

**THE DILEMMA OF FULFILLING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AMONG SMALL-SCALE
PALM OIL FARMERS IN WEST KALIMANTAN**

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ABSTRACT

Smallholder palm oil plantations have become a central pillar of rural livelihoods in many parts of Indonesia, including West Kalimantan. While governance and policy studies often frame palm oil expansion primarily in terms of production and economic growth, its social consequences particularly for children within smallholder households remain underexplored. This article examines the relationship between smallholder palm oil resilience, local governance practices, and the fulfillment of children's rights through the lens of the anthropology of government. Drawing on qualitative ethnographic research conducted in Kapuas Hulu and Sintang Regencies, West Kalimantan, this study argues that palm oil functions not merely as an economic commodity but as a *crop regime* that structures daily rhythms, labor relations, and moral orientations within smallholder families. In this context, children frequently occupy adaptive positions within household survival strategies, including domestic labor and informal economic participation, which may undermine their rights to education, health, and well-being. The findings further demonstrate that children's vulnerability in smallholder palm oil regions cannot be understood solely as a cultural or household-level issue. Rather, it is closely linked to fragmented local governance practices. The state emerges as a *selective presence*: strongly engaged in promoting productivity and economic stability in the palm oil sector, yet largely absent in integrating child protection mandates into economic and village governance policies. This selective engagement generates governance gaps that effectively delegate social risks to households and local communities. By positioning children as an analytical lens rather than merely as policy beneficiaries, this article contributes to government studies by highlighting how economic development policies shape everyday governance and reproduce social inequality at the household level. The study underscores the need for child-sensitive governance frameworks that integrate economic development with social protection in rural and agrarian contexts.

Keywords: Anthropology of government, Smallscale palm oil farmer, Children's rights.

ABSTRAK

Perkebunan kelapa sawit rakyat telah menjadi tulang punggung ekonomi perdesaan di berbagai wilayah Indonesia, termasuk Kalimantan Barat. Namun, literatur pemerintahan dan kebijakan publik masih cenderung menempatkan sawit sebagai isu produksi dan pertumbuhan ekonomi, sementara implikasi sosialnya terutama terhadap kehidupan anak dalam keluarga pekebun swadaya skala kecil kurang mendapatkan perhatian analitis yang memadai. Artikel ini bertujuan menganalisis secara mendalam relasi antara ketahanan pekebun sawit swadaya, praktik pemerintahan lokal, dan pemenuhan hak anak melalui perspektif antropologi pemerintahan. Berbasis pada penelitian kualitatif etnografis di Kabupaten Kapuas Hulu dan Sintang, Kalimantan Barat, tanaman sawit tidak semata-mata berfungsi sebagai komoditas ekonomi, melainkan sebagai *crop regime* yang mengatur ritme kerja, relasi kekuasaan, serta orientasi moral rumah tangga pekebun. Dalam konteks tersebut, anak-anak kerap ditempatkan dalam posisi adaptif untuk menopang keberlanjutan ekonomi keluarga, baik melalui kerja domestik maupun keterlibatan ekonomi terselubung, yang pada akhirnya berpotensi mengabaikan prinsip kepentingan terbaik bagi anak. Lebih jauh, artikel ini berargumen bahwa kerentanan anak di wilayah perkebunan sawit tidak dapat dilepaskan dari praktik pemerintahan lokal yang terfragmentasi. Negara hadir secara selektif: kuat dalam

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mendorong stabilitas dan produktivitas sektor sawit, namun lemah dalam mengintegrasikan mandat perlindungan anak ke dalam kebijakan ekonomi dan tata kelola desa. Kondisi ini menciptakan kesenjangan tata kelola (*governance gaps*) yang mendorong delegasi tanggung jawab perlindungan anak kepada keluarga dan komunitas lokal. Dengan memadukan analisis empiris dan teori antropologi pemerintahan, artikel ini berkontribusi pada pengayaan studi pemerintahan di Indonesia dengan menempatkan anak sebagai lensa kritis untuk membaca kegagalan integrasi antara pembangunan ekonomi dan keadilan sosial di tingkat lokal.

Kata kunci: Antropologi pemerintahan, Pekebun sawit swadaya, Hak anak.

