



## Mining Exploitation and the Existence of Small Islands: The Case of Konawe Islands Regency

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### Abstract

Intensive nickel mining has brought significant changes to the livelihoods, and social cohesion of local communities. This research examines the socio-economic impacts of mining exploitation on small islands in Konawe Islands Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. This research uses Qualitative method of descriptive model with data collection techniques through three important points, namely observation, interview and documentation. The results of this study show that the main impact is the loss of traditional sources of livelihood, where residents who previously depended on agriculture, fisheries and tourism experienced a decrease in income due to environmental damage. In addition, land acquisition for mining activities has led to disputes between local communities and mining companies, where residents feel the land acquisition process is unfair and the compensation provided is inadequate. The distribution of economic benefits from mining activities tends to be unequal, concentrating on mining companies and local elites, while most communities remain poor, creating a sense of injustice and dissatisfaction. In addition to economic impacts, mining activities also threaten the sustainability of cultural heritage that is important to the identity of local communities. Demographic changes due to sudden urbanization trigger social problems such as overcrowding. The phenomenon of out-migration also arises when local residents move to other safer and more promising areas, causing a reduction in local labor for other economic activities. This research emphasizes the importance of fair and sustainable policies to address the negative impacts of mining exploitation in Konawe Islands Regency.

**Keywords:** *Livelihood, Mining Exploitation, Social Conflicts, Socio-Economic Impacts.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Small islands have significant potential for natural resources and ecosystem services, which can serve as a foundation for Indonesia's future development. They offer productive natural resources such as coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangrove forests, fisheries and conservation areas. Small islands also provide great environmental services due to their natural beauty, which can support the marine tourism industry. However, the utilization of this potential has not been optimal because government attention and policies have focused more on the mainland.

The development of small island areas will bring changes to their ecosystems, which will affect the environment. The higher the intensity of management and development, the higher the level of resource utilization and environmental changes that will occur in the area.

Exploitation of natural resources, especially the mining sector, plays an important role in Indonesia's economy. It is a significant source of income for the country and the region, but it also brings a variety of

negative impacts, especially when conducted in vulnerable areas such as small islands (Zhang et al., 2022). One prominent example is Konawe Islands Regency in Southeast Sulawesi. The region faces a range of environmental and social challenges due to intensive mining activities. Small islands have unique ecosystems and are sensitive to change, so any uncontrolled human activity can disrupt the ecological balance and survival of local communities.

Exploitation of natural resources is one of the most intensive and far-reaching human activities, especially when it comes to mining. Mining exploitation is the process of extracting and utilizing mineral resources from the earth, such as iron ore, nickel, copper, gold and coal. This process involves various stages, from exploration, extraction, to processing and marketing the final product. While the economic contribution of the mining industry is significant, its environmental impact is also enormous and often detrimental (Aigbedion & Iyayi, 2007).

On the other hand, small islands have unique and vulnerable ecosystem characteristics. These islands are



often home to rare and endemic species of flora and fauna. They also support the lives of local communities who depend on local natural resources for livelihoods, such as fishing and tourism. Therefore, ecological balance on small islands is crucial for the survival of ecosystems and local communities.

Mining exploitation on small islands poses major challenges. The environmental impacts of mining activities, such as deforestation, water and soil pollution, and erosion, can damage fragile island ecosystems. In addition, landscape changes caused by mining activities can disrupt local communities' living patterns and livelihoods (Upe et al., 2020; Wahyuni et al., 2023). The conflict between economic interests and environmental protection is one of the main issues that need to be addressed (Patunduk et al., 2020; Wagner, 2019).

A concrete example can be seen in the Konawe Islands region of Indonesia, which is known for its mineral wealth. Here, mining activities have made a significant economic contribution to the area, but also caused serious environmental impacts (Amijaya et al., 2022). Mangrove forest destruction, river pollution, and loss of wildlife habitat are some of the negative impacts that arise from mining activities.

