Frontier formation in an Indonesian resource site

Mukrimin[1]

Greg Acciaioli

State Islamic Institute, Indonesia

University of Western Australia, Australia

Abstract
This article examines the role of transmigration in the formation of a frontier in the Indonesian province of Sulawesi. The "KTM" (*Kawasan Terpadu Mandiri* – Integrated and Self-Sustained Settlement) initiative, which is funded by the government, provides the primary context. Using ethnographic methods, we identify the first Bugis migration in Indonesia that was funded by the government. The Bugis who settled in Baras were the only ones for whom the state had any involvement in the planning, sponsorship, or endorsement of their relocation from other regions like Sumatra or Kalimantan. We argue that the KTM of Baras has evolved from an agricultural frontier to an economic frontier and, most recently, a frontier focussed on the core issues of political ecology. This focus has arisen because the settlement has taken on the characteristics of an intersection of various types of frontiers. Empirically, the intersection of frontier and the oil palm industry have contributed to transforming the north-western region of Sulawesi.
Keywords: Bugis, frontier, transmigration, Baras, West Sulawesi, Indonesia, political ecology

Résumé
Cet article tente d'examiner le rôle de la transmigration dans la formation d'une frontière dans la province indonésienne de Sulawesi. L'initiative "KTM" (*Kawasan Terpadu Mandiri* – établissement intégré et autonome), financée par le gouvernement, constitue le contexte principal. À l'aide de méthodes ethnographiques, nous identifions la première migration des Bugis en Indonésie financée par le gouvernement. Les Bugis qui se sont installés à Baras sont les seuls pour lesquels l'État a participé à la planification, au parrainage ou à l'approbation de leur relocalisation depuis d'autres lieux comme Sumatra ou Kalimantan. Nous soutenons que le KTM de Baras est passé d'une frontière agricole à une frontière économique et, plus récemment, à une frontière axée sur les questions fondamentales de l'écologie politique. Cette orientation s'explique par le fait que la colonie a pris les caractéristiques d'une intersection de différents types de frontières. Empiriquement, cette intersection de frontières et l'industrie du palmier à huile ont contribué à transformer la région nord-ouest de Sulawesi.
Mots-clés: Bugis, frontière, transmigration, Baras, Sulawesi occidental, Indonésie, écologie politique

Resumen
Este artículo intenta examinar el papel de la transmigración en la formación de una frontera en la provincia Indonesia de Sulawesi. La iniciativa "KTM" (*Kawasan Terpadu Mandiri* – Asentamiento integrado y autosuficiente), financiada por el gobierno, constituye el contexto principal de este artículo. Utilizando métodos etnográficos, este ensayo identifica la primera migración bugis en Indonesia financiada por el gobierno. Los

---

[1] Dr. Mukrimin, IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo (State Islamic Institute, Gorontalo), Jl. Gelatik No.1, Kota Gorontalo, Gorontalo 96124, Indonesia. Email: mukrimin@iaingorontalo.ac.id. Dr. Greg Acciaioli, Senior Honorary Research Fellow, School of Social Sciences, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway, Perth WA 6009, Australia. Email: greg.acciaioli@uwa.edu.au. The authors thank Simon PJ Batterbury and two outstanding reviewers for their useful suggestion and comments and all participating informants in conducting the research. Respondents are anonymous in this article. Thank also goes to Litapdimas, MORA, Kemenag of the Republic of Indonesia for their generous Kolaborasi Internasional funding in 2022.

bugis que se asentaron en Baras fueron los únicos en los que el Estado intervino en la planificación, el patrocinio o el respaldo de su reubicación desde otros lugares como Sumatra o Kalimantan. En este artículo sostenemos que el KTM de Baras ha pasado de ser una frontera agrícola a ser una frontera económica y, más recientemente, una frontera centrada en las cuestiones centrales de la ecología política. Este enfoque ha surgido porque el asentamiento ha adoptado las características de una intersección de varios tipos de fronteras. Empíricamente, esta intersección de fronteras y la industria de la palma aceitera han contribuido a transformar la región noroccidental de Sulawesi.
Palabras clave: Bugis, frontera, transmigración, Baras, Sulawesi Occidental, Indonesia, ecología política

1. Introduction

Indonesia has emerged as the foremost transmigration nation globally in the past century. The phenomenon of transmigration is commonly understood as the governmentally sponsored relocation of a populace from a region with high population density to one with lower population density (MacAndrews 1978, 458). As per the Transmigration Act of 1972, the act of transmigration in Indonesia has been defined as the transfer or displacement of a populace from one region to another for the purpose of their settlement. This has been executed in the interest of Indonesia's development or for other reasons deemed necessary by the Indonesian government (Hardjono, 1977, 1978a, 1986). In 2009, the Indonesian government defined the concept of transmigration as outlined in Article 29, as a voluntary relocation of a populace by the state with the aim of enhancing their economic well-being, necessitating their settlement in designated transmigration sites (Bubandt, 2014; Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, 2013a, 2013b; Warganegara & Waley, 2022). The phenomenon of transmigration has given rise to a frontier of settlement that frequently overlaps with an agricultural frontier (Abdoellah, 1993; Bazzi *et al*., 2017; Cunfer & Krausmann, 2015; Geiger, 2008a; Leinbach, 1989; Li, 2014; Peluso & Lund, 2011; Potter, 2012).

This article uses ethnographic methods, and a political ecology approach, to identify the first Bugis migration in Indonesia funded by the government. We then argue that the KTM of Baras has evolved from an agricultural frontier to an economic and political frontier. The settlement exhibits several different frontier types. It is the intersection of frontiers with the oil palm industry that has contributed to transforming the north-western region of Sulawesi.

The frontier

To begin with, let us re-examine the concept of the frontier. It was introduced into academic discourse by the historian Frederick Jackson Turner in his seminal publication of 1893, *The significance of the frontier in American history*. As stated by Turner, the frontier denotes the juncture between savagery and civilization. Turner further explains that the frontier "lies at the hither edge of free land" (Turner, 1920, 1961). Turner's definition, despite its primary focus on the history of American political democracy, has gained significant importance in various other academic disciplines (M. Anderson, 1996; Geiger, 2008b; Kröger, 2021; Rietberg & Hospes, 2018; Scott, 2009; Tsing, 2005).

The establishment of settlement frontiers, facilitated by transmigration and migration, has emerged as a crucial factor in demographic and economic advancement across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Although differing in their nomenclature, numerous investigations suggest three primary themes in frontier settlement (Geiger, 2008a; Potter, 2012; Ross, 1980; Sáinz, 1982; Shrestha, 1989b; Warganegara & Waley, 2022). One is the aspiration of the involved parties to acquire additional land and to promote economic sectors that gradually reduce the extent of frontier lands (Shrestha, 1989a). The second is unanticipated migration to border regions, compounded by the inadequacies of respective governmental planning policies. Lastly is the insufficiency of exploration into of the fundamental dynamics of frontier migration. We need to understand historical occurrences, socio-economic contexts, and the accomplishments of pioneers on the frontier. The issue of differential success rates among settlers in frontier regions is a crucial point of inquiry (Arndt & Sundrum, 1977; Gosling *et al*., 2021; Malanson *et al*., 2006; Nyerges, 1992; Schwake, 2021; Shrestha, 1989a; Taylor, 2002).

Danilo Geiger (2008a, 2008b) has identified different categories of frontiers, which include "frontiers of settlement" or "settlement frontiers," "colonization frontiers," and "land frontiers" or "agricultural frontiers" (Geiger, 2008a, 2008b). Agricultural land accounts for approximately 33% of the total surface area of the planet (Cunfer & Krausmann, 2015). Geiger defined settlement frontiers where "outsiders" establish a permanent residence at the periphery of indigenous areas, often leading to displacement or disruption of local settlement and subsistence (Geiger, 2008b). Frontier settlements are typically transitory in nature, and frequently appropriate extensive areas of land, as well as displace the native communities, during their swift progression (Geiger, 2008b, p. 96). There are distinct sorts of frontier settlements based on the resources available to settlers (Geiger, 2008b, pp. 7-8). First, there are state-sponsored frontier settlements, which include moving people from an urban area to a rural one. The government meticulously maps out, establishes, and finances these outposts. The second type is settlement not supported by a central government. It is common for the government to partially arrange and fund (through incentives or subsidies) migration or settlement programs in these areas, but, the migrants themselves are capable of maintaining the social, political, and ecological systems in place. Spontaneous settlements, the third type, occur when individuals or communities move to the frontier without state sponsorship or guidance. Spontaneous settlers are one type of voluntary migration that occurs frequently in Indonesia.

Maeda (1988, 171) provides a definition of the frontier from a geographical standpoint as an expansion into inhabitable terrain. Given a supposed lack of habitation and uncertain history of prior settlement attempts, reclamation efforts are open to all interested parties and economic growth primarily relies on the commercial cultivation of crops. An agglomeration of socially heterogeneous populations frequently takes place, but territorial ambiguity can lead to various political responses, including a strong identification with a central authority, a return to ancestral ties with the homeland, or a lack of concern for any central authority. Symbolic reconstruction at the frontier triggers the emergence of a novel sociocultural configuration from a cultural perspective (Maeda, 1988, 1994; Timmer, 2011).

