

# Gold Mining and Political Struggles for Access in Banyuwangi, East Java

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*Received:* 31 December 2019 | *Accepted:* 29 May 2020 | *Published:* 12 June 2020

## Abstract

This article explores how the materiality of natural resources influences social movements. Applying a relational paradigm and new materialism approach, this article explores the materiality of gold as a vital element of actor–network linkages, organisation, framing mechanisms, and recruitment. The transformation of gold from an ore into a mechanism for commodification reflects the interactions between capital holders, scientists, political actors, and legislators. This socio-material formation has limited residents' access to such resources as gold, water, land, wood, and clean air, and this momentum has given rise to a social movement in opposition to gold mining activities.

This article shows that social movements are not monolithic, but rather dynamic movements that consist of various actors, issues, narratives, and strategies. This study focuses on the anti-mining movement in Tumpang Pitu, Banyuwangi, East Java, and its two decades of struggle to illustrate how the formation, networking, fragmentation, and evolution of social movements is influenced by their materiality (in this case, gold). This article finds that the commodification of gold influences movements' repertoires. This offers an alternative explanation for social movements, which have long been dominated by an actor–structure approach that views social movements as linear, monolithic, and constant collective actions that respond to marginalisation and injustice.

**Keywords:** *materiality, social movements, gold mining corporation, access, Tumpang Pitu, Banyuwangi*

## Introduction

This article discusses a social movement active within the mining sector. The extraction of natural resources is often

rejected by local residents, who mobilise themselves in opposition to mining and other exploitive activities (Urkidi, 2010; Grugel et al., 2017, pp. 1-19). The Mining Advocacy Network (Jaringan Advokasi

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Tambang, Jatim) reports 71 cases of protests in opposition to mining and the government's issuance of permits in Indonesia between 2014 and 2019; most occurred in East Kalimantan (14 cases), East Java (8 cases), and Central Sulawesi (9 cases) (Thea, 2020).

Tarrow & Tilly (2015) offer an important approach for analysing social movements as part of the struggle for power and within the context of contentious politics. The literature has identified social movements as resulting from the complex relations and networks with historical (rather than universal) roots (Tarrow & Tilly, 2009; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015, pp. 10–11). It has also underscored the importance of marginalisation and injustice as powerful tools for constructing the political agency and activism of social movements (i.e. Özen & Özen, 2009; Samorna, 2013; Grugel et al., 2017). Nonetheless, the literature has failed to identify the specific mechanisms that connect networks and facilitate collective recruitment (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015).

In order to fill this gap, this study identifies the materiality of natural resources as having affecting social and political relations and connecting actors–network through collective action. Such an approach is rarely used, as the actor–structure approach is dominant (Tarrow & Tilly, 2009; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015).

Materiality has been used by new materialists to explain the implications of the capital–nature relationship for commodification, the mechanism through which natural resources are transformed into economic commodities (Bakker & Bridge, 2006). This approach can be used to explain how the material characteristics of gold can influence the socio-material aspects of actor–network relations, capital,

technology, and knowledge, as well as resource legislation and policy. Such socio-material aspects also influence social movements (Bennett, 2004; Law, 2009; Callon, 2017). According to Dougherty (2013), the material politics approach holds that gold has specific characteristics as a global and strategic commodity that inspires competition and rent-seeking behaviour. Its mining, meanwhile, has significant ecological implications (Mudd, 2007). On the one hand, competition prioritises actors–networks with strategic political relations that they can exploit as they seek to maintain access (Bakker & Bridge, 2006; Ribot & Peluso, 2009). On the other hand, such competition results in the marginalisation of ordinary people and limits their access to nearby natural resources (including water, land, and wood). This drives the creation of collective movements in opposition to mining activities.

Employing a relational paradigm and new materialism approach, this article explores how the dynamics of contestation and commodification affect social movements. Changes in materiality can influence actors and networks, as well as their organisational evolution, framing, and recruitment mechanisms. Ultimately, social movements processually undertake collective action, experience multiplicity in their motivations, agendas, narratives, and face significant uncertainty.

To illustrate the formation, fragmentation, and evolution of collective action, this article takes the case of the anti-mining movement in Tumpang Pitu, Banyuwangi. For two decades, this movement has used different approaches and formations to oppose gold mining. The latest formation is a civil society alliance, the People's Forum for Banyuwangi (Forum

Rakyat Banyuwangi, ForBanyuwangi), that has organised members in opposition to PT Bumi Suksesindo (PT BSI) and its mining activities. Since 2012, PT BSI has held a permit (IUP OP) to exploit 5,000 hectares of land in Sumberagung Village, Pesanggaran Regency, including 1,942 hectares of which is in Tumpang Pitu. This case shows how gold extraction and commodification requires not only significant capital, technology, and labour, but also close relations with political actors and policies that permit mining within protected forests.

The opposition to mining in Tumpang Pitu shows another face of Banyuwangi Regency, which in recent years has become known nationally as a tourist destination—the "Sunrise of Java". Since being elected in 2010, Regent Azwar Anas has implemented new and innovative development policies to expand the tourism sector, ultimately receiving an award from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 2017. In 2015, these policies resulted in the funding and construction of an international airport with direct flights to Jakarta and Kuala. Investment in Banyuwangi soon followed, with new hotels and restaurants being built and various international congresses being held in the regency. The expansion of the tourism sector was also used to promote a narrative of environmentally sound mining (Ilhami,<sup>3</sup> personal communication, January 3, 2017); The Banyuwangi Office of Tourism designated Merah Beach and

Merah Island, located less than five kilometres from the gold mine in Tumpang Pitu, as natural tourism attractions (Director of Mining, Office of Industry, Trade, and Mining, personal communication, January 5, 2017).

