

The Principle of Economic Justice and Its Implications for Economic Inequality in East Java

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Abstract

The principle of economic justice plays a crucial role in ensuring the equitable distribution of resources and promoting social and economic welfare. This article explores how the application of economic justice principles can help address economic inequality in East Java Province, focusing on the government's role in reducing regional disparities. Despite East Java's rapid economic growth, inequalities between urban centers like Surabaya and rural areas such as Madura and Bojonegoro remain significant challenges. Through an in-depth literature review, this study identifies key principles of economic justice, such as the principles of distributional justice, balance, public benefit, and protection, which must be applied to achieve inclusive prosperity. The findings suggest that government efforts through programs like Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), agrarian reform, and the development of sectors such as tourism and local industries are crucial in reducing inequalities. However, the greatest challenges remain in bridging the infrastructure and human resource gaps between cities and rural areas. This study proposes a more coordinated approach between central and regional governments to ensure that the principles of economic justice are effectively implemented across the province, allowing all segments of society to benefit from sustainable economic growth.

Keywords: Economic Justice, Economic Inequality, East Java, Government Policy, Distributional Justice, Rural Development, Economic Growth.

INTRODUCTION

Economic growth is a crucial instrument in the economy. National economic development is the average figure resulting from the economic growth figures of each province in Indonesia. Indonesia's economic growth can be seen from the economic well-being of its people. This serves as a benchmark for how a country can grow and develop. The economic well-being of a country's people can be seen from their own income. Income cannot be predicted with certainty, due to several influencing factors, such as natural resources, human resources, and environmental conditions.

The Indonesian economy is undergoing a complex transition, influenced by various domestic and international factors that shape the current economic climate. Entering 2023 and 2024, Indonesia is focused on increasing global competitiveness, strengthening infrastructure, and developing a new capital city (IKN) as a new economic hub. Diversification of economic sectors is a priority to reduce dependence on commodity exports and encourage digital-based manufacturing and services. Overall, the Indonesian economy demonstrates resilience and significant growth potential, although external and internal challenges remain. Economic diversification strategies and increased investment in infrastructure and education will be crucial to securing a stable and sustainable

economic future. In this regard, provinces play a crucial role in building the national economy.

Indonesia has 38 provinces, each possessing unique natural resource potential, economic characteristics, and cultural distinctiveness, contributing to the country's economic strength. Overall, Indonesia's provinces play a crucial role in building and developing the national economy, particularly through leveraging local potential, improving infrastructure, and supporting community welfare. Effective cooperation between the central and regional governments will further strengthen Indonesia's economy in the future.

East Java is one of the largest and fastest-growing provinces in Indonesia, both in terms of population, economy, and infrastructure. As one of the economic centers on the island of Java, East Java plays a strategic role in the national economy. With its capital in Surabaya, East Java has a population of over 40 million, making it the second most populous province in Indonesia after West Java. East Java has a diverse economy, supported by several sectors including agriculture, plantations, industry, manufacturing, fisheries, and tourism. East Java's economic growth over the past few years has shown considerable stability and resilience, with average growth ranging from 5% to 5.5% per year.

Despite its rapidly growing economy, East Java Province still faces significant economic disparities between the central and remote areas. Large cities like Surabaya tend to grow faster than coastal rural areas and other remote areas. The province has not yet fully succeeded in encouraging the development of economic centers in other regions that have the potential to reduce inequality. For example, Madura has significant economic potential, but infrastructure and investment on the island remain limited. Although several cities, such as Malang and Kediri, are emerging as new economic centers, the focus of development and investment remains predominantly on Surabaya and its surrounding areas.

East Java boasts a wealth of natural resources, but the distribution and utilization of these resources are uneven. Economic resources, such as industry and large-scale trade, are concentrated in Surabaya and its surrounding areas, while other regions rely more heavily on agriculture and fisheries. The agricultural sector in rural areas generates less added value than the industrial sector in large cities, resulting in a widening income gap between urban and rural areas. Large cities like Surabaya and Malang offer easier access to higher education and skills training than remote areas. This also creates a disparity in the quality of the workforce between urban and rural areas. This disparity hinders the development of industry and business in rural areas, which require skilled labor to compete with more developed regions.

