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(³ Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, Merauke, South Papua, Indonesia)

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(² Department of Sociology of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia)

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(³ Faculty of International Relations, Ho Chi Minh City University of Economics and Finances Binh Thanh District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam)

(⁴ Department of International Relations, Universitas Kristen Indonesia)

(⁵ Ph.D Student of Asia-Pacific Regional Studies, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Dong Hwa University Hualien 974, Taiwan)

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(² Department of Public Administration, Universitas Padjadjaran)

(³ Department of Political Science, Universitas Padjadjaran)

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Muh Fichriyadi Hastira¹, Armin Arsyad¹, Gustiana Kambo¹, Muhammad Muhammad¹, Muhammad Saad¹, Mimi Arifin²

(¹ Departement of Political Science, Hasanudin University, Indonesia)

(¹ Departement of Urban and Regional Planning, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia)

Spatial Politics: Questioning Land Use in the IKN Region from a Spatial Production Perspective

Muh Fichriyadi Hastira¹, Armin Arsyad¹, Gustiana Kambo¹,
Muhammad Muhammad¹, Muhammad Saad¹, Mimi Arifin²

¹ Departement of Political Science, Hasanudin University, Indonesia

² Departement of Urban and Regional Planning, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia

Email Correspondence: muhfichriyadihastira@fisip.unmul.ac.id

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Abstract

The relocation of Indonesia's national capital to East Kalimantan reflects spatial-political dynamics in which state, corporate, and community interests collide. This study employs a qualitative case study combining field observations, document analysis, and in-depth interviews with the IKN Authority, East Kalimantan provincial officials, Dayak and Balik traditional leaders, NGOs such as AMAN, and civil society actors. Findings show that spatial planning is dominated by the central government and investors, while local participation remains limited. Key policy instruments, including the IKN Law and Detailed Spatial Plan (RDTR), tend to override indigenous rights, marginalize traditional living spaces, and prioritize long-term land concessions for corporations. Such exclusionary practices have intensified land conflicts, forced evictions, and ecological damage in the Sepaku and Samboja areas, including deforestation, biodiversity loss, and water resource degradation. The results indicate that IKN development is not a neutral technical exercise but a contested political project. This aligns with Lefebvre's conception of space as a contested social product shaped by power. The study contributes to debates on spatial politics in Indonesia while underscoring the need for inclusive, just, and ecologically sustainable planning.

Keywords: Nusantara Capital City, spatial production, spatial planning, indigenous peoples

Abstrak

Peralihan Ibu Kota Negara Indonesia ke Kalimantan Timur mencerminkan dinamika spasial-politik di mana kepentingan negara, korporasi, dan masyarakat saling bertabrakan. Studi ini menggunakan metode studi kasus kualitatif yang menggabungkan pengamatan lapangan, analisis dokumen, dan wawancara mendalam dengan Otoritas IKN, pejabat provinsi Kalimantan Timur, pemimpin tradisional Dayak dan Balik, LSM seperti AMAN, dan aktor masyarakat sipil. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa perencanaan ruang didominasi oleh pemerintah pusat dan investor, sementara partisipasi lokal tetap terbatas. Instrumen kebijakan utama, termasuk Undang-Undang IKN dan Rencana Tata Ruang Terperinci (RDTR), cenderung mengabaikan hak-hak masyarakat adat, menggeser ruang hidup tradisional, dan memprioritaskan konsesi tanah jangka panjang bagi korporasi. Praktik-praktik eksklusif ini telah memperparah konflik tanah, pengusiran paksa, dan kerusakan ekologi di wilayah Sepaku dan Samboja, termasuk deforestasi, kehilangan keanekaragaman hayati, dan degradasi sumber daya air. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengembangan IKN bukanlah praktik pembangunan yang bersifat netral,

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melainkan proyek politik yang kontroversial. Hal ini sejalan dengan konsepsi Lefebvre tentang ruang sebagai produk sosial yang diperebutkan dan dibentuk oleh kekuasaan. Studi ini berkontribusi pada debat tentang politik ruang di Indonesia sambil menekankan perlunya perencanaan yang inklusif, adil, dan berkelanjutan secara ekologi.

Kata Kunci: Ibu Kota Nusantara, produksi ruang, tata ruang, masyarakat adat

INTRODUCTION

The relocation of Indonesia's capital from Jakarta to a new area on the island of Kalimantan is a strategic national policy that constitutes a significant shift in national planning and development. The Capital City of Nusantara (IKN) is administratively established in East Kalimantan Province, covering Samboja District in Kutai Kartanegara Regency and Sepaku District in Penajam Paser Utara Regency, as stipulated in Law Number 3 of 2022 and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2022. With a total area of 256,142 hectares, including 56,180 hectares of core government area, this designation is not only technical and administrative in nature, but also reflects political choices regarding space. The large scale of land allocation opens up opportunities for long-term investment, but at the same time has implications for overlapping claims, customary land ownership, and changes in the socio-ecological structure that accompany the development of a new city.

