figures in the area, such as tribe and farmer leaders, who each serve as representatives for a specific group of people.

Sepaku's indigenous and local inhabitants, like many other people in the area, have been subject to a long history of in-migration and land exclusions. A local tribe leader underlined two vital outside influences that shaped the situation before IKN [Interview, H02]. First, in the 1970s, migrants from the inner islands (mainly Java) came to Sepaku under President Suharto's *transmigrasi* (transmigration) project. The Javanese migrants settled in several villages and were granted two hectares of certificated land, often at the expense of the land of indigenous peoples who were dependent on customary land tenure. Yet, the largest exclusions occurred when palm oil and timber agribusinesses, such as PT Agromas East Kalimantan (AEIK), turned large chunks of land into palm oil and acacia forests: "In the past, the Balik tribe lived near the forest, but because of the arrival of PT. ITCI and the transmigrant people slowly took our land, and now the move of the New Capital City will also take the land we have defended for generations. People here give up their land because they don't know the country's laws. They are afraid to go against the government because they have no power" [ibid.].

According to the local tribe head, most conflicts between incumbent corporations and the villagers have now largely been resolved [Interview, H02]. In fact, big palm oil corporations, who were always seen as an ‘enemy’ for causing displacements of indigenous land and harm to the environment, are now vital for sustainable income. The companies created jobs and opportunities for the local and indigenous people to sell their palm oil for a sustainable income. Yet, this positive image of the palm oil companies is nuanced by his neighbor [Interview, H01]. While the indigenous peoples can manage some land through use rights (*segeI*), the palm oil corporation AEIK has displaced and dispossessed much indigenous land through a concession with the government [Interview, H02]. The agribusiness did not have any regard for the customary land practices of the local and indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, after long struggles of displacements of their indigenous land, the conflicts in the village have been put to bed, the man stated [ibid.].

President Widodo’s initiative to provide indigenous and local people in Indonesia with legal certificates has not been practiced yet in Sepaku. With IKN's formalization, all legal land transactions are put on hold in Sepaku until 2024 [Informant, 03]. Therefore, there remains a difference in land-claim strength in the area: Javanese transmigrants – although mostly the older generation – possess a certificate, while other migrants (e.g., Sulawesi and Sumatra), the newer generations of transmigrants, and the indigenous peoples only possess use rights. It is important to note here that although Javanese transmigrants in RT04 and RT09 often possess certificates, they were also often forced to work in the plantation forest, as explained in the contextual chapter.

The abovementioned mechanisms have shaped differences in land ownership and the spatial distribution of groups of people in the village, leading to several establishments of RTs [Interview, H04]. Hence, Sepaku consists of several local communities with their historical migratory trajectories and ways of managing land instead of consisting of one homogenous local community. When speaking of ‘the community,’ the participants mostly referred to their inner circle, i.e., the people they live with. The common demeanor in the village remains the work in palm oil or other farming industries in the nearby community-managed plantation forests. Table 3 provides an overview of the spatial distribution of Sepaku’s inhabitants in the study area.

When analyzing the processes of communication and consultations concerning the Sepaku Intake project, it is important to be aware of the heterogeneity of the Sepaku village. The Sepaku Intake is situated directly adjacent RT03, an area where mostly indigenous peoples live, who maintain a relationship with the Sepaku River. Furthermore, the expansion of the Intake overlaps with RT02, a neighborhood where mostly migrants from Sulawesi have settled. Table 3 provides an overview of the various RTs in the study area and their overlap with the project’s plan. The following

section delves into what individuals from the various RTs know about the Intake, and how communication and information flow within the village.

Table 2. Ethnic groups and spatial distribution in the study area.

RT (village sub-area)	Main ethnic group	Main historical migratory pattern	Main land ownership situation	Overlap with current plans for river and road widening	Human-water relationship
01;02	Sulawesi/Bugis	Migrated to Sepaku Lama in late 21 st century	Segel (use rights)	Partly overlaps, some displacements expected	Low
03	Balik/Paser	Indigenous people (generation-to-generation)	Segel (use rights)	Almost fully overlaps, displacements expected	High
04;09	Java (trans)migrants	Migrated to Sepaku Lama in 1970s from Java (Suharto's <i>transmigrasi</i>)	Certificate (ownership rights)	Small overlaps, no displacements yet	Low

7.2 People-to-people communication

Even though most individuals in the study area are aware of the Sepaku Intake and its relationship with the wider IKN project, much is unknown about its mechanisms. For example, several participants questioned what the reasons were for the location of the Intake project. The local Balik headman wondered why the decision was made to locate the Intake next to the indigenous part of the village as if the government sought to evict the indigenous villagers from their ancestral land [Interview, H02]. Moreover, the headman was puzzled about why the authorities did not choose the concession areas further upstream of the river [ibid.].

The local heads of the RTs are vital in diffusing the information from the IKN authority to the local people [Informant, 02]. According to the village chief, the authorities inform him, upon which he informs the local heads, who in turn inform the other villagers. An identified issue is that not all RT leaders knew or desired to know about the upcoming plans to expand the Intake [Interview, H12]. Hence, cases exist where people have not received adequate information about the project. One woman who currently faces eviction described how she did not know what was going on beyond her backyard while the noise of the excavators was echoing in the background [Interview, H15]. The woman knew the project was related to IKN but was uncertain about its mechanisms

[ibid.]. Many other participants were unaware of what was happening in their neighborhood [Interview, H19; H23; H24]. When the RT leader does not adequately communicate the plans, their motives, and objectives, the local people depend on what they hear from others, sometimes left guessing.

A similar trend occurred with regard to communication about the expansion aspects of the Intake project. As mentioned in the previous section, there is a plan to expand the project area by placing several water pumps and widening the river. A picture of this expansion plan was presented to the community leaders. Yet, what the picture entailed exactly was not understood by everyone. One household received the picture of the expansion but no additional information about what the yellow area meant [Interview, H19; H20].

Aside from people-to-people communication, group discussions about the Intake were held, but not all villagers involved attended these meetings. The discussions were predominantly attended by the RT leaders and some other villagers of the 22 households facing displacement. Hence, the group discussions about the Intake mostly revolved around the land acquisition process and were not meant for the other villagers. The nature of the consultation process will be elaborated upon in the next section.

Figure 9. The expansion plans for the Intake which were shown to the villagers. Source: Author.



7.3 Consultations about land

The 22 households in RT02 and RT03 who currently face displacement do not legally own the land where they live but possess so-called use rights (*segei*). The land that the indigenous and other local people use results from a period of struggle with the companies [Interview, H02]. In the last

decades, the local people were given these use rights, which are often administrated by the RT leaders [Interview, H02; H03]. However, the land remains under state authority [Informant, 03]. In theory, the IKN authority does not necessarily need consent from the local people to proceed with the expansion of the Intake. Nevertheless, the government promised to respect the living situation of the local people (Bappenas, 2021). How does this mechanism work in practice?

