
Legal Consequences of Land Sale and Purchase Transactions Based on Receipts on Land Ownership Rights

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the legal consequences of land sale and purchase transactions based on receipts on ownership rights within the Indonesian agrarian legal system. The main issue lies in the practice of the community, which still uses receipts as the basis for transactions without fulfilling the formal procedures established by law. This study aims to analyze the evidentiary weight of receipts and their implications for the legal certainty and protection of land rights. The method used is normative legal research employing a legislative, conceptual, and case-based approach, through a literature review of primary and secondary legal sources. The results of the study indicate that a receipt only serves as evidence of payment and cannot legally prove the transfer of land rights. Consequently, transactions based on receipts do not provide legal certainty and have the potential to lead to disputes. In conclusion, the transfer of land rights must meet formal requirements through an authentic deed and land registration to ensure legal certainty and the protection of rights.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Land sale and purchase transactions in Indonesia still take various forms, ranging from formal transactions through deeds issued by Land Deed Officers (PPAT) to informal transactions using only receipts as proof of payment. The phenomenon of using receipts in land sale and purchase transactions frequently occurs in society, particularly in areas with relatively low legal literacy or due to considerations of cost and time efficiency. However, this practice raises serious legal issues, especially regarding the certainty and protection of land rights as an

object of high economic value and complex legal dimensions [1].

Normatively, Indonesian agrarian law, through the Basic Agrarian Law (UUPA) and its implementing regulations, stipulates that the transfer of land rights must be carried out through specific procedures, including the preparation of an authentic deed by a Public Notary (PPAT) and registration at the land office. These provisions aim to ensure legal certainty and prevent disputes from arising in the future. However, in practice, receipt-based transactions continue to take place and are often considered socially valid by the parties,

even though legally they may not necessarily meet the required formalities [2].

Problems arise when disputes occur over land that was sold based solely on a receipt. A receipt, as a piece of evidence, essentially only indicates the payment of a certain amount of money but does not automatically prove that a lawful transfer of land rights has occurred. This creates legal uncertainty regarding ownership status, particularly when one party reneges on the agreement or when the land is subsequently transferred back to another party holding stronger formal evidence [3].

Previous studies have shown that the public's limited understanding of legal land procedures is one of the main factors contributing to such informal transactions. Additionally, *trust-based transactions* and local customs also influence the transaction patterns that have developed within the community. Other research also highlights that the land registration system in Indonesia has not yet fully reached all regions, thereby encouraging the public to use alternative mechanisms considered more practical [4].

The existing literature has substantially discussed land registration, legal certainty in land ownership, and the validity of land transactions under agrarian law. Recent studies have also examined informal land transactions from sociological and administrative perspectives. Nevertheless, most of these studies focus on the causes of informal transactions or on the general importance of land registration, while limited attention has been given to the specific legal consequences of receipt-based land sale and purchase transactions concerning the transfer and ownership of land rights. This condition indicates a research gap in the current body of knowledge regarding the evidentiary and juridical implications of receipts in land ownership disputes.

Nevertheless, the normative approach in land law places formalities as a crucial element in determining the validity of a land rights transfer. From the perspective of civil and agrarian law, the transfer of land rights depends not only on the agreement of

the parties (consensus) but also on the fulfillment of administrative and legal requirements established by legislation. Consequently, there is a tension between evolving social practices and the provisions of positive law in effect [5]. This discrepancy between legal norms and social realities demonstrates the need for a more comprehensive legal analysis concerning the status of receipt-based transactions within Indonesia's land law framework.

Based on this background, the issue addressed in this study is the legal consequences of land sale and purchase transactions based solely on a receipt regarding ownership of land rights. Additionally, this study seeks to examine the evidentiary weight of a receipt from the perspective of the law of evidence and its implications for the legal protection of the parties involved in such transactions. This focus distinguishes the present study from previous research by specifically addressing the relationship between receipt-based transactions, proof of ownership, and legal certainty in agrarian law.

