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**Understanding the Persistence of Extractivism:  
An Insight from East Kalimantan, Indonesia**

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# Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Maps</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>vi</i>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Setting the Context: The Rising of Extractivism	1
1.2 Zooming in on East Kalimantan, Indonesia's Leading Extraction Destination	2
1.3 Research Objectives and Questions	4
1.4 Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Positionality	5
1.5 Chapter Overview	9
<b>Chapter 2 Extractivism as Development</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 Unpacking Extractivism and Development	10
2.2 Discourse and Practice of Extractivism in Indonesia	11
<b>Chapter 3 Tracing the History of Extractivism in East Kalimantan</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 Colonial Discovery of Coal and Oil: Beginning of Extractivism	14
3.2 After the Independence: Continuation of Extraction under Sukarno's Nationalist Ideology, from 1945-1966	15
3.3 Suharto's State-led Developmentalism and the Expanding of Extractivism, from 1966-1998	16
3.4 After Reformasi: Decentralization, Wave of Resistance and the Deepening of Extractivism, from 1998 to the Present Day	19
<b>Chapter 4 Investigating the Persistence of Extractivism in East Kalimantan</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1 From Colonial to Deepening Extractivism: How Has It Persisted?	22
4.2 From East Kalimantan, Indonesia to Latin America: How Does It Differ?	29
<b>Chapter 5 Conclusion</b>	<b>32</b>
<i>References</i>	<i>34</i>

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Indonesian Export (Gross Export in Billion USD) 1995-2018	11
Figure 2 Total Natural Resource Rents (% of Indonesian GDP)	12
Figure 3 Evolvement of Extractivism in East Kalimantan	22
Figure 4 Behind the Continued Extraction After Independence	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 5 Extractivism as Hegemony under Suharto's Regime	25
Figure 6 Maintaining Extractivism as Hegemony in the Contemporary Era	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## List of Maps

Map 1 Map of East Kalimantan	2
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## List of Acronyms

AMAN	<i>Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara</i> (Indigenous People Alliance of the Archipelago)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDRP	Gross Regional Domestic Product
GSM	<i>Gerakan Samarinda Menggugat</i> (Samarinda Lawsuit Movement)
HDI	Human Development Index
JATAM	<i>Jaringan Advokasi Tambang</i> (Mining Advocacy Network)
KIARA	<i>Koalisi Rakyat untuk Keadilan Perikanan</i> (The People's Coalition for Fisheries Justice)
KPK	<i>Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi</i> (Corruption Eradication Commission)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NIMBY	Not in My Backyard
PELITA	<i>Pembangunan Lima Tahun</i> (Five Year Development)
PNI	<i>Partai Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian National Party)
PWYP	Publish What You Pay
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
WALHI	<i>Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia</i> (Friends of the Earth Indonesia)

## **Abstract**

Exploring political-economic histories illuminates contemporary reality. The phenomenon of extractivism serves as a compatible context for examining the re-making of state-society relations over a broad period, given that extractivism is continuously evolving, in response to the emerging contestation. Bringing together Gramsci's framework of "hegemony" with historical analysis approach, this paper examines why and how extractivism persists in East Kalimantan across political regime, since the colonial period to the present day. This paper demonstrates how the dominant groups' interest to sustain extractivism is legitimized through various strategies, which differ from one period to another, and also how the broader structure contributed to the attainment. In doing so, I investigate the contestations surrounding extractivism and the political economy structure where extractivism taking place. I elaborate why and how the resistance movements have emerged, also how the ruling elites – local and central government and business elites – respond to them through deploying coercive measures (civic oppression, criminalization), sharing material benefit via (physical) development program and also incorporating the alternative view of the opposition groups (adoption of their agenda). I suggest that these dynamics determine the variety direction of extractivism, despite its usual association to colonialism and global capitalism, as exemplified by the differing phenomenon of extractivism between East Kalimantan-Indonesia and Latin America presented in this paper.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

Extractivism has been re-entering development debate, following the rising resource exploitation in the global south in recent years. The substantial discussion has been conducted by focusing on the distinct phenomenon of neo-extractivism in Latin America, but discussion on other regions are still lacking. Therefore, by bringing the insight from East Kalimantan, Indonesia, this paper offers a distinguished phenomenon of extractivism, which takes place in a distinct political economy structure – democratic and decentralized government with a market-oriented economy. Here lies the relevance of this paper to enrich and widen the spectrum of discussion. Besides, the political-economy lens adopted in this paper puts back the relevance of politics in understanding the phenomenon of extractivism. It challenges the apolitical and technical approach which dominated the discourse, particularly in Indonesia.

## **Keywords**

East Kalimantan, Indonesia, extractivism, development, hegemony, resistance

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Setting the Context: The Rising of Extractivism

Resurgence of natural resources extraction is recorded at the turn of 21st century. Recent study by UN Environment suggests that today exploitation rate is tripled than in 1970 (Watts, 2019). The rising demand for primary commodities from the traditional capital hub in the global north and emerging economies, led by China and India who undertook rapid industrialization is frequently cited as the primary driver (Borras et al., 2016). However, it is just one fragment of wider phenomenon. It involves growing environmentally driven initiative – Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and other programs alike – and diversification of financial institution’s portfolio (White and Dasgupta, 2020; Deininger *et al.*, 2011; Osborne, 2011; Cotula, 2012; German *et al.*, 2014). Resource extractivism is now situated as the answer to the convergence of multiple crises: climate, environment, energy, food, finance and economy (Alonso-Fradejas, 2018). Extractivism continues moving to new domains and locations and grabbing new resources to keep on operating, especially in the global South (Ye *et al.*, 2020, pp. 158-9; Acosta, 2013, p. 63).

The continued and expanded extractivism is rather mystifying given the growing resistance across the globe, from Dakota pipeline protest in the United States, indigenous-led struggle in Latin America, peasant-driven resistance in Asia to recent climate youth movement all over the world.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, a consensus has been made on the negative lists of extractivism. Environmental damage, social conflicts, impoverishment are only a few of them (Ye *et al.*, 2020). While economic development which has been situated as the promise of extractivism by its proponents is rather unseen. Rather, a phenomenon called the “resource curse” has been mushrooming, particularly in Africa (Auty, 1993). Resource-rich countries has experienced a vicious circle of “poverty with wealth derived from natural resources” (Magrin and Perrier-Bruslé, 2011, p.2). Several studies have highlighted the problems come along with the curse, namely stagnation of productive sectors, indebtedness, authoritarianism, corruption and conflict (Rosser, 2006; Le Billon, 2005).

This paper aims to understand the persistence of extractivism despite the resistances and problems that come with the extraction. The notion of extractivism<sup>2</sup> here is not strictly referred to “activities which remove great quantities of natural resources that are not then processed (or are done so in a limited fashion) and that leave a country as exports” (Gudynas, 2010, p.1), but broadly situated as a development model. Great attention has been given to the discourse of extractivism in development debate. However, they are mainly drawing from the experiences of progressive and leftist countries in Latin America which share a criticism on the “market reductionism”, use a differing form of “state activism” and make poverty alleviations agenda as their priority (Ibid., p.2).

Hence, in this paper, I turn to Indonesia which coming from a different political economy context – democratic<sup>3</sup> country which experienced radical decentralization and now deeply embraces a market-oriented economy (Gellert, 2019). For a more grounded observation, I choose East Kalimantan, a resource-rich province which has been experiencing vast

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<sup>1</sup> For database on socio-environmental conflict and protest see: <https://ejatlas.org> (an online platform documenting social conflict revolving around environmental issues).

<sup>2</sup> The term “extractivism” is initially used to depict the development in mining and oil export sectors in the 1970s, especially in South America. Both the proponent and critic of such development path widely used the term (Gudynas, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> I use the word “democracy” to simplify Indonesian political context. It is not intended to suggest the “genuine” form of democracy. Indonesia itself has been experiencing democracy regression in the past years (Bourchier, 2014; Mietzner, 2020).

expansion of extraction in recent years. Commodity is shifting from timber, to coal and palm oil, while oil still holds dominant position. As the practice of extractivism is deepening, the resistance movement is growing and the region is falling deeper into the crisis – economic, ecological, food, social. Yet, it is unlikely that resource exploitation in East Kalimantan will come to an end. Therefore, I opt East Kalimantan as the emblem of continued extractivism along with its perplexity.

## **1.2 Zooming in on East Kalimantan, Indonesia’s Leading Extraction Destination**

Indonesia remains as one of the world’s largest producers of primary commodities, especially coal and palm oil. In 2019, their production reached the highest figure in the history, of which more than 50% is exported to generate foreign exchange. It is no surprise that Indonesia is now a leading palm oil exporter and second biggest coal exporter after Australia (Siregar, 2020). East Kalimantan has a vital role in this “attainment”. Nearly 50% of Indonesian coal is originating from the province as reported by Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. While palm oil exploitation is still modest compared to its neighbouring province, East Kalimantan is still among five biggest palm oil producing provinces in Indonesia, according to data of Ministry of Agriculture. Besides, the province is still undergoing an expansion of the plantation, as it situates palm oil as one of the main pillar of green development program.

Located in the eastern part of Borneo Island (known as Kalimantan), East Kalimantan has a total area of 12.9 million hectares, of which 75% of the area has been classified as “forest area” (Parker, 2013). However, most of the “forest area” has been cleared to make way for extractive and infrastructure projects, such as large-scale road building (Alamgir et al., 2019). When Indonesia managed to put down the overall deforestation rate in 2018, the forest loss in East Kalimantan experienced an increase of 43% (Wijaya, Samadhi and Juliane, 2019). The situation is critical given that East Kalimantan is home to Indonesian primary forest – an important ecosystem with high biodiversity that supports the endangered species of orangutans and livelihood of the locals. Besides, East Kalimantan is also known for its hundreds of rivers, which mainly used as means of transportation. Mahakam River, the longest river, has played a key role in the expansion of resource extraction.

**Map 1**  
Map of East Kalimantan





Source: National Mapping Agency of Indonesia, 2015

Recently, East Kalimantan has been appointed to host the new capital city of Indonesia; an announcement made by President Joko Widodo himself in August 2019. Civil society groups advocating indigenous rights (AMAN), fisherman livelihoods (KIARA) and environment (Greenpeace and JATAM) believe that the relocation will exacerbate the existing socio-environmental problem attributed to the expansion of resource extraction in the province, namely land grabbing, horizontal conflict and deforestation (Gokkon, 2019). The scale of resource exploitation in East Kalimantan is exceptionally massive. A recent finding by an environmental group – JATAM – shows that the total area of extractive concession – mining, plantation and forestry is exceeding the provincial administration area (JATAM, 2019). Not to mention the oil extraction that has been present since the colonial period (Magenda, 1991). Owing to these massive exploitation, East Kalimantan has been accumulating its economic growth.

In the last two decades, primary sectors (timber, plantation, oil and coal mining) has contributed an average of 70% of the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) of East Kalimantan (author’s own calculation based on the data of Central Bureau of Statistics). Mainly sticking to this macro-data, many claimed that this exploitation-based economy has been successful to bring local development, such as the increase of employment and Human Development Index (HDI), among many. However, recent study on the distributional aspects of growth in East Kalimantan revealed that such claim is not true (Satria *et al.*, 2017). The study implies that the main beneficiary of the current exploitative economy in East Kalimantan is the rich. The finding is reinforced by ecological loss study carried out by the academics of University of Mulawarman – Samarinda-based university – in 2010-2013. It is estimated that the loss incurred from resource exploitation in East Kalimantan amounting 6.3 trillion rupiah per year which at least borne by one third of the entire population (Julius, 2014). Among the costs, the most prominent one is the price to buy clean water due to water shortage and pollution which is mainly borne by the poor. Meanwhile, strong stance is taken by Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry which argues that coal mining in Kukar

bring more damage than benefits, so coal is better left at the ground (Suastha and Kandi, 2016). Such position is derived from its study<sup>4</sup> which assessed economic valuation of mining activity back in 2013. However, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources did not agree to the findings.

Economic argument frequently cited by the proponent of extractivism only covers the overall economic activity brought by extraction, but it does not indicate whether these activities bring benefits for the population. The following evidences offer the missing element from the notion of “growth” which explicitly confirm the real impact of resource extraction to the population. It contributes to the food crisis. Watchdog groups – Waterkeeper Alliance and JATAM – argue that mine pit water contributes to the drop of rice yields and fish production: 50% and 80% respectively (2017, p.2). Also, wetland have been converted into mining area, while what remains is increasingly squeezed by mining expansion. Rice deficit that has been present for years is getting worsened (Wibisono, 2018). Resource extraction is deteriorating the quality of life of the people. Based on an investigation in Banpu (Thailand-originated coal company) mines in Samarinda, Greenpeace reported that “some villagers surrounding coal mines are forced to use mine pit water for washing, bathing, irrigation of crops and fish farming” (2016). Also, Samarinda, the provincial capital, has experienced more frequent floods since the proliferation of coal mining: 150 occasions between 2009 and 2014 (Waterkeeper Alliance and JATAM, 2017). Importantly, resource exploitation has led to human tragedy, the drowning of 39 children and teenagers in the abandoned ex-mining pits since 2011. National Commission on Human Rights has been declaring the case<sup>5</sup> as a human rights violation, especially “against the right to life, right to have a good and healthy living environment, right to justice and child’s right” (National Commission on Human Rights, 2016), yet it keeps repeating.

