

**NATURAL RESOURCE EXPLOITATION AND STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN EAST KALIMANTAN: CHALLENGES FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**EKSPLOITASI SUMBER DAYA ALAM DAN TRANSFORMASI STRUKTURAL DI KALIMANTAN TIMUR: TANTANGAN BAGI PEMBANGUNAN EKONOMI INKLUSIF**

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**ABSTRACT**

East Kalimantan represents a critical case study of resource-dependent regional economies struggling to achieve structural transformation despite substantial natural resource endowments. This research examines the paradox of persistent extractive sector dominance and limited economic diversification in Indonesia's wealthiest province. Employing qualitative methodology through document analysis and secondary data synthesis, this study analyzes economic structure evolution during 2023-2025, revealing that mining and extractive industries continue to account for 68.4% of regional GDP while absorbing only 12.3% of the workforce. The research identifies three primary barriers to inclusive development: premature deindustrialization patterns, asymmetric capital accumulation favoring resource sectors, and institutional frameworks perpetuating enclave economy characteristics. Analysis of 2024 provincial data demonstrates that despite per capita income reaching IDR 187.4 million, poverty rates in extractive-dependent districts remain 3.2 percentage points above provincial averages. The findings challenge conventional resource curse narratives by demonstrating that institutional design rather than resource abundance itself constitutes the fundamental constraint. This research contributes to development economics literature by documenting how subnational resource governance structures mediate national-level development outcomes. Policy implications emphasize the necessity of redistributive mechanisms, forward linkage development, and deliberate industrial policy coordination to achieve structural transformation objectives aligned with Indonesia's 2045 vision.

**Keywords:** structural transformation, resource curse, extractive industries, inclusive development, regional economics

**ABSTRAK**

*Kalimantan Timur merepresentasikan studi kasus krusial mengenai ekonomi daerah yang bergantung pada sumber daya alam namun mengalami kesulitan mencapai transformasi struktural meskipun memiliki endowment sumber daya yang melimpah. Penelitian ini mengkaji paradoks dominasi sektor ekstraktif yang persisten dan terbatasnya diversifikasi ekonomi di provinsi terkaya di Indonesia. Menggunakan metodologi kualitatif melalui analisis dokumen dan sintesis data sekunder, studi ini menganalisis evolusi struktur ekonomi selama periode 2023–2025, yang menunjukkan bahwa sektor pertambangan dan industri ekstraktif masih menyumbang 68,4% terhadap PDRB daerah, namun hanya menyerap 12,3% tenaga kerja. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi tiga hambatan utama terhadap pembangunan inklusif: pola deindustrialisasi prematur, akumulasi modal yang asimetris yang berpihak pada sektor sumber daya, serta kerangka kelembagaan yang mempertahankan karakteristik ekonomi enclave. Analisis data provinsi tahun 2024 menunjukkan bahwa meskipun pendapatan per kapita mencapai Rp187,4 juta, tingkat kemiskinan di kabupaten yang bergantung pada sektor ekstraktif tetap 3,2 poin persentase lebih tinggi dibandingkan rata-rata provinsi. Temuan ini menantang narasi konvensional tentang kutukan sumber daya dengan menunjukkan bahwa desain kelembagaan, bukan kelimpahan sumber daya itu sendiri, merupakan kendala fundamental. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur ekonomi pembangunan dengan mendokumentasikan bagaimana struktur tata kelola sumber*

*daya di tingkat subnasional memediasi capaian pembangunan pada tingkat nasional. Implikasi kebijakan menekankan pentingnya mekanisme redistribusi, pengembangan keterkaitan ke depan (forward linkage), serta koordinasi kebijakan industri yang terencana guna mencapai tujuan transformasi struktural yang selaras dengan visi Indonesia 2045.*

**Kata Kunci:** *transformasi struktural, kutukan sumber daya, industri ekstraktif, pembangunan inklusif, ekonomi regional*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between natural resource abundance and economic development trajectories has generated substantial scholarly debate since Sachs and Warner (1995) formalized the resource curse hypothesis. East Kalimantan province exemplifies this paradoxical dynamic, possessing extensive coal reserves (37.8 billion tons), significant petroleum deposits, and diverse forest resources, yet experiencing constrained structural transformation progress (Statistics Indonesia, 2024). With per capita gross regional domestic product (GRDP) reaching IDR 187.4 million in 2024, approximately 3.4 times the national average, the province simultaneously exhibits persistent development challenges, including limited manufacturing sector expansion, concentrated employment patterns, and spatial inequality (Central Bureau of Statistics East Kalimantan, 2024).

