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Traditional Rituals as Tools of Resistance: The Lom People's Fight against Unconventional Tin Mining in Bangka Island, Indonesia

Dini Adriani[1*], Siya Uthai[2]

[1] Master Student of Development Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

[2] Department of Social Science and Development, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

* Correspondence: diniadriani_dini@cmu.ac.th

Abstract

Unconventional tin mining on Bangka Island, Indonesia, has caused severe environmental and social consequences, particularly for indigenous communities like the Lom people. The key causes driving their resistance include deforestation, water pollution, and the appropriation of ancestral lands without proper consultation, which disrupt access to clean water, food sources, and traditional livelihoods, threatening their well-being and cultural heritage. This study employs a qualitative descriptive case study approach to explore the experiences of the Lom community in three hamlets: Air Abik, Pejem, and Tuing. The research aims to (1) examine the role of traditional rituals in the Lom people's resistance against mining activities, (2) analyze how these rituals foster cultural identity and community solidarity, and (3) explore the broader implications of indigenous knowledge systems in advocating for environmental justice and indigenous rights. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis to gain a deeper understanding of

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the role of traditional rituals in their resistance movements. The findings reveal that the Lom people's rituals, rooted in centuries-old indigenous knowledge, serve as powerful tools for resistance. These rituals assert cultural identity, foster community solidarity, and defend ancestral lands. Beyond their cultural significance, rituals provide moral, emotional, and social cohesion while serving as platforms for advocacy. They enable collaboration with external allies such as environmental activists and academic institutions. Through these efforts, the Lom community safeguards their cultural heritage, livelihoods, and legal rights against mining encroachment. The scientific novelty of this study lies in its exploration of traditional rituals not merely as cultural expressions but as strategic mechanisms for resistance and advocacy. By highlighting the intersection of indigenous knowledge systems, environmental justice, and social movements, this research contributes to broader discussions on the role of cultural practices in addressing contemporary environmental and social challenges. This study concludes that indigenous rituals are more than symbolic expressions; they are critical strategies for promoting environmental justice and protecting indigenous rights. By highlighting the role of indigenous knowledge systems, this study underscores the importance of traditional rituals in achieving environmental and social justice.

传统仪式作为反抗的工具：印度尼西亚邦加岛洛姆族人民反对非常规锡矿开采的斗争

摘要：

印度尼西亚邦加岛的非常规锡矿开采造成了严重的环境和社会后果，尤其是对洛姆人等土著社区而言。促使他们反抗的主要原因包括森林砍伐、水污染和未经适当协商就占用祖传土地，这破坏了他们获得清洁水、食物来源和传统生计的机会，威胁到他们的福祉和文化遗产。本研究采用定性描述性案例研究方法，探讨洛姆社区在三个村庄的经历：Air Abik、Pejem 和 Tuing。该研究旨在（1）研究传统仪式在洛姆人反抗采矿活动中所起的作用，（2）分析这些仪式如何促进文化认同和社区团结，以及（3）探索土著知识体系在倡导环境正义和土著权利方面的更广泛影响。通过访谈、观察和文件分析收集数据，以更深入地了解传统仪式在他们的反抗运动中的作用。研究结果表明，洛姆人的仪式植根于数百年的土著知识，是抵抗的有力工具。这些仪式宣扬文化认同，促进社区团结，捍卫祖传土地。除了文化意义之外，仪式还提供道德、情感和社会凝聚力，同时充当倡导平台。它们使与外部盟友（如环保活动家和学术机构）的合作成为可能。通过这些努力，洛姆社区保护了他们的文化遗产、生计和合法权利，免受采矿侵占。这项研究的科学新颖之处在于它不仅将传统仪式作为文化表达，而且作为抵抗和倡导的战略机制进行探索。通过强调土著知识体系、环境正义和社会运动的交集，这项研究有助于更广泛地讨论文化实践在应对当代环境和社会挑战中的作用。这项研究的结论是，土著仪式不仅仅是象征性的表达；它们是促进环境正义和保护土著权利的关键策略。通过强调本土知识体系的作用，本研究强调了传统仪式在实现环境和社会正义方面的重要性