According to the Indigenous Allegiance, AMAN, the decision from the government to locate the Intake project adjacent to the village happened swiftly and without any prior consultation with the local people [Informant, 01]. Representatives of the organization explained how the project was first meant to be built further upstream in palm oil concession land. The village chief explained that the land earmarked for the Intake was mainly palm oil land belonging to transmigrants with whom the sale of their land had been agreed [Informant, 02]. However, there is no clear reason why the IKN authority chose Sepaku as the exact location.

A local palm oil farmer whose house is separated by the concrete wall of the Intake project told how the authority asked him for just a small part of his backyard, which he agreed to [Interview, H04]. When more land was needed for the expansion of the Intake, the builders placed signs in the people's backyards, which were needed for the widening of the river and the other expansion plans. After the people complained to the chief, a group discussion was initiated [ibid.]. However, later on, the government placed a sign closer to his house. The farmer described the process:

“Initially, the government set a bet without prior information to the people here. Then, they held group discussions with the Lurah (Village chief), RT (Neighbourhood Head) and the people who get the effect of the project. The decision...the deal...was that the government only took the land on the first measurement, so we agreed to the first expansion. Later, the government came here again and scouted this place [points to his backyard]. I disagreed with that, and I complained to the Lurah because I couldn't give up this large piece of land” [Interview, H04].

Another participant described a similar experience. She is a housewife, and her husband works for AIEK, a palm oil corporation. Even though her land had not been taken by the authorities yet, she suddenly found two signs on both sides of her house [Interview, H15]. If an imaginary line were taken from one pole to the other, her newly renovated house would be split in half. Hence, she was concerned and wondered what would happen next. She believes that her land is needed for the project. At least, that is what she heard from her family members [ibid.].

Thus, whereas during the initial phase of the Intake expansion, the participants in RT03 were asked to give up a small portion of their backyard, they were surprised by the second expansion.

From that point onwards, there has been a disagreement between the indigenous peoples and the authorities. In response, several moments of interaction between the authorities and the villagers have been initiated.

Until this research was conducted, there had been five moments of interaction between the households nominated to be evicted and representatives from the project. One of these discussions occurred in the capital city of East Kalimantan, Samarinda, a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Sepaku [FGD, P01]. While the participants could attend these discussions, some stated that the group discussions had an informative character instead of serving the opportunity to influence the outcome [Interview, H06]. As several subsequent group discussions occurred, the construction of the Intake continued, despite the ongoing disagreement between the villagers and the authorities [Interview, H01; H04]. Whereas the chief stands by the local people, he reiterated that it was in the people's best interests to agree with their displacement [Informant, 02]. If they disagreed, they would most likely experience more floodings from the river [ibid.].

The position of women in the group discussions was marginal, as only a few attended the discussions. Interviewed women stated that there had been no attempt by the government to gather them for discussions. However, the chief underlined that everyone affected by the construction had the chance to participate [ibid.]. The women who did attend one or more meetings found it hard to engage in the discussions. An older woman from RT02 said there was no room for her to raise her voice [Interview, H08]. Other women found the available information about the project difficult to understand and confusing due to the use of 'high language' [FGD, P07].

Furthermore, several people mentioned the unconventional ways in which they were told to comply with the government's will [Interview, H01; H06]. The Balik tribe leader stated that he was not permitted to talk with the media about the Sepaku Intake, though he continued to do so [Interview, H02]. Other respondents stressed that if the people resisted giving up their land, they would not receive any compensation. For instance, one participant was told, "They said if we don't give up our land then we will face the courts" [Interview, H04]. The same participant claimed that after the first expansion, his use-rights documents were kept by the authorities [ibid.].

8. Results: Contrasting perspectives

This chapter elaborates on Sepaku and its villagers and delves into the villagers' perspectives on IKN. The chapter begins with the perspectives on the IKN concept and continues by explaining how current impacts (re)shape these into contrasting perspectives on how IKN is unfolding. Finally, the motives behind the different sets of resistance and acceptance towards land acquisition are explained.

8.1 Perspectives on the capital relocation

The interviewed villagers are predominantly positive about the capital relocation to the Sepaku area. These positive views were dominant for young and old villagers, indigenous peoples, and transmigrants. Three main positive perspectives on the IKN concept were identified concerning the area's development, having a capital city in the center of Indonesia, and the benefits for the future generation.

Table 3. Perspectives on the IKN concept

Perspectives on the concept	Explanation
Positive change and development	Because of the development of IKN, the place has become more famous. It affects the development of this area. [Interview, H02].
The center of Indonesia	This area is Kalimantan, in the center of Indonesia. There is no different treatment from the government. [Interview H21,]
Future generation	The younger people can get an advantage from IKN. If they obtain a good education, they will work here. [Interview, H20]

First, some participants note that IKN can initiate change and development in Sepaku because the area has become increasingly 'famous' [e.g., Interview, H01; H02; H03]. More people traveling to the area would mean more chances for the villagers to find ways to participate and eventually profit and improve their lives [Interview, H01]. Adding onto this, a few participants found the capital relocation

a good plan, as Kalimantan is the center of Indonesia. According to one participant, for instance, Kalimantan is the center of Indonesia, where no different treatment between the people takes place [Interview, H20]. Third, some interviewees believe the IKN initiative may provide a brighter future for younger generations [e.g., Interview_H21]. They believed that IKN would enhance young people's chances for education and jobs. As an example, the daughter of the Balik tribe leader is the only one among her village friends who attends a university. Most families cannot afford to send their children to higher education because of the costs and the vast distance [Interview, H02]. While many other participants did not give specific reasons for their positive views, they still voiced optimistic opinions about IKN.

8.2 Contrasting perspectives on the current mechanisms

Despite the positive image of IKN's concept, more – and contrasting – perspectives were found when asked whether these positive perspectives and expectations were realized. The participants in the various RTs were asked how they currently experience IKN. It turned out that despite their initial positivity and optimism towards the IKN concept, most of the villagers became less positive and often even concerned regarding the evolving IKN's trajectories in their neighborhood and beyond. For instance, surrounding the main road, the prices for food, guesthouses, and restaurants have risen dramatically, much to the concern of some participants [FGD P07; P08]. Yet, villagers who tend to stay in their area do not necessarily experience the negative sides of this [FGD P07-P011]. Some other participants mentioned that crime has increased with the increasing population [Interview, H01].

The proximity to the Intake to the participants has also considerably impacted how people perceive IKN. For instance, the people living beside the Sepaku Intake are separated from the Intake project by a recently built concrete wall. Yet, the wall does not protect some of the villagers from the noise, as a local palm oil farmer explained: “when they were doing the digging there was like an earthquake in this area [...] and it was very noisy” [Interview, H04]. The farmer explained how he initially gave up 35 m² of his backyard for the sake of the project. Recently, he heard that the area reaching up to his kitchen was needed for the Intake, due to the enlargement of the dam area. With the potential displacement of the 22 households, many participants were concerned about getting evicted [e.g., Household 01;02; 03].

Aside from spatial explanations for differences in experiences, crucial contrasting perspectives were found on three issues within the village: infrastructure, land value, and job opportunities (see Table 5 for an overview). What shapes these divergent perspectives?

