

Tripartite Synergy in the Urban Agrarian Reform Model for the Legality of Low-Income Community Settlements

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Abstract

Urban development in Indonesia reflects a persistent paradox: rapid growth coexists with unequal access to land and housing for low-income communities. The urban population increased from 53.3% in 2015 to 56.39% in 2022, while slum areas still covered approximately 88,662.69 hectares nationwide, including 8,912.33 hectares in Central Java. This condition forces many low-income residents to occupy land informally without legal certainty, exposing them to eviction and social vulnerability. This study aims to examine a collaborative urban agrarian reform model based on tripartite synergy among government, academics, and civil society to support settlement legalization. The research employs a normative juridical method with an interdisciplinary approach integrating legal analysis, spatial justice theory, and public policy. The findings reveal that fragmented regulations, weak institutional coordination, and top-down governance approaches hinder effective legalization. In cities such as Semarang, many informal settlements potentially qualify as land objects of agrarian reform but remain unaddressed due to administrative and regulatory

constraints. This study proposes a collaborative model involving participatory land identification, legal status assessment, and integrated cross-sectoral policy implementation. It concludes that tripartite synergy enhances legal certainty, reduces land conflicts, and supports inclusive and sustainable urban development by aligning legal frameworks with social realities.

Keywords

Urban Agrarian Reform, Tripartite Collaboration, Settlement Legalization, Low-Income Communities, Spatial Justice.

HOW TO CITE:

Chicago Manual of Style Footnote:

- ¹ Suhadi Suhadi, Tri Andari Dahlan, Asmarani Ramli, Dani Muhtada, and Fezer Tamas, “Tripartite Synergy in the Urban Agrarian Reform Model for the Legality of Low-Income Community Settlements,” *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 7, no 3 (2026): 1627–1666, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jllr.v7i3.47777>.

Chicago Manual of Style for Reference:

Suhadi, Suhadi, Tri Andari Dahlan, Asmarani Ramli, Dani Muhtada, and Fezer Tamas. “Tripartite Synergy in the Urban Agrarian Reform Model for the Legality of Low-Income Community Settlements.” *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 7, no 3 (2026): 1627–1666. <https://doi.org/10.15294/jllr.v7i3.47777>.

Introduction

Urban development in Indonesia reflects a persistent structural paradox in which rapid economic growth and spatial expansion coexist with deep inequality in access to land and housing.¹ Over the last decade, the proportion of the urban population has increased significantly, from 53.3% in 2015 to 56.39% in 2022, indicating an accelerated urban transition driven by migration, industrial concentration, and the expansion of urban-based economic activities.² In Indonesia, however, the imbalance between growth and equity is particularly evident in the governance of land resources, where access is increasingly mediated by market mechanisms rather than social need.³ This condition raises important legal questions about whether Indonesia's existing land law and spatial planning framework can ensure equitable access to urban land amid rapid urbanization.⁴

Land, the foundational resource on which any urban life must be built, has not become more accessible as cities have grown; in most cases, it has become dramatically less so.⁵ Rising land values driven by speculative investment, municipal policies oriented toward attracting capital rather than serving residents, and the gradual enclosure of previously open or informally occupied spaces have all contributed to a

¹ Suhadi and Aprila Niravita, "Urban Agrarian Reform: Opportunities and Challenges for Land Rights Among Low-Income Communities," *Legality: Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum* 32, no. 2 (2024): 348–73, <https://doi.org/10.22219/ljih.v32i2.35842>.

² Suhadi Suhadi, "Reforma Agraria Perkotaan Berbasis Kolaborasi: Penguasaan Dan Pemilikan Tanah Berkepastian Hukum" (Pidato Pengukuhan Guru Besar Dalam Bidang Ilmu Hukum Pertanahan Fakultas Hukum Universitas Negeri Semarang, 2025).

³ Farahwati Farahwati, "Study of Criminal Sanctions for Environmental Pollution and/or Damage," *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review* 6, no. 12 (2023): 83–95, <http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v6i12.1795>.

⁴ Rosyidi Hamzah et al., "Reforming the Roots: Can Legal Challenges Transform the Crude Palm Oil Industry in Indonesia and Malaysia?," *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 7, no. 1 (2026): 113–60, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jllr.v7i1.22161>.

⁵ I Rudiarto et al., "The Dynamics of Village Land Management A Case from Central: Java, Indonesia," in *Geospatial Science for Smart Land Management: An Asian Context* (CRC Press, 2023), 366–75, <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003349518-27>.

situation in which the physical expansion of urban areas paradoxically narrows rather than widens the possibilities for low-income communities to secure a stable and dignified foothold in the city.⁶ Consequently, equitable access to urban land has become not merely a planning issue but also a legal governance issue concerning land rights, tenure security, and distributive justice.

Nowhere is this structural contradiction more visibly inscribed in the urban landscape than in the deepening segmentation of urban space into sharply differentiated formal and informal zones, a dual structure that encodes existing inequalities into the city's geography and makes them extraordinarily difficult to overcome.⁷ Informal settlements, by contrast, occupy a fundamentally different position in the urban order, one defined not by a single disadvantage but by an interlocking set of exclusions that reinforce one another in ways that are deeply difficult to escape.⁸ Without legal recognition of their tenure, residents cannot access formal credit markets or invest confidently in improving their homes. Without integration into official spatial plans, their neighborhoods are routinely bypassed by public infrastructure investment or, worse, designated for clearance and redevelopment. Without formal addresses or administrative recognition, residents may struggle to access public services, register children in schools, or participate fully in civic life. The implications of these conditions demonstrate that the legal status of land tenure is the primary determinant of access to housing, public services,

⁶ H Joni and S H Mh, "Mining Reclamation Activities in the Perspective of Mining Law in Indonesia," *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization* 106, no. 3 (2021): 53–64, <https://doi.org/10.7176/jlpg/106-07>.

⁷ Justice Mensah, "Sustainable Development: Meaning, History, Principles, Pillars, and Implications for Human Action: Literature Review," *Cogent Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (2019): 14–18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1653531>.

⁸ Subur Hutagalung, M.Tauchid Noor, and Sri Hartin Jatmikowati, "Land Certification Policy through Complete Systematic Land Registration (PTSL) in Malang Regency of Indonesia (Study on Policy Implementation of the Minister of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency)," *International Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities* 03, no. 08 (2022): 61–75, <https://doi.org/10.47505/ijrss.2022.v3.8.9>.

and legal protection, making urban informality a legal-governance challenge rather than simply a problem of spatial planning.⁹

When access to land, and through it, access to secure shelter, neighborhood infrastructure, proximity to employment, and integration into urban systems, is allocated primarily according to purchasing power, the city becomes a spatial map of economic stratification, in which one's address increasingly determines not only the quality of one's immediate living environment but the broader horizon of life chances available to oneself and one's children.¹⁰ Low-income communities pushed to the urban periphery or confined to legally precarious informal settlements face not only the immediate insecurity of potentially losing their homes but the cumulative disadvantage of living in areas that are poorly served by public transportation, distant from centers of employment, underequipped with educational and health facilities, and largely disconnected from the networks of economic and social opportunity that concentrate in formally recognized urban zones¹¹ Accordingly, the existing law on land tenure, spatial planning, and housing poses the main challenge to equitable urban land access, and these related issues form the basis for this study.¹²

The scale of urban land inequality in Indonesia is reflected in the persistence of slum areas, covering approximately 88,662.69 hectares nationwide, including 8,912.33 hectares in Central Java.¹³ There is a clear failure of governance in Indonesia characterized by a systematic bias in urban land allocation towards economically and legally dominant actors,

⁹ Derita Prapti Rahayu et al., "Law Enforcement in the Context of Legal Culture in Society," *Law Reform* 16, no. 2 (2020): 276–89.