As East Kalimantan drawn deeper into the crisis, resistance movement led by various actors is growing across the province. Farmer-led movement against coal and oil palm plantation companies are reported in Samarinda and Kukar (Arumingtyas, 2017). Indigenous groups also involved in the struggle against timber and plantation companies in West Kutai and Mahakam Ulu (Mongabay, 2014). In 2012, various actors – non-governmental organization (NGO), student organization, religious leaders, scholars, farmers and indigenous groups – initiated *Gerakan Samarinda Menggugat/GSM* (Samarinda Lawsuit Movement) and took government of Samarinda and other responsible parties to court for their irresponsible manner in regulating coal mining. Despite the soaring protests against extractivism, resource exploitation in East Kalimantan is still thriving till the present day.

### 1.3 Research Objectives and Questions

The paper aims to offer a distinguished phenomenon of “extractivism” from Indonesia, which comes from a different historical experience compared to Latin America – the dominant focus of scholarship in the “extractivism” debate within the nexus of development – environment discourse (Acosta, 2017; Ulloa, 2015; Arsel, Hogenboom and Pellegrini, 2016; Gudynas, 2010). With attention to the persistent character of extractivism, the research explores the strategies to maintain extractivism as the hegemony across political regime, despite of its salient externalities and growing resistance.

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<sup>4</sup> The study assesses the economic valuation of mining activity. It uses several parameters, such as tax compliance, economic contribution (infrastructure, employment, education, people well-being) and costs incurred – health, agriculture (addressing the declined productivity), environment (revegetation, water shortage), social conflict.

<sup>5</sup> The accident did not come as a surprise, given the fact that there are 1,735 inactive open mining pits in the province which many are located near the residential area – less than 500 metres, according to JATAM (Yovanda, 2019).

Therefore, my main research question is the following: *with reference to East Kalimantan Province, why and how has extractivism persisted despite of its salient externalities, shifting across commodities and political regime?*. The main research question is further unpacked into the following sub-questions:

1. How did extractivism emerge and become “dominant” in East Kalimantan?
2. What has been the role of the ruling elite to “maintain” extractivism in East Kalimantan?
3. How has the societal pressure evolved against extractivism in East Kalimantan?
4. How has the contestation between the “supporter” and the “opponent” of extractivism shaped the practice of extractivism?

## **1.4 Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Positionality**

### ***Theoretical Framework***

The research strongly embraces Gramsci’s framework on state-society relation in the analysis. Deployment of such a framework is intended to lead to the discussion on why extractivism became dominant and how it is continuously reproduced and contested by practices involving both material and ideological relations. Hence, the analysis is anchored on the concept of hegemony. Gramsci coins the notion of hegemony which broadly incorporates “the interpellation and organization of different class-relevant ... forces under the political, intellectual and moral leadership of a particular class” (Jessop, 1990, pp.207-8). Departing from the understanding that both state and society are heterogenous sites where multiple and conflicting interests are in place (Akbulut, 2011), “hegemonic project” is needed to mediate and resolve the conflicts between those various interests (Jessop, 1990, p.208), and constitute and reproduce the “general interests”.

Gramsci distinguishes “hegemony” from the notion of “dominance”; he emphasizes the role of “organic relations” between state and society which enabled the establishment of “active consent”, backed by coercion (1971). Consent is built “based on the intellectual, moral and political leadership also persuasion of the dominant group”, organized through specific institutions, and backed by force.....(that) also appears to be based on the consent of majority” (Akbulut, 2011, p.47-48). Here, the state is “used” by the dominant ruling group to justify and maintain their claim as a collective will, a “national-popular” program, and win the consent of the ruled group. State then appears as a neutral institution, which does not. The state-society relation is denoted by differential responses from the state. It suggests the notion of selective responsiveness depending on the different interests of society toward the hegemonic project, which implies that the state is and cannot be neutral. This circumstance lead to the uneven impacts on society, which is also derived from the distinct abilities across different groups to access the state (forms of representation) and thus realize their interests via political action (Jessop, 1982). The asymmetric influence of the state to society then implies the “winners” and “losers” in society.

The operational practices to carry out “hegemonic leadership” involve several actions: mobilization of support behind a national-popular program which serves the long-term interests of the dominant group; a flow of short-term material concessions to other (subordinate) social groups, incorporation of certain elements of alternative ideologies into the dominant (Jessop, 1985, 1990; Poulantzas, 1978). These processes of a struggle for hegemony may “lead to the production of new natures and new landscape” (Ekers, 2009, p.303). Here, hegemony is attached with (new) character: the “expansive socio-natural character” (Ekers, 2009, p.304); it is in line with the invitation of Halls to highlight “multi-dimensional and multi-arena character of hegemony” (1996, p.424). This assertion enables this paper to go

into an experimental direction: how hegemony is built and contested through the remaking the “material-symbolic” landscape (Ekers, 2009, p.303).

The concept of internal colonization is deployed to understand the practice of extractivism in East Kalimantan, which is present in the context of central and local’s tension in managing natural resources. Internal colonization shares the same feature of “normal” colonialism, but in the former, “colonizing nation or race or other group occupies the same territory as the colonized people” (Wolpe, 1975, p.105). Wolpe further offers two core elements of colonial relationship in internal colonization: “conceived of as occurring between different countries, total population, nations, geographical areas or between people of different races, colours and cultures” and “involving domination, oppression and exploitation” (Ibid., p.106). Blauner adds that typically internal colonization includes exploitation of “the land, raw materials, labour and resource of the colonized nation”, the subordination then maintained by establishment of “formal recognition” – based on the differences in power, autonomy and political status – and agencies (1969, p.395). However, one must consider the crucial notion of historical specificity: the differing modes of imperialist economic exploitation which leads to different forms of colonial domination (Wolpe, 1975, p.110). The relationship of the capitalist to non-pre-capitalist modes of production – as the important economic basis of colonial domination – may differ for various reasons; it may centre around the extraction in a different way (Ibid, p.112).

Engaging in development – environment debate, Calvert highlights how the process of “internal colonization” in the “Southern states” through urbanization has offered a better understanding of environmental politics (2008). He suggests the coercion measure imposed by the government to carry out the urbanization program, also a form of imagery of “growth” which pulls people to migrate from the countryside to the city. He further links urbanization with the process of enclosure on the commons, which make a way of resource exploitation in the countryside. Instead of sticking to a racial or ethnic category, Calvert uses the notion of “city” and “countryside” to explain the “colonizer” and “colonized” group in internal colonization. The city is seen as a home for both government and market, which represents the ruling elite. As indirectly implied by Calvert, there is a linkage between the concept of hegemony and internal colonization. The latter could be situated as one of the practices of constructing hegemony, as also argued by Caprotti (2008).

### ***Historical Analysis Approach***

My methodological approach is mainly inspired by historical political ecology, which portrayed as “a field-informed interpretation of society-nature relation in the past, ..... how and why those relations have changed (or not changed) over time and space, and the significance of those interpretations for improving social justice and nature conservation today” (Offen, 2004, p.21). I turn to a historical approach due to its invitation to locate the contemporary reality as the products of the past process, transformations and dynamics (Mathevet et al., 2015). It treats landscape and environment as historically “situated, produced and representational spaces” (Ibid, p.2), allowing a more affluent and thorough understanding of the subject. Also, the approach mainly helps me to distance myself from an “apolitical” analysis. As David argued, the covert power relation could be revealed through a critical understanding of the history of environments, social relations and knowledge and the privilege that comes with it (2012, p.263).

Despite the varied and multifaceted approaches in historical political ecology (Watts, 1983; Blaikie, 1985; Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Peluso, 1992, 2009, 2012; Bryant, 1997; Davis, 2007; Robbins, 2012), many of the studies share similar findings: the persistence of the ideas about nature and environment developed under western imperialism and passed on

through colonialism or other subtle forms (Davis, 2009, p.286). It resonates with my focus on the persistence of extractivism as a particular mode of resource use and development path in East Kalimantan. I will use the historical dimension of extractivism in East Kalimantan to inform the contemporary extractivism in the region and explain its root, emergence and persistence to the present-day. The use of historical analysis here is not meant to offer a detailed and chronological history of resource extractivism in the region. Rather it is deployed to give important historical details in order to help understand the main problem, the persistence of extractivism. Hence, I will trace back to the root of the “problem”: the emergence of extraction in the colonial period, as argued by Wainwright, “doing political ecology in post-colonial spaces carries the responsibility of engaging with colonialism, because . . . . . cannot understand these spaces outside of, prior to, or apart from the fact of the colonial experience” (2005, p.1034). It gives room for me to explore the notion of “received wisdom” (Willems-Braun, 1997) – how the colonial legacy continues (with no or little changes) in the post-colonial context. Here, I will turn to Nancy Peluso’s classic work, *Rich Forest, Poor People*, which generally denotes the colonial legacy in resource control, specifically in Javanese forest, Indonesia (1992). However, I will not situate this research in the post-colonial studies which underline culture and representation (Kapoor, 2002). Instead, it is more inspired by the insights from the French Annales School, which focuses on the *longue durée* and, especially emphasizes the continuities of (deep) structure in history (Braudel, 1985).

## ***Methods***

This paper is largely based on reviews of the secondary resources, including existing literatures, government and NGO reports, also media article. I started by reviewing of broad literature on extractivism, then narrowing down to its practice in East Kalimantan and Indonesia in general. Drawing from those fragmented literatures – most of them only focus on particular sector, such as timber, coal or palm oil – I reconstructed the practice of extractivism in East Kalimantan since the colonial period to the present-day; it involves substantial work on selecting and eliminating various historical details. I also utilized great portion of NGO reports, particularly on the devastating effects of resource exploitation. Within the debate of production of knowledge, activists have been recognized for their massive stock of detailed knowledge which highly driven by their particular values (Gerber, 2019: slide 40).

The Covid-19 pandemic gave me an opportunity to engage in the contemporary debate of development and extractivism in East Kalimantan and Indonesia by joining several webinars, mainly held by NGOs. I joined webinar on the Omnibus Bill on Job Creation and its link to the Crisis of East Kalimantan held by Indonesian Legal Aid Institute to obtain an insight on the potential influence of national agenda to East Kalimantan. I also participated in a discussion regarding the evolvement of NGOs coalition working on extractive governance to understand the dynamics within the NGOs.

I was aware that reliance on the secondary sources, especially archival document, which is “essentially class products” (Davis, 2012, p.265), exposes a particular limitation: the distorted view. Watts specifically denoted that, “the distorted optic provided by a wholesale dependence on archival sources can, and I would argue must be complemented by oral fieldwork” (2013, p.34). Therefore, I conducted online interview as part of the triangulation effort. I recognize that by conducting secondary research, there is a risk that I will reproduce the hegemonic view and remain neglecting the underrepresented groups. Therefore, I decided to interview two local activists who have been involved in the resistance movement regarding extraction in East Kalimantan. One activist is linked with anti-mining group, while the other is associated with “governance” group. I deliberately chose two seemingly different actors to gain more robust insight on the contestation within the debate of extractivism in East Kalimantan. I employed semi-structured (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) and text-based

interview, depending on the circumstances of the informant: internet connection. For text-based interview, I sent the list of questions to the informant through instant-messaging application. The informant answered through text or voice messages.

Given the nature of the research, the data collection process seems endless. I adopted the notion of “data saturation”, which defined as “the point in data collection and analysis when new incoming data produces little or no new information to address the research question” (Guest, Namey and Chen, 2020, p.2). I identified several themes derived from the research question and theoretical framework, such as development, extraction, resistance and political contestation. Departing from that, I decided whether the data is sufficient. This is subjective work determined by my judgment and experiences which highly informed by my positionality.

### ***Positionality***

The processes in this research is revolving around diving into documents, reading, interpreting and writing the results. Any decision involved – select sources, read and comprehend them in “certain” manner, write the interpretation – is influenced by my positionality. It suggests the notion of “situated knowledge” (Haraway, 1988), which calls for “an accounting of the history, race, class, gender and geography .... of knowledge producers” (Neely and Nguse, 2012, p.142). Hence, it is essential to present my point of departure in this research.

