

Socio-Behavioral Changes in Dava Village: The Influence of the Gunung Botak Gold Mine

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the influence of the Gunung Botak gold mine on behavioral changes and identify the factors driving socio-economic shifts within the community of Dava Village, Buru Regency. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with purposive sampling used to select informants based on predetermined criteria aligned with the research objectives. Data collection was carried out through observations, interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed through stages of reduction, presentation, verification, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal significant social and economic impacts of the mining activities. Socially, the mine has disrupted social structures, triggering tension and conflict due to shifts in roles and inequitable distribution of mining benefits. These changes have led to polarization, distrust, altered communication patterns, and increased violence and aggression. Economically, many residents have shifted their livelihoods to mining, resulting in higher incomes that influence consumption patterns, lifestyle changes, and the emergence of new social status symbols. Several factors contribute to these socio-economic changes, including economic pressures from the mine, migration and urbanization, environmental impacts, and cultural and value shifts. Collectively, these factors reflect a complex and multidimensional socio-economic phenomenon caused by the presence of the gold mine.

Keywords: *Gold Mining; Mining Impact; Community Behavior; Socio-Economics; Local Community.*

Introduction

Humans, as social beings, undergo changes both individually and collectively. These behavioral changes are influenced by various conditions that shape human tendencies (Sudiyarti et al., 2021; Eptiana, 2021; Rusdi, 2021). Factors such as social, political, economic, cultural, and geographical conditions can significantly impact human behavior. Social change is closely linked to the evolution of thought and behavior, transitioning from classical, traditional, to modern phases, each undergoing distinct developmental processes and methods.

In the development of human resources and regional progress, adequate infrastructure serves as a key indicator. It supports human mobility and facilitates regional development (Pollo et al., 2023; Hatu, 2011; Saleh, 2020; Hamuddin et al., 2022). While development is essential and inevitable, it often comes at the cost of environmental degradation, which in turn affects community behavior.

The environmental degradation in Desa Dava, Kabupaten Buru, has been increasing each year due to gold mining activities at Gunung Botak. Both licensed and unlicensed mining operations have contributed to environmental damage, including water pollution. However, the impact extends beyond the environment, causing significant changes in the socio-economic behavior of the local community (Iwan & Niken, 2020; Fitriyanti, 2016; Listiyani, 2017; As'ari, 2018).

The use of chemicals in gold mining has resulted in water contamination, which directly affects the daily lives and behaviors of the community near the mining area (Ningrum et al., 2019; Fahlia, 2019; Crystallography, 2016; Rahman, 2019). The presence of the mine has shifted local livelihoods, with many former farmers and fishers abandoning their traditional roles to become miners. This shift has also led to the erosion of the community's social identity, transforming once socially cohesive communities into more

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individualistic societies.

Behavioral changes among the community arise as responses to external stimuli, driven by the influence of external socio-cultural environments and the impact of mining activities. The shift is not only evident in lifestyle changes but also in the mindset of local youth, many of whom now prefer mining over continuing their education (Fatulloh, 2019; Rahman & Affandi, 2014; Asnawi, 2019). This behavioral shift reflects the socio-economic stimuli affecting the community living on Buru Island.

Dissatisfaction with long-standing social conditions has also contributed to these behavioral changes (Rusdi, 2020; Supadi & Sudana, 2018; Sari et al., 2019). Other negative phenomena associated with mining activities include diminished environmental awareness, shifts in lifestyle, increased crime, and the emergence of prostitution. These behavioral transformations highlight the complex challenges faced by the community, making this topic a valuable case for research. The insights gained can inform strategies for protecting local communities and promoting sustainable development and independence (Pramono, 2016; Iye et al., 2023; Sam et al., 2019). This study focuses on the impact of gold mining on the behavioral changes in Desa Dava, Kabupaten Buru. The research aims to describe how the mine influences social and economic behavior and to identify the key factors driving these changes (Mansoor et al., 2024).