Recent economic data reveals concerning trends. Between 2023 and 2025, the extractive sector contribution to provincial GRDP increased from 66.2% to 68.4%, while the manufacturing sector share declined from 8.7% to 8.1% (BPS Kaltim, 2025). This trajectory contradicts conventional structural transformation patterns documented in successful developing economies, where manufacturing typically expands as per capita income rises (Rodrik, 2016). The phenomenon assumes heightened policy relevance as Indonesia pursues ambitious economic transformation objectives outlined in Vision 2045, targeting advanced economy status through industrialization and diversification strategies (National Development Planning Agency, 2023).

East Kalimantan's structural challenges intensified following its selection as the new capital location (*Ibu Kota Nusantara/IKN*). The massive infrastructure investment—projected at USD 32 billion through 2045 creates opportunities for economic diversification but simultaneously risks reinforcing extractive dependencies through construction material demand and land speculation pressures (Ministry of National Development Planning, 2024). This dual dynamic necessitates rigorous analysis of transformation mechanisms and constraints.

This research addresses three fundamental questions. First, what structural characteristics define East Kalimantan's economy during the 2023-2025 period? Second, which mechanisms perpetuate extractive sector dominance despite substantial resource rents and policy interventions? Third, what institutional and policy frameworks could facilitate inclusive structural transformation? The study contributes to development economics literature by providing empirical documentation of subnational transformation dynamics in resource-rich contexts, challenging simplistic resource curse interpretations through institutional analysis.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Structural Transformation Theory

Structural transformation constitutes the fundamental process through which developing economies transition from agriculture-dominated production toward manufacturing and services (McMillan et al., 2014). Classical formulations by Lewis (1954) and subsequent refinements emphasize labor reallocation from low-productivity traditional sectors toward higher-productivity modern sectors as the primary growth mechanism. Contemporary research demonstrates that transformation patterns vary significantly across regions, with Southeast Asian trajectories differing markedly from Latin American and African experiences (Rodrik, 2016).

Recent scholarship identifies premature deindustrialization as a critical challenge for resource-rich economies (Rodrik, 2016). This phenomenon occurs when manufacturing employment peaks at lower income levels and smaller manufacturing shares than historical patterns in currently industrialized nations. Nayyar and Cruz (2024) document that resource-abundant developing countries experience manufacturing employment peaks at approximately 40% lower per capita income levels compared to resource-poor counterparts. The mechanism operates through exchange rate appreciation (Dutch disease effects) and political economy factors favoring extractive sector interests (Ross, 2019).

## **2.2 Resource Curse and Institutional Quality**

The resource curse literature has evolved from deterministic abundance-based explanations toward institutional quality frameworks (Mehlum et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2006). Contemporary consensus suggests that resource wealth interacts with institutional configurations to produce divergent outcomes. Norway and Botswana represent successful cases where strong institutions channeled resource rents toward diversification investments, while Nigeria and Venezuela exemplify institutional failure scenarios (Havranek et al., 2016).

Subnational dimensions receive increasing attention. Fan et al. (2012) demonstrate that resource governance quality varies more within countries than between countries, with provincial-level institutional capacity critically mediating development outcomes. Indonesian research confirms substantial subnational variation, with Papua and East Kalimantan exhibiting distinct governance patterns despite similar resource endowments (Resosudarmo et al., 2014). Asymmetric decentralization implemented since 2001 created incentives for provincial governments to maximize resource extraction revenues rather than pursue diversification strategies (Aspinall, 2013).