关键词: 原住民知识, 环境正义, 传统仪式, 文化抵抗, 非传统采矿

1. Introduction

Indonesia, with a population of 273.7 million, is home to a diverse range of indigenous peoples, who are between 50 and 70 million and are spread across the archipelago (IWGIA, 2022). These communities, known as *masyarakat adat* or *orang asli*, maintain a rich cultural heritage deeply tied to their ancestral lands (Moniaga, 2007). One such community, the Lom people of Bangka Island, has faced significant challenges owing to the expansion of tin mining, particularly unconventional

mining practices that pose serious environmental and social threats. These activities, which include deforestation, water pollution, and land degradation, have undermined Lom's traditional farming and fishing livelihoods, which are both vital to their cultural and spiritual identity (Smedal, 2018).

Today, Indonesia is the world's second-largest tin producer, with Bangka Island playing a central role in this industry. The history of tin mining in Bangka dates back to the 19th century under Dutch colonial rule, when mining exploitation was formalized through major enterprises (PT. TIMAH TBK, 2015). One of these is a state-owned company in the Southeast Asia Tin Belt, capitalized on the island's rich mineral deposits, driving socioeconomic development and environmental challenges (Asmarhansyah, 2017). Over time, tin mining has evolved into two categories: conventional mining, which is conducted legally under established regulations, and unconventional mining, which occurs without permits or adheres to environmental standards (Yunianto, 2009). The latter, often illegal, leads to deforestation, water and air pollution, land degradation, and unsafe working conditions, with thousands of floating vessels recorded since 1999, and numerous lives lost due to safety failures (Hasan, 2011).

Among the communities living in Bangka, the Lom people are indigenous to Bangka Island; they are the oldest and most deeply connected to their land and sea. Unlike neighboring groups that have turned to mining for economic survival, the Lom people prioritize preserving their ancestral wisdom, which emphasizes living in harmony with nature (Janawi and Nikmarijal, 2020). Lom resides in three main hamlets: Air Abik, Pejem, and Tuing. Those in Air Abik focus on farming rice, cassava, pepper, and palm, whereas those in Pejem and Tuing depend on fishing. For the Lom people, nature is not simply a resource but an equal partner possessing the right to co-exist alongside humans (Smedal, 2018). However, the increasing prevalence of unconventional tin mining has severely impacted livelihoods and cultural identity. Deforestation, water pollution, land degradation, and fish depletion undermine subsistence practices and ancient wisdom. Additionally, these environmental changes have fueled social and moral conflicts, further threatening Lom's way of life (Wijaya, 2021)

The Lom people's responses to these disruptions are a unique form of *everyday resistance* rooted in their cultural and spiritual traditions. Rather than resorting to open conflict, they used traditional rituals and ceremonies, such as prayers and symbolic plants like *kumba*, to invoke ancestral protection and reaffirm their connection to the land. These rituals serve as powerful tools for mobilizing community solidarity, fostering collective action, and symbolizing defiance against the destructive encroachment of illegal mining. More than symbolic acts, these practices allow the Lom people to challenge dominant power structures, assert self-determination, and protect their livelihood and cultural heritage. This topic is crucial for the broader community, because it highlights the critical role of indigenous knowledge systems in addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainable practices.

The environmental degradation caused by unconventional tin mining on Bangka Island serves as a microcosm of global environmental injustices faced by indigenous communities. Understanding Lom's resistance strategies provides valuable insights into how traditional wisdom can inspire sustainable environmental governance and community-based solutions.

Despite substantial research on the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of mining, there is a notable gap in understanding how cultural practices, such as traditional rituals, serve as strategic forms of resistance and advocacy for environmental protection. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the role of these rituals in the Lom community's resistance to unconventional tin mining and their efforts to protect their land and cultural heritage. This study's theoretical framework is grounded in *everyday resistance*, mainly in how indigenous communities use cultural practices to challenge dominant power structures.

