

Patronage, Power, and Livelihood Dispossession: A Political Ecology of Coal Extraction in East Kalimantan

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Abstract

East Kalimantan's rural frontier has become a key arena of Indonesia's dual extractive economy, where coal mining and oil-palm plantations intersect to reshape village life. In Long Beleh Modang Village, overlapping concessions, uncontrolled land clearing, and weak state regulation have produced a "common problem" of ecological degradation and livelihood precarity: forests are fragmented, rivers polluted, and customary tenure eroded. Communities that once relied on forest and river resources face declining access to natural capital, deepening economic dualism, and growing dependence on informal patronage networks. Against this background, this article investigates how the combined expansion of coal and oil-palm industries transforms rural livelihood structures and reconfigures local power relations. Using a qualitative case-study design—comprising in-depth observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions—the study applies the Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis (SLA) framework not as a full livelihood assessment, but specifically to explain how extractivism drives structural inequality and erodes community livelihood capitals (natural, physical, human, social, and financial). Political-ecology concepts complement this analysis to reveal the power dynamics behind dispossession. The findings show a shift from adaptive to coping strategies, marked by land fragmentation, heightened informal labor, and declining access to natural resources. Agrarian conflict is intensified by overlapping tenure claims and the absence of participatory land governance. An emergent system of extractive patronage, where local elites broker access to corporate resources, reinforces economic inequality and social exclusion. By demonstrating how SLA illuminates the structural erosion of livelihood assets under extractive pressure, this study contributes to debates on extractive governance and rural sustainability, underscoring the urgency of equity-oriented, community-based governance and participatory spatial planning.

Keywords

patronage; power; livelihood

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INTRODUCTION

Martens and Rattmann (2001) present an apologetic argument based on estimates of global material consumption, suggesting that each individual requires more than 300 tons of mined products over the course of their lifetime. East Kalimantan Province is one of Indonesia's most strategic regions within the national extractive industry landscape, particularly in coal mining. With substantial coal reserves and production volumes, this province has become a major hub of mining activities. Kutai Kartanegara Regency stands out as one of the largest coal-producing areas in the province. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), East Kalimantan produced 294.25 million tons of coal in 2021, with a significant portion extracted from Kutai Kartanegara (BPS Kaltim, 2021). This regency also contributes the highest share to the regional GDP from the mining and quarrying sector, rendering its economy heavily dependent on resource-based commodities.

However, the dominance of this sector leaves behind a trail of complex environmental, social, economic, and legal issues. Environmental degradation has emerged as a critical concern among activists and NGOs (Raimulan, Nanang, and Murlianti 2021; Yunianty, Murlianti, and Nanang 2021), yet it remains a marginal issue in the discourse of policymakers and corporate entities. In a parallel critique, Ang et al. (2023) examine the application of GIS and remote sensing technologies in assessing the socio-economic impacts of mining activities. While technologically sophisticated, the study implicitly critiques the lack of attention to cultural dimensions and the structural inequalities that are often obscured in data-driven analyses. Similarly, Petley (2018), Arief, M. (2020) highlights an alarming trend of increased landslide occurrences linked to human activities such as hill-cutting and illegal mining, reinforcing the thesis that ecological transformation is not merely the result of geophysical dynamics, but increasingly a manifestation of intensified anthropogenic pressures.

The implementation of Law No. 3 of

2020 on Mineral and Coal Mining reveals structural weaknesses, particularly in reclamation enforcement and environmental regulation (Jalaluddin et al., 2023; Yulianingrum & Oktaviani, 2023). Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) studies highlight the significant carbon emissions and dust pollution produced by land clearing and coal transport processes (Wongso & Manik, 2023). Anggraeni et al. (2019) further confirm water contamination in nearby wells and rivers, reinforcing global findings on the long-term health risks of surface mining exposure (Hendryx et al., 2008; Woolley et al., 2015), (Priambodo, Murlianti, and Nanang 2020).