The principle of economic justice aims to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and economic opportunities so that every individual or region has equal access to economic benefits. This principle is particularly relevant in the

context of the uneven distribution of economic centers in East Java, where differences in levels of economic development between regions pose significant challenges to efforts to create fair and equitable prosperity across the province. Overall, the application of the principle of economic justice in development in East Java is essential to creating an equitable distribution of opportunities and prosperity across the province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Principles of Economic Justice and Its Implications for Economic Inequality in East Java

Economic justice is a principle deeply rooted in the concept of equity, fairness, and moral integrity within the economic system. It advocates for the just and balanced distribution of wealth, resources, and opportunities to ensure social welfare and mitigate disparities among different sections of society. In this context, the application of economic justice is essential in addressing the persistent issue of economic inequality, particularly in regions like East Java Province, which experiences significant disparities in economic growth and access to resources.

The Concept of Economic Justice

Economic justice, as a principle, revolves around several interrelated ideals, such as fairness, balance, welfare, protection, and ethical moral values. These principles emphasize the need for equitable wealth distribution and the safeguarding of fundamental human rights. According to Munandar & Ridwan (2023), economic justice within an Islamic context focuses on the equitable distribution of resources to ensure that all individuals, irrespective of their background, have equal access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and employment. The principle of justice in economic systems is not limited to monetary values but extends to ensuring that individuals' rights to a fair share of society's benefits are upheld.

The Principle of Justice asserts the necessity of fair and equal wealth distribution, ensuring that all societal members have access to opportunities for advancement (Handayani, 2018). This principle challenges systems that allow extreme wealth accumulation by the few while the majority remains impoverished. Handayani (2018) and Munandar & Ridwan (2023) further assert that economic systems must align themselves with broader ethical values to foster a more just society.

The Principle of Balance within economic systems requires an equal distribution of resources across various sectors to prevent the creation of economic ghettos. As highlighted by Handayani (2018), achieving balance requires that resources, opportunities, and rights be protected for all citizens. This balance

must also account for the varying needs and economic potentials of different regions and sectors.

The Principle of Benefit or "public interest" focuses on prioritizing decision-making that serves the community rather than individual or narrow group interests (Munandar & Ridwan, 2023). This principle underpins many public policies aimed at reducing inequality by promoting initiatives that address the needs of marginalized groups. Economic policies aligned with this principle aim to create an inclusive society, where economic opportunities and public goods benefit the population as a whole.

Moreover, the Protection Principle is particularly significant in the context of consumers, workers, and the environment. According to Muhamad (2021), protecting these groups ensures that economic systems do not exploit vulnerable communities for the benefit of the elite. This protection, when effectively implemented, forms a fundamental part of equitable resource distribution.

Finally, Moral and Ethical Principles of economic justice are deeply embedded in Islamic economic systems, where business transactions must adhere to principles of honesty, transparency, and social responsibility (Muhamad, 2021). These principles aim to avoid exploitation and ensure that economic activities contribute to the common good rather than harm others or the environment.

Economic Inequality in East Java: Challenges and Policy Responses

East Java, as one of the largest provinces in Indonesia, plays a pivotal role in the nation's economic development. Despite its substantial contribution to the national economy, East Java experiences significant economic inequality. This inequality manifests in the disparity between urban centers, such as Surabaya, and rural areas, such as Madura and Bojonegoro. The uneven distribution of resources, particularly between agriculture-based regions and urban industrial centers, exacerbates these disparities.

Studies by Iswanto (2015) indicate that the uneven growth across regions in East Java has led to marked income inequality, with urban areas like Surabaya and Malang exhibiting higher economic growth rates compared to rural areas that remain heavily dependent on agriculture and basic industries. The concentration of economic resources, such as industries, trade, and infrastructure in Surabaya, means that the economic benefits of growth are not equitably distributed across the province.

This economic imbalance reflects a failure in fully implementing the principles of economic justice. As Handayani (2018) argues, economic justice requires not only equitable distribution but also sector diversification to avoid over-reliance on a few industries. The economic policies adopted by the government in East Java, including regional development plans, are aimed at

reducing these imbalances by promoting diversified sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and small industries (Rapitasari, 2021).

Government Intervention in Reducing Inequality

The Indonesian government has taken several steps to reduce economic inequality through targeted policies. For instance, the introduction of programs such as Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) and the Family Hope Program (PKH) aims to provide direct support to low-income families (Putri, 2024). These programs are designed to ensure that underprivileged groups can access basic services, such as healthcare and education, which are essential for social mobility. The success of these programs has been instrumental in reducing poverty in several regions and improving the economic welfare of marginalized groups.

