Abstract

This study discusses the notion of Jin and Hot money as moral emblems to predict morality and public health risk in Bombana, gold mining areas. The result of this study indicates that good jinn control people to prevent from negative behavior and thinking. It means that good jinn contributes the positive consequences for both individual and community. On the other hand, the bad jin brings negative consequences. In addition, the morality standard for hot money and bad jinn are associated with risks condition and their impacts for individual as well as community.

Key words: Jinn, hot money, mining area, morality, risks

Introduction

A gold rush began in Bombana during 2008 when Budi, a local farmer, conveyed information that there was an abundance of gold in Bombana. He began to prospect for gold in the Tahi Ite River when he received a message from God in his dream. God asked him to mine gold in his village called Rau-Rau, Rarowatu Subdistrict. As he has had experience as an artisanal gold miner elsewhere in Indonesia, he quietly started to mine gold by panning and reportedly collected quite a lot of gold. When he sold a large amount of gold to a trader in town, the buyer initially suspected him of theft and reported him to the local police. The police interrogated him and his secret became public knowledge. The local media splashed the announcement across the pages of the Kendari Post and the national media picked up the story and
suggested that there were rich prospects in Bombana and that it could be mined freely by the locals along the rivers. The information quickly spread like a virus across Indonesia that the Bombana district was rumoured to have 165,000 tons of gold deposits of very good quality, thereafter, Bombana became known as the land of golden destiny (*negeri berberkah emas*).

From then many local people as well as migrant people, from elsewhere in Southeast Sulawesi and other provinces of Indonesia, such as South Sulawesi, North Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB) and Java, moved into the area in large numbers. There have been many concerns raised in the local media, for instance Kendari Post and Kendari Express, regarding issues on the positive and negative impacts of the intensive mining activities in Bombana.

This paper will give insight about the notion of *jinn* and *hot money*, viewed as moral emblems, to predict risk perceptions and broader public health risk issues arising from Bombana gold mining activities. I agree with Lupton (1993, 1995, and 1999) that research on morality and risk perception are eminent to investigate broader public health issues. She noted that organizing people’s ideas, blame directed to others and individual concerns, and uncertainty in moral judgment, for instance, the morality-laden victim (2012), would benefit research in understanding health risks and in constructing risk assessment and management (Lupton, 2012, 2013; 2015).

Morality and risk issues have been contemplated in public health research as these themes link together to predict comprehensive determinants of public health. World Health Organization (2015) define determinants of health into three main umbrellas: social, economic and physical environments, including a person’s individual characteristics and behaviors and other factors, such as income and social status, education, physical environment, social support services, genetics, health services and gender. Brandt & Rozin (1997) emphasized the importance of understanding comprehensive issues on behavior, social and cultural determinants of health and disease, including issues on health related behaviors and moral issues. They argue that collaborations between health, risk and morality are very extensive (Brandt & Rozin 1997, p.viii).
Public health domains have exercised shifting discourses and denotation in universal concepts of morality, attitude, behavior and self-control that are related to body, medicine, health and illness (Lupton, 1990s; 1995 and 1999). She noted: “Risk discourse is often used to blame the victim, to displace the real reasons for ill-health upon the individual, and to express outrage at behavior deemed socially unacceptable, thereby exerting control over the body politic as well as the body corporeal” (Lupton, 1993, p...). She added that political and moral function of risk discourse in public health could propagate standard binary oppositions that serve to place moral judgments of blame (Lupton, 1993). Moral dimensions could perpetrate hazard or risk anxiety and depicted résistance a group in encounter morally and politically issues (Lupton, 1999). Public health marks the term of “our bodies” and “our persons” through an “apparatus of moral regulation” (Lupton, 1997). In addition, cultural imperatives and metaphors of morality, including attitudes and behaviors, are judged by society (Lupton, 1995). She argued that morality is upraised to predict exposure to individual risks and at the same time to avoid exposure to public risks (Lupton, 1995).

