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The Transformation of the Namblong Indigenous Movement Against Deforestation Practices in the Grime Nawa Valley, Papua

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the transformation of the Namblong Indigenous movement against deforestation driven by PT Permata Nusa Mandiri's oil palm expansion in the Grime Nawa Valley, Jayapura Regency, Papua. The study explores why and how the movement changed, maps its stages, and identifies key actors. The intrinsic case study draws on three evidentiary layers: in-depth interviews with six key actors on 9 June 2026; participant observation; and a coded documentary corpus of seventeen items carrying fourteen named speakers, nine of whom were not part of the leadership. The customary boundaries, the revoked concession, and patrol posts were verified in QGIS. When analyzed through the lens of New Social Movement theory, the findings reveal four non-linear phases: traditional protest (2011–2020); multi-scalar advocacy alliances (2021–2022); a partial, contested victory (2022–2025), in which central-government revocations were never matched by district-level cancellation; and institutionalization through Indonesia's first Indigenous-owned corporation (2024), owned by 44 clans across roughly 52,765 hectares. This study argues that the incompleteness of the legal victory, rather than its success, drove the shift from rejection to development. The study also documents the accompanying internal friction. The present study extends New Social Movement theory by proposing the Indigenous corporation as a new repertoire of resistance in the Global South. This is offered as an analytical, precondition-dependent generalization.

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■ INTRODUCTION

Deforestation is a significant global environmental concern, directly affecting ecosystems, climate, and the rights of Indigenous peoples. Ongoing deforestation in Southeast Asia is driven largely by the expansion of extractive industries and infrastructure development. This phenomenon is further compounded by the inadequate protection of Indigenous territories, which exacerbates the situation (FAO, 2020). From a political ecology standpoint, tropical deforestation is a form of ecological distribution conflict driven by the expansion of industrial economies into remaining natural habitats (Martinez-Alier, 2021). Papua's tropical forests, among the largest in Indonesia, are now a primary target of this accumulation (Malinda, 2025; Nerenberg, 2022).

For Indigenous peoples in Papua, forests are not merely land or a commodity; they are living space, cultural identity, and a sacred source of life and protection (Chao, 2021). This relational perspective is congruent with the global rights-of-nature movement and the notion of multispecies justice (Fitz-Henry, 2022; Kauffman & Martin, 2023). However, as Tănăsescu (2020) contends, the relationship between Indigenous peoples and modern law is strategic rather than genealogical: legal instruments do not represent Indigenous ontologies but serve as channels for emancipatory goals. The tension between the forest's sacred meaning and the modern legal-economic approach is central to the Namblong case. Cross-border evidence corroborates that this value is not merely symbolic, showing that deforestation on Indigenous lands occurs at a significantly slower rate than in unprotected areas and at rates comparable to formal conservation areas (Sze et al., 2021). Resistance to deforestation extends beyond local concerns; it contributes to global sustainability.

This research examines the transformation of the Namblong resistance movement against PT Permata Nusa Mandiri (hereafter PT PNM), which obtained a location permit from the Regent of Jayapura in 2011 for an oil palm plantation of about 32,000 hectares across the Unurum Guay, Nimbokrang and Nimboran districts, in a valley of high ecological value where plantation

licensing directly implicates the recognition of customary rights (Runtuboi et al., 2020). The company is named explicitly here because its permit numbers and concession boundaries are matters of public record in ministerial decrees, national and international reporting, and an international human rights case file. Anonymization would have made the spatial and documentary verification below impossible to audit. From 2019 onwards, the company initiated a program of land clearing and plantation development. This program continued until its activities were formally contested.

The expansion of oil palm into Papua represents the latest stage in the eastward shift of the commodity frontier, following the conversion of lowland Sumatra and Kalimantan. Subsequently, plantation capital has been directed to Papua, the final frontier of primary forest (Malinda, 2025). This phenomenon occurs within an imbalanced framework. Despite the formal expansion of regional authority and the recognition of Indigenous rights entailed by Special Autonomy, implementation is limited by forestry regulation, administrative capacity, and a contested social-forestry bureaucracy in which the advancement of customary-forest recognition is gradual (Maryudi et al., 2022; Sopaheluwakan et al., 2023). Permits are often issued before customary territories are delineated, forcing Indigenous communities to decline after the fact rather than participate in decision-making. This structural condition contributes to recurrent corporate–state–community conflicts in Papua (Afrizal et al., 2023; Afrizal & Berenschot, 2022). This largely stems from violations of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) principle. In the Namblong case, the requisite notification was not issued before the clearance operations began, and the landowners were not informed of the company's activities until after the work began. Resistance manifested in demonstrations at the Regent's office, road blockades, customary rituals, and advocacy through the Tribal Customary Council (Dewan Adat Suku, DAS). Greenpeace and national organizations such as WALHI, Yayasan Pusaka, and Yayasan Auriga Nusantara endorsed this resistance.

From January to March 2022, the central government issued a series of revocations. The Minister of Environment and Forestry revoked the company's forest-area release of 16,182.48 hectares, and the Minister of Investment revoked its business permit. However, the analysis shows that the Regency Government neither mirrored these decisions nor fully enforced them. Indigenous peoples resisted not only to secure recognition of their territorial sovereignty, but also to ensure their capacity to manage the valley's resources autonomously. The establishment of Indonesia's first Indigenous-owned enterprise, BUMMA, represents a significant development in corporate ownership and economic empowerment. This entity, formally incorporated as a limited liability company, is collectively owned by 44 clan leaders (Iram) and represents a substantial population of approximately 50,000 individuals.

This challenges two narratives about Indigenous peoples. The initial perspective portrays them as victims whose resistance ultimately proves unsuccessful. A comprehensive study of 150 oil palm conflicts finds that most communities struggle to address their grievances, largely because power holders and corporations collude within informalized state institutions (Berenschot et al., 2022; Berenschot & Dhiaulhaq, 2025). This vulnerability is further exacerbated by the escalating violence directed towards Indigenous environmental defenders (Scheidel et al., 2020; Tran & Hanaček, 2023). The second standpoint argues that Indigenous movements' capacity is limited to protest and advocacy. However, the Namblong case shows that these movements can use contemporary legal and economic instruments to assert sovereignty. This assertion aligns with the consolidation of commons, cooperatives, and corporations in Indonesia's contemporary land reform (Li, 2021).

The present study is grounded in the theoretical framework of New Social Movement (NSM) theory. The NSM paradigm, developed since the late 1960s by Touraine, Melucci, and Habermas, focuses on identity, meaning, autonomy, and quality of life rather than class conflict alone. It also defends the lifeworld from market and bureaucratic logic (Buechler, 2013). It is well suited to explaining the cultural and symbolic dimension of Indigenous resistance – how forests, rituals and territorial meanings operate alongside organization and funding – and recent commons-movement scholarship connects this cultural politics to the defense of shared resources (Villamayor-Tomas & García-López, 2021). The Namblong case represents a significant extension of the paradigm, as it concerns safeguarding identity through the establishment of enduring economic and legal entities.

The article is guided by three questions. The primary research question concerns identifying the processes that have led to the movement's transformation over time, and the underlying reasons for this transformation. RQ2: The investigation will analyze the stages of the transformation and subsequently categorize them. RQ3: Identify the agents responsible for the observed change, and analyze how their

interactions have shaped the trajectory from rejection to development. The study posits that the movement's resilience, as evidenced by its ability to transition from rejection to development, is not contingent on a single legal victory. Rather, it results from a multifaceted process that integrates NSM theory, political ecology, and forest relational ontology. This transition, from opposition to acceptance, remains ongoing and unfinished, underscoring the movement's capacity for adaptability and resilience in the face of legal challenges.