Furthermore, the Indonesian government has focused on agrarian reform to provide land to landless farmers, which is a crucial step in addressing economic injustice in rural areas. Land redistribution is seen as an essential tool for promoting social justice, increasing agricultural productivity, and enhancing rural communities' economic access. The government's push to enhance infrastructure and improve connectivity between underdeveloped and developed areas is another critical measure aimed at addressing regional inequality (Rapitasari, 2021).

In the educational sector, the government has emphasized inclusivity by offering scholarships and financial assistance programs to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These programs are geared toward creating equal educational opportunities for all children, irrespective of their socioeconomic status. As Munandar & Ridwan (2023) note, an inclusive education system is a significant aspect of economic justice, as it empowers individuals to compete equally in the labor market and achieve upward mobility.

Additionally, the National Health Insurance (JKN) program has been pivotal in ensuring that healthcare is accessible to all citizens, regardless of their financial situation. With over 225 million Indonesians enrolled in the program, JKN provides equitable healthcare access, thus contributing to reducing the economic disparities that hinder individuals' ability to achieve their full potential (DetikNews, 2024).

The Role of Sector Diversification and Regional Cooperation

To tackle the economic inequality in East Java, the government has focused on sector diversification. Encouraging regions that are reliant on a single industry, such as oil and gas in Bojonegoro and Bangkalan, to explore alternative sectors like agriculture, small-scale industries, and tourism is essential for mitigating the risks associated with commodity price fluctuations. As Rapitasari (2021) suggests, promoting tourism and local industries can stimulate economic growth and reduce

the reliance on natural resource extraction, which is often volatile and unsustainable.

Additionally, fostering regional cooperation plays a crucial role in promoting economic justice across East Java. By encouraging inter-regional collaborations, the government can leverage the strengths of different areas to foster a more balanced economic development (Iswanto, 2015). This cooperative approach ensures that the benefits of development are shared across the province, reducing economic disparities and ensuring that every region has the resources to thrive.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a literature review, meaning that this methodology relies solely on previously published works, including books, journal articles, research reports, and other academic sources. The purpose of the literature review is to gather relevant and in-depth information on the topic under study and to understand the context and development of existing theories.

This study aims to analyze and determine how the principles of economic justice can be implemented to address economic inequality in East Java province and to determine the role of the government in addressing this issue.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Principles of Economic Justice in Indonesia

The application of the principles of justice in Indonesia encompasses several policies and programs aimed at reducing socioeconomic disparities and promoting equitable prosperity. One concrete step is through social assistance programs designed by the government to support low-income and disadvantaged communities, such as Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) and the Family Hope Program (PKH). These programs aim to provide direct financial support to underprivileged families so they can meet basic needs such as food, education, and healthcare.

In addition, the government is implementing asset redistribution policies, including agrarian reform, which aims to provide fairer access to land for landless communities. This policy is expected to increase agricultural productivity, the welfare of smallholder farmers, and economic access for rural communities. Furthermore, agrarian reform also plays a role in creating social justice by reducing inequality in land ownership, which is often a source of conflict and dissatisfaction among communities. By granting land rights to smallholder farmers, it is hoped that they will be able to manage their land more effectively and sustainably, which in turn will increase agricultural yields and incomes.

In the education sector, inclusive education programs are a key focus to ensure that all children, regardless of socioeconomic background, have equal access to quality education. Scholarships and educational assistance are also provided to students from low-income families to encourage their participation in

higher education. Furthermore, the government has launched various affirmative action programs designed to increase access to education for marginalized groups, such as children from remote areas, children with disabilities, and indigenous communities. These programs include providing child-friendly educational facilities, training teachers on inclusive education, and developing curricula that respect cultural diversity.

In the health sector, the National Health Insurance (JKN) program aims to ensure that all citizens have access to adequate healthcare services. With JKN, it is hoped that no one will be excluded from accessing healthcare due to cost. This program has successfully covered more than 225 million Indonesians since its launch in 2014, making it one of the most comprehensive health insurance programs in the world. Through JKN, participants can access a wide range of healthcare services, from basic services to specialized care, without having to worry about burdensome costs (Detiknews.com, 2024).

