Conflict among stakeholders in karst area management of Pati Regency

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Abstract. Environmental problem leading to conflict among stakeholders occurred in Pati Regency, Central Java Province, when local community of Samin people and mining company were involved in dispute concerning the situation in the North Kendeng karst mountain area. The mountain has been known for limestone richness as a result of natural processes through geological space and time. This research applied a descriptive-qualitative method, focused on the aspect of conflict between local people and PT. Semen Gresik, Tbk., and between the local people and Pati Regency Government. Research data were collected by observation, in-depth interviews, and analyses of secondary sources. The qualitative data were analysed by a descriptive-qualitative approach, more familiarly known as qualitative-descriptive analysis. There is conflict of interest between those agree and disagree with the karst exploitation for cement factory, which has been known nationally. Opposition strategy by the local people around the karst area in Pati Regency by opposing the cement industry cooption was similar to the strategy applied in other conflicts. The “shifting strategy” of the cement conflict in Pati is difficult to vanish because it has been strongly rooted in Saminism. Therefore, better mediation must be well practiced.

1. Introduction
Environmental problem leading to conflict among stakeholders occurred in Pati Regency, Central Java Province, when local community and mining company were involved in dispute concerning the situation in the North Kendeng Mountain. The mountain has been known for limestone richness as a result of natural processes through geological space and time. The limestone is potentially utilized for cement and other uses. The product of earth dynamics that continues to occur from the ancient era to the present day have resulted in unique natural phenomenon. North Kendeng Mountain is definitely the major site on which the local people have been depending on, because it is an important area of ground water storage for potable water and rice field irrigation [1,2]. Therefore, strong social problem arises as the karst landscape becomes a potential target of cement producers using the karst as the raw material when Central Java’s government wants to make the province as an investment-friendly province [3]. Tension becomes apparent when the natural resources are wrongly exploited or when
the government forgets to take into account the environmental impacts of the investment projects [4, 3].

Tension between local people and cement company has been taking place since 2006. PT Semen Gresik, Tbk., the cement producer, was attempting to exploit the karst area in North Kendeng Mountain, which are in Sukolllo and Kayen Districts, Pati Regency [5,3]. The company’s mining plan caused a conflict, which threatened the tranquillity among the local inhabitants because of intimidation, black campaign towards key figures, and criminalisation against the local farmers.

The conflict began with irresponsible act of suspected individual and makelar tanah (land broker) by making effort alledgedly on behalf of the company’s interest. It was eventually found that some did it for their own sake, placing the cement company as a scapegoat. Another factor of the conflict was the one sided policy of the government, which favored the corporate. Such policy was definitely against the will of the grassroot actors. The intervening factor that causes a social movement is government policy, which stands on the opposite direction of popular interest [6] adds that conflict occurs because the government issue policies that do not prioritise the popular interest.

2. Literature Review
Conflict in a general meaning is a perceived divergence of interest, a belief that aspirations of the conflicting parties lead to a deadlock. This definition deals with either micro- or macro-space, in which a conflict always relates to actors with different interests. The fundamental issues of a conflict that become the conflict sources include difference in aspiration and perception, which develop as the difference in interest. The interest entails what an individual really wants, which develops as such that it conflicts with other’s interest. Such feeling tends to be the centered in the mind and action of an individual, creating the core of attitudes, objectives, and intentions [7].

Jurgen Habermas contends that conflict is an inherent object within a community system. Power, or authority, closely relates to social system, with its dominance nature and becomes something to compete. An authority structure group is capable of making and directing policies to dominate, where the interest in dominating and conquering particular class structures below it occur, creating misunderstanding of instrumental communication [8].

The above concept of conflict reveals that critical conflict opposes functional conflict, which strengthens dominant authority as the center for social system. The concept of domination comprises the following conditions: (a) unequal authority/power, (b) dependence, and (c) absence or disobedience. According to Althusser, domination forms can be divided into RSA (Repressive State Apparatus) and ISA (Ideological State Apparatus).

The conflict that occurred in Pati Regency concerning the emergence cement company affected local people and government. This conflict among stakeholders began in 2006 and still continues up to now. The mining conflict in Pati Regency was coincident with other areas, where aspirations and complaints converted into poorly accumulated perceptions [9]. Accordingly, values of mutual agreement in terms of consensus did not exist as the conflict grew into an open encounter, even physically.

3. Method
This research applied a descriptive-qualitative method using a subject of Policy on Environmental Management in Central Java. It focused on the following aspects: (1) Causes of conflict among stakeholders concerning on North Kendeng karst area, in Pati Regency, Central Java Province; (2) Conflict and social opposition over the karst area; and (3) Government response to the conflict.