■ METHOD

Informants, Evidentiary Layers and Research Subjects

This study's evidence base is organized into three layers. This layered design responds to the concern that a movement encompassing 44 clans and approximately 50,000 people cannot be represented solely through its leadership.

Layer A consists of three conventional leadership informants who were interviewed individually on 9 June 2026. The informants include a customary leader (Iram) of the Tecuari clan, whose customary land the company cleared (IN-01); the chairman of the Namblong Tribal Customary Council (IN-05); and the chair of the Namblong Indigenous Women's Organization, ORPA (IN-06). These three actors have a significant presence within the nodes through which cultural legitimacy, customary governance, and women's mobilization are exercised.

Layer B comprises a group interview conducted at the office of the Indigenous-owned corporation on the same day, with three participants present simultaneously: the director of the corporation (IN-02), its operational director (IN-03) and a representative of the accompanying partner institution (IN-04). The group format was deliberately retained, as it was considered the most effective way to address the disagreement and qualification that arose between the three participants. This disagreement centered on issues such as profit distribution and the origin of capital, and the group format was deemed the most effective environment for resolving them.

Layer C is a documentary corpus meticulously assembled to transcend the conventional boundaries of leadership. The collection consists of seventeen published items, dated between April 2020 and April 2026. These include investigative reporting, non-governmental organization releases and case files, a national news agency report, and an international human rights case dossier. The items include attributable testimony from fourteen named speakers. Nine of these speakers are located outside the leadership nodes represented in Layers A and B. These include ordinary clan members, young Indigenous women active in community journalism and a cultural school, an ecotourism operator, and members of a neighboring clan whose customary forest overlaps the concession. The complete corpus, including publication dates, speakers, and access dates, is presented in the Data Sources section. Treating each item as third-party testimony, rather than as fieldwork, is a salient feature of the study. The study reports the evidentiary weight of each item accordingly.

The limitations of this design must be articulated explicitly. Layer C is clearly documentary and thus mediated. It is important to note that the researchers did not personally elicit these accounts themselves; rather, the selection of speakers is indicative of the editorial choices of the publishing organizations, as well as the composition of the community. A focus group discussion with directly affected ordinary clan members was not conducted during the June 2026 fieldwork, and the present article does not claim to substitute for one. The layered design enables a test of two key elements. Firstly, it ascertains whether the themes derived from leadership accounts also manifest, in analogous terms, in testimony gathered independently of the research team over six years. Secondly, it determines whether these themes are contradicted anywhere. As illustrated in Figure 3 and discussed in the section on friction and dissent, the test is reported as follows.

Treatment and Citation of Primary Interview Data

The primary interview material is treated in this article as personal communication. In accordance with the seventh edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, personal communications are considered unrecoverable by readers. They are therefore cited in text only and excluded from the reference list. To preserve both verifiability and the undertakings given to participants, each informant is assigned a stable code that identifies the institutional position held, the layer to which the account belongs, and the interview date. In-text citations therefore take the form (IN-01, customary leader, personal communication, 9 June 2026), rather than the undifferentiated form used in the previous version of this manuscript. The correspondence between codes and named individuals, in addition to signed consent forms, interview guides, recordings and verified transcripts, is retained by the research team and made available to the editors upon request, contingent upon the

Table 1. Informant codes and evidentiary layers

Code	Position	Layer	Interview setting, 9 June 2026
IN-01	Customary leader (Iram), Tecuari clan	A	Individual interview at the informant's residence, 11.30
IN-02	Director of the Indigenous-owned corporation	B	Group interview at the corporation's office, 13.20
IN-03	Operational director of the Indigenous-owned corporation	B	Group interview at the corporation's office, 13.20
IN-04	Representative of the accompanying partner institution	B	Group interview at the corporation's office, 13.20
IN-05	Chairman of the Namblong Tribal Customary Council (DAS)	A	Individual interview at the Council office, 15.50–16.20
IN-06	Chair of the Namblong Indigenous Women's Organization (ORPA)	A	Individual interview at the Customary and Cultural School, Benyom village, 16.30

Note: Layer A = customary leadership; Layer B = corporate management (group interview); Layer C = documentary corpus, listed in the Data Sources section.

participants' consent. The list of codes appears in Table 1.

The interviews were conducted in Indonesian. Direct quotations are presented in this article in the original Indonesian, enclosed in single quotation marks, immediately followed by an English translation in square brackets. This approach enables readers with the source language to assess the rendering while the argument remains legible in English. Quotations of a more substantial length are to be set as indented extracts. The exact wording of the interview transcripts, which were verified by the research team, has been reproduced here. The translations are the authors' own and were checked against the recordings during member checking with the Layer A and Layer B informants. In instances where a quotation constitutes the testimony of a single participant within the Layer B group interview, the speaker's code is documented. Conversely, in instances where a formulation was affirmed by multiple participants, the codes of those who affirm are also documented.

Research Design and Approach

The present study adopts a qualitative approach through an intrinsic case study design, focusing on the unique characteristics of the first Indonesian BUMMA rather than generalizing to a wider population (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design facilitates in-depth examination of the intricacies of events, actors, and meanings within a single context, a methodological approach well suited to analyzing a movement transformation that unfolded over more than a decade. The design is intrinsic and single-case; thus, the study aims to achieve analytical generalization rather than statistical generalization. Consequently, the study assessed the transferability of the lessons investigated through comparative research rather than assuming it.

Data Collection and Research Ethics

The primary data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted on 9 June 2026 at four locations within the Namblong customary area: the customary leader's residence (11:30), the corporation's office (13:20), the Tribal Customary Council office (15:50–16:20), and the Customary and Cultural School in Benyom village (16:30). The researcher conducted participant observation during the interviews. Secondary data sources encompassed the location permit, the forest-area release and its revocation, and the corporation's deed of establishment. Additional sources included reports and case files from Greenpeace Indonesia, Yayasan Pusaka, WALHI Papua, Yayasan Auriga Nusantara, and Human Rights Monitor, satellite monitoring, and media reports. Triangulating layers, sources, and methods consolidated the findings and exposed discrepancies, which were not smoothed over but retained.

The research followed established ethical principles for engaging with Indigenous communities in contexts of agrarian conflict and legal vulnerability. Participation was voluntary and informed, and access followed customary protocol, with the Tribal Customary Council's consent sought before approaching individual leaders. Information that could expose an individual to risk – in particular the indirect

threats reported by IN-01 – is reported at an aggregated level. Several key informants are also public leaders who have provided testimony in the media under their own names; these published statements form the Layer C corpus. This article therefore attributes media statements to the named public speaker as published and reproduced verbatim, while interview material is cited only by role code. Media quotations are presented in the original Indonesian with the authors' English translation. When a source was published in English, the statement is reported rather than presented as an Indonesian verbatim, and the source is flagged. In the sources under consideration, variant name spellings and uncertainties of clan affiliation are retained and signaled, rather than being silently harmonized.

Spatial Data and Mapping Procedure

To meet the requirement for spatial verifiability when comparing contested and consolidated territory, the areal claims advanced in this article are presented as a layered polygon map (Figure 2), rather than as a bar chart. The map was prepared in QGIS using the WGS 84 geographic coordinate system (EPSG:4326) and compiled from five distinct source groups. The first source group comprised the Regent of Jayapura's location permit decree (No. 213/2011) for the concession envelope. The second source group consisted of the forest-area release decree SK.680/MENHUT-II/2014 and its January 2022 revocation for the released and subsequently withdrawn area. The third source group encompassed the customary forest decrees issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 2022 for the four clan forest zones. The fourth source group included participatory mapping carried out by the community, together with its accompanying organizations, for the outer boundary of the customary territory. The fifth and final source group involved satellite-based monitoring by Greenpeace Indonesia and Yayasan Auriga Nusantara for the cleared area. The locations of the five Ballor Sip customary patrol posts were documented during fieldwork conducted on 9 June 2026, and these findings were corroborated through informant sources. This approach aligns with the methodology used in recent studies on customary mapping and territorial governance in Papua, where participatory boundary data are interpreted alongside permit geometry rather than superseded by it (Frank & Idris, 2026).

