

A Study of Buluh Tumbang Community, Belitung: The Social Movements Antitheses Analysis

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Abstract

Belitung Island has a long history in tin production and trading. The abundant tin content has attracted power from time to time to carry out exploitation. Although the victims are reportedly thinning tin, the news about the prediction of Thorium as a valuable mineral for energy production is expected to add to the history of mining in Belitung for thousands of years into the future. Several studies reveal that apart from having a positive impact, especially on the economy, mining also has a negative impact. Environmental degradation is getting worse every day and requires comprehensive handling. Although tin mining actually has a significant impact on the economic life of the community, mining activities do not guarantee a sustainable life for the community. The awareness that environmental damage is getting serious and worrying has not yet been collective-confrontational action directed at the responsible party. The common view of the people, government, and mining actors regarding economic dependence on tin affects the weakness of the framing process and the mobilization of reactions related to the problem of environmental damage. The contention of the people, government and mining actors took place in mutual compromise. This condition can threaten a threat to sustainable development. Contest analysis is needed to clarify the picture of the extent to which the dynamics of contestation can contribute to promoting sustainable development.

Keywords

movement; environmental damage; contention; society; government; miners



I. Introduction

Belitung Island as a tin producer, has a long mining history since the Dutch-owned Billiton Maatschappij began operating in 1850 (Heidhues, 1991). The pattern of tin production and trade from time to time during the 19-20 century has always changed depend on who is in power. Mining work monopoly has always been left to private companies, both during the Dutch government and to current government Republic of Indonesia. After the 1998 reform, control of mining works became even loose. Several traditional smelters and mining, called unconventional mining (TI), are scattered and uncontrolled both on land and sea (Erwana, Dewi, Rahardyan, 2015). This has an damaging environmental impact that cannot be stopped due to lack of regulations and supervision (Purnaweni, Kismartini, Prabawani, & Roziqin, 2019).

Based on data from the BPS Province of Bangka Belitung Islands (Bangka Belitung Islands), tin production experienced a decline between 2004 and 2013, back to increase in 2014 (BPS data for Bangka Belitung Islands, 2020). The average tin export value over last decade reached 73,000 tons per year, with a value about US \$ 80 million or 1.2 trillion rupiah (freight on board). Meanwhile, the value of the Belitung Regency ADHK Gross Regional Domestic Product (PDRB) between 2014 and 2019 showed an average growth of 5%. This data indicates that tin production has an effect on improving the community's economy.

Although tin trade is fluctuating, the socio-economic life of people in Belitung is difficult to be separated from tin. the community's livelihoods are still dominated by miners. Other source of economy such pepper, are not able to sustain the regional development (Swastiwi, Nugraha, Purnomo, 2017).

People generally thinks the tin reserve on Belitung Island is starting to decline, but studies show there are remaining large tin reserve over the land, rivers and offshore (Yunianto, 2009). Even from BATAN (National Atomic Energy Agency) research revealed that the area of Belitung Island, along with Bangka and East Kalimantan, contains thorium, as a source of efficient power plant material with minimal waste (BPS Kepulauan Bangka Belitung, 2020). The amount of Thorium is sufficiently predicted to supply Indonesia's energy needs for 1000 years. This estimation will certainly add more long history of mining in Belitung.

Beside mining's positive impact on regional economy development, some studies revealed its negative impact as well. More than 5400 hectares of land in Belitung, mainly forest, have been converted into mining areas (Henri, Hakim, & Batoto, 2018). As a result, there is degradation and narrowing of people's productive lands (Ginting, P., Budi, R., and Khalid, K., 2014). The open pits caused by dredging of soil surface then followed by flooding (Hariyanto & Iskandar, 2011). The loss of the soil surface and huge tailings waste cause poor bearing capacity of soil for flora and fauna. the excavation process to mine underground materials has damaged the landscape (Kartawisastra & Gani, 2017). Environmental degradation is increasingly complex and requires comprehensive handling (Henri, Hakim & Batoto, 2018).

