



The Involvement of Walhi Region of South Sulawesi in Environmental Politics Against the Polemic of the Lae-Lae Island Reclamation Plan

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Abstract. The Laelae Island reclamation plan in Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province, received different responses from the community and the government, triggering a polemic. In the polemics that occurred, the involvement of several environmental-based non-governmental organizations was observed, one of which was WALHI South Sulawesi. WALHI South Sulawesi utilizes its existence as one of the Non-Governmental Organizations engaged in environmental advocacy efforts to participate in supporting the rejection of the Lae-lae Island reclamation plan by the South Sulawesi government. This research further examines the extent of WALHI South Sulawesi's involvement in environmental politics in responding to the Laelae Island reclamation plan which will influence the decision-making process by the South Sulawesi government in the future on environmental issues, especially related to the Laelae Island reclamation plan. WALHI South Sulawesi in this case then utilizes its power relations as one of the non-profit organizations based on environmental interests or better known as Non-Governmental Organizations by raising the Laelae Island reclamation plan polemic to become an environmental issue in the national scope using the concept of political opportunity and transnational advocacy strategies consisting of (1) information politics, (2) symbolic politics, (3) leverage politics, and (4) accountability politics. These strategies are used to influence the policies of the Makassar City and South Sulawesi Provincial governments regarding the Makassar City Laelae Island reclamation plan.

Keywords: WALHI, Reclamation, Laelae Island, Environmental Politics

1 Introduction

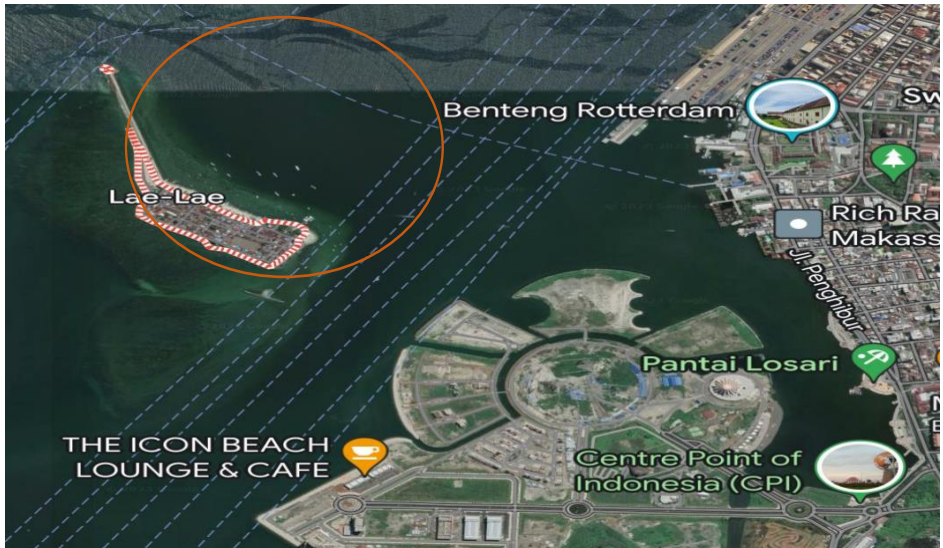
Makassar City as the capital of South Sulawesi Province is a priority for investment by domestic and foreign companies. Currently, there are seven megaprojects that will be built in Makassar City including the continuation of the Center Poin of Indonesia (CPI) Reclamation where the South Sulawesi Government has previously signed an agreement with PT Yasmin Bumi Asri regarding the continuation of the reclamation project in the CPI area to Laelae Island which will be worked on 12,11 hectares. The reclaimed land will later function as a new marine tourism destination area on Laelae

Island to improve community welfare through the tourism sector. But in its development, the reclamation plan on Laelae Island was rejected by the local community. Although the reclamation plan on LaeLae Island will be implemented in an area where there are no settlements, the community's rejection of the reclamation plan is still ongoing. The rejection is also supported by several environmental-based non-governmental organizations, one of which is WALHI South Sulawesi.