Two cautions apply to the map and are printed on its face. First, the polygon geometry is schematic. It was digitized from permit documents, participatory maps, and informant descriptions, and has not been reconciled with an official terrestrial survey by the National Land Agency or the regional office of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Therefore, interpret the map as a verified representation of relative position, extent, and overlap, rather than as a cadastral boundary. Secondly, the figure is a cartographic product generated from these source data in geospatial software; it is not an image produced by a generative artificial intelligence tool. This also applies to Figures 1 and 3, which were plotted in Python from the coding tables reproduced in this article.

Data Analysis and Data Validity

The analysis followed a systematic process of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion formulation and validation. The thematic coding process involved familiarisation through transcription and repeated reading, open coding of meaning units, grouping into categories, and constructing themes across informants and layers. The themes were then mapped onto four phases. Table 2 provides illustrative meaning units with their respective codes, categories, source layer, and phase. Each coded unit in the shared matrix retains a pointer to its source. The source is an interview code and transcript line for Layers A and B, or a corpus identifier for Layer C. This ensures that each matrix cell is traceable. The full matrix is available as supplementary material.

Following a rigorous process of elimination, eleven themes were ultimately selected for further consideration. As illustrated in Figure 3, the distribution of themes across the three layers can be evaluated using the instrument for assessing theme stability across social strata. The results were interpreted based on patterns of convergence and divergence rather than absolute counts, which reflect corpus size as much as salience. The four-phase framework was developed inductively through repeated interaction between field data and NSM theory. As illustrated in Figure 1, two quantitative dimensions were summarised: the number of organizational actors mobilized per year, and the widest advocacy scale (an ordinal 1–4 from community to transnational). These were coded from the chronology and interviews rather than measured, and are interpreted for shape, not precision.

The concept of trustworthiness was based on four criteria: credibility (triangulation across three layers and member checking with Layer A and B informants), transferability (contextual description and an explicit statement of preconditions), dependability (an audit trail linking every coded unit to its source), and confirmability (reflexivity about the researchers' positionality). The study's results are analytical

Table 2. Illustrative thematic coding matrix: from meaning units to phases

Illustrative meaning unit (data)	**Code**	**Category**	**Layer/source**	**Phase/theme**
Refusal of company entry by the 44 Iram; the forest described as a 'supermarket' providing food and income	Cultural–territorial rejection	Traditional repertoire	A — IN-01	Phase I: Traditional protest
Junior standing within the family and customary structure constrained open opposition while an elder relative chaired the company-linked cooperative	Intra-family asymmetry	Internal friction	A — IN-01	Phase I: Traditional protest
Road blockades, demonstrations outside the Regent's office, sasi prohibition rituals	Non-violent direct action	Traditional repertoire	A — IN-01, IN-05	Phase I: Traditional protest
Collective memory of roughly 3,000 hectares of customary land lost to an earlier transmigration scheme.	Collective memory of dispossession	Historical grievance	A — IN-01	Phase I: Traditional protest
Women's organization and legal aid institute compile approximately 100 objections and submit a rejection letter to the Regent.	Grassroots mobilisation	Organisational infrastructure	A — IN-06	Phase II: Multi-scalar alliance
Forest described by Indigenous women as 'home, friend and palace'	Relational ontology of forest	Cultural legitimacy	A — IN-06; C — D-14	Phase II: Multi-scalar alliance
Coalition with WALHI Papua, Yayasan Pusaka, JERAT Papua, LBH Papua,	Scale jumping/ boomerang	Transnational advocacy	C — D-04, D-13	Phase II: Multi-scalar alliance

Illustrative meaning unit (data)	Code	Category	Layer/source	Phase/theme
Greenpeace and Auriga; satellite monitoring; open letter to an international biodiversity forum				
Central government withdraws the forest-area release and the business permit (January & March 2022)	Institutional leverage	Political opportunity	C — D-03, D-05	Phase III: Partial victory
District-level location permit and cultivation right remain uncancelled; representatives of nine districts petition the Regent again in September 2025	Enforcement gap	Contested implementation	C — D-08, D-12	Phase III: Partial victory
Company continues clearing after revocation; Ballor Sip patrol maintains presence on customary territory.	Contested physical control	Enforcement gap	A — IN-01; C — D-07	Phase III: Partial victory
Establishment of the Indigenous-owned corporation; the Injorum forum retains decision-making authority over it	Institutionalization of sovereignty	Indigenous entrepreneurship	B — IN-02, IN-05	Phase IV: Institutionalization
Initial capital comes from community assets, documents, and contracts used to secure bank financing, rather than from cash contributions.	Asset-backed capital formation	Economic viability	A — IN-01; B — IN-02, IN-04	Phase IV: Institutionalization
Women's leadership of the	Contestation of women's leadership	Internal friction	B — IN-02	Phase IV: Institutionalization

Illustrative meaning unit (data)	Code	Category	Layer/source	Phase/theme
corporation questioned by part of the community on customary grounds				
Concern that some Iram and Tekai may yet align with outside investors, prompting continuous menoken (customary socialization)	Risk of defection	Internal friction	B — IN-02, IN-04	Phase IV: Institutionalization
Profits have not yet appeared as a substantive agenda item in two annual general meetings.	Deferred distribution	Governance tension	B — IN-04	Phase IV: Institutionalization

Note: The full coding matrix, with transcript line references and corpus item identifiers for every coded unit, is available as supplementary material.

and do not lend themselves to statistical generalizations. The study is of a single case.

■ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Chronology of The Agrarian Conflict Between Indigenous Peoples and The Company

The conflict has now lasted more than ten years. Re-examining the documentary record during the revision process required restating the first of two milestones, previously described as the revocation of the company's permits in 2022, which consequently affected the entire argument set out below. As illustrated in Table 3, the corrected chronology is presented, with the provenance of each entry clearly marked.

Table 3. Corrected chronology of the agrarian conflict in the Grime Nawa Valley and the establishment of the Indigenous-owned corporation (2011–2026)

Date	Event	Main actors	Significance	Source
2011	Regent of Jayapura issues a location permit of approximately 32,000 ha (SK No. 213/2011); company socialization begins in the villages.	PT PNM; Jayapura Regency Government	Onset of conflict; permit issued without FPIC	IN-01; D-02
2014	Environmental permit issued (February); plantation business permit of 30,920	PT PNM; Provincial and central government	Legal architecture of the concession completed	D-05; D-09

Date	Event	Main actors	Significance	Source
	ha issued by the Governor of Papua (28 March); forest-area release of 16,182.48 ha granted (SK.680/-MENHUT-II/-2014); company begins operating			
7 March 2015	Establishment of the Namblong Indigenous Women's Organization (ORPA)	Namblong women; Tribal Customary Council	Organizational infrastructure created six years before the escalation	IN-06
15 November 2018	Cultivation right (HGU) granted during the national oil palm moratorium	PT PNM; National Land Agency	Consolidation of corporate tenure	D-05
2019	Death of the clan figure who chaired the company-linked cooperative; internal balance within the landholding family shifts; land clearing begins	Tecuari clan; PT PNM	Removal of the principal internal obstacle to open refusal	IN-01
2021	Approximately 19 units of heavy equipment enter the village area; a dispute arises between the customary leader and the company's field manager; the Save the Grime Nawa Valley Coalition forms.	PT PNM; DAS; ORPA; Yayasan Pusaka; WALHI Papua; JERAT Papua; LBH Papua; Greenpeace Indonesia; Yayasan Auriga Nusantara	Escalation and formation of a multi-scalar alliance	IN-01; D-03
5–6 January 2022	Minister of Environment and Forestry revokes the forest-area release of 16,182.48 ha (SK.-01/MENLHK/-SETJEN/KUM.1/-1/2022)	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	First formal reversal, at central-government level	D-03; D-05

