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The discourse of resistance against gold mining in Trenggalek

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Abstract. The issue of gold mining industry in Trenggalek has increasingly been a high concern among the local people. People are aware that the mining industry will give adverse impact for their life now and the next generation, because of the natural destruction resulted from the extraction industry. People's concern is expressed through the texts produced by local people to be circulated locally and more widely. The texts analyzed in this study are the articles in the local portal of "Nggalek.co," which is locally produced by young people in Trenggalek. As the unit of analysis, there are 6 articles, selected by using the keyword of "tambang emas" (gold mining). This study aims at understanding the discursive strategy of the writers (Trenggalek community) in producing the text in building resistance discourse of the gold mining industry for ensuring the local sustainable development. This research is based on Foucauldian critical framework and critical discourse analysis by employing the Fairclough's framework of three levels of analysis: micro, meso, and macro. The analysis resulted in identifying the discursive strategies in the form of key themes (knowledge produced) through the text, explaining the social political context of the resistance discourse, and identifying the power relations among the actors. Keywords: environmental issue, gold mining, resistance, Trenggalek

1. Introduction

In many cases around the world, the environmental impacts of gold mining (small scale or big scale) have been studied and documented [1]. In its operation, gold mining applies a number of rudimentary technologies and management practices that in short and long term, led to the natural and environmental damage. The most striking one is the water and land contamination of mercury and other dangerous chemical[1]. The study on the cultural impacts of mining industries can be found in the following studies. Kittipongvises, S. (2015) studied the feasibility of applying clean development mechanism in gold mining industry in Thailand [2], while study by Oppong & Gold (2016) discusses the local managerial in the Ghanaian mining industry [3]. Tufano (1996) studied the empirical examination of Risk Management Practices in the gold mining industry[4]. From many studies, the environmental issue is the most dominating challenges in mining industry, and pollution and contamination have become the biggest challenges, for example, the gold mining industry in Ghana which is more uncontrollable and intensified in the recent years [5].

The environmental impacts of mining industry have been studied by many researchers, like Hilson who studied the environmental impacts of gold mining industry in Ghana [1]. In Indonesia, the environmental problems caused by extractive industries can be seen for instance, from the studies on tin mining in Bangka Belitung by Erwana et al. [6], [7]. Another the newest published book on the environmental impact of human activity, which is translated into Indonesian version, is the



anthropological study of Palm industry in Indonesia by Tania M L and Pujo Semedi [8]. The study detailed the situation and environmental problems resulted from the palm plantation industries in many places in Indonesia. The social and environmental issues as the impact of the giant company of palm plantation are described and critically analyzed in this book.

The paper presents the analysis of people's voice in responding to the gold mining industry by PT SMN in Trenggalek, as it is written in the local portal Nggalek.co. Nggalek.co is a local portal (citizen journalism) built independently by a group of young people in Trenggalek in 2016. Trenggalek is a town in the southern part of East Java, bordered by coastline and mountainous areas, in which most of the people are farmers and fishermen. The agricultural activities dominate the regency. As one of the local portal or citizen journalism, "Nggalek.co" independently publishes articles in the forms of essays and reports on many social economic issues encountered by the local people of Trenggalek [9]. The articles are written mostly by local young men and women. They all do that voluntarily, and nevertheless, the portal existed since 2016 up to now [10]. Last August 2022, the "Nggalek.co" got the award as the best citizen journalism from AJI (Aliansi Jurnalis Independen), one of the reasons is due to its consistency in articulating the environmental issues and its impacts for the people and nature as a whole [11].

The stormiest issue in this local portal recently is the gold mining plan by PT SMN (PT. Sumber Mineral Nusantara), in which the company got the land concession that covers nine (9) districts in Trenggalek. The plan of gold mining in those districts incite furor among the people and communities of Trenggalek, in which the landscape of the Trenggalek covers forest, karst, mountainous and coastal lines. The concern of the ecological damage as the impact of the gold mining has made people anxious and spark the resentment against the gold mining company. For that reason, the current paper aims at figuring out the discursive strategy applied by the writers of Trenggalek young people in the portal "Nggalek.co" in producing the texts that build resistance discourse against the gold mining industry. To reach the objective, the paper presents the Fairclough's CDA [12] with the three levels of analysis on the texts taken from "nggalek.co". These texts are the primary information sources of the study of the "Resistance Discourse against Gold Mining in Trenggalek." The texts selected are those dealing with the issue of gold mining in Trenggalek.