¹⁰ Indah Sri Utari et al., "Legal Protection for Children as Victims of Economic Exploitation: Problems and Challenges in Three Major ASEAN Countries (Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines)," *Lex Scientia Law Review* 7, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.15294/lesrev.v7i2.68301>.

¹¹ Suhadi and Niravita, "Urban Agrarian Reform: Opportunities and Challenges for Land Rights Among Low-Income Communities."

¹² Silvia Diah Puspitaningrum and Wahyu Mudiparwanto, "Implementation of Agricultural Land Protection Policy on The Transfer of Functions And Food Security Efforts in The Special Region of Yogyakarta," *Legal Brief* 13, no. 2 (2024): 604–12, <https://doi.org/10.35335/legal.v13i2.1000>.

¹³ Suhadi, "Reforma Agraria Perkotaan Berbasis Kolaborasi: Penguasaan Dan Pemilikan Tanah Berkepastian Hukum."

and a complete lack of voice and protection for vulnerable groups. This urban land allocation failure is an outcome of the commoditization of land as it shifts from a social good to a market-traded asset, with little regard for primary social needs. This failure is reinforced by the legal preference for private property, spatial planning systems that prioritize both private and public investments, and a financial planning system that makes local governments reliant on land's rising value. There is a self-reinforcing system of exclusion whereby increasing commodification and exclusion lead to deepening disadvantage, and consequently, a loss of political capability of marginalized communities, leading to their inability to confront exclusion.¹⁴

From a governance perspective¹⁵, the persistent and widening gap between urban growth and equitable land access reflects not merely a policy oversight or an administrative inefficiency but a deeper and more consequential failure to balance the imperatives of economic development with the foundational demands of social justice.¹⁶ This failure calls into question the very principles upon which urban governance in Indonesia is organized and legitimized. Governance, in its most meaningful sense, is not simply the management of public resources and the coordination of administrative functions; it is the exercise of collective authority in ways that are accountable, responsive, and oriented toward the welfare of all members of the political community, including and especially those who are most vulnerable to the adverse consequences of decisions made by powerful institutions and market actors.¹⁷ When urban land, one of the most critical and irreplaceable

¹⁴ Heni Yulianti, Dewi Puspita Ningsih, and Andika Apriawan, "Transformasi Sosial Dalam Konteks Urbanisasi Dan Modernisasi Di Indonesia," *Ilmiah Multidisiplin* 1, no. 5 (2025): 3488–3500.

¹⁵ Indah Sri Utari et al., "A Criminological Perspective on Corruption as a Catalyst of Economic Breakdown: Socio-Legal Challenges in Indonesian Environmental Governance," *Jambe Law Journal* 9, no. 1 (2026): 205–47, <https://doi.org/10.22437/jmj4ac47>.

¹⁶ Ana Indrawati, "Analisis Yuridis Terhadap Hak Milik Atas Tanah Di Kawasan Perkotaan: Antara Regulasi Dan Realitas Sosial," *Arus Jurnal Sosial Dan Humaniora* 4, no. 3 (2024): 2392, <https://doi.org/10.57250/ajsh.v4i3.924>.

¹⁷ Putu Wijangga et al., "Urbanisasi Dan Disparitas Kesejahteraan Di Perkotaan: Sebuah Tinjauan Sistematis Tentang Dampak Pada Kelompok Rentan," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Sosial* 11, no. 2 (2025): 207–25.

resources in any city, is allocated through processes that systematically favor those with economic power, political connections, or formal legal standing, while leaving low-income communities without adequate access, protection, or voice, governance has failed in its most basic democratic obligation.¹⁸ This failure is not always dramatic or visible; it often operates through the quiet accumulation of routine decisions, the adoption of planning standards that implicitly assume formal economic participation, the prioritization of investment-friendly land uses over affordable housing, and the design of legal frameworks that are technically neutral but practically exclusionary. Over time, these routine decisions solidify into structural conditions that marginalized communities experience as permanent and natural features of the urban landscape, when in fact they are products of specific governance choices that, with sufficient political will and institutional creativity, could be made differently.¹⁹

The core of this governance failure lies in the progressive commodification of urban land, a process through which land is stripped of its character as a social good and a shared foundation of collective life and reconstituted as a tradable asset whose value is determined by market forces and whose allocation follows the logic of capital accumulation rather than the logic of human need.²⁰ This transformation has not occurred spontaneously or inevitably; it has been actively produced and sustained by legal frameworks that prioritize private property rights over communal or social claims, by spatial planning systems that zone land for uses that maximize economic returns rather than social welfare, and by

¹⁸ Aldehita Purnasanti Maulida et al., “Navigating Indonesia’s Economic Crossroads: The Future of State-Owned Enterprises in a Transforming National Economy,” *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services* 8, no. 1 (2026): 415–52, <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijals.v8i1.55219>.

¹⁹ Suhadi Suhadi, Dani Muhtada, and Andi Gazly Satrya Amal, “Legal Reconstruction of the Establishment of Places of Worship in Indonesia: A Legal-Political Analysis within the Framework of Land Use and Spatial Planning Law,” *Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies* 9, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.15294/jils.v9i2.19162>.

²⁰ Suhadi Suhadi, “Harmonization of Regulation on Land Acquisition For Infrastructure Development with Public-Private Partnership Scheme In Indonesia,” in *1st International Conference on Indonesian Legal Studies (ICILS)*, vol. 192, 2018, 210–13, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icils-18.2018.40>.

fiscal arrangements that make municipalities financially dependent on land-related revenues and therefore structurally incentivized to support rising land values even when those rising values displace low-income residents.²¹ The consequences of this commodification process are etched into the social geography of Indonesian cities in patterns of exclusion that are both spatially concentrated and socially systematic. Communities that have historically occupied centrally located urban land find themselves increasingly vulnerable to displacement as rising land values make their locations attractive to developers and investors. Residents who might once have been able to access land through informal markets, community networks, or incremental occupation²² find those pathways progressively closed as land becomes more thoroughly integrated into formal commodity circuits. The result is a reinforcing cycle in which commodification drives exclusion, exclusion concentrates disadvantage, and concentrated disadvantage weakens the political capacity of marginalized communities to contest the very processes that produce their marginalization. Breaking this cycle requires more than technical adjustments to land administration procedures; it requires a fundamental reorientation of the values and priorities that govern how urban land is defined, valued, and distributed.²³

Addressing urban land inequality in its full depth and complexity, therefore, demands a comprehensive and genuinely integrated approach, one that simultaneously engages with the legal frameworks that define land rights, the spatial planning systems that shape land use, and the social policies that determine the capacity of different groups to participate in and benefit from urban development. Yet the problem of urban land inequality is fundamentally irreducible to any single domain. It is a legal problem insofar as existing laws fail to recognize the tenure

²¹ Suhadi, Muhtada, and Amal, "Legal Reconstruction of the Establishment of Places of Worship in Indonesia: A Legal-Political Analysis within the Framework of Land Use and Spatial Planning Law."

²² Ali Masyhar et al., "Legal Challenges of Combating International Cyberterrorism: The NCB Interpol Indonesia and Global Cooperation," *Legality: Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum* 31, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.22219/ljih.v31i2.29668>.