Date	Event	Main actors	Significance	Source
23 February 2022	Regency investment and licensing office orders a temporary halt to clearing; the order is not complied with	DPMPTSP Jayapura; PT PNM	First evidence of the enforcement gap	D-03
7 March 2022	Written rejection letter carrying approximately 100 objections submitted to the Regency Government	ORPA; LBH Papua; Indigenous leaders	Peak of documented grassroots mobilization	IN-06; D-04
8 March 2022	Joint statement issued by a coalition of 22 organizations; #SaveLembah-GrimeNawa campaign	Yayasan Pusaka; JERAT Papua; WALHI Papua; Greenpeace Indonesia and others	National and international media pressure	D-04
29 March 2022	Minister of Investment revokes the company's business permit	Ministry of Investment / BKPM	Second formal reversal at central-government level	D-03; D-06
14–17 June 2022	PT PNM files a suit against the revocation at the Jakarta Administrative Court (No. 167/G/-2022/PTUN) and withdraws it three days later.	PT PNM	The only court proceeding in the case; initiated by the company, not the community	D-05; D-06
21 July 2022	Customary meeting of more than 100 customary and women leaders sets a deadline to revoke the remaining permits.	DAS; ORPA; Indigenous leaders	Peak political momentum	D-03
7 September 2022	Mass peaceful action at the Regent's office demanding revocation of the location permit, the environmental	Indigenous peoples of the Grime Nawa Valley	Largest single mobilization of the movement	D-03; D-07

Date	Event	Main actors	Significance	Source
	permit and the HGU			
8 September and November 2022	Letters from the Regent's office ordering the company to halt all activity pending a formal decision; no revocation decree is issued.	Jayapura Regency Government	Administrative pressure without cancellation of the district-level permits	D-03
12 September 2022	Satellite analysis records more than 100 ha cleared since January 2022; a cumulative estimate of approximately 198.64 ha is subsequently reported.	Greenpeace Indonesia; Yayasan Auriga Nusantara	Clearing continues after the central revocations	D-07
9 December 2022	Coalition press release states that the Regent has not fulfilled the undertaking to revoke the company's permits and that no permit has been canceled.	Save the Grime Nawa Valley Coalition	Explicit documentation of the enforcement gap	D-08
February 2023	Regency evaluation team recommends that the company's permits not be extended.	Jayapura Regency Government	Administrative route substitutes for revocation	D-09
25 August 2023	Vanilla drying facility launched with an accompanying foundation; the Regency Secretary publicly supports the Indigenous enterprise.	BUMMA; Samdhana Institute; Jayapura Regency Government	First public state endorsement of the alternative economy	D-10
2023	First shareholders' meeting; a customary collective share of IDR 100 million per clan is agreed	44 clans (Iram)	Consolidation of customary collective capital	IN-02; IN-04

Date	Event	Main actors	Significance	Source
30 October 2024	The Indigenous-owned corporation obtains legal-entity status	44 clans; customary deliberation (menoken)	First BUMMA in Indonesia; institutional transformation	IN-02
2025	Diversification of business units into ecotourism, forest rehabilitation, livestock and agriculture; approximately 30 staff; the corporation begins paying tax to the Regency	Corporation management	Operationalization of a sustainable customary economy	IN-02; IN-03; D-11
11 September 2025	Representatives of nine districts again attend the Regent's office to demand revocation of the company's business permit, location permit, and HGU.	Grime Nawa communities; ORPA	The district-level permits remain uncancelled three years after the central revocations.	D-12
9 June 2026	Fieldwork for this study; informants report that division between supporting and opposing households persists	Research team; IN-01 to IN-06	Friction is contemporaneous, not historical	IN-01 to IN-06

Note: Source codes beginning with IN refer to interviews listed in Table 1; codes beginning with D or L refer to the Data Sources section.

Correcting the Permit Chronology: What Was Revoked, By Whom, and What Was Not

The initial assertion that the Regent of Jayapura revoked PT PNM's location and environmental permits in September 2022 is not supported by the extant documentation, including the sources initially referenced. The record, however, establishes a different and more consequential sequence.

Two revocations were issued, both at the central-government level and both before September 2022: on 5–6 January 2022 the Minister of Environment and Forestry withdrew the 16,182.48-hectare forest-area release, and on 29 March 2022 the Minister of Investment revoked the business permit. The company contested the latter at the Jakarta Administrative Court in June 2022, then withdrew its own suit within three days. At the district level, no cancellation was issued. The Regency licensing office ordered a temporary halt in February 2022, which was ignored. The Regent's office sent letters in September and November 2022 to stop pending a formal decision. In December 2022, the campaign coalition recorded that the undertaking to revoke had not been fulfilled and that none of the permits had been canceled. In February 2023, a Regency team recommended non-extension, opting for an administrative route instead of revocation. As recently as 11 September 2025, representatives of nine districts once again submitted a petition to the Regent, requesting the revocation of the business permit, the location permit, and the cultivation right.

Three implications are derived from this analysis. First, the opportunity seized in 2022 was initiated by central government institutions in response to transnational and national

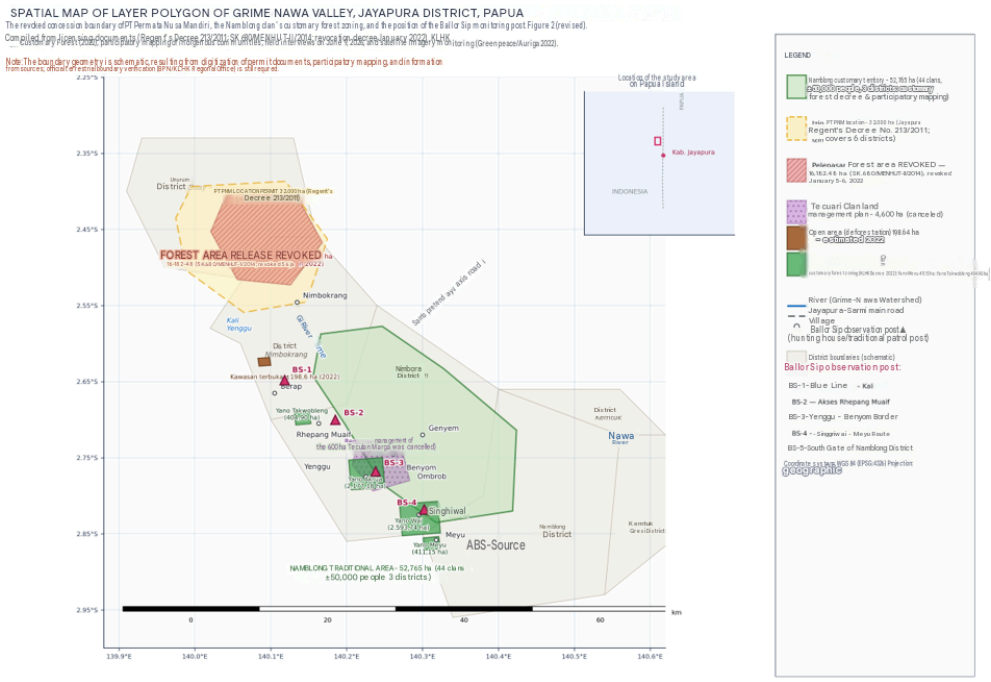


Figure 1. Layered polygon map of the Grime Nawa Valley: the revoked concession, clan customary forest zoning, and the positions of the Ballor Sip patrol posts.

