



Seizing Power Over the Sea: Intermediary Politics of The Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum on Sea Mining Resistance

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze how the strategies employed by the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum (FNPTKD) as a non-electoral actor in intermediary politics can represent fishermen as citizens through the dynamics of natural resource management in the waters of Kelabat Dalam Bay, Bangka Belitung Islands Province. Specifically, this research analyzes the compromise and contestation strategies carried out by FNPTKD as an intermediary actor. This research used qualitative methods through data collection stages: interviews, observation, documentation, and literature study. The data was analyzed through data reduction, presentation, and verification. This research found that apart from compromise strategies carried out internally, such as fishermen's meetings, as well as evaluation and monitoring aimed at maintaining solidity and the same ideology (vision) of fishermen, this forum also carried out internal strategies in the form of cultivation and conservation as contestation strategies or tool of resistance to mining. On the one hand, this forum also carries out several external strategies, both compromise and contestation, as a form of maintaining the resistance movement, such as a contestation agenda in the form of demonstrations as a form of reaction to the mining activities that are taking place. Apart from that, collaboration and consolidation with the community and other groups were carried out, and there was an advocacy agenda, which was a form of compromise with several related agencies to guide the marine protection of Kelabat Dalam Bay.

Keywords: FNPTKD, Intermediary Politics, Strategy.

1 Introduction

Kelabat Dalam Bay's waters, located between Bangka and West Bangka Regencies, Bangka Belitung Islands Province, present an interesting socio-political phenomenon. This phenomenon revolves around the discourse concerning the management of natural resource space. It involves stakeholders with distinct interests, including the local fishing communities, PT Timah Tbk, and private entities (partners). As for the fishing community, they are joined in a large forum, the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum (FNPTKD), to facilitate movement. In the process, various strategies have been

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carried out by the forum to reach and disseminate issues. The resistance movement that was built has also undergone numerous transformations in line with the changing problems.

Accordingly, this paper aims to discuss the strategic role played by intermediary actor that is articulated through the activities of the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum (FNPTKD) as a forum for fisherman alliances from various villages in the Kelabat Dalam Bay region to carry out resistance to sea mining in the area. Meanwhile, FNPTKD is classified as an intermediary actor because it positions itself as a bridge that connects the state and society. Intermediary actors have a critical role in advocating for people's rights, which are often difficult for the state to reach [1]. Therefore, the phenomenon of the emergence of intermediary actors usually occurs in the public policy process as an effort to influence and reshape public policy governance according to the wishes of the group being represented [2].

There have been quite a lot of studies on intermediary actors in Indonesia, one of which is research by Putra [3], which focuses on the role of Vinolia Wakijo and the Kebaya NGO as non-electoral actors in intermediary politics who can represent the rights of transgender as citizens. Apart from that, other research by Rahmadani [4] also focuses on the role of NGOs as mediator actors in resolving the conflict between the two (2) Nagari in Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatera. On the other hand, research by Muhammad [5] regarding political parties as electoral actors in intermediary politics also plays a role in bridging conflicts or problems of intolerance in Yogyakarta. Thus, looking at previous research regarding intermediary actors, quite a lot was carried out in the electoral and non-electoral spheres, but in non-electoral matters, there is still much research that has not focused on community organizations that come from the grassroots and focuses on environmental issues and how strategies are implemented.

Therefore, researchers must examine the strategies of compromise and contestation by FNPTKD in resisting and gaining support from the wider community. The dynamics of natural resource management and the strategy of intermediary actors can provide an overview of ecological and intermediary politics that occur at the local level.