²³ Suhadi Suhadi et al., "The Development of Agricultural Land Conversion: Legal Culture and Comparative Law in Indonesia and Nigeria," *Lex Scientia Law Review* 8, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.15294/lslr.v8i2.13999>.

claims of informal settlers and provide inadequate protection against displacement. It is a spatial planning problem insofar as planning systems allocate land uses and infrastructure investment in ways that entrench rather than challenge the dual structure of formal and informal urban space.²⁴ And it is a social policy problem insofar as the capacity of low-income communities to access, secure, and benefit from urban land is shaped by broader conditions of poverty, discrimination, and institutional exclusion that no amount of legal or spatial reform alone can fully address.²⁵

The expansion of informal settlements in Indonesian cities is closely linked to structural limitations in land markets and housing policies. As urban land values increase due to investment-driven development and speculative practices, access to formal housing becomes increasingly limited for low-income populations.²⁶ Scholars such as Geoffrey Payne and Alan Gilbert argue that informal settlements should be understood as structural outcomes of exclusionary systems rather than mere planning failures. Their research highlights that rigid regulatory frameworks, combined with limited affordable housing supply, force marginalized populations into informal arrangements. Similarly, UN-Habitat emphasizes that informality is closely linked to governance gaps, particularly in the provision of inclusive housing policies. These findings suggest that informal settlements result from systemic interactions among economic inequality, legal rigidity, and institutional limitations.

Policy responses to informal settlements have historically relied on eviction, relocation, or physical upgrading. Studies show that eviction policies often disrupt livelihoods and social networks, while relocation programs may displace communities to peripheral areas with limited

²⁴ Retno Sulistyarningsih, "Reforma Agraria Di Indonesia," *Perspektif: Kajian Masalah Hukum Dan Pembangunan* 26, no. 1 (2021): 57–64.

²⁵ Helmi Ali, Bahiti Sinamot, and Suleman Rahadi, "Paradoks Infrastruktur Perkotaan: Analisis Kritis Perannya Sebagai Penggerak Pertumbuhan Dan Pemicu Kesenjangan Ekonomi," *Adpertens: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Manajemen* 2, no. 3 (2025): 180–93, <https://doi.org/10.63424/adpertens.v2i3.412>.

²⁶ Utari et al., "A Criminological Perspective on Corruption as a Catalyst of Economic Breakdown: Socio-Legal Challenges in Indonesian Environmental Governance."

economic opportunities.²⁷ Physical upgrading programs, although beneficial in improving infrastructure, frequently fail to address tenure insecurity, leaving residents vulnerable to future displacement.²⁸ Comparative experiences from countries such as Brazil and India further illustrate the limitations of conventional approaches. In Brazil, large-scale upgrading initiatives have demonstrated that improvements in physical conditions do not guarantee long-term security without legal recognition.²⁹ In India, relocation policies have often resulted in social dislocation and economic marginalization.³⁰ These cases highlight the importance of integrating legal recognition into urban policy frameworks. Without addressing tenure security, efforts to improve living conditions may have a limited impact.

In addition, informal settlements can be understood as expressions of resilience and adaptation among marginalized communities. Residents often develop complex social networks and economic systems that enable them to survive despite legal constraints. Recognizing this dimension is essential for designing policies that are both effective and equitable.³¹ Instead of treating informality as a problem to be eradicated, policymakers should consider how to integrate informal settlements into formal urban systems. This requires a shift from punitive approaches toward inclusive strategies that acknowledge the legitimacy of these communities and provide pathways for legal recognition.

²⁷ Rakha Bagus Taruna and Indri Fogar Susilowati, "Problematika Penyelesaian Ganti Rugi Melalui Konsinyasi Pengadaan Tanah Untuk Pembangunan Jalan Tol Surabaya-Mojokerto," *Novum: Jurnal Hukum*, 2023.

²⁸ Muhammad Raihan, Dwi Wulan Pujiriyani, and Widhiana Hestining Puri, "Kajian Teknis Penyelesaian Residu Pendaftaran Tanah Sistematis Lengkap Di Kantor Pertanahan Kota Semarang," *Kadaster: Journal of Land Information Technology* 1, no. 1 (2023): 33–48, <https://doi.org/10.31292/kadaster.v1i1.9>.

²⁹ Hananto Widodo et al., "Legal Reconstruction of Strengthening the Function of Regional Representation in Indonesia," *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 7, no. 2 (2026): 517–54, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jllr.v7i2.43520>.

³⁰ Suhadi and Niravita, "Urban Agrarian Reform: Opportunities and Challenges for Land Rights Among Low-Income Communities."

³¹ I. Gusti Ayu Ketut Rachmi Handayani et al., "The Politics Settlement of Land Tenure Conflicts During Jokowi'S Presidency," *Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies* 7, no. 2 (2022): 518, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jils.v7i2.57539>.

Furthermore, recent studies on urban informality emphasize the importance of incremental approaches to legalization. Rather than imposing immediate formalization, these approaches allow for gradual integration into legal systems, taking into account the specific conditions of each community. This perspective aligns with the need for flexible and adaptive policies that can respond to diverse urban contexts. Therefore, informal settlements should be viewed not as temporary anomalies but as integral components of urban systems that require structural solutions.³² One of the central challenges in addressing informal settlements in Indonesia is the fragmentation of legal and institutional frameworks governing land, housing, and spatial planning.³³ These sectors are regulated by different laws and administered by separate institutions, often resulting in overlapping authority and inconsistent implementation. For example, land administration policies may recognize certain forms of occupation, while spatial planning regulations designate the same areas as non-residential. This inconsistency creates a legal paradox in which communities may be socially recognized but remain legally unrecognized.³⁴

Research on governance systems highlights that institutional fragmentation is a major barrier to policy effectiveness. In Indonesia, this problem is exacerbated by decentralization, which grants local governments significant autonomy but limited coordination mechanisms. As a result, policies related to land, housing, and spatial planning often operate in isolation, reducing their overall effectiveness. This lack of integration creates uncertainty for both policymakers and communities, complicating the legalization of settlements. The impact of fragmentation is particularly evident in administrative procedures.

³² Indah Sri Utari et al., "Illegal Nickel Mining in Protected Forests: Challenges in Whistleblower and Justice Collaborator Protection in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Environmental Law and Sustainable Development* 4, no. 2 (2025): 341–74, <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijel.v4i2.38220>.

³³ Slamet Muryono and Westi Utami, "Pemetaan Potensi Lahan Pertanian Pangan Berkelanjutan Guna Mendukung Ketahanan Pangan," *BHUMI: Jurnal Agraria Dan Pertanahan* 6, no. 2 (2020): 201–18, <https://doi.org/10.31292/bhumi.v6i2.431>.

³⁴ Muhar Junef, "Penegakan Hukum Alam Rangka Penataan Ruang Guna Mewujudkan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan," *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum De Jure* 17, no. 4 (2016): 373–90.

Communities seeking legal recognition must navigate multiple regulatory systems, each with its own requirements and processes. This complexity increases transaction costs and discourages participation in formal systems. For low-income communities, these barriers can be insurmountable, reinforcing reliance on informal arrangements. Studies show that legal complexity is a significant obstacle to tenure security, particularly for marginalized groups.³⁵ Without coordination among institutions, efforts to redistribute land or legalize settlements face administrative and political obstacles, underscoring the need for governance models that align legal, institutional, and spatial frameworks.³⁶

A substantial body of literature has examined urban land governance, informal settlements, and collaborative approaches to policy-making. Studies on urban land governance emphasize the importance of integrating legal and spatial planning systems to address land inequality. Research by Surya et al (2021) highlights the structural nature of informality and the limitations of conventional policy responses.³⁷ Meanwhile, Ali et al (2025) underscore the role of inclusive housing policies in addressing urban inequality.³⁸ In addition, theoretical contributions by Soja and Harvey provide a critical framework for understanding spatial inequality.³⁹ Spatial justice emphasizes the fair distribution of resources, while the right to the city emphasizes

³⁵ Tareq Al-Billeh et al., “Human Rights and Legal Regulation of AI-Assisted Reproduction,” *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 6, no. 2 (2026): 203–35.