Note: Prepared by the authors in QGIS (WGS 84, EPSG:4326), 2026, from permit documents (SK Bupati 213/2011; SK.680/MENHUT-II/2014; SK.01/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/1/2022), customary forest decrees (2022), community participatory mapping, field coordinates recorded on 9 June 2026, and satellite monitoring.

advocacy, rather than by the district authority that had been the primary focus of local pressure. This outcome can be considered a signature of a boomerang pattern, rather than one of local political access. Second, the 'political victory' achieved was partial and contested. The legal foundation for the concession was removed at one level, while the permits authorizing local occupation remained in effect at another. Thirdly, and most fundamentally from a theoretical standpoint, the incompleteness of the victory explains the ensuing transformation. A community with a comprehensive and enforced remedy would have had far less incentive to spend years and collective capital establishing an institution to govern its territory.

A discrepancy from triangulation remains unresolved. IN-06 noted that approximately 6,000 of the 8,000 hectares of forest permits had been revoked, while IN-01 described a 4,600-hectare management plan over Tecuari land as canceled. However, the record shows a single 16,182.48-hectare release that was withdrawn in its entirety. The divergence is informative: the figures circulating within the movement reflect the territory experienced as at stake, not the administrative instruments. This partial knowledge is itself one condition under which the enforcement gap persists (Hidayat et al., 2026).

Spatial Verification of The Contested and Consolidated Territory

As illustrated in Figure 1, the earlier paired bar chart and process diagram have been replaced with overlapping georeferenced polygons. This development enables examination of the relationship between contested and consolidated territory rather than simply asserting it.

The map illustrates the 32,000-hectare concession envelope authorized in 2011 across Unurum Guay and Nimbokrang. Within this envelope, the map delineates the 16,182.48-hectare forest-area release withdrawn in January 2022, the canceled 4,600-hectare management plan over Tecuari land, and the approximately 198.64 hectares cleared in 2022. In contrast, the customary territory held collectively by the 44 clans across three districts is approximately 52,765 hectares. Within this territory, the four clan forest zones are recognized by decree in 2022: Yano Wai (2,593.74 ha), Yano Akrua (2,177.18 ha), Yano Meyu (411.15 ha) and Yano Takwobleng (404.90 ha). The five Ballor Sip patrol posts were also recorded in fieldwork.

The following two observations are warranted. Firstly, the consolidated territory exceeds the concession envelope, not because the movement gained land, but because the two polygons measure different things. The

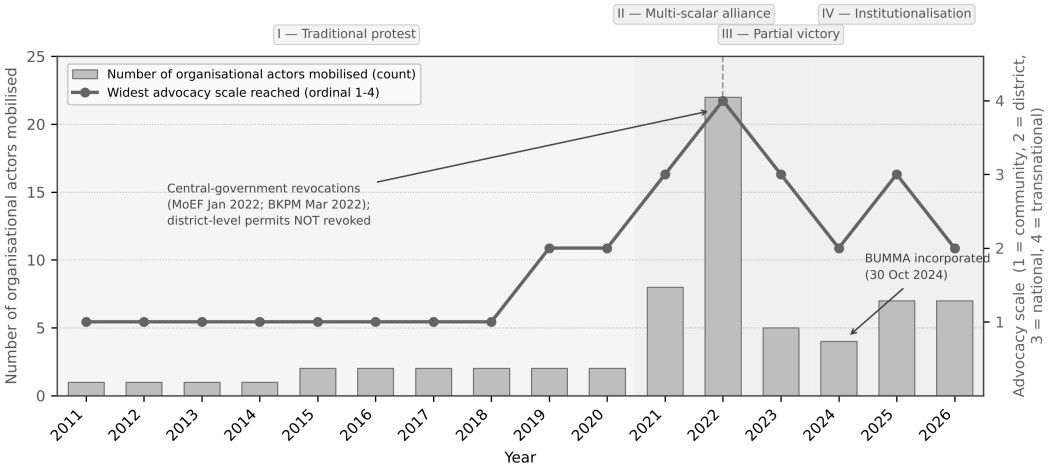


Figure 2. Trend of movement mobilization and advocacy scale, 2011–2026

concession was an administrative envelope over part of a customary territory that had never been fully mapped. The movement's accomplishments included documenting and collectively registering an existing territory under an institution capable of holding it, a point that had been overstated in the earlier version. Second, the designated clan forest zones cover about 5,587 hectares, a mere tenth of the claimed territory. The remaining area depends on participatory mapping and customary authority rather than formal recognition, in accordance with IN-01's assertion that certain regions remain unmapped and susceptible to renewed entry (Frank & Idris, 2026; Loivaranta, 2023).

Yano Akrua is the subject of a territorial dispute between the local clan and its neighbors. The customary leader has asserted that the land cannot be alienated, stating that 'The right remains with Yano Akrua because it was handed down by the ancestors' (Yusuf Hembring, as quoted in D-16). Members of the Waisimon clan have also rejected the transfer, with Alex Waisimon stating that 'That is ancestral forest, given to no one' and Martha Waisimon adding that 'If the oil palm company enters, none of it is ours any longer' (both as quoted in D-16). The voices under discussion are located within an area that coincides with the concession, although the sources do not always indicate this explicitly. The voices are reported as corroboration of the adjacent area rather than as direct testimony from Namblong.

The distribution of Ballor Sip posts along the southern and western approaches to the territory, where roads and river crossings enter it, rather than at the former concession, indicates a shift from contesting a particular clearing to maintaining a standing presence along the perimeter of a territory under collective management.

The Transformation of The Namblong Indigenous Peoples' Movement Against Deforestation

A thematic analysis reveals four non-linear yet mutually reinforcing phases, with each phase building on the previous one. Earlier repertoires also persist into later stages. As illustrated in Figure 2, the transformation is traced through two dimensions coded from both Table 3 and the interviews. These dimensions are: the number of organizational actors mobilized per year, and the widest advocacy scale reached.

The observed pattern indicates an escalation followed by institutionalization, rather than a steady growth trajectory. From 2011 to 2020, the movement was localized, with one or two actors at community and district level. A significant inflection point appears in 2021–2022, coinciding with the coalition's most expansive phase, as shown by the endorsement of the joint statement on 8 March 2022 by twenty-two organizations. Concurrently, advocacy initiatives transcend national boundaries, entering the transnational arena. Following the central revocations, the curve showed a re-localization rather than a simple decline, reflecting the corporation's consolidation. The modest recovery in 2025 can be attributed to renewed district-level petitioning over unresolved permits, as well as universities entering as partners. The events of 2022 were therefore a pivotal moment in the sequence, rather than a definitive conclusion. Table 3 alone cannot provide a conclusive answer to the research questions.

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of coded units across the three layers. The cultural core, which encompasses cultural-territorial rejection, the forest as living space, and the absence of consent, is most densely coded in both the customary leadership layer and

the grassroots corpus and only weakly in the corporate management layer. Conversely, the operational themes of capital formation and institutionalization mirror this pattern. The convergence of cultural themes across layers assembled independently and six years apart suggests they are not artifacts of a leadership-centered sample. The divergence of operational themes is addressed in the section on friction.