Picture 1. Master Plan Citraland City Losari Makassar City, South Sulawesi, part of reclamation plan in Laelae Island (Source: Kompas.com, 2017)

Laelae Island is an island located about 1,1 km from the Kayu Bangkoa crossing pier in Makassar City and is inhabited by around 1900 people. The majority of people who live on Lae-Lae Island work as papalimbang and fishermen, and most of them have both professions. After the information about the reclamation plan according to the Circular Letter of the Regional Secretariat of South Sulawesi Province Number 180/1428/B.Hukum, Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2022 concerning the Regional Spatial Plan of South Sulawesi Province, and Governor Regulation Number 14 of 2021 concerning the development of Marine Tourism Destinations on Lae-Lae Island triggered an increase in local community concerns based on the impact of environmental damage felt after the CPI reclamation and Makassar New Port development reclamation. Therefore, this issue needs to be a common concern, including environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as WALHI South Sulawesi.



Picture 2. Aerial View of Laelae Island (Source: Google Map, 2023)

From the background of this problem, the researcher then wants to examine "The Involvement of WALHI South Sulawesi in environmental politics in the polemics over the Laelae Island reclamation plan in Makassar City", so that in the future new things can be found related to the role and strategy of WALHI South Sulawesi in utilizing its relationships to support the rejection of the Laelae Island reclamation plan.

2 Literature Review

Politics can no longer be seen only as the relationship between humans and humans, but also humans and the environment. This has led to a new branch of Political Science, namely Environmental Politics. Paterson [8] environmental politics is an approach that describes environmental problems with political economy to represent a dynamic turn of tension between the environment and humans, between various groups in society on a scale from local individuals to transnational as a whole. The process of environmental politics ensures that solutions to environmental problems can be achieved as targeted and sustained. In the application of the perspective of Environmental Politics, one of the elements involved in it is environmental-based non-governmental organizations such as WALHI. WALHI has developed into one of the independent and professional non-governmental organizations, especially in terms of advocacy and environmental law enforcement as explained in Law Number 32 of 2009 article 66 concerning Environmental Protection and Management which states that "Anyone who fights for the preservation and rescue of the environment cannot be convicted and civilly prosecuted so that it opens up great opportunities and gives its own strength and power to certain elements of society to carry out social movements in enforcing environmental law".

Tarrow [11] states that the power of social movement is a movement that has the value of contentious collective action that can be carried through institutional mediums. Meanwhile, for the concept of political opportunity from Meyer [7] and Giugni [4] is used as a basis that connects social movements and political aspects, social movements can have power in the form of politics, one of which is in the enforcement of civil rights in the United States and for environmental issues.

The source of previous research used by researchers as literacy in this research is an article by Suhardi entitled "Analysis of the Center Point of Indonesia (CPI) Reclamation Policy of Makassar City in the Environmental Political Perspective" in 2021. Suhardi [10] reclamation policy does not have a good impact in accordance with its essence and original purpose, on the contrary, the reclamation increases the risk of disaster for Makassar City, especially for areas located in coastal areas both land and sea. The reclamation in the CPI area of Makassar City has attracted a number of NGOs' attention through the formation of an alliance demanding that the reclamation be stopped because it has caused damage to the surrounding environment and caused economic and material losses to coastal communities. The politics of control and management of territories on all fronts without regard to the precautionary principle increases sustainable, social and human rights conflicts and creates poverty, including environmental damage.

Furthermore, another source of previous research used by researchers as literacy in developing this research belongs to Yanuar Albertus with the title "Transnational Advocacy Network: Greenpeace's strategy in rejecting Shell's drilling plan in the Arctic in 2012-2015" in 2021. From the results of the study, Albertus [1] the advocacy process that Greenpeace has carried out since 2012 has used every tactic contained in the international advocacy network (TAN) strategy to influence Shell's policy to stop the drilling plan, which includes information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and also accountability politics. The main tactics used by Greenpeace are information politics and symbolic politics. Greenpeace uses information politics tactics in TAN to disseminate information and gain widespread public support so that it can successfully utilize its cognitive power and social power. Meanwhile, in the tactic of symbolic politics, Greenpeace succeeded in using its symbolic power and social power by making clear its position in opposition to Shell regarding drilling plans in the Arctic region.

