

Research Article

Hegemony in the Shadow of Tradition: Hidden Resistance of the *Lio* Indigenous Community Against *Mosalaki* Domination in the Era of Modernization

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Abstract: This research examines the dynamics of hegemony and resistance in the *Lio* indigenous community of Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, focusing on the power practices of *mosalaki* (traditional elites) and the forms of hidden resistance developed by farming communities. Using an ethnographic approach over four months in Keliwumbu Village, the study combines Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony with James Scott's theory of hidden transcripts to understand the complexities of power relations in traditional societies undergoing economic transformation. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with 18 informants, and document analysis, analyzed thematically. The findings reveal that *mosalaki* power is legitimized through three main pillars: genealogical narratives from *Lepe* and *Mbusu* myths, control over customary land (70% of agricultural land), and ritual authority as intermediaries with *ata mate* (ancestral spirits). Hegemonic practices are enforced through the *pire* system (customary prohibitions), mandatory *nggua* rituals, and decision-making control, as seen in the coal-fired power plant case. However, farming communities exhibit hidden resistance in forms such as sabotage, passive non-compliance, gossip, informal criticism, and migration. This resistance operates within the same cultural framework, developing alternative interpretations of "true custom" rather than rejecting the system entirely. This research contributes to theoretical insights on hegemony in non-Western societies and highlights the manipulation of "local wisdom" to reinforce structural inequality. Practically, it calls for more critical development policies that address internal power dynamics in indigenous communities to prevent further elite domination.

Keywords: Hegemony; Hidden Resistance; *Lio* Indigenous Community; *Mosalaki*; Power Dynamics

1. Introduction

The dynamics of power in Indonesian indigenous communities present compelling complexities for examination, particularly in the context of modernization and national development. Traditional social structures that have been deeply rooted for centuries now face challenges from globalization, democratization, and economic transformation demanding adaptation and change (Li, 2014). This phenomenon occurs not only in Indonesia but has become a global issue in various developing countries where indigenous communities experience pressure from capital expansion and modern development projects (Hall et al., 2011). In this context, power relations between traditional elites and ordinary people become increasingly complex and often problematic.

Theoretically, power practices in traditional societies can be understood through the concept of hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci (1971). Hegemony refers not only to domination through physical violence but more to the ability of dominant groups to obtain consent from dominated groups through the penetration of certain ideologies and values (Patria & Arief, 2003). In the context of indigenous communities, hegemonic practices often operate through the legitimation of tradition, rituals, and historical narratives that position traditional elites as holders of unquestionable authority. However, as articulated by Scott

Received: June 24, 2025

Revised: August 19, 2025

Accepted: October 14, 2025

Published: December 09, 2025

Curr. Ver.: December 09, 2025



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(1985), beneath the compliance visible on the surface, there always exist forms of hidden resistance (hidden transcripts) showing that power is never total and absolute.

Studies on local elites and power practices in Indonesian indigenous communities have attracted attention from various researchers. Research indicates that traditional elites play strategic roles in mediating between the state and local communities, yet this position is often exploited to strengthen domination and accumulate economic resources (Vel, 2008). Henley & Davidson (2007) identified that in many cases, modernization actually strengthens the position of traditional elites rather than weakening it, as they are able to adapt to modern power structures while maintaining traditional legitimacy. However, most existing research remains focused on analyzing the structure and function of traditional elites, with limited attention to the dynamics of resistance and agency of ordinary people in confronting unequal power practices.

A significant research gap lies in the paucity of studies exploring forms of everyday resistance in the context of Indonesian indigenous communities. While Scott's (1985, 1990) concepts of hidden transcripts and weapons of the weak have been widely applied in studies of peasant movements in Southeast Asia, their application in the specific context of Indonesian indigenous communities remains very limited. Yet understanding these dynamics of resistance is crucial for revealing the true complexity of power relations, where domination and subordination do not operate mechanically but involve continuous negotiation, contestation, and adaptation.