The approach we take to understand the complex dynamics of access to resources and inequalities at the frontier draws on political ecology, which also explores the political forces at play in material and symbolic environmental conflicts. A major issue is that unequal power relations create a politicized atmosphere (Barbier, 2012; Barbieri *et al*., 2009: 292). Political ecology is a useful tool to analyze the flow of "power" in changing economic and social settings, as we will demonstrate (Foucault, 1980; Li, 2007; Svarstad *et al*., 2018; Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018; Cavanagh, 2018).

2. Study site: Baras and its people

Baras in West Sulawesi—our study site—has been marked by several of the frontier characteristics above. Baras was initially a settlement frontier and an agricultural frontier. Based on our ethnographic investigation, we contend that Baras can be classified as a mixed frontier or intersection frontier. It was originally designed to serve as a settlement for pioneers, achieved through the process of transmigration, while concurrently functioning as an agricultural frontier because it yielded palm oil. The region subsequently evolved into an economic frontier, as it persisted as a migration destination for the cultivation of oil palm. Recent trends indicate that the region has also emerged as constituting a political boundary. It is creating a new political landscape within the decentralized regions of Indonesia.

The site is a former Baras Integrated Self-Sufficient Settlement (*Kawasan Terpadu Mandiri* – KTM). According to the official transmigration ministry and reports of the study informants, two settlement units were decided upon for this area: Baras and Sarudu. These two KTMs were chosen because they offered secluded, unpopulated, and virgin forest areas. Baras (now in North Mamuju) and Sarudu (now in Central Mamuju) are both former KTMs in West Sulawesi; however, due to limited space, this article focuses on Baras only. Adjacent to the Baras KTM lives a population that both the local authorities and the new settlers have labelled as "isolated communities" (*masyarakat terasing*) comprise of peoples indigenous to the region, such as the Bunggu, Binggi, and Pakava. Many new settlers, and the local authority, consider and treat the Bunggu and Binggi as "upland peoples" (*orang tebing* or *orang pegunungan*), and consider the Pakava to be "people from the seashore" (*orang pendatang dari pantai*). The district government treats the Binggi as uplanders (*orang tebing* or *orang*

pegunungan) who live as nomads across the new border between North Mamuju of West Sulawesi and Donggala of Central Sulawesi. The district authority resettled a majority of the Binggi people to Bambanlamutu, and has relocated the Bunggu from their culture village (*perkampungan adat*) to nearby Pasangkayu (North Mamuju's capital district). The Bunggu are considered to be "more civilised", according to the local government (Lewu, 2017; Mukrimin, 2022a).

A different ethnic group called the *orang Baras* resides south of the frontier. Terminologically, Baras is the name of a village (*desa*) and a sub-district (*kecamatan*), in addition to referring to this ethnic group. Unfortunately, information and literature about the *orang Baras* remains limited. The linguists Charles Grimes and Barbara Grimes (1987) classify the Baras language as belonging to the Kaili–Pamona family. These linguists estimated that Baras had fewer than 4,000 speakers in the early 1990s (C. E. Grimes & Grimes, 1987), while their subsequent survey reports that just 250 people spoke the language by the year 2000 (B. F. Grimes, 2000). The data from the field suggests that, currently, 100 Baras speakers remain, possibly fewer. These individuals occupy the shore of Bambanloka or live as nomads occupying Bulu Taba's uplands (BPS Pasangkayu, 2020b, 2020a, 2021b, 2021a, 2022, 2023). Ultimately, the Baras language is among the most endangered languages in Indonesia (Mukrimin, 2022a).

In the pre-colonial era, Baras was a petty state of the Sendana kingdom, which in turn, was under the jurisdiction of *Pitu Babanna Binanga* of the Mandar kingdom (now Polman). However, due to its proximity to the Kaili kingdom, Baras was both socio-culturally and politically influenced by the latter, as were numerous neighboring kingdoms along the Lariang River towards Pasangkayu. Due to centuries of conflict, war, and peace between the Mandar and Kaili kingdoms, the situation of Baras and other states on this peninsula remained vulnerable and challenging. Indeed, according to the historical accounts of local people, the *Tanah Mea* ("red land") region was named because it was perpetually covered with blood spilt in the war between the Mandar and Kaili kingdoms (Maras, 2009: 22-25; Mukrimin, 2022). The Surumana River, near to Tanah Mea, was also vital at the time. The river still forms a provincial borderline between West Sulawesi and Central Sulawesi (Mukrimin, 2019b, 2019a, 2022a).

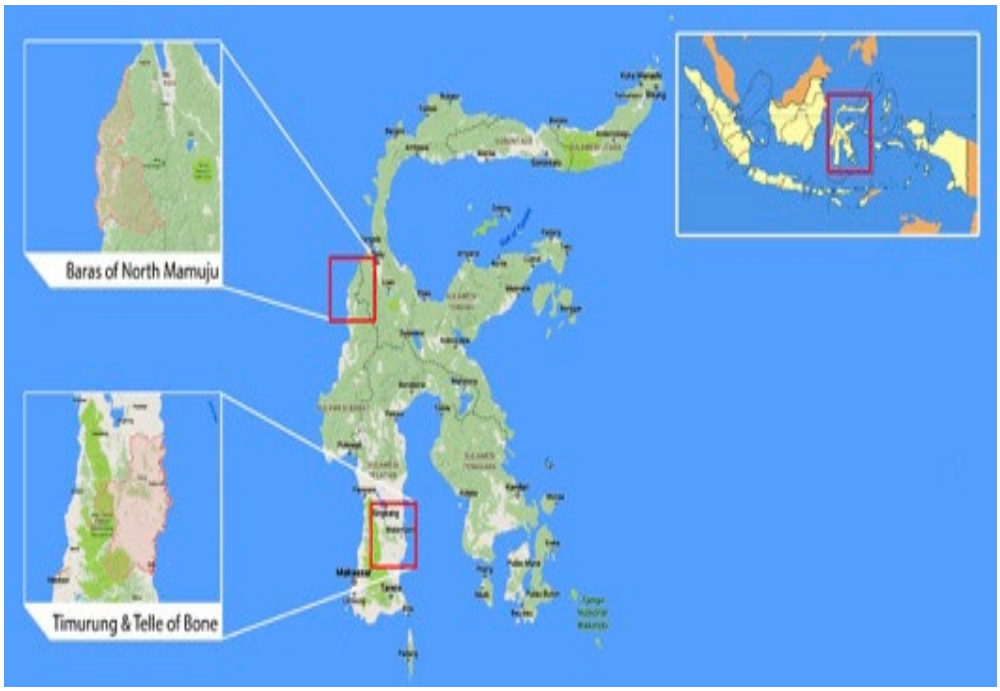

Figure 1: Bugis movement from Telle and Timurung in Bone, to Baras in North Mamuju. Source: The authors, 2022

The article examines the contribution of the Bugis community in Indonesia towards initiating a frontier via a transmigration program that was supported by the state. We take into account the intersection frontier comprising four dimensions, namely settlement, agriculture, economy, and its political ecology, as this frontier settlement is also an agriculture frontier. Baras as a political frontier has surfaced as a relatively recent development, because the research site, North Mamuju in West Sulawesi, has only recently been established as a new district as a result of Indonesia's decentralization. As a result of transmigration, the previously engineered community has undergone a transformation into a peri-urban region, serving as a resource site located on the Sulawesi peninsula. The settlement has undergone a significant transformation into a new district (*kabupaten*) due to the noteworthy contributions of the region's new settlers. These settlers belong to multi-ethnic communities such as Baras, Balinese, Bugis, Javanese, Kaili, Sasak, Sundanese, and Timorese peoples. The identities of the new settlers, specifically the Bugis, have played a significant role in shaping and influencing the local political landscape (Mukrimin, 2019b, 2019a, 2021). Figure 1 highlights Baras District in West Sulawesi and the region of origin of the Bugis transmigrants, namely Bone District in South Sulawesi.

3. Method

Research drew upon the findings of ethnographic inquiries, and more recent participatory research and interviewing of government officials, farmers, and other stakeholders by the first author (Mukrimin, 2022a). The fieldwork took place from 2014, with intermittent visits until the end of 2022. These multiple visits highlighted the complex and dynamic nature of the study area.

Ethnographic and qualitative methods were supplemented with in-depth and open-ended interviews, critical manuscript analysis and participant observation. Ethnographic methods followed recommended procedures (Atkinson, 1992; Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007; Fetterman, 2010; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Schensul *et al*., 2012; Spradley, 1979). Ethnography, for Charlotte Aull Davies, refers to "a research process based on fieldwork using a variety of (mainly qualitative) research techniques, which includes engagement in the lives of the study subjects over an extended time" (Davies, 1999, p. 5). It frequently uses direct quotations and a "concrete" depiction of events, offers individuals a voice in their own local context and leads to truthful, accurate, and credible accounts (Fetterman, 2010).

