INJECT (Interdisciplinary Journal of Communication)
p-ISSN: 2548-5857; e-ISSN: 2548-7124
Vol. 11. No. 1 June 2026: p. 441-466
DOI: https://doi.org/10.18326/inject.v11i1.6390

Resistance Murals and Spatial Politics in the Dago Elos Agrarian Conflict: A Visual Discourse Analysis

Aprilianti Pratiwi*
Prodi Magister Media dan Komunikasi, Fakultas Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Pancasila, Jakarta, Indonesia
aprilyantipratiwi@univpancasila.ac.id

Nathalia Perdhani Soemantri
Prodi Sarjana Ilmu Komunikasi, Fakultas Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Pancasila, Jakarta, Indonesia
nathaliaperdhani@univpancasila.ac.id

Ahmad Badari Burhan
Prodi Magister Media dan Komunikasi, Fakultas Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Pancasila, Jakarta, Indonesia
ahmadbadariburhan@univpancasila.ac.id

Soedarto
Prodi Magister Media dan Komunikasi, Fakultas Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Pancasila, Jakarta, Indonesia
soedarto@univpancasila.ac.id

Abstract
Agrarian conflicts in the Dago Elos area, Bandung, not only take place in the realm of formal law and politics, but are also mediated through visual practices in residential spaces. This study aims to analyze how resistance murals function as a form of collective visual communication in responding to threats to citizens' living spaces. This research is expected to enrich the study of visual communication and urban resistance, especially in the context of urban agrarian conflict. The method used is a qualitative approach with visual discourse analysis, Gillian Rose, which includes the site of production, the site of the image, and the site of audiencing. The Data was obtained through focus group discussions with residents and artists, visual documentation, and analysis of four murals in the Dago Elos area. The results showed that murals are produced spontaneously, based on solidarity networks, and do not depend on formal structures. Visually,

murals utilize a variety of communication strategies to claim living space and build a narrative of resistance. Murals also play a role in transforming everyday spaces into political arenas that are collectively accepted by citizens. This study concluded that murals do not merely represent agrarian conflicts, but become a medium for politicizing space and strengthening the collective identity of citizens.

***Keywords**: Resistance Murals; Agrarian Conflict; Visual Communication; Public Space; Dago Elos*

1. Introduction

Dago Elos agrarian conflict is one of the most complex land cases in the city of Bandung over the last decade. The conflict is rooted in land ownership claims by the Muller family that refer to colonial-era documents, while Dago Elos residents have occupied and managed the area for generations since the 1940s. Differences in ownership basis, inconsistent court decisions since 2017, and the slow determination of land status create prolonged legal uncertainty (CNN Indonesia, 2024). This situation culminated in 2023 when an execution attempt sparked clashes between officers and citizens, including the use of tear gas, which had a traumatic impact, especially for children (Dany, 2023). These repressive conditions show that agrarian conflicts are not only related to legal aspects, but also involve symbolic and structural violence suffered by communities.

In the literature of Agrarian Studies and social movements, land conflict is often analyzed as a form of struggle for space and resources involving power relations between citizens, States, and economic actors. This research positions the Dago Elos conflict as an arena of space contestation that can be read through the perspective of space politics and social space production. In this context, citizens develop various resistance practices that are not limited to legal channels and formal advocacy, but are also manifested through cultural expression as a medium of political articulation and solidarity (Maharani et al., 2025). Agrarian conflict is understood as a form of class conflict between citizens and owners of capital, in which the formation of collective consciousness becomes an important element in strengthening the resistance of the movement (Efendi, Pratiwi, Komariyah, et al., 2025). A number of studies show that creative acts such as theater, music, and independent protest actions play a significant role in building and maintaining such collective consciousness (Efendi, Pratiwi, Muqsith, et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the concept of "resistance" in the literature is not always understood as a purely

subversive act; some studies also point to the potential for symbolic co-optation by institutions or commodification of visual expression in public spaces (Abram, 2024; Adie et al., 2025; Evans, 2025). This conceptual tension is important to note in reading mural practice as a form of political communication.

Globally, various studies show that street art has an important role in resistance movements. Young (2022) calls art part of the "arsenal of everyday resistance," as seen in the practice of Palestinian murals representing political identity and collective solidarity. Fraihat & Dabashi's (2024) A study shows how graffiti on the Israeli separation wall serves as a medium of political articulation that combines resistance, memory, and aspirations for freedom. Meanwhile, Zhang & Chan (2021) found that protest graffiti in Macau is able to record the dynamics of public participation through the evolution of visual messages that follow political developments. These findings indicate that visual expression in public spaces cannot be separated from spatial theory, visual culture, and resistance studies, because it operates within power relations that shape political meaning and legitimacy.

In Indonesia, the study of visual expression in public spaces has grown, but most of it still focuses on aesthetic aspects, semiotics, or tourism. Minanto (2024) examined anti-tank project posters in Yogyakarta as a medium for post-reform democracy, while Sahabuddin & Hildayanti (2024) looked at murals in Makassar as a means of forming the city's image. Yohana's research (2022) The murals of Kampung Cibunut emphasize aesthetic and semiotic aspects as an effort to beautify the environment. On the other hand, the study of agrarian conflict in Indonesia develops within the framework of movement communication, collective awareness, and alternative media. Studies of Efendi, Pratiwi, Muqsith, et al., (2025) shows how movement communication in Dago Elos takes place through creative actions and digital media such as Instagram Live to build a collective identity and challenge the dominant narrative of the country. Similar studies in Telukjambe and Yogyakarta also confirmed the role of digital visual media in expanding participation and solidarity (Pratiwi et al., 2019; Pratiwi & Pangestu, 2022). However, there are not many studies that systematically analyze murals as a visual practice produced in the context of agrarian conflict using a comprehensive visual discourse analysis framework, specifically through the integration of production, image, and audience dimensions.