Protests against the destruction of living spaces have been widely voiced by NGO activists. In East Kalimantan, numerous position papers and reports by JATAM Kaltim have highlighted the environmental, social, and economic consequences of mining activities, including the tragic deaths of 54 children in abandoned mine pits (Anugrah 2023) (Murlianti and Nanang 2022; Salsabilla and Murlianti 2023). Yet, to date, no substantial efforts have been undertaken to mitigate the damage. While global awareness of environmental degradation may be on the rise, particularly when it concerns proximate, tangible environments, public concern significantly diminishes when such destruction occurs in remote, physically inaccessible regions (Kaikkonen & van Putten, 2021). Brauers and Oei (2020) further emphasize the political-economic dimensions of resistance to coal phase-out. Energy transition, they argue, is not merely a matter of replacing technology, but entails the transformation of the very socio-political. Bottom of Form

Informal practices, elite patronage, and weak state capacity contribute to a fragile condition of "stateness" (Fünfgeld, 2016), where affected communities are largely excluded from decisions affecting their living spaces, and the state abdicates its role as a public protector (Adhi et al., 2022). These asymmetric power relations consolidate corporate dominance over local communities (Murlianti et al., 2022; 2024). In what was once envisioned as an agricultural and

food security frontier, many transmigration areas have instead been converted into mining concessions (Jurniar et al., 2018; Murlianti et al., 2022, 2024; Salsabilla & Murlianti, 2023; Wibawa et al., 2022). This transformation has not only degraded ecosystems but also marginalized agrarian identities.

Socioeconomic studies in mining-affected villages such as Bhuana Jaya and Tanjung Enim reveal growing social conflict, cultural displacement, and unequal distribution of economic benefits (Anwar et al., 2023; Wiradinata et al., 2025, (Großmann 2019; O'Faircheallaigh and Babidge 2023; Pye, Radjawali, and Julia 2011)). The restructuring of rural labor and livelihood systems has led to the exclusion of smallholder farmers, particularly in transmigration zones like Tenggara Seberang (Murlianti et al., 2022). While Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs occasionally provide benefits such as clean water access and scholarships (Pambudi et al., 2022), they often fail to address the long-term needs of local communities (Zamroni et al., 2022), Kerebunu, F., & Fathimah, S. (2022).

These impacts are disproportionately borne by vulnerable groups. Feminist-informed studies by Sagung and Dewi (2020) and Dyah & Dewi (2020) show that women and children are most affected, losing access to natural resources and even falling victim to unreclaimed mining pits. This perspective underscores the urgency of integrating ecological justice into mining governance.

Long Beleh Modang Village in Kembang Janggut District, Kutai Kartanegara, serves as a concrete site where these macro-level problems manifest. Coal mining activities in this area have drastically transformed community life, eroding access to customary lands and water resources while increasing dependency on extractive livelihoods. Yet, empirical studies focusing on the village's social dynamics remain scarce. A deeper understanding of how villagers experience, respond to, and negotiate these changes is critical for designing more just and sustainable mining policies.

This study addresses the central question: how do coal mining activities affect

the transformation of social, economic, and ecological structures in Long Beleh Modang? More specifically, how do marginalized groups, particularly women, local farmers, and youth, experience and respond to these transitions? The research aims to analyze the multidimensional impacts of extractive activities on livelihood sustainability, access to livelihood capitals, and the reconfiguration of local power that shapes the distribution of risks and benefits. It also contributes to the formulation of more inclusive and ecologically just mining policies, while offering an empirical basis for social interventions tailored to the realities of extractive frontiers like Long Beleh Modang.

In doing so, this study seeks to fill a critical gap in the literature on the intersection of extractive industries and rural livelihood transformations, particularly in terms of how coal mining disrupts everyday life in villages and deepens vulnerability among smallholders, women, and youth. The findings also serve as a point of reflection for policy frameworks that aspire to be more sensitive to local dynamics and structurally marginalized voices.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study approach, combining ethnographic, institutional, and spatial analysis to understand how extractive industries reshape rural livelihoods and power structures. Long Beleh Modang Village in East Kalimantan was selected as a critical site due to its long-standing exposure to coal mining and palm oil expansion since 1994, and its strategic location across contested customary and corporate territories.