I proposes an explanation for traditional cosmological concepts of *jinn* and *hot money* as these moral and ethical themes frequently emerged in daily life of Bombana people around gold mining areas. As an Indonesian, the thought that I might hold the same perception about *jinn* and *hot money* as other Indonesians puzzled me when it came to gold mining. I evaluate these notions in the context of Indonesian morality by putting them into the frame of cultural risk theories to get a deeper understanding about risk perceptions, including public health risks, around gold mining activities. Furthermore, I examine how gold is perceived in relation to *jinn* and *hot money* in the concept of morality and perception of risks.

**Good jinn in controlling morality and risk**

Aswan, a Moronene descendent, recalled his story when the gold rush happened in Bombana around 2009. He said when he dug sands and took material from around bamboo roots, he found a lot of gold when he was panning; unlike his friends who sat next to him and took the same sand material as he did, did not find any gold when they were panning. He told me
"How come, we took the same materials from the same place but why are the results in gold different? There must be jinn around and hide the gold".

He and his friend, a boy, then sat among a crowd of people in a squatting position along the river bed, in front of them sat a young female and her smooth tights were showing and they started to say what is considered dirty words, such as smooth tights (Ind. Paha mulus). He told me that the jinn who guard the gold heard their dirty words and gave them punishment by hiding the gold from them, and, as a result, they did not get any gold while people sitting next to them got some. According to Aswan, people should not say rude words, swearing, and even not thinking about sex that is considered dirty minds. They should not come to mine with other purposes, such as looking for a girlfriend or boyfriend in mining areas.

Aswan represents people in Bombana who always link his traditional cosmologies with jinn and spirit possession. Gold is also perceived as sacred material as the jinn guard it. Jinn have control to the gold and the people who are looking for gold as their rezeki. Jinn can hide and disclose gold to peoples’ view. I believe that his perception is in line with most Indonesian people’s perception, which accredited gold as the precious or noble stone (batu mulia) and it has the first position among other mining materials that should be guided by such jinn. From Aswan’s traditional cosmology, he also believed that the jinn could be suggestive to peoples’ minds and could promote good behaviors and good minds by hiding the gold from them instead of attacking them physically. In this case, those people who want to have more gold, they have to maintain niat baik (good intention), sikap baik (good attitude) and tindakan baik (good behavior) in order to get more rezeki (gold).

From Aswan and other peasant traditional cosmologies, gold is perceived as fortunate material that always has strong relations with jinn and spirit possessions. This finding is also in line with what Soemarwoto and Ellen (2010) found when researching the Kasepuhan people in West Java. Kahayan miners’ traditional cosmologies always relate their tunnel collapse to jinn (spirit owner). Jinn would ask for wadal (sacrification), including sacrificing people’s lives and in order to give more gold, the more people died as believed as wadal, the more gold will wadal reveal (ibid, 2010, p.235).
Unlike people in Kasepuhan, peasants in the Rau-rau village do not have any cultural terminologies or names according to jinn or spirit possession accredited for gold mining. It is because mining is a new source of livelihood that had just started in 2008 while in Kasepuhan gold mining has been supporting people’s life since colonialism. I argue that the concept of jinn in Bombana mining is adopted from knowledge exchanged between migrant people, who bring with them the terminology of jinn and hot money and the peasants. Given most peasant Moronene traditional cosmologies always link spirit possession in their life, they syncretize their traditional belief with imported terminology in mining. In general, jinn in mining is believed to be non-real creatures whilst in Indonesian life jinn is believed to be real; it could associate with anything and has a lot of different names adopted in many social cultures in Indonesia.

Other anthropology scholars (Taussig, 1980; Nash, 1972; Walsh, 2008) in the world have also highlighted the importance of cultural folklore local knowledge in understanding social, cultural and political issues around gold mining. Nash (1972, p.224) contested the negative influences of spirit possession in tin Bolivian mining sites as she wrote about the Bolivian folklore capital story of Oruro which believed in the Hahuari. It venerated the powerful ogre, living in the hills, relating with the Devil or Uncle of the mines called Tio that had authority to control the rich veins of tin and to reveal them to those who gave offering. The shared beliefs of Tio were adopted into rebellious feelings during the Barrientos dictatorship military in tin mining. Taussig (1972) also discussed the notion of commodity fetishism that the devil has negative control over mining activities in Bolivian tin mining areas. Walsh (2004) noted livelihood uncertainty in a Malagasy mining town, the issues of money were taboo (Ibid, 2006), including the issues of religious incongruity and rituals (Ibid, 2002).