Theoretically, this study is based on the tradition of critical Space Studies and visual culture that views space not as a neutral entity, but as a product of power relations that are continuously produced and negotiated. Lefebvre (2007) affirms that social space is the result of social practices and representations that shape and are shaped by power structures. In this framework, the agrarian conflict is not automatically positioned as a class conflict in the Marxist political-economic sense, but rather as a contestation over production and the legitimacy of living space. Correspondingly, Rose (2016) emphasizes that the visual image must be understood as a discursive practice that works through the site of production, site of the image, and site of audiencing, so that meaning is not only represented, but also produced through certain social relations. Thus, the theoretical problem of this study lies in the limitations of previous studies that still tend to see murals as symbolic representations, rather than as discursive practices that operate in the political production of space in the context of urban agrarian conflicts.

Based on the analysis, the gap of this study is not on the claim that the mural has never been studied, but on the lack of analysis that places the mural as a discursive practice that works in the contestation of the Agrarian space, specifically in Dago Elos. Thus, this study positions murals as not merely aesthetic objects, but as meaning-producing practices involved in the formation of resistance discourses and space politics. This approach views imagery as a socio-political practice born of power relations and specific communication goals (Pravitasari et al., 2023), thus allowing not only descriptive, but also conceptual analysis of how the meaning of resistance is constructed and negotiated.

The study offers an analytical solution to the gap through two main contributions. First, methodologically, this study operationalizes the three sites of VDA Rose (2016) interconnectively, rather than as separate categories, thus enabling the reading of murals as a discursive practice connected from the stage of production, image construction, to audience acceptance in one context of the same conflict. Second, substantively, this study documents a phenomenon that has not been widely studied in the literature, namely, the politicization of domestic space (the walls of people's homes) as a medium of Agrarian resistance. Different from the study of murals in conventional public spaces (streets, city walls), Dago Elos shows that even private spaces can serve as an arena for the production of resistance discourses when communities face the threat of immediate eviction. The novelty of this study also lies in its specific

context, namely the urban agrarian conflict in Indonesia that brought together colonial legal claims, prolonged judicial uncertainty, and active repressive escalation. This shows that the combination that forms the conditions of mural production is different from the context of conflict studied in previous international literature.

Based on the framework, these research questions are formulated as follows: (1) How do mural production practices in Dago Elos form resistance strategies in the context of structural stress; (2) how does mural visual construction represents and produces Space political meaning; and (3) how the audience process forms the interpretation and circulation of resistance discourse in public and digital spaces. This study aims to analyze the Dago Elos mural as a discursive practice that operates in the contestation of urban agrarian space, while enriching the study of visual communication and Resistance Studies in the context of agrarian conflict in Indonesia.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative design that is explorative to understand the practice of resistance mural as a form of visual communication Dago Elos residents in the context of agrarian conflict. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the meaning, experience, and social practices behind the production and reception of murals in a contextual manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), in line with Gillian Rose's (2016) Visual Discourse Analysis's epistemological commitment is rooted in the Foucauldian tradition of discourse analysis. VDA is not treated as a mere" framework " in a technical sense, but rather as a critical methodology that proceeds from the assumption that visual imagery is a discursive practice that produces meaning through the power-knowledge relationship, rather than merely reflecting reality objectively.

Data sources consist of Dago Elos residents involved in the production or interaction with murals, resistance-themed murals scattered in the area, as well as news articles and digital uploads documenting and discussing murals. Data collection was conducted through two Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions with semi-structured guidance. Participants were recruited purposively with the following criteria: (1) Dago Elos residents who are directly involved in the production or daily interaction with murals; (2) members of the art community; and (3) members of the Dago Melawan Alliance. A Total of 10 participants in one FGD session, consisting of two representatives of residents, two representatives of

sisingaan art, two representatives of music, two representatives of murals, and two representatives of benjang. Data saturation is achieved when the dominant themes are repeated, and no new information appears in the second session. The power dynamics in FGDs are managed through facilitation guidelines that encourage equal participation, and the position of the researcher as a facilitator is stated transparently to the participants. Field observations were conducted to document the spatial and environmental context of each mural.

Visual documentation was carried out on four main murals that were purposively selected as analytical cases. Four murals were selected based on the following criteria: (1) murals that explicitly respond to the Dago Elos agrarian conflict; (2) are in locations with high public visibility; and (3) were produced during the conflict escalation period in 2023. The selection of these four murals was not intended for statistical representation, but to capture the variety of visual strategies that reflect the spectrum of approaches in the discourse of resistance.

Data analysis using the visual discourse analysis framework, Gillian Rose (2016) which includes the site of production, the site of the image, and the site of the audience. At the site of production, the analysis is directed to the socio-political context of mural production, the actors involved, and the underlying communicative objectives, using FGD and observation data. At the site of the image, the analysis focused on visual composition, modalities, and technology to identify how the meaning of resistance and space politics are constructed visually. Meanwhile, the site of audiencing was analyzed through participant responses, digital documentation, and reporting to see how murals were interpreted, negotiated, and circulated in public and digital spaces. Analysis was conducted through an open coding process of FGD transcripts, followed by thematic coding and cross-site interpretation to connect the production context, visual construction, and meaning constructed by the audience. Findings from multiple data sources are actively triangulated between FGD data, visual documentation, and media sources identified and transparently reported. The triangulation process is carried out systematically by identifying the suitability and tension between sources, then reconciling them through cross-site interpretation. In addition, validity in visual research is strengthened through the presentation of thick descriptions, reflexivity of researchers to their positions and involvement in the field, and audit trails to ensure transparency of the interpretation process.

The principles of research ethics are applied through the procedure of informed consent documented in writing, anonymization of the identity of participants in reporting, and identity protection in the context of ongoing agrarian conflicts. In view of the active conflict situation, the researcher implemented an additional risk management protocol, i.e., sensitive information that could identify participants in the conflict was not included in the public report, and participants were given the right to review excerpts to be published.