Data collection was conducted between 2022 and 2024 using multiple techniques: (1) in-depth interviews with 25 key informants, including customary leaders, youth, women, village officials, and company representatives; (2) three focus group discussions (FGDs) involving different social groups across hamlets; and (3) participant observation in daily livelihood activities, village meetings, and land dispute events.

Official documents (e.g., village RPJMDes, CSR contracts), spatial materials (e.g., concession maps, drone imagery), and media archives were also analyzed to triangulate findings.

Data were analyzed thematically using a Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis (SLA) framework, enriched with concepts from political ecology, spatial theory (Lefebvre, 1991), and actor-centered institutionalism. Spatial shifts and actor interactions within the context of ecological and institutional change were analyzed with an emphasis on critical reflexivity. This was done to ensure that local perspectives were not reduced to policy categories but rather recognized as situated knowledge shaped by unequal power relations. SLA analysis is used specifically to explain how coal exploration changes the status of the capital of village residents' lives and how community strategies deal with capital erosion and the resulting structural inequalities..

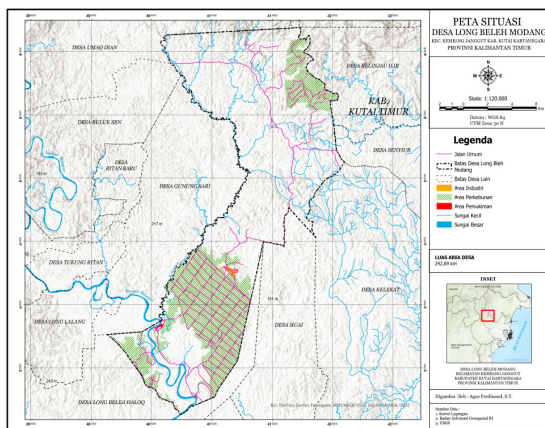


Figure 1. Map of Long Beleh Modang Village

Source: Japsika data 2024

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dispossession, Disruption, and The Re-configuration of Rural Power

Coal mining cannot be understood merely as an economic process, but rather as part of a development project imbued with ideological constructs. Nilsen (2021) introduces the concept of pseudo-developmentalism to explain how development narratives are framed as discourses of progress, yet

in practice serve to deepen capitalist power relations and produce structural dispossession of local communities from their lived spaces. In the context of Long Beleh Modang, the mining project manifests itself through symbols of development, such as haul roads, electricity, and formal employment opportunities, while simultaneously inducing shifts in social relations, loss of customary land rights, and the consolidation of external domination over local economic structures.

By integrating Bourdieu's (1977) notion of symbolic power and Durkheim's (1897) concept of anomie, this study elucidates how the dominance of corporate and state capital in extractive operations is legitimized through symbolic mechanisms that marginalize local social values, dismantle agrarian-communal habitus, and reproduce inter-group social inequalities. The entry of extractive industries generates normative disintegration, as rapid structural change occurs in the absence of integrative foundations, leading to a void between pre-existing and emerging social structures. This is reflected in rising agrarian conflicts, water crises, and the erosion of social norms. Beck's (1992) risk society thesis further highlights how modern development projects produce landscapes of ecological and social uncertainty, evident in water pollution, landslides, and the loss of food sovereignty in Long Beleh Modang. As such, this theoretical framework enables a critical reading of mining development as a space of intersection between ideology, capital, and socio-ecological resistance at the local level, producing new social formations that are fragile, exploitative, and prone to long-term dysfunction.

