



Environmental Politics in the Implementation of Waste Management: A Study of the Environment Agency of West Lampung Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of environmental politics in the implementation of waste management by the West Lampung Regency Environmental Agency (DLH). The volume of waste that reaches around 120 tonnes per day, with only 70% effectively managed, presents a critical governance challenge. Using Piers Blaikie's theory of Political Ecology, this qualitative field research was conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation analysis. The findings of the study show that although DLH has a clear regulatory foundation, especially Regional Regulation Number 15 of 2013 and Regent Regulation Number 48 of 2018, its implementation faces significant obstacles. These obstacles include infrastructure limitations such as lack of adequate landfills and transport fleets, inadequate budget allocation for operations and maintenance, uneven distribution of waste services between sub-districts (some remote areas are unreachable), and low community participation which only reaches 35% in sorting activities and levy payments. This low participation is exacerbated by weak environmental awareness and lack of strict sanctions. This study concludes that strengthening DLH's institutional capacity, increasing regional budget commitments in a sustainable manner, and developing participatory and ecologically fair community involvement are absolute requirements to achieve sustainable waste management in West Lampung. On top of these three pillars, the gap between policy and practice will continue to widen, threatening the environment and social justice.

1. Introduction

The problem of waste management is one of the most pressing environmental challenges in the modern development era. Along with the increasing population, urbanization, and increasingly complex community consumption patterns, the volume of waste produced continues to increase from year to year. This condition not only has an

impact on the quality of the environment, but also has implications for public health, regional aesthetics, and the sustainability of the ecosystem as a whole. In the context of sustainable development carried out by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), good waste management is one of the important indicators of the success of regional development. The Government of Indonesia has given its commitment to the SDGs through Presidential Regulation No. 59 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.¹

West Lampung Regency is one of the areas in Lampung Province that is facing serious challenges in waste management. As an area that continues to experience population growth and economic dynamics, West Lampung is faced with an increase in waste generation which reaches an average of 120 tons per day. However, the available waste management and transportation capacity is only able to reach around 70% of the total volume, so that around 30% of waste is still accumulating in the community due to limited facilities and transportation facilities.

This problem cannot be seen solely as a technical-administrative issue. From an environmental political perspective, waste management is part of a political process that involves power relations, public policy, economic interests, and the values of sustainability and ecological justice. The Theory of Political Ecology developed by Piers Blaikie emphasizes that environmental problems are the result of interactions between power structures, state policies, and socio-economic conditions of society. Thus, the failure or success of waste management is highly determined by how local governments carry out their political roles and capacities, as well as how the relationship between the state and the community is built in the process of implementing policies.²

Allah SWT says in the Qur'an Surah Al-A'rāf verse 56 which means: "And do not do any damage to the earth after it has been created. Pray to Him with fear and hope. Indeed, Allah's mercy is very near to those who do good." This verse affirms the responsibility of humans to preserve the earth and prevent environmental damage, including in the context of waste management. In the perspective of Islamic Political Thought, environmental management is a collective obligation that must be realized through public policies that are fair, effective, and oriented towards the common good.³

Departing from this background, this study aims to analyze two main problems: first, how the condition of landfills and waste management in West Lampung Regency is based on data and field reality; and second, how environmental governance in West Lampung Regency starts from the final disposal system (TPA), the implementation of the 3R program

¹ The SDGs were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 through Resolution A/RES/70/1, encompassing 17 global development goals to be achieved by 2030. Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) are directly related to waste management. See: Presidential Regulation Number 59 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

² Piers Blaikie is a British political geographer who pioneered the Political Ecology approach through his work *The Political Economy of Soil Erosion in Developing Countries* (1985). Together with Harold Brookfield, he developed this concept further in *Land Degradation and Society* (1987), which became a major reference in environmental studies based on power relations and socio-economic structures.

³ QS. Al-A'rāf [7]: 56. In the commentary of Al-Mishbah, M. Quraish Shihab explains that the word "fasād" (damage) includes all forms of destruction of nature, including environmental pollution due to irresponsible waste management. See: Shihab, M. Q. (2021). *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, Vol. 5. Jakarta: Lentera Hati.

