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## **THE CONTESTATION OF ACTORS AND CONFLICT ESCALATION IN GOLD MINING AREA OF SOUTHWEST MALUKU REGENCY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Indonesia is one of the largest countries with natural resources wealth scattered on land and at sea. The natural resources wealth owned is beneficial to improve the state economy and the people welfare. The management and the utilization of the natural resources are expected to provide benefits for all people scattered in the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, including in Southwest Maluku Regency, Maluku Province. Gold mining is the wealth owned by people in Southwest Maluku Regency, precisely in Romang Island. The management and the utilization of the gold mining have not been able to improve the welfare of the people, but instead it creates conflict among actors. The conflict among actors that occurred was caused by differences in interests on gold resources. As the result of the conflict, social relation among the people was broken, and at this level, the possibility of conflict escalation will occur. This research uses qualitative method with case study approach. The purposes of this research are to analyze the conflicts among the actors and the possibility of the conflict escalation. The results of this study indicate that the conflicting actors are the state, the private and the people, while the possibility of conflict escalation is due to the creation of social class structure and the weakening of cohesiveness in the society.

### **KEY WORDS**

Conflict, gold mining, actor, escalation, Southwest Maluku.

The development of the mining industry in 1970 in Indonesia helped increase the role of the mining industry to meet the domestic and the foreign needs. Various commodities are processed from the mining of oil and natural gas, coal, tin, gold and silver, as well as minerals such as sand, river stone, limestone, which is also followed by the growth of the management and manufacturing of finished goods industries. The impacts of the mining industry vary greatly depending on the type of commodity and its spreading characteristics. In addition to the environmental impacts, mining activities may also have social, economic and criminal impacts (Sudrajat, 2006) as well as conflicts.

The impact of the management and the utilization of natural resources (NR) by mining occurred in various regions in Indonesia, one of them is in Maluku. Maluku lies between the confluence of three main plates forming the earth's crust namely Eurasia plate (north), Indonesia Australia plate (south), and Pacific plate (west), which is a potential area for the formation of various mineral reserves, geothermal, and hydrocarbon basins. The mining potential and the potential energy to be developed commercially i.e gold, copper, nickel, limestone, sulfur, petroleum, and geothermal energy are located in various regions of Maluku Province (Hanafi, 2012). NR owned by Maluku also provides benefits for the society, but also presents problems of social, economic, health to criminal acts that culminate in conflict. Humanitarian problems (social, economic, health, to conflict) also occur in Buru regency, Maluku Province. The traditional mining extractive process that has taken place since October 2011 in several places in Buru regency, Maluku has created many problems, such as population growth, environmental damage and pollution resulting in health quality, prostitution to horizontal conflicts (Hasyimi et.al, 2014).

In addition to Buru regency, there is also one regency in Maluku which is experiencing mining problems, namely Southwest Maluku Regency, precisely in Romang Island. Romang Island is one of the small islands rich in natural resources with an area of 1129.6 km<sup>2</sup>