Table 4. Contrasting perspectives on IKN’s mechanisms

Theme	Positive	Negative
Land	The higher land value means a higher income.	Because of the higher land value, it will be increasingly difficult to find land in Sepaku.
Job opportunities	Because of IKN, renting your car or house is easier, so income increases.	Sometimes the company stops the contracts with the local people. After just three days of work and a cheap salary.
Infrastructure	The road has been improved and the bridge has been built, so it’s easier to go anywhere.	The access to the river decreased and the road got bumpier due to the heavy vehicles.

8.2.1 Water and road infrastructure

Contrasting perspectives emerged around the theme of water and road infrastructure in the Sepaku village. The Indigenous communities near the Intake and the Sepaku River have witnessed a changing relationship with water. The Indigenous Balik and Paser villagers have long connected with this river [FGD, P09; P10]. Several people who live along the river mentioned how their access to clean and sufficient water has diminished because of the Intake. For instance, a Balik woman describes how her family traditionally relied on the river water for laundering and cooking purposes, but that the Intake project has polluted the water and disrupted the natural flow of the stream [ibid.]. Similarly, a Paser man from RT09, who lives with three generations of his family, drew water from a pipe he installed to connect his backyard to the river. This water served their daily needs. However, since the construction for the Intake began, less water has flown through the pipe [Interview, H20]. The man mentioned that his family must now buy water tanks from expensive stores. Furthermore, the Balik tribe leader notes a significant shift in flooding occurrences. Now they occur about once a month. In March 2023, the area around the Sepaku Intake area experienced massive flooding [ibid.].

Whereas the presence of the IKN, albeit through the Intake project, is experienced in predominantly negative ways by the people in RT03, this presence is not experienced in the same ways by other villagers. Two neighbors who live further from the project and the river (in RT09) mention how their day-to-day situation in their village has not changed much, aside from some

infrastructural enhancements [Interview, H28]. Another RT01 participant residing near the Intake project, conveys that IKN's presence is not felt in her locality. The woman stated that a bridge was built, which improved the accessibility of the villagers to other parts of the district [Interview, H21]. In contrast, villagers from RT03 argue that their road has gotten worse due to the increasing heavy traffic. Some report more pollution and road dust in their neighborhood [Interview, H01; H04].

8.2.2 Land value

The second contrasting perspective emerged from the interviewees' views on the surge in land value within the region. Since President Widodo's plan to relocate the capital city to East Kalimantan, land prices have skyrocketed due to the high demand among opportunity seekers to start a business in the area [Informant 03]. Whereas for some interviewees, the increasing land prices are experienced as potentially benefiting the local people, others see this as negative. Of the five households with a certificate of their land, four mention higher land prices as a positive aspect [Interview, H21; H22; H24]. The land value of the transmigrants is higher due to their certificates [Informant, 03]. On the contrary, the Indigenous peoples and other non-transmigrants mainly see the higher land prices in the area as an obstacle [Interview, H01; H02; H06]. If they are forced off their lands, they may not be able to buy new land in the area due to their weaker land claim [Informant, 03]. Finally, the proximity to the Intake and the future displacement forms another barrier for the people in RT03. According to one participant from RT03, newcomers are not interested in renting or buying their house because of the rumors that the area would be taken for the project [FGD, P06].

8.2.3 Job opportunities

Third, contrasting perspectives were found regarding the current job opportunities IKN brings. Some participants describe how IKN enhances their chances of getting a job besides remaining solely as a farmer [Interview, H10]. For instance, villagers might work as construction workers or start a store. A young woman from RT04 recently graduated from a university in Samarinda, the capital city of East Kalimantan. Now, she works as an administrator for the IKN project while still living near her parents, which would not have been possible before [Interview, H26].

However, the men who occupy a part-time job in the IKN project speak about limited job opportunities, bad contracts, low wages, and even dangerous practices. A few Balik men from RT03 who cultivate a small area for palm oil and crops in the neighborhood during the day work at night as security guards (*wakar*) in one of IKN's construction areas. According to one participant, and confirmed by others during the group discussion, the job can be dangerous due to robberies of the expensive equipment they guard [Interview, H01]. Moreover, working in IKN results in little pay, and

their contracts were sometimes terminated without reason [Interview, H06]. In the eyes of an electrician from RT01, the IKN authority prefers workers from other cities, primarily Jakarta. These workers are more skilled than the local people. Additionally, the people who occupy higher ranks are often also from Java (ibid.). The electrician continued by explaining that their village does not experience benefits because the project is situated near the main road, not in their area.

Several women, the majority of whom are housewives, mention how they do not have the chance to start a business. In contrast, people near the main road in the transmigration areas would have more opportunities because that is where the project occurs. Interestingly, women are not talking about the IKN-related project but the unintended changes which were reported in chapter 5.

8.3 Mechanisms of support and resistance

Aside from the current divergent perspectives on changes in the area, various mechanisms of support and resistance towards potential land acquisition were identified. Although not all participants directly face eviction from their land (yet), they were asked whether they would give up their land if the government needed it for the IKN project. This question was asked given that spatial displacement could entail and mean something different for individual households. How do people see the potential for displacement? As a threat, or perhaps even as necessary for the development of IKN?

The indigenous Balik peoples of RT03 reject, and some even resist the relocation of the 22 households. Most Balik people in RT03 have lived in that area for their entire lives [Interview, H02]. The historical and cultural attachment to their land is important to the Balik people, who feel that they were let down by the government before due to large-scale land concessions and the transmigration program. Now, some resist displacement from their ancestral land, supported by the indigenous rights group AMAN. AMAN maintains an even starker tone, claiming that the Balik Indigenous peoples' culture, language, and identity may become extinct [Informant, 01].

Interestingly, the group discussions with indigenous Balik men and women point out that many indigenous land traditions were banned or becoming increasingly hard to practice. For instance, a typical land practice was planting mountain rice by burning land as a fertilization process [FGD, P07]. This practice of clearing land by burning was already prohibited by law before IKN. Additionally, a local hunter explains how hunting has become a hobby instead of a livelihood asset due to the decreasing forest. In the past, there were wild animals everywhere, he says. The development of IKN will make this practice even more difficult, he regrets [FGD, P09]. The indigenous Balik peoples feel that IKN might accelerate their indigenous livelihoods even more [Interview, H02].

A starkly different attitude towards potential eviction from their land occurred in the transmigration areas of RT09 and RT04. The transmigrant families who migrated under the Suharto administration to Sepaku pointed towards the importance of their trust in the government. “If the government wants to take this land, we would be happy to give it,” a transmigrant woman conveyed [Interview, H23]. As mentioned in the contextual chapter, the transmigrants were supported by the government, who allocated them two hectares of certificated land. This group of participants tends to trust the government, as they have been helped before with these transmigration projects [Interview, H28]. Importantly, this does not mean that everyone would rather be in this situation, but if it proved necessary, most would accept the government's plans [ibid.].

Table 5. Attitudes and perspectives towards potential land acquisition.

