



Institutional Framework for Protecting Communal Land Rights in Customary Villages (The Case Study of Pengastulan and Sumberklampok, Bali, Indonesia)

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Abstract

Communal land rights in Bali face increasing threats from land commercialization, tourism development, and legal uncertainties, highlighting the need for robust governance mechanisms that integrate formal state regulations and customary institutions. This study examines how these institutional systems interact to protect communal land rights in Pengastulan and Sumberklampok villages. Using Scott's four-pillar institutional framework, we conducted a qualitative constructivist study involving 26 informants, including customary leaders, government officials, and community members, through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Results show contrasting institutional capacities: Pengastulan exhibits strong customary legitimacy, cohesive social norms, and resilient cultural practices, but faces pressures from privatization and tourism; Sumberklampok demonstrates weaker customary institutions, relying more on legal advocacy and collective mobilization due to prolonged agrarian conflicts. Findings indicate that effective communal land protection depends on the dynamic interplay of regulatory, normative, cultural-cognitive, and habitual dimensions rather than formal legal recognition alone. The study contributes theoretically by extending institutional governance frameworks to customary land contexts under legal pluralism and offers practical insights for adaptive, collaborative approaches that integrate state administration with local customary mechanisms to strengthen communal land resilience.

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of communal land rights remains a persistent and multifaceted challenge in Indonesia's socio-political and legal discourse. In particular, the protection of customary land (tanah adat) represents a critical intersection between indigenous traditions, state regulatory frameworks, and the rapid pressures of economic development (Baker et al., 2016; Joireman & Tchatchoua-Djomo, 2023; Maulana et al., 2025). In Bali, customary land is not merely a physical asset but embodies profound spiritual, social, and cultural values deeply embedded in the identity of local communities (Wiwin, 2026; Narayana, 2023; Windia, 2013). However, the institutional mechanisms meant to

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safeguard these communal rights are often inadequate or inconsistently implemented, leading to conflicts, marginalization, and legal uncertainty (Adib et al., 2026; García-Vegas, 2024; Mills et al., 2023; Suryawati et al., 2026).

Conflicts over customary land in Indonesia have shown a significant increase year after year. According to a report by the National Land Agency (BPN), 123 customary land disputes were recorded across Indonesia between 2021 and 2023, with Bali being one of the most affected provinces. In Bali, the number of cases increased from 12 in 2021 to 35 in 2023. Protracted customary land disputes, such as the one in Sumberklampok Village that lasted approximately 61 years, demonstrate the weak legal recognition of customary structures and the imbalance between formal regulations and local customary practices. The cases in Pengastulan and Sumberklampok Villages highlight the urgent need for a robust communal rights protection system that relies not only on formal law but also on social norms, cultural practices, and local traditions.

From an institutional perspective, as theorized by Scott (2013), the sustainability of any governance system, including land tenure arrangements, is dependent on the integration and reinforcement of four institutional pillars: regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive, and habitual dispositions. These pillars provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how institutions operate and persist (Scott, 2005). In the case of communal land in Bali, these pillars function not only as administrative tools but also as embodiments of long-standing customs and values.

Customary institutions such as subak, a traditional water management system recognized by UNESCO, exemplify the integral role of local wisdom in governing communal resources (Windia, 2013). These institutions thrive due to strong normative and cultural-cognitive legitimacy, demonstrating community participation, spiritual belief systems, and collective responsibility. However, the contemporary governance system often reduces protection of customary land to its regulative and normative aspects, disregarding the crucial role of cultural and habitual practices (Joireman & Tchatchoua-Djomo, 2023; Lanzona Jr, 2019; Widjaja et al., 2024). As a result, there is a dissonance between formal policies and lived experiences, which exacerbates land related conflicts and weakens the institutional resilience of indigenous communities.

Despite efforts by national and local governments to formalize the recognition of customary land rights-such as through Bali Provincial Regulations No. 4 of 2014 on Cultural Heritage and No. 4 of 2019 on Desa Adat-empirical evidence reveals a growing trend of land disputes. For instance, data from the Bali Provincial Land Agency (2023) indicates that conflicts over customary land rose from 12 cases in 2021 to 35 cases in 2023. Such escalation reflects the inability of existing policies to accommodate the dynamic and deeply embedded systems of communal land governance practiced by indigenous Balinese communities.

Two emblematic case studies highlight the urgency and complexity of the issue: the customary land conflicts in Pengastulan and Sumberklampok villages in Buleleng Regency, Bali. In Pengastulan, customary land ownership became privatized due to misaligned legal interpretations by the National Land Agency (BPN), which failed to integrate awig-awig (customary laws) and pararem (community rules) into its land registration framework. In Sumberklampok, the situation is even more convoluted, involving prolonged conflict with corporate interests over 61 years, leading to state intervention without conclusive resolution. Although a joint agreement was signed between the government and the local community outlining land allocation and agrarian reform, the implementation remains stalled, highlighting the fragility of state-led solutions in the absence of local legitimacy and trust (Lanzona Jr, 2019; Roengtam et al., 2023).

This policy and institutional vacuum is symptomatic of a broader theoretical and practical gap. On the one hand, legal frameworks such as the Basic Agrarian Law (UUPA 1960), Forestry Law No. 41/1999, and various ministerial regulations formally recognize ulayat (customary) rights. On the other hand, implementation mechanisms lack cultural sensitivity and fail to operationalize local institutions effectively. The legal recognition of customary rights must be coupled with tangible security and administrative clarity to empower indigenous communities. Similarly, Ostrom (1990) theory of collective action underlines the importance of participatory governance and clearly defined rules in sustaining communal resource management. In Bali, these conditions are inconsistently met, leading to overlapping claims and persistent legal ambiguity.

A comparative outlook across Indonesia reinforces the national urgency of the problem. Data from the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency (2023) reveals an

alarming increase in customary land appropriation: 113 cases in 2021 affecting 451,000 hectares and 203,000 individuals; 135 cases in 2022 affecting 526,000 hectares and 515,000 individuals; and 166 cases in 2023 impacting 776,000 hectares and 820,000 individuals. One notable case is the agrarian conflict in Rempang, Batam, which parallels the Balinese experience in its disregard for indigenous land tenure and systemic exclusion of local voices.

This national trend underscores the need to reframe the discourse on customary land not merely as a legal or economic issue but as a fundamentally institutional one. The inadequacy of existing frameworks to address the specificities of indigenous systems stems from a narrow interpretation of regulation and formal norms, often ignoring the lived realities and spiritual-cultural dimensions of land governance. As [Scott \(2013\)](#) argues, the failure to uphold all institutional pillars equally may result in institutional breakdown or conflict, especially when normative and cultural elements are marginalized.

The empirical and normative gaps observed in Pengastulan and Sumberklampok illuminate the failure of state-centric governance models to internalize indigenous epistemologies and institutional practices. Although formal recognition exists, it does not guarantee effective protection or empowerment. In practice, local communities continue to rely on their traditional mechanisms—*awig-awig*, *pararem*, and religious doctrine rooted in Balinese Hinduism—as primary sources of authority and legitimacy. These systems are not only legally valid under local regulations but also essential to maintaining social harmony and ecological balance through the principle of *Tri Hita Karana* ([Wiwin, 2026](#); [Narayana, 2023](#)).