In addition to these policies, implementing the principle of economic justice also involves fair law enforcement. The Indonesian legal system strives to ensure that all citizens are treated equally before the law, as mandated by the 1945 Constitution. (Putri, 2024) However, challenges remain regarding accessibility and fairness in legal practice, particularly for communities in remote or marginalized areas. Many individuals in these areas face difficulties in accessing adequate legal services, either due to distance from a lawyer's office or legal institution, or due to a lack of understanding of their rights. This often results in injustice, with certain groups unable to effectively pursue their rights.

To address this issue, the government and various non-governmental organizations have launched legal aid programs aimed at providing free or low-cost legal services to underprivileged communities. These programs not only include legal assistance in criminal and civil cases but also education about legal rights and procedures. This way, people in remote areas can better understand and utilize the legal system to protect their interests.

Thus, the implementation of the principles of justice in Indonesia is a comprehensive effort involving various sectors and policies to achieve the goal of shared prosperity and reduce socio-economic inequality.

Level of Economic Inequality in East Java Province

In East Java province, most of the regions are classified as relatively underdeveloped. This is ironic because East Java is the agglomeration pole of the eastern axis of Java Island, which is one of the centers of national economic activity. Economic growth is uneven in East Java province, income inequality between regions is a very serious problem, some regions experience rapid economic growth, but others experience slow economic growth. To measure the level of inequality in East Java province, one way is to measure the distribution

of Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) (Iswanto, 2015). The following is the Economic Growth Rate of Regency/City in East Java province according to GRDP:

Kabupaten/Kota		Tahun				
		2019	2020	2021	2022*	2023**
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
3501	Pacitan	5,08	-1,84	2,49	5,54	4,46
3502	Ponorogo	5,01	-0,90	3,19	3,24	5,14
3503	Trenggalek	5,08	-2,17	3,65	4,52	4,92
3504	Tulungagung	5,32	-3,09	3,53	5,22	4,91
3505	Blitar	5,12	-2,29	3,02	5,20	4,45
3506	Kediri	5,06	-2,41	3,06	4,90	4,53
3507	Malang	5,49	-2,68	3,12	5,13	5,00
3508	Lumajang	4,61	-2,79	3,14	4,43	5,00
3509	Jember	5,51	-2,98	4,00	4,53	4,93
3510	Banyuwangi	5,55	-3,58	4,09	4,43	5,03
3511	Bondowoso	5,30	-1,36	3,49	3,51	4,62
3512	Situbondo	5,44	-2,33	3,26	4,39	4,90
3513	Probolinggo	4,56	-2,12	3,35	4,52	4,73
3514	Pasuruan	5,83	-2,03	4,34	5,32	5,21
3515	Sidoarjo	5,99	-3,69	4,21	7,53	6,16
3516	Mojokerto	5,81	-1,11	4,12	5,82	5,15
3517	Jombang	5,10	-1,98	3,24	5,37	5,04
3518	Nganjuk	5,36	-1,71	3,61	4,84	5,40
3519	Madiun	5,42	-0,12	3,32	4,32	5,12
3520	Magetan	5,04	-1,64	3,04	3,89	4,47
3521	Ngawi	5,05	-1,69	2,55	3,19	4,49
3522	Bojonegoro	6,34	-0,40	-5,54	-6,16	2,47
3523	Tuban	5,14	-5,85	3,00	8,88	4,36
3524	Lamongan	5,43	-2,65	3,43	5,56	4,28
3525	Gresik	5,42	-3,68	3,79	7,38	4,62
3526	Bangkalan	1,03	-5,59	-2,07	-1,12	1,20
3527	Sampang	1,85	-0,29	0,22	2,31	2,56
3528	Pamekasan	4,92	-2,54	3,41	4,66	4,96
3529	Sumenep	0,14	-1,13	2,61	3,11	5,35
3571	Kota Kediri	5,47	-6,25	2,50	3,96	1,92
3572	Kota Blitar	5,84	-2,28	4,28	5,22	5,29
3573	Kota Malang	5,73	-2,26	4,21	6,32	6,07
3574	Kota Probolinggo	5,94	-3,64	4,06	6,12	6,04
3575	Kota Pasuruan	5,56	-4,33	3,64	6,22	5,65
3576	Kota Mojokerto	5,65	-3,69	3,65	5,56	2,79
3577	Kota Madiun	5,69	-5,34	4,79	5,52	5,80
3578	Kota Surabaya	6,09	-4,85	4,29	6,51	5,70
3579	Kota Batu	6,50	-6,46	4,04	6,18	6,19
PDRB Provinsi Jawa Timur		5,60	-2,33	3,56	5,34	4,95