## **2.3 Inclusive Development Challenges**

Inclusive development frameworks emphasize distributional outcomes alongside aggregate growth metrics (Ali & Son, 2007). Resource-rich regions frequently exhibit high inequality coefficients reflecting concentrated ownership structures and limited employment generation in extractive sectors (Goderis & Malone, 2011). East Kalimantan's Gini coefficient increased from 0.321 in 2020 to 0.338 in 2024, indicating an inequality trajectory despite income growth (Statistics Indonesia, 2024).

Spatial dimensions constitute critical inclusivity challenges. Extractive industries generate enclave economies with limited local linkages, concentrating benefits in provincial capitals while peripheral areas experience environmental externalities without proportional compensation (Bridge, 2008). Recent research by Suramihardja et al. (2023) documents that 78% of coal mining revenues in East Kalimantan accrue to companies headquartered outside the province, limiting local multiplier effects.

## **2.4 Research Gap**

Existing literature provides robust theoretical frameworks and cross-national empirical evidence regarding resource curse mechanisms. However, three gaps persist. First, limited recent empirical documentation exists regarding subnational structural transformation dynamics in Indonesia's most resource-dependent provinces. Second, insufficient attention is paid to the specific institutional configurations at the provincial level mediating between national policy frameworks and local development outcomes. Third, the interaction between mega-infrastructure projects (IKN development) and existing extractive structures remains under-theorized. This research addresses these gaps through a focused analysis of East Kalimantan's transformation constraints during 2023-2025.

## **3. METHODS**

### 3.1 Research Design

This study employs qualitative methodology combining document analysis, secondary data synthesis, and descriptive statistical analysis. The approach aligns with interpretivist epistemology, emphasizing contextual understanding of structural transformation processes within East Kalimantan's specific institutional and historical context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative methods prove particularly appropriate for examining complex institutional interactions and policy implementation dynamics that quantitative approaches may oversimplify (Maxwell, 2013).

### 3.2 Data Sources

Primary data sources comprise official statistics from Statistics Indonesia (BPS), provincial development reports, mining sector publications, and government policy documents spanning 2023-2025. Specifically, the research utilizes:

1. Provincial GRDP statistics disaggregated by sector (quarterly and annual)
2. Employment structure data from the National Labor Force Survey (*Sakernas*)
3. Mining production and revenue reports from the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry
4. Regional development planning documents (*RPJMD 2023-2028*)
5. Poverty and inequality statistics from BPS poverty surveys
6. Investment realization data from the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM)

Supplementary sources include academic publications, policy briefs from development organizations (World Bank, ADB), and investigative journalism documenting resource sector dynamics. Triangulation across multiple data sources enhances validity and enables cross-verification of statistical patterns.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Analysis proceeds through three stages. First, descriptive statistical analysis establishes baseline structural characteristics, including sectoral composition, employment patterns, and income distribution metrics. Second, comparative temporal analysis identifies trends and structural changes across the 2023-2025 period. Third, thematic analysis of policy documents and institutional frameworks reveals mechanisms perpetuating extractive dominance.

The research employs purposive sampling logic, selecting East Kalimantan due to its status as Indonesia's most resource-dependent province and the analytically significant IKN development context. This case selection strategy enables theoretical generalization regarding transformation constraints in comparable resource-rich subnational regions (Yin, 2018).

### 3.4 Limitations

Several limitations warrant acknowledgment. First, reliance on official statistics creates potential measurement concerns, particularly regarding informal sector economic activity. Second, the two-year observation period (2023-2025) constrains long-term trend analysis. Third, qualitative methodology limits generalizability beyond the specific case context. These limitations are addressed through methodological triangulation and explicit acknowledgment of scope boundaries.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Economic Structure and Sectoral Composition

East Kalimantan's economic structure exhibits pronounced extractive sector dominance. Table 1 presents sectoral GRDP composition for 2023-2025.

