

## **The Implications of Moving the National Capital for the Configuration of Indonesian Political Power in the Era of Leadership Transition from Jokowi to Prabowo**

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### **Abstract**

The relocation of the National Capital (IKN) from Jakarta to the Indonesian archipelago in East Kalimantan is not merely a technocratic policy, but rather a strategic manoeuvre with a significant impact on Indonesia's political configuration, particularly during the transition from President Joko Widodo to Prabowo Subianto. This study examines how the relocation of the IKN affects the distribution of power, elite alliances, and the role of civil society. Using a qualitative approach based on literature studies and document analysis, the main findings indicate a shift in power from the central elite in Jakarta to local actors and oligarchs involved in the development of the IKN. New political alliances are forming, but they tend to be pragmatic rather than ideologically driven. On the other hand, the power of civil society is beginning to emerge, although its space for participation remains limited, and it is often marginalised. The leadership transition is a crucial context because it determines the sustainability or change in direction of the IKN project. This study emphasises that the development of the new capital reflects a contestation of power and is not politically neutral. Thus, the IKN project is a crucial arena for assessing the extent to which democracy and political participation are truly realised in Indonesia's national development process.

**Keywords:** Capital City Relocation, Political Configuration, Leadership Transition, Power Distribution, Elite Alliances

## Introduction

The relocation of the nation's capital from Jakarta to East Kalimantan, the Indonesian archipelago, is a strategic policy of President Joko Widodo's administration, aimed at creating equitable development and reducing the burden on Jakarta as the country's political, economic, and administrative centre. This project is viewed as an effort to create a symbol of a new, modern, inclusive, and sustainable civilisation (Bappenas, 2020). However, behind this ambition lies a complex political dynamic, particularly related to the relocation of the centre of power. This relocation implies not only changes in physical structure but also changes in the configuration of political power involving national elites, local actors, and civil society. This change is all the more significant because it occurs during the transition of power from President Joko Widodo to President-elect Joko Widodo, who has a different background and political approach. This transition period is a crucial moment in assessing the strategic impact of the relocation of the new capital on power relations and the patterns of influence of the national political elite.

In the context of academic studies, the issue of relocating capital cities has garnered attention in various countries. In Indonesia, several pieces of literature have highlighted the impacts of capital city relocation from economic, spatial, and environmental perspectives. The literature discussing capital city relocation generally emphasises technocratic and economic aspects, such as sustainable development, transportation systems, and new urban spatial models (Firman, 2021; Ghozali, 2022). However, studies on the political implications of the relocation are still relatively limited, particularly those that discuss how the geographic shift in the centre of government can influence the configuration of national political power during the transition period. Hutapea (2021) mentions the challenges of post-relocation governance but does not explicitly explain how the political power structure changes. This represents a crucial gap that must be filled, considering that changes in the centre of power are not only about infrastructure but also affect who has access to decision-making. International studies, as well as capital city relocations in countries such as Brazil and Myanmar, also demonstrate similar political dynamics, namely how local and national political actors respond to shifts in the centre of power (Resende & Oliveira, 2020). Therefore, a significant gap exists in the literature that needs to be addressed through a more political and contextual approach to the IKN relocation project. This requires a study that directly links this phenomenon to the political dynamics during the national power transition.

This study specifically aims to analyse the impact of the relocation of the national capital on the configuration of Indonesian political power amidst the transition of national leadership from President Joko Widodo to Prabowo Subianto. The primary focus of this research is not only on spatial-geographical changes but also on how political actors utilise these changes to form alliances, renegotiate influence, and devise new power strategies. This study takes a qualitative-political approach to examine power relations, elite dynamics, and the role of civil society in responding to this significant project. By adopting political and sociological perspectives, this study not only provides a structural overview of the administrative relocation but also reconfigures the power relations that emerge amid this systemic change. The focus on the transition of power between Jokowi and Prabowo is a key difference from other studies, which tend to focus more on technical or economic aspects

alone. This study emphasises that the relocation of the capital is a highly strategic political event. This study also attempts to answer the question of the extent to which the IKN project is used as an instrument of political legitimacy by the incumbent regime and the one that will take over power.