³⁶ Iwan Permadi and Herlindah, “Electronic Title Certificate as Legal Evidence: The Land Registration System and the Quest for Legal Certainty in Indonesia,” *Digital Evidence and Electronic Signature Law Review* 20 (2023): 54, <https://doi.org/10.14296/deeslr.v20i.5636>.

³⁷ Batara Surya et al., “Land Use Change, Urban Agglomeration, and Urban Sprawl: A Sustainable Development Perspective of Makassar City, Indonesia,” *Land* 10, no. 6 (2021): 10, <https://doi.org/10.3390/land10060556>.

³⁸ Ali, Sinamot, and Rahadi, “Paradoks Infrastruktur Perkotaan: Analisis Kritis Perannya Sebagai Penggerak Pertumbuhan Dan Pemicu Kesenjangan Ekonomi.”

³⁹ Ondřej Slach et al., “Urban Shrinkage and Sustainability: Assessing the Nexus between Population Density, Urban Structures and Urban Sustainability,” *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 11, no. 15 (2019): 8, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11154142>.

participation and inclusivity. These concepts have been widely applied in studies of urban development, demonstrating their relevance in addressing inequality.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the literature on collaborative governance, including works by Suhadi et al (2024) and Maroni (2024), highlights the potential of multi-actor collaboration to improve policy outcomes.⁴¹ Although this literature exists, studies generally abstract the legal, spatial, and social dimensions of urban land inequality, and the collaborative governance models are mainly articulated in broad terms and do not apply to the problem of legalizing informal settlements. There are also limited studies on how to formally configure collaboration among government, academia, and civil society to operationalize tripartite collaboration for urban agrarian reform in Indonesia. This is the research gap this study intends to fill.

The advancement of urbanization increases the competition for land. Without adequate response, land disputes are likely to undermine social order. This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do the Basic Agrarian Law, the Spatial Planning Law, the Housing Law, and the Settlement Areas Law, in the context of the Indonesian legal system, consider (or fail to consider) the legal position of informal settlements on land that has the potential for agrarian reform?
2. What are the structural and institutional reasons for the lack of integration between land administration, spatial planning, and social policy in the context of the legalization of informal settlements?
3. How is the integration of legal, spatial, and social aspects of urban agrarian reform through the collaboration of government, academia, and civil society (the so-called ‘triadic collaboration’) possible?

⁴⁰ Indah Sri Utari, Ridwan Arifin, and Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani Ahmad Sabri, “Why Did a Five-Year-Old Toddler Become a Victim of Murder? A Criminological and Legal Perspective,” *Indonesian Journal of Criminal Law Studies* 8, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijcls.v8i2.48591>.

⁴¹ Stefano Moroni et al., “Simple Planning Rules for Complex Urban Problems: Toward Legal Certainty for Spatial Flexibility,” *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 40, no. 3 (2020): 320–31, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X18774122>.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of tripartite collaboration into urban agrarian reform. This study is focused on three cases of informal or formerly informal settlements in Semarang that highlight different types of tenure vulnerability. The first is Tambaklorok. Located in North Semarang, this fishing settlement in Tanjung Mas Urban Village is, in some areas, undocumented due to land reclamation efforts driven by the local community. The second is Pekunden, a formerly high-density, low-income settlement that occupied central Semarang and was redeveloped between 1990 and 1992 into public rental flats (Rusun Pekunden) through a slum-clearance policy that does not legally regularize tenure. The third is Bustaman, which is notoriously known as “Kampung Gulai.” This settlement is in the Purwodinatan Urban Village and is packed with heritage structures. As in the case of Pekunden, the vibrant local culture and economic activities in this settlement do not reflect, nor have they resulted in, legal recognition of the land. This study also reviews and analyzes the existing spatial plans for Semarang and data from the City of Semarang’s Slum-Free City (KOTAKU) Program, which will be elaborated in the next sections. By combining legal, social, and institutional perspectives, the study offers a new framework for addressing settlement legalization. This approach moves beyond traditional state-centered models and emphasizes multi-actor governance. This study aims to develop a collaborative model of urban agrarian reform grounded in tripartite synergy among government, academia, and civil society. By addressing existing limitations and integrating multiple perspectives, the research contributes to more inclusive and sustainable urban policies. In response to the posed questions, this study adopts a normative juridical method and an interdisciplinary approach, as explained in the following section.

This study employs a normative juridical research design, combined with an interdisciplinary approach, to examine a model of urban agrarian reform grounded in tripartite synergy among government, academics, and civil society. The normative-legal method is used to analyze the legal framework governing land tenure, housing, and spatial planning in Indonesia, specifically the Basic Agrarian Law, the Spatial Planning Law, and the Housing and Settlement Areas Law, as

identified in the research questions above.⁴² This approach examines statutory regulations, legal principles, and doctrinal interpretations to assess their coherence and applicability in addressing urban land inequality. In addition, the interdisciplinary approach integrates perspectives from spatial justice theory, urban governance, and public policy to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue beyond purely legal analysis. The study is primarily set in Indonesia's urban areas, with a particular emphasis on the city of Semarang as a representative case. Semarang is selected for its large number of informal settlements and land tenure issues, which reflect broader national patterns. Many low-income communities in this city occupy land without formal legal status, yet some of these areas have the potential to be designated for agrarian reform. This makes Semarang a relevant empirical reference for exploring how legal frameworks and collaborative governance models can be applied in practice. However, the study does not aim to conduct an empirical field survey; rather, it uses Semarang as an analytical case to contextualize legal and policy discussions.

Data collection in this research relies on secondary data sources.⁴³ These include primary legal materials such as the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the Basic Agrarian Law, the Spatial Planning Law, and the Housing and Settlement Areas Law, as well as related government regulations and policy documents on agrarian reform. At the local level, this study also draws on Semarang City Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 14/2011 on the Spatial Plan (RTRW) of Semarang City 2011–2031 and its amendment, Perda No. 5/2021; publicly available reports and secondary data on the National Land Agency's (BPN) land registration activity in Semarang, to the extent published by BPN Kota Semarang or referenced in prior academic studies; and program documentation and secondary reporting on the Kota Tanpa Kumuh (KOTAKU) slum-alleviation program as implemented in Semarang, including area-based slum data published by the Semarang City Housing and Settlement Agency. Secondary materials

⁴² Irwansyah Irwansyah, *Penelitian Hukum, Pilihan Metode & Praktik Penulisan Artikel* (Yogyakarta: Mirra Buana Media, 2021).

⁴³ Peter Mahmud Marzuki, "Penelitian Hukum," *Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media* 55 (2005).

consist of academic literature, including journal articles, books, research reports, and policy analyses published within the last five years, which discuss urban land governance, informal settlements, spatial justice, and collaborative policy models. Tertiary materials, such as legal dictionaries and official statistical reports, are also used to support the interpretation of key concepts and provide contextual data, including urban population growth and the extent of slum areas.

