

Towards Environmental Sustainability: Pandawara Group-Denmark Collaboration Through Transnational Advocacy Network

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ABSTRACT

Pandawara Group as a non-governmental organization that started with environmental concerns, has expanded to a larger scope to be able to work with the government and other external parties. The role of social media has also increased the existence of the Pandawara Group so that they can be recognized as an influential organization in the state society. Their success resulted in several awards and led to an opportunity to learn more about environmental management with an overseas party from Denmark. In the different categories of countries, there are certainly differences in how the environment is managed, such as Indonesia and Denmark. This research aims to analyze how the Denmark government manages waste and find differences in how waste is managed between the Indonesian-Denmark government and how much social media impact has on awareness of environmental issues. Through a qualitative approach with a descriptive method using literature studies to obtain relevant data, it explains how the efforts made by Pandawara Group can influence The Government of Denmark to make and pursue policies using the theory or concept of Transnational Advocacy Network. The concept itself is a contemporary framework that describes how non-state actors, such as NGOs, advocacy groups, and other kinds of social movements, collaborate beyond national boundaries to influence policy changes to certain institutions or governments and also to promote shared values or ideas. Transnational advocacy network theory emphasizes the power of information, persuasion, and network-building in shaping international politics and domestic policies. This research paper concludes that Pandawara Group as a NGO, collaborating with Denmark as a foreign state actor through Transnational Advocacy Network, can build and strengthen partnerships in order to achieve the goal of promoting global environmental sustainability.

Keywords: *Pandawara Group, Indonesia, Denmark, NGOs, Transnational Advocacy Network, Environment*

INTRODUCTION

In the state system, non-state actors also have a role in how an issue that is being felt by many civilians can rise to the level of an issue that the government needs to concern about. Non state actors are entities that have no connection with the government, usually in the form of non-governmental organizations, or multinational companies. Large scale non-state actors can also have a significant influence on domestic and foreign politics. Non-Governmental Organizations as a part of non-state actors that have existed since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 and have become a

counterweight to government policies make NGOs very commonly known in social life, NGOs usually prioritize social interests and are usually non-profit (Syefafalih, 2023), many were established as an initial forum for common interests or as a place to solve problems that usually occur in the surrounding environment.

It cannot be denied that the environment is still an issue that needs to be concerned by the global community. Referring to the points of the United Nations' sustainable development goals which are rooted in environmental problems such as point 6 “Clean and Water Sanitation”, point 13 “Climate action”, point 14 “Life below water”, and so on (United Nations, n.d.) is proof that the environment also has an important role in sustainability. The existence of environmental damage that is not immediately addressed can have an impact on the quality of the environment for the next generation.

In the reality of life in the modern era, globalization makes life in the world easier to connect and influence (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.). Globalization is identified by social scientists as something that is interconnected, where conditions that allow space and time to connect actions from a distance. In this sense, globalization is defined as a system of expanding relations in any sector despite the distance (Britannica, n.d.). The implementation of globalization can be seen along with the advancement of sophisticated technology and will continue to develop in the future, making it easier for communication and information to spread quickly only through social media.

NGOs can take this opportunity to facilitate wider dissemination of information to people who have interests in line with NGOs' interests. People on social media are usually referred to as netizens which is a combination of the phrases “Internet” and “Citizen” (Fluent Slang, 2023). Netizens contribute to online communities that can usually make it easier for an issue to rise into a trend. In the case correlation that will be discussed, Pandawara Group as a non-governmental organization with members Agung Permana, Gilang Rahma, Ikhsan Destian, Muhammad Rifqi, and Rafly Pasya, which was originally just a group of young people who were annoyed with their surroundings, with repeated flooding presented their initiative to clean up the garbage in the river around the area where they lived. They also uploaded the cleaning process on their Tiktok account which unexpectedly going viral plus received a lot of good responses from netizens (Nuri, 2023) and they also expanded the cleaning area because one of the factors was that the garbage in the surrounding rivers was polluted due to shipments from rivers in other areas.

