

Mining and Peasant Societies Resistance: Political Ecology Perspective

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Abstract: The exploitation of mining resources in various regions in Indonesia often has environmental, social, and economic impacts. These problems underlie the societies' rejection of the surrounding mining activities. Likewise, the resistance of peasant societies in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency was vociferously voiced from 2015 to 2019. On this basis, this article aims to analyze the dynamics, strategies, and rationality of the resistance of peasant societies in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency. Methodologically, the research approach used in this study is a qualitative approach through discourse analysis. Data was collected by various news in the mass media from 2015 to 2019. Based on the results of the study it can be concluded two basic things. First, the dynamics of the resistance of the peasant society shows the pattern of daily resistance by involving a coalition of civil society as its strategy. Resistance is carried out in the form of joint demonstrations by unity student action and through advocacy by legal aid agencies. Second, the rationality of the resistance of the peasant societies in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency reflects the socio-ecological and socio-juridical rationality based on the ethics of subsistence by the principle of safety first.

Keywords: Mining Discourse, Peasant Society, Social Resistance.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country rich in natural resource potential, both renewable (agricultural products) and non-renewable (mining and mineral products). This abundant natural wealth is essentially used for the prosperity of all Indonesian people, approved in Article 33 section 3 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. As an effort to realize the aspirations of people's prosperity, one of the government's policies is to design national development plans within the frame of the Master Plan for the Acceleration and Expansion of Indonesian Economic Development (MP3EI). The acceleration and expansion of Indonesia's economic development are carried out based on the approach of developing centers of economic growth, both existing and new. This approach is essentially an integration of sectoral and regional approaches. Each region developed a product that became its superiority (Bappenas, 2011).

The purpose of developing these centers of economic growth is to maximize the benefits of agglomeration, explore the potential and advantages of the region, and correct the spatial imbalance of Indonesia's economic development. To realize these objectives, the MP3EI is designed through three strategies, namely the Development of Economic Potentials through the Economic Corridor, Strengthening National Connectivity, and Strengthening the Capability of Human Resources and National Science and Technology. Based on the three strategies that have been set, a development plan for 6 economic corridors has been prepared which is focused on developing several major economic activities by the advantages of each region as in the following table.

Table 1. Distribution of Economic Corridors According to MP3EI

| Economic Corridors | The Central Theme of Development |
|--------------------|--|
| Sumatra | Center for Production and Processing of Agricultural |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| | Products and National Energy Reserves |
| Java | National Industry and Service Drivers |
| Kalimantan | Center for Production and Processing of National Energy Mines and Granaries |
| Sulawesi | Center for Production and Processing of Agricultural Products, Plantation, Fisheries, Oil and Gas, and the National Mining |
| Bali – Nusa Tenggara | Tourism Gate and National Food Supporters |
| Papua – Maluku Islands | National Center for Food, Fisheries, Energy and Mining Development |

Source: MP3EI 2011 – 2025

Based on the data above shows that Sulawesi is one of the economic corridors that is focused as the Center for Production and Processing of Agricultural Products, Plantation, Fisheries, Oil and Gas, and the National Mining. As one of the mining center designs, Sulawesi is the region with the most advanced nickel production in Indonesia. Nickel mining in Sulawesi accounts for around 7 percent of Sulawesi's GRDP. Therefore, mining activities in the Sulawesi Economic Corridor are focused on nickel mining which is the largest mining potential in this corridor (Bappenas, 2011). Specifically, in Southeast Sulawesi Province mining has become one of the commodities managed. Data shows the number of Mining Business Licenses (IUP) that have been issued by each district is 528 IUP, 350 IUP (66%) are nickel IUP. This shows that mining activities in Southeast Sulawesi Province are dominated by nickel business activities. The highest nickel IUP is in North Konawe Regency, North Kolaka Regency, Konawe Regency, Kolaka Regency, Konawe Selatan Regency, Bombana Regency, Buton Regency and a few in other districts (The Center for Data and Information Technology of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, 2015). This data proves that the Province of Southeast Sulawesi makes the mining sector one of the corridors of economic acceleration as intended in the MP3EI.

