



Contestation Of Economic And Political Interests In Community Mining (Comparative Study Of Jambi Province And Bangka Belitung Province)

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Abstract.his research aims to analyze the contestation of economic and political interests in artisanal and small-scale mining in two provinces in Sumatra. Mining activities in both areas have been long established and have significantly increased in number due to their potential to drive economic growth in the region. Besides having an impact on the community's economy, mining activities have adverse effects on the environment and society. This research will focus on the areas in Sumatra Island, Jambi Province and Bangka Belitung Province by concentrating on the mining area research locations. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. This research uses primary and secondary data gathered from various sources to analyze the phenomenon of economic and political struggles in the research area. Different data are processed and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analysis stages. Qualitative data analysis activities are carried out interactively and continuously until they are saturated. The study results show that community mines are an alternative solution to the rampant illegal mining activities. The more massive unlawful mining activities demand the government to be more active in making decisions, as the impact of illicit mining is detrimental to the community, the environment, and the government. Community miners need more assistance related to its implementation so that community mining can reduce environmental damage and improve the community's welfare.

Keywords: artisanal; contestation of interests; mining; political economy; small-scale

1 INTRODUCTION

In 2021, there were 2,700 illegal mining locations in Indonesia, consisting of 96 coal and 2,645 mineral mining sites (1). Illegal mining has many negative impacts, including environmental damage, social vulnerability, conflicts with companies, lack of resource conservation, and loss of state revenue (2) (3). Despite the adverse effects, villagers choose mining activities as a promising livelihood (4).

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In the last 20 years, small-scale mining activities have been rampant in several provinces in Jambi, such as Merangin, Tebo, and Batang Hari (5). The mining activities involve sand, gravel, and gold mining. In contrast, in the Bangka Belitung area, mining activities are focused on tin mining, which has been ongoing since Sultan Abdurrachman Sultanate of Palembang, the Dutch and British colonial era, until now. Small-scale mining began in areas that were not economically valuable and were then handed over to local miners or the community (6). As a result of the illegal tin ore mining, there are around 123,000 hectares of critical land and 62,423 hectares of damaged land due to illegal mining (7).

The causes of the rampant small-scale mining activities include the lack of serious and sustainable natural resource management concepts, the absence of regulations at the regional level governing the implementation of spatial utilization permits, and the confusion in law enforcement. Ultimately, these factors will harm both the people and the country. (8). Efforts to address the rampant small-scale mining activities include inventorying illegal mining locations, organizing mining areas, supporting regulations to promote community-based mining, data collection and monitoring by mining inspectors, proposing the establishment of People's Mining Areas (WPR) according to the proposal of the Regional Government, and law enforcement efforts (1).

Implementing regulations and establishing WPR is hoped to minimize environmental damage, increase regional income, reduce social conflicts, and maximize natural resource management (9). In 2020, Jambi Province had 363 WPR with an area of 66,341 hectares, while Bangka Belitung had 207 WPR with 19,918 hectares (2). Small-scale mining activities not only involve and provide benefits to the community but also involve officials and authorities who benefit from these activities (8). The dynamics of economic interests, the environment, and political involvement in small-scale mining activities require the presence of the state as a regulator.

Small-scale mining activities not only involve and benefit the community but also involve officials and authorities who benefit from these activities. The dynamics of economic interests, the environment, and political involvement in small-scale mining activities require the presence of the state as a regulator. Given the participation of many stakeholders, the existence of WPR is a contested issue for obtaining access to natural resources on a large scale. Therefore, the presence of WPR must be connected to the economic and political interests that play a significant role in small-scale mining. Some parties benefit from illegal mining activities, including miners with investors, investors with law enforcement officials, and the government that creates prohibitions or policies (10).

Several previous research studies have been conducted, including a historical approach to examining conflicts among small-scale miners due to government economic policies (11). Conflicts between politics and business related to mining management policies (12). The role of the government, social institutions, and associations of small-scale mining in small-scale mining and the legalization of illegal small-scale mining as a business guarantee and environmental management policy (2). Looking at the relationship between SDGs and small-scale mining on environmental issues (13).

It is necessary to look deeper into the issuance of WPR permits as a solution to illegal small-scale mining. Given the involvement of many actors, the policy should only be

exploited for the benefit of investors if it provides positive impacts to the small-scale miners. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to examine the effects of small-scale mining on economic, political, and WPR policy aspects.