INTRODUCTION

Palm oil plantations have long been positioned as a driving force of Indonesia's economic development, both in national policy discourse and in local governance practices. Over the past two decades, palm oil expansion has been driven not only by large-scale corporate investment but also by the rapid growth of smallholder plantations involving millions of independent farming households. In West Kalimantan, particularly in Kapuas Hulu and Sintang Regencies, smallholder palm oil has developed as a survival strategy for rural communities amid limited livelihood alternatives and the decline of subsistence agriculture.

Behind narratives of economic success, however, lie complex social dynamics that are frequently overlooked, especially those related to the lives of children within smallholder palm oil households. Recent studies in agrarian political economy demonstrate that monoculture-based extractive economies, such as palm oil, tend to produce structural dependency and social vulnerability at the level of small-scale households (Gibson-Graham, et al., 2016; Santika et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2022; Fonjong & Gyapong, 2021). Dependence on global markets, fluctuations in fresh fruit bunch prices, and high production costs place smallholder farmers in weak bargaining positions. Under these conditions, the family becomes both the primary unit of production and the main buffer against economic risk. Children, as members of the household, are often involved in various forms of domestic and economic labor that are culturally perceived as normal, yet potentially disruptive to their rights to education, health, and protection.

Although child labor in the palm oil industry has received growing attention in the context of corporate plantations and global supply chains, the situation of children within smallholder households remains relatively underexamined. Children are frequently positioned as secondary "by-products" of poverty or market failure, rather than as subjects situated at the core of rural development governance. Yet international reports indicate that forms of child labor within family contexts are often more difficult to identify and intervene in, as they are framed as part of moral education and socialization processes (Cramb & McCarthy, 2016; ILO, 2021; Busquet et al., 2023). Consequently, analyses that focus solely on formal labor regulations are insufficient to capture the vulnerabilities experienced by children in smallholder plantation regions.

From a governance perspective, Indonesia has established a relatively comprehensive legal and policy framework for child protection. However, implementation at the local level particularly in plantation villages remains partial and fragmented. Studies on decentralization and village governance reveal limited capacity among local authorities to mainstream social protection issues, both in terms of resources and cross-sectoral coordination (Widayanti & Legowo, 2022). In practice, child protection policies are rarely integrated with village economic policies, including the palm oil sector that constitutes the primary livelihood base for rural communities.

This condition reflects what is described in the anthropology of government literature as the *absent presence* of the state, a situation in which the state is present through regulation and development discourse, yet absent in substantive interventions to protect vulnerable groups (Shore & Wright, 2015; Gupta, 2022). The state appears strong in promoting productivity and economic stability, while delegating

responsibility for social protection to families and local communities. Within smallholder palm oil households, this delegation places children in particularly vulnerable positions, as families themselves struggle under structural economic pressures.

This article proceeds from the argument that children's vulnerability in smallholder palm oil regions is not merely a matter of culture or family choice, but rather the outcome of power configurations and governance practices that privilege production over social protection. By employing an anthropology of government perspective, the article examines not only how state policies are formulated, but also how they are translated, negotiated, or ignored in the everyday lives of smallholder families. This approach allows for a more incisive analysis of the relationship between the palm oil economy, local governance practices, and the fulfillment of children's rights.

Empirically, this article focuses on West Kalimantan, particularly Kapuas Hulu and Sintang Regencies, which represent the characteristics of smallholder palm oil plantations in rural and border regions. These areas are analytically significant as they reveal the intersection between extractive economic expansion, limited local governance capacity, and child vulnerability. By positioning children as the primary analytical lens, this article seeks to shift governance studies beyond formal policy evaluation toward a deeper understanding of the social impacts of economic policies at the household level.

METHOD

Methodology in this study is understood as an analytical strategy for examining power relations, policy practices, and the lived experiences of independent smallholder palm oil families, particularly in relation to the fulfillment of children's rights. Accordingly, a qualitative ethnographic approach was selected as the primary research method, as it enables the capture of social dynamics that are not fully accessible through quantitative instruments or normative policy evaluations. Within the context of governance studies, qualitative research with an ethnographic design is employed to trace how the state and public policies are manifested in the everyday lives of small-holder farmers (Shore & Wright, 2015).

Ethnography allows the researcher to observe governance not merely as a set of policy texts, but as a series of practices, interactions, and negotiations unfolding at the local level. In this study, ethnography was used to examine how policies related to palm oil plantations and child protection are translated, negotiated, or neglected by local actors, including village officials, independent smallholders, and families. This approach aligns with Gupta's (2022) argument that the state should be studied through administrative practices and the lived experiences of small-holder farmers, particularly those of vulnerable groups.