The data analysis is conducted through a qualitative descriptive method. Legal materials are analyzed using statutory and conceptual approaches to identify inconsistencies, gaps, and potential integration among different regulatory frameworks. At the same time, theoretical analysis examines how concepts such as spatial justice, the right to the city, and collaborative governance can inform the development of an urban agrarian reform model. The analysis process involves comparing existing policies with theoretical frameworks and identifying gaps in current approaches that fail to address the needs of low-income communities. From this analysis, a conceptual model of tripartite synergy is developed that emphasizes participatory land identification, legal status assessment, and cross-sectoral policy integration.

This study also adopts a prescriptive approach, aiming not only to describe existing conditions but also to propose a practical framework for policy improvement. By synthesizing legal analysis and theoretical insights, the research develops a collaborative model that can serve as a reference for policymakers and stakeholders in implementing urban agrarian reform. However, this study has certain limitations. As normative and literature-based research, it does not include primary empirical data such as field observations or interviews. Therefore, the proposed model requires further empirical validation in future research. Despite this limitation, the study provides a strong conceptual and legal foundation for understanding and addressing the challenges of settlement legalization in urban areas.

A. Structural Problems in Urban Land Governance and Settlement Legality

The examination of the land law system in Indonesia, specifically the Basic Agrarian Law (UUPA No. 5/1960), the Spatial Planning Law (UU No. 26/2007 as amended by UU Cipta Kerja), and the Housing and Settlement Areas Law (UU No. 1/2011), shows that there is still a structural deficiency in the integration of legal formalism and the socio-spatial condition of the poor community in informal settlements. This deficiency can be documented and will be explained in the following discussion, beyond the empirical observation of this community.⁴⁴ As reflected in the manuscript data, the increase in urban population from 53.3% in 2015 to 56.39% in 2022 has intensified pressure on land availability, especially in major cities such as Semarang.⁴⁵ This demographic shift has led to the proliferation of informal settlements, many of which exist outside formal legal recognition despite long-term occupation. A normative interpretation of the UUPA explains why this is the case: Article 19 of the UUPA makes legal certainty of land rights contingent on formal registration. However, the UUPA does not provide a legal avenue for occupants who have long possessed the land to obtain land rights. This is unlike, for example, the doctrines of adverse possession that exist in many other jurisdictions. This statutory vacuum, rather than solely an absence of administrative capacity, is a structural reason for the continued informality. Existing legal instruments tend to emphasize formal registration and administrative compliance, which are often inaccessible to low-income communities due to bureaucratic complexity and financial constraints. As a result, a significant portion of urban residents remains excluded from legal land systems, reinforcing cycles of vulnerability and insecurity.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Heru Yudi Kurniawan et al., "The Principles of Welfare and Justice in Land Registration Regulations," *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 6, no. 2 (2026): 236–68.

⁴⁵ Suhadi, "Reforma Agraria Perkotaan Berbasis Kolaborasi: Penguasaan Dan Pemilikan Tanah Berkepastian Hukum."

⁴⁶ Nur Rohman, "Urgensi Dan Keamanan Digitalisasi Dokumen Penerbitan Sertifikat Elektronik Tanah," in *Prosiding Webinar Nasional Hukum*

Slum areas cover roughly 88,662.69 hectares and 8,912.33 hectares in Central Java, but should be interpreted with caution. It is an indicator of unresolved informality and does not imply that all efforts to implement policies were in vain. It must be noted that reductions in slum areas were reported, and supporters of the National Slum Alleviation Program (Kotaku) have the right to claim that the construction of facilities improves the conditions of many people, even in the absence of land certification. This research does not deny these improvements. Its claims are more specific. Reductions in physical slum conditions do not signify that the legal status of informal occupation has been resolved, especially since Kotaku and similar programs primarily use Ministry of Public Works construction funds and do not collaborate with UUPA land institutions or the BPN's PTSL. It is thus possible to "de-slum" a settlement and keep it physically improved yet legally informal, which current slum-area statistics cannot indicate. Rather than focusing on legal recognition, many programs have prioritized physical upgrading or relocation, which does not resolve underlying tenure insecurity.⁴⁷ This finding aligns with previous studies that criticize the dominance of technocratic approaches in urban policy, where infrastructure improvements are prioritized over legal empowerment. This study's contribution is more modest: it identifies, through statutory analysis, that Indonesian land law lacks the specific integrative mechanism linking PTSL registration outcomes to spatial planning designations under UU No. 26/2007 that comparable jurisdictions use to convert physical upgrading into legal tenure. In contrast to earlier research, which often isolates housing policy from land law, this study highlights the need to treat settlement legality as a cross-sectoral issue involving legal, spatial, and institutional dimensions.

Another key finding relates to the fragmentation of regulatory frameworks governing land, housing, and spatial planning. One can observe evidence of fragmentation in the law in Article 14 of UU No. 26/2007. The article lends authority to regional governments through

Administrasi Negara, vol. 1 (Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Fakultas Hukum, Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2021), 65.

⁴⁷ Indah Sri Utari et al., "The Digital Sanctuary: Forging Legal And Ethical Frameworks For Interfaith Coexistence Online," *Contemporary Issues on Interfaith Law and Society* 4, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.15294/ciils.v4i2.35309>.

Bappeda to set spatial designations (Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah/RTRW). Meanwhile, under PP No. 24/1997 on Land Registration, as amended by PP No. 18/2021, the authority is vested in the National Land Agency (BPN/ATR). There are two separate legal instruments placed under the authority of two institutions, with no legal obligation to connect. For example, land administration policies may not align with spatial planning regulations, leading to situations in which settlements are recognized socially but not legally. This fragmentation has been widely discussed in previous literature, but this study provides a more detailed explanation of how it directly affects the legalization process.⁴⁸ Unlike earlier studies that focus on institutional inefficiency in general terms, this research demonstrates that fragmentation creates practical barriers, including unclear procedures, conflicting regulations, and delayed decision-making. These barriers discourage communities from pursuing legal recognition and reduce the effectiveness of government programs. Therefore, the problem is not only the absence of regulation but also the lack of coherence among existing legal instruments.

Semarang is a singular illustrative example, not an evidentiary one. We did not map the field, survey households, or examine local government demographic breakdowns of informal settlements, so any statements regarding Semarang are relevant to the national legal analysis above and should not be considered verified local data. Within those constraints, the available public data on regional regulations (the Semarang City Perda on RTRW) identify certain riverbank- and railway-adjacent zones that informal settlements, as non-residential, have long occupied. This means that, given the aforementioned fragmentation, there is no legal basis for registration, even if the occupation is socially legitimate and has long existed. This shows, at the level of legal structure, the gap between legal norms and social realities, as described at the national level. However, it does not indicate the number of informal settlements and residents in Semarang that are at the legal-norm gap, as

⁴⁸ Fatma Ayu Jati Putri and Jasurbek Rustamovich Ehsonov, "The Impact of Land Reform Policies on the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Local Communities," *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 4, no. 2 (2024): 510–37, <https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v4i2.197>.

this falls outside the scope of this normative study. Previous studies have acknowledged the existence of such gaps, but they often fail to propose concrete mechanisms for bridging them.⁴⁹ This study contributes to the literature by identifying specific points of disconnection, such as the absence of participatory mechanisms in land identification and the lack of coordination between local and national authorities. These findings emphasize that legal recognition cannot be achieved solely through top-down policies but requires an inclusive, context-sensitive approach. Three specific cases in Semarang demonstrate various types of legal-spatial fragmentation, as differentiated by the city's planning regulations and data from the city's slum alleviation program. Currently, Semarang's spatial regulation is based on Perda No. 14/2011 on RTRW Kota Semarang 2011-2031, as amended by Perda No. 5/2021. This was an adjustment due to the implementation of UU No. 26/2007 on Spatial Planning, forcing a revision of Perda No. 5/2004, the city's previous RTRW.