Literature Review

Social Change

Rogers (1962), emphasizes how shifts in economic, cultural, and environmental factors influence transformations in community behavior and social structures. Changes within a community are often triggered by external stimuli, such as technological advances, economic developments, or environmental changes, which push communities to adapt. The theory suggests that individuals and groups respond to these shifts by altering traditional behaviors, values, and social interactions to align with new opportunities and challenges. These adaptations often occur progressively, creating a transition from conventional ways of living toward more modern or economically viable alternatives.

In the case of the Gunung Botak gold mine, economic opportunities arising from mining activities have profoundly affected community behavior and lifestyle. Many local residents, who previously relied on farming and fishing as their primary livelihoods, have abandoned these traditional occupations to engage in mining. This shift aligns with Rogers' concept of social change, where communities adjust their ways of living in response to new economic possibilities. The lure of higher income from mining has altered not only individual behaviors but also broader community dynamics, influencing consumption patterns, social interactions, and family structures.

Furthermore, these changes reflect a deeper transformation in values and community cohesion. As some individuals gain more wealth from mining, social polarization becomes evident, creating new hierarchies within the community. Traditional social bonds weaken, and conflicts may arise as members compete over mining profits and resources. This adaptation to new economic realities, while providing short-term financial benefits, has long-term implications for social unity and sustainability. Thus, the application of Social Change Theory provides a useful lens for understanding the behavioral shifts in Desa Dava, as residents respond to both the opportunities and challenges brought by the presence of the Gunung Botak gold mine.

Social Identity Overview

The Theory of Social Identity, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), explains how individuals derive a sense of identity and self-worth from the groups they belong to. Group membership helps individuals shape their social identity by categorizing themselves and others into "in-groups" and "out-groups." This categorization often leads to comparisons between groups, which can result in competition or conflict when social status becomes a significant factor. Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals tend to seek a positive group identity by aligning themselves with groups that offer higher status or economic benefits, creating divisions among different social groups within the same community.

In the context of mining in Desa Dava, the income generated from gold mining activities has introduced new social identities and economic hierarchies. Those who have gained wealth through mining enjoy an elevated social status, marking a shift from traditional roles like farming and fishing to mining-based identities. As a result, there has been a reorganization of community dynamics, with miners forming new social classes that differentiate them from those still engaged in traditional occupations. This emergence of distinct social classes has led to the creation of in-groups, primarily composed of wealthier miners, and out-groups, including individuals who have not directly benefited from mining activities.

These newly formed identities have caused tensions and social fragmentation within the community. Differences in wealth and lifestyle foster distrust and polarization among community members, weakening pre-existing social bonds. Communication patterns and social interactions have also changed, as some individuals distance themselves from those with lower economic status (Rahman & Amir P, 2019). The competition for mining resources has exacerbated these divisions, contributing to conflicts and disrupting community cohesion. The application of Social Identity Theory offers insights into how economic shifts, such as those driven by the Gunung Botak gold mine, not only reshape livelihoods but also alter the social fabric, leading to complex intra-community dynamics.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design, where the researcher systematically and clearly illustrates the object of study. By using this approach, the study aims to explore the subject in depth, allowing for a thorough understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. The emphasis on clear illustration ensures that the complexities of the object of study are well captured.

The purpose of this research is to provide a detailed description of the impact of gold mining on community behavior. This focus serves as the foundation for qualitative analysis throughout the investigation, highlighting the social and behavioral changes brought about by mining activities. Through this descriptive approach, the research aims to uncover patterns, insights, and perspectives directly related to how gold mining shapes community dynamics.

Participant Selection

Informants for this study were selected using purposive sampling, a technique that involves intentional selection based on predetermined criteria aligned with the research objectives (Etikan, 2016; Tongco, 2007). Informants were chosen based on their direct involvement, experience, knowledge, and understanding of the issues under investigation. The criteria for selecting informants included: 1) residents of Desa Dava who work in gold mining; 2) individuals who have directly experienced the effects of mining; 3) the village head; and 4) community and cultural leaders.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection occurred through several stages:

1.Observation: Initial data was gathered through direct observation, focusing on the influence of gold mining on community behavior.

