

LIVING AROUND THE MINES (AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY ON SOCIAL CHANGE AND ADAPTATION STRATEGIES OF THE LELILEF WAIBULEN COMMUNITY TOWARD THE PRESENCE OF PT IWIP MINING INDUSTRY)

TINGGAL DI SEKITAR PERTAMBANGAN (STUDI ANTROPOLOGIS TENTANG PERUBAHAN SOSIAL DAN STRATEGI ADAPTASI KOMUNITAS LELILEF WAIBULEN TERHADAP KEHADIRAN INDUSTRI PERTAMBANGAN PT IWIP)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the social change and adaptation strategies of the Lelilef Waibulen community, Central Halmahera, in response to the presence of PT Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP). Employing a qualitative ethnographic approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and field documentation. The findings reveal that the community's economic transformation from an agrarian to an industrial and informal service economy has triggered changes in social structure, cultural values, and local power relations. These transformations can be understood through Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice and Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, as elaborated by Ibnu (2024), which emphasize the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. Furthermore, Ibnu's (2023) study on local governance and regulation shows that industrialization often produces social inequality and weakens community sovereignty. The research concludes that the Lelilef Waibulen community is not merely a victim of change but an adaptive social actor that negotiates its socio-economic space amid industrial pressures. These findings contribute to the anthropology of development and socio-ecological studies in extractive industry regions.

Keywords: social change, cultural adaptation, mining industry, structuration, Bourdieu, Lelilef Waibulen

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis perubahan sosial dan strategi adaptasi komunitas Lelilef Waibulen, Halmahera Tengah, sebagai tanggapan terhadap kehadiran PT Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP). Menggunakan pendekatan etnografi kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipan, dan dokumentasi lapangan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa transformasi ekonomi komunitas dari agraris menjadi ekonomi industrial dan layanan informal telah memicu perubahan dalam struktur sosial, nilai-nilai budaya, dan hubungan kekuasaan lokal. Transformasi ini dapat dipahami melalui teori praktik sosial Pierre Bourdieu dan teori strukturasi Anthony Giddens, sebagaimana diuraikan oleh Ibnu (2024), yang menekankan hubungan dialektis antara struktur dan agensi. Lebih lanjut, studi Ibnu (2023) tentang tata kelola dan regulasi lokal menunjukkan bahwa industrialisasi sering menghasilkan ketimpangan sosial dan melemahkan kedaulatan komunitas. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa komunitas Lelilef Waibulen tidak semata-mata menjadi korban perubahan, melainkan sebagai aktor sosial yang adaptif yang menegosiasikan ruang sosio-ekonominya di tengah tekanan industri. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap antropologi pembangunan dan studi sosio-ekologi di daerah industri ekstraktif.

Kata kunci: perubahan sosial, adaptasi budaya, industri pertambangan, strukturasi, Bourdieu, Lelilef Waibulen

1. INTRODUCTION

Mining industrial development in Indonesia over the past two decades has become one of the symbols of national economic progress. However, behind this narrative of growth

and investment lies a complex and often contradictory social dynamic at the local level. One such case can be found in the Lelilef Waibulen Village, Central Halmahera, where the community now coexists with the nickel industrial zone of PT Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP)—a national strategic project in the extractive sector.

The arrival of mining industries in rural areas has brought profound changes to local economic systems, social structures, and cultural orders. Communities previously reliant on agriculture and traditional fisheries now face an industrial economy and capitalist work relations. This shift creates a dilemma between the hope for new prosperity and the fear of losing local autonomy. Industrialization, therefore, should not be seen merely as an economic process but as a social transformation that reshapes people's understanding of identity, living space, and power relations.

In this context, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice is relevant to explain how economic transformation affects habitus, capital, and community positions within the new social field created by industrialization. Meanwhile, Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, as expanded by Ibnu (2024) in his study of political socialization, asserts that social change always occurs through the dialectic between structure and agency. This implies that communities are not merely victims of a larger system but reflective actors capable of negotiating, adapting, and even contesting existing social structures.

Ibnu (2023) also shows that local regulations often reinforce industrial dominance while neglecting community participation in decision-making. Such patterns are evident in mining-affected regions, where communities face limited access to natural resources and living spaces. Therefore, an anthropological approach is essential to comprehend mining's social impact more deeply—not only as economic change but as an ongoing process of social and cultural negotiation among various actors.

This study aims to address two main questions:

1. How have social and cultural transformations occurred within the Lelilef Waibulen community due to the presence of PT IWIP?
2. What adaptation strategies have been developed by the community in response to structural change?

Theoretically, this research enriches the discourse of development anthropology and the sociology of structuration, particularly in analyzing the encounter between global economic power and local social structures. Practically, it contributes to the formulation of more participatory and equitable socio-ecological policies in extractive industrial zones.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on social change due to mining expansion have become central in development anthropology and economic sociology. Several researchers argue that large-scale industrial presence often generates tensions between capitalist economic logic and local social systems grounded in communal values. Asdan et al. (2023) note that industrial expansion in Central Halmahera not only alters economic structures but also establishes new, power-imbalanced social relations. Hairil, Robo, and Adjam (2024) also highlight that industrialization transforms traditional solidarity into transactional, individualistic relations.