The many environmental impacts of mining exploitation include ecosystem damage, water pollution, erosion and landslides. In addition, mining exploitation can have socio-economic impacts. Communities on small islands such as Konawe Islands are largely dependent on agriculture, fisheries and tourism for their livelihoods. Mining activities can drastically alter the local landscape, forcing residents to seek other sources of income. Agriculture and fisheries are often negatively impacted by pollution and environmental change, while the tourism sector can suffer from environmental degradation that reduces the attractiveness of nature (Kivinen et al., 2020; Upe et al., 2019).

The arrival of mining companies often triggers conflicts between local communities and the company and government. These conflicts are rooted in issues of land acquisition, compensation, and distribution of economic benefits from mining activities. It was reported that 29 residents of Wawonii Island, Southeast Sulawesi, were criminalized for resisting nickel mining by PT GKP. Legal action is considered one-sided, with residents' reports ignored. Residents rejected the mine

through demonstrations and lawsuits, facing intimidation and land grabbing by the company (Wicaksono, 2024).

Local communities often feel that they are not being fairly compensated or receiving their fair share of the profits generated by the mine, while bearing the negative impacts. While mines can be a great source of income, the distribution of economic benefits is often unequal. Most of the profits are usually enjoyed by mining companies and local elites, while the general population remains poor. This inequality can worsen the socio-economic conditions of local communities and lead to discontent and social tensions.

Konawe Islands Regency has unique geographical and ecological conditions. As an archipelago, it has rich and diverse marine and coastal ecosystems, including mangrove forests, coral reefs, and a variety of marine species. These ecosystems are not only ecologically important but also a source of livelihood for local communities. Ecosystem damage due to mining activities can disrupt the ecological balance and threaten the sustainability of community livelihoods.

Limited infrastructure in Konawe Islands is one of the main obstacles in monitoring and enforcing mining regulations. Difficult transportation access, lack of monitoring facilities, and limited human and financial resources at the local level can hinder government efforts to control and manage mining activities. These limitations can also slow responses to environmental incidents and exacerbate the negative impacts of mining activities.

## **METHODS**

This research was located in Konawe Islands Regency. This research uses a case study approach with qualitative methods (Denzin, 2009; Hennink et al., 2019). Data will be collected through observation, in-depth documented interviews with various stakeholders (including local communities, government, and mining companies), as well as secondary data analysis from relevant documents and reports. This methodology will enable a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of mining activities from multiple perspectives.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Mining exploitation on small islands such as in Konawe Islands Regency brings significant socio-



economic impacts. Some of the key points of these impacts include:

### **Livelihood Changes**

#### **1. Loss of Traditional Livelihood Sources**

Mining exploitation in Konawe Islands Regency has a significant impact on the traditional livelihoods of local residents who depend on agriculture, fisheries and tourism. Environmental damage due to mining activities results in a decrease in the quality and productivity of these livelihood sources, which has a direct impact on the economic welfare of the community. This is expressed by Hasraman that the community believes that the entry of mining will threaten long-term sources of income such as agricultural products of cashew, cloves, coconut and nutmeg. The people of Roko-roko village are aware that only agricultural products can last, both now and in the future, to ensure their economic sustainability (Utami Argawati, 2024).

##### **a. Impact on Agriculture**

Agriculture is one of the main sources of livelihood for residents in Konawe Islands. However, land clearing for mining often involves deforestation and destruction of agricultural land. This process results in the loss of fertile land essential for food production. In addition, soil contamination by mining waste, such as heavy metals and hazardous chemicals, makes the soil no longer fertile and suitable for agriculture.

Mining waste that pollutes rivers and other water sources also has an impact on farmland irrigation. Polluted water not only damages crops, but can also lead to reduced yields and even crop failure. Farmers who were previously able to produce enough food and horticultural crops for their daily needs and local markets are now experiencing a drastic drop in income.