The integration of extractive industries into rural peripheries such as Long Beleh Modang has generated profound transformations beyond economic indicators. Rather than delivering equitable development, these interventions have triggered spatial reconfigurations, institutional realignments, and shifts in local power structures. This section critically examines the implications of extractive expansion for rural governance and livelihood sustainability.

Drawing on political ecology and the Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis (SLA) framework (Scoones, 1998; Bebbington, 1999), we explore how dispossession occurs not only through the depletion of natural capitals, but also through mechanisms that entrench social stratification and political marginalization.

At the core of these dynamics is the rise of extractive patronage: informal networks through which access to land, employment, and compensation are brokered by local elites. These arrangements blur the boundary between formal authority and informal power, allowing private interests to permeate local governance. To what extent can patron-client relations in extractive villages be understood as a form of informal institutional capture? And how do these power configurations, while appearing as local adaptation, actually reproduce asymmetries and erode community agency? The discussion that follows addresses these questions by examining the socio-spatial restructuring of the village and the shifting configurations of power and livelihood.

Spatial Transformation and Infrastructural Disparities in the Extractive Village

Long Beleh Modang Village is located in Kembang Janggut Sub-district, Kutai Kartanegara Regency, East Kalimantan. Although the most recent demographic statistics (such as population growth rate and detailed household data) are not publicly available, the village forms part of the Dayak Modang homeland, a wider indigenous community spread across Kembang Janggut and adjacent areas (P2K Stekom, n.d.). The broader Modang customary territory known as Long Way Lung, of which Long Beleh is a component, covers approximately 10,567 hectares and is home to about 1,803 residents—883 men and 920 women (BRWA, n.d.). Administratively, the village maintains its own government office (Idalamat, n.d.), and basic infrastructure such as electricity and clean-water distribution remains in a transitional stage. Recent regional budgets have funded a multi-billion-rupiah project to extend the electricity grid to

Long Beleh Modang and neighboring settlements (Data LPSE, 2024). Similar initiatives for potable-water provision have been announced through collaborations between the village government and private actors, including PT Rea Kaltim and PT Indo Bara Pratama (Prokom Kukar, 2024). At the institutional level, the village is active in revising its medium-term development plan (RPJM-Des) and revitalizing its village-owned enterprise, Bumdesa Etam Rakat Membangun (Kembang Janggut District Government, 2025).

The absence of up-to-date, verifiable population data constrains participatory planning and evidence-based resource allocation for education, health, and sanitation. While electrification and clean-water projects signal progress, they also reveal the persistent risk of uneven service delivery, particularly for the most geographically isolated households. Agrarian disputes involving plantation and mining concessions, as well as ambiguous land tenure within forest zones, add another layer of structural tension. Local institutions—village administration, Village Consultative Body (BPD), and Bumdesa—could function as arenas of transformative autonomy if managed transparently and in line with indigenous aspirations. Yet these same institutions risk becoming mechanisms of domestication when decision-making fails to center community needs. Long Beleh Modang thus stands at a crossroads where the promises of state-led development intersect with extractive pressures and ecological vulnerability, highlighting the ongoing negotiation between indigenous sovereignty, corporate interests, and the regulatory state.

The expansion of extractive industries, namely coal mining and oil palm plantations, has significantly reshaped the spatial structure and power relations within Long Beleh Modang Village. The administrative shift from the indigenous hamlet of Long Mahli to the newly industrialized hamlet of Penoon illustrates a profound dislocation of authority and a reorganization of space driven by capital interests and migrant labor mobility. This phenomenon exemplifies

what Lefebvre (1991) termed the “production of social space,” where capitalist logic determines patterns of settlement, public service distribution, and local political legitimacy. As a consequence, the indigenous Dayak Modang community faces both symbolic and material marginalization, particularly in access to infrastructure, education, and health services (Tsing, 2005; Bebbington, 2013).