This study employs various qualitative approaches to collect data, including in-depth interviews conducted between January and December 2017.<sup>4</sup> Interviews were conducted with anti-mining activists, government officials tasked with handling mining and forestry, members of pro-mining civil society organisations, as well as local residents. Data were also collected through observation of anti-mining activists' activities. Government documents produced between 2015 and 2018 were also reviewed, as were mass media coverage, statistics, and social media.

This article builds its argument through four stages: a theoretical discussion of gold and social movements, a history of gold commodification at Tumpang Pitu, a discussion of the politico-economic capacity involved in commodification mechanisms, and finally a discussion of the anatomy, repertoire, and mechanisms through which social movements have conducted framing and recruitment at Tumpang Pitu.

<sup>3</sup> Pseudonym

<sup>4</sup> Data used in this article were collected through a collaborative programme involving the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada, and the University of Melbourne titled "Adaptive Resource Conflict Management Strategies in Decentred and Multi-

level Governance Contexts" (2017). The authors would like to express their gratitude to the programme director, Dr Nanang Indra Kurniawan, for his permission to use the data. The authors are responsible for the contents of this article.

## Social Movements and the Materiality of Gold

Studies of social movements tend to employ a structuralist paradigm and depart from narratives of marginalisation and injustice. Consequently, such studies tend to be deterministic in nature, viewing the unequal redistribution of economic resources as the main cause of social movements (Pichardo, 1997). In their analysis of social movements, structuralists tend to employ one of two models: the social structural model that defines social movements as the products of structural inequality or the political structural model that perceives social movements as resulting from political mobilisation (Tarrow & Tilly, 2009, p. 12).

Such a structuralist approach was ultimately challenged by the new social movement approach, which—while still attributing social movements to marginalisation and injustice—focuses more on the values and beliefs that create collectivity (Melucci, 1996). Langman (2013), for instance, argues that cultural filters such as emotion, morality, and spatial interactions contribute to the formation of collective identity. By recognising such cultural aspects, this paradigm tends to be more fluid, open, and decentralised in its framing of social movements (Pichardo, 1997). Grugel et al. (2017) argues that narratives of marginalisation and injustice are powerful tools with which political agents who wield the power of rights-based claims can create collectivity and design resistance movements (Tarrow & Tilly, 2009; Grugel et al., 2017). Samorna (2013) explains that framing may be recognised as part of how political agents discursively construct collectivity.

The new social movement offers an understanding of the lengthy process through which socio-political constructs are integrated into people's everyday lives and collective action is created. However, this literature tends to be static in its discussion of the actors and structures involved in social movements. Tarrow & Tilly (2015) argue that it is necessary to enrich the structuralist–constructivist approach by recognising the dynamics of contentious politics and its effect on social movements. Tilly and Tarrow define contentious politics as follows:

*"We call contentious politics, that actors made claims on authorities, used public performances to do so, drew on inherited forms of collective action (our term for this is repertoires) and invented new ones, forged alliances with influential members of their respective polities, took advantage of existing political regime opportunities and made new ones, and used a combination of institutional and extra institutional routines to advance their claims." (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015, p. 7).*

Tarrow (2011) explains that contentious politics occurs when ordinary people, allied with individuals with the capacity to shape public opinion, confront those with power and their supporters. Such a situation is made possible by opportunities and obstacles that incentivise actors to take action with the limited resources available to them (Tarrow, 2011, p. 6). Contentious politics involves three aspects of struggles for power: contention, politics, and collective action (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015, pp. 7–14). Contention is an integral part of claim making, as well as the restriction of others' activities, while politics involves interactions with government actors and institutions with significant political

capacity (such as corporations); these intersect in such diverse fields as regulation, licensing, and property rights. Collective action, meanwhile, is a means of organising communities and stakeholders to promote their shared interests and desires.

This framework contributes a means of understanding social movements as having historical rather than universal roots (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015), wherein collectivity is interpreted and translated through a framing mechanism. Such an approach underscores the importance of socio-political relations in everyday interactions, with the formal approach being used to articulate interests through government institutions and the informal approach being used to conduct extra-bureaucratic negotiations (Tarrow & Tilly, 2009; Tarrow, 2011). Such an approach holds that social movements have their own repertoires, i.e. collective action strategies that are produced through reflection upon and knowledge of relevant issues (Tilly, 2005). Tarrow & Tilly (2009; 2015) recognise that the literature has failed to provide a clear explanation of recruitment and networking mechanisms. Several causes have been proposed, including access to information, solidarity, and social control (Tarrow & Tilly, 2009, p. 12; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015).

This study seeks to address this issue by investigating materiality and its transformation in the commodification of gold, with a specific focus on the interactions between networks, actors, information, reports, policies, and discourses through which collective action is created. Following Sørensen (2009), this article explores materiality to understand the economic and political dynamics of natural resource exploitation and social movements (Bebbington et al., 2008).

According to Dougherty (2013), the particular characteristics of gold drives competition for direct access of this resource as well as rent-seeking behaviour (Dougherty, 2013). Ultimately, the commodification of gold shapes the struggles and contestations between capital holders, labourers, and technology (Castree, 2003).