##### **b. Impact on Fisheries**

Community work as fishermen is considered almost all communities in Konawe Islands Regency in this field. Both as a main job and a side job.

Fisheries are another important source of livelihood for island communities. Mining exploitation that causes pollution of sea and river water has serious impacts on the aquatic ecosystems of the study sites. Hazardous chemicals from mining waste can kill fish and other marine organisms, damage the food chain, and reduce fish populations in traditional fishing grounds, as stated by (Kibria, 2013).

Water pollution also results in a decrease in the quality of the fish caught, thus lowering the selling price in the market. Fishermen who depend on fish catches for their daily income find that their catches decline in both quantity and quality, resulting in a significant drop in income.

##### **c. Impact on Tourism**

Tourism in Konawe Islands, which has great potential due to its natural beauty and biodiversity, is also affected by mining activities. Environmental damage such as mangrove deforestation, beach pollution, and coral reef destruction reduce the attractiveness of natural tourism. Places that were previously tourist destinations such as beaches, mangrove forests, and diving spots are now losing their beauty and coolness, discouraging tourists from visiting. The decline in the number of tourists has a direct impact on the income of people involved in the tourism industry, including innkeepers, tour guides, and souvenir traders. The loss of income from the tourism sector worsens the economic condition of communities that previously depended on income from tourism activities.

The loss of traditional livelihoods in Konawe Islands Regency due to mining exploitation has a serious impact on the economy and community welfare. Damage to agricultural land, a decrease in the quality and yield of fish catches, and reduced tourist attraction have resulted in local residents losing the livelihoods that have been their mainstay. To overcome this problem, sustainable environmental restoration efforts and economic diversification are needed to provide alternative livelihoods for the community.

#### **2. Shifting to Mining Work**

Mining exploitation in Konawe Islands Regency has forced many local residents to shift from their traditional livelihoods to work in the mining sector. This change does not necessarily bring improvements in economic welfare, as mining jobs are often temporary, dangerous, and do not guarantee long-term welfare.

Employment in the mining sector is generally temporary and unstable. Many mining companies operate on short-term contracts, leaving miners with no certainty of continued employment. After the contract period ends or when the mining project is completed, many workers lose their jobs with no guarantee of



further employment. This creates significant economic uncertainty for workers and their families.

Mining work is notorious for its high risk and hazardous working conditions. Mine workers are often exposed to dust, hazardous chemicals, and the risk of workplace accidents such as landslides and explosions. Adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) is often not provided, and safety standards may be ignored to reduce operational costs. As a result, many mine workers suffer from injuries or occupational diseases, which adversely affect their health and productivity.

While mining work can offer higher incomes compared to some traditional jobs, wages are often low and not commensurate with the risks involved. Many miners are employed on daily or short-term contracts, which do not provide benefits such as health insurance, retirement benefits or other labor rights. Wage instability and lack of social protection exacerbate economic insecurity for mine workers (Smith & Sepasgozar, 2022).

Employment in the mining sector rarely provides long-term welfare guarantees. Without stable job security, health insurance or pension programs, miners face an uncertain future. After leaving mining work, many lack the skills or education to transition to safer and more sustainable jobs.

The shift from traditional occupations to the mining sector also brings significant social impacts. Many miners are forced to leave their families to work in remote mine sites. This can lead to family disintegration and other social problems. In addition, job and income instability can increase stress and anxiety levels among workers and their families.

The shift to mining work in Konawe Islands Regency is not a sustainable long-term solution for local residents. While it may offer higher incomes in the short term, the temporary nature of the work, hazardous working conditions, low wages and lack of long-term welfare guarantees make mine work a less than ideal option. To improve community welfare, a more holistic approach is needed that includes economic diversification, improved education and skills training, and protection of mine workers' rights.

