

TRANSFORMATION OF LOCAL MOVEMENTS TO TRANSNATIONAL: THE ROLE OF PANDAWARA IN EFFORTS TO COMBAT PLASTIC WASTE IN MARINE

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ABSTRACT Environmental issues, particularly plastic waste pollution in marine ecosystems, have become a global concern. This study explores the transformation of Pandawara, a local environmental movement in Indonesia, into a transnational advocacy initiative. Pandawara has effectively utilized digital platforms, particularly social media, to raise awareness, mobilize public participation, and establish collaborations with international environmental organizations. Using the concepts of productive power by Barnett and Duvall, as well as the Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) and Transnational Social Movement (TSM) approaches in International Relations, this research analyzes how Pandawara has evolved beyond its local context. The study employs a descriptive-analytical method based on literature review and digital content analysis. Findings indicate that Pandawara's strategies—comprising field actions, community education, and digital campaigning—have successfully engaged a global audience. Collaborations with foreign NGOs and participation in international environmental programs highlight the movement's growing transnational impact. However, challenges remain in policy advocacy, as Pandawara has yet to influence governmental regulations. This study contributes to understanding how grassroots environmental movements can leverage digital activism to achieve transnational influence. Strengthening policy engagement and expanding global partnerships are recommended to enhance Pandawara's long-term sustainability as a transnational environmental movement.

Keywords: Pandawara, Environmental Movement, Transnationalism, Plastic Waste, Social Media Advocacy

INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues have become a very concerning problem, especially the issue of plastic waste in water bodies, which, if continuously neglected, can worsen the environmental condition both domestically and globally. Based on data from the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) in 2017, more than 8 million tons of plastic enter the oceans every year, equivalent to dumping one truckload of plastic waste every minute. As much as 80% of all the waste in our oceans is made of plastic. Therefore, according to several estimates, with the rate of disposal of items such as bottles, bags, and single-use plastic cups, it is predicted that by 2050 the oceans will carry more plastic mass than fish and 99% of seabirds will ingest plastic. Similarly, according to data from Greenpeace, an international environmental organization, it

is estimated that around 80% of marine debris originates from land sources, which accumulate through processes such as poor waste disposal and runoff from rivers and drainage systems (Allsopp, Walters, Santillo, & Johnston, 2011).

Pandawara as a local movement focused on environmental issues and addressing water pollution, demonstrates its concern for the problem of plastic waste that causes environmental damage. The actions of Pandawara itself include organizing cleaning activities in water areas, educating the community through social media platforms, and campaigning for environmental awareness, especially regarding water waste issues on both domestic and global scales. The phenomenon of the Pandawara's role shows how collective actions based on local movements can contribute to social change in environmental issues.

The study of the transformation of social movements plays a crucial role in advocating for environmental issues globally as explained by Rakhman and Haryadi (2020), by showing that under certain conditions, non-governmental organization (NGO) strategies directly influence change by utilizing international advocacy networks, thereby accelerating the formation of power relations within existing multi-actor groups. Movements that focus on environmental issues possess transformative qualities within them, making these movements increasingly global as the issues raised have become topics of discussion in the international political agenda (Hidayat, 2017).

While others argue that environmental issues often face obstacles due to political factors, the research by Firliandoko, Sarwoprasodjo & Saleh (2023) reveals that politics is both a supporting and hindering factor in social movements conducted in various communities. Although there are regulations issued by the government regarding environmental issues, their implementation often experiences inconsistency. It is evident from the research findings of Esthy, Aqshadigrama, and Baga (2023) that there is a lack of environmental representation in the political system, causing environmental issues to often not be prioritized in political decision-making.

This research aims to examine the journey and role of local movements such as Pandawara in strengthening global awareness to transform a local movement that begins from the concerns of civil society into a transnational movement to raise and voice environmental issues, especially regarding water waste problems, which not only become a movement but also a concrete action in addressing global issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Study on transnationalism the movement is divided into two main views. On one hand, researchers feel that transnationalism is important, while others consider that transnationalism is not the main issue. The view regarding transnationalism is important as conveyed by Nkongolo-Bakenda and Chrysostome (2020), who state that transnationalism is crucial and must be implemented by an organization. Similarly, Harrington and Seabrooke (2020) explain that transnationalism operates under the strong influence of globalization. Globalization creates an increase in the mobility of international communication, forming extensive professional networks to build the exchange of ideas and best practices at the global level. This becomes the foundation for the Movement that will later address global issues (Nkongolo-Bakenda & Chrysostome, 2020).