This spatial shift began in the 1970s, during the initial wave of spatial commodification through logging concessions (HPH) granted to multinational timber companies. The Belayan River, formerly central to subsistence life, was transformed into a commercial transport route. A timber logistics zone evolved into the settlement now known as Penoon, which gradually emerged as part of Long Beleh Modang. The arrival of major companies such as PT Rea Kaltim, Sinar Mas, Lestari, and PT Indonesia Pratama in the 1990s further intensified demographic change through in-migration from NTB, Sulawesi, and ethnic Kutai groups, establishing Penoon as the economic and administrative hub.

Currently, the village comprises three spatial clusters: (1) Penoon, the industrial and migrant-dominated center; (2) Long Mahli and Long Tahap, traditional hamlets inhabited predominantly by Dayak Modang communities; and (3) estate-based settlements controlled by corporate entities. Spatial inequality is stark. Only Penoon benefits from paved roads, while the other hamlets rely on dirt tracks and wooden bridges. Transport in Penoon is dominated by private vehicles, contrasting with Long Mahli and Long Tahap where residents depend on small motorboats (*ketinting*). Access to electricity is uneven: PLN reaches only Penoon and parts of Long Mahli, while Long Tahap relies on solar panels. Educational infrastructure is limited to four kindergartens, four elementary schools, and one state junior high school, all centralized in Penoon. The lack of resident teachers compromises instructional quality, and access to secondary education (SMA/SMK) is restricted to subdistrict centers.

Health services are equally inadequate, with only one community health center (*puskesmas*) and one sub-health post (*pustu*) serving a vast, dispersed area. The concentration of services in Penoon exacerbates inter-hamlet disparities and reinforces geographic and social segregation. These inequalities have sparked discourse around administrative fragmentation as a potential strategy to improve service delivery and territorial representation. Sociologically, the current village structure reflects a segregated spatial logic and a reproduction of inequality shaped by extractive political-economic relations that exclude indigenous voices and needs.

Traces of Ecosystem Degradation, Water Quality Decline, and Spatial Transformation

The presence of large-scale companies such as PT REA Kaltim, PT Bara Tabang, and PT Indonesia Pratama in Long Beleh Modang Village has generated significant environmental impacts, which can be broadly categorized into three main dimensions: ecosystem degradation, water quality decline, and landscape transformation. Since 1994, land clearing for oil palm plantations and coal mining has led to the disappearance of natural forest cover, especially around the Penoon area. The primary vegetation, which once supported the mountainous ecosystem, has been replaced by oil palm monocultures that have disrupted local wildlife habitats. This shift has triggered biodiversity imbalance and increased the area’s vulnerability to landslides, particularly during the rainy season.

The second category of impact is the pollution and deterioration of water quality, especially along the tributaries of the Belayan River that intersect with corporate activity zones. A 2019 community report documented changes in the color and odor of water near Muara Penoon, located close to a palm oil mill’s waste discharge channel. Residents who traditionally relied on the river for bathing and washing reported skin irritation and a decline in fish populations. The



a. The Penohon River, a polluted tributary of the Belayan River pollutes the Belayan River from the direction of Muara Penohon, Penohon Hamlet



b. An open-pit coal mine operates right on the bank of the Belayan River, near the hamlet of Long Stage

Figure 2. The Belayan River is polluted from 2 directions

deteriorating quality of freshwater has also deepened community reliance on rainwater or commercial bottled water, adding to the economic burden of rural households. A basic laboratory analysis conducted by the village environmental monitoring team in 2021 revealed that the Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) levels exceeded Class II water quality standards, indicating the onset of mild eutrophication (HSE, 2025; Potter, 2009).

The third impact concerns the transformation of the physical landscape and the functional reorganization of space. Corporate infrastructure, such as hauling roads, fuel storage tanks, and industrial irrigation canals, has fragmented residential areas, particularly between Long Tahap and the village center in Penoon. These changes have accelerated spatial fragmentation, displacing what was once a contiguous zone of subsistence agriculture with dense industrial and residential enclaves surrounding the estates. In 2020, a landslide occurred along the Long Mahli–Penoon access route due to soil destabilization from heavy machinery operations, resulting in the isolation of the area for three days. Cumulatively, these physical changes have diminished the community's quality of life, particularly in terms of accessibility, environmental comfort, and socio-ecological sustainability.

