

THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA TO PREVENT POTENTIAL NATURAL DISASTERS: A STUDY ON THE NEWS OF IRON SAND MINING CONFLICTS

Dionni Ditya Perdana ^{1,*}

¹Department of Communication Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
University of Bengkulu

Email : ¹ ddperdana@unib.ac.id*

* corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Conflicts of interest are inevitable when the natural potential is harnessed in mining. This happened in Seluma Regency, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia, in a conflict due to the impact of iron sand mining involving the community, mine owners, and the government. Mining always intersects with environmental degradation, which leads to disaster triggers. This is also inseparable from the media attention shown in its reporting. The purpose of this study is to determine the role of the media in preventing potential disaster events, specifically related to reporting on mining conflicts in the iron sand mines in the Seluma district. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The analysis method was carried out using a framing analysis from Robert N. Entman, where researchers will dismantle the construction of news submitted by the media from the iron sand mine conflict in Seluma Regency. The study's findings suggest that the information conveyed in the news of iron sand mining conflict emphasizes the impact on the survival of the fishermen of the surrounding community. This research shows that the media can play a role in preventing potential natural disasters through reporting on mining conflicts with the perspective of sustainability and environmental sustainability.

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1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country that has many regions with abundant natural resource potential. Since the colonial period, natural resources have become an essential and exciting factor in Indonesia. The existing natural potential makes some parties interested in utilizing it through mining activities. Mining activities in Indonesia are carried out officially, legally, or illegally. Not infrequently, mining activities by large companies, local companies, and governments to individual communities bring conflicts of interest to them.

Mining is a complex operation because it is formed from various dimensions, namely material, social and normative dimensions. Transactions that occur in mining create dependence between actors. There is a conflict between natural, economic, and human resources in creating opportunities for cooperation that often lead to the generation of conflict, greed, and grievances (Bebbington et al., 2008; Franks et al., 2014; Hilson, 2002;

Mining Minerals and Sustainable Development Project, 2002; Ocaklı et al., 2020; Stevens et al., 2013).

There is a dualism in looking at the availability of natural resources, first is utilization in supporting the economy and development, but on the other hand, contrary to views related to environmental sustainability. A sustainable ecological situation is expected to play a role in preventing natural disasters. Antunes et al. (2022) mentioned that the paradigm of disaster development is seen to have two conflicts, namely between socioeconomic processes that create human vulnerability and natural processes that create geophysical hazards. This is felt to have an effect, especially in less developed countries.

In Seluma regency, Indonesia, there is a natural resource, iron sand, attracting mining investors. Helia, Wijaya, and Liker (2017; 2004) mentioned that iron sand is an essential factor in making cement compared to other raw materials. The quality and quantity of iron sand are the determining factors for rejects and losses, both financial and non-financial.

The use of natural resources through mining brings several impacts, both socially, economically, health, and up to environmental sustainability. Positive results can be in the form of regional income from the mining sector, job creation, etc. However, what becomes a conflict is when the mining does not bring prosperity and even causes danger, especially for the communities around the mining area.

The involvement of local communities is crucial in assessing ecosystems to formulate their role in environmental governance. In addition, ecosystem assessment affects social preferences and trade-offs in decision-making and land change (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Quevedo et al., 2021). Therefore, when this is not done, conflicts will arise. As happened to iron sand mining in Seluma district, Bengkulu Province, the refusal of fishermen and surrounding communities for mining is related to the damage to coastal ecosystems that are their source of income. Concern for preserving nature is one of the focuses in avoiding disaster events due to ecosystem instability.

Environmental issues have now become a global problem faced by every country in the world (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2020; Franks et al., 2014; Neckel & Hasenfratz, 2021; Park & Lee, 2019). Policies related to environmental sustainability determine the fate of future generations. From the perspective of environmental journalism, the media needs to play a role in showing the masses that environmental degradation has occurred. There needs to be an attitude from the community to be willing to preserve the natural environment. AlQahtany & Abubakar (2020) mentioned that the whole world makes mitigating the risk of natural disasters the primary policy, especially in developing countries that are vulnerable to economic losses when natural disasters occur.