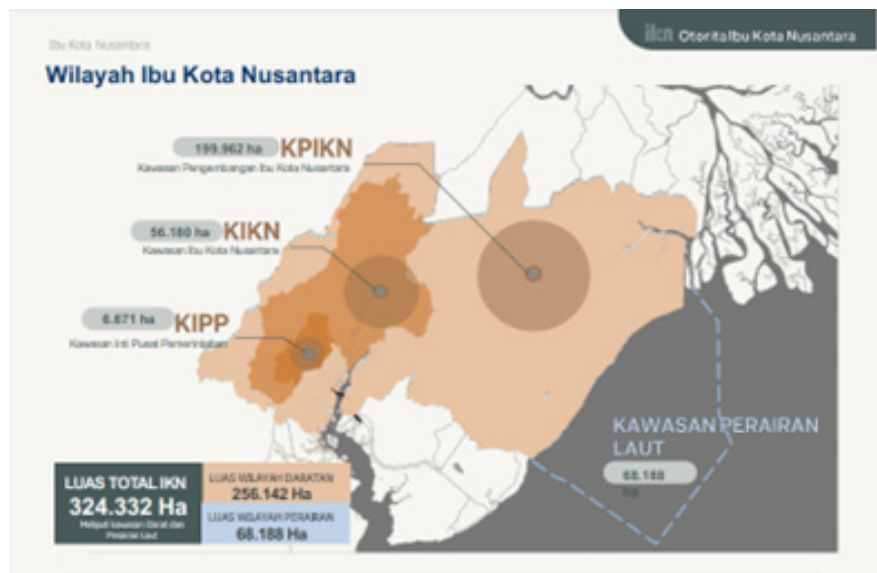


Figure 1. Map of the Capital City of Nusantara

Source: Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 3 Tahun 2022 Tentang Ibu Kota Negara dan Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 63 Tahun 2022 Tentang Perincian Rencana Induk Ibu Kota Nusantara.

The policy of relocating the capital reflects efforts to decentralize government and spread national development more evenly. For decades, Jakarta has served as the political, economic, and administrative center, but this dominance has led to chronic problems such as excessive urbanization, land subsidence, coastal flooding, and increasingly severe environmental degradation (Abidin et al., 2011; Firman, 2004). This ecological vulnerability makes Jakarta unsuitable as a long-term center of government. Therefore, moving the capital to East Kalimantan is seen as a strategic solution: this region is relatively safe from earthquakes and tsunamis, is more centrally located geographically, and represents a commitment to reducing development disparities between western and eastern Indonesia.

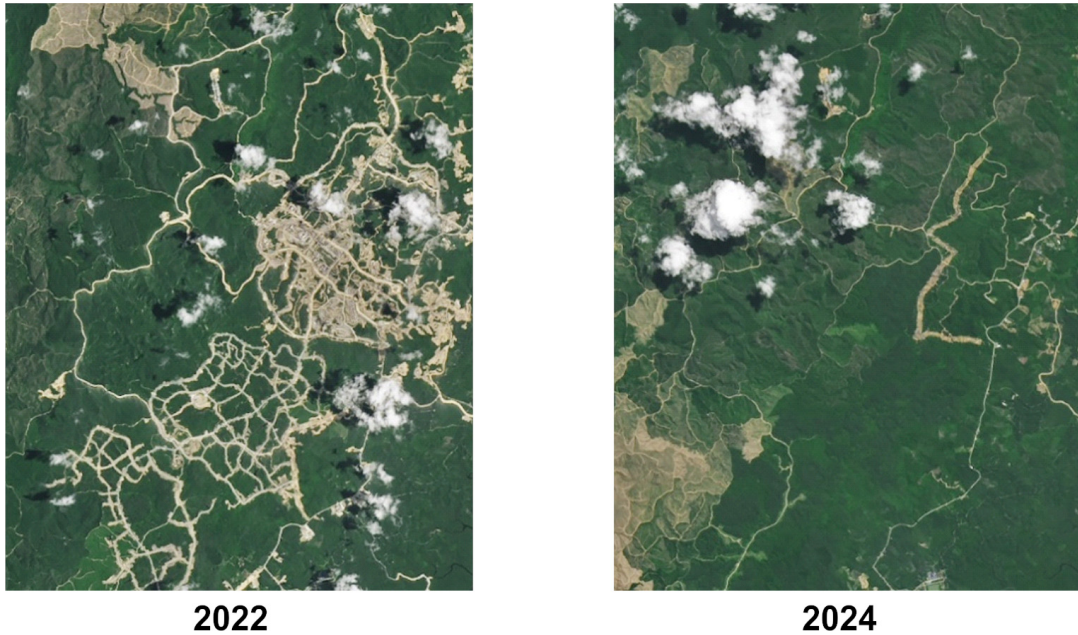
However, the relocation of the capital is not merely an administrative policy or a large-scale infrastructure project. It is a manifestation of the dynamics of power in the production of space. In spatial studies, space is not viewed as a neutral physical entity, but rather as the result of social and political construction. Harvey (1973) states that the production of space is always linked to power relations, in which dominant actors seek to control space to realize their interests, often at the expense of other groups. Similar analyses have also developed in studies of Southeast Asia, such as research on development projects in Cambodia and Laos, which shows how spatial policies are influenced by the interests of the state and foreign investors, and have an impact on the marginalization of local communities (Kenney-Lazar, 2012; Shatkin, 2017). Thus, the relocation of the national capital in Indonesia needs to be understood not only as a technocratic effort, but also as a political practice of spatial planning that is fraught with interests, negotiations, and potential conflicts.