This study employed a qualitative descriptive case study approach, focusing on three Lom hamlets: Air Abik, Pejem, and Tuing. Through fieldwork and interviews, this research investigated the significance of traditional rituals in fostering solidarity, mobilizing collective action, and facilitating dialogue with external allies such as environmental activists and government authorities.

The expected results of this study are twofold: first, to demonstrate how traditional rituals function as powerful tools for environmental and social justice and second, to contribute to broader discussions on the role of indigenous knowledge systems in contemporary resistance movements. The findings underscore the importance of preserving indigenous cultural practices as critical mechanisms for sustainable environmental governance and offer global lessons for communities and policymakers.

2. Literature Review

Environmental justice highlights the unequal burden of environmental degradation disproportionately experienced by marginalized communities, including indigenous peoples. Tin mining activities, such as those on Bangka Island, are among the primary causes of this injustice, contributing to air, water, and soil pollution, while threatening the health, well-being, and livelihoods of indigenous communities. Bullard (2005) emphasized that environmental justice is a fundamental human right that requires protection of all individuals from environmental harm and discrimination. Schlosberg and Carruthers (2010) extended this concept by incorporating aspects of recognition, participation, and

capability, particularly in the context of indigenous struggles. This idea is further reinforced by Bryant (1995), who integrated distributive, normative, and structural justice to create an inclusive and sustainable society. Resistance to environmental injustice is often carried out through covert forms, as Scott (2013) describes in his concept of "everyday resistance." Acts such as passive rejection, evasion, and cultural symbolism frequently serve as ways for marginalized communities to challenge power without confrontation.

In this context, cultural rituals function as powerful tools of resistance, enabling communities to symbolically and effectively express the disapproval of dominant structures. Indigenous knowledge, as a localized system of understanding passed down through oral traditions, rituals, and communal experiences, is central to these acts of resistance (Briggs, 2013). This knowledge encompasses ecological, social, and spiritual dimensions, reflecting the interconnected relationships between humans and their environments (Mistry et al., 2020). Despite being often overshadowed by Western scientific paradigms, indigenous knowledge plays a crucial role in addressing global challenges such as environmental conservation and climate change (Berkes and Turner, 2006). In the context of environmental justice, indigenous knowledge provides practical strategies for resisting exploitative practices, while strengthening cultural identity and resilience (Kimmerer, 2013). Moreover, approaches like "Two-Eyed Seeing" (Bartlett et al., 2012) propose collaborative models that integrate the strengths of both indigenous and scientific knowledge to create equitable and sustainable solutions.

While studies on environmental justice and indigenous resistance have highlighted the relevance of indigenous knowledge as a tool for resistance, there is still a gap in the understanding of how traditional rituals specifically function as strategies in these resistance movements. Previous research has predominantly focused on ecological dimensions or direct advocacy, often overlooking the potential of rituals as symbolic expressions capable of fostering solidarity, reinforcing cultural identity, and encouraging engagement with external alliances. Therefore, this study explores the role of indigenous rituals in the resistance movements of indigenous communities against environmental injustice, specifically in the context of the Lom people of Bangka. This research offers a novel approach to understanding how indigenous knowledge systems can be strategically used in the struggle against environmental exploitation and violation of indigenous rights.

3. Methods

The study employed qualitative research methods, emphasizing the construction of meanings through the lived experiences of the Lom people with unconventional tin mining. The research followed a structured approach, beginning with data collection through fieldwork, in-depth interviews, and participant observation over four months in three hamlets: Air Abik, Pejem, and Tuing. The selection of the Lom people and three hamlets—Air Abik, Pejem, and Tuing—as the research focus was based on several key criteria. First, these hamlets are among the most affected by unconventional tin mining, making them crucial sites for understanding their socio-environmental impact. Second, the Lom people have unique indigenous knowledge and cultural traditions that influence their interactions with the environment, providing valuable perspectives on environmental justice and resistance. Third, these communities have engaged in various responses to mining activities, ranging from adaptation strategies to resistance efforts, making them significant for studying indigenous agencies in environmental conflicts. Sixteen face-to-face interviews were conducted, including participants from indigenous communities, traditional leaders, and representatives from NGOs specializing in environmental and human rights issues. The data processing phase involved transcribing interviews, reviewing field notes, and systematically identifying patterns and recurring themes.