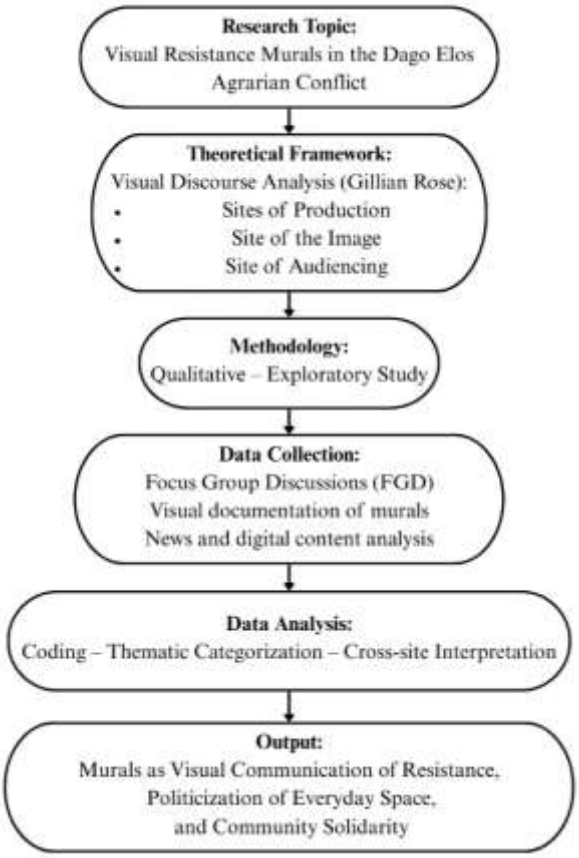

Figure 1. Research Flow
Source: Researcher Data

3. Results

This section discusses research findings on the practice of resistance murals in Dago Elos, Bandung, in the context of ongoing agrarian conflict. Dago Elos is not only a physical space that is contested legally, but also a

symbolic space for residents to negotiate identity, land rights, and narratives of justice through collective expression. Murals emerge as an alternative medium for conveying political messages visually and publicly, which are linked to the process of collective production, repressive contexts, and circulation in public and digital spaces. The findings are explained based on three sites within Gillian Rose's Visual Discourse Analysis to show how murals function as a medium of resistance discourse and community solidarity.

These findings are generated through repeated coding across visual documentation and FGD transcripts. Open coding identifies recurring themes, which are then grouped into analytical categories aligned with Rose's three sites. The three sites are presented separately for analytical clarity, but they operate relationally in the production of resistance discourse.

Figure 2. Visual Discourse Analysis Framework Of Dago Elos Landscape Painting
Source: Processed by Researchers

3.1 Site of Production: Collective and Adaptive Mural Production

The results showed that the production of murals in Dago Elos takes place as a collective action that is spontaneous but organized. Spontaneity in this context does not refer to actions without direction, but rather to the absence of a hierarchical formal structure. Mural production relies on a network of solidarity between residents, the Dago Melawan Alliance, and the art community. The mural reads, "Sabubukna!" It is a direct response to the legal crisis experienced by residents, especially after the submission for review by the opposing party, even though the residents previously won the case in the Supreme Court (Ghifari, 2022). The phrase was born from the collective anxiety of a legal process that was considered awkward and hasty, so the mural was positioned as a statement of the political attitude of citizens.

This finding is reinforced by media documentation showing that murals do not stand as a single visual product, but rather as part of a collective set of activities. Fland, the initiator of the collaboration with the Burn the Flowers community, stated that the mural was produced as a form of solidarity as well as an effort to activate citizens ' living spaces so that the Dago Elos agrarian conflict receives wider public attention (Ghifari, 2022). This is in line with the results of the FGD, where participants emphasized that the murals were made in mutual cooperation and without formal licensing: "*Spontaneously, without asking for permission, with a little bit of money from everyone, and it ended up becoming propaganda through murals."* (Participant 1, Graffiti Community, 2025).

The production of murals was also carried out with a high awareness of the risk of repression. The findings suggest an adaptive security strategy, including timing, location, and format of activities. In the journalistic KM coverage, the mural agenda with Burn the Flowers is packaged as a series of artistic and cultural activities, such as wall jamming, stencil workshops, and children's art activities, which function to reduce the potential for apparatus intervention without eliminating political messages (Ghifari, 2022). In open public spaces, such as around stations or major roads, murals are produced situationally with great care. This was also conveyed in the FGD by one of the participants:

> *"Before we start, we always check the location first. We see if there are CCTV cameras, what the road conditions are like, and what time is best."* (Participant 2, Graffiti Community, 2025).

In addition, the study found a shift in the function of the private sphere into a medium of political articulation. The walls of residents ' houses and alleys of settlements are used as the location of murals with the consent of the owners of the space. The Media noted that the mural " sabubukna!" was produced in a residential environment and accepted as part of collective solidarity (Ghifari, 2022). However, some residents also expressed mixed feelings between pride and concern about the impact of murals on personal safety.

The results showed that the production of murals in Dago Elos took place as a spontaneous but organized collective action. Spontaneity in this context does not refer to actions without direction, but rather to the absence of a hierarchical formal structure. Mural production relies on solidarity networks between residents, the Dago Melawan Alliance, and the art community. The mural reads, " Sabubukna!" This is a direct response to the legal crisis experienced by residents, especially after the filing of a judicial review by the opposing party, even though the residents previously won the case in the Supreme Court (Ghifari, 2022). The expression was born from the collective unrest against the legal process, which was considered awkward and hasty, so the mural was positioned as a statement of the political attitude of the citizens.

This finding is reinforced by media documentation showing that murals do not stand as a single visual product, but rather as part of a collective set of activities. Fland, the initiator of the collaboration with the Burn the Flowers community, stated that the mural was produced as a form of solidarity as well as an effort to activate people's living space so that the Dago Elos agrarian conflict receives wider public attention (Ghifari, 2022). This is in line with the results of the FGD, where participants emphasized that the murals were made in mutual cooperation and without official permission: "spontaneously, without asking permission, with little money from everyone, and ended up becoming propaganda through the mural."(Participant 1, Graffiti Community, 2025).