Meanwhile, another study that considers transnationalism not to be the main focus, as explained by Tedeschi et al. (2020), states that transnationalism is transformative in nature,

which often leads to debates in providing a precise and clear theoretical definition, as transnationalism can be defined as telecommunications, return migration, and the relationship between bodies and laws. This is also supported by the research of Redclift & Rajina (2019), which explains that transnationalism is often seen as an obstacle to integration and is considered too abstract, leading to various interpretations when considering the practical implications of social interactions (Tedeschi, 2022).

Research examining the process of transnationalism in movements has been explained by James, Checker and Edelman (2022) stating that the process towards transnationalism in a movement requires collective action to achieve the goal of building a new framework for governance and advocacy globally. These actions can be divided into two types: vertical (connecting transnational, national, and subnational organizations within the same movement country) and horizontal (international and regional). Meanwhile, Asy'ar (2020) explains that the process towards a transnational movement can also go through the framing process as a bridge in interpreting an issue, thereby influencing public understanding and response. The framing process is divided into three types of framing: diagnostic (identifying injustice), prognostic (proposing solutions), and motivational (providing reasons to act) to help mobilize collective action and support from various parties globally (Harrington & Seabrooke, 2020).

In the case of Indonesia, the explanation of local social movements that then grow into transnationalism is described by Wahyudi et al. (2021) through a case study of the WALHI (The Indonesian Forum for Living Environment Movement, stating that the process of WALHI as a local movement certainly has several stages to develop into a transnational movement. As one of the movements that started as a local movement, WALHI often involves various strategies in conducting broader international advocacy. This is done as one of the steps to gain momentum through actions and the formation of inter-institutional networks to elevate domestic issues to global ones (Wahyudi et al., 2021).

The study on Pandawara itself has been previously researched by Arlanthy et al. (2023) by analyzing the go green campaign program conducted by Pandawara. The researchers discuss how social media, especially the TikTok application, serves as a platform for Pandawara to conduct their campaigns. Through social media insights, Pandawara finds it easier to conduct campaigns that can be seen by the public at large. On the other hand, Rayhan et al. (2023) researched the contribution of Pandawara in organizing marine waste on the Labuan Bay beach as an effort to realize a welfare state. The researchers also highlighted the responsibility and awareness of the government and society regarding environmental damage, which will eventually lead to public welfare through various programs such as public health and social security benefits (Arlanthy, 2023).

Dony (2024) highlights the Pandawara content and examines a number of values reflected in the actions of the Pandawara content using the value philosophy perspective of Max Scheler to deepen the essence of values that play a role in human life. The research explains that the actions of the Pandawara content are not merely a movement but rather a significant social influence in raising environmental awareness and motivating constructive actions within the broader community.

This study will attempt to explain the phenomenon of local movements becoming transnationalism using the productive power approach by Barnett and Duvall. According to Barnett and Duvall in their writing titled "Power in International Politics" productive power is a concept of power that shapes identity, norms, and understanding (Barnett & Duvall, 2005). In

their writing, they also explain that the concept emphasizes two important aspects in its application: first, the formation of social identity as the foundation in the discursive process of society in giving meaning to social identity to become an object of power dynamics in the global context. Second, generating norms and social understanding as a form of representation of a social action that shapes social behaviour to be easily understood and regulated to achieve goals in analyzing the process of global governance.

This study will also attempt to explain the phenomenon of the transformation of local movements towards transnationalism using the Transnationalism approach in international relations, focusing on non-governmental actors (NGOs), particularly the Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) and Transnational Social Movement (TSM) as forms of cross-national organization and both organized and unorganized mass power in advocating for various global interests and issues (Soetjipto, 2018).