The research was conducted in Kapuas Hulu Regency and Sintang Regency, West Kalimantan Province. The selection of these sites was based on several analytical considerations. First, both regions represent the typical characteristics of smallholder palm oil plantations in rural and borderland areas, with a predominance of small-scale independent farmers managing limited landholdings and relying heavily on local market networks. Second, Kapuas Hulu and Sintang exhibit distinctive local governance dynamics, characterized by relatively limited institutional capacity at the village and district levels to integrate economic policies with social protection agendas. These conditions render the regions particularly relevant for examining the practice of the state's *absent presence* within the context of smallholder palm oil governance. Third, from a socio-cultural perspective, communities in both regions live within multiethnic and multicultural configurations that shape how families interpret work, education, and children's roles. This context is essential for understanding how cultural norms interact with economic pressures and public policies in structuring household decision-making and child vulnerability.

The primary subjects of this study were small-scale independent palm oil farming families, with particular attention given to children as household members occupying structurally vulnerable positions. In addition, the research involved local governance actors, including village officials, subdistrict administrators, and representatives of relevant government agencies, in order to capture policy perspectives and governance practices at the local level.

The unit of analysis in this study extends beyond individuals or households to include social practices and policy arrangements that shape the lives of smallholder families. Accordingly, analysis is directed toward the relationships between economic policies, governance practices, and the lived experiences of children within the context of smallholder palm oil plantations.

As an ethnographic study involving children and vulnerable families, reflexivity and ethics were central considerations throughout the research process. The researcher remained attentive to positionality and sought to minimize bias and potential negative impacts on participants. Informed consent was obtained through a persuasive and ongoing engagement process, ensuring that participation was voluntary and that all information provided was treated with confidentiality.

This ethical approach is consistent with the principles of social research that prioritize the interests and well-being of participants, particularly children who were indirectly involved in the study.

Data were collected using several complementary techniques. First, participant observation was conducted by engaging in the daily activities of smallholder families, including work in palm oil gardens, domestic routines, and interactions within village public spaces. This method enabled the researcher to understand how labor, time, and family relations are organized within the palm oil economy. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with independent smallholders, parents, and children to explore their subjective experiences related to work, education, and well-being. Interviews were also carried out with village officials and local stakeholders to understand policy rationales, administrative practices, and implementation constraints at the local level. Third, focus group discussions (FGDs) were employed to capture collective perceptions and social dynamics that do not always emerge in individual interviews. FGDs were conducted with groups of smallholders and community leaders to discuss issues related to palm oil cultivation, household economies, and child protection.

Data analysis was conducted thematically using a conjunctural approach that integrates empirical and theoretical dimensions. Field data were analyzed to identify patterns in governance practices, power relations, and household survival strategies. The analytical process was iterative, continuously linking empirical findings with theoretical frameworks from the anthropology of government. This approach enables the researcher not only to describe observed phenomena, but also to interpret their meanings and implications within the broader context of public policy and rural development. Analysis focused on understanding how economic policies and child protection frameworks interact in practice, and how governance gaps shape children's lived experiences in smallholder palm oil regions.

DISCUSSION

The Socio-Economic Context of Independent Smallholder Palm Oil Farmers in West Kalimantan

The socio-economic context of small-scale independent palm oil farmers in West Kalimantan constitutes the empirical foundation for understanding the structural vulnerabilities experienced by households, particularly children. The analysis does not stop at a descriptive account of economic conditions; rather, it situates the smallholder palm oil economy as an arena of power relations produced through the interaction of markets, public policies, and local social practices. In this sense, the socio-economic context is understood as the outcome of governance practices that shape the life choices and constraints faced by smallholder families.

Agrarian Structure and Land Ownership among Independent Smallholders

Independent palm oil farmers in West Kalimantan generally manage small to medium-sized landholdings, ranging from one to five hectares. Land ownership is acquired through various mechanisms, including family inheritance, self-initiated land clearing, and informal land transactions. This fragmented agrarian structure differentiates independent smallholders from large plantation corporations, while simultaneously placing them in a more vulnerable position vis-à-vis economic fluctuations and policy changes.

