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The Sustainability of Palm Oil

Defining and Solving the Problem in Civil Society Networks

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This thesis studies the construction of meaning in a transnational civil society network (TCSN) campaigning over oil palm cultivation in Indonesia. The focus of the study is on the ways in which TCSNs interpret taken-for-granted, but socially and environmentally destructive, practices in novel ways in order to alter the manner in which people understand and act upon these practices. The construction of meaning is understood to take the form of narratives as narrating is a way to add plot and coherence to our experiences, bringing them together as a meaningful whole.

The research is based on literature and interviews. The literature includes books, briefs and pamphlets written by NGOs. The research material also includes interviews with Indonesian environmental and social NGOs, indigenous peoples' advocacy groups, and members of a grassroots' association called the Oil Palm Farmers Union. In addition, individual smallholders and oil palm plantation workers were interviewed for the research.

Due to the focus on the construction of meaning, the thesis is based on a social constructivist approach. According to social constructivism, behaviour is only meaningful within an intersubjective social context as only people who share a communication environment can construct reality together in meaningful ways. Respectively, intersubjective knowledge constructs social reality for the people in this environment and, by doing so, limits and empowers actions within this environment. Thus, narratives are understood to have normative power as they (re)define understandings of, and behaviour towards an issue. Primarily, TCSN offer alternative ways to understand (sustainable) development through redefinitions of "proper" natural resource use and "true" ownership of these resources.

In order to research the construction of meaning the analysis of the research material is done by means of narrative and frame analysis. Both of these methods can be used for interpreting the ways in which people organise their experiences into meaningful wholes. This is done by paying attention to the ways in which activists interpret oil palm plantation development problematic, assign causes and consequences to the problem, name victims and perpetrators of plantation development, and define possible ways to solve the situation.

The analysis reveals that oil palm cultivation is framed in multiple ways. First, Plantation development is portrayed as an inseparable part of deforestation and linked to global problems, such as climate change. The oil palm plantation system is also perceived to be a major threat to indigenous peoples' rights to land and self-determination. Furthermore, activists on the grassroots' level mainly deal with oil palm as a question of livelihood. These multiple framings reveal a division between two forms of environmentalism in the narratives. First, one of the narratives mainly represents concerns to protect forests and wildlife without broader aims of social transformation – i.e. it represents post-material forms of environmentalism that strive for environmental governance. Yet, primarily the network represents more social forms of environmentalism. These sorts of narratives represent efforts to open up more political space for civil society and indigenous people in order to alter the ideational context in which oil palm plantation development "as usual" is acceptable. Through this, they also strive to alter the prevailing social order.

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1. Introduction

The cultivation of oil palm in Indonesia has raised concerns on the international arena as civil society groups have drawn attention to the impacts of oil palm plantations on local communities and the environment. The civil society networks that have evolved around the issue involve a great variety of activists and there are now several regional, national and transnational environmental and social non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and advocacy groups for indigenous peoples' rights working on issues related to oil palm plantations. In the center of their campaigns seem to lay questions of sustainability and environmental justice.

I have chosen to research these campaigns because I believe that civil society networks are able to envisage empowering alternatives for our understandings of such issues as development and natural resource use. The focus of my thesis is on the construction of meaning within these networks. In particular, my aim is to analyse how different groups campaigning over palm oil construct oil palm as an environmental or social problem and frame this problem in specific ways. The assumption here is that these frames form "storylines". Thus, knowledge, and the meaning it carries, is understood to take the form of narratives. These narratives are understood to be intersubjective and to have normative power as transnational civil society networks aim to ease environmental protection through these narratives.

Due to my focus on the construction of meaning I have adopted a social constructivist approach to research and knowledge. According to social constructivism, social reality shapes and is shaped by social interaction. Thus, knowledge of reality is intersubjective and, accordingly, it is sustained in social routines and practices which enable it to persist beyond the lives of individual social actors. According to constructivists, behaviour is only meaningful within an intersubjective social context as only people who share a communication environment can construct reality together in meaningful ways. Respectively, intersubjective knowledge constructs social reality

for the people in this environment and, by doing so, limits and empowers actions within this environment.[1]

I have combined the social constructivist approach with theories of transnational civil society networks (TCSN). These theories assert that networks can be seen as communicative structures able to construct "grand green narratives" of sustainable development and environmental justice. Through these narratives, transnational networks are able to ease the undertaking of environmentally sound and just actions by changing the underlying ideational context of our lives – i.e. our understanding of reality.[2]

As my aim is to study how activists in networks organise their experiences into meaningful wholes and, through this, produce collective understandings of sustainability and environmental justice, I will use narrative and frame analysis as methods for the analysis of the research material. Both of these methods draw attention to the ways in which activists interpret oil palm plantation development problematic, assign causes and consequences to the problem, name victims and perpetrators of the plantation development, and define possible ways to solve the situation. Through their interpretations, civil society groups construct understandings of sustainability and environmental justice.

The research is based on literature and interviews. The literature includes books, briefs and pamphlets written by NGOs. The literature has been gathered from the internet or received from the offices of Indonesian NGOs. In addition to literature, interviews have been held in Indonesia with 7 environmental and social NGOs, 3 indigenous peoples' advocacy groups, and 10 members of a grassroots' association called the Serikat Petani Kelapa Sawit (SPKS) – i.e. the oil palm farmers union. In addition, individual smallholders and oil palm plantation workers were interviewed in two villages, namely in the village of Gunung Sari in East Kalimantan and the village of Suka Gerundi in West Kalimantan. The research (or at least my understanding of the subject) has also benefited from a visit to an oil palm plantation.

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[1] See for example Hopf 1998, 173-174, 179 and Adler 1997, 236-237.
[2] See for example Keck and Sikkink 1998 and Wapner 1996.

The gathering of research material took place in Indonesia during an internship at the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) during 14.5.-14.9.2007. CIFOR supported the research by helping to get the required research and travelling permits in order to make the research possible.

2. The Palm Oil Sector in Indonesia

Palm oil (derived from the fruit bunches of oil palms) is a vegetable oil that is mainly used by the food processing industry (as edible oil) and the chemical industry (e.g. in soaps and cosmetic products). It is also one of the vegetable oils that can be used to produce biodiesel. The global demand for products containing palm oil has shown significant growth in recent decades and as a result there has been a rapid expansion of the area under oil palm cultivation in Indonesia. The area under oil palm plantations in Indonesia has nearly ten-folded within twenty years, being 597.362 ha in 1985 and reaching 5.453.817 ha in 2005, the average yearly growth rate being roughly 11.6%.[3]

2.1 Oil Palm Plantation Development

The government of Indonesia has promoted oil palm plantations as a means of development of the rural areas of outer islands as oil palm plantations are considered to generate local income and regional economic growth as well as reduce poverty in rural areas.[4] The government together with international agencies has put up several schemes over time in order to intensify the production of smallholder tree crops. These schemes have aimed at improving the smallholders' standard of living and reducing their dependence on shifting cultivation.[5]

In 1968 the government of Indonesia, with help from World Bank, started up state-led oil palm companies (PTPs) in order to guarantee a sufficient amount of edible oil to the domestic market, to support the development of industry and to promote non-oil based exports. Unlike rubber plantations, where smallholders were involved early on, oil palm plantations didn't involve smallholders until 1979. Smallholders were taken into oil palm plantation development through a government programme called the "Nucleus Estate and Smallholder" (NES)[6] scheme.

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[3] Figures used for calculations are from the Directorate General of Plantations.
[4] Zen, Barlow and Gondowarsito 2006, 18-19.
[5] Potter and Lee 1998, IX, 5
[6] In Indonesian this model is referred to as PIR, proyek Perkebunan Inti Rakyat.

2.1.1 The NES Scheme

The Nucleus Estate and Smallholder scheme is comprised of the nucleus estate managed by the company and the surrounding plasma area managed by the smallholders. The plasma area is roughly 60-80% of the total plantation area. The government issues a permit giving the company the right to use a certain area for the plantation. The company is expected to form a partnership with the local community and the community has the right to refuse the plantation. The smallholders who are willing to have the plantation release 5-7.5 ha of land for its development. The company pays compensation for the trees on the released land.[7]

So the company gains access to land and is provided with subsidized capital for the development of the plantation by the government. The smallholders also agree to take their fresh fruit bunches to the company's mill to be processed.[8] In return the smallholders receive 2 ha of ready planted oil palms (plasma), in some cases 0.5-1 ha for settlement and garden/farming, and also management, technology and services. The smallholders have to pay for their smallholding by taking up a loan from the company.[9]

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the share of state-led companies has decreased while the share of smallholder plantations and private companies has grown significantly.[10] Although private companies are free to choose the model for their plantations, the government still highlights the importance to form a partnership between the company and local community as an important part of the oil palm plantation system in Indonesia. As a result many companies use some form of the NES Scheme as a model for their plantations.[11]

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[7] See for example Potter and Lee 1998, 3. This information also came out in the interviews.
[8] Zen, Barlow and Gondowarsito 2006, 21.
[9]; Bamba, interview; Members of SPKS, interview; Potter and Lee 1998.
[10] Directorate General of Plantations
[11] Potter and Lee, 1998: 4

2.2 Concerns over the Expansion of Oil Palm Plantations

Concerns over the rapid growth of oil palm plantations started to rise among civil society groups in Indonesia in the late 1990s after Soeharto's rule ended and the political situation in the country became more fluid. These concerns range from land rights of indigenous people and livelihoods of forest dependent communities to deforestation. More recently, the link between biofuels and palm oil has brought the potential benefits and disadvantages of the increased use of biofuels to the centre of the discussions over palm oil. These benefits and disadvantages are often global by nature and concern such sectors as climate, energy and agriculture.

A transnational (civil society) network has formed around the organisations campaigning over palm oil in Indonesia. This network involves a great variety of activists, and there are now several local, regional, national and transnational environmental and social NGOs and advocacy groups for indigenous people working on issues related to palm oil. These organisations weary in their aims, as some of them are campaigning to oppose further oil palm plantation development, while others are campaigning for a more sustainable industry.

In addition to civil society organisations, private businesses, financial institutions, and parts of the Indonesian government are taking part in the discussions over the sustainability of the palm oil sector. In 2004 a multi-stakeholder forum called the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) was established by the initiative from WWF-International and some of the private companies involved in palm oil. The RSPO was established to promote both the adoption of more sustainable management practices on oil palm plantations and the use of sustainable palm oil as well as to improve the image of the industry. The RSPO has developed criteria for sustainable palm oil and bases its work on market mechanisms.

The network over palm oil is complex and it involves a variety of differently positioned groups. Though the private sector and government are involved in the network, civil society organisations have been most active to shape the discussion over palm oil.

3. A Social Constructivist Approach to Research

My research is based on the assumption that people live their lives through stories. These stories, and the meanings they carry, are socially constructed. The basic idea of social constructivism is that knowledge, and consequently reality, is constructed in social interaction as social reality emerges from the meanings people assign to physical objects and occurrences.[12]

Narrating can, thus, be seen as a way to add plot and coherence to our experiences in and understandings of the world, bringing them together as a meaningful whole.[13] On one hand, existing stories help to give meaning to lived experience and, thus existing stories shape people's lives and actions. On the other hand, everyday experiences turn into new forms of narratives when people try to organise and articulate their experiences in meaningful ways.[14] In other words, the way in which reality shapes and is shaped by people's actions depends on the normative interpretations they make of it. Thus, constructivists understand language not merely as descriptive but also deeply constitutive of reality.[15]

3.1 Intersubjectivity

The meanings and ideas we produce through language are intersubjective. Yet, intersubjective meanings do not merely refer to the aggregation of ideas of individuals who experience and interpret the world together. Nor do they refer to a "collective mind". Rather, intersubjectivity implies that, though each of us has our own thoughts, we also share meanings and common concepts.[16] Guzzini provides an illuminating example of intersubjectivity through an analogy with language. On one hand, language does not exist independently from its use. On the other hand, there is no private language as the rules of language cannot be reduced to the meanings that individuals attach to it. Thus, languages exist in the shared meanings that people

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[12] Adler 1997, 324.
[13] Boje 2001, 2.
[14] See for example Penttinen 2004, 51-53 or Bochner 2001, 153.
[15] Adler 1997, 322.
[16] Adler 1997, 327.

attach to them, and are reproduced through their practices. Respectively, these practices are patterned by the rules embodied in the language.[17] So, intersubjective meanings exist as collective knowledge that is shared by all who are capable of taking part in or recognising a proper performance of a social practice.[18]

Hence, the notion of intersubjectivity has two implications for the way in which narratives (as collective knowledge) can be understood. First, narratives must be understood to persist "beyond the lives of individual social actors" because they are "embedded in social routines and practices as they are reproduced by interpreters who participate in their production and workings"[19]. Second, the idea of intersubjectivity involves a group of people who have a shared communication environment and, through this environment, shared values and understandings of "proper" behaviour.[20] Thus, narratives have normative power.

3.2 Norms

Norms generally refer to the expectations that a group of people in a given context or with a shared identity have of "proper" and "appropriate" behaviour. They constitute "social facts" for this group of people and accordingly, inform people of what they "ought to do" in a certain situation or context.[21] Norms are usually divided into regulating and constituting or enabling ones. Regulative norms refer to those intersubjective interpretations of shared reality that prescribe and order behaviour. Thus, these norms establish rights and obligations and also operate as standards that specify "proper" actions for people in a given context. So, regulative norms function as "road maps" specifying actions that are needed in order to reach certain goals. In the case on TCSNs working for environmental protection, regulative norms might specify actions that are needed in order to reach sustainability and environmental justice. On the other hand, constitutive norms give meaning to these actions while enabling norms permit certain actions to be taken.[22] As such, norms reflect the

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[17] Guzzini 2000, 164.
[18] Adler 1997, 326-327.
[19] Adler 1997, 327.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Payne 2001, 37; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 891; Björkdahl 2002, 14-15.
[22] Björkdahl 2002, 15-16.

intersubjective interpretations of reality that have been constructed by a given group. Thus, attention should be directed at communicative processes through which collective meanings are agreed upon.[23] The ways in which this can be done are elaborated on in chapter six, where narrative and frame analysis are explained in detail.

3.3 Interpretation

A social constructivist understanding of "interpretation" deals with the explanation of social action in, what Adler calls an, interpretive setting. This means that, while we are attempting to explain social action, we need to except that there is meaning in both, the event -i.e. in the actions of the people we are studying - and in the account which we are to take of this event. Interpretation is, then, "not just a method used by social scientists, but also the collective interpretations, practices and institutions of the actors themselves"[24]. So, social constructivists understand interpretation to take place on both levels: the level of observation (research) and the level of the actions that are being researched. On both levels, interpretation reflects as well as constitutes reality. So, the action of doing research is understood in terms of the practices of the academia.[25] Following this thought, the theories of international relations and transnational civil society are also forms of narrative that shape and are shaped by social reality. Thus, I (as a researcher of narratives) am as much embedded in narratives as the "storytellers" (the people who are being researched).