We interacted directly with informants in everyday situations, presenting a "Participant Information Sheet", and a "Participant Consent Form" before the interviews were conducted. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed if permitted by research participants. All participating informants were rendered anonymous for the purposes of the research to protect their privacy.

Participant observation is a collection of approaches, from which we chose the elements most effective for our specific scenario (Davies, 1999). It was definitely not the primary data collection strategy, but engagement in people's daily lives enables observation of specific behaviors and occurrences and facilitated more open and meaningful discussions with informants. By utilizing ethnography we were able to obtain a deep and rich understanding of the research population, because we spent considerable time at the field-sites.

It should be noted here that due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Gonda *et al*., 2021; Helmcke, 2022), field visits became intermittent. A new understanding of political and ecological issues and power relations nonetheless emerged, following other studies (Acciaioli, 2020; Acciaioli & Nasrum, 2020; Acciaioli & Sabharwal, 2017; Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018; Gonda *et al*., 2021; Healy, 2019; Helmcke, 2022; Moragues-Faus & Marsden, 2017).

4. Transmigration: the frontier of settlement

Transmigration began in Sulawesi in the early 1900s when the Dutch colonial government resettled Javanese individuals for farm work. These transmigrants were mostly peasants and farmers, and it was hoped that the presence of these settlers would support the colony's demand for rice. At the time of transmigrant settlement, Sulawesi was considered a backward area of the Indonesian Outer Islands. The region contained many unpopulated empty spaces, and the availability of land was the reason why Dutch colonisers relocated people from inner Indonesia, predominantly Javanese, to Sulawesi through transmigration. These transmigrants also served as an inexpensive workforce for the Dutch. Among those settlements that emerged from this period

of transmigration was Wonomulyo in Polewali Mamasa (now PolMan district). Today, Wonomulyo is acknowledged by the peoples of West and South Sulawesi as *kampung Jawa* (a 'Javanese village'), identifying the settlement being the first Javanese village to be established in Sulawesi. The area was considered initially due to its potential for supplying the Dutch colony's need for rice. Today, the villages of Wonomulyo are known as the 'rice-bowl' of West Sulawesi (Mukrimin, 2022a).

Due to the success of the transmigration programme in Wonomulyo, the Dutch considered undertaking similar projects in other areas (Mukrimin, 2022a). Other regions in Sulawesi were acknowledged as possible transmigration sites, including Mapilli, Malili, Masamba, and Malangke in South Sulawesi (Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, 2013b, 2013a; Mukrimin, 2022a; Sáinz, 1982; Whitten, 1987). These locations were still unpopulated and hence were open to the introduction of new crops, such as cocoa. Following the resettlement in southern Sulawesi, the Dutch sent more non-Javanese to Central Sulawesi, including many Balinese. One scholar noted that, until the end of the 1940s, settlers surpassed 200,000 people; these included approximately 23,600 across Sulawesi Island who were located in Mapili, Muna, Masamba, and Kalaena of Luwu (Hardjono, 1977:19, 1978b). The Dutch administrative policy that led to the transmigration programme was initially based on separating populations in Java and Bali, as well as many of the other islands in the Dutch East Indies, for political reasons. Thus, unlike the transmigration that transpired in Lampung and other areas of Sumatra Island, the transmigration programme in Indonesia's Outer Islands (notably Sulawesi) was not solely intended to alleviate high population densities but were also aimed at controlling the population of the non-Javanese region. Indonesia's independent government from the late 1940s, particularly the New Order regime, then arranged the transmigration program according to Five-year Developmental Plans (*Pembangunan Lima Tahun* – Pelita).

In the period from 1905–1970, there were approximately 424,000 sponsored people relocated by the transmigration programme (Table 1). A further 705,000 were relocated during the first two Five-Year Development Plans (Pelitas) (Pelita I 1969–1974, and Pelita II 1974–1979). The target for Pelita III (1979–1984) was to relocate a total of 500,000 families; by 1984 over 560,000 sponsored families had been resettled. During Pelita IV and Pelita V (1984–1989), more than 800,000 families were resettled across Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua (Abdoellah, 1993: 3-4). The transmigration authority designated 1.1 million hectares of additional land for the relocation of 550,000 families in 1990–1995 as part of Pelita V (Leinbach, 1989). Accordingly, at least 2.5 million government-sponsored transmigrants existed during the Dutch colonial administrative era and until the end of the 1990s (Elmhirst, 1999; Fearnside, 1997; Hoey, 2003; MacAndrews, 1978).

Scholars and analysts maintain that a total of 3.75 million people were targeted for resettlement until 1989 (Bubandt, 2014; Elmhirst, 1999; Fearnside, 1997; Grillo, 2007; Hardjono, 1986; Hoey, 2003; Leinbach, 1989; MacAndrews, 1978; Potter, 2012; Watkins & Leinbach, 1993) (see also Hardjono, 1978; Fearnside, 1997: 553–554). When aggregated, the census data released by Indonesia's Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration show an even higher number of transmigrants. They established in 5,885 settlement areas (*Unit Pemukiman Transmigrasi* – UPT). A government source shows that there were 7,936,651 documented transmigrants in the 1905–2013 period, including 2,138,312 families (Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, 2013a). Recent official data show that there have been 12,884 families and 49,233 people resettled since 2015 (Kemendes PDTT, 2023) (Table 1).

As can be seen from official data, Indonesia's New Order government resettled about 47,692 transmigrants to Sulawesi Island during the first Pelita (1969–1974). These settlers were spread across several provinces: 20,102 were relocated to Luwu, South Sulawesi; 15,074 were relocated to Central Sulawesi; and the remaining 3,505 were relocated to North Sulawesi (Sáinz, 1982: 24). As mentioned, the transmigration programme in Sulawesi Island throughout this period was designed to achieve agricultural extension, mainly increased rice output. The transmigration programme continued to take place after the decentralization era (2000–2010s), though the number of individuals involved was not significant. Until recently, Indonesia's government continued to resettle some selective transmigrants to Sulawesi Island (Potter, 2012). For example, the Indonesian government resettled 7,274 families (26,134 people) to a new transmigration settlement and was

still relocating individuals to 'backward' regions, such as Gorontalo, Central Sulawesi, and Southeast Sulawesi, as recently as 2011 (Kemendes PDTT, 2023; Li, 2017; Potter, 2012: 274).

No.	Settlement Period	Number of UPT	Number of Transmigrants	
			Family	People
1	Dutch colonial	62	60,155	232,802
2	1950 to 1968	176	98,631	394,524
3	Pelita I	139	40,906	163,624
4	Pelita II	139	82,959	366,429
5	Pelita III	767	337,761	1,346,890
6	Pelita IV	2,002	750,150	2,256,255
7	Pelita V	750	265,259	1,175,072
8	Pelita VI	1,109	350,064	1,400,256
9	2000 to 2004	246	87,571	354,272
10	2005	45	4,615	17,752
11	2006	145	10,297	38,665
12	2007	92	8,557	35,487
13	2008	93	9,584	36,385
14	2009	45	8,800	32,758
15	2010	75	7,346	28,081
16	2011	-	7,274	26,134
17	2012	75	7,546	28,276
18	2013	-	837	2,989
19	2014	-	-	-
20	2015-2022	-	12,884	49,223
	Total	**5,885**	**2,151,196**	**7,985,874**

Table 1: Indonesia's Transmigration over time. Source: Kemendes PDTT, 2023; Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, 2013a

Indonesia's national government then introduced a new type of transmigration, "international border transmigration" (*transmigrasi wilayah perbatasan antar negara*) (Sukmaniar & Saputra, 2019). Since its introduction, border transmigration has involved the resettling of 233 families in West Kalimantan, 180 families in East Kalimantan, 350 families in East Nusa Tenggara, and 250 families in Papua (Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, 2013a; Potter, 2012). Furthermore, in early 2013, 2,989 people were resettled outside of Java, while around 100 transmigration families had been settled in Central Sulawesi by the end of 2014 (Kemendes PDTT, 2023; Mukrimin, 2022a). Accordingly, it can be said that, throughout various regimes, Indonesia's government has continued to resettle populations through transmigration programmes of varied types and purposes.

5. Transmigration: frontier formation at North Mamuju

By the end of Pelita V and early Pelita VI, Indonesia's national government decided to resettle individuals to Baras in North Mamuju; this area was covered in tropical forest and is situated in north-western Sulawesi. It is worth noting transmigration to Baras involved a combination of so-called "general" and "local" transmigrants. These general transmigrants were nominated from rural Javanese (mainly from Central Java, West Java, and East Java), Lombok of Nusa Tenggara, and Tabanan of Bali; the local transmigrants were selected from Bone Bugis and Bambanloka. The government implemented a new category of "local transmigration" (*translok* or *transmigrasi lokal*), mainly as a response to critics of the transmigration programme (Mukrimin, 2022a). Among the main criticisms of those against the transmigration programme was that it aimed to "Javanize" Indonesia's outer islands (Abdoellah, 1993; Arndt & Sundrum, 1977; Elmhirst, 1999;

Elmirst, 2002; Fearnside, 1997; Grillo, 2007; Hardjono, 1977, 1978, 1986; Hoey, 2003; Van Der Wijst, 1985). This criticism emerged because Javanese had dominated the transmigration programmes for decades. Ultimately, Indonesia's government—specifically, the New Order regime—introduced this new policy of resettling and mixing both general and local transmigrants with the avowed aim to create and maintain harmony and integration among Indonesia's ethnic groups.