Attitudes and perspectives towards potential land acquisition	Background/RT	Explanation
Generally supportive	Javanese formal landowners	‘The government helped us in the past, thus we will accept relocation.’ [Interview, H23]
Generally negative/resisting	Indigenous Balik (RT03)	‘This is our ancestral land’ [Interview, H02]
Mixed reactions	Javanese, Bugis, Mandar, Sumatra, migrants (RT01, RT02)	‘I support the government as they have the higher power’ [e.g., Interview, H20]

A divergent set of reactions were found in RT01 and RT02, an area inhabited by migrants from Sulawesi and other parts of Kalimantan. While a majority mentions that they will follow the government’s will, their reasoning differs from other villagers. Some feel that the IKN project is a project from the government, and hence the government will decide what happens [Interview, H18]. Several people note there is no way to oppose the government, given their power in Indonesia [ibid.].

9. Results: Needs and aspirations

This chapter delves into the wants and needs of Sepaku's inhabitants concerning IKN. First, the section will elaborate on people's short-term needs. Then, the section provides insights into what people aspire to gain or not gain from the capital city. Essentially, it asks: What are people's hopes for the future, and what role does IKN play in these aspirations?

9.1 Short-term need: land

The villagers' short-term needs are heavily influenced by the Intake and the potential future evictions. While not all Sepaku's inhabitants (currently) face displacement, the participants noted the importance of land security. 'Land' is an important asset, not just in economic but also in social-cultural terms. Several entangled needs were identified about peoples' land: the need for a fair payment or relocation, the importance of a certificate, and the need to maintain the communities.

First, if the eviction of their land happens, the participants stressed the need for a proper payment for their land that relates to the market price of land. The rapidly rising land prices in the area would make it impossible for them to buy new land in Sepaku if they were to be evicted. Because of the high land prices, the participants hope that the government prepares land for them in Sepaku, as otherwise, they will not be able to maintain the same amount of land they currently use.

Moreover, the villagers who do not possess a certificate for their land, need a certificate to prevent different treatment compared to the Javanese transmigrants [Interview, H01]. With their current weaker land claim, the non-transmigrants will possibly receive less compensation for the land, while at the same time often owning a lesser amount of hectares [Informant, 03]. As mentioned before, the land certification process has stopped with the introduction of IKN. The people with use rights are concerned that they cannot buy new land near Sepaku, where they were born, and where their history lies [Interview, H01]. Thus, to avoid being forced to move far from Sepaku, they need an official certificate for their land.

Interestingly, most indigenous peoples in RT03 who disagreed with the expansion of the Intake would accept the current relocation plans if the government would meet the abovementioned needs [Interview, H01]. This finding contrasts the message of the leaders of the indigenous people's organization AMAN, who stress that the indigenous peoples would resist any relocation [Informant, 01]. While AMAN explains the importance of the indigenous land and people's cultural attachment through rituals as a motive to resist relocation, the participants mostly stress how these detachments were already happening before IKN. True, in an ideal situation there

would be no relocation needed, but the interviewed Balik households would agree with a proper and fair relocation plan [Interview, H01]. A Balik woman proposed how the government could give them an own area so they could maintain their culture and identity [FGD, P08]. In sum, not all interviewees share the same tone and use of words as AMAN.

9.2 Short-term need: inclusion in IKN

Another important need revolved around the inclusion of the villagers in the IKN project. The training that some people have received has not been successful in realizing involvement in the project. The participants still noted that the government was not interested in local people developing the project. To compete with the workers from Java, the men voiced their need for better training, contracts, and higher salaries [FGD, P012-017].

Furthermore, several interviewees require more information and better communication about the plans from the government. The people are currently dependent on the village leaders' communication on the receiving and sending end. Some state that they have not received enough information and would like to know more directly from the government [Interview, H14]. For instance, what happens to the people who will be displaced, has not been decided yet [Informant, 02]. In fact, these needs relate back to a larger problem of the new city, namely, the lack of a clear plan, according to the government consultant: "Yes, we have the masterplan, but what are the steps? How? There is no information" [Informant, 03]. The consultant added that there are also no clear relocation and compensation plans yet [ibid.]. Hence, there is a need for information centers for the local communities to clarify what will happen to them and assist them in this process.

9.3 Between palm oil and IKN

It is not a given that all participants want to be socially and economically involved in the project. Rather, the aspirations among the participants often revolved around maintaining current practices and keeping their palm oil land, especially concerning the older generation. Most of the younger interviewees generally aspire to be able to study and work in IKN [FGD, P01-06]. One recently graduated university student already has a job as an administrator in the IKN project [Interview, H26]. However, the younger participants of the group discussion mention that it is difficult to participate in the project with no higher education. According to one participant, IKN will not profit from them if the current mechanisms continue because they can only become casual laborers [FGD, P01-06]. Yet, the participants hope to start their own businesses [ibid.]. With a university in the area, they could develop themselves further, gather skills and build a network to compete in the new city. Unlike most of their parents, they do not wish to become palm oil farmers [ibid.]. An adolescent of

22 years remarked: ‘We have different mindsets [than our parents]. We are very supportive of IKN, but there are no benefits yet for the younger people. [...]. I want to start a business in IKN’ [FGD, P01]. IKN would serve as a good opportunity to do so.

To continue, the older generation also looks at IKN as an opportunity for the new generation to go to a university and to get a job in IKN, as explained by a farmer from RT09: “I don’t want my children to become farmers, I want the new generation to get a better job in the future. [...] I hope with IKN that the government will build a university and a hospital, so the job opportunities are higher” [Interview, H28]. The daughter of the Balik tribe leader shared this thought as the only one of her friends in her RT who goes to university. She hopes that IKN will change the mindset of the local population in the future beyond solely focusing on palm oil [Interview, H02].

Nevertheless, for the palm oil farmers, that is not an option. In their lives, there were no other options than becoming a farmer. Being a farmer means that they can manage their own time, one man explained: “The people here are not interested in working in IKN because we have our own work, as framers. And as farmers, we can manage our own time. If we want to go farming, we will go, but if they work there [in IKN], they have a time schedule, so they are not free to go” [Interview, H28]. Most current palm oil workers interviewed shared this narrative.

9.4 Staying in Sepaku

Sepaku is drastically changing, and the proposed images of the capital would indicate that their entire district will look and be drastically different. One image of IKNs proposed outlook was shown to the participants. The picture was often met with laughter and the word ‘*bagoos*,’ meaning ‘good’ in Indonesian. Despite the impressive outlook on what IKN should become, it is not necessarily something where the villagers see themselves living in the future. Why is that the case?

The Indigenous peoples hope they can maintain their ancestral lands, including the graveyards where their (grand)parents are buried, the name of their village, and the river [FGD_Women]. They want to stay in the area, even if it gets busier [ibid.]. Other non-Indigenous people share this thought. Not because of their long family history or their cultural attachment to the land, but because they feel comfortable where they live. A new living place would bring new difficulties [Interview, H03], and many do not expect they are the ones who will live in the new city: “In the future we will probably not stay here because we already know that the government will bring people from Jakarta. So, there’s no place for the local people who want to stay in IKN” [Interview, H23]. Only the younger population of Sepaku see themselves living in the new capital city of Indonesia [FGD, P01-06].