Social problems also arise due to tin mining activities. Mining companies do not promote local communities' participation (Azis & Salim, 2005) who are generally underprivileged people (Zulkarnain, I., 2005). This situation has triggered various socio-economic conflicts such as thuggery, illegal alcohol distribution, prostitution, and ethnic conflicts (Yunianto, 2009).

Environmental issues have become increasingly prominent driven by active mass media, especially local media publications during last decade. Environmental news in range of 7% to 38% per month within period January to June 2019 (Ibrahim, Haryadi, D., Wahyudin, N., 2019). News consist of cases and events related to environmental issues such as control of illegal mines by police, mining pontoon incidents, floods, illegal mining waste, fishermen protests against illegal mines in waters, and conflicts between miners and the community (Ibrahim et al., 2019). These various reports have opened up a wider picture of environmental damage in Belitung to the public at large.

World Bank's evaluation in 2003 revealed that mining activities in the Province of Bangka Belitung Islands did not contribute to local communities poverty alleviation (Resosudarmo & Subiman; Erman, 2013). Although tin mining actually has a significant impact on the community economic life, however it does not guarantee a sustainable life for the community (Rahmawati, Purwanto, 2019).

All components of society basically recognize the environmental damage in Belitung. However, local conditions do not trigger a collective action to stop increasing environmental damage. It seems nobody is responsible for the environmental damage, since all parties have an economic interest in tin products. Framing and reaction mobilization to environmental damage are weakened in the absence of public enemies. All actors such as the community, government and miners interact in mutual compromises. Common interest with no social contestation might be good for social stability, however the compromised society with no social contestation might not stop nor reduce growing environmental damage in Belitung.

This study aims to examine social contestation in Belitung related to environmental damage issues caused by mining activities. In terms of relationship, the study wants to investigate the extent to which contestation interactions can lead to emerging social movements. The study results is expected to provide academic reference in managing social contestation to generate social movements that can reduce growing environmental damage in Belitung.

II. Review of Literatures

Contestations and Social Movements

A social movement is a method used by social groups to convey their aspirations to those who are positioned as leaders. Aspirations are motivated by the basic human need for optimism, that life will be easier, safer and more comfortable (Jones, 2015). In society there is a diversity of aspirations among groups which can lead to social dynamics. The role and quality of relationships between groups determine the intensity of the conflicts that arise. According to Anthony Giddens (1985), collective action to achieve common interests that triggers collective action is referred to as a social movement. Tarrow (1986) argues that social movements exist within the framework of ongoing interactions between elites, opposing parties and the authorities. It is further explained that social movements are a form of political group resistance against elites, opposing parties, and the authorities. Groups can consist of groups of people or individuals who are allied with influential figures to take collective action in the form of resistance to dominant forces economically or ideologically. Tarrow gives the term cycles contention to a movement that develops and experiences an escalation of problems so that it can cause friction, which moves to trigger other movements wildly. Cycles of contention that extremely spread can cause even a revolution.

Contentious collective action is the basis of political resistance which can be instant or longer time, depending on the development of the situation and conditions in the area. The emergence of social movements does not necessarily mean that they go through stages. Initially, there was a framing process about a critical thought about the imbalance of social reality. The reciprocal between framing and mobilization can trigger movement.

Contest is closely related to opportunities and obstacles. The dimensions of opportunity according to Tarrow are increased access, the existence of shifting, elite division, the influence of alliances, and the existence of repression or facilities. The interaction between opportunity and mobilization is dynamic. Opportunities can create mobilization, and vice versa. Contestation action can be in the form of violence, interference or convention, related to a determined action strategy to achieve a rational goal. According to Tarrow, to gain support and provide markers, leaders create symbols and create framing. The existence of the media is considered important in constructing the framing and symbolization process to keep the ongoing mobilization in line with the values and direction of the goals. The existence of a mobilization structure in a social movement is needed to keep contingency actions underway to gather people, form coalitions, face opposing parties, and determine future points of direction to be achieved together. This mobilization structure can be accommodated in both formal and informal organizational forms.