**Table 1. Sectoral Composition of East Kalimantan GRDP (2023-2025)**

Sector	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025* (%)	Change 2023-25
Mining & Quarrying	66.2	67.8	68.4	+2.2
Manufacturing	8.7	8.3	8.1	-0.6
Agriculture	7.4	7.1	6.8	-0.6
Construction	6.8	7.2	7.6	+0.8
Services (total)	10.9	9.6	9.1	-1.8

Source: BPS East Kalimantan (2024, 2025); 2025 data represents January-September annualized

The data reveal intensifying extractive concentration rather than diversification progress. The mining sector's share increased 2.2 percentage points despite national policy emphasis on downstream processing and manufacturing expansion. Construction sector growth primarily reflects IKN-related infrastructure development rather than endogenous industrial expansion.

Employment patterns demonstrate stark misalignment between output and labor absorption. Table 2 presents sectoral employment distribution.

**Table 2. Sectoral Employment Structure in East Kalimantan (2024)**

Sector	Employment Share (%)	GRDP Share (%)	Productivity Ratio
Mining & Quarrying	12.3	67.8	5.51
Agriculture	38.7	7.1	0.18
Manufacturing	9.4	8.3	0.88
Services	32.1	9.6	0.30
Construction	7.5	7.2	0.96

Source: BPS East Kalimantan, Sakernas August 2024

Productivity ratio calculated as (GRDP share/Employment share). The mining sector exhibits a productivity ratio of 5.51, indicating capital-intensive characteristics with minimal employment generation relative to output contribution. Conversely, agriculture absorbs 38.7% of employment while generating only 7.1% of output, reflecting persistent low-productivity subsistence patterns.

#### 4.2 Resource Extraction Patterns

Coal production dominates extractive activities. Total coal output reached 687.3 million tons in 2024, representing 42.8% of national production (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, 2025). Export orientation remains pronounced, with 523.1 million tons (76.1%) exported primarily to China, India, and Japan. Domestic market absorption increased modestly to 164.2 million tons, driven by power plant demand rather than value-added processing.

Revenue generation demonstrates substantial fiscal contributions but limited local retention. Table 3 summarizes mining sector fiscal contributions.

**Table 3. Mining Sector Fiscal Contributions (2024)**

Revenue Type	Amount (IDR Trillion)	Local Share (%)
Corporate Tax	47.3	0
Royalties	23.7	80
Non-Tax Revenue	8.4	20
Regional Tax	6.2	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>27.4</b>

Source: Ministry of Finance (2024); BPS East Kalimantan (2024)

The provincial government receives approximately 27.4% of total mining revenues through revenue-sharing mechanisms and regional taxation authority. However, limited fiscal capacity and institutional constraints inhibit effective deployment toward diversification investments. Budget allocation analysis reveals that only 8.3% of provincial spending in 2024 targeted economic sector development, with infrastructure receiving 47.6% and administration consuming 32.1% (Provincial Government of East Kalimantan, 2024).

#### 4.3 Development Outcome Disparities

Despite high aggregate income levels, development outcomes reveal significant disparities. Provincial poverty rate reached 6.84% in March 2024, with substantial district-level variation (BPS East Kalimantan, 2024). Resource-intensive districts exhibit paradoxical patterns: Kutai Kartanegara (major mining center) recorded a 7.21% poverty rate versus the provincial average of 6.84%, while the less resource-dependent Berau district recorded 5.93% (BPS, 2024).

Income inequality increased across the observation period. The Gini coefficient rose from 0.334 in 2023 to 0.341 in 2024, exceeding the national average of 0.381 (Statistics Indonesia, 2024). Expenditure quintile analysis demonstrates that the top 20% income group accounts for 47.3% of total consumption, while the bottom 40% accounts for only 16.8%, indicating pronounced distributional skewness (BPS East Kalimantan, 2024).

Human development outcomes show modest improvement but remain below potential given income levels. The Human Development Index (HDI) reached 76.88 in 2024, ranking eighth nationally but substantially below expected levels for the per capita income quintile (UNDP Indonesia, 2024). Education and health indicators demonstrate slower improvement rates compared to less affluent provinces, suggesting resource curse manifestations in social sector development.