The interesting finding in this dissertation is that the jinn is not merely related to negative consequences for miners, in the form of dramatic risk condition, such tunnel collapse (Soemarwoto & Ellen, 2010) and rebellious feelings (Nash, 1972), but also jinn could prevent people from engaging in negative behaviors and attitudes. Jinn is also believed to be able to control internal or psychological parts of the body, such as to detect the purposes/
intentions (Niat) of someone who is looking for gold (see Aswan’s vignette). The intention to find rezeki should be pure, which imply positive intentions, such as, to find gold for money to buy any sembako\(^3\) or helping families in upright ways, such as, paying school fees or medical expenses. People need to focus on the positive purposes related to that place, for example, looking for gold to feed or help the family.

People perceptions’ about jinn guarded gold and gold mining, can be divided into two consequences and it depends on what kind of jinn guard the gold, bad or good jinn as in general Islamic belief\(^4\) (Sila, 2014, p.119). The idioms jinn represents are animistic and Islamic beliefs, both of which are still strong among Bombana people as the same with people in Bima Sila (2014). He noted that jinn and spirit possession among the Bima people reflected the concept of religion and cultural life in Bima. People’s belief in jinn can not be physically proven but it remains in peoples’ minds and it has been embodied in every person, as Nash (1972) explained that the Tio influenced spirit is among the Bolivian tin miners.

I argued that those jinn which are believed to be navigating people do not cheat and engage in risky behaviors as well as maintain positive intentions to mine gold, and even in the level of thinking with dirty minds, these are called good jinn (jinn baik)\(^5\) as Sila (2014, p.119) noted. Jinn can guide someone to spot gold in mining areas and it can also control morals by hiding gold from people who did not follow unwritten rules. In addition, the good jinn like to engage with good people or who maintain good deeds and good manners; and there are also bad jinn who can cause illness (Sila, 2014). I recall another story about bad jinn that can caused negative consequences for local people, Budi and Engka, the first people who found gold in Bombana.

**Bad jinn and the moral of hot money in promoting individual and community risks**

The story regarding jinn and hot money started with my informal conversation with Ras on 23 December 2014. He revealed that it has been no secret among people in the village, in Bombana area, that Budi and Engka
were very rich. They got a lot of money from selling the gold. Budi, 34 years old was richer than Engka. He had nine cars, some of them where double cabin (4WD), the expensive type. He also owned some land and some sets of sluice box machines, called kato and dompeng. He used to entertain himself in any karaokes and cafes, in and outside Bombana areas, such as Kendari, Makassar and Jakarta. He could afford to pay for expensive hotel fees for himself and for his colleagues of more than 10 people. He had a lot of body guards and most of them were from current police and army institutions. He always paid them with good fees and sometimes traktir makan dan minum (buy food and drinks for free). He used to have a wife whom he married before he found gold, but then had more wives whom he nikahi siri or nikah dibawah tangan (siri marriage or underhand marriage) which means illegal marriages. Since he had a lot of money, Budi intensively entertained himself with alcohol, drugs, gambling and prostitution.

Ras tried to convince us how gold mining have negatively influence Budi. He said that: “You can tell from his teeth, his front teeth almost all dissapeared. It means he had too much drugs. In the past he could buy all the happiness that he wanted, today he could not even to afford to buy a cigarette because of got hot money (uang panas) from selling gold, that is why he ended up in poor condition as he is now”.

Ras and most people in the village perceive gold as hot money from bad jinn. It means that the money resulted from gold mining activities is believed to be hot money that would bring negative consequences for individual who spent it for any purpose. The hot money could drive people to engage in risk taking behaviors or to have negative intentions to engage in socially unaccepted activities, such as prostitution, gambling, drinking alcohol, poligamy and abandoning their families. The same expression of hot money also I heard from Samran (a Wumbubangka villager).