This led to an iterative and dynamic coding process, ensuring that the emerging themes were consistently refined and connected to the theoretical framework. The study was guided by theoretical analysis incorporating the concepts of environmental justice, resistance, and indigenous knowledge to interpret the findings within a broader scholarly context. The final phase involved data interpretation and synthesis, where connections were drawn between the empirical findings and existing literature, ensuring that the study remained grounded in the lived realities of the Lom people. Figure 1 shows a schematic of the study process.

4. Results and Discussion

The Lom people refer to an indigenous community living in Bangka Island, Indonesia. They are scattered across the villages of Air Abik, Pejem, and Tuing, all located in Gunung Muda. The term "Orang" or "Urang" refers to indigenous communities living in both settled areas and remote regions, with the Lom being a significant group within the Legal Environment of the Bangka Archipelago (Koentjaraningrat, 2000, p. 203). The name Lom comes from the word "belum," meaning "not yet," reflecting the historical rejection of Islam during that time. The villages of Air Abik, Pejem, and Tuing are located in Gunung Muda, which covers an area of 302.65 km², making it the second largest village on Bangka Island after Long Riding (797 km²). The population of Gunung Muda is 6,726, consisting of 3,429 males and 3,297 females. Air Abik is home to 431 people, Pejem has 362 people, and 214 people inhabit Tuing.

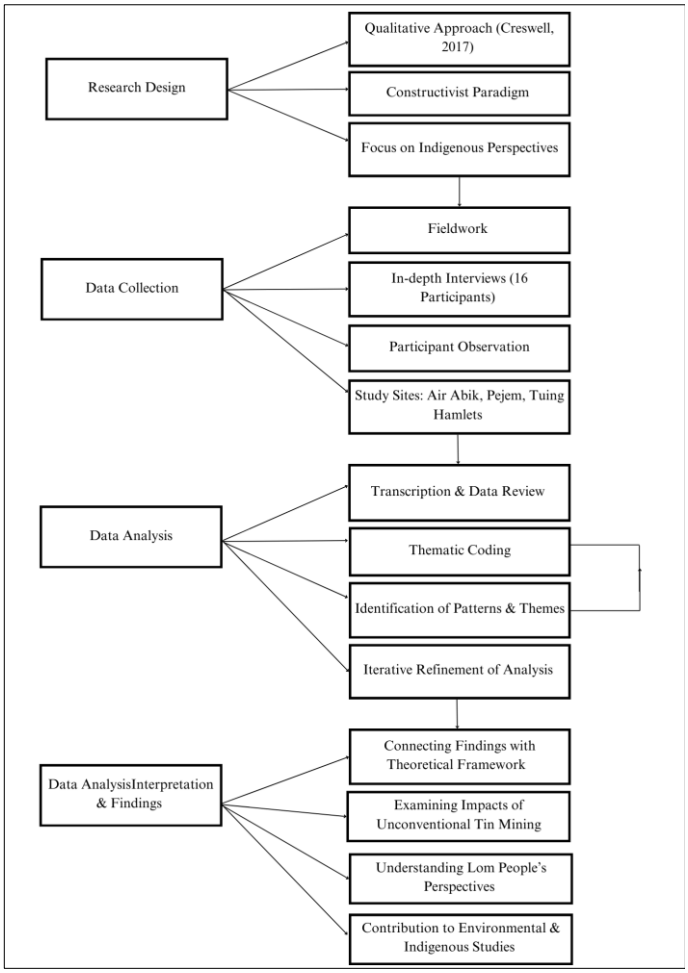

Figure 1. Research approach and methodological steps (developed by the authors)