2.Interviews: The interview process provided information regarding the impacts of gold mining on the community. During this stage, the researcher clarified the purpose of the study to each informant separately, fostering a familial atmosphere to encourage open dialogue. The researcher posed questions aligned with the research focus. This process was supported by recording and note-taking to capture primary data from informants, complemented by secondary data derived from observations, field notes, literature reviews, including books, journals, articles, media reports, and relevant photographs.

3. Documentation: Data gathered through documentation included quantitative information about the research site, such as the number of miners from Desa Dava, population statistics, land area, and environmental conditions, as well as other data pertinent to the research focus.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process involved several stages:

1. Data Reduction: The researcher processed the data to clarify the research issues, integrating both field and library data. Data was collected and selectively filtered to align with the research focus.

2. Data Presentation: Relevant data collected by the researcher was distinguished from irrelevant information, organized, and categorized according to defined research boundaries.

3. Verification: This stage involved drawing conclusions following the presentation of data. Verification was an ongoing process throughout the research, wherein the researcher aimed to uncover the meaning within the gathered data. Ultimately, this process facilitated the formulation of conclusions based on the comprehensive data collected.

By employing these methodologies, the research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how gold mining influences social and economic behavior in the community of Desa Dava, Kabupaten Buru.

Results

The Influence of Gold Mining on Community Behavior

The behavior of communities often changes, influenced by various social and economic conditions experienced in their environment. The introduction of new elements outside of daily routines can transform the social and economic structure of a community, both from internal dynamics and external pressures (Nuraini N. et al., 2019; Tumangkeng SYL., Maramis JB., 2022). The presence of gold mining within a community significantly impacts the socio-economic behavior of the surrounding populace. The existence of the Gunung Botak gold mine in Dava Village has far-reaching effects on various aspects of community life, leading to changes in social and economic behavior among residents living near the mining area. These impacts can be categorized into two primary areas: the influence of gold mining on social behavior and its impact on economic behavior.

The gold mine induces changes in social structure, prompting shifts in community roles, as individuals previously engaged in agriculture and fishing transition to becoming gold miners. This shift results in social disparities and alterations in social behavior between those involved in mining activities and those who are not. Social conflicts arise as a consequence of the gold mine's presence, triggering social dynamics both internally among community members or miners and externally with entrepreneurs or mine owners. These conflicts often stem from unequal profit distribution among mining workers and competition over land in mining locations. Such social strife leads to behavioral changes, including distrust and social polarization, where conflicts regarding profit distribution breed distrust among community members. Injustices related to profit-sharing, land access, or natural resources create tension and social polarization. Consequently, communities that once had strong social solidarity become fragmented into competing and hostile groups, limiting interactions with others who do not share their interests and fostering exclusivity. Furthermore, social conflicts alter communication patterns; amid rising tensions, communication becomes more guarded and cautious. Direct interactions diminish, replaced by behind-the-scenes discussions that form hidden alliances. Previously open expressions of opinion become rare, as individuals fear misinterpretation or exploitation by opposing parties. Unresolved social conflicts frequently culminate in acts of violence. When dissatisfaction and perceived injustices cannot be addressed through mediation or dialogue, some community members may feel compelled to resort to violence to achieve their goals. This shift transforms the community's behavior into a more aggressive stance in expressing discontent, manifested through protests, road blockades, or physical violence.