The idea of space as a social and political product found its most influential form through Henri Lefebvre (1991) in *The Production of Space*. Lefebvre introduced the triad of space spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space which emphasizes that space is never neutral, but rather produced through social, symbolic, and political relations. This thinking was later enriched by Edward Soja (1980) through the concept of thirdspace, which highlights how space becomes an arena where power, identity, and resistance are negotiated. David Harvey (1973) also asserts that the production of space is always linked to the logic of capitalism and class conflict, where dominant interests seek to control space for accumulation. This theoretical framework forms the basis for research analysis, particularly for understanding how the development of the IKN produces space through state policy and investment, and how local communities interpret and respond to this space as part of political practices that are fraught with negotiation and potential conflict.

In the context of the IKN relocation, the spatial politics approach is a highly relevant analytical tool. This project not only involves technocratic decisions about location and design, but also reflects how the state uses its authority to regulate space in accordance with its political and economic objectives. The state, as the dominant actor, plays a role in determining the direction of development through planning policies, land allocation, and investment regulation. However, the state is not a neutral or homogeneous entity (Bardhan, 2016). According to Arief Budiman et al (1999), the state can be autonomous (independent) or non-autonomous (dependent on external forces), depending on the relationship between state institutions and the dominant social classes. In the case of the new capital city, it is important to examine whether the state is acting as a representative of the public interest in general, or more as a tool of private capital interests that are riding on the back of the development project.

This is increasingly important because, in practice, the spatial production process in the NKL involves various actors with diverse and not always aligned interests. These actors include state institutions (central and regional), private companies (both domestic and foreign), and local communities that are directly affected by spatial changes. These dynamics give rise to various forms of power relations, ranging from collaboration and negotiation to open conflict (Booher & Innes, 2002; Fousiani et al., 2021; Natarajan, 2017). For example, land evictions, shifts in the function of customary spaces, and the influx of large capital into the control of certain areas have led to resistance from some local communities (Kim et al., 2020; Lata, 2020; Lelandais, 2014; Obaitor et al., 2021; Steeven et al., 2025). In many cases, the voices of local communities do not have equal bargaining power in top-down planning processes (Gupte et al., 2022; Sanga et al., 2021; Sapkota & Adhikaree, 2023). This shows that spatial planning in the IKN is not a fully inclusive process.

Criticism of the IKN project also comes from an ecological perspective. East Kalimantan is an area of high ecological value, which is home to various endemic species and has an important function as the lungs of the world. Large-scale land conversion for the construction of a new city has the potential to cause serious ecological damage, such as deforestation, habitat fragmentation, water and air pollution, and human-animal conflicts. In this context, the development of the IKN must consider the carrying capacity and capacity of the environment, as well as ensure the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem. However, in reality, the drive for economic growth and investment interests often dominate ecological considerations, risking new inequalities and irreparable damage.



Figures 2 and 3. Satellite Images of Landscape Changes in IKN Development from 2022 to 2024
Source: [visibleearth.nasa](https://visibleearth.nasa.gov/) (2024)

Spatial politics studies offer an analytical lens for critically understanding these processes. There are five important aspects of spatial politics: (1) space as a contested resource, giving rise to contestation and conflict; (2) space that is required to function optimally and economically; (3) space as an instrument for increasing state/regional revenue; (4) space as a tool for political negotiation and transaction; and (5) the tendency for the state to side with capitalists in the management of space (Brenner et al., 2008). These five aspects are evident in the planning and development process of the IKN, in which the state acts as a facilitator of development, but also as the party that determines who benefits or loses from spatial changes.