Gold has become part of the global commodity chain, wherein natural resources are extracted from particular locales before being processed and traded across space and time. Since at least the 16th century, gold has been a symbol of wealth and prosperity (Braudel, 1992). According to Singh & Bourgouin (2013), the global commodity chain requires governments to become involved in extractive industries to reduce risks and promote investment in extractive industries (Kaup, 2008). States thus act as custodians, having the authority and capacity to manage resource exploitation and commodification while restricting movements and activities that could potentially disrupt investment (Özen & Özen, 2009).

Owing to its material characteristics as a strategic global commodity, gold has a particular resource access priority (Bakker & Bridge, 2006). Ribot & Peluso (2009) emphasise that access is capacity, the *power* to benefit from resource exploitation. Unlike the property regime, which is rooted in ownership and legalisation processes, the access regime involves networks of actors with access to natural resources within political, economic, and cultural structures (Ribot & Peluso, 2009). Richardson & Weszkalnys (2014) argue that contestation is caused not only by states, companies, and citizens' different levels of access, but also by their

different perspectives of gold and other natural resources. Under the dominant extractivist paradigm, other views of gold are ignored, including that which Carreño (2016) identifies as an *ecological paradigm* wherein gold has a living materiality and is closely intertwined with the water, wood, air, land, and people surrounding it.

In this article, this theoretical framework is used to understand how the shifting materiality of gold at Tumpang Pitu has limited residents' involvement in extractive industries as well as their access to nearby natural resources (such as water, land, fish, and wood). As a result, contentious politics has emerged, with residents and activists working together to claim access.

### **History of the Extraction and Commodification of Gold at Tumpang Pitu**

Gold is a material that has long been used as part of global trade (Hartwick, 1998). Today, the gold market consists of three main segments. Almost half of gold is produced to meet consumer demand (48.7 per cent), being used for jewellery and information technology; another 34.5 per cent of gold is mined for investment and currency (bars, coins, etc.); the remainder is used by central banks (PT MDKA, 2015). Indonesia contributes significantly to this market, having produced 109 tonnes of gold in 2014 (mostly from Grasberg in Mimika, Papua) (Emas, 2015). Ongoing efforts to discover alternative sources of gold have identified veins at Tumpang Pitu, in southern Banyuwangi Regency. This hill was previously part of Meru Betiri National Park, a protected region since the colonial era (Maimunah & Muhammad, 2002).

Exploration and exploitation activities in Banyuwangi show what Castree (2003)

identifies as the intersection of capital and nature in the commodification of natural resources. This commodification has influenced the policies and regulations produced by national, provincial, and municipal governments, which have converted protected land, violated the principle of informed consent, and excluded local residents from decision-making processes. Consequently, natural resource exploitation is frequently protested.

Owing to the value of gold, capital, labour, and technology are invested to identify the location and availability of gold ore. Between 1991 and 2000, a number of companies—both domestic and international—began seeking new sources of gold in Indonesia, including PT Gamasiantara (Golden Eagle Indonesia), Korea Toosun Holding, Golden Valley Mines, Placer Domet, and Hakman Group JV. In 2006, PT Indo Multi Cipta (IMC)—later renamed PT Indo Multi Niaga (IMN)—continued these explorations, as did PT Hakman, PT Jember Metal (PT JM) and PT Banyuwangi Mineral (PT BW). These explorations show the significant capacity and capital of these companies, which received permission to explore protected forests from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

The exploitation of these resources, however, only became possible following the commencement of decentralisation in the early 2000s. After the implementation of regional autonomy, local governments were granted the authority to manage mining and other extractive activities. On 7 September 2000, the Regent of Banyuwangi granted a mining permit to PT BW; similarly, the Regent of Jember provided PT JM with the opportunity to begin investment. Both companies were

granted access to parts of the Meru Betiri Forest, which spans from southern Banyuwangi to Jember. In 2006, the Regent of Banyuwangi Ratna Ani Lestari (2005–2010) cancelled the Hakman Group's permission to explore Tumpang Pitu (Walhi Jatim, 2018b), ultimately granting a mining permit to PT Indo Multi Niaga (IMN) in 2007. PT IMN also received permission (Izin Pinjam Pakai Kawasan Hutan/IPPKH) from the Ministry of Forestry, after the ministry converted the status of protected forest into the production forest, as this mineral was perceived as strategically important (Walhi Jatim, 2018a)

The decision to begin mining in Meru Betiri National Park, including Tumpang Pitu, was broadly protested. Environmental activists and conservationists argued that previous explorations of the region had resulted in draughts (Walhi Jatim, 2018b). They also questioned the land's dual status as protected forest and mining district.