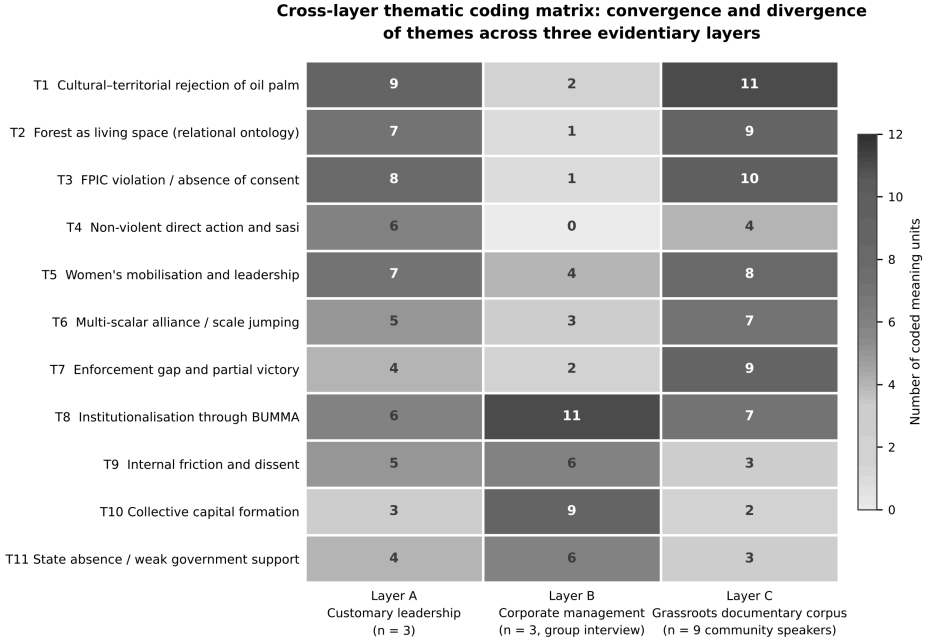


Figure 3. Cross-layer thematic coding matrix: convergence and divergence of themes across three evidentiary layers

Phase I: traditional protest and its internal asymmetries (2011–2020)

The initial phase (2011–2020) was characterized by conventional, culture-based protest methods, such as road blockades, demonstrations outside the Regent's office, Sasi rituals, and customary deliberation. IN-01 posited that the rejection was not the result of an impulsive reaction, but rather was attributable to a collective memory of dispossession transmitted through parental instruction:

> *'Our parents always told us to guard the forest and the customary land for our children and grandchildren. Our family once lost around 3,000 hectares of customary land to transmigration.' (IN-01, customary leader, personal communication, 9 June 2026)*

He underlined the collective refusal of the 44 Iram and grounded it in the forest's role as the community's means of subsistence:

> *'All 44 Iram did not consent to the oil palm company entering our customary territory. We do not need oil palm, because this forest has already become our supermarket — from food to sources of income, everything is in the forest.' (IN-01, customary leader, personal communication, 9 June 2026)*

The 'supermarket' metaphor links livelihood to the forest's ecological function, echoing accounts of the customary forest as a complete supermarket elsewhere in Papua (Malinda, 2025). Globally, the phase was marked by non-violent action rooted in community practice (Chao, 2023; Scheidel et al., 2020).

The movement was not homogeneous. Between 2014 and 2019, the cooperative associated with the company was chaired by a senior member of IN-01's own clan and family, and IN-01 was explicit that his junior standing limited open opposition:

> *'I am the younger brother. The one who accepted the company was my elder brother, who at that time held a greater position and influence in decision-making. So there was little I could do to refuse.' (IN-01, customary leader, personal communication, 9 June 2026)*

Consequently, open refusal expanded exclusively after 2019, when the position became vacant. Interpreting the phase as unified

resistance would serve to obscure the internal asymmetry that influenced the timing of this expansion.

The sasi ritual, a customary prohibition on using an area or resource for a predetermined period, served dual functions as a symbolic-spiritual practice and an access-regulating management mechanism. In a context of resistance, it not only reinforced customary authority but also challenged the legitimacy of state permits. Its continuation into subsequent customary corporate governance shows how cultural significance becomes a political resource and how collective action can sustain long-term common forestry resources (Barnaud & Muradian, 2024; Herrawan et al., 2022; Santoso et al., 2024; Villamayor-Tomas & García-López, 2021).

Phase II: multi-scalar alliance and advocacy (2021–2022)

The second phase (2021–2022) established a multi-scalar alliance through the Save the Grime Nawa Valley Coalition, encompassing local (DAS, ORPA), national (WALHI Papua, Yayasan Pusaka, JERAT Papua, LBH Papua), and transnational (Greenpeace, Yayasan Auriga Nusantara) actors. This alliance used digital campaigns, investigative reports, satellite monitoring, and diplomatic pressure to achieve its objectives. After a report on the scheduled eviction circulated, ORPA and LBH Papua compiled the community's objections and submitted a rejection letter to the Regent. IN-06 recollected

> *'We built communication with the legal aid institute and held a consolidation with around 100 community members who rejected the company's presence, then submitted a rejection letter to the Regent. However, up to that point there had been no adequate response.' (IN-06, chair of the Indigenous women's organization, personal communication, 9 June 2026)*

For Indigenous women, the forest was articulated in relational terms. Asked what it meant, IN-06 answered:

> *'The forest is home, the forest is a friend, and the forest is a palace.' (IN-06, chair of the Indigenous women's organization, personal communication, 9 June 2026)*

This shift in perspective has helped legitimize the defense of forests as spaces of social reproduction, rather than merely as resources, even as women remain under-recognized in formal forestry institutions (Anugrah et al., 2022; Lurie, 2025). Non-governmental organizations functioned as interest groups, disseminating local claims into national and transnational arenas (Bjork-James et al., 2022; Harada et al., 2022; Laraswati et al., 2022; Rahayu et al., 2023).

The documentary corpus supplies named voices from outside the leadership, reproduced verbatim as published. In December 2022, Orpha Novita Yoshua, a young Namblong woman, wrote to an international biodiversity convention, stating that her community had never surrendered the rights to their land to the company (as quoted in D-13). The following assertion is made by members of the community journalism group Suara Grina, who have documented the clearing directly: It was asserted by Vebriani Hembring that 'The customary territory and forest of the Namblong people is not empty land' (D-14). Tresya Imelda Yoshua linked the loss to identity, stating that 'That too is our identity' (D-15). These are not leadership voices and were published independently of this research; their convergence with the leadership on consent, livelihood, and attachment to the forest supports the claim that these themes are not confined to the leadership.

The concept of 'local cultural legitimacy' is defined as the notion that the Council, ORPA, and the Iram, in conjunction with the technical and advocacy capabilities of external networks, can overcome the conventional power imbalance. This process can be conceptualized as a boomerang pattern, in which the closure of domestic channels prompts the mobilization of local actors, who in turn use international networks to pressure domestic authorities. The corrected chronology emphasizes this point, as the 2022 revocations issued from Jakarta followed the international campaign rather than the local petitions. The movement's capacity to scale up distinguishes it from communities confined to a single scale (Bauer et al., 2023; Larson et al., 2022).

Phase III: A partial and contested political victory (2022–2025)

The third phase (2022–2025) is best understood not as a political victory, but as a partial and contested one. The withdrawal of the forest-area release in January 2022 and the business permit in March 2022 removed the concession's legal foundation, and the company's suit against the latter collapsed within three days. Nevertheless, the clearance process persisted, reaching an estimated 198.64 hectares by the end of 2022, and the district-level permits remained valid. The outcome occurred in a context of risk: IN-01 reported being subjected to threats during the period of open refusal. In their own communication dated 9 June 2026, IN-01 stated

that they had previously received threats while defending customary land, although they were not informed of these threats directly. Cross-country findings indicate that diverse strategies and litigation are associated with success, but they also highlight the criminalization of activists, with women defenders particularly vulnerable (Mueller, 2022; Scheidel et al., 2020; Sylvester & Clark, 2026; Tran & Hanaček, 2023).