However, the political approach to spatial planning is still relatively unpopular in political science studies in Indonesia. The main focus of political studies in Indonesia is still dominated by issues of institutions, political parties, government systems, and public policy. Studies on power relations in spatial production are still limited and tend to be considered the domain of regional planning or political geography studies. In fact, understanding how space is produced, controlled, and contested can open up new insights into how power works in people's daily lives.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to analyze the relocation of the national capital to Nusantara as a complex spatial planning project. This study focuses on how space in the IKN area is produced, distributed, and managed within the framework of national policy. This study will also highlight the roles of various actors, including the state, the private sector, and

civil society, as well as the dynamics of power relations between them. Specifically, this study will evaluate the impact of spatial planning policies on local communities and local ecological conditions, including land conflicts, shifts in traditional living spaces, and environmental sustainability challenges. Thus, space is not only understood as a physical entity, but also as a political arena full of meaning, symbols, and contested interests.

This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of spatial politics studies in Indonesia by integrating Lefebvre's theoretical framework on the production of space with empirical evidence from the IKN development case. Practically, this study offers recommendations for more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable spatial policies, particularly with regard to the rights of indigenous peoples, public participation, and ecological sustainability. In the long term, the political geography approach can become an important framework for formulating national development policies that are not only technically efficient, but also responsive to the social, cultural, and ecological dynamics of local communities.

METHOD

This study analyzes spatial planning practices in the National Capital City (IKN) through the lens of power relations between state, corporate, and local actors. The focus of this research is how spatial planning policies in the IKN project reflect certain interests and influence social structures, the living spaces of local communities, and environmental sustainability. By viewing space as an arena of power struggles, this study aims to reveal how the development of the IKN is not only a technocratic agenda but also a political practice that shapes (and is shaped by) power relations.

This study uses a qualitative approach, a case study focusing on the process of space production in the context of the development of the Capital City of Nusantara (IKN). The case study approach was chosen because it allows researchers to intensively trace the social, political, and cultural dynamics that occur in a particular location, as well as to see the interactions of actors in a specific spatial context. With case studies, researchers can delve deeply into the experiences of local communities, government policies, and investor interventions in spatial planning and practices. Furthermore, this strategy is in line with the research objective of understanding the phenomenon holistically, rather than simply measuring separate variables (Bennett & Elman, 2007).

Data was obtained through two main techniques: field observation and in-depth interviews. Observations were conducted in the core and buffer zones of the IKN (mainly in the Sepaku and Samboja areas) to directly observe the physical and social changes that are taking place. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, with the following criteria: (1) government officials directly involved in the planning and implementation of the IKN; (2) indigenous leaders and residents directly affected by spatial transformation; and (3) NGO activists advocating for environmental issues and local community rights. A total of 16

informants were interviewed, supplemented by field observations at the core IKN development site and surrounding areas. They consisted of central government officials, including the head of the IKN authority, Basuki Hadimulyono, and regional officials, namely a member of the East Kalimantan Provincial DPRD, Agusriansyah Ridwan, local community leaders, namely traditional elders of the Dayak and Balik indigenous peoples, environmental activists, namely administrators of the East Kalimantan Alliance of Indigenous Peoples (AMAN), Masjaya, an academic who is also part of the transition team for the relocation of the capital city to Kalimantan, and several communities affected by the first ring of the IKN. The selection of informants took into account their position, experience, and involvement in the IKN development process. This research was conducted from 2024 to 2025.

The sources of information were grouped into three categories: (1) government and development authorities, which provided information on spatial planning policies and implementation; (2) local communities, which provided perspectives on the impacts of and responses to development; and (3) private actors, who revealed the role of capital in shaping the direction of IKN development. These three categories enabled a multi-perspective analysis of the process of spatial production in the IKN area. The analysis was conducted by connecting these themes, which were then interpreted using Lefebvre's spatial triad to identify forms of spatial representation and contestation.

In the analysis stage, Henri Lefebvre's theoretical framework of the spatial production triad (spatial practice, representations of space, representational space) was used as a guideline in the coding process. In the restatement stage, the data from observations and interviews were reorganized by placing the concrete experiences of the community into the spatial practice category. The thematic description stage was aimed at identifying the formal representations of the state through planning documents (representations of space) and the counter-discourse emerging from local communities (representational space). In the interpretation stage, these patterns were then interpreted through the lens of David Harvey's theory of capital accumulation and dispossession to understand how power operates and is negotiated in the development of the IKN. Data analysis is conducted manually using open and thematic coding techniques, allowing flexibility in linking empirical data with theoretical categories (Chowdhury & Shil, 2021).