Research data were collected by observation, in-depth interviews, and analyses of secondary sources. The qualitative data were analysed by a descriptive-qualitative approach, more familiarly known as qualitative-descriptive analysis [10]. Figure 1 illustrates the research scheme:
4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Causes of conflict leading to social oppositions
Conflict that occurred between stakeholders (local people, mining company, and government) can be described into the following themes:

4.1.1. Long-standing conflict. Mining conflict that involved local people or local communities, miners, mining company, and the government has been a long-standing problem in some parts of Indonesia, including in Pati Regency [11,12,13,14,15]. The miners are referred to as big, legal investors or small, illegal mining. The conflict between the local people and the cement company in Pati began when lands, as stated by the local people, unfairly traded by the corporation. This conflict continued by the growing actors of interest. Since then, the local people suffered from many bad experiences due to unfriendly deeds of irresponsible group of individuals who acted as if they were on behalf of the mining company. These misconduct behaviours sacrificed the popular interest and marginalised their rights and existence [16].

4.1.2. Land conflict. The termination of land property added the conflict, in which one might found two important cases. Firstly, the mining corporation annexed the land had been taking place long before PT. Semen Gresik came on the stage. The cases were still in dispute with no sign of problem-solving. Farmers’ land possession became diminished due to the road extension project to the mining site. The miners tricked the farmers by not informing them about the site extension and land exploitation. The local people appealed such case to the village government, but the government did not give any meaningful decision. Secondly, land trade was full of fraud, in which the trading activity was dominated by land brokers. The brokers take benefit from the trading process. They came in different levels, e.g. 1st-tier, 2nd-tier, and 3rd-tier brokers, causing the loss of profit at the expense of the land owners.

4.1.3. Emergence of PT. Semen Gresik Tbk., a new conflict. The emergence of a large scale cement industry in the shape of PT. Semen Gresik Tbk. had given birth to negative perceptions of most local people with past experience of injustice concerning the mining business. A new opportunity had opened for the locals to express their unsatisfactory attitudes towards the miners. Similar to the past experience, PT. Semen Gresik Tbk. also posed threats to the local people. The company, however, also became the prolonging opportunity to irresponsible individuals who used to take benefits at the expense of the local people, such as land trade and brokerage. In other words, those individuals irresponsibly acted fraudulent manners as the brokers towards the land owners, but with the interest of PT. Semen Gresik Tbk. (it was possible, however, that some individuals in the company also conspired in the fraud). According to the local people, the new conflict with PT. Semen Gresik Tbk.,
was caused by agents bringing new culture with them without having capacity to become an agent. Therefore, anything that happened during the process often violated the norms and code of conduct.

4.1.4. Change in policy. Since having had a license to develop facilities and infrastructures, the cement company had made use of land owned by the Ministry of Forestry under the terms of land function or other reasons, which was claimed to be a result of mutual understanding between the company and the authority. The authority encouraged economic policies without considering the genuine needs of the localities, favoring the company, i.e. PT. Semen Gresik Tbk., at the expense of the local people. Deals between the government and the company were not disclosed to the other stakeholder, i.e. the affected people. Meanwhile, the local people were too busy (and even too satified) with good political promises given by the authorities during electoral process. The conflict with PT. Semen Gresik, Tbk. entailed problems surrounding intention, interest, and necessity that must be in an equal proportion. What people want and need must be put into the priority because they will take the immediate impact. In other words, the company must fulfill the people’s interest. The policy on the establishment of the cement industry on the hundreds of hectares of land owned by the Ministry of Forestry has brought about significant effects on the agricultural life of the local people who are mostly farmers. Therefore, such situation lead the local people to make movements [17], both by internal or external actors, which leads to social opposition. The local people who are worried about the environmental impact of limestone mining, encouraged with the emergence of democracy values. Besides, as farmers for generations since their ancestors, the industrial concept is in contradictory with their present daily life. There are also external factors such as support and comments from various religious leaders and scholars from various background, make the situation more complex. Table 1 illustrates a brief description of the ongoing conflicts in question and their causes.

| No | Cause of conflict | Description |
|----|------------------|-------------|
| 1  | Past conflict    | The conflict had existed long before the new cement company had been established, beginning with the dispossession of land property. The conflict occurred between the actors of interest and the local people. The conflict of land property dispossession included land trade and trade fraud. Furthermore, village chief election contributed to extend the conflict even worse due to misconducted behaviors and intervention of externalities. |
| 2  | New conflict with cement company | The conflict began with violation against humanity, emergence of critical community members, corporate-bound government policies by allowing land exploration, especially those owned by the Ministry of Forestry, where the local people made their livings. |
| 3  | Other causes of conflict that triggered social opposition | The conflict that triggered the social opposition continued to grow as time went by, i.e. change in policy, environmental impact, human rights, and democracy, as well as unpreparedness of the local people to accept new cultures, difference in perception among religious leaders and scholars. |
4.2. Conflict and Social Opposition

Conflict among the stakeholders (PT. Semen Gresik Tbk., the government, and the local people) in the karst area management triggered a social opposition in Pati Regency against PT. Semen Gresik Tbk., and the government.