Catatan: * : Angka sementara

** : Angka sangat sementara

Sumber: BPS Provinsi Jawa Timur

Figure 1. Data on Economic Growth Rates of Regencies/Cities in East Java Province

Based on data from bps.go.id (2024) above, it can be seen that in 2023, the economic growth rate in East Java was 4.95 percent. The city of Surabaya

recorded 5.70 percent growth, influenced by the recovery of the service, trade, and industry sectors, which are the backbone of the city's economy. Investment in infrastructure and increased household consumption also played a significant role in this growth. Batu City experienced 6.19 percent growth, driven by the recovery of the tourism sector, which is a leading sector in this region. The reopening of tourist attractions and the increase in the number of tourist visits after the Covid-19 pandemic subsided significantly contributed to economic growth. Malang City showed 6.07 percent growth, also driven by the tourism and education sectors. The education sector is boosted by the presence of several large universities that attract students from various regions, thus increasing local economic activity.

However, several regions still face challenges in their economic growth. Bojonegoro Regency experienced growth of 2.47 percent, impacted by a decline in oil and gas production, the region's primary sector. Furthermore, minimal economic diversification makes the region vulnerable to fluctuations in oil and gas commodity prices. Bangkalan Regency recorded growth of 1.20 percent, also impacted by the oil and gas and mining sectors, which have not shown significant recovery.

Based on the data above, it can be seen that several regions are experiencing inequality, namely Bojonegoro Regency and Bangkalan Regency, which are experiencing low economic growth rates due to the oil and gas and mining sectors not showing significant recovery. Nevertheless, these regions must receive fair and equal treatment with regions with relatively high growth to achieve economic balance.

The Government's Role in Addressing Economic Inequality in East Java

The government has several strategies to address the disparity in economic growth in East Java, particularly between cities like Surabaya, Batu, and Malang, which are experiencing positive growth, and regions like Bojonegoro and Bangkalan, which are experiencing low growth. The following are steps that can be taken.

The government is promoting sector diversification by encouraging regions with a high dependence on certain sectors, such as oil and gas in Bojonegoro and Bangkalan, to develop other sectors, such as agriculture, small industry, and tourism. This can mitigate the risk of economic fluctuations caused by falling commodity prices.

The government is improving transportation infrastructure and accessibility in underdeveloped areas to facilitate the distribution of goods and services. For example, improving highways and public transportation facilities can improve connectivity between regions. (Rapitasari, 2021).

The government is developing the tourism sector in areas such as Batu and Malang by promoting the natural beauty and local culture. It is developing existing tourist attractions to drive economic growth in the region. (Rapitasari, 2021).

In addition to the above, the government is also implementing an economic recovery program to develop the local economic base, including improving the quality of products and services and implementing health protocols in the trade and tourism sectors.

Finally, the government is building inter-regional cooperation to share resources and experience in addressing economic challenges. This can be done through discussion forums or meetings between regional leaders.

The above is the government's effort to reduce economic inequality in East Java, so that all regions can feel the benefits of more equitable economic development.

CONCLUSION

The principle of economic justice aims to create a just and equitable system for all people in Indonesia. This principle encompasses equal access to resources, employment opportunities, and basic services regardless of social, economic, or cultural background. The principles of economic justice encompass fairness, balance, welfare, protection, and ethical morals.

In Indonesia, these principles are implemented through policies to reduce socioeconomic disparities. In education, inclusive programs, scholarships, and educational assistance ensure access for all children, especially those from low-income families. In health, the National Health Insurance (JKN) strives to provide equitable access to healthcare services.

In East Java, economic inequality exists in several regions, such as Bojonegoro and Bangkalan, due to their dependence on the oil and gas and mining sectors. The government has responded by encouraging sector diversification, improving infrastructure, and developing the tourism sector to reduce inequality. Furthermore, efforts are underway to develop local economies and strengthen interregional cooperation to achieve economic equality.

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