In this study, Tarrow's thoughts will be used to analyze the contestation dynamics between mining stakeholders in Belitung. This theory is used to make inference to research data that has been collected through direct observation and interaction with informants. The analysis based on Tarrow's concept is expected to explain the real condition related to community in Belitung and identify opportunities arise from contestation dynamics to support sustainable development in Belitung.

III. Research Methods

Data collection and observation were carried out on January 16 to 19, 2021. The research location was in Buluh Tumbang Village, Tanjung Pandan District, and Belitung Regency. In Buluh Tumbang there is the H.A.S Hanandjoeddin International Airport that open more access to increasing tourism development of Belitung Island. The distance to the provincial capital is 181 kilometers. Based on data from the Central Statistics of Bangka Belitung Islands Province, the area of Belitung Regency is 2,263.16 square kilometers, which is 13.97% of the total area of the Bangka Belitung Islands Province with the largest number of islands, namely 165 islands. The total population in 2014 was 182,079 people or 12.51% of the total population of the Bangka Belitung Islands Province, with a female population composition of 56%. The population growth rate in the last decade was 1.51%. The number of labor force to the working age population is 69.32%. The population over the age of 15 who more than a week worked in the mining and quarrying category, processing industry, processing industry, electricity and gas procurement, water supply, waste management, waste and recycling, construction, in 2020, amounted to 22%. The average monthly net income of informal workers in this category in 2020 is IDR 1,719,597, while that of formal workers is IDR 2,406,214. In August 2020, the open unemployment rate was recorded at 4.82%. The Human Development Index for the last five years has increased from 72.29 to 72.51.

The subjects in this study were the people of Belitung with various work backgrounds. They consist of miners, farmers, employees, laborers, housewives, university students and high school students. The number of informants was 97 people consisting of 93 people from Buluh Tumbang village who filled out a question sheet consisting of 11 selected questions and 8 open questions, as well as 4 people who were directly interviewed. Location observations were also carried out by recording video images from the air for the location of Buluh Tumbang and its surroundings.

The unit of analysis in this study is text in the form of words and sentences that describe the participants' perspectives on the environmental impact of tin mining activities obtained from transcribing questionnaires, conversations and recording images obtained from observations at the research location. The data processing process is carried out by collecting data, making transcripts in the form of a written narrative on the answers and descriptions of the informants. Furthermore, the NVIVO application is used to develop a project model that represents a description of the research problem. The resulting model is then analyzed and interpreted.

The themes identified are (1) work background (2) existence of surrounding mining area (3) environmental damage perspective (4) forms of environmental damage (5) awareness of environmental damage (6) damage intensity expression (7) environmental improvement.

IV. Discussion

Based on obtained data, in the aspect of existence of surrounding mining area, most of informants stated that they felt the impact of environmental damage. For the aspect of damage intensity expression, most of informants can describe the intensity of environmental damage due to mining impact. As for the aspect of public awareness of the discourse on environmental damage related to mining activities, it is divided into three groups, namely: there are 78 informants (84%) who describe most of the community who agreed that mining activities have damaged the environment, only 2 informants who disagree that mining activities have damaged environment, and 13 informants describing community groups, taking a neutral attitude towards mining activities.

Although the environmental damage caused by mining is a discourse arise within community, however this stay only at awareness level which has not turned becoming collective action. The common concerns regarding environmental issues among community does not emerge into common goals and social solidarity. The interaction between community, elite, authorities and opposing parties, does not take place in a sustainable manner that can support the development of social movements. They acknowledge environmental damage, however there is no controversy between community, elite, authorities. This relatively homogeneous view limits information that can provoke each other. There is no dissemination of conflict-prone information by which one contestant is challenged, or used by individuals to provoke boundaries of social control that can trigger social movements (Tarrow, 1986). According to statement informant representing regional government, confirming the existence of regional government control despite numbers of obstacles. The regional government, since 2019 has no longer the authority to determine mining policy which become central government responsibility. This situation does not trigger a cycle-contention. The social dynamics in Belitung are relatively well controlled without extreme political escalation (Tarrow, 1986).