As an initial hypothesis, this study proposes that the relocation of the national capital has triggered a shift in the configuration of political power in Indonesia, both territorially and structurally. This shift is marked by the emergence of new alliances between central and regional elites, the marginalisation of some of the old Jakarta-based power groups, and the increasing role of civil society, which has begun to criticise the project as a symbol of a new style of centralisation of power. In the context of the transition from Jokowi to Prabowo, the national capital project has the potential to become both an instrument of political consolidation and a platform for contestation among various competing interests. Thus, the relocation of the capital city is not only a development policy but also an arena for political battles that reflect the future direction of Indonesian democracy. This aligns with Mietzner's (2024) view that in transitional periods, new rulers tend to adopt the significant projects of their predecessors as a means to demonstrate continuity and strength. Therefore, this study aims to examine whether this relocation is truly politically inclusive or instead creates new exclusions in the distribution of power.

Relocating a nation's capital is not a new phenomenon in global political history. It has become a practice employed by various countries as an effort to redistribute power and promote national development. For example, Brazil relocated its capital to Brasilia in the 1960s to encourage development in the central region. At the same time, Myanmar moved its administrative centre to Naypyidaw in 2005 for security and political control reasons, not solely for urbanisation or economic development. These moves demonstrate that relocation of the centre of government always has a profound political dimension, driven not simply by considerations of urbanisation or administrative efficiency. In the Indonesian context, the relocation of the National Capital (IKN) to East Kalimantan is a strategic decision that implies an effort to reorganise the centre of national power, creating a new centre of power that can represent a more inclusive national identity and strengthen the narrative of more equitable development. This opens up opportunities for the redistribution of political influence that has previously been concentrated in Jakarta. Resende and Oliveira (2020) note that capital relocation is often used by ruling regimes as a means of creating a "political buffer" to strengthen the regime's legitimacy, making it a crucial tool in power configuration strategies. Therefore, studies on the IKN cannot be limited to just the technocratic aspects, but must also consider how this policy becomes an instrument in the configuration of power between the central and regional governments, old and new elites, and civilian and military actors.

The concept of political configuration refers to the form, structure, and dynamics of power formed through interactions between political actors, both at the national and local levels (Mietzner, 2018). Sartori (2005) emphasised that the configuration of power is influenced not only by the formal structure of the state but also by informal practices and power relations between interest groups. In Indonesia, the political configuration is manifested not only through official institutions, such as the House of Representatives (DPR), political parties, and

the bureaucracy, but also through informal relations, including the influence of oligarchies, the military, and civil society. Significant events, such as elections, reforms, or strategic policies, including the relocation of the capital, often trigger changes in this configuration. The relocation of the capital has the potential to alter this balance. Robison and Hadiz (2004) show that post-New Order Indonesian politics has been dominated by elites who form informal coalitions based on economic interests and power. The relocation of the capital city has the potential to shift this configuration of power, both nationally and locally. In this context, the relocation of the capital city has the potential to trigger a reorientation of this configuration, both at the national and local levels. These changes are important to analyse because they can impact the direction of democracy, the quality of governance, and the long-term distribution of power.

In the context of Indonesian politics, the transitional era refers to the period of transition from one government regime to the next, marked by a change in national leadership. Such transitions are often accompanied by political uncertainty, the emergence of new coalitions, and the repositioning of established actors within the power structure. According to Huntington (1991), political transitions are fluid periods that create opportunities for changes in previously established power structures. This change in leadership is not merely an administrative shift but also has implications for the formation of new power networks. The transition from Jokowi to Prabowo presents an interesting dynamic because both come from different political traditions but share an interest in maintaining power stability amidst a significant project such as the new capital city (IKN). Jokowi, as the initiator of the IKN project, has a long-term vision based on infrastructure development and regional integration.

Meanwhile, Prabowo, although committed to continuing the project, has a different military background and political base, which could influence how the IKN is used as a new instrument of power. This transition not only marks a change in administrative leadership but also has implications for the formation of new power networks that could be significantly different from those of the previous era. In the literature on transitional politics, as argued by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), moments of transition are often crucial times in the formation of long-term institutions and power patterns, as political actors negotiate positions and form new consensus or conflict within the institutional framework. The conceptualisation of capital relocation in this study encompasses three main dimensions: geographic, institutional, and symbolic. The geographic dimension refers to the physical relocation of the centre of the government from Jakarta to East Kalimantan, including its implications for infrastructure and resource mobilisation. The institutional dimension encompasses bureaucratic restructuring, the relocation of ministries, and the shift in the centre of decision-making. The symbolic dimension highlights how this relocation is framed as a project of national awakening, a new identity, and aspirations for Indonesia's future. James Scott (1998) notes that the development of a new centre of power often aims to project the image of a strong and modern nation. In the context of the new capital city, the narrative of "Indonesia-centric" and sustainable development provides a robust political framework for development. However, in practice, this project also becomes a platform for a struggle for influence between the old elite and emerging new powers.