The situation was further complicated by competition over gold, as multiple government agencies were involved and thus regulatory and geographic lines were blurred (Dougherty, 2013; Bakker & Bridge, 2006). This is evident in PT IMN's interactions with the local and national government. Although Regent Ratna Lestari had permitted mining in 2007, this permit was revoked by her successor Azwar Anas. Likewise, PT IMN fell afoul of Law No. 4 of 2009 regarding Mineral and Coal Mining as most of its stock was owned by foreign investors. Consequently, without the knowledge of PT Intrepid—its largest shareholder—PT IMN sold its stock to PT Merdeka Copper Gold,

resulting in conflict between PT IMN, PT Intrepid, and the Banyuwangi Regency Government. After international arbitration was conducted in 2012, the Banyuwangi Regency Government decided to issue a permit to PT Bumi Suksesindo (a subsidiary of PT Merdeka Copper Gold), as this would ensure that the gold mine remained under Indonesian control (Director of Mining, Office of Industry, Trade, and Mining, personal communication, January 5, 2017).<sup>5</sup>

PT Merdeka Copper Gold (henceforth PT MDKA) established networks with actors who had the authority to control access to gold and forests (Ribot & Peluso, 2009). PT MDKA is a holding company established 2012 by PT Saratoga Investama Sedaya and Provident Capital Indonesia, companies that were founded by Sandiogo Uno and Edwin Soeryadjaya. One significant stakeholder, holding 3.2% of shares, is Sakti Wahyu Trenggono, a politician who backed Joko Widodo during the 2014 presidential election after having served as the National Mandate Party's treasurer. Its commissioners are individuals with significant economic and political influence. These include Edwin Soeryadjaya, the President of the Board of Commissioners; Garibaldi Thohir, a coal businessman from Grup Adaro Energy; Richard Bruce Ness, a commissioner with PT Indika Energy and PT Petrosea who had led PT Newmont Minahasa Raya between 1997 and 2004; and Dhohir Farisi, a Gerindra Party politician, member of Indonesian Parliament's Commission VII (responsible for natural resources, environmental affairs, and conservation), also husband of influential Nadhlatul

BSI granted the government a golden share of 10 per cent in December 2012.

<sup>5</sup> The Government of Banyuwangi issued No.188/547/KEP/429.011/2012 on 9 July 2012 issued a mining permit to PT BSI. In return, PT

Ulama figure, Yenny Wahid. Mining was facilitated by the close relationship between Regent Azwar Anas and Minister of Forestry Zulkifli Hasan, who supported the regent's proposal to convert 9,742 hectares of protected forest into productive forest through Ministerial Decree 826/Menhut-II/2013; this decree released 1,942 hectares of protected forest, thereby allowing mining to occur (Martadi, 2015).

A relational process was also used to influence political actors and shape policy, thereby enabling PT Bumi Sukses Indo (BSI), a subsidiary of PT MDKA, to begin

operations in 2017. PT MDKA has since become the fourth largest extractor of gold in Indonesia (as seen in Table 1). To secure gold production, the national government identified the Tumpang Pitu gold mine as a vital national object through Regulation of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources No. 651 K/30/MEM/2016. The national government thus identified gold as a strategic commodity, with the implication that its production and distribution had to be protected by the military and the police.

**Table 1. Gold Mining Contracts in Indonesia**

Corporation	Production (2014, kg)	Location of Production Mining Business License
Freeport Indonesia	36,256	Papua
Nusa Halmahera Mineral	10,255	North Maluku
Agincourt Resources	8,566	North Sumatra
Merdeka Copper*	4,800	East Java
J Resource Bolang Mongondow	2,770	North Sulawesi
Tambang Tondano Nusajaya	2,437	North Sulawesi
Newmont Nusa Tenggara	2,436	West Nusa Tenggara
Aneka Tambang	2,334	West Java
Meares Sopotan Mining	2,208	North Sulawesi
Kasongan Bumi Kencana	1,518	Central Kalimantan
Indo Muro Kencana	675	Central Kalimantan
Natarang Mining	435	Lampung
Ensbury Kalteng Mining	34	Central Kalimantan

Note: \*Operations began in 2017; figures represent the 2018 production target

Source: Derived from Indonesia Mineral and Coal Information (2015)

### **Materiality and Politico-Economic Capacity**

This study shows that gold not only has the economic capacity to attract capital, labour, and technology, but also the political capacity to attract diverse actors. Through its involvement of material (capital, labour, and technology) and non-material (prosperity and regional development discourses), gold creates a

socio-material formation of *governable space* with specific and complex values, order, and power relations (Watts 2003, 2004). It thus has the politico-economic capacity to influence power relations and blur the boundaries between the global and the local, the public and the private (Allen, 2016)

*Gold governable space* is first created when gold ore is extracted from the ground,

separated from other minerals, and transformed into granules of 20% gold and 80% silver. Ore is thus associated with *capital*, technology, and expert technicians with particular skills and knowledge. In 2014, it was estimated that Tumpang Pitu held 898,262 oz of gold ore and 21,644,984 oz of silver ore. In its initial public offering, PT MDKA stated that the ore was so extensive that its extraction would take between eight and nine years (PT MDKA, 2015).

The company identified its ore extraction and production processes as good mining practices (Sodiqin, 2018). PT BSI has adopted heap leaching, a tailing-free approach that it claims is environmentally sound (Aini, 2018). According to PT MDKA (2015), it employs a barren leach solution (BLS) to separate gold ore from other minerals within a holding pond of dilute alkaline cyanide solution. After a series of carbon and electrochemical processes, a pregnant solution of gold and silver is produced. These precious metals are then melted into granules and sent to Antam, a government-owned enterprise in Jakarta, for purification. This process results in gold bars that meet London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) standards (PT MDKA, 2015).