From an ethical standpoint, this research ensures informed consent from all participants, maintains anonymity by using pseudonyms, and pays attention to cultural sensitivities when interacting with indigenous peoples, for example by following local customs during the interview process (Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M., Saldana, 2014). This procedure is intended to maintain the integrity of the research while protecting the rights and comfort of participants in studies involving sensitive issues such as land, cultural identity, and power relations.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND ANALYSIS

Representation of Interests in IKN Spatial Planning Policy

Spatial planning in the development of the Nusantara Capital City (IKN) demonstrates that it is not merely a technocratic or physical planning process, but rather a political instrument used to consolidate power. Policy documents such as the RTRW, RDTR, and the IKN Law reveal how the central government plays a hegemonic role in defining space based on the logic of growth and investment, while subordinating the roles of local governments and communities (Hidayat et al., 2024; Wiryawan & Otchia, 2022; Wu et al., 2018). In this sense, spatial planning reflects what Lefebvre conceptualizes as the representation of space the state's rationalized vision of territory while marginalizing the lived experiences of local communities that constitute representational space.

The IKN project also illustrates what may be termed “political centralization through spatial means” (Anirwan et al., 2024). By deploying spatial instruments, the state legitimizes development priorities that favor investors and national elites, while overlooking the everyday spaces of indigenous peoples and ecologically vulnerable areas. According to AMAN (2022) and Sucahyo (2023), there are 51 indigenous communities in the IKN region 17 in Penajam Paser Utara and 34 in Kutai Kartanegara whose customary territories overlap with state-designated development zones. This overlap exemplifies Lefebvre's argument that spatial practice is never neutral, but always reflects underlying power relations.

Among these communities, the case of the Paser Balik in Sepaku District is particularly significant. This group, with ancestral lands of approximately 5,000–6,000 hectares, has long relied on customary practices for survival, yet their land remains uncertified and thus vulnerable to shifts in ownership regimes (Rachmawati, 2022). The incorporation of around 500 hectares of Paser Balik land in Pemaluan Village into the Central Government Core Area (KIPP) illustrates Harvey's concept of accumulation by dispossession: land that once sustained community livelihoods is redefined as state space for national development, transferring value from local communities to the state and investors.

This dispossession is not limited to the Paser Balik. AMAN (2022) estimates that approximately 30,000 hectares of indigenous customary land in the IKN region overlap with mining and plantation concessions even prior to the relocation project, with some of this land now absorbed into the IKN plan. Assuming an average of 200 families per community, this situation potentially affects at least 16,800 individuals. Beyond the loss of land as an economic resource, this also entails the erosion of cultural heritage, agrarian knowledge, and social identity, aligning with Lefebvre's notion of the colonization of lived space by dominant spatial representations.

In response, the Paser Balik community has organized resistance through the Paser Balik Jaya Mandiri Forest Farmers Group (KTH PBJM), submitting a request to the IKN Authority (OIKN) to manage 4,656.96 hectares of land outside the KIPP as a means of

sustainable, agriculture-based empowerment (Arief, 2025). This illustrates how communities mobilize representational space to contest the dominance of state-defined spatial orders. IKN project should be understood as a complex political practice where spatial planning is deployed as a strategic instrument of power concentration, simultaneously legitimizing elite interests while dispossessing and marginalizing local communities.

Table 1. Inequality of Representation in IKN Spatial Planning Policy Documents

Policy Documents	Local Community Representation	Corporate Representation	Description
UU No. 3 Tahun 2022 tentang IKN	Not explicit	Strongly implied	Does not explicitly mention customary rights or indigenous peoples
Perpres No. 63 Tahun 2022 (Rencana Induk IKN)	Minimal	Included in the investment scheme	Regulates National Strategic Areas and accelerates investment
RDTR IKN	Does not involve local governments or residents in the formulation	Facilitates the use of space for investment activities	Received official objections from the PPU Regional Government
One Map Policy (2023)	Not participatory	Used for development efficiency	151 thematic maps not validated with indigenous communities or affected residents

Source: Diolah penulis dari Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (2022); Peraturan Kepala Otorita IKN No 1 Tahun 2023 tentang Rencana Detail Tata Ruang Wilayah Perencanaan Kawasan Inti Pusat Pemerintahan Ibu Kota Nusantara; Peraturan Presiden Nomor 9 Tahun 2016 Tentang Percepatan Pelaksanaan Kebijakan Satu Peta Pada Tingkat Ketelitian Peta Skala 1:50.000, 2016; Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 3 Tahun 2022 Tentang Ibu Kota Negara; Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 63 Tahun 2022 Tentang Perincian Rencana Induk Ibu Kota Nusantara.