### **Social Conflict**

Social conflict in Wawonii Island occurs due to mining activities that damage ecosystems and threaten the main livelihoods of the community. The presence of one mining company such as PT Gema Kreasi

Perdana (PT GKP) has caused divisions in the community. These conflicts worsen relations between people, even within families, with husband-wife and parent-child conflicts (Administrator, 2023). This finding divides social conflicts into land disputes and conflicts between communities.

#### **a. Land Disputes**

Land acquisition for mining activities in Konawe Islands Regency is often a source of conflict between local communities and mining companies. These land disputes occur for various reasons, including unfairness in the land acquisition process, inadequate compensation and unclear land ownership rights.

Many local residents feel that the land acquisition process conducted by mining companies is not transparent and fair. They are often not involved in the decision-making process and are not given adequate information about the plans and impacts of mining activities. This lack of community participation in the process leads to feelings of disrespect and neglect.

The compensation given to local people for their land is often considered inadequate. Low land valuations and lack of compensation for loss of livelihoods, such as farmland or fisheries, lead to dissatisfaction. Many residents feel that the compensation provided is not proportional to the economic and social value of the land they gave up.

Land disputes are also often caused by unclear land ownership rights. In many areas, land ownership rights are poorly documented or not officially recognized by the government. This allows mining companies to claim land without consent or adequate compensation to local people who have long worked or lived on the land.

In many local communities, land has important cultural and spiritual values. Violations of customary and traditional rights often trigger conflict over land. Local people who have cultural ties to certain lands feel they are losing their identity and ancestral heritage when the land is taken over for mining activities without their consent.

Effective dispute resolution mechanisms are often absent or dysfunctional. Local people who feel aggrieved by land acquisition processes have little access to justice or effective grievance mechanisms. This leads to prolonged tensions and conflicts between local communities and mining companies.



Land disputes not only create social tensions, but also negatively affect the economic conditions of communities. The loss of agricultural or fisheries land as a source of livelihood results in decreased income and welfare. Prolonged conflict can also disrupt social stability and community harmony, and cause further economic losses.

Land disputes in Konawe Islands Regency due to mining activities are complex issues that require a holistic approach to resolution. Injustice in the land acquisition process, inadequate compensation, unclear ownership rights, violations of customary rights, and the lack of effective dispute resolution mechanisms are the main factors causing these conflicts. Addressing land disputes requires collaborative efforts between the government, mining companies and local communities that involve transparency, active community participation, upholding traditional rights and providing fair and effective dispute resolution mechanisms. By doing so, it is hoped that a fair and sustainable agreement can be reached for all parties involved.

#### b. Inter-Community Conflict

Mining exploitation in Konawe Islands Regency not only causes disputes between local communities and mining companies, but also triggers horizontal conflicts between community members themselves. This division occurs between groups that support mining activities and groups that reject them. Such tensions can worsen social conditions, disrupt community harmony and affect people's daily lives.

One of the main causes of conflict between communities is different views on the economic impacts of mining activities. Groups that support mining are often made up of individuals who see employment opportunities and increased income from the mining sector. They argue that mining can bring significant economic benefits and help reduce poverty in the area.

On the other hand, groups that oppose mining usually focus more on the negative impacts, such as environmental damage, loss of traditional livelihoods and threats to health. They feel that the short-term economic benefits are not worth the long-term losses to the community and environment.

Inequities in the distribution of economic benefits from mining activities can also trigger conflicts between communities. If only a few individuals or groups enjoy the benefits of mining, while the majority

of the community does not benefit or even suffers from environmental and social damage, discontent and envy will increase. This can exacerbate divisions and tensions between communities.

Mining companies or other interested parties may use manipulation and provocation tactics to strengthen their support. For example, by providing financial incentives or facilities to pro-mining groups, or spreading inaccurate information about the positive impacts of mines. Such tactics can deepen divisions between communities and increase horizontal conflict.

Prolonged conflict can have serious psychological and social impacts. Tensions between groups can damage long-standing social relationships, reduce mutual trust, and increase stress and discomfort among community members. These conflicts can also hinder cooperation in other community activities, such as gotong royong and social events, which are important for maintaining social cohesion.