The continuation of operations after the revocations lends further credence to the extant literature on the inadequate implementation of customary forest recognition after Constitutional Court ruling No. 35/PUU-X/2012. The legal distinction between customary forests does not necessarily guarantee enforcement; the case exemplifies a national pattern of 'collective action without rights', wherein communities favor informal mediation due to the perceived ineffectiveness of judicial processes, while informalized states can facilitate collusion. (Afrizal & Berenschot, 2022; Berenschot & Dhiaulhaq, 2025). The Namblong case is a pertinent example in this context because the community did not engage with the judicial system at all – the only court proceeding was instigated and subsequently abandoned by the company. In Papua, this disparity is exacerbated by the deficiencies in the region's forestry regulations, which stem from the country's special autonomy status, and the prevalence of customary governance where decentralized institutions are not in place. (Sandi et al., 2026; Sopaheluwakan et al., 2023).

However, it is important to temper the celebration of this victory. Control remained partial, and customary institutions were compelled to assert their authority; the Ballor Sip patrol posts (see Figure 2) maintained a presence and monitored incursions, managing disputes through customary authority. The study documents the patrol through interviews and observation, but did not record every interaction with company personnel, so the physical contest remains to be investigated further; the claim here is that sovereignty was asserted institutionally, not that physical control was fully restored.

Consequently, the study proposes an alternative relationship between legal outcomes and movement trajectories. Movements have been observed to confront the limits of partial remedies by shifting from rejection to development, thereby providing livelihood alternatives and building resilience. This intention was publicly declared as early as 2023 by the then DAS chairman: 'We will manage this land ourselves' (as quoted in D-09; the source records this leader's surname variously as Sawa and Nawa, which the study was unable to reconcile and flags for verification). In the Namblong case, the shift was not a response to victory, but an acknowledgment of victory's limitations.

Phase IV: institutionalization through a customary corporation (2023–present)

The fourth phase, institutionalization through a customary corporation (2023–present), commenced with the conceptualization of the BUMMA at the 2021–2022 Indigenous Peoples' Congress and, following customary socialization (menoken), the establishment of the corporation as a legal entity. IN-02 provided a detailed account of the aforementioned step, stating: 'On 30 October 2024, PT Namblong formally obtained legal-entity status. The formation of this organization was initiated with the primary objective of safeguarding customary land rights, customary forest, and the rights of the Indigenous community in Namblong' (IN-02, personal communication, 9 June 2026). One source gives 30 September 2024 (D-17); the date reported is the director's, corroborated by the deed of establishment, and the discrepancy is noted rather than resolved. IN-05 stated that the corporate form was selected over the cooperative for its broader scope and its alignment with the Council's vision of safeguarding land, resources and people. Local institutions, such as the Injorum forum and the Ballor Sip post, continue to play a pivotal role in governance. The transition from rejection to development places the community within Indigenous entrepreneurship, characterized by ongoing negotiation between cultural and commercial imperatives. (Colbourne et al., 2024; Gouvea et al., 2022; Manganda et al., 2023; Mika et al., 2024; Padilla-Meléndez et al., 2022).

The corporation operates across four distinct business lines: ecotourism, forest rehabilitation, livestock, and agriculture. Initially, the corporation engaged in vanilla trading before its incorporation, and now employs approximately thirty staff members, up from twenty-three, all of whom are from Namblong. The Customary Council oversees recruitment, while university partnerships support capacity building. The territory spans three districts and twenty-five villages.

The transition to development has been thoroughly chronicled. The ORPA chair noted the financial obligations that had now been fulfilled, stating, 'From 2024 we have been paying tax to the Jayapura Regency Government' (D-11), and offered the movement's enduring image, 'Let this valley remain a valley of praise, not of tears' (D-09). As a cultural-school teacher asserted, the ecological premise was that Indigenous people can manage forest ecosystems without felling trees (Regina Bay, D-11). The lack of state

endorsement was notable, and only in August 2023 did the Regency Secretary express support for the vanilla enterprise, stating, "We want indigenous peoples to be able to manage vanilla well" (Hana Hikoyabi, D-10). In an English-language profile, the director positioned the corporate form as a means to attract investment without relinquishing community control (D-17), a position that aligns with her interview account (IN-02).

The NSM scholarship offers a counterargument to the commodification of the lifeworld, and the limited-company form accentuates this tension. Rather than dissolving it, the case manages it. The broader-scope corporate form was chosen consciously, showing that Indigenous peoples adopt and redirect modern instruments to strengthen sovereignty rather than reject them. This is the classic challenge of Indigenous entrepreneurship: preserving culture, land and community while meeting business demands (Manganda et al., 2023). The corporation remains subordinate to customary mechanisms through the Injorum forum and the Ballor Sip post, so profit is framed as a means of protecting non-accumulative customary ends, aligning with analyses of commons, cooperatives and corporations as complementary land-reform instruments (Buratti et al., 2022; Li, 2021; Villamayor-Tomas & García-López, 2021; Khan & Han, 2023). In accordance with Tănăsescu's (2020) assertion, the legal instrument is employed strategically, rather than as a substitute for the forest's sacred significance.

This framing must be qualified by the group interview. IN-04 noted that in the two annual general meetings so far, profit has not been a substantive agenda item:

> *"To date, company profit has never been a main item of discussion in the two general meetings held. The focus of the reports presented is still on work achievements and the company's forward work plans.' (IN-04, partner institution representative, personal communication, 9 June 2026)*

The subordination of profit to customary ends is therefore, as of yet, a statement of design rather than a tested outcome: no distribution has yet occurred through which it could be observed. Whether it will endure in the face of mounting commercial pressure remains unanswered; only longitudinal research can provide definitive insights.

The Formation of Collective Capital

The earlier version indicated that the collective capital was established but not audited. Fieldwork conducted in June 2026 enabled a more precise, revised account. The previous version treated an IDR 100 million contribution per clan as the capital base; however, the interviews demonstrate that the capital was constituted in three ways. Firstly, IN-01 was explicit that the initial capital was not in the form of cash at all:

> *'The initial capital for establishing PT Yombe Namblong did not come from cash, but from assets owned by the community. Various documents, contracts, and other assets were then used as the basis for obtaining financing support from a banking institution in order to run the company's business activities.' (IN-01, customary leader, personal communication, 9 June 2026)*

Second, IN-02 and IN-04 described the provision of seed support and sustained technical accompaniment from a partner foundation, under a memorandum of understanding, in conjunction with donor support through its network. Thirdly, the IDR 100 million customary collective share per clan was formally ratified at the inaugural shareholders' meeting in 2023.

Two qualifications are appended. The 2023 commitment is defined as a shareholders' resolution; the study did not verify what proportion of the 44 clans have paid in, so the implied aggregate is not capital received. More significant is that a structure supported by asset-backed bank financing and a partner foundation's accompaniment is classified as a hybrid entity, and its autonomy is subject to certain conditions. IN-04 stated that accompaniment would continue until the corporation could stand independently, a candid acknowledgment that it does not yet do so. Such dependencies at the early stages of a model's development are not uncommon and do not inherently indicate fragility (De Gruyter et al., 2025). However, these dependencies do not allow inference of a model's sustainability solely from its establishment.

Friction, dissent and the limits of collective consent

The earliest manifestations of friction appear within landholding families. From 2014 to 2019, the company-affiliated cooperative was led by a senior member of IN-01's own family, which constrained his overt opposition. He ascribed differences of opinion to social jealousy and divergent economic interests, and reported that these persist at the time of fieldwork:

> *'Differences in stance towards the company are largely influenced by social jealousy and differences in economic interest. The*

ancestors had divided the customary territory among each community group. To this day there remains a difference of view between the group that supports and the group that rejects the company's presence.' (IN-01, customary leader, personal communication, 9 June 2026)

Friction over gendered authority appears within the corporation. IN-02, who leads it, reported that part of the community questions leadership by a woman:

'There are still some in the community who question leadership by a woman because of the strong customary view that regards men as the principal leaders. This situation is a particular challenge for me as Director of the BUMMA.' (IN-02, director of the Indigenous-owned corporation, personal communication, 9 June 2026)

IN-06 described resistance within her own household: As IN-06 noted in a personal communication on 9 June 2026, one challenge is the family unit, specifically the husband and children, who show reluctance to support women's engagement in organizational activities. As posited by Anugrah et al. (2022)Both perspectives support the notion that interpreting women's leadership can be a readily accessible resource. However, this assertion is contested within the very communities mobilized by that interpretation.