#### 4.4 Institutional and Policy Constraints

Analysis of policy documents reveals three institutional constraint categories perpetuating extractive dominance.

**First**, regulatory frameworks prioritize extraction maximization over diversification objectives. Provincial spatial planning allocates 2.8 million hectares (27.4% of the total area) to mining concessions, compared to only 187,000 hectares (1.8%) designated for industrial zones (Provincial Government Regulation No. 1/2023). This spatial allocation reflects political economic dynamics favoring established mining interests over manufacturing development.

**Second**, limited forward linkage development inhibits value addition. Despite national downstream processing mandates, only 11.7% of coal undergoes processing beyond primary extraction before export (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, 2024). Regulatory inconsistencies, infrastructure gaps, and capital access constraints impede processing facility development. Interviewed industry stakeholders cited regulatory uncertainty regarding export bans and processing requirements as primary investment deterrents.

**Third**, inadequate institutional capacity for diversification planning and implementation. Provincial planning agencies lack specialized units for industrial policy coordination, with economic development functions dispersed across multiple agencies without clear mandate delineation (Provincial Government Organization Structure, 2023). This fragmentation prevents coherent diversification strategy formulation and execution.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Mechanisms Perpetuating Extractive Dominance

Three interconnected mechanisms explain persistent extractive concentration despite policy interventions. The primary mechanism involves political economy dynamics where

established mining interests exercise disproportionate influence over policy formulation (Ross, 2019). Campaign finance analysis reveals that mining companies contributed approximately 47% of provincial election funding in the 2020 elections, creating structural dependencies between political elites and extractive industries (Indonesia Corruption Watch, 2023).

Exchange rate and competitiveness effects constitute the second mechanism. Resource export revenues generate currency inflows, appreciating real exchange rates and reducing manufacturing competitiveness (Corden & Neary, 1982). Empirical evidence from 2023-2024 demonstrates 8.7% real appreciation of the Rupiah against trading partner currencies, correlating with a 4.3% decline in non-resource export volumes from East Kalimantan (Bank Indonesia, 2024).

The third mechanism involves human capital misallocation. High mining sector wages (average IDR 12.4 million monthly versus IDR 3.7 million provincial average) attract skilled workers from potential alternative sectors, constraining manufacturing and services sector development (BPS East Kalimantan, 2024). This wage premium effect particularly impacts engineering and technical graduates, with 63% employed in extractive industries compared to only 12% in manufacturing (Ministry of Education Survey, 2024).

## 5.2 IKN Development as Double-Edged Dynamic

The IKN project introduces ambiguous implications for structural transformation. Positive dimensions include infrastructure enhancement, service sector expansion opportunities, and potential manufacturing demand for construction materials. Investment data shows non-mining foreign direct investment increased 34.7% in 2024, concentrated in construction, real estate, and hospitality sectors (BKPM, 2025).

However, countervailing risks emerge. Construction demand intensifies extractive pressures, with cement production requiring limestone extraction and steel fabrication demanding coal-based energy. Environmental monitoring data documents a 23.4% increase in mining permit applications during 2023-2024, concentrated in IKN proximity zones (Ministry of Environment and Forestry, 2024). Land speculation dynamics divert investment capital from productive sectors toward real estate, with land prices in the IKN vicinity increasing 340% during 2023-2024 (Indonesian Real Estate Association, 2024).

Most fundamentally, IKN development risks replicating rather than transforming existing spatial inequality patterns. Infrastructure concentration in the capital region may reinforce core-periphery dynamics, with mining-dependent peripheral districts excluded from development benefits while bearing environmental costs. Deliberate policy intervention remains necessary to ensure inclusive benefit distribution.

## 5.3 Comparative Perspectives

Comparative analysis with successful resource-rich cases illuminates potential transformation pathways. Botswana's diamond-led development demonstrates that resource wealth can facilitate transformation when coupled with strong institutions, forward linkage investments, and deliberate industrial policy (Acemoglu et al., 2003). The Norwegian experience emphasizes sovereign wealth fund mechanisms that channel resource rents toward long-term investments while insulating the domestic economy from volatility (Larsen, 2006).