In categorising power configurations, we can distinguish between centralised and decentralised power, as well as formal and informal power. Centralised power is characterised by the central government's dominance over all political and economic decision-making, whereas decentralised power allows for greater autonomy and space for local actors. Formal power, on the other hand, refers to the legal structure and state institutions, while informal

power encompasses personal networks, patronage, and cultural influence. The relocation of the capital city has the potential to give rise to a hybrid form of power configuration, in which informal actors assume significant roles in the formal processes of the new government, thereby opening up the opportunity for the formation of new axes of power that could disrupt the existing national coalition order. In the long term, this alliance could develop into a more stable and structured political force, especially if local actors are given significant participation. If local actors are given meaningful participation, this new power alliance has the potential to become more stable. However, if the relationship is exclusive or transactional, conflicts of interest and power imbalances could widen in the future. This aligns with Bertrand's (2014) findings, which highlight the importance of understanding the relationship between formal and informal power in Indonesian local politics.

The role of civil society in the capital city relocation process is often overlooked, despite its crucial role in ensuring the accountability and transparency of national projects. In the literature on deliberative democracy, civil society plays a crucial role in ensuring that public policy is not solely the domain of the elite but also reflects the aspirations of the people. This is because civil society facilitates public deliberation and policy accountability (Habermas, 1996). Relocating the capital city without meaningful public participation risks creating new social and political inequalities. A study by Sihombing (2022) reveals that many indigenous and environmental groups in East Kalimantan feel excluded from the decision-making process, as the dominance of state narratives and weak public consultation mechanisms often limit their participation. This creates potential social tensions that could impact future political stability. Nevertheless, there are indications of a growing civil society movement demanding transparency, participation, and protection of socio-cultural rights, particularly for indigenous communities directly impacted by the project. These dynamics demonstrate that the capital city relocation has also become an arena for contestation between the state and civil society over space and the meaning of power.

## Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study strategy to gain a deep understanding of the political dynamics surrounding the project to relocate the National Capital (IKN) from Jakarta to East Kalimantan. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploring complex phenomena in real-life contexts, especially when issues such as power configurations are not always readily apparent (Yin, 2018). The Penajam Paser Utara and Kutai Kartanegara regions were chosen as the focus of the analysis because, in addition to being the physical location of the IKN development, they also represent symbols of ongoing political and administrative change. Data collection was conducted through a systematic desk study. Researchers utilised credible secondary sources, including Law Number 3 of 2022 concerning the National Capital Region (IKN), planning reports from Bappenas, and data from the Central Agency. Statistics, as well as scientific literature and news reports from national media outlets such as Kompas and Tempo, were used. The primary focus of data collection was to capture the official state narrative, critical academic views, and the dynamics of public opinion regarding the new capital city (IKN) from 2019 to 2025, the transition period from President Joko Widodo to Prabowo Subianto. To analyse the data, two main techniques were used:

content analysis and critical discourse analysis. Content analysis was used to examine the substance of policy documents and narratives. In contrast, critical discourse analysis was employed to expose the power relations and ideologies underlying the language used in public discourse. In this regard, the research draws on the ideas of Norman Fairclough (2013), who emphasised that language is not only a means of communication but also a means of producing power. By using this combination, the research aims to understand how the New Capital City (IKN) project is not merely a technocratic development policy, but also a political strategy infused with meanings of power and ideology.

### Result and Discussion

The relocation of the national capital from Jakarta to East Kalimantan has had a significant impact on Indonesia's political power structure. Not only administratively, but also symbolically and strategically, this relocation shifts the focus of power from the western to the central regions of Indonesia. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (2023) shows a significant increase in development budget allocations in East Kalimantan since 2020, reaching over 40 trillion rupiah. Politically, this creates a redistribution of power, with local elites in Kalimantan beginning to gain strategic positions in national policy. While the government's official narrative claims that the new capital city is a symbol of equality, in practice, it opens up new competition between political actors who were previously concentrated in Jakarta. This shift also presents unique challenges in terms of infrastructure readiness, new bureaucratic cultures, and political integration between the central and regional governments. During the transition from the Jokowi to Prabowo administration, this process also serves as a test of the government's capacity to distribute power more fairly and effectively. This project serves as a political bargaining chip between the central and regional governments, particularly during the transition period, making it fraught with long-term political interests (Santoso, 2022).