2. Methods

The study presents a Critical Discourse Analysis of six (6) articles taken from the "Nggalek.co" written by young people in Trenggalek, to find out the discursive strategy of the writers in this portal, and the understand the resistance discourse in these texts. The six articles are selected by using the keyword of "tambang emas" (gold mining) from the website, as the corpus data that can be seen in the Table 1. The articles are uploaded on August 2021- 9 August 2022, and most of them are in the essay genre.

Table 1. Data of the study

No	Title of the article	Date uploaded	Writer
1	Cerita Penolakan Tambang Emas dari Warga Desa Suruh, Trenggalek (The story of resistance against gold mining from the people of Suruh Village, Trenggalek)	25 August 2021	Wahyu AO
2	Warga Trenggalek Bisa Hidup dari Bertani, Bukan Tambang Emas (People of Trenggalek are able to live by agriculture, not gold mining)	30 April 2022	Wahyu AO
3	Menelusuri Sumber Mata Air di Desa Ngadimulyo (Surveying the water springs in Ngadimulyo village)	20 July 2022	Wahyu AO
4	Pertanian di Lahan Kawasan Karst ala Jhe Mukti (Agriculture at the Karst land are using Jhe Mukti's method)	20 July 2022	Beni K Wardani
5	Tak Perlu Tambang Emas, Kampak Hanya Perlu Konservasi (We do not need gold mining, Kampak only needs conservation)	9 August 2022	Beni K Wardani
6	Tambang Emas Mengancam Kelangsungan Hidup Warga Trenggalek (Gold mining threaten the live of Trenggalek people)	2 August 2022	Risqi N Irfansyah

The analysis is done through Fairclough's framework of three levels of analysis; micro, meso and macro analysis [12]. In micro analysis the linguistic features are examined to get the idea of the resistance

discourse. In meso level, the texts are examined in connecting to the other texts, this is to figure out how the text is produced and perceived by human subject. Macro analysis deal with the sociohistorical condition that determine the process [13]. In other word, in this study, it is the social historical and political context of the gold mining issues in Trenggalek, as the context of the gold mining might be bigger than the district. The discussion is presented into two themes: the discourse of resistance against gold mining and the reasons for the resistance.

3. Result and Discussion

In Trenggalek, the environmental issue has been an important issue for a long time [10], and the discourse of gold mining has emerged since around 2016, and it increasingly becomes a serious issue. From the text 1, we obtain the early information of the gold mining issue. The historical account of the problems can be seen from the following text entitled “The story of resistance against the gold mining from the people of Suruh village, Trenggalek” (Text 1).

*...sekitar tahun 2016, warga sudah melakukan penolakan terhadap rencana tambang emas. Ketika alat-alat berat dari PT Sumber Mineral Nusantara (SMN) datang, warga Desa Suruh ramai-ramai menghentikan alat berat itu. Penolakan rencana tambang emas juga didukung oleh Lurah atau Kepala Desa Suruh, Gaguk Susilo.
(Data 1, Text 1).*

(...around 2016, people had rejected the gold mining plan. When the heavy equipment owned by PT SMN came here, the people of Suruh village altogether stopped the equipment. The rejection against the gold mining was supported by the head of the village, Gaguk Susilo.)

In the data 1, the story was told by Gaguk Susilo, the man from Suruh village, who became the head of the village in the year 2016. At that time, people had rejected the gold mining by PT Sumber Mineral Nusantara. They had made rejection through demonstration against the gold mining of PT. SMN, by stopping the heavy equipment. The rejection was supported by the head of the village. The data above shows that the rejection was successful temporarily because the people of the village did that altogether and supported by the head of the village.

The story told by Gaguk Susilo is the data dealing with the resistance of local people against gold mining, and this belongs to the micro level analysis. This analysis is strengthened with the meso analysis in which Gaguk (as the representation of the local people) look into the wider context of the issue. He is looking for the other data, that is the policy from Bappeda of East Java. The meso analysis can be seen in the following data of the notes from Bappeda of East Java.

*Mengingat catatan Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah (Bappeda) Jawa Timur, tanggal 4 Juli 2011, pihak tambang emas melakukan penggalian di Timahan, Kojan dan Suruh. Di Suruh, ada dua lubang yang digali dan menunjukkan kandungan emas 0,55 g/t (gram/ton) pada titik simpang 4 meter di kedalaman 65 meter, serta 0,18 g/t pada titik simpang 16,8 meter pada kedalaman 77 m.
(Data 2, Text1)*

(Remembering the notes by Bappeda of East Java, the Provincial Bureau of Development, that 4 July 2011, the gold miner had made excavation at Timahan, Kojan and Suruh villages. At Suruh, there were two holes excavated and found out the gold content of 0,55 g/t at the point of 4 meters in the depth of 65 meter, and 0.18 g/t at the point 16,8 meter in the depth of 77m.)