Structural Inequality and the Erosion of Livelihood Capitals

Livelihood sustainability is fundamentally shaped by equitable access to five

core capitals: natural, physical, human, social, and financial (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Scoones, 1998). In the case of Long Beleh Modang, the degradation of natural capital (traditionally the primary foundation of livelihood) is stark, driven by the expansion of mining and oil palm plantations. The dispossession of access to forests, rivers, and customary lands is not merely an ecological concern but also reflects the marginalization of local identities and the disintegration of indigenous socio-productive relations. Disparities in the distribution and utilization of livelihood capitals are pronounced, producing a structurally fragile (vulnerable) livelihood system dominated by short-term survival strategies.

Community adaptive potential is undermined by structural pressures: unequal access to capitals, limited educational and technological capacity, and the declining ecological carrying capacity. From an SLA perspective, this configuration signals a dominant condition of livelihood insecurity that threatens intergenerational sustainability (Chambers & Conway, 1992). Addressing this condition requires integrated, multi-sectoral interventions: community capacity strengthening, community-based natural resource management, and equitable, inclusive village development governance.

The Dayak Modang people of Long Beleh Modang largely depend on natural capital (particularly forests and rivers) which are deeply embedded in their socio-cultural system. These resources provide timber, wild game, rattan, and water for daily needs

Table 2. Taxonomy of Livelihood Capitals and Vulnerabilities in Long Beleh Modang

Capital Category	Current Capital Status	Challenges	Community Strategies
Natural Capital	Degraded due to palm oil and mining expansion	River pollution, declining forest yields	Diversifying farmland, selling timber
Physical Capital	Uneven distribution, Long Tahap lags behind	Damaged road infrastructure, limited electricity access	Use of solar panels, river transportation
Human Capital	Low education and skills	Children not attending school, reliance on traditional skills	Informal learning centers, shifting cultivation
Social Capital	Strong mutual cooperation and social aid	Inter-regional jealousy, potential social fragmentation	Community savings groups, women's organizations, joint religious activities
Financial Capital	Sharp gap between rich and poor groups	No savings, dependence on social assistance	Plantation labor, small shops, palm oil transport

Source: Observation Data Collection

(modal2.docx, 2025). However, land scarcity due to palm oil plantation expansion and mining operations has sharply reduced their access. The Belayan River, once the primary source of clean water, has suffered severe pollution from corporate waste since 2002. Within the SLA framework, the degradation of natural capital heightens livelihood vulnerability by undermining long-term sustainability (Scoones, 1998).

Physical and human capitals are unevenly distributed. Areas such as Long Tahap remain marginalized in terms of basic infrastructure and access to education and health services, generating spatial inequalities that weaken adaptive capacities. Human capital, particularly in the form of modern knowledge and skills, remains underdeveloped. School dropout rates are high, and agricultural practices are largely traditional, with limited transition to mechanized systems. This illustrates the interdependence among livelihood capitals, none of which operate in isolation, in shaping both vulnerability and adaptive capacity (Ellis, 2000; Bebbington, 1999).

In Long Beleh Modang, physical capital development is regionally skewed. Infrastructure such as roads and electricity are more accessible in Muara Penoon and Long Mahli, while Long Tahap, isolated by the Belayan River, remains deprived of even basic

facilities such as schools and clinics. This reflects weak spatial connectivity in physical capital, which constrains the synergistic use of other capitals like human and social capital (Ellis, 2000).

Human capital is marked by low levels of formal education and a lack of skills relevant to modern technologies and mechanized agriculture. Many children do not complete primary education, and farming practices continue to rely on swidden cultivation rather than modern irrigated systems. On the other hand, elements of social capital, such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and local solidarity, remain relatively intact. Yet, these are increasingly strained by inter-village jealousy driven by uneven development (modal2.docx, 2025). Such tensions risk weakening adaptive networks, which are essential in SLA for managing risks and uncertainties collectively (Chambers & Conway, 1992).