A case study in East Kalimantan illustrates how local political consolidation is unfolding as the new capital city (IKN) project gains momentum. Figures such as Isran Noor, Governor of East Kalimantan for the 2018–2023 period, play a crucial role as a mediator between the central government and local communities, while simultaneously strengthening his political position at the national level (Tempo, 2022). He actively participates in IKN policy forums and advocates for the formation of a Regional IKN Task Force, which provides local elites with leverage. In practice, this dynamic is shifting the previously highly centralized power structure in Jakarta toward a new coalition between central and regional elites, potentially becoming a permanent force in Indonesia's post-Jokowi power configuration (Mietzner, 2023). The relocation of the capital also facilitated the formation of new, more permanent political alliances between national and local actors. During the planning and implementation of the IKN project, a power struggle appears to be occurring between the central government, business oligarchs, and regional elites. This is evident in the involvement of several prominent political figures and businesspeople in the IKN funding consortium, as reported by Tempo (2023). Furthermore, several large companies owned by the families of national politicians also participated in infrastructure development tenders. This alliance is not temporary; instead, it demonstrates a tendency to evolve into a long-term power structure that can influence the broader direction of public policy. This consolidation confirms the emergence of a hybrid power bloc, combining bureaucracy and capitalism, which creates a new form of political patronage. In the context of the transition to the Prabowo administration,



the sustainability of this project will largely depend on the extent to which this alliance remains relevant and effective in shaping the future national strategic direction.

Therefore, the relocation of the IKN is not merely a technocratic policy, but rather a political strategy that reorganizes power relations structurally and in the long term (Warburton, 2021). In the political-economic dimension, the involvement of national conglomerates such as the Sinarmas Group, Agung Sedayu, and the Salim Group in the consortium for the development of the new capital city illustrates the strong influence of oligarchs in this project. Several of these companies have direct ties to national political figures and are suspected of being involved in land ownership around the capital's development area (Kompas, 2023). This reinforces Hadiz's (2017) argument that oligarchs are the dominant actors in development projects in Indonesia. This phenomenon creates a hybrid power pattern between bureaucracy, capitalism, and local elites, which play a role not only in technical planning but also in formulating long-term national policy directions.

Amidst the dominance of the state and oligarchy in the IKN project, reactions have also emerged from civil society forces rejecting or criticizing the project. Indigenous groups, environmental activists, and academics are part of the civil society forces questioning aspects of social justice, environmental sustainability, and transparency in the IKN development process. For example, the IKN project has sparked resistance from civil society forces, particularly from indigenous communities such as the Balik, Paser, and Dayak tribes. The Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) openly rejects the project, claiming it ignores the rights of indigenous peoples and local cultural values inhabiting the proposed capital city (Kompas, 2023). They also believe the project was implemented without adequate consultation, violating the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) as guaranteed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Along with academics and environmental activists, these groups use digital channels, public forums, and legal instruments to voice their rejection of the top-down approach to development. Their presence indicates the rise of political resistance from below, which, although not yet nationally organized, has the potential to become a corrective force against exclusive practices of power (Suryakusuma, 2020; Hadiz, 2022).

The above findings have particular significance when viewed in the context of the transition from Jokowi to Prabowo. This transition is not simply a change of figure, but also a momentum for consolidating power that can continue or alter the direction of development. The relocation of the national capital is part of Jokowi's strategic agenda. It will be the first test for the new administration in managing the major projects inherited from its predecessor. In this regard, the power configuration formed around the national capital will significantly influence the stability and political direction of the Prabowo administration. If established alliances and distributions of power remain dominant, then the policy direction will likely continue. However, if there is a change in direction or strong resistance from civil society and new political actors, the power structure could be reoriented. Furthermore, the transition process also opens up the possibility of new leadership styles, either more centralized or more participatory, depending on the chosen political strategy. Thus, the national capital serves as a concrete arena for power contestation during the governmental transition, and its position will determine the future direction of national governance (Mietzner, 2023). The relocation of the