3 Research Methods

The research used a qualitative research approach through understanding the phenomenon of what was done by WALHI South Sulawesi in supporting the rejection of the Laelae Island reclamation plan. The implementation of qualitative research is used with journal content analysis techniques where data sources come from secondary data based on the results of literature review studies. Secondary data is obtained from the results of research that has been conducted by previous researchers, especially those that have relevance to the role and strategy of NGOs in environmental politics to address environmental problems that occur in the vicinity. Meanwhile, the literature review study contains reviews, summaries, and the author's thoughts on several literature sources in the form of articles, journals, books, slides, information from the internet and others related to the topic discussed.

The data analysis technique in this literature study will emphasize the references or literature used as a reference by researchers. Furthermore, the population and sample in this study were not used because the research conducted used a type of qualitative research that originated from a particular case study and in a particular social situation which focused on WALHI South Sulawesi and the results of the research could not be applied equally to the population. However, the research results obtained can be transferred to the future in other places with social situations that have similarities with the social situation of the case that is being or has been studied in the future.

4 Result & Discussion

WALHI South Sulawesi's involvement in supporting the Laelae island community to reject the reclamation plan by the South Sulawesi Government is based on ecological facts that were previously released in May 2023 through the walhisulsel.or.id website. WALHI South Sulawesi argues that the reclamation project in the CPI area that began in 2014, including the one that will be carried out on Laelae Island, has caused human rights violations in the form of deprivation of living space for fishermen and local residents. WALHI South Sulawesi also supports the Central Government, in this case the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), which until now has not issued a reclamation permit for Laelae Island.

Although the escalation of the rejection of the reclamation development of Laelae Island in Makassar City so far still ebbs and flows and seems momentous following the commemoration of certain days such as environmental day. The progress of mass mobilization continues to be accommodated by WALHI South Sulawesi by building public opinion raising the issue of human rights deprivation and destruction of marine ecosystems on Laelae Island and its surroundings. The existence of problems related to the marine ecosystem and the professional life of the Laelae Island community is also still being discussed in the form of consolidation both by students in various moments of demonstrations or through open dialogue and or studies conducted by environmental activists. The presence of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) adds to the dynamics in the advocacy process of the Laelae Island reclamation plan polemic until the issue is further followed up to find a solution.

Bryant and Bailey [5] present NGOs that emerged from environmental issues and ecological politics, the focus of their movements lies on the issue of developmentalism, namely fighting for and promoting justice for vulnerable groups over environmental resources. Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia or better known as WALHI is one of the NGOs in Indonesia engaged in environmental advocacy. In South Sulawesi, WALHI South Sulawesi sees that the Laelae Island reclamation plan will cause environmental damage to the surrounding marine ecosystem including the loss of livelihoods and residence of the local Laelae island community. In addition, it emphasizes that previously PT Yasmin as the developer of the reclamation project in the CPI area of Makassar City has also failed and was unable to fulfill its promises so that the Government should sanction PT Yasmin as the project developer.

E Keck and Sikkink [6] NGOs have normative power in changing the policies and behavior of other actors (stakeholders) involved in a problem. Therefore, WALHI South Sulawesi actively advocates environmental issues in collaboration with LBH Makassar City, Mongabay.co.id (an environmental news site), all WALHI South Sulawesi member institutions, the Coalition Against Coastal Reclamation (Kawal Pesisir), student organizations, and other related organizations. Meanwhile, for the national scale network, WALHI moves together with ICEL and YLBHI while the transnational network, WALHI is a member of Friend of the Earth (FoE) which consists of 71 organizations in 70 countries with 15 affiliate organizations, 5,000 local activist groups on every continent with more than 2 million memberships and other active supporters around the world.