The history of Belitung's development cannot be separated from its stigmatization as a "Red Zone" during the New Order era. This stigmatization was related to "G30S PKI", with DN Aidit as key leader was originated from Belitung. Since 1965 New Order regime has suppressed PKI, clean out the 'Aiditism', banned PKI related activities and initiated mass roundups of party leaders and suspect members (MLM-US 2007). The community has common view on this unequal development. The historical phenomenon related to the PKI incident is a form of shift in socio-political life that caused the mobilization of people's aspirations move slowly.

Lack of physical and human resource developments in long period of time has certainly caused excesses in mental development of the Belitung people. Belitung people do not seem to have "bargaining power", because of limited knowledge, as well as economic limitations, so that mental passivity is very evident from the results of direct and two-way interactive observations. The majority informants expressed a uniform opinion that there has been environmental damage but they do not know what to do, have no efforts to protest nor organise community collective action.

The environmental damage caused by tin excavation activities can be found throughout Belitung. Tin is the backbone commodity for people in Belitung, that make them very dependent on tin products. If Tin production is disturbed, it can be ascertained that whole Belitung's economy will also be disrupted. On the one hand, they realised environmental damage caused by mining activities.

The passive sensitivity of most Belitung people can be caused by a 'vacuum' of human resource development during the New Order period, which was approximately 30 years. In addition, the very high dependence on tin can be a major contributing factor to the 'cessation' of the community's critical thinking process in finding alternatives to tin. As a result, everything related to tin mining activities, the community seems to be given up which is reflected by an informant's comment saying, "what else we can do, that is the way (tin mining) we make a living". Ironically, other source of economy such as; pepper farming, fishing / fishermen, kaolin, do not really interest the community compared to tin mining sector. Pepper gardening is considered not as promising as tin, especially when the price of pepper has dropped sharply. The fishing sector is carried out only for daily family dishes, instead of a reliable catching commodity (Masyhuri Imron, 2003). Meanwhile, other sectors, such as kaolin sand, which is the basic material for making ceramics, have not received much attention.

Belitung people are relatively not dynamic, tend to accept what they are. BPS data shows the unemployment rate in Belitung is very high, reaching more than 60%. the competition among political parties in Belitung is not stormy, even though there is one party that dominates, but it is not significant, in the sense that the people's votes there are divided, evenly across all competing parties. The three forms of contention, combine "properties of challenge", uncertainty, and solidarity (Tarrow: 2020) have not been seen in the people of Belitung. Although natural resources, apparent order and solidarity have not been fully formed, the dramatic level of social unrest has yet to be found there. Regarding the dimensions of Tarrow opportunity, the trade system that does not side with the farmers, and the limited job opportunities in the formal sector are forms of the absence of facilities that can encourage the emergence of social movements.

The ethnic conflict between Malays and Chinese is also a social issue that has become an open secret. Starting from the composition of the population from various ethnicities, such as; Malay vs. Chinese, to control of economic land between indigenous and non-indigenous, environmental damage. In Tarrow's explanation, the issue of ethnic conflict is a dimension of division that actually has the opportunity to trigger social movements. However, this can be suppressed by the indigenous community (Malays) long before the potential for riots to occur, while the ethnic immigrants (Chinese) act to respect indigenous people decisions. In this case a compromise is built.

The role of the community leader, such the village head, is not really heard. In general, what they think of as the head of village is mediocre without proper participation. This is evident in the case of empowerment within the Karang Taruna environment, and the complaints from the Head of Village to us.