Social capital, historically embedded in trust, reciprocity, and informal networks, has served as a key pillar of resilience for the Dayak Modang community. However, the presence of large-scale corporations has induced social fragmentation; both between and within villages. Inequitable access to CSR programs, competition over village projects, and the dominance of local elites have triggered social envy and reduced

community cohesion. From an SLA standpoint, the erosion of social capital is particularly critical, as it directly undermines the community's collective capacity to respond to change and manage risk through participatory governance (Chambers & Conway, 1992)

The community has developed distinct survival strategies in response to the transformation of their living spaces. When dry seasons reduce agricultural yields, residents turn to alternative crops such as cassava. Supplementary income is often sought through forest resource extraction and labor in palm oil plantations. However, the lack of modern skills limits livelihood diversification into non-agricultural sectors, including urban labor migration, which remains minimal. These conditions indicate a reactive form of livelihood adaptation, coping mechanisms that do not evolve into proactive, capacity-enhancing strategies. From an SLA perspective, such reactivity reflects structural constraints on developing adaptive strategies essential for long-term resilience (DFID, 1999).

The unequal distribution and access to financial capital further deepen the community's economic dualism. A small segment of residents in Penoon has succeeded in becoming owners of oil palm enterprises and transport services, while the majority remain trapped in low-wage, insecure labor positions without capital reserves. This disparity illustrates a pronounced form of asset inequality, which undermines the broader community's capacity to absorb shocks such as inflation, crop failure, or ecological disasters. In SLA terms, unequal asset distribution diminishes the overall livelihood resilience of the community, obstructing efforts to build a robust and equitable rural economy (Scoones, 1998; Bebbington, 1999).

Extractive Patronage and Actor Constellations in Village Power Struggles

The power configuration in Long Beleh Modang significantly influences access to livelihood capitals and the distribution of development benefits. The polarization

between pro-corporate elites and critical Indigenous actors reveals not only a conflict of legitimacy, but also structural inequality in power and urgency. This has given rise to a system of extractive patronage, wherein power is derived not from state legitimacy but from control over mining permits, CSR contracts, and infrastructure projects. Local patrons, often village elites or former heads of government, act as brokers distributing access to economic resources in return for loyalty. These patron-client relationships obscure corruption and reinforce social inequality. As studies of Indonesia's extractive economy reveal, "each stage of the extractive value chain is vulnerable to corruption and rent-seeking behavior, particularly in discretionary and politicized permit processes" (Economica, 2025, p. 1), (Brata, N.T. At. Al, 2022). Such arrangements weaken formal governance and entrench exclusive development pathways subordinated to economic patronage (Economica, 2025).

The actor constellation in Long Beleh Modang is fragmented into at least two dominant blocs. The first is led by Anwar, a former village head with strong links to district-level political elites and corporate actors. Anwar formed "Team 7," composed of close allies such as the BUMDes director, village secretary, and BPD members. This network has consolidated economic control through strategic relations with mining companies. Anwar's power is rooted in his high urgency and access to external actors, although his formal legitimacy has declined amid accusations of corruption and regional development disparities.

The opposing bloc is led by Darma and his brother Erfan, who represent Indigenous interests and command strong support in Long Mahli. They have established "Team 7-2," which maintains ties with the HTI (industrial timber) company and mediates agrarian conflicts. This group enjoys high cultural legitimacy and grassroots support, advocating for spatial justice and the autonomy of Long Mahli as a historical territory. In the power-legitimacy-urgency model (Mitchell et al., 1997), Darma's group holds strong legitimacy and urgency but possesses

less structural power compared to Anwar's faction.