This *gold governable space* has been incorporated into the power structure and its narratives of mining and development. PT BSI has linked its gold mining with regional development, prosperity, and job-creation. The company employs 1,500 people, 65 per cent of whom are Banyuwangi natives (<https://bumisuksesindo.com/>). It has also given a *golden share* of stock—10 per cent—to the Banyuwangi Regency Government. At the initial public offering, this stock was

valued at approximately Rp 22 billion; according to PT BSI (2017), since then this stock has increased in value to Rp 440 billion. PT BSI also uses 1.5 per cent of its total income for its corporate social responsibility activities, through which it seeks to empower the people of Banyuwangi through education, healthcare, and economic support. The Banyuwangi Regency Government, meanwhile, has linked gold mining with regional development and welfare, with the *golden share* forming part of the regional budget and mining jobs providing tangible benefits to residents (Director of Mining, Office of Industry, Trade, and Mining, personal communication, January 5, 2017).

Such framing of gold extraction is closely linked to its materiality, its ability to connect to political agents and create opportunities for the populace. Regent Azwar Anas has played a key role, working through formal and informal mechanisms to create support. The local government has disseminated pro-mining developmentalist narratives through its official forums, including those for environmental impact analyses.

Informally, meanwhile, Azwar Anas—an activist with Nadhlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia—has communicated pro-mining ideals in religious forums. This has been important in Banyuwangi, as most residents are NU-affiliated Muslims. This religious organisation is influential at the village level, and alumni of its boarding schools have created informal networks through which they have promoted pro-mining developmentalist narratives at the grassroots level. In their sermons, they urge the faithful to enjoy Allah's blessings and interpret the Qur'an as promoting the exploitation of natural resources such as

gold (*Pesantren* administrator and NU activist, personal communication, January 6, 2017).

Another religious organisation that has supported gold extraction is the Blambangan Forum (Forsuba), which was established by a former Multipurpose Ansor Front (Banser) officer in 2004. This forum has received funding from several mining companies, including IMN and BSI; in return, it has been asked to communicate the companies' intentions to its members and their peers (Ahmad<sup>6</sup>, personal communication, December 19, 2017). For instance, in 2015, PT BSI used Forsuba to mediate its conflict with local residents. Two years later, Forsuba confronted anti-mining activists and was the only civil society organisation urging the immediate prosecution of protestors who had waved a hammer-and-sickle banner.

Village level dynamics have also been influenced by NU members at the national level. In 2015, Yenny Wahid—the daughter of former President of Indonesia Abdurrahman Wahid and a prominent NU leader—was made an independent commissioner of PT BSI. After some of the company's facilities were razed by local residents, she was replaced as commissioner by her husband, Dhohir Farisi, who similarly occupies an important position within NU.

Nonetheless, it must be recognised that NU is not a monolithic organisation. Indeed, the pro-mining positions of senior NU members in Banyuwangi have been opposed by their juniors in the Nahdliyin Front for Natural Resource Sovereignty (Front Nahdliyin Untuk Kedaulatan Sumber

Daya Alam, FNKSDA) (NU activist, personal communication, December 16, 2017).

This situation illustrates the politico-economic capacity of gold and its extraction (Dougherty, 2013), which simultaneously stimulates competition while consolidating capital, labour, and political agency into a *gold governable space* (Castree, 2003; Watts, 2003, 2004). At the same time, however, some local residents have seen Tumpang Pitu as a living material (Carreño, 2016), translating their different ontology into a struggle for access.

### Understanding the Anti-Mining Movement

Social movements are produced through historical processes, the everyday mechanisms through which everyday challenges are overcome—including making demands, organisational strategies, and collective action (Tarrow & Tilly, 2009; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). This study finds that these framing mechanisms are complicated and extended by the materiality of gold, including the capital, technology, labour, political agency, regulations, and prosperity narratives involved. Near Tumpang Pitu, the anti-mining movement has resulted from the consolidation of diverse initiatives, motivations, and interactions into collective action.

The specific actors, strategies, narratives, framing mechanisms, recruitment mechanisms, and networks of the anti-mining movement have been determined by the materiality of gold. This is evident from three pillars of the movement: its repertoire, including its strategies and action plans; its framing

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<sup>6</sup> Pseudonym, Forsuba.

mechanisms and means of creating collective solidarity; and its recruitment mechanisms.

### **Creating a Repertoire**

A repertoire is not a partial strategy or action, but rather an organised and consolidated collective movement with a specific goal. Near Tumpang Pitu, the anti-mining movement's repertoire has developed as residents have improved their knowledge of mining and interacted with others in their everyday lives. As Tarrow argues:

*"People do not simply 'act collectively' [...] Contentious politics is not born out of organizers' heads, but is culturally inscribed and socially communicated. The learned conventions of contention are part of society's public culture. Social movements are repositories of knowledge of particularly routines in a society's history, which helps them to overcome the deficits in resources [...]"* (Tarrow, 2011, p. 19).

Tilly (1995, pp. 41-44) argues that contention and collective action intersect in a *repertoire of contention*, with ordinary people sharing their understandings and perceptions to work collectively towards a mutual goal. Since the 1990s, the commodification of gold in Tumpang Pitu has limited local residents' access to such natural resources as water, land, air, and wood. This was their primary motivation for developing collective approaches and strategies.

However, owing to the materiality of gold, activists' efforts to develop a repertoire have been difficult and lengthy. As residents' perceptions of gold have changed, so have their views of its extraction and mining. The most recent approach, ForBanyuwangi, has been used

to consolidate residents who have developed diverse interests, goals, motivations, and understandings. Since the initiation of political reform in 1998, as well as the subsequent implementation of decentralisation afterwards, activists have had more opportunities to articulate their opposition to (or acceptance of) gold mining.