To conclude, social reality is constructed through a process of intersubjective interpretation: when we articulate interpretations of our experiences in the world we also construct social reality to be perceived in a certain way. These intersubjective meanings that we attach to social reality do not merely constrain or empower a certain group of actors but also define social reality for this group.[26] Thus, these meanings are considered to have normative power.

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[23] Payne 2001, 43.
[24] Adler 1997, 236.
[25] See for example Bochner 2001, 136 or Penttinen 2004, 52.
[26] Adler 1997, 327.

4. Theories of Transnational Civil Society

Wapner defines civil society as the sphere of life that "exists above the individual and below the state" consisting of "a complex network of economic, cultural, and social practices based on friendship, custom, the market, and voluntary affiliation.[27]" Yet, for most scholars, civil society refers to that part of social life that exists outside the state and market as an independent third sector.[28] It involves self-organized citizenry in forms of movements, non-governmental organisations and associations. Furthermore, civil society is considered to be a progressive force in politics striving for social change and operating as a check against government and market activity.[29] Thus, according to Alejandro Colas, civil society can be understood as "a political space which includes 'grand narratives' that can stillenvisage the possibility of global changes in the socio-economic and political structures of a given society"[30].

The transnationalisation of civil society is often linked to globalisation processes in culture, economics and politics. For one, modern information and communication technology, cheaper telecommunications and transport possibilities and the prominence of English language as 'world language' all provide an opportunity for civil society organisations to act transnationally.[31] Further more, the dominance of the state as the 'locus' of politics has diminished as transnational sites and international institutions have gained more influence in world politics. A shift in the axis of power away from politics to the market, with neoliberal economic policies increasing the power of multi-national corporations and financial institutions, has also reduced the power of traditional state structures.[32] In other words, globalisation has brought a transnationalisation of political relationships, and the international system based on nation-states seems to be transforming into a political system composed of overlapping multilevel authorities.[33] Following this thought, the transnationalisation

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[27] Wapner 1996, 4.
[28] See for example O'Byrne 2005, 1; and Kiely 2005, 138.
[29] Fisher 2004, 178.
[30] Colas 2002, 62.
[31] Clark 2003, 1-2.
[32] Smith and Bandy 2005, 1; Della Porta and Tarrow 2005, 2.
[33] Della Porta et al 2006, 12.

of the civil society can be considered as "the social dimension of globalisation"[34]. This transnationalisation usually takes the form of networks.

4.1 Transnational Civil Society Networks

Transnational civil society networks can be seen as communicative structures. Groups involved in such networks are bound together by shared values, a common discourse and dense exchanges of information.[35] Typically these networks consist of various civil society organisations connecting with each other on voluntary basis.[36] On the other hand, they may not only involve NGOs, associations and movements (the traditional civil society actors) but also businesses, financial institutions, political parties, parts of government, among other. In other words the network may consist of all relevant actors working on an issue transnationally. Such networks are, according to Keck and Sikkink, most prevalent in issue areas characterised by high value content and informational uncertainty.[37]

Here networks are understood as "political spaces, in which differently situated actors negotiate - formally and informally - the social, cultural, and political meanings of their joint enterprise"[38]. Yet the level of cooperation within a network can be limited to the non-organised diffusion of ideas.[39]

Some of the civil society organisations campaigning on palm oil are also tied up in more or less close relationships with private businesses and financial institutions through their membership in the RSPO. In this respect, the transnational civil society network can be understood to include actors that are not part of civil society. Due to the complexity of the network around palm oil, power relations and social distances within networks should not be overlooked.

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[34] Leonardi 2001 in Della Porta et al 2006, 16.
[35] Khagram, Riker and Sikkinik 2002, 7.
[36] Chilton 1995, 197.
[37] Keck and Sikkink1998, 2.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Smith and Bandy 2005, 3.

4.2 The Tension between Local and Global within Networks

Comparisons between civil society organisations in the South and North show that southern movements are more keen to forge links with groups in other regions and put more value on belonging to a network.[40] Transnational networking provides southern groups access to the international arena. Resituating southern demands in arenas with more potential allies helps to amplify their demands. Networks also provide southern groups with information, leverage, legitimacy, and finances all which they could not expect to have on their own. For northern groups networking provides better access to information, especially in the form of personal accounts. Moreover, networking brings credibility to northern activists. Much of northern groups' credibility lies on the assertion that they are struggling with, and not only for their southern partners.[41]

On the other hand, power disparities within networks are rather evident as most resources and information flow from north to south.[42] More powerful northern groups can dominate transnational agendas and identities disproportionately. Communities in the south may, for example, lose control over their stories when these stories are resituated into new arenas. These stories might be transformed a lot in order to fit into new contexts and might not represent their initial meaning at all.[43] Also the division of labour within networks can be unequal, if southern groups serve mainly as informants, not as partners. Northern groups have been accused of talking too easily about 'partnerships' in cases where equality and trust do not exist within networks to the extent that such a term implies. Furthermore, networks can lead to forms of organisation that are structured to meet the expectations of northern donors instead of meeting the needs of the communities in south.[44]

Yet, some scholars have challenged the notions that network ideas and strategies, like other political and economic forces, flow invariably from powerful countries to weaker ones. They suggest that the social movement sector does not simply mimic world-system power disparities, but rather, it seeks to transform global inequalities.

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[40] Doherty and Doyle 2006, 699.
[41] Keck and Sikkink 1998, 12-13.
[42] Smith and Johnston 2002, 6.
[43] Keck and Sikkink 1998, 19.
[44] Doherty and Doyle 2006, 699-700.

This happens when activists self-consciously act to change how power relations between states impringe on internal network relations.[45]

4.3 Transnationalisation of environmental politics

While researching how civic environmental politics takes place, theorists have identified four forms of transnationalisation of environmental politics. First, the transnationalisation of environmental politics has occurred through the diffusion of ideas. Ideas and practices are likely to spread through networks but the diffusion of ideas needs not to involve connections across borders. Contentious groups in one country can adopt and adapt their organisational form, collective action frames, and targets from/to those in other countries without forging relationships between one and other. Within social movement studies, this global dissemination of ideas is not dealt with as the mere spread of Western ideas over the world, but as global exchange resulting in a variety arenas of discursive exchange. [46] Second, transnational environmental politics takes the form of domestication. Domestication refers to the playing out an environmental problem with external origins on domestic territory. Third, activist groups challenge external supranational institutions to intervene in domestic affairs. This is called externalisation. IR scholars have analysed externalisation to be prominent in informational and lobbying campaigns in which national and international NGOs attempt to stimulate international alliances with nationally weak social movements. In these cases social movements look to international institutions for the mobilisation of resources that can be used at the national level. Externalisation is more effective for movements who are focusing on internationally established norms (for example human rights) than for those struggling against internationally hegemonic discourses (for example neoliberal market policies).[47]

These three forms of transnational environmental politics – diffusion, domestication, and externalisation – represent more traditional forms of transnational relations. Since

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[45] Smith and Johnston 2002, 6.
[46] Della Porta and Tarrow 2005, 3.
[47] Della Porta and Tarrow 2005, 5-7.

the 1990s, a fourth form has taken place. From thereon, transnational collective action has become an important form of transnational relations. Transnational collective action manifests itself through coordinated transnational protest campaigns against neoliberalism. These protests are inspired by evidence of unaccountable and unjust transnational sites of power, and often, are aimed at transnational institutions. Transnational collective action represents a shift away from a state-centric network to a transnational one.[48]

The diffusion of ideas is the most prominent way in which the transnationalisation of environmental politics is understood to take place within the network that this thesis deals with.

4.3.1 Forms of Transnational Environmental Politics

The work of transnational environmental networks involves shaping and spreading ideas, values, and norms. They act as storytellers who are able to envisage 'grand green narratives' with a worldwide reach. They frame situations and events in novel ways, rendering them meaningful for larger publics. They interpret a situation problematic, assign causes and consequences to the problem, name victims and perpetrators of the situation, and define possible ways to solve the problem.[49] Through the construction of meaning, TCSNs try to influence policy and widespread behaviour. Presenting information in the form of stories is an effective way of disseminating information to audiences far away.[50]

In order to affect widespread behaviour TCSNs strive to create an ideational context within which environmentally sound actions are more likely to be undertaken. They try to change people's understanding of the world in order to ease environmental protection. Wapner calls this the dissemination of an ecological sensibility.[51]

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[48] Della Porta and Tarrow 2005, 7.
[49] See for example Baud and Rutten 2004, 1-2.
[50] Erikson Nepstad 2002, 137.
[51] Wapner 1996, 3-4, 42-44.

Furthermore, shaping the ideational context of our lives aims at a broader social change. For example, when transnational civil society networks aim to influence social transformation they strive to widen the recognition of the sources of domination within and across societies, and through this, to alter power relations and modes of production.[52]

4.3.2 Specific Types of Ideational politics

I will elaborate on four specific types of ideational politics a bit further. These are symbolic politics, politics of bearing witness, leverage politics and politics of local empowerment.

Symbolic politics refers to the call upon symbols, actions, or stories that help to make sense of a situation for an audience that is frequently far away.[53] For example, environmental NGOs frequently use images of animal species threatened by extinction as symbols of tropical forest loss. Environmental NGOs also offer testimonies from 'local people' in order to give a human face to an environmental issue.

Bearing witness involves making environmentally and socially destructive actions public, and through this, putting pressure on the person who is doing the (often morally) questionable act. Hence, by linking morally questionable actions to political responsibility NGOs are able to convince larger publics why the action in question ought to be termed as an "injustice". So, when NGOs observe an environmental or social injustice they bring it into public awareness. Together with the public they bear witness to this injustice. If the actor, who is doing the morally sensitive action, does not stop or take measures to prevent further injustice from happening, the actor must continue to do so while knowing that other people now know and are concerned about his/her actions.[54]

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[52] Wapner 1996, 42-44.
[53] Keck and Sikkink 1998, 16.
[54] Wapner 1996, 50-53.

According to Keck and Sikkink, leverage politics takes place when powerful actors are called upon to affect a situation where weaker members of a network are unlikely to have any influence on their own.[55] A broader view of leverage politics implies that by using global and complex interdependencies as levers of power, TCSNs can make states (among others) more sensitive to environmental dilemmas. Due to interdependencies between different realms of world affairs (states, markets, and civil society), actions in one realm will have consequences for the other realms. Thus, civil society actors may intentionally take part in the formation and manipulation of a 'global civil society'. The politicisation of 'global civil society' involves turning the realms of transnational social, cultural, and economic life into levers of power that can be used to affect world public affairs. [56]

Politics of local empowerment is an important part of the work of transnational networks. By mid 1970s, groups taking part in transnational networks were disillusioned with conventional approaches to development. From thereon TCSNs have worked to support southern communities' efforts to empower themselves. They help communities in the south to claim rights and espouse alternative conceptions of development. Moreover, TCSNs try to forge ties in support of sustainable development between the communities and the outside world. Through their work civil society networks aim to embolden local people and increase the influence of local communities.[57]

On the other hand, NGOs committed to empowerment through environmental work, and probably enforce their own views and interests on local communities while helping them to realise their environmental and social potential. Yet, work taken for local empowerment strengthens existing patterns of social interaction and restructures the way communities interact with wider domains of social relations. This increased social agency within communities shifts the balance between the state and social forces.[58]

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[55] Wapner 1996, 50-53.
[56] Wapner 1996, 119-121.
[57] Keck and Sikkink 1998, 130.
[58] Wapner 1996, 101, 103.

4.4 Environmental Governance vs. Emancipatory Environmentalism

Different civil society groups contribute to transnational environmental politics in very different ways. In order to better understand the nature of contemporary civic environmental politics, Doherty and Doyle have made a conceptual division between groups fashioning more social forms of environmentalism and groups who take part in structures of global environmental governance. In short, those civil society groups who campaign for social and political change that goes beyond mere policy change represent social forms of environmentalism. Social environmental networks can include groups outside those usually defined as environmental. On the other hand, environmental groups who do not challenge the dominant political and social structures but take part in them, are environmental but not social. Organisations taking part in these networks are integrated into policy-making. [59] This division into emancipatory forms of environmentalism and environmentalism that strives for governance is useful as a conceptual tool.

4.4.1 Networks and Environmental Governance

Environmental problems have become increasingly subject to transnational forms of management, as the increasing importance of environmental issues in world politics has given rise to new networks of interest groups, (who are) eager to develop particular forms of natural resource management.[60] These governance networks are formed through complex relationships between the governments of developing countries, international environmental NGOs, transnational companies, and financial institutions. Duffy refers to such networks as 'global governance states'.[61]

The development of global governance states is part of the trend towards pluralized structures of governance and a shift in power away from nation-states and local arenas toward transnational sites. According to Duffy, global governance states take place in the context of post-conditionality. The politics of post-conditionality refers to a

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[59] Doherty and Doyle 2006, 702, 704.
[60] Duffy 2006a, 90; Duffy 2006b, 732.
[61] Duffy 2006b, 731.

situation, where terms such as 'participation', 'partnership', and 'stakeholder' are used to enforce compliance instead of using formal conditionalities that accompanied loan and aid in the 1980s and 1990s. Global governance states represent a neoliberal form of governance offering market-based and depoliticised, technical approaches to environmental protection.[62]

Doherty and Doyle claim that civil society groups involved in environmental governance do not challenge environmental injustice. Rather, they are in general reproducing forms of inequality through their participation in governing structures. Doherty and Doyle base their argument on two features of global governance states. First, organisations involved in global environmental governance are increasingly constructing grand environmental narratives which offer a limited, mainly post-material, interpretation of environmental concerns. Second, they seek to globalise environmentalism through disciplining the local into carefully constructed and restricted version of the global.[63]

4.4.2 Social Forms of Environmentalism

Social forms of environmentalism are perceived to constitute "green public spheres". These spheres are spheres of dialogue and debate between different forms of environmentalism. Groups in public spheres do not strive for unity. Rather, they try to resist the homogenisation of opposition as the public sphere is, at least in part, sustained by the value participants put on the process of debate itself.[64]

Groups participating in public spheres represent more emancipatory forms of environmentalism. These emancipatory groups have a strong social dimension and they try to increase the power resources of the poor and environmentally degraded.[65]

By making a conceptual division between governing and social forms of environmentalism helps to better understand the dynamics of civil society.