The flow of information in today's global system allows social networks and new media to become alternative spaces in building public discourse and awareness of disaster response that is increasingly integrated (Cottle, 2014; Guo et al., 2012; Matthews, 2019; McCormick, 2016). The journalist profession is also experiencing a shift in attracting public attention through new platforms such as social media (Bélair-Gagnon & Holton, 2022; Mathews et al., 2023).

The collection and presentation of news and or information related to natural events and the causes of events that are or will happen to humans in the future related to disaster events are referred to as disaster journalism. The presentation of information before, during, and after a disaster or event becomes the standard of disaster journalism (Houston et al., 2012, 2019). Therefore, disaster journalism plays a vital role in providing mitigation to countermeasures. The power of the media to disseminate information massively can build audience knowledge related to environmental problems that are being faced. This study specifically looked at disaster journalism's role in reporting on iron sand mining conflicts in the Seluma district. News related to the conflict arises when the community holds an action to grab attention. This research focuses on the role of the media

in the perspective of disaster journalism, specifically by analyzing news related to the iron sand conflict in the Seluma district.

2. Method

This research is conducted through a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. The author's research focuses on the news of the iron sand mining conflict in Seluma regency, which occurred in December 2021. The reason for the selection of the time span is that it is the beginning of the conflict raised in mass media reporting. The analysis method was carried out using a framing analysis from Robert N. Entman, where researchers will dismantle the construction of news presented by the media from the iron sand mine conflict in Seluma Regency. According to Entman, news framing can be done in 4 ways: (1) define the problem: which means seeing what the event is and with positive or negative values; (2) diagnose cause: identify the cause of the problem, namely who is considered to be the cause of the problem; (3) make a moral judgment: moral evaluation means evaluating the cause of the problem; (4) Treatment Recommendation: suggests to solve the problem, means offering a way to deal with the problem and sometimes predicting the outcome (Junaidi, 2017; Rozalena, 2020; Santosa, 2016; Shin, 2020). As the purpose of framing analysis is to find the direction of the framing of reality by the media, through this approach, researchers will find the role of the media in responding to iron sand mining conflicts from the perspective of environmental journalism.

3. Results and Discussion

In this study, the author chose 3 news stories according to the focus of the research, namely related to disaster journalism in reporting on the iron sand conflict in Seluma regency. The details of the news are as follows:

- 1) Seluma Market Residents Affirm to Reject Iron Sand Mine (*Warga Pasar Seluma Tegaskan Tolak Tambang Pasir Besi*) published on Wednesday, December 8, 2021, on the following page: <https://bengkulu.antaraneews.com/berita/202961/warga-pasar-seluma-tegaskan-tolak-tambang-pasir-besi>
- 2) Women Rally to Reject Iron Sand Mine at Seluma Market published on Thursday, December 23, 2021, (*Kaum Perempuan Berunjukrasa Tolak Tambang Pasir Besi di Pasar Seluma*) on the following page: <https://bengkulu.antaraneews.com/berita/206297/kaum-perempuan-berunjukrasa-tolak-tambang-pasir-besi-di-pasar-seluma>
- 3) Women Repellents Mine in Seluma Survive Until Night published on Thursday, December 23, 2021, (*Perempuan Penolak Tambang di Seluma Bertahan Hingga Malam*) on the following page: <https://bengkulu.antaraneews.com/berita/206393/perempuan-penolak-tambang-di-seluma-bertahan-hingga-malam>

The researcher then analyzed the framing in the selected news, referring to entman's framing analysis unit as follows:

News 1: Seluma Market Residents Affirm to Reject Iron Sand Mine (*Warga Pasar Seluma Tegaskan Tolak Tambang Pasir Besi*)

a. Define Problems

In the first paragraph of news text 1, defined problems are immediately displayed through the following narrative: "*The people of Pasar Seluma Village, Seluma Regency, Bengkulu Province, reject the existence of the PT Faminglevto Bakti Abadi iron ore sand mine on the coast of Pasar Seluma Beach because it will accelerate abrasion and damage coastal areas as a land barrier from the Indian Ocean waves.*" In this news, the emphasis on the rejection of iron sand mines is related to the problem of abrasion and damage to coastal areas. This shows that the existence of mines has terrible implications for environmental sustainability. In addition, the news also shows the community's concern for their environment.