Based BPKH (Balai Pmenafaatan Kawasan Hutan) data, it shows that mining, plantations and illegal logging dominate forms of land use activities that affect increasing flood flow rates. The affected areas are scattered areas under the ex-mines which were due to illegal mining at IUP locations. It requires strategic policy to restore area ex-mine damage. The development of information technology brings a change in society. The social media has influenced a shift in culture, ethics and existing norms. It also affects social change of Indonesia with a large population from various ethnic cultures, races and religions. Most of Indonesians use social media in obtaining and conveying public information that create changes affecting social relationship, social system, values, behaviour among social groups. The social media, both printed and electronic, has raised lot of news about damaging Belitung environment to stimulate social awareness and actions to save Belitung. As the examples on November 17, 2020, published news about incidents with many deaths of tin miners who were buried in sand, collapsing quarries. "Accidents often occurred because many of our people are lured by large profits from mining tin, so important aspects such as work safety are often neglected," said Dr. Ibrahim, to Mongabay Indonesia, Monday [14/9/2020]. Lack of technical education is also a factor in the occurrence of [illegal] tin mining accidents, plus mining is often carried out on the same land. "At that time, people's tin mining accidents had often occurred. However, the thoughts of getting paid instantaneously in large amounts seems to be addictive, while entrepreneurs continue to make profits," wrote Dr. Ibrahim, in his book published in 2013. Several regulations (Perpu) have been issued to deal with mining problems in Belitung, but there is still no law or regulations that protect miners' workers. The environmental damage in Belitung was also revealed in the VOA media, which discussed coral damage caused by Production Suction Boats used to mine tin sand from the sea. the ship often destroys the reef and when the tin runs out, it leaves damaged waters without fish. "When it settles, this mud will cover the coral where the fish breed. Once covered with this mud, no marine biota can develop there," said Asbaru.

The media raised the people concerns due to increasing damage caused by KIP Timah and the Government who continuously grant mining permits regardless the obvious environmental damage. Residents do not have any means to prevent the condition by expressing: "What can we do. We are just ordinary people. Obviously, we have tried to refuse the ship to operate, but now everything is in the hands of the governor, "said Asbaru. The Suction Ship incident has become a symbol of damage in Belitung.

Beside environment impact, tin mining has economic and social impacts. The Tin Suction Boat has caused reduced catching fish by local fishermen, that trigger community furious to take collective actions to stop KIT operation. However, tin companies continue to lure fishermen in several locations to accept suction boats operations by offering compensation money. "They divided us. There are some fishermen in other places who are given compensation money. Then they conveyed it to their friends here. There is also a fishermen organization which is said to agree, but it turns out that the organization is led by a mining entrepreneur. It's strange, "added Juliadi.

Another thing was also disclosed, mining on land destroys the forests, while mining at sea destroys coastal ecosystems and eliminates fish that will impact 45,000 traditional fishermen. Bangka-Belitung Province is in the highest position in terms of land damage, which reaches 1.053 million hectares or 62 percent of its land area. The industry is also a source of corruption. Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW) since 2004, recorded within 10 years state losses from tin mining is 68 trillion rupiah from taxes, reclamation fees, royalties, export taxes and non-tax revenues. Large companies such as Apple and Samsung have even been sued for using tin from illegal mining in Bangka Belitung. Both promised to evaluate the tin supplier, but it ended without clarity.

In the media, reported that Government has never taken firm action against the land reclamation provisions. Director of WALHI (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup), Ratno Budi, has recommended the Government not only depend on the economy for mining, but also develop other sectors such as agriculture, plantations and tourism. Together with a number of non-governmental organizations, Walhi has urged President Joko Widodo to impose a tin mining moratorium. Walhi also urged the government to carry out an environmental audit and review all granted mining permits. The government must enforce all mining companies to reclaim ex- mining land in Bangka Belitung. This reflect local community aspirations and pressures, that have not been addressed by Government seriously.