The production of murals was also carried out with a high awareness of the risk of repression. The findings suggest adaptive safety strategies, including timing, location, and format of activities. In the journalistic KM coverage, the mural agenda with Burn the Flowers is packaged as a series of cultural art activities, such as wall jamming, stencil workshops, and children's art activities that serve to reduce the potential for apparatus intervention without eliminating political messages (Ghifari, 2022). In open public spaces, such as around stations or main streets, murals are

produced situationally with great care. This was also conveyed in the FGD by one of the participants:

"Before we start, we always check the location first. We see if there are CCTV cameras, what the road conditions are like, and what time is best."(Participant 2, Graffiti Community, 2025).

In addition, the findings found a shift in the function of the private sphere into a medium of political articulation. The walls of residents ' houses and residential alleys are used as the location of murals with the consent of the owner of the space. The Media noted that the mural " sabubukna!" was produced in a residential environment and accepted as part of collective solidarity (Ghifari, 2022). However, some residents also expressed mixed feelings between pride and concern about the impact of murals on personal safety.

Overall, the findings indicate that the mural production strategy of Dago Elos residents Dago elos mural production involves several things, namely the collaboration of citizens and communities without formal structures, consideration of location and time in the implementation, and the transformation of domestic space into an arena of political articulation. These three mechanisms together create the conditions that allow murals to continue to be present in residential spaces, even in the context of intense structural stress.

3.2 Site of the Image: Visual Strategies and Articulation of Resistance

Based on the visual documentation collected, there are several different visual characteristics on the murals in Dago Elos. The find presents a visual description of some of the main murals.

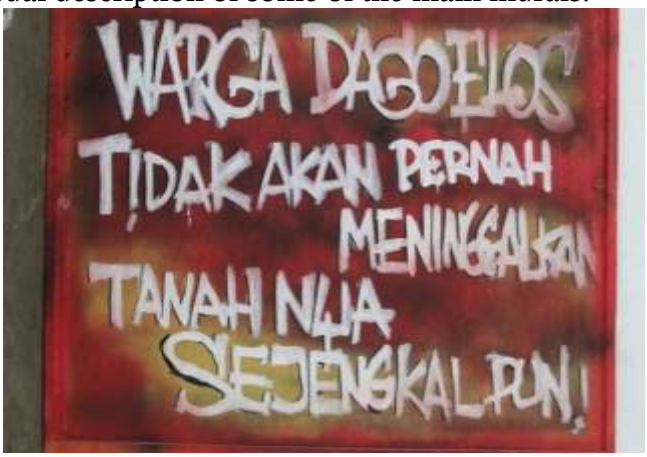

Figure 3. Murals in the Dago Elos Area
Source: Researcher Documentation

One of the murals displays the text "Dago Elos Tidak Akan Pernah Meninggalkan Tanahnya Sejengkalpun!"with large capital letters that almost filled the entire plane of the wall. The writing uses full capital letters of the dominant size and without additional illustrations. Free space in the plane of the wall is minimal so that the composition looks solid. The color used is a dark red background with white text. The contrast of colors makes the writing clearly visible from a distance. There are no human figures or other visual symbols on this mural. The Media used is permanent paint on the walls of people's homes. It is located in a residential area and faces a publicly accessible road.

Figure 4. A mural reading "Dago Still Fighting" in the public space of Dago Elos
Source: Researcher Documentation

A different visual strategy is seen in the mural "Dago Masih Melawan" which uses a short slogan with three main words. The writing is placed in the central part of the visual field with a symmetrical composition and without additional illustrative elements such as drawings or symbols. All visual attention is focused on the text. The letters are written large and thick so that they are easy to read from a certain distance. Spacing between letters and between lines is relatively tight, but still allows for clear readability. The color of the text is made in contrast to the basic color of the walls, so it stands out among the surroundings of the settlement. The surface used is a permanent wall facing directly onto a public road. The position of the mural is at a point that can be seen by road users and local residents. There are no additional ornaments around the text, so the whole look looks simple and direct.

Figure 5. A Mural reading "Dago Elos Never Lose, Tak Bisa Dikalahkan" on non-permanent medium in Dago Elos
Source: Researcher Documentation

Some murals use cloth or tarpaulin media spread on bamboo frames and installed in residential areas. This medium is not permanently attached to the wall, but is hung or tied to a specific structure so that it can be removed and moved. Because it uses fabric or tarpaulin media, this mural looks flexible in its placement, both in residential alleys and at temporary points. The text used in the form of short phrases such as" Never Lose "and" can not be defeated". The colors used are generally contrasting between the background and the text, such as dark-light combinations or vice versa, so that the writing remains clearly visible even though it is installed in an open space. There are additional lines or paint splashes around the text. The Mural combines English and Indonesian. The Shape of the letters is written with a large size and expressive style.

Figure 6. A Mural reads "Never Stop Hate Cops!" in the area of Dago Elos
Source: Researcher Documentation

There are murals that display direct call-to-action phrases such as ”Never Stop" in large capital letters. The writing is made with a dominant size and occupies most of the visual field. The Shape of the letters tends to be thin but still clearly visible. The Mural uses additional visual shapes around the text, such as shapes resembling the explosion effect surrounding the writing. The texture of the paint strokes looks rougher than other murals, with the thickness of the lines that are not always flat. There are no figurative illustrations, and the composition as a whole places the text as the only main element.

The findings suggest that the four murals represent a spectrum of different but complementary visual strategies in building resistance discourse. The main difference lies in the length and shape of the text (long, short, imperative), the Media used (permanent paint on the walls and fabric/tarpaulin media). In general, all murals place text as the main visual element and use large letters for easy reading in residential spaces.

3.3 Site of Audiencing: Public Response to the Demands of Dago Elos

The data showed that the residents of Dago Elos interpreted the mural as part of the conflict situation they experienced. Some residents said that at first, the presence of murals caused fear, mainly due to the context of the ongoing conflict. However, over time, the mural was accepted as part of a collective experience. This is reflected in the statement of one of the following participants:

> *“It was even pride. In front of the terminal, there is also, it becomes our encouragement. There was a picture in front of me, and I was terrified. But that's what motivates us.” (Participant* 3, Dago Elos Residents, 2025).