In the growth paradigm, it is natural that government policies choose to exploit massively to exploit the potential of natural resources. The mining policy framework is expected to contribute economically to local communities through infrastructure development, job creation, and community development through CSR programs (Brata, 2014; Devi & Prayogo, 2013; Fatah, 2008; Gilberthorpe & Banks, 2012). But behind that, the exploitation of natural resources in several regions in Indonesia raises various problems. In general, problems that often occur in mining activities are environmental crises, including damage to soil structure, risk of accidents, water pollution (McMahon et al., 2000; Upe et al., 2019), and pollution from mine waste (Kambey et al., 2001; Limbong et al., 2003; McKinnon, 2002). These environmental problems indicate that decentralized governance in the mining sector has threatened livelihoods and environmental sustainability (J. Spiegel, 2012).

These various problems also serve as lessons for some regions to refuse or even fight against all forms of mining extraction business. Civil society resistance in the mining context occurred in several areas, including resistance from the peasant communities in Soroako against PT Inco (Sangaji, 2002), gold mining conflicts in Timika Papua (Tebay, 2016), manganese mining conflicts in East Manggarai (Regus, 2011); and tin mining conflicts in Bangka Belitung (Erman, 2010).

The social problem of mining in the Southeast Sulawesi province of which is currently serious is the mining case in Konawe Kepulauan Regency, also known as

Wawonii. The area included in the small islands was attacked by dozens of IUPs. Approximately 32% of the area in the Konawe Island Regency is dominated by mining. Factual conditions like that greatly threaten the existence of local communities who generally earn their living as farmers. Therefore, the resistance of the peasants to government policies that are considered pro to mining entrepreneurs continue to be conducted from 2015 to 2019.

The presence of several mining companies in Wawonii further confirms the existence of *neoliberalism* through accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003). This can be seen from the opening of new territories as part of the dynamics of capital accumulation spaces and the penetration of existing social formations. According to Kirsch, the neo-liberal political and economic policy model makes the state's position very less effective as a regulatory body, because the responsibility for monitoring and compliance is transferred to the company (Kirsch, 2003). The implication is that local people who are supposed to be one of the stakeholders are not involved in planning the direction of mining management policies. Worse yet, their aspirations were even blocked by the security forces accompanied by violence.

In the perspective of agrarian political economy, (Bernstein, 2010) mentioned four questions as the focus of studies in looking at multi-actor social relations. (1) who owns what? This question focuses on the social relations of different regimes of ownership, and how production and reproduction are distributed; (2) who does what? This question is related to who carries out production and reproduction activities organized by social relations within the production unit; (3) who gets what? Who gets from the production activity; (4) what do they do with it? what do they do with it? Besides, White adds 1 point of analysis namely what do they do to each other? This question is related to social and political relations created between multi actors in the larger political-economic system (White, 2011). According to (Alonso-Fradejas, 2012) these questions are very useful for understanding how the dynamics of political economy are formed, through contemporary discourse.

Based on the factual conditions and perspectives above, this article aims to analyze two important things related to the resistance of peasant societies towards mining activities in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency. First, it aims to describe the dynamics and resistance strategies of peasant societies, and secondly, it aims to analyze the rationality of resistance of peasant communities in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency.

RESEARCH METHODS

Methodologically, this research is based on a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2009; Taylor et al., 2016) through discourse analysis of various information in the mass media from 2015 to 2019. Therefore, a genealogical approach from Michel Foucault is needed. Which is intended to find the rationality of the resistance of the peasant society in the veil of media discourse (Foucault, 1972).