Within agrarian studies, small landholdings are often associated with limited access to capital,

technology, and market information (Hall et al., 2022). This condition is evident in Kapuas Hulu and Sintang, where independent smallholders rely heavily on their own resources to finance land preparation, crop maintenance, and harvesting. Such dependence reinforces their weak bargaining position within the palm oil supply chain, resulting in relatively limited and unstable economic returns.

Market Dependence and Patron–Client Relations

One of the defining characteristics of the smallholder palm oil economy in West Kalimantan is its high dependence on local market networks dominated by middlemen. These intermediaries function not only as links between farmers and processing mills, but also as informal providers of capital through debt-based arrangements. Such relationships generate patron–client dynamics that place smallholders in subordinate positions.

Research on agrarian political economy demonstrates that patron–client relations in agricultural sectors are not solely economic in nature, but are also embedded in social and moral obligations (McCarthy et al., 2020). In Kapuas Hulu and Sintang, middlemen often become central figures in village economic life by providing emergency loans, price information, and access to markets. However, this dependence is paid for through low selling prices and persistent debt entanglements that are difficult to escape. From the perspective of the anthropology of government, these relationships reflect how the absence of the state in providing capital access and price protection opens space for non-state actors to perform informal functions of economic governance. In this context, market intermediaries effectively assume regulatory roles in shaping production decisions, income distribution, and risk management at the household level.

Production Costs, Income Uncertainty, and Household Survival Strategies

The production costs associated with smallholder palm oil cultivation are relatively high, encompassing expenditures for seedlings, fertilizers, pesticides, and labor. Price fluctuations of fresh fruit bunches, largely influenced by global markets, further exacerbate income uncertainty for smallholders. Under such conditions, farming households develop various survival strategies to sustain household economic continuity.

These strategies include the diversification of household labor, the reduction of non-essential expenditures, and the utilization of family labor to minimize production costs. Children are frequently involved in these strategies, either directly or indirectly for instance, by assisting with domestic tasks so that parents can spend longer hours working in the plantations. Such practices illustrate how structural economic pressures are translated into internal household arrangements.

Palm Oil as a Regulator of Household Life Rhythms

Within the framework of a *crop regime*, palm oil functions as a regulator of the rhythms of smallholder family life. Cycles of planting, maintenance, and harvesting determine the allocation of work and rest time, as well as shaping the family's social calendar. Children grow up in environments where plantation activities constitute the center of everyday life, blurring the boundaries between work spaces and domestic spaces.

Li (2021) have emphasized that life around plantation economies is characterized by strict temporal and bodily discipline. In West Kalimantan, this discipline is reflected in smallholder family routines that prioritize crop maintenance as the primary daily obligation. Children learn from an early age to adapt to these rhythms, which on the one hand may foster a strong work ethic, but on the other hand risks sacrificing time for schooling and play.

Children within the Household Economy of Smallholder Palm Oil Farming

In the context of the smallholder palm oil economy, children are not always positioned as formal workers, but rather as integral members of the household unit who contribute to the sustainability of the household economy. These contributions are often invisible and unrecognized as labor, yet they have tangible impacts on children's daily lives.

The literature on child labor suggests that such forms of family-based contribution often occupy a gray area between learning and exploitation (Cramb & McCarthy, 2016; Busquet et al., 2023). In West

Kalimantan, children assist their parents in ways that are culturally perceived as normal and morally acceptable. However, over time, these practices can limit children's access to education and other social opportunities, thereby reinforcing long-term vulnerability.

The Socio-Economic Context as a Product of Governance Practices

The socio-economic conditions of independent smallholder palm oil farmers in West Kalimantan cannot be separated from governance practices that shape market structures and risk distribution. The absence of price protection policies, limited access to subsidies, and the weak integration of child protection considerations within plantation-sector policies demonstrate how the state contributes to the production of structural vulnerability.

From an anthropology of government perspective, this condition reflects the delegation of state responsibility to households and local communities. The state is present through regulations that promote palm oil expansion, yet it transfers the management of social risks to smallholder families. Children, as the most vulnerable members of these households, ultimately bear the consequences of this governance configuration.

Children in the Smallholder Palm Oil Economy and Local Governance Practices

This section focuses on the position of children within the smallholder palm oil economy and examines how local governance practices respond to or neglect the vulnerabilities experienced by children in independent smallholder households. The discussion is not intended to make moral judgments about family practices; rather, it seeks to trace how economic configurations and public policies shape the choices and constraints faced by smallholder families. In this way, children are positioned as a key indicator for assessing the extent to which palm oil-based economic development is integrated with principles of social justice and rights protection.