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[62] Duffy 2006b, 731, 737.
[63] Doherty and Doyle 2006, 705.
[64] Torgerson 2006, 716.
[65] Doyle and Doherty 2006, 883.

5. Contemporary Environmentalisms

Environmentalism is "less a set of universally agreed upon principles than it is a frame within which the relations among a variety of claims about resource use, property rights, and power may be reconfigured.[66]" As environmental problems manifest themselves rather differently in the North and South, environmentalism also tends to take differing forms in these areas. This chapter outlines three prominent forms of environmentalism – post-material, post-industrial, and post-colonial – which represent dominant forms of environmental concern in the North and South.

Post-materialism represents a form of environmentalism which highlights the need to protect the nature and species in it without broader aims of social transformation. For the past 30 years or so, environmentalism in the US and Australia has been dominated by such post-materialist concerns over the rights of the 'other nature'. [67] Environmentalisms in Europe and the South, on the other hand, have been dominated by forms of environmentalism that challenge the prevailing power relations within and across societies. Yet, environmentalism represents itself rather differently in Europe and in the global south.[68]

Post-industrial environmentalism has dominated the environmental agenda in Europe. Post-industrial environmentalism is a combination of post-materialist concerns related to the preservation of nature, and concerns over structural forms of power that lead to the degradation of the environment. Environmental groups fashioning post-industrialist forms of environmentalism have concentrated on challenging the ideals of advanced industrialism and capitalism, and notions of limitless growth.[69]

In the South, environmentalism can be described as post-colonial, structural, or as struggles for survival. Post-colonial environmentalists consider grand green narratives to be based on the homogenising discourse of development. Through globalisation, these narratives function as forms of domination which maintain and renew the

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[66] Keck and Sikkink 1998, 121.
[67] Doherty and Doyle 2006, 706.
[68] Doyle and McEachern 2001, 2.
[69] Ibid.

patterns of inequality produced during colonialism. Post-colonial concerns go beyond concerns over environmental well-being to broader socio-economic and political issues. Groups fashioning post-colonial environmentalism typically struggle against the understanding of development as a project to increase growth and consumption. They support a re-evaluation of the relationship between people and the environment in order to break the domination of nature, which according to them, is also a project to dominate other people. Structural forms of environmentalism involve struggles against domestic power structures. They take place in a situation where small elite has control over natural resources and production. Furthermore, local communities are considered to aim to gain control of their own resources and lives through environmental disputes. These disputes represent struggles for survival. When the ecological basis of people's life is threatened, people are risking their chances to life.[70]

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[70] Doherty and Doyle 2006, 706-708.

6. Method for Analysis and Collection of Research Material

This chapter deals with the ways in which the research materials are analysed and were gathered. First, I explain how narrative and frame analysis are used in this thesis to analyse the research material. Then I turn my attention to the collection of research material. In chapters 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 I also pay a lot of attention to the issues that limit the analysis of the research material and to the ethical questions that rised during the writing of this thesis.

6.1 Narrative and Frame Analysis as a Method

This chapter deals with the ways in which the organisation of experience can be analysed. It draws insights from both, narrative and frame analyses.

Narrating, as well as framing, are both forms of (retrospective) sensemaking. A narrative is articulated after some sort of order has been imposed onto the flow of experience. [71] Even though a narrative can be any sequent of events (reflecting experience) that are told forward, there are some requirements to what a narrative must include in order to be a narrative.

A narrative has to create a world and populate it with people and objects. The narrative world also needs to undergo changes as changes "create a temporal dimension and place the narrative world in the flux of history[72]". A narrative also demands a plot or at least some sort of a reconstruction of an interpretive network. This means that, for example, causal relations, and motivations must be expressed around the narrated events so that the reflected experiences are brought to a coherent and meaningful whole. [73] Yet, the form of the narrative can lack some of these requirements when people are still in the middle of making sense of the events in their lives. In such cases the plot of the narrative can be expected to be quite loose and

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[71] Boje 2001, 1-3.
[72] Ryan 2004, 9.
[73] Kohler Riessman 1993, 18-21.

incoherent.[74]

Erving Goffman defines frames as organising devices that help people to interpret what a situation ought to be for them and then act accordingly.[75] Here frames are understood as boundaries which establish the nature of a problem or as storylines, lending coherence to otherwise discrete pieces of information. There are two sorts of frames that are used here to support the narrative analysis of the research material. First, within a narrative one can frame an event to be perceived in a specific way. These sorts of frames are *frames of events*. Second, frames can be "communication about communication". These sorts of frames set the realm status of an event and specify an attitude toward the events in that realm. These sorts of *communicative frames* can also specify the relationship between two realms within the narrative.[76]

Narrative analysis focuses on three different levels at which to examine meaning: content (what is said), structure (how the story is put together), and interpersonal interaction (who is the audience; how the roles of speaker and listener change in interview situations etc.).[77]

6.1.1 Content

Frame analysis can be especially helpful in analysing the content of the narrative. In their research on social movements, Snow and Benford have identified three different kinds of frames commonly used by social movements. These are diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames. Each of the frames gives an idea of a person's interpretation of "what is going on?" i.e. content of the story. Diagnostic framing refers to the identification of a problem. During diagnostic framing people identify a problem, name causes, consequences, victims and perpetrators of the problem and attribute blame or causality for the problem. Prognostic frames specify the course of action that is needed in order to solve the problem. The diagnostic framing of a problem, especially the causal factors that have been voiced in it, have direct

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[74] Boje 2001,
[75] Goffman 1986, 1.
[76] Young 2004, 76-80.
[77] Kohler Riessman 1993, 21.

implications for prognostic framing. For example, Oil palm plantation development can be seen as problematic because it involves unfair deals over land with indigenous people. Blame may be attributed to the state who gives land use rights to plantation companies. The prognostic framing that follows such a diagnosis has to involve (legislative) measures to improve indigenous people's rights to land. Respectively, when the problem is perceived to be more of a technical nature (for example bad practices on plantations) then the remedy is also of a technical nature. Motivational framing offers a rationale for taking affirmative action. Motivational frames are, according to Snow and Benford, often aimed at requiting people to join a social movement.[78] In stead of motivational framing, people can offer explanations for their actions. Narrative analysis terms this as "evaluation". When people evaluate on the story they have just told, they also give reasons for why the story was worth telling for.[79]

6.1.2 Structure

The analysis of the structure focuses on how issues and events are connected to each other in the narrative i.e. how the story is put together and why the story is put together in a particular way.

When framing is done in terms of a primary framework the innermost core and the so called rim of the frame are the same. Frames, understood in terms of primary frameworks, do not hark back to some prior or "original" interpretation. They render meaning to an event or aspect of an event that would otherwise be meaningless.[80] Yet, events can be multiply framed. In such a case the frame is layered: the innermost core frames the event and the rim of the frame tells us what sort of status in the real world the described event has.[81] Thus, communicative frames can show us how the narrative is put together insofar as they connect events and assert the relationship between these events in the narrative.

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[78] Snow and Benford 1988, 200-202.
[79] Kohler Riessman 1993, 18.
[80] Goffman 1986, 21.
[81] Young 2004, 76-80.

Hannigan has identified five framing devices which can be used to structure our understanding of occurrences. These are metaphors, exemplars (historical illustrations from which lessons are drawn from), catch phrases, depictions and visual images.[82] In addition to these devices, narratives may be put together by, for example, forming a juxtapositioning between events or characters in the narrative.[83]

In interview situations the structure of the answers can be affected by the question. The way in which the questions of the interviewer may affect the structure of the response, can be seen especially well in an interview I had with an advocate for indigenous peoples' rights:

Advocate:	Mhmm, mm. Ok, so what are you especially interested in?
I:	Well, specifically, I'd like to know more about the social and environmental and economic impacts of the plantation development in Kalimantan.
Advocate:	Mhmm, well ehm from my perspective, you know, I think ehm a little bit different ideas of these palm oil issues. While we know that on the international level there has been growing discussions and discourse over sustainable palm oil – me, I do not believe in such a thing. Especially in Kalimantan. I don't know about palm oil in other countries or other areas, but in Kalimantan I strongly believe that there is no such sustainable palm oil.
I:	Why can't it be sustainable?
Advocate:	Because, I think, when we talk about sustainability, we are not only talking about ecological sustainability. For me sustainability does at least touch the issues of environmental – first of course – and then economical sustainability but also social and cultural sustainability. While we see that most of the people, when they talk about palm oil sustainability, they are only talking about ecological sustainability or – to the best – to economic sustainability. So, I think your research focus on social and cultural impact will be very helpful in explaining the weaknesses of the discourses of sustainable palm oil.[84]

The example is an excerpt right from the beginning of the interview. In the example I divide sustainability into three different spheres. The answer of the advocate follows this division. Yet, he also adds cultural sustainability to his reply. During the interview, the division of sustainability into environmental, economic and social was visible. Yet, the interview changed later on when the advocate started to talk about social and cultural aspects of the oil palm plantations. At this point he brought all

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[82] Hannigan 1995, 61.
[83] Kohler Riessman 1993, 67.
[84] Interview with a representative from Institut Dayakologi.

aspects of sustainability together and clearly broke the division my question had brought to the interview situation.

6.1.3 Interpersonal Interaction

The analysis of interpersonal interaction focuses on the ways in which the roles of speaker and listener change during interview situations. Also a person may tell an entirely different story depending on the interviewer or the interview situation. This is why interpersonal interaction should be analyzed in the context in which it took place.[85] On the other hand, the analysis of interpersonal interaction can also pay attention to who is the audience of the information. For example, NGO pamphlets that are written in English are mainly aimed at an international audience.

6.2 Collecting Literature and Interviews

The research is based on literature and interviews. The literature has been gathered from the internet or received from the offices of NGOs. The literature consists quite broadly of books, briefs and pamphlets. The interviews for this research were done in Indonesia during 14.5.-14.9.2007. Interviews were held in Indonesia with 7 environmental and social NGOs, 3 indigenous peoples' advocacy groups, and 10 members of a grassroots' association called the Serikat Petani Kelapa Sawit (SPKS) – i.e. the oil palm farmers union. In addition, individual smallholders and oil palm plantation workers were interviewed in two villages, namely in the village of Gunung Sari in East Kalimantan and the village of Suka Gerundi in West Kalimantan.

My aim was to do unstructured, narrative or conversational, interviews. Unstructured interviews resemble a conversation where both parties, the interviewer and the interviewee, can bring subjects to the discussion and guide the interview to a wanted direction.[86] Compared to a semi-structured interview, in which the same themes or questions are covered in each interview, the themes and questions in unstructured interviews weary according to the experiences of the person who is being

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[85] Kohler Riessman 1993, 21.
[86] Tiittula and Ruusuvuori 2005, 11.

interviewed.[87] Semi-structured interviews are also more prominently lead by the interviewer.[88] The interviews done for this research ended up as something between unstructured and semi-structured (group) interviews.

As the group of people I interviewed was very heterogeneous all the interviews are very different from one another. When interviewing smallholders, most of the interview situations became group interviews as it simply was impossible to get people to answer by themselves. The aim of group interviews is said to be the exploration of the opinions and attitudes of the participants over the issue that is being discussed.[89] As I was trying to get to know more than just people's attitudes on the oil palm issue, I tried to get people in the groups answer the questions as freely as possible and supplement each others answer hoping for a story or at least a story-like report to come out of this.

In order to get people to narrate freely about their experiences of an event or issue, the interviewer should avoid abstractions and tie the questions to specifics or to context.[90] In the interviews with smallholders I tried to tie the interviews to the context of the villages, asking questions like "How has life changed after the establishment of the plantation?" or "How do you deal with oil palm in your everyday life/ profession?" With NGOs I tried to tie the questioned to their work and campaigns. Most of the interviews were started with more general questions.

At best, few of the interviews resemble narratives as the person, who was interviewed started to tell about his or her experiences or about the oil palm plantation system in his or her own way. Yet most of the interviews resemble more like a set of short 'reports' or like very 'thin' narratives.

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[87] Eskola and Vastamäki 2007, 27.
[88] Eskola and Vastamäki 2007, 25.
[89] Valtonen 2007, 226.
[90] Mason 2002, 227.

6.2.1 Reports and Narratives

A report is a prompt answer to a question. In a report of an event a person does not take responsibility of the significance of the event he or she has described. The report doesn't reflect 'experience'. A narrative on the other hand reflects experience and feeling and gives reasons why the narrative was worth telling.[91]

Narratives, or stories, can be 'thick' or 'thin' depending on how much they reflect experience. Hyvärinen and Löyttyniemi present three different forms of doing narrative interviews or interviews with narrativity in them. One way is to construct and produce a biographical narrative from interviews and other material. In an interview this is done by giving an open question to start the narration. The interviewer can also guide the narration when it gets sidetracked. Another way of understanding a personal narrative is when the narrative refers to short 'stories' resembling the form of oral narratives. These narratives or short stories describe a certain event or an experience. They have a situation, characters and a story line. They usually answer one question describing e.g. one experience of the storyteller. The third form covers long sequences of speech and the interaction of an interview. The focus on this is on the structure of the speech and on interaction. The researcher brings her own experience and worldview to the interview situations well as to the analysis of the interview. The narrative finally gets finished in the reader of the research.[92] The narrative answers that came out in the interviews for this research resemble mostly the second type of narratives mentioned above.

6.2.2 Limits to Research?

There are several things that affect the interview situation. In an interview situation both, the interviewer and the person who is being interviewed, have their own positions. The interviewer is the person asking the questions and the interviewee the one to answer them. The interviewer also deals with the issue on a more general level

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[91] Hyvärinen and Löyttyniemi 2005, 199.
[92] Hyvärinen and Löyttyniemi 2005, 192–193.

than the interviewee, who often handles the issue through every day experiences.[93] In addition to this, both participants may approach the interview situation from different world views and view themselves and each other in different ways. There is also a material dimension (e.g. sex, age and ethnic background) that determines these differing perceptions of the interview situation. [94] For example my origin as a woman and a 'westerner' has been probably the most prominent 'material dimensions' of me that has influenced the interview situations. Some respondents thought that my research will have a lot of influence just based on my origin. This might have also led them to talk about the financial aspects of the plantations more than they would have with a different interviewer. The researcher should be aware of these sorts of aspects and try to take it into account in the analysis of the research material.

An interview can only be successful if the participants, the interviewer and the interviewee, understand each other.[95] Cultural and language differences can have a big impact on an interview situation. In the interviews with oil palm smallholders (and with few NGOs) I was completely dependent on an interpreter. As the interpretation has been done simultaneously at the spot, the quality of the translation is a bit rough. This seriously limits the analysis of the structure as not much structure can be derived from these interviews. Language differences did not limit only to the division between English and Bahasa, but also between 'academic' and 'common' language. The objective of the research was hard to explain to people who could not understand concepts like sustainability, climate change and biofuels.