Gaguk Susilo as the main resource person in this article, said that the people got awareness that the mining industry was not environmentally friendly, and they were alerted with this mining business especially from the data from Bappeda of East Java (Provincial Bureau of Local Development) showing the content of the gold in the area. As the head of the village at that time, Gaguk was able to know the data from Bappeda of East Java that the excavation by the company showed the gold content in the

village of Timahan, Kojan, and Suruh. In Suruh village, the content of gold was as much as 0.55 g/t (gram/ton) and 0.18 g/t. The data presented by Gaguk means that he knows the potentials of the gold in the area, and the big business that planned to explore the area.

The critical discourse analysis on the text above can be presented in the following table.

Table 2. CDA on the text 1.

Level of Text analysis	Text	Coding
Micro	(...around 2016, people had rejected the gold mining plan. When the heavy equipment owned by PT SMN came here, the people of Suruh village altogether stopped the equipment	The resource person described the way they rejected the gold mining plan in 2016, and the people (most of the people of Suruh village) who are involved in the action.
Meso	“...the notes by Bappeda of East Java, the Provincial Bureau of Development, that 4 July 2011...”	People (Gaguk) was convinced that the government legally knew about the potency of the gold content in the area, it was documented in the notes of Bappeda in 2011
Macro	..In 2016, people had rejected the gold mining plan... Remembering the notes by Bappeda of East Java, the Provincial Bureau of Development, that 4 July 2011...	The text presented the socio historical context of the gold mining rejection. It was back in 2016 of the rejection of PT SMN, and he also presented the data from 2011. It means that historically, PT SMN has been doing their activities of gold-mining since 2016, and the government has known this issue, formally since 2011.



Figure 1. The Map of Trenggalek [14]

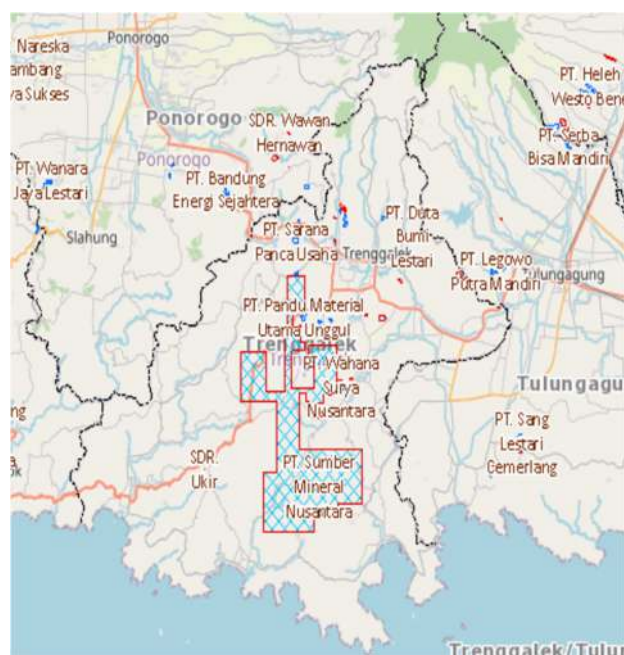


Figure 2. The Map of IUP of PT SMN [15]

From the micro analysis of the texts 1-6, the narrative of resistance against the gold mining in Trenggalek are based on some factors, mainly the economic factors, natural resources sustainability and security factors. Each of the factors is related each other. For instance, the economic factor is affected by the declining of the income of the farmers because of the long draught, lack of water for irrigation in the rice fields, the pollution in the karst areas that directly impacted on the agricultural landscape.

The first reason is presented by Gaguk (in Text 1) that the rejection of the gold mining is due to the fact that the mining industry is benefitted for the company, not for the people, because it is not 'community-based' management. The other fact that makes him doubted the company is that PT SMN has no clear profile. He also emphasized that the people in Suruh village are realized that the gold mining will not profitable for them, because it will destroy the nature, and abolish the water sources (Data 5).

“Ya jelas saya tolak karena tambang emas itu cuma menguntungkan kapitalis (pemodal) dan tidak berbasis ke masyarakat,” (I strongly rejected the gold mining, because it only benefitted the capital (the company) and it is not (managed) community-based.) (Data 3, Text 1)

Waktu menjadi Lurah, Gaguk pernah menelusuri profil dari PT SMN. Namun, yang ia temukan hanya ketidakjelasan. Bahkan lokasi kantor PT SMN saja tidak ada.