6. The agricultural frontier

Equally significant is the utilization of the recently established transmigrant settlement location in Sulawesi for the cultivation of a novel crop, namely oil palm (elaeis guinneensis). During the 1980-90s, the Indonesian government incorporated private corporations to boost the oil palm industry, as evidenced by various studies (Andrianto *et al*., 2019; Gatto *et al*., 2017; Li, 2017; Masalam, 1988; Obidzinski *et al*., 2014a; Rietberg & Hospes, 2018; Varina *et al*., 2020). The government has made significant investments in infrastructural development, issued extensive land concessions, and provided subsidized loans to incentivize private sector involvement in the oil palm industry. Consequently, land, the primary resource at this frontier, became crucial, and the frontier became agricultural. Land could serve as a means of sustenance, a site for labor, a transferable asset, or a subject of fiscal imposition (Bennett *et al*., 2018; Geiger, 2008a, 2008b; Li, 2017; Lund, 2018; Peluso & Lund, 2011; Rietberg & Hospes, 2018). The stability and disputed nature of the uses and meanings of land, coupled with its materiality, are significant factors. The terrain does not resemble a flat piece of material. It is not possible to roll up and remove it. Land possesses a discernible existence and is situated within a specific geographic area. Land exhibits a wide range of affordances that are both abundant and varied, encompassing a multitude of potential uses and values, such as the ability to support and maintain human existence (Bennett *et al*., 2018; Geiger, 2008a, 2008b; Li, 1999, 2001, 2014, 2017; Lund, 2018; Masalam, 1988; Obidzinski *et al*., 2014a; Peluso & Lund, 2011; Rietberg & Hospes, 2018).

Most of the new settlers in Baras were farmers and saw oil palm as a prospective livelihood. Many farmers consider oil palm in Baras as "green gold" (Mukrimin, 2022a), a view common throughout Indonesia. Many of their fellow villagers from South Sulawesi (Bugis homeland) were undertaking similar work in Sabah and other oil palm farms in Malaysia (Mukrimin, 2019c, 2019b, 2022a, 2022b). These more local oil palm plantations appear to offer much the same work as those done by migrant workers in Malaysia. However, the distinguishing feature in Baras was that settlers were provided with an allotment of free land. Consequently, many of the first Bugis settlers no longer needed to travel for oil palm work in Malaysia.

As an agricultural frontier, Baras exemplifies scholars' arguments that agricultural frontiers constitute the front or leading edge associated with people migrating into a geographical area and bringing with them land practices that are different from the land management schemas that are already in place (Rindfuss *et al*., 2007). Agricultural frontiers can be thought of as a front or leading edge associated with people moving into a geographical area (Gatto *et al*., 2017; Li, 2017; Lund, 2018; McCarthy *et al*., 2012; McCarthy & Cramb, 2009; Mukrimin, 2022b; Obidzinski *et al*., 2014a; Peluso & Lund, 2011; Rietberg & Hospes, 2018; Varina *et al*., 2020). It is a procedure that involves alterations to the use of land (Andrianto *et al*., 2019; Arndt & Sundrum, 1977; Li, 2014, 2018; Mccarthy & Cramb, 2009; Rietberg & Hospes, 2018; Ross, 1980). Unlike other frontiers—such as Lampung of Sumatra, where swamplands were typically converted to rice fields with the help of Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese transmigrants (Abdoellah, 1993)—most, if not all, transmigrants in Baras are involved in the oil palm sector (Mukrimin, 2022b). Accordingly, the vast majority of settlers in the frontier of Baras are "agricultural workers" to borrow a term from Geiger (2008b: 3).

7. Baras: an inter-section frontier

Admittedly, all categories and types of frontier that have been mentioned above can be seen in Baras. Indeed, as the frontier itself can be said to typify the meeting point between "savagery and civilization" (Turner, 1920, 1961) , it is hard to deny that Baras became an area in which local peoples and new settlers met. Crucially, "the expansion of the nation-state" (Little, 2001) through the transmigration program correlates with the fact that the state effectively sponsored the frontier settlements in Sulawesi. This corroborates the argument that a

frontier will take place when "outsiders set up permanent residence at the indigenous periphery" (Geiger, 2008b: 98, 2008a) .

Research informants said that, initially, their willingness to join the programme was only half-hearted. This is attributable to the fact that these villagers first assumed "*transmigrasi*" to be associated with the term "expelled" (*dibuang* (Indonesian) or (*dipâlî* (Bugis)), which they associated with being expelled to the jungle. Indeed, *transmigrasi* recalled to these villagers' stories about bandits, robbers, and rebels, most of whom were *dipâlî* during the time of the old Bugis kingdoms. Another reason was that the *transmigrasi* programme was the first of its kind in South Sulawesi, and many villagers thought that such programmes only applied to Javanese and Balinese people. While many Bugis migrated for work (Mukrimin, 2019a, 2022a), to be transmigrants was something different. A further critical issue was that the transmigration programme had been proposed by the government to further engagement with the oil palm industry, a sector that was new and alien in the eyes of many Bugis. Most informants agreed that three promises led them to participate in the transmigration programme: free land, one year's subsidised living, and the agreement that their village leader would accompany them to their new settlement for three months (Mukrimin, 2022a, 2022b).

Informants mentioned that the scheduled move date for these transmigrants was 1987. Under the provincial plan, the head of the Bone district was extremely eager to relocate about 150 families. This plan did not materialize until early 1988 however, and of the 150 families (applicants) who registered, only 22 families (comprising 42 members) had departed by the start of February that year. The remaining 26 families (comprising 102 members) followed in November 1988. The entire first Bugis group arrived, and each family therein was given a transmigrant house number. Today, these house numbers correspond to those in 'Blok B' at Baras 1. Compared with Balinese, Javanese, and Sundanese people, the location selected for transmigrated Bugis families—that of flat land that featured a small river—were, according to one first settler, "quite favorable to make a living." The data from the field site show that these initial Bugis settlers, classified as APPDT 1 and 2, all came from the Bone district (Mukrimin, 2022a) (Table 2).

No.	Transmigrants origin	Date of arrival	Number of families	Number of transmigrants
1	APPDT Bone I	13 February 1988	22	42
2	West Java	13 February 1989	25	96
3	Central Java	7 March 1988	90	387
4	East Java	8 March 1988	18	76
5	Bali	25 November 1988	75	287
6	APPDT Bone II	5 November 1988	26	102
7	APPDT Baras	31 November 1988	19	93
8	East Nusa Tenggara	25 October 1988	50	158
	Total		**325**	**1,241**

Table 2: The first transmigrants and their date of arrival in Baras. Source: Kantor Desa Balanti (formerly UPT Baras I), 2022

When a village head was asked 'Why from Bone?' He responded that, at the time, Bone was the most overpopulated district in South Sulawesi. According to the same village head, a further reason was that Indonesia's central government offered local transmigration as compensation for the provincial authority. At that time, Baras was still under the jurisdiction of South Sulawesi. The Indonesian government used the term *Alokasi Penempatan Penduduk Transmigrasi* (APPDT) to refer to special settlement allocation regarding the local population within the receiving province. The first wave of the transmigration program within this area included two APPDTs: APPDT Bone, and APPDT Baras. APPDT Bone comprised Bugis individuals (predominantly from Timurung and Telle villages) as well as other Baras people (predominantly from Bambanloka). These two APPDT transmigrant groups were pioneers in this frontier (Mukrimin, 2022a).

According to the transmigration authority, two sub-districts (*kecamatan*) were officially designated as KTMs in West Sulawesi: Sarudu and Baras. The total number of transmigrants within these two KTMs was

19,337, comprising 4,509 families (Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, 2013b). It must be noted that these KTM projects were not only monopolized, both financially and technically, by Indonesia's national government (particularly the Ministry of Transmigration) but that Indonesia's provincial and local governments were also involved in their management.

Notably, the data provided above highlights a unique model for Bugis migration. Thus, unlike other Bugis who settled elsewhere—such as those Bugis farming shrimp in the Mahakam River in East Kalimantan (Timmer, 2011) or those Bugis farmers in Loa Janan, also in East Kalimantan (A. P. Vayda & Sahur, 1985; A. Vayda & Sahur, 1996)—the Bugis in Baras were planned, sponsored, and endorsed solely by the state. Another equally distinctive feature is that the departure of Bugis was grouped, and all such individuals were relocated along with their respective families. Consequently, this migration model differs from previous research on Bugis migration (Acciaioli, 1989; Ammarell, 2002; Lineton, 1975; Mukrimin, 2019a, 2022a). and emphasizes the argument made in other articles by the first author that the Bugis in Baras are *mallekke dapureng* ("moving the kitchen out"), the Bugis idiom for engaging in a process of permanent migration (Mukrimin, 2019a, 2022a).