Anna Rastas claims that one cannot fully understand or 'learn' a different culture.[96] Yet, as knowledge is here understood as culturally relativist and is central to the research, it is vital to try to understand cultural characteristics at least to an extent. This is rather difficult as the people who this research deals with come from various cultural backgrounds, for example from Indonesian and Dayak (indigenous people in West-Kalimantan are Dayak indigenous people) cultures. I have read about both cultures (Indonesian and Dayak) to increase my knowledge over them. In addition, the five month stay in Indonesia has helped to understand the Indonesian culture. Yet it is

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[93] Ruusuvuori and Tiittula 2005, 37.
[94] Rastas 2005, 90.
[95] Rastas 2005, 79.
[96] Ibid, 85.

important for me to bring my own ignorance of these cultures out in the analysis of the interviews.

In this chapter, the interactive nature of the interview situations has been dealt with as 'problematic' or as a possible source for limitations to research. This is not the only way to see an interview situation. As the constructionist approach and narrative analysis suggests, reality is created through social interaction. In this sense the interactive situation of an interview can be taken as the main focus of analysis.[97]

6.2.3 Ethical questions

An important thing concerning the ethics of research is that the interviewer should explain her research objective clearly enough to the people she is going to interview. This was a bit problematic occasionally, because it was difficult for the smallholders to understand the subject. The focus of my research also kept changing a bit during the research. Due to these problems it is equally important that people have the chance to know what has been written about them. This gives them a chance to criticize the research in case they feel that they have been misrepresented. Due to this, I have chosen to write my thesis in English.

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[97] Alasuutari 1994, 123, 128.

7. Narratives of Oil Palm

I was able to derive four narratives from the literature and interviews. Two of these are "grand", or at least "big", narratives able to reach a global audience. The other two are derived from the experiences of villagers, smallholders and activists on the grassroots' level.

From the two "big" narratives, the first one (in chapter 7.1) deals with oil palm mainly in terms of environmental governance and as an environmental/ecological issue. This narrative is based on two brochures from WWF. This does not mean that oil palm is narrated in this way only by WWF. Merely, these two brochures represent this sort of narrative well. The second narrative (in chapter 7.2) represents more social forms of environmentalism and accordingly strives to alter prevailing power relations and social order. It deals with oil palm plantations in terms of rights and justice. This narrative seemed to be more prominent among Indonesian NGOs' than the first one. Yet, dividing the narratives to social and "governing" forms of environmentalism is a bit artificial as there exists a tension between environmentalism that strives for governance and the more emancipatory forms of environmentalism in both narratives (not just between them).

The two narratives from the grassroots level (chapters 7.3 and 7.4) both deals with oil palm as a question of livelihood. The narratives are composed of many (fragmented) "small stories". The stories reflect a lot on how the economic development, brought by the plantations have affected their lives. For one, people portray oil palm plantations as a possibility to increase their welfare and livelihood. On the other hand, the oil palm plantation schemes are portrayed as a threat to the people's livelihood because the benefits that people are able to derive from oil palm farming are considered to be so small that oil palm farming is driving them into poverty. There are two narratives (one dominant and one smaller one) that were derived from these "small stories". Both of these narratives deal with oil palm plantations as a question of livelihood and survival.

7.1 Oil Palm Plantations as an Inseparable Part of Deforestation

In this narrative, the diagnostic framing presents oil palm plantations as a form of land use - i.e. plantation agriculture - that is a major cause of tropical deforestation. The problem is constructed mainly as an environmental or ecological issue, focusing on the global (and local) environmental problems caused by deforestation. These problems include, among others, the acceleration of climate change, loss of biodiversity and a threat to endangered species.

The increasing demand for palm oil is named as the main cause of the problem as the global demand for products containing palm oil is perceived to be driving the expansion of plantations. In addition to this, short-sighted national and international policies are considered to accelerate the demand for palm oil, thus contributing to the problem. Furthermore, bad management practices on plantations are said to cause environmental and social problems in producing countries. Thus, the prognostic framing offers a market-based solution to the problem, namely the development of criteria for sustainable palm oil.

7.1.1 Oil Palm Plantations as Inappropriate Forms of Land Use

In this narrative, oil palm is presented as a form of land use (plantation agriculture) that poses a threat to tropical forests. The underlying problem is tropical deforestation which is driven by the expansion of plantation agriculture. Due to this, for example WWF's, brochures deal with oil palm together with soy as they both are among the most rapidly expanding plantation crops in the tropics.

The problem posed by oil palm plantations is introduced in a brochure of WWF titled "Oil Palm and Soy: The Expanding Threat to Forests" in the following way:

> "Deforestation of tropical forests took place at a rate of 10-16 million ha per annum during the last two decades, and is showing no signs of slowing down. The causes are complex and often interrelated, but among them is the role of plantation agriculture. Without significant changes in policy and practice, the process of forest conversion is likely to continue at a rapid rate and pose a major threat to High Conservation Value

Forests (HCVFs), freshwater ecosystems, livelihoods of forest dependent peoples, and habitats of endangered species."[98]

This sort of approach to the problem enables NGOs to deal with oil palm plantations mainly on a global level. On one hand, the problem is admitted to touch especially tropical countries (as these are the areas where the forests exist) and the people who are dependent of the forests. Yet, forests (and the biodiversity their harbour and the environmental services they are able to provide) tie the question of oil palm plantation to global environmental problems.

The diagnostic framing of the problem is put together by attributing characteristics to oil palm plantations and tropical forest. On one hand, the nature of oil palm plantations is defined by a comparison to other oil crops that are posing a threat to tropical forests, namely soy. Oil palm is mentioned to be "a highly efficient use of land for oil production"[99] when compared to other crops. This portrays palm oil as an environmentally sensible option when compared to other oil crops. On the other hand, the diagnosis of the problem is formed by drawing a juxtapositioning between oil palm plantations and tropical forests. Oil palm plantations are described to be "primarily planted as large-scale monocultures for commercial production"[100]. In contrast to this, tropical forest is framed as "a world of astonishing animals and plants" and as one of the "most diverse and valuable ecosystems around the globe"[101]. In addition, forests are described to provide a "home to a number of endangered species"[102] and subsistence to forest dependent peoples. Tropical forests are also mentioned to "prevent soil erosion, help maintain the water cycle and limit global warming" and offer "watershed protection, timber and other products, along with a wide range of recreational opportunities"[103]. Describing tropical forests in this way is used to show that deforestation deals not "only" with trees (i.e. forest) but a whole variety of related aspects. The elaborations insinuate that if the forests are cleared for oil palm plantations then all of these livelihood and recreational aspects as well as environmental services provided by the forest will be lost. In contrast to this, an image

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[98] WWF, 2003, 1
[99] WWF 2008, 2
[100] WWF 2003, 2
[101] WWF 2008, 3.
[102] Ibid.
[103] WWF 2008, 3.

that portrays oil palm plantations as poor in biodiversity is emphasised. Also, in contrast to the environmental services and recreational opportunities provided by forests, oil palm plantations are presented to give benefits in economic terms alone. Describing tropical forest in this way can be seen as a way to construct a constitutive norm. By framing tropical forests as a unique ecosystem (with intrinsic and other values) NGOs give meaning for their protection and for the changes that are required in oil palm plantation development.

The nature and severity of the problems posed by oil palm plantation development is specified by describing the expansion of plantation agriculture as "unabated" and "occurring at the expense of natural rainforest"[104]. The role of oil palm in tropical deforestation is also underlined by comparing it to other causes of deforestation. For example, one comparison claims that "agricultural expansion is a much more serious threat to forests than timber trade"[105]. Through such descriptions, it is implied that the problem is not merely the establishment of oil palm plantations but the location where they are established - i.e. on forested areas. It is also implied that the expansion of oil palm plantations to forested areas is not, at the moment, controlled by anyone.

The diagnostic framing is elaborated by explaining some of the related problems of plantation development in further detail. These elaborations function as a warning as they give examples of things that either could happen or are already happening because changes in plantation development have not been undertaken. These related problems are loss of biodiversity; problems related to endangered species and the loss of habitat of wildlife; plantation related social problems; and global warming.

A short description of biodiversity loss, caused by oil palm plantations, draws attention to the definitive nature of this loss:

> "Large-scale oil palm and soy plantations have a significant negative impact on biodiversity because plantations are primarily planted as large-scale monocultures for commercial production. While monoculture plantations offer considerable economic benefits, development predominantly results in the total clearance of diverse natural vegetation and the consequent loss of wide variety of habitats it provides for wildlife.

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[104] WWF 2008, front page.
[105] Ibid.

> Pesticides and herbicides kill of the last vestiges of biodiversity able to co-exist with the plantations, and significantly diminish the chances of habitat restoration."[106]

It is explained that, as a first step, diverse natural vegetation is cleared for the oil palm plantation, and then pesticides and herbicides are described to "kill of" the remaining biodiversity and diminish chances of habitat restoration. This description portrays biodiversity loss as definitive. It also emphasises the nature of oil palm plantations as monocultures where only a very limited amount of plants and species are able to co-exist with the palm trees.

The loss of forest is also explained to pose a further threat to endangered species. It is explained that:

> "Forest loss is leaving endangered species such as elephants, tigers and orangutans with nowhere to hide, exposing them to the risk of poaching and increased conflict with humans."[107]

Endangered species are used as strong symbols throughout the narrative as they are used to evoke emotion and concern over forest loss. Forests are also framed as the "home"[108] of animals and "the last stronghold"[109] of these species emphasising their importance to endangered wildlife. Forest loss also affects other wildlife as the loss of forest drives animals to populated areas which causes conflicts between people and wildlife. Visual images of elephants trapped in people's backyard are used in brochures to convey a more powerful image of the problem to larger publics.

Plantation related social problems portray people to suffer from oil palm plantation development just like wildlife or the environment. For example, the vulnerability of forest dependent people is compared to the vulnerability of endangered species. It is explained that, just like wildlife, people may be evicted from the area designated for an oil palm plantation:

> "People that depend on forests are just as vulnerable to forest conversion. [comparison to wildlife that was dealt with in the previous chapter] Even where they have land titles to prove their ownership, very often they are evicted by plantation

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[106] WWF 2003, 2
[107] WWF 2008, 3.
[108] WWF 2008, 3 and 2003, 1.
[109] WWF 2008, 2.

companies - sometimes, violently so. Other times, they are offered trivial compensation for their land.

Oil palm and soy plantations also provide jobs and foreign exchange. But they are often criticised for bad working conditions, sometimes amounting to forced labour, and for agricultural practices that cause soil erosion and pollution."[110]

In the first excerpt, people are brought up as victims of deforestation and plantation management just as wildlife before this. People are portrayed to be dependent of the forest. In stead of receiving an option to improve their livelihoods through oil palm plantations, people are explained to be evicted or cheated out of their lands. In the second excerpt, bad management practices on plantations are described to have an effect on both people's health and the condition of the surrounding environment. Both, people and the environment are presented as victims of plantation development. Partly, descriptions like these help to give a human face to the problems posed by oil palm plantations. Yet, mostly they are used to show that solving environmental problems also solve social ones, and vice versa.

The link between oil palm plantations and global warming is drawn in two ways: First, the clearance of natural forest and peat swamp forest (in order to plant an oil palm plantation) causes carbon dioxide emissions that accelerate climate change. Especially, peat swamp forest is mentioned to "play a vital role in moderating climate change"[111].

"When draining or converting peatland forests for plantations, palm oil companies contribute to climate change, as these 'carbon sinks' store more carbon per unit area than any other ecosystem in the world."[112]

Second, causal relations between palm oil and climate change are drawn because palm oil is one of the vegetable oils that can be used to produce biodiesel. This role of palm oil as a possible "green fuel" is mentioned to complicate the framing of it. On one hand, the demand for biofuel is seen as a possible problem:

"An increase in production of soy and palm oil for biofuel could expose the world to the risks of food shortages, price increases and even increased greenhouse gas (GHG)

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[110] WWF 2008, 3.
[111] WWF 2008, 5.
[112] Ibid.

emmissions. Moreover, the need for biofuel could create new incentives to push agricultural production much deeper into natural forests."[113]

On the other hand, it is acknowledged that biofuels may play an important role in mitigating climate change as a sustainable form of energy:

> "For WWF, biofuels have a role to play in providing sustainable energy for the future, as they can contribute to a reduction of the GHG that impact on global temperatures - and hence on climate change. But for this to happen, biofuels must be produced according to agreed criteria for sustainable production. Production of biofuels from these commodities [palm oil and soy] must result in a positive GHG balance, including GHG emmissions associated with land clearing to establish the crop fields, and the refining process that transforms the crop into a fuel."[114]

The nature of palm oil as a possible "remedy" to global warming and as a cause of it complicates the framing. It shows a tension between efforts to protect tropical forest and to develop "green fuels" in order to mitigate climate change. This sort of framing draws attention to the "proper" ways to deal with oil palm plantations. The framing emphasises that the expansion of oil palm plantations is a problem when the expansion occurs at the expense of tropical forest. This sort of framing also links oil palm to global issues and to "the global environment".

7.1.2 The roots of the problem

The causes/blame of the problem posed by oil palm plantations are attributed to the growing demand for products containing palm oil (that is, to international markets and investments), short-sighted national and international policies that facilitate the expansion of oil palm plantations, and to bad management practices on plantations. In WWF's brochure "Oil palm, soy and tropical forests: a strategy for life" the growing demand for palm oil is described in following way:

> "Global demand for palm oil continues to grow. And as the market expands, so does the quantity of forest land that is scrapped to make room for oil palm monocultures.
>
> Complicating the story is the growing popularity of biodiesel, which can be produced from palm oil. With many countries setting biofuel targets for national transport and

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[113] WWF 2008, 4.
[114] Ibid.

energy needs, traders and producers are receiving strong signals that they should be growing more oil palms.

The industry is rushing to meet that demand, including in forest areas where endangered orang-utans have their last stronghold."[115]

A very clear causal relation is drawn between the growing demand for palm oil and the loss of forest to make room for plantations: the line of thought is that when the market expands, so does the (forest) area that is converted into oil palm plantations. The explanations above also focus on biodiesel, which is mentioned to complicate the story. Attention is drawn to the policies that are giving "strong signals" for companies to grow more oil palms. Complication is insinuated, as many countries need biofuel to meet their energy targets. The final excerpt finishes the argument by giving an image (by means of symbolic politics) of industry rushing to clear more forest for oil palm plantations, and thus destroying the "last stronghold" of endangered orangutans.