Table 1 is the result of a systematic interpretation of the substance of regulations related to IKN in terms of the principle of actor representation in spatial planning. The assessment of the level of representation in the table is based on content analysis of policy documents, specifically looking at whether and to what extent there are clauses that mention the involvement of local communities, indigenous communities, and corporate interests. The category “not explicit” is used when the document does not mention community participation or customary rights at all, while ‘minimal’ is used if there are general or limited references without clear mechanisms for community involvement. Conversely, corporate representation is assessed as “strongly implied” or “included” due to the existence of articles or schemes that explicitly prioritize investment and accelerate licensing.

Table 1 shows that IKN spatial planning policy documents tend not to provide adequate representation for local communities, especially indigenous peoples. The IKN Law and Presidential Regulation No. 32 of 2022 emphasize investment interests, without explicit recognition of customary rights. The IKN RDTR (Spatial Plan) has even been rejected by the North Penajam Paser Regency Government due to the lack of regional involvement. Meanwhile, the One Map Policy program is not yet fully participatory, as there is a lack of community involvement in the map validation process. This shows that policies usually favor corporations and the state, with minimal local participation (Mardiana & Saputri, 2024).

In practice, the formulation of spatial policies for the IKN is highly centralistic. This can be seen from the dominance of the state through Law No. 3 of 2022 concerning the National Capital and its derivative regulations, including Presidential Regulation No. 63 of 2022 concerning the IKN Master Plan and Presidential Regulation No. 75 of 2024 concerning the Acceleration of IKN Development. These regulations give the IKN Authority, as the main actor in spatial management and development decision-making, very broad authority, even beyond the local government mechanisms regulated in Article 18 of the 1945 Constitution. The IKN Authority is not a democratically elected institution, but is appointed directly by the President, making it a political instrument that blurs the line between administrative functions and centralistic power.

The consequence of this concentration of power is the marginalization of local actors in the spatial planning and implementation process. District governments such as Penajam Paser Utara (PPU) have officially expressed their objections to the IKN Detailed Spatial Plan (RDTR), which is considered to not involve regional input and tends to ignore the existence of land owned by residents. In its critical review, the PPU district government warned that an exclusive spatial pattern has the potential to cause social conflict because it eliminates the role of the community in decision-making and does not provide a fair and humane compensation scheme.

Furthermore, the spatial mapping carried out by the central government, including the establishment of the Central Government Core Area (KIPP), shows that spatial planning is treated as an instrument of spatial control. Spatial planning is used to regulate, displace, and exclude certain groups, particularly indigenous peoples and local farmers. For example, there are unilateral claims over the Maridan customary territory by agencies such as the National Police Headquarters based on the legal basis of the IKN Land and Strategic Spatial Planning Agency, which immediately put up claim signs without dialogue with the local indigenous community. This illustrates how space is shaped not only by development needs, but also by the logic of control and claims of authority.

The neglect of indigenous and local communities is also evident in the lack of explicit recognition of customary rights in the IKN Law. In fact, records from the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) show that there are at least 21 indigenous communities

inhabiting the IKN development area, with more than 20,000 residents potentially displaced (AMAN, 2022). In the IKN RDTR, there is no space allocated for the poor or informal workers, which indicates a bias in urban design towards certain social classes. This shows that the IKN project is not an inclusive shared space, but rather an elitist project aimed at serving the interests of the upper-middle class and capital.

The pattern of spatial control through legal instruments also shows symptoms of “political centralization through spatial means.” The state uses spatial planning to strengthen its hegemonic position in regional management (Widiatedja et al., 2023). The issuance of Building Use Rights (HGB), Business Use Rights (HGU), and Land Use Rights for up to 190 years to investors in the IKN development scheme is an extreme form of public space liberalization for the sake of capital accumulation (Muarabagja, 2024). Instead of reflecting a pro-people stance, this spatial policy has turned space into an object of economic speculation and investment.

The One Map Policy, developed to technically harmonize overlapping land use, has not actually resolved the political issues surrounding space at the local level. Although this program has succeeded in consolidating 151 thematic maps from 22 ministries/agencies, the data and decisions produced still favor the formal structures of the state and do not involve indigenous peoples in the validation process (Geospasial, 2025). These maps are more often used to accelerate the development of strategic national infrastructure without resolving deeper agrarian conflicts.