4.2.1. Institutional Strategy. Institutional strategy explains from the start about a process of organisational establishment that functions as an aspiration medium for the people, and explains the other organisations/institutions that also support the social opposition against cement industry in Pati (i.e., local people vs. PT. Semen Gresik, Tbk.). Institutions are established coexisting with community groups in delivering their identities, such as what have been performed by local community in several districts in Pati Regency, i.e. Sukolilo, Tambakromo, and Kayen. They established unions to develop as a social movement [17]. Institutional strategy in the local term in Pati Regency was called seduluran, a term derived from the Samin people, which means kinship without social class and interest. It has purpose of creating the mutual feeling, construct, and value. Seduluran is similar to kinship or friendship, which values highly the members, consistently and committed to togetherness. Para dulur is equal to dulur, a primordial nature which is take for granted. The fundamental objectives of the establishment of an organisation in the cement conflict in Pati were opposing any mining activity that exploits the karst area at small or large scales, preserving and maintaining nature power over the mining efforts, recovering the loss of the rights on land, and struggling in justice and humanity in an agricultural economy. Local people in three districts of Pati Regency who stood against the establishment of cement industry by exploiting the karst area joined together in an institutional network namely Community Care Network for Kendeng Mountain (Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Pemungutan Kendeng, JMPPK) of Pati Regency. The JMPPK collaborated with JMPPK Blora, Rembang, and Grobogan. The successful effort of the local people to oppose the cement industry in Pati was a result of action contribution by a local community group namely Sedulur Sikep which are also known as Samin community. Members of this group were proactive during the protests and demonstrations by coordinating one to another in Rembang, Pati, Blora, and Grobogan regencies. They worked in concert towards mutual objective. The involvement of community leaders from Sedulur Sikep in the social movements under the JMPPK was proven in some events, such as casting legs with concrete mold, long march from Pati to the Governor Office of Central Java in Semarang, and other events.

4.2.2. External Support Strategy. The role of external institutions in helping sustain the social movement opposing the karst area exploitation in Pati by the establishment of the cement industry had a significant effect. It was due to the fact that all had the similar ideas and principles taken for granted. The role of external institutions was proven in practice by strengthening material and immaterial aspects. The externalities helped sustain the social movements, which often found the deadlock if they were performed by solely internal actors. The establishment of PT. Semen Gresik, Tbk. in three districts of Pati Regency were opposed by community groups (internally or externally), mass media, scholars, religious leaders, community leaders, environmentalists and environmental activists, and NGOs, such as Walhi (Indonesian Environmental Association) or JATAM (Mining Advocacy Network). Equally important in the conflict among stakeholders in the karst area management was the rise of social vulnerability due to women participation in the social opposition movements against the cement company and the government.

4.3. Government response to the conflict

Governments, either at regency, provincial, or national levels, became the most prominent actors during the conflict in cement industry in Pati Regency. They proved inconsistent in the decision-making process and implementation.
Difference in perception between regency and provincial governments encouraged the national government to analyse and examine the cement conflict in Pati, Central Java. The conflict extends and to Rembang Regency, and get stronger when another cement investor wanted to invest in Rembang Regency, next to Pati. The unrest forced the President to establish a special team namely Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Kajian Lingkungan Hidup Strategis (KLHS). This assessment was important to put any problem under the dispute on the right track, since the aim of SEA is sustainable development [18].

The KLHS eventually decided the future status of the mining company to be established in Kendeng Mountain area, including in Pati. The first assessment had been resulted in a discussion that mining industry would disturb the karst sustainability in Watuputih Mountain. This assessment should play an important role in determining the action taken by the President in responding to the future development of the cement industry in Pati, Central Java, in particular, and Java Island, in general. This is due to the fact that the ecological condition of the island has been more vulnerable.

5. Conclusion
The conflict concerning the cement industry in Pati is closely related to the conflict of the karst management in North Kendeng Mountain between the local people and PT. Semen Gresik Tbk., who intended to establish the mining site in Kendeng area. The local people resistance prevented this intention and pushed PT. Semen Gresik, Tbk., out of Pati region.

The cement conflict in Pati is a build up conflict beginning with old instruments, i.e. small scale mining businesses. As complaints accumulated, it eventually crystallised and culminated in the terms of struggle, opposition, and resistance towards the idea of the current mining site planning by big cement business.

Opposition strategy by the local people around the karst area in Pati Regency by opposing the cement industry cooptation was similar to the strategy applied in other conflicts. The “shifting strategy” of the cement conflict in Pati is difficult to vanish because it has been strongly rooted in Saminism, that witholds a principle of “resistance to the death”. Therefore, better mediation must be well practiced.

6. Acknowledgments
The authors highly appreciate the research fund from the Indonesian Ministry of Research and Higher Education (Kemenristekdikti) under PKPT (University Cooperation Program) scheme for Universitas Tidar and Universitas Diponegoro, in 2017-2018.

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