(reduce, reuse, recycle), to existing regulations and policies reviewed from the perspective of environmental politics. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the perspective of political ecology with Islamic ethical values in analyzing regional waste management policies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Environmental Politics and Political Ecological Theory

Environmental politics is a branch of political science that discusses the relationship between public policy, power, political actors, and economic and social interests in environmental management. Different from the technical-managerial approach, environmental politics views ecological issues as the result of a political process that involves the state, society, and the private sector in determining the direction of sustainable development. This study emphasizes that environmental damage, including the waste management crisis, cannot be separated from the dynamics of power and resource distribution.

The Theory of Political Ecology developed by Piers Blaikie is the main analytical framework in this study. Blaikie argues that environmental degradation is the product of unequal socio-economic relations, in which ecological conditions are directly influenced by local, national, and even global power structures. In his work with Harold Brookfield, Blaikie asserts that the environment is a political arena in which there are unfair relations of interests and distribution of resources. This framework is relevant to analyze why waste management policies in West Lampung have not run optimally even though regulations have been available.⁴

Previous studies show that the West Lampung Regional Government already has a legal basis in the form of Regent Regulation Number 48 of 2018, but its implementation has not been running optimally due to various technical and institutional obstacles. Previous studies also analyzed that waste management at the sub-district level in West Lampung is constrained by limited infrastructure and low community participation. The fundamental difference between this study and previous studies lies in the use of a political ecology perspective that integrates the dimensions of science, economics, ethics, and Islamic values in a holistic analytical framework.

2.2 Waste Management Policy in a Legal Perspective

Waste management in Indonesia is regulated by Law Number 18 of 2008 concerning Waste Management which requires local governments to implement a waste management system that includes reduction, sorting, collection, transportation, processing, and final processing. This law emphasizes that waste management is no longer seen as just a cleaning activity, but as part of efforts to protect the environment and improve the quality of public health.

Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management strengthens the government's obligation to maintain the quality of the environment as a constitutional right of every citizen. In the context of regional autonomy, the district

⁴ Blaikie, P., & Brookfield, H. (1987). *Land Degradation and Society*. London: Methuen, hlm. 17. Blaikie dan Brookfield defines political ecology as the study that combines ecological concerns with broad political economy, encompassing the study of the impact of social, economic, and political pressures on environmental change.

government has full authority in formulating and implementing waste management policies according to the characteristics and needs of the region.⁵

In West Lampung Regency, the legal basis for waste management is strengthened by Regional Regulation Number 15 of 2013 concerning Public Order, which among other things regulates criminal sanctions for violators of waste disposal provisions. The Regency Government has also issued Regent Regulation Number 48 of 2018 concerning Household Waste Management Policies and Strategies as an implementation of the mandate of the law. This regulatory framework reflects the seriousness of local governments in tackling the waste problem, although the gap between regulation and implementation on the ground is still a major challenge.

2.3 Operationalization of Political Ecology Theory in Waste Management Analysis

In this study, Piers Blaikie's theory of Political Ecology is operationalized through three interrelated analytical dimensions. First, the structural-relational dimension, namely analyzing how the power relationship between the central government, local governments, and the community shapes the distribution pattern of waste management services. Blaikie (1985) asserts that ecological conditions are inseparable from the socio-economic and political structures that underlie them.

Second, the policy-implementation dimension, namely examining the gap between existing regulations and the reality on the ground. Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) argue that environmental policy failures are often caused by mismatches between top-down regulatory frameworks and limited local institutional capacity. In the context of West Lampung, Regional Regulation No. 15 of 2013 and Perbup No. 48 of 2018 have been normatively available, but their implementation is hampered by budget and infrastructure limitations.

Third, the dimension of ecological participation and justice, namely examining the extent to which the community is involved in the decision-making process and implementation of environmental policies. Bryant and Bailey (1997) expand on Blaikie's framework by emphasizing the importance of the involvement of non-state actors, including local communities and civil society groups, in equitable environmental governance. The low participation of the community in the waste bank program in West Lampung (35%) indicates that the existing approach has not been able to encourage systemic behavioral transformation.⁶

3. Method

This research is a field research with a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe systematically, factually, and accurately the phenomenon of waste management policy in the perspective of environmental politics. The nature of this research is descriptive analytical, namely describing the actual conditions of waste management and then analyzing it through the framework of political ecology theory. The research location is

⁵ Law Number 18 of 2008 concerning Waste Management, Article 5, stipulates that the government and local governments are tasked with ensuring the implementation of good and environmentally sound waste management. Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management, Article 65, affirms the right of everyone to a good and healthy environment as part of human rights.