This study aims to comprehensively analyze the legal consequences of using receipts in land sale and purchase transactions and to identify the weaknesses and risks they pose to the legal certainty of ownership. The approach used is a normative legal approach, examining relevant legislation, legal doctrine, and court decisions. The novelty of this study lies in its critical analysis of receipt-based land sale and purchase practices within the context of contemporary agrarian law development, particularly in relation to the principles of legal certainty and the protection of rights. Unlike previous studies that primarily discuss procedural aspects or socio-cultural factors, this study integrates normative and sociological perspectives to evaluate the legal position of receipts and their implications for land ownership rights. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide both academic and practical contributions to efforts to reform land law in Indonesia and to enhance public legal awareness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Land Sales and Purchases from an Agrarian Law Perspective*

The concept of land sale and purchase in Indonesian law is fundamentally inseparable from the national agrarian legal regime, which is rooted in the Basic Agrarian Law (UUPA). Land sales and purchases are understood as legal acts of transferring land rights that are *cash-based, public, and real*, as developed in customary law and subsequently adopted into the national legal system [6]. The term “*cash*” implies that payment and the transfer of rights occur simultaneously; “*transparent*” means the transaction is conducted in the presence of an authorized official; and “*real*” indicates the existence of a tangible act involving the transfer of the property itself [7].

In the context of positive law, the transfer of land rights through sale and purchase must be evidenced by an authentic deed prepared by a Land Deed Officer (PPAT) as a formal requirement determining the validity of such transfer [8]. Furthermore, land registration is a subsequent stage that serves to provide legal certainty and legal protection to the rights holder [9]. Thus, the existence of the PPAT deed and the registration process are essential elements in determining the legality of land ownership rights.

However, in social practice, the concept of land sales and purchases is not always carried out in accordance with these normative provisions. There are still many people who conduct simple transactions without involving a PPAT, thereby creating issues regarding evidence and legal certainty [10]. This indicates a gap between *the ideal (das sollen)* and *reality (das sein)* in the practice of agrarian law in Indonesia.

2.2 *The Evidentiary Value of Receipts in Civil Law*

In civil law, a receipt is essentially written evidence of a private nature (*onderhands acte*) that serves as

proof of payment of a certain amount of money. From the perspective of the law of evidence, a receipt has probative value as long as it is acknowledged by the parties who created it, as stipulated in the provisions regarding written evidence in the Civil Code [11]. However, the evidentiary weight of a receipt is not as strong as that of an authentic deed, as it is not drawn up by an authorized public official [12].

In the context of land sale and purchase transactions, a receipt can only prove that a payment was made, but it cannot serve as conclusive evidence that a transfer of land rights has occurred. This is because the transfer of land rights requires certain formalities that cannot be replaced by a receipt alone [13]. Therefore, in the event of a dispute, the party possessing only a receipt is in a weaker position compared to the party holding an authentic deed as the primary evidence.

Furthermore, the legal doctrine of evidence asserts that evidence must be comprehensively evaluated by the judge based on the principle of *vrij bewijs* or freedom of evidence. In this context, a receipt may serve as supporting evidence (*begin van bewijs*), but it is insufficient to fully prove ownership of land rights [14]. Thus, the use of receipts in land transactions entails significant legal limitations.

2.3 *Legal Certainty and Protection of Land Rights*

Legal certainty is one of the fundamental principles in the agrarian legal system, particularly regarding the protection of land rights. Land registration as a legal instrument aims to provide legal certainty to rights holders through the issuance of certificates as strong evidence [15]. Land certificates possess full probative force unless proven otherwise in court [16].

From a legal theory perspective, legal certainty is not only related to the clarity of norms but also to consistency in the application of the law-by-law

enforcement officials [17]. In the context of land sale and purchase transactions based on receipts, non-compliance with formal procedures leads to weak legal certainty and opens the door to potential disputes in the future. This contradicts the objectives of national agrarian law, which prioritizes the protection of the public's rights to land [18].