This study was conducted in these three villages to explore the different perspectives related to the livelihoods of the Lom people and gain a deeper understanding of their cultural practices, rituals, and local wisdom facing challenges, particularly those related to the exploitation of natural resources. The findings show that although each village has slightly different approaches to managing natural resources, they share common impacts from unconventional mining practices and similar forms of resistance to mining activities. Differences in resource management are influenced by factors such as village location. For example, in Air Abik, the Lom people mainly rely on agriculture for their livelihoods, whereas in Pejem and Tuing, located near the sea, most people work as fishermen. This finding highlights the form of resistance carried out by the Lom people by applying indigenous knowledge as a form of resistance due to the impact of unconventional tin mining practices. The research findings show that Lom people resist unconventional tin mining practices through traditional rituals.

The Lom people are known for their rich cultural heritage and deep ecological wisdom, and are closely connected to their surroundings, nature, and environment. They have a strong spiritual relationship with their land, as reflected in the various traditional rituals performed to maintain environmental sustainability and resist the exploitation of natural resources. These rituals, such as *mengasal tmah*, are used by the Lom people as symbolic forms of resistance to defend their land rights, preserve their cultural identity, and protect the environment from damage caused by mining activities, particularly unconventional ones. However, it is essential to emphasize that the trigger for resistance by the Lom people is environmental damage caused by unconventional tin mining practices. This damage includes soil and water contamination with heavy metals, ecosystem destruction, deforestation, and long-term environmental degradation, which threatens biodiversity and sustainable natural resources.

These environmental impacts not only affect the landscape directly, but also have a ripple effect on the well-being and survival of the Lom community, as their dependence on natural resources for survival and livelihoods is severely disrupted. Therefore, in this study, it is crucial to reveal the impact of unconventional tin mining practices as the foundational reason why the Lom people ultimately engage in resistance. The tangible impacts on agricultural and fishing activities, contamination of water sources, disruption of ecosystems, and health challenges faced by the community demonstrate the severe environmental damage caused by unconventional tin mining. These direct experiences highlight the significant challenges faced by the Lom people, including reduced food security, economic instability, and the weakening of cultural identity, based on the results of the AMAN representation interviews:

"Extraction activities such as mines certainly destroy all aspects, especially if we talk about unconventional (TI) mines. The aspects of life, social, cultural, and economic, are environmental. Culturally, this mining activity eliminates their customary customs, which generally, the Lom people plant dry rice, garden, and farming. This habit loss is caused by the seizure of land used for mining activities."

Moreover, the excavation and transportation of mining materials frequently leads to significant soil erosion, leaving behind large pits that scar the landscape. In addition, unconventional tin mining disrupts aquatic ecosystems, causing water pollution and altering seawater composition. These environmental changes can severely damage marine ecosystems, threatening aquatic life and endangering the livelihoods of the Lom people, who rely heavily on fishery resources. Statements from Indigenous leaders in the air bik support statements from AMAN representatives

"In addition, another impact is on those of us who farm; this tin mine also affects the quality of the soil for us to garden and farm; talk about pollution; it must be polluted like seawater; the water is grainy and turbid, so

the income of fish is reduced because the water is no longer clear."

Unconventional tin mining activities have had significant impacts, resulting in ecological disasters, such as forest degradation due to deforestation, flooding, and seawater pollution. The impacts of these unconventional tin mining activities affect the community and future generations. The Lom people are not spared from these negative impacts as indigenous communities that focus on environmental conservation, living in harmony with nature, and protecting their territory and land. Extraction processes such as mining have created environmental problems and the dispossession of indigenous people's land, disruption of traditional practices, and loss of livelihoods. Another argument that supports the statements of other informants is that of the Lom living in Tuing Hamlet:

> "*Environmentally, it is undoubtedly very polluted with the existence of former mining areas, water pollution, and damage to soil quality*."