In the Foucauldian tradition, the reality is not seen as right or wrong, but rather how the workings of discourse become dominant discourse (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Thus, through this approach the rationality of peasant society's resistance and contestation patterns in each episode of discourse are found and how the effect of discourse power works to construct local government policies related to the management of nickel mines in Konawe Kepulauan Regency.

Practically, data in the form of discourse is collected through the news in various mass media, then the data are analyzed in an inter-discursive pattern (Foucault, 1991). This analysis is intended to describe the differences and contradictions between various

perspectives of discourse, to find the strategies and rationality of resistance of peasant communities in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Dynamics and Strategy of Peasant Society Resistance

To understand the strategy and rationality of the resistance of peasant societies against mining in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency, the historical setting and dynamics of community resistance are first described. Historically, before it was formed as a definitive area, Konawe Kepulauan or better known as Wawonii was Konawe Regency. The Konawe Kepulauan Regency has officially declared a new autonomous region in 2013 based on Statute Number 13 in 2013 about the Establishment of the Konawe Kepulauan Regency in Southeast Sulawesi. Therefore, mining problems in this area are inseparable from the previous policy.

The conflict between Konawe Kepulauan societies and the company has occurred since 2015. At that time, Sunday (8/March/2015) around 500 people from Kekea Village, Polara Village, and Tondonggito Village burned PT Derawan Berjaya Mining (DBM) assets in the form of offices, employees' mess, six trucks, and three excavators heavy equipment and a smelter (DBM) plant. The community claims that the 10,070-hectare IUP area is their ancestral land. While on the company side claimed to have legality from the Regent of Konawe based on Decree number 63 of 2007. This open resistance resulted in 14 victims due to abuse and violence from the police (Data Source: www.mongabay.co.id, 12 May 2015). This confirms that mining activities by companies tend to involve the use of threats and armed violence as occurs in various other regions (Downey et al., 2010).

The violence of the police who opposed the security of mining companies seemed effective in controlling community protests. For approximately 3 years of open conflict was not published by the mass media. Furthermore, opposing the community was voiced again at the end of 2018, discussed in October and December carried out through demonstrations delivered to the DPRD and the Regional Government of Konawe Kepulauan Regency. The community expects the government to stop all mining activities in its territory (Data Source: www.antaraneews.com, 22 October 2018; www.liputan6.com, 21 December 2018).

The community protest movement carried out until 2018 did not affect mining activities. Because of this, open resistance continued almost throughout 2019. The massive movement began on March 4, March 6, then continued on March 14, 2019, voiced by thousands of residents¹⁴ accompanied by various civil society groups (Data Source: Kompas.com, 06 March 2019; zonasultra.com, 7 March 2019; www.mongabay.co.id, 8 March 2019; detiksultra.com, 14 March 2019). This spectacular action also succeeded in influencing the policies of the provincial government. How could the Deputy Governor of Southeast Sulawesi, Lukman Abunawas, who met with the protesters, say that they supported the revocation of all IUPs in the conclusions. Not only that to strengthen his statement, but he also signed an IUP revocation statement on behalf of the Southeast Sulawesi Provincial Government.

Although the provincial government has firmly revoked the mining business license (IUP), the company's activities are still ongoing. This was demonstrated by the land grabbing of residents' land by PT Gema Kreasi Perdana (GKP) on 9 July 2019 (Data Source: zonasultra.com, 10 July edition and 13 July 2019). The peak of land grabbing by PT GKP continued on midnight Friday 23 August 2019, where residents'

lands were forcibly evicted by 18 company-owned excavators (Data Source: Kompas.id, 23 August 2019; zonasultra.com, 24 August 2019). This seizure caused hundreds of wawonii residents who were members of various elements of the community to hold a demonstration on September 10, 2019. The masses asked the Konkep Regional Government elements to expel the mining company PT Gema Kreasi Perdana (GKP) and revoke the remaining mining business licenses (IUP) (Data Source: zonasultra.com, 10 September 2019).