So, some of the blame is also attributed to national policies in countries such as Indonesia where "government policies have facilitated soy and oil palm expansion […]" and "[s]imilar government policies are projected to stimulate further growth in the near future"[116]. The government is thus blamed for the "unabated" expansion of oil palm plantations which is a big part of the whole problem posed by oil palms.

Bad practices on plantations add to the environmental and social problems caused by plantation agriculture:

"People that depend on forests are just as vulnerable to forest conversion." [comparison to wildlife that was dealt with in the previous chapter in the brochure] Even where they have land titles to prove their ownership, very often they are evicted by plantation companies - sometimes, violently so. Other times, they are offered trivial compensation for their land.

Oil palm and soy plantations also provide jobs and foreign exchange. But they are often criticised for bad working conditions, sometimes amounting to forced labour, and for agricultural practices that cause soil erosion and pollution."[117]

The two excerpts above further elaborate on the roots of the problem. The problems posed by oil palm plantations are not only caused by demand from international

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[115] WWF 2008, 2.
[116] Ibid.
[117] WWF 2008, 3.

markets and by "bad" policies, but also by bad management practices on plantations, as they cause "local" social and environmental problems.

7.1.3 Prognostic framing of the problem

Following the causal relations that were drawn during the diagnosis of the problem, the prognostic framing suggests that in order to solve the problem criteria (a certification system) for sustainable palm oil (SPO) must be set up. Thus, the sustainability of palm oil is expected to be achieved by using market mechanisms. A market-based solution is said to require a multi-stakeholder approach to the problem. This multi-stakeholder approach refers to the RSPO which has established criteria and principles[118] for sustainable palm oil.

Even though there were several causal relations drawn during the diagnostic framing of the problem, only market-based activity is framed as a way to solve the problem. Through such framing, the policies and regulations of the Indonesian government (as well as other governments) are considered to be a part of the problem in a way that prevents civil society from taking measures that would include them (separately) as a solution.

So first of all, it is explained that: "palm oil and soy production play an important role in the economic development of some tropical countries. Therefore, a boycott of these products is not proposed"[119]. This sort of prognosis functions as a boundary which limits the possible ways to solve problems caused by oil palm plantations. So, though forests need protection, they should not be protected at the cost of people who are dependent of palm oil (thus a boycott of palm oil is explained to damage the economies of palm oil producing countries). It also backs up the idea to achieve SPO through market mechanisms. Campaigns on regulations and policies are not promoted either, because they are perceived as a cause to the demand, and thus a part of the problem.

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[118] See RSPO Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Palm Oil.
[119] WWF 2003, 3.

The prognostic framing is further elaborated with a notion that "all stakeholders along the chain of custody" must be engaged "to address the environmental and social problems associated with the expansion of palm oil and soy"[120]. It is also mentioned that:

> "[S]ustainability in the soy and palm oil sector can only be achieved if everyone involved works together.
>
> Providing an arena for just such cooperation, WWF has been instrumental in the creation of the roundtables on sustainable palm oil (RSPO) and responsible soy (RTRS).
>
> These roundtables bring together social and environmental organizations, producers, processors, manufacturers and retailers, where criteria are set for the responsible production and how they can be implemented."[121]

By adopting a multi-stakeholder approach and labelling it as the solution to the problem, the narrative draws attention to the interdependencies within and between different international realms - i.e. the global interdependencies between states, markets and civil society. By framing the prognosis like this, the narrative uses these interdependencies as levers of power. This is done by politicising palm oil and framing the interdependencies as possible causes and remedies to the problems. This way they make companies and governments more sensitive to the environmental and social problems posed by palm oil. For example, politicising palm oil and activating consumers through motivational framing by "[i]nviting consumers [especially in developed countries] to choose products made from responsible soy and palm oil and reduce consumption of products that are made irresponsibly"[122], is a way to use the aforementioned interdependencies in order to enhance environmental protection.

In addition, testimonials are offered from industry members giving proof that they have altered their behaviour. Offering testimonials is a way to persuade people to believe that the problem can be solved through market mechanisms.

By framing the prognosis in terms of a multi-stakeholder approach, the narrative makes normative interpretations which enable civil society actors to draw industry

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[120] WWF 2003, 3.
[121] WWF 2008, 9.
[122] WWF 2008, 7.

members and governments into partnerships with NGOs. This opens up more political space for civil society. Furthermore, the solution is framed in terms of post-conditionality. This is done by using vocabulary of "partnerships" and "stakeholders" to enforce compliance. So, even though the actual standard for SPO involves a great deal of social and environmental protections[123], also mere technical solutions are perceived to be able to solve the problems.

> "[C]onservation and social priorities can be met if proper land-use planning and good plantation practices are implemented that halt the conversion of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF)."[124]

This excerpt explains that sustainability is possible, if oil palm plantation development is done according to "proper" land-use planning, and if oil palm cultivation is done according to "appropriate" management practices. By this, the narrative refers to two things. First, forested lands should not be allocated for oil palm plantations. Second, the other, more local environmental and social conflicts can be solved by improving management practices on plantations. These management practices include for example a decrease in the use of pesticides as they were mentioned to be a part of the problem.

7.1.4 Concluding Remarks

This narrative tries to persuade people to accept that oil palm plantations should not be dealt with independently from tropical deforestation. Forests are framed as unique ecosystems rendering them the role of "global public goods". Thus, the narrative mainly deals with oil palm and sustainability in post-materialist terms as it concentrates attention on the protection of wildlife and forests.

Hence, this narrative offers a "normative road map" that involves the creation of a multi-stakeholder forum as a solution to the problems raised by oil palm plantations. The involvement of multiple stakeholders is needed in order to improve management practices on plantations, to guarantee efficacy in land use and the conservation of high conservation value forests by means of land-use planning. These are the measures (i.e.

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[123] RSPO Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Palm Oil.
[124] WWF 2003, 3.

proper behaviour) that need to be taken in order to reach sustainability in oil palm cultivation. These measures are perceived as meaningful because, through these measures, a unique ecosystem (that is the forest) can be saved.

These sort of normative interpretations enable civil society networks to draw industry members and governments into partnerships with NGOs. This opens up more political space for civil society. Yet, the narrative mainly uses the language of environmental governance, promoting forms of environmentalism that do not challenge the prevailing social order between "stakeholders".

7.2 Oil Palm Plantations as a Question of Indigenous Peoples' rights to land and self-determination

In this narrative, the oil palm plantation system is constructed mainly as a social problem involving the exploitation of indigenous people and their lands. The oil palm plantation system is framed multiply, first portraying it as a legal question and then extending the framing to portray the system as a system of exploitation. Framing the oil palm plantation system in legal terms is used to show how the government is able to gain control over both land (the use of natural resources) and people. Thus, the legal framing is also used to show how the imposition of development plans, such as oil palm plantations, takes away peoples' right to determine development for themselves. Framing the oil palm plantation system then as exploitative is used to point out that the development of oil palm plantations cannot be understood as development in terms of improving people's welfare. This sort of framing helps to question the state's authority to manage natural resources for national development and portrays the government and companies' actions as (morally) questionable.

In order to elaborate on the diagnostic framing of the problem, the framing is extended to portray both indigenous people and the environment as victims of the oil palm plantation schemes. Thus, the faith of both people and the environment are represented to be tied together in this narrative. The destruction of the surrounding environment is explained to cause related problems, such as the destruction of indigenous peoples' culture, poverty and conflicts among and between communities.

On the other hand, empowering local communities is implied to contribute to environmental protection.

The prognostic framing portrays especially the facilitation of local empowerment as a suitable way to deal with the problems posed by the oil palm plantation system. Local empowerment is framed to ease environmental protection. Yet, it is also explained that the efforts to increase social agency among local communities are not tied to pre-planned, environmentally sound outcomes. Thus there is a small tension between environmental governance and more emancipatory forms of environmentalism in this narrative. In addition to the facilitation of local empowerment, rising public campaigns demanding for a change in regulations and offering an alternative crop to oil palm are seen as good ways to counter the oil palm plantation system.

7.2.1 The Oil Palm Plantation System as a legal question

The diagnostic framing begins with an introduction to two different legal systems, namely customary law and national law. The framing of the oil palm plantation system in legal terms is used to show how these two legal systems define the relationship between two of the key characters in this narrative: the government and indigenous people.

> "Customary rights in land are recognised by the Indonesian Constitution but inefficiently secured and protected by other laws and implementing regulations. This means that when lands and forests are allocated by government agencies to third parties, like plantation companies, customary rights tend to be ignored. Usually customary rights are treated as if they were just weak use rights on State lands, which have to give way in the face of national development projects, like plantations."[125]

Both of these legal systems define the ownership of a certain piece of land. But here the state is depicted as wrongfully considering itself to have the highest authority over natural resources. By noting that customary rights "are recognised by the constitution" but ignored or treated as "weak use rights on State lands" by the government, the narrator passes judgement on the inequity that prevails between these legal systems. By passing judgement, the narrative questions the state's authority. The assertion that

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[125] Colchester and Jiwan 2006, 4.

the government would somehow naturally be the highest authority over land is questioned throughout the narrative. This is done by noting that "local people have been living there before Indonesia became independent"[126] or that indigenous people are "the first owner of that land" and have been living there "long before the state was proclaimed"[127]. These sorts of remarks are used to define, and draw attention to, the "true" ownership of land and natural resources. The argument is based on the historical ties, that is, on the idea that indigenous people have owned a certain piece of land prior to the state and thus have longer historical ties to the area in question. Power to the argument is (throughout the narrative) drawn from the Constitution as the highest law in Indonesia.

The relationship between the two legal systems is described in further detail, explaining how the constitution protects indigenous peoples' rights to land and, consequently, what sort of the laws and provisions do not secure these rights. For example, it is mentioned that articles 28H and 281 of the Constitution:

> "can be understood as explicitly protecting the rights of indigenous peoples to their lands and resources but is in tension with Article 33 of the Indonesian Constitution of 1945, which legitimates the right of the State to regulate and manage natural resource use."[128]

By referring to provisions to Article 33 of the Constitution and to Articles 3 and 5 of the Basic Agrarian Law (BAL) of 1960 the narrative explains that:

> "Based upon these provisions, the State justifies itself as the single source of legitimacy for determining the ownership of agrarian and natural resources, in effect giving the government the authority to determine whether indigenous peoples still exist or not and to take over natural resources from indigenous peoples by extinguishing ulayat rights."[129]

This sort of construction of the tension between the constitution and other regulations are used to show the imbalanced relationship between customary law and national law. This sort of construction also implies that what is at stake here is not only the ownership of land but the right to self-determination, i.e. peoples' right to govern their

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[126] Jiwan, interview.
[127] Bamba, interview.
[128] Colchester et al 2006, 48.
[129] Colchester et al 2006, 49.

lives and natural resources in their own way. In the very first description, this was done by noting that customary laws are bypassed due to "national development plans, like plantations". The imposition of development plans such as plantations can be seen as a total change of the way land is managed and life is governed. So, people cannot choose themselves how to manage the land in question. In the more detailed descriptions of the laws and regulations governing the relationship between national law and customary law, it is explained how the state has the right to "determine whether indigenous people still exist" and thus the right to extinguish customary rights of indigenous communities, making it very clear that the regulations structure the relationship between the government and the indigenous peoples in a way that prevents the peoples from making decisions over natural resource use that are in a juxtapositioning with the state's interests.

More detailed descriptions of the process of land acquisition for oil palm plantations is (then) given to show how the government uses the oil palm plantations system to take control over customary lands. First, the narrators explain why the land rights of indigenous people are not thought to be "efficiently secured and protected by other laws". Here is how an advocate for indigenous peoples' rights constructed the oil palm plantation system during an interview:

> "So, first of all, we have areas. Let's say this area is managed by the local people based on customary law. So, they own the area basically through three system of origin. The first system is collective ehm ownership, the second one is individual ownership, and the third one is group ownership, or family, [...] ownership. And of course the system of ownership has not certificate, written certificate. So it is based on customary law. But according to the constitution, the first constitution in Indonesia, that is drafted by the founding fathers of this country, they said: recognise this type of ownership based on customary laws. [...] But what is happening now e-ehm this right is denied by the government. So, [...] they are still forcing the local people to have certificate of ownership, land certificate which is not possible for the people, you know, to have it. Why? Because, as I said, there is collective ownership system, and for the collective or family ownership system, it is not possible for you to have a certificate. Because certificate system is based on the individual ehm ownership, yeah? [...] So, therefore - what is happening right now - the government, especially the government, consider that the local people have no right to the land. And the land belongs to the state."[130]

Here (again) judgement is passed on the government's actions. The government's actions (the request for a certificate of ownership) are portrayed as forceful. By asking

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[130] Bamba, interview.

for a certificate, the government bypasses customary law. What is underlined is not only the question of who should have authority to decide on resource use and but also how different customs of ownership should have the chance to co-exist. Two short descriptions below show how the government pushes indigenous people into oil palm plantation schemes:

> "So, it is the government who has the authority, you know, to manage the land. [...] So, what the government is doing, is putting some ehm arrangement on this piece of land, yeah, through various licences like for example what they call HGU. This is eehm, ehm the right to use [...] HGB, the right to, for building. So, what the government is doing, is that inviting investors and give them this right [HGU; HGB] over this area of land [the previously mentioned land owned by locals]. So, for example, they give the investor the right to use this land for 25 year, for example. To be planted into palm oil. These two parties, government and investors are making the deal between themselves, without involving the local people."[131]

> "The land is owned by the state and local people. The company borrows it.[...] In 2004 a plantation act was made. It gives user rights for 120 years. [...] In 2007 a new investment act was made that provides total protection to investment. It gives land use rights for 165 years in terms of investment." [...] So, land is under state control from the company's perspective. Local, on the other hand, see that they have been living there before Indonesia became independent. So, it is considered land expropriation by the government."[132]

In the first description, the government is depicted as deceitful. This is done by describing how the government bypasses the customary ownership system by "inviting investors", and giving them "right over [...] land" with "various licences". The government is also depicted to make a deal with the investors "without involving the local people". All this frames the government's actions as questionable and deceitful. Indigenous people and local communities are also framed here as they are described to be "not involved". This clearly goes to show that blame for plantation establishment is on the government and the company who make the deal between themselves. The description also emphasises how the indigenous peoples' rights have been trampled on. The second description attributes blame especially to the government by showing how - due to the government's actions - different actors (namely the company and indigenous people) see the ownership of land rather differently.

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[131] Bamba, interview.
[132] Jiwan, interview.