This is what underlies Pandawara Group to expand its influence with the aim of making people more aware of the cleanliness of the surrounding environment. Pandawara Group intends to form teams in regional areas of Indonesia to work together (Turosidea, 2023). Pandawara Group currently has around 12 million followers on Tiktok and 3.2 million on Instagram, which shows their popularity among the younger generation as well as fans of online entertainment content. This popularity is also often driven by their ability to adapt to trends and utilize social media platforms effectively. Pandawara Group's actions have earned them several awards, as well as the opportunity to expand

their knowledge of the environment and receive invitations to Denmark. Denmark is known to be one of the countries that are very concerned about the environment and sustainability.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative methodology with a descriptive approach to examine the contribution of the Pandawara Group in environmental management as well as the influence of digital platforms on public awareness of ecological issues. The choice of qualitative method is based on its ability to comprehensively explore complex social phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This research utilized secondary data collected through a literature review. Sources of information included scientific publications, official government reports, documents from non-governmental organizations, as well as policies related to waste management in Indonesia and Denmark, including the role of the Pandawara Group as a non-governmental organization in environmental advocacy. The data collection process was conducted through a systematic literature review, with the researcher searching and sorting relevant sources using various keywords. In addition, press releases from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the social media pages of the Pandawara Group were also researched to obtain up-to-date information on waste management policies and practices. The Transnational Advocacy Network Theory Framework was used as the main analytical foundation, helping to explain how non-state entities such as the Pandawara Group can influence environmental management policies and practices through advocacy networks that transcend national boundaries. Key concepts in this theory, such as information exchange, persuasion, and network development, were utilized to analyze the interaction between the Pandawara Group and the Danish government (Keck & Sikkink, 2014).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, several strategies were applied. First, data source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from different types of sources (academic journals, government reports and NGO publications) to verify the consistency of findings. Second, peer debriefing involved other researchers with expertise in environmental studies and international relations to review and provide feedback on the data analysis and interpretation process. Third, thick description was used in the presentation of findings to provide a rich context and allow readers to assess the transferability of the research results. However, this study has some limitations. As it relies on secondary data, this study may not be able to capture the latest dynamics in waste management and environmental advocacy that have not been documented in the available literature. In addition, limited access to internal documents of the Pandawara Group and the Danish government may limit the depth of analysis on the decision-making and negotiation processes that take place in the context of transnational cooperation.

Transnational Advocacy Network theory serves as the main analytical lens in this study, highlighting how non-state actors such as the Pandawara Group can influence

environmental management policies and practices across national boundaries. Key concepts in this theory, including information exchange, persuasion, and network building, were used to analyze the interactions between the Pandawara Group and the Danish government. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of transnational cooperation on environmental issues and the role of non-governmental organizations in shaping policy across countries. The analysis also includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Group's advocacy strategies, including the use of social media and other digital platforms to raise public awareness and mobilize support for sustainable waste management initiatives.

Despite limitations, this study provides valuable insights into the role of non-governmental organizations in environmental advocacy across national borders and the potential for knowledge transfer between developed and developing countries in terms of waste management. The study underscores the importance of international collaboration in addressing global environmental challenges and the crucial role played by non-state actors in facilitating the exchange of knowledge and best practices. The findings of this study can contribute to a better understanding of the relationship dynamics between civil society organizations, governments and the international community in the context of environmental sustainability. Furthermore, this study can serve as a foundation for future research exploring the effectiveness of transnational advocacy strategies in other environmental issues and the potential replication of similar cooperation models in other developing countries.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

PANDAWARA GROUP AND THE THEORY OF TRANSNATIONAL ADVOCACY NETWORK

Pandawara Group is a small non-governmental group that emerged in mid-2022, with the initial movement carried out due to the same unrest, namely the flooding problems they experienced. From that problem, they moved to clean up the rivers close to where they lived. And since this small movement, there have been many rivers in Indonesia that have been successfully cleaned by the Pandawara group. The activity carried out by the Pandawara group is an activity carried out in groups by working together to fight for certain issues, which in this case is the issue of environmental cleanliness. Pandawara Group has inadvertently built an advocacy network in Indonesia on environmental issues (Muhammad, 2023).