Conflicts between communities can disrupt daily life. For example, economic activities such as trade, agriculture and fishing can be disrupted by tensions and disputes. In addition, security and order in the village can be disrupted by protests, road blockades or physical clashes between conflicting groups. All of these have a negative impact on the overall stability and well-being of the community.

Inter-community conflict due to mining exploitation in Konawe Islands Regency is a serious problem that needs to be addressed with a comprehensive and inclusive approach. Differences in economic outlook, unfairness in benefit distribution, manipulation by interested parties, and the psychological and social impacts of the conflict require special attention. Mitigating these conflicts requires open and participatory dialogue between all parties involved, enforcement of fairness in benefit distribution, and efforts to increase community awareness and understanding of the long-term impacts of mining activities. Thus, it is hoped that a more harmonious and conducive atmosphere can be created for sustainable development in the area.

#### **Economic Inequality**

##### 1. Uneven Distribution of Benefits

Economic benefits from mining activities tend to be concentrated in mining companies and local elites, while most communities remain poor. This inequality





creates a sense of injustice and dissatisfaction among the community.

Mining activities in Konawe Islands Regency often generate large economic profits, but the distribution of benefits from these profits tends to be uneven. Economic gains are usually concentrated in mining companies and local elites, while most communities remain in poverty. This inequality fuels a sense of injustice and discontent among the community.

Mining companies often make the most profit from mining activities. Revenues generated from the extraction and sale of natural resources mostly go into the pockets of the company, including shareholders and management. Meanwhile, investments made in infrastructure and facilities in mining areas are usually intended to support mining operations, not to improve the welfare of local communities.

In addition to mining companies, local elites consisting of political leaders, government officials and community leaders with connections to mining companies also often get a share of the economic benefits. They may receive commissions, employment contracts or other incentives from mining companies in return for political or administrative support. This leads to a concentration of wealth in the hands of a few individuals, while most communities do not benefit significantly.

Mining activities often require skilled and educated labor, which may not be available among local communities. As a result, mining companies often bring in workers from outside the area to fill these positions. While some locals may find employment at the mine, the jobs available are often low-level positions with inadequate wages, while high-paying positions are filled by outside workers.

The investment made by mining companies in local development is often disproportionate to the profits earned. Public facilities such as roads, schools and health services may not receive adequate attention or investment. Without sustainable development of infrastructure and facilities, local communities cannot fully benefit from the presence of the mine.

Government policies to regulate the distribution of mining profits are often ineffective or poorly implemented. Royalties and taxes collected from mining companies may not be allocated fairly or used for community benefit. Transparency and

accountability in the management of mining revenues is often low, leading to abuse and corruption.

Uneven distribution of economic benefits creates a sense of injustice among communities. They feel that natural resources that should be common property are being exploited for the benefit of a few, while they themselves do not get their fair share. This sense of dissatisfaction can lead to protests and prolonged social conflict.

The unequal distribution of profits exacerbates economic inequality in mining areas. While local elites and mining companies enjoy prosperity, most communities continue to live in poverty. This inequality not only impacts economic well-being, but can also affect social and political stability in the area.

Without equitable distribution of benefits, sustainable development is difficult to achieve. Inadequate investment in infrastructure and public services hinders long-term economic growth and improvements in people's quality of life. Lack of education and training also limits local people's opportunities to improve their skills and get better jobs.

The unequal distribution of benefits from mining activities in Konawe Islands Regency is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. Concentrated economic benefits to mining companies and local elites, as well as a lack of investment in local development, lead to significant inequality. Achieving economic justice and sustainable development requires policies that ensure a more equitable distribution of benefits, increased investment in infrastructure and public services, and improved skills and education for local communities. By doing so, it is hoped that the benefits of mining activities can be felt by the whole community, not just a few people.