The anti-mining movement traces its roots to Pancer Hamlet, Pesanggaran Village, which is located approximately five kilometres from the mine. Owing to its coastal location and its proximity to productive forests, this hamlet occupies a strategic position. Most of its residents work in the tourism industry on nearby Merah Island or as fishermen; to support the latter, in the 1970s the national government provided Pesanggaran with a dock for landing and transporting fish (Administrator of Pancer Hamlet, personal communication, January 5, 2017). In 1994, Pesanggaran was hit by a tsunami. Residents believe that the brunt of the tsunami was borne by Tumpang Pitu, (Administrator of Pancer Hamlet, personal communication, January 5, 2017) and fear of similar environmental disasters was a major driver of their opposition to gold mining in Tumpang Pitu.

Nonetheless, residents are not united in their beliefs. For instance, some welcomed the construction of PT BSI's facilities in 2013, asking only that each household receive Rp 1 billion to compensate them for their loss of income. Fishermen, both those who supported mining and those who opposed it, feared that the gold mine would pollute the ocean with its dilute alkaline cyanide, as had occurred in Buyat Bay in North Sulawesi. Fish populations would scatter, and this would endanger their livelihoods.

Owing to the commodification of gold, as well as the accompanying prosperity narrative, residents have taken diverse views of mining. Nonetheless, general trends can be identified in specific locales and within particular sectors. Those who accept mining tend to live in the highlands and work as farmers; a small minority are employed at the gold mine. Conversely, those who oppose the mine tend to live along the coast, and most are involved in the fishing and tourism sectors (Administrator of Pancer Hamlet, personal communication, January 5, 2017). Residents who accept the mine tend to perceive it as offering them an opportunity to increase their incomes and improve their economic situation. Through the multiplier effect, entrepreneurship has become increasingly common in the highlands, with local residents supplying food to miners, selling heavy equipment, working at the mine, or receiving financial support. Reflecting trends elsewhere (Dougherty, 2013), these pro-mining activists tend to compete to access company projects and funds.

This diversity has made it difficult to mobilise and organise residents into a consolidated anti-mining movement. Observations in the field identified three types of repertoires, which were used during three different periods in response to extractive activities in Tumpang Pitu.

The anti-mining movement was initiated by a group of fishermen in Sumberagung Village, Pesanggaran District, in the 1990s. These early activists worked in conjunction with fishermen from Kedungrejo Village, Muncar District, from whom they were separated by a peninsula located, as well as the Sumberagung Village Government, the Banyuwangi Forum for Environmental Learning (Baffel),

and environmental activists. Despite its opposition to modern gold mining, these early activists affiliated themselves with local strongmen who operated artisanal mines in the Wringinagung Hamlet; this indicates that activists were driven by different motives and ideologies.

In its earliest stages, the anti-mining movement opposed the exploration of Tumpang Pitu by PT Hakman and PT IMN (Chief of Sumberagung Village, personal communication, January 6, 2017). Residents used mass actions and demonstrations to show their consolidated opposition to mining, even though they were organised in separate associations. Fishermen, farmers, and artisanal goldminers all feared that their livelihoods would be disrupted and that corporate mining would pollute the natural environment upon which they depended. Although these activists were unable to stop exploration, they were able to effectively use blockades and other mass actions to force negotiations and guarantee the creation of jobs and the provision of corporate social responsibility.

Exploration continued between 2000 and 2015. However, in 2012 the government granted PT BSI permission to mine 5,000 hectares of land in Sumberagung; in 2013, Ministry of Forestry converted 1,942 hectares of land of protected forests in Tumpang Pitu into productive forests allocated for PT BSI's mining area. These events provided the movement with the momentum needed to strengthen its bonds. Unlike previously, when activists had exhibited no collective identity, activists—be they entrepreneurs, artisanal miners, farmers, and tourism professionals—identified themselves collectively as the People's Anti-Mining

Movement (Gerakan Rakyat Anti Tambang, Geramang).

In the Banyuwangi dialect, the word *geramang* denotes *large red ants that live in wood*. Activists thus implicitly likened themselves to ants, working collectively to overcome threats and dangers. Geramang established networks with local and national politicians, including members of the Indonesian Parliament from the Democratic Party of Indonesia –Struggle and members of the Banyuwangi Local Parliament from the Nasdem Party. Activists held joint prayers, blocked roads, and besieged the company's offices. Although these activists successfully showed their collective strength, they were easily provoked, and two separate demonstrations (in 2011 and 2015) became clashes between protestors and company strongmen.

Political parties became involved when a number of activists were accused of destroying PT BSI property and arrested by the East Java police on 25 November 2015.<sup>7</sup> NS, a member of parliament from the Democratic Party of Indonesia – Struggle, retained a lawyer to defend these activists. Activists and their allies also reported the police to three intermediary institutions: the Commission for Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS), the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM), and the Witness and Victim Protection Agency.

<sup>7</sup> Twelve representatives of the organisation, accompanied by their lawyer Amrullah, went to KontraS' offices in Surabaya as well as Komnas HAM and LPSK's offices in Jakarta. They reported that the police had come to the village and arrested residents accused of participating in the riot. This had included several activists who vocally rejected the mine, including Ari,

Komnas HAM send a team to investigate allegations, but never released its findings to the public. Ultimately, the movement became fragmented as activists perceived themselves as having been exploited to advance politicians' personal interests (Ilhami,<sup>8</sup> personal communication, January 3, 2017).