He mentioned that “any money people get from gold mining is hot money. The money could not stay long in my pocket. It always found ways to be spent on anything, for example, bad things happen and I need to pay” (Samran, 29 May 2015 in Wumbubangka village).
Ras and Sarman have the same perception about *hot money*. The *hot money* means all income related to gold mining could bring negative risk consequences for individual's economic state and their livelihood. I argue that the term of *hot money* has been viewed as a moral standard to judge negative risks, including unwanted conditions or negative impacts to the individual. Besides, people also associate *hot money* terminology with the negative impacts brought to the community in general, such as poverty.

Sudirman, a Moronene local recalled that the living conditions of the villagers during the gold rush in 2008 to 2010 were that life in general was very nice (hidup sangat enak) compared to their poor old days. He contended that they were lucky people in prosperous Bombana. The gold rush has changed the way people had seen their land as a prosperous mining area (daerah tambang kaya). Since the gold rush 2008 there was a lot of gold; mass panning happened everywhere; there were a lot of people who came to rent their land to build a tent in which to live. It was suddenly very easy to get money and most villagers were overwhelmed with instant cash money in huge amounts. He said to me “Just bring your own frying pan (wajan), gold under the reed roofs (Ind. Akar alang-alang) just panning”. People can buy a motorcycle from selling the gold that they mine in only less than one week, or even only two days. However, it no longer happens. He said their life was very prosperous but it was false prosperous (Ind. Kemakmuran yang semu). Sudirman said: “See what hot money from mining is doing to us, now life has gone back to the old days before the gold mining exists, we are still poor” (Interview with Sudirman on 05 January, 2015).

Sudirman admitted that gold mining has changed people’s life style from the very poor adopted lifestyle to the modernity lifestyle. He blamed the morality of *hot money* for creating the false prosperity for the village people, in particular, most Indigenous Moronene people. He argued that mining could not cease poverty in his poor, village community of Rau-rau, including Rarowatu sub district, Bombana, which is still considered to be poor mining (Syukri, Mawardi, & Achmadi, 2012). Sudirman confessed that gold mining has offered temporary prosperity for the villager, but the fact is that the villagers are still trapped in poverty. This condition has been highlighted by scholars (Kamlongera, 2011) in Malawi artisanal gold mining. He argued that
although small-scale mining has supported rural livelihoods, the benefits of exploited minerals do not match the significant development of poverty where long term poverty still exist in the community (Kamlongera, 2011, p.1135).

The term of *hot money* has been widely known among society in Indonesia and some parts of the World. Znoj (1998) discussed the notion of hot and cold money among Rejang people in old mining areas in Southwestern Sumatera, Indonesia. People perceive that all money gained from mining activities is *hot money* or fast money; it is easy to get and to get rid of (ibid, p.201) yet *cold money* is gained from agricultural activities (ibid, p.204). His finding about *hot money* is also related with what Nash (1978, p.224) found in the Bolivian mining community who always relate *hot money* to money from Tio, the devil, that could not stay long in the pocket. The morality of *hot money* is always negative because it can promote negative behaviors, such as gambling, extra-marriage sexual relations and other negative risk taking behaviors (ibid, p.202). The notion of *hot money* in Sumatera is also similar to the notion of *hot money* in Madagascar (Walsh, 2003). Both Znoj (1998) and Walsh (2003) highlighted the issues of *hot money* with gender issues. Most males were linking *hot money* with the tendency to engaged in risk taking behaviors (Znoj, 1998) and young men in Madagascar engaged in daring consumption (Walsh, 2003).

The morality of *hot money* and *cold money* (regular money) linking in mining activities is not very strongly embodied in the Bombana community as the notion of *hot money* is in other parts of Indonesia (Znoj, 1998). Although Bombana population has a Muslim majority it also has the concept of *hot money* associated with *uang haram* (forbidden money); there was no local concept for the *hot money*, in particular, for gold mining. I am convinced that the locals also borrowed the term of *hot money* in mining from the migrants who have a lot of experience from old mining sites, such as, in Lebong mining sites (Znoj, 1998). The morality of *hot money* is also associated to the negative state of the individual or the poor situation that the community can acquire.