2 METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative-comparative method conducted in the provinces of Jambi and Bangka Belitung, focusing on the People's Mining Area (WPR). Primary and secondary data were used to analyze artisanal mining activities. The following data search was structured and semi-structured interviews with various informants, including artisanal miners, NGOs, community organizations, local government agencies, and other essential informants in each area. Secondary data were obtained from multiple sources such as activity reports, news, books, publications, and social media. The data obtained were analyzed in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, using Miles and Huberman's analysis stages.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Economy

Artisanal mining is a common practice in Indonesia and is often passed down from generation to generation. Some areas have been mining for a long time, while others are new to the course. Traditional methods and tools were initially used in areas where mining has been practised for a long time, but recently, heavy machinery such as excavators has been introduced. In areas where mining is new, the community starts exploring the surrounding areas, expanding mining areas and increasing the number of mining sites. The community's high interest in mining can be seen from their willingness to mine, even if it means destroying their plantations or homes. Artisanal mining is labour-intensive and low-tech, and it belongs to the economy's informal sector.

The community's high interest in artisanal mining is due to the perceived increase in income from mining activities. In addition, the decline in agricultural production and prices has led to increased exploration of mining areas. Although the community is aware of the environmental impact of mining, the difficult economic conditions and the lack of job opportunities force miners to shift their livelihoods from agriculture to mining. This is because some people remain farmers while others become miners. The informal nature of artisanal mining makes it challenging to regulate and monitor, and it often leads to environmental degradation(10).

Different characteristics of gold, sand, and stone mining areas determine the type of workers involved. Some sites only allow residents and close relatives to work in the mines, while others accept workers outside the area. The cultural characteristics of the community influence the pattern. Exclusive mining areas for local residents and their close relatives are done to ensure that the natural potential benefits can impact all community members. Moreover, since mining activities are still illegal, keeping them closed to outsiders is necessary. On the other hand, areas that accept workers from

outside the region do so because they conduct large-scale exploitation and use modern tools and methods. The advantage of exclusive regions is that it is easier to control mining activities, waste management, and regulation.

Artisanal mining significantly impacts the local economy, as it increases the community's purchasing power and the demand for goods and services to meet their needs, such as food, housing equipment, and infrastructure. The development of the village's economy can be seen from the increasing number of people building houses and owning expensive vehicles. However, the economic benefits of artisanal mining are often accompanied by environmental degradation, social conflicts, and health risks (14). The lack of regulation and monitoring of artisanal mining activities makes it difficult to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community. Artisanal mining can also positively impact the local economy by creating employment opportunities and generating income for the community. One job completed in the mining sector can lead to the generation of one additional assignment in other sectors, indicating the potential for regional economic and social progress resulting from mining.

Artisanal mining can positively and negatively affect the local economy and community. Some of the positive effects include increased purchasing power of the community, increased demand for goods and services to meet the needs of the community, economic benefits to communities, mainly where mining is the main activity, input services provided to mining operations, which can assist local business development and outsource services, donations to social causes such as supporting widows and orphans, scholarships, building schools, and places of worship.

However, artisanal mining can also have adverse effects on the local economy and community, such as a shift of livelihoods from agriculture to mining, degradation and invasion of agricultural and livestock land, water pollution and environmental damage, economic hardship for the community due to pollution and appropriation of resources, social conflicts and health risks. Therefore, it is essential to regulate and monitor artisanal mining activities to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community (15). Sustainable development pathways can result in lower food prices, fewer people affected by floods and other climatic disruptions, and increased forested land.

3.2 Political

The mining sector has attracted attention from various groups due to its high economic value. The community and entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, politicians, and security forces are interested in it. Moreover, since artisanal mining is often illegal, mining entrepreneurs need political and security backing to conduct their activities. Corrupt bureaucrats, politicians, and security forces often exploit these spaces to gain profits from mining activities. The scale of lawlessness in the mining sector is hard to overstate, and even government officials acknowledge that the mining sector faces a myriad of problems, including widespread illegal mining. Illegal mining is when operators harvest resources they have no legal right to exploit. The failure of critical regulatory mechanisms to ensure that even legal mine operators comply with the law and respect human rights is also a significant problem. Mining can be destructive and dangerous if not

managed and regulated responsibly. Critics have long alleged that the push for industrialization and growth pressures regulators to look the other way instead of demanding that mines and other industrial projects adhere to the law (Pratama 2018), (11).

The prevalence of illegal mining is likely due to the relationship between miners and those in power. This relationship further complicates policy enforcement. On one hand, the community needs mining to improve their economic status, but they do it illegally. On the other hand, some people take advantage of or protect illegal mining to gain personal profit, even if it means breaking the law. Illegal mining often leads to environmental degradation, social conflicts, and health risks. The government has taken steps to address illegal mining, such as inventorying illegal mining locations, regulating mining areas, and enforcing the law. However, the lack of regulation and monitoring of artisanal mining activities makes it difficult to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community. It is essential to regulate and monitor artisanal mining activities to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community. Sustainable development pathways can result in lower food prices, fewer people affected by floods and other climatic disruptions, and increased forested land.