Furthermore, legal protection for land rights holders is also linked to the principles of *rechtszekerheid* and *rechtsbescherming*, which require clear mechanisms for the recognition and enforcement of rights [19]. In practice, receipt-based transactions often fail to provide adequate legal protection for the parties involved, particularly when ownership conflicts arise. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach is needed to understand the relationship between social practices and legal norms in order to create a more responsive and equitable land system.

3. METHODS

This study is a *normative legal research project* that focuses on analyzing the legal norms governing land sale and purchase transactions, as well as the legal implications of using receipts as the basis for the transfer of rights. The approaches used include *the statutory approach, the conceptual approach, and the case approach*. The subjects of this study are the parties involved in land sale and purchase transactions, while the object of the study focuses on the validity and legal consequences of receipt-based transactions regarding ownership rights to land. This study is not limited to a specific geographic location but examines practices developing in Indonesia in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

The research instruments used consist of a study of legal documents or materials, comprising primary, secondary, and tertiary legal sources. Primary legal sources include laws and regulations related to agrarian law and civil law, such as the Basic Agrarian Law and the Civil Code.

Secondary legal materials consist of scholarly literature, legal journals, and expert opinions relevant to the research topic. Tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries and encyclopedias to support conceptual understanding. Data collection was conducted through *library research* by reviewing credible and up-to-date legal sources.

Data analysis is conducted qualitatively using a descriptive-analytical method, which involves systematically outlining applicable legal norms and relating them to the issues under study. The analysis process involves the stages of inventorying legal materials, classification, interpretation, and drawing conclusions through deductive reasoning. Using this method, the study aims to provide a comprehensive legal argument regarding the status of receipts in land sale and purchase transactions and their legal consequences for property rights, thereby contributing to the development of agrarian law and legal enforcement practices in Indonesia.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that land sale and purchase practices based on receipts are still widely found in society, particularly in areas where access to formal legal services is relatively limited. Such transactions are generally conducted based on trust between the parties without involving a Land Deed Officer (PPAT). From an empirical perspective, the use of a receipt is considered sufficient evidence of payment and agreement. However, from a legal perspective, this practice raises serious issues regarding the validity of the transfer of land rights. This situation highlights a gap between social practices and prevailing legal norms [20].

Normatively, Indonesian agrarian law requires that the transfer of land rights be conducted through formal procedures involving authentic deeds and land registration. These provisions are intended to ensure legal certainty and protect the interests of the parties involved. However,

research findings indicate that many transactions disregard these requirements because they are perceived as complex and entail additional costs. This reflects a low level of legal compliance among the public. Additionally, economic and cultural factors also influence the public's choices in conducting transactions [21].

Research findings also reveal that receipts, as evidence, have only limited probative value. A receipt cannot be equated with an authentic deed drawn up by an authorized official. In the event of a dispute, a party relying solely on a receipt is in a legally weaker position. Judges tend to prioritize evidence with higher legal weight. Thus, the use of receipts does not provide legal certainty regarding land ownership [22].

In judicial practice, there are several rulings indicating that a receipt is viewed merely as preliminary evidence (*begin van bewijs*). This means a receipt must be supported by other evidence to strengthen a claim of ownership. Without such support, a receipt is insufficient to prove the lawful transfer of rights. This indicates that the system of evidence in civil law prioritizes authentic deeds as the primary evidence. Consequently, the role of receipts in land transactions is highly limited.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that receipt-based transactions are prone to disputes in the future. Disputes typically arise when one party breaches the agreement or when the land is transferred to a third party. In such circumstances, the party lacking formal evidence will struggle to defend its rights. This leads to an increase in the number of land-related cases in court. Consequently, this practice has the potential to undermine legal stability in the field of land law.

From a legal protection perspective, receipt-based transactions do not provide adequate guarantees for the parties involved. The absence of official registration means that land rights lack strong legal recognition. Consequently, receipt holders cannot obtain maximum protection from the state. This contradicts the objectives of agrarian law,

which aim to create certainty and justice [23]. Thus, this practice requires serious attention from policymakers.