This research therefore seeks to examine the institutional dynamics of communal land protection in Bali through an integrative framework that recognizes the interdependence of formal policy instruments and local customary practices ([Scott, 2001](#)). It aims to evaluate how the four institutional pillars function in practice, identify the factors that hinder their effective integration, and propose a policy model that can harmonize state governance with indigenous institutions. By focusing on the micro-contexts of Pengastulan and Sumberklampok, the study contributes to the broader discourse on land governance, institutional theory, and participatory public policy in Indonesia.

The issue of communal land protection is increasingly important in the global sustainable development discourse, particularly in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on poverty reduction, reduced inequality, and peace, justice, and strong institutions. In many developing countries, indigenous peoples continue to face increasing pressure from land commodification, tourism expansion, agrarian conflicts, and state-centered development policies that often marginalize traditional territorial rights. The weakening of communal land governance not only threatens local livelihoods and cultural sustainability but also undermines ecological resilience and social cohesion within indigenous communities. In Indonesia, particularly in Bali, rapid tourism development and increasing land commercialization have contributed to tensions between formal state land administration systems and customary governance institutions. Consequently, the protection of communal land rights has emerged as a global governance concern and a critical local institutional challenge requiring integrated and culturally sensitive governance approaches.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge theoretical, normative, and empirical gaps that currently hinder the effective protection of communal land rights. It addresses the misalignment between statutory law and customary law, reveals the institutional constraints of policy implementation, and emphasizes the need for a collaborative governance model rooted in local wisdom and cultural legitimacy. In doing so, the research not only contributes to the academic literature on institutional theory and land policy but also provides actionable insights for policymakers, civil society, and indigenous communities committed to sustainable land governance.

Previous studies on customary land governance have largely focused on the legal context, agrarian conflicts, land administration, or cultural dimensions of indigenous communities ([Afrihadi et al., 2025](#); [Angela & Setyawati, 2022](#); [Gorby et al., 2023](#); [Handika et al., 2025](#); [Merta, 2024](#); [Narayana, 2023](#); [Wijaya et al., 2022](#)). However, limited attention has been paid to understanding how formal state institutions and customary governance systems dynamically interact to shape the protection of communal land rights through an integrated institutional perspective. This study addresses this gap by using [Scott's \(2013\)](#) institutional framework to analyze the interplay between institutional dimensions in two contrasting customary village contexts in Bali. This study's use of this framework

provides a comprehensive analytical lens for understanding the multidimensional nature of communal land governance. The cases of Pengastulan and Sumberklampok are unique because they represent distinct customary governance configurations. Pengastulan represents a customary village with relatively strong customary institutions, yet simultaneously experiencing increasing pressure from tourism development and land privatization. In contrast, Sumberklampok reflects a more complex institutional setting characterized by weaker customary institutional structures, long-standing agrarian disputes over former plantation concessions, and a greater reliance on legal advocacy and state negotiation mechanisms. A comparison between these two villages allows for a deeper analysis of how institutional resilience, customary legitimacy, and governance capacity shape communal land protection in different socio-political and legal contexts.

Academically, this study contributes to the development of institutional governance literature by extending Scott's institutional framework to the context of indigenous peoples' communal land protection and legal pluralism in Bali. It offers a comparative institutional analysis that highlights how the interaction between formal governance structures and customary institutions shapes territorial protection and community resilience under conditions of socio-economic change and external pressures. Practically, this study provides important policy implications for strengthening communal land governance in Indonesia, particularly related to customary land recognition, participatory governance, and institutional integration between state administrative systems and indigenous peoples' governance mechanisms. These findings are expected to support policymakers, local governments, and customary institutions in developing more adaptive and culturally sensitive governance approaches to protect communal land rights amidst increasing pressures from tourism development, commercialization, and agrarian conflicts.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach based on a constructivist paradigm, aiming to understand how people experience and interpret the social realities around them (Creswell, 2013; Miles & Saldaña, 2014; Tracy, 2020). This study uses a constructivist paradigm because communal land governance in Bali cannot be understood solely through objective legal or administrative approaches, but must also be interpreted through socially constructed meanings, cultural values, customary norms, and collective experiences embedded in customary communities. The research focuses on the institutional dynamics that support the protection of communal land rights within indigenous communities, specifically in Desa Pengastulan and Desa Sumberklampok, Buleleng Regency, Bali. It explores how meaning-making, cultural traditions, and local knowledge systems shape land governance practices in these settings.

This study adopts a constructivist paradigm, which posits that social realities are co-created through human interactions, cultural meanings, and shared experiences. This paradigm aligns directly with the focus of the research on communal land governance in Bali, as the protection and management of customary land cannot be fully understood through formal legal or administrative frameworks alone. By applying a constructivist lens, the study captures how local communities interpret, negotiate, and implement customary norms, collective practices, and institutional rules, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms through which communal land rights are maintained, contested, or adapted in response to internal leadership dynamics and external pressures such as tourism and land commercialization.

Designed as a case study, the research allows for an in-depth and contextual examination of complex institutional arrangements related to communal land tenure (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Jason & Glenwick, 2016). This approach supports a detailed comparison between the two villages and helps uncover how different institutional elements—normative, regulative, and cognitive-cultural, as outlined by Scott (2013) influence land rights governance. The study is both descriptive and explanatory, aiming to portray real-life practices while also revealing the underlying mechanisms and institutional logics that affect communal land protection (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

This research was conducted in 2024 through several stages, including preliminary observation, field data collection, in-depth interviews, participant observation, document analysis, data verification, and thematic interpretation. Extended field engagement enabled the researchers to develop a deeper understanding of local institutional dynamics, customary governance practices, and

communal land conflicts within the socio-cultural context of Pengastulan and Sumberklampok villages. The researcher actively engaged in the field through participant observation and immersive involvement in community activities, including attending village meetings, customary ceremonies, and land governance deliberations. This close engagement enabled the researcher to observe decision-making processes, leadership dynamics, and customary practices firsthand, providing richer and more nuanced insights than interviews alone could capture. By participating in daily community interactions, the researcher was able to contextualize the perspectives of customary leaders, government officials, and community members, thereby strengthening the depth and credibility of the collected data.