The place where I embark on this research is mainly denounced by my five-year (2014-2019) experience working at Publish What You Pay (PWYP) Indonesia – NGO on extractive governance, based in Jakarta. Given the nature of the organization which leans toward policy advocacy, I have been interacting more frequently with policymakers and NGOs both in local and national level, rather than grass-root community. It also informs my first encounter with East Kalimantan, which goes back six years ago during my first visit to the province for conducting a discussion with local government and civil society on mining permits control. Since then, at least once a year, I go there, doing another multi-stakeholder discussion on the themes revolving around extraction rent, stringent mining governance and the linkage between extraction and climate change. I also acted as an agent to bring organization’s agenda to “promote” policy innovation in the field of extractive governance in the province, which sometimes served as a barrier to engage with critical groups who strongly resist the extraction. Sometimes, I also briefly go to the abandoned mining sites and talk with mining-impacted households. Many are sharing their personal take on mining industry. I situated their struggle as the evidence of policy failure.

My line of thinking was primarily influenced by problem-solving framework, which “takes the world as it finds it, with prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework for action. .... (and aimed) to make these relationships and institutions work smoothly by dealing effectively with particular sources of trouble” (Cox, 1981, pp. 128-9). As I entered graduate school, I went through a transitioning due to the exposure of other stream of scholarship – the critical theory. I embrace the invitation of the critical theory to “not take institutions and social and power relations for granted but calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether they might be in the process of changing” (Ibid). This paper is part of my journey to unlearn and relearn.

I adopted a standard ethical procedure in the research process, which includes permission to directly cite informant’s statement. I also shared the overall direction of my research when asking for an interview and before the interview session. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, I did not disclose the name of the informants, but used an initial. Also, I strongly urged the informants to warn me if their statements could not be disclosed in the paper. However, I do not receive any requests till the completion of the paper.

## 1.5 Chapter Overview

The paper is structured into five chapters. Following the introduction chapter which covers the problematique and methodology, I revisit the discourse of extractivism in the second chapter. It highlights the evolvement of extractivism as a development path mainly taken by countries in the global south. I then take the discussion to the practice of extractivism in Indonesia. In the third chapter, I critically explore the history of extractivism in East Kalimantan. It begins with an observation on its root in the colonial period and its development and expansion in the post-colonial setting, which further divided into three periods based on its political regime. In the fourth chapter, I investigate the elements which maintain extractivism as the hegemony – what makes extractivism persisted in East Kalimantan, also the evolvement of extractivism as the outcome of contestation between various interests. Reflecting from that, I locate back the findings in a broader extractivism discourse. I compare them with the phenomenon of extractivism in Latin America, to further inform the “specificity” of extractivism in East Kalimantan and Indonesia. I then resume the analysis and offer reflections in the concluding chapter.

## Chapter 2 Extractivism as Development

In this chapter, I critically revisit the theoretical debate of extractivism in development discourse, highlighting its evolution as a development path mainly taken by developing countries in the global south. Then, I lead to a more specific discussion, the practice of extractivism and development in Indonesia.

### 2.1 Unpacking Extractivism and Development

Close link between resource extraction and development has been established since the colonial period. Acosta defines extractivism as “a mechanism of colonial and neo-colonial plunder and appropriation” (2013, p. 63). Massive exploitation of raw materials in the colonies was carried out to meet the demand of the colonizers for their industrial development; colonies were then “designated” as exporters of primary commodities. This setting continues, where resource exporter countries, notably in the global south, serve the need of global capitalism in the north, at the expense of their society and environment. In fact, extractivism acts as an essential element in the current global economy (Scharffartzik et al., 2016).

Extractivism has devoted proponents, ranging from international institutions to the government actors. Neoliberal institutions such as World Bank, has been encouraging resource-rich countries to adopt resource exploitation based economic and growth model. As stated in its website, resource rent are located as an instrument to reduce poverty and boost prosperity, while respecting community and environment. While the devastating effects of resource exploitation as happened today are dubbed as mismanagement. Governments largely adhere to the stated economy argument: transforming raw materials into commodities is necessary to stimulate economy, create employment and tackle inequality (Asiedu, 2004; Feichtner, 2014; Hoogvelt, 2001; Smart, 2020). Therefore, extractivism has been persisting and evolving over the years, going beyond “classic extractivism” or “conservative extractivism” which is defined by “the perpetuation of neoliberal policy patterns such as transnationalization, deregulation and privatization” (Brand, Dietz and Lang, 2016, p.130).

Countries in the global south follow this resource (over)exploitation based economic and growth model under various justification and in various forms, depending on their respective political and economic context. Countries in Asia and Africa followed the path of “resource nationalism” policy, which involves partial or total nationalization of extractive corporations, contract renegotiation, increase in public shareholding, value-added processing and enactment of new (higher) fiscal regime (Almeida, 2020).

Meanwhile the progressive governments in South America adopted what is called “progressive new extractivism” or “new extractivism” – later known as “neo-extractivism”, which is rooted at the partial objection of neoliberal agenda. It is denoted by the increasing role of the state to redistribute the surplus derived from the conservative extractivism to population (Gudynas, 2010, p.1). Acosta (2013) argues that the increase presence of the state in new extractivism is aiming to gain greater access and control of natural resources and benefits of the extraction. Neo-extractivism is not necessarily criticizing the appropriation of nature as a basis of development, but *only* addresses the issue of access and control. Social and environmental impacts of the extraction are accepted as the price of national development; marginalized groups who often experienced the impact of resource exploitation have to sacrifice to pursue national goals. To compensate for that, state collects (greater) revenue from the industry to fund social programmes which then used to seek legitimacy from the citizen. Yet the state does not recast the existing inequal distribution of income and wealth. It denotes the absence of government’s action to get into “socially and politically complex redistribution



process” (Ibid., p.74). Importantly, problems brought along by the traditional extractivism are staying or getting worse (in some cases) due to the mindset of “extractive imperative”, where the intensification of resource extraction is indispensable for financing social program, such as poverty alleviation (Arsel, Hogenboom and Pellegrini, 2016). Critics of neo-extractivism are frequently labelled against national development and progress.

Regardless the type of extractivism, all are justified in an economic term under the tenets of development. However, as asserted by Gudynas, the practice of extractivism has gone beyond logical reasoning; it becomes an idea of “development” in itself (2018, p.74). Similarly, Burchardt and Dietz argues that “the practice of extractivism is associated with an imagined national interest” and “it becomes a politically legitimised development project” (2014, p.470). Extractivism goes beyond the phenomenon associated with colonialism and linked to global capitalism; it is a political project which involves “various trajectories, differentiated outcomes, multiple and fluid politic” (Alonso-Fradejas, 2018, p. 25). Consequently, practice of extractivism is not homogenous; it differs from country to country, from one era to another, though foundational elements persist.

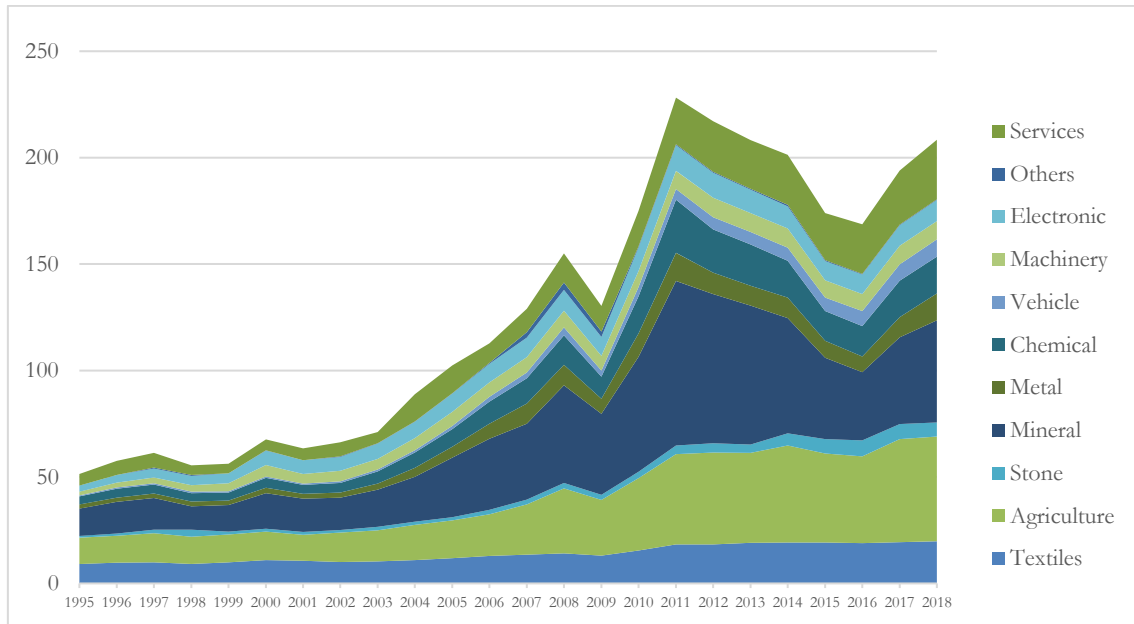
## 2.2 Discourse and Practice of Extractivism in Indonesia

Indonesia has been known as the “pioneer” of extractivism. The root of extractivism in Indonesia could be traced back since the colonial era. The practice is solidified during post-independent period, especially during the authoritarian governments under the New Order regime (1966-1998) which facilitates mass scale of extraction as the backbone of export-led national development. Scholar specifically denotes New Order regime as an “extractive regime” which referred to a regime relied on “extraction of multiple natural resources in the formation of an economic and political order that is also supported by global and regional forces” (Gellert, 2010, p.30). Following the stated argument, Indonesian extractive regime succeeds to maintain and deepen its existence in today new political and economy landscape. Both authoritarian and democratic government have embraced extractivism.

The expansion of resource exploitation in Indonesia is historically promoted by a discourse of national development, economic growth and poverty eradication. Nature commodification is strongly justified by high economic development. It was particularly prominent in the New Order era. Indonesian economy grew rapidly from 1968 to 1981 (Booth, 1986, p.122), fueled by the abundant oil money due to 1970s oil boom. Since mid 1980s, agriculture sector’s share in the economy structure declined, while the share of mining and manufacture sector significantly increased (Ibid., p.128).

Indonesian export which has long been characterized by its resource-based commodities also shares above pattern. The leading export commodity has shifted from agriculture to mining: from coffee (19<sup>th</sup> century) to sugar (late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century) to rubber (20<sup>th</sup> century) to petroleum (late 20<sup>th</sup> century) to coal and palm oil (early 21<sup>st</sup> century) (Gellert, 2010, p. 38; 2019, p. 908). Many scholars believe that natural resources export-led development adopted by Indonesian authoritarian government is just a temporary phase toward Westernized progress and development with higher income per capita and consumption level (Gellert, 2019, pp. 896-7). However, as suggested by the number above, the decline of one resource’s export is compensated by the increase of others. Indonesia struggles to diversify its export commodities and still rely on resource exports in spite of its new status as “consumer-driven middle-income country” (Ibid., p.907). Moreover, the value of export for certain commodities – coal and palm oil – has reached record highs in the recent years.

**Figure 1**  
Indonesian Export (Gross Export in Billion USD) 1995-2018



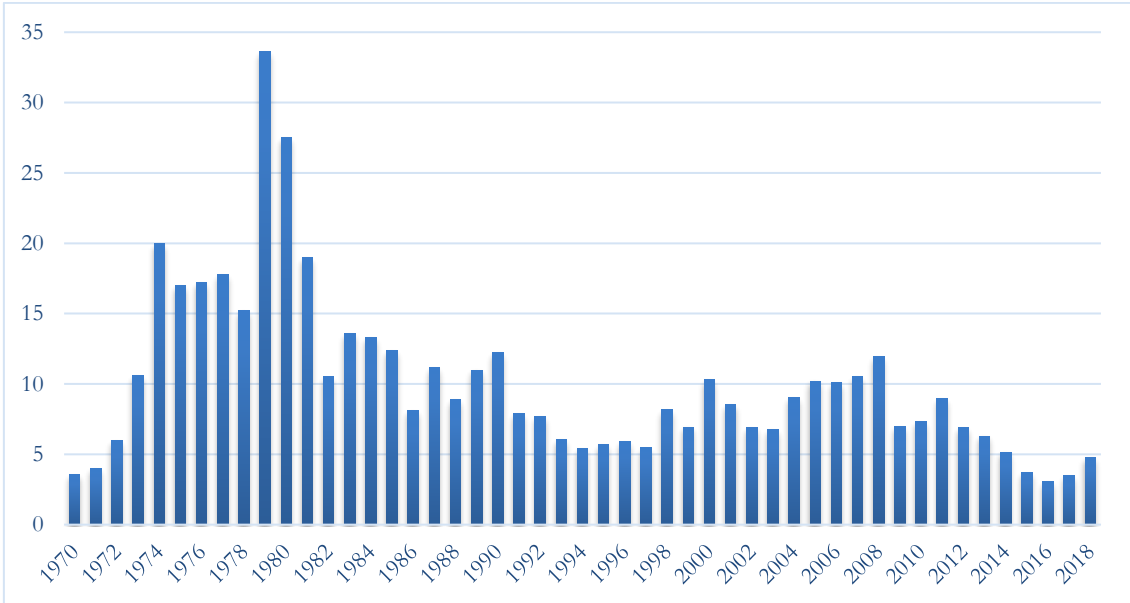
Source: Center for International Development at Harvard University, Accessed 4 September 2020

Despite the continuity, the practice of extractivism in Indonesia has been evolved. It enjoyed rapid expansion during the authoritarian period. The strategic oil sector was strongly managed by the state through its national oil company – Pertamina. Forests exploitation was monopolized by Suharto’s crony. Mining was largely controlled by big foreign enterprises (Gellert, 2010). While oil palm plantation has yet to soar. Resource exploitation was substantiated by national development agenda: building road, electricity installation, pro-poor agenda, etc. Importantly, the government managed to silence the opposition.