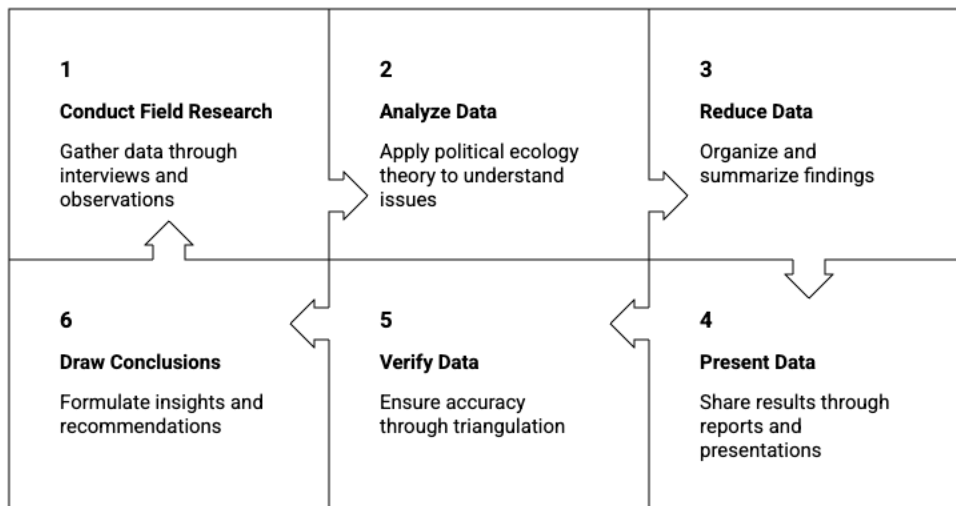
⁶ Bryant, R. L., & Bailey, S. (1997). *Third World Political Ecology*. London: Routledge, pp. 38–45. Bryant and Bailey expand on Blaikie's concept of political ecology by including the dimension of non-state actors (NGOs, civil society, and local communities) as active agents in environmental governance in developing countries.

focused on the West Lampung Regency Environmental Agency and Pekon Sebarus, Balikbukit District, as the area with the highest volume of waste and the only sub-district that has the Bahway Final Disposal Site (TPA).

The data sources in this study consist of two types. First, primary data sources were obtained through in-depth interviews with five informants who were selected through purposive sampling based on position, authority, and knowledge of the problems being studied. The five informants are: (1) Amri, S.H., M.Hum. as the Head of the West Lampung Regency Environmental Agency; (2) Ardiansyah Fikri as Head of Cleanliness Division of DLH; (3) Melky Dafirzata as the Head of Pekon Sebarus; (4) Indra as the Chairman of RT/RW Pekon Sebarus; and (5) Yulia Guntari as a representative of the local community. Second, secondary data sources are obtained from the DLH Annual Report, LKJIP 2024, DLH Strategic Plan 2025-2029, as well as relevant laws and regulations.

Data collection was carried out through three main methods: in-depth interviews, direct observation of waste management conditions in the field, and documentation analysis. Data analysis was carried out in a qualitative descriptive manner following three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and verification and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data is ensured through source triangulation, which is comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation to obtain a comprehensive understanding that can be accounted for academically.⁷

Waste Management Policy Research Cycle



In the systematic waste management policy research cycle, the process begins with the collection of field data through interviews and observations, then analyzes using the framework of political ecology theory to uncover the relationship of power and environmental complexity. The data collected is then reduced, summarized and organized so that it is easy to manage, before finally being presented in the form of reports or

⁷ The descriptive qualitative approach in this study refers to Moleong, L. J. (2019). *Qualitative Research Methodology*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, and Sugiyono. (2018). *Qualitative Research Methods*. Bandung: Alfabeta. The source triangulation technique is used to ensure the validity of the data by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation analysis.

presentations. The data verification stage through triangulation is a crucial step to ensure the accuracy of the findings, after which the researcher draws conclusions and formulates policy recommendations. This cycle is iterative, where each phase is interrelated and enriches understanding so that waste management policies are not only technical, but also human and contextual.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Landfill and Waste Management Conditions in West Lampung Regency

Based on data from the West Lampung Regency Environmental Agency and the results of field observations, the volume of waste generation in this area shows a worrying condition. The average waste production reaches around 120 tons per day, but only about 70% is managed properly, while the remaining 30% is still piling up in the community due to limited facilities and transportation facilities.⁸

