



# Claiming indigenous rights through participatory mapping and the making of citizenship



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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 6 October 2016

Received in revised form

17 August 2017

Accepted 19 August 2017

### Keywords:

Citizenship

Indigenous people

Indigeneity

Participatory mapping

Political agency

Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

This paper considers how participatory mapping, through the notion of indigeneity, is involved in the making of participants' political agency and the possible implications for local struggles over customary land and resources. Empirically, the paper draws on a field study of participatory mapping as a cartographic-legal strategy for the recognition of the customary rights to land and resources of the Dayak, an indigenous ethnic group in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. In this paper, we use citizenship as a basis for our analysis. On this basis, we discuss how the notion of indigeneity has assembled actors across different scales and how this has enabled indigeneity to develop as a site for claiming customary rights to land and resources through participatory mapping. One of our main arguments is the need to understand indigenous citizenship as a process that develops over time and through networks of actors that transcend the borders of the state and expand the formerly exclusive relationship between the state and its citizens in the making of citizenship. We challenge Isin's clear distinction between active and activist approaches to making claims of citizenship, suggesting instead that these approaches are mutually constitutive.

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## 1. Introduction: the rise of indigenous citizenship and participatory mapping

Indigenous people in Indonesia have long been on the margins of the national project of the state as the state has long ignored claims of customary, or *adat*,<sup>i</sup> rights to land and resources (Li, 2000; Persoon, 1998; Warren & McCarthy, 2002; Warren, 2005a, 2005b). Rather than accepting the differences represented by indigenous people, the post-colonial state has sought to integrate the Dayak<sup>ii</sup> and other indigenous people into the nation-building project by 'allowing' them to participate in the nation as Indonesian citizens,

purportedly on equal footing with other citizens (Li, 2000). 'Indigenous' became a postcolonial category referring to the nation's colonial past when all Indonesians were subordinated to the European colonizers (Rosaldo, 2003). Thus, in Indonesia, as in many other countries in the global south, ignorance of indigenous rights and claims became integral to the ideology of nationalism that aimed to create a nation that could be controlled and developed and to create prosperity for its citizens (Savino, 2016).

Nevertheless, this approach to indigenous people and the possibility of making citizenship appears to have changed in recent decades in several countries in the global south, particularly in Latin America, as indigenous people worldwide are increasingly seen as political subjects with particular rights that diverge from those of the majority (Larson, 2004; Pacheco, 2004). A major force in the recognition of indigeneity as a political factor can be seen through the political principles of decentralization, which includes the devolution of power to lower administrative units (Wilson, 2008). As much as it is about governmental reform, however, decentralization is also about acknowledging that new expressions of diversity within the nation play a role in national development (Peluso, Afiff, & Rachman, 2008). This has opened the door to the development of new political identities based on ethnicity and

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<sup>i</sup> Customary land rights here refer to the concept of *adat*, a term used in Indonesia to describe complex customary systems, including rights to land and resources. However, *adat* also refers to a wide range of traditional rules, conventions, principles, and beliefs.

<sup>ii</sup> The word 'Dayak', which has become standard in the literature on Borneo, was a loose colonial term referring to indigenous, non-Muslim, and non-Chinese inhabitants of Borneo, most of whom are, or were, swidden cultivators residing in the interior of Borneo. Dayak includes several ethnic groups (Dove, 2006).

territorial attachment on scales other than that of the nation state as well as new forms of local integration into neoliberal global capitalism and transnational social movements (Li, 2007b). What it means to be indigenous is changing as indigeneity is produced and reproduced through new constellations of power, dominance and possibilities across various scales (Radcliffe, 2015, 2017).

Indonesia, which is the empirical context of this article, followed a policy of decentralization and new forms of recognition of minorities after the end of Suharto's authoritarian 'New Order' rule in 1998 (Li, 2000; Resosudarmo, 2004; Warren, 2005b). Democratic development emerged simultaneously with the devolution of the right to manage lands to both local governments and customary institutions (Warren, 2005b). In the Province of Central Kalimantan, the location of the empirical study discussed in this paper, the Dayak indigenous people have used this approach since the 1990s as a tool of resistance against land expropriation by both companies and the state (Peluso, 1995; Radjawali, Pye, & Flitner, 2017; Warren & McCarthy, 2002; Warren, 2005b). Initially, the use of maps and mapping by indigenous peoples was conceived of as a strategy to bolster the legitimacy of customary rights to land and resources by producing alternative representations of the land on which they live (Peluso, 1995). Recently, as will be discussed in greater detail below, participatory mapping programmes in Kalimantan, as well as other places, have been accommodated by the state and conducted alongside recognition of Dayak customary land rights. However, the state's interest in participatory mapping is not limited to Dayak claims on land. It is also, as we argue elsewhere, a strategy to simplify, classify, administer, and measure the nature and people of Central Kalimantan (Kurniawan, 2016). In the words of Scott (1998), participatory mapping has been a way to make indigenous citizens more legible and, thus, more easily brought into the market in the attempt to develop the national economy (Warren & McCarthy, 2002; Warren, 2005b). This situation raises the question of what type of political agency is created through the practice of participatory mapping and resonates with the ongoing debate within geography on the position of participation in post-colonial development (Cornwall, 2008; Kesby, 2007; Korf, 2010).