In eastern Indonesia, particularly in East Nusa Tenggara, this phenomenon is clearly visible in the lives of the *Lio* indigenous community in Ende Regency, Flores. The *Lio* tribe has a social structure led by *mosalaki* (landowners or traditional leaders) who control customary land and possess extensive authority in various aspects of community life (Emmed, 2013). This leadership system is legitimized through historical narratives about ancestors who first opened and controlled certain territories, subsequently passed down patrilineally to their descendants. In practice, *mosalaki* function not only as ritual leaders and guardians of tradition but also as holders of control over land resources that form the basis of the community's economic life.

However, in the last decade, *mosalaki* power practices have faced new challenges with the entry of national development projects into customary territories. One prominent case is the construction of a coal-fired power plant (PLTU) in Keliwumbu village involving land acquisition of 40 hectares without adequate consultation with farming communities. In this case, *mosalaki* claimed full rights over the land based on customary legitimacy, while farming communities who had cultivated the land for decades felt disadvantaged because they did not receive fair compensation (Dale, 2013). This phenomenon demonstrates how hegemonic practices operate through the manipulation of traditional narratives for economic accumulation interests.

What is interesting about this case is the community's response, which is not entirely passive even though they outwardly appear compliant and accepting of *mosalaki* decisions. Preliminary observations reveal various forms of subtle resistance conducted by farming communities, ranging from illegal planting on *mosalaki* land, livestock killing, to avoiding customary rituals. These forms of resistance are not formally organized and are not articulated as open resistance, but collectively create significant disruptions to the stability of the traditional power system.

This research aims to analyze the dynamics of hegemony and resistance in the *Lio* indigenous community, focusing on *mosalaki* power practices and the forms of hidden resistance conducted by farming communities. Specifically, this research seeks to answer three main questions: (1) How is the legitimacy of *mosalaki* power constructed and maintained in *Lio* society? (2) How do hegemonic practices operate in the daily life of the indigenous community? (3) What are the forms of hidden resistance by farming communities in response to unequal power practices?

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to theory development regarding hegemony and resistance in the context of Indonesian indigenous communities. Theoretically, this research enriches literature on power dynamics in traditional societies by revealing the complexity of relations between domination and resistance often hidden behind narratives of social harmony. Practically, the findings are expected to provide more nuanced understanding of social dynamics in indigenous communities, which can serve as reference for policymakers in designing more inclusive and equitable development programs. Additionally, this research

contributes to documentation and preservation efforts of knowledge about indigenous community social systems experiencing rapid transformation due to modernization and globalization.

2. Literature Review

The Concept of Hegemony in Gramsci's Perspective

The concept of hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci (1971) provides a fundamental theoretical framework for understanding how power operates in modern society. Unlike classical Marxist conceptions emphasizing domination through violence and coercion, Gramsci argues that effective and sustainable power relies more on the ability of dominant groups to obtain consensus from dominated groups (Simon, 2004). Hegemony, in Gramsci's understanding, constitutes "intellectual and moral leadership" enabling the ruling class to present its particular interests as the universal interests of the entire society.

The hegemonic process occurs through what Gramsci calls the "war of position," namely ideological contestation occurring in the realms of culture, education, religion, and other social institutions (Patria & Arief, 2003). In this context, cultural apparatuses such as schools, churches, media, and traditions play strategic roles in instilling and reproducing dominant ideology. What is crucial in Gramsci's theory is the recognition that hegemony is never total or permanent, but always contains internal contradictions and must be continuously fought for and renewed (Fontana, 2006).

In traditional societies, hegemony often operates through legitimation sourced from historical narratives, origin myths, and ritual practices positioning traditional elites as representations of ancestral authority or transcendent powers (Bocock, 2007). The strength of traditional hegemony lies in its ability to present hierarchical social order as something "natural" and "given by the ancestors," making it difficult to question or criticize openly by community members.

Resistance and Hidden Transcripts in James Scott's Theory

While Gramsci's hegemony theory explains how ideological domination operates, James Scott (1985, 1990) developed complementary concepts to understand how subordinate groups respond to and resist such domination practices. Scott identifies two different discursive realms: public transcripts and hidden transcripts. Public transcripts refer to open interactions between dominant and subordinate groups characterized by deference, compliance, and recognition of existing power legitimacy. Conversely, hidden transcripts constitute critiques of power occurring outside the direct observation of rulers, developed and shared among subordinate groups in relatively safe social spaces.