2 Research Method

This research is based on qualitative research, which reveals descriptive data as an approach to a general understanding of the research focus [6]. Therefore, this research is presented in descriptive form so that it can describe the strategies of intermediary actors involved in carrying out resistance to marine mining cases in the Kelabat Dalam Bay area, in the Bangka and West Bangka Seas, Bangka Belitung Islands Province with the research object, namely the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum. Data sources in this research were obtained through interviews as primary data and observation, documentation, and literature studies as secondary data. The collected data is then processed through data analysis techniques: data reduction, presentation, and verification. The data processing results are the basis for the researchers to conclude.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Rise or Disappear: The History of the Formation of the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum

The conflict between the traditional fishing community and PT Timah Tbk, a state-owned enterprise (BUMN) operating in the mining sector, has been fighting over access to Kelabat Dalam Bay in Bangka Belitung for a long time. The conflict arose because of differences in the interests and activities of PT Timah and its partner companies, which resulted in negative externalities for traditional fishing activities [7]. It was coupled with the increasing prevalence of illegal mining, which has also worsened the socio-economic conditions of the community. Consequently, fishermen have to bear losses because their income has decreased due to the impact of mining waste, which makes the sea cloudy and the marine ecosystem damaged [8]. Based on information from local fishermen, it is explained that:

“The Kelabat Dalam Bay area used to have white sandy beaches and relatively clear waters, and of course, the catch for fishermen in the sea was still straightforward because the marine ecosystem was still maintained, but since the presence of mining, both legal and illegal, the water that was once clean has become cloudy, clean sand, even turning into mud, coupled with increasing amounts of rubbish, ultimately causing marine products to decrease due to damage to the ecosystem in the Kelabat Dalam Bay marine area.”



Fig. 1. Illegal mining in Kelabat Dalam Bay.

Furthermore, based on information from other fishing communities, they have also explained that:

"In the case of several villages in the Kelabat Dalam Bay area, crop failures often occur due to the impact of mining waste. This condition requires fishermen to seek other jobs to increase their income."

Based on these problems, the fishing community in Kelabat Dalam Bay agreed to carry out massive resistance by forming a fishermen's alliance in 2017, which is expected to become a significant milestone in fighting against legal and illegal mining in the Kelabat Dalam Bay area. However, it turned out that the alliance needed to be operating better because several members had a different direction from the initial aim of forming the organization, namely that there were fishermen who received compensation from PT Timah Tbk. With the dissolution of the alliance in 2019, a new forum was formed called the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum (FNPTKD) on November 15, 2020, which consists of fishermen alliances in 10 villages in the Kelabat Dalam Bay area, namely Pusuk Village, Pangkal Niur Village, Rukem Village, Semulut Village, Bukit Tulang Village, Mengkubung Village, Berbura Village, Kapit Village, Tuik Village, and Bakit Village. The formation of this forum was also inseparable from the encouragement and assistance of students and environmental activists in Bangka Belitung Province.

3.2 Compromise and Contestation: The Strategy of the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum as an Intermediary Actor

In the context of developmentalism, marginalized groups are alienated and disadvantaged from the development process [9]. In this case, the marginal group is the fishermen's alliance affected by marine mining activities in Kelabat Dalam Bay. This discourse is not confined solely to informal settings but extends to formal forums and agendas. According to Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2020 concerning the Zoning Plan for Coastal Areas and Small Islands (RZWP3K) for the Bangka Belitung Islands Province for 2020-2040, the Kelabat Dalam Bay area is included as a zero-mining area. However, as reported by Nita [10] in a news article on *Bangkapos.com*, companies with valid permits are still allowed to mine until their permits expire.

As an intermediary actor, this discourse made the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum (FNPTKD) implement several strategies to maintain the resistance movement. According to Mayer [11], the intermediary actor's strategy is divided into two (2), namely compromise and contestation strategies. The following is an illustration of the intermediary political strategy carried out by FNPTKD, namely:

First, Internal Strategy. The internal strategy carried out by FNPTKD in intermediary politics is divided into three (3) things: fishermen's meetings, conducting evaluations and monitoring to increase the commitment and integrity of forum members, and development and empowerment programs through cultivation and conservation. According to Meyer [11], a compromise strategy is generally carried out by two (2) or more parties who present their mutual interests to a forum that can fight for the group's interests. In this case, FNPTKD implemented a compromise strategy, where the alliance of each fisherman in the villages submitted their rights and interests to the forum during fisherman's meetings. Based on the research results, it was stated that during a fishermen's meeting on November 15, 2020, in Pusuk Village, Bangka Regency, the

fishermen's alliance of 10 villages in West Bangka Regency and Bangka Regency agreed to the FNPTKD through a written statement as members to fight for the rights of the fishing community.