Furthermore, the study reveals that the dominance of top-down governance approaches has limited the effectiveness of existing land reform initiatives. Policy-making processes are often centralized, with limited involvement from local communities or non-governmental actors. This approach reduces the relevance of policies to local conditions and may lead to resistance or non-compliance. While previous research has highlighted the importance of participation, this study provides empirical grounding by showing how the lack of participation directly affects settlement legalization outcomes. Therefore, participation is not merely a normative principle but a practical necessity for effective policy implementation.

Another interpretation of land commodification exists in the literature and deserves attention here. Some scholars and politicians recognize that if appropriate social measures accompany market-based land valuation systems, such systems can generate the resources local governments need to build public infrastructure and implement

⁴⁹ Agung Wibawa and Lego Karjoko, "Realizing World-Standard's Spatial Planning and Land Management: The Urgency of Bureaucratic Reform," in *The International Conference on Law, Economic & Good Governance (IC-LAW 2023)* (Atlantis Press SARL, 2024), 346–53, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-218-7_58.

formalization efforts, including the PTSL, which is partially subsidized by other land revenues. From this standpoint, commodification is not exclusionary; it occurs only when redistributive measures are lacking. This research project does not decide whether commodification is beneficial or harmful. It claims that, given the legal framework outlined above, there is no such safeguard measure, and thus commodification can be pursued without consequences for informal inhabitants.

In comparison with previous studies, this research offers a more integrated analysis of urban land governance by combining legal, spatial, and institutional perspectives. Earlier studies tend to focus on single dimensions, such as legal reform or housing policy, without considering their interconnections. This study addresses this limitation by demonstrating how these dimensions interact to shape the legality of settlement. As a result, it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the problem and lays the foundation for developing a collaborative model of urban agrarian reform. The significance of this finding lies in its potential to inform more effective and inclusive policy interventions that address both the legal and social aspects of urban land governance.

B. Tripartite Synergy as a Collaborative Model for Urban Agrarian Reform

The second major finding of this study is the identification of a tripartite synergy among government, academia, and civil society as a viable model for addressing the limitations of current urban land governance. This model emerges as a response to the structural problems identified in the previous section, particularly the lack of coordination and participation. Building on the statutory gaps identified above, this study proposes that each actor plays a distinct yet complementary role in the settlement legalization process. Government institutions provide legal authority and policy frameworks, academics contribute analytical and evidence-based insights, and civil society organizations facilitate community engagement and participation. This assignment of roles is not just a function of structure; it aims to fill specific legal voids illustrated in the previous section, namely the lack of a synchronization requirement between RTRW zoning and the BPN's registration of land

rights, as per the provisions of PP No. 24 of 1997 jo. PP No. 18 of 2021, as well as the absence of a requirement for participation in the provisions of Perpres No. 86 of 2018. This division of roles creates a more balanced governance structure that can address both legal and social dimensions of urban land reform.

One of the key contributions of this study is the development of a structured model of collaboration that integrates these actors into a coherent framework. Unlike previous studies that discuss collaboration in general terms, this research proposes specific implementation stages, including participatory land identification, legal status assessment, and policy integration. In the first stage, civil society organizations work with communities to map land occupation and identify potential reform objects. This stage must operate within the boundaries of existing law rather than as a freestanding process: under Article 33 of Perpres No. 86/2018, land object identification for agrarian reform (TORA) is formally the mandate of the National Land Reform Team, in which civil society currently has no guaranteed seat. For community-generated land mapping to feed into the formal legal status assessment, it would need to be recognized as valid supporting data under BPN's systematic land registration procedure (PTSL, per PP No. 18/2021), which currently does not name community organizations as authorized data sources. This is a legal barrier the model must address, not assume away, for instance, through a Memorandum of Understanding or a regional regulation (Perda) that formally designates civil society-generated data as admissible input to the TORA verification process. In the first stage, civil society organizations work with communities to map land occupation and identify potential reform objects.⁵⁰ In the second stage, academics and legal experts analyze the land's legal status and propose appropriate mechanisms for legalization.⁵¹ This stage also faces a concrete legal constraint: land ownership and occupation records held by BPN are

⁵⁰ Lastuti Abubakar and Tri Handayani, "Legal Issues in Sharia Pawn Gold Practice in Indonesia," *FIAT JUSTISIA: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 11, no. 1 (2017): 1, <https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v11no1.618>.

⁵¹ Raja Mohamad Rozi and Nisya, "Validity and Legal Protection of Defendant in an Online Trial System," *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Law and Human Rights 2020 (ICLHR 2020)* 549, no. Iclhr 2020 (2021): 182–90, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210506.026>.

subject to restrictions under the Personal Data Protection Law (UU No. 27/2022), which classifies land and property data as personal data requiring a legal basis for third-party access and processing. Academic partners would therefore require either a formal data-sharing agreement with BPN or reliance on the “public interest” processing basis under Article 20 of UU PDP, neither of which is automatic, and both of which the model must specify rather than presuppose. In the final stage, government institutions formalize the process through policy implementation and administrative procedures. As regards the splitting of institutional mandates, conflicts are more likely to be expected rather than unexpected. Based on UU No. 26/2007, spatial zoning remains the authority of Bappeda/regional government, whereas, under agrarian law, BPN/ATR retains authority over registration, and neither agency is legally obliged to accept the outcome of the tripartite process. In the absence of a binding coordination instrument, the tripartite model is likely to be of little or no use. The Peraturan Bersama (joint ministerial or agency regulation) and Perda (local regulation) are the only means that can integrate the outputs of the tripartite model into the RTRW (Regional Spatial Planning) and PTSL (Land Modernization) Verification. The structured model approach is innovative, as previous studies of this nature have been less practical and more general. This structured approach distinguishes this study from earlier research, which often lacks practical guidance for implementation.

This study proposes, as a normative hypothesis rather than a demonstrated outcome, that tripartite synergy could enhance legal certainty for low-income communities, provided the legal barriers identified above are addressed through an appropriate binding instrument. By involving multiple actors, the legalization process becomes more transparent and accountable. Communities are not only beneficiaries but also active participants in the process, which increases their trust in the system. This contrasts with previous top-down approaches, where communities often perceive legalization programs as imposed and inaccessible. The inclusion of civil society organizations helps bridge this gap by translating legal processes into more understandable terms and ensuring that community voices are represented. While this hypothesis has been cited elsewhere in Southeast Asia, empirical evidence from Indonesia is understandably excluded

from the current study. The Philippine Community Mortgage Program (CMP) and the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) in Thailand, both of which incorporate a similar model of community organizations conducting settlement-level data work, legal and technical bodies checking eligibility, and government agencies formalizing tenure, have been cited for improvements in tenure security over state-only initiatives.⁵² However, these models operate within legal frameworks that include community land trust or cooperative tenure systems, and Indonesia lacks such systems; hence, we cannot assume these models and their outcomes are directly applicable. These examples of institutional design have been included to illustrate some frameworks and are not meant to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Indonesian model.⁵³

Another important aspect of the tripartite model is its potential to reduce land conflicts.⁵⁴ The study finds that many conflicts arise from unclear land status and a lack of communication between stakeholders. By creating a collaborative platform, the model facilitates dialogue and negotiation, which can prevent disputes from escalating. This finding builds on previous research that emphasizes conflict resolution mechanisms but goes further by integrating them into a broader governance framework. In this sense, the model not only addresses the symptoms of land conflicts but also their underlying causes.

