

Seeing Indonesia from East Kalimantan:

Coal Extractivism, Social Vulnerability, and Ecological Justice

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#### Abstract

Since the colonial period, the island of Kalimantan has been seen as a "wild" and "underdeveloped" area that must be opened and promoted through development with economic growth, primarily through extractivism, such as logging and mining to a new capital city project. The perspective does not change when seeing the experience of East Kalimantan province as the largest coal exploitation area in Indonesia in the last 25 years. Coal mining contributes to the national and regional economy. However, it also contributes to the socio-ecological costs that have never been calculated and are even borne by the environment and local residents. Mining policies that continue the colonial spirit to treat nature as a commodity have been proven to create an unsustainable local economy, increased corruption in the government, deforestation, shrinking agricultural land for food, regular floods, health problems, decreased security, including the death of 40 people in abandoned mines pit. Using the perspective of Environmental Justice, this paper explains how the dependence on coal extractivism creates the social vulnerability in the coal region with intergenerational and inter-island dimensions of injustice. This situation places the most vulnerable groups, especially the poor, women, children, and people with disabilities, the most victims. With the release of current policies related to mining expansion to support the extractivism economy in Indonesia, this paper argues that the experiences of "the multiple environmental injustices" in East Kalimantan are essential to reference policy reform in Indonesia. This reflection allows Indonesia to escape from "kemunduran hukum (?)" and have "Afiriasi kebijakan" to ensure intergenerational justice and climate justice.

Keywords: coal mining, environmental justice, extractivism, vulnerability.