In relation to advocacy efforts to support the rejection of the Laelae Island reclamation plan, WALHI South Sulawesi collaborates with LBH Makassar City, Mongabay.co.id (an environmental news site), all WALHI South Sulawesi member institutions, the Coalition Against Coastal Reclamation (Kawal Pesisir), student organizations, and other related organizations. Meanwhile, for the national scale network, WALHI is engaged with ICEL and YLBHI while the transnational network, WALHI is a member of Friend of the Earth (FoE) which consists of 71 organizations in 70 countries with 15 affiliate organizations, 5,000 local activist groups on every continent with more than 2 million memberships and other active supporters around the world.

WALHI South Sulawesi actively criticizes all forms of government policies by participating in encouraging the community to take peaceful action against the Laelae island reclamation plan. Therefore, there are several strategies that NGO actors then use in advocacy efforts. E Keck [6] lists four typologies carried out by transnational advocacy groups in the context of socialization, including: Information politics, namely the ability to generate information and direct the impact that will occur from the information obtained; symbolic politics, namely the ability to call for symbols and actions that can raise public opinion and framing and construction of an issue; leverage politics, which is the ability to influence certain situations when one party is unable to exert influence; accountability politics, is an effort to maintain powerful actors in order to continue to hold the policies that have been set.

Based on these strategies, researchers then describe the strategies used by WALHI South Sulawesi in utilizing its relationships to address the polemics over the Makassar City Laelae island reclamation plan as previously described.

4.1 Information Politics Strategy

WALHI South Sulawesi in influencing the community, especially those living on Laelae Island, uses a political information strategy by mobilizing the community to be proactive in responding to the Laelae Island reclamation plan by the South Sulawesi government. WALHI South Sulawesi's strategy can be seen through uploads on the walhisulsel.or.id website and Walhi South Sulawesi's Instagram social media which are poured in the form of an in-depth story describing the development and impact of the Laelae Island reclamation plan, one of which is the Ecological Facts study Vol III May 2023 with the title "Laelae Reject Reclamation" [13].



Picture 3. Ecological Facts WALHI region South Sulawesi “Laelae Rejects Reclamation”
(Source: *Walhisulsel.or.id*, 2023)

In addition, WALHI South Sulawesi is also actively reporting through other online media in collaboration with local journalists in Makassar City. Lallo (2023) news published in the Fajar Rakyat Sulsel online media which tells of WALHI South Sulawesi's rejection of the Laelae island reclamation which was directly conveyed by Muhammad Al Amin as the Executive Director of WALHI South Sulawesi because it will damage the environment and previously PT Yasmin as the implementer of the reclamation project in the field was unable to continue its activities after the first reclamation project in the Makassar City CPI area was unable to fulfill the initial agreement with the South Sulawesi Government.

4.2 Symbolic Politics Strategy

WALHI South Sulawesi utilizes a symbol political strategy in its efforts to influence local communities through the depiction of the rejection of the Laelae island reclamation plan. WALHI South Sulawesi emphasizes community support for the potential impacts that the reclamation project will have on both local communities and the environment, especially the waters of Makassar City [12]. The symbol depictions by WALHI South Sulawesi include the following:



Picture 4 & 5. Environmental Campaign Against Laelae Island Reclamation With Local Communities (Source: Walhisulsel.or.id & Mongabay.co.id, 2023)

4.3 Leverage Politics Strategy

WALHI South Sulawesi as one of the subsidiary organizations of WALHI which focuses on environmental advocacy continues to strengthen and expand its network both through cooperation with other local environmental organizations in South Sulawesi and Indonesia in general in order to increase organizational strength. Forms of cooperation between WALHI South Sulawesi in advocacy efforts related to reclamation issues in Makassar City, namely with Greenpeace Indonesia, YLK (Marine Conservation Foundation) Indonesia, Sobat Bumi, Marine Scientific Diving Club (MSDC) Hasanuddin University, Fisheries Diving Club (FDC) Hasanuddin University, Green Youth Movement, Alliance to Save the Coast (ASP), Pedjuang Pesisir Kodingareng, and Marine Buddies on January 29, 2020 in Makassar City and focused on a campaign to save the marine ecosystem in the waters of the Spermonda Islands in South Sulawesi from the threat of destructive fisheries and other threats such as plastic

waste, reclamation, marine sand mining, and climate change. Although the coalition's initial focus was on the polemics over marine sand mining on Kodingarengkeke Island, one of its campaigns is also related to the issue of reclamation so that it can re-emerge if the Laelae island reclamation plan is carried out by the South Sulawesi government.