Fieldwork was conducted in Pengastulan and Sumberklampok villages, two villages selected due to ongoing land disputes and the existence of customary land tenure systems. These cases highlight how traditional institutions such as *awig-awig* and *pararem* interact with formal legal frameworks, offering insights into the intersection of customary and state-based governance models. The selection of Pengastulan and Sumberklampok was based on the consideration of capturing different institutional configurations in communal land governance. Operationally, Pengastulan was chosen because it represents a customary village with relatively strong customary institutions that simultaneously faces increasing pressures from tourism development, land commercialization, and privatization. In contrast, Sumberklampok was chosen because it reflects a village characterized by weaker customary institutional structures, a protracted agrarian conflict involving former plantation concessions, and a greater reliance on legal advocacy and negotiation with state institutions. The contrasting institutional characteristics of these two villages provide an important basis for comparison to examine how variations in institutional capacity, customary legitimacy, and governance interactions influence the protection of communal land rights within the broader context of legal pluralism in Bali.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of communal land governance and institutional interactions in both villages. In-depth interviews involved customary leaders, village officials, government representatives, land administration authorities, academics, and community members directly involved in communal land governance and agrarian conflict issues. Participant observation was conducted during customary meetings, communal activities, ritual practices, and village governance processes to capture the everyday institutional practices embedded in local communities. Additionally, document analysis included an examination of customary laws (*awig-awig*), customary laws (*pararem*), land administration documents, government regulations, policy documents, and archival records related to communal land disputes and customary governance. Data analysis was conducted using an interactive qualitative analysis model consisting of data reduction, data categorization, thematic interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was guided by an institutional framework that allowed empirical findings to be systematically categorized into institutional dimensions. Informants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling to ensure the inclusion of individuals directly involved in land governance. These included traditional leaders (*bendesa adat*), village officials, community elders, mediators, and representatives from the National Land Agency (BPN). A total of 26 informants were interviewed, 13 from each village, reflecting diverse perspectives across roles, genders, and generations.

A total of 26 informants were selected for this study, including customary leaders, village officials, government representatives, mediators, academics, and community members directly involved in communal land governance. This number was deemed sufficient because data saturation was achieved: additional interviews no longer produced new insights or themes. The purposive and snowball sampling strategy ensured that diverse perspectives from all relevant stakeholder groups were included, capturing the breadth of experiences, institutional practices, and community dynamics necessary to thoroughly address the research questions.

To maintain the validity and credibility of the findings, this study employed source triangulation, method triangulation, and theoretical triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from various informants, including traditional leaders, village officials, government officials, academics, and local residents. Method triangulation was implemented through the integration of interviews, observations, and document analysis to

verify the consistency of empirical findings across various forms of evidence. Meanwhile, theoretical triangulation was conducted by interpreting the findings through Scott's institutional framework and related perspectives on legal pluralism, indigenous governance, and communal land protection. Furthermore, member checking and ongoing researcher engagement in the field were conducted to ensure the accuracy of interpretations and strengthen trust in the research findings.

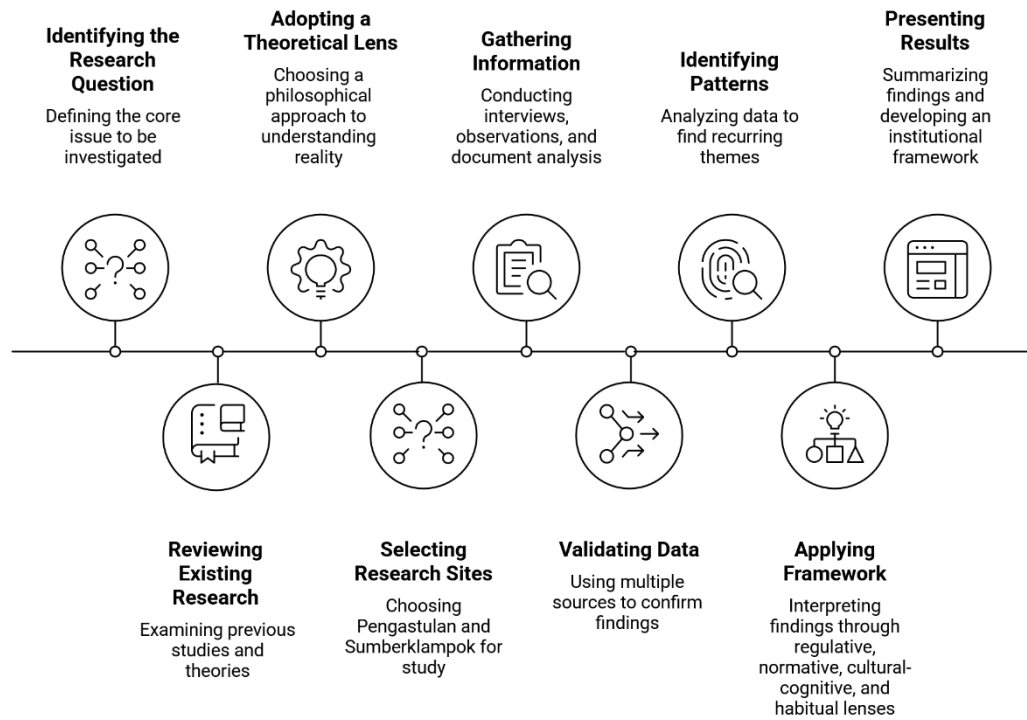


Figure 1. Research Design and Analytical Procedure

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Institutional Fragmentation and Unequal Protection of Communal Land

The protection of communal land rights in Pengastulan and Sumberklampok reflects the complex interaction between formal governance and customary institutional systems. Rather than functioning in complementarity, these institutional arrangements often overlap and operate according to different legal and social logics, creating uncertainty regarding ownership, authority, and territorial control. In both villages, communal land governance is shaped not only by legislation but also by customary legitimacy embedded in local social structures, traditional leadership, and collective memory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Narayana, 2023).

In Pengastulan, institutional fragmentation emerged gradually through land certification and registration programs that increasingly transformed communal land into individual legal property. Historically, customary land in the village was collectively governed through customary laws and village-based agreements that emphasized shared responsibility and communal management. However, administrative procedures introduced through state land governance mechanisms tended to prioritize individual ownership categories, creating tension between state legality and customary legitimacy. The Head of Pengastulan's Traditional Village explained:

"In Pengastulan Village, customary land is more than just an ordinary asset to us. It's an inherited treasure that must be preserved. We, the customary leaders, have a dual role as guardians of tradition and policymakers regarding customary land. We ensure that the community's rights and obligations regarding customary land are properly regulated." (Interview, February 10, 2024).

The statement illustrates how customary authorities view communal land as more than just a material asset. Land represents ancestral continuity, social order, and a moral responsibility that must be collectively safeguarded. The village head of Sumberklampok expressed similar concerns:

"Traditional land for us has deep meaning. We not only maintain its traditional aspects, but also play a role in managing the land, ensuring its continuity, and completing any restoration that may arise." (Interview, February 10, 2024).

Despite the continued existence of customary governance, state-based land certification programs are increasingly changing local perceptions of ownership and territorial authority. Certification schemes such as PRONA and PTSL, originally designed to strengthen legal certainty, often give rise to new internal disputes because communal land is registered in the names of individuals or religious figures. Rather than strengthening communal protection, the legalization process sometimes accelerates the privatization of customary territories. This problem is clearly expressed by Wayan P. Windia, an expert on Balinese customary law:

"Certification without understanding customary law can cause serious problems. Customary land is not just about legal ownership, but also about spiritual values and social relationships that must be respected." (Interview, May 14, 2024).