Thus, the practice of spatial politics in the development of the IKN reveals itself as a form of control over space by the state and capital. This project reflects a shift in the function of spatial planning from an inclusive development planning tool to a tool for legitimizing the interests of the elite. This reinforces Lefebvre’s argument that space is a social and political product, shaped by relations of power, knowledge, and interests (Lefebvre, 1991). Space in the IKN project is not neutral; it is constructed, regulated, and maintained to serve the dominant actors in the current political and economic system.

Power Relations and Spatial Production in Project Development in the National Capital City

The discussion focuses on the socio-political dynamics that arise as a result of the National Capital City development practices. Spatial production here is not only seen as the result of state policy, but also as a complex process involving various actors with different interests. The state acts as both a regulator and facilitator of capital, providing investors with broad access to space through incentives, land use rights, and the development of supporting infrastructure. On the other hand, local communities, especially indigenous groups and farmers, experience the pressure of relocation, loss of living space, and marginalization from the decision-making process.

The concentration of authority is evident in the dominance of the central government and the IKN Authority in controlling spatial planning policies. Based on a qualitative analysis of policy documents and stakeholder interviews, the central government and the IKN Authority are considered to have the greatest influence in spatial planning, followed by corporations through concession schemes, while local governments and communities have little influence. This imbalance has a real impact. This inequality not only creates an imbalance in representation, but also leads to the loss of local communities' living space and marginalized voices in strategic decisions made by the central government.

In this context, the IKN project shows how space becomes an arena for distributive conflict. The concept of "accumulation by dispossession" proposed by David Harvey (1973) is relevant to understanding how the IKN development is carried out through mechanisms of marginalization, whether through restrictions on land access, the elimination of communal rights, or through the dominant narrative of modernity and national development that dismisses local narratives. The analysis will also show that although this project brings promises of progress, it also creates power imbalances and increases the risk of spatial injustice.

The relocation of the national capital (IKN) to East Kalimantan is not only a physical development and spatial planning project, but also creates an arena of intense contestation of interests between the state, the private sector, and local communities. In this context, space is no longer just a geographical medium, but has become a commodity that is actively contested by various actors. The contestation of space in the development of the IKN reflects structural inequalities in access, control, and distribution of benefits over available space.

Local communities, especially indigenous communities such as the Balik and Paser Maridan tribes, are the most vulnerable parties in this development constellation. They not only experience land loss but also face the destruction of social, cultural, and belief systems that existed long before the modern Indonesian state was formed. Ritual sites and traditional burial grounds destroyed by development projects, such as Batu Tukar Nondoi and Batu Badok due to the construction of the Sepaku Intake Dam (Ayunda, 2023). This shows that the IKN project is not merely relocating the center of government, but also displacing the foundations of the collective identity of indigenous peoples.

The accounts of traditional leaders from the Balik community reflect an experience of loss that is far broader than just physical land. They voice concerns about the narrowing of their living space, the destruction of sacred sites, and the collapse of the nature-based livelihood system that has long supported their community's independence. While the state and investors see land as an object of development and investment value, indigenous peoples see it as part of their value system and livelihood. This disparity in perception is the main basis for the agrarian conflicts that now accompany the IKN project.

This struggle for space is also manifested in the long history of land grabbing from indigenous communities, even before the IKN project began. Since 1968, indigenous territories

in East Kalimantan have experienced the expansion of timber company concessions, transmigration, and oil palm plantations such as PT Agro Indomas and PT Palma. This means that the IKN project does not exist in a vacuum, but rather extends the systemic marginalization of indigenous peoples that has been going on for decades. What sets it apart is the scale and speed of change, which is now driven by the legitimacy of national strategic projects.

Meanwhile, the private sector receives various forms of incentives and privileges from the state within the framework of IKN development. The revision of the IKN Law and Presidential Regulation No. 75 of 2024 makes it easier for investors to obtain Land Use Rights (HGU), Building Use Rights (HGB), and Right of Use for up to 190 years. The granting of land concessions for such a long period of time explicitly creates structural inequality in land ownership and control. This opens up opportunities for speculation and monopoly over land, while also making it difficult for local communities to access their own living spaces.

This pattern of power relations not only creates vertical conflicts between the state and the community, but also horizontal conflicts at the grassroots level. The entry of land mafia, speculators, and illegal development that takes advantage of the vagueness of regulations further exacerbates the situation. The IKN Authority itself acknowledges the existence of illegal development after the ratification of the IKN Law, which shows that loose and non-inclusive spatial policies open up opportunities for multiple conflicts, both in the form of double land claims, land grabbing without legal basis, and criminalization of residents who refuse to surrender their land.