In the FGD, residents said that the mural was a reminder of conflict situations in everyday life. The existence of murals around houses and alleys of settlements makes conflict issues remain visible in the daily activities of residents. The findings showed a change in response from worry to pride in some residents. However, not all residents have the same response to the entire mural produced.

In addition to serving the internal community, murals also serve as a communication medium that expands public awareness outside of Dago Elos residents. The findings regarding the external audience response were obtained from the statements of citizens and members of the art community in the FGD. Some participants said that murals often attract the attention of outsiders who pass by or visit the Dago Elos area. One of the participants of the graffiti community explained:

"Usually people will take a picture and find out. Indirectly they know that there is one area that is being evicted, there is a very hot conflict." (Participant 2; Graffiti Community, 2025).

FGD participants said that the murals trigger conversations with visitors or volunteers who come to the region. These Data come from the testimonies of citizens and communities, not from direct observation of external audiences.

Another important finding relates to the response of citizens to the practice of counterfeiting itself. Unlike the general assumption that often interprets the mural as vandalism, Dago Elos residents actually show active acceptance and provide social legitimacy to the resistance mural. Residents voluntarily allow the walls of their homes to be used as media murals and interpret them as part of a collective struggle. One of the participants stated:

"It just so happens that my house is dimural. That's in the back. Think of it as propaganda. So the passers-by thought, 'What's going on?' That's great, I'm struggling. Residents whose homes are also proud, rather than afraid. (Partisipant 3, Dago Elos Residents, 2025).

The findings mark a shift in the meaning of murals from illegal acts to collectively legitimized political practices. But the conditions under which this legitimacy is contested or negotiated hierarchically within the community need to be recognized; not all Dago Elos residents have a uniform view of all murals produced, especially confrontational ones. This heterogeneity is an important dimension of community dynamics that should not be leveled in the analysis.

Overall, the findings showed that the response to the mural in Dago Elos included four things, namely the change in the response of some residents from fear to pride, the perception that the mural attracts the attention of outsiders and triggers curiosity, the willingness of some residents to provide domestic space as a mural medium, and the variation of views among residents on the type of message displayed. These findings suggest that audience responses to murals are diverse and evolve over time in the context of ongoing conflict.

4. Discussion

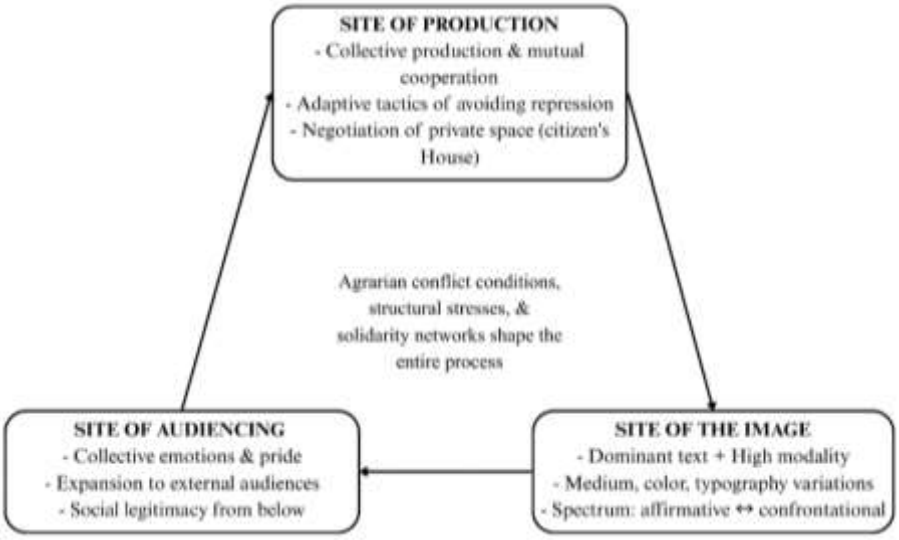

Figure 7. Visual Discourse Analysis Framework in Dago Elos Resistance Mural Practice

Source: Processed by Researchers

This section discusses the findings of the study by placing the practice of Dago elos resistance murals within the framework of Gillian Rose's Visual Discourse Analysis (2016), especially the relationship between the site of production, the site of the image, and the site of audiencing as social processes that form each other. This legitimacy does not come from formal authority, but rather from the emotional involvement and collective consent of citizens. But the conditions under which this legitimacy is contested or negotiated hierarchically within the community need to be recognized; not all Dago Elos residents have a uniform view of all murals produced, especially confrontational ones. This heterogeneity is an important dimension of community dynamics that should not be leveled in the analysis.

The finding that mural production takes place collectively and spontaneously without a formal hierarchy not only explains the technical mechanism of mural Making, but reflects the character of the social movement that developed in Dago Elos. In the framework of Visual Discourse Analysis (VDA), proposed by Gillian Rose (2016), the site of production is understood not only as a context for visual creation, but as an arena of power relations that determine what can be produced, by whom, and under what conditions. Thus, the spontaneity of production in

Dago Elos needs to be read as an adaptive response to structural pressures, such as legal uncertainty, threats of eviction, and limited access to formal communication channels, rather than as an indication of a lack of political awareness. Spontaneity here precisely demonstrates tactical flexibility in crisis situations.

This pattern differs substantively from the findings of Fraihat & Dabashi (2024) who document Palestinian murals as part of an ethno-national movement with a consolidated and coordinated ideological framework across generations. In the context, visual production is integrated in a relatively well-established movement structure. In contrast, in Dago Elos, there is no formal ideological Coordination Center; the production of murals arose as a situational response to the escalation of the legal crisis that culminated in 2023. This distinction is analytically important because it shows that the effectiveness of resistance communication does not necessarily depend on the centralization of structures or the consolidation of ideologies. Communal solidarity formed through the shared experience of threat-the risk of loss of residential space-can be a strong enough foundation to sustain persistent and adaptive visual production.