This situation demonstrates that legal recognition alone is insufficient when administrative mechanisms fail to accommodate indigenous peoples' understanding of communal land and ownership. Formal legalization can inadvertently weaken customary structures when communal territories are interpreted solely through individualistic legal categories. Different institutional dynamics emerged in Sumberklampok. Unlike Pengastulan, where customary institutions remained relatively consolidated, Sumberklampok experienced a protracted agrarian conflict rooted in overlapping territorial claims involving local communities, the state, and former plantation concession holders.

The analysis identifies several structural weaknesses in the institutional arrangements of both Pengastulan and Sumberklampok villages. In Pengastulan, internal fragmentation within customary leadership and competing elite interests have occasionally bypassed traditional deliberation mechanisms, reducing transparency and weakening collective decision-making. In Sumberklampok, the customary institutions are comparatively weaker, with limited authority and coordination capacity, leaving the community more dependent on formal legal procedures and state intervention. These structural deficiencies create vulnerabilities in communal land governance, including inconsistent enforcement of customary laws, susceptibility to external pressures, and challenges in maintaining coherent management of territorial resources.

The absence of robust customary institutional structures forced villagers to rely heavily on political negotiation, legal advocacy, and formal bureaucratic processes. Furthermore, according to Wayan P. Windia:

"Sumberklampok doesn't have a strong traditional village history. Land management here is largely determined by political advocacy and negotiation, rather than customary rules, as in other traditional villages." (Interview, May 14, 2024).

The Head of the Buleleng Land Agency also acknowledged the reality and dominance of formal legal struggles in the village:

"Land management patterns in Sumberklampok are dominated by formal legal struggles. We in the government are trying to open up dialogue so that residents can obtain legal rights to their land, even though it doesn't have the customary structure of a village head like other traditional villages in Bali." (Interview, May 15, 2024).

The lack of clear customary institutional arrangements exacerbates legal uncertainty surrounding land ownership and territorial claims. In many cases, villagers are forced to navigate

lengthy litigation processes and overlapping claims involving state land categories, former HGU areas, and corporate interests. This situation reinforces reliance on formal legal mechanisms and exposes the limitations of state-centered governance in resolving communal land conflicts (Joireman & Tchatchoua-Djomo, 2023; Roengtam et al., 2023).

Customary Norms and Collective Responsibility in Land Governance

Communal land governance in both villages is strongly supported by normative arrangements rooted in collective obligation, social accountability, and customary responsibility. These normative structures govern not only land ownership and use, but also the moral relationships between individuals, community members, and ancestral territories.

In Pengastulan, customary laws serve as the primary normative instrument governing communal land management. Customary laws establish restrictions on land transfers, conversions, inheritance systems, and communal obligations related to territorial management. Community members view customary laws as a legitimate social contract that binds individuals to collective responsibility for communal land.

The traditional village head of Pengastulan describes the role of the awig-awig as follows:

"The customary laws are our commitment to the principles of Tri Hita Karana. These rules protect customary land from sale, land conversion, or seizure by outsiders. They also regulate the types of crops that may be planted, the timing, land cultivation methods, and fair and transparent inheritance mechanisms for future generations." (Interview, 2024).

These normative arrangements go beyond technical land regulations. They establish ecological ethics, intergenerational obligations, and collective discipline related to the protection of communal territories. The prohibition on selling customary land to external parties, for example, reflects a broader communal commitment to preserving territorial continuity and cultural identity.

Norm enforcement is also maintained through informal social sanctions. Individuals who violate customary obligations may face exclusion from communal ceremonies, reduced participation in village activities, or social disapproval from customary authorities. These mechanisms remain effective because communal legitimacy continues to play a central role in village social life.

The importance of awig-awig was also emphasized by the Head of the Bali Province Culture and Tourism Office:

"Customary customs are the moral and cultural foundation that binds indigenous communities. The provincial government is committed to strengthening customary customs as part of cultural preservation and sustainable resource management." (Interview, May 15, 2024).

In Sumberklampok, normative governance developed through a different pathway. Although the village lacks a deeply institutionalized customary hierarchy, collective solidarity and participatory deliberation remain central to communal land management. Land decisions are generally negotiated through deliberations involving village actors, community groups, and local residents.

Collective participation is crucial because village institutional structures are shaped by a long history of agrarian conflict and social heterogeneity. Shared experiences of exclusion and territorial uncertainty strengthen communal solidarity and reinforce participatory approaches to land governance.

Therefore, normative cohesion emerges not primarily through rigid customary hierarchies, but through collective negotiation, social trust, and shared historical experiences. This adaptive form of communal governance allows villagers to maintain territorial cohesion despite institutional limitations and prolonged legal uncertainty (Craig et al., 2017; Folke et al., 2005; Suryawati et al., 2026).

Sacred Territory and the Cultural-Cognitive Meaning of Land

Communal land in Bali has significance far beyond administrative ownership or economic value. In both villages, land is embedded in a cognitive-cultural system that defines territory as sacred, ancestral, and inseparable from collective identity. Religious beliefs, ritual practices, and local cosmologies shape how communities understand territorial boundaries and communal responsibilities.

In Pengastulan, the Tri Hita Karana philosophy forms the primary cultural framework guiding communal land management. This principle emphasizes harmony between humans, nature, and God, positioning land as part of a sacred cosmological relationship, not simply as a productive resource.

Wayan P. Windia, as an expert in Balinese customary law, explains:

"In Bali, land is more than just a plot of land; it is part of a sacred relationship between humans, nature, and God. This makes managing customary land a spiritual obligation inseparable from our cultural identity." (Interview, May 14, 2024).

This spiritual interpretation of land management is reinforced through ritual practices, temple-based territorial arrangements, and the subak system that governs agricultural life. Land use often involves ceremonial processes aimed at maintaining cosmic balance and communal harmony.

The Head of the Bali Provincial Cultural Service also emphasized the relevance of local cosmology in contemporary governance:

"The Tri Hita Karana principles are not only cultural guidelines, but we have also pushed for them to become the basis for developing regulations related to customary land management. The government must align with local values to ensure policies do not erode the Balinese spiritual heritage." (Interview, May 16, 2024).

The Head of Regional Governance in Buleleng Regency also noted that:

"We deeply respect the traditional village structure and the rituals that accompany land management. In villages like Pengastulan, the local government strives to ensure that every development program aligns with traditional values to avoid spiritual or social conflict." (Interview, May 15, 2024).

In Sumberklampok, cultural-cognitive protection emerges through a hybrid interaction between Hindu traditions, Islamic values, and local solidarity principles such as *Menyama Braya*. Although the village lacks a consolidated customary institutional structure, communal beliefs regarding environmental responsibility and social balance remain highly influential.

On the other hand, the Head of Sumberklampok Village stated:

"Our community teaches us to maintain a balance between human needs and environmental sustainability. We utilize customary land responsibly and sustainably, maintain the cleanliness of the environment around our customary land, and manage it fairly and equitably for the benefit of the entire community." (Interview, January 8, 2024).