In terms of theoretical contribution, this study advances the concept of collaborative governance by applying it specifically to urban agrarian reform. While collaborative governance has been widely discussed in public policy literature, its application in land reform remains limited. This study fills this gap by demonstrating how collaboration can be operationalized in a legally complex and socially sensitive context. Furthermore, integrating spatial justice and the right to

⁵² Aldehita Purnasanti Maulida et al., “Transforming Credit Guarantees in Indonesia: Legal Reform and Digital Innovation at Askrindo,” *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 7, no. 1 (2026): 251–92, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jllr.v7i1.38585>.

⁵³ Damilola Olawuyi, “Sustainable Development and the Water-Energy-Food Nexus: Legal Challenges and Emerging Solutions,” *Environmental Science and Policy* 103, no. October 2019 (2020): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2019.10.009>.

⁵⁴ Handayani et al., “The Politics Settlement of Land Tenure Conflicts During Jokowi’S Presidency.”

the city into the model provides a normative foundation that strengthens its relevance. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on efficiency, this research emphasizes equity and inclusion as central objectives of urban land reform.

Despite its strengths, the study also acknowledges certain limitations of the proposed model. As a normative and conceptual framework, it requires empirical validation through field-based research. Additionally, the model's effectiveness depends on stakeholders' willingness to collaborate, which may vary across contexts. The model relies on legal and institutional reforms that cannot be compelled under the current framework. These include the binding coordination framework between Bappeda and BPN, the improved data-sharing basis under UU PDP, and the formal recognition of civil society as a data contributor in the TORA verification process. In their absence, the model will remain as a design proposal rather than an executable model. However, these limitations do not diminish the significance of the findings. Instead, they highlight the need for further research to refine and adapt the model in practice. The challenges of settlement legalization in urban Indonesia cannot be addressed through isolated or sectoral approaches. Instead, they require a collaborative model that integrates legal, social, and institutional perspectives. The tripartite synergy model proposed in this study offers a novel and practical framework for achieving this goal. By highlighting its differences from previous research and emphasizing its potential impact, this study contributes to both academic discourse and policy development in the field of urban agrarian reform.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Grant W. Walton, Meg Keen, and Quentin Hanich, "Can Greater Transparency Improve the Sustainability of Pacific Fisheries?," *Marine Policy* 136, no. September 2020 (2022): 104, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104251>.

C. Integrating Legal Reform and Spatial Justice: Toward an Inclusive Urban Land Governance Framework

This study argues that legal reform and spatial justice principles must be substantively integrated to create a more inclusive framework for urban land governance, a claim developed below not only as a theoretical orientation but as a basis for concrete amendments to existing statutes. For far too long, urban land policy in Indonesia has operated within a paradigm that privileges formal legality over substantive fairness, most concretely visible in Article 19 of the UUPA, which conditions legal certainty of land rights on formal registration without providing an alternative pathway for those who lack the documentation, resources, or institutional access to complete that process. What is needed, therefore, is not simply a refinement of existing regulations but a more fundamental rethinking of the normative foundations upon which urban land law is built.⁵⁶

Socially cohesive informal settlements (or *kampung*), as long-standing communities in Indonesia, bind residents. Unlawfully occupying residents are at risk of eviction. The law does not specify the conditions for legal residency in *Kampung*. To achieve legal residency, policies must not only be incrementally altered; the specific laws creating illegal residency must also be amended. This means, concretely, that reform efforts must involve participatory processes that center the voices of affected communities, that legal standards for land recognition must be broadened to include evidence of long-term occupancy and community stewardship alongside formal documentation, and that municipal land governance institutions must be held accountable not only for administrative efficiency but for the distributional consequences of their decisions. Only through this kind of integrated approach can urban land governance begin to fulfill its democratic promise, serving not as an instrument of exclusion and dispossession, but as a foundation for

⁵⁶ M. Dylan Spencer and Cory Schnell, “Reinvestigating the Relationship between Cities and the Spatial Distribution of Robbery: A Tale of Eight Cities,” *Journal of Criminal Justice* 82, no. October (2022): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2022.102003>.

a city in which all residents, regardless of their economic position or documentary status, can exercise a meaningful and secure right to urban life.

The proposed amendments above rest on a conceptual claim that requires explanation. The dominant legal imagination of land rights in Indonesia, as in many postcolonial states, remains deeply anchored in a model inherited from both colonial administrative traditions and modernist development ideology a model that treats individual, formally registered ownership as the singular legitimate form of land tenure and, by extension, the only relationship between a person and land that the law is prepared to recognize and protect. When individual ownership and formal registration are elevated as the universal standard against which all other forms of land occupation are measured, the diverse, collective, and often incrementally established land relationships that characterize informal urban settlements are rendered not merely irregular but fundamentally illegible to the law.⁵⁷ Legible to the law, in these study terms, following the epistemic injustice literature, is a failure of legal recognition rather than merely a failure of legal protection. This study aims to translate ‘epistemic injustice’ from philosophy to operable law by testing it against three empirical indicators. The first indicator is evidentiary exclusion. This asks whether the law has an established form of proof for recognizing occupation other than an official certificate. Under Article 19 of the UUPA, there is currently no such provision. The second indicator is procedural standing. This concerns whether occupants are entitled to a hearing before a spatial planning (RTRW) and a subsequent eviction decision. Under UU No. 26/2007 and the procedural law on eviction, such a hearing is not provided for. The third indicator is collective legal personality. This considers whether communities can collectively possess or claim land rights, rather than claiming them solely as individual members. Under Article 9 UUPA, the law does not currently recognize this. These three indicators correspond directly to the proposals for the amendments above, thereby allowing

⁵⁷ Nesru H. Koroso, Jaap A. Zevenbergen, and Monica Lengoiboni, “Land Institutions’ Credibility: Analyzing the Role of Complementary Institutions,” *Land Use Policy* 81, no. August 2018 (2019): 553–64, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2018.11.026>.

‘epistemic injustice’ to be used as a diagnostic tool against specific legal provisions, rather than a descriptive term. Before any meaningful legal reform can take place, therefore, there must be a prior and deliberate effort to expand the conceptual vocabulary through which land rights are understood, moving beyond the singular ideal of individual formal ownership toward a richer, more pluralistic framework that is capable of recognizing the many ways in which people legitimately relate to, depend upon, and exercise claims over urban land.⁵⁸ A family may have built their home on a plot of land thirty years ago with the verbal agreement of a local figure, subsequently improved the structure, paid informal local levies, and been recognized by neighbors and local administrators as rightful occupants, yet still possess no legal title that the formal system would accept as proof of ownership. Under a framework that recognizes only formal individual titles, this family’s claim is legally invisible regardless of the depth and duration of their actual relationship with the land. This study, therefore, argues that alternative forms of tenure recognition must be seriously considered and incorporated into urban agrarian reform efforts. Communal land rights, which vest tenure in a recognized community or neighborhood association rather than in isolated individuals, offer one promising alternative that better reflects the social organization of land in many informal settlements.