From various studies, none have explained the Pandawara phenomenon using the productive power approach by Barnett and Duvall and transnationalism in international relations. Thus, the uniqueness of this research lies in the case of the environmental movement, which is not commonly found in third-world countries like Indonesia.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive-analytical approach to examine the phenomenon of the transformation of the local Pandawara movement into a transnational movement on environmental issues, particularly as a movement focused on water pollution. This approach is also used to systematically illustrate how the development process of Pandawara, which began as a local initiative, became part of the global discourse in environmental advocacy, as well as to analyze the factors contributing to that process.

This research was conducted by focusing on literature that has discussed Pandawara activities. This was done by searching for keywords that are relevant to Pandawara, such as environmental activism, community engagement, and social impact. After that, searching for relevant journals that discuss Pandawara in various databases, especially through Google Scholar, JSTOR, the Pandawara organization website, and the media that discusses it whose news has validity. This is intended so that the data obtained is relevant and can be used as scientific data that can be used in this study. The data obtained will later be categorized in the form of activities, strategies and impacts. Then, after collecting various sources of literature, it was compiled into a single cohesive piece by examining the dynamics of this movement using the concept of *productive power* by Barnett and Duvall. Barnett Duvall (2005) explains that the concept of productive power is a form of social reality that is built based on the identity, interests and social capacities owned by a person or organization in the form of discourse, practice and situation. Product power is different from coercive or structural power, the difference lies in how food is created and the ability to understand oneself and others. Productive power runs that discourse and narrative are the main forces that are considered legitimate and have an influence on the environment. Pandawara as a social organization is able to demonstrate this in a massive way, especially in environmental management and norms that are in line with the vision of society. Then *transnationalism* of *Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN)* and *Transnational Social Movement (TSM)* approach in international relations. Transnationalism in international relations refers to cross-border interactions and networks that go beyond state actors. In this context, Keck & Sikkink (1998) explain that Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) are networks of activists and organizations, often with shared

values, that work together across borders to advocate for issues such as human rights or environmental protection, while Transnational Social Movements (TSMs) are broader grassroots movements that aim to challenge power structures or advocate for social change globally. Both TANS and TSMs demonstrate how non-state actors can shape international norms, influence policy, and connect local struggles to global agendas, highlighting the growing role of global civil society in international relations. This research aims to provide a deep understanding of the role of social movements in shaping global awareness of environmental issues.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pandawara as an Environmental Movement

Pandawara Group, commonly known as an environmental care community focused on waterways in Indonesia, was founded by five young men from Bandung: Agung Permana, Gilang Rahma, Muhammad Ikhsan, Rafla Pasya, and Rifki Sa'dula in mid-2022. This community was born from the phenomenon of frequent flooding in Bandung. They found that the accumulation of waste in the surrounding rivers became a dominant factor. In addition, the low public awareness about the impact of littering also worsens the environmental conditions (Tamba, Sitorus, Situmorang, Wahyudi, & Ibrahim, 2024). As a result of the flooding phenomenon they experienced, they initiated the Pandawara initiative to organize the cleaning of ditches and nearby small rivers, which was first published on the TikTok post @pandawaragroup and the official Pandawara Instagram @pandawaragroup.

Pandawara implements its vision for the environment through three main forms: field actions, socialization, and social media models. *First*, the field actions carried out by Pandawara in implementing the water waste cleaning program, Pandawara formed a survey team known as river hunters, tasked with identifying river areas that have a high level of urgency for cleaning. One of the aids received by Pandawara in identifying river areas with a high level of urgency for cleaning was the Cikeruh River in Bandung, which became Pandawara's main project in carrying out river waste cleaning actions (M. Elgana & Wismabrata, 2023). During the cleaning activities of the water area, they successfully collected 27,066 kilograms of waste or 4,511 trash bags from 78 water points, including large rivers, small rivers, and gutters that were cleaned by Pandawara in the 2022 recap (Defitri, 2023).

