CHAPTER 1
PREFACE

1.1 Introduction

Land conflicts have become a critical issue in Indonesia. Monitoring by the Agrarian Reform Consortium (KPA) reports an increase in agrarian conflict cases over the past five years. The year 2024 recorded the highest number of conflicts, reaching 295 cases, a 21.9 percent increase from the previous year (KPA, 2025). Urban land conflicts, in particular, have intensified significantly, with property development emerging as the second-highest contributor to agrarian disputes in 2023, accounting for 44 cases nationwide (KPA, 2024). This phenomenon reflects deeper structural tensions between community rights and capital interests, particularly in rapidly developing urban areas where land becomes increasingly valuable for commercial development. Urban land disputes differ substantially from rural agrarian conflicts, involving complex power dynamics among residents, government authorities, and private developers within densely populated metropolitan contexts.

The Dago Elos case in Bandung exemplifies these complexities. This dispute involves 331 families facing eviction claims from the Muller family and PT Dago Inti Graha over 6.3 hectares of land inhabited by residents for multiple generations. The conflict has persisted for nine years through various legal proceedings, from District Court to Judicial Review, while residents simultaneously engage in collective resistance through campaigns, demonstrations, and community organizing (Ginting & Lidjon, 2020; BandungBergerak.id, 2024).

Deliberative communication has emerged as a critical framework for understanding conflict resolution processes, particularly where multiple stakeholders with competing interests seek sustainable solutions. Dryzek

(2002) defines deliberative communication as inclusive public discussion enabling equal participation, rational consideration of arguments, and collectively legitimate decision-making. However, implementing deliberative principles in urban land conflicts faces significant challenges: power asymmetries, resource disparities, and institutional barriers that constrain meaningful participation by affected communities.

Research on communication in land conflicts has identified various resolution approaches. Studies of agrarian conflict in Indramayu demonstrate the importance of inclusive dialogue, negotiation, and mediation in achieving sustainable resolution (Siregar et al., 2023). Holistic approaches involving legal clarification, community empowerment, and improved communication have proven effective in rural conflict contexts. However, other research tends to focus on strategic communication and social media mobilization in collective resistance (Pratiwi et al., 2019; Pratiwi et al., 2022; Pratiwi & Pangestu, 2022; Mamahit & Pratiwi, 2022). While these studies provide valuable insights, three critical gaps remain.

First, the literature has not adequately explored how deliberative communication practices emerge, function, or are constrained when formal dialogue forums are unavailable or fail. Siregar et al., (2023) study assumes the availability of institutionally-facilitated dialogue spaces but does not examine what occurs when institutions avoid deliberative responsibility. Second, most research concentrates on rural agrarian conflicts, leaving a significant gap in understanding urban community communication dynamics operating within dense metropolitan contexts with distinct bureaucratic complexities (Mustopa et al., 2020; Nayiroh & Ema, 2024). Third, adequate understanding is lacking regarding how communities navigate between resistance and dialogue, or how digital and offline communication spaces interact to create alternative deliberative forums when formal mechanisms fail. This study aims to analyze deliberative communication practices in the

Dago Elos land conflict, specifically examining: (1) how residents construct and maintain deliberative spaces despite structural constraints and institutional failure; (2) what communication strategies facilitate or hinder deliberative processes under non-ideal conditions; (3) how power dynamics shape deliberative practices; and (4) the extent to which deliberative approaches contribute to just conflict resolution in urban settings.