4.4 Accountability Politics Strategy

WALHI South Sulawesi as one of the Non-Governmental Organizations engaged in environmental advocacy is active in conducting movements both in monitoring and following up on all forms of local government policies that are considered to have good and bad effects on the environment. The movement is not only in the form of encouragement and invitation to the local community to participate in peaceful actions and protests against government policies that are considered to have an effect on the environment, but also to report to the South Sulawesi House of Representatives on the absence of a permit for the implementation of the Laelae Island reclamation so that it needs to be followed up to prevent the movement of the development company to carry out the project without an AMDAL document from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia.

From the results of the analysis that has been carried out by researchers associated with previous related research, namely by Suhardi and Yanuar Albertus in 2021, what can be used as a comparison is that Suhardi's research emphasizes more on the impact of the reclamation project policy carried out by the government of South Sulawesi and Makassar City on the surrounding environment, be it environmental, economic and other socio-cultural impacts which then have the potential to threaten the human rights of the community. Meanwhile, research from Yanuar Albertus has similarities with the research that has been conducted using the concept of transnational advocacy strategies, but what distinguishes it is in terms of the sample used, namely Greenpeace and the success of Greenpeace to determine the drilling plan off the coast of the North Pole, while from the results of this study WALHI South Sulawesi is still in the process of advocacy efforts against the rejection of the Laelae Island reclamation plan.

The results of this research are expected to have implications for the NGO movement in the South Sulawesi region, especially in terms of environmental concerns, to jointly voice the potential vulnerabilities that can arise from reclamation projects without regard to environmental impact analysis. In addition, it can also be basic information for the South Sulawesi government to determine future policies in terms of reclamation project plans to pay attention to the interests of the community. In addition, based on the research that has been conducted, there are no significant obstacles faced by researchers because this research study uses a literature review study. However, the researcher proposes suggestions to be carried out in the future, including:

- a. The South Sulawesi Government and the Makassar City Government need to reassess the Environmental Impact Assessment (AMDAL) of the Lae-lae Island reclamation plan by taking into account the development of the situation

and environmental conditions on the coast of Makassar City after the reclamation of the CPI area.

- b. Coastal reclamation can have a negative impact on the environment, socio-culture, and the economy of the community, especially among fishermen on Laelae Island and surrounding islands.

5 Conclusion

The results of the research on WALHI South Sulawesi's involvement in environmental politics on the polemics over the Lae-Lae Island reclamation plan in Makassar City using WALHI's perspective as a non-governmental environmental organization (NGO) in Indonesia show that WALHI South Sulawesi has a major influence in the process of making policies related to environmental issues by the government, especially related to the Lae-Lae Island reclamation plan through the application of the concept of political opportunities and transnational advocacy strategies which are divided into four important strategies, namely (1) information politics, namely WALHI South Sulawesi uploading the reasons behind the support for the rejection of the Laelae Island reclamation plan on the walhisulsel website. or. id and Walhi South Sulawesi's Instagram social media; (2) symbolic politics, namely WALHI South Sulawesi emphasizes support for the rejection of the project reclamation plan using symbols in the form of campaign attributes to reject reclamation conveyed through local community involvement; (3) leverage politics, namely WALHI South Sulawesi cooperates with coalitions with other non-governmental organizations both locally and nationally to participate in highlighting environmental problems that will arise from existing reclamation projects in Makassar City, especially on Laelae Island in the future; and (4) accountability politics, namely WALHI South Sulawesi is active in carrying out movements both in monitoring and following up on all forms of local government policies that are considered to have good and bad effects on the environment, especially on the companies involved, the South Sulawesi government, and the central government.

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