b. Diagnose Causes

The source of the problem in the news is shown through the use of excerpts from the statement of the origin, namely Hertoni as the Village Head. "*Village communities generally reject the existence of this iron sand mine because it will damage coastal and marine ecosystems. Meanwhile, the average community is a fisherman who makes a living from the sea.*" This statement can answer the root of the problem that environmental damage due to mining leads to disruption of the survival of local communities.

c. Make Moral Judgement

The justification of the argument, as stated in this report, is supported by data related to the mining permit. "*... The company is not eligible to mine. This is under the announcement of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources number 1343.pm/04/DJB/2016 about the 19th Clean and Clear and the list of IUP revoked by the regent governor or mayor.*" This further suggests that mining activities should not be carried out in the area apart from community rejection because they do not get government permits.

d. Treatment Recommendation

Treatment recommendations given through news reports lead to the cessation of mining activities to avoid conflicts. This is shown in the following news text: "*Hertoni mentioned that his party rejected the existence of the mine because there had been a conflict in the community during the presence of an iron sand mining company in Pasar Seluma Village a few years ago.*" We don't want any more of our people to be jailed because of the iron sand mining conflict," he said."

News 2: Women Rally to Reject Iron Sand Mine at Seluma Market (*Kaum Perempuan Berunjukrasa Tolak Tambang Pasir Besi di Pasar Seluma*)

a. Define Problems

"Several mothers in Pasar Seluma Village, Seluma Regency, Bengkulu Province rallied at the site of an iron sand mining plan owned by PT Faminglevto Bakti Abadi." The opening sentence in the news text immediately displays the subject matter that wants to be conveyed to the reader. The existence of a rally event that occurred at the location generally became the content of the news.

b. Diagnose Causes

In the aspect of diagnosing causes, the answer to the defined problem that was previously formulated was found. The citation of the statement of the source becomes an affirmation of the intention of the protest. "*Our coming here rejected the existence of iron sand mines. We request that the company's equipment be removed and that there is no mining activity here.*"

c. Make Moral Judgement

News texts seek to build arguments that reinforce the foundations of the defined subject matter. "*These mothers reject the existence of iron sand mines because they threaten coastal ecosystems that are prone to abrasion and disrupt the livelihoods of people who work as fishermen.*" Still, in line with previous reports, people's desires are based on the wise sustainability of the environment, which has direct implications for their lives.

d. Treatment Recommendation

The resolution of the problems constructed in the news favors the resolution of the conflict with the closure of the iron sand mine. "*We're not messing around. If there is no attitude from the government, we will stage the action again and with more masses.*" The citation of the statement chosen in this framing is very influential in the media's emphasis.

News 3: Women Repellents Mine in Seluma Survive Until Night (*Perempuan Penolak Tambang di Seluma Bertahan Hingga Malam*)

a. Define Problems

Still, in line with previous reports, news related to the mining rejection demonstration continued on the same day. This news emphasizes the determination of the people to fight for their wishes. "*The women of the Seluma Market Village community of Seluma Regency, who acted to reject the iron sand mine, still survive in the area of the planned mining site until the evening.*" This gives a stand that the problem of mining conflicts is a very serious thing for the community. They strive to fight for their wishes or rights.

b. Diagnose Causes

The actor or source of the problem in this news is the decision of the protesters, namely the mothers of the local villagers who insist on asking for a response from the relevant officials. *"The mothers are determined to spend the night at the mine site until there is a government decision regarding the cessation of mining activities."*

c. Make Moral Judgement

"We refused. Without mine, our lives are already prosperous. Mines will only damage our village". The citation of the source's statement used in this news story strongly influences the moral decisions of the existing problems. Local communities do not need the existence of mining, and the emphasis on environmental damage also continues to be a narrative in the news text.

d. Treatment Recommendation

The solution to the problem offered is to end mining activities. *"We ask that all this mining equipment be removed and not brought back here. We don't need mines," said Coordinator of action Zemi Tipantri.*" The conflict will be ended if mining is stopped.