Advocacy networks, commonly known as transnational advocacy networks are networks of advocacy efforts in which activists from different circles in two or more countries work together to achieve a common goal. These networks usually function as interest groups, and TAN's own goals are the policies of countries, the UN, IMF, World Bank, and other international organizations. Transnational Advocacy Networks advocate on human rights, women's rights and environmental issues. This advocacy network acts as an interest group against issues and policies that are not in line with its goals. Transnational Advocacy Network Theory (TAN) is a concept that explains how social

groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) interact across national borders to influence public policy and achieve broader societal goals. The theory was developed by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in their book *Transnational Activists: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (1998). They consider how advocacy networks can function in a global context involving various actors, including governments, international organizations, and civil society. There are 4 strategies that are broken down and used by networks, namely information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and responsibility politics (Claudia, Patriani, & Nuzulian, 2022).

Information politics is the ability to deliver politically useful information quickly and reliably to problem centers. Information is critical to the effectiveness of the network. Many networks' members exchange information informally via telephone, email, fax, newspapers, brochures and newsletters. Using this information, the network determines who is responsible, and suggests reliable solutions. Therefore, non-state actors rely heavily on access to information because reaching out to like-minded national and international groups can provide access to information, expand legitimacy, and mobilize information towards specific policy goals. Symbolic politics is the ability to use symbols, actions and stories to explain the whole situation as audiences often have very different understandings. In the process of persuasion to raise awareness and expand the electorate, networks often match people with specific events to raise awareness and get them to change their minds and take action.

Leverage politics is the ability to bring in actors with greater influence when weaker network members are unlikely to have greater influence. Accountability politics, on the other hand, seeks to incorporate commitments to act on principles and policies that are formally endorsed by more powerful actors. These networks strive to persuade governments and other stakeholders to change their positions on certain issues. But at the heart of TAN theory is the idea that global problems often require a collaborative approach from multiple stakeholders. Typically, transnational advocacy networks are made up of actors who share a common goal, even if they come from different countries. Weaker network actors cannot influence state practices like stronger network actors. Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink further divide this influence into two categories: material and moral influence. Material influence is like the relationship between issues of money or goods. Moral leverage, however, is a way to shame targeted actors, bringing their behaviour to the world's attention. So this type of moral influence can be particularly effective if the target country upholds international prestige. For example, groups advocating for human rights or environmental protection often work together to influence policy at the international level.

Meanwhile, accountability politics is an attempt to encourage more powerful actors to act in accordance with the principles and policies they officially support. Here, networks attempt to convince governments and other parties to change their perspective on the issue. While this may be underestimated as the target government or other actors may change their discursive position simply to divert network and public attention, successfully changing the target's position enables accountability politics. Once a

government or other actor publicly commits to a principle, the network can demonstrate the difference between discourse and action. To ensure that the targeted actor actually changes its policy, the discourse here is a commitment in the form of a written legal document.

Transnational advocacy networks are also characterized by a boomerang pattern. That is, when the relationship between the state and domestic actors breaks down, domestic actors may seek international alliances to exert external pressure on the state. This happens because the government does not respond to the demands of groups whose demands are also echoed elsewhere. Therefore, international contacts can strengthen the demands of national groups by opening up space for new issues and returning demands to the domestic sphere. However, this carries the potential risk of being accused of foreign interference in domestic affairs (Novaradila, 2022). Despite its great potential, TAN also has various challenges, one of which is the differentiation of local contexts. This means that something that works in one country may not necessarily work in the same country in the same way, and may even be irrelevant or inapplicable in another country.