The legal frame is drawn to a conclusion by explaining that after a NES-type plantation has been established "the lands allotted to the nucleus estates would thence be considered as State lands. Even when the leaseholds granted to the companies expire, the lands do not revert to community ownership"[133]. It is also explained that the communities who are involved in these schemes are hardly ever aware of this. This has lead one advocate to name the process of oil palm plantation establishment as "systematic land grabbing by the state"[134]. This sort of description functions as the rim of the frame and portrays the oil palm plantation system (the whole narrative so far) to be the government's scheme to gain control over and ownership of customary lands.

Through legal framing, civil society actors are able to relate their concerns over oil palm plantations to broader issues of governance of natural resources, resource use and property rights. By framing the oil palm plantation system as a legal question NGOs are also able to question the prevailing power relations and structures of dominance. This is done by questioning the authority of the state as the highest authority and as the "appropriate" authority in relation to natural resource use and land rights. Such framing implies that the aim of this narrative is to alter the prevailing social order and to change power relations by shifting more power to indigenous people and customary communities.

7.2.2 The Oil Palm Plantation System as a System of Exploitation

The narrative continues by applying another frame to the oil palm plantation system. After explaining the oil palm plantation system in legal terms, the narrative constructs the system, especially the establishment process, as a system of exploitation. This sort of framing is used to portray the deals between oil palm plantation companies and indigenous people as unfair and morally questionable. Applying this frame further questions the notion that oil palm plantations could be considered as a means to improve people's welfare and as development, backing up the argument that indigenous people should be able to decide on natural resource use and thus to determine development for themselves.

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[133] Colchester and Jiwan 2006, 5.
[134] Bamba, interview.

Framing in terms of exploitation starts by explaining how the establishment of oil palm plantations works. Much like previously, the deals to establish oil palm plantations are depicted to happen either "without involving local people" or through manipulation. The local people are mainly framed as bystanders who are unable to affect the outcome, whether they wanted to or not. This sort of image of the plantation deals is highlighted, for example, by describing the communities' efforts to reject plantations:

> "The government does not consult local communities in making these land allocations nor in deciding what proportions of the lands should be for smallholdings. Even where communities object, through representations to local officials, petitions to the local legislatures, appeals to the press, demonstrations or, in the last resort, through direct actions, their objections tend to be overruled."[135]

By listing a number of different ways communities have tried to object the plantations, the narrative builds up an image of the establishment process which portrays local communities as active in their struggle against plantations but also unable to affect the outcome. This image of the process attributes all blame (for example of the location of the plantation) to the government. It also portrays the government as disinterested in the concerns and wishes of local communities.

After the deal is made, it is explained that the people who live in the area and are willing to take part in the plantation scheme release 7-10 hectares of land each to its establishment. [136] The explanation continues that the company then is expected to pay some compensation to the people for the trees on the released land. The compensation is described in the following way:

> "[W]hat they really do [when they pay the compensation] is only to avoid any conflict with local people. Because, in fact, from the government, they don't have that obligation, to pay the compensation." [...][T]he compensation is very, very small because it also depends on the negotiation" "so, for example, [...] they pay only 1 euro or two euro per hectare. Yeah, it is quite common. But sometimes there is only one 20-kilogram of rice. [...] [A]nd they send the army or the police".[137]

The compensation is portrayed as insignificant and unfair. The compensation is framed to give the image that it is paid in order to silence objections to plantations.

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[135] Colchester and Jiwan 2006, 5.
[136] Colchester and Jiwan 2006, 5; Bamba, interview.
[137] Bamba, interview..

Also it is depicted that sometimes the compensation is delivered by authorities that make refusal difficult. All this is used to frame the process of plantation establishment as unfair and, to an extent, forceful and dubious. Furthermore, the role of the government in creating the problems related to the establishment of plantations is again highlighted.

The story of the establishment process ends with an explanation that, in return for the released land, the people receive a two-hectare smallholding with oil palm already planted on it. It is mentioned that the smallholders then have to pay for this smallholding by taking up a loan from the company. The smallholders are described to be unaware of the total amounts of loan they have to assume as well as the sizes of reductions they have to pay.

> "The process by which they [referring to smallholders] get paid also tends to be confusing. Farmers get handed a chit recognising the receipt of their crop at the mill gate and are later paid by the cooperative. The amount they actually receive, however, is much reduced. Sums are subtracted for debt repayments, for the KUD running costs and for transport. A `loading fee' may also be subtracted. A 'waiting fee' is charged for the time in the queue at the mill gate. A fee for 'security' is charged. Some KUD charge a premium for the driver and most also deduct money for farmers' 'savings'."[138]

This description portrays the oil palm plantation deals as dubious and "secretive". This sort of framing highlights transparency as an important part of sustainability and environmental justice.

This is when the rim of the frame is deployed. The whole oil palm plantation system (the story of the establishment process that is put together so far) is framed all over again by explaining "what is really happening" when the plantation is finally established and the people have to pay for their smallholdings:

> "So, if we look at this system, what is really happening is that the investors or lets say businessmen - they like business – they go to the investor, financial institution, they borrow some money from the financial institution for opening a palm oil plantation some where there in Borneo [...] So, the businessman starts opening the area. But this loan, you know that the businessman owes to the financial institution, is paid by the farmer. So, the credit for 20 years. On the other hand, the farmer [...]

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[138] Colchester and Jiwan 2006, 7.

has to pay the loan of the businessman and respectively they have to pay for their own plot."[139]

In the end, the plantation deals are portrayed so that they only benefit the government (who gain the ownership of customary lands) and the companies (who can exploit the smallholders financially). This framing is used to question the government's sincerity in drawing development plans and also the whole definition of development these plans construct. An understanding of the deals between indigenous people and companies as exploitative helps to raise demands of empowerment and shifts in power.

There are also other ways this rim of the frame is put to use. The establishment process of oil palm plantations as exploitative is also constructed, for example, through comparisons to kultuurstelsel:

> "And we used to say even this oil palm plantation system is worse than kultuurstelsel of the Dutch. Do you know the rules of the Dutch colonial era, in which they ehm [...] applied it, kultuurstelsel? [...] So, at that time, basically, what the Dutch colonial were doing, is forcing [...] the Indonesian people to plant certain commodities, [...] spice, you know. So, they force it for the European demand. That is what was happening and it cost some result, you know. [...] But if we compare it to the oil palm plantation system right now, the system of oil palm plantation is a lot worse than kultuurstelsel. Let me tell you how this thing [the oil palm plantation system] works, briefly."[140]

After this the advocate explains how the government takes control over land and how the businessmen make the farmers pay not only for their own smallholdings but also for the businessmen's loan. Then he concludes with this remark: "So, that's why I said it is worse than kultuurstelsel"[141].

Kultuurstelsel is here described as forced plantation explaining that during this period people were forced to plant certain crops thus having no power to decide themselves what to farm on their own land. Through this comparison, the oil palm plantation system is portrayed as worse. This sort of framing implies that not only is oil palm cultivation forced upon people but the whole system of oil palm plantation development is used to exploit and control indigenous people. It is explained that through this system the people loose their lands and are exploited financially.

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[139] Bamba, interview.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.

Through legal and exploitative framing civil society actors are able to make normative claims by drawing attention to rights and obligations. Civil society actors are able to question the right and authority of the government by explaining that the government does not respect the obligations it has toward the indigenous people. These obligations are explained to include development measures. Framing the oil palm plantation system as exploitation (instead of development) is a way to show that the government cannot fulfil its obligations, and accordingly, should not have rights over land and authority over interpretations of development. This sort of framing also sets a normative "road map" that orientates the actions of civil society so, that they should include local empowerment in them.

7.2.3 Extending the Framing to Cover Environmental Concerns

The diagnostic framing in the narrative is elaborated further by extending the framing to cover environmental concerns. This is done by attributing blame for the degradation of the environment to plantation companies and portraying the indigenous people, together with the environment, as victims. On one hand, smallholders are depicted to be:

> "aware that they are, in part, a cause of this decline in environmental health [mainly referring to the degradation of forests], as participants in the estates, and as hunters, fishers and farmers dependent on increasingly limited resources."[142]

It is noted that indigenous people are involved in the destruction of the environment not only through their involvement in oil palm plantation schemes but also through other activities. It is also explained that the natural resources local communities use, are becoming "increasingly limited" implying that this decrease in the amount of resources is, at least in part, caused by the activities that local communities are involved in. Yet, this depiction is also used to alleviate the blame that is attributed to the local people. This is done by explaining that the people in question are dependent of the surrounding environment for example as hunters, fishers and farmers. The framing continues to attribute most of the blame to the government and companies.

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[142] Colchester and Jiwan 2006, 11.

> "In general, smallholdings are established by government and by companies without reference to communities. Lands are allocated in accordance with regional land use plans and smallholdings are allotted by companies within these zones without smallholders having a say."[143]

This sort of framing attributes blame for the degradation of forests to the government and companies as they are the ones who decide on the location of the plantation. The framing portrays smallholders mainly as victims, not as active participants. The inability of smallholders to affect plantation deals and the former framing of smallholders as victims of plantation development portrays them as victims together with the environment. This is especially implied when companies are depicted to set up oil palm plantations "not on the grassfields, the open fields" but on "the forest area" because "then for the land clearing they cut all the trees, and actually, all the trees that they cut, they use that to pay [for the costs of plantation establishment]"[144]. In this description, the environment is portrayed in a similar position as the smallholders were during framing in exploitative terms. The environment is framed as the economic basis that makes the plantation deals so lucrative.

The framing of the environment and indigenous people as victims can be seen as a regulative norm that helps to orientate "appropriate" forms action in order to counter the problems posed by oil palm plantations. The framing implies that measures should not be taken "against" indigenous people and smallholders. Instead, actions should be taken for their empowerment. This sort of behaviour is further encourages by explanations that tie the wellbeing of indigenous people together with the wellbeing of the environment.

The faith of the environment is tied together with the faith of the people, implying that the wellbeing of the environment goes hand in hand with the wellbeing of the people. I have here three short stories which tie the wellbeing of the people and environment together and elaborate on the diagnostic framing of the problem. The short descriptions function like warnings, further explaining what will happen if the oil palm

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[143] Colchester and Jiwan 2006, 11
[144] Members of Pancur Kasih, interview.

plantation system will not be changed. The first one deals with conflicts that arise due to oil palm plantations:

> "This has a very serious social impact in the future. [...] If people lose their land [...]. So, for example, [...] those villages who are working for the plantation because they have already converted their areas to palm oil, and they don't get enough income, so they have to find other sources. They start bothering, you know, ehm, the fellow farmers [...] by, for example tapping the rubbers there, you know, because they need some extra income [...] or collect the firewood in that area because they don't have it in the plantation areas [...]. And you can imagine, you know, within the next 30 or 40 years, the social situation, you know, in that area will be very prone to conflict."[145]

The line of reasoning in this story is quite clear: The expansion of oil palm plantations has caused some community members to lose all their lands except the 2-hectare smallholding of oil palm. The loss of land is portrayed to cause conflicts among communities. Conflicts, it is explained, rise because the people, who are involved in oil palm plantation schemes, need to supplement their income, and due to the lack in available farming land they have to impose on other people's land. This sort of reasoning portrays the people (both the ones involved in oil palm and the ones who stayed out of the schemes) as victims of oil palm plantation development. The story re-enforces the image that environmental degradation (deforestation) is caused by plantation companies, and that the "victims" are both people and the environment.

The second story links the destruction of indigenous culture together with the destruction of the surrounding environment:

> "[I]f we talk about the cultural impact for the Dayak people especially - they are the local people - there are three things, three main comp... main elements that become the most ehm important for their ehm ehm culture, yeah. First is land, second is forest and third is river, yeah, or water. Without these three things the Dayak culture could not survive. [...] Why? Because to be able to exist the Dayak culture needs resources you know from these three main elements to be able to perform the cultures. [...] If they want to maintain their agricultural knowledge you know, and practices and tradition, they need forest to do that. If they want to maintain their natural resource management, for example, they need rivers. So, without those three, it is not possible for them to maintain their cultures. [...]"[146]

This story frames natural elements, namely land, forest and water, inseparable from indigenous peoples' culture. This framing further elaborates on the diagnostic framing,

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[145] Bamba, interview.
[146] Ibid.

as the story constructs the expansion of oil palm plantations, and the degradation of natural resources caused by this expansion, as a threat to indigenous peoples' culture. Thus, the narrative also supports cultural diversity as an important part of our understanding of sustainability.

The third short story shows how plantations affect people's ability to supplement their income with other crops and what happens when large scale monoculture plantations become popular in a region:

> "Well, ideally, it [referring to rotation farming] should be around minimum or five years before you go back to that area and start clearing the area again for a rice field, yeah. But since now, more and more areas has been converted to plantations and also destroyed by these logging activities - both illegal and legal, it's just the same - so, the areas become very very narrow, so it is not possible to, all the time, to do the rotation you know in proper time, in five to seven years. So, the rotation becomes shorter and shorter. And that of course will have some impact on the harvest and also on sustainability of the area. So, that's also one of the challenges now you know with the opening of this forest [...]. But if it is done properly, you know, I think the local people have proved that for hundreds or even thousands of years they have been able to maintain the sustainability of the Kalimantan environment. Because otherwise, if what they are doing were wrong, then I don't think that the republic of Indonesia will inherit good Kalimantan forest condition. You know, from the local people when it was declared independence. So it is very clear that ehm ehm the forest destruction is caused more by this industrial and development activities than local people."[147]

Through this description, the narrative takes a stand on "proper" ways of natural resource use and management. Blame for forest destruction is assigned to industrial development activities, not customary uses of land and forests. So, here local people are the caretakers of the forest and industrialisation is the cause of destruction. The argument is based on an interpretation of history as it is noted that the forests have been in better condition before industrial development plans started and the forests were only used by indigenous people in customary ways. Also, not only the environment, but also the local people are affected by the degradation as people are not able to get as good as a yield as they used to. Here the wellbeing of the environment clearly goes hand in hand with the well being of the people.

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[147] Bamba, interview.

7.2.4 Prognostic framing

The narrative offers three acceptable/appropriate ways to counter the problems caused by the oil palm plantation system. First, the narrative promotes an image of oil palm plantations as unsustainable. Thus, the narrative expresses that the expansion of oil palm plantations should be stopped. This, according to the narrative, can be done by offering an alternative to oil palm.