The concept of everyday resistance developed by Scott (1985) shows that resistance does not always take the form of revolution or open rebellion, but more often emerges as subtle, unorganized, and often anonymous actions such as sabotage, petty theft, feigned ignorance, or passive non-compliance. These forms of resistance, though seemingly trivial, can cumulatively create significant disruptions to the stability of domination systems and force ruling groups to continuously adjust their control strategies.

What is important in Scott's theory is the recognition that resistance and accommodation often occur simultaneously. Subordinate groups can display surface compliance while simultaneously developing hidden resistance practices (Scott, 1990). This dynamic creates what Scott calls the "infrapolitics of subordinate groups," namely informal politics occurring beneath the radar of formal power but having substantive impact on power relations in society.

Traditional Elites and Power in the Indonesian Context

Studies on traditional elites in Indonesia demonstrate unique complexities in the post-colonial and democratization contexts. Henley & Davidson (2007) identified that Indonesian political reform has actually strengthened the position of traditional elites in many cases, as decentralization and multiculturalism discourse provide wider space for articulation of traditional identity and authority. The phenomenon they call "*adat* revival" is not always progressive, as traditional elites often exploit customary legitimacy to strengthen control over economic and political resources.

Vel (2008) in her study on democratization in West Sumba demonstrates how traditional elites successfully adapted to democratic political systems while maintaining hierarchical and exclusive power practices. In this context, tradition and modernity are not in opposition but synergize to create new forms of domination. Similar findings are presented by Li (2007) who

analyzes how "customs and communities" are used as tools to facilitate capital accumulation and social exclusion in development projects.

Specifically in the East Nusa Tenggara context, several studies have explored the power dynamics of traditional elites. Emmed (2013) analyzes *mosalaki* power practices in the traditional political system of the *Lio* tribe, emphasizing legitimation aspects based on genealogy and control of customary land. Meanwhile, Dale (2013) provides more critical analysis of how local elites in Manggarai exploit traditional narratives to facilitate external capital penetration that actually disadvantages ordinary people.

Land, Power, and Identity in Indigenous Communities

In Austronesian indigenous societies, including in eastern Indonesia, land is not merely an economic asset but also constitutes the basis of identity, spirituality, and political legitimacy (Fox, 2006). The concept of customary land or ancestral land reflects complex relationships between humans, ancestors, and landscape underlying traditional power systems. In this context, control over land not only provides access to economic resources but also legitimizes social and political authority.

Anthropological studies on customary land tenure systems show that although formally customary land is considered communal property, in practice the distribution and control of land is often very unequal and dominated by traditional elites (Bovensiepen, 2014). This creates a system that is ideologically egalitarian but practically hierarchical, where the majority of community members have limited access to land and depend on the "policies" of traditional elites to obtain farmland.

This dynamic becomes increasingly complex in the context of modernization and market economic penetration. Infrastructure development projects, natural resource extraction, and capitalist investment often require large-scale land acquisition, creating new opportunities for traditional elites to accumulate economic profits using their traditional authority over customary land (Hall et al., 2011). In this process, ordinary people often experience double dispossession: they lose access to farmland and are simultaneously excluded from economic benefits generated from the conversion of such land.

The theoretical framework developed in this literature review provides conceptual foundation for analyzing the dynamics of hegemony and resistance in the *Lio* indigenous community. The combination of Gramsci's hegemony theory and Scott's hidden transcript concept enables more nuanced understanding of how power operates and is contested in the context of traditional societies experiencing rapid socio-economic transformation.

3. Research Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with ethnographic design to analyze the dynamics of hegemony and resistance in the *Lio* indigenous community. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to deeply understand complex and multidimensional social phenomena, namely *mosalaki* power practices and forms of hidden resistance by farming communities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Ethnographic design allows researchers to explore cultural meanings underlying social practices and reveal power dynamics often invisible in daily social interactions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019).

The research was conducted in Keliwumbu Village, Maurole District, Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, during the period from April to August 2022. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that this village still maintains the traditional *mosalaki* leadership system with a clear hierarchical structure and has experienced significant land conflicts related to power plant construction. More importantly, the researcher's access as a member of the *Lio* community enabled more in-depth and authentic *data* collection, given the sensitivity of the research topic.