Secondly, through direct socialization with the community, this was carried out by Pandawara through visits to junior high schools at SMPN 7 Bandung, where they provided education on the types of waste and the dangers of littering. Pandawara also teaches students to utilize recyclable waste into creative crafts. This has become one of Pandawara's programs called Ajaraksa, which is an effort to instill education and fundamental awareness of environmental conditions (Pradana, 2024). The Ajaraksa program was implemented at the end of 2023 and has been carried out in three junior high schools, namely SMPN 2, SMPN 5, and SMPN 7, located in Bandung. The target of this program is aimed at junior high school students because junior high school students are the most suitable target for education and the first target in this work program (Manurung & Wijaksono, 2024). Although Pandawara's outreach on environmental issues predominantly uses social media, Pandawara strives to provide further education to the community.

Third, the model of social media usage is carried out through TikTok and the official Pandawara Instagram by creating content related to the organization of river cleaning actions

and environmental education as a form of Pandawara's campaign to voice environmental issues. The documentation carried out by Pandawara shows the initial process and results of the river cleanup action, known as a clean-up, with the hashtag #onedayonetrashbag, as well as educating the audience verbally. The documentation and content created by Pandawara on their official social media accounts contain environmental advocacy and education, with text posts accounting for 90.90%, images for 93.47%, and audio for 86.36% (Lestari, Handayani, & Mahdalena, 2025). Pandawara also initiated several environmental campaigns in their actions by opening volunteer opportunities for the general public who wish to join through announcements on social media. With this strategy, Pandawara can easily attract a wide audience and the community in carrying out their activities (Nufus & Sukmawati, 2024).

Pandawara, as an environmental movement that relies on social media as its main tool in executing its strategy, through the documentation of organized waste clean-up activities, campaigning on environmental issues, and providing education on waste problems in waterways, has had a significant impact on the wider community. Pandawara as an environmental movement shows that efforts to clean up waste in water bodies cannot develop sustainably without adequate educational support for the surrounding human resources (Putri, Christiani, Sari, & Pramuja, 2024). Pandawara received various responses from the community. On one hand, this movement inspires many young people to participate in environmental cleaning actions, such as the emergence of small content creators who follow in Pandawara's footsteps by cleaning trash in ditches and rivers. Pandawara's consistency in advocating for environmental issues greatly contributes to increasing public awareness and helps expand the impact of their movement to organize larger waterway clean-up efforts beyond the Bandung area. On the other hand, there is criticism regarding whether the education provided by Pandawara truly has a long-term impact on the community's behaviour in managing waste. Because there are often cases of residents littering around the water areas that Pandawara cleans openly or even thinking that Pandawara is responsible for cleaning the surrounding river waste (Rossa, 2024).

Media as a Basis for Collaboration with Foreign NGOs

Pandawara's strategy in campaigning for environmental issues through social media involves creating content and documentation that showcase the process of organizing waste clean-up operations in water bodies, as well as socialization related to education both verbally and non-verbally (Melangedd, 2019). This serves as a platform for Pandawara to develop their environmental movement collaboration with NGOs outside Indonesia. The social media exposure gained by Pandawara also serves as a bridge in spreading environmental issue campaigns from domestic to global. Thus, Pandawara is able to expand cooperation and collaboration related to global efforts to tackle plastic waste in waters. Pandawara's confidence in creating broader global cooperation and collaboration in organizing clean-up actions is also driven by its success in building networks with Pertamina Trans Kontinental (PTK) in Semarang and Yogyakarta through the "Coastal Clean Up" action in September 2023 (Alexander, 2023).

The collaboration and cooperation strategy formed by Pandawara takes the form of the Creator Contribution program, which focuses on visits to countries facing environmental issues, particularly related to waste in waterways, by collaborating with communities and NGOs from those countries (Rahman & Astriani, 2024). Published on the official Pandawara TikTok social media platform, the creator contribution program aims to discuss the proper communication education techniques for the public regarding proper waste segregation, river maintenance