10. Conclusion and discussion

Indonesia's proposed new capital city is one of many new cities in the global South. New cities are not just a recent trend, yet their motivations and considerations have changed over the last decades, influenced by international and postcolonial agendas. With the attempted inauguration of IKN Nusantara in 2024, President Widodo distinguishes himself from his predecessors, who long have had the ambition to establish a new capital city. Widodo further separates himself from his predecessors by not only aiming to symbolize Indonesia's post-colonial unity, but also the stressing the ideals of recent international agendas such as the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

This study used a qualitative approach to research the perspectives and experiences of Sepaku's villagers towards the capital relocation and its unfolding mechanisms. By studying perspectives and experiences, this research aimed to capture how local people understand the new capital city from their point of view, while considering how contemporary experiences shape and alter these perspectives. This research is theoretically embedded in the urban land rush and inclusive development, specifically focusing on participatory land governance through 'Free, Prior and Informed Consent', and inclusive urbanization through the 'right to the city' concept.

The following research question was central to this paper: *"What are the perspectives and experiences of Sepaku's villagers towards Indonesia's capital relocation, and how do these relate to inclusive development?"* Herewith, this study aimed to fill the empirical knowledge gap concerning local perspectives and experiences on new cities. Through focusing on affected local people, this study aimed to evaluate how the early stages of the project relate to the safeguard 'Free, Prior, and Informed Consent', and the 'right to the city' concept. With regard to societal relevance, a better understanding of local perspectives and experiences may lay the basis for more inclusive processes.

To answer the central question, this research consisted of five sub-questions, the outcomes of which were addressed in the five results chapters. The first results chapter described the IKN concept, outlining its motivations and contemporary critiques. Then, the most notable spatial changes and contrasts in the planned city were presented. Hereafter, this study zoomed in on the case-study area, the Sepaku village, and specifically how the land acquisition processes for the Sepaku Intake unfolded. Fourth, the divergent perspectives of Sepaku's villagers on IKN and its current mechanisms were explained. Finally, the fifth results chapter explained diverse needs and aspirations among the participants.

The following section provides a discussion and concluding remarks on this study's results. First, the empirical findings will be discussed and interpreted. Then, this study addresses its relevance to the broader scientific debates about urban land grabs, new cities and inclusive

development. Finally, this study's results will be reflected upon, providing a deeper critical insight on new cities and the limitations and future research avenues of this research.

10.1 Discussion of empirical results

The new capital city area is rapidly transforming, yet the spatial constellations of the project are evolving in nonlinear and fragmented ways. Chapter 5 showed that the governmental core area comprises a demarcated construction site, whereas a large palm oil concession area covers the landscape just across the provincial road. While many villages have primarily remained untouched, opportunity seekers have started several new businesses, such as guesthouses, restaurants, and shops along the provincial road, representing the unintended changes in the new city area. As Van Noorloos et al. (2019b) asserted, these newcomers are drawn by city aspirations and do not necessarily represent the elite. In similar ways, Bandauko and Aruku (2023) found that socio-spatial transformations can rapidly occur even in the conceptualization phase of Zimbabwe's new capital city. The unintended changes and the various fragmented demarcated construction zones unveil that the project is evolving in rather nonlinear ways. This finding reiterates conclusions of Van Noorloos et al. (2019b), who found how urban development projects make for a constantly shifting landscape of actual and potential impacts.

Specifically related to the case study, the Sepaku Intake transforms the landscape within the Sepaku village due to the construction and expansion of the Sepaku Intake and the proposed river widening. The water-management project is justified by pointing towards the need to supply water and manage flooding in the new capital city area [Informant, 02]. The project has evolved in co-occurrence with the villagers, who live adjacent to the Intake and are separated from the project through a concrete wall. At the time of research, the Intake project has mainly utilized land previously designated for palm oil cultivation. However, the new plan will expand the build-up area towards RT02 and RT03 of the Sepaku village, and overlaps with 22 households [ibid.]. For now, other villagers are expected to stay. These findings show how the project so far has evolved in co-occurrence with the local populations, yet sometimes overlaps with existing villages.

Chapter 6 built on the case study by examining how the villagers in the surrounding areas of the Intake are informed and consulted about the Intake project. Revisiting Fontana and Grugel (2016), 'Free, Prior and Informed Consent' stresses the importance of proper consent through non-coercive, prior, and transparent information. According to the indigenous rights organization AMAN and some participants, the construction of the Intake began without discussions on the actual placement of the Intake [Informant, 01]. This would convey the authorities' lack of prior engagement with the villagers. Nevertheless, the villagers who live directly adjacent to the Intake have generally

been informed about the need for a part of their land for the first expansion of the Intake. The ‘prior’ - the sought consent in advance of activities (Fontana & Grugel, 2016) - element of FPIC is thus, in some instances, adhered to, though it appeared absent in the decision-making and the formalization of the project.

However, several participants noted new poles in their backyard after the first expansion. For instance, one participant stated how she did not receive any information from the authorities who needed more land. [Interview, H14]. If an imaginary line would be drawn from one side of the poles to the other, her house would be split in half. Later on, she heard from her family that her land was needed for the Intake. Similarly, a local farmer said only a few meters of his land was required, upon which he agreed. The man explained that more land was needed here and found poles in his backyard [Interview, H04]. These findings convey that several participants were inadequately informed about the second expansion and depended considerably on people-to-people communication in search of explanations. In sum, evaluating the ‘informed’ - whether people received adequate information (Fontana & Grugel, 2016) - element in FPIC was in several cases absent regarding the plans for the second expansion.

Moreover, the results revealed several instances where the participants encountered unfair mechanisms from the authorities. Predominantly the participants in RT03 reported these issues. For example, one participant described how he was told by the IKN authority to stop talking to the media about the Intake [Interview, H02]. Others mentioned how they were told they could meet the government in court, which would be impossible. In addition, one interviewee told how his use-rights documents (*segel*) were taken and kept by the contractors after he agreed on the first expansion of the project. Thus, in some cases, the ‘free’ element in FPIC – the absence of coercion and force (Fontana & Grugel, 2016) – was questionable.

Eventually, FPIC is about people’s right to (withhold) consent (Franco, 2014). While the participants were asked about their land for the first expansion of the Intake, it does not appear that people had a genuine ability to withhold their consent. In response to the complaints from the villagers, at least five group discussions or meetings have been set up with the 22 households expected to be evicted from their land [Interview, H04]. Yet the participants pointed towards the merely informative character of the discussions [Interview, H01; H04; H14]. The participants felt they lacked the chance to adjust or change the authorities’ agenda. The ‘C’ in this case of FPIC thus had a mere consultative character instead of a real opportunity to ‘withhold’ consent. Even more so, some households in RT02 conveyed why they would accept the eviction of their small community because of their inability to change the government’s agenda. Hence, for some villagers, there is no real sense of ability to withhold consent, resulting in automatic acceptance.

Whereas Chapter 6 researched participation in the land acquisition process of the Sepkau Intake, chapters 7 and 8 dove deeper into the perspectives and aspirations of the villagers. Chapter 7 showed the mere positive perspectives of the villagers on the IKN concept, yet this sentiment changed when asked about the contemporary mechanisms of IKN in the village. Three contrasting narratives revolved around land value, work, and infrastructure. First, transmigrants with a stronger land claim saw the rising land value as positive, while those with a weaker land claim saw the same mechanism as an obstacle for the future. Second, a couple of male participants primarily work as security guards (*wakar*) in construction sites overnight, with low pay and in sometimes dangerous circumstances.