Based on the dynamics of resistance of the peasant community as described above shows a vertical conflict. The conflict started with the granting of permission by officials who excluded a group of people from their natural resources. Access that has been owned by the people of Wawonii for generations has been restricted and transferred to the company. In the agrarian study literature⁹ the concepts of access and exclusion are two inseparable concepts. Access implies the ability to benefit from something, including material objects, people, institution,²¹ and symbols (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). Whereas exclusion is interpreted as a way in which other people are prevented from benefiting from something. This exclusion process uses regulation, market, power, and legitimacy (Hall et al., 2011).

The dynamics of resistance of the Wawonii community in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency is inseparable from the resistance strategy used. Based on data collected from various mass media, it is known that the Konawe Kepulauan Regency community resistance strategy is carried out through a civil society alliance. This strategy is carried out in hard form through demonstrations with student associations and social organizations, and in a soft form, through press conferences in the mass media such as those conducted by Indonesian Forum for Environment (Walhi) and other social organizations.

The dynamics and strategies of the community resistance movement in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency confirm the existence of a serious struggle by the citizens in maintaining their livelihoods. This is in line with the explanation of the theory of human needs as intended by Fisher et al., (2000) that conflicts occur due to basic human needs that are not met. In this context, the farming community uses agricultural land as the basis for their basic needs which is used as a nickel mining area. This is in line with Polanyi's view that if treating nature as a commodity by separating it from the bonds of social relations attached to it, it will undoubtedly produce shocks that destroy the joints of the community's sustainability of life, and then there will be a counter-movement to protect the community from the damage harder (Polanyi, 1967)²⁰ the dynamics of resistance from the Wawonii community also show patterns of everyday forms of resistance (Scott, 1985), where resistance is intended to reject various mining activities.

The Rationality of Peasant Society Resistance

The resistance of peasant societies in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency is one of the many forms of protest over mining exploitation in Indonesia. Socio-ecologically, peasant societies in general, including the Wawonii community, have become accustomed to agricultural livelihoods that prioritize the principle of survival. More than that, farmers can be said as individuals who are full of rational calculations in making decisions, including their involvement in the resistance. Farmer resistance is always associated with choices available to farmers. Based on the results of the study, two typologies of rationality are known as reasons for the resistance of peasant societies in the mining area of Konawe Kepulauan Regency, namely socio-ecological rationality and socio-judicial rationality.

1. Socio-Ecological Rationality

The socio-ecological rationality referred to in this article is a reason or consideration based on the condition of people's lives for generations which are based on natural resources. The Wawonii people who are indigenous people in Konawe Kepulauan Regency are generally farmers and fishermen, where their livelihood is highly dependent on natural conditions. When their nature or environment is degraded, it will have an impact on their livelihoods. Socio-ecological rationality is based more on considering the sustainability of livelihoods in future generations. Therefore, environmental ethics in the process of meeting needs is a matter of great concern.

The presence of several mining companies with an open mining pattern in community life based on agricultural land is seen as a threat to the environment and their livelihoods. Therefore, for whatever reason, the community rejects the presence of mining companies. This was very loudly voiced by several people in Konawe Kepulauan Regency. Based on information obtained from various media, it is known that the rejection of mining activities because they are considered to only have negative impacts on the environment and its people (Data Source: antaranews.com. October 22, 2018).

Sociologically, the perspective of rationality emphasizes the most beneficial consideration of the various alternatives. Likewise, the community resistance action in Konawe Kepulauan Regency was also based on rational consideration and calculation. The community around the mine considers that the presence of the mine presents more problems than the benefits obtained (Data Source: liputan6.com. December 21, 2018). Imagine, the presence of several IUP in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency has taken over residents' agricultural land. The company demolished the community garden which will be used as a special lane for the preparation of PT Gema Kreasi Perdana nickel ore loading (Data Source: zonasultra.com, 10 July 2019).