Between 2016 and 2018, activists began organising themselves intensively in response to PT BSI's construction of new facilities, the identification of Tumpang Pitu as a vital national object, and the commencement of mining in 2017. Opposition intensified after one activist, Heri Budiawan (better known as Budi Pego), was accused of having spread communist teachings during an April 2017 demonstration. The criminalisation of this dragon fruit farmer from Sumberagung Village gave the movement the momentum necessary to consolidate itself into a civil society coalition. Ultimately, although the hammer-and-sickle banner was never found (let alone introduced into evidence), Budi Pego was sentenced to ten months' imprisonment. This decision was appealed by the Advocacy Team for Agrarian Sovereignty (Tim Advokasi Gerakan Rakyat untuk Kedaulatan Agraria, Tekad Garuda), but this appeal was rejected by the Supreme Court of Indonesia, which ultimately added another four years' imprisonment to Budi Pego's sentence (Walhi Jatim, 2019).

Fitri, and Edi Laksono. As evidence, the police presented four cartridges. Ultimately, two of these people (Fitri and Edi Laksana) were identified as suspects in the riots, but cleared of all charges. Meanwhile, Ari did not experience any legal repercussions.

<sup>8</sup> Pseudonym.

At this time, the anti-mining movement adopted a new repertoire. Responding to the commencement of mining, activists allied themselves with various civil society organisations in Banyuwangi (Ilhami,<sup>9</sup> personal communication, January 3, 2017). Allying itself with other organisations, including the Nahdliyin Front for Natural Resource Sovereignty, the Indonesian Forum for Environment (Walhi), and Tekad Garuda, the movement established ForBanyuwangi. Recognising the ineffectiveness of allying with political parties, activists determined that an alliance with non-governmental organisations would better advance their goals and promote greater consolidation (Ilhami,<sup>10</sup> personal communication, January 3, 2017).

ForBanyuwangi enacted a long-term strategy to increase support at the village level. Members have continuously urged, particularly women, to openly articulate their opposition to mining. Several of the activists involved in the Budi Pego case were produced through this cadreisation process. ForBanyuwangi has also worked in conjunction with local artists to design attractive media that could be distributed through social media and performances to attract the attention of the general public.

### ***Framing and Shaping Collectivity***

Before adopting the name ForBanyuwangi in 2017, the anti-mining movement had created collectivity through a lengthy process. Tarrow (2011) identifies framing as an important component of creating solidarity within the context of *contentious politics*. Such framing is not

static, but rather dynamic and processual, changing along with its socio-cultural context (Benford & Snow, 2000; Urkidi & Walter, 2011). In this case, framing mechanisms enabled activists and their allies to spread specific views of gold while simultaneously incorporating diverse motives and goals into a singular movement.

In the 1990s, the anti-mining movement framed exploration activities as threatening the environment and the livelihoods of local farmers and fishermen. They attributed the pollution of local springs as well as the land's reduced arability to the ongoing gold exploration. Such a livelihood narrative not only promoted solidarity amongst farmers and fishermen, but also attracted the support of artisanal miners.

Environmental and livelihood narratives continue to be used to create collectivity, albeit with some modifications. Since 2015, activists have linked these narratives to local wisdom (Polgov-KSI, 2016), using their collective memory of the earthquake and tsunami of 1994 to promote a shared understanding of the importance of preserving Tumpang Pitu. Activists argue that open pit mining and heap leaching will erode Tumpang Pitu and reduce its windbreaking ability, thereby resulting in stronger winds and waves. Anti-mining activists have also embraced the rituals that were traditionally used to promote good harvests and catches, arguing that the environmental impact of mining would reduce harvests and otherwise harm the community (Suni,<sup>11</sup> personal communication, December 17,

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<sup>9</sup> Pseudonym.

<sup>10</sup> Pseudonym.

<sup>11</sup> Pseudonym, Geramang activist.

2017). Activists have also incorporated traditional communal prayers (*istigoshah*) in their activities.

As PT BSI's facilities were constructed between 2013 and 2015, government security forces became increasingly prevalent, as did local resistance. Activists responded to this situation by emphasising security forces' violations of human rights and repression of activists. This became particularly prominent after the destruction of PT BSI property on 25 November 2015, when it was used to counteract the police narrative that activists had promoted unrest and chaos. Activists used this approach again in 2017, after Budi Pego was prosecuted for spreading communist teachings.

After PT BSI began production in 2017, ForBanyuwangi—the latest permutation of the anti-mining movement—strengthened itself by establishing alliances with civil society organisations. ForBanyuwangi spread a narrative of environmental justice, focusing particularly on mining's deleterious effect local residents' access to economic, social, and cultural resources. This narrative was used to counteract the prosperity and regional development narratives promoted by the Banyuwangi Government and PT BSI. ForBanyuwangi also strengthened its bonds with other movements by participating in anti-development activities around Indonesia, protesting (among other things) the reclamation of Benoa Peninsula in Bali and the construction of coal-fired power station in Indramayu. Since 2017, ForBanyuwangi has also utilised its agrarian justice narrative to increase solidarity with forest communities elsewhere. As stated by Tarrow (2011), such framing and narratives offer mechanisms for increasing collectivity.

However, in employing these strategies activists position themselves as the opponents of the state, the mass media, and the company. Such contestation has perpetuated the practice of *contentious politics* in and around Tumpang Pitu.