Further analysis indicates that the primary factors driving the use of receipts are the ease and speed of the transaction process. The public tends to avoid formal procedures perceived as cumbersome. Additionally, the costs associated with drafting deeds and land registration are also significant considerations. These factors indicate that economic aspects have a significant influence on the public's legal behavior. Therefore, the approach employed must not only be normative but also account for socio-economic factors.

In the context of legal theory, this phenomenon can be analyzed using the "law in action" approach. Although legal norms have been clearly established, their implementation in practice does not always proceed as expected. This indicates that the effectiveness of the law is greatly influenced by the social conditions of the community. Thus, legal reform must not only be carried out at the regulatory level but also at the implementation level. A comprehensive approach is needed to bridge this gap.

Research findings also indicate that a lack of legal awareness is one of the primary causes of this practice. Many people do not understand the importance of authentic deeds in land transactions. Additionally, access to legal information remains limited in some regions. These conditions lead people to rely more on long-standing customs. Therefore, improving legal literacy is a crucial step that must be taken.

From a comparative perspective, several countries have implemented simpler and more integrated land registration systems. These systems allow the public to conduct transactions quickly while still ensuring legal certainty. This demonstrates that land system reform can serve as a solution to address existing issues. Indonesia can learn from these practices. Consequently, the existing legal system can become more responsive to public needs.

The findings of this study also indicate that the role of the Public Notary

(PPAT) is crucial in ensuring the validity of land transactions. The PPAT not only functions as a drafter of deeds but also as the party ensuring that transactions are conducted in accordance with legal provisions. However, in practice, this role is often overlooked by the public. This highlights the need to strengthen the role of the PPAT within the land administration system. Additionally, oversight of transaction practices must be enhanced.

In terms of legal certainty, land certificates play a vital role as strong evidence. Without a certificate, land ownership becomes difficult to prove legally. Therefore, transactions not followed by land registration create legal uncertainty. This can disrupt economic and social stability. Consequently, land registration must be a priority in every transaction.

An analysis of legal doctrine indicates that ownership of land rights is not determined solely by the agreement of the parties. There are formal requirements that must be met for the transfer of rights to be legally recognized. In this context, a receipt does not meet these requirements. Therefore, transactions based on receipts cannot be considered a valid transfer of rights. This underscores the importance of formalities in agrarian law.

Furthermore, this study found that many land dispute cases originate from informal transactions. These disputes often drag on and take a long time to resolve. This indicates that the social costs of this practice are significant. Additionally, the conflicts that arise can also trigger tensions within the community. Therefore, dispute prevention must be a primary focus.

From a legal policy perspective, strategic measures are needed to address this issue. One step that can be taken is to simplify land registration procedures. In addition, the government also needs to provide subsidies or incentives for the public to register their land. This policy is expected to improve public compliance with the law. Consequently, informal transactions can be minimized.

Research findings also indicate that the digitization of land administration services can serve as an effective solution. With a digital system, the land registration process can be conducted more quickly and transparently. This can enhance public trust in the legal system. Furthermore, digitization can reduce the potential for corrupt practices. Therefore, digital transformation must continue to be promoted.

From a sociological perspective, the practice of using receipts reflects a still-weak legal culture. The public tends to prioritize trust over legal certainty. This indicates that changing legal culture is no easy challenge. It requires consistent time and effort to shift public mindset. Thus, legal reform must be accompanied by cultural change.

This study also found a mismatch between public needs and the existing legal system. A legal system that is overly formal is perceived as inflexible and difficult to access. This drives the public to seek more practical alternatives. Therefore, the legal system must be adapted to public needs without sacrificing the principle of legal certainty. An adaptive approach is essential.

From a legal-economic perspective, receipt-based transactions can be viewed as an effort to reduce transaction costs. However, these cost savings may actually lead to greater losses in the future. Disputes that arise can result in significantly higher costs. Therefore, short-term efficiency does not always align with long-term legal certainty [24]. This requires public attention.