Government in the other hand, published its efforts to save the environment via babelprov.go.id. the Government realizes mining sector has significant role in the development and economy support in the Province of Bangka Belitung Islands despite its environmental damage. the Government has issued a reclamation and post-mining regulation to all land disturbed by exploration activities as stated in Article 2 of Government Regulation Number 78 of 2010. From a study on several media, it was not clear of Government's action as well as miners in delivering real measures to protect and restore environmental damage. It is reflected in the Kompas.com media which raised a news with title "The Government and Officials are Overwhelmed to Overcome Illegal Tin Mining on Bangka Belitung Island". The media revealed that the Governor of Bangka Belitung Erzaldi Rosman said the government and its apparatus had repeatedly controlled the miners and illegal tin. However, the difficulty of getting to mining location and limited personnel hindered the control efforts. This discourse was uttered by Erzaldi Rosman to respond hundreds of fishermen who demonstrated against coastal damage caused by mining activities in front of PT Timah, Pangkal Pinang, Bangka Belitung, Monday (5/4/2021). Erzaldi added that the Bangka Belitung Regional Leadership Coordinator Forum had agreed that in the future there would

be more efforts to control illegal tin miners. Due to limited personnel, he asked fishermen to work together to actively report illegal tin mining activities.

Belitung itself has symbols that can mobilize social movements in society. One of them is Laskar Pelangi which is a symbol of hope for the people of Belitung.

Until now, the mobilization promoted by the media have not been be able to move people in Belitung to make significant changes. Various media have raised many issues about the damage to Belitung, citizens' protests environmental damage, and promises from state officials to handle every case. Most of the people tend to be passive in facing the reality. The miner's efforts who mostly are not original inhabitants of Belitung do not demonstrate commitment and efforts to protect Belitung's environment.

Analysis of the problem with the Tarrow theory approach can be explained by the model contained in the project study model as shown in figure 1 and 2, which in general, the environmental damage caused by mining activities has raised public awareness. However, the historical background, the framing process, the mobilization actions that take place in the community have not led to continuous contestation actions so they do not lead to the formation of social movements. However, in recent years, there is a wave of new types of activism that is different from the social movements and campaigns that we are familiar with, namely 'quiet digital activism' (silent activism). This was motivated by the high economy dependence on the mining sector (Bo'do, 2019).

Our study on social dynamics in Belitung, conclude that stakeholders involved in activities in Belitung, especially the mining sector, have taken a compromised situation between the government, businessmen (read; mining actors), the community, so that this condition does not lead to a social conflict or confrontation that leads to an unfavourable situation.

The interaction between community, elite, authorities and the opposing parties, does not take place in a sustainable manner so that it does not support escalation condition to become social movements. Common view regarding environmental issues is not sufficient to emerge social solidarity. The historical background related PKI incident has also impacting on slow mobilization of people's aspirations, because access to socio-political developments is controlled by the ruling regime for quite long period. Imbalance community trading access and conflicts between ethnic groups could potentially trigger social movements, however, these issues can be softened by compromise between actors. Meanwhile, the social objection symbols raised by the media to the community becoming an opening door for socio-political change. However, the medial symbols and local mass organisations have not been able to play a significant influence to generate social movements.

The contestation amongst three stakeholders is a "social capital" which is required for future fair, equal and sustainable development. this can also lead to a "deadlock" of future development direction, because there is no party to "correct" each other. The study admitted that social and political stability are relatively good in Belitung. The contestation dynamic does not indicate trend to a social movement, but rather create a compromised zone to softened potential horizontal conflicts. In addition, the contestation dynamics are used to mobilize innovative ideas in finding solutions, opportunities, and social problems. this can be seen in tourism sector that has emerged as an alternative to other economic alternatives beside tin mining.

This social capital owned by Belitung can be accommodated as a basic strength amongst 'stakeholders' to sit together, equalize the vision, mission, find common ground that to build common welfare, and determine the direction that aims mutual benefits to all parties.