capital city is not only a matter of geography and practical politics, but also concerns symbolic representation and the formation of a new national identity for Indonesia. By abandoning Jakarta, which has long been a symbol of centralized power, the relocation to Kalimantan was intended as a symbolic effort to erase the legacy of colonialism and establish a new, more inclusive centre of power. However, this symbolism was not universally accepted. Some saw it as a repackaging of old power in a new way, without fundamental changes to the political structure. The new identities sought to be created through the IKN, such as a "green city" or "smart city," have also been questioned in their implementation, given the lack of public participation in planning. Furthermore, the project has drawn criticism from an environmental perspective, as deforestation and degradation of Kalimantan's ecosystems are key issues. Therefore, the IKN, as a symbolic project, still raises a significant question: does it truly reflect a new face of Indonesian politics, or does it reinforce the status quo in a more organized and modern form? The answer to this question will only be revealed through concrete implementation and broad public engagement (Tanuwidjaja, 2022).

The relocation of the National Capital (IKN) from Jakarta to East Kalimantan, theoretically, reflects the process of symbolic and spatial decentralization in the Indonesian political system. In previous literature, as explained by Firman (2020), the construction of a new capital city is often associated with efforts to achieve equitable development and reduce regional inequality. However, in the Indonesian context, the reality shows that the relocation of the IKN is also fraught with power contests between the central and regional governments, as well as national and local elites. Figures such as Isran Noor, the former Governor of East Kalimantan, have emerged as central figures in bridging interests between the central and regional governments, which in turn strengthens Kalimantan's political position within the national structure (Tempo, 2022). This demonstrates that the relocation of the capital city is not merely a geographical shift, but a political reconstruction that incorporates local actors as part of the new power structure. The findings of this study indicate a reconstruction of the centre of power that goes beyond mere geographical relocation, but also a repositioning of strategic political actors before and after the transition from Jokowi to Prabowo. This enriches the literature by introducing a new dimension: the relocation of the capital city during the era of government transition can serve as a stage for political elites to strengthen their influence and form long-term alliances that shape the direction of the new government (Firman, 2020; Warburton, 2021).

The IKN project also affirms the role of oligarchy in Indonesia's development process, as theorized by Hadiz (2017), regarding the way oligarchy can infiltrate formal institutions and direct policies according to its interests. In the literature, oligarchy is described as an elite group capable of controlling state resources for its own interests through consolidation with formal institutions. The IKN planning and implementation process involves several political and business elites in a consortium scheme, which not only regulates funding but also determines the direction of development. In the IKN project, this is evident through the involvement of conglomerates such as the Salim Group and the Sinarmas Group, which have interests in controlling strategic land around the new capital city area (Kompas, 2023). The development project has evolved into a forum for political-economic negotiations involving both old and new power networks. This suggests that the IKN development is not merely a technocratic project, but also a venue for consolidating economic and political power. In this case, the IKN project exemplifies how infrastructure development can become a tool to strengthen the political dominance of certain groups and indirectly transfer power to the next government.



This situation suggests that large development projects, such as the IKN, have the potential to strengthen existing power networks in new forms, a finding that extends beyond a purely technocratic perspective and leads to a structural understanding of power practices in Indonesia (Hadiz, 2017; Mietzner, 2023).

In the context of the rise of civil society power, this finding adds important nuance to the discourse on participation in national development. Previous literature has shown that public participation in large-scale projects is often undermined by the dominance of the state and the private sector (Suryakusuma, 2020). However, in this study, despite the continued dominance of the state and the private sector, indigenous communities, environmental activists, and academics have begun to develop alternative advocacy channels, such as social media, lawsuits, and academic and community forums. This response signals the rise of grassroots political power that rejects the logic of top-down, non-inclusive development. Suryakusuma (2020) notes that large-scale projects often exclude public voices; however, in the case of the New Capital City (IKN), a surge of resistance is emerging that has the potential to act as a corrective force against state policy. Although not yet widely organized, this participation offers hope that the development of the new capital city (IKN) can become a collective learning opportunity for the democratization of the national development process. This phenomenon demonstrates a grassroots political revitalization that, although not yet massively organized, has the potential to become a corrective force in development politics. This enriches the literature by demonstrating that, in an era of political transition, projects like the new capital city can actually catalyze the revival of critical and reflective civic participation (Suryakusuma, 2020; Hadiz, 2022).