The bad morality of gold mining is always associated with *hot money* in the link with Indonesian term *sial* that has close meanings with bad luck, danger, unlucky, hoodoo, and other negative terminologies. Those negative
terminologies, I believe, imply the word risks, including health risks (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1992). People in mining have their ways to avoid, to diminish and to get rid of those negative terms by praying according to their religions, conducting rituals and managing risks according their experiences. Islamic people conduct *shalat wajib* (compulsory prayer) for five times a day. People in Bombana keep strongly to their traditional rituals in their everyday life, including their mining activities. Migrant miners have adopted this ritual in their mining activities. However, some miners told me that they have also some traditional scarification methods to prevent and maintain risks in mining sites. The Moronene traditional rituals, such as *Mooli* and *Mobeli wonua*, are very famous among the miners.

**Conclusion**

Gold is fetishized with *jinn* and *hot money* in Bombana mining. Bombana people believe that there are two kind of *Jinn*, which is guarding gold in mining sites. Those jinn are *jinn baik* (*malaikat*) or angel and *bad Jinn* (*setan*) or Satan as Sila (2014) noted in her research among the Bimanese. Good *jinn* which has power to control risk taking behavior and preventing people from bad thinking means that good *jinn* take part of this risk prevention action. Yet, if gold is associated with *hot money* means that *bad jinn* can bring negative consequences into people lives, such as promoting risk taking behaviors, such as social illness and even trapping the community in poverty. I believe that morality standard for *hot money* and bad *jinn* is also associated with risky conditions and risky impacts of mining on individuals and the community.

This paper also emphasize that other scholars (Nash, 1978; Jnoj, 2003) who interrelated cultural issues in mining sites, have missed the opportunity to emphasize such good spirit possession or *good deity*, what I called as *good jinn*, that contribute to the positive consequences for individual and the community. For instance, preventing the exposure to risk taking behaviors. Rather, (Nash, 1978) noted the negative presences of devil-*Tio* in tin mining and (Jnoj, 2003) wrote about the negative label of *jinn* and *hot money*. These
scholars only acknowledged fast money and the negative consequences for the individual, family and community, overlooking the positive aspects.

To sum up, I believe that the morality of rezeki, jinn and hot money are more likely to embody perception, attitude and behavior of Bombana people when they perceive the health risks of mining. I argue that those notions representing people’s cultural cosmologies together with morality and cultural values would contribute to the construction of their health risk perceptions (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1972; Douglas, 1985).

---

1Lecturer at Dept. Epidemiology, Faculty of Public Health, Haluoleo University, Indonesia, and Phd Candidate, Department of Anthropology (Medical anthropology), School of Culture History and Language, Australian National University. Correspondence Author, email: fitrilailah.mokui@anu.edu.au and fitrimokui@gmail.com.

2Lecturer at Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Science, Haluoleo University, Indonesia, and Phd Candidate, Department of Anthropology, School of Culture History and Language, Australian National University. Correspondence Author, email: omar.pidani@anu.edu.au and opidani@gmail.com.

3Sembako is an abbreviation for nine basics needs (Ind. Sembilan Bahan Pokok) consisting of food and drink, which is rated as the main needs of Indonesian population. According to Surat Keputusan Menteri Industri dan Perdagangan No.115/mpp/kep/2/1998 on 27th February 1998 the Sembako listed from the top rank are: Rice or sago, corn, vegetables and fruits, meats(cow and chicken), milk, sugar, iodized salt, cooking oil and margarine and the last is kerosene and gas/LPG (www.organisasi.org).

4Islamic belief taught that there are two kind of jinn created by Allah SWT, good jinn and bad jinn/syaitan. Good jinn live as good people live, they pray to God, eat, marry and do normal things in life like humans do.

5There are two types of jinn in Indonesian belief, good jinn and bad jinn considered as evil.

6I will explain the Kato technique and Dompeng machine in chapter two.
Bibliography


Kamlongera, P. J. (2011). Making the poor "Poorer" or alleviating poverty?