The ongoing discord concerning the territory's direction persists. IN-02 and IN-04 identify the potential for some Iram and Tekai to align with external investors, facilitated by continuous menoken, as a primary concern:

'One of the concerns the BUMMA faces is the possibility that some Iram and Tekai may shift to supporting investment from outside parties or foreign investors. To anticipate this, the BUMMA together with its partner continuously carries out menoken with the Indigenous community.' (IN-02 and IN-04, personal communication, 9 June 2026)

The movement itself reports friction attributed to the company. In September 2025, the ORPA chair identified horizontal conflict within the community, alongside environmental damage, as a consequence of the company's continued operation (D-12). This finding provides the clearest indication to date that the community does not present itself as undivided.

As illustrated in Figure 3, this hypothesis is confirmed by the coding: internal friction is coded most densely in the corporate management layer and least in the grassroots corpus, where published testimony is predominantly oppositional to the company; capital formation and institutionalization show the same asymmetry. A thorough examination of the available data reveals a consensus among participants regarding the rejection of the concession and the forest's cultural significance. However, the findings indicate a lack of comparable grassroots endorsement of the corporate form in particular. The question of how that agreement is understood by ordinary clan members is the focus of a discussion group, conducted independently of leadership and the corporation, and it is the primary objective for the subsequent phase of this research.

Theoretical contribution: extending new social movement theory in the global South

The present study contributes to the concept of layered transformation by integrating political ecology, political-process analysis and forest relational ontology in Melanesia. This region has received little scholarly attention. The study proposes institutionalizing movements through Indigenous corporations as an alternative to protest and advocacy. Whereas classical NSM theory emphasizes identity, meaning, and autonomy, the Namblong case adds to this by showing how local identity can be institutionalized within economic and legal organizations that endure beyond the protest period.

The revised chronology substantiates this assertion. In the extant literature on movement outcomes, the decision is typically the dependent variable. That is, it is the outcome the movement seeks, and it is measured in terms of success. The Namblong case is an exception, as the decisive change was triggered not by decisions won, but by their non-enforcement. The enforcement gap, which is typically a condition of failure, in this case functions as a generator, converting a movement seeking a remedy from the state into one that builds an institution to hold territory without one. It is therefore recommended that the evaluation paradigm shift from a focus on triumph or defeat to an examination of the institutional capacity that is formed and the locations where it exerts its effect. This reorientation should be consistent with analyses of how resource access is institutionalized at commodity frontiers (Rasmussen & Lund, 2025).

The case demonstrates that resistance is a gradual process rather than a single event. Rather than representing the pinnacle of achievement, this legal victory marks the start of a new phase: a shift from defensive mobilization to institutionalization and the adoption of an alternative development

agenda within a path-dependent logic. The following four preconditions for sustainable-tenure struggles have been identified: first, organizational consolidation ahead of escalation; second, the integration of female leadership; third, the documentation and designation of customary territories; and fourth, economic diversification alongside forest preservation. As the chronology shows, the women's organization (2015) and the coalition (2021) both predate the 2022 confrontations.

Limitations and Scope of The Claims

These contributions must be evaluated within the parameters of the design. The study remains an intrinsic, single-case study, and its conclusions are analytical rather than statistically generalizable. Three specific limitations warrant consideration.

First, the grassroots evidence is documentary rather than elicited. The present study extends the evidence base beyond the six leadership and management informants and independently tests the core themes. However, editorial selection by publishing organizations mediates the findings, and most data comes from sources sympathetic to the movement. This cannot substitute for direct fieldwork with ordinary clan members, and no focus group discussion with directly affected clan members was conducted. As shown in Figure 3, the discrepancy between leadership and grassroots coding of the institutional themes should be interpreted accordingly.

Secondly, the spatial evidence presented in Figure 2 is schematic. The polygons were digitized from permit documents, participatory mapping, and informant descriptions, and have not been reconciled against an official terrestrial survey. Establishing relative position, extent, and overlap is a fundamental aspect of the analysis. However, these elements are not sufficient to support the argument about the relationship between the concession and customary territory. These boundaries do not constitute cadastral boundaries and, as such, should not be cited as such.

Third, the formal status of the company's district-level permits and cultivation rights remains unresolved in the public record as of this writing. The analysis of the enforcement gap is thus based on the documented absence of revocation, rather than a positive determination of current permit status. Direct documentary confirmation from the Regency Government would be beneficial.

The model delineated here is accordingly offered not as a universal paradigm but as a contextual exemplification whose transposition depends on specific preconditions: a cohesive customary authority capable of acting collectively, the availability of external technical and advocacy networks, a documented customary territory, and a legal opening of some kind. The fundamental question that future comparative work must address is whether comparable outcomes can be achieved in the absence of these preconditions.

■ CONCLUSION

The Namblong movement underwent a series of transformations across four non-linear phases that were mutually reinforcing: firstly, a defensive cultural mobilization; secondly, cross-scale alliances and advocacy; thirdly, a partial and contested victory, in which district-level cancellations did not match central government revocations; and finally, institutionalization through an Indigenous corporation, supported by cross-scale alliances and women's leadership, which culminated in a restorative economic agenda.

The key conclusion from this analysis is that the incompleteness of the legal outcome, rather than its sufficiency, drove the consolidation of institutional sovereignty. The primary actors in this case study are as follows: the women's organization, which provided organizational infrastructure before the escalation; the customary council, which provides legitimacy and governs access; and the 44 Iram, as collective shareholders. The 44 Iram are supported by Greenpeace, WALHI Papua, Yayasan Pusaka, JERAT Papua, LBH Papua, and Yayasan Auriga Nusantara in advocacy; by foundations and universities in capacity building; and by a Regency Government that issued warnings without revocation. The ability to overcome constraints imposed by asymmetric power proved contingent on cross-scale cooperation.

The establishment of Indonesia's inaugural BUMMA marks a pivotal transition toward institutionalization, in which an Indigenous community is empowered to function as an autonomous economic entity, rather than a passive recipient. The present study extends the theoretical framework of NSM by proposing the concept of the Indigenous corporation as a novel repertoire within the Global South. Furthermore, it argues that an unenforced legal victory can be generative rather than merely frustrating. This is an intrinsic single-case study, i.e., a contextual lesson dependent on specific preconditions. These preconditions are: cohesive customary authority, external advocacy networks, a documented territory, and a legal opening. The lesson is not a universal model.

Future research should be conducted as follows. First, cases should be compared to

test the research's transferability. Second, assess whether profit is subordinated to customary ends to determine whether this holds after the initial substantive distribution. Third, verify capital formation, including the proportion of clan contributions actually paid and the terms of asset-backed financing. Fourthly, gender and leadership regeneration should be examined. Finally, the question of grassroots consent should be carried to the grassroots themselves through focus group discussions conducted independently of both leadership and corporations.

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■ DISCLOSURE OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

While drafting this manuscript, the authors used the DeepL Write tool (deepl.com) to refine the language and support proofreading. Figure 2 was produced in QGIS from permit documents, customary forest decrees, participatory mapping, and field-recorded coordinates. Figures 1 and 3 were plotted in Python using the Matplotlib library from the coding tables reproduced in this article. It is evident that no artificial intelligence image tool was employed in the generation of the figures. The authors have reviewed and edited all content and assume full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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