Notably, the KTM project was integrated into the oil palm sector. Accordingly, transmigrants and settlers were expected to cultivate oil palm plantations with the support of corporate engagement, joint-venture, smallholder, and independent-grower systems (Mukrimin, 2022a, 2022b). The position of *translok* among Bone and local Baras transmigrants within this frontier was, therefore, fundamental for securing access to resources (i.e., land and forest) (Mukrimin, 2022a). Accordingly, the mixing of agricultural and settlement frontiers initially transpired in the area.

From 1989 to 1991, some Bugis informants reported that they experienced what they referred to as the 'bitter of the bitterness of life' (*pâina pai'e*). They experienced this during moments when rice was scarce, and there was no or very little money available. Most, if not all, of the first settlers said that survival was desperate throughout this period. Accordingly, in trying to survive, innovative transmigrants used their 0.5 ha slot of land to cultivate short-harvesting consumable foods, such as maize, cassava, and sweet potatoes, among other crops. Throughout his period, Bugis and Balinese transmigrants that had enough capital, which they amassed from their daily wages, began buying land from their fellow transmigrants. Crucially, newcomers (both *perantau* and wanderers) to the area throughout this same period were immediately encouraged to come to Baras. From the 2000s onward, therefore, these agricultural and settlement frontiers underwent remarkable changes (Mukrimin, 2022a).

By the end of the Pelita V, a proposal had been made to establish the new district of North Mamuju. The former transmigration settlement units (UPT: *Unit Pemukiman Transmigrasi*) were then handed over from the authority of the central government (Ministry of Transmigration) to local authorities, becoming established autonomous villages (*desa mandiri*) (Table 3).

No.	UPT Name	New Village Name	Settlement Arrival Year	Handed-over Year	Population in settlement	Population in-handover
1	Baras I	Balanti	1987/1988	1995	1,300	1,431
2	Baras II	Motu	1987/1988	1995	1,300	1,383
3	Baras III	Karappe	1988/1989	1995	1,800	1,834
4	Baras VII	Bajawali	1991/1992	1997	720	817
5	Baras XI	Kenangan	1996/1997	n.a.	n.a.	n.a
6	Baras V	Parabu	1991/1992	1996	1,106	1,106
7	Baras IV	Lilimuri	1989/1990	1995	2,000	2,322
8	Baras X	Sumber Sari	1997/1998	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
9	Baras VI	Lelejae	1991/1992	1996	1,106	1,041
10	Baras VIII	Kastabuana	1992/1993	1998	1,232	1,371

Table 3: Change of the transmigration settlement into village administration. Source: Ministry of Manpower & Transmigration, 2013(d), adapted by the authors, 2022. *: no available data

8. The economic frontier

An economic frontier subsequently followed these settlement and agricultural frontiers. The finding from the field site shows that spontaneous Bugis migrants followed initial transmigrant pioneers about seven years after the initial Bugis transmigration program. For example, two or three informants mentioned that they came to Baras through the so-called *sisipan* (insertion). In this context, *sisipan* means either the replacement or purchase of properties of registered transmigrants who had abandoned their possessions. Once a *sisipan* is arranged, the possessions concerned are reported to settlement unit officers as *ganti rugi* (recoupment). For example, Daeng Mangenredalle (62, male), paid about four million rupiahs (US$272) to purchase two and a half hectares of land, in addition to a house, which had both been abandoned in 1990 by a transmigrant from West Java. Our data show that all transmigrants, many of whom can be called spontaneous migrants, who came to Baras in 1989–1991 admitted that they did it according to *sisipan* or *ganti rugi* (Mukrimin, 2022a). When asked how this *sisipan* or *ganti rugi* had been arranged, haji Daeng Masugi (a 60 year old man, settled in 1990) provided the following explanation:

> … [t]he transmigrants' allowances were not paid [*leppe*' *jata*] anymore, i.e., the locally so-called "conversion", and our wages (2500 rupiahs/day [17cents]) for mowing the grass to preparing the oil palm plantations were delayed for four months; subsequently, almost all the settlers from West Java and some from East and Central Java left their properties one by one. Those who wanted to go back [to their] home-villages or somewhere else, then announced they would sell their 2.5 hectares of land, plus a house [for] about 300,000 rupiahs [US$20]. If the arrangement [was] agreed, then we reported to *Pak Kepala Unit* [the head of the settlement unit]; then the *Pak Unit* would note in his book "*sisipan* transmigrants." However, one of my neighbor's purchases at Blok 90 was reported by Pak Unit to be '*ganti rugi*' because the owner of the land needed pocket money to go back to Java. (Daeng Masugi, 2014)

Most informants agreed that 1989–1991 was a turning point for these settlers. One 70-year-old settler even un-jokingly showed us his plantation stating: "You see, this *lahan* [0.5 hectares of land] was purchased with two packs of cigarette in 1991 because the owner did not like his *lahan*; it was a marsh."

Subsequently, Baras also became an economic frontier. The observations we made show that Baras (and, more broadly, North and Central Mamuju) has become the primary destination for many Bugis migrants "searching for [good] fortune", to borrow Acciaioli's phrasing (1989). In this area, therefore, the oil palm industry has catalyzed economic dynamics (Mukrimin, 2022b).

The site subsequently has evolved into a political frontier as well, with North Mamuju serving as a platform for political prospects. In the local context, numerous settlers have leveraged their political standing by utilizing Baras as a means to an end. As evidenced by the data, most of the village heads, specifically six out of eight, in this former transmigration settlement unit are comprised of individuals who have recently migrated to the area (BPS Pasangkayu, 2022, 2023).. These individuals may have arrived as former transmigrants or as spontaneous ones. Additionally, it has been commonly reported by residents of Pasangkayu that over 50% of political positions at the district level in North Mamuju, including local executive and judicial members, are occupied by individuals who are new to the area (Mukrimin, 2022a, 2022b). There are parallels here with the numerous instances of frontier formation observed in tropical regions (M. Anderson, 1996; Cavanagh, 2018; Geiger, 2008b; Gosling *et al*., 2021; Healy, 2019; Kröger, 2021; Lund, 2018; Malanson *et al*., 2006; Obidzinski *et al*., 2014a; Oliveira & Meyfroidt, 2022; Scott, 2009; Tsing, 2005).

9. A political ecology perspective on the intersection of frontiers

Until very recently the Baras region has illustrated the three major forms of a frontier economy. It operated as a "new frontier" even within the frontier settlement itself (Peluso & Lund, 2011). This new frontier does not concern the contention between "development" and "progress", with that of "wilderness" or "traditional lands"; instead, it now presents a more complex dynamic (Andrianto *et al*., 2019; Cleary, 1993: 33; Li, 2014, 2018; Peluso & Lund, 2011; Rietberg & Hospes, 2018; Scott, 2009: 82-83). Baras has established powers,

jurisdictions, entitlements, and patterns of domination but also opposition from novel enclosures, fresh property systems, and territorialization, resulting in the emergence of novel 'urban-agrarian-natured' settings, consisting of innovative labor and production methods; novel agents, entities, and networks linking them; and novel lawful and aggressive methods of contesting prior land regulations (Peluso & Lund, 2011: 667).

From an economic perspective, Baras is different from other locations settled by Bugis migrants. For example, as we mentioned, Bugis have migrated to work in several destinations in Malaysia's oil palm sector, where labor is mostly carried out by migrant-workers (*pajjama*). The Bugis settlers in Baras are farmers who own their lands, and many settlers in Baras are land-owning oil palm growers. The Bugis in Baras can be categorized as either smallholders or middle growers of oil palm plantations. Owning their plantations means they differ from the *ponggawa-sawi*' (patron-client) system that includes many traditional Bugis farmers and fishermen. We argue that the economy and social structural change remains the principal reason why many Bugis left their villages in South Sulawesi, and why subsequent spontaneous Bugis migrants followed them to Baras, or elsewhere where oil palm was cultivated. It is hard to deny that, thanks to the oil palm industry and its various dynamics, the economy of the Bugis settlers in Baras changed remarkably (Mukrimin, 2022a, 2022b).

In relation to the economic frontier and the perspectives of transmigrant Bugis towards transmigration and oil palm, it is pertinent to consider Anna Tsing's (2005) proposition that such frontiers are not inherently or organically defined categories, but rather a mobile concept that has been influenced by various pre-existing associations. Scholars argued that the configuration of Indonesian frontiers was influenced by other tumultuous times and locations, and the concept of the frontier has persisted through subsequent optimistic frontier movements. This is evident from the statement, "Indonesian frontiers were shaped to model other wild times and places" (Li, 1999: 16-17, 2001, 2014, 2018; Tsing, 2005, p. 32).