Tabel 1. Waste Landfill in West Lampung Regency in 2022–2025

| Year | Waste Generation (tons/year) | Source/Notes |
|------|------------------------------|--|
| 2022 | ± 47.220 | Stockpile data per day 129.37 tons × 365 days (DLH Lampung Province) |
| 2023 | ± 47.654,35 | 2023 Waste Generation Report (SIPSN/KLHK) |
| 2024 | ± 47.654,35 | Data collection status data has not been fully reported to SIPSN |
| 2025 | ± 46.640 (projection) | Projection of Bappeda of Lampung Province (~127.72 tons/day × 365) |

Source: West Lampung Regency Environmental Agency

Of all existing sub-districts, Balik Bukit District is recorded as the area with the highest volume of waste, which is around 30 to 35 tons per day. Balik Bukit is also the only sub-district that has a two-hectare Bahway Final Disposal Site (TPA), although with a very limited management capacity. Meanwhile, other sub-districts such as Way Tenong, Sekincau, and Sumber Jaya each produce between 10 to 20 tons of waste per day, but do not have an adequate management system and still rely on open disposal or incineration.

This condition was confirmed by the Head of DLH West Lampung Regency, Amri, S.H., M.Hum., who emphasized that the limited fleet of waste transportation and the lack of a standard number of Temporary Shelters (TPS) are the main obstacles in waste management. In addition, the level of community participation in the new waste bank program reached around 35% of total households, far below the expected target.

4.2 Environmental Governance: Landfills, 3R Programs, and Regulations in West Lampung Regency

Referring to Blaikie's theory of political ecology, effective environmental governance demands integration between regulatory policies, infrastructure capacity, and community participation. In the context of West Lampung Regency, this study finds three main

⁸ An interview with Amri, S.H., M.Hum., Head of the West Lampung Regency Environmental Office, was held on March 10, 2025 at the West Lampung Regency DLH Office, Liwa. Waste generation data is sourced from the 2023 West Lampung Regency DLH Annual Report and SIPSN/KLHK documents.

dimensions of environmental governance that need to be studied in depth. First, the management dimension of landfills (TPA). The Bahway Landfill, located in Balik Bukit District, is the only final disposal facility in West Lampung Regency. With an area of only two hectares, the capacity of this landfill is far from adequate to accommodate the generation of waste which reaches 120 tons per day. The Head of Cleanliness Division of DLH, Ardiansyah Fikri, said that the management system at the Bahway Landfill still uses an open dumping method that does not meet sanitary landfill standards as mandated by laws and regulations. This condition is a clear reflection of the gap between regulation and implementation identified by Blaikie as the root of the problem in the environmental crisis in developing countries.

Second, the dimension of implementing the 3R program (reduce, reuse, recycle). DLH West Lampung Regency has initiated the waste bank program as the main instrument for the implementation of the 3R. However, the level of community participation in this program has only reached 35% of the total households. The Head of Pekon Sebarus, Melky Dafirzata, revealed that its residents need support in the form of proper TPS facilities and a regular transportation schedule so that community-based hygiene programs can run consistently. The Chairman of RT/RW Pekon Sebarus, Indra, added that the socialization of the 3R program is still sporadic and unsustainable. Meanwhile, Yulia Guntari, a representative of the local community, emphasized that the real economic incentives from the waste bank program have not been significantly felt by residents.

Third, the dimension of regulation and policy implementation. DLH West Lampung Regency has the authority stipulated in Regent Regulation No. 48 of 2018 to formulate policies, provide facilities and infrastructure, determine the location of polling stations and landfills, and conduct guidance and supervision. However, the Head of DLH Amri, S.H., M.Hum., revealed that the waste management budget allocation is still not sufficient for ideal operational needs, especially for the procurement of new fleets and the construction of representative polling stations in all sub-districts.

4.3 Political Ecology Analysis: Answering the Formulation of Waste Management Problems in West Lampung

Using Blaikie's framework of political ecology, this study answers two formulations of the problem posed. First, the condition of landfill and waste management in West Lampung Regency shows a significant gap between production volume (120 tons/day) and management capacity (70%), with uneven service distribution only in Balik Bukit District that is fully served while other sub-districts depend on community independent initiatives. Blaikie explained that this condition is a product of an unequal power structure, where the distribution of environmental infrastructure reflects political priorities that favor the center of district government.