Children's Education in the Context of the Smallholder Palm Oil Economy

Access to and continuity of children's education constitute one of the most critical dimensions for assessing the impact of the smallholder palm oil economy on household life. Formal educational facilities in Kapuas Hulu and Sintang are limited, particularly at the secondary level, requiring children to travel relatively long distances to continue their schooling. Transportation costs, school supplies, and other supporting expenses represent additional burdens for households with unstable incomes.

Under conditions of economic uncertainty, education is often framed as a long-term investment that can be postponed in favor of meeting immediate economic needs. Children are expected to assist their families either by working in the plantation or by taking over domestic responsibilities so that parents can maximize productive labor time. This practice illustrates how structural economic pressures are translated into educational decision-making at the household level.

UNESCO (2022) indicates that children in rural, commodity-based economies are particularly vulnerable to school dropout or delayed educational trajectories due to household economic pressures. This pattern is evident in the smallholder palm oil context of West Kalimantan, where children's education frequently becomes an adjustable variable within household survival strategies.

Children's Health, Nutrition, and Living Environment

Children's health and nutritional conditions are also closely linked to the dynamics of the smallholder palm oil economy. Access to healthcare services in plantation villages remains limited, while plantation environments present specific health risks, including exposure to agricultural chemicals and limited access to clean water. Children represent the group most vulnerable to these environmental risks.

WHO (2021) emphasizes that prolonged exposure to agricultural chemicals poses long-term health risks, including respiratory and developmental disorders. In the context of West Kalimantan, smallholder families often have little choice but to involve all household members in plantation-related activities, making environmental exposure an integral part of children's daily lives. In addition, income instability affects household dietary patterns. Consumption practices that rely heavily on plantation income and

limited food sources have direct implications for children's nutritional intake, particularly during periods of low palm oil prices. Children's nutritional resilience is therefore strongly shaped by household economic stability, which in smallholder palm oil economies tends to be fragile (UNICEF, 2021).

The Normalization of Child Labor as Family Morality

One of the most significant findings in the context of smallholder palm oil farming is the normalization of child labor as part of family morality. Child labor is not always understood as exploitation, but rather as a process of learning responsibility, discipline, and family solidarity. In agrarian cultures, children's contributions to household economies are often viewed as markers of maturity and social readiness.

Research on child labor in agrarian family contexts demonstrates that such practices exist along a broad spectrum, ranging from educational participation to exploitative labor (Widayanti & Legowo, 2022; Busquet, 2023). In West Kalimantan, the boundary between these two poles is often blurred due to economic pressure and the lack of alternative livelihood options. Children assist their parents in plantation work not because of direct coercion, but as a response to household needs. However, this normalization carries long-term implications for children's life chances. When work is prioritized, education and leisure time are marginalized, reinforcing the intergenerational reproduction of poverty. From a child vulnerability perspective, this condition illustrates how vulnerability is structurally produced through the interaction of cultural norms and economic constraints (Cramb & McCarthy, 2016).

Local Governance Practices in Addressing Children's Issues

In responding to children's vulnerability in smallholder palm oil regions, local governance practices tend to be limited and fragmented. Village and district governments generally possess child protection programs that are normative and sectoral in nature, lacking strong integration with economic and plantation policies. Studies on village governance indicate that children's issues are frequently treated as the responsibility of social welfare or education offices, while economic sectors are managed separately (Widayanti & Legowo, 2022).

Village administrations in Kapuas Hulu and Sintang rarely incorporate indicators of children's well-being into development planning that prioritizes income generation and infrastructure development. This policy fragmentation produces governance gaps that weaken child protection efforts. In the smallholder palm oil context, these gaps are further exacerbated by weak cross-sectoral coordination and limited administrative capacity at the local level.

Children as Indicators of Failed Development Integration

An analysis of children's positions within the smallholder palm oil economy reveals that children can be understood as indicators of the failure to integrate economic development with social protection. When economic policies succeed in increasing palm oil production but fail to ensure children's well-being, this outcome reflects a production bias embedded within governance practices.

From the anthropology of government perspective, this condition demonstrates how the state prioritizes economic stability and growth while delegating social risks to households and local communities. Children bear the burden of this delegation because they occupy the weakest positions within household and market structures. This section underscores that child protection in smallholder palm oil regions cannot be separated from the reformulation of economic governance and local government practices. Development policies that are not sensitive to children's rights risk reproducing social vulnerability across generations.