techniques, and conducting clean-up actions with environmental communities in various countries. Pandawara, which is active in campaigning for environmental issues through social media, has an advantage in connecting its movement with global environmental communities (Asy'ari, 2020). In this creator contribution program, Pandawara has begun a collaboration with a Vietnamese content creator focused on environmental issues, namely Sài Gòn Xanh. This community in Vietnam shares the same action focus as the Pandawara movement. The design of the creator contribution program between Pandawara and Sài Gòn Xanh is also one of the programs in celebration of Earth Day on April 22, 2024 (Amalia, 2024). In the creator contribution program, Pandawara is committed to facilitating various environmental activities by opening discussion forums and clean-up actions. Through the documentation shared by Pandawara on their official TikTok platform, Pandawara conducted outreach regarding waste segregation, education in efforts to raise public awareness about the environment, and discussed clean-up techniques with Sài Gòn Xanh members. The clean-up action was carried out by Pandawara and members of Sài Gòn Xanh, inviting the Vietnamese community to contribute to waste organization efforts around Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The visit made by Pandawara to Vietnam, besides aiming to strengthen relationships among content creators focused on environmental issues, also commits to regular communication with environmental communities there. The documentation uploaded through the official Pandawara TikTok account regarding the collaboration between Pandawara and Sài Gòn Xanh has been viewed by more than 33.7 million TikTok users and liked by 2.2 million accounts as of February 18, 2025.

Seeing the support given by the audience encourages Pandawara to continue the program. Pandawara has begun to continue the implementation of the content contribution program by collaborating with content creators from other countries, namely LoKoHoPunoh, which is one of the environmental communities in Malaysia. This time, Pandawara and LoKoHo_Punoh are committed to working hand in hand to preserve the environment and prevent further damage. The collaboration took place at Batu Rakit Beach, Kuala Terengganu City, where they conducted a joint clean-up action and uploaded documentation related to the clean-up process on Pandawara's official TikTok account (Nurshabrina, Vistara, Sijabat, & AlMunawarah, 2024). With the existence of the creator contribution program, Pandawara is committed to continuing the collaboration extensively to various other ASEAN countries as a form of campaign related to environmental issues. Through the content contribution program created by Pandawara, it shows how social media insights can connect communities and movements in voicing environmental issues globally. Pandawara has used media as a basis for collaboration in campaigning for environmental issues, demonstrating how audience engagement on social media can serve as another strong indicator of the effectiveness of the #CreatorContribution campaign. The insights obtained by Pandawara through social media show that 86.3% of respondents actively participate in environmental activities and 84.3% frequently interact with Pandawara's campaign content on TikTok (Simamora & Nugroho, 2025). This provides concrete data regarding how media functions as a catalyst for collaboration with foreign NGOs.

In addition, the exposure gained by Pandawara through social media also provides an opportunity to be involved in the development of the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) program in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Denmark (Tamba, 2023). Material Recovery Facility (MRF) is a program that builds waste recovery facilities that can serve as facilities combining several waste processing techniques, such as separation, composting, or recycling. This collaboration aims to enable Pandawara to learn more about effective waste management policies and practices, which can be implemented to enhance environmental sustainability in Indonesia. Denmark is considered the best example in this

regard, so the views and techniques applied there are very valuable for policy development in Indonesia. The training received by Pandawara from the Danish embassy and the Danish government is an effort to strengthen bilateral relations with Indonesia, where environmental issues are one of the main focuses in the cooperation agenda of both countries (Rahman, et al., 2024). The invitation received by Pandawara through participation in a comparative study on waste management in Denmark, namely the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) program, has been implemented by Pandawara in Bandung, and it is hoped that if this program is successful, it will be applied in other cities in Indonesia (Wuri, 2024).

Analysis of the Transformation of Pandawara Towards a Transnational Movement

The Pandawara initiative through its programs and actions has become relevant, especially with the increasing awareness of the surrounding community regarding environmental issues related to waste problems in water bodies, which is one of the positive impacts provided by Pandawara (Allsopp, 2010.). This movement not only contributes to environmental preservation efforts but also plays a role in increasing public participation regarding ecological issues more broadly. The distinctive feature built by Pandawara in sharing action documentation and education as a form of campaigning for environmental issues has garnered attention from various local to international media platforms, thereby expanding their influence on a global scale (Dony, 2024). In the context of power theory, Pandawara's actions can be linked to the concept of productive power, which highlights how discourse and social practices shape identity, understanding, and norms within society. Through social media-based communication strategies involving content creation and documentation, Pandawara successfully created a discourse that environmental concern can be an initial step towards collective societal responsibility. In other words, this movement not only focuses on direct environmental cleanup actions but also builds awareness and new norms in the social behaviour of the surrounding community regarding waste management. This has become one of the approaches used by Pandawara in conducting advocacy and mass mobilization related to environmental issues, especially concerning waste in water bodies. The impact of this is evident from the emergence of similar initiatives towards communities at various domestic and global levels inspired by the Pandawara model (Barnett & Duvall, 2005).