Research subjects consisted of 18 informants selected using purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. Key informants included four *mosalaki* representing various levels in the traditional leadership hierarchy, ten farming community members directly affected by land acquisition policies, two religious leaders, and two village government officials. Informant selection was conducted in stages considering variation in perspectives, involvement in land conflicts, and ability to provide information relevant to research objectives.

Data collection was conducted through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation was conducted for four months to observe *mosalaki* power practices in daily life, customary rituals, and interactions with farming communities. The researcher lived within the community and participated in various social

activities to understand power dynamics invisible in formal interactions. In-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guides developed based on the theoretical framework of hegemony and resistance. All interviews were conducted in *Lio* and Indonesian languages according to informant preferences, then transcribed and translated for analysis purposes.

Data analysis employed the thematic approach developed by Braun & Clarke (2006) integrating Gramsci's hegemony theoretical framework and Scott's hidden transcript concept. The analysis process began with transcription and coding of raw *data*, followed by identification of initial themes emerging from the *data*. The next stage was developing these themes into more abstract and theoretical analytical categories. Analysis was conducted iteratively with cross-checking between empirical *data* and theoretical framework to produce coherent and valid interpretation.

Research ethics aspects were primary considerations given the sensitivity of the research topic. Informed consent was obtained from all informants with clear explanations about research objectives, *data* collection procedures, and identity confidentiality guarantees. Informant identities were concealed using initials or pseudonyms to protect them from possible retaliation. Specifically for potentially controversial *data*, researchers conducted member checking to ensure interpretation accuracy and requested approval before using such *data* in research reports.

4. Results and Discussion

This research reveals complex dynamics between hegemony and resistance in the *Lio* indigenous community, where *mosalaki* power practices operate through traditional legitimation while facing various forms of hidden resistance from farming communities. Findings indicate that although harmonious on the surface, power relations in *Lio* society contain significant structural tensions.

The legitimation of *mosalaki* power in *Lio* society is constructed through three main pillars: genealogical narratives, control over customary land, and ritual authority. Genealogical narratives derive from the myths of *Lepe* and *Mbusu*, two ancestors believed to be the progenitors of the *Lio* tribe who produced 12 descendants who subsequently became *mosalaki* in various territories. As stated by *Mosalaki* A: "We are direct descendants of *ata nggoro* (the first people), who first opened this land. This land is inheritance from our ancestors, and we have the responsibility to manage it according to *tata ngga'e* (customary rules)." This narrative is reinforced through the *nggua* ritual held annually, where the genealogical lineage is recited and preserved orally.

Control over customary land becomes the material basis of *mosalaki* power legitimation. The land ownership system is based on the principle "sai deki mulu tuge banga api jeremu" (whoever first sets foot on the land becomes its ruler). In practice, *mosalaki* control nearly 70% of total agricultural land in Keliwumbu village, while farming communities only have access through the *hibah* (grant) system that can be revoked at any time. Informant R, a farmer, explained: "The land we cultivate is not ours, but only wae (grant) from *mosalaki*. We could lose this land anytime if *mosalaki* is displeased with us."

Ritual authority provides a sacred dimension to *mosalaki* power legitimation. They function as intermediaries between the community and *ata mate* (ancestral spirits) in various customary ceremonies. Every important decision, including land distribution and conflict resolution, must receive *mosalaki's* blessing through special rituals. This creates spiritual dependency that reinforces political and economic domination.

Hegemonic practices in daily life operate through subtle yet effective mechanisms. First, through the *pire* system (customary prohibitions) regulating various aspects of community life, from planting times to consumption patterns. Violations of *pire* are subject to *poi* (customary fines) which may involve surrendering livestock or paying a certain amount of money. Second, through mandatory *nggua* rituals that must be attended by the entire community bringing offerings of rice, chicken, and palm wine. This ritual functions as a redistribution mechanism flowing from bottom to top, strengthening *mosalaki's* economic position.

Third, through control over information access and decision-making. The case of power plant construction in Keliwumbu village demonstrates how *mosalaki* made unilateral decisions without consultation with farming communities. Informant M, who lost 2 hectares of farmland, stated: "We knew nothing about the power plant plans. One morning, officials came to measure the *land*, and *mosalaki* said our land had been sold for construction. We had no choice but to accept."