Even though the company argued that the people's crops had been compensated, the community still refused because economically the benefits derived from agricultural land were greater than the compensation provided. The community considers that the compensation offered by the company is 700 thousand per cashew tree, while in one tree it can produce more each year. Not to mention the plantation land also planted with other long-term crops such as cloves, nutmeg, and coconuts (Data Source: detikusultra.com, 25 August 2019). The calculation of economic losses by farmers in Wawonii further reinforces Sudarlan's findings that the mining sector harms economic growth and economic growth is not statistically significant for poverty reduction (Sudarlan et al., 2015).

The reason for society resistance was also strengthened by the analysis of the Mining Advocacy Network (Jatam) which said that mining on Wawonii Island had caused a very severe ecological crisis. Every year, flash floods always occur on this small island. Whereas before the presence of the mining project, flooding had never occurred (Data Source: mining.co.id, 12 November 2019). According to Walhi (2015) mining exploitation has caused an ecological crisis that appears in the form of ecological degradation and even permanent environmental damage. This ecological crisis occurs mainly because of national policy factors that continue to produce high-risk development. High-risk development is a development model that relies on extractive industries that involve clearing and burning forests, conversion of agricultural land, open-pit mining, and not infrequently the disposal of toxic waste.

Based on the data described above, it shows that the presence of mining companies in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency is a mechanism of capitalism in slowly removing the local wisdom of the community in the living space of the farming community. Mining expansion not only marginalizes the Wawonii community but also occurs in other areas such as Bangka Island, where local people do not get a balanced distribution of benefits (Rosyida et al., 2018).

In the context of political ecology, the rationality of resistance of the Wawonii community shows that there are differences of opinion between the indigenous population and the company in responding to environmental impacts (Macintyre & Foale, 2004). Likewise in a critical ecological perspective as Forsyth's view emphasizes that environmental degradation and marginalization are a necessity as the influence of capitalism (Forsyth, 2003). Thus, the resistance of peasant societies is also a manifestation of resistance to capitalism. The phenomena of land degradation, marginalization, environmental conflict, and conservation politics have links to aspects of the political economy (Rifai-Hasan, 2009; Robbins, 2012).

2. Socio-Juridical Rationality

The second rationality of resistance by the peasant society is socio-juridical, that is, the reasons or considerations are based on the applicable legal basis, both originating from the center in the form of laws, and local government policies. As a rule of law, all forms of movement, action, or resistance must be based on law.

This rationality initially did not emerge from the ideas of local people given their daily activities on traditional agriculture. But along with the dynamics of discussion and advocacy from various civil society units as mentioned in the strategy analysis above, the socio-juridical rationality becomes the "consumption" of the farming community. Therefore, socio-juridical rationality is a reinforcing factor for the resistance of the Wawonii people in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency. ¹³

Based on Law Number 27 of 2007 Junto Law No. 1 of 201²³ about the management of coastal areas and small islands explicitly states that the use of small islands and surrounding waters are prioritized only for conservation, education and training, research and development, marine cultivation, tourism, business fisheries, and marine and sustainable fishing industry, organic farming, animal husbandry, and/or national defense and security. According to this Law, the small island category is an island with an area smaller or equal to 2,000 Km² (two thousand square kilometers), while Wawonii Island has a total area of ± 867.58 Km², so it is clear Wawonii Island is a zonation of small islands in Southeast Sulawesi. ¹⁸

This type of rationality was expressly conveyed by many civil society organizations, such as the ⁴Wahana Lingkungan Hidup (Walhi) of Southeast Sulawesi, student associations, the *Front Rakyat Sultra Bela Wawonii* (FRSBW), the *Jaringan Advokasi Tambang* (Jatam), Forest Watch Indonesia (FWI) and the *Komisi Untuk Orang Hilang dan Anti Kekerasan* (KontraS). The Walhi of Southeast Sulawesi stated that the island of Wawonii or Konawe Kepulauan Regency is not a mining area, because the area includes small islands. Small islands should not be mined, let alone the community strongly rejects, because they already know many examples in other areas, that the mine will not benefit and not prosper the community around the mine (Data Source: zonasultra.com, 7 March 2019). Likewise, it was stated by FRSBW, JATAM, FWI, and KontraS that all mining operations on small islands violate the law under Article 23 Section 2 of Law Number 1 of 2014 (Data Source: zonasultra.com, 13 July 2019).