The transition of power from Jokowi to Prabowo has become a focal point of analysis that highlights the contested nature of Indonesia's political configuration. Previous literature has not significantly linked regime change to major state projects such as the National Capital City (IKN). These findings demonstrate that the IKN symbolizes Jokowi's political legacy, which the new administration must carefully manage and preserve. If Prabowo chooses to continue with the same scheme, he will strengthen the old power structures established by Jokowi. However, if he chooses to revise his development approach, potential conflict with the old power networks will arise. This suggests that the IKN project is a crucial point that tests the adaptability, power orientation, and ability to reconstruct the basis of legitimacy independently. In other words, the IKN is not only an infrastructure legacy, but also a political trial run for the new direction of power (Mietzner, 2023; Tanuwidjaja, 2022).

Finally, the relocation of the capital city as a symbol of the formation of a new national political identity requires critical analysis. In global literature, the construction of a new capital city is often interpreted as an effort to create a new and more inclusive national identity (Vale, 2014). However, the Indonesian context demonstrates the ambiguity of this symbolic project. The government promotes the narratives of "green city" and "smart city" as reflecting a sustainable future; however, a paradox exists between the rhetoric of sustainable development and practices that still lack policy transparency, public participation, and local community involvement. This poses a serious challenge in shaping a new identity that truly represents democratic and inclusive values. This research demonstrates that without meaningful public participation, the symbolism of the capital city becomes merely the outer shell of continuity

from old power. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that this symbolic development is accompanied by reforms to political and social structures, preventing it from becoming merely a cosmetic project (Vale, 2014; Tanuwidjaja, 2022).

### Conclusion

The main findings of this study confirm that the relocation of the National Capital (IKN) is not simply an administrative decentralisation policy, but rather part of a complex political strategy to reshape the configuration of national power. This finding creates significant shifts in political structures, both symbolic and practical, such as the shift in the role of political actors from the central government to the regions, the consolidation of local oligarchs and elites, and resistance from civil society, which is beginning to gain space for articulation. All of this demonstrates that the IKN project is more than just a large-scale infrastructure development; it also reflects an ideological and political contestation between the status quo and demands for change. The fact that this project took place during a period of power transition adds weight to the analysis, as it reveals how inherited power is managed and directed to shape new power structures (Mietzner, 2023; Warburton, 2021). This demonstrates the importance of examining the IKN as a crucial arena for managing and regenerating the political process, rather than simply as a technocratic project.

From a scholarly perspective, this research contributes new insights into how capital city relocation can be a crucial variable in the study of political configurations and power transitions. Unlike previous studies that tended to view the IKN project as a development policy or environmental issue, this paper emphasises the political dimension, particularly the power networks and actors involved in the struggle for political space. Using a case study approach and qualitative analysis based on literature and secondary data, this study strengthens the argument that large infrastructure projects, such as the IKN, are not immune to political interests but instead serve as a primary arena for the power struggle (Santoso, 2022). Furthermore, the presence of civil society forces criticising the IKN project adds a new dimension to understanding contemporary Indonesian politics, where spaces for participation and resistance remain vibrant despite often being marginalised. Thus, this paper enriches the discourse on the relationship between development, power, and democracy in developing countries.

The main limitation of this research lies in the data sources, which are derived solely from documentary studies and literature analysis, without involving direct interviews with key actors in the field. This limits the ability to fully capture the socio-political dynamics in the New Capital City (IKN) area, particularly the perspectives of local communities. Furthermore, the research's focus is limited to the transition period from Jokowi to Prabowo, thereby precluding an examination of the long-term development of IKN policy. Therefore, future research is expected to include an ethnographic approach or direct surveys in the IKN area to capture local voices more comprehensively. Similarly, a comparative study with capital city relocations in other countries is needed to identify global patterns in the relocation of centres of power. This way, we can see the intersecting global and local patterns in the process of relocating centres of power. This comparative approach is crucial to determine whether projects like the New Capital City (IKN) tend to result in new, exclusive consolidation of power, or instead open up broader and more democratic spaces for participation. Despite these limitations, this study still makes an important contribution to understanding the politics of

development in an era of power contestation. This study has made a significant contribution to understanding development politics in an era of power contestation. It has opened up space for critical reflection on the direction of Indonesian democracy amidst the dynamics of ongoing structural change. The IKN project is a clear illustration of the inseparable nature of development and politics, and both must be viewed within a unified and interconnected framework.

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