The relationship between miners and those in power is often exploited to conduct illegal mining activities. This relationship further complicates policy enforcement, as security forces often must be more effective in stopping illegal mining activities. The finances of illegal mining represent money and power for criminal organizations, and illegal mining is often linked to economic crimes such as tax evasion, fraud, and corruption. Illegal mining often leads to environmental degradation, social conflicts, and health risks. The state's inability to confront illegal small-scale mining reveals power relations that shield the actual perpetrators (17). The lack of regulation and monitoring of artisanal mining activities makes it difficult to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community. It is essential to regulate and monitor artisanal mining activities to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community.

The high cost of politics is a supporting factor for the relationship between miners and those in power. One of the impacts of high political costs is that politicians provide compensation, licenses, commissions, and contracts to mining entrepreneurs. This relationship further complicates policy enforcement, as security forces are often ineffective in stopping illegal mining activities. The finances of illegal mining represent money and power for criminal organizations, and illegal mining is often linked to economic crimes such as tax evasion, fraud, and corruption. It is essential to regulate and monitor artisanal mining activities to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community. Sustainable development pathways can result in lower food prices, fewer people affected by floods and other climatic disruptions, and increased forested land (18).

The involvement of national and local elites in mining activities can lead to collusion and regulatory manipulation in the management of the mining sector (12), (8). Politicians who support mining activities benefit economically from mining entrepreneurs in all their political activities and gaining support in elections. The involvement of political elites in mining activities is often linked to corruption, tax evasion, fraud, and other

economic crimes. The lack of regulation and monitoring of artisanal mining activities makes it difficult to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community. It is essential to regulate and monitor artisanal mining activities to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community (19).

3.3 Policy

Mainly, illegal artisanal mining activities can negatively impact the economy, society, environment and the loss of non-tax state revenue (20). To regulate and reduce the negative impacts of artisanal mining, the government has implemented the Artisanal Mining Area (WPR) policy as the basis for issuing Artisanal Mining Permits (IPR). The WPR policy was previously regulated in Law No. 4/2009, granting community access to mining land up to 25 hectares. However, it was revised in Law No. 3/2020, which stated that the WPR area could reach a maximum of 100 hectares. The larger WPR area should allow communities to explore natural resources more extensively and legally. It is essential to regulate and monitor artisanal mining activities to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community. The lack of regulation and monitoring of artisanal mining activities makes it difficult to ensure the safety and well-being of the miners and the surrounding community.

The change in legislation is accompanied by a transfer of authority in granting mining permits. In UU No. 4/2009, the granting of tickets was under the head of the local government, while in UU No. 3/2020, the central government directly controls access. The granting of mining permits requires strict supervision so that small-scale mining can be fully utilized for the benefit of the people, not for mining entrepreneurs (21) (9). However, JATAM's research shows that many poor and unemployed people live in mining areas because they need capital or competence (22).

Several aspects need to be considered in legalizing artisanal mining, such as legality, institutionalization, technology, financing, environmental sustainability, and marketing of mining products (3). Legality is the main focus in handling many illegal artisanal mining activities. However, many miners need to be made aware of the regulations related to artisanal mining. Some believe their activities are legal because they are known or allowed by the local government and security forces, even without proper permits. Most miners know their actions are illegal but are reluctant to obtain permits because they have been running smoothly without them. Field surveys show that artisanal miners desire to obtain legal licenses if the process is easy.

Legalization will only have a maximum impact on increasing the positive or negative effects of artisanal mining with an increase in the capacity of miners. The increase in the span of miners from mining methods, management of results, waste management, and management to marketing can be achieved by working together with many parties starting from the community, local government, associations, police, mining companies, State-Owned Enterprises, Regional-Owned Enterprises, and Non-Governmental Organizations (23) (3). (2). The policy of artisanal mining will run effectively if it gets strict supervision and assists miners.

4 CONCLUSION

The presence of artisanal mining has a significant impact on improving the economy of the people, although it risks the survival of the environment. However, the community has no choice because the selling price and agricultural harvest no longer meet the family's needs. The high economic impact of artisanal mining attracts many stakeholders to get involved. The high economic-political contestation in artisanal mining can be seen from the many unauthorized mining operations operating for a long time and in an increasingly more expansive area. The presence of the government in addressing the negative impacts of artisanal mining by legalizing or expanding artisanal mining areas needs to be supervised and guided more so that mining areas can be maximally beneficial to the community, not just to large investors.

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