Besides, resistance movements based on judicial considerations were voiced by many student forums. The Presidium of *Forum Mahasiswa Pemerhati Investasi Pertambangan* (FORSEMESTA) explicitly asked the Southeast Sulawesi Regional Police to stop the activities of PT. GKP. Because of the existence of PT. GKP violates existing laws. According to him, Law No. 1 of 2014 has clearly instructed all components of the Indonesian nation that mining activities on small islands are strictly prohibited without exception to the Konawe Kepulauan Regency (Data Source: sultraline.id, July 6, 2019).

This resistance based on rationality became even stronger when the Konawe Kepulauan Regent, Amrullah insisted that there would not be room for mining activities on Wawonii Island. "To this day in our Regional Spatial Planning, there is no room for mining (Data Source: zonasultra.com, 13 March 2019). This shows the overlapping policies between the central and regional governments. In line with that, (Hamidi, 2015) states that several mining laws in Indonesia cannot be applied consistently because of legal, economic, and environmental problems that occur at the level of the central government, regional government, and the area around mining. Besides, mining environmental policies in Indonesia are also not well integrated to overcome various problems related to mining activities (Dwiki, 2018).

Based on the data above shows that the resistance of the Wawonii people has a strong rationality base in maintaining their ancestral lands. Communities choose to maintain their livelihoods based on agriculture rather than choosing to be exploited by mining entrepreneurs. In Scott's perspective, this pattern is referred to as the ethics of subsistence or the principle of putting safety first (Scott, 1985). The rationality tactics of the Wawonii community also show rational actions as intended by Popkin. Popkin explained that farmers as rational creatures always pursue their goals rationally. The rationale intended by Popkin in this context is more aimed at something that can result from actions or decisions that have been taken by those who are by the expectations and values of local wisdom. According to Popkin, farmers always pay attention to the welfare and security of themselves and their families (Popkin, 1986). Besides, according to Popkin's view, the emergence of peasant resistance is not merely due to a threat, but because the presence of capitalism can give birth to a risk that will lead farmers into uncertainty in living their lives.

CONCLUSION

The dynamics and strategies of resistance of peasants to nickel mining activities in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency, both carried out frontally through demonstrations, and through legal channels confirm the contestation in socio-economic space control. This contestation took place between the provincial government and the local community, where the provincial government unilaterally permitted several mining companies, without regard to the spatial plan of the Konawe Kepulauan Regency.

The resistance of the peasant society that continues to do until now has succeeded in influencing government policy, where the provincial government has signed the revocation of IUPs of several mining companies in the Regency of Konawe Kepulauan. The success of the struggle of the peasant society is based on very basic reasons, namely the socio-ecological and socio-juridical ratios based on the ethics of subsistence or the principle of prioritizing congratulations. Ecologically, community resistance is based on the fact of environmental damage in various mining exploitation areas. Also, the people of Konawe Kepulauan for decades cultivated their livelihood systems by farming. While

from a ¹⁶juridical aspect, mining exploitation in Konawe Kepulauan Regency is contrary to the law on the management of coastal areas and small islands.

Therefore, the central government and the provincial government should permanently revoke Mining Business Permits from several mining companies in the Konawe Kepulauan Regency. People's welfare does not have to be through mining exploitation, but also through abundant agricultural and marine resources in Konawe Kepulauan Regency.

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Mining and Peasant Societies Resistance: Political Ecology Perspective

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