The Nyukat ritual also continues to function as an important symbolic practice aimed at maintaining spiritual purity and collective attachment to traditional territory. In both villages, sacred understandings of land create powerful symbolic boundaries to resist excessive commodification. Even under conditions of economic pressure and legal uncertainty, cultural beliefs maintain communal territorial awareness and strengthen resistance to land alienation (Wiwin, 2026).

Leadership Tensions and Institutional Vulnerabilities

Leadership dynamics significantly influence the stability of communal land governance in both villages. Institutional continuity depends heavily on the ability of village leaders, customary

authorities, and local actors to maintain trust, coordinate communal decisions, and mediate conflicting interests (Rahmawati et al., 2025).

Leadership conflicts in both Pengastulan and Sumberklampok villages have a direct impact on the effectiveness of customary land governance. In Pengastulan, disputes among village elites occasionally bypass traditional deliberation mechanisms, creating gaps in decision-making and reducing the enforcement of customary laws. In Sumberklampok, weaker customary authority combined with leadership fragmentation has led to reliance on formal legal procedures, which can slow responses and weaken communal control. These conflicts undermine transparency, collective accountability, and coordination, thereby eroding the capacity of local institutions to manage and protect communal land effectively.

In Pengastulan, internal political rivalries and leadership disputes undermine communal cohesion and reduce institutional transparency regarding land management decisions. Several respondents described how competing elite interests sometimes bypass customary deliberation mechanisms, creating fragmentation within communal governance structures (Zheng, 2026).

Therefore, institutional weakening arises not only from external intervention but also from declining coordination between customary leadership and village governance actors. This situation creates opportunities for land transactions and territorial decisions that no longer reflect collective communal consensus.

Protecting customary land in Pengastulan and Sumberklampok requires resilient village leadership that is responsive to evolving dynamics. Effective leadership is closely linked to the ability to balance customary legitimacy with the pressures of modern governance, including tourism expansion, bureaucratic intervention, and shifting socio-economic orientations among the younger generation.

A different dynamic emerged in Sumberklampok, where collective leadership became a crucial stabilizing force during a protracted agrarian conflict. Although formal institutional structures remained relatively weak, local leaders were able to sustain negotiation efforts and maintain community solidarity during interactions with state authorities and external actors. Therefore, leadership functions as an important institutional mediator capable of strengthening community resilience or accelerating fragmentation in customary land governance systems (Digdowiseiso et al., 2020; Jun & Lee, 2023; Saadah & Agustiyara, 2024).

Tourism Expansion, External Pressure, and the Commodification of Indigenous Lands

Tourism expansion and market-oriented development are increasingly shaping communal land governance in both villages. Coastal areas and areas of cultural significance are attracting investors, heightening tensions between economic opportunities and customary law protections.

The expansion of tourism in both Pengastulan and Sumberklampok villages has significantly influenced the structure of customary institutions. In Pengastulan, increased land commercialization and investor interest have pressured traditional authorities to adapt or partially cede decision-making, which has sometimes fragmented customary governance and weakened the enforcement of collective norms. In Sumberklampok, where customary structures were already less consolidated, tourism-driven economic incentives have further shifted control toward formal legal mechanisms and external stakeholders, accelerating institutional vulnerability. These developments demonstrate that tourism not only transforms the economic value of communal land but also reshapes institutional authority, internal coordination, and customary decision-making processes, highlighting the need for adaptive governance strategies that integrate local traditions with external development pressures.

In Pengastulan, the proposed development of tourism infrastructure and a luxury resort has drawn significant opposition from traditional leaders. Many villagers view the tourism project as a potential threat to ancestral territory, spiritual balance, and community sustainability.

Next, the traditional village head of Pengastulan explained:

"One of the keys to resisting external pressures is strengthening the customary law system and other customary rules governing the management of customary land. This helps us maintain our cultural values and traditional rights." (Interview, January 19, 2024).

Younger indigenous actors are also increasingly involved in advocacy activities aimed at defending communal territories from external commercial pressures. Campaigns, educational activities, and negotiations with external stakeholders are being organized to raise awareness of the importance of protecting communal lands.

In Sumberklampok, external pressures arise through persistent uncertainty surrounding land ownership and future development plans. Weak institutional protections raise concerns that communal areas could ultimately be vulnerable to commercial takeovers and state-driven development projects. Therefore, tourism and commercialization not only function as economic transformations, but also as institutional pressures capable of reshaping communal authority, social relations, and cultural legitimacy around customary land governance (Getz, 2008; Prayitno et al., 2026; Tjoetra et al., 2025).

Grassroots Resistance and Institutional Resilience

Despite legal uncertainty, commercial pressures, and institutional fragmentation, both villages demonstrated strong forms of grassroots resistance aimed at maintaining communal land rights. Collective resilience was maintained primarily through social solidarity, cultural legitimacy, and deeply embedded communal practices.

Both Pengastulan and Sumberklampok villages have demonstrated collective resistance to defend communal land rights under external pressures. In Pengastulan, villagers organized customary ritual gatherings and village assemblies to formally oppose unauthorized land privatization and proposed tourism development projects, leveraging traditional forums to enforce communal norms. In Sumberklampok, where institutional structures are weaker, the community mobilized participatory deliberations and coordinated legal advocacy, engaging both local leaders and government authorities to negotiate land allocations and assert collective claims. These actions illustrate how each community employs context-specific, collective strategies to maintain control over ancestral territories and reinforce customary governance despite legal and economic pressures.

In Pengastulan, institutional resilience emerged through the revitalization of customary law (awig-awig), ritual obligations, and collective customary participation. Communal institutions such as the Village Sabha continue to serve as important mechanisms for dispute resolution and territorial coordination. In Sumberklampok, resilience is maintained through participatory mobilization, collective negotiation, and solidarity-based social organization. Community members continue to rely on deliberation and collective action to maintain territorial claims amidst prolonged legal and political uncertainty. Nevertheless, both villages share a shared commitment to protecting communal land as part of their cultural identity and collective survival.

Respect for customary land is a key principle in both villages in preserving ancestral heritage. Communal land is consistently interpreted as a collective heritage that connects the current community to the responsibilities of ancestors and future generations. This shared territorial awareness strengthens resistance to commodification and reinforces the legitimacy of customary governance systems. Institutional resilience in both villages is built on the ongoing interaction between collective memory, social obligations, ritual practices, and communal participation embedded in daily village life (German et al., 2013; Sulaiman et al., 2024; Wahyuningrat et al., 2024).

Discussion

This section presents the principal findings of the study and discusses them in light of the institutional theoretical framework. Using Scott's (2013) four pillar model of institutions—regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive, and habitual disposition as the analytic lens, the study examines how Desa Pengastulan and Desa Sumberklampok in Bali manage and protect customary communal land rights amidst contemporary institutional challenges such as land commodification, external interventions, and internal leadership dilemmas.