Second, environmental governance in West Lampung Regency which includes the management of the Bahway landfill, the 3R program through the waste bank, and the regulations of Regional Regulation No. 15/2013 and Perbup No. 48/2018 reviewed from the perspective of environmental politics show three main gaps: (a) the regulation-implementation gap, where existing policies have not been accompanied by adequate institutional and budgetary capacity; (b) service distribution gap, which reflects ecological injustice between the sub-districts served and those that do not; and (c) community participation gaps, where the 3R program has not been implemented systematically and community-based. Integration of Islamic perspectives through QS. Al-A'rāf [7]:56 which

prohibits fasād on earth affirms that the failure of waste management is a moral-political responsibility that demands the commitment of the state in ensuring ecological justice for the entire people of West Lampung.

4.4 DLH Strategic Plan Data Analysis 2025–2029: Institutional Capacity and Performance Targets

The Strategic Plan Document (Renstra) of the West Lampung Regency Environment Agency for 2025–2029 provides a comprehensive overview of the actual institutional conditions and environmental management performance targets for the next five-year period. The data in this document reinforce and complement the field findings obtained through in-depth interviews with the key informants of this study.

In terms of human resources, the Strategic Plan noted that as of July 23, 2025, DLH West Lampung has 30 ASN (PNS and PPPK) and 194 non-ASN personnel, with details of 148 cleaning technical personnel, 26 landscaping personnel, 14 Bahway TPA personnel, and 3 environmental laboratory personnel. This composition shows that the waste management workload is fully supported by non-ASN personnel, which has implications for staffing instability and the potential for a decline in service quality in the long term.

In terms of facilities and infrastructure, the Strategic Plan noted that DLH has 11 units of 6-wheeled vehicles (garbage trucks), 13 units of 3-wheeled vehicles, and 7 units of 4-wheeled vehicles, as well as 5 units of buildings. This transportation fleet is clearly inadequate to serve 15 sub-districts with an average volume of waste generation of 120 tons per day. Head of Hygiene Ardiansyah Fikri said that the waste transportation ridiculous in the served area is still not optimal, some areas in Balik Bukit District have only received transportation services 2-3 times per week, far from the ideal daily standard.

In terms of waste performance, the Strategic Plan noted that waste management from 15 sub-districts only covers 1 sub-district, namely Balik Bukit District. Data shows an increase in waste handling from 6,137.84 tons/year in 2021 to 13,068.68 tons/year or 28.28% in 2023, but this figure is still very far from the ideal need. In terms of budget, Strategic Plan data shows that DLH's total budget has increased from Rp. 14,061,713,882.00 (2021) to Rp. 15,382,236,611.00 (2024), but this value is still disproportionate compared to the waste infrastructure investment needs for 15 sub-districts.

In Blaikie's political ecology perspective, the non-transparency of public resource allocation is an indication of the weak democratization of environmental governance in favor of the interests of marginalized communities. This problem shows that waste management concerns power relations in environmental policy-making, the condition of waste is also a matter of ecological justice, where the state is required to ensure that the distribution of environmental services is carried out fairly, inclusively, and in favor of the interests of the wider community.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of waste management in West Lampung Regency still faces various structural challenges rooted in the weakness of the political capacity of local governments. Although DLH has a fairly strong regulatory foundation, marked by the existence of Regional Regulation No. 15 of 2013 and Perbup No. 48 of 2018, the gap between regulation and implementation is still very significant. This is characterized by the limited infrastructure of the Bahway landfill, uneven distribution of

services, and low community participation which has only reached 35% of total households.

Environmental governance in West Lampung Regency, which includes the dimensions of landfills, 3R programs, and regulations, requires comprehensive reform. The Bahway landfill system needs to be upgraded from open dumping to sanitary landfill, the 3R program needs to be strengthened through real economic incentives and sustainable socialization, and existing regulations need to be accompanied by adequate budget and institutional capacity. The findings of this study prove that Blaikie's theory of political ecology is relevant in explaining how the waste management crisis in West Lampung is a manifestation of an unequal power structure and an unfair distribution of public resources.

Based on these findings, this study recommends: (1) gradually increasing the DLH budget allocation to meet the needs of transportation fleets and TPS infrastructure in all sub-districts; (2) the development of sustainable and community-based environmental socialization and education programs; (3) strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with operationally measurable performance indicators; and (4) the development of a co-production model between DLH and the community through the empowerment of a pekon-based waste bank supported by real economic incentives. Further research is recommended to compare the effectiveness of community-based waste management models in various districts in Lampung Province.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors stated that there was no conflict of interest in this study.

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