In contrast, others stated how IKN provides more and better jobs for the local people [Interview, H10]. Third, the indigenous villagers with a historical attachment to the Sepaku River experienced declining water availability and worse roads, while others mentioned road improvements. These findings reiterate earlier research on how perspectives on new cities vary starkly and can be situated in people's life history, ethnicity, livelihoods, and land ownership situation (Van Noorloos et al., 2019b). Moreover, the results unveiled the limited knowledge from the villagers on the city's future.

To continue, the perspectives on the current mechanisms of the project in the village show striking parallels with the observations of Li (2017) on displacements and rural land grabs in Indonesia. In her observation, Li argues that land dispossessions often occur without spatial displacements. With the current land claim of the Indonesian government on many community-managed palm oil land, smallholders may not be able to maintain their source of income. As such, the Balik tribe head told how their community is concerned that the plantation companies will disappear [Interview, H02]. If the palm oil companies leave, the local farmers can no longer sell their palm oil to the company [ibid.]. Even more so, the perspectives and experiences show how the villagers are only marginally if at all, needed for the IKN project. This mechanism, when people's land is needed, but their labor is not, is described by Li as a 'double displacement'.

Moreover, a 'triple displacement' occurs when laborers are selected based on ethnicity, age, and gender (ibid.). In several instances, the participants argued that IKN is only open to younger people from other islands, such as Java, and that there is an absence of demand for women [Interview, H01; H05]. While it is too early to draw significant conclusions on these matters, as these perspectives are for now based partly on expectations and initial experiences, the similarities with Li's observations are important to mention.

Lastly, chapter 8 explored the needs and aspirations of Sepaku's villagers. There were unanimous need for a fair land acquisition process, adequate resettlement processes, and better

local services such as schools and hospitals. Interestingly, people's aspirations, i.e., what people hope to achieve in the future, frequently were not tied to IKN. For example, a local palm oil farmer explained that being a farmer earns more than working as a security guard in the project [Interview, H28]. As a farmer, he could manage his time and live comfortably [ibid.].

On the other hand, the adolescents showed a higher interest in IKN, because they could start a business in the future. For instance, one participant already worked at IKN as an administrator [Interview, H26]. However, both young and old, women and men, aspire to stay in the area they grew up in, even if the city expands to Sepaku. These results unveil large discrepancies when relating the complex aspirations of the villagers to the modernized city-building aspirations of the government. Moreover, it shows how little is known about how the city will look. Previous research on new cities also noted discrepancies in aspirations between city-builders and local people (Bandauko & Arku, 2023; Moser, 2015; Datta, 2015).

10.2 Placing the study in broader debates

Revisiting Leitner and Sheppard (2018), the surrounding spaces of large-scale urban projects are hardly ever empty, and the same is true for the appointed IKN development zone. The 256,000 hectares of land that will become the IKN development zone comprises numerous villages totaling tens of thousands of inhabitants and several large palm oil and mining concession areas (Saputra, 2022). The area has experienced a long history of resource extraction, land change, and migration processes, often heavily influenced by land politics. Specifically in the Sepaku district, palm oil and mining concessions comprise a considerable amount of the landscape (ibid.). What is different now is that the rural land grabs from the past have to make room for urban development, reflecting an increasing global trend (Zoomers et al., 2017). These urban developments are illustrated by the growing urban activities alongside the main road (hotels, restaurants, and shops) and the continuation of farming activities further from the main road. These urban developments in the merely rural area of Sepaku reveal how urban land grabs increasingly blur the rural-urban divide (ibid.).

Like other new cities, IKN does not involve one single urban land grab (Van Noorloos et al., 2019b). However, it does involve a unilateral claim of the Indonesian government on enormous amounts of land. In line with Kaag and Zoomers (2014), the case shows that the active role of governments in land acquisition is justified through their own legal framework, namely its land laws and politics, partly stemming from the Suharto era. Besides, as the results show, the land acquisition process for the Sepaku Intake sometimes occurred in questionable ways.

The crux in assessing FPIC measures in the IKN case lies in the question of whether Indonesia's land context even allows the implementation of FPIC to be possible. As earlier mentioned by Peluso and Vandergeest (2001), with its 'political forests', Indonesia's government has historically claimed the land as a state asset. Because the government has a unilateral claim over many lands, it can be argued that Indonesia's land-political context does not allow FPIC to be implemented. If the 'C' really means 'consent', then how can consent be achieved if the government eventually holds the veto power (Franco, 2014)? Hence, a paradox in evaluating FPIC presented itself in this study: several participants argued that they agreed with the expansion plans, as the government upholds the higher power. This problem reflects observations by Franco (2014): FPIC is often a political problem rather than a technical problem. Nevertheless, the FPIC framework benefits this study by providing a tool to evaluate inclusive land governance.

The findings further unveil how Sepaku's villagers see IKN as a government project far from theirs. Indeed the separated governmental core, destined for officials from Jakarta, and plans to establish special economic zones unveil how the merely rural populations are not destined to live in IKN. Although there is a stop on land transfers, land speculation is currently rising, and the need for billions of dollars of funding from investors in the future shapes IKNs potential for socio-spatial segregation. When relating peoples' perspectives on the masterplan to the 'right to the city' approach, it becomes evident that several participants do not even expect that they have a right to the city to begin with.

What is more, the results show how the local young and educated people will probably have more rights to the city, as they are the ones who can use their university degrees in administrative jobs. Conversely, the interviewed (older) farmers often felt disconnected from IKN or worked a low-paid and sometimes even dangerous job. The results show how there have been some efforts to include the villagers in the project, but so far, these have seemed more symbolic rather than making a real difference. Hence, this study's results thus reiterate that achieving inclusivity in new cities goes beyond solely focusing on inclusive land governance (Zoomers et al., 2017).

Besides, recalling Zoomers et al. (2017), urban land grabs in rural areas are further blurring the rural-urban divide, leading to more complex issues about land (Goldman, 2011). This study shows that by implementing a top-down project in a rural setting, the word 'inclusivity' can have different meanings. For some, it might indicate living and working in the new city; for others, it might mean the ability to maintain palm oil land in their native land but staying close to the new city for its hospitals and universities. Additionally, the current local populations largely lack *de jure* land rights, an often recurring phenomenon (ibid.). The mix of informal land rights speculative practices and the

welcoming investment climate, resulting from IKNs 'World City' imaginary, unveil the high potential for dispossessions and displacements for local populations.

10.3 Reflection and concluding remarks

In sum, the first results illustrated the various motivations and criticism on IKN. The second section shed light on how the project has thus far evolved in nonlinear and fragmented ways. Then, the research investigated to what extent the FPIC principle has been adhered to. While some consultations have taken place, the historical unilateral claim on much of Indonesian land makes the case for meaningful participation and true consent difficult. Hereafter, the research explained how the villagers' perspectives on the new city concept were generally positive but have evolved in divergent ways due to various mechanisms. Finally, the short-term needs of the villagers showed that some are willing to participate in the new city, but others aspire to maintain their current ways of living. The results reveal two premature but essential challenges to the city's inclusiveness: fair participation in land acquisition and a true right to the new city. Now, what do these results eventually tell us about local people who face the uncertainties of IKN? Is achieving an all-encompassing inclusivity even possible?