However, beneath the compliance visible on the surface, farming communities have developed various forms of hidden resistance. The most common form of resistance is subtle sabotage of *mosalaki* property, such as damaging plants in *mosalaki* gardens, stealing harvests, or allowing their livestock to damage crops. Informant T admitted: "When *mosalaki* took our land without fair compensation, we fought back in our own way. We cannot resist openly, but we have ways to show our disapproval."

Another form of resistance is passive non-compliance with *mosalaki* commands. Farming communities often arrive late or are absent from communal work activities commanded by *mosalaki*, pretend to be sick when asked to work on *mosalaki* land, or provide minimal contributions in customary rituals. Informant G explained: "We still come to *nggna* ceremonies, but we bring the smallest offerings. We also often arrive late or leave early. This is our way of showing protest."

Resistance also develops in the form of gossip and criticism circulating among farming communities. In informal meetings at coffee shops or in fields, communities often discuss injustices they experience and criticize *mosalaki* behavior. Informant D stated: "We cannot speak openly about the injustice we experience, but among fellow farmers, we share stories and strengthen each other. We know what we experience is not fair."

The most significant form of resistance is the effort to seek alternative land access outside *mosalaki* control. Some farming community members have begun purchasing land in neighboring villages or migrating to other areas to seek better economic opportunities. This creates long-term threats to the *mosalaki* power system by reducing the labor base and their social legitimacy.

These findings indicate that *mosalaki* hegemony is not total and faces continuous contestation from farming communities. Although this resistance is not formally organized, it cumulatively creates significant disruptions to the stability of the traditional power system. This confirms Scott's theory of weapons of the weak, demonstrating that subordinate groups possess agency and ability to resist domination through creative and adaptive means.

The research findings reveal the complexity of hegemonic dynamics in the *Lio* indigenous community that cannot be understood through simple dichotomies between domination and subordination. *Mosalaki* power practices demonstrate characteristics aligned with Gramsci's concept of hegemony, yet with unique adaptations to the Austronesian traditional society context. Unlike hegemony in modern capitalist societies operating through civil society institutions such as schools and mass media, *mosalaki* hegemony functions through what can be called "traditional civil society" consisting of ritual systems, genealogical narratives, and customary practices internalized over centuries.

The legitimation of *mosalaki* power constructed through the *Lepe* and *Mbusu* narrative demonstrates how origin myths function as "organic ideology" in Gramscian terminology. This myth not only provides historical justification for political domination but also creates what Anderson (1983) calls an imagined community that positions social hierarchy as an integral part of *Lio* tribal collective identity. In this context, rejection of *mosalaki* authority means not only political resistance but can also be interpreted as denial of cultural identity. This explains why open resistance is very rare, as the social and symbolic costs borne by resistance actors become very high.

However, findings regarding *mosalaki* control over customary land reveal fundamental contradictions in the traditional hegemony system. While customary ideology emphasizes principles of communalism and reciprocity, actual practice demonstrates extreme land ownership concentration among traditional elites. This aligns with Li's (2014) analysis of land's end showing how traditional narratives are manipulated to facilitate primitive accumulation in the context of peripheral capitalism. The case of power plant construction in Keliwumbu clearly illustrates how customary legitimation is used to facilitate external capital penetration while excluding farming communities from resulting economic benefits.

The most interesting aspect is the consensus mechanism in the *mosalaki* hegemony system, demonstrating characteristics different from Gramsci's classical hegemony concept. Consensus in *Lio* society is not built through ideological persuasion in open public spaces but through what can be called "coercive consensus" constructed through combinations of spiritual sanctions (*mula tedo iwa mbale*) and material (*poi*). This mechanism creates situations where farming communities "agree" with *mosalaki* domination not because they accept its ideological legitimacy, but because the cost of resistance is considered too high in the context of traditional belief systems.