## 2. Increased Cost of Living

The presence of mining in Konawe Islands Regency has a significant impact on the cost of living for local residents. Exploitation of natural resources by mining companies triggers economic dynamics that cause the price of local goods and services to increase.

Mining activities often bring in large numbers of workers from outside the region, which increases demand for local goods and services. When demand increases while supply remains fixed or unable to keep up with the surge in demand, prices of basic goods such as food, clean water and fuel tend to rise. This localized inflation adds to the economic burden on



local residents, especially those whose incomes have not risen in line with the price increases.

In addition to the price of goods, the price of services is also likely to increase. Services such as transportation may experience rising costs due to increased demand from a growing population. Service providers may raise prices to offset increased operational costs and to capitalize on increased demand.

The increased cost of living due to the presence of mining in Konawe Islands Regency brings significant economic challenges to the local population, especially those not directly involved in mining activities. Local inflation, rising housing and service prices, and economic inequality exacerbate the already vulnerable living conditions of the community.

#### **Reduced Quality of Life**

The next finding is the effect on quality of life analyzed through the mapping of environmental damage and threatened loss of cultural heritage.

##### **1. Environmental Damage**

Mining exploitation in Konawe Islands Regency has caused significant environmental damage, reducing the quality of life for local communities. The polluted and damaged environment has a far-reaching adverse impact on the daily lives and living comfort of local residents.

One of the most noticeable impacts of mining activities is water pollution. Mining waste containing hazardous chemicals is often discharged into local rivers and water sources. Polluted water not only damages aquatic ecosystems but also reduces the availability of clean water for residents. Communities that depend on river water for daily needs such as bathing, washing and cooking face serious health risks, including skin diseases, digestive disorders and heavy metal poisoning.

Environmental damage caused by mining activities in Konawe Islands Regency has significantly reduced the quality of life of local communities. Water pollution, air pollution, soil degradation and loss of biodiversity are some of the main aspects that affect the daily lives and living comfort of residents (M Ambari, 2023). In addition to physical impacts, environmental degradation also has profound psychological and social implications.

To address these issues, concerted efforts are needed to restore the environment and implement

sustainable mining practices. Strict regulations, effective supervision, and active community participation in environment-related decision-making are important measures to ensure that the exploitation of natural resources does not come at the expense of the quality of life and well-being of local communities.

##### **2. Threatened Loss of Cultural Heritage**

Mining exploitation in Konawe Islands Regency has an impact that is not only limited to economic and environmental aspects, but also on cultural and social aspects. One of the most detrimental impacts is the loss of cultural heritage that is very important for the identity and pride of the local community. The loss of these cultural sites and ancestral heritage can reduce the sense of belonging and social cohesion among communities. The following are some aspects related to the loss of cultural heritage due to mining exploitation:

Cultural and historical sites are often direct victims of mining activities. Excavation, construction of mine infrastructure and the mining activity itself can damage or destroy sites of historical and cultural value. These sites can be ancestral burial sites, traditional ceremonial sites, or historical landmarks that are important to the local community.

Cultural heritage consists not only of physical objects, but also includes traditions, customary practices and local knowledge passed down from generation to generation. Mining exploitation that changes the landscape and way of life of communities can disrupt or even stop these customary practices. When land used for ceremonies or cultural activities is taken over or damaged by mining activities, communities lose the opportunity to continue their traditions.

A sense of belonging to a community and place is an important part of social and mental well-being. The loss of cultural sites with emotional and spiritual value can undermine this sense of attachment. People who lose their cultural heritage may feel alienated and lose their identity, which can negatively impact social cohesion and community solidarity.

People's cultural identity is often closely linked to their natural environment and cultural sites. When these environments are destroyed by mining activities, cultural identity is also threatened (Golub, 2006). This process can lead to the erosion of cultural identity, where communities begin to lose understanding and appreciation of their own cultural heritage. In the long



term, this can result in the loss of irreplaceable cultural and historical knowledge.