Once beautiful, the natural landscape is now marred by mine pits, stockpiles, and other mining infrastructure, leading to visual pollution that detracts from the esthetic appeal of the environment. Stockpiles, made up of waste rock and non-tin soils from excavations, contribute to this visual disorder. Additionally, mining structures such as roads and buildings further alter the landscape. Consequently, the picturesque view was transformed into one dominated by noticeable human-made features. This disruption damages natural beauty and creates visual dissonance, diminishing the esthetic experience of both locals and visitors. This visual pollution reflects the broader adverse effects of conventional tin mining on both the quality of life and environmental sustainability. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Sulista (2019), which highlight the adverse effects of unconventional mining, such as losses for farmers, landscape degradation, river siltation, and flooding. As discussed earlier, evidence of the impacts of unconventional tin mining further emphasizes the urgency of concrete action from the Lom people as an indigenous group directly affected by environmentally destructive mining practices.

These impacts, including damage to agricultural land, water contamination, ecosystem destruction, and health threats, demonstrate that mining activities severely disrupt daily life and livelihood sustainability. As an Indigenous community with a strong spiritual and cultural connection to their land and surrounding environment, the Lom people have the right to protect their environment and preserve the natural resources that form the foundation of their lives. Therefore, organized resistance efforts to defend their rights, protect natural resources, and ensure the survival and well-being of future generations are necessary, and will be discussed in this study. This resistance addresses the immediate negative impacts and preserves the continuity of their culture and identity as part of their ancestral heritage, which must be safeguarded. The findings reveal that Lom people's rituals, rooted in centuries-old indigenous knowledge, serve as powerful tools for resistance. Through these efforts, Lomidentity fosters community solidarity and defends ancestral land. Beyond their cultural significance, rituals provide moral, emotional, and social cohesion, while serving as platforms for advocacy. They enable collaboration with external allies such as environmental activists and academic institutions. Through these efforts, the Lom community safeguards its cultural heritage, livelihoods, and legal rights against mining encroachment. These rituals represent a hidden form of resistance, aligning with James Scott's (2013) concept of "hidden transcripts," which emphasizes covert and non-confrontational acts of resistance. One such ritual involves planting *kumba*, a local plant believed to have spiritual significance. According to a representative of the Lom people from Tuing Hamlet:

> *"If a piece of land containing tin has been planted with kumba, the tin within it will disappear... This is part of our efforts to maintain a harmonious relationship with nature and prevent more severe damage caused by unconventional tin mining."*

The *kumba* plant, a symbol of ecological protection and spiritual resistance, is used in rituals to assert the land's sacredness and impede mining activities. This practice reflects the Lom community's deep understanding of the ecological balance and reliance on symbolic acts to assert autonomy. Planting *kumba* disrupts mining activities without provoking confrontation, showcasing a subtle yet effective form of defiance. Beyond individual acts, these rituals also contribute to broader community solidarity. The communal performance of traditional rituals strengthens group cohesion and reinforces shared cultural identity. For example, the *mengasal tmah* ritual involves planting *kumba* and conducting prayers and offerings to invoke ancestral protection.

The term *mengasal tmah* refers to the traditional spiritual practices, prayers, and incantations performed by the Lom community. These practices are deeply rooted in Lom's cultural and spiritual connection to their land, which is considered sacred and central to their identity and survival. Observations during data collection revealed that rituals were carried out with solemnity and shared responsibilities. They are often conducted privately, with their timing determined by the prophetic dreams experienced by shaman elders or specific auspicious dates, such as the 13th day of the lunar calendar. These ceremonies involve the use of

kumba plants, which have symbolic and practical importance.

