Community Engagement in a Social Movement: A Case of Geothermal Energy Development in Talang Mountain – Kili Hill area

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Abstract. Social movements often emerge in response to repressive actions taken by the government towards the community. The main entities that become movers in social movements are civilian communities, be they NGOs, social activist groups, or communities with various other backgrounds. The purpose of this study is to look at the strategies of civil society groups in West Sumatra in developing discourse to increase community engagement. This research is in the form of case studies that focus on civilian communities that oppose geothermal development around the Talang Mountain - Kili Hill area. This area is planned to be built a Geothermal Power Plant with an energy capacity of 20 Mw. Data is collected through field observations, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that the communities involved in the movement could be categorized into three groups, namely NGOs, Students, and the Community of Interest, and each group had different strategies in increasing community engagement. The background of the group influences the approach.

1. Introduction

The most recent studies of engagement only discuss engagement by the community or citizens in policy or decision making [1,2,3]. Whereas in many development cases, especially in developing countries that have precious natural resources, community engagement in extractive resource development policies is complicated [4]. The community is not involved in participating in channeling opinions in development [5].

This resulted in people looking for other channels in participating, namely through social movements. The community, both local and native, then involved themselves in social movements. Coupled with a government and company approach that is often repressive is forcing development projects to continue. So, in a democratic country, the reaction that arises is the gathering and collaboration of civil society into action to protest the development [6].

The joint action of the local community can develop into a social movement if the scale of community involvement becomes larger and aims to advocate for policies and interests of local, marginal, or environmental communities. Even so, to become a massive social movement, the local
Community must have the ability to network with others in developing discourse in the public sphere so that it presents pressure for policymakers. Therefore, we would like to see community engagement in a slightly different spectrum. Often involvement is only captured in the form of institutionalized participation, such as musrenbang (development planning deliberations) in Indonesia. Whereas on the other hand, engagement can also take the kind of interruption of policy and grow from the bottom. Therefore, community involvement can function as the main channel for local communities to express their concerns about the adverse effects of development that they consider controversial [7].

In this study, we discuss a case of community engagement in social movements that occurred in the plan to construct a geothermal power plant in the Talang Mountain - Kili Hill area, Solok Regency. The power plant to be built has a power of 20 MW (megawatts) with a land exploitation permit of around 27,000 ha. This power plant construction project includes one of the national strategic plans to achieve the national geothermal energy production target in 2025 of 7,200 MW [8].

Planned power plant called the geothermal working area (WKP) Talang Mountain - Kili Hill, which is managed to produce in 2021.

Figure 1. Coordinates map of Talang Mountain –Kili hill geothermal working area (scale 1:100,000)

However, the plan was rejected by local communities around the (Talang Mountain) area. The rejection movement was later strengthened by civil society in West Sumatra, such as; student groups, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), communities of diverse interests, and parties sympathetic to the community [9]. This shows the need for social approval in the construction of geothermal power plants [10,11,12,13,14,15,16]. If not, then what will happen is rejection, which in the case of our research, takes the form of social movements. Thus, the purpose of our research is to explain and analyze community engagement in social movements as an effort to reject the development of geothermal power plants in the area of Talang Mountain - Kili Hill.

2. Materials and Method

The object of this study is the civil community involved in the rejection of the development of geothermal power plants on Talang Mountain - Kili Hill Area. The concept of community that we developed was published from Harington et al. [17] that community is a plural term that can be defined in a broad spectrum as a group of people who share a geographical location, shared interests
(community interests) or shared characteristics (community identity). And civil society is a community formed by interests.

This study uses qualitative methods with case study design [18]. This approach was chosen in addition to being able to analyze complex social phenomena also because it makes it possible to build relationships between practical and theoretical abstraction events [19,20]. But it also provides flexibility to identify new variables [21]. Data collection is carried out using: observation, document review (social media, print media, and online media) and interviews.

Interviews were conducted using in-depth semi-structured interviews with individuals or actors included in the identified categories [22]. Semi-structured interviews are an excellent tool for gathering information from an individual perspective, focusing on experience, beliefs, and perceptions. The topic of the interview includes the reasons for involvement in the movement, impressions of the movement, their perceptions of other communities involved, the ideas they come up with, and their experiences in the movement. Interviews were conducted from June to September 2019. While the data validation technique used in this study was the source triangulation technique, the analytical method in this study uses an interactive analysis model. The interactive analysis model consists of three activities that occur simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

![Interactive analysis model](image)

**Figure 2. Interactive analysis model**

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Initial Engagement

In the initial stages, the movement to protest the Geothermal Power Plant project on Talang Mountain - Kili Hill Area was only initiated by the local village community located around the Talang Mountain area. Community groups who do not approve of this development then call themselves HIMAPAGTA (Gunung Talang Lovers Community Association). They asked the government to cancel the development of geothermal projects. The reason was they are not involved in development planning. The parties involved in the socialization process of village and adat elite groups. Local people were not involved in the development planning process, as stated by the following research informants:

> Exploration licenses granted by the government to the company covered 22 villages with an exploration permit area of 27,000 ha, (the community) from the beginning were not involved and were not asked how the community's response to the project investment activities there. (Interview on August 26, 2019).