External factors such as tourism expansion, land commercialization, and bureaucratic intervention also influence the institutional dynamics of communal land governance. Tourism development has increased the economic value of customary land, driving pressures toward privatization and market-oriented land use. In Pengastulan, tourism investment is gradually challenging customary territorial arrangements by encouraging the transformation of communal

land into commercial assets, thereby weakening normative obligations and communal control mechanisms. Meanwhile, bureaucratic land administration systems often prioritize formal legality and individual ownership categories, creating tensions with customary governance structures that emphasize collective rights and cultural legitimacy. In Sumberklampok, bureaucratic complexity and overlapping land claims further exacerbate legal uncertainty and prolong agrarian conflict. These external pressures demonstrate that institutional pillars do not operate in isolation but are continually reshaped through interactions with broader political-economic forces that influence indigenous territorial governance in Bali.

External factors exert significant and differentiated impacts on the protection of communal land in both Pengastulan and Sumberklampok villages. Tourism expansion increases the economic value of customary land, creating pressures for privatization and encouraging some local actors to adjust traditional decision-making practices. Investor-driven land commercialization introduces external interests that can override collective norms and fragment customary authority, particularly in areas with weaker institutional structures. Bureaucratic interventions and state-led certification programs, while intended to provide legal clarity, sometimes conflict with local customs and inadvertently weaken communal governance by prioritizing individual ownership over collective rights. Collectively, these external forces shape institutional resilience, decision-making processes, and the ability of communities to maintain customary land protection, highlighting the need for adaptive governance strategies that integrate both formal regulations and local customary practices.

Although both villages experience institutional pressures related to communal land governance, Pengastulan and Sumberklampok exhibit distinct institutional configurations and governance dynamics. Pengastulan represents a traditional village with relatively strong customary institutionalization characterized by well-established customary laws (awig-awig), stronger cultural legitimacy, and more structured customary authority. However, the village simultaneously faces increasing pressures from tourism development, privatization, and internal elite fragmentation that are gradually weakening communal territorial control. In contrast, Sumberklampok represents a village with weaker customary institutional structures and limited customary authority, where communal land governance is more strongly shaped by protracted agrarian conflict, legal advocacy, and negotiations with state institutions. While Pengastulan relies heavily on cultural legitimacy and customary governance mechanisms, Sumberklampok exhibits a stronger reliance on formal legal struggles and collective mobilization to defend communal territorial claims. These contrasting configurations suggest that institutional resilience in communal land protection can emerge through different pathways depending on local governance capacity, historical experiences, and the interaction between state and customary institutions.

Table 1. Comparative Institutional Characteristics of Pengastulan and Sumberklampok in Communal Land Governance

Indicator	Pengastulan	Sumberklampok
Institutional Structure	Strong traditional village institutions (Traditional Villages)	Weak customary institutional structures
Main Governance Principles	Customary laws and customary rulers	Legal defense and negotiation
Dominant Institutional Pillars	Normative and cognitive-cultural	Regulatory and collective resistance
Major Threats	Tourism expansion, privatization, elite conflict	Agrarian conflicts, overlapping claims, state intervention
Land Conflict Patterns	Internal fragmentation and privatization	External conflicts involving the state and former HGU land
Source of Legitimacy	Ritual, customary authority, collective cultural identity	Collective struggle and communal solidarity
Governance Mechanism	Customary deliberations and customary regulations	Participatory mobilization and legal negotiation
Institutional Vulnerability	Commercialization and fragmentation of leadership	Weak customary legitimacy and legal uncertainty
Community Response	Accountability focuses on BLU service performance and financial management.	Collective resistance and advocacy movements

Institutional Embeddedness of Customary Land Protection

The discussion in this study demonstrates that the protection of communal land rights in Bali cannot be understood solely as a legal-administrative issue, but rather as a multidimensional institutional process shaped by the interaction between formal state governance and customary institutional systems. The cases of Pengastulan and Sumberklampok reveal that communal land governance is influenced not only by regulatory mechanisms but also by normative legitimacy, cultural meanings, and customary social practices embedded in indigenous communities. Through Scott's institutional perspective, the findings suggest that the sustainability of communal land protection depends on the extent to which these institutional pillars interact in a balanced and adaptive manner amidst increasing pressures from tourism expansion, land commodification, bureaucratic intervention, and changing socio-economic conditions in rural Bali.

Regulative Pillar: The Role of Customary and State-Based Legal Frameworks

The findings demonstrate that both Desa Pengastulan and Sumberklampok rely heavily on a combination of formal regulations and customary laws to establish claims and protection mechanisms over customary land. These regulations are, however, not always codified in the national legal system, which creates ambiguity. In Sumberklampok, for example, overlapping claims between villagers and a large corporation that held former Hak Guna Usaha (HGU) rights created prolonged conflicts lasting over six decades. Resolution was only possible through a legally binding agreement facilitated by the provincial government, allocating 70% of the land to the villagers and 30% to the state. This illustrates the dualism and friction between formal state recognition and local legitimacy. While [Scott \(2013\)](#) argues that regulatory structures should stabilize institutional expectations, in these villages, such structures are often in conflict, highlighting the incomplete integration of customary norms into the formal land registration system.

Normative Pillar: Social Obligations and Collective Responsibility

Norms of collective responsibility and community consensus (*musyawarah*) are deeply embedded in the villages' governance of communal land. Social sanctions are imposed on individuals who attempt to privatize or commercialize land without communal consent. Shared obligations are articulated through customary gatherings and decisions, reflecting what [Ostrom \(1990\)](#) conceptualizes as collective-choice arrangements. These institutions help reduce transaction costs and enhance trust, yet they are fragile when facing internal leadership disputes or external investment pressures ([Ginting et al., 2023](#); [Handayani et al., 2023](#); [Merawati et al., 2025](#)). In Pengastulan, there were cases where village leaders succumbed to personal interests, resulting in land alienation. Conversely, other leaders upheld customary obligations, demonstrating the critical role of ethical leadership in sustaining institutional norms.

Local Knowledge and the Cultural-Cognitive Pillar

The cultural-cognitive dimension in both villages is manifested through ritual practices and symbolic expressions such as Subak and Tri Hita Karana. These reflect deeply rooted meanings of land as sacred and inseparable from the spiritual identity of the community. In both communities, land is not merely an economic asset but a sacred entity- a view that conflicts with the state's market-oriented land valuation systems. This dichotomy reinforces the findings ([Lynch & Harwell, 2002](#)), who argue that customary boundaries and values must be preserved through participatory territorial mapping. The ritualistic affirmation of land's spiritual significance creates a psychological and emotional attachment that serves as an informal but powerful defense mechanism against external threats.

Leadership Conflict and the Habitual Disposition Pillar

Despite the strength of the previous three pillars, leadership tensions present critical institutional vulnerabilities. Findings show that disputes between formal (head of village) and informal (*bendesa adat*) leaders often result in governance vacuums, particularly in situations involving land registration or negotiations with investors. In Pengastulan, internal disputes diluted collective action, while in Sumberklampok, leadership consolidation enabled the community to reach an agreement with the government.

Scott (2013) fourth pillar habitual disposition is particularly useful here. It captures how long-standing practices and leadership styles influence institutional behavior. The study found that where dispositional routines favored transparency, collaboration, and fidelity to adat, land protection was stronger. Conversely, when routines shifted toward individualism and political maneuvering, institutional erosion occurred (Besley & Dray, 2024; Saadah & Agustiyara, 2024; Sabatier, 1991).