The transition from domination to resistance reveals equally complex dimensions. Findings regarding hidden resistance of farming communities provide empirical validation of

Scott's hidden transcript theory, yet with unique characteristics in the indigenous community context. Unlike Malay peasant resistance studied by Scott which was more individual and spontaneous, *Lio* community resistance demonstrates more structured and symbolic patterns. Sabotage of *mosalaki* property, for instance, is not merely an economic action to reduce material losses but also constitutes ritual inversion symbolically challenging the cosmological order claimed by *mosalaki*.

What is interesting is how this resistance operates within the same cultural framework as the hegemony it contests. Farming communities do not reject the customary system entirely but develop alternative interpretations of "true custom" emphasizing principles of justice and reciprocity. This shows that resistance in traditional societies is not always counter-hegemonic in the sense articulated by Gramsci but can be "intra-hegemonic resistance" working within the same discursive framework as dominant ideology.

The phenomenon of gossip and informal criticism developing among farming communities demonstrates the formation of what Scott calls "infrapolitics of subordinate groups." However, in the *Lio* community context, this infrapolitics has spiritual dimensions not found in Malay peasant cases. Criticism of *mosalaki* is often framed in religious language about "ancestral will" and "cosmic balance," showing how resistance adapts to dominant cultural meaning structures.

Findings regarding exit strategies through migration and land purchase in neighboring villages reveal resistance dimensions not anticipated in Scott's theory. This strategy demonstrates that in the era of globalization and increased mobility, subordinate communities have wider options to escape local domination relations. This aligns with Hirschman's (1970) analysis of "exit, voice, and loyalty" showing that availability of exit options can reduce incentives for voice and potentially weaken domination system legitimacy.

However, this exit strategy also creates new paradoxes in the traditional hegemony system. On one hand, migration reduces the social basis of *mosalaki* legitimacy and creates pressure for reform. On the other hand, exodus of farming communities can strengthen land concentration among traditional elites and reduce internal resistance to domination practices. This indicates that long-term impacts of exit strategies on transformation of hegemony systems remain ambiguous and require deeper longitudinal research.

Analysis of the power plant construction case reveals how traditional hegemony interacts with global capitalism in creating new forms of exclusion. The occurring process is not only "accumulation by dispossession" in Harvey's (2003) terminology but also "accumulation by tradition" where customary narratives are used to legitimate asset transfers from farming communities to alliances between local elites and external capital. This demonstrates that in peripheral capitalism contexts, tradition and modernity are not in opposition but can synergize in creating hybrid forms of domination.

Research findings also confirm Henley & Davidson's (2007) argument about "*adat* revival" actually strengthening traditional elite positions in the democratization era. In the *Lio* context, democratization and decentralization did not reduce *mosalaki* authority but provided new legitimacy through formal recognition of "local wisdom" and "indigenous community rights." Ironically, multicultural discourse that should empower indigenous communities is manipulated to strengthen traditional elite domination over their own community members. This demonstrates that in contemporary Indonesian contexts, tradition revitalization is not always progressive but can become an instrument for perpetuating structural inequality under the guise of cultural legitimacy.

5. Comparison

Compared to existing state-of-the-art studies on traditional elites, land politics, and hidden resistance, this research offers several distinctive contributions. Previous works by Henley & Davidson (2007) and Vel (2008) primarily emphasize how decentralization and *adat* revival reinforce the authority of traditional elites. Similarly, studies by Li (2007; 2014) and Hall et al. (2011) highlight how customary narratives and land regimes are instrumentalized to facilitate capitalist expansion and exclusion. However, these studies focus more on elite strategies and structural dynamics rather than the agency of subordinate groups.

In contrast, this research extends James Scott's (1985; 1990) framework by demonstrating that hidden resistance within indigenous communities does not merely take the form of spontaneous or individual acts but is culturally embedded in ritual symbolism and moral interpretations of "true custom." Unlike Scott's Southeast Asian peasant cases which emphasize everyday resistance such as theft, false compliance, or foot-dragging the *Lio*

context reveals more complex patterns in which resistance is intertwined with spiritual beliefs, genealogical narratives, and cosmological order.

Furthermore, while previous ethnographic studies of East Nusa Tenggara (e.g., Emmed, 2013; Dale, 2013) examine *mosalaki* authority and elite manipulation of custom, they rarely analyze how farming communities reinterpret *adat* norms to subtly challenge domination. This study fills that gap by illustrating how resistance emerges not as counter-hegemonic rejection but as intra-hegemonic negotiation, where subordinate groups engage in reinterpretation rather than outright confrontation.