(When Gaguk became the head of the village, he tracked the profile of the PT SMN, and he found out that the information of the company was not clear. Even it had no office address.) (Data 4, Text 1)

Warga Desa Suruh sudah sadar bahwa kedatangan tambang emas tidak akan menguntungkan mereka. Kedatangan tambang emas akan merusak alam, karena wilayah konsesinya juga mencaplok Embung (cekungan penampung aliran air hujan) di Daren, Desa Suruh. Embung Daren berfungsi mengairi tanaman pertanian warga Desa Suruh. Wilayah ini terancam rusak, bahkan hilang jika ada tambang emas.

(The people of Suruh village were aware that the gold mining would not give any benefit for them. The gold mining will destroy the nature, and the area of concession for the mining covers the water spring at Daren, Suruh village. The Daren spring has vital functions for people's farming. The area will be threatened, destroyed, and abolished when the gold mining operates here.) (Data 5, Text 1)

The meso analysis, people have awareness and big concern on the wider landscape of their land, and its characteristics. The landscape of karst is also a big concern because it needs specific treatment to make the agricultural area sustained. The mining industry is understood as the one that endanger the Karst ecosystem. The mining industry will impact directly to the Karst's capability in absorbing the water to produce water sources. If the Karst are is polluted or contaminated with dangerous materials like mercury, it will directly impact the water sources. The Karst area is important part of the landscape that have to be protected. By managing the Karst area in the right way, the agriculture will be very fruitful. The fact of the Karst as a protected area has been declared in the local government regulation.

Jhe Mukti berpesan, jika pertanian di lahan kawasan karst ini dimaksimalkan dan dilakukan dengan baik (dengan tetap menjaga ekosistem lingkungan) juga bisa mendatangkan pundi-pundi rupiah. Oleh karena itu, sangat penting bagi masyarakat Trenggalek, yang mayoritas petani, untuk menjaga tanah mereka dari ancaman industri ekstraktif. (Data 6, Text 4)

(Jhe Mukti said the message, if the farming in the karst area is maximized and well-managed (by preserving the ecosystem) it results in more benefit. Therefore, it is important for Trenggalek people, which mostly are farmers, to protect their land from extractive industry.)

The text 4 gives emphasis on the importance of land management especially in the karst area. Karst management in the context of Trenggalek has been crucial, as most of the area in trenggalek is karst. The expert on karst management has been cited to support the ideas on the issue of karst management in Trenggalek. Jhe Mukti, as expert on karst management and he himself practiced what he knows in his farming.

Jhe Mukti is a man who has the background knowledge that enable him to learn comprehensively the karst area of Trenggalek where he owns his agriculture. He knows the historical facts that Karst management in the context of Trenggalek, started in 2018. It was due to the uncontrollable deforestation in the 1997. Only after ten years, the government issued the rules on Karst management, giving the emphasis on the importance of managing karst area and forestating (planting many kinds of trees) in the karst area. He also shed the light on the importance of using no pesticide in the forestation, because the impact of the chemical pesticide will directly be absorbed into the water spring that is consumed by the people. This shows that people have got the understanding on environmental health literacy, as the direct impact of the mining is the people health [16]. The vegetation, even the grass is important to be planted on the karst areas, one of which functions is to avoid soil erosion. He mentioned the grass as example of vegetation that functions to protect the karst areas, because most people thought that the grass is considered as weed so that they eradicate it. The assumption of grass as weed is dangerous because the karst area will absorb more heat from the sunlight and the heat will burn the other plants on the area. In sum, maximizing the karst land (by conserving the ecosystem) will result in bigger profit. For that reason, it is important to protect the land from the extractive industry (gold mining).

The preservation of natural resources become a critical issue in building the narration against the gold mining. The mining industry is believed to be the dominant factor that destroy the natural resources. Some evidences are given. In addition to the karst area that needs protection, the other natural resources that is deemed as vital for the agriculture and for human living is water resources. Water sources or water springs are available in many places around each of villages in Trenggalek. The water sources are vital because peoples in all the villages depend upon the water for their daily needs and for their farming. The text 5 gives example of the case in Kampak district. This district has 80 or more water springs. The existence of water springs is endangered by the gold mining industry as the concession area of PT SMN covers the area of karst as the protected area for the water sources (Data 7).

Kecamatan Kampak mempunyai 80 sumber mata air, dan ini bisa lebih banyak lagi karena belum terdata secara keseluruhan. Sayangnya, sumber mata air itu semua terancam oleh PT Sumber Mineral Nusantara (PT SMN). Pasaunya, area konsesi pertambangan emas PT SMN itu mencakup kawasan karst (sumber mata air) dan hutan lindung, yang menurut undang-undang lingkungan hidup, kawasan ini tidak boleh ada kegiatan ekstraktif atau penambangan. Malahan, kawasan ini harus dikonservasi agar tetap lestari (Data 7, Text 5).