The absence of Jasman, the interim village head, has further weakened neutral mediation, resulting in stagnated development and intensifying factionalism. Without a central authority to bridge competing interests, long-term planning has stalled. Conflicts over legitimacy and access to economic patronage, particularly between Penoon and Long Mahli, undermine inclusive governance.

Shadow of Value Erosion

This normative tension is manifest in the rise of social issues such as increased alcohol consumption, gambling, early marriage, and other deviant behaviors, as recorded in the 2023 field report. These developments signify a gradual erosion of moral boundaries and traditional value systems that once regulated social behavior in a tightly-knit rural community. The absence of participatory mapping and digital cadastral systems has further exacerbated these disputes, resulting in legal uncertainty over territorial boundaries (Berger, 1963; Acciaioli, 2001). Beyond undermining social cohesion, this uncertainty has deepened economic segregation, dividing those who receive compensation from those who have lost access to productive land. Such inequalities weaken the fabric of communal solidarity and introduce new forms of marginalization.

Other socio-cultural problems have emerged through the moral destabilization of the community, particularly affecting the youth. Reports of narcotics abuse, covert prostitution, and recurrent theft, especially in Long Beleh Modang, reflect shifting value orientations, driven in part by the disintegration of traditional mechanisms of social control. The transformation of forested areas into industrial zones has also led to the loss of natural food sources and medicinal plants, thereby weakening local food security systems.

In sum, the entry of extractive industries into Long Beleh Modang has not only fueled structural land conflicts and environmental degradation but has also acce-

lerated processes of socio-cultural disorientation. The weakening of social cohesion, displacement from ancestral lands, and erosion of ecological knowledge systems represent a multi-dimensional crisis, linking territorial dispossession with the breakdown of value structures and community resilience.

CONCLUSION

This article illuminates the intricate interconnections between the expansion of extractive industries, particularly coal mining, and the socio-ecological transformations unfolding in Long Beleh Modang Village, Kutai Kartanegara. The study's primary novelty lies in a multi-modal approach that integrates elements of the Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis (SLA) framework with local actor-structure analysis, ecofeminist perspectives, and ecological justice theory. Findings demonstrate that natural-resource exploitation not only drives ecological degradation, through deforestation, water contamination, and spatial fragmentation, but also produces layered social inequalities, agrarian conflict, identity crises, and the erosion of access to sustainable livelihoods. These impacts are compounded by the absence of equitable and effective governance and by asymmetric power relations between village actors and external networks of corporations and regional political elites.

The article contributes to wider debates on extractive governance amid informal power relations and ecological decline, opening new interdisciplinary avenues for examining livelihood resilience under extractive pressure. Its critical discussion of extractive patronage, institutional erosion, and the dispossession of rural livelihoods in Southeast Asia offers a perspective on the "resource curse" that extends beyond conventional macro-economic indicators.

Ideally, regulation of the extractive sector should prioritize inclusive, ecologically just, and socially accountable governance. Policymakers must move beyond technocratic interventions by integrating participatory spatial planning, community-based vulnerability assessments, and the protection of Indigenous rights. Development frameworks should foreground the experiences of women, youth, and marginalized rural laborers to ensure a more equitable distribution of benefits and risks.

The scope of this study remains temporally limited and confined to a single locality, potentially overlooking the longitudinal dynamics of displacement, psychosocial impacts, and mi-

gration patterns. Future research would benefit from longitudinal designs that trace how labor mobility, shifting identities, and demographic change unfold in extractive village economies. Comparative analyses across mining regions, within Indonesia and globally, could further enrich understanding of how extractive regimes generate diverse outcomes under varying political and cultural conditions. Additionally, rigorous assessment of the long-term effectiveness of community-based corporate social responsibility programs is urgently needed, especially regarding their capacity to strengthen livelihood resilience and socio-ecological justice at the grassroots level.

Ultimately, the study underscores the urgency of reconfiguring extractive governance through grounded, participatory, and justice-oriented frameworks that remain responsive to the everyday realities of rural communities situated at the frontiers of industrial expansion.

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