Thus, this research advances current scholarship by showing that hegemony in indigenous societies operates through a hybrid model combining ideological, spiritual, and material dimensions, while resistance becomes a culturally mediated process shaped by ritual frameworks and existential dependence on *adat* structures. This reveals a more nuanced interaction between tradition and modernity than previously documented in the literature.

6. Conclusion

This research reveals that hegemonic dynamics in the *Lio* indigenous community represent complex and adaptive forms of domination operating through traditional legitimation while accommodating modern economic interests. *Mosalaki* power practices demonstrate hegemonic characteristics relying not only on physical coercion but more on deep ideological penetration through ritual systems, genealogical narratives, and control over land resources. However, this hegemony is not total and faces continuous contestation through various forms of hidden resistance developed by farming communities.

The legitimation of *mosalaki* power constructed through *Lepe* and *Mbusu* narratives, control over customary land, and ritual authority creates a domination system difficult to challenge openly because it is embedded in fundamental cultural meaning structures. The consensus built in *Lio* society is more coercive than voluntary, where farming communities "accept" *mosalaki* domination due to high resistance costs in traditional belief system contexts. This demonstrates that hegemony in traditional societies has different characteristics from hegemony in modern societies, with stronger emphasis on spiritual and cosmological dimensions.

Farming community resistance to *mosalaki* domination takes subtle yet significant forms, ranging from property sabotage, passive non-compliance, to exit strategies through migration and alternative land purchase. These forms of resistance are not formally organized but cumulatively create disruptions challenging traditional power system stability. What is interesting is that this resistance operates within the same cultural framework as the contested hegemony, developing alternative interpretations of "true custom" rather than rejecting the customary system entirely.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in developing understanding of hegemony and resistance in traditional society contexts experiencing economic transformation. These findings demonstrate that Gramsci's hegemony concept needs adaptation to understand power dynamics in non-Western societies, particularly regarding consensus mechanisms and the role of spiritual dimensions in power legitimation. Meanwhile, Scott's hidden transcript concept proves relevant but requires deeper contextualization to understand how resistance operates within the same cultural framework as dominant ideology.

Practically, this research reveals that development policies ignoring internal power dynamics in indigenous communities potentially strengthen local elite domination and disadvantage ordinary people. The power plant construction case in Keliwumbu demonstrates how "development for community welfare" narratives can be manipulated to facilitate economic accumulation by alliances between traditional elites and external capital. Therefore, development interventions need to consider internal power structures and develop more inclusive participation mechanisms.

This research also implies the need for reorientation in studies of Indonesian indigenous communities. Rather than romanticization about social harmony and local wisdom, academic research needs to adopt more critical approaches to reveal structural inequality and conflicts of interest in traditional societies. This does not mean rejecting traditional values but recognizing that tradition can be manipulated for domination and exploitation interests.

The broader implication of this research is the importance of developing analytical frameworks capable of understanding complex interactions between tradition and modernity in contemporary Indonesian contexts. Globalization and democratization do not

automatically reduce the relevance of traditional power structures but can provide new legitimacy and strengthen local elite domination. In this context, discourse about "local wisdom" and "indigenous community rights" needs critical evaluation to ensure cultural preservation efforts do not become instruments for perpetuating social inequality.

Finally, this research demonstrates that indigenous communities are not homogeneous and harmonious entities but constitute dynamic arenas of contestation between various groups with different interests. Recognition of ordinary community agency in facing local elite domination becomes important for developing more effective empowerment strategies. Although hidden resistance developed by farming communities has not yet fundamentally transformed power structures, this demonstrates potential for more progressive social change if supported by appropriate interventions.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization: M.U.; Methodology: M.U.; Formal analysis: M.U.; Investigation: M.U.; Resources: M.U.; Data curation: M.U.; Writing original draft preparation: M.U.; Writing review and editing: M.U.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author due to privacy and ethical restrictions.

Acknowledgments: The author acknowledges all informants in Keliwumbu Village who participated in this research and provided valuable insights.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest

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