Zhang & Chan (2021) The study of the development of graffiti messages in the Macau protest movement also shows a different relationship between visuals and political momentum. In the context of Macau, the evolution of messages follows a structured dynamic of political momentum. Meanwhile, in Dago Elos, the relationship moves in reverse; the mural not only responds to the momentum that has been there, but also produces and maintains the momentum. The existence of murals that continue to be present in residential spaces, even outside periods of mass action, indicates that they serve as a mechanism for the persistence of discourse. In other words, murals work as symbolic infrastructures that keep agrarian issues alive in the everyday consciousness of citizens, rather than simply as visual documentation of protest events.

The practice of packaging mural production as an artistic and cultural agenda reveals a mechanism that can be understood as negotiating visibility. Movements need to appear clear enough to convey a political message, but not so explicit as to trigger immediate repression. This strategy shows the presence of spatial awareness and risk calculation in visual production. If Syamsuadi et al. (2025). Discussing formal and informal strategies in policy communication in the institutional realm, the Dago Elos context extends the discussion to the realm of agrarian conflict

at the grassroots level. The negotiation of visibility here takes place materially, over a wall whose own ownership is being contested, so the production of murals becomes a communication practice as well as a spatial practice. Space is not just a backdrop, but a force field negotiated through visual presence. Overall, the site of production in the case of Dago Elos shows that the production of visual resistance is a collective practice that operates under conditions of structural tension. This aspect is shaped by horizontal solidarity, adaptation to risk, and management of visibility in contested spaces.

At the site of the image, the visual diversity on all four murals, ranging from affirmative absolute declarations to confrontational imperative appeals, cannot be understood as the inconsistency of the movement's narrative. Rather, the variation reflects the internal dynamics of the Resistance community itself. In the framework of Visual Discourse Analysis proposed by Gillian Rose (Rose, 2016), the site of the image is not only related to what is represented, but also to how visual choices, namely composition, level of modality, materiality of the medium, and intertextual relations, construct a certain discursive position for both the producer and the audience. Thus, the difference in visual strategies between murals needs to be read as an expression of diverse positions, risk calculations, and political orientations within the same community.

The first Mural, "Tidak Akan Pernah Meninggalkan Tanahnya Sejengkalpun!", uses absolute phrases with a very high modality. The choice of diction that closes the space of such ambiguity builds claims that do not provide a negotiating gap of meaning. Discursively, this statement serves as a counter-narrative to the legal logic that questions the legitimacy of the existence of citizens. The permanent Medium used reinforces the effect of such assertiveness, as if the claim to the land were neither temporary nor conditional. In this visual construction, citizens are positioned as subjects with moral authority over space, even challenging the contested legal authority. This articulation shows how visuals can operate as a form of symbolic sovereignty claim.

In contrast, the second mural, "Dago Masih Melawan", presents a more minimalist but calculative strategy. The word "Masih" serves not just as a temporal marker, but as a statement of sustainability that contains affective and historical dimensions. He noted that despite the escalation of the conflict, pressure from the authorities, and the threat of execution, the resistance continued. The simplicity of the composition and the high readability allow the reproduction of this message at different points of the

space, creating a repetitive and diffuse visual presence effect. This finding is in line with the arguments of Marusek and Wagner (2024) who emphasize the importance of repetition and visual simplification in maintaining the vitality of political messages in public spaces. In the context of Dago Elos, this strategy serves to maintain continuity of discourse through constant visual presence.

The third Mural, "Never Lose" or "Tak Bisa Dikalahkan", produced on a non-permanent medium such as fabric or tarpaulin, presents a different configuration. Messages with a high degree of assertiveness are conveyed through a medium that is mobile and can be moved. Analytically, this combination reflects risk-laden production conditions. When public spaces are under surveillance, and the potential for repression is ever-present, a flexible medium allows messages to remain circulating without having to be tied to one permanent location. The use of English also broadens the intertextual horizon of the message, linking local struggles with a global vocabulary of resistance. This strategy shows an effort to extend symbolic solidarity beyond the internal community, while emphasizing the position of the struggle in the wider resistance landscape.

Mural keempat, "Never Stop Hate Cops!", merupakan yang paling eksplisit secara konfrontatif. Bentuk imperatif langsung menginterpelasi audiens untuk mengambil sikap, bukan sekadar menyaksikan. Dalam pengertian interpelasi sebagaimana dirumuskan oleh Althusser (Althusser, 1971), pesan ini memanggil subjek untuk mengidentifikasi dirinya dalam posisi tertentu terhadap aparat negara. Respons yang beragam terhadap mural ini, termasuk ambivalensi sebagian warga, menunjukkan bahwa komunitas Dago Elos tidak bersifat homogen. Heterogenitas tersebut justru memperlihatkan dinamika internal yang hidup. Berbeda dengan temuan Omwoha (2024) Findings on murals in Dagoretti, Nairobi, which are relatively coherent in tone and communication strategy, the context of Dago Elos exhibits a more layered and negotiable spectrum of expression.

Overall, this diversity of visual strategies shows that within the same movement, the expression of resistance is not always centered on a single style or tone. The variation reflects differences in social position, level of courage, risk calculation, as well as the affective orientation of visual producers. Thus, heterogeneity is not a sign of fragmentation, but rather a form of adaptive capacity of the community in the face of changing conflict situations.

On the site of audiencing, the transformation of the meaning of murals from a source of fear to a source of pride and motivation, as revealed in the

FGD, cannot be understood solely as a change in individual emotions. In the framework of Visual Discourse Analysis proposed by Gillian Rose (2016), the site of audiencing is a space where visual meaning is reproduced through the encounter between the image and the social conditions of the audience. In the context of Dago Elos, the social condition is the experience of agrarian conflict experienced collectively. The threat of losing residential space is not a separate experience, but rather a shared threat that shapes the horizon of the citizen experience. Therefore, the reported emotional change, from fear to pride, indicates a process of the production of meaning of a collective nature. The Mural became a visual marker of the same threat, and through repeated interactions in everyday life, its meaning shifted from a symbol of tension to a symbol of resilience.