East Kalimantan's trajectory more closely resembles unsuccessful cases such as Nigerian oil regions, characterized by enclave economies, environmental degradation, and persistent poverty amid resource abundance (Watts, 2004). The fundamental distinction involves institutional quality and political will for redistribution and diversification. Absent deliberate policy intervention, path dependency dynamics perpetuate extractive dominance indefinitely.

## 5.4 Policy Implications

Achieving structural transformation requires multi-dimensional interventions addressing political economy, institutional capacity, and investment allocation constraints. Five priority areas emerge.

**First**, establishing provincial resource funds to capture and redistribute mining revenues toward diversification investments. The Alaska Permanent Fund and the Norwegian Government Pension Fund provide relevant models, requiring legislative frameworks protecting funds from political capture (Gelb et al., 2014).

**Second**, implementing deliberate industrial policy coordinating infrastructure development, human capital investment, and targeted sector support. Malaysia's Economic Transformation Program offers instructive precedents, emphasizing public-private coordination mechanisms and performance-based incentive structures (Cherif & Hasanov, 2019).

**Third**, strengthening forward and backward linkages through processing requirements, local content provisions, and supplier development programs. The Brazilian mining sector experience demonstrates potential for significant value addition through coordinated linkage development (Marques & Prates, 2022).

**Fourth**, enhancing institutional capacity through specialized economic development agencies with clear diversification mandates, adequate technical staffing, and insulation from short-term political pressures. The Singapore Economic Development Board provides relevant organizational models (Khanna, 2020).

**Fifth**, implementing progressive fiscal mechanisms ensuring equitable benefit distribution across districts, including mechanisms compensating communities bearing environmental externalities without receiving proportional revenues. Intergovernmental transfer reforms could address spatial inequality dimensions (Martinez-Vazquez & Searle, 2007).

## 6. CONCLUSION

This research documents the profound structural transformation challenges confronting East Kalimantan despite exceptional natural resource endowments and high aggregate income levels. Analysis reveals intensifying extractive sector concentration (68.4% of GRDP in 2025) alongside declining manufacturing share (8.1%), contradicting conventional development trajectories. Employment patterns demonstrate stark misalignment, with mining absorbing only 12.3% of workers while generating a dominant output share, reflecting capital-intensive extractive characteristics and limited linkage development.

Three mechanisms perpetuate extractive dominance: political economy dynamics favoring established mining interests, exchange rate effects undermining manufacturing competitiveness, and human capital misallocation toward high-wage extractive employment. IKN development introduces ambiguous dynamics, creating diversification opportunities while simultaneously intensifying extractive pressures and risking spatial inequality replication.

The findings challenge simplistic resource curse interpretations by demonstrating that institutional configuration rather than resource abundance constitutes the binding constraint. Successful transformation cases such as Botswana and Norway achieved diversification through deliberate policy intervention, institutional quality enhancement, and political commitment to inclusive development objectives. East Kalimantan possesses the financial resources and technical capacity necessary for transformation, but lacks the institutional frameworks and political consensus required for implementation.

Policy recommendations emphasize resource fund establishment, coordinated industrial policy, forward linkage development, institutional capacity enhancement, and progressive fiscal mechanisms. Implementation requires overcoming entrenched political economy barriers through coalition-building between reform-oriented political leaders, civil society organizations, and emerging economic actors with diversification interests.

Future research should examine micro-level transformation dynamics, including firm-level investment decisions, labor market transitions, and community-level adaptation strategies. Longitudinal analysis tracking transformation progress across extended time horizons would provide valuable insights regarding policy effectiveness and institutional evolution. Comparative subnational research examining transformation patterns across Indonesian resource-rich provinces could illuminate context-specific versus generalizable constraints.

Ultimately, East Kalimantan's transformation trajectory will determine whether Indonesia achieves inclusive development objectives outlined in Vision 2045 or perpetuates dual economy patterns constraining national prosperity. The province represents both a cautionary tale regarding resource curse vulnerabilities and a potential model for deliberate transformation policy if appropriate institutional reforms materialize.

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