> "I think local product like rubber is very promising in the future. And you could enrich the rubber plantation which has already belong to the people and they manage it according to their tradition, and it does not need to clear the area to plant rubber, you know, so it can grow together with other trees. So, it is very sustainable. And I think this is one of the alternatives we could offer. And for the other areas like in East Kalimantan for example maybe rattan could become the alternative, yeah. We have to find another way, other than the palm oil. And I think it is also not wise to open large areas of palm oil in West Kalimantan. So in the future the economy of West Kalimantan depends solely on one product. That is not very wise, I think. Because, if the product price drops then the whole province will suffer."[148]

A juxtapositioning is drawn between oil palms and other products like rubber. The juxtapositioning is based on two divisions between the crops. First, rubber and rattan (the possible other products) are mentioned to be local in contrast to oil palms. Second, oil palms are known to be a monoculture crop while rubber and rattan are able to grow with other trees and plants. The former juxtapositioning is also used to point out that alternative crops are environmentally more sustainable than oil palms. The argument for alternatives is finalised by expressing concerns over the expansion of oil palm plantations. These concerns are dressed in the form of dependency on one crop, which can leave people vulnerable to price changes and market fluctuations.

Second, the narrative explains that campaigns which are demanding a change in regulations and are aimed at government are needed. It is explained that campaigns ought to be aimed at the government because the government "has the right and also the responsibility to make the regulation"[149], expressing that the government is responsible for the problematic situation. Furthermore, it is explained that it is the government "who invites the foreign investors"[150] into the country further

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[148] Bamba, interview.
[149] Hendy, interview.
[150] Ibid.

emphasising the governments role in creating the problem. The government is also framed as the character with authority (ability), and respectively, with the responsibility to "change the regulation and also take away the permit they have already given to oil palm plantations"[151]. It is specified that the government has the responsibility to take away permits because the oil palm plantations "cause disadvantage to the community"[152]. So, it is suggested that in order to improve the oil palm plantation system a change in regulation is needed.

These campaigns that are aimed at the government are explained to be carried out by bearing witness to the injustices (and environmental degradation) caused by oil palm plantations. This is done by bringing the injustices (and environmental problems) into public knowledge, in order to pressure the government to alter the (interpretation of) regulations related to oil palm plantations.

The third response offered in this narrative is the facilitation of local empowerment. Most of the empowerment activities concentrate on campaigning for indigenous peoples' right to FPIC. FPIC refers to right of indigenous peoples "to give or withhold their free, prior and informed consent to actions that affect their lands, territories and natural resources"[153]. The right to FPIC is described to derive from "indigenous peoples' right to self determination and is closely linked to people' rights to their lands and territories based on customary and historical connections with them"[154]. On the other hand, the right to self determination is described to include respect for "customary laws, the whole system in general, not just land rights" and "the right to prioritise development for themselves" as FPIC functions as "the underlying principle that people should be free to make choices about the way they are governed and what happens on their lands"[155]. Ensuring peoples right to FPIC is also one of the principles in the RSPO criteria for sustainable palm oil.

Promotion of the right to FPIC aims at shifting more power and leverage to indigenous people. By explaining that indigenous people have this right because of

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[151] Hendy, interview.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Colchester and Ferrari 2007, 1.
[154] Colchester and Ferrari 2007, 2.
[155] Ibid.

customary and historical connections to a certain territory, the narrative tries to open public space for the idea that customary laws and rights are, in respect to land, above national regulations. Thus the right to FPIC aims to deconstruct power structures that are considered to limit the ability of indigenous people to form freely their own understanding of (sustainable) development. This idea is further elaborated below:

> "indigenous peoples' right to FPIC should also help to ensure that imposed development schemes would only go ahead on their lands where impacts on indigenous peoples had been addressed to the extent that the peoples themselves were assured that the projects would bring them long-term benefits. Respect for the right to say 'no' should also stop the kinds of imposed and destructive development schemes which have given the very word 'development' such a bad name, and would contribute to the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources."[156]

This description sheds light on what sustainable development is considered to be. Two aspects are brought into attention: First, development schemes should bring long-term benefits to indigenous people. Second, the schemes should not be imposed upon people but freely and knowingly decided upon. As oil palm plantation schemes do not meet these qualifications, it is implied to be important that people have the right to reject plantation development. It is also implied that empowering people and helping them to secure their rights to self determination can work for environmental protection. By portraying the right like this further ties development plans, like oil palm plantations, together with environmental destruction and social injustices.

On the other hand the right to FPIC is also used refer to indigenous peoples' dealings with non-state actors. It is mentioned that the right to FPIC also applies to a situation where NGOs are "seeking to control, or to gain access to, their lands and resources, whether for development or for conservation"[157]. Thus, the prognostic framing also underlines that "ensuring that indigenous peoples and farmers have the freedom to decide what happens on their lands" also means "accepting that communities and farmers may make mistakes or make choices we think are imprudent"[158]. Elaborating on this idea further, it is clarified that what NGOs are doing when they are campaigning for the right to FPIC is "asserting a rights-based approach, in line with

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[156] Colchester and Ferrari 2007, 2.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Colchester, interview.

the principle of self determination, not the imposition of well-intentioned pre-planned outcomes"[159].

Though, it is implied that the empowerment of indigenous people could activate people to work for environmental protection, it is also explained that this is not the aim of the activities that are taken to facilitate local empowerment. The narrative frames empowerment so, that measures taken to empower people should not be tied to pre-planned outcomes, even if these outcomes were to ease environmental protection. Through this framing, a tension between environmental governance and emancipatory forms of environmentalism becomes visible. On one hand, the link between people's wellbeing and environmental conservation can contribute to both, measures taken for empowerment and measures taken for environmental protection. On the other hand, empowerment that involves "pre-planned outcomes" does not really qualify as empowerment in this narrative. By embracing a "rights-based approach" the narrative emphasises social and emancipatory forms of environmentalism over environmental governance.

Some NGOs, for example, have made DVDs where indigenous communities tell about their experiences (the advantages and disadvantages) of oil palm plantation partnerships. These DVDs are then showed to communities who are considering joining a plantation scheme. This way NGOs can deliver information of oil palm plantation schemes to local communities in a way that "really" represent views from the grassroots' level. NGOs also inform communities of their rights. Facilitating empowerment this way, can be seen as an effort to avoid dictating outcomes for the local communities and instead working out possible outcomes with them as partners.

7.2.5 Framing the RSPO

As the RSPO deals with social and environmental protections (for example, the right to FPIC is part of the criteria for SPO), the roundtable is framed in this narrative as "a tool" in the struggle for environmental justice[160]. Even though the RSPO considers

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[159] Colchester, interview.
[160] For example Colchester and Lumuru 2005; Lumuru, interview; Bamba, interview.

that palm oil can be sustainable, and thus promotes "a responsible expansion" of oil palm plantations, it is seen as a way to improve the practices on existing plantations and to offer valuable social protections, such as the right to FPIC. Yet, in this narrative, the RSPO is portrayed problematic in few ways. First, it is explained that the RSPO is based on market mechanisms, and so the standard is based on voluntary measures. Attention is drawn to the problems rising from this voluntary approach as many of the standards deal with issues that are explained to be "really the government's responsibility" [161] (labour standards, land registers, laws respecting community land rights and land use planning processes are given as examples). Thus, plantation companies may not be able to meat some of the criteria in the standard just based on their voluntary action. Perceiving the standard of the RSPO in this way emphasises that the problems related to land acquisition cannot be solved through market mechanisms alone. Second, the membership of NGOs in the RSPO is, on one hand, considered to "weaken the struggle, because most of the RSPO participants are from the palm oil industry, meaning that [the NGOs] presence will legitimise the current large-scale plantation system"[162]. On the other hand, involvement in the RSPO is also considered "as a good strategy for influencing the pro-investor policy of the Indonesian government.[163]" Involvement in the RSPO is also upheld by perceiving the RSPO as "a valuable way of opening up political space for Indonesian civil society groups, concerned about the impacts of palm oil.[164]" This sort of framing constructs the RSPO in two ways: as a possible solution (as it has good protections and is considered to open political space for Indonesian NGOs) as well as part of the problem (as it is considered to legitimise the plantation system and thus weaken the struggle to oppose this system). This sort of framing politicises the notion of civil society. Even though the RSPO is perceived to weaken the normative aims that this narrative promotes, it also perceives the RSPO as a way to open up public space for civil society. Thus, this narrative constructs the issue of palm oil (from the diagnosis to the prognosis) through terms of emancipatory forms of environmentalism. The aim of this narrative is environmental and social change that empowers people as it encourages dialogue between different forms of environmentalisms.

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[161] Colchester, interview.
[162] Lumuru, interview.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Colchester, interview.

7.2.6 Concluding Remarks

Questions of social justice and social and cultural sustainability are at the core of this narrative. The narrative implies that, while we are talking about the sustainability of palm oil, what we are actually talking about is the very definition of sustainability. The narrative explains that it is important to include social and cultural considerations, or better yet, the notions of cultural diversity and social justice in our understanding of the concept of sustainable development. It is understood that sustainability cannot exist without social justice and cultural diversity. In addition to these aspects, transparency is highlighted as an important part of sustainability.

The narrative also questions the notion of development that is perceived to be implied in the oil palm plantation system. Oil palm plantations are considered to be development plans that are imposed upon people. Thus, the narrative tries to deconstruct their image as "development" by explaining that the plantation schemes are only the government's way to control land and indigenous people. Through the deconstruction, this narrative tries to open up public space for alternative conceptions of development that include social and environmental justice. Hence, the narrative represents primarily structural forms of environmentalism, as it aims at altering existing power structures and understandings of development by opening up more political space for civil society and indigenous people.

The normative interpretations of oil palm plantation development in this narrative imply that, in order to achieve sustainability people should be enabled to make "free" interpretations of development. According to the narrative, this can be done through local empowerment. Measures that are undertaken for local empowerment are rendered meaningful by implying that shifting power to indigenous people and smallholders will help them preserve forests, and thus contribute to environmental protection. These normative interpretations also persuade civil society actors to undertake measures for local empowerment and to do environmental work together with indigenous people as partners.

7.3 Oil Palm Plantations as a Question of livelihood and survival

In this narrative, oil palm plantations are described to compromise people's livelihood in two ways. First, it is explained that people are not able to derive adequate benefits from oil palm farming. Second, the expansion of oil palm plantations is mentioned to affect the smallholders' ability to supplement their income e.g. with other types of farming because the expansion of plantations has made land and forest scarce.

Oil palm plantations are depicted to bring economic change and development but the economic benefits from oil palm farming are framed as temporary and inadequate. In contrast to this, land and forest seem to represent continuance and be portrayed as the basis for life and livelihood. Blame, or causal relations, is attributed to plantation companies who are considered to manipulate people and make bad deals with them. Some of the blame is also attributed to regulations that make this situation possible. Furthermore, people explain that the lack of knowledge about their own rights and about the regulations that deal with oil palm has contributed to the situation they now are in.

Thus, prognostic framing includes such normative claims as smallholders' efforts to empower themselves, efforts to increase their knowledge about their rights and the regulations dealing with oil palm. Also the establishment of their own union is considered to provide them an arena where from the smallholders can address the problems they have experienced. Thus, the establishment of the union is seen as part of the solution to the problems faced by members. In addition to this, changes in regulation and the pricing of fresh fruit bunches (FFB) are considered as important means to improve the smallholders' situation.

7.3.1 Economic change and Development

The narrative is constructed by giving examples of the economic development brought by the plantation. For example, motorcycles were used as symbols of economic development and prosperity in a few interviews. Motorcycles were described as "the demand of the era" as "everything should be fast" explaining their

meaning to the people in question[165]. During an interview with a village leader in East Kalimantan, the following short description was given when I asked the leader to describe the economic change they had experienced:

> "Before the plantation came, there were only 1 or 2 motorcycles in the village, but now every household has 1 or 2 motorcycles. Just to give you a picture!"[166]

This short depiction of the economic development in the village deals with economic development as prosperity, in terms of an increased ability to purchase material goods. The leader portrays himself and his village wealthier. The prosperity is due to the oil palm plantation. In the next brief narration the economic development that was brought by an oil palm plantation is framed multiply, giving a rather different image of the change:

> "[W]e, the community, had been promised that there will be economic change if there is a plantation opened here. The company also brought some of the Tumangung – the community leaders – to Sumatra to see the proof that actually the plantation is good and makes the community become prosperous. For example, here before the plantation you can hardly see a bicycle or [let alone] a motorcycle but there, in Sumatra, they have them. But then we understood that this is only kind of manipulation, just a lie, because the proof, the fact now, untill 20 years, the community here still feels that they are not prosperous."[167]

In this brief narration the economic development is framed in a very different way. Though motorcycles are still framed as a symbol of development and prosperity, economic change brought by the plantation is framed as a sort of illusion (or a lie) resulting from manipulation. The last sentence can be seen as a communicative frame, being evaluative of the foretold story: it explains that the change and promises of prosperity that were visioned by motorcycles were not what they were expected to be. What people highlight is that they still consider motorcycles as development and that they do not want to oppose development[168]. Yet, even though they have motorcycles, they still feel poor implying that the vision of having motorcycles in the village was a vision of a more thorough economic development. Yet, though people now have motorcycles and life has become easier in some respect, people do not feel that life has changed in significant ways and the people still feel poor and disadvantaged.

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[165] Atung, interview.
[166] Village leader from Gunung Sari, interview.
[167] Atung, interview.
[168] Ibid.

Together with perceptions of economic development, people describe the ways in which they were manipulated or intimidated to take part in the plantation deals. In the former description this was done by noting that the company took the community leaders to Sumatra to see how beneficial the plantation schemes are for local communities. The explanation portrays the company's actions as manipulation. There is another example of manipulation and intimidation below:

> "[B]ecause the community is still pure and we don't know anything about law, so those who have authority try to intimidate us and we become helpless and cannot do anything. Because, if we don't give land, we have been told that we are trying to stop development and then they think like: Are you a communist? Are you a provocateur or what? So, we were afraid of that."[169]

Here the person explains why villagers take part in plantation schemes. By framing his community "pure" he portrays the community to be easily tricked into plantation schemes. This sort of framing also explains how people are intimidated to take part in the schemes. When he explains that the government and companies blame people of opposing development or of being a communist, he shows what sort of accusations are used for intimidation. These accusations help to explain what sort of things people do not want to or just are not able to say. For example, this description shows that people feel that they cannot oppose oil palm plantation schemes if this opposition is interpreted (by the government or companies) as opposition of development. This does not necessarily mean that indigenous people and other smallholders alike would even want to oppose development (understood in the forms of large-scale plantations). It just means that even if they would want to do so, they feel that they cannot.

The diagnostic framing is further elaborated by explaining why the smallholders do not feel prosperous and why they consider themselves poor. First of all, this is done by explaining that the price for fresh fruit bunches is too low. Here are two short descriptions that elaborate on the issue:

> "The price for TBS [fresh fruit bunch, FFB] should be increased. 1 unit [= a 2-hectare smallholding] can only produce 1 tonne per month, maximum 1.5 tonnes per month. We get 1194 Rp per kilo for TBS, so we'll get 1 194 000 Rp per month. This is our gross income. After we pay for transportation and other things, maybe 500 000Rp is left. If we weren't working on rubber plantation, we couldn't make ends meet. That's

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[169] Members of SPKS, interview.