Palm Oil and Children's Vulnerability

This discussion brings empirical findings into dialogue with theoretical frameworks from the anthropology of government to elucidate how the smallholder palm oil economy operates as a technology of power that shapes family social life and produces children's vulnerability. Rather than reiterating results, this section functions as a critical analytical arena connecting field data, contemporary theory, and

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governance implications.

Palm Oil as a Technology of Power in Local Governance

The findings indicate that palm oil functions not only as an economic commodity but also as a technology of power that regulates the rhythms of smallholder family life. Within the anthropology of government, technologies of power do not necessarily operate through formal institutions alone; they also work through the regulation of time, bodily discipline, and moral orientations (Shore & Wright, 2015; Gupta, 2022; Wahab, 2023).

In West Kalimantan, palm oil cultivation structures household work calendars, determines priorities in resource allocation, and shapes definitions of valuable labor. Through policies that promote palm oil expansion, the state indirectly reinforces this regime without providing adequate social protection. This condition illustrates how state power operates indirectly through markets and economic practices rather than through direct administrative intervention.

The State as a “Selective Presence” and the Delegation of Social Risk

The analysis reinforces the argument of the state as a *selective presence*: strongly involved in promoting economic stability and productivity, yet weak in managing the social risks generated by such development trajectories (Görmar et al., 2023). In the smallholder palm oil context, the state is present through production and trade regulations but delegates risks associated with price volatility, health, and education to households.

This delegation has direct consequences for children, who become the last buffer in household survival strategies. Children adapt by reducing school attendance, assisting in family labor, or accepting suboptimal health and nutritional conditions. Within this framework, children’s vulnerability is not an anomaly, but a logical outcome of a governance configuration biased toward production.

Children and the Reproduction of Intergenerational Inequality

An examination of children’s positions in the smallholder palm oil economy reveals mechanisms of intergenerational inequality reproduction. When children’s education is disrupted and their health compromised, opportunities for social mobility become increasingly constrained. These dynamics reinforce cycles of poverty that are difficult to break.

The findings from West Kalimantan demonstrate that the smallholder palm oil economy often promoted as a pathway out of rural poverty may instead reproduce inequality if not accompanied by governance frameworks sensitive to children’s rights. Children’s vulnerability thus has long-term implications for human development and social justice.

Contributions to Governance Studies and Policy Implications

From the perspective of governance studies, this article contributes theoretically by extending the application of the anthropology of government to agrarian economic analysis and child protection. Children are positioned not merely as beneficiaries of social policy, but as an analytical lens for examining failures in policy integration. This approach challenges governance studies that separate economic and social analyses. By demonstrating how economic policies directly affect children’s everyday lives, the article advocates for cross-sectoral integration in governance analysis.

The policy implications are reflexive and contextual: Integration of child protection into village development planning, particularly in smallholder palm oil regions. Indicators of children’s well-being should be incorporated into village planning documents as measures of development success; Strengthening local government capacity through a child-sensitive governance perspective to bridge gaps between normative policies and field-level practices, with an emphasis on cross-sectoral integration rather than isolated programs; Economic policies for smallholder palm oil development must be accompanied by adequate social protection mechanisms, including access to education, healthcare, and child protection. Without such mechanisms, economic development risks reproducing social vulnerability.

CONCLUSION

This article demonstrates that the resilience of independent smallholder palm oil farmers in West Kalimantan cannot be separated from issues of child protection. Through the lens of the anthropology of government, the study reveals how the smallholder palm oil economy operates as a technology of power that structures family life and produces children's vulnerability. The state appears as a selective presence active in promoting economic productivity, yet absent in managing the social risks generated by palm oil development.

Children, as the most vulnerable members of smallholder households, bear the consequences of this governance configuration. These findings underscore the urgency of integrating economic development policies with social protection frameworks in rural contexts. Overall, this article contributes to the enrichment of governance studies in Indonesia by offering an analytical approach that links agrarian economies, governance practices, and children's rights as a critical lens for advancing more just and sustainable development pathways.

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GOVERNANCE: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Politik Lokal dan Pembangunan

ISSN: 2406-8721 (Media Cetak) dan ISSN: 2406-8985 (Media Online)

Volume 13 Nomor 1 Januari 2026

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