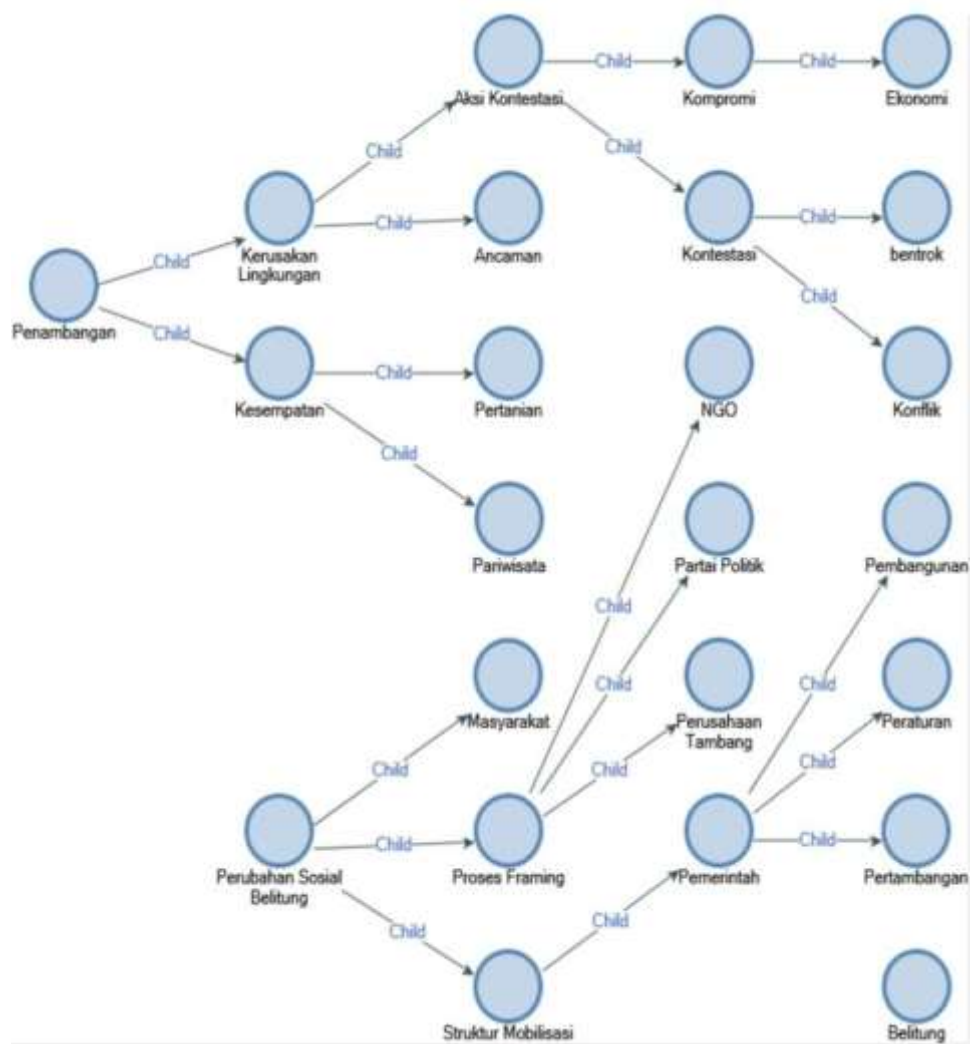


Figure 1. Project Study Model Software Output

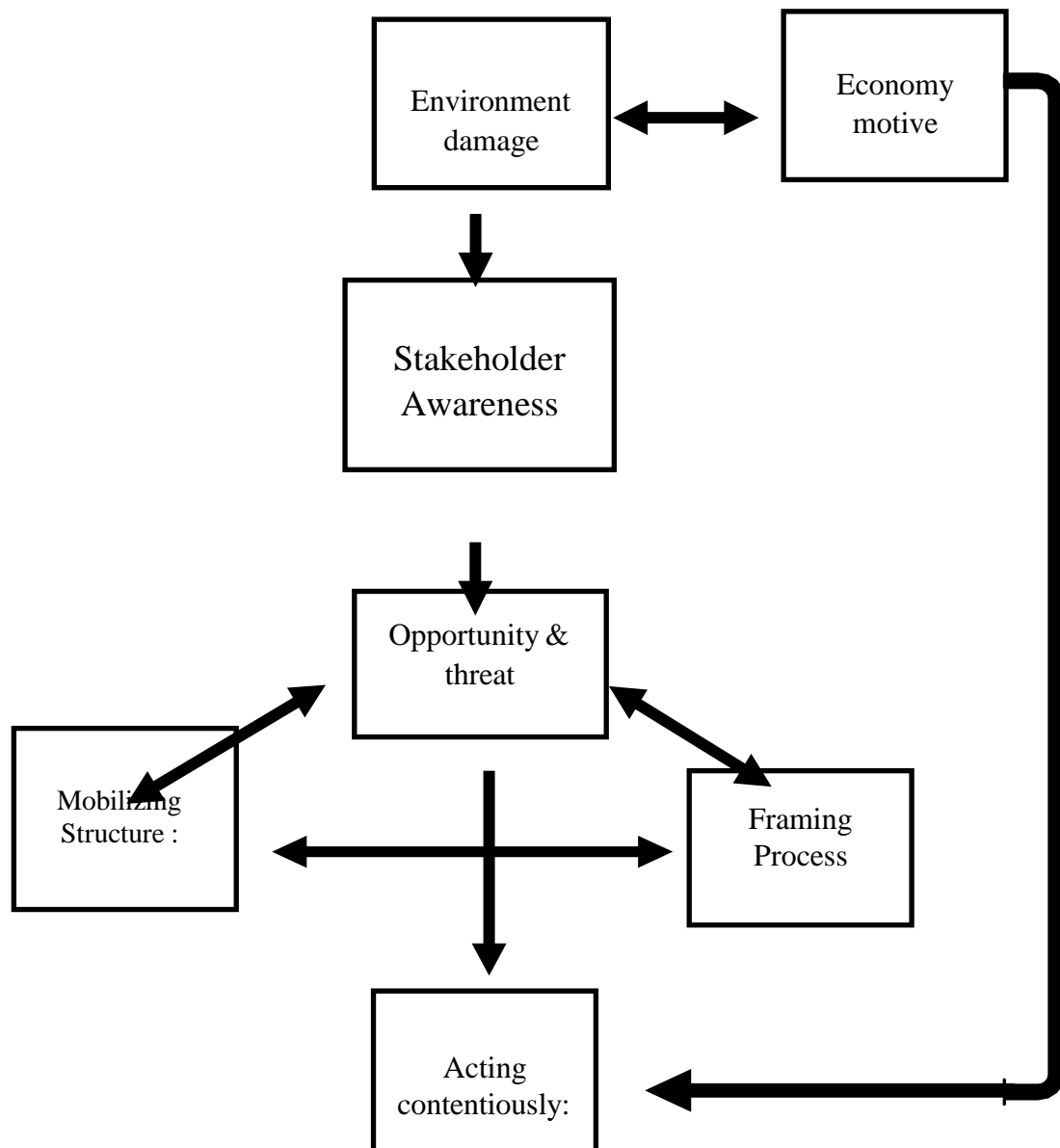


Figure 2. Simplification of Project Study Model

V. Conclusion

The aim of this study is to examine social contestation in Belitung related to environmental damage issues caused by tin mining activities. This study recognised contestation on environmental damage caused by mining activities in Belitung currently does not emerge a significant social movement, this far a compromised situation exists amongst stakeholders due to high dependence on economy benefits from tin production.

The study results are expected to provide academic reference explaining why majority people in Belitung although experienced severe environmental damage from tin mining activities for quite long period does not emerge a social contestation between key actors to limit or gradually stop tin production. Our research findings can not be generalised to the study of Bangka Belitung Province as the The number of informants (were 97 persons) were from Buluh Tumbang Village , Tanjung Pandan District, Belitung Regency. The study information about political party and illegal miners were hard to be confirmed directly from authorized person.

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