PANDAWARA ACTIVITIES RESULTED IN AN INVITATION FROM DENMARK

The cleanliness movement carried out by the Pandawara group has received a lot of attention both from within and outside the country. The clear and precise vision and mission make this group's movement very impactful for the surrounding community. This started from the concern of one of the group members who felt that the cleanliness of the environment in the surrounding area was not clean enough so that flooding often occurred. This cleanliness movement continued to spread to several points where garbage piled up, starting from small gutters, culverts, certain yards, quite large rivers, even several beaches with the category of the dirtiest beaches in Indonesia. The Pandawara group originated from Bandung, but the escalation of this clean movement has increased and spread outside the city of Bandung. There are several cities that are the points of this group's clean program, for example the city of Depok and the area around Jakarta where it turned out that the rivers and several gutters in the city had become places where excessive garbage piled up, causing blockages in several gutters. This was responded to quickly by the Pandawara group so that those who were not from the area finally stepped in and cleaned the location without assistance from the local government. Not only that, the Pandawara group even held a clean-up and environmental cleanliness action with the people of Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province, especially in the Makassar fishing village.

The Pandawara group together with the residents of the fishing village together cleaned up locations that were garbage accumulation points, most of which were also located in residential areas of fishing villages around the coast (Alim, 2023). Furthermore, this cleaning activity has been carried out by the Pandawara group to the NTT Province, precisely on the coast of West Manggarai Regency, Komodo District, Labuan Bajo Village. Due to the rapid growth of the tourism industry, this has caused an increase in

the volume of waste in the coastal destination area. The waste produced per day is 60 tons with a recycled waste category of 33 percent (Sunariyah, 2024). This is what caused the environmental activists of the Pandawara group also together with the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy and the bottled drinking water company AQUA to hold a joint beach cleaning movement which was carried out at Binongko Beach, Labuan Bajo NTT. In addition, one of the big projects of the Pandawara group is cleaning 4 beaches with the category of the dirtiest beaches in Indonesia. In first place is Teluk Labuan Beach, Banten. Before the Pandawara group cleaned the beach, they informed the local residents through an Instagram post containing an appeal to work together to clean Teluk Labuan Beach, Banten. Not only that, the local district government also took part in this cleaning service. In second place is Jalan Ikan Selar Beach, Lampung. The cleaning of the beach area began in the morning together with the Lampung community and the Lampung city government also took part in cleaning Ikan Selar Beach. Next, in third place is Kesenden Cirebon and fourth is Cibusun Loji Sukabumi Beach. This beach cleaning activity was attended by the local community who care about the cleanliness of their beach. In the cleaning activities carried out by the Pandawara group itself, they received many offers of cooperation from several communities and even companies that care about environmental cleanliness (Andryanto, 2023). Starting from the many cleaning activities they held at several points in their area and even outside the city, they also often visit schools to hold meetings and provide education about the importance of maintaining environmental cleanliness and also provide several trash cans that aim to support the "one day one trash bag" movement that they are doing. Not only that, they also invite school children to create innovative works from recycled waste materials so that they can benefit them too.

The environmental clean-up movement carried out by the Pandawara group has received a lot of positive support from several parties including the Danish embassy in Indonesia. From this positive movement, the Danish embassy in Indonesia through cooperation between the Danish government and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry invited the Pandawara group to participate in a comparative study to Denmark to learn about waste management, considering that Denmark is the country with the best waste management in the world (Elmira, 2023).