Resistance and Resilience: Public Opposition to External Interventions

Public resistance was observed as a grassroots response to external threats- particularly land speculation, tourism development, and investor encroachment. In both villages, collective protests, occupation of disputed land, and appeals to regional governments were common. This finding is consistent with the notion of “institutional work” (Hampel et al., 2017), where actors engage in maintaining or repairing institutions under threat. Despite the lack of formal institutional capacity, villagers demonstrated significant agency in defending their land, highlighting that effective institutions may not always be codified but can be strongly embedded in local knowledge and collective memory (Burdon & Sorour, 2020; Negoro et al., 2026; Setijaningrum et al., 2025).

The Double-Edged Sword of Tourism

While tourism was initially seen as a development opportunity, it gradually became an existential threat to land integrity. Investors often target coastal and culturally significant lands for commercial tourism, offering short-term economic gains but risking long-term dispossession. In both case villages, attempts to develop tourism facilities clashed with customary zoning and sparked communal resistance. Land commodification disrupts the symbolic and practical role of land in communal life and challenges institutional continuity.

The expansion of the tourism sector has accelerated the commodification of customary land in both Pengastulan and Sumberklampok villages. In Pengastulan, the development of luxury resorts and tourism infrastructure has incentivized individualization of communal land, undermining collective decision-making and weakening the enforcement of traditional norms such as *awig-awig* and *pararem*. In Sumberklampok, tourism-related investment pressures exacerbate institutional vulnerabilities, encouraging the community to rely more heavily on legal advocacy and formal negotiations with the state. These processes transform ancestral land from a communal, culturally embedded resource into a market-oriented asset, altering customary governance structures, shifting authority, and creating tensions between economic development and the preservation of social and spiritual obligations. The cases demonstrate that tourism-driven commercialization not only reshapes land value but also fundamentally changes the institutional and normative foundations of communal land protection.

Tourism, thus, functions as both a catalyst for economic mobility and a destabilizer of institutionalized land practices (Prayitno et al., 2026). This duality mirrors Greenwood et al. (2011) concept of institutional complexity, where organizations (or communities) must navigate competing logics-development vs. preservation.

Implementation Gaps in Regional Regulation

The study also highlights significant challenges in translating Bali Province Regulation No. 4 of 2019 on Adat Villages into actionable protection. Ambiguities in jurisdiction, registration processes, and coordination among stakeholders hinder effective implementation. Despite legal recognition, customary communities remain vulnerable due to bureaucratic inertia and institutional fragmentation.

In this context, the study supports the position of Joireman & Tchatchoua-Djomo (2023) who argue that post-conflict land restitution frameworks must include legal clarity and institutional coherence to be effective. In Bali, despite formal recognition of adat villages, protection is still heavily reliant on the agency and vigilance of local actors rather than systemic institutional safeguards.

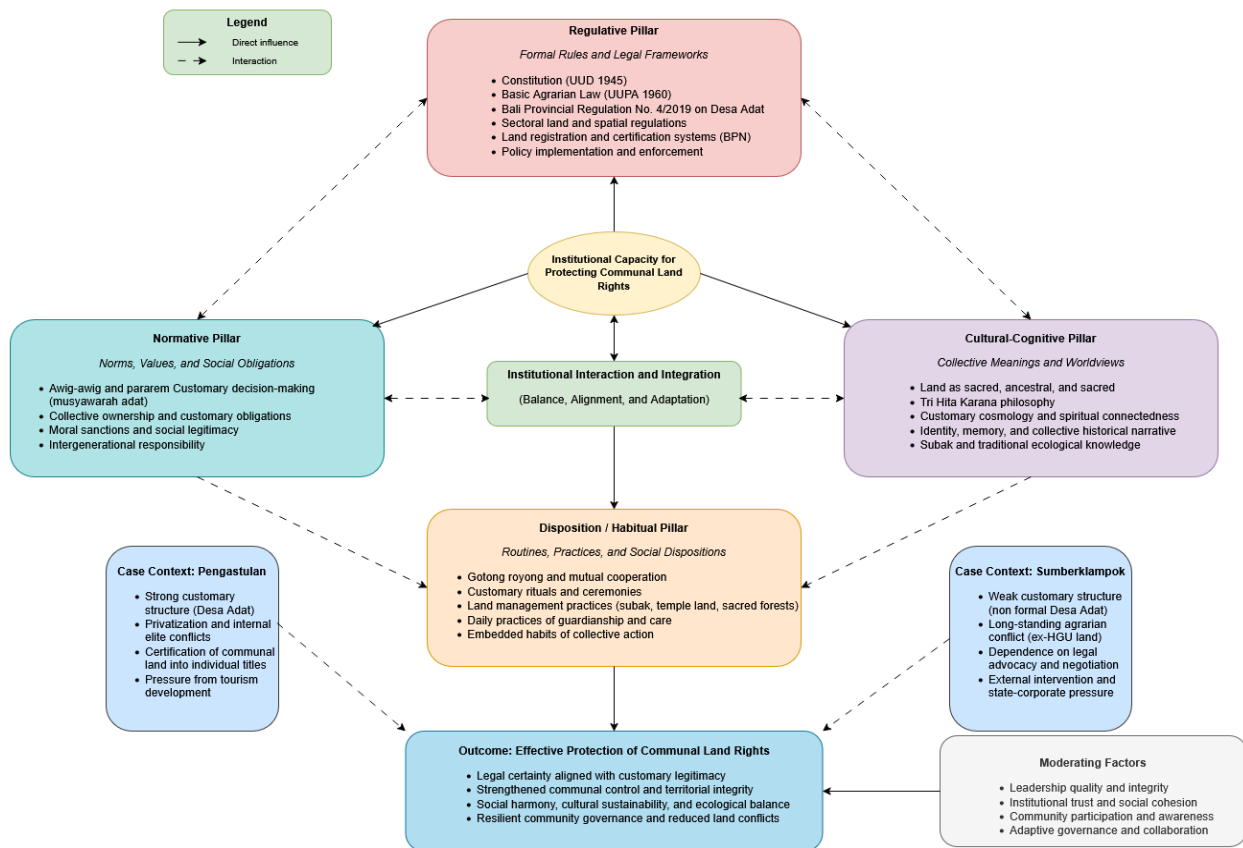


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of Institutional Protection of Communal Land Rights in Customary Villages (Source: Processed by Author)

Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework developed from this research to explain the institutional protection of communal land rights in Pengastulan and Sumberklampok, Bali. This framework demonstrates that the sustainability of communal land governance is shaped by the interaction of four interrelated institutional pillars adapted from an institutional perspective: the regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive, and dispositional/habitual dimensions (Scott, 2013). The regulative pillar emphasizes the role of the formal legal framework, which provides legal recognition and formal governance structures. At the same time, the normative pillar highlights the importance of customary law (awig-awig), customary deliberation, social obligations, the principle of shared ownership, and moral legitimacy in maintaining communal discipline and territorial responsibility. The cultural-cognitive pillar reflects how land is collectively understood as sacred, ancestral, and spiritually embedded through Tri Hita Karana, subak, ritual practices, and collective historical memory. Meanwhile, the dispositional or customary pillar explains how everyday practices such as mutual cooperation, ritual participation, communal land management, and the intergenerational transmission of customs continue to reproduce institutional stability and social cohesion within indigenous communities.