In many ways, the oil palm sector, with palm oil being the product of both agricultural and economic frontiers, can consequently be understood as "an imaginative project capable of moulding places and processes" rather than as "a place or process" (Tsing, 2005: 32). Therefore, the attitude of Bugis settlers in Baras is compatible with the argument that "frontier men and resources are made in the dynamics of intensification and proliferation" and that, accordingly, the "the frontier appears to roll with its own momentum" (Tsing, 2005: 41). We concur with Tsing, who states that the concept of the frontier is "a space of desire" (Tsing, 2005: 32), characterized by an inherent allure that elicits a sense of yearning within individuals (Margulies, 2022). It possesses a seemingly self-generating quality that engenders a set of needs and wants. Once encountered, the impulse to investigate and utilize it becomes irresistible. The frontiers possess distinct technologies pertaining to space and time. Their vast expanses come at a high cost, extending across the terrain. They attract swift and unpredictable temporalities of hearsay, conjecture, and patterns of economic growth and decline, fostering increasingly heightened forms of ingenuity (Acciaioli, 2020; Acciaioli & Nasrum, 2020).

The intersection frontier of Baras crucially highlights several important perspectives which contribute to political ecology, particularly as it pertains to Indonesia (see Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018; Bennett *et al*., 2018; Cavanagh, 2018; Gonda *et al*., 2021; Healy, 2019; Helmcke, 2022; Margulies, 2022; Moragues-Faus & Marsden, 2017; Rangan & Kull, 2009; Svarstad *et al*., 2018; Walker, 2005). We have illustrated the complex intersections and relations between humans and their landscapes over time, which have local, regional, and global implications. Political institutions such as central and local governments and corporations, and social networks have all played a role in shaping the frontier landscape and environmental governance. Empirical data shows that there have been no robust and sustainable regulations which govern palm oil in West Sulawesi. The political environment and economy are characterized by centralization and top-down decision making, as in the case of the transmigration program. This has perpetuated existing inequalities and hampered the implementation of efficiently tailored solutions. The government's emphasis on resources compensation (land and agricultural) over strategies to protect natural resources have been ineffective. This has resulted in a situation of short-term gain at the expense of long-term sustainability, particularly on the ecological and environmental governance of the tropical rain forest of Indonesia.

10. Who and what have been marginalized in transmigration policy and the construction of this frontier?

Building on these points, scholars contend that the frontier "is a highly unstructured field of power (i.e., a contested space), where the rules of interaction are not established"; indeed, in Becker's (1988) words these areas have "the capacity to engender new realities and has a high political potential" (Little, 2001: 8). Frontier areas comprising "sparsely populated geographical areas peripheral to political and economic centres of power that experience accelerated rates of demographic, agricultural, or technological change" (Little, 2001: 1) are identified with inequality and marginalization. This case follows others in showing how geographical spaces, forces of modernity, and the expansion of the nation-state are essential elements in the development of the frontier (Acciaioli & Sabharwal, 2017; M. Anderson, 1996; Z. R. Anderson, 2019; Andrianto *et al*., 2019; Cavanagh, 2018; Kröger, 2021; Obidzinski *et al*., 2014b; Scott, 2009). For example, the crucial dispute in Baras is between the oil-palm refinery industry and indigenous villagers in the settlement of Towoni (Figure 2). The former hamlet recently became a frontline border between the oil palm sector and the typical village (both of which belong to the refinery fabric and transmigration area). Towoni villagers reluctantly or unwillingly have engaged with the oil palm industry but wish to maintain their traditional cropping systems.

Figure 2: Towoni village and its border with the oil palm plantations. Source: The authors, 2022

The first issue about this settlement frontier, emerging from transmigration, is that the receiving society was neglected. The argument maintained by many transmigration supporters (in the case of Baras this generally comprises policymakers and oil palm corporates) regarding the inclusion of APPDT migrants from within the province fails to address the issue of balance. Our data show that harmony and cohesion among communities

has not happened. In fact, as we have seen in the case of Binggi, Bunggu and Towoni, the receiving communities and local people continue to undermine the new arrivals (Mukrimin, 2022a, 2022b). These indigenous communities are marginal but oppose the oil palm industry.

Equally important is that land grabbing and claim of ownership over land is mainly undertaken by those with access; specifically influential people and bodies such as corporates, government officials, village heads, army officers, and prominent villagers. This can be seen at the frontier at Baras and among many similar schemes in Indonesia's frontier zones (Li, 2014). Critically, the demarcation of border rights at the frontier is ongoing, as is the contention between the oil palm industry—which incorporates both refinery (*Hak Guna Usaha*, i.e., utility and concession rights) and the former transmigration sites (*afdeling Baribi*), including Towoni village (Mukrimin, 2022a, 2022b). Empirically, the apparent impact of this frontier is that of ecological and environmental degradation. The demand for land to be used for oil palm, the primary product, continues to expand at a significant rate. Anybody who visited the region just 4–10 years ago would today notice how much the landscape has changed. When this study began oil palm, as a monoculture crop, was concentrated in the areas of Baras, Lariang, and Sarudu. Four years later, oil palm plantations continue to spread down the Trans-Sulawesi highway, and today all sub-districts within this area covered by oil palm plantations (Mukrimin, 2022b).

The consequences of this intersection frontier on the environment are predictable. In fact, as a result of the spread of these plantations, the area has lost much of its rich flora and fauna. The destruction of this once-huge tropical forest is stark and significant, and the resource extraction being carried out in the area surpasses human needs. In short, transmigration and oil palm have changed the north-western region of Sulawesi.

11. Conclusion

This article has interrogated the position maintained by Indonesia's transmigration policy that it is only used only to fill empty spaces. In the case of Baras in North Mamuju, areas initially covered by substantial tropical forests have subsequently come to contain UPTs (ten settlement units), eventually becoming a catalyst for a new Indonesian district. Within the KTM in Baras, all former UPTs have become established as different villages. Moreover, these former 10 UPTs were recently divided and merged into three new sub-districts (*kecamatan*). Baras has changed significantly and continues to alter in its dynamics and complexity. It is more complicated than "peopling the Hills," to borrow Scott's (2009) phrase.

In brief, the trajectory of transmigration has shifted over time. We have shown that historically, transmigration was about the relocation of individuals from a densely populated region to a specific settlement as a means of addressing imbalanced population distribution. However, in contemporary times, it has been primarily utilized as a mechanism for the allocation of resources, particularly land, and particularly for industrial agriculture. The transmigration programs in Indonesia, specifically those related to industrialized agricultural sites utilized for oil palm, have evolved into "integrated self-sufficient cities" (*Kota Terpadu Mandiri* or KTM). The KTM located in Baras has undergone a significant transformation from a frontier characterized by settlements and agriculture to a peri-urban region that is equipped with corresponding amenities. Baras has become a significant resource in the advancement of North Mamuju.

Ultimately, the development of different types of frontiers has effaced differences among the settlers, no longer distinguishing between previous transmigrants, recent arrivals, and itinerants, and rendered largely invisible the local Indigenous peoples, who have been unable to mount any substantial resistance to the conversion of the land into industrial agriculture. Members of the Bugis community residing in Baras have been able to maintain their ties with their native land, owing to the advancements in infrastructure in the surrounding area, particularly the trans-Sulawesi road. Nonetheless, their defining characteristic, in contrast to spontaneous Bugis migrants elsewhere, has been their persistence from the very beginning in establishing permanent residence in Baras. Empirically, the intersection frontier has been established by the state and subsequently populated by a fervent tradition of migration. Over time, the region has been socially, economically, and politically dominated by Bugis settlers, ultimately evolving into a distinct district. While this evolution in transmigration has played a significant role in the extension of the Indonesian nation-state into the

local context, this process has also entailed increasing inequalities between the migrants and local peoples, as well as incipient land degradation.

References

Abdoellah, O. S. (1993). *Transmigrants and adaptation: an ecological-anthropological perspective*. University of California Press.

Acciaioli, G. (1989). *Searching for good fortune: the making of a Bugis shore community at Lake Lindu, Central Sulawesi.* PhD dissertation. Australian National University.

Acciaioli, G. (2020). From subjugation to local sovereignty: The dynamics of frontierization and defrontierization in Lindu, Central Sulawesi (Indonesia). In Haugh M., K. Großmann K., & Kaartinen T. (Eds.), *Paideuma* (pp. 183–200). Frobenius Institute.

Acciaioli, G., & Nasrum, M. (2020). Frontir-isasi dan de-frontir-isasi sebagai kerangka untuk studi marjinalitas: Studi kasus Lindu di Sulawesi Tengah. *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya*. https://doi.org/10.14203/jmb.v22i1.1017

Acciaioli, G., & Sabharwal, A. (2017). Frontierization and defrontierization: Reconceptualizing frontier frames in Indonesia and India. In Moreno J. & Tatar B. (Eds.) *Transnational frontiers of Asia and Latin America since 1800* (pp. 31–46). Routledge.