### **Recruitment and Expansion**

Activists have used their narrative of gold mining and its deleterious effects to create new networks and expand their reach. This narrative draws on the collective belief that the commodification of gold is prioritised over residents' access to natural resources. Such harm may occur anywhere, and may affect anyone.

Several factors have contributed to the successful use of this mechanism. First is the very materiality of gold. As it is transformed from ore to granule, gold is continuously commodified. This reality has significantly intensified anti-mining activities. As capitals, technologies, actors, regulations, and policies were consolidated before ore was extracted in December 2016 (marking the shift from construction to production), recruitment increased significantly. In the first quarter of 2017, PT BSI produced 25,063 oz of gold and 6,420 oz of silver (PT BSI, 2015). At the same time, PT MDKA conducted an aggressive initial public offering (PT MDKA, 2015). This escalated the conflict in Tumpang Pitu, resulting in riots (2015) and the criminalisation of anti-mining activists (2015, 2017).

The second element that has facilitated recruitment is the actor networks, derived from the individual friendships of activists as well as their organisational web of networks with NGOs. ForBanyuwangi was established with the support of numerous NGOs who had

consistently opposed the commodification of gold in the Meru Betiri Protected Forest since the 1990s. These activists had their own networks with environmentalist groups, agrarian organisations, and legal aid organisations such as Jatam, Walhi, and the Legal Aid Institution. Such support facilitated the establishment of ForBanyuwangi.

Recruitment was also facilitated by digital media campaigns on social media. ForBanyuwangi intensively used Facebook and Instagram to campaign for agrarian and environmental justice. The criminalisation of Budi Pego, for instance, was frequently mentioned in its social media posts.

Recruitment may be understood not only through the elements that facilitate it, but also the spatial expansion of the organisation and its networks. This organisation, which began at the village level, grew to the district, regency, and ultimately provincial level. This new scope was made possible by its networks and its narrative of access, through which the movement expanded and found new bases of support (Allen, 2016). The first of these was Songgon District, where Satumin—a coffee and ginger farmer—was sentenced to 3.2 years imprisonment after being found guilty of entering a state-owned forest without permission. ForBanyuwangi used its narrative of agrarian justice to advocate for Satumin and claim access to these forests. Although the Banyuwangi State Court ultimately found Satumin guilty, this advocacy was an effective means of accumulating support and opposing the criminalisation of small farmers (Arifianto, 2018).

Spatial recruitment mechanisms were also evident in ForBanyuwangi's alliance with civil society organisations in

Surabaya. These associations had been established to advocate for Budi Pego, a dragon fruit-farmer who was accused of spreading communist teachings during a protest. With the establishment of Tekad Garuda, an alliance of Walhi, Kontras Surabaya, and the Legal Aid Institution, Surabaya became the new centre of the anti-mining movement.

The proximity of Banyuwangi and Bali also enabled ForBanyuwangi to establish a formal alliance with the Balinese People's Forum against Reclamation (Forum Rakyat Bali Tolak Reklamasi, ForBali). Both forums received national and international support as they advocated for justice in development projects. In 2018, for example, ForBanyuwangi worked together with ForBali to facilitate the arrival of Greenpeace's *Rainbow Warrior* in Benoa, Bali (Konferensi pers, 2018). The arrival of this ship symbolised the international environmentalist group's support for ForBali and its cause.

This spatial expansion coincided with the broadening of the movement's organisational identity. New networks meant new collective identities, as the social movement began representing not the interests of one specific group but rather the broader desire for access. By becoming involved in the case of Satumin in Songgon, Banyuwangi, the anti-mining movement expanded itself from mining to agrarian justice.

As its scope expanded, the movement continuously renamed itself. Initially, it identified itself as representing the residents of Pancer Hamlet, most of whom were fishermen. In the early 2000s, it rebranded itself as the People's Anti-Mining Movement (Gerakan Rakyat Anti-Tambang, Geramang). As it continued to expand, and as it began focusing on broader narratives

of justice, in 2017 the movement became the People's Forum for Banyuwangi (Forum Rakyat Banyuwangi, ForBanyuwangi).

## Conclusion

This article has shown how the evolution of gold's materiality through commodification shapes the actor–network linkages and recruitment mechanisms of social movements. The transformation of gold from ore to granule is inexorably linked with capital, technology, labour, political agency, and regulation. Through this process, residents' access to gold and other resources is limited, providing a basis for contentious politics and anti-mining activities.

Unlike the dominant actor–structure approach, which tends to reduce social movements to static and linear collective action, this article has illustrated how social movements evolve and adapt to the shifting materiality of their objects. Gold has particular economic and political value,

and as such the anti-mining movement is a processual one that experiences fragmentation and reformation. The anti-mining movement also unites persons with different motives, agendas, and discourses, uniting them in a shared narrative of livelihood rights, human rights, natural disaster, conservation, and environmental justice. Through their recruitment mechanisms, such movements reach people from different areas and from different social backgrounds. This is closely related to the political agency of residents, activists, professional associations, non-governmental organisations, and religious organisations, as well as non-material factors such as motives, goals, narratives, discourses, and identities. At the same time, however, uncertainty also drives movements' continued evolution. As the materiality of gold continues to evolve and create contentious politics, ForBanyuwangi will respond to new actors, narratives, strategies, and actions by continuously adopting new repertoires and strategies. (\*)

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