Discussion

Environmental issues are currently quite intensively raised in the mass media, this is certainly a response to climate change, pollution and deforestation that are happening today. These problems have direct implications for human survival, as well as the balance of the ecosystem. Campaigns related to environmental care also fill the mass media or social media today. Social movements have sprung up to increase awareness and commitment to environmental sustainability. Many parties, activists, governments, companies and the community are asked to take concrete actions in responding to environmental damage.

Indonesia, with its rich natural resource potential, often brings conflict. Conflicts of interest are inevitable when the natural potential is utilized in mining (Hilson, 2002; Ocaklı et al., 2020). Power relations sometimes oppress society, and partiality towards environmental sustainability becomes neglected. Conflicts between mine owners, governments, and some communities have never risen to the surface in the mass media, but some have also grabbed media attention. When a conflict results in casualties or a major violent riot, the media targets it as an exciting commodity to be informed about. Ideally, the media should provide reporting on the incident and education related to environmental issues and their impact from the perspective of disaster journalism.

In disaster news reporting, depth and accuracy are urgent. Communication technology plays a role in helping journalists to conduct deeper investigations or ask difficult questions is consequently reduced (Zafra, 2018). Accuracy is important because the community makes disaster information a reference in taking action after a disaster (Fraser & Fitchett, 2022; Miles & Morse, 2007). Disaster journalism is a concept where the media plays a role in reporting disasters in the pre-disaster phase, during and after disasters.

The media, in the perspective of disaster journalism, is not just reporting a disaster event but also providing disaster education and information. Through this, the media can play a role in mitigation efforts for disaster management. One of the functions of the mass media is related to supervision, so the hope is the role of watchdogs from the media in the event of a conflict. In this case, it is related to iron sand mining with fishermen or residents in the Seluma regency. They can find a perspective that favors the prevention and management of disasters due to natural damage.

The media can carry out the role of three institutions at once. The media can be a social institution, a political institution, or a business institution. As a mass social media institution, it can influence how audiences think about emerging issues in society. As a political institution, the media also has the power to transfer its ideology to influence public opinion. On the one hand, the media is also a business institution where the media is oriented towards financial benefits for business development.

But often, the portion is not balanced, and we even call it a commercial medium. This naming is the answer to why the media focuses more on commodification than usefulness. In the news related to disasters and conflicts, this has not escaped being a problem. Coverage related to disasters and conflicts only shows a report of events. But more than that, the media can help through its power. The mass media can do the ability to influence public opinion to influence policy.

The results of the framing analysis conducted on the news of the conflict between the community and iron sand mining in Seluma district show that the media has tried to prominent issues that show partiality towards survival. The topics in the news are related to environmental damage caused by iron sand mining. Communities, most of which are fishermen, reject mining because it has direct implications for their livelihoods. In addition, the news also shows the problem of licensing mining companies that have issues. This further confirms that the solution to the situation in the conflict is to return the area to the community as it should be.

So this research shows that conflict reporting, especially related to environmental issues, can be used as a disaster journalism approach. This is done so that the public or readers understand that environmental damage can have implications for both natural and non-natural disasters.

4. Conclusion

Conflicts related to environmental issues often appear in the mass media. Of course, the existing debates are always related to economic interests, development and environmental sustainability. The mass media has an important role in framing this narrative. As with the function of mass media, there is a role to provide information and education as well as social control related to conflicts related to the interests of the wider community. The iron sand mining conflict in Seluma is quite concerning because the community has gone down to the mining site to close the company's access. The community needs the right news related to the problems they are facing. The results showed that media framing through the prominence of the issue of the impact of environmental damage caused by iron sand mining plays a role in preventing natural disasters. The information conveyed in the news of the iron sand mining conflict emphasizes the impact on the survival of the surrounding community, which is fishermen. This research shows that the media can play a role in preventing potential natural disasters through reporting on mining conflicts with the perspective of sustainability and environmental sustainability. The mass media needs to continue to cultivate sensitivity or sensitivity in favor of environmental sustainability. This is what makes the writing of journalists (news) alive in conveying a message of peace in the context of news related to conflict.

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