The willingness of residents to provide home walls as mural media also indicates a form of legitimacy that goes beyond passive tolerance. Rose (2016) asserts that audiencing is not a one-way acceptance process; audiences actively influence the sustainability and meaning of visual production. In the case of Dago Elos, residents do not stop at the position of the recipient of the message, but rather are involved as co-producers by making their private space part of the visual arena of resistance. These findings bear similarities to the results of the Ke (2025) study on participatory art, which showed that direct community involvement builds a sense of ownership of the work. However, the difference lies in the context of production; in Dago Elos, participation is not facilitated by externally designed art programs but rather grows organically from the experience of conflict that touches the domestic space of citizens directly. Thus, the legitimacy that is formed comes from shared experiences, not from an institutional framework.

The function of the mural in attracting the attention of an external audience, which is then encouraged to seek more information, shows a mechanism that can be understood as discourse ignition. Murals serve as visual entry points that spark curiosity and expand the circulation of agrarian issues beyond community boundaries. These findings intersect with the study of Rodriguez et al. (2025), which documents murals as conversation starters in public health communication. The difference lies in the source of message production: if in the context of Health Communication, murals are often designed by experts or institutions with a specific audience segmentation, in Dago Elos, the message is born directly from the affected communities. The authoritativeness of the

experience presents a dimension of authenticity that amplifies the resonance of the message in the public space.

Findings regarding the heterogeneity of responses to more confrontational murals also open up an important dimension in the analysis of social movements. The variation in citizens' attitudes between full support and concern for risk suggests that resistance communities are not monolithic. These differences reflect the gradation of courage, the calculation of risk, and the limits of acceptance of diverse tactics among community members. This recognition of heterogeneity prevents the analysis from getting stuck on romanticizing the movement as a completely coherent entity. It is precisely this internal dynamic that indicates that the process of producing meaning takes place through continuous negotiation, not through static consensus.

On a more conceptual level, these findings suggest that when residential spaces become objects of dispute, murals are no longer simply a medium of communication, but rather part of the process of politicizing the space itself. The boundary between “house wall as a physical object” and "house wall as a political statement" is blurred. From the perspective of space production proposed by Lefebvre (2007), this kind of practice can be understood as a form of space appropriation, a process in which citizens not only defend space through legal channels but also reclaim its symbolic meaning through daily visual practices. Thus, the mural presents itself as an intimate and material form of resistance; it is attached to the wall of the same house that is being legally contested. In this context, visuals are not simply a representation of conflict, but rather part of the practice of maintaining existence in a threatened space.

The study has four limitations that need to be acknowledged transparently. First, data on external audience response comes entirely from community perceptions within the FGD, not from direct observation or surveys of the external audience itself. Claims about how people outside the community interpret murals are, therefore, inferential and cannot be independently verified in this study. Second, the study focused on one location and one time period, so it was unable to capture how the mural's meaning changed as the conflict escalated or de-escalated. Third, broader economic-political dimensions, such as the structure of land ownership, the interests of developers, and the position of the state, are only an implicit background, not a direct object of analysis, so a more structural reading of power relations cannot yet be carried out. Fourth, while FGDs are

designed to encourage equitable participation, it is not certain that more skeptical or ambivalent citizens are proportionately represented in the data.

This study provides four contributions that can be highlighted. First, the study documents the politicization of domestic spaces, the walls of houses of citizens threatened with eviction, as a typical medium of resistance in urban agrarian conflicts. This is a dimension that has not been explicitly thematized in existing mural and VDA literature. Second, the study shows that visual heterogeneity in movement without centralized coordination is not a sign of narrative weakness, but rather an authentic reflection of the complexity of an organic community that needs to be analyzed, not leveled. Third, the concept of" negotiating visibility", preserving message exposure while minimizing the risk of repression through the packaging of artistic activities, offers a new categorization useful for the study of visual activism in other repressive contexts. Fourth, by operating the three VDA sites interconnectively in the context of agrarian conflict, this study demonstrates that the dialectical circularity between production, image, and audience is not a linear one-way relationship; it is the main mechanism that allows murals to function as a mechanism for the persistence of a continuous discourse of resistance.

5. Conclusion

This research shows that the resistance mural in Dago Elos serves as a political communication practice located in complex spatial and social relations. Through the Visual Discourse Analysis approach, this study confirms that mural production, visual construction, and audience process cannot be separated analytically because they form each other in the context of ongoing agrarian conflict. Murals in this case are not only a symbolic expression, but a mechanism of articulation of claims to living space that are negotiated at the community level and projected onto a wider public space.

The contribution of this research is contextual and limited. This study does not intend to expand the theoretical framework of Visual Discourse Analysis, but rather shows its relevance in reading the visual practice of resistance in the domestic spaces of settlements. The findings on the tension between collective solidarity and ambivalence toward confrontational messages show that visual resistance is not a stable category, but rather a negotiating arena containing internal differences. In this context, this study provides empirical contributions to the study of

visual communication in the practice of mural urban agrarian conflict communities.

The study has a number of limitations that affect the range of interpretation. Research Data is mainly sourced from Dago Elos residents as actors and internal audiences, so that the perspective of external audiences, such as people outside conflict areas, state officials, or policy actors, has not been adequately accommodated. This lack of external perspective limits the understanding of how murals are interpreted outside of the community and how they operate in the wider public arena. In addition, this study has not examined in depth the dimensions of political economy and state power relations surrounding the agrarian conflict, so that the reading of the structure of land ownership, the logic of the commodification of space, as well as the position of the state in production and restrictions on visibility are still implicit. The focus on a specific location and period also makes the findings situational, while the absence of longitudinal data limits the analysis of changes in the meaning of murals over time.

Such limitations suggest that the findings of this study should be understood as a contextual reading that is open to other interpretations and requires further deepening. Future research is suggested to involve the perspective of an external audience, expand the analysis of the economic-political structure of spatial conflict, and use a longitudinal approach to trace the transformation of visual meaning as conflict dynamics change. Thus, the study presents a situational understanding of how murals work as a negotiated and constantly changing communication practice in a space of agrarian conflict.