During the rituals, community members gather under the guidance of the *dukon tmah* (a shaman specializing in tin rituals), ensuring that the prayers and intentions are correctly fulfilled. The ritual concludes with the planting or scattering of kumba in areas containing tin, symbolically "neutralizing" the land to make it unsuitable for mining activities. This act is believed to render tin inaccessible, reinforcing the community's spiritual guardianship over their ancestral territory. One informant from Pejem Hamlet elaborated the following:

> *"When performing the mengasal tmah ritual, we recite specific prayers or chants, which hold deep spiritual significance and are believed to connect us with the ancestral spirits and the natural forces surrounding the tin. These prayers or mantras are sacred and can only be performed by a dukon tmah, a traditional spiritual leader entrusted with the knowledge and authority to carry out such rituals by the customs and traditions passed down through generations."*

The *mengasal tmah* ritual not only holds profound cultural and spiritual importance as a sacred tradition connecting the community to their ancestral heritage and the natural world but also underscores the collective nature of these practices. While the *dukon tmah* is a custodian of sacred knowledge, the rituals themselves are deeply communal. They are often conducted as community events that foster a shared sense of purpose and unity among Lom people. These gatherings transform rituals into collective resistance, amplifying their significance beyond mere ceremonial acts.

This statement underscores that the participation of the Lom people reflects their commitment to preserving their traditions and resisting external forces that threaten their way of life. On a symbolic level, rituals reclaimed the land and asserted the community's spiritual and cultural connection to it. Beyond symbolism, they strengthen Lom's cultural resilience, ensuring that their knowledge systems and ancestral traditions endure. Furthermore, by integrating these practices into their daily lives, the Lom people demonstrate a sustainable form of resistance that merges ecological stewardship with cultural preservation, creating a powerful model for maintaining their identity in the face of modern challenges, such as mining operations and environmental degradation.

These findings also indicate that the outcomes of these rituals extend beyond spiritual resistance. On a small scale, they disrupt mining operations by symbolically reclaiming land and asserting the community's connections to it. On a larger scale, these practices strengthen the cultural resilience of the Lom people, ensuring the continuity of their traditions and knowledge systems.

From the perspective of resistance theory, the use of rituals aligns with Scott's (2013) concept of "slow, subtle, and non-confrontational" resistance, enabling Lom people to navigate systemic power imbalances. The planting of *kumba* and the performance of *mengasal tmah* disrupt mining activities in symbolic yet impactful ways. These actions demonstrate how indigenous knowledge and spiritual practices can serve as tools for resistance, challenging environmental exploitation while preserving cultural identity and fostering community solidarity. The ritual of *mengasal tmah* also reflects the principles of environmental justice as articulated by Bullard (2005), Schlosberg and Carruthers (2010), and Bryant (1995). By addressing the disproportionate harm caused by unconventional tin mining, Lom people's practices embody the integration of the ecological, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of environmental justice. For example, the invocation of ancestors during these rituals underscores the interconnectedness of all living and non-living entities–a core tenet of indigenous knowledge systems. One participant from WALHI highlighted:

> *"A common struggle among indigenous peoples, including the Lom people, is often metaphysical resistance. For example, rituals that include prayers, offerings to ancestral spirits, or other spiritual activities are intended to invoke protection or gain spiritual support despite threats to their territory."*

This metaphysical dimension reinforces the Lom people's resistance by asserting their land's sacredness and right to a safe and sustainable environment. Furthermore, these rituals serve as a means of advocacy, drawing attention to the environmental degradation caused by mining, and highlighting the need for participatory decision-making in environmental governance. While the impact of these rituals may initially appear localized, their potential for broader application cannot be overlooked. Rituals, such as *mengasal tmah* can inspire more extensive collective actions, serving as a foundation for organized resistance movements. By mobilizing their indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage, the Lom people demonstrate how traditional practices can evolve into collective efforts that challenge systemic injustice. This perspective is supported by a representative of WALHI Bangka, who stated:

> "*The Lom people, rich in knowledge and noble values inherited from their ancestors, resist through the application of traditions or rituals that use cultural and spiritual approaches to defend their land and environment. They perform rituals or ceremonies as a form of resistance to the threats they face."*