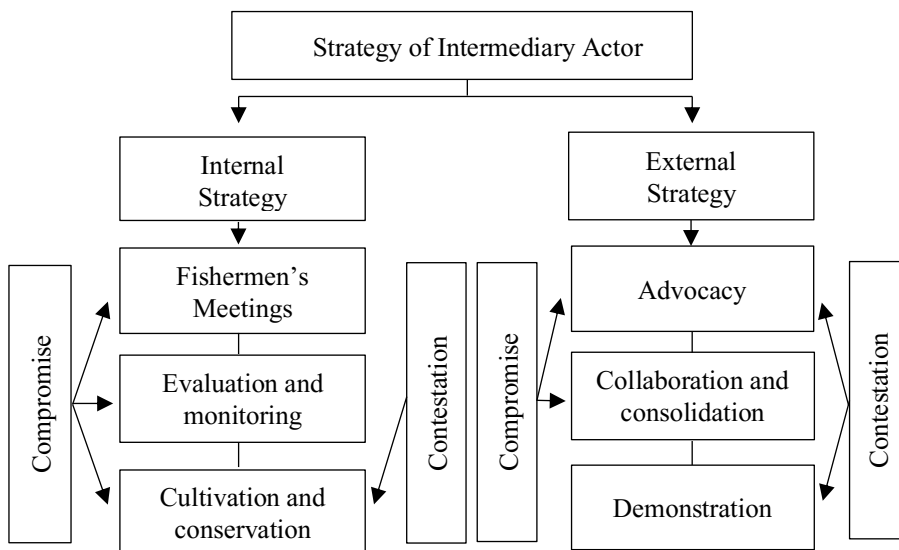


Fig. 2. FNPTKD strategy.

On one hand, to maintain sustainability and strengthen the commitment and integrity of fishermen in resisting marine mining, FNPTKD carries out evaluation and monitoring through monthly meetings. The agenda is usually related to friendship and evaluation of the conditions of each area in Kelabat Dalam Bay. This activity is carried out from one village to another to reach the community on a more massive scale and provide critical awareness of the phenomena occurring in the area. Apart from that, this is also a form of compromise made by FNPTKD towards the fishing community in the Kelabat Dalam Bay area to fight for their interests together.

According to Haryanto et al. [12], at least two (2) things can maintain the sustainability of intermediary actors, namely the ability to strengthen and unify paradigms regarding political ideology and maintaining broad network relations so that they remain committed to the intensity of the movement. Based on this statement, the two important elements have been implemented by the FNPTKD so that this has become a strong basis for the forum's sustainability in carrying out systematic movements. In this way, FNPTKD tries to maintain ideological reasoning about the object being fought for through fishermen's meetings and regular evaluation and monitoring so that it can reach many relations from the wider community.

Apart from that, based on the statement from the Chair of the FNPTKD:

“FNPTKD's funding source is obtained through member fees. This forum also conducts conservation activities and cultivates shellfish and seaweed to stabilize the community's economy.”

The existence of other main programs, such as shellfish and seaweed cultivation and water conservation, is also a form of compromise between the FNPTKD and the fishing community so that forum members can avoid offers of compensation from parties who try to weaken the resistance movement. Cultivation and conservation are also tools of contestation or a form of resistance that FNPTKD carries out where cultivation and conservation are analogous to production sources and (legal) companies that FNPTKD forms to fight sea mining in the area.