Reference

Abram, S. (2024). Graffiti, Street Art and Murals Against the Neoliberal City: Wall-Written Dissensus. *Street Art and Urban Creativity*, *10*(1), 54–71. https://doi.org/10.25765/sauc.v10i1.919

Adie, A. U., Utang, D. A., Idu, J. E., & Owokor, E. I. (2025). Creative Resistance: The Role of Art Activism in Advancing Social Justice. *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, *13*(5), 30–41. https://doi.org/10.37745/gjahss.2013/vol13n53041

Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation). In *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (hal. 79–88). Monthly Review Press.

CNN Indonesia. (2024). *Awal Mula Sengketa Tanah Dago Elos hingga Muller Bersaudara Tersangka*. https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20240508092600-12-1095270/awal-mula-sengketa-tanah-dago-elos-hingga-muller-bersaudara-tersangka

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (6 ed.). SAGE Publications.

Dany, F. W. W. D. (2023). *Dago Elos Melawan Tak Bisa Dikalahkan*. https://www.kompas.id/artikel/dago-elos-melawan-tak-bisa-dikalahkan

Efendi, M., Pratiwi, A., Komariyah, F. S., & Kuswanti, A. (2025). Konflik Kelas dan Komunikasi Kesadaran Kolektif dalam Sengketa Lahan Dago Elos, Bandung, Jawa Barat. *CoverAge: Journal of Strategic Communication*, *15*(2), 144–156. https://doi.org/10.35814/coverage.v15i2.8538

Efendi, M., Pratiwi, A., Muqsith, M. A., & Waluyo, L. S. (2025). Live Streaming For Your Life: How The Dago Elos Community Uses Instagram to Broadcast Their Protest for Land Rights. *ASPIRATION Journal*, *6*(July), 17–45. https://doi.org/10.56353/aspiration.v6i1.92

Evans, G. L. (2025). Graffiti, Street Art and Ambivalence. *Humanities*, *14*(90), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.3390/ h14040090

Fraihat, I., & Dabashi, H. (2024). Resisting subjugation: Palestinian graffiti on the Israeli apartheid wall. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *47*(13), 2707–2736. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2023.2247473

Ghifari, F. (2022). *Burn the Flowers: Menambah Semaraknya Dago Elos atas Nama Solidaritas*. https://kmjurnalistik.com/2022/09/burn-the-flowers-menambah-semaraknya-dago-elos-atas-nama-solidaritas/

Ke, Z. (2025). Values and challenges of participatory art in urban and community development: a 10-year systematic review. *Front. Sociol*, *10*(September), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2025.1571383

Lefebvre, H. (2007). *The Production of Space*. Blackwell Publishing.

Maharani, D. D., Addinari, S. S., & Muradi. (2025). Bandungbergerak dan Perjuangan Masyarakat Dago Elos terhadap Hak Atas Tanah: Advokasi dan Pemberdayaan oleh Civil Society. *SOSMANIORA*

(Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora), *4*(4), 1367–1375. https://doi.org/10.55123/sosmaniora.v4i4.7046

Marusek, S., & Wagner, A. (2024). Public Art and the Mural: Interpreting Public Memory Through Prominence, Place, and Color. *Law, Culture and the Humanities*. https://doi.org/10.1177/17438721241300651

Minanto, A. (2024). Street Art and a New Space of Democracy in Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Reading Anti-Tank Project posters. *Jurnal Komunikasi Indonesia*, *13*(1), 29–46. https://doi.org/10.7454/jkmi.v13i1.1230

Omwoha, J. (2024). The Murals of Dagoretti : Examining Visual Communication and its significance on Social Change. *Writing the Arts &Amp; Humanities in Africa*, *1*(1), 68–79. https://doi.org/10.52907/wahia.v1i1.517

Pratiwi, A., & Pangestu, C. D. (2022). Instagram sebagai Medium Perlawanan Petani di Era Digital. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi UHO : Jurnal Penelitian Kajian Ilmu Komunikasi dan Informasi*, *7*(2), 233–248. https://doi.org/10.52423/jikuho.v7i2.24277

Pratiwi, A., Sarwoprasodjo, S., Soetarto, E., & Pandjaitan, N. K. (2019). Strategi Komunikasi Gerakan Perlawanan Petani Peasant ' s Movement Communication Strategies. *Jurnal Pekommas*, *4*(2), 165–176. https://doi.org/10.30818/jpkm.2019.2040207

Pravitasari, I. S., Pandanwangi, B., & Laksani, H. (2023). Komodifikasi Perempuan Pada Desain Kemasan, Studi Kasus Teh Tubruk. *CITRAWIRA: Journal of Advertising and Visual Communication*, *4*(2), 187–201. https://doi.org/10.33153/citrawira.v4i2.566

Rodriguez, A. K., Hack, G., Valdes, D., & Sonke, J. (2025). Murals as Health Communication: A vaccine promotion feasibility study. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, *19*(1), 40–65. https://doi.org/10.53333/IJICC2013/19104

Rose, G. (2016). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction of Visual Materials*. SAGE Publications.

Sahabuddin, W., & Hildayanti, A. (2024). Visual communication in public space through mural art in Makassar, Indonesia. *SINERGI*, *28*(1), 83–92. https://doi.org/10.22441/sinergi.2024.1.009

Syamsuadi, A., Safitri, K. I., Anjani, B. P., Jaes, L., & Rahman, R. (2025). Formal and Informal Communication Strategies for Public Support in Riau Hijau Policy Implementation. *INJECT (Interdisciplinary Journal of Communication)*, *10*(1), 733–762. https://doi.org/10.18326/inject.v10i1.4503

Yohana, F. M. (2022). Analisis Semiotika Peirce pada Mural Desa Cibunut Bandung sebagai Media Penyampai Pesan Masyarakat. *SINASTRA: Prosiding Seminar Nasional Bahasa, Seni, dan Sastra*, *1*, 244–255.

Young, M. (2022). The Art of Resistance: Art And Resistance in Palestine. *Janus.Net: e-Journal of International Relations*, *13*(1), 18.

Zhang, H., & Chan, B. H.-S. (2021). Protest graffiti, social movements and changing participation frameworks: The case of Macao. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *20*(4), 515–538.