> why we really hope the price would increase, like to 2000 or 3000Rp per kilo. Then it would bring prosperity to us."[170]

> "If we only get 1 million, it's only enough for eating and daily basics. After that, there is no money left to buy fertilisers and pesticides. It means that we cannot take good care of the plantation. And if the plantation isn't being kept well, then it'll be less productive also."[171]

For one, the low income of smallholders is portrayed to depend on the low price of fresh fruit bunches and on the size of the smallholding (2ha). It is explained that people are only able to produce 1-1.5 tonnes per unit (2ha), and with this amount of produce, their earnings will stay at a low rate. To improve their situation, people need either a better price or bigger plantations. In these descriptions emphasis is put on the prise of the FFB. This first description sets the situation, explains what sort of limits are involved. This first description also points out that people need to supplement their incomes with other crops. Pointing out that if they could not supplement, they really could not make end meet. Then it is further explained just what they mean by "couldn't make ends meet" in the second description.

In the second description, the low price of FFB causes a vicious circle: the farmer gets an inadequate price for his produce, which in turn leaves him with too little money to take good care of his smallholding, which in turn results in lower yields, which result in lower incomes and so forth. The circle keeps going on. Describing the pricing of FFB like this, gives an image that the plantation companies are driving the farmers into poverty.

7.3.2 Scarcity of Land

The diagnostic framing is taken further with short description portraying the benefits that can be derived from oil palm, as temporary. People explain the temporary nature of the benefits through examples. These examples describe how people worry about the scarcity of land (for many, the only land left is their 2-hectare smallholding) and the effect this will have on their children's future. There are two examples below that portray the oil palm plantation as only giving temporary benefits:

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[170] Atung, Albertus Darius and Christianus, interview.
[171] Ibid.

"We can see that the economy is increasing here, like for example before, we do traditional farming but now we can build a house and life becomes easier. We have enough food to eat and children can go to school also."[172]

"We live quite good right now compared when we worked in rubber plantation, barter trade. Now we get cash money." [...] "Only temporary. Because what is left for children to get in the future? Because children probably won't get anything from what we are doing right now. We are afraid children will do crime because here is nothing to do, no work."[173]

These two examples set the situation by explaining that the person experiences the present situation as an improvement from the past. The change from barter trade to cash is considered to be a good thing. It is explained that life in the present is experienced to be easier because people are able to educate their children and they have enough food to eat etc. In the second example, all this is portrayed as "only temporary" because it is felt that the prosperity is tied to their income from the oil palm smallholding, and, though this income is enough to support them at the moment, it will not be enough to support all the children when they grow up. This line of thinking is further clarified in the next two examples (below) explaining that most of them only have the 2-hectare smallholdings left and several children. The smallholdings cannot support all of the children when they grow up and have families of their own. Due to this situation people need either more land or higher incomes from oil palm farming.

"Also one family can only get one unit, 2ha. We have children and when children grow up, we should give the land to them. But there's not enough land."[174]

"I have 3 children. I gave 7,5ha to company and got 2ha back. So, in the future the 2ha is supposed to be divided for 3 children – less than 1ha per person! This is why we are asking for a share in profits. It'll mean more income."[175]

The livelihood provided by oil palm plantations is framed as temporary. In contrast to this, land and forest represent some sort of continuance in this narrative. This can be seen in the examples that were told above and in the next short description. In the above ones, the meaning of land is limited to the smallholdings. In the following description, the meaning of land and forest is presented more as the basis of life and livelihood.

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[172] Members of SPKS, interview.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Herculanen, interview.

"Before we really depended on farming. The farming we divided into two parts: shifting cultivation and then rice fields and also rubber. Those were the economy. Because there's still some forest left, we could go hunting and could sell the animal meet. Also non-timber products like rattan, we can also sell it. But now that the forest is gone, everything is gone. Today there is back up plan for those who were able to keep other land. And then they can survive. Like, […] she owns young oil palm plantation and also rubber and cocoa. So, she can depend also on other things. But for those who don't have the land, it means they cannot do anything. Just hoping to work for the company and work for the replanting."[176]

The description shows how the economy of the people was more diverse earlier. The role of forest is highlighted in providing livelihood and wellbeing for the people. Oil palm plantations are related to the loss of forest, which in turn represents the loss of certain aspects of livelihood. Furthermore, it is explained that those who do not have any land left, except for their oil palm smallholding, cannot "survive". This is emphasised in the next two examples:

"In one place they already gave up their land and have no land left. And they have the factory on that land. So, without any land the community cannot do farming. And they are not allowed to work at the factory, so they cannot do any work at all. So, how can they survive in their life? This happened in Sungai Kodan, in Kapuas sub-district."[177]

"I gave land, but didn't receive any. So, then there was only inti[178] and outsiders got the land. I felt like a spectator on my own land."[179]

In these short descriptions the oil palm plantation is portrayed as a threat to people's life. The people in the former description are portrayed as victims who have been robbed from their land and livelihood. The whole description functions as a warning, as a "worst case scenario" and frames the oil palm plantation as a serious threat to people's life and livelihood. In the latter description, a person reflects upon his situation and frames himself as "a spectator" on his own land. This evaluative remark portrays the person as someone who has no control over the events, as someone who cannot be active. The problem in the description is the loss of control over land which has left him without livelihood. In the next example a village leader explains why he and his village have chosen to oppose a plantation scheme in the Kalimantan and Malaysian border area, called "the mega project":

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[176] Atung, interview.
[177] Members of SPKS, interview.
[178] Into refers to the nucleus estate.
[179] Jampin, interview.

"We opposed the mega-project on the border area. Not because we want to, try to halt development but because we also have to think about the lively[hood] aspects of the community. [...] It's harder to get water, there's pollution from factory and also [there has] rise some conflict within the community itself."[180]

Here the opposition of the plantation scheme is framed as a question of livelihood. It is first clarified that the people in question did not oppose the plantation scheme in order to oppose development, but to safeguard their own livelihood. The issue is further clarified by giving examples how plantations affect their livelihood. By framing the question this way helps smallholders and indigenous people to oppose plantation development without "opposing development".

7.3.3 Prognostic framing

The prognostic framing deals with smallholders' efforts to empower themselves and strengthen their union, to raise their awareness of laws and regulations in order to better understand their own rights, and to negotiate a better price for fresh fruit bunches.

The establishment of their own union is framed as part of the solution to their problems. It is explained that the union is important because before they were represented through organisations like the KUD (a village cooperative unit which deals with economic issues) and the forum of the farmer (an arena to discuss issues related to the plantation established by the company). The last two "arenas" were not considered to be based on equality and representation was considered to be unfair. For example, the forum of the farmer is framed as "a tool and symbol from the company" without "making any improvement for the farmers' condition"[181]. It is further explained that through the establishment of the union, members were trying "to build the power and also the solidarity among farmers"[182]. They also see that "by having the union [...] it means that their bargaining position will become stronger"[183]. So, the union is framed as a solution because, according to the prognostic framing, it has given smallholders and indigenous people more leverage.

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[180] Sartono, interview.
[181] Cion, interview.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.

It is further explained that the SPKS helps their members to "realise on their own rights, especially on their customary rights" and "understand about the regulation" and "their own problem"[184]. Through these activities farmers are depicted to have "become very critical about the unfairness of the company[...]"[185]. The rise in awareness is explained to contribute to solving the rest of the problems. For example, due to the rise in heir awareness, smallholders are depicted to be demanding to be involved in the pricing of FFB.

7.3.4 Concluding Remarks

This narrative ties the question of oil palm tightly to people's livelihood and life chances. It represents people's struggle to gain control of their own lives as an appropriate course of action in order to solve the problem. Sustainability is implied to be achieved when people still have land and forest left, so that the basis of their livelihood is not threatened. The idea of sustainability is based on future generations' (children) ability to cope in the future.

The narrative also shows how the political space of indigenous people and smallholders is limited as they cannot freely articulate reasons for opposing oil palm plantation schemes.

7.4 Livelihood and the Productivity of Smallholdings

There is a second smaller narrative, or a sub-narrative, that can be derived from the interviews with grassroots' activists and oil palm smallholders. This narrative perceives the problems related to livelihood in more limited terms. The problem is basically the same: oil palm farming is considered to drive people into poverty due to inadequate benefits from oil palm farming. Yet, this narrative portrays the situation so, that some people are able to derive benefits from their smallholdings while others are not. Those who are not able to do this, become poor. This difference in the

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[184] Cion, interview.
[185] Ibid.

smallholders' ability to derive benefits from oil palm farming is explained by their farming skills and technical know-how:

> "Oil palm plantation has really changed the community's economy and they realise there is some development. [...] But for those who don't understand and cannot provide land, they cannot keep their land properly. Then there's the problem.[...] [T]he community's not able to manage oil palm because they don't understand. Only a few people understand and they become the successful ones. [...] So, after these 25 years, we have the replanting and the company tried to take over because the company already saw the side-effects and they thought the community needs help to manage their plantation. [...] [I]n September they will be replanting the old ones. Then the management will be under same roof, in one place. Previously, the company took care of their own and the community of their own. So, community can just take the harvest or they can also become the worker. I supported the idea."[186]

It is also mentioned that the union does "the training on how to manage the plantation" so that the farmers learn "good management techniques" and know "how to manage the plantation well.[187]"

Thus, differing quite a lot from the previous interpretation, this narrative frames the productivity of the smallholdings as the underlying problem and "blames" the lack of smallholders' skills and know-how for the problem. The prognostic framing thus involves improving the smallholders' knowledge on good management practices and, through this, getting better yields.

This narrative gives a rather limited interpretation of the problems faced by smallholders. Yet, it also represents people's struggles to gain control of their own lives as people are training to improve their management and farming skills.

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[186] Sartono, interview.
[187] Cion, interview..

8. Conclusion: Narratives of Sustainability and Environmental Justice

My aim was to study the construction of meaning in a transnational civil society network campaigning over palm oil. I chose to research the construction of meaning because transnational civil society networks' primary form of politics might be called "ideational" as a big bulk of their work involves interpreting taken-for-granted, but socially and environmentally destructive, practices in novel ways in order to alter the manner in which people understand and act upon these practices. When civil society actors make these interpretations, they also form normative claims about how to achieve sustainability. These normative claims involve setting appropriate courses of action within the networks and specifying rights and obligations.

Transnational civil society networks were understood to do this by envisaging (grand) narratives of sustainability and environmental justice. These narratives were understood to have normative power as narratives (re)define "proper" understandings of, and behaviour towards, an issue. Primarily, the narratives were taken to offer alternative ways to understand (sustainable) development through redefinitions of "proper" natural resource use and "true" ownership of these resources. The narratives (especially the ones that represented more social forms of environmentalism) also offered evaluations of (exploitative) power relations and persuaded to alter them in order to change the course of development into more sustainable and humane directions.

The environmental concerns portrayed by NGOs were also explained to vary as there are multiple forms of environmentalism as well as more or less social forms of environmentalism in the world. Furthermore, four specific types of ideational politics – namely symbolic politics, politics of bearing witness, leverage politics and politics of local empowerment – were introduced in the theoretical part of the thesis to better understand the construction of meaning within the network.

All the forms of ideational politics were present in the narratives. First, *symbolic politics* was widely used in the narrative that framed the question of oil palm

plantations mainly in ecological or environmental terms. In this narrative, endangered species were used to help audiences far away to better understand what sort of effects forest loss and, thus, plantation expansion, have. These symbols were also used to evoke emotion and concern. This narrative also used testimonials from industry members to convince larger publics that solving the problem through market mechanisms can work. Second, the larger public was also drawn to *bear witness* on the exploitative characteristics of the plantation system as NGOs raised the hardship experienced by indigenous people and smallholders to public awareness. Third, through the manipulation of global interdependencies NGOs were able to make companies and the government more sensitive for the environmental and social problems caused by oil palm plantations. This sort of *leverage politics* was used to change the behaviour of companies and the Indonesian government. Fourth, local empowerment is a big part of the work undertaken by NGOs in order to alter the prevailing social order and to embolden smallholders and indigenous people. By adopting a rights based approach to the problems posed by oil palm, NGOs were able to open up political space for indigenous people and smallholders. Ultimately, the *politics of local empowerment* aimed to help indigenous people to envisage alternative conceptions of development that better suit them.

I was able to derive four narratives from the research material. These narratives perceived sustainability in terms of forest conservation, improved management practices on oil palm plantations, participation, transparency, and (adequate and long-term) economic benefits. The first narrative dealt with sustainable palm oil mainly in ecological terms highlighting needs to protect high conservation value forests and needs to improve management practices so, that they do not degrade the surrounding environment or damage people's livelihoods. The second narrative emphasised the participation of indigenous peoples and smallholders as equals in the plantation partnerships. The participation of indigenous people in determining development for themselves was represented as a crucial part of environmental justice. The narrative also highlighted the need for transparency in the plantation deals. Participation and viable economic benefits were brought to the center of the problem in the stories of smallholders and members of SPKS. In the two narratives (that were derived from the grassroots' level) economic benefits were perceived important, but at the moment,

inadequate. Smallholders also held their own participation as an important part of the struggle to improve their livelihoods.

In order to achieve these aims, the narratives included two different normative interpretations of appropriate courses of action for civil society actors. First, partnerships between civil society actors, industry members and governments were framed as a good way to gain leverage and to open up political space for civil society. Through the establishment of a multi-stakeholder forum, NGOs were portrayed to be able to affect environmental governance well. Second, measures to facilitate local empowerment were interpreted as an acceptable way to alter the oil palm plantation system. Sustainability, e.g. in terms of cultural diversity, was framed to be achieved only through local empowerment.

So, the analysis revealed that oil palm cultivation is narrated and framed in multiple ways. Common to all the narratives was that blame for the degradation of the environment was mainly attributed to palm oil companies and the Indonesian government. Indigenous people and smallholders – together with the environment and wildlife - were instead presented as victims of the plantation development. Yet, these multiple framings also revealed a division between two forms of environmentalism in the narratives. First, one of the narratives mainly represented concerns to protect forests and wildlife without broader aims of social transformation – i.e. it represented forms of environmentalism that strive for environmental governance. The other narratives represented more social forms of environmentalism. These sorts of narratives represented efforts to open up more political space for alternative understandings of "proper" natural resource management and "true" ownership of land in order to alter the ideational context in which oil palm plantation development "as usual" is acceptable. Through this, they also strived to alter the prevailing social order. Through these narratives NGOs were (to an extent) able to open up more political space for civil society and for alternative understandings of development.

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