Perhaps, the answer to this question resides in the initial need for an inclusive development response, recognizing that neoliberal projects do not benefit all (Pouw and Gupta, 2017). Given the substantial divergences in perspectives, needs, and aspirations among the participants, conflicting with the government's goal to establish the city as an appealing hub for global investors, the ideal of achieving inclusivity for all seems unlikely. As reiterated by Harvey (2015), there will always be a struggle for the right to the city. Allowing everyone access to a homogenous set of resources, while IKN is designed by a few and destined for governmental or business elites, would be an utopian ideal. The question thus arises, what is then the purpose of IKN and new city projects as a whole?

When we talk about the objectives to create a growth center beyond Java, IKN may bring more economic opportunities and stimulate the macro-economical growth of (East) Kalimantan. Besides, the case showed that local people often felt positive about the IKN concept. However, when we look at the modernization-induced considerations of the project and the lack of clear plans for the local populations, the project might just benefit (inter)national elites. If local people who face urban development project do not expect that they have a right to the city to begin with, we cannot assume that in the current state of these projects inclusive urbanization processes will unfold. After all, if there are no adequate plans to involve the local people, how can we expect the local people to participate in the city, let alone aspire to participate?

One of the mentioned limitations of this study, being that IKN is in its early stages and the impacts could not be observed in entirety, informs us on important future research avenues. Considering that 80% of IKN will need private investments, these urban mechanisms might (further) displace Sepaku's villagers and create new social-spatial segregations between the local people and governmental and business elites. Land speculation and transient investors could pave the way for dispossessions and displacements (Goldman, 2011). Recalling Van Noorloos et al. (2019a), using the lens of urban land grabs shows us that displacements in rural-urban transformations cannot be seen separately from other exclusions such as the privatization of land, an increasing land price, and gentrification. Hence, we should not only look at direct spatial displacement, but also at other, less visible forms. For instance, what will happen to all the construction workers who will build the city? Will they have a chance to live in the new city, or are they deprived of their right to the city? Thus, future studies should assess to what extent (sequential) processes of displacements and exclusions occur.

Equally important is paying attention to what happens to what Otsuki et al. (2017) referred to as 'after the consent.' This research indicates that many villagers would consent to the relocation, but only on fairgrounds. Even if Sepaku's villagers are forced to comply with displacements, and consent is thus not obtained, the FPIC process requires us not only to look at mechanisms of land dispossession, but also at resettlement programs and the extent to which people can reconstruct their livelihoods (Zoomers & Otsuki, 2017). Questions should include: What new obstacles arise? Are people pushed further into marginalization?

Ultimately, what can be done by the IKN authorities is to respond better to the needs and aspirations of the local populations, and inform them better on how the masterplan will unfold. Here must be considered that the villages and its people are diverse, also in their needs and aspirations. Providing adequate training, contracts, clear plans, and a real chance to participate in the new city might enhance peoples' right to the city. At the same time, attention should be placed on fair compensations and adequate resettlements so that the local people can at least continue the way they lived before IKN. Undeniably, IKN poses multiple uncertainties. Will the local people be able to stay in the area? Can they continue their way of living? These unanswered questions reveal that Sepaku's local people are facing the unknown.

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Appendix

APPENDIX I: Lists of Participants

1A. Household interviews

Household	Duration of Living In Sepaku	Age	Occupation	Sex	Ethnicity
H1	Entire life	31	Farmer	Male	Balik
H2	Entire life	25	Student	Female	Balik
H2	Entire life	60	Farmer	Male	Balik
H3	Entire life	61	-	Male	Sulawesi
H3	Entire life	20	Student	Female	Sulawesi
H4	Entire life	63	-	Male	Balik
H5	20 Years	60	Farmer	Female	Sulawesi
H5	3 Month	34	Farmer	Female	Sulawesi
H5	8 Years	27	Farmer	Female	Sulawesi
H6	30 Years	40	Farmer/Laborer	Male	Sulawesi
H6	28 Years	50		Male	Sulawesi
H7	37 Years	55		Male	Bugis Paser
H7	37 Years	30		Female	Bugis Paser
H8	38 Years	38	Housewife	Female	Paser
H9	Entire life	22	Housewife	Female	Sulawesi
H9	8 Years	33	Housewife	Female	Sulawesi
H10	24 Years	52	Farmer	Male	
H11	-	41	Labor	Male	Banjar
H12	38 Years	38	Housewife	Female	Paser
H13	15 Years	43	Housewife	Female	Bugis (Sulawesi)
H14	3 Years	39	Supervisor in IKN Company	Male	Java
H14	36 Years	36	Housewife	Female	Mandar (Sulawesi)
H15	21 Years	49	Labor in Forest Plantation (IHM)	Male	Java
H16	44 Years	44	Labor in Forest Plantation (IHM)	Female	Mandar (Sulawesi)
H17	43 Years	80		Female	Java
H18	49 Years	73	Housewife	Female	Java
H18	49 Years	60	Housewife	Female	Java
H19	37 Years	41	Housewife	Female	Mandar
H20	36 Years	36	Housewife	Female	Java
H20	29 Years	29	Housewife	Female	Java
KI	11 Years	35	Chief of Village	Male	Bajo (Sulawesi)
H21	43 Years	66	Farmer	Male	Toraja (Sulawesi)
H22	42 Years	55	Housewife	Female	Java
H22	42 Years	53	Housewife	Female	Jakarta Transmigrant

H22	42 Years	65	Housewife	Female	Jakarta Transmigrant
H23	48 Years	50	Household Assistant	Female	Java
H24	55 Years	65	Farmer	Male	Paser
H25	42 Years	42	Leader of RT. 9	Male	Java
H26	23 Years	23	Fresh Graduated	Female	Java
H26	23 Years	47	Housewife	Female	Sunda
H27	33 Years	33	Electrical Engineer	Male	Java
H28	59 Years	59	Farmer	Male	Java

1B. Focus group discussions participants

Participant	Duration of living in Sepaku	Age	Occupation	Sex	Ethnicity
P01	26 Years	26	Freelance	Male	Bugis (Sulawesi)
P02	20 Years	20	Freelance	Male	Java
P03	19 Years	19	Graduated	Male	Sunda
P04	31 Years	31	Freelance	Male	Bugis (Sulawesi)
P05	20 Years	20	Student	Male	Java
P06	20 Years	20	Student	Male	Java
P07	46 Years	46	Housewife	Female	Paser Balik
P08	49 Years	49	Housewife	Female	Balik
P09	23 Years	23	Housewife	Female	Mandar Sulawesi
P10	51 Years	51	Housewife	Female	Balik
P11	26 Years	26	Housewife	Female	Nusa Tenggara Barat
P12	47 Years	47	Housewife	Female	Balik
P13	51 Years	51	Farmer	Male	Balik
P14	31 Years	31	Farmer	Male	Balik
P15	34 Years	34	Privat Employee	Male	Bugis (Sulawesi)
P16	43 Years	43	Labor	Male	Balik
P17	24 Years	24	Privat Employee	Male	Mandar (Sulawesi)

APPENDIX 2 – List of interview guides

2A. Group discussions/ household interviews guiding questions (Example FGD, adolescents)

Intro

Hello everyone, thank you all for coming. This is Sem Olijkan, a master student researcher from the Netherlands and he studies the perspectives and aspirations of local people in Sepaku Lama regarding IKN. For today, we focus on the younger population in Sepaku Lama. And I'm Oshfer (brief introduction).