Similarly, Muhid et al. (2024) emphasize that industrialization in eastern Indonesia causes "cultural dislocation," where communities lose control over natural resources. Hence, social change is not merely economic transition but a profound transformation of value systems and daily life patterns.

Nevertheless, local communities are not passive actors. Sayang and Widowaty (2023) found that people near mining sites often develop creative cultural and social adaptations, building new mechanisms of solidarity and preserving local wisdom. Thus, the mining frontier becomes a negotiation arena between economic power and community agency.

To understand these processes, this study integrates two theoretical frameworks. First, Bourdieu's theory of social practice highlights habitus, capital, and field as central to explaining how individuals and groups act within complex social realities. The Lelilef Waibulen community's agrarian habitus now confronts an industrial-capitalist field, forcing a conversion of social and cultural capital into economic or symbolic capital relevant to the new context.

Second, Giddens' structuration theory provides a framework for understanding society not as a passive recipient of structure but as an active agent capable of reproducing and transforming it. Ibnu (2024) asserts that structure and agency are in constant dialectical relation, with individuals reflecting and negotiating social constraints. This perspective is crucial to explain how Lelilef Waibulen residents adapt within an industrialized and regulated environment.

Ibnu (2023) further argues that local governance often functions top-down, limiting public participation and reinforcing capitalist dominance. Combining Bourdieu's and Giddens' frameworks, this study treats society as an active agent operating within unequal power relations—where adaptation is not mere adjustment but a symbolic and political strategy to sustain existence amid industrial capitalism.

3. METHODS

This research employed a qualitative ethnographic approach focusing on the lived experiences, meanings, and social strategies of the Lelilef Waibulen community. The study was conducted in Lelilef Waibulen Village, Weda Tengah Subdistrict, Central Halmahera, North Maluku—located within the PT IWIP industrial ring.

Data were collected through:

1. Participant observation in social, economic, and ritual community activities;
2. In-depth interviews with 18 key informants, including traditional leaders, village officials, miners, farmers, and housewives; and
3. Document analysis, including village archives, company reports, and NGO publications (WALHI, 2023; JATAM, 2024).

Data were analyzed thematically through coding based on economic, sociocultural, and adaptation themes. Triangulation and member checking ensured validity and interpretive accuracy.

4.RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Economic Transformation and Social Restructuring

PT IWIP's presence has profoundly altered the local economy. Formerly reliant on dryland farming, coconut plantations, and fishing, residents have transitioned into contract laborers, traders, and informal service providers. This shift from agrarian to industrial livelihoods has generated new social stratification—creating an emergent “industrial middle class” while marginalizing traditional peasants and fishers. These dynamics reflect Ibnu's (2023) finding that local spatial policies often reinforce inequality by excluding community participation.

4.2 Shifts in Values and Local Culture

Economic transformation also reshapes cultural values. Communal ethics such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and collective deliberation have weakened, replaced by consumerist and individualistic orientations. Traditional rituals like *hasi dolo* (harvest ceremony) and *cakalele* dance are declining. However, local leaders and youth initiatives strive to preserve traditions through cultural and religious gatherings—reflecting symbolic negotiation rather than cultural decay. In Bourdieu's terms, this adaptation represents the conversion of symbolic and cultural capital into socially relevant forms within a new industrial field.

4.3 Social Adaptation and Survival Strategies

The community demonstrates three adaptive strategies:

1. Economic diversification: combining industrial work with small businesses (food stalls, motorcycle taxis, home rentals).
2. Revitalization of customary institutions as mediators in land disputes and recruitment negotiations.
3. Spiritual adaptation religious leaders reinforcing moral solidarity through collective worship.

As Giddens (1984) and Ibnu (2024) emphasize, this reflects active social reproduction communities exercising agency to sustain life amid structural pressures.

4.4 Power Relations and Social Negotiation

New local elites have emerged as brokers between the company and villagers, often perpetuating brokerage politics and unequal benefit distribution forming what locals call a “new mining middle class.” This confirms Ibnu’s (2023) thesis that public policy often reproduces power asymmetries. However, Ibnu (2024) notes that power is never static; communities maintain reflective capacities to negotiate and reshape structures through collective action and dialogue.

4.5 Social and Theoretical Implications

The findings illustrate multidimensional change economic, social, cultural, and ecological change while highlighting community resilience and agency. The study advances development anthropology by framing social change as a multi-layered structuration process involving the interplay of global economic forces and local agency.

5. CONCLUSION

The presence of PT IWIP in Lelilef Waibulen has generated complex social transformations—reshaping economic foundations, social hierarchies, and cultural norms. Yet, the community demonstrates adaptive agency through economic diversification, cultural revitalization, and spiritual resilience. These findings reaffirm Bourdieu’s and Giddens’ theoretical relevance, as elaborated by Ibnu (2023, 2024), in explaining the dialectic between structure and agency in contexts of rapid industrialization.

Practically, this study recommends that regional development policies in extractive zones prioritize social participation, ecological justice, and cultural preservation. Sustainable industrial progress requires not only economic efficiency but also inclusive social dialogue among governments, corporations, and communities.

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