Additionally, Pandawara, as one of the NGO actors, plays a role in educating and advocating the importance of environmental preservation (Esthy Reko et al., 2023). By utilizing social media based on internet technology and data algorithms, this movement is able to disseminate information quickly and create communication networks without geographical boundaries. This not only raises global awareness about environmental issues but also encourages community involvement in tangible actions, such as participating in trash clean-ups or adopting environmentally friendly habits both domestically and internationally (Dony, 2024). Thus, the networking and collaboration of Pandawara with NGOs or international environmental communities also become opportunities to strengthen the global dissemination of their ideas. With the support that Pandawara receives through social media and international communities for the pro-environment movement, it becomes a driving force for Pandawara to develop beyond national borders and encourages the transformation of Pandawara into a transnational movement. One of the ways is through the creator contribution program initiated by Pandawara, using the transnationalism approach in International Relations regarding the Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) and Transnational Social Movement (TSM) (Nkongolo-Bakenda & Chrysostome, 2020). This means that cross-national organization and the mobilization of both organized and unorganized mass power in advocating various issues can influence social movements that start from a local dimension to a transnational dimension.

Transnational movements have become one of the methods for NGOs in their efforts to promote an issue (Tedeschi, 2022). The transnational movement allows for a broader scope of action for non-state actors because the efforts undertaken are not limited by specific territories (Soetjipto, 2018).

In the transnationalism approach in International Relations regarding Transnational Advocacy Networks (TAN) and Transnational Social Movements (TSM), the transformation of a movement into a transnational movement requires a policy formulation stage. To become an NGO or transnational actor capable of convincing the government or state, along with other organizations, to change their policies on an issue (Soetjipto, 2018). Meanwhile, Pandawara still faces obstacles in this regard, as their environmental advocacy has not yet influenced any policies. Pandawara's initiative in organizing a beach cleanup at Loji Beach, Sukabumi, as a form of campaigning for environmental issues by inviting the community to participate in the cleanup action, was met with rejection from the local government. Thus, various perspectives emerged from the community and environmental movements regarding the government's decision in reflecting the community's aspirations related to environmental issues. Even environmental movements like WALHI have spoken about the controversy surrounding the matter and supported the Pandawara action initiative (Damayanti, Fidianingsih, Melyani, & Syawalia, 2024). The issue serves as evidence of the obstacles in the Pandawara advocacy process to influence policy on a particular issue. On the other hand, with the increasing global awareness of environmental issues, Pandawara still has the potential to develop into a transnational movement capable of inspiring and mobilizing collective action in various countries in the future through support from the community to local and international environmental movements (Wahyudi, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The process of transforming a local movement into a transnational movement with a case study Pandawara, in its efforts to combat plastic waste in the waters as a community-based environmental movement, has successfully organized waste cleanup actions in Indonesian waters with strategies that include field actions, community education, and digital campaigns through social media. Social media has become the main instrument in expanding Pandawara's reach, enabling collaboration with various communities and international environmental organizations, including through the Creator Contribution program. On the other hand, Pandawara's role as an environmental movement still faces obstacles in influencing environmental policies at the national level despite receiving support from various global communities. This shows that Pandawara needs to adopt a more strategic approach in policy advocacy to achieve a broader impact in order to move towards a transnational movement.

From an academic perspective, this research contributes to the study of social movement transformation by highlighting how the concepts of productive power and transnationalism in International Relations within the concepts of transnational advocacy networks (TAN) and transnational social movements (TSM) can be used to understand the evolution of Pandawara as an environmental movement from the local to the transnational level. To strengthen the global transformation of Pandawara, there is still a need to enhance advocacy capacity to influence environmental policies at both national and international levels. the lack of global network development through collaboration with NGOs and other communities can be encouraged through the optimization of digital platforms to increase community participation, as well as the empowerment of local to global communities through sustainable educational programs to build long-term environmental awareness.

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