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## **At the Capitalist Frontier: Changing the Riverine Ethnic Identity in Central Kalimantan**

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### **Summary**

Ethnic identity has long been a contested issue in Kalimantan, the home island of the Dayak in Indonesia. This paper draws on fieldwork in a Dayak Murung village to trace the evolution of Dayak ethnic identity – understood as a process of transformation through encounter – in response to successive waves of territorialisation for the purposes of resource extraction, as occurring from the Dutch colonial period to the present day. I use the concept of ‘frontier assemblages’ to explore the process of transforming ‘wilderness’ to extractive landscapes and simplifying the meaning and value within the space. In the frontier landscape, encounters with the globalised commodity economy, state territorialisation, colonial and state-imposed changes to religious beliefs and practices, and changing riverine landscapes are all reconfiguring Dayak Murung identities and undermining their traditional cosmology. Political decentralisation – which had seemed to offer a way forwards for a broader-based ethnic political mobilisation around the key issue of access to resources – is used by the Dayak elite to consolidate their power. Using feminist Political Ecology, the paper uncovers the complex interplay of power relations between state actors, the extractive companies and local elites. Therewith it explores the intersectionality of Dayak Murung everyday resistance, especially how those concerned contest and subvert the dominant extractivist powers.

**Keywords:** ethnicity, frontier, extractivism, coal, resistance, feminist political ecology

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