PANDAWARA GROUP-DENMARK COLLABORATION: THE FUTURE TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Denmark is one of the countries in the world that has widely known for its domestic policies regarding environmental protection and preservation, and for its roles and activities in regional and international bodies to pursue and to promote goals and agendas regarding to environmental protection and sustainability worldwide. In the country itself, not only the domestic government, the civil society also play a major role in shaping the environmental protection, preservation and sustainability. This has led Denmark to become a front-runner in terms of environmental policy, for which this has been proved by Denmark is ranked second after Sweden in Sustainable Governance Indicators analysis' published in 2022. (Denmark: Environmental Policies, 2022). The

role of civil society in shaping the Danish Government’s environmental policy and goals are presented by the cross-sectoral, public-private partnerships. In this way, the Danish Government are offering the chance of collaboration with some of the public and private partners- varies from agriculture and entrepreneurship sectors- in which have the purpose of pursuing the goal towards environmental sustainability. The partnerships mainly focused on addressing the global climate issues (How Denmark became a frontrunner in sustainability, 2022).

As part of the goal to achieve environmental sustainability, the Danish government also working on the waste management policy. The waste policy itself is proceeded and executed by both national and local municipal authorities in which they are responsible in collecting and managing tonnes of household and industrial wastes and disposals. The new concept within this waste management policy is that the idea of less incineration and more recycling to create a society free of waste. In this method, waste is perceived as a resource that can be utilized in the future. In the practice, the recycling is the process of extracting the material and resource embedded within the waste and then transforms them to become utilities that can brought benefits to the environment and at same time can make a circular economy in the society. For example, food disposal can be recreated as biogas or fertiliser which can be used to support farming activities and shredder waste that can be reused as an energy source which can support the environmental sustainability (Circular economy country profile – Denmark , 2022).

As have been mentioned and explained on the earlier section, Pandawara Group as an NGO from Indonesia, which have been actively participated in environmental protection and preservation activities in certain regions of the country, are now expected to learn more and to enrich their knowledge in areas of waste management and environmental preservation to achieve sustainability. Pandawara group recently has been invited by the Indonesian Embassy to Denmark in Copenhagen, to meet with the Danish scholars and experts in environmental preservation activities. The Indonesian embassy sought to strengthening the bilateral ties between Indonesia and Denmark through soft-political approach and environmental issues is one of the keys and concerning issue that put 2 countries into mutual attention and awareness. Indonesia faced some of its domestic issues regarding to environmental preservation and sustainability, particularly the waste management policy, and that brought Indonesia to come up with the idea by learning from other countries that had positive reputation and experience regarding the issue. As the author has been mentioned earlier about how Denmark can be effective in its waste management policy therefore its pursuing goals towards environmental sustainability, Indonesia have the chance to learn from Denmark in order to improve the quality of waste management and to pursue the mutual agenda of strengthening partnerships towards environmental sustainability which included the reduction of negative impacts on economics, public welfare and health.

Pandawara Group is one of the example that Indonesia had regarding to public-citizen involvement in preserving and protecting environment which it shares the same value and goals with the Denmark Government and its public-private sector partners. The

pandawara group can not only just learning on how the Danish effectively handling the waste management and to preserve environment, they also can acquire new skills, methods and even technology to be implemented in Indonesia. The Denmark government, in this case, can promote its global goals of environment sustainability within the hads of the Pandawara Group in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Non-state actors, especially non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have an important role in bringing public issues to the attention of governments. A non-governmental organization (NGO) from Indonesia, Pandawara Group, successfully raised public awareness about the importance of keeping the environment clean and started a broad social movement through social media. They were able to clean up various pollution hotspots and raise public awareness of the importance of maintaining cleanliness with the support of netizens. Pandawara Group collaborated with the Danish government to study environmental sustainability and waste management. This shows the transnational potential to support environmental issues. It shows that international cooperation can enhance local efforts to achieve sustainability goals. To increase effectiveness, it is recommended that other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Indonesia take an approach like Pandawara Group to make their movements more effective, by utilizing online platforms to increase public awareness and participation. In addition, the government should support local initiatives by providing the necessary resources and training. To create policies that are more responsive to environmental challenges, cross-sectoral cooperation between the government, non-governmental organizations, and communities must be strengthened. To implement effective waste management strategies and promote a circular economy, Indonesia should continue to learn from Denmark. These steps will make the hope of achieving environmental sustainability more real, and future generations will feel the impact of these actions.

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