Cultural ecosystems include the interactions between people, the environment and culture. Mining exploitation that damages these ecosystems can disrupt the balance that has been established over centuries. Damage to cultural ecosystems affects not only physical sites, but also social relationships and community structures that support cultural sustainability, this is also reinforced by the expression (Wicaksono, 2023).

The loss of cultural heritage can cause profound social and psychological harm to communities. Losing places of spiritual and emotional significance can lead to feelings of loss and grief. In addition, the inability to continue indigenous traditions and practices can cause an identity crisis and undermine people's psychological well-being.

Strong social cohesion is based on shared values, traditions and cultural identity. When cultural heritage is lost, social bonds within communities can weaken. Communities that no longer have a shared cultural reference point may experience decreased solidarity and increased internal conflict (Alwi et al., 2023).

Cultural heritage also has economic value, especially in the context of tourism. Cultural and historical sites can attract tourists and support local economies. The loss of cultural heritage can reduce tourist attraction and eliminate potential sources of income for local communities.

The loss of cultural heritage due to mining exploitation in Konawe Islands Regency is a complex and multidimensional issue. The destruction of cultural sites, the loss of traditions and customary practices, and the erosion of cultural identity have a profound impact on people's sense of belonging and social cohesion. To protect cultural heritage and ensure cultural sustainability, measures are needed that include protection of cultural sites, recognition and respect for customary practices, and active community participation in decision-making related to mining activities. In this way, cultural heritage can be preserved and continue to be a source of pride and identity for future generations.

#### **Urbanization and Migration**

This analysis found that migration occurred due to mining which caused the erosion of local income in the form of copra, and cashew nuts, this was also

expressed by (Rusdianto, 2022). The author divides the analysis of these findings into demographic changes and out-migration.

##### **1. Demographic Changes**

Mining activities in Konawe Islands Regency not only have an impact on the environment and economy, but also bring significant changes in the local demographic structure. Mining activities often attract migrants from outside the area who are looking for work, resulting in sudden urbanization. These demographic changes can trigger a range of complex social problems, including overcrowding, inadequate housing, and pressure on infrastructure and public services.

Intensive mining activities often attract workers from various regions including the study area. Sudden urbanization occurs when people from outside the region migrate to mining areas in search of jobs and economic opportunities. Population density due to mining activities is also expressed by (Da Silva et al., 2019).

Population density increases along with the influx of many migrants. Previously sparsely populated areas turn into high-density areas, which often exceed the capacity of existing infrastructure. This density leads to problems of congestion, pollution and degradation of quality of life.

Sudden urbanization often leads to a housing crisis. The demand for housing increases dramatically, while the supply of decent housing cannot keep up. As a result, many migrants are forced to live in informal settlements or inadequate housing, which can lead to health and social problems.

Basic infrastructure such as roads, bridges, clean water and sanitation are often unable to handle sudden population surges. Increased use of public facilities can cause damage and overload on existing infrastructure. This results in decreased quality of life and potential health hazards for residents.

Public services such as health, education and security are often unprepared for population increases. Shortages of medical personnel, teachers and security guards can lead to reduced service quality and accessibility. This worsens people's well-being and increases dissatisfaction.

Migrants from outside the region bring different cultures, customs and norms. Interactions between migrants and natives can lead to social and cultural





conflicts. Differences in ways of life, values and economic interests can create tensions and divisions within local communities. Urbanization triggered by mining activities often increases economic disparities. While some migrants may find employment and improve their welfare, locals who do not have the same skills or opportunities may be left behind. These disparities can exacerbate social and economic inequities in the area.

Demographic changes bring about changes in the social structure of communities. The influx of migrants with different backgrounds changes the existing social dynamics and community networks. These changes can lead to the disintegration of traditional social structures and reduce community solidarity.