Second, External Strategy. Apart from carrying out internal strategies, FNPTKD also carries out external strategies. One of the strategies carried out by this forum is to fight through an advocacy agenda with the government, PT Timah, and stakeholders. Based on the research results, it was found that FNPTKD had carried out many advocacy activities with the government, starting from the struggle for zero marine mining in the Kelabat Dalam Bay area through Regional Regulation RZWP3K No. 3 of 2020, then hearings with law enforcement officials regarding illegal mining, and hearings with the Regional Legislative Council (DPRD) regarding illegal mining activities which are increasingly widespread in the region. Apart from the advocacy agenda to the government and stakeholders, FNPTKD has also carried out advocacy for PT Timah, one of which is lobbying and hearings regarding losses to the cultivation of the Kelabat Dalam Bay fishing community as a result of mining waste, where FNPTKD hopes that the fishing community will receive compensation for losses from crop failure. Still, this compromise action has yet to achieve FNPTKD and the fishing community's desired results. The Chair of the FNPTKD made the following statement:

“In 2022, the fishing community in Kelabat Dalam Bay will experience 80 tons of harvest failure. Therefore, through the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum, we tried to sue PT Timah so the community could receive compensation, although we have not found common ground.”

Apart from that, several activities taking to the streets (demonstrations) are also often carried out by FNPTKD as an external strategy that needs to be implemented. Based on information from FNPTKD members, they stated that:

“This forum makes it easier for fishermen to take to the streets. Various actions have been carried out in several places, such as regional government office areas including districts/provinces, the PT Timah company, and areas where mining activities occur.”

However, these demonstrations often receive pressure from outside parties, resulting in horizontal conflicts between fishermen and miners. According to Meyer [11], this condition is a form of contestation strategy carried out by intermediary actors where FNPTKD contests social policies that are not profitable for fishermen.

On the one hand, FNPTKD and fishermen, in carrying out resistance movements through demonstrations, also collaborate with groups and communities who care about the environment in Bangka Belitung Province, such as the Bangka Belitung Environmental Forum Organization, student organizations, and the regional level Cipayung student organization. The Cipayung student organization includes students from Bangka Belitung University, the State College for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Syaikh

Abdurrahman Siddik Bangka Belitung, the Islamic Student Association of Bangka Belitung Raya Branch, and environmental activists in Bangka Belitung. These organizations consistently assist FNPTKD in carrying out marine mining resistance movements in the region.

Apart from that, FNPTKD carries out joint studies and consolidates with these groups to reach a wide network. Based on the research results, FNPTKD compromised with this organization to further strengthen the movement it was building and increase the group's network so that substantial narratives could be better conveyed to the parties being sued. Apart from that, reactionary discussions were held regarding the current condition of the issues in the Kelabat Dalam Bay Sea. The Cipayung student organization also has a significant role in maintaining the spirit and solidarity of FNPTKD. These various media movements support FNPTKD in reaching forces outside the group. They did this as an external strategy to reach other groups and strengthen the resistance movement they were carrying out.

3.3 Examining the Dynamics of the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum as an Intermediary Actor

Marine mining activities are incongruent with the core principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) embraced by nations worldwide [13]. This vision of defending and protecting marine resources is the ideological foundation that unites every fisherman's alliance within the forum. However, the forum's resistance and sustainability have faced several obstacles and challenges. These obstacles and challenges come from internal and external forums. The discourse on the forum's existence is an issue that different interest groups routinely carry out. Conflicting groups often try to create compensation issues to divide the forum. Some of the obstacles and challenges that occurred are as follows:

First, there are individual fishermen who, on behalf of the forum, receive compensation and funding to accommodate marine mining interests. According to the FNPTKD Chairman's statement that:

“There was a time when several individuals took compensation funds in the name of FNPTKD.”

This condition is a challenge because it can divide the continuity of the forum. The sanction given to fishermen who violate the forum agreement is a ban on fishing in the Kelabat Dalam Bay Sea area. The aim is to provide a deterrent effect and demonstrate the forum members' movement consistency.