Although quite a lot has been written about participatory mapping as a political strategy, particularly in the Latin American context, this paper aims to advance this literature by approaching the relationship between political agency and participatory mapping as it has been articulated in Indonesia from a citizenship perspective. We do so by addressing how, through notions of indigeneity, participatory mapping involves the construction of participants' political agency and the possible implications for local struggles over customary land and resources. Empirically, the paper draws on a field study of Dayak peasants' use of participatory mapping as a cartographic-legal strategy to secure recognition of customary rights to land and resources (see Bryan, 2011). 'Acts of citizenship' is used as a concept to analytically ground our analysis (Isin, 2008, 2009). The aims of this paper are, first, to highlight aspects of the transformative power of participatory mapping and, second, to explore the potential to use citizenship as an analytical tool for analysing indigenous people's claims to rights through participatory mapping.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The next section begins by outlining some basic perspectives on citizenship and how these are related to indigeneity and participatory mapping. The discussion continues by examining how Dayak peasants in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, have applied participatory mapping in their struggle to protect their rights to customary land and resources. We end the paper by providing some concluding remarks.

## 2. Claiming rights as indigenous citizens through participatory mapping

Nation-state-based forms of citizenship have become the globally dominant way of defining formal aspects of citizenship and the main pathway through which people make claims as citizens to the political community of which they are a part (Isin, 2009, 2012). Nevertheless, most scholars of citizenship have observed that nation-state-based citizenship models seem to have reached their peak in terms of their importance for understanding how an individual's subjectivity develops in relation to a political community (see, for example, Delanty, 2000, 2007; Isin & Turner, 2007; Sassen, 2005; Staeheli, Attoh, & Mitchell, 2013). This recent change in the understanding of citizenship is widely related to increased global connectivity among people and places due to the recent development of the neoliberal global economy, new patterns of migration and the rapid development of new means of communication, all of which render our connections to territorial categories, such as the state, more fluid. With regard to the issue of indigenous rights in Indonesia, this development is evident in the close relation between the struggle of indigenous peoples for land and resources and the expansion of land-based investment for industries such as palm oil plantation and mining into customarily Dayak land (Gellert, 2010; Li, 2007b; Tsing, 2004). The response of peasant farmers and indigenous peoples is seen through the formation of counter-powers that include attachment to global environmental and agrarian justice movements as well as the mobilization of grassroots efforts to counter global agrarian and extractive industries (Gellert, 2010; Peluso et al., 2008; Pye, 2010).

From the perspective of these recent reconfigurations of political subjectivities, which include new scales and sites for making claims to rights, indigenous practices of citizenship are particularly interesting as they appear to represent a kind of localism that, at first glance, appears to be contradictory to globalization and globalism. Claims to rights by indigenous peoples are typically based on territorial attachments and strong and long-lasting communal ties to lands that have existed for longer than the ties of other people to the same environment. This situation allows for special and, to some extent, exclusive rights to the land on which these peoples have lived for generations (Canessa, 2012; Castree, 2004; Greene et al., 2004) and sometimes for a type of sedentarism that violates the rights of other citizens with strong attachments to the same territory (Li, 2002). Although indigenous claims made through this version of localism appear to represent a contradiction to the current reconfiguration of citizenship in the context of migration, mobility and global connection, similarities are evident. Recent claims from local villagers, peasants and indigenous peoples – who are not typically regarded as forces or players in the recent waves of globalization – might be considered deeply rooted in contemporary processes of increased global connectivity despite their long-lasting ties to land and territories (Arora-Jonsson, Westholm, Temu, & Pettitt, 2015; Asher & Ojeda, 2009). Local expressions of indigeneity are folded into a space where connections to the external world are expressed as an aspect of the local orientation of indigeneity (Allen, 2016).

The global aspects of indigenous localism are apparent for several reasons. First, recent indigenous movements may be understood as part of a global movement as much as local articulations of rights to land and resources (Canessa, 2012; Castree, 2004; Niezen, 2003; Pye, 2010; Tsing, 2004). Although different indigenous peoples have experienced diverse political, cultural and social contexts, they share a particular sense of justice or, rather, the historical injustice of being denied customary rights to the land on which they have lived for generations. This situation creates the conditions for indigenous people to become part of a global justice

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