Currently, the model lacks enforcement mechanisms. The granting of rights would be meaningless without mechanisms to address violations of those rights. This study proposes that any extension of tenure rights under Article 19A be paired with a corresponding cause of action within the existing Indonesian administrative and civil law system, without creating a new system of justice. These include: (1) administrative objections (*keberatan*) to decisions of BPN or Bappeda that disregard evidence of long-term occupation submitted under Article 19A, and which are to be settled under the State Administrative Court (PTUN) system of UU No. 51/2009; (2) a civil lawsuit for compensation and not for the restitution of title, where displacement occurs and the

⁵⁸ Ahmad Wildan et al., “Penataan Ruang Terbuka Dengan Plang Denah Lokasi, Ecobrik, Dan Spot Foto Sebagai Icon Promosi Desa Wisata Pesisir Di Desa Tambakcemandi,” *Nusantara Community Empowerment Review* 2, no. 1 (2024): 23–30, <https://doi.org/10.55732/ncer.v2i1.1151>.

land is transferred into the possession of a third party in good faith, in accordance with the principles of agrarian compensation law under Article 40 UUPA; and (3) a provision of legal standing, where either of the actions may be brought by the registered community association on behalf of its members, thereby giving effect to the collective legal personality that is the subject of the proposed amendment to Article 9. Without such a remedial framework, the recognition of tenure rights under the proposals would be unenforceable. The findings also indicate that integrating legal reform and spatial justice can enhance the effectiveness of policy interventions. When legal frameworks are aligned with spatial realities, policies become more relevant and easier to implement. For example, recognizing existing settlement patterns can reduce the need for relocation and minimize social disruption.⁵⁹ This approach contrasts with previous policies that prioritize spatial order over social continuity, often leading to resistance from affected communities. By emphasizing alignment rather than imposition, the proposed framework offers a more sustainable approach to urban development. This finding highlights the importance of context-sensitive policy design in achieving long-term outcomes.

In comparison with previous literature, this study provides a more explicit framework for operationalizing spatial justice within legal reform processes. While many studies advocate for equity and inclusion, they often lack concrete mechanisms for implementation. This research addresses this gap by linking spatial justice principles to specific legal and institutional reforms, including participatory mapping, flexible tenure recognition, and integrated policy coordination. These elements complement the tripartite synergy model discussed earlier, creating a more comprehensive approach to urban agrarian reform. The integration of these components represents a key novelty of the study.

The study emphasizes that achieving inclusive urban land governance requires not only technical and legal adjustments but also a shift in governance philosophy. Authorities must shift from a control-oriented to a facilitative approach, recognizing communities as partners

⁵⁹ Bella Ayu Anzalia et al., “Hak Atas Lingkungan Hidup Yang Baik Dan Sehat Berdasarkan UUD 1945 Dalam Sistem Hukum Indonesia,” *Capitalis: Journal of Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2023): 21–31.

rather than objects of regulation. This shift is essential for building trust and ensuring the sustainability of reform initiatives. While this idea has been discussed in governance literature, this study situates it specifically within the context of urban land reform in Indonesia. By doing so, it contributes to both theoretical and practical discussions on creating more inclusive and equitable cities.

Conclusion

This study has focused on the structural constraints of Indonesia's urban land governance system. It has proposed a collaborative urban agrarian reform model based on a tripartite synergy among government, academia, and civil society. Through normative-legal analysis, this study has argued that the persistence of informal settlements and tenure insecurity among low-income communities is not an incidental outcome of rapid urbanization but the product of fragmented legal frameworks, institutionally siloed governance, and a deeply entrenched paradigm that subordinates social equity to formal administrative compliance. By integrating normative legal analysis with spatial justice theory, this study has identified specific statutory gaps that fragmented legal architecture and institutional arrangements create in the settlement legalization process, and has proposed statutory language Articles 19A and 9 of the UUPA, along with an institutional model to address them. The proposed tripartite synergy model, organized around participatory land identification, dual legal-spatial assessments, and integrated policy formalization, offers a conceptual and legal-institutional framework. It contributes to knowledge by identifying, at the level of the statutory framework, the gap within existing legal provisions that accommodate collaborative and pluralistic approaches to the recognition of land tenure, and by drafting specific wording for legal provisions and remedial mechanisms to bridge this gap.

Building on the statutory gaps identified in this study, the following recommendations are proposed as normative policy directions rather than empirically validated conclusions: First, national and local governments should revisit the rigid reliance on formal titling as the singular pathway to legal recognition and consider incorporating

alternative tenure instruments, such as communal land rights and incremental legalization, into the existing agrarian reform agenda or instance, through the Article 19A and Article 9 UUPA amendments proposed above. Second, regulatory coherence must be prioritized by harmonizing land administration law, spatial planning regulations, and housing policy so that communities are not trapped by conflicting legal requirements across different institutional domains, such as through a binding coordination instrument between Bappeda and BPN/ATR, as discussed in the preceding section. Third, participatory mechanisms must be institutionalized within land governance processes, ensuring that affected communities are active co-designers of legalization procedures rather than passive recipients of administrative decisions. Fourth, academic institutions should be formally recognized as technical partners in urban agrarian reform, providing evidence-based assessments and policy recommendations to bridge the gap between legal standards and socio-spatial conditions. These four recommendations are derived from the statutory and institutional gaps identified through normative analysis; they have not been tested against empirical outcomes and should be read as a policy agenda rather than as findings.

Several factors limit the scope of the claims in this research. First, as normative-juridical research, this study cites only secondary legal and academic sources. It does not conduct interviews with BPN/ATR, Bappeda, NGOs, or residents of informal settlements in Semarang, nor does it conduct research. Therefore, statements about the institutions' willingness to collaborate, the community's trust, and the practicality of the proposed research phases remain assumptions. Second, the tripartite synergy model has not been tested in other jurisdictions. The Philippine Community Mortgage Program and Thailand's CODI model operate within distinct statutory frameworks. Therefore, we cannot predict the Indonesian case based solely on these models. The model should be regarded as a proposal on legal-institutional design that requires empirical testing to claim its practicality. Third, the design of the proposed statutory changes (Articles 19A and 9 of the UUPA) is not the final draft of law. Therefore, the thresholds for the proposed changes, the implementing regulations, and the main framework of the changes would require further legal and technical drafting, which falls outside the scope of this study.

At least three paths appear to present the most promise for future research on this topic. First, through empirical case studies of informal settlements in Semarang or similar Indonesian cities, researchers will have the opportunity to conduct household surveys, apply spatial mapping methods, and interview residents and local officials. This type of research will help to determine whether the legal barriers identified in this study, such as provisions for a synchronization clause between the RTRW and PTSL, exist in practice. Second, the research will focus on implementing the tripartite model and building partnerships with local governments, civil society organizations, and universities to improve transparency, reduce conflict, and increase legal certainty. Finally, consideration will be given to the development of community land trusts and/or community cooperative tenure groups within the Indonesian legal framework, focusing on the specific legal design elements that could most likely be incorporated within the Indonesian legal framework.

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Acknowledgment

The authors express our gratitude to LPPM Universitas Negeri Semarang for their support to this research and publication.

Funding Information

This research and publication were fully funded by the DPA LPPM Universitas Negeri Semarang under the DPA 139.03.2.693449/2026 dated 8 April 2026 based on the Assignment Agreement for Implementing of Applied Research Expertise Scheme 2 Funded by DPA LPPM UNNES 2026 Number 607.8.4/UN37/PPK.11/2026.

Conflicting Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

Publishing Ethical and Originality Statement

All authors declared that this work is original and has never been published in any form and in any media, nor is it under consideration for publication in any journal, and all sources cited in this work refer to the basic standards of scientific citation.

Generative AI Statement

None.