Research findings also indicate that legal protection for parties acting in good faith remains a subject of debate. In some cases, a party purchasing land via a receipt may receive protection if they can prove their good faith. However, such protection is not always consistent in judicial practice. This highlights uncertainty in the application of the law. Therefore, clearer guidelines are needed.

In the context of legal reform, harmonization between customary law and statutory law is required. Many land sale and purchase practices still rely on customary law. However, statutory law mandates

certain formalities. Therefore, integration between these two legal systems must be achieved. This aims to create a more inclusive legal system.

This study also indicates that the role of local governments is crucial in overseeing land transactions. Local governments can conduct outreach and provide education to the public. Additionally, local governments can facilitate the land registration process. Thus, the involvement of local governments is essential. This can enhance the effectiveness of land policies.

From a civil law perspective, the principle of freedom of contract does indeed provide room for the parties to determine the form of the agreement. However, in the context of land affairs, this freedom is limited by mandatory legal provisions. Therefore, not all forms of agreements can be considered valid. This indicates limitations in the application of this principle [25]. Thus, land law possesses unique characteristics.

Analysis of field practices reveals that many members of the public are unaware of the legal risks associated with receipt-based transactions. They tend to focus on convenience without considering long-term consequences. This highlights the need for increased legal awareness. Continuous education is essential. Consequently, the public can make wiser decisions.

This study also found that the judiciary plays a crucial role in providing legal certainty. Court rulings can serve as a reference in resolving land disputes. However, inconsistent rulings can create uncertainty. Therefore, consistency in law enforcement is required. This is vital for maintaining public trust.

In the context of globalization, a land tenure system that fails to provide legal certainty can hinder investment. Investors require assurance that the land rights they acquire are legally valid. Therefore, land tenure reform is of paramount importance. This impacts not only local communities but also the national economy. Consequently, this issue has far-reaching implications.

Research findings indicate that a multidisciplinary approach is necessary to comprehensively understand this issue. Legal, social, and economic aspects are interrelated. Therefore, any solution adopted must consider all these aspects. A partial approach will not be effective. Consequently, this study advocates for a more holistic approach.

In the final analysis, it can be concluded that land sales and purchases based on receipts carry high legal risks. Although considered practical, this practice does not provide legal certainty. Therefore, the public needs to be encouraged to follow formal procedures. This is important to protect their rights. Thus, legal certainty can be achieved.

This discussion emphasizes that the existence of law is not merely as a norm but also as an instrument for creating social order. When norms are not followed, the potential for conflict increases. Therefore, compliance with the law is of utmost importance. Consistent law enforcement is also necessary. Thus, the objectives of the law can be optimally achieved.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion outlined above, it can be concluded that land sale and purchase transactions based solely on a receipt lack sufficient legal validity to legally transfer ownership rights under Indonesian agrarian law. A receipt serves only as evidence of payment but does not meet the formal requirements as a legally recognized instrument of evidence for the transfer of rights, as it is not executed before a Land Deed Officer (PPAT) and is not followed by the land registration process. Consequently, ownership of land rights lacks legal certainty and is prone to disputes, particularly when confronted by other parties holding stronger formal evidence such as authentic deeds or certificates. Thus, the research objective is addressed: the legal consequences of receipt-based transactions include weak legal protection for the parties involved and the incomplete recognition of

land rights transfers under Indonesia's positive legal system.

The recommendations that can be offered include the need to enhance public legal awareness through intensive outreach regarding the importance of formal procedures in land sale and purchase transactions, particularly the obligation to use PPAT deeds and land registration. Additionally, the government must reform the land administration system by simplifying procedures and reducing

administrative costs to make them more affordable for the public. Strengthening the role of PPATs and utilizing digital technology in the land registration system are also strategic steps to enhance legal certainty and protection. Thus, it is hoped that land sale and purchase practices based on receipts can be minimized and that the land law system in Indonesia will become more effective, fair, and responsive to the needs of the public.

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