Initially, the community of Talang Mountain was not involved in all efforts to develop geothermal projects. The program was previously agreed upon between the government and the company, and only afterward told the community that this program was non-negotiable because it was an agreement between the regional government and the company. Then the project is supported and facilitated by the local government. In this case, the community only accepts the results of the agreement without asking for their approval on whether or not to agree with the geothermal project (Interview on August 30, 2019).
The response was then continued with a demonstration by the local community at the Solok Regency Office. But the event did not get a response from the government. Furthermore, the road to the starting point of development in the village of Batu Bajanjang was blocked by the community when the company (PT Hitay Daya Energi) and the government, together with the security forces, came to start the exploitation process. The blockade ended with clashes between the two parties, which caused the company car to catch fire, and seven people were injured.

Figure 3. Blockade conducted by the community (left) and community demonstrations in the offices of the Regent of Solok Regency (right)

After the arson action, 12 people who were the main actors of the movement were then named suspects, 3 of whom were arrested. This case causes the movement of local communities to decline. However, on the other hand, civil society groups in West Sumatra later joined the movement. Some of the reasons that made them join were community violence and criminalization, lack of community involvement, and the impact of development on the environment. Widespread demands are not only about the rejection of development projects but also investigating the violence that occurs against communities and demanding community involvement in the policy process.

We then gathered the Civil Society Groups involved in the movement into groups, namely; NGOs (Padang Legal Aid Institute, WALHI West Sumatra, Women’s Conscience), Students (Alliance Student Executive Board, West Sumatra), Community of interest (Coffee Hut, Kamisan Action, North Shelter, Belanak, Sumatra Twilight, Space of Threats, and individuals related to this problem) (see Fajri, et al. 2018). Each group has a different pattern. NGO groups are more involved in mentoring and capacity building activities for affected communities. Student groups conduct demonstrations and reject actions directly to the government. While interest groups involved in various forms, ranging from mentoring to the community, making online petitions, performing arts shows, discussions, propaganda on social media, and other sympathetic actions. However, all of that was still under one decision, namely to build a discourse in the public sphere so that more parties were interested in joining the movement.

Figure 4. One of the save solidarity posters of Talang Mountain
3.2 Campaign Strategies in Expanding Community Engagement

The development of discourse in the public sphere by conducting campaigns becomes essential in social movements. It needs to be improved to increase community involvement so that it becomes wider. The campaign strategy for announcing community involvement can be carried out with various activities and actions by groups already in the movement. The expected impact of the campaign and community involvement is to increase public perception of the issues being fought for so that the movement gains strength. Necessary, in social movements, the more community involvement will put pressure on the government in implementing policies.

Groups that are part of a movement to build a geothermal power plant on Talang Mountain - Kili Hill have different ways of increasing community involvement. Differences in the way campaigns are carried out by parties who are members of this movement provide an alternative to outsiders who want to join the movement. This is as agreed by Fajri [8], which states that in the concept of new social movements, the development of public discourse can be done in a more varied way so that it has more impact.

The campaign strategy undertaken by NGOs involves more formal activities, such as holding seminars and open discussions by bringing experts, professionals, and politicians, to discuss the development of geothermal power projects. The results of the discussion are then published in the form of studies and then shared and distributed through websites, social media, WhatsApp, or through other media. Also, they carry out sympathetic actions - forming theatrical actions - held at the site of the development project (and usually collaborate with interested communities). The Director of the Indonesia Forum for the Environment (WALHI) explained the activities they carried out as follows:

WALHI has also conducted several times and facilitated discussion and outreach, both with academics, the community, and the government. WALHI is also a party that facilitates the public to receive complaints submitted to the community and provide studies to the public about geothermal energy. (Interview on September 15, 2019)

Meanwhile, the Student Executive Council Alliance group conducted a campaign by holding a demonstration in front of the governor's office and the people's representative council in the province of West Sumatra and also holding discussions on campus. However, their actions are so exclusive and strict that they fail to create broad community involvement. That's because their efforts are only limited to groups of students involved in student organizations. In addition, things that cause failure are those who rely heavily on the orders of leadership of the Student Executive Board. Interesting action is carried out by community groups with interest in developing public discourse. The strategies, ideas, and media they use are not monotonous but very dynamic and attract more implementation from the public. Groups consisting of many communities and dependent in many cities in West Sumatra move in a very fluid and autonomous manner without depending on a single command such as Alliance of the Student Executive Council. Each group or community does not support one another, but they are supportive.

The ideas they brought into the movement were even more diverse, ranging from the problem of environmental damage caused by the construction of geothermal power projects, violence against the local community, criminalization of the movement, and community involvement in the development process. However, their main idea in this movement is more about the environment. Then they called the campaign "Save Talang Mountain."
While the media they use is also more varied. In addition to holding discussions in public spaces where young people gather, campaign campaigns (including the Thursday Campaign and the Seven Day Campaign), they also make murals 'on the city wall.' Besides, they also use social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), online petitions, and website blogs in campaigns for problems. Preferred strategy choices for discussing issues, building discourse and inviting communities in the movement to support development projects of young people

4. Conclusion

If the purpose of the social movement is to change policies, the social movements carried out by the community in rejecting the development of geothermal power plants in the area of Talang Mountain - Kili Hill Area cannot be said to be successful. Because, until now, there has been no government policy to stop the power plant construction project. However, if a social movement is an activity whose purpose is to advocate for policy and involve the broader community into the campaign, what has been done by the local communities in West Sumatra has shown they can capitalize the issue into public discourse with a strategy they have done. However, more significant effort is needed in the sense of the word greater movement and the involvement of the wider community to force the government to sit at the negotiating table and correct the policies they have taken.
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