Ahlborg, H., & Nightingale, A. J. (2018). Theorizing power in political ecology: The where of power in resource governance projects. *Journal of Political Ecology*, *25*, 350–425. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2458/v25i1.22804

Ammarell, G. (2002). Bugis migration and modes of adaptation to local situations. *Ethnology*, *41*(1), 51–67. https://doi.org/10.2307/4153020

Anderson, M. (1996). *Frontiers: territory and state formation in the modern world*. Polity Press.

Anderson, Z. R. (2019). Mainstreaming green: Translating the green economy in an Indonesian frontier. In J. Cons J., Eilenberg M. (Eds.), *Frontier assemblages: The emergent politics of resource frontiers in Asia* (pp. 83–98). Wiley.

Andrianto, A., Komarudin, H., & Pacheco, P. (2019). Expansion of oil palm plantations in Indonesia's frontier: Problems of externalities and the future of local and indigenous communities. *Land*, *8*(4). https://doi.org/10.3390/land8040056

Arndt, H. W., & Sundrum, R. M. (1977). Transmigration: land settlement or regional development? *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, *13*(3), 72–90. https://doi.org/10.1080/00074917712331333204

Atkinson, P. (1992). *Understanding ethnographic texts*. Sage.

Atkinson, P., & Hammersley, M. (2007). *Ethnography: principles in practice*. Routledge.

Barbier, E. B. (2012). Scarcity, frontiers and development. *Geographical Journal*, *178*(2), 110–122. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4959.2012.00462.x

Barbieri, A. F., Carr, D. L., & Bilsborrow, R. E. (2009). Migration within the frontier: The second-generation colonization in the Ecuadorian Amazon. *Population Research and Policy Review*, *28*(3), 291–320. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-008-9100-y

Bazzi, S., Gaduh, A., Rothenberg, A., & Wong, M. (2017). Unity in diversity? ethnicity, migration, and nation-building in Indonesia. *CEPR Discussion Papers* 12377 https://www.bu.edu/econ/files/2017/04/Bazzi_Unity_in_Diversity.pdf

Bennett, A., Ravikumar, A., & Paltán, H. (2018). The political ecology of oil palm company-community partnerships in the Peruvian Amazon: deforestation consequences of the privatization of rural development. *World Development*, *109*, 29–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.04.001

BPS Pasangkayu. (2020a). *Baras in figures*.

BPS Pasangkayu. (2020b). *Pasangkayu in figures*.

BPS Pasangkayu. (2021a). *Baras in figures*.

BPS Pasangkayu. (2021b). *Pasangkayu in figures*.

BPS Pasangkayu. (2022). *Baras in figures*.

BPS Pasangkayu. (2023). *Pasangkayu in figures*.

Bubandt, N. (2014). Rice as symbolic capital: knowledge, practice and the struggle for social recognition in an Indonesian transmigration site. *Antropologi Indonesia*, 55, 84-100. https://doi.org/10.7454/ai.v0i55.3335

Cavanagh, C. J. (2018). Political ecologies of biopower: diversity, debates, and new frontiers of inquiry. *Journal of Political Ecology*, *25*, 350–425. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2458/v25i1.23047

Cleary, D. (1993). After the frontier: Problems with political economy in the modern Brazilian Amazon. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *25*(2), 331–349. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X00004685

Clifford, M. (2001). *Political genealogy after Foucault: Savage identities*. Routledge.

Cunfer, G., & Krausmann, F. (2015). Adaptation on an agricultural frontier: Socio-ecological profiles of Great Plains settlement, 1870–1940. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, *46*(3), 355–392. https://doi.org/10.1162/JINH_a_00868

Davies, C. A. (1999). *Reflexive ethnography: A guide to researching selves and others*. Routledge.

Elmhirst, R. (1999). Space, identity politics and resource control in Indonesia's transmigration programme. *Political Geography*, *18*(7), 813–835. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298(99)00029-3

Elmirst, R. (2002). Daughters and displacement: Migration dynamics in an Indonesian transmigration area. *The Journal of Development Studies*, *38*(5), 143–166. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00220380412331322541

Fearnside, P.M. (1997). Transmigration in Indonesia: Lessons from its environmental and social impacts. *Environmental Management*, *21*(4), 553–570.

Fetterman, D. (2010). *Ethnography: Step by step*. Sage.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. Harvester Press.

Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 87–104). University of Chicago Press.

Gatto, M., Wollni, M., Asnawi, R., & Qaim, M. (2017). Oil palm boom, contract farming, and rural economic development: Village-level evidence from Indonesia. *World Development*, *95*, 127–140. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.02.013

Geiger, D. (2008a). Introduction: state, settlers and indigenous communities. In D. Geiger (Ed.), *Frontier encounters: Indigenous communities and settlers in Asia and Latin America* (pp. 1–76). International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research North-South.

Geiger, D. (2008b). Turner in the tropics: the frontier concept revisited. In D. Geiger (Ed.), *Frontier encounters: Indigenous Communities and Settlers in Asia and Latin America* (pp. 75–216). International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research North-South.

Gonda, N., Leder, S., González-Hidalgo, M., Chiwona-Karltun, L., Stiernström, A., Hajdu, F., Fischer, K., Asztalos Morell, I., Kadfak, A., & Arvidsson, A. (2021). Critical reflexivity in political ecology research: How can the Covid-19 pandemic transform us into better researchers? *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, *3*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2021.652968

Gosling, E., Knoke, T., Reith, E., Reyes Cáceres, A., & Paul, C. (2021). Which socio-economic conditions drive the selection of agroforestry at the forest frontier? *Environmental Management*, *67*(6), 1119–1136. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-021-01439-0

Grillo, R. (2007). Betwixt and between: Trajectories and projects of transmigration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *33*(2), 199–217. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830601154138

Grimes, B. F. (2000). *Ethnologue: languages of the world*. 14. Ethnologue, SIL. http://www.ethnologue.com

Grimes, C. E., & Grimes, B. D. (1987). *Languages of South Sulawesi*. https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/145413/1/PL-D78.pdf

Hamilton, S. (2018). Foucault's end of history: the temporality of governmentality and its end in the Anthropocene. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, *46*(3), 371–395. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829818774892

Hardjono, J. (1977). *Transmigration in Indonesia*. Oxford University Press.

Hardjono, J. (1978). Transmigration: a new concept? *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, *14*(1), 107–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/00074917812331333281

Hardjono, J. (1986). Transmigration: looking to the future. *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, *22*(2), 28–53. https://doi.org/10.1080/00074918612331334814

Healy, H. (2019). A political ecology of transdisciplinary research. *Journal of Political Ecology*, *26*, 500–528. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2458/v26i1.23245

Helmcke, C. (2022). Ten recommendations for political ecology case study research. *Journal of Political Ecology*, *29*, 266–276. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2458/jpe.2842

Hoey, B.A. (2003). Nationalism in Indonesia: Building imagined and intentional communities through transmigration. *Ethnology*, *42*(2), 109–126. https://doi.org/10.2307/3773777

Kemendes PDTT. (2023). *Data jumlah transmigran [Data on numbers of transmigrants]*. http://sibarduktrans.kemendesa.go.id/RekapTransmigran.aspx

Kemendes PDTT. (2018). Permendesa nomor 10 tahun 2018: pelaksanaan pemberian bantuan transmigrasi oleh pemerintah dan/atau pemerintah daerah kepada transmigran [Permendesa number 10 of 2018: implementation of transmigration assistance by the government and/or local government to transmigrants], Pub. L. No. 10, Kemendesa PDTT (Ministry of Village, Isolated Region Development, and Transmigration).

Kröger, M. (2021). Frontiers of existence: Redefining who can exist and how at resource frontiers. *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society*, *46*(1), 77–96. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30676/jfas.v46i1.99900

LeCompte, M D., & Schensul, J. J. (2010). *Designing and conducting ethnographic research*. AltaMira Press.

Leinbach, T. R. (1989). The transmigration programme in Indonesian national development strategy: Current status and future requirements. *Habitat International*, *13*(3), 81–93. https://doi.org/10.1016/0197-3975(89)90023-4

Lemm, V., & Vatter, M. (2014). *The government of life: Foucault, biopolitics, and neoliberalism*. Fordham University Press.

Lewu, P. (2017). Eksistensi suku Bunggu Mamuju Utara Sulawesi Barat. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kh566tpHj6E

Li, T. M. (1999). Marginality, power and production: analyzing upland transformations. In T. M. Li (Ed.), *Transforming the Indonesian uplands: Marginality, power and production* (pp. 1–46). Harwood Academic Publishers.

Li, T. M. (2001). Agrarian differentiation and the limits of natural resource management in Upland Southeast Asia. *IDS Bulletin*, *32*(4), 88–94. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2001.mp32004011.x

Li, T. M. (2007). Governmentality. *Anthropologica*, *49*(2), 275–281.