Extractivism is deepening in the post-authoritarian regime. New actors from the local emerge due to rapid decentralization. Thousands of mining concession were granted. It becomes the new arena of illicit practices. Indonesia’s anti-corruption agency – *Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi/KPK* – revealed in 2016 that 40% of nearly 11 thousand mining permits issued had failed to meet all legal requirements: paying financial liability, conducting environmental rehabilitation, etc. Similar findings also found in palm oil plantation. Critics toward the industries is growing. Some groups fully object the practice, some urge better regulation and governance. The government could not bring developmentalist argument, given that the contribution of natural resources in Indonesian economy is constantly declining, as captured by the share of natural resources rents<sup>6</sup> in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, the sector still has a prominent role in the local level. Several districts are highly dependent on oil or coal money; more than 90% of their budget is derived from the sector. This is the current mainstream narrative on extractivism – development nexus in Indonesia.

**Figure 2**  
Total Natural Resource Rents (% of Indonesian GDP)

<sup>6</sup> National resource rent is the accumulation of oil, natural gas, coal, mineral and forest rents. The term is conceptually rooted at the notion of economic rent.



Source: World Bank, 2020

The government also utilized the discourse of “nationalism” in sustaining extractivism. Divestment and downstream (value-added processing) agenda have been directed to mineral commodities which primarily dominated by foreign companies. Resource access and control are at the center of the debate. While in coal mining, it is often circulated to “protect” the industry from the allegation on socio-environmental problems raised by critical groups; coal mining is 95% owned by Indonesian companies in 2012 (Warburton, 2017, p.298). Current government – Jokowi – locate coal and palm oil as strategic commodities whose rent has been used to compensate Indonesian biggest trade deficit in 2019 due to crude oil import (CNN Indonesia, 2019). The exploitation is expected to soaring given the current trajectory of Indonesian development.

## Chapter 3 Tracing the History of Extractivism in East Kalimantan

In this chapter, I present the history of extractivism in East Kalimantan based on certain periodization. I divide the periodization into four main periods which represent a distinctive regime. First, colonial period which sets the foundation of extractivism in East Kalimantan. Second, post-independent period under Sukarno (1945-1966) which was known for its nationalist direction. Third, Suharto's period (1966-1998) which is highly denoted by his authoritarian government and developmental rhetoric. Last, post-Suharto's period (1998 onwards) which is known for the decentralization and democratization wave. This categorization is intended to highlight the distinctive feature of each period, yet showcase their similarity in the continuity of the practice of extractivism.

### 3.1 Colonial Discovery of Coal and Oil: Beginning of Extractivism

In mid of 19<sup>th</sup> century, Dutch colonial government implemented cultivation system or known as *Tanam Paksa* in Indonesian history, which obliged peasants to devote 20% of their land to government export crops. This policy led to an increase of exploitation and impoverishment of Java's peasants – the main target of the program (Bosma, 2017). After its abolishment in 1870 due to internal political dynamic in the Netherland, the colonial government turned to liberal policy which was centred at free market and deregulation agenda. Indonesia then opened to foreign enterprises, but foreign investment only soaring at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which mainly allocated in the primary sectors (Pham, 2019). Later on, Indonesia emerged as an export-led country with agricultural crops and minerals as primary commodities. This background shaped the history of extractivism in East Kalimantan which was further influenced by both domestic and external factors.

Initially seen as a burden rather than an asset (Black, 1985), Dutch colonial government's attitude toward East Kalimantan gradually changed due to newly-discovered natural resources, namely coal and oil in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The colonial government ended its no-intervention policy<sup>7</sup> imposed in the region and began actively involved in the local administration, especially natural resource management (Lindblad, 1989). The first commercial coal mining in East Kalimantan was commenced in Kutai Basin by Dutch enterprise, following the issuance of mining concession by local authority – Kutai Sultanate<sup>8</sup> – in 1882 which allowed coal exploitation for 75 years. Several coal-mines were later opened in the regions (Erman, 1999). In exchange to that, the sultanate collected land rent and levies (Amin, 1975). Yet, *only* comparably small amount of coal was extracted and it was mainly used as fuel for Dutch's shipping industry (Fünfgeld, 2016).

East Kalimantan was pulled closer to the extractive terrain, when oil was discovered in Balikpapan at the turn of the century. Dutch colonial government put East Kalimantan under

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<sup>7</sup> No-intervention policy is part of the framework of *ethical policy* imposed by the Dutch colonial government to the outer Java. Consequently, 50% of the outer islands was still under the administration of native sultanate (Vandenbosch, 1941, p.133). Dutch then began its expansion driven by its ambition to explore Indonesia's resources. In the case of East Kalimantan, Kutai Sultanate only enjoyed de facto autonomy until the 1870s where the Dutch colonial government started to realize the economic potential of Kalimantan. East Kalimantan which is used to seen as a separate sultanate then becomes part of the Dutch East Indie (Indonesia before its independent).

<sup>8</sup> Kutai Sultanate is the largest and most influential kingdom whose territorial domain covered the vast Mahakam River basin (Tromp, 1889; Knappert, 1905)

its authority and began to monopolize oil exploitation, while the sultanate enjoyed “protection” from the colonial government and an abundant income from oil exploitation. Kutai’s aristocracy specifically benefited a luxury standard of living – as Europeans did. Oil became the means of the sultanate to maintain its dominance and wealth in the island as well as the Dutch East Indies. High level dependency of the region on extractive revenues began to establish. The expansion of resource extraction in East Kalimantan cannot be detached from the export-oriented economy policy adopted by colonial government. The increased extraction of coal and oil (along with tin in Sumatra) overtook agriculture products (tobacco, sugar, rubber, tea coffee and palm oil) as Indonesia’s top export commodity in the early of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The existing literature suggest the absence of resistance toward coal and oil extraction in the region. It was enabled by the establishment of “coalition” between Dutch colonial government and Kutai Sultanate which nuanced with patron-client nature, among many. However, opposition movement took place in the oil city – Balikpapan – due to concern over uneven development, not necessarily the extraction itself. Despite of vast contribution of the city to the sultanate’s economy, the living conditions in the city is far lacking compared to other territory, especially the sultanate’s capital in Tenggarong (Magenda, 1991, p.31). The movement was initiated by Banjarese population and joined by Javanese migrant workers. Prior to the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), this movement grew as a nationalist movement with anti-Dutch and anti-aristocracy orientation; it was fuelled by the frustration and hardship endured under this regime. In spite of that, local historian situates oil discovery as a turning point in East Kalimantan’s development due to its abundant income (Ahyat, 2013).

### **3.2 After the Independence: Continuation of Extraction under Sukarno’s Nationalist Ideology, from 1945-1966**

Indonesia experienced an amalgamation of socialism and nationalism during post-independence period, mainly influenced by Sukarno’s socialist alike perspective. Sukarno who serves as Indonesia’s first president, sought to dismantle the “colonial economy”<sup>9</sup> which in his belief has brought the economic drain for the country. Yet, colonial characteristics still persisted, especially in early 1950s, given the high dependence of the Indonesian economy on the production and export of agricultural products and mining commodities: rubber, tin, copra and oil. Sukarno also called to expel foreign domination by nationalizing strategic industries owned by Dutch and other Western countries, involving military forces. Moreover, he hindered foreign enterprises to enter forestry sector. His anti-western stance was clearly suggested by his refusal over foreign aid and the withdrawal of Indonesia from the United Nations in 1964 (Gellert, 2010, p.39). This backdrop affected the dynamics of extractivism in East Kalimantan.

The year after independence in East Kalimantan was marked by poor living condition, sluggish recovery in primary industries and food crisis – rice shortages and increased food price (Obidzinski, 2003, p.86). Oil and coal mines in East Kalimantan were massively damaged following the intense battle of World War II. The operation of mining and forestry enterprises were cut. Production of coal and oil experienced a major drop. In the midst of this crisis, timber emerged as a significant commodity in East Kalimantan. Not only that the main commodity shifted, the practice of extractivism in the region during this period was also altered.

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<sup>9</sup> “Colonial economy” was emerged as a common national objective, despite the difference perspectives upheld by various political groups. Instead, they sought to pursue “an independent national economy” with a nationalist orientation, based on 1945 constitution. However, there is not a rigid interpretation on this matter (Pham, 2019).

The firm stance of Sukarno against foreign investors made way of domestic players in the extraction projects. In the late 1950s, coal mines in Samarinda owned by Dutch enterprise were handed over to government-controlled company, P. N. Tambang Batu Bara Mahakam (Ibid., p.102). This concluded government's effort to gain control over all coal mines in Indonesia (Bank Indonesia, 1959). While the Dutch's oil refinery in Balikpapan was took over by military commander of East Kalimantan, though later in 1963 it was handed back to the owner, Shell (Pham, 2019, p.191). Interestingly, oil was exempted from the restrictions imposed by nationalist Sukarno (White, 2012), knowing the revenues generated from the sector. In spite of that, oil production was still lowered due to disruption imposed by nationalist movement in East Kalimantan. In another hand, timber extraction steadily increased and played a vital role, both in economic and political sense, for civil servants, traders, military officers and political party.

Timber exploitation during post-independence period was mainly conducted by small-scale loggers; timber permits with maximum area of 10,000 hectares were granted by local authorities. However, it was strongly nuanced with illegality; it was estimated 50% of overall production were not recorded (Obidzinski, 2003). Timber was not only served to generate revenues, but it became politically significant commodity, suggesting the linkage between extractive sector and politic. Revenues from illegal timber served as a reward for ruling elites from central government amidst the deterioration of national economy. As argued by Van der Kroef, the outer regions were lacked resources to meet the most basic needs to run the government, yet central government had very little money to distribute during the period of late 1950s to early 1960s (1959, p.72). Therefore, conducting illegal activity, including illegal logging, was rather "expected" and deemed necessary. Also, timber exploitation was used by the political party in East Kalimantan, especially *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia* (PNI) – nationalist-oriented party – to generate campaign funds and finance its activity (Rocamora, 1970). Allying with local authorities, PNI imposed additional levies on businessman who obtained concession (Ibid., p.146).

Following the adoption of 1957 Martian Law<sup>10</sup>, military groups took over and dominated government bodies in East Kalimantan. They involved in the matter of license issuance; licenses became major asset for the groups. Small-scale logging was intensified; forests were more exploited to cover both personal and institutional expenditure, given most of government's budget was directed to support the fight against separatist movement in Sumatra and Sulawesi.

The rising timber industry in East Kalimantan was also influenced by the growing timber market led by Japan which caused a strong increase in commodity price. Japan herself has gradually withdrew from Philippine in the late 1950s due to restrictive timber export policy and exhausted forest reserves (Lee, 1976).

### **3.3 Suharto's State-led Developmentalism and the Expanding of Extractivism, from 1966-1998**

Suharto's rule inherited acute economic crisis – negative growth, permanent hyperinflation (1,000% annual inflation), severe hunger, poverty and crumbling infrastructure – from the previous regime (Robison, 1993). In rapid pace, his government unravelled Sukarno's policy;

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<sup>10</sup> The law enabled military involvement in vital economic activities and administrative bodies. They took over foreign estates formerly managed by the Japanese army, such as "power installations, transport companies, mines, factories and agricultural estates" (Pham, 2019, p.107). Military managers held dominant positions in the majority of state-owned plantation. Importantly, they were keen to involve in the matters of tax collection and license issuance (Ibid., p.161). An extensive military access was particularly found in the local level; some even served as governors or district commissioners.

he differentiated his regime by naming “New Order”, suggesting the previous regime’s period as “Old Order”. Suharto began to lift price controls, end subsidies, eliminate import barriers, return nationalized firms to the owners and importantly open the economy (Thorburn, 2004). Foreign investment law was put in place in 1967 to create business-friendly environment (Winters, 1996); it provided clear procedures for the operation of foreign enterprise along with generous financial leniency. It was then followed by the passing of new laws on natural resources sector<sup>11</sup>. Law 5/1967 on forestry designated around 75% of the Indonesia’s territory as “State Forest” under the control of Ministry of Forestry, while the forest inhabitants were defined as squatters (McCarthy, 2000; Moniaga, 1993). Law 11/1967 on mining deduced that all Indonesia’s land could be open for mining. These laws effectively facilitated natural resources extraction in large scale by foreign enterprise, mainly in the outer islands, including East Kalimantan.

Given the centralistic approach taken by Suharto’s regime, East Kalimantan was practically controlled by central government. East Kalimantan became one of designated areas for government’s extensive timber extraction project in the 1960s, as part of government development projects under PELITA (*Pembangunan Lima Tahun* – five-year development). Timber extraction was continued in a rapid pace, mainly fuelled by foreign investment and aided by state. However, small-scale operation was still maintained despite of the problems plagued in the practice and led to the phenomenon of *banjir kap*<sup>12</sup> in the 1967-1971. While acknowledging the problems, Suharto reassured (local) actors involved that it was understood given the on-going crisis (Semann and Rosasi, 1968, p.47). His strategy succeeded to gain support from East Kalimantan, given the winning of his party – Golkar – in the election of 1971. Nevertheless, the practice of *banjir kap* was gradually eliminated in favour of large timber concession which benefited Suharto’s allies, especially military leaders and Indonesian Chinese groups.

Military groups continued to be allowed to involve in economic activity as long as they were loyal to the ruling party – Golkar (Suharto’s party). Through military’s foundation, they obtained timber concessions and joined hand with Indonesian Chinese loggers for their expertise (Ascher, 1998). Moreover, forestry sector was deliberately structured to benefit the concessionaries. The government captured less than 20% of timber rents, while its share in oil reached up to 85% (Mubariq, 1992; WALHI, 1991). The loggers were subject to low royalty rate, but they were obliged to contribute part of their profits for government development project. Meanwhile the personal wealth of timber baron as well as Suharto’s closed ally – Bob Hasan – soared excessively (Barr, 1998); Acted as a chair of Indonesian Wood Panel Association, he monopolized timber distribution and market price by establishing alliance with Japanese importing firms (Gellert, 2003). Once a timber producer along with Korea, Japan became the biggest importer of Indonesian timber (Dauvergne, 1997; Geller, 2003).

Forestry sector was fully centralized, the same goes with the patronage. However, it did not entirely eliminate the “old” practice of timber extraction in East Kalimantan which has served as a basis for political and economic life for bureaucratic officers all over the province (Obidzinski, 2003). Suharto maintained the illegal small-scale logging as a mean to gain support from low bureaucratic officers without disturbing the overall economy of the country. Their participation in illicit activity had to be paid by providing “payments” and displaying political loyalty to the his party (McLeod, 2000, p.18). A particular yet complex patronage relationship was also established in this illegal sphere (Obidzinski, 2003). Hence, timber extraction in East Kalimantan involved wider spectrum of actors, from local loggers, all levels

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<sup>11</sup> The substances of these new laws were conflicted with 1960 Basic Agrarian Law which was initially situated as an umbrella law for natural resource management in Indonesia (Moniaga, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Banjir kap is the term commonly used to refer to “flood logging boom” in East Kalimantan (Obidzinski, 2003, p.83).

of civil servants, military groups to foreign enterprises. This complexity contributed to the ingrained forest exploitation in the province, considering the “shared” spill of the extraction despite the main beneficiaries remain Jakarta-based actors.

Migrants from densely populated areas, especially Java and Madura were brought to the “picture” through government’s transmigration program funded by World Bank and bilateral aid<sup>13</sup> in the 1970s (Hart and Peluso, 2005); this resettlement program was seen as an attempt to homogenize the nation. However timber itself also attracted migrants from other regions, suggested the notion of pull factor of rural-urban migration. They followed the logging roads and practiced “slash-and-burn” agriculture (Vayda, Colfer and Brotokusumo, 1980). Confrontation between migrant farmers and native groups were inevitable (Thorburn, 2004). They both had distinct orientation on farming; the native – Dayak groups – were subsistence oriented, while the migrants were more market-oriented.

East Kalimantan enjoyed timber boom in the early 1970s. As the exploitation of timber intensified, conflicts often broke between villagers, commercial loggers, state-forces and forces-backed concession holders (Thorburn, 2004). Villagers were prohibited to cut the wood and collect forest products for their subsistence needs within the concession. Whereas they views forests as “common property”. Their resistance toward the concession holders were symbolized in an act of stealing. Forest became a critical site of struggle (Hart and Peluso, 2005).

Depleted resources brought logging industry crash in the late 1980s; its top spot is replaced by timber processing industries – plywood and pulp and paper (Hidayat, 2016, p. 233). Around the same period, large scale coal mining extraction started to commence, which Lucarelli designates it as the “take-off period” of Indonesian coal mining industry (Lucarelli, 2010, p. 11). Central government signed contract with six coal mining companies which will begin its operation in East Kalimantan. Local actors were absent in the discussion.

Oil extraction which was distorted during previous regime picked up again in Suharto’s period, especially during oil boom in the 1970s and 1980s. As an oil producing province, East Kalimantan enjoyed the spill, but much gains went to central government and oil companies (Hill, Resosudarmo and Vidyattama, 2008). Oil money was used to build Jakarta’s business district and monument. In fact, without East Kalimantan’s timber and oil, Indonesia was expected to lack of foreign exchange (Hollie, 1981). East Kalimantan indeed had a critical role in Indonesian macro economy.

The ever growing impact of Suharto’s development project led to the emergence of critical groups in the 1990s. The main criticism was revolving around the environmental and social impact of resource exploitation, especially in the extractive region. In the last two decades of Suharto’s regime, East Kalimantan has experienced three massive forest fires: 1982, 1994 and 1997. The 1982 forest fire cleared 3.5 million hectares of forests – around 20% of Kalimantan’s forests (Goldamer, 2001). Resource extraction in East Kalimantan indeed has been undertaken for decades, but it was rarely perceived as a problem due to its small scale and slow rate of extraction. However, Suharto’s rule has expanded extractive project till the concern of unsustainability rising. Another critics toward the regime was the unequal distribution of the benefits of due to more concentrated economic power in the hands of Suharto’s family and allies (Barber, Johnson and Hafild, 1994; Thorburn, 2004; WALHI, 1991).

A combination of “repression, concessions and co-optation” was given as a response from Suharto’s government toward the critics. The government had a strong grip toward both formal and informal groups, such as labour association, private sector, political party, media and civil society organization (Kartodiharjo, 1999). Military groups were deployed to

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<sup>13</sup> Suharto’s regime obtained robust aid from Western countries (Robison, 1986; Winters, 1996). It also became the major recipient of Japanese aid and loans. World Bank was also among the long-standing donor that pushed for liberalization measures in Indonesia.



silence his opposition. Therefore, Suharto's regime could maintain seemingly stable national political, economic and social life. Many believe the only way to resolve these problems is to change the regime (Resosudarmo, 2005).

### 3.4 After *Reformasi*: Decentralization, Wave of Resistance and the Deepening of Extractivism, from 1998 to the Present Day

Uprising against Suharto's regime in May 1998 along with adamant pressure from domestic and international actors led to the fall of Suharto's government which open to a historical reform in Indonesia – dubbed as *reformasi*. Political change toward democratization, decentralization and regional autonomy was among the significant reform pursued to dissolve centralistic government under Suharto (Smith, 1999; Kohar, 2001). This phenomenon massively changed the practice of extractivism in East Kalimantan.

Following the news of Suharto's fall, “community groups, entrepreneurs and gangsters seized corporate resource sites, occupied mining and destroyed logging camps”, fuelled by the spirit of political freedom, (Tsing, 2003, p.5106). Resistance movements against extractive projects were emerged all over East Kalimantan. Indigenous group of Dayak Benuaq fought against Truba Indo Coal Mining – Thailand based coal company – which has been operated on their indigenous land. Other indigenous group demanded compensation fee from Kelian Equatorial Mining – Rio Tinto's subsidiary – for human rights abuse and pollution caused by its gold mining operation in since 1992 (Down to Earth, 1998).

Decentralization law which put into effect in 2001 gave substantial authority to local government, including in natural resources management. Head of district, city major and governor were equipped with power to grant coal mining<sup>14</sup> and palm oil concession in their respective area. This marked the beginning of discord between government officials at different levels; they debated about which resources allowed to exploit and the procedure to issue the concessions, among many (Tsing, 2003). The phenomenon of creation of new districts complicated the situation even further. Despite this unsettled circumstances, an exponential increase of coal exploitation took place in East Kalimantan in the early of 2000s, followed by an expansion of palm oil plantation (Naylor *et al.*, 2019, p. 1196), presumably as the outcome of radical decentralization in a short period and also enabled by global commodity boom in the 2000s.

The expansion of coal mining is also allegedly linked to money politics, as reported by several NGOs. Political candidates are believed to receive financial support from mining companies during local election. In exchange to that, the companies will be rewarded mining concessions after elections. JATAM dubbed this practice as the phenomenon of “*Ijon Politik*” derived from the notion of transactional politics. Moreover, “many government officials, parliamentarians and administrative staff are directly involved in coal mining business in one way or another”, taking advantage of their positions (Fünfgeld, 2016, p.151). The tie between coal mining and local politics is also happened in other commodities.

The new decentralized natural resource management provided a space for “self-enrichment among local authorities” (Ibid., p.158), as proven by the soaring corruption cases in the sector. District head of Kukar for the period of 1999 – 2006 – late Syaokani – has been convicted of misusing fee from oil and gas sector. His daughter – Rita Widyasari – who was elected as his successor were later convicted for her involvement in plantation permit bribery

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<sup>14</sup> Mining sector is now re-centralized. Local government authorities are withdrawn to the central government, including the authority to grant concessions. This is one of the most recent changes to Indonesia's mining sector, following the revision of 2009 Mining Law which was passed in parliament in May 2020.

case in 2017 (Gabrillin, A., 2018). Surprisingly, this family still left a good impression on the eyes of local people, as quoted in a national newspaper, “During his tenure, Syaukani gave a lot of money to the local people. He also built Tenggarong, the district capital. . . . . Maybe the corruption is his fault, but it may just be the act of some people who are not happy with him. I still like him and many East Kalimantan people also like him” (Ambrosius and Hernowo, 2009). Local cultural observer even dubbed Syaukani as a robin hood; he stole from central government and shared it to the poor in Kukar (Ibid).

Nuanced with pro and contra, more and more groups go against extractivism emerged in some part of the province. It included street blockade, demonstration, litigation and also institutional activism by seeking recognition for customary forest which involved East Kalimantan and Jakarta-based NGOs (Affif and Rachman, 2019). Their resistance are grounded on both material and non-material interests. The former indicates the notion of environmentalism of the poor of Martinez-Alier (2002), whereby they resist when the extraction project impacted their source for livelihood. As exemplified in farmer-led movement against coal companies in Makroman and Palaran, Samarinda (Hardjanto and Rahmad, 2014) and resistance against oil palm plantation company (Perkebunan Kalimantan Utama/PKU) in Kukar by farmer groups (Arumingtyas, 2017). While the latter revolves around identity, indigenous and historical value, as shown by the resistance of Santan people in Kukar against coal mining company, Indominco Mandiri – subsidiary of Bangkok-based Banpu Public Company – which nearly erased the historical linkage of their village and Santan River by relocating the river (Hardjanto, 2016) and other indigenous-led movement against timber and oil palm plantation across East Kalimantan: Dayak Benuaq in West Kutai (FWI, 2015) and Long Isun in Mahakam Ulu (Mongabay, 2014).

In 2012, there was a convergence of social movement concerning extractivism across actors in Samarinda under the umbrella of *Gerakan Samarinda Menggugat*/GSM (Samarinda Lawsuit Movement). Using citizen lawsuit (CLS) mechanism, they demanded the responsible parties to evaluate mining projects and regulate them in a stringent manner. A lawsuit was particularly filed against the Samarinda City Government, the Samarinda City Parliament, the East Kalimantan Provincial Government, the East Kalimantan Parliament, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and the Ministry of Environment. After two-year battles, the judges ruled in favour of GSM and obliged the government to revise policies on coal mining. The Samarinda City Government appealed to the higher court, yet the verdict was unchanged in favour of the GSM (Hardjanto, 2014). However, concrete changes remain to be unseen.

Some protests succeeded to gain substantial recognition in local and national media with the support of local and national NGO, as shown in the GSM case. In some cases, government agree to meet and hear the concerns of the protestors. As they did in the case of Mukroman movement. However, police and private security forces were also often deployed to hinder the protest. For instance, human rights abuse involving state apparatus took place on 20 August 2008 in Kukar. One protesters was killed, 24 people were imprisoned and many were beaten, kicked and shot. These people were protesting against the issuance of coal permit owned by PT Arkon on their land; they demanded the return of their land (Down to Earth, 2010).

Extractive companies are reportedly employing more private forces, such as thugs (*preman*) and paramilitary groups, to guard their operations. They often registered as civil society organizations. While the paramilitary group resembles the (actual) state military; they are often trained by army personnel, both the retired and active one. I witnessed it myself during my visit to Samarinda back in 2014. My car stopped briefly in one of coal mines concession. There is no fence and signboard indicating the name of the coal company. It is just a bare land with some opening pits and heavy equipment parked nearby. Suddenly a group of security forces approached and interrogated me and my colleagues. This incident is turned out to be the everyday reality in East Kalimantan. Furthermore, JATAM Kaltim – the local branch

of JATAM – often become their target. They destroyed its office and physically threatened its officers. Moreover, criminalization of opposition groups are also soaring. Kideco, Korea-linked coal company filed a police report against an indigenous woman in Paser for obstructing company's activity. An indigenous people in Mahakam Ulu was arrested and imprisoned for five months under the similar charges. Theodorus Tekwan Ajat, member of indigenous group of Long Isun was charged for taking a chainsaw and keys to a bulldozer owned by logging company who was granted timber concession in his indigenous land. The same pattern is also found in Berau, where a resident was naming as a suspect for interrupting coal company activity (Hardjanto, 2015).

However, responses toward extractivism in East Kalimantan has been altered in recent years. It is not only about going for or against extractivism, but also how to “do” extractivism. Jakarta-based organization whose works stems on the agenda of anti-corruption and public service delivery, started to introduce the new tools of advocacy grounded on the concept of good governance in East Kalimantan in 2006. These organizations believe that managing natural resources in transparent and accountable manner will bring an optimum benefit for the people; it echoes the mainstream argument on technical and administrative matter in natural resource management (Borras and Franco, 2010, p.2). Their perspective fits with the shifting of global agenda toward the “new” function of market, state and civil society under the umbrella of “good governance” promoted by neoliberal institution such as World Bank. It serves as a bridging to the opposition groups which later were also drawn to the discussion on bureaucratic sphere. This new landscape is now the practice of extractivism in East Kalimantan today. Wider government bodies, such as Anti-Corruption Agency and Ombudsman, involved in governing natural resources, highlighting the domination of governance discourse. It resulted in an improvement of bureaucratic mechanism, particularly in mining sector, such as stricter licensing process, information openness on extractive policy also greater monitoring, which deemed advantageous from the perspective of the opposition groups.

Stringent bureaucratic mechanism is proven unsuccessful to limit extraction in East Kalimantan. Since 2018, there was a growing illegal coal mining which presumably built on the new patronage between local business actors and law. This illegal activity is allegedly linked to the “legal” coal company; illegal coal are sold to the big (legal) coal company. Hence, it diffuses the legal-illegal sphere. The scale of the illegal coal mining is expected to getting larger given the upcoming regional election.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Personal interview with local activist A, September 2020.

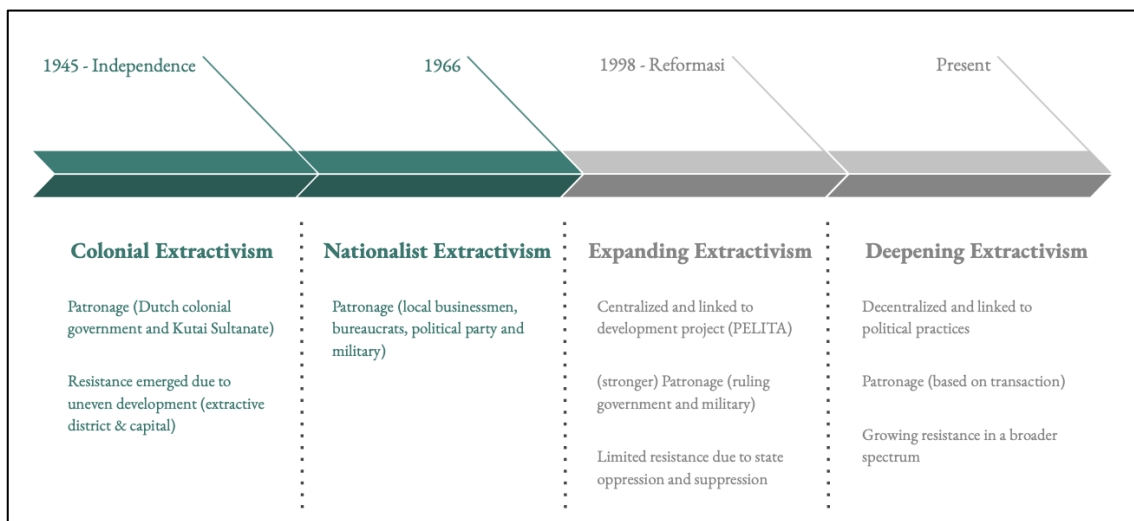
# Chapter 4 Investigating the Persistence of Extractivism in East Kalimantan

Drawing from the previous chapter, I analyze the persistence of extractivism as hegemonic ideal in East Kalimantan since colonial period till now. The argument is grounded on the contestation of interests between actors. I then locate back the discussion to a broader extractivism discourse, emphasizing both the differences and similarities with the phenomenon in other regions, particularly Latin America.

## 4.1 From Colonial to Deepening Extractivism: How Has It Persisted?

The leading commodity is changing. The resistance is growing, yet the scale is continuously expanding. The following section aims to interrogate the persistence of extractivism by adopting a Gramscian framework on hegemony. I will first analyze the element which enables and shape the practice of extractivism in each period. Then, I will draw the continued elements to grasp the “bigger picture” behind the persistence of extractivism in East Kalimantan.

**Figure 3**  
Evolution of Extractivism in East Kalimantan



Source: Author's Analysis, 2020

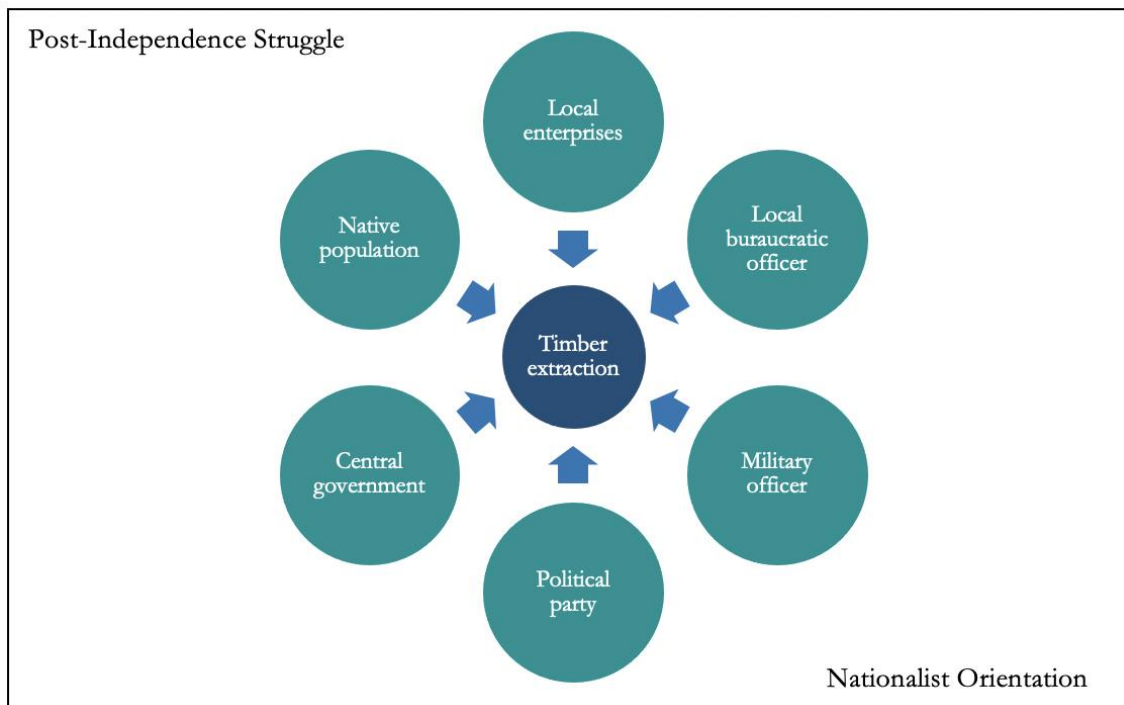
The penetration of the Dutch colonial government brought the first commercial extraction in East Kalimantan to the region in the mid 19th century. Patronage between the colonial government and local authority – Kutai Sultanate – has enabled resource extraction in the region. In exchange of granting the license to exploit coal and oil, the Sultanate obtain tax and levies, as well as security protection from the Dutch colonial government. It resulted in the growing extraction: the local authority granted 36 coal and oil concessions from 1886 to 1903 (Ahyat, 2013). Even by then, the problems of uneven development between the resource-producing district and the capital city has been present. For instance, the Sultanate has built several education facilities in Tenggarong, the capital, but they neglected Balikpapan – the most significant contributor of Sultanate’s wealth (Magenda, 1991). It triggered the

resistance movement against both the colonial government and aristocracy led by migrants in oil city, Balikpapan, which later evolved to be national movement involved in the fight for independence.

The practice of resource extraction continued yet altered in the post-independent period, which I dubbed as “nationalist extractivism”, following the nationalist orientation adopted by Soekarno which imposed nationalization of foreign companies and further prohibited foreign enterprise involvement in Indonesian economy. Domestic actors began to dominate the extractive project in East Kalimantan, especially timber. A wider range of actors involved in the logging industry with various degree and nature of participation, from villagers, local enterprises, bureaucratic officers, political party members and military groups. They established patron-client relationship mirroring the phenomenon of patronage in the colonial era; concession was granted with the promise of financial benefits for the grantor.

No opposition was recorded against extraction. Local enterprises driven by its capital interest took part in the logging industry; they seized the moment to accumulate their capital which previously hindered under the colonial era. Bureaucratic and military officers involved to obtain financial gain for both personal and institutional needs. The political party needed money to fund a political campaign. Central government which was busy dealing with domestic and international politic affairs did not intervene much and further affirmed the practices due to the shortage of state budget. While the native population’s interest – collecting forest products for subsistence – was undisturbed. Timber extraction managed to facilitate differing interest among several distinct groups. It was supported by the fact that there were still extensive forests available for everybody in East Kalimantan. The worsening economy added justification on it; any means necessary to make money were understood by that time of struggle. Also, Indonesia, as an independent state was still struggling to translate the nationalist-socialist ideology embraced by Sukarno into a concrete state agenda. East Kalimantan’s forest was like an unregulated space “open” for everybody.

**Figure 4**  
Behind Continued Extraction After Independence



Source: Author's analysis, 2020

Extractivism continued, vastly expanded and became hegemonic in Suharto's authoritarian regime (1966-1998) which turned to the opposite direction of nationalist Sukarno. Foreign investment was facilitated through a legal instrument and financial arrangement. Indonesian resources management was fully centralized; East Kalimantan was completely under Jakarta's grip. It is mirroring the notion of internal colonization, where Jakarta acts as colonizer and East Kalimantan is the one being colonized. This paternalistic governance plays an essential element to enforce large-scale exploitation in East Kalimantan. Extractivism was also put within the framework of the national development agenda and was built on the strong patronage between the ruling government and military group. This new configuration led to an "expanding extractivism" in East Kalimantan, dominated by big enterprises and centred on timber and oil. Massive extraction project triggered conflicts in the extractive frontiers. Critics also emerged concerning the externalities of Indonesian development path under Suharto; resistance movement in East Kalimantan was driven by what was happening in Jakarta. Strong oppressive measures involving military groups deployed to silence these opposition groups. A coercive element of hegemony is clearly and strongly nuanced in maintaining and expanding of extractivism.

Suharto also rested on his successful rhetoric of developmentalism to sustain the practice of extractivism in East Kalimantan. His strategy was relatively straightforward. He carried out a long-listed development program under PELITA: building road and school, installing electricity; the focus is more on the "physical construction" (Li, 1999, p.300). He also explicitly formulated a pro-poor program through Presidential Instruction (Intruksi Presiden/Inpres) which was designated for the village and rural development. Its main target included the construction of the elementary school in every village in Indonesia, rehabilitation and extension of road and support for villages that "left behind" (Booth, 2003). The improvement brought by these programs were real, but there was also political motivation to gain political support, particularly from the people in the rural area. Mohsin noted the additional program was implemented on the eve of an election, such as free electrical generators for rural communities and donation of television in East Kalimantan (2014, p.83). It was aimed to establish the idea of Suharto as the figure who brings development, hence supporting him is necessary for the sake of development.

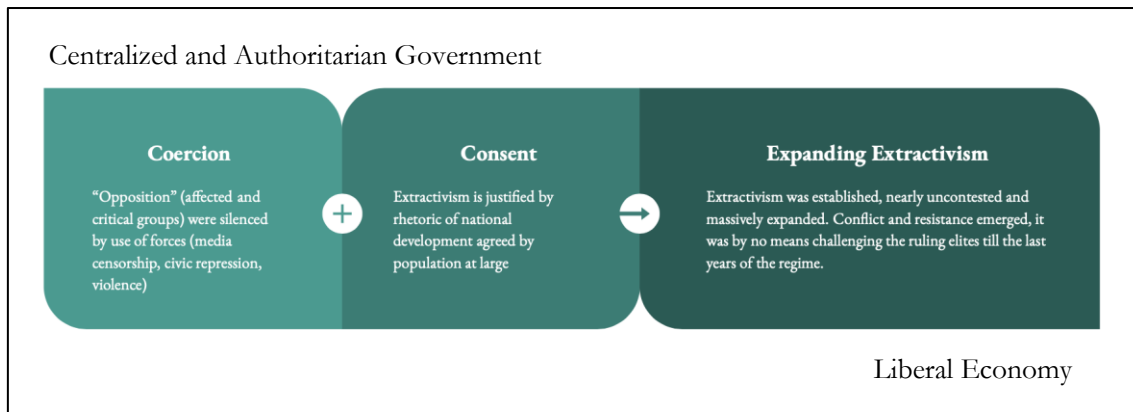
The progress brought by Suharto's development program is massive, but differing responses were coming from people on the outer island. They feel robbed by Jakarta, as reported by national newspaper from its in-depth reporting in Kukar (Ambrosius and Hernowo, 2009). It is comparable with the sentiment of a colony within the framework of internal colonization. Money to finance the development program was coming from Riau and East Kalimantan, the central oil-producing provinces at that time. At the same time, many claimed that the program mostly benefited Java which has the largest population in Indonesia.

Despite the differing views, Suharto's strategy was deemed successful in gaining people's support which is favourable for the long-term interest of the ruling elite. He has a good reputation as a leader who lifts Indonesia out of crisis from Sukarno's era and guides Indonesia toward modernity; he was known as "Father of Indonesian Development". People regarded Suharto and his political party – Golkar – as those who "promoted development", exemplified by the presence of hard infrastructures, such as road, dam and bridges (Gaffar, 1992, p.192). Many put a blind eye to his repressive measure, not to mention conflicts surrounding the extractive project in the distant area. Firm grip on civil society has contributed to this attainment: press control and censorship. Consequently, those severely impacted by the expansive extraction project drawn to engage in discursive struggles (Fried, 2003).

Resource exploitation based economic and growth model – large-scale extractivism – was firmly established and nearly uncontested in Suharto's period. Borrowing Gramscian concept on hegemony, it was enabled by coercive measures and backed by active consent

from the population at large. Suharto used material progress as an instrument to mobilize voluntary support – consent – from the populace during his tenure. His pro-poor program precisely fits within Jessop’s framework to maintain hegemony: give a short-term material flow to subordinate social groups. That strategy was possible due to the centralized government and liberal economy (with some degree of state control); they offered an enabling structure for resource exploitation to thrive in East Kalimantan.

**Figure 5**  
Extractivism as Hegemony under Suharto’s Regime



Source: Author’s Analysis, 2020

With decentralization system in place following the falling of Suharto’s authoritarian regime in 1998, Jakarta loses its absolute control on East Kalimantan’s resource. Hence, East Kalimantan could determine their direction of development and natural resources management. In other words, Jakarta and East Kalimantan are no longer tied to a colonizer and colonized relationship within the notion of internal colonization as strongly nuanced in Suharto’s era. However, resource exploitation as the manifestation of colonization continues to flourish in East Kalimantan in this new setting. The actors involved are going beyond the dichotomy of “the colonizer and the colonized” mirroring the central and local tension. Contemporary extractivism does not recognize spatial separation. Local-central spheres are getting diffused. Local actors are well-connected to Jakarta. Hence, national actors do not necessarily lose their access to East Kalimantan’s resources. Furthermore, the subordinate groups start actively exercising their agency to resist, protest, neglect, accommodate and even accept the view of the dominant groups. Here lies the complexity of relations between actors involved in contemporary extractivism, which challenges the notion of internal colonization.

The moment of reformasi is indeed critical for extractivism: whether to continue or be challenged. Nevertheless, the practice of extractivism persists and deepens. Problems surrounding extractivism, which has been scrutinized by critical groups during Suharto’s regime shift to the local level. Coal and palm oil concession is suspected at the centre of the practice of transactional politics in East Kalimantan (and other provinces in Indonesia), as indicated by rampant practices of corruption related to licensing involving the head of the district. It is presumably enabled by the establishment of new patronage, involving various actors, from “old” Jakarta-based and local actors which have involved in politics throughout the New Order regime (Morishita, 2008) as well as new actors which have been suppressed during Suharto’s era.

The wave of democratization has enabled resistance movement against extractivism to grow, which mainly fuelled by the enlarging problems brought by the expansion of the industry. However, the protests are mainly emerged in the site of extraction projects and led

by affected groups; many silence toward the exploitative industry. This phenomenon is presumably linked to the practice of paternalism which has been perpetuated since Suharto's era. Government leader is situated as a "father" who kindly give his gift to his children – the people. In return of that, society has to be thankful (Mohsin, 2014, p.65). Society has been conditioned to think and act in this particular manner – blurred lines between public and private domain – which benefited the ruling elite (Santoso et al., 2018, p.139). The case of Kukar, which I briefly mentioned in the previous chapter is the perfect example. Despite the corrupt behaviour and massive problems in Kukar which getting more media attention in recent years, the local people are still fond of the late corrupt district head, Syaokani. My informant, who was born and grew up in Kukar shared that Syaokani was generous and often handed out money by the side of the road. In terms of his policy, he adopted a populist agenda, such as giving out a huge sum of money for each village without really monitor its utilization. On the other hand, a public service programme is not carried out accordingly (Ibid). These practices have shaped the mindset of the people regarding the role of the state. It is centred at the material flow, not really on the effectiveness of the government. He bluntly said that all people think is money. Hence, it is understandable why people silence on the destruction brought by extractivism. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Kukar; it is an everyday reality in East Kalimantan, particularly the northern part of East Kalimantan which is less-developed compared to the southern part of the province where the big city is located. On the other hand, people in the southern province are likely more "progressive"; many exercise their political rights by criticizing their government and questioning their policy on natural resource exploitation.

Besides, many still feel inferior and powerless as "small citizen" who is in an unfortunate place, both in economic and political terms (Fünfgeld, 2016). Decades of suppression has hindered the local people from protesting and resisting. They doubt that the government will hear their voice and concerns, as confirmed by my informant that, people in East Kalimantan have more trust for the NGOs, rather than the government. Therefore, many of them rely on NGO's help. NGOs have a critical role in the resistance movement against extractivism in East Kalimantan. Most of the time, the NGOs are the one who pushes people to act and also structure the resistance strategy.

One dominant feature of the resistance movement against extractivism in East Kalimantan is the notion of NIMBY (not in my backyard) movement. The protestors are only opposed to specific extractive project operated in their respective environment. They do not necessarily protest against the overall practice of extractivism, not to mention the discourse of mainstream development. NGOs are the one who finds common ground and connects various movements spreading across East Kalimantan or even Indonesia. They also link the grounded aspirations to the wider national debate. Mirroring to my experience, it is common for national NGO (usually based in Jakarta) to facilitate the affected groups and local NGO to meet with national policymaker and media to put pressure toward the provincial government. International NGO might involve if the case is concerning the international company. However, success is still limited to increased public awareness, massive media coverage or improved written regulations. Real changes in the ground are still unseen, suggesting the empty response from the government and private actors.

Mixed responses are reported toward the resistance groups. Coercive measures involving state-forces and para-military groups toward those who oppose are frequently deployed. On the other hand, both central and local governments are also now more open to sit and talk with the opposition groups. Several factors led to the differentiated responses, such as the identity of the protestors (ethnic, religion, status), causes brought by the protests, public exposure of the resistance, and etc. Here lies the essential notion of "structural selectivity" by the state; the state is not equally reactive to all groups in society. In the case of extractivism in East Kalimantan, the state is particularly responsive to the new groups who bring "good



governance” agenda – those whose interests lay on how to do extractivism, not simply support or resist the practice. Their agenda fits within the framework of development alternative perpetuated by the neoliberal institution: changing the practice without recasting the foundational element of the structure. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the state is more open to this new group.

The presence of governance groups has altered the dynamics of the resistance movement in East Kalimantan. Environmental groups in East Kalimantan who initially opposed to the governance framework, later drawn to the discussion, including JATAM, one of the most vocal NGOs that oppose the extractive project. Back in 2000, JATAM called the government to stop all mining activities in Indonesia (Down to Earth, 2000). Their stance against extraction is still intact, but their demand now is more “accommodating”. They absorb the language of transparency and accountability. For instance, in the last five years, they have been demanding the government to disclose mining licensing documents. This change of behaviour is interesting, yet expectable, as shared by one of the informants:

“The transparency language is easy to digest. People are interested at number, economic loss, corruption. Government is actively responsive on this matter. They have interest in increasing state budget. Long story short, who can fight alone? You need ally to fight for a long time. That is why they (environment group) later use it (governance agenda) as one of their weapon. Also, we (local NGO) still depend on Jakarta-based NGO to amplify our issue. It is a fact that I should acknowledge. Most of the time, we (local NGO) follow their issue and approach.” (Personal interview with local activist B, October 2020)

Governance groups are succeeded (to a certain degree) bridging the distinct interest of pro and contra groups due to their middle way kind of agenda: improving the licensing system, disclosing extractive-related data, developing complaint handle mechanism etc. Their involvement contributed to the improvement of the bureaucratic mechanism, which deemed advantageous from the perspective of the contra groups as well. Here, the consent of the opposition group is obtained through beautification of the practice of extractivism in the form of better governance. However, a stringent administrative mechanism (better governance) could not limit exploitation. One of the informants argues as detailed below:

“The licensing system can be improved greatly. Moratorium policy on mining sector can be put in place. But it is no use. Today, illegal mining is flourishing. It is a proof that the under-the-table transaction continues. Everything is perfect on the paper. But that’s it. The real reform is yet to be seen.” (Personal interview with local activist A, September 2020)

The efforts pursued by opposition groups managed to alter the outward appearance of extractivism. However, the fundamental practice of extractivism is still intact. The resistance movement could not touch this solid practice. The practice of extractivism is deepening in East Kalimantan. Political interests overpass any bureaucratic reform. Broader politics in East Kalimantan and Indonesia holds a vital role in the persistence of contemporary extractivism. It is linking with the phenomenon of patronage (transactional clientelism), which crosses the local-national domain. In some cases, Jakarta-connected local politician act as a patron, while her/his client comprises of local businessmen and other groups, as shown in the case of late Syaukani in Kukar (Santoso et al., 2018). Meanwhile, some Jakarta-based actors – national politician – maintain their dominance in the province through their pawn – local politician, as seen in the case of the current governor of East Kalimantan, Isran Noor who is affiliated with the Nasdem Party.

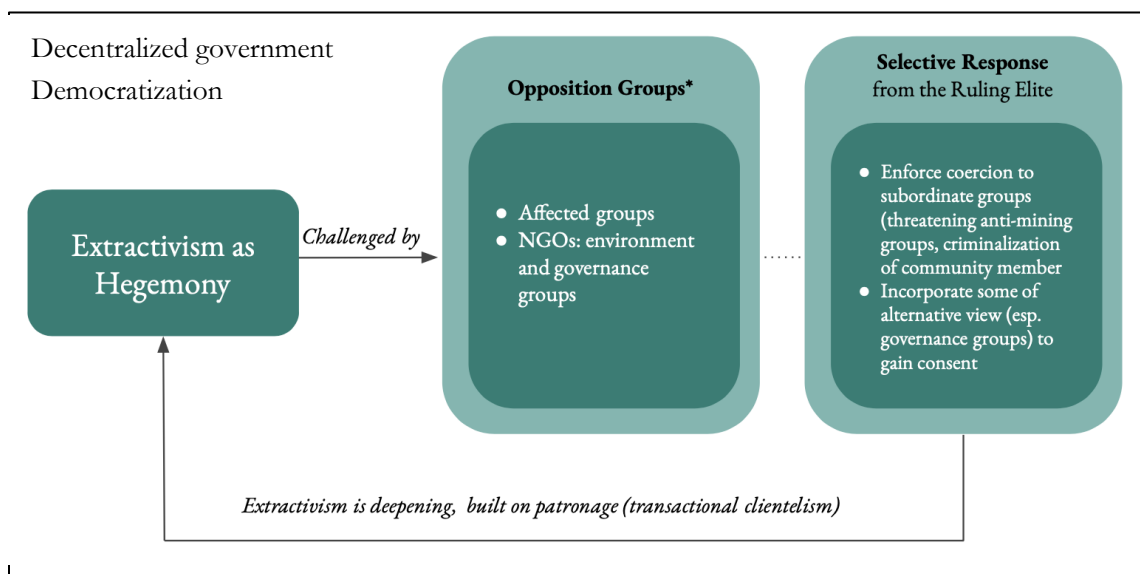
Among the political practices tied to extractivism, money politics is the most well-known. It is known publicly that extractive industries support candidates who come forward in the election, both in East Kalimantan and also national (presidential election). The candidates need capital to run for office, given the high election costs in Indonesia. Hence, whoever wins the election, the winner is still the industry. It is expected for the elected candidate

to adopt a policy in favour of the supporters - the capital owner. My informant also shares the critical role of politic in the continuity of extractivism:

“Election is ideally becoming our hope to elect leaders who have a vision on sustainability. But we do not trust election anymore. The percentage of *golput* (not-voting) in East Kalimantan is high; it is up to 40% in the last election, whether for technical or ideological reasons. We are trapped in a vicious cycle. Without changing our political system – electoral democracy – nothing will change in East Kalimantan.” (Personal interview with local activist A, September 2020)

The contemporary extractivism in East Kalimantan involves more complex dynamics. It is not as straightforward as in Suharto’s era. Rather than imposing their view directly as Suharto did use his developmental agenda, the ruling elite incorporates some of the alternative views of those who challenge the status quo to sustain extractivism. It is echoing Jessop’s argument on the practical ways to maintain hegemony. Both the government and private entities adopt more robust code of conduct as suggested by the governance stream to gain “consent” (in some degree) from the society; mining concessions granted in a “transparent manner” are more agreeable, despite that it still involves land grabbing which put marginalized groups at a loss. At the same time, coercion is still enforced, but in a more discreet manner, compared to Suharto’s regime. I find these as a critical element to maintain extractivism in the present-day.

**Figure 6**  
Maintaining Extractivism as Hegemony in the Contemporary Era



Source: Author’s Analysis, 2020

The observation above explains how extractivism persisted in East Kalimantan, despite its alteration in the practical level. There is one element which always presents across periods: patronage revolving around resource concession (see figure 3). Patronage is intact across regime. It suggests that patronage has been ingrained in the political-economy structure of East Kalimantan and Indonesia at large; it becomes the system which has been evolving itself. Long-term relational patronage which firmly established in New Order regime has changed into short-term transactional patronage where patron-client relation is built on a short-term transaction, rather a long-term relation (Aspinal and Hicken, 2020, p.138). Consequently, the patron-client relation today is frequently changing, which is mainly driven by the material interests of the actors involved. It fits perfectly with the opportunist nature of

capital which can cut across different political regime. Hadiz and Robison argue that “capital has historically been politically opportunist rather than reformist, reluctant to accept the risks of attaching itself to reformist politics” (2013, p.56).

Looking at the current trajectory of East Kalimantan and Indonesia in general, the patronage politics has transformed into an oligarchy which is indicated by the concentration of wealth and power and its collective defence by a handful of elites (Ibid., p.37). The number of business elites who get into politics and fill in strategic positions in the government is soaring. In most cases, the industry-affiliated figure is serving in the government body which regulate and oversee the industry as well. The similar phenomenon also found in the parliament. Hence, all critical positions are occupied by the elites. This condition serves as a favourable environment for extractivism to sustain. At the same time, it will be harder for the opposition groups to make a change.

## **4.2 From East Kalimantan, Indonesia to Latin America: How Does It Differ?**

Extractivism in East Kalimantan has a distinctive feature which represents the trait of the phenomenon of extractivism in Indonesia in general. Here I compare the extractivism in East Kalimantan-Indonesia with Latin America, which occupies most of the debate of extractivism in development scholarship. I recognize that the practice of extractivism across countries in Latin America is diverse with various degree and intensity, yet there is an emerging trend which can be identified. The comparison is aiming to highlight both the differences and similarities of the trend surrounding extractivism in those two regions. The comparative analysis is organized around several aspects, including the actors involved (military involvement and external actor), state agenda (nationalization) and resistance movement.

The actors involved in the practice of extractivism in Indonesia today are varied. However, the role of the military group tended to decline compared to Suharto’s authoritarian regime where the group have direct access to timber concession, both directly through its coalition with the president and indirectly via its supposedly non-profit foundation. Its role now is mainly to secure the extractive site, both managed by state-owned enterprises or private enterprises. The extractive site has been designated as vital national objects, according to Indonesian law. Besides, they also frequently deployed to deal with protest groups against the extractive project. On the other hand, militarization in natural resource management is soaring in Latin America (Gudynas, 2019). For instance, Colombia incorporates environmental management under national security policies with the ultimate objective to control illegal resource exploitation and turn them into a legal business. Brazil is heading toward a greater military presence in taking control of natural resources, particularly in Amazon. More conspicuous measure taken by the Venezuelan government which assigns armed forces to control and manage mining exploitation in a newly established area called “military economic zone”. Peruvian police and military groups regularly deployed to put down protest against mining project (Ibid.). The practice is varied from country to country in the region, yet its presence is more apparent than before. This trend cannot be detached from the broader politic phenomenon in Latin America: persisted military dependence (Clark and North, 2018).

Turning to the role of external actors, there is a decline of the share of foreign enterprise in the extraction project in Indonesia, especially the mining sector, which is used to be dominated by foreign companies. It is mainly due to the enactment of a divestment policy, which requires foreign mining companies to divest a portion of their shares to Indonesian shareholders after a certain period. Meanwhile, the remaining foreign enterprises, including in the oil and gas sector, still originate from traditional capital hub from the global north.

However, there is an increasing role of Chinese capital in mineral processing industries which is now developing in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the growing palm oil sector is dominated by domestic player. This finding is different from Latin America, where China has been playing an important role to advance extractivism. It is estimated that Chinese foreign investment in Latin America which is mainly for extractive projects is reaching USD 24.2 billion. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela are among the destination countries of Chinese investment (Smart, 2020, p.773).

As indirectly mentioned above, there is a trend of increasing state control over resources in Indonesia. It is mirroring nationalization agenda which serves as the commonality of extractivism in Indonesia and Latin America, despite the differing manifestation in the practical level. Growing nationalist sentiment is particularly evident in the mining sector in Indonesia, following the revision of the mining law in 2009. The new law changes the mining contract regime to the licensing regime. It also mandates divestment and development of downstream industries. The economic motive to increase revenue is the dominant argument behind these changes, given the continuous decline of extractive revenue driven by resource depletion. However, the implementation of both policies is still low. Export of raw material continues, while the progress of processing facility development generally lacks and also varied across commodities. Downstream industry in nickel is deemed more advanced compared to copper (Umah, 2020). The direction toward nationalization is strongly nuanced in Latin America. It is commonly stipulated in the constitutions with various level of implementation. For instance, Bolivia started the renegotiation with oil and gas companies in 2007. Morales – Bolivian President – deemed nationalization as a turning point for Bolivian people, as reported by Reuters, he argued that “we went from being a beggar colonial state to a dignified Plurinational State” (Reuters, 2012). The renegotiation resulted in an increased Bolivian government’s share of revenue of up to approximately 54% (Anthias, 2012, p.154). Similar agenda also found in Ecuador and Argentina where the government renegotiated with international companies to gain more significant resources rent (Smart, 2020, p.773). These countries justified their manoeuvre by bringing development argument: increased revenue from extraction is needed to finance social spending for people welfare. Here lies the notion of progressive extractivism, the distinctive feature of extractivism in Latin America.

Extractivism have affected both Indonesia and Latin America comparably. Deforestation, forest fires, loss of biodiversity, social conflict and corruption have been reported from both locations. However, there is a distinct phenomenon of social movement in those two regions. Despite various background behind the movement regarding extractivism in Indonesia, the dominant unified voice came out of it is the demand to alter the practice of extractivism by imposing more stringent regulation. It is manifested in the slogan, such as better resource governance, transparent mining licensing, responsible mining or even sustainable palm oil. However, those who oppose to extractive activity is not necessarily gone, but this group has been drawing to above agenda. This phenomenon suggests the underlying discourse of “development alternatives” nuanced in the movement which “known for its herodox positions on development, yet silenced on the subject of progress, modernization and backwardness (Gudynas, 2013b). Gudynas further argues that this framework questions the way of doing development, but accepts the foundational notion of mainstream development such as economic growth (2013a, p.18). Furthermore, “this approach offers short-term corrective procedures, yet ignores the underlying problems of extractivism” (Rini, 2020, p.3). Therefore, it is not surprising that counter-hegemonic idea is less present; this was recognized as one of the weaknesses of the resistance movement in East Kalimantan and Indonesia, as agreed by the informant.

“For years, we have fought against extractive industry, exploitation based economy. But we do not emphasize the alternative. Therefore, we (his organization) have been campaigning for

alternative economy – sustainable and independent – under the label of *ekonomi tanding* (counter economy), such as making crafts, reviving the culture.” (Personal interview with local activist A, September 2020)

A different situation is observed in Latin America. Peasant and indigenous struggles against extractivism have led to the emergence of the notion of “alternatives to development” – which criticizes the current model of development and aims to explore a radically distinct development agenda. For instance, a narrative on the rights of Mother Earth (Pachamama) and Buen Vivir (Good Living) which coming from indigenous knowledge has circulated in Ecuador and Bolivia, serving as counter-hegemonic narrative, not only to extractivism but also mainstream development. However, one must recognize that the existence of counter-hegemonic process does not necessarily reflect the social reality, as extractivism continue to thrive in the region. The central role of indigenous groups in the struggle against extractivism in Latin America is closely linked to the history of indigenous movements in the region. Besides, indigenous people comprise a sizable proportion of the population, particularly in Ecuador and Bolivia. This observation is in contrast with indigenous people in Indonesia who are still struggling to gain state recognition.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

In this paper, I attempt to understand why and how extractivism in East Kalimantan has persisted across different political regime, since the colonial period to the present day. I find that extractivism in East Kalimantan was marked by the growing extraction during the Dutch colonial period. It was enabled by patronage between the Dutch colonial government and local authority. The classic problems of uneven development between extractive frontier and the capital city have been present, which triggered the emergence of resistance movements. Despite that, extractivism in East Kalimantan continued in the post-colonial setting. The practice was altered, following nationalist ideology embraced by Sukarno, Indonesia's first president. It was centred at timber extraction involving wide-range of domestic actors which bounded in a patron-client relationship grounded on material benefits.

Regime change to an authoritarian Suharto further solidified extractivism in East Kalimantan. The combination of centralized government, an open economy and strong patronage between the ruling elite and military group, resulted in an expanding extractivism dominated by big foreign and domestic players. Extractivism became hegemonic and seemingly uncontested. It was built on the rhetoric of state-led developmentalism; an extensive development program was used to gain support from the populace. At the same time, oppressive measures were used to silence the critical groups. Therefore, political, economic and social life in Indonesia appeared relatively stable despite numerous conflicts, including in the extractive sector.

Major political reform in 1998 which led to radical decentralization and democratization did not weaken extractivism in East Kalimantan. It is still thriving despite the growing resistance movement across the province. The ruling elites adopt some alternative ideas of the opposition – stringent regulation and better governance – and also use coercive measures toward protestors (to a lesser extent) to maintain extractivism as the hegemony. Consequently, extractivism in East Kalimantan today is experiencing a change in outward appearance, but its root is intact and even further deepening into the political domain.

I situate the persistent yet altered extractivism in East Kalimantan as the distinguished phenomenon of extractivism from Indonesia – the missing narrative in the extractivism debate. I further highlight its specificity through a comparison with Latin America – the most discussed region in the scholarship. There is a contrast direction on the trend of militarization and protest movement in those two regions. Military involvement in re-source extraction is less apparent in Indonesia today, but the opposite findings reported in Latin America. Various protests against extraction project in Latin America has led to the emergence of a unified call on “alternative to development”, yet it is missing in Indonesia. However, those two regions share similarity on the adoption of nationalist-nuanced extractive agenda.

The finding demonstrates that despite the common association with colonialism and global capitalism, the phenomenon of extractivism varies in one place to another. It is shaped by contestation and broader political economy structure. This finding is particularly pronounced due to the historical approach employed in this paper, which explores the phenomenon of extractivism from time to time. On the other hand, the seemingly fit extractivism in different political economy structure – left or right government, authoritarian or democratic, centralization or decentralization, nationalist or open economy – strongly suggests the adaptability and flexibility of capital. Such a distinct trait makes extractivism able to adapt to the growing contestation and greater structure, which leads to its continued presence. The finding invites us to rethink the relevance of politics in the extractivism discourse. Furthermore,

it calls for greater unpacking and investigation of extractivism within the framework of political economy.

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