In conclusion, the Lom people's use of traditional rituals and indigenous knowledge exemplifies a holistic

approach to resisting unconventional tin mining. These practices address environmental injustices and foster cultural resilience, community solidarity and ecological stewardship. While the scale of their resistance may be limited, their actions lay the groundwork for more significant collective movements, highlighting the potential of indigenous knowledge systems to contribute to sustainable and equitable solutions in the fight against environmental exploitation. By amplifying the voices of the Lom people, this study contributes to indigenous rights advocacy and environmental governance by offering insights into how marginalized communities experience and respond to environmental degradation. It also provides empirical data for NGOs and policymakers on sustainable mining practices and indigenous land rights. Theoretically, this research enhances discussions on environmental justice, resistance, and indigenous knowledge, enriching the academic literature on the intersection of extractive industries and indigenous communities.

5. Conclusion

The Lom people of Bangka Island, Indonesia, exemplify the profound impact of indigenous knowledge and traditional rituals as a form of resistance to environmental exploitation. Faced with severe environmental degradation caused by unconventional tin mining, the Lom community has mobilized its cultural and spiritual practices to assert its rights and protect its ancestral lands. This study highlights the crucial role of rituals, such as planting the kumba plant and the mengasal tmah ritual, in fostering community solidarity, preserving cultural identity, and challenging destructive mining practices. These rituals not only symbolize the deep connection of Lom people to their land, but also serve as practical strategies for disrupting mining activities and advocating environmental justice.

The findings demonstrate that the Lom community's approach aligns with "everyday resistance," where non-confrontational and symbolic acts effectively challenge dominant power structures without direct conflict. By invoking ancestral protection and emphasizing the sacredness of their land, the Lom people asserted their ecological stewardship and cultural resilience.

This study makes a distinct academic contribution by filling a significant gap in the existing research on the intersection of indigenous resistance, cultural practices, and environmental justice. While previous studies have primarily focused on the ecological impacts of mining or direct advocacy efforts, this study uniquely examines how traditional rituals function as strategic and effective forms of resistance within indigenous communities. The originality of this study lies in demonstrating how rituals serve not only as cultural expressions, but also as political acts of resistance, reinforcing indigenous agency in environmental governance.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this study provides valuable insights for policymakers, environmental activists, and scholars on the role of indigenous knowledge in shaping sustainable environmental governance. The Lom people's resistance to traditional rituals offers a powerful model for other indigenous communities facing similar environmental injustices. Their story serves as a testament to the enduring strength of cultural traditions in combating environmental exploitation and preserving both the ecological balance and indigenous identity.

This study underscores the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge into global environmental policies by shedding light on the strategic use of rituals for resistance. This highlights the need for greater recognition of cultural practices as legitimate and impactful forms of environmental advocacy, thereby contributing to broader academic debates on indigenous resilience, decolonial resistance, and sustainable environmental justice.

6. Limitations and Further Study

This study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the covert nature of the Lom community's resistance rituals makes it challenging to fully capture their practices, and reliance on qualitative data limits the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should incorporate quantitative methods, such as surveys or participatory mapping, to strengthen the evidence base and provide a deeper understanding of indigenous resistance patterns. Second, this study's focus on the cultural and symbolic dimensions of resistance has not thoroughly explored the economic and ecological impacts of unconventional tin mining. Future research should investigate these dimensions to provide a holistic perspective. Finally, the geographical scope, limited to the Lom community on Bangka Island, restricts the generalizability of the findings. Comparative studies involving other indigenous communities would broaden our understanding of shared strategies and unique adaptations of resistance practices.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, D.A; methodology, D.A; software, S.U.; validation, D.A.; formal analysis, S.U.; investigation, D.A., and S.U.; resources, D.A.; data curation, D.A; writing—original draft preparation, S.U.; writing—review and editing D.A.; visualization, S.U.; supervision, S.U., administration, D.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Written informed consent was obtained from the informant(s) to publish this paper.

Data Availability Statement

The dataset is available on request from the authors.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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