This framework further demonstrates that institutional protection of communal land rights is not determined by a single institutional dimension, but rather by the dynamic interaction and balance between these pillars within broader contextual pressures. External forces such as tourism expansion, land commodification, state bureaucracy, investor interests, legal pluralism, and internal leadership conflicts continue to challenge communal territorial governance in both villages. In Pengastulan, institutional tensions are associated with strong customary structures facing pressures from privatization and tourism expansion, while in Sumberklampok, institutional vulnerability arises from weak customary institutionalization, protracted agrarian conflicts, and reliance on legal advocacy. Nonetheless, this framework demonstrates that institutional resilience can still emerge through leadership integrity, social trust, cultural legitimacy, collective participation, and adaptive governance practices. Ultimately, this model demonstrates that effective protection of communal land rights requires institutional integration between formal legal

recognition and indigenous governance systems, where state regulations, customary norms, collective meanings, and customary social practices reinforce each other to maintain territorial integrity, cultural continuity, and community resilience.

This study provides several important implications for communal land governance in Indonesia. From a policy perspective, the findings highlight the need for stronger institutional integration between state land administration systems and customary governance mechanisms to reduce legal fragmentation and strengthen communal territorial protection. Formal recognition of customary land alone is insufficient without institutional arrangements that accommodate local norms, cultural legitimacy, and customary governance practices. Therefore, an adaptive governance approach that emphasizes participatory decision-making, collaborative institutional arrangements, and culturally sensitive policy implementation is crucial for strengthening communal land resilience amidst increasing tourism expansion and commercialization pressures. Academically, this study contributes to the institutional governance literature by extending Scott's institutional framework to the context of customary communal land protection and legal pluralism in Bali. This research demonstrates that communal land governance is shaped not only by regulatory mechanisms but also by the interplay of normative legitimacy, cognitive-cultural meanings, and communal practices that collectively maintain institutional resilience within customary communities.

Unlike previous studies on customary land conflicts in Bali and Indonesia, which have largely focused on legal recognition, agrarian disputes, or cultural preservation separately, this study offers a more integrated institutional analysis by examining how formal state governance and customary institutional systems interact dynamically through four institutional pillars. The novelty of this study lies in the comparative institutional approach between Pengastulan and Sumberklampok, which reveals that communal land protection is influenced by different configurations of institutional power, customary legitimacy, governance capacity, and external pressures.

This study offers a distinct advantage over previous research by integrating a constructivist, comparative case study approach with Scott's four-pillar institutional framework. Unlike prior studies that primarily focus on either legal recognition, cultural practices, or conflict resolution in isolation, this research simultaneously examines regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive, and habitual dimensions of communal land governance in two contrasting Balinese villages. By combining qualitative fieldwork, participatory observation, and document analysis with rigorous triangulation, the study captures the dynamic interactions between formal state institutions, customary authorities, and community practices. This comprehensive approach not only provides a deeper understanding of how institutional resilience emerges under external pressures but also demonstrates the mechanisms through which communal land rights are maintained or contested, thereby clearly establishing the novelty and theoretical contribution of the research relative to existing literature.

This study also demonstrates that institutional resilience in customary land governance cannot be understood solely through formal legal recognition, but must be analyzed through the interaction between regulative, normative, cognitive-cultural, and customary dimensions embedded in local communities. Consequently, this study extends existing discussions on legal pluralism and customary governance by offering an institutional framework capable of explaining the complexity of communal land protection in the rapidly changing socio-economic and political context of Bali.

LIMITATION

This study has several limitations that should be considered. It focuses on two traditional villages in Buleleng Regency (Pengastulan and Sumberklampok), which limits the broader generalizability of the results to other traditional communities in Bali or Indonesia, which may have different historical, cultural, and institutional characteristics. The institutional conditions observed in this study are also highly dynamic and continue to evolve along with the expansion of tourism, political change, bureaucratic reform, and shifting socio-economic orientations within rural communities. Consequently, the institutional interactions and governance patterns identified during the fieldwork may continue to evolve over time. Therefore, future research could strengthen this

study through comparative cross-regional analysis, a longitudinal approach, or a mixed-methods design that further examines how institutional resilience and communal land governance adapt under different political, economic, and cultural contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the institutional framework protecting communal land rights in Pengastulan and Sumberklampok relies heavily on a balanced interaction between regulatory, normative, cultural-cognitive, and customary pillars. Although customary rights are legally recognized, their implementation is inherently tied to the integrity of local norms and routines. Key findings indicate that regulatory mechanisms often conflict with deeply rooted customary laws such as *awig-awig* and *pararem*, particularly when the state legal system fails to incorporate local epistemologies. Normative structures, embedded in collective decision-making and community consensus, have proven resilient yet vulnerable to leadership disputes and economic pressures. The cultural-cognitive pillar, expressed through ritual, spirituality, and ancestral ties, serves as a powerful source of legitimacy, while the customary pillar highlights how everyday practices, leadership behaviors, and community routines shape institutional sustainability.

This study makes a theoretical contribution by applying the institutional framework to local and comparative contexts, filling a gap in institutional theory regarding legal pluralism and customary governance. This study also extends existing discussions on customary land conflicts in Indonesia by demonstrating that variations in institutional capacity and local governance configurations significantly influence community resilience in responding to external pressures and territorial challenges. This study provides practical insights by proposing that sustainable land protection requires not only formal legal reform but also participatory and culturally sensitive institutional design that empowers local actors.

This study further reveals that institutional resilience emerges through the integration of formal regulations, customary authority, cultural values, and everyday communal practices that collectively support territorial protection within customary communities. These findings suggest that communal land governance in Bali is not merely a legal-administrative issue, but also a social, cultural, and political process shaped by legal pluralism and institutional interactions. Therefore, strengthening communal land protection requires a more adaptive and collaborative governance approach that integrates the state land administration system with customary governance mechanisms and local socio-cultural realities. Ultimately, this study underscores the need for a hybrid governance model that bridges state law and customary institutions. Policy reform must move beyond recognition to integration, recognizing that communal land is not only a legal asset but also a socio-cultural institution. This integrative approach offers a path to reducing land conflicts, strengthening institutional legitimacy, and supporting the autonomy of indigenous communities in managing their ancestral territories.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

I.N.A.B. contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, field investigation, data collection, data interpretation, and preparation of the original manuscript draft. I.K.M. contributed to the development of the methodology, field data validation, institutional analysis, and

revision of the manuscript. A.T. contributed to the theoretical framework, legal and institutional analysis, interpretation of findings, and manuscript review and editing. S. contributed to the methodological refinement, data analysis, supervision of the research process, and critical revision of the manuscript. I.W.M.S. contributed to field coordination, local data verification, resource support, project administration, and final manuscript review.

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