Second, there is a horizontal conflict between fishermen and miners. Differences in perception of marine management are a fundamental thing that causes many conflicts between fishermen and miners in Kelabat Dalam Bay. Not infrequently, this conflict leads to acts of violence against fishermen. This conflict is increasingly complicated due to the absence of the government in efforts to resolve classic problems that have mushroomed. Apart from that, in the researcher's interview with the Chair of the FNPTKD:

“There are indications of the involvement of law enforcement officers in illegal mining activities in the Kelabat Dalam Bay area, which is one of the major obstacles for FNPTKD.”

In line with this statement, according to research by Theta and Yuningsih [14], law enforcement elements try to benefit themselves, even though they have to violate the law that should be enforced. Regarding the problem of illegal tin mining in Bangka Belitung, these law enforcement officers could be "supporters" of illegal tin mining because it is not uncommon that when enforcement is to be carried out, the enforcement location is suddenly empty and abandoned by the owner. Therefore, suspicions arise that law enforcement officers are helping the illegal tin miners by providing information related to the enforcement activities that will be carried out. Therefore, this condition needs serious attention because it will become a prolonged conflict if it continues.

Third, damage to marine ecosystems due to mining activities causes large losses to fishermen. If fishermen's catches decrease and seaweed cultivation results in crop failure, the forum's funding sources will also be affected, thus narrowing the space for FNPTKD accommodation.

Fourth, the dual role of fishermen is also a problem in carrying out marine mining resistance. Based on information from FNPTKD members, they stated that:

“What is also a problem as a member of the FNPTKD is the busyness of being a fisherman who has to go to sea to earn his daily living.”

Therefore, on the one hand, FNPTKD members have to go to sea to survive their families. Still, on the other hand, they have to resist, making it difficult for FNPTKD members to maintain the consistency and intensity of the movement. The fishermen hope that the state will be present to resolve this ongoing discourse.

Based on the discussion above, the challenges faced by FNPTKD in carrying out the resistance movement against tin mining in Kelabat Dalam Bay have opened a new perspective to see the conflict over natural resources in that area. It differs from the study conducted by Agustin and Hanif [7], which looks at conflict management in Kelabat Bay through the various interests of each actor in the conflict. However, it does not rule out the possibility of seeing different perspectives in the conflict, for example, through regulation, history, political interests, and impacts. Moreover, the focus of this research is especially limited to the strategies of intermediary actors.

Furthermore, as the author suggests, the findings in this study can be made more complex by comparing conflicts over sea resources that occur in other places. Material differences will affect different movements, conflicts, actors, and mechanisms.

4 Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the Kelabat Dalam Bay Lovers Fishermen Forum (FNPTKD) has an important role as an intermediary actor in mining resistance in the Kelabat Dalam Bay Sea area. The intermediary politics carried out by FNPTKD are very diverse, starting from compromise and contestation strategies, which are spread across two (2) forms of methods, namely: First, internal strategies, such as holding fishermen's consultations and carrying out evaluations and monitoring villages that are members of the forum to strengthen the commitment and integrity of fishermen,

as well as cultivation and conservation programs as a tool of resistance. Second, external strategies include an advocacy agenda with policy-making actors, holding demonstrations, and maintaining networks with environmental activists and other groups that support the forum movement.

Several obstacles and challenges exist in the continuity of the forum, and the movements carried out. Horizontal conflicts result from overlapping regulations, individual fishermen abusing the authority of the forum, obstruction of funding sources, and the multiple roles that fishermen must carry out. However, these obstacles and challenges were resolved with the strategies and agenda carried out by FNPTKD.

Nevertheless, no common ground for this discourse can lead to more extensive and massive conflicts, especially at the grassroots level. Therefore, this discourse requires a solution and regulation that mediates between each interest group. Concerns that a more significant conflict will occur are the responsibility of all stakeholders in completing it. In the socio-political dimension, this conflict of interest is an interesting issue regarding social movements, ecological politics, intermediary politics, and local politics in the region. It can be evidence of the state's lack of systematic conflict management.

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