Li, T. M. (2014). What is land? Assembling a resource for global investment. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *39*(4), 589–602. https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12065

Li, T. M. (2017). Intergenerational displacement in Indonesia's oil palm plantation zone. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *44*(6), 1160–1178. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1308353

Li, T. M. (2018). After the land grab: Infrastructural violence and the "mafia system" in Indonesia's oil palm plantation zones. *Geoforum*, *96*, 328–337. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.10.012

Liamputtong, P. (2013). *Qualitative research methods*. Oxford University Press.

Lineton, J. (1975). *An Indonesian society and its universe: A study of the Bugis of South Sulawesi (Celebes) and their role within a wider social and economic system.* PhD dissertation. University of London.

Little, P. E. (2001). *Amazonia: Territorial struggles on perennial frontiers*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lund, C. (2018). Predatory peace: Dispossession at Aceh's oil palm frontier. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *45*(2), 431–452. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1351434

MacAndrews, C. (1978). Transmigration in Indonesia: prospects and problems. *Asian Survey*, *18*(5), 458–472.

Maeda, N. (1988). A note on frontier settlements in Johor. *Southeast Asian Studies*, *26*(2), 166–174.

Maeda, N. (1994). Coping with the currents of change: A frontier Bugis settlement in Johor, Malaysi. *Southeast Asian Studies*, *32*(2), 197–230.

Malanson, G. P., Zeng, Y., & Walsh, S. J. (2006). Landscape frontiers, geography frontiers: Lessons to be learned. *The Professional Geographer*, *58*(4), 383–396. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9272.2006.00576.x

Maras, B. (2009). *Tapak-tapak perjuangan berdirinya Mamuju Utara*. Annora Media.

Margulies, J. (2022). A political ecology of desire: Between extinction, anxiety, and flourishing. *Environmental Humanities*, *14*(2), 241–264. https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-9712357

Masalam, H. (1988). Conservation and palm oil dispossession in Sumatra and Sulawesi: Third-Worldist Participatory Action Research, indigenous and small peasant resistance, and organized activisms. In D. Kapoor & S. Jordan (eds.), *Research, political engagement and dispossession: Indigenous, peasant and urban poor activisms in the Americas and Asia.* (pp. 110–132). Zed.

McCarthy, J. F., & Cramb, R. A. (2009). Policy narratives, landholder engagement, and oil palm expansion on the Malaysian and Indonesian frontiers. *Geographical Journal*, *175*(2), 112–123. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4959.2009.00322.x

McCarthy, J. F., Gillespie, P., & Zen, Z. (2012). Swimming upstream: local Indonesian production networks in "globalized" palm oil production. *World Development*, *40*(3), 555–569. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2011.07.012

Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration. (2013a). *Penempatan transmigrasi dari era kolonisasi s/d tahun 2013 [Transmigration placements from the colonization era to 2013]*. Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration. http://www.depnakertrans.go.id/pusdatin.html,97,512,ptrans

Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration. (2013b). *Program penyiapan permukiman dan penempatan pransmigrasi baru [New pre-migration settlement and placement program]*. Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration. http://www.depnakertrans.go.id/pusdatin.html,97,512,ptrans

Moragues-Faus, A., & Marsden, T. (2017). The political ecology of food: Carving 'spaces of possibility' in a new research agenda. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *55*, 275–288. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2017.08.016

Mukrimin. (2019a). "Moving the kitchen out": Contemporary Bugis migration. *Southeast Asian Studies*, *8*(3), 349–368. https://doi.org/10.20495/seas.8.3_349

Mukrimin. (2019b). The Bugis and their 'tellu cappa' in contemporary Indonesia's decentralization. *South East Asia Research*, *27*(3), 238–253. https://doi.org/10.1080/0967828X.2019.1669968

Mukrimin. (2021). *Power sharing: Local autonomy and ethnic politics in Sulawesi Indonesia*. Pustaka Learning Center.

Mukrimin. (2022a). "*Moving the kitchen out*"*: the dynamic of a Bugis frontier community in an Indonesian resources site*. PhD dissertation. The University of Western Australia.

Mukrimin. (2022b). 'Complexation' of palm oil in Indonesia: the actors and their involvement in North Mamuju, West Sulawesi. *Forest and Society*, *6*(1), 398–378. https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v6i1.13789

Nyerges, A. E. (1992). The ecology of wealth-in-people: Agriculture, settlement, and society on the perpetual frontier. *American Anthropologist*, *94*(4), 860–881. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1992.94.4.02a00050

Obidzinski, K., Dermawan, A., & Hadianto, A. (2014). Oil palm plantation investments in Indonesia's forest frontiers: limited economic multipliers and uncertain benefits for local communities. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, *16*(6), 1177–1196. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-014-9519-8

Oliveira, E., & Meyfroidt, P. (2022). Strategic spatial planning in emerging land-use frontiers: Evidence from Mozambique. *Ecology and Society*, *27*(2). https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-13001-270205

Peluso, N. L., & Lund, C. (2011). New frontiers of land control: Introduction. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *38*(4), 667–681. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2011.607692

Potter, L. (2012). New transmigration 'paradigm' in Indonesia: Examples from Kalimantan. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, *53*(3), 272–287. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8373.2012.01492.x

Rangan, H., & Kull, C. A. (2009). What makes ecology "political"? Rethinking "scale" in political ecology. *Progress in Human Geography*, *33*(1), 28–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132508090215

Rietberg, P. I., & Hospes, O. (2018). Unpacking land acquisition at the oil palm frontier: Obscuring customary rights and local authority in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, *59*(3), 338–348. https://doi.org/10.1111/apv.12206

Rindfuss, R. R., Entwisle, B., Walsh, S. J., Mena, C. F., Erlien, C. M., & Gray, C. L. (2007). Frontier land use change: synthesis, challenges, and next steps. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *97*(4), 739–754. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.2007.00580.x

Ross, M. S. (1980). The role of land clearing in Indonesia's transmigration program. *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, *16*(1), 75–85. https://doi.org/10.1080/00074918012331333719

Sáinz, J. P. P. (1982). *Accumulation, state and transmigration in Indonesia*. James Cook University of North Queensland.

Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J., & LeCompte, M. D. (2012). *Initiating ethnographic research: A mixed methods approach*. Altamira Press.

Schwake, G. (2021). The community settlement: a neo-rural territorial tool. *Planning Perspectives*, *36*(2), 237–257. https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2020.1728569

Scott, J. C. (2009). *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press.

Shrestha, N. R. (1989a). Frontier settlement and landlessness among hill migrants in Nepal Tarai. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *79*(3), 370–389. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1989.tb00268.x

Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Sukmaniar, S., & Saputra, W. (2019). Transmigrasi wilayah perbatasan di Indonesia. *UNM Geographic Journal*, *3*(1), 41. https://doi.org/10.26858/ugj.v3i1.14599

Svarstad, H., Benjaminsen, T. A., & Overå, R. (2018). Power theories in political ecology. *Journal of Political Ecology*, *25*, 350–363. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2458/v25i1.23044

Taylor, C.C. (2002). Nucleated settlement: a view from the frontier. *Landscape History*, *24*(1), 53–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/01433768.2002.10594539

Timmer, J. (2011). *Access to compensation in the Bugis frontier culture of the Mahakam Delta, East Kalimantan*. State Society and Governance in Melanesia Program, ANU. https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/9875/1/Timmer_CompensationState2011.pdf

Tsing, A. (2005). *Friction: An ethnography of global connection*. Princeton University Press.

Turner, F. J. (1920[1893]). The significance of the frontier in American history. In G. R. Taylor (Ed.), *The Turner thesis concerning the role of the frontier in American history*. DC Heath and Company.

Turner, F. J. (1961). *Frontier and section: Selected essays of Frederick Jackson Turner*. Prentice-Hall.

Van Der Wijst, T. (1985). Transmigration in Indonesia: An evaluation of a population redistribution policy. *Population Research and Policy Review*, *4*(1), 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00125539

Varina, F., Hartoyo, S., Kusnadi, N., & Rifin, A. (2020). Efficiency of oil palm smallholders in Indonesia: a meta-frontier approach. *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Agribisnis*. https://doi.org/10.17358/jma.17.3.217

Vayda, A. P., & Sahur, A. (1985). Forest clearing and pepper farming by Bugis migrants in East Kalimantan: antecedents and impact. *Indonesia*, *39*(Apr.), 93–110. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004

Vayda, A., & Sahur, A. (1996). *Bugis settlers in East Kalimantan's Kutai national park: Their past and present and some possibilities for their future*. Special Publication. Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).

Walker, P. A. (2005). Political ecology: where is the ecology? *Progress in Human Geography*, *29*, 73–82.

Warganegara, A., & Waley, P. (2022). The political legacies of transmigration and the dynamics of ethnic politics: A case study from Lampung, Indonesia. *Asian Ethnicity*, *23*(4), 676–696. https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2021.1889356

Watkins, J. F., & Leinbach, T. R. (1993). Women, family, and work in Indonesian transmigration. *The Journal of Developing Areas, 27*(3), 377–398.

Whitten, A. J. (1987). Indonesia's transmigration program and its role in the loss of tropical rain forests. *Conservation Biology*, *1*(3), 239–246. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1523-1739.1987.tb00038.x