Please don't be shy in the discussion. We would like to hear everyone's opinion so we would appreciate it if everyone leaves space for each other to talk. I would also like to emphasize that there are no incorrect or correct answers. Your honesty is very valuable to us.

During the discussion, we will take notes, but we cannot write down everything you say. Therefore, we would like to have your permission to record the meeting. Please be informed that this is completely confidential and your names won't be shared to anyone. Your information will only be used with regards to Sem's masters research.

So for today, please be aware that you don't have to talk if you prefer not to, but we highly appreciate if you share your opinions and views. Also, you can react to someone's else points, we actually encourage this. However, it is important that only one person talks at a time so we can capture everything. If you disagree with someone or something, please speak up, as we would like to capture all of your views. But please respect everyone's opinion. The discussion will take about an hour and please tell me if you would like something to drink. Are there any questions before we start?

Let's start by introducing ourselves. You can include information such as your name, age, education, living situation, tribe, work, etc.

I would like to start by asking questions about your life in Sepaku Lama.

1. What was life like growing up in Sepaku Lama?
2. What were the challenges while growing up?
3. Land ownership situation etc.

Now we have talked about growing up, I would like to move on to your perspectives of IKN.

4. What was your first response when you heard that the government will build a new capital city here?
5. What about the Sepaku Intake project?
6. What are the current challenges your family and the broader community face by IKN?
7. Who currently benefits the most from IKN? And why?
8. How would you say IKN has changed your lives in the last couple of years?
9. Overall, what is your current opinion of IKN now? What has affected this?

Now we have talked about your opinions on IKN, I would like to talk about the future and your aspirations.

10. How do you think IKN will shape your life in the future?
11. What are the main wishes you have for IKN? Why do you/don't you want...?
12. What can the government do to involve the population in Sepaku Lama in the new capital city?

As a closing question, I would like to fantasize about the future. (Picture of IKN)

13. Where do you see yourself and the community in 5 years? (Think of living situation, workforce).

2B. Guiding questions: Interview – AMAN (Indigenous People Allegiance)

1. Introduction

Good evening. My name is Sem Olijkan. I am 24, from the Netherlands, and currently enrolled in the master's program in International Development at Utrecht University. In collaboration with University Gadjah Mada, I am researching the new capital city project and the experiences of Indigenous People/Local communities. In doing so, I am trying to approach my research through a bottom-up perspective to understand more about the experiences of local people regarding, among other, people's knowledge of the project, the communication they have received, and their subsequent opinions.

- Could you introduce yourself and the organization, AMAN?

2. The Sepaku district

- Can you briefly introduce me to your knowledge of the Sepaku district?
- What indigenous tribes live in Sepaku?
à Can you point out on the map where they live?
- What is the land tenure situation in the area? I.e., do people own land, or is this owned by the state?
- How does land ownership relate to different land users, such as smallholders and big agribusinesses?

3. IKN Nusantara: the concept

- When did you first hear about the new capital city, Nusantara? What were your thoughts?
- What is your opinion on the concept of Nusantara (i.e., good or bad)?
- Do you think that the city will be successfully finished?
à And if so, will it indeed be a carbon-neutral city?
- Is the concept of Nusantara clear regarding its planning and goals?
- Can you tell me more about (indigenous) people's initial opinions when the project was announced? Are there differences in age, ethnicity, and religion?
- Have your views on the project changed over time?
à What has caused this?
- Have the feelings of people towards the project changed over time?
à What have been the main drivers?

4. Involvement in the planning process

- Who is currently involved in the project, aside from the Joko Widodo administration?
- Has the government involved local groups and people, such as your organization, in the planning process (from the beginning)?
- Have you talked to local representatives of the project? Have they been approaching the local people and leaders?
- What do you expect to happen to Nusantara once Joko Widodo steps down as President in 2024?

5. Changes

- What are the most noteworthy changes that have taken place since the IKN Nusantara Law?
- What has changed for the people in Sepaku since the establishment of the IKN Nusantara Law?
- Have people been evicted from their land?
à If yes, where has this happened?

à Are there plans for future evictions?

- What are the most significant future issues for the inhabitants of Sepaku?

6. Closing question

- Do you want to mention anything about this topic that hasn't already been touched upon?

Thank you for your time; I appreciate it a lot.

2C. Guiding questions: Interview – Government Consultant

Good evening, my name is Sem Olijkan. I am 25, from the Netherlands, and currently enrolled in the master's program in International Development at Utrecht University. In collaboration with University Gadjah Mada, I am researching the new capital city project and the perspectives and experiences of Indigenous People/Local communities. In doing so, I am trying to approach my research through a bottom-up perspective through interviews and group discussions, which were conducted when I went to Sepaku in April and May. I think your input can be valuable to understand more about the current mechanisms between the people and the government.

So I have some drafted questions, but let me know if I'm missing something! I would really appreciate it if you would be as detailed as possible. Any information is valuable and very welcome.

Is it OK if I record this meeting for research purposes only?

Introduction:

1. Can you introduce yourself? What do you do, where do you come from, what is your background?
2. What is your involvement/role in the IKN project?

Since when? Who what etc.

IKN:

3. Can you briefly explain why the government is relocating the capital city?

Probe: why exactly to East Kalimantan? What are the different reasons?

4. How did the process of choosing the Sepaku area go? How was this decided?
5. What is your opinion on the new capital specifically in relation?

Probe: will it bring prosperity to the outer islands? And why?

6. There are currently several concessions with big palm oil companies on land. Can you tell me about how the government approaches this, as they need the land?
7. How optimistic are you regarding the process of the capital relocation?

Probe: what will happen when Widodo retires next year? Will there be enough investors to fund the project? What are the challenges?

Local communities:

8. How are indigenous and local people involved in the relocation?
9. How are local people affected by the development of the new city?
10. What is the current land situation in Sepaku?

Probe: sell land, certificate?

11. How are the demands of the local people taken into account?

Sepaku village:

12. What do you know about the Sepaku village and the Sepaku Intake?

Probe: relocation, land taken, resistance

13. Why was that particular area chosen for the Intake?

Do you think it's fair?

14. What happens to the people who have to be relocated? Will there be more?

Probe: new land? Compensation?

15. There are differences in land ownership in the village. Whereas Java transmigrants often own a certificate, the local and indigenous people have a Segel. How do these different land claims become important in the project?

16. Is there a difference in compensation structure for Java transmigrants

Closing questions:

17. Who will benefit the most from IKN and why?

18. What has to happen to make this project more inclusive?

How to better involve people?

19. What are the biggest and most important challenges ahead?

Do you have anything to add that might be valuable for my research?