Increasing population pressure also impacts the environment. Expansion of settlements and infrastructure often comes at the expense of agricultural land and green areas. Air and water pollution is also increasing due to mining activities and urbanization. This environmental degradation has a direct impact on people's health and quality of life.

Demographic changes due to mining activities in Konawe Islands Regency bring complex social challenges. Sudden urbanization, overcrowding, inadequate housing, and pressure on infrastructure and public services require serious attention and handling. To address these negative impacts, comprehensive planning and policies are needed that include increasing infrastructure capacity, providing adequate housing, improving public services, and good social integration between migrants and local residents. With the right approach, it is expected that demographic change can be managed effectively to improve the welfare of the entire community.

## 2. Out-migration

In addition to attracting migrants from outside the region, the negative impact of mining activities in Konawe Islands Regency can also force local residents to move to other areas that are considered safer and more promising. This out-migration phenomenon has serious implications for the social and economic dynamics in the area.

Mining activities in Konawe Islands Regency cause severe environmental damage, including water and soil pollution, deforestation and loss of natural habitats. Damaged environmental conditions disrupt traditional livelihoods such as agriculture and fisheries.

When agricultural land is polluted or no longer productive and fisheries resources decline, people who depend on these sectors lose their source of income. In such a situation, many local residents are forced to move in search of livelihoods elsewhere (M Ambari, 2023).

Environmental pollution from mining activities can have a direct impact on public health. Diseases from polluted water, air pollution and heavy metal poisoning pose a serious threat to the local population. This health insecurity is one of the main reasons for residents to leave the area in search of a cleaner and healthier environment.

Mining exploitation often leads to social tensions and conflicts within communities. Differences of opinion between groups supporting and opposing mining activities, as well as inequities in the distribution of benefits, can cause significant social disruption. These tensions make daily life uncomfortable and motivate some residents to seek a more stable and peaceful life elsewhere.

Sudden urbanization and pressure on infrastructure and public services due to the influx of newcomers can reduce the quality of life for indigenous people. Inadequate infrastructure, such as damaged roads, limited access to clean water, and inadequate health and education services, leave local residents feeling neglected. This condition is one of the drivers of out-migration, as they seek areas with better facilities.

The destruction of cultural sites and ancestral heritage due to mining activities also contributes to out-migration. Residents who feel they have lost their cultural identity and sense of belonging may choose to move to a place that can provide a stronger sense of community and cultural values.

Out-migration results in less local labor available for other economic activities in the area. Sectors such as agriculture, fishing, and other local industries will lack workers, which can hinder the development of the local economy. This loss of labor can also lead to decreased productivity and income for the remaining communities.

Out-migration can lead to social disintegration, where long-established social networks and community ties are disrupted. Remaining residents may feel lonely and lose social support that is essential for mental and emotional well-being. This social disintegration can



also worsen living conditions and reduce social cohesion.

With a reduced workforce and population, the economic stability of mining areas can suffer. A decline in economic activity and local consumption reduces the attractiveness of investment from both the private and government sectors. This economic instability can make it difficult for the area to recover and develop again.

Out-migration due to the negative impacts of mining activities in Konawe Islands Regency poses serious challenges. Environmental degradation, health insecurity, social disruption and loss of cultural identity drive local residents to seek a better life elsewhere. Long-term impacts of this out-migration include local labor shortages, social disintegration, population decline, and economic instability. Addressing these issues requires policies and interventions that focus on environmental preservation, public service improvement, and cultural heritage protection, as well as the creation of sustainable economic opportunities for local residents. This is expected to prevent excessive out-migration and ensure the well-being of local communities is maintained.

## CONCLUSION

Mining exploitation on small islands in Konawe Islands Regency brings complex and diverse socio-economic impacts. These impacts include changes in livelihoods, social conflict, economic inequality, health issues, decreased quality of life, and demographic changes. To mitigate these negative impacts, inclusive and sustainable policies are needed, involving active community participation, close monitoring, and fairer distribution of economic benefits.

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