Kampak district has more than 80 water springs. Unfortunately, all of the water springs are endangered by PT Sumber Mineral Nusantara. It is because of the concession area of the PT SMN covers the karst area and conserved forest, in which according to the Environmental Law, the areas are not for extractive or mining activities. Moreover, the area must be conserved for its sustainability.

Water spring has vital roles for people's daily life, for all people's daily consumption, agriculture, and livestock. Most of the people in the area of Kampak district, like other area surrounding Trenggalek, highly depends on the natural water spring located in the forests and other areas around the villages. Unfortunately, the gold mining industry (PT SMN) got the land concession covering the areas where the water springs located. Therefore, people are worried that the gold mining threatened the water spring in the area. From the data above, it is also known a contradictive fact, that the area of concession obtained by PT SMN covers the karst and protected forest which must be conserved / protected from the mining activities, according the law. This contradiction shows the inconsistency of the government policy maker

who issued the concession, because it is against the environmental law to protect karst and conserved forest. The text also conveys the mistakes of the concession right issued by the government (ministry of ESDM).

The gold mining also gives impacts on the security. People feels insecure with the gold mining, because this extractive activity will give affect the natural disaster. In the text 6, people said that natural disaster such as flood, drought, have occurred many times so that the mining activities will worsen the nature, and it will impact on severe disaster.

...pemberian hak izin tambang emas yang masuk ke Kabupaten Trenggalek akan mengancam sembilan kecamatan. Kecamatan Watulimo, Dongko, Munjungan, Tugu, Karang, Pule, Suruh, Gandusari, dan Kecamatan Kampak. Salah satunya adalah Desa Karangrejo, yang masuk wilayah Kecamatan Kampak.

(...the concession right of gold mining in Trenggalek regency threatens nine districts, Watulimo, Dongko, Munjungan, Tugu, Karang, Pule, Suruh, Gandusari, and Kampak districts. One of the villages is Karangrejo which is included in Kampak district).

Selama tiga tahun belakang ini, sumber mata air di Desa Karangrejo, mengalami masalah kekeringan yang parah. Dari hasil observasi kepada para petani, banyak yang mengeluh merasakan dampak kekurangan air untuk irigasi pertanian mereka, apalagi saat musim kemarau tiba.

(For the last three years, the water sources at Karangrejo village, have been drained. The observation shows that most farmers got the impact of lack of water for the irrigation, moreover, in the dry season.) (Data 8, Text 6)

The activities of gold mining industry involve the digging, exploring, extracting, all of which using heavy equipment, dangerous chemicals and occupying very fast areas. The activities will change the landscape of the nature, people's lives and inhabitants, all of which give adversary impacts for the people.

The environmental problems that have been the main concern among the people in Trenggalek in facing the gold mining by PT SMN, is the real important issues. The environmental issues are also confirmed by the research done by Hilson in Ghana gold mining industries [1]. In Ghana's gold mining, the government enacted the Small-Scale Gold Mining Law in 1989 that means the small-scale gold mining in the country is legal, and the gold mining industries have contributed to increasing national gold production, foreign exchange earnings and employment. However, the industries have impacted on the increased environmental problems such as mercury pollution and land degradation. The environmental crises, of which the most serious effect of surface subsidence induced by the mining, are also confirmed in the activities of coal mining industries in China, [17] which has been the largest coal-producing and -consuming country in the world, and is highly dependent on its coal industry.

4. Acknowledgments

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5. Conclusions

The discourse of resistance against gold mining in Trenggalek can be found clearly in the website *Nggalek.co*. The narration in the six articles observed shows people's responses on the plan, the preliminary exploration of the gold mining in Tranggalek regency. The discourse of resistance against gold mining can be seen in the narrative strategy of using the micro explanation from the farmers and local people who will get the impacts directly of the mining industry, and the meso as well as macro strategy in presenting the text. The meso can be found in people's understanding on the specific karst landscape which is also the important point to build the narration against the gold mining, as the karst area needs careful treatment to ensure the water resources for the people in many villages across the

regency. The macro analysis shows that the reasons for the resistance ranging from the economic aspects to human being existence. The research is limited in scope and the material to explore the people's responses towards mining industry in the early phase of the exploration. So, it is open to the next researchers to explore the qualitative responses on the mining industry in other areas and in the wider scope.

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