The influence of mining on economic behavior occurs in two main aspects. Firstly, the majority of residents near the mining area shift their professions to become miners and engage in businesses related to mining, such as providing goods and services. Consequently, there is a noticeable decline in employment within the agriculture and fishing sectors on Buru Island. Secondly, residents' incomes surrounding the mine generally rise significantly, subsequently affecting their consumption behavior. This income increase provides access to goods and services that were previously unattainable, resulting in a shift in lifestyle. Community members begin to adopt more modern consumption patterns, allocating their income towards luxury items such as vehicles, electronic equipment, and branded clothing, thereby using these luxury goods as symbols of newfound social status.

Factors of Changes in Socio-Economic Behavior

The community in Dava village surrounding the mining area is experiencing changes in socio-economic behavior as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. The presence of the gold mine has a significant impact on the local population, both directly and indirectly, driven by various underlying factors occurring within the community.

The establishment of the Gunung Botak gold mine on Buru Island marks the beginning of a major transformation in the socio-economic life of the area. The existence of the gold mine not only offers hope for improved welfare through new economic opportunities but also brings significant changes in the socio-economic behavior of the surrounding community. From changes in employment patterns to new social dynamics, the presence of the gold mine has altered the way of life and interaction within the local community.

Changes in the socio-economic behavior of the community around the Gunung Botak gold mine are influenced by several factors. First, the economic impact of mining: the potential for significant profits from mining activities attracts both local residents and individuals from outside Buru Island to participate in this industry. Consequently, this shifts the community's economic orientation from subsistence to market-based activities.

Second, migration and urbanization play a crucial role. The large mining activities in Gunung Botak, which are believed to contain abundant gold deposits, have drawn attention through social media, attracting migrants from various regions. This leads to an increase in population around the mining area and accelerates the process of urbanization, impacting lifestyle changes, values, and social norms among local residents.

Third, environmental impact is a critical factor. Environmental degradation resulting from mining activities, such as ocean pollution, river contamination, and land degradation, directly affects the fertility of crops, livestock health, and the well-being of the local population. These environmental issues raise concerns that influence their daily behaviors.

Fourth, cultural influence and values are significant. Contact with new cultures brought by workers from outside Buru Island, who come to work at the gold mine, introduces new customs and values that affect the local culture and behavior. As a result, traditional values experience a shift towards newer, more materialistic, and individualistic norms. This cultural influence raises individual awareness regarding the importance of preserving and protecting local culture, which is increasingly eroded by the presence of workers from various ethnic backgrounds. This has led to the emergence of cultural preservation communities among the local population, including those living near the mine and other communities across Buru Island.

These four factors driving changes in socio-economic behavior are interrelated and collectively shape the behavioral transformations within the community surrounding the mining area in Dava village, Buru Regency.

Conclusion

The existence of the Gunung Botak gold mine has become a significant attraction for both the local community and those from outside Buru Island. Several factors contribute to this appeal, including the substantial gold reserves, the availability of small business opportunities for mine workers, the relatively high wages for gold miners, and its strategic location. The presence of the gold mine in Dava village has had a profound impact on the social and economic behavior of the surrounding community.

Socially, there have been major changes in the social structure, tensions, and conflicts arising from shifts in roles and injustices in the distribution of mining profits. This has led to polarization, distrust, changes in communication patterns, and an increase in violence and aggressiveness. Economically, the community has experienced changes in livelihoods, with many transitioning to mining, as well as increased income that affects consumption patterns, lifestyles, and social status symbols. This indicates that the presence of the gold mine has altered the socio-economic behavior of the community in both positive and negative ways, necessitating greater attention to manage its impacts.

Changes in the socio-economic behavior of the community around the mine are influenced by several interrelated factors. The mine's presence has brought about significant transformation in the community's economic orientation, shifting from subsistence to a market economy. Additionally, migration and urbanization driven by mining activities accelerate changes in the lifestyle and social values of local residents. Environmental impacts from mining operations also affect the health and daily behaviors of the community. On the other hand, contact with new cultures brought by external workers has shifted traditional values, although it has also fostered awareness of the importance of preserving local culture. Overall, these changes reflect a complex and multidimensional socio-economic phenomenon resulting from the presence of the gold mine.

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