According to data released by the Agrarian Reform Consortium (KPA), as of 2022, there have been at least 30 agrarian conflicts in East Kalimantan due to overlapping land ownership, covering a total area of more than 64,000 hectares (Admin, 2023). This conflict is exacerbated by the implementation of overlapping spatial maps that have not been fully resolved, even through the One Map 2.0 initiative. Although the One Map system is expected to reduce the area of overlap from 77 million hectares to 57 million hectares, this figure shows that the fundamental problem remains unresolved: namely, the issue of recognition of customary rights and community involvement in spatial decision-making (Marthalina, 2018).

The imbalance of interests in the development of the new capital city is clearly evident in the absence of a fair rights restoration scheme between the affected parties and the beneficiaries. The compensation scheme implemented by the state tends to be top-down and one-sided, focusing only on financial compensation without any room for equal negotiation. In fact, for indigenous peoples, land is not merely an economic asset, but also has relational, spiritual, and collective identity values that cannot be measured in monetary terms. This condition reveals a materialistic bias in state-managed spatial planning, in which the socio-cultural aspects of space are ignored (AMAN, 2022; Rachmawati, 2022). In line with Harvey (2003) concept of accumulation by dispossession, this process reflects how the state and

capital extract value from the living spaces of local communities for the sake of national economic growth.

This dynamic of exclusion is not unique to Indonesia, but reflects a global pattern in capital relocation projects. The experiences of Brasília in Brazil, Abuja in Nigeria, and Naypyidaw in Myanmar show similar trends, where the state uses spatial planning as an instrument of centralization and modernization while marginalizing local communities (Holston, 1989; Seekins, 2009; Tunde & Agunbaide, 2009). Comparative studies of these cases confirm recurring themes: the dispossession of indigenous or rural communities, the prioritization of the interests of elites and investors, and the emphasis on the symbolism of national projects over social justice (Shatkin, 2017). By placing the IKN within this global pattern, it becomes apparent that capital city relocation is often not merely a physical development project, but also a practice of spatial politics that reproduces structural injustice.

Thus, the development of the new capital city must be understood as an arena for the struggle for power in the production of space. While the state and corporations view land as an investment commodity, indigenous peoples see it as the foundation of their lives, identity, and cultural heritage. This fundamental difference creates the potential for increasingly sharp conflict when compensation is only offered in financial terms without recognition of the social and spiritual dimensions of space. As Lefebvre (1991) reminds us, the production of space always involves a clash between representations of space imposed by the state and the representational space experienced by communities in their daily lives. Empirically, the case of the IKN from the destruction of sacred sites, overlapping concessions, investor privileges, to increasing agrarian conflicts shows that Indonesia's spatial governance is still prone to dispossession. Therefore, spatial governance that instills the principles of justice, cultural recognition, and ecological sustainability is needed as a fundamental requirement for the development of the new capital city.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of the Capital City of Nusantara (IKN) in East Kalimantan is not merely a technocratic process, but rather a practice of spatial politics that demonstrates how spatial planning in Indonesia actually reinforces structural inequality rather than reducing it. Through legal instruments such as Law No. 3 of 2022 and its derivative regulations, the state and investors gain dominant legitimacy in spatial management, while local communities especially indigenous communities are often marginalized. This is in line with Lefebvre's framework on the production of space and Harvey's analysis of accumulation by dispossession, which explain how power relations and capital interests shape and control new urban spaces. Thus, the IKN case reinforces the theoretical understanding that space is not a neutral entity, but rather an arena of conflict between interests that is fraught with social and ecological injustice.

In practical terms, the findings of this study confirm the need for reform of spatial planning mechanisms to make them more inclusive and equitable. Several recommended policy measures include: applying the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in every decision-making process; establishing a customary council as part of the IKN governance structure; mandating independent environmental and social impact assessments; and establishing participatory mapping mechanisms to ensure recognition of customary rights. These steps are important to minimize socio-ecological exclusion while promoting the legitimacy of the new capital city development.

In terms of scientific development, this research contributes to the study of spatial politics in Indonesia by integrating Lefebvre and Harvey's theories with empirical evidence from the IKN case. Going forward, further research could focus on two areas: first, comparative analysis with the experiences of capital city relocation in other countries (e.g., Brazil, Nigeria, or Malaysia) to enrich regional and global perspectives; second, long-term monitoring of the socio-ecological impacts of IKN development, particularly in relation to agrarian conflicts, changes in community identity, and environmental sustainability. Thus, this research not only offers a critique of